



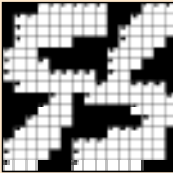
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Photo courtesy James Griffith

Two brother Knights with the new walk-in commercial freezer at the Mandarin Food Bank.

Knights of Columbus donates freezer to Mandarin Food Bank

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

On May 16, 2023, the Knights of Columbus St. Johns River Council 10850 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church donated a new commercial freezer to the Mandarin Food Bank. The freezer is severely needed, especially during Thanksgiving when each family receives a frozen turkey. More than 400 turkeys were provided during the 2022 holiday season.

The food bank's mission is to provide emergency food and clothing to those in need in the Mandarin community. Volunteers operate the entire ministry through their time, skills, and donations. Each Thanks-

Knights cont. on pg. 9

Mandarin Garden Club holds year-end meeting; presents Community Beautification Award

By Joann Butler
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Mandarin Garden Club held its general meeting on May 25. It was a great year of reflection on all the tasks and events that had taken place during the past year.

An Honorary Membership is sometimes given to a non-member who is recognized for outstanding and extraordinary contributions to the club. This year was the 18th time an Honorary Membership was presented — to Earl Keller, a Master Gardener since 1991, for his specialty of vegetable gardening. He has been providing gardening knowledge to members and nonmembers for 31 years.

Life members are chosen because of their outstanding service to their circle and to the club. This year the Life Member Awards were given to Juliet Johnson, Cherokee Rose Circle; Janine Smith, Dogwood Circle; and Christine Richards, Magnolia Circle.

This year was the 14th time that the



Photo courtesy Joann Butler

The Community Beautification Award was presented to the Winchester family: Robyn Freedman of the Mandarin Garden Club, Dr. Rod Winchester, Jason Winchester, Janice Winchester. and Dr. Eric Winchester.

Community Beautification Award was presented to a local business or organization whose property reflects an effort to maintain and preserve the natural beauty of the Mandarin community. The Julington Creek Animal Hospital at 12075 San Jose Blvd. has preserved the

natural beauty of the Mandarin area for almost 50 years. They have nine acres of native trails behind the animal hospital building. The Mandarin Garden Club was honored to present this year's Com-

Mandarin Garden cont. on pg. 9

Mandarin Rotary Club raises \$50,000 for local charities

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

On April 29, the Mandarin Rotary Club held its second annual Run to Feed the Hungry, in which 416 runners participated. The event raised more than \$50,000 for the Mandarin Food Bank and the Daily Bread Food Pantry at the Mandarin Presbyterian Church, as well as for multiple additional local charities. The event was expertly organized by Club President Marc Hassan and Doug Alred of the First Place Sports company.

The winner of the female

division of the 5K race was Katherine Nelson with a time of 20:24. The overall winner was Justin Holstein, with a time of 18:19.

The Rotary Club of Mandarin is dedicated to the service of others, with the motto of "Service Above Self." The club meets for breakfast and fellowship every Tuesday morning at 7:30 a.m. at the Ramada Inn on Hartley Road in Mandarin. Email membership director Michael Sullivan at michaels@coj.net or visit the club's website, www.mandarinrotary.org, for more information.




Photo courtesy Steve Gallagher

The second annual Run to Feed the Hungry was hosted by the Mandarin Rotary Club.

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Peripheral Neuropathy Breakthrough!

*"My feet feel like they're on fire."
"Each step feels like I'm walking through mud."
"I live in constant fear that I'll fall."
"I can't sleep, my hands and feet tingle all night."*

What do all of these people have in common? They suffer from **peripheral neuropathy**. It's estimated that more than 20 million people in the United States have peripheral neuropathy. Unfortunately this figure may be significantly higher as the disease is often misdiagnosed because of its wide array of symptoms.

Dr. Jann Turpin of Riverplace Acupuncture Integrative Health in Jacksonville shares this belief. "I've been treating neuropathy, in all its various forms, for over one decade and so often my patients come to me because of the symptoms, not because of the diagnosis. They saw one of my newspaper ads, or read the testimonial of another patient, or spoke to another patient and said to themselves, 'hey, I feel the same thing'."

Lisa B. testified to this. "Pain doesn't wake me at night anymore and I can walk as much as I want to all day without pain. I'm going to start exercising on the treadmill, for the first time in years. These are things I couldn't do before seeing Dr. Jann and getting acupuncture!"

Those diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy often face a very grim reality; Western medicine declares that there is no solution while most alternative therapies carry large price tags and offer little to no resolve. Which is why Dr. Turpin and the staff at Riverplace Acupuncture pride themselves on being 'the last resort with the best results'.

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves and this damage is commonly caused by lack of blood flow in the hands and feet. This shortage results in a lack of nutrients; the nerves then begin to degenerate and die which causes pain ranging from discomfort to debilitating. Because neuropathy is a degenerative condition, once the nerves begin to deteriorate they will continue to do so until they are completely expired, leaving those suffering with severe balance issues. "In this case, the absence of pain is not necessarily a good thing," shares Dr. Turpin. "This usually means that your nerves are hanging by a thread."

So how exactly is Dr. Turpin able to reverse the effects of this degenerative disease? "Acupuncture has been used to increase blood flow for thousands of years which helps to get the necessary nutrients to the affected nerves. But the real magic happens when I integrate ATP Resonance BioTherapy™. This is tech that was originally developed by NASA to expedite recovering and healing."

"I just can't say enough about Dr. Jann," Lisa shared through tears of joy. "My husband and I moved here 3 years ago and he's gone to the beach almost every day. I always stayed home because of the pain and discomfort. Yesterday I walked on the beach with him! And next week we're starting ballroom dancing lessons. I am truly living life these days."

By seamlessly blending the ancient science of acupuncture with modern medical solutions, Dr. Turpin has achieved a 90% success rate in reversing the effects of neuropathy. She starts each patient with an initial consultation during

which a sensory exam is performed. "This not only aids in making a proper diagnosis but it helps to define just how much nerve damage has occurred," tells the doctor. "This is important because if a patient has suffered more than 95%, there is little that I can do to help them. I'm familiar with the medical miracle but I know my limits as a practitioner and the limits of my medicine."

When it comes to treating peripheral neuropathy, regardless of its origin, early detection greatly improves your chances of a full recovery.

If you or someone you love is suffering with chronic pain that presents as burning, tingling or 'pins and needles' or you've recently been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy, it's important to know that there are options. There is hope!

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BFF

Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Pierogi!

Breed:
Pomeranian

Favorite Activity:
Play with the garden hose

Favorite Food:
Peanut butter

Favorite Friend:
Bella, our next door neighbor's dog who he loves to flirt with

How Did Your BFF Get Their Name:
We adore pierogis and since the Pom originally came from Poland, it was a perfect fit.

Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answer to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Also tell us you saw the BFF contest in Mandarin NewsLine. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and appear in Mandarin NewsLine! Email editor@floridanewsline.com to enter your pet.

Happy 4th of July!

From your friends at Mandarin NewsLine!

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Answers to our Puzzles
PG 10

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July

Community Calendar

What's Happening in Mandarin

Shuffleboard is played on Tuesdays at 9:30 a.m. at Mandarin Park. The courts are at the park entrance next to the tennis courts. Try to get there a few minutes early for court assignments. Beginners are welcome. Just show up (a few minutes before playing time), unless it rains.

Toast of Jax Toastmasters meets every Saturday, except on holiday weekends, at 7:30 a.m. at Mandarin Lutheran Church, 11900 San Jose Boulevard. Guests are welcome. The meetings can also be attended online at <https://toastofjax.toastmastersclubs.org/>.

Acoustic Jam Session is held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Kids' Building of Trinity Mandarin, located at 2955 Orange Picker Road. This jam is open to everyone and all levels of ability are welcome. Come to play with the group or just sit back and enjoy the music. For more information, contact Burt Coulliette at (904) 302-0423.

Playing HOOKie, a group for those who enjoy knitting, crocheting and looming (with all items donated to charity) meets every Wednesday from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at Maple Street Biscuit Company, 1627 Race Track Road in St. Johns. Visit the group's Facebook page (Playing HOOKie) or email playinghookie2022@gmail.com for more information.

1st: Paint party at Mandarin Museum will be held on July 1 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Come to the museum, located at 11964 Mandarin Road to purchase, paint, and take home a Mandarin Frog (or sea turtle or squirrel). The cost is \$22 (\$24 for a squirrel) and advance registration is required; email info@mandarinmuseum.org to sign up.

8th: Second Saturday Arts and Farmers Market at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. on July 8 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Visit www.facebook.com/SecondSatMarket/ for more information.

8th: The Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society will meet Saturday, July 8 at 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Branch Library, 3330 Kori Road and online via Zoom. Visit www.sgesjax.org or call (904) 778-1000 for more information and the Zoom link.

8th: Southside Multiple Sclerosis group meets on the second Saturday of each month (this month on July 8) at 2 p.m. at the JCA, 8505 San Jose Blvd. Every other month there is a speaker and on alternate months there are group discussions on the current situation with our MS. Call group leader Susan Armstron, (904) 396-1082 for more information.

10th: Square Dancing is offered every Monday night at 6:30 p.m.

at the Mandarin Senior Center, 3848 Hartley Road. The first two sessions are free and then the cost is \$5 per person. Call (904) 255-6750 for more information.

11th: Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet on Tuesday, July 11 at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church in the Loft on the County Dock Road side of the church at 2501 Loretto Road. September's QuiltFest JAX information and volunteer signups will be covered. Wearing masks is optional. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

15th: The historic buildings of the Mandarin Museum, including the 1875 Webb/Jones farmhouse, 1876 Barn, 1898 St. Joseph's Mission Schoolhouse for African-American Children, and Losco Winery log cabin will be open from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on July 15 in Walter Jones Historical Park, 11964 Mandarin Road. Visit www.mandarinmuseum.net or call (904) 268-0784 for more information.

17th: The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. for socializing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, July 17 at the First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. Vicki Zoller will oversee the reveal and vote on this year's submissions for the "Recycled" challenge by members. Sew and Tell is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

22nd: JaxKids Book Club will for a summer storytime series on Saturday, July 22 from 3 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the South Mandarin Branch Library. Join library staff and explore stories with themes based on books in your JaxKids Book Club backpack. Call the library at (904) 255-2665 for more information.

27th: Mandarin Republican Club will meet on Thursday, July 27 at St. Mary's Seafood, 11290 Old St. Augustine Road. Social time begins at 6 p.m. and the meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. First time visitors are welcome.

29th: Adult Drop In: Crochet Basics will be held Saturday, July 29 from 3 p.m. – 4 p.m. at the South Mandarin Branch Library. Teens and adults can drop in to learn about the basic building blocks of this wildly diverse art form, including working in the round, pattern reading, and common materials used. Beginners can learn basic stitches and techniques. More experienced crocheters may bring a project you need help on. Ages 16 and up. All skill levels are welcome. Supplies are limited. Call the library at (904) 255-2665 for more information.

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with Duval County School Board Member Lori Hershey, District 7

Q: Can you give an update on the search for a new superintendent for Duval County Public Schools?

A: On June 13, Andrea Messina, CEO of the Florida School Boards Association, led the school board in a workshop detailing, start to finish, the superintendent search process. For Board Member Jones and myself, this will be our fourth superintendent search, but the first for all the other board members (except for appointing Dr. Kriznar as interim superintendent). This will likely be a national search. The whole process should take around six months and we expect to have someone in place in early 2024.

Q: What's the latest on the relocation of the school district offices away from the St. Johns River?

A: On June 20, the school board held a workshop where we finally began this discussion for relocation that I originally introduced to the board in December 2020. We learned of the recommendation of relocation of the board offices to the Florida Blue building located on Riverside Avenue and then the sale of our current building to JTA for their use. Leasing space rather than building something makes the most financial sense for us at this time, based upon the recommendations the board received. At the July 10 school board meeting, the board will vote on this recommendation. If anyone has any questions about

this, please feel free to reach out to me.

Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 7?

A: At the City Council meeting on June 13, the council voted to rename a portion of RG Skinner Parkway, the street in front of Atlantic Coast High School, to Stingray Parkway. The school is the only entity that will be impacted by this change, which was made possible in conjunction with and the approval and support of the Skinner family. The effort was led by Atlantic Coast High School SAC member Ramon Day. Atlantic Coast students as well as Dr. Michael George, school principal, spoke at the council meeting in support. I'd like to thank Council Member Danny Becton for introducing the bill and Council Member Michael Boylan for being a co-sponsor. This was an effort that started in fall 2022 and it's exciting to see the culmination of all the hard work.

Additionally, a historical marker will be placed on school property recognizing the historical significance of the Skinner family in the area. The goal is to have this marker in place by the beginning of the 2023 – 24 school year.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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

Mandarin Women's Club installs new officers before summer hiatus



Photo courtesy Sharon Weed

At its May meeting the Mandarin Women's Club installed the newly-elected board members for 2023 – 2024: Kathy Sisbarro (president), Judy Witte, Susan Pearson, Jo-Ellen Baxley, Patty Blalock, Sue Wojtowicz, Barbara Metallo, and Linda Peacock. After the installation ceremony club members enjoyed learning about the life and career of local TV Anchor Tennika Hughes and celebrated May's Kentucky Derby by sporting their beautiful and outlandish hats. There will be no luncheons in July or August, but active members will still enjoy Bunco, Mah Jongg, Mexican Train, and other events. Visit www.mandarinwomensclub.com for more information and to obtain a Membership Form.

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Prop Club supports Mandarin Food Bank

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Julington Creek Prop Club is a non-profit organization committed to sharing a passion for boating and supporting fish, wildlife and waterway conservation. Members meet monthly for business meetings, social dinners and events. The December Holiday Boat Parade on Julington Creek, sponsored annually by the Prop Club, has been the club's most anticipated public event for many years. Club members have been supporting other non-profit

organizations for several years and for the third year in a row donated to the Mandarin Food Bank.

The Mandarin Food Bank provides emergency food and clothing to those in need in the Mandarin community. It is entirely run by volunteers and is dependent on donations. The food bank and clothes closet are open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Donations during the summer hiatus are particularly needed at this time so any help is greatly appreciated.



Photo courtesy Bill Flynn

Julington Creek Prop Club officers Sally Flynn (Secretary), Bill Flynn (Commodore) and Susan Kirkpatrick (Treasurer) present a donation check to Bonnie McNulty, Mandarin Food Bank Co-Director.

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Q&A

with Jacksonville City Council Member Michael Boylan, District 6

Q: What is the latest on the County Dock/Loretto Road rezoning request?

A: The applicant has decided to defer any additional effort to move forward with the rezoning until they have addressed the concerns of neighbors expressed at the community meeting. There is presently a group of citizens working with the applicant at the time. The representative for the applicant advised me that it will be some weeks before they will be refileing the revised application.

Q: What is going to be built at the site of the old Shell gas station on the corner of Loretto Road and San Jose Boulevard?

A: A demolition permit was pulled for this property, but no other permits or Civil Plans have been submitted at this time. Since anything built here would be new construction, the property would be required to submit for Civil Plan Review (10-Set) before development of the property could occur. My office will be aware when this happens.

Q: Is there an update on the Livingston Road and Reed Avenue applications [as of interview date of June 16]?

A: For Livingston Road, the agent has requested another deferral and so this will be open-continue to the July 18 Land Use and Zoning Committee, at 5 p.m. in Council Chambers.

The Reed Avenue rezoning application is scheduled to be taken up by the City Council's Land Use and Zoning Committee at its meeting on Wednesday, June 21 and then, if passed, by the full City Council on June 27. A nuance of the Reed Avenue application is that as of July 1, this project will be part of District 5. It is my understanding that newly elected Council Member Joe Carlucci has met with the applicant and neighbors and facilitated an acceptable compromise.

Q: Is it true that a Home Depot will be going in where the old K-Mart was located on San Jose Boulevard?

A: The K-Mart location Development Services had a Pre-Application meeting for this property on April 4 to discuss the Home Depot Redevelopment Project. They discussed applying for a rezoning to a PUD to allow for outdoor storage before moving forward with Civil Plan

submittal. The property is currently zoned CCG-1. I recently spoke with a property management director for Ash Properties who told me that no purchase/lease agreement has yet to be executed, but committed to keeping me advised going forward.

Q: What is the status of the Julington Creek Road bridge repairs that have necessitated the detour on Julington Creek Road?

A: The Julington Creek Road closure is scheduled until September. Many have asked about the scope of work and why it would take so long. The City's Chief of Engineering provided us with the following detail:

- Pressure grouting both approach slabs to raise them about 0.75' at the outer edges.
- Milling and resurfacing the approach roadways out to about another 100 feet in both directions.
- Full depth pavement widening along this resurfacing work.
- Replacing guardrails at all four corners to current FDOT Standards.
- Pressure washing bridge railings and repainting.
- Installation of 119 feet of gravity wall along the wetlands at the northwest approach.
- Installation of curb and gutter and drainage inlet with discharge pipe to creek.
- Clean up and restripe improved area with raised pavement markers.
- Install grassed erosion protection on disturbed embankments.

Q: Do you have anything else to share with District 6?

A: The first two weeks of July the City Council will be on hiatus. On Monday, July 17, the new mayor will submit her first budget to the council for consideration.

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.

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National Elementary Honor Society induction held at Crown Point

By Mary Eyster
mail@floridanewsline.com

On May 16, more than 60 students from third through fifth grade were recognized and honored for their academics and leadership achievements. For the first time in Crown Point history, the school held a National Elementary Honor Society ceremony to induct the school’s student leaders who have displayed excellence in academics performance and serve as role models for their peers and communities.

Principal Brett Hartley and the Assistant Principal Dawn Moore welcomed all visitors and announced the requirements needed to become a member of the National Elementary Honor Society. At the start of the ceremony, Crown Point students lit four candles that depicted the four values of the National Elementary Honor Society, including commitment to learning and scholarship, character and responsibility, service, and leadership. Students Olivia Abbot, Regi Lika, Alexandria Kaufman, and Devin Battle helped light the respective four candles.



Dr. Diana Greene and Principal Brett Hartley.



Photo courtesy Mary Eyster

Students stand for the Pledge of Allegiance at the National Elementary Honor Society induction.

The lighting of these candles during the ceremony confirm the importance of taking an active role in their schooling and community. The inductees then recited the membership pledge in the presence of their teachers, families, and special guests, including Superintendent Dr. Diana Greene, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Dana Kriznar, Region Superintendent Dr. Marianne Simon, Executive Director Stephanie Manabat, and Lori Hershey, District 7 school board member.

Bobbi Smith and Barbara Lakin, two third grade teachers, presented the certificates to all third graders. Rachel Nunnally, the fourth grade teacher, awarded the certificates to all the fourth graders, while Dawn Moore presented the fifth graders with their well-deserved certificates. The school held a reception after the ceremony in the school’s cafeteria for all honored students and guests.

Drug Take Back sets record with Spring Collection

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

More than 3,200 pounds of expired, unused and/or unwanted medication is being destroyed after the most successful Drug Take Back in five Northeast Florida Counties. Multiple local non-profits including the Florida Poison Information Center - Jacksonville, Drug Free Duval, Project Opioid, partnered with the city leaders in Jacksonville, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, Jacksonville Beach, local law enforcement, the National Guard and the DEA to collect medication Saturday, April 22, 2023. Neighbors from five counties cleaned out their medicine cabinets and delivered more than 850 pounds more medication than a year prior.

“We are so thankful people in Duval, Clay, St. Johns, Baker and Nassau counties understand the danger medication left around the house poses,” said Florida Poison Information Center-Jacksonville Director Dawn Sollee. “Too many children are getting poisoned with prescription and non- prescription medicine because it is readily available. Getting rid of medication that is no longer needed takes the threat out of the home.”

Duval County collected 900 pounds more than last year. Clay County also saw a big increase collecting 175 pounds more than last spring’s collection.

“We were able to add more drop off locations this year to make it easier for people to safely dispose of medication. We want to thank everyone who came out; you are making a difference,” Mike McCormick Media Relations/ Education Coordinator Florida Poison Information Center-Jacksonville said.

Take Back Sites were so busy in the five-county area, many ran short on boxes to pack up the medication. All the medication is immediately secured at Take Back Sites by sworn law enforcement, weighed and then sent for destruction.


“The bottom line is getting rid of unneeded medications can help prevent drugs from being misused,” said TJ Ward the Director of the JAX Chamber’s Project Opioid initiative, funded by a grant from the Florida Blue Foundation. More than 105,000 people died from drug overdoses in a 12-month period ending in September of 2022 according to the Center for Disease Control. Research has shown as many as 50 percent of the people who became addicted to opioids got the first pill from a friend or family member.

Drug Take Backs are held on the last Saturday of April and October each year. Between events, you can find a location near you to drop off medication for safe disposal by visiting floridapoisoncontrol.org.

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Briefs

Monovision modernized with new implant

Donald Downer, M.D. of Clay Eye Physicians & Surgeons was recently the first physician in North Florida to perform a successful IC-8 Aphthera Lens Implant. This lens is the first of its kind.

Dr. Downer said, “I’m always excited to be on the cutting edge of ophthalmology advancements for cataract surgery, and the Aphthera IC-8 IOL is the first of its kind. I liken this lens to a camera. With the Aphthera IOL, light is naturally focused as it enters the eye and seamlessly expands patients’ range of vision, so they can see objects, people and signage from varying distances.”

The IC-8 lens provides a solution for patients who have monovision, where one eye is used for distance vision and the other for near vision. With this lens, the near eye can now see both near and far distances. This is a significant improvement from traditional monovision, as it allows for better visual acuity at all distances. Patients who previously could not tolerate monovision due to changes in their distance vision can now benefit from this type of vision correction. This is because the IC-8 lens maintains distance vision, which was previously compromised with traditional monovision. Overall, the IC-8 lens provides a promising option for patients who are seeking improved vision correction and quality of life.




Photo courtesy Clay Eye Physicians & Surgeons
Dr. Donald Downer.

“Prior to surgery, we educate patients on the benefits of each lens choice that we offer, so they can make an informed decision that is best for their visual and lifestyle needs,” Dr. Downer said. “We strive to provide patients with as much visual freedom as possible, and the IC-8 increases the opportunities for doing so.”

Visit www.clayeye.com for more information.

AAA opens new retail branch in Mandarin

AAA has announced a new partnership with Walmart and the Auto Club Group opened a new retail branch inside the Walmart Supercenter on San Jose Boulevard on Tuesday, June 27. This will be the first of two AAA-Walmart stores in the United States; the other one is in Michigan.

The 514 square foot branch will be dedicated to AAA’s insurance business, enabling visitors to review their home and auto coverages to ensure they’re prepared for hurricane season.

AAA was founded more than 100 years ago for the purpose of lobbying for driver and passenger rights, fair laws and safer vehicles — all to better promote the love of the open road and the adventure of driving. Since then, AAA has grown to more than 60 million members strong, while providing membership services such as roadside assistance. Additionally, AAA has broadened its horizons to include all types of travel-related services, as well as offer a variety of insurance and financial products and services. Visit <https://member.acg.aaa.com/> for more information.

Save water and money — 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.
- 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.

travel • pantry raiders • gardening
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Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Ted Corby

Ted Corby hails from the Canadian side of Niagara Falls — the best side of the falls, according to him. While still in elementary school, his family moved down to Jacksonville and then back to Canada a couple of times because of his father's job, but by the time Ted was in high school, they were back in Jacksonville and he graduated from Englewood High School. He then joined the US Army and while stationed in Germany was deployed for Operation Desert Storm. A combat veteran, he served one tour with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment before his honorable discharge and return to Jacksonville. He joined the US Postal Service as a letter carrier in 1993 and has been with the Post Office ever since, currently working in employee development in the human resources department. He earned his associate's degree from Florida State College in Jacksonville, a bachelor's in religion from Liberty University, and just completed his master's degree in Art and Biblical Counseling from Luther Rice College and Seminary. He is an ordained pastor of a small home church called Immersion Fellowship and he just released a CD of original music. Passionate about baseball, he has attended numerous MLB Fantasy Baseball camps. He and his wife Maria, Director of Member Relations for First Coast Manufacturers Association, live in Mandarin with their "spoiled rotten" Dachshunds, KC and Sophia. They also have two grown children and two grandchildren.

Q: How did you become interested in

Get to Know ...

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



Photo courtesy Ted Corby
Ted Corby.

music and what instruments do you play?

A: I play the guitar and sing. My brother, Bill Hart, was the guitar director at the Atlanta Institute of Music as well as a Jacksonville Jazz Fest performer. He influenced me to pick up the guitar. I didn't have the same interest in jazz as he did, though; I'm more of a rock/pop guy. As for singing, I was asked by San Jose Baptist Church to help with singing during their services, so I took some voice lessons for confidence.

Our band is The TC Band, named after my songwriting partner, Mark Timblin (the "T") and myself (the "C"). We haven't gigged post-COVID, but we used to play regularly at a pizza place on the Southside. Also of note, Mark and I sang the Canadian National Anthem for the Jacksonville Icemen a few times when they had Canadian opponents.

Q: How would you describe your CD?

A: One of the songs, "Shine," is a Christian song, but the others are a hodge-podge of stories. I would

describe it as "retro pop." Some people tell me we sound like a cool '70s band. This CD is more polished and has the best sonic quality of anything we've done. It's available on Spotify and other streaming platforms.

Q: How did you meet your wife?

A: We met at my birthday party. She is the cousin of one of my good friends and we were having a mutual birthday party. We've been together ever since that night and have now been married for 28 years.

Q: What can you tell us about the MLB Fantasy Baseball Camps?

A: I didn't play baseball growing up, but was always a fan. As an adult, I love to play and attended the Detroit Tigers camp in 2021 and am scheduled to attend a weekend camp at the end of June with the Pittsburgh Pirates as well as a full week camp with the Pirates next year during Spring Training. They treat you like a major league player ... I'll have my own uniform and locker and the opportunity to have former MLB players as coaches. I play outfield and pitch. It's a kid's dream that men do. I actually just started playing baseball a few years ago so I could attend these camps. I wrote a book about my experiences as well as helpful information for others who might be interested in attending a fantasy camp. It's called "Shagging a Dream" and it's available on Amazon.

Q: What do you do in your spare time?

A: Well, I don't have a lot of spare time between work and church. But since I just finished up my master's degree, I now have a little time to play my guitar.

Mandarin Garden cont. from pg. 1

munity Beautification Award to the Julington Creek Animal Hospital and its founding family: Dr. Eric Winchester, his wife Janice and their two sons, Dr. Rod Winchester and Jason Winchester.

Outgoing president Bonnie Myers presented the President's Award jointly to Karen Rowe and Wanda Bosworth for their extraordinary service and effort ensuring that the finances met all state and federal guidelines. New officers were elected and installed for the Executive Committee: Laura Miller, president; Mary Kay Weis, first vice president; Linda Carvalho, second vice president; Deborah Kaplan, treasurer; and Juliet Johnson, recording secretary.

The next event at the club will be the \$1 Clothing and Jewelry Sale on Aug. 4 – 5 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. each day. Circle meetings will resume in September. More information on those meetings will be forthcoming. In the meantime, happy gardening to everyone!

Knights cont. from pg. 1

giving and Christmas, it provides a box of food for a complete holiday meal and serves about 400 families at each event.

Council 10850 in Jacksonville, Florida is one of 17,000 Knights of Columbus Councils that make up the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization. Founded in 1882 to assist working-class and immigrant Catholics in the United States, today the approximately 2 million members of the Knights put their faith into action through a broad range of charitable causes locally, nationally and internationally with financial contributions and hands-on service. Based on the founding principles of charity, unity and fraternity, the Order remains committed to strengthening Catholic families and parishes and to practicing faith in action through service to all in need.

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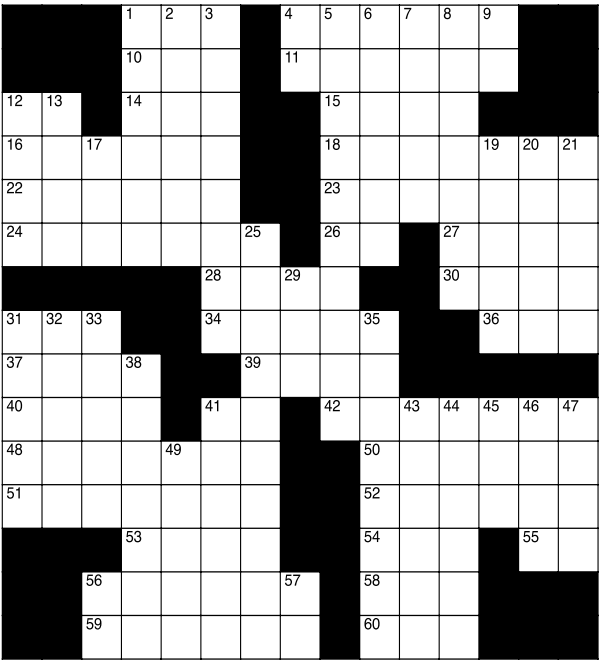


APPOINTMENTS



Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Small Eurasian deer
4. Irish county
10. A major division of geological time
11. Broadway actor Lane
12. Canadian province
14. It causes fainting (abbr.)
15. Two
16. A notable one is blue
18. Utter repeatedly
22. Rings
23. Sullies
24. Occurs
26. Publicity
27. Near
28. Tools of a trade
30. Offer in good faith
31. “American Idol” network
34. Garments
36. Soviet Socialist Republic
37. Retired NFL DC Dean
39. Hot meal
40. A type of gin
41. Percussion instrument
42. A \$10 bill
48. About ground
50. Medicine man
51. Seedless raisin
52. National capital of Albania
53. Appendage
54. OJ trial judge
55. By the way
56. Bicycle parts
58. Barbie’s friend
59. In a way, stretched
60. Commercials

CLUES DOWN

1. Make up for
2. American songbird
3. Pay
4. International organization
5. Engravers
6. Declared as fact
7. Criminal
8. Jewelry
9. Hospital worker (abbr.)
12. Nonsense (slang)
13. Town in Galilee
17. Value
19. Another name
20. Sheep in second year before shearing
21. Town in Surrey, England
25. Appropriate during a time of year
29. Creative output
31. Recesses
32. District in N. Germany
33. Rider of Rohan
35. The official emblem of the German Third Reich
38. One who puts down roots
41. Scribe
43. Painted a bright color
44. Tycoons
45. Actress Thurman
46. Walking accessory
47. Crest of a hill
49. Member of a North American people
56. Type of computer
57. U.S. State (abbr.)

STAR SPANGLED WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- AMERICA
BACKYARD
BURGER
CELEBRATE
DESSERT
FLAG
FOURTH
FRANKFURTER
GATHERING
GRILLING
GUESTS
HOLIDAY
ICE CREAM
INDEPENDENCE
LEMONADE
POOL
ROCKETS
SKY
SPANGLED
STAR
SUMMER
SUNSHINE
UNITED
WARM



Solve the code to discover words related to Independence Day.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 14 = E)

- A. 10 26 11 14 3 14 26 11 14 26 19 14
Clue: Freedom from control
- B. 13 10 24 14 7 5 24 15 8
Clue: Pyrotechnics
- C. 19 14 17 14 2 24 25 23 10 5 26
Clue: Party
- D. 20 10 19 23 5 24 1
Clue: Defeating an opponent

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Summer at your Library continues through August 12

By Jeremy Yates
mail@floridanewsline.com

Pre-K kids and families can join us for Little Readers storytime (birth – age five) Fridays at the Mandarin Library at 10:15 a.m. and 11 a.m. or Mondays at 1:30 p.m. at South Mandarin Library.

But that's not all! The ever-popular Pop-Up Storytime also continues in the park outside South Mandarin Library Thursdays at 10 a.m. and Sensory Friendly Storytime continues Wednesdays at 11 a.m. at Mandarin Library. Did you know? Sensory toys



Photo courtesy Jacksonville Public Library
Storytime can happen anytime with Traveling Tales book bundles and activity kits.

and aids are also available for anyone who needs them at all 21 library locations for in-library use.

Storytime can happen anytime with Traveling Tales book bundles and activity kits. Designed for preschoolers aged two to five, these convenient kits contain five to seven carefully selected children's books, puppets or other interactive manipulatives. Materials for each theme are contained in a sturdy bag and can be checked out with your library card. Learn more at jaxpubliclibrary.org/bookbundles.

STEAM & Stories (for ages five to 12) combines an exciting story with a fun hands-on activity from the exciting world of Science, Technology, Engineering Art and Math. Join us at Mandarin Library Mondays at 3:30 p.m. Explore more STEM concepts at Mandarin Library in Junior Scientists (ages five through eight) Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m.

Are you interested in art, animation, or want to learn a new skill? In Animation Lab, you'll explore different animation techniques while designing and creating your very own animated stories. Join us Thursdays

at 3:30 p.m. at the Mandarin Library or Wednesdays at 4 p.m. at the South Mandarin Library and get animated (for ages nine through 12).

Feeling creative? Elementary age kids (aged five through 12) can Craft and Create every Tuesday at 1 p.m. at Mandarin Library (July 11, 18 and 25). Junior Artists (aged five through eight) also continues at South Mandarin Library Tuesdays at 4 p.m.

Have you always wanted to crochet but don't know where to start? Do your projects come out crooked or

full of holes? Teens and adults are of all skill levels are welcome at Drop in for Crochet Basics at South Mandarin Library every other Saturday at 3 p.m. We're also on the lookout for an intermediate to advanced crafter to volunteer to help out.

For teens, there's also Drop-In Game Day Tuesdays at 5 p.m. (July 11, 18 and 25) and Teen Advisory Board Friday, July 28 at 4:45 p.m., both at the South Mandarin Library.

Visit www.jaxpubliclibrary.org/events to find out more.

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Nutrition Check

Did you know July is National Picnic Month?

By Kristen Hicks-Roof PhD, RD and Rayonna Hills BS
mail@floridanewsline.com

I have fond memories from my childhood sitting on an open blanket and munching down on some snacks my parents packed at the park. There is a lot of value in creating happiness and peace at mealtimes and a picnic is just the way to do it! Going beyond setting the table or sitting in front of a screen, get outdoors and enjoy the sounds, smells, and atmosphere.

How do I do this?

Well, the good news is that a picnic can be anywhere, anytime. You can have a picnic at the park, in your backyard, at the zoo or even the beach. This picnic can be for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or even a late-night dessert picnic. This is especially helpful if you have children or a family, as adding a change in the scenery can go a long way in terms of eating a healthful meal.

What should I pack?

A picnic can either be served as a full-balanced meal (e.g. protein and grain; sandwich; leftovers) or as a charcuterie board (vegetables, fruit, protein, crackers etc.). The options are limitless, I recommend

aiming to think outside of the box and add something new that isn't in your normal routine — let's face it, you likely do not eat picnic style very often, so why should the food be the same? Visit www.eatingwell.com/recipes/19926/holidays-occasions/occasions/picnics/ as it provides a lot of fun ideas that you can add to your menu.

Beyond just what you're going to eat, think about other outdoor activities that you could add to your mealtime. This is an ideal opportunity to have family bonding and/or physical activity added to your day. You can pack items such as board games, sports equipment, or even make your own I-spy scavenger hunt pages, depending on your picnic location.

All in all, the goal is to get outdoors, enjoy nature, and think outside the box on when, where and how we develop a positive relationship with food and family. Enjoy!

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

Fishing

Jimmy's Fishing Report

By Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewsline.com

When I sit down after throwing the net a few times and I can feel the sweat running down my legs, I can tell it's officially uncomfortably hot. It definitely makes you appreciate the days you can get enough bait with just a couple throws. That being said, if you can stand the heat there's fish to be had.

Shrimp started off a little slow this year and we even got skunked throwing for them on June 1. They showed up in reasonable numbers shortly after and of a better size, so I'm glad they're here.

What I have been catching a lot of with the net are comb jellies. These little ctenophores are just one sign that our stretch of the river is saltier than normal. All I can say is make sure you rinse and flush your equipment right now.

As I expected the stripers have been biting really well on the bridges along with a few redfish. I'm glad they're adjusting to the salinity levels because they can save a slow day of fishing more often than not.

I also need to make mention of the yellowmouth trout bite going on. It's been a few years without them showing up in

their usual numbers, but this year might make up for that. They are being caught on channel edges and deeper shell beds. Before shrimp season started, they were eating store bought shrimp really well, but I'd imagine some river shrimp would make the bite even better. This is a great fish to target with the kids since they can bring a lot of consistent action and you can literally drop baits over the side of the boat. If we get some sizable croakers in the mix that would be something special.

The usual suspects in redfish, flounder, and sheepshead can be caught around docks on our river shrimp. The redfish and flounder will also take artificials, but why not please all of them and put a shrimp down?

I haven't heard anything about tarpon other than sightings here and there. They really are like a silver ghost for me because I've yet to see one myself. A big murky river is a great place to hide I guess.

I'm sure I missed a few things, but most importantly stay hydrated out there. Tight lines.

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Mandarin Museum receives special donation

By Brittany Cohill
mail@floridanewsline.com

Jacksonville artist Nofa Farha Dixon recently donated four Charlie Brown pieces of pottery and one Memphis Wood piece to the Mandarin Museum's permanent collection. Brown (1904 – 1987) and Wood (1902 – 1989) were longtime Mandarin residents, close friends, and nationally renowned for their work in a variety of mediums including painting, pottery, and fiber arts. Brown's methods, while creating beautiful handwrought designs, made his pottery fragile. No less valuable, the cracking in the piece shown is part of its story, inviting the audience to embrace imperfection while exploring its artistry and charm.



One of the Charlie Brown pieces Nofa Dixon donated to the museum's permanent collection.

Donor Nofa Dixon is an accomplished artist in her own right. Active in the Jacksonville art community for many decades, she is a professional artist and arts educator. She served as Curator of Education at the Museum of Contemporary Art Jacksonville for 12 years before joining the Department of Art and Design at the University of North Florida where she taught drawing, painting, and design classes. She also served as an Artist-in-Residence for Duval County Schools from 1997 to 1999, and in 1998 was awarded the Art Educator of the Year by the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville.

Dixon's work can be seen at the South Mandarin Library as part of the Cultural Council's Art-in-Public-Places permanent collection. Commissioned in 2005 and titled Stepping Stones, ceramic floor tiles feature glaze-painted stones that lead guests from the library's entrance to the children's section. Dixon used a technique known as trompe l'oeil ("to deceive the eye"), a technique whereby an artist produces realistic imagery to make a flat surface appear three-dimensional.

Charlie Brown and Memphis Wood's influence can be seen in Dixon's work. She, along

with other young emerging artists in Jacksonville during the 1970s, formed a group known as the Crown Craftsmen. Charlie Brown and Memphis Wood were mentors to this younger generation who displayed and sold their pieces at galleries across Florida. Serving as a matriarch and patriarch of sorts, they were instrumental in encouraging the Crown Craftsmen as they pursued their passion. Dixon recalls her first piece that sold went to a special buyer: Charlie Brown.

This past month, Dixon approached Mandarin Museum & Historical Society with the idea for a permanent Crown Craftsmen collection for the museum's archive. An exciting endeavor, the

museum will collaborate with Dixon to curate, preserve, and share the work of artists born out of this distinct moment and movement within Jacksonville's art community. With Mandarin's own Charlie Brown and Memphis Wood playing central roles in the Crown Craftsmen narrative, this new collection will further the museum's mission to share the stories of Mandarin's history and culture. Many of Dixon's pieces will serve as the foundational acquisition and will be featured in future exhibitions.

Visit www.mandarinmuseum.org for more information about Mandarin artists.

Eagle Scout project benefits Italian American Club



On May 19, Nick Martin and other scouts from Scout Troop 473 constructed the base for a flagpole and a picnic table at the Italian American Club as part of Martin's Eagle Scout project. The suggestion for a flagpole had come from Mark Rose, vice president of the Italian American Club and he reached out to Troop 473, based at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, to do the project. On Saturday May 20, family members and Italian American Club members watched a Flag Retirement Ceremony, in which American flags that are no longer fit to serve were destroyed, performed by Troop 473. Final presentation was done by the Knights of Columbus St. Johns River Council 4th Degree in honor of the flags. The American and Italian flags were then raised on the flagpole later that day.

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The Pantry Raiders

Chicken fingers make picnics fun

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Fried chicken long has been a popular picnic menu item, but other chicken dishes can fill in for this staple quite easily. For example, this recipe for “Sesame Chicken Fingers with Honey Dip” can be enjoyed by kids and adults on a picnic or even at casual events at home. This recipe, from “125 Best Chicken Recipes” (Robert Rose) by Rose Murray, features a sweet honey dip, but other dips can complement the meal as well.

Sesame Chicken Fingers with Honey Dip

Serves 4

1/3 cup light mayonnaise

3 tbsp. liquid honey

1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

1/4 cup light mayonnaise

2 tbsp. Dijon mustard

2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

1/3 cup dry bread crumbs

3 tbsp. sesame seeds

1 tsp. dried Italian herb seasoning

1 lb. skinless boneless chicken breasts cut into fingers, 2 inches long by 1/2-inch wide

1. Honey Dip: In a small bowl, stir together the 1/3 cup mayonnaise, honey and 1 tablespoon lemon juice until well combined. Refrigerate if making ahead.
2. In a small bowl, combine the 1/4 cup mayonnaise, Dijon mustard and 2 tablespoons lemon juice.
3. On waxed paper or in a shallow bowl, combine the bread crumbs, sesame seeds and Italian seasoning.
4. Coat chicken with mayonnaise mixture, then with bread crumb mixture. Place on prepared cookie sheet. Bake in preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown and the chicken is no longer pink inside, turning once. Serve hot with the honey dip and potato wedges, if desired.




Photo courtesy MetroCreative

Sesame Chicken Fingers with Honey Dip.

Gardening

Summer, a time of change

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
mail@floridanewsline.com

In early June, the nightly news brought pictures of the frightening air pollution affecting the northeast of the country. The seasonal wildfires in Canada were far worse than usual and there was little sign of them being extinguished. Here in Florida, we are also subject to dry season fires, but as the summer progresses, storms and hurricanes are more likely to be in our forecasts.

Some flowers blooming around town include sunflowers (*Helianthus sp.*), wandflower (*Gaura sp.*), Stoke's aster (*Stokesia laevis*), blanket flower (*Gaillardia sp.*), wild petunia (*Ruellia caroliniensis*), tall red starflowers (*Pentas sp.*), coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea and cultivars*), society garlic (*Tulbaghia violacea*), Lily of the Nile (*Agapanthus sp.*), coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), firecracker plant (*Russelia equisetiformis*), and shrimp plant (*Justicia brandegeana*). Most provide food for a wide variety of pollinators as well as hummingbirds, which are regular visitors to my shrimp plants. After seasonal rain, the lovely pink trumpets of rain lilies (*Habranthus sp.*) pop up to surprise and delight.

A trip to the nursery can be a real sensory treat at this time of year; all those colors, shapes, and perfumes are wonderful! Plan on buying what you really need, though. I've found that shopping for plants on a whim can be a bit like food shopping while hungry. If you need further inspiration, check out this expansive list of recommended plants: <https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/ornamentals/>. Know the conditions in your yard, in relation to soil type, and sun and shade, and narrow down your options before you go to the nursery. The only other recommendation I would make is to try to purchase pesticide-free perennials and annuals, to protect our bees and other pollinators. Even milkweeds, which many people

buy to feed monarch caterpillars, may be treated with systemic pesticides, which can remain in plant tissues, including pollen, for a considerable time. Thankfully some companies are beginning to grow plants without the use of pesticides and will usually state that on their labels, but asking knowledgeable staff at a nursery is always an option. They might also take action on sourcing pesticide-free flowering plants if enough people ask for them.

For the vegetable growers, the University of Florida has a wealth of information to draw upon, and this link will take you there: <https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/plants/edibles/vegetables/>. And a phone call to a Master Gardener Volunteer can be really helpful if you're struggling with a problem (904-255-7450, Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.).

With rainier weather, pests and diseases become more prevalent. Checking plants regularly — scouting — will alert a gardener to problems before they become difficult to control. Combined with an early morning stroll around the garden with a cup of coffee in hand is a good way to start the day. Above all, enjoy your garden and feel proud of your handiwork!




Photo courtesy Lesley Arrandale

Stoke's aster



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Travel

Beautiful Bali: Rice Terraces and Temples

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewslines.com

Most people imagine Bali as an exotic and enchanting paradise with emerald-green terraced rice fields, gorgeous sandy beaches, and volcanic peaks. I can affirm that the magical, lush landscape lives up to the dream, but getting to the isle is a seemingly endless series of flights. But, worth the time!

Bali, Indonesia, is known as the Island of the Gods for its multitude of temples. Hundreds of temples, shrines, and monumental decorative gates lie scattered throughout Bali's cities, villages, and countryside. Some are ancient, some covered in moss, and others decorated with flowers.

Ninety percent of the Balinese are Hindu, and this architectural style remains an essential component of the culture. Every village also maintains a main temple, a large ceremonial and gathering pavilion, and a drum tower to call the residents. And each family compound has an outdoor family temple.

Art and craftsmanship are highly valued and practiced on the island. Entire villages frequently produce a particular art form, such as woodcarving, stone

cutting, jewelry making, drawing and painting, basketry, weaving, and textiles. Extended families, often three generations, work together, the youngest learning from their elders. At an art gallery, I watched the patriarch bent over a complex pen and ink scene, the son painting with watercolors, and the youngest working with acrylic paints. While the arts are evolving, the communal environment nourishes the talent.

Water is critical to life on the island for Bali's iconic rice fields. They use a thousand-year-old system to keep the supply available when and where needed. Each farm belongs to a local water-sharing association, and each chapter's head works out a planting schedule so farmers can flood and drain the rice fields at precise stages of the growing cycle.

The verdant and artistically shaped rice terraces attract tourists and lots of photographers. Here again, the communal spirit is at work. While standing above the fields provides a majestic sight, just looking earns a few tourist dollars. The community-based tourism association wisely built swings, zip lines, photo



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Swinging over rice terraces.



Ubud temple.

ops, restrooms, and snack huts. Visitors buy tickets to interact with nature while having fun and bring income to the area. I purchased my ticket for a ride on a giant swing soaring over the rice paddies — a moment I won't forget. I wish I'd had time to trek among the terraces (another paying tourist option.)

Many women in my group were quilters interested in learning about batik fabric. We took a class at a family-owned batik shop where we dipped a cloth into dye, scrunched it, drizzled on a different color dye, and then sprinkled it with ash to create a marbling effect. The second process involved placing a copper template into hot wax and stamping it on the fabric to transfer a design. Afterward, the cloth is re-dyed, the paraffin is boiled off, and beautiful printed material appears.

I also wandered through the Sacred Monkey Forest Sanctuary, a lush jungle

with gigantic Banyan trees. About 1,000 monkeys roam free, the babies mischievously frolicking.

Bali ranks high for wellness and yoga retreats; spa treatments come at bargain prices. I stayed busy participating in a water purification ritual and visiting the picturesque lake temple on Mount Batur's caldera. I also took a cooking class, learning to make a spicy salad and satay with ground chicken cooked on a grill.

I lodged in a colorful boutique hotel in Ubud, the cultural and artistic heart. Then I moved to a luxury beach resort hotel in Nusa Dua. I left the magical island too soon but hope to return someday.

I purchased the tour from Crafttours.com and highly recommend it.

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

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