

Mandarin NewsLine

JULY 2020 Volume 14 Issue 9

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Mandarin Community Club to host blood drive

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The June blood drive held at the Mandarin Community Club was so successful that OneBlood has requested another drive be held at the club on Saturday, July 18 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Appointments are strongly recommended.

All safety precautions including temperature checks and social distancing will be observed. Donors can wait in the air conditioned comfort of the community club building using social distancing or wait outside under the shade of the oaks at 12447 Mandarin Road. Each donor will receive a free OneBlood zippered black handle and



Photos by MetroCreative

trim tote bag in addition to a COVID antibody test included with every successful blood donation. Each donor is given a mini-physical examination, including a check of the donor's blood pressure, pulse, temperature and iron count. Techs also perform a non-fasting, total serum cholesterol level screening test. Most importantly, each unit of blood donated can save up to three lives.

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Local authors aim to inspire aspiring writers

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Newly published author and Mandarin resident David Gaslin recently wondered if many people know how many published authors there are living in Mandarin.

"If someone has the 'itch' to write, I thought it might motivate them to know how many authors there actually are here and in the northeast Florida area," Gaslin said.

As a high school reading teacher responsible for bringing struggling students' reading levels up to grade level so they could graduate, he felt motivated to write a book that once people started reading, they wouldn't be able to put down. He named the first book that affected him like that as "Jaws."

He said that especially in school, there are a lot of boring books one must read, but finding interesting books are key to keep young readers motivated so they don't fall behind.

Gaslin said he always knew he wanted to write a story for kids about bullying, and he began by writing short stories for his grandchildren. One 30 page story led to a few more and after a friend read them all and was impressed, he decided to try to get the story published. After many rejections, he found a publisher willing to give him a chance and then the "hard" work of page design, chapters, and illustrations began. About six months later, Gaslin finally had a copy of his book for middle school readers, "The Little Tree that Changed Everything," in his hands. He has since started writing a

fantasy trilogy, also aimed at middle school readers, featuring a fairy princess. The coronavirus pandemic has slowed publishing efforts, but he is delighted that he has settled on an illustrator for the books, a local high school student.

His advice for aspiring writers? First, talk to people, especially other writers. Gaslin said he likes to go to open houses, such as at the Mandarin Museum, where local authors' books are for sale. Secondly, he said to never give up. He sent 150 letters to potential publishers and all said "no" before finally one said "yes."

Author Bob Nay, who also lived in Mandarin for many years before moving to St. Johns County, said he writes books not because of a love of writing, but because of a desire to share stories.

"You can tell stories one time," Nay said. "If you write the stories down, they will be around for a long time."

As a math major, he worked for Blue Shield. Upon his retirement he wanted to share family stories with future generations. He especially liked research, and said he initially thought about writing as merely writing a letter to someone and then adding on the details.

Nay's seven books include four fam-



Photo courtesy David Gaslin
Author David Gaslin at a signing for his book, "The Little Tree that Changed Everything."

ily history books and then three others that also tell family stories — just not his family's. Perhaps most well known is "I Am a Full Fledged Floridian: The Life and Times of William Webb," which is sold at the Mandarin Museum gift shop. Like his other books, Nay spent a lot of time researching museum and military records and learned that Webb moved from his home state of New York to Mandarin and operated an orange grove where the Mandarin Museum is now located. He said researching this book helped him to learn even more about Mandarin's history, and he donated all proceeds to the Mandarin Museum.

Nay said he thought it was important for aspiring writers to play to their own strengths; his is research, so his books require a lot of that. Additionally he said a teacher once gave him some good advice: just start writing and don't worry about grammar and form at first — just try to keep from being chaotic.

Juvenile fiction author and Mandarin resident Jane R. Wood is well known among school children for her five-book historical fiction series set largely in the southeast. Her first book in the series, "Voices in St. Augustine," was purchased in bulk by the Duval County School District after teachers requested it, saying that their fourth graders liked to learn about history through fiction. The third book, "Trouble on the St. Johns River" has an environmental

Local authors cont. on pg. 4



Photo courtesy Jane R. Wood
Author Jane R. Wood at a book signing

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Mandarin says an unexpected “farewell” to a Patriarch Oak

By Susie Scott
mail@floridanewslines.com

As most residents of Mandarin know, they have the good fortune to live in an exceptional area of Jacksonville that has its identity deep in the roots of the trees and the lush natural beauty that is Mandarin. In fact, Mandarin Road is the only designated Scenic and Historic Corridor in all of Jacksonville and is protected by city ordinance. That ordinance stands between reckless tree trimming and removal, which could forever change the historic landscape — including the majestic oaks that



Tree replacement

canopy the roadway. We have two former City Council members, Mary Anne Southwell and Sharon Copeland to thank for that unique honor.

Recently, Mandarin lost one of the giants that has graced the neighborhood for centuries. One of the Patriarch



Photos courtesy Susie Scott
Patriarch Oak stump

Oaks dropped two large branches and the city made the decision to remove the entire tree. The city arborist inspected and determined that the old giant had severe enough decay to warrant removal. We will never know if the tree might yet have survived or for how many years. Removal should always be a last resort.

But, we can be thankful that the city has committed to planting a live oak in that immediate area and a request has been made for an oak of significant size that holds a promise for the future. While we will not live to see it reach the majestic size of its forefather, we will know that through its successor the canopy along Mandarin Road will thrive.

Are bicyclists allowed on sidewalks? And other things you need to know

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewslines.com

Walkers, joggers, and bicyclists are all taking advantage of northeast Florida’s beautiful early summer weather. But what happens when these all converge on a sidewalk? Is it even legal to ride a bike on a sidewalk?

According to St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office NW Commander Kevin Cronin, bicyclists are allowed on public sidewalks per Florida Statute, but must always yield to pedestrians.

“There could be different rules about whether bicycles can be ridden on sidewalks in private communities, though,” Cronin said.

He recommended that everyone stay up to date with their own community’s rules and regulations regarding private sidewalks and roads.

He pointed out that, regardless, bicyclists should have a horn or other device, including using their voice, to alert pedestrians on a sidewalk of their intention to overtake. Lights are re-

quired on bicycles if operated between dusk and dawn and all bicyclists younger than age 16 must wear a helmet.

Cronin said that bicycles are also allowed on the roadway, and if they choose to do so, they must follow the same rules of the road as vehicles. They must ride with traffic — as opposed to walkers, who must walk facing traffic for safety.

“Bicyclists are allowed to ride in the lane like a motorist if no bike path is available,” Cronin said. “Of course, if a bike lane is available, that would be preferred.”

Cronin noted that Florida Statute 316 governs most of the state’s bicycle and pedestrian regulations and deviation from the rules is punishable by citation, just like the driver of a motor vehicle.

“In fact,” he said, “it’s also unlawful to operate a bicycle under the influence. You could be arrested for BUI (Biking Under the Influence.)”



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 - MRI average cost \$350..
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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

BREED:
Red Tri Australian Shepherd.

FAVORITE ACTIVITY:
Chasing the chickens and wrestling with Daddy!

FAVORITE TREAT:
Apples and any food that falls on the floor.

FAVORITE FRIEND:
Daddy!

HOW YOUR BFF GOT THEIR NAME:
Her red color of her coat matched the color of a Phoenix.



This month's contest sponsored by:
Mandarin Animal Hospital
4473 Sunbeam Road
www.mandarinanimalhospital.com

Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answers to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and you could win a Gift Certificate!
Does your business cater to pets? Would you like to sponsor our contest?
Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet or sponsor the BFF contest.

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MYSTERY PHOTO



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

Last month's Mystery Photo was the gardens at the Mandarin Garden Club. Our winner was Diane Frisco. Congratulations!

Answers to our Puzzles PG 12

CRYPTO FUN

Substitute the code to reveal the answer!

Answers: A. cooling B. thermostat C. degree D. house

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with Jacksonville City Council Member, District 6, Michael Boylan

Q: Can you give us an update on the sidewalk construction along Mandarin Road?

A: We are in the process of building new sidewalks to complete gaps that will help to address pedestrian safety and mobility issues along Mandarin Road. This project includes the design and construction of three segments of sidewalk: San Jose to Ingle Lane, Orange Picker Road to Long Cypress Trail and Long Cypress Trail to Red Cypress Road. As of early June, construction is on schedule and nearing completion. The expected completion date is July 13, 2020.

A new sidewalk project being undertaken includes the design and construction of a new sidewalk along Orange Picker Road from Mandarin Road to Brady Road.

Q: What can you tell us about the dock and kayak launch at Mandarin Park?

A: This project included design, permitting and specifications for a floating dock extension and a new kayak launch. As of early June, the completion of this project has been delayed, but it should be advertised as complete sometime in July.

Q: What else has kept city crews busy in the Mandarin area lately?

A: At Burnett Park, various roofs at park buildings have been replaced. At Fire Station 51, there has been indoor air quality testing and various repairs, to include shelving, paint and tilework. The Mandarin Library has had a chiller replacement and the Palmetto Leaves Concession Lift is permitted and ready for use. At the South Mandarin Library, ADA improvements have taken place, as well as canopy rust removal and painting, waterproofing and window glazing, and chiller replacement.

Q: What is the latest on the Mandarin Senior Center?

A: Renovations are completed, but the center is not yet open. The city is working through its phased reopening and a reopening date has not yet been decided.

Q: What is the best way for our readers to contact you?

A: Community members can email me at MBoylan@coj.net or call (904) 255-5206.

News from the Duval County School District

Gov. Ron DeSantis's June 11 announcement about opening schools in the fall is a key factor in Duval County Public Schools' plan for the new school year beginning Aug. 10.

"We anticipated the state would recommend reopening schools and returning to the classroom, and the governor's announcement enables us to focus on that scenario," said Superintendent Dr. Diana Greene.

While the governor has signaled the desire to reopen schools, he also shared that school districts have the responsibility of reopening with appropriate health and safety precautions to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 spread.

The school district will share more about the procedures and school attendance options for next school year before the July 4 holiday.

While the district evaluates school options for 2020 – 21, graduation dates for last year's seniors have now been set. A May survey of Duval's 2020 graduates overwhelmingly supported postponing traditional ceremonies that could not be held due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Mandarin High School's ceremony is now scheduled for July 23 at 9 a.m. in the school's stadium. See the district's website for information on protocols that will be in place to reduce the risk of Covid-19 spread.

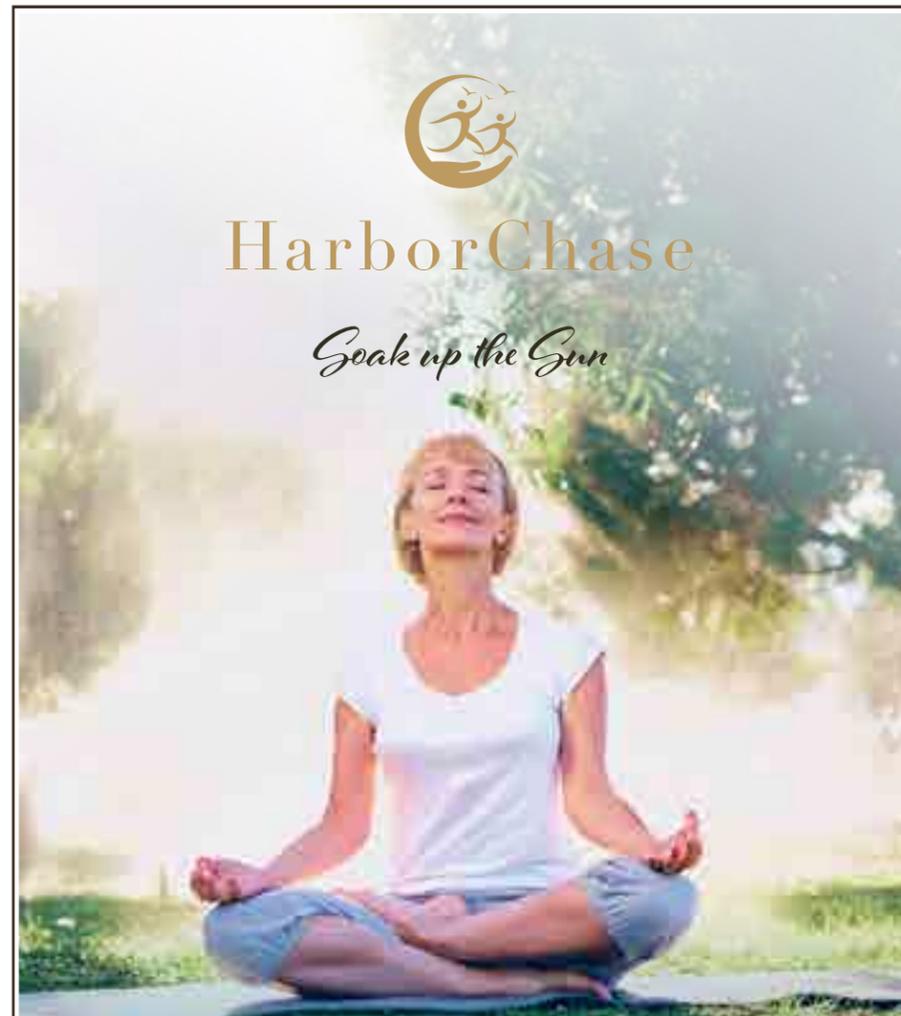
One area of school life is already back in play. Summer conditioning for athletics began June 15. This is the first of a three-phase plan moving toward normal practices.

The district's phased plan was developed in consultation with the Jacksonville Sports Medicine Program, a sports-medicine partner to the district. The current phase focuses only on conditioning with outdoor activities. The plan includes safety procedures such as social distancing of participants. Phase two will add weightlifting with additional precautions to reduce the risk of Covid-19 spread.

When school does return in August, the district will open with two fewer schools. The school board voted on June 16 to close two small schools on the Northside with highly deteriorated facilities. The students will move into nearby schools that have excess capacity. A third consolidation will occur for the 2021 – 22 year.

These consolidations represent the first steps in implementing the district's master facility plan. The plan also includes safety and security upgrades at all schools, eliminating most portables, and meeting deferred maintenance needs at all schools. Duval County's public school buildings are the oldest of any district in Florida. The school board is asking voters to fund the plan with a half-penny referendum which will be on the November ballot.

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Local authors cont. from pg. 1

theme and is set in Mandarin. It even has a scene set at County Dock.

"I like to weave a fun fictional story around history and vice-versa," Wood said. "I know my young audience and try not to overwhelm them with the history."

Wood said she fell in love with writing in fourth grade while working on a poetry project. She said she discovered the "magic of words." She took creative writing classes in college and eventually became a seventh grade teacher where, like Gaslin, she was responsible for getting some of her students to read up to grade level. She moved on to a corporate job and was ultimately laid off as the result of corporate downsizing.

"I had always said, 'one of these days' I'll write a book," Wood said. "After the downsizing, I realized that maybe today is that day."

She decided to self publish her books and created Florida Kids Press. She had help from her husband and son, but eventually had to learn all about printing, distribution, marketing and social media — the skills that many writers who use a traditional publishing company don't really need to learn.

Wood recommended that aspiring writers "do their homework!" She suggested calling other authors and attending book events like the Jax Book Fest and the Amelia Island Book Festival. Wood also made note of two different groups for would be authors to check out: a writers' group, such as the Florida Writers Association (<https://floridawriters.net/>) and a publishers' group, the Florida Authors and Publishers Association (<https://myfapa.org/>), which focuses more on the publishing aspect. Both organizations have local groups.

FYI Contact Numbers

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“Drain The Oceans” came to Mandarin

By Sandy Arpen
mail@floridanewsline.com

Members of the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society were so excited in the spring of 2019 when a call was received from a production company in London, asking if they could help with an episode of the National Geographic TV series “Drain the Oceans.” As described by National Geographic, the series “dives deep into the unknown. A truly original series that takes underwater adventure and earth science illustration into a whole new era.” An episode in Season 3 was to include the Union steamship “Maple Leaf” as part of a Civil War segment.

Later in the summer, a film crew came and spent three days in Mandarin — one inside the Mandarin Museum, one outside in the Walter Jones Historical Park and in the Webb/Jones Farmhouse, and another on the water directly over the ship.

None of this would have happened without Dr. Keith Holland. We would know very little about the Union steamship buried in the mud at Mandarin Point — and maybe wouldn’t even be talking about it all. Holland actually found the ship and excavated the Civil War artifacts with the help of the St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions team of divers. It was because of their work and persistence in the 1980s and ‘90s that we have artifacts to show and stories to share today, 156 years since the ship went down. Holland was featured in the National Geographic episode. Also featured was Jacksonville resident and maritime archaeologist James Delgado, who is a regular series expert.

The episode, “Drain Raiders of the Civil War,” premiered in the United States on June 9, but is now available for TV viewing in 170 countries and by streaming on the National Geographic Channel at <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/tv/shows/drain-the-oceans>.

It was very interesting to see what the ship wreckage might now look like without eight feet of mud and 25 feet of black water over it. The program also reinforced the fact that the wreckage holds the larg-



Photo courtesy Mandarin Museum & Historical Society
Model of the “Maple Leaf” at Mandarin Museum.

est collection of Civil War artifacts ever — and included a dramatic recreation of what the explosion and sinking must have looked like.

The Mandarin Museum & Historical Society has always had a special interest in the “Maple Leaf” because a past-president of the organization, Jim Towart, served as the historian of the St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions team and was a co-author (with Keith Holland and Chief Diver Lee Manley) of the only book written about “Maple Leaf.” Since 2014, the 150th anniversary of the sinking by Clay County Confederates, there has been even greater interest in this Civil War connection to Mandarin. That is why the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society decided to build a new exhibit hall to the existing museum building to provide a designated and special space for the “Maple Leaf” stories to be told. Unfortunately, the construction and renovation of all exhibits inside the museum have caused it to be closed until all work is completed this fall. In the meantime, there are plenty of very interesting links to “Maple Leaf” material at www.mandarinmuseum.net/mandarin-history/maple-leaf.

Note: The artifacts seen in the National Geographic film and in the museum were recovered by the St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions team, but were given to the State of Florida Division of Historical Resources in 1994. Museums like Mandarin Museum & Historical Society and MOSH may borrow them for public display.

Visit www.mandarinmuseum.net for more information about Mandarin’s history and museum schedules.

Senior living facility has three winners in nationwide heroes sweepstakes

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

On May 6, 2020, JetBlue announced a sweepstakes promotion to give a pair of free tickets to 100,000 healthcare workers as thanks for their work during the coronavirus pandemic. River Garden Dining Services Manager Dan Uhl jumped at the chance to nominate River Garden staff for the prize. As of June 1, three winners from River Garden have been named. Following are portions of their nominations:

“Tshey works at a long term care nursing home for 165 residents. She works tirelessly caring for our residents even though her own husband is compromised with respiratory health problems.”

“Yvonne is a cook in a long term care facility for approximately 165 elderly residents. She works hard to provide nourishment for elderly. She has worked for us for 20+ years. She herself is in her 60s and risks her own health to provide for others.”

“Liz, a mother of four, is a cook at a long term care assisted living facility. She is an immigrant who works hard every day

to provide nourishing meals for our 165 residents that live full time at our facility. She never misses a day of work and always shows up with a smile ready to help our team and residents.”

The JetBlue Healthcare Heroes Sweepstakes’ first 10,000 prizes were given to workers at Mount Sinai Health system and NYC Health + Hospitals, one of the hardest hit areas for the virus. Other nominations received

May 7 – 15 were to be included in a random drawing May 18 – July 1; these 90,000 winners would each receive two round-trip travel certificates, valid for travel through 2021.

JetBlue’s Joanna Ger-

aghty said in a statement, “We applaud the healthcare workers who are helping us get through this challenging time and inspiring humanity along the way. This is an opportunity for us to fly it forward and show our appreciation for the heroic efforts of medical professionals, first responders and public servants – not just in New York but around the country as well.”



Photo courtesy River Garden
Elizabeth Lacuku and Dan Uhl celebrate the win!

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Briefs

American Legion awards Law and Order honors

On June 11, 2020, American Legion Mandarin "Fallen Heroes" Post 372 held its annual Law and Order Awards, recognizing Jacksonville Sheriff's Office Police Officer of the Year and the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department Firefighter of the Year.

The legion's Police Officer of the Year was presented to Officer Gordon Titcomb for outstanding sustained patrol and investigative work resulting in closure of many cases and the recovery of stolen property.

The Firefighter of the Year was presented to Engineer Vincent Harper. Engineer Harper, while operating the rescue unit with his partner in the back with a patient, observed that the patient was struggling with the medic and assaulting the medic with a box cutter. The medic was severely stabbed. Engineer Harper stopped the rescue unit, ran to the back and subdued the assailant, while receiving stabbing injuries himself. Due to Engineer Harper's swift and heroic reaction, he was credited with saving the life of his partner.

Watch the weather, wait to water this summer

Summer afternoon showers and tropical rainfall mean that Mother Nature may be able to handle much of your lawn sprinkling over the next few months, saving water and your money. That's why the St. Johns River Water Management District's summertime water

conservation message is "Watch the weather. Wait to water."

Florida's rainy season extends from May through October, typically accounting for up to 70 percent of our annual rainfall totals. The period from June to September includes the wettest months, with most rainfall monitoring stations in the district typically receiving five to seven inches of rain during each of these months, compared to two to three-and-a-half inches in the winter and spring.

Since these are average patterns, it is best to pay attention to your local conditions — watch the weather, wait to water.

Here are some tips for taking advantage of Florida's summer rains:

- Check your forecast to see if rain is on the way. A weather app is an easy and convenient way to stay up to date.
- Use a rain gauge to determine how much rain your yard has gotten. During June through September, yards need no more than one-half to three-quarters of an inch of water every two to three days.
- If you use an irrigation system, know your watering days. District watering restrictions allow enough water to maintain healthy landscapes year-round. The mandatory restrictions specify the hours when watering may occur, the amount of water that may be applied, and the days when watering may occur for residential and nonresidential locations. Visit www.sjrwmd.com/wateringrestrictions/ to learn your days.

• You can use the "catch can" method to determine how much water to apply to your landscape and to see if you are watering uniformly. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F09sRfYmdM)

• Make sure your gutter downspouts are directed into landscaped areas or lawn. Consider installing a rain barrel to capture excess rainwater.

• Decrease watering time during cool or humid conditions and skip a scheduled watering after a moderate rainfall.

• Check to see if your rain sensor is working and the controller is not in bypass mode — that way, your system won't run if there has been recent rain. Many people aren't aware that rain sensors are required on all automatic irrigation systems.

Visit the Water Less campaign online at www.WaterLessFlorida.com for more information.

Junior Achievement of North Florida's Golden Ticket Raffle now underway

Junior Achievement of North Florida has Jacksonville's Golden Ticket and this year's theme is geared toward supporting local businesses. The fundraising raffle to benefit the nonprofit offers donors a chance to win some great gift cards, gift certificates and vouchers to local businesses like The Bearded Pig, V Pizza, Clara's Tidbits, Wicked Barley Brewing Company and more. Raffle tickets can be purchased now through July 22 by texting JANFL to 50155 or email Tiffany Mackey Guthrie at tiffany@janfl.org.

The Golden Ticket was originally the ultimate entertainment package with tickets to sports games, concerts and other events but the COVID-19 pandemic forced JA of North Florida to change this year's theme. The Support Local theme was created to not only raise money for the nonprofit but also to help bring people into local businesses.

"This pandemic has forced us all to make some changes and with no sporting events or concerts to go to, we found a different way to try and bring in donations to our nonprofit while also helping out local businesses that support us," said Steve St. Amand, president of JA of North Florida. "All of the money

we raise will go directly to help bring JA programs to students on the First Coast to help prepare them for the future."

A suggested donation of \$20 will provide one chance to be the winner of the Golden Ticket, a suggested \$50 donation will get three tickets and for \$100 donors will get seven tickets for the Support Local Golden Ticket raffle. Donors must be 18 or older to enter. Only 1,000 tickets will be available.

The winner will be drawn via Facebook live on July 23 on the Junior Achievement of North Florida's Facebook page at facebook.com/JAofNorthFlorida/. For more information, contact Tiffany Mackey Guthrie at tiffany@janfl.org or call (904) 398-9944 ext. 230.

Walk Your Way to Defeat ALS fundraiser announced

On Saturday, Aug. 1, The ALS Association Florida Chapter is inviting the Jacksonville community to participate in a new, one-of-a-kind Walk Your Way experience, presented by the Jacksonville Jaguars and Duval Motor Company, to help support ALS patients in the state while also fighting back to defeat the disease.

Walk Your Way to Defeat ALS will kick off with live opening ceremonies from 10 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. At the conclusion of the ceremonies, participants will be asked to begin their personal walks with their family, friends or coworkers. The route and format will be completely up to the team to decide. Some may choose to take a neighborly walk around the block/park; others might walk inside their homes or in their backyard; or, some could choose to decorate their car and organize a car parade that can wind throughout their subdivision. The design and style will be as unique to all teams that sign up. At the end of the event, all teams will gather for brief, live closing ceremonies at 11:30 a.m.

Interested participants can register by contacting Michelle Decker at mdecker@alsaff.org or (888) 257-1717 x130.

The Walk Your Way experience was designed to keep the ALS community safe, while still allowing them the opportunity to join the fight to defeat ALS.

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Nutrition Check

4th of July Food Fun!

By Kristen Hicks-Roof, Ph.D., RDN, LDN; Marissa Schwam, B.S.
mail@floridanewsline.com

Phytochemicals are naturally occurring plant chemicals that help give plants their color, flavor, and odor. (AICR) Phytochemicals are found in whole foods such as fruits and vegetables. Supplements are good for additional vitamin supplementation, but they do not provide as many health benefits as food itself. These phytochemicals have been shown to provide our bodies with numerous benefits such as helping us fight off colds, improving skin health, and building strong bones. Below are some red, white, and blue sources of these phytochemicals— in honor of the 4th of July.

Red

Tomatoes, red grapes, apples, cranberries, red peppers, watermelon, strawberries, and raspberries. Fresh fruit is a refreshing summer snack. Get your family together and take a trip strawberry or cherry picking. These fruits and vegetables have the phytochemicals “lycopene” and “anthocyanin.” Did you know... anthocyanins have been shown to help improve vision and neurological health? Get some of these so you can see the fireworks better this 4th of July!

White

Some white vegetables that also have anthocyanins are onions, mushrooms, garlic, and cauliflower. Did you know that garlic contains antibacterial properties? This means that it can help keep

our immune system strong! This 4th of July, try adding sautéed onions or garlic to your mashed potatoes for some extra flavor and nutrients. You could also add frozen cauliflower to smoothies to pump up the phytochemical power so you can stay strong throughout the summer.

Blue

Phytochemicals such as anthocyanins and flavonoids are in blue fruits and vegetables such as blueberries, eggplant, plums, figs and raisins. Blueberries have many benefits such as making our skin healthy and making our bones strong. They have even been shown to help support our mental health. Blue fruits can be great additions in smoothies and can also be a delicious topping to a cup of oatmeal, cereal or yogurt.

With all of the benefits phytochemicals may provide, it would be silly to not incorporate them into our dietary pattern. This 4th of July, show off your phytochemical knowledge and bring a fruit and vegetable platter to your family picnic. Work to make healthier decisions in your life such as including phytochemicals in your dietary patterns.

Kristen K. Hicks-Roof Ph.D., RDN, LDN is an assistant professor in the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Brooks College of Health, University of North Florida.

The Pantry Raiders

Berry bountiful muffins

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Blueberries are tiny powerhouses of nutrition and eating more of them can be an easy way to get the antioxidants necessary to fend off many different diseases. While blueberries are nutritional allies, they also happen to taste delicious, whether it's all on their own or mixed into various cereals or baked goods. This take on muffins pairs blueberries with whole grains and chips for a go-to breakfast or any-time-of-day snack. Enjoy “Blueberry Bran Chocolate Chip Muffins” from “The Brain Boosting Diet” (Whitecap) by Norene Gilletz and Edward Wein, PhD. This make-ahead batter yields a big batch, but leftover batter can be refrigerated up to three weeks, so feel free to bake up as many or as few muffins as you'd like.

Blueberry Bran Chocolate Chip Muffins

(Makes 30 muffins)



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
Blueberry Bran Chocolate Chip Muffins

- 3 cups all-bran cereal
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 cup hot tea
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tbsp. lemon juice, plus enough milk (skim or 1%) to equal 2 cups
- 1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup molasses or honey
- 2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- Zest of 1 orange
- 1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup chocolate chips (semisweet or sugar-free)

1. In a very large mixing bowl, combine bran with oil and yogurt. Pour hot tea over the mixture and let stand for 5 minutes. Stir well. Add eggs, milk mixture, brown sugar, and molasses. Stir until combined. Add flour, cinnamon, baking soda, and baking powder. Mix until blended. Stir in orange zest, blueberries, and chocolate chips, just until combined.

Either let batter stand for 30 minutes, until thickened, or cover and refrigerate for up to three weeks. Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray compartments of a muffin pan (or muffin pans) with nonstick spray. Scoop batter into the muffin pan(s), filling each compartment about two-thirds full. Bake 22 to 25 minutes, or until tops spring back when lightly touched.

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Photos courtesy ElderSource

Seniors receive care packages

ElderSource, a nonprofit organization that provides resources and support for seniors and caregivers in Northeast Florida, has received funding from multiple organizations used to purchase food and supplies for seniors. Just in the month of May alone, more than 1,000 care packages were delivered. ElderSource received significant funding from the First Coast Relief Fund and the Jim Moran Foundation, and additional support from Farm Share, Humana, Wells Fargo, United Way of Northeast Florida, and Florida Blue. All these donations have helped provide food, supplies and comfort for seniors and their caregivers. Call the ElderSource HelpLine at 904-391-6699 for information and assistance.

News from the Friends of South Mandarin Library

By Leah Sue Giddings
mail@floridanewsline.com

Of all the things missing from our lives now, the library is high on my list. But we have some good news for readers! Plans are for our library to reopen in mid-July. Won't it be great to browse the stacks and look for great reads? In the meantime, Mandarin South will have curbside service.

The Friends of South Mandarin Library is pleased to fund the summer reading program again. We are happy to be a part of introducing young readers to the library.

What a great place our library is. We have such a beautiful setting with

great shade trees and walking space. Even during the shutdown, work goes forward on the park behind Mandarin South. Our library is a lighthouse of learning full of resources.

The Friends continue to collect donated books in anticipation of a sale later in the year. Our sales fund improvements and ongoing programs such as summer reading. Plan to become a part of the Friends of South Mandarin Library. When the library reopens, our meetings will resume on the second Thursday of each month at 2 p.m. in the library.

Mandarin remembers artist Lucinda Halsema

By Sandy Arpen
mail@floridanewsline.com

Artist Lucinda Halsema helps us remember what Mandarin used to look like. She did that through her beautiful pen and ink drawings of Mandarin's historic homes and places, including the Church of Our Saviour, the Mandarin Community Club, the old Store and Post Office and the live oaked canopy of Mandarin Road. Sadly, she passed away at the age of 77 on May 26, 2020.



Photo courtesy Mandarin Museum & Historical Society
Mandarin artist Lucinda Halsema.

Lucinda was born in Pensacola but raised in Jacksonville close to Lee High School, her alma mater. She wasn't into art at that time, according to her daughter Cindi, and she didn't really start drawing as a profession until the late 1970s. She took some classes on various art forms like watercolor and etching, but really best liked doing pen and ink renderings that were very detailed. She did them in black and white, but also hand-colored them. Since she lived in Mandarin and loved the history of the area, she decided in the 1980s to do a series of drawings of the historic structures in the area. These drawings have been very popular for decades as prints, and they are still available in the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society Gift Shop.

prolific in documenting Mandarin's history, buildings and homes — she had a huge body of work related to Mandarin.”

Lucinda also produced a beautifully illustrated book for the Jacksonville Symphony that was written for children to learn about different instruments. Additionally, she served the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour in a variety of roles over many years' time as a congregant there.

According to Cindi, “the two things that brought my mother the most joy in her life were making her art and the Episcopal Church.”

In recent years Lucinda would just show up at the Mandarin Museum

As all artists do, Lucinda sold her work at various galleries over the years, but also did quite a lot of commission work — being hired to draw homes of private citizens for their personal collections. She also taught art, starting with offering classes out of her garage in Mandarin. Hundreds of young people have taken classes from her over the years through these private classes as well as her work at St. Joseph's School and as a substitute around the county. She later obtained a degree in graphic design and worked as a paralegal.



Lucinda Halsema's pen and ink drawing of the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour.

on occasion to check on her print inventory and to sit in a front porch rocker. She would talk with folks and tell stories about her life in Mandarin and all the people she knew — which were many. She said she dreamed of doing an illustrated book for the museum about “all the

little critters in the park” so the children could learn about backyard animal life and nature. We know it would have been a great book.

Talented artist and beloved Mandarin character, Lucinda Halsema — you will be greatly missed in this community.

At the request of the family, donations may be made to the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society in Lucinda's memory, at PO Box 23601, Jacksonville 32241 or at www.mandarinmuseum.net/join/donations.

Sandy Arpen is a volunteer with the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society. Visit www.mandarinmuseum.net for more information about Mandarin's history.

Service was also an important part of Lucinda's life. She volunteered at the Mandarin Community Club and served as president in 1984. Emily Lisska, board member of the Mandarin Community Club, remembers Lucinda's time there fondly and said, “Her interest was especially in the Mandarin Art Festival and she always had a table of her work, including special pieces each year that honored that year's festival and raised money for the Club. She was

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Get to Know . . .

Rebecca Day and Jen Day Thompson

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com



Photo courtesy Charleen Morency
Photo courtesy Rebecca Day

Sisters Rebecca Day and Jen Day Thompson grew up in a musical family, so it's really no surprise that making music has become not only a passion for them, but also a career. Performing locally and regionally since 2013 as the Crazy Daysies (suggested by their father, the name reflects a play on their last name), they consider themselves first and foremost as singer songwriters. The sisters were born in South Carolina and moved to Jacksonville due to their father's job relocation. Jen was already in college, attending the University of South Carolina; she transferred to the University of North Florida where she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's in criminology. She is married to David Thompson and they share two small children. Rebecca was in middle school when the family moved to Jacksonville; she attended one year at Mandarin Middle School and then graduated from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts, where she majored in creative writing. She has an associate's degree in art from Florida State College at Jacksonville. She is married to Joshua Knight and they share a rambunctious miniature schnauzer named Rusty. Both sisters, as well as their parents, live in Mandarin. Rebecca said that Mandarin is "home" and they love living here.

olina held an assembly to introduce us to all the different instruments. I heard the sound of the viola and was drawn to it. I played in the orchestra in middle school and high school and performed in the All State orchestra in South Carolina. But when we moved to Mandarin and I was in college, I got away from music and didn't play regularly for 11 years. I would occasionally take out my viola just to assure myself that I could still play! When Rebecca started her acoustic shows, she invited me to play with her and we've been together ever since.

Rebecca: I always knew I wanted to write and play music. I began by playing the guitar and became serious about it and songwriting after a lengthy illness when I was 12. Songwriting became therapy for me. When I was 16, I earned second place in a songwriting competition at Douglas Anderson. I was the only non-music major to place. I was paid \$150 and this was the first time I was paid for my music. After finishing my associates degree at FSCJ, I went to just one (very long!) day at the University of North Florida and I could tell it wasn't for me. I came home and told my mom that I wanted to be a musician and she supported me. Within two weeks I had booked my first paid gig at a wine bar in 2011 and I never looked back. I performed two years as a solo artist and then Jen joined me.

Q: Describe the Crazy Daysies' style of music.

Rebecca: I called it "swampy." Our major influence is the singer-songwriter kind of country music as well as blues along with poetic influences in our lyrics, because our mom is a poet.

Q: How do you write songs?

Rebecca: Since I play the guitar, I write lyrics and chord progressions kind of together. Then I'll pass it along to Jen, who will add her viola piece and melodies.

Jen: I often have a general melody in my head and then it seems that Rebecca can make it happen! It's really fun to write together. Some of our favorite memories are spending the day together, maybe at the pool, and we end up with a couple of new songs.

Q: What is your favorite thing about performing together?

Rebecca: The fact that we are sisters, we mentally operate differently and that makes us work really well together. There's such a level of trust. We've always been very close. I think being able to experience performing music as sisters is a really unique experience.

Jen: I agree! For me, the first thing that I liked about performing was it allowed me to be at home with my children and still earn money. But it has evolved to a pride of being a part of this family effort.

The Crazy Daysies perform regularly at local bars and restaurants that have an emphasis on live music, as well as at various local festivals. They also perform live on Facebook each Thursday at 6:30 p.m., "Live from Ja'Ville." Visit www.thecrazydaysies.com for more information.

Blood drive cont. from pg. 1

The donation process is simple, efficient and lasts about 45 – 60 minutes. A typical donation process includes registration (donor presents a photo ID, reads the educational material information and completes a questionnaire on a tablet), medical screening and mini physical examination, and the donation itself, which takes between five and 20 minutes. It is advisable for donors to drink plenty of fluids after the donation.

Appointments can be made online at <https://www.oneblood.org/donate-now/>; Sponsor: Mandarin Community Club; Code: 31941 or call 1-888-9Donate or (904) 534-7425.

The oldest civic organization in Jacksonville, the purpose of the Mandarin Community Club is to foster and promote the appreciation, beautification and civic well-being of the Mandarin community and preserve the historic properties of the Mandarin Community Club for the benefit and education of its members, the public and future generations.



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Q: What is your musical background?

Jen: In elementary school, the orchestra from the University of South Car-

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editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

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North Florida Bonsai Club to host beginners workshop

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The North Florida Bonsai Club announces a three-day class on introductory bonsai, to be held on Aug. 3, Aug. 10, and Aug. 17, from 7 p.m. – 10 p.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road.

Each day will focus on a different skill set that will ensure by the end of the class, each participant has a fair understanding of how to maintain, train and grow his or her own bonsai tree. Each workshop seat includes the three day course, bonsai tree and a pot. Partici-

pants will leave with a styled and potted bonsai tree.

Workshop participant seats are \$30 and limited to 15 for this event due to time constraints and limited supply of trees. To register, email North Florida Bonsai Club at Yodasworkshop@aol.com.

For questions or additional information on future events, check North Florida Bonsai Club's website, <http://northfloridabonsai.com/> or contact the club on Facebook: North Florida Bonsai.

Mandarin Garden Club eyes re-opening

By Diana Openbrier
mail@floridanewsline.com



The Mandarin Garden Club's recent plant sale looked a little different than normal, due to the coronavirus.

As with many organizations recently, the Mandarin Garden Club has been mostly shut down. The Extension Office Master Gardeners were told to stop all activities due to the pandemic; however, the gardens have needed to be tended, so member volunteers have stepped up and worked in isolation to weed, water, replant and organize the gardens. The property has been kept in good shape by these volunteer member gardeners. Master Gardeners have just been released to return and will be welcomed.

The board recently met for planning. Distancing, masks, gels, and handwashing are recommended and symptomatic people are to stay home. Some club meetings are being held outside with masks and social distancing.

While the only answer for avoiding Covid-19 is a vaccine, club members are trying to move forward in our new world and hope that someday we can resume normal associations. Until then we are using CDC guidelines. To date we have no known cases and hope this continues.

On May 23 a plant sale was held differently than usual, where members crowd inside the building to share plants. This time plants were grouped outside and people purchased plants with reasonably limited contact, following CDC guidelines. A wide variety of plants came from garden plantings and club members. The community stepped up and bought most of the

plants and greatly helped the club's budget. People loved the inexpensive plants and the expert advice for their gardens.

Building rentals normally provide funds for maintaining the building and grounds and these were cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. The good

turnout and sales at the plant sale were welcome. Gardens are open daily, dawn to dusk, except when the facility is rented.



Mandarin Garden Club volunteers helped out at the plant sale.

The Mandarin Garden Club is planning its famous \$1 Clothing Sale (a few boutique specials cost a bit more) on Aug. 28 – 29. While we do not know what will happen day to day, we are moving forward and will do all we can to stay safe and keep our community safe and beautiful.



Mandarin Garden Club members are following CDC guidelines.

The Mandarin Garden Club has been an important member of the Mandarin community. Since 1945, members have worked to beautify the Mandarin area. The club's building is a popular and economic community activity venue. Demonstration

gardens, open to the public, show off many native and beautiful plants. Educational labels for plants teach about plants for the community and schools. Visit mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

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Gardening

Summer in a time of reflection

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
mail@floridanewsline.com

While the state has been giving some businesses the go-ahead to open, and there are more opportunities for us to participate in outdoor activities, I feel lucky to have gardening to keep me active and safe at the same time.

Our local Master Gardener volunteers are now available to assist the public on a limited basis. As of June 8, there has been a Master Gardener volunteer in the office answering your phone calls from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. The phone number is (904) 255-7450. If you need to go into the office, be sure to call first as visitors are currently required to make an appointment.

Even with minimal outdoor space, it is possible to cultivate a few beautiful pots on a porch or patio. A packet of seeds or small transplants can go a long way to brightening a space and lifting spirits. If you are tempted to try, check out <https://tinyurl.com/y8gwqgux>. Cosmos, blanket flowers, and marigolds all make a colorful show. As with all plants, give them the soil, light, and water they need: put the Right Plant in the Right Place.

With plenty of passion flowers (*Passiflora incarnata*) dotted around my backyard I had wondered why I have never seen any fruit. Just what creatures — or maybe the wind — pollinate this beautiful flower? Well, it didn't take long to discover that it is bumblebees, so maybe I haven't been doing a good job at attracting enough of these useful insects. The solution is to plant more flowers for pollinators: <https://tinyurl.com/ttzw2k>. It is also possible that after the passion flowers are pollinated the fruits simply need more water to develop.

After cutting back a flat-leaved parsley plant that was going to seed, I was delighted to see that the one I left to mature

is hosting three black swallowtail butterfly caterpillars. This illustrates that what is ostensibly past its useful life for us humans has great potential for supporting local wildlife. At the end of summer, birds benefit enormously from flower seeds which they consume to fatten up for the winter. Plants we dead-head during the summer to promote more flowering can be left to produce seed both to feed our birds and maybe supply us with volunteer seedlings to transplant around our yards. A win-win, I think.

As storm Cristobal headed north, we had torrential rain and some localized flooding, and our yards will take time to recover. Lawns may show signs of disease after being inundated, or even just subject to days of heavy rain, so check out this article: <https://tinyurl.com/ybcf7sk3>. It's a good starting point to help you diagnose potential problems.

During a flood, wildlife will head to higher ground and that includes snakes. Hopefully they will be as wary of us as we are of them, and will head to cover away from residences, but it makes sense for us to be vigilant when venturing outside after heavy rain. This article will help you identify any unwanted visitors: <https://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/snakes/north.shtml>. I would stay clear of any snake in my yard and give it time to retreat, but there will be some instances when more detailed advice is needed: https://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/dealing_with_snakes.shtml.

Master Gardener Volunteers receive an online monthly newsletter, The Neighborhood Gardener, from the University of Florida. It's an enjoyable read. For the latest issue, visit <https://tinyurl.com/y7ntd2uo>. If you wish, you can sign up to get the newsletter delivered to your inbox every month. Happy gardening to all.

The importance of safety when swimming in backyard pools

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Backyard pools provide families with ample opportunities for recreation. It's easy to be distracted by all the fun when swimming in a backyard pool, but it is crucial that homeowners take steps to ensure everyone is safe when spending time in the pool.

Establish a barrier: The Consumer Product Safety Commission warns that drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death in children between the ages of one and four in the United States. Pools attract curious children, so maintaining a barrier between the home and the pool is essential. Many municipalities require some sort of fencing around pools or ladders that self-latch or can be closed off to climbing. Locks and alarms on windows and doors that face or provide access to the backyard also can serve as barriers.

Keep play under control: Children and even adults may be swept up in the fun and engage in potentially dangerous behaviors. Pool users should not be allowed to run around the perimeter of an inground pool, as the cement can get slippery when wet and lead to falls that can cause injuries. Exercise caution when using diving boards or diving into pools. It's easy

for divers to hit their heads when diving off a board into a pool due to close proximity of the transition wall in the deep end of the pool or by diving into shallow water. The Red Cross recommends a water depth of 11.5 feet for safe diving and the transition wall should be at least 16.5 feet from the tip of the diving board. However, the standard depth for many pools is 7.5 feet of water and a slope beginning seven feet from the board.

Exercise caution with inflatables: The Good Housekeeping Research Institute found that inflatable pool toys are especially dangerous. Such toys can flip easily, putting children at risk for injury (from striking the sides of the pool) or drowning (especially if the children were ejected into deep water). Inflatables also can prevent access to the surface of the water for submerged swimmers.

Choose a backyard lifeguard: At least one person should be designated as backyard lifeguard when the pool is in use. This person should always direct his or her focus on the pool, counting swimmers and keeping track of who enters and leaves the pool. Safe Kids Worldwide suggests rotating water watchers every 15 minutes.



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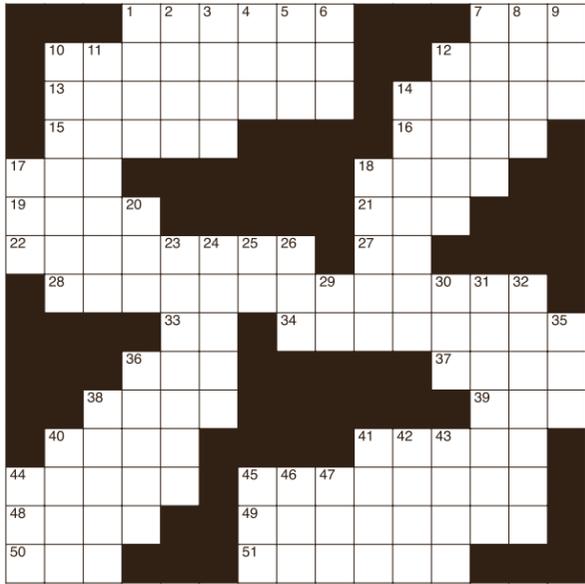
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. African nation
- 7. ___ fi (slang)
- 10. Not arranged according to size
- 12. A demand for a show of hands in a card game
- 13. Having a play of lustrous rain-bowlike colors
- 14. Panama has one
- 15. Taking legal action
- 16. Top of the body
- 17. Part of (abbr.)
- 18. Soul and calypso song
- 19. Murres
- 21. Irish river
- 22. Accepts as true
- 27. The Bay State
- 28. 1950s Hollywood icon
- 33. Blood type

- 34. In a way, became lost
- 36. Large primate
- 37. A spongelike cake leavened with yeast
- 38. Mama ___, folk singer
- 39. Visual metaphor (computers)
- 40. Trim by cutting
- 41. Small group of people
- 44. Pulitzer-winning scientist
- 45. Unique S. American mammal
- 48. Energy, style and enthusiasm
- 49. One who works for you
- 50. Snakelike fish
- 51. Consumers

- 3. Late rocker Allman
- 4. Word element meaning ear
- 5. Amino acid (abbr.)
- 6. Promotions
- 7. Actress Lathan
- 8. Clothed
- 9. Unwell
- 10. Loosen
- 11. Cephalopod mollusks
- 12. ___ at Obdurata: Harmful papal bull
- 14. Musical composition
- 17. Irish bar
- 18. Greek island
- 20. Afflict
- 23. Goes by
- 24. Ambience
- 25. Video game manufacturer
- 26. Surplus Marketing Administration

- 29. Football position
- 30. Electronic musical style (abbr.)
- 31. Furniture with open shelves
- 32. Clouds of gas in outer space
- 35. Indian midwife
- 36. Packers' signal caller
- 38. Secret political clique
- 40. Cry weakly
- 41. Gomer ___, marine
- 42. Academic Bill of Rights
- 43. Negatives
- 44. Hip hop icon Kool Moe ___

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Cylindrical sacs
- 2. Extinct North Germanic language

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

WORDS

- AIR
- BIOAEROSOLS
- BLADES
- CENTRAL
- COIL
- COMFORT
- COMPRESSOR
- CONDENSER
- COOLING
- DAMPER
- DUCTWORK
- EFFICIENCY
- ENERGY
- EVAPORATOR
- FURNACE
- HANDLER
- HUMIDIFIER
- PARTICLES
- REFRIGERANT
- REFRIGERATION
- SYSTEM
- THERMOSTAT
- ZONE

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Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 26 = e)

A. 5 13 13 10 6 11 24

Clue: Heating and _____

B. 16 12 26 17 9 13 2 16 1 16

Clue: Measures temperature

C. 4 26 24 17 26 26

Clue: Unit of temperature measurement

D. 12 13 19 2 26

Clue: Residence

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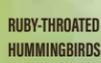
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Fishing

Capt. David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka
mail@floridanewsline.com

Even though we are still early in the summer season, fishing in the St. Johns has been pretty good. Keeper reds have been on docks from San Marco to Switzerland Point. The croaker bite has steadily been on the increase with some decent size to them. Yellowmouth trout, now referred to as Weakfish, are showing a little early, but should increase in numbers and size as the summer increases.



Photo courtesy Andy White
Two-year-old Drew catches his first catfish, which hit a small white jig in May 2020 on Lake Beluthahatchee.



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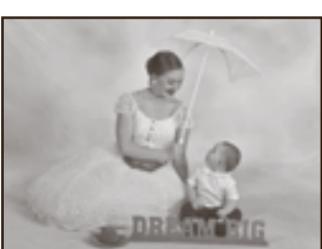
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Travel

Baton Rouge: Louisiana's capital

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was the last destination I visited before the coronavirus lockdown. I went for a conference, and honestly wasn't expecting much from the city. But I was wrong. The revitalized and clean downtown impressed me. I found fantastic interactive museums, an old and new capitol building, and a lively spirit that flowed through the city, likely due to hometown Louisiana State University's (LSU) football team winning the National Championship.

If you're not from Louisiana, you might think New Orleans is the capital — but that's wrong. Baton Rouge, meaning "red stick" in French, earned the honor in 1849. The name dates back to 1699 when French explorers noted a red cypress tree stripped of its bark that marked the boundary between Houma and Bayou Goula tribal hunting grounds. They called the tree "le baton rouge," or red stick.

Over the centuries, Baton Rouge functioned under seven governing bodies: France, England, Spain, Louisiana, the Florida Republic, the Confederate States, and the United States. In the mid-1700s, French-speaking settlers from Acadia, Canada's maritime regions, driven into exile by British forces, came to rural Louisiana. Hence the nickname Cajuns, as descendants of the

Acadians.

During the first half of the 19th Century, the city grew steadily as a result of steamboat trade and transportation, but the Civil War halted economic progress.



Old Capitol dome

In 1909, the Standard Oil Company built a facility, and that lured other petrochemical firms. In recent years, a building boom brought money, improvements, and restored the downtown.

State capitol building tours are always worth the time and effort, but in Baton Rouge, you get two for free. Statehood symbolism abounds from the exterior and interior of the current capitol, constructed in 1932 (although it's often called the new capitol). The Observation Deck on the 27th floor overlooks the city at the height of 350 feet.

What began as the dream of one man — Governor Huey P. Long — became a city symbol. Rising 450-feet, it's the tallest state capitol in the U.S. In 1935, the building that Long built became the site of his assassination, and his grave.

The Old State Capitol looks like a castle and contains the most colorful interior glass dome I've come across. You climb a wrought iron staircase looking up into a blaze of stained glass.

Adjacent to the current capitol building stands the modern Capitol Park Museum brimming with interactive displays that tell the Louisiana story. Trust me, this museum is not outdated or old-style dull.

Since Baton Rouge is a port city, you'll find a lovely riverwalk, perfect for strolling and with more attractions. Visit the USS KIDD historic battleship, a WWII destroyer restored to her 1945 appearance. Families with kids enjoy the permanently docked boat.

The Louisiana Art and Science Museum overlooks the river and includes wonderfully arranged exhibitions and a planetarium. Check out the mummy in the Ancient Egypt collection.

FYI: Many Baton Rouge museums offer free admission on the first Sunday of every month.

Drive over and see Mike the Tiger and



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Current Capitol Building

the Louisiana State University (LSU) Stadium. The school mascot has a good life. Mike's yard encompasses 14,010 square feet plus a night house. He gets the best of care from a personal veterinarian from the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine. Mike's fur glistens in the sunshine like a woman's hair in a shampoo commercial. Animals activists should know that Mike is not sedated, nor taken into the stadium.

Besides museums, there's plenty to do in the area. Nearby you'll find Bayou tours, plantation tours, botanical gardens, boating, fishing, and other sports. And, you can't go to Louisiana without dining on some decadent Cajun dishes.

If you go: A road trip across the Panhandle of Florida will take eight and a half hours to Baton Rouge. VisitBatonRouge.com

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

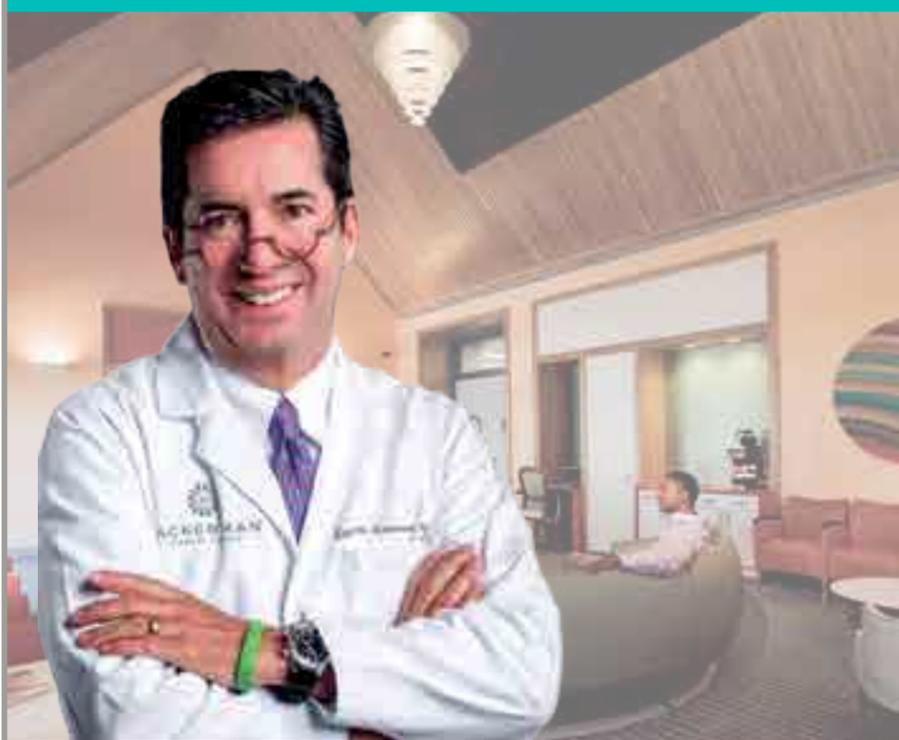


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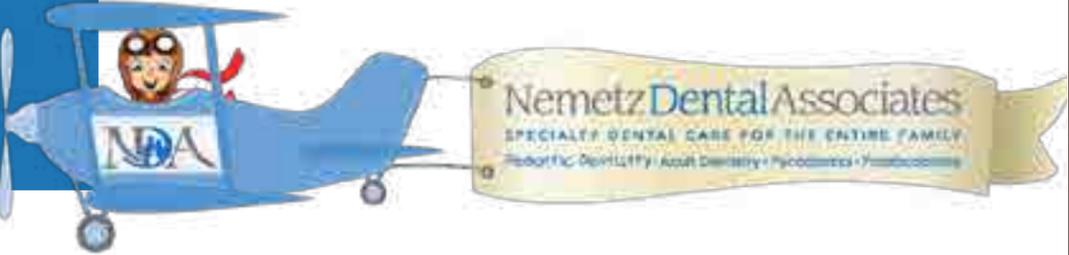
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