

Mandarin NewsLine

August 2023 Volume 17 Issue 10

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BFF Best Furry Friend



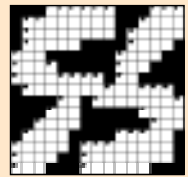
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Q&A with
Michael Boylan



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Melanie Matrascia



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Puzzles



Photo courtesy Mandarin Museum & Historical Society

Mandarin Museum & Historical Society will host its grand reopening on Saturday, Aug. 5, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Mandarin Museum to host ribbon cutting for newly renovated facility

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Mandarin Museum & Historical Society announces its grand reopening on Saturday, Aug. 5, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Visitors are invited to view new exhibits featuring the history of Mandarin as a settled community, the Civil War-era “Maple Leaf” shipwreck, Mandarin’s most famous past resident Harriet Beecher Stowe, and “The Untold Story of Black Mandarin.” Visitors will also enjoy

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Temple Sisterhood Braille group to host tactile graphics classes

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

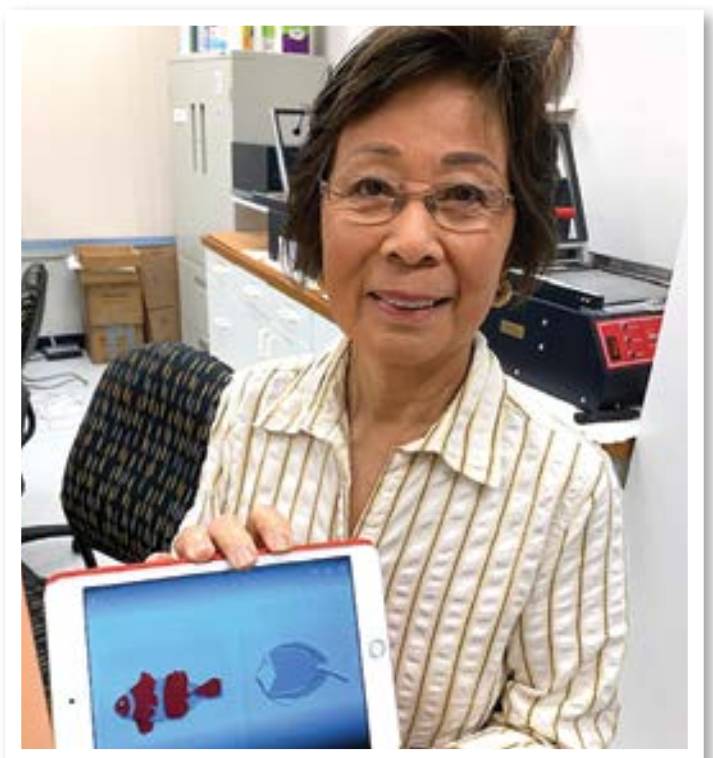
The Temple Sisterhood Braille Group will host tactile graphics classes on four Wednesdays in September at The Temple (Congregation Ahavath Chesed), located at 8727 San Jose Blvd. in Mandarin. This class is free of charge and is open to anyone interested in learning to create graphics for the blind. Mark your calendars for Sept. 6, 13, 20, and 27 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. to teach your fingertips to see.

Early children’s books are filled with pictures as an introduction to reading. With blind children, the learning process is a bit different. The Temple Sisterhood Braille Group provides them with tactile graphics to better understand what they read.

“You can give them a ball, and they can feel the ball,” said braille group

member Susan Foster. “But if you are talking about a honeybee, you will have to give them a tactile graphic. Their fingertips will feel the image so they can imagine what a honey bee looks like.”

What are tactile graphics? Basically, it is a raised image of a two -dimensional interpretation of an object. The method used most frequently is collage. A



Photos courtesy Susan Foster

Linda McQueen showing a graphic from The Temple Sisterhood Braille Group's online library.

Temple Sisterhood cont. on pg. 2

Girls on the Run: Fall season registration opens soon

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida’s registration for the fall season opens on Thursday, Aug. 17 at 6 a.m. Registration is completed online and is on a first come, first served basis. Girls on the Run (GOTR) is a 10-week physical activity-based, positive youth development program that inspires girls in third through eighth grades to be joyful, healthy, and confident.

In May 2023, the nation’s top health official, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, took notice of Girls on the Run’s commitment to supporting girls. The Office of the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Public Health Service released a report about

Girls on the Run cont. on pg. 2



Photo courtesy Girls on the Run

Girls on the Run is a 10-week physical activity-based, positive youth development program for girls in third through eighth grades.

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Girls on the Run cont. from pg.1

the vital connection between physical activity and mental health. In the report, Dr. Murthy highlighted Girls on the Run as an example of a program for girls to learn life skills through engaging activities and lessons. The program was recognized as a powerful resource in supporting girls when they need it most.

Since 2004, Girls on the Run of Northeast Florida has inspired more than 27,000 girls. This season, the program will serve girls in Alachua, Bradford, Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Marion, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Union, and Volusia counties. Girls on the Run has research-based lessons that use dynamic discussions

and fun running games to teach critical life skills. The season will culminate with a celebratory 5K event that brings together family, friends, and community members to celebrate the girls’ growth throughout the season.

The program fee for the fall season ranges from \$50 – \$130 and is based on household income. Scholarship funding is available to those who qualify. The program fee includes all lesson materials, registration for the celebratory 5K event, a finisher medal, a GOTR t-shirt, and GOTR water bottle.

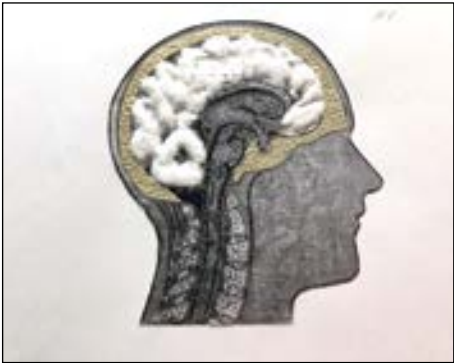
Visit www.gotrnefl.org for more information about the program and registration.

Temple Sisterhood cont. from pg. 1

variety of materials with different textures are used to represent things like land or water. The image is constructed in different levels to represent height or depth. Another common method for creating tactile graphics is foil, where the image is etched in foil. In both collage and foil, a thermoform machine is used to duplicate the finished graphic onto durable plastic for use by the blind reader.

“Creating tactile graphics is a labor of love. It not only benefits the blind student but is very gratifying for the graphic artist,” said Foster. “When you look at a picture, you must put yourself in the shoes of the blind students. What do they need to learn? What parts of the original image do you leave in and what parts do you leave out?”

According to Chancey Fleet, MIT Technology Review, June 15, 2023: “Tactile graphic design is an art of transformation: what appeals to the eye may be cluttered and chaotic to the fingertips. You learn to simplify to communicate. And you want that student to say, ‘I get it.’”



Tactile representation of a brain.

For more information about the Temple Sisterhood Braille Group Tactile Graphics classes on Sept. 6, 13, 20, and 27, contact Susie Coleman at (904) 725-2427.



Graphic artist Charon Dyer at work.

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BFF

Best Furry Friend
of the month

Meet Minnie Pearl!



Breed:

Dalmatian

Favorite Activity:

Sitting on her favorite person's lap

Favorite Food:

Absolutely everything

Favorite Friend:

Hazel Nut

How did your BFF get her name:

From the comedian in "Hee Haw"

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.



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**Back to School
Guide
in this issue!
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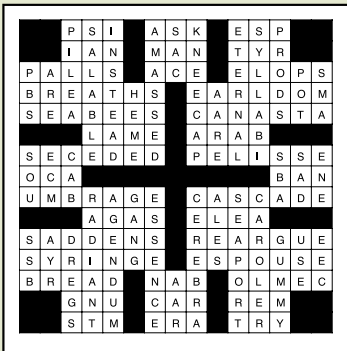
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MYSTERY PHOTO



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

Last month's Mystery Photo was Bowlero bowling alley on San Jose Boulevard.



Answers
to our
Puzzles
PG 10



A. humid B. steamy C. summer D. sky



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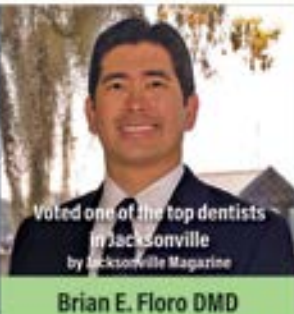
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August

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: Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet on Tuesday, Aug. 1 at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church at the Mandarin Road Campus in the Woody Room at 11844 Mandarin Road. It's the guild's birthday party and members will celebrate with a Hawaiian beach luau and dinner served for \$15 per person. Wearing masks is optional. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

3rd: Town Hall with Mayor Donna Deegan and City Council-member Michael Boylan will be held on Thursday, Aug. 3 at 6 p.m. at the Mandarin Senior Center, 3848 Hartley Road. Topics include the city's budget, the Jaguars, and anything else attendees would like to discuss during a Q&A segment.

4th – 5th: Mandarin Garden Club's \$1 Clothing and Jewelry Sale will be held on Friday, Aug. 4 and Saturday, Aug. 5 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. each day. Gently used clothes, shoes and accessories for the family will be sold for \$1 each. Some boutique and jewelry items will be priced slightly higher. Cash only is accepted. The event features free parking and admission. The Masons' "Famous" Barbeque lunch will be for sale both days. The Mandarin Garden Club is located at 2892 Loretto Road. Visit mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

5th: Mandarin Museum & Historical Society's grand reopening will be held on Saturday, Aug. 5 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Mandarin Frog Painting will be held at 10 a.m. and the ribbon cutting will take place at 2 p.m. Mandarin Museum is located at 11964 Mandarin Road. Visit mandarinmuseum.org or call (904) 268-0784 for more information. To register for Mandarin Frog Painting, email info@mandarinmuseum.org.

12th: Second Saturday Arts and Farmers Market at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. on Aug. 12 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Visit www.facebook.com/SecondSatMarket/ for more information.

12th: The Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society will meet Saturday, Aug. 12 at 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Branch Library, 3330 Kori Road and online via Zoom. Featured speaker Diana

Crisman Smith will discuss finding female ancestors. Visit www.sgesjax.org or call (904) 778-1000 for more information and the Zoom link.

12th: Southside Multiple Sclerosis group meets on the second Saturday of each month (this month on Aug. 12) 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.

14th: North Florida Bonsai Club will host a two-part class introducing participants to bonsai on Aug. 14 (and Sept. 11) from 6 p.m. – 10 p.m. at the Mandarin Garden Club, 2892 Loretto Road. By the end of the class each participant should have an understanding of how to maintain, train and grow their own bonsai tree. Each workshop seat (cost is \$45) includes the two-day course, bonsai tree and a training pot. Participants will leave with a styled and potted bonsai tree, Portulacaria Afra (Dwarf Jade).

14th: Family Game day featuring board games will be held on Monday, Aug. 14 from 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. at the Mandarin Branch Library, 3330 Kori Road. Call the library at (904) 255-2665 for more information.

21st: The All Star Quilters Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. for socializing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, Aug. 21 at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. Members will reveal community service quilts made from mystery bag fabrics. Sew and Tell is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

24th: Mandarin Republican Club will meet on Thursday, Aug. 24 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.

25th – 26th: Global Believers Camp Meeting will be held on Friday, Aug. 25 at 5:30 p.m. and Saturday, Aug. 26 at 10 a.m. at Hampton Inn & Suites, Jacksonville South Bartram, 13950 Village Lake Circle. Visit <https://globalbelieverscampmeeting.com/> for more information and to register.

26th: Adult Drop In: Crochet Basics will be held Saturday, Aug. 26 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.

30th: Financial Peace University will be held at Christian Family Chapel, 10365 Old St. Augustine Road, every Wednesday for nine weeks at 6 p.m. beginning Aug. 30. Financial coaches will lead this nine-week class that uses practical wisdom and common sense to help attendees tackle budgeting, pay off debt, and make their money work for them. The cost of the classes is \$45. Sign up at CFCJax.com/events or email blakem@cfcjax.com for more information.

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Back to School Guide



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with Duval County School Board Member Lori Hershey, District 7

Q: What do you have to share regarding the first day of school?

A: Our first day of school is just around the corner, on Aug. 14. I encourage parents to check their child's school's website for supply lists and orientation dates now. Also, be prepared for an increase in traffic on our roads as not only students, but school employees, go back to school. Patience will be required!

Q: Can you explain the new phonics curriculum?

A: Literacy has been identified as the top priority of the district, and as a result of that, we are rolling out a new reading curriculum in which teachers focus on teaching students phonics. It's called University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI) and the program was piloted during the 2022 – 23 school year. It will expand to all kindergarten through second grade students this year.

Q: What's new at Mandarin Middle School this year?

A: Students at Mandarin Middle School will have two new clubs available for them to join. The first is an E-Sports Lab, which is virtual sports. Secondly, the tennis court at Mandarin Middle School has been transformed into a pickleball court and students will have the option of joining the pickleball club. Both of these clubs will take place either before or after school, depending on the sponsor. Contact the school if your child is interested in joining.

Q: What's the latest on the expansion at Mandarin High School?

A: A ribbon cutting will be held in September (watch this space next month for the date announcement) to celebrate the start of construction of the new wing, which will house two

new Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs: Culinary Arts and Medical Arts. The new wing will also house additional classroom space to replace the school's portables.

The school's anatomy table, the only one in a high school in the county, will be housed in the new wing. Any student interested in pursuing a career in medicine should consider Mandarin High School's Medical Arts program. Mandarin High School also offers three pathways for dual enrollment to earn an associate's degree.

Q: Do you have an update on Atlantic Coast High School?

A: Atlantic Coast is also expanding its CTE. The school recently finalized a partnership with Mayo, which will include Mayo nurses teaching daily on campus for the 2023 – 24 school year for the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. Also new at Atlantic Coast this year, many ninth grade students will have the opportunity to take an AP class as a freshman.

Both Mandarin and Atlantic Coast high schools continue to be premier neighborhood high schools in the district.

Q: What's the latest on the search for a new superintendent?

A: Parents will be able to take part in an online survey in mid-August. Also, there are four upcoming community meetings from mid-August to mid-September, which may be attended in person or online. The best way to stay up to date on this process is to visit our dedicated webpage, <https://dcps.duvalschools.org/search>.

Q: How can our readers contact you?

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



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with Jacksonville City Council Member Michael Boylan, District 6

Q: Can you explain how the city’s budget process works?

A: New Mayor Donna Deegan has presented her budget to the City Council, which the Finance Committee will be reviewing to assure accountability and use of funds over the next month. She placed a significant emphasis on infrastructure spending throughout the city, and I expect that Mandarin, too, will be a beneficiary. Although I am not a member of the Finance Com-

mittee, I will be taking part in these discussions. There will be a series of public Budget Hearing Meetings, with the first one taking place on Aug. 10.

Q: What are your committee assignments on City Council for the upcoming year?

A: I have been named the chair of the Neighborhoods, Community Services, Public Health and Safety Committee (NCSPHS) which addresses the concerns of our constituents and dovetails

nicely with the special Critical Quality of Life Issues Committee, which I spearheaded last year. The NCSPHS is the first committee that takes on new items and oftentimes amendments to ordinances come from this committee. It’s the council’s first opportunity to critically review ordinances. I will also continue my service on the Rules Committee, which will be pivotal as it relates to the mayor’s new appointments.

Additionally Council President Ron Salem has created a special committee and asked me to head it up. This committee is tasked with exploring the location, cost, healthcare, mental healthcare and other issues involved with relocating the jail out of downtown. We will just be laying the foundation for the future as we don’t expect immediate action on this. The public will be able to participate in meetings in the future.

I’d like to express my gratitude to Council President Salem for the confidence he placed in me to serve on these committees.

Q: Do you have any updates since last month on the Livingston Road or County Dock Road rezoning applications?

A: The Livingston Road application continues to be deferred. As for the County Dock property, nothing has changed since last month, but I fully expect it to start up again by late August.

Q: Do you have anything else to share with Mandarin readers?

A: Mayor Donna Deegan and I will be hosting a Town Hall meeting on Thursday, Aug. 3 at 6 p.m. at the Mandarin Senior Center, located at 3848 Hartley Road. Mayor Deegan plans to address the city’s budget, the Jaguars, and anything else attendees would like to discuss during a Q&A segment.

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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End of summer activities at your public libraries

By Jeremy Yates
mail@floridanewslines.com

Come celebrate the end of summer at your library’s Drop-In Summer Closing Party! Join us on Wednesday, Aug. 9 from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. at Mandarin Branch Library or Friday, Aug. 11 from 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. at South Mandarin Branch Library for one last party before the kids go back to school. Kids and teens in attendance will receive their final, free Summer Prize Book.

Teens: Back-to-school prep got you down? Unwind at our first-ever De-Stress Fest with the Teen Advisory Board (for ages 12 – 17) on Friday, Aug. 11 at 4:45 p.m. at the South Mandarin Library.

Teens and adults (of all skill levels) are welcome to Drop-In for Crochet Basics at South Mandarin Library every other Saturday at 3 p.m. (this month, Aug. 12 and Aug. 26). No registration or prior experience is required. You can learn something new, bring in projects you’re struggling with or help others.

A batch of eager young cake enthusiasts will learn the basics of buttercream and master the sugary arts in Frosting Lab (for ages nine – 12) every Thursday at 3:30 p.m. at the Mandarin Library or Wednesdays at 4 p.m. at the South Mandarin Library.

For those looking for something less sweet and more scientific, South Mandarin Library will host Forensics Lab on Fridays from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. for homeschoolers (ages 10 – 14). In this nine-week series, attendees will learn how to use real-life forensic tools and techniques to solve a fictional crime.

For ages five through 12, there’s STEAM & Stories which combines an exciting read-a-loud with a fun hands-on activity from the world of Science, Technology, Engineering Art and Math. Get inspired at Mandarin Library Mondays at 3:30 p.m. Explore more STEM concepts at Mandarin Library for Junior Scientists (ages five through eight) on Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. Or get crafty at Junior Artists (ages five through eight) at South Mandarin Library on Tuesdays at 4 p.m.

Pre-K kids and families can join us for Little Readers storytime (birth – age five) on 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. Or join us in the park outside South Mandarin for Pop-Up Storytime Library on Thursdays at 10 a.m. Sensory Friendly Storytime continues Wednesdays at 11 a.m. at Mandarin Library.

Visit www.jaxpubliclibrary.org/events for more information.



Photo courtesy Jacksonville Public Library



Back to School Guide

How to prepare children for kindergarten

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The first day of kindergarten is a milestone moment for children that their parents will remember forever. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates that around five million children attend an organized preschool or daycare facility in the United States. Children who attend preschool or daycare may make a relatively seamless transition to kindergarten; however, it's still a good idea for parents to take steps to prepare youngsters for kindergarten in advance of the first day of school.

- Attend orientation or related events. Elementary schools typically are housed in much larger buildings than preschools or daycares, and that size can be intimidating for children. Attend-

ing kindergarten orientation or related events as a family can help children see their classrooms, meet their teacher and potentially their classmates.

- Meet other kids in the neighborhood. Some children attend preschools or daycares close to home, while others may go to facilities near a parent's office. Regardless of where kids go to daycare or preschool, they're likely to meet new youngsters in kindergarten. Introducing them to other kids in the neighborhood who will be going to kindergarten as well can calm children's nerves. Seeing a familiar face on the bus and/or in class can put youngsters at ease.
- Avoid lengthy goodbyes. Parents may get a little teary-eyed on their children's first day of kindergarten, but drawing

out goodbyes as kids get on the bus or walk into school will ultimately make it harder on children. Limit your goodbye to a hug and kiss and some words of encouragement. Keep the emphasis on the positive and the fun that's to be had so kids arrive at school in a good frame of mind.

- Remind youngsters you'll be there to pick them up at the end of the day. Let children know that, just like daycare and preschool, mom or dad will be there to pick them up at school or the bus stop at the end of the day. This sense of



Photo courtesy MetroCreative
The first day of kindergarten is a big moment for young children. Parents can take steps to calm first-day jitters and ensure children have a memorable day.

the familiar can calm kids' nerves and reassure them that a smiling face will be there at the end of the school day.

A refresher course in school bus safety

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The dawn of a new school year is a time marked by change and fresh opportunities. For many children, school marks the first time they are away from their parents for an extended period of time. It also may be the first time they ride in a vehicle other than their parents' cars.


Each school day, 25 million children ride a bus to school in the United States. A school bus is among the safest modes of transport and one of the most regulated vehicles on the road, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.



Riding a school bus can be a novel experience no matter a student's age or grade. Kindergarteners may be introduced to the school bus on their first day of school, while older students are no doubt familiar with life inside a school bus. But all students and

families can benefit from a refresher course on school bus procedures to ensure this school year begins on safe footing.

- Be a smart pedestrian. Riding the school bus is very safe, but injuries can occur walking to and from the bus stop. Watch for cars backing out of driveways and always look both ways multiple times before crossing streets.
- Remember school bus laws. Most areas of the country have specific school bus laws that include stopping when red lights are flashing on the school bus. Cars must stop whether they're behind the school bus, next to it or on the opposite side of the street facing the bus. Stopping allows passengers to enter or exit the bus safely.
- Stand away from the curb. The National Safety Council advises keep-

School bus safety cont. on pg. 9





Dr. Jimmy Glenos

Dr. Craig Hadgis



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Briefs

Mandarin Women's Club seeks members
After enjoying summer vacation, it is time to join or renew membership in the Mandarin Women's Club. Luncheons are held the fourth Thursday of each month, September through May. The next luncheon will be on Thursday, Sept. 28, at the Ramada Inn in Mandarin.

Members may look forward to an exciting year of activities under the guidance of the 2023 – 2024 board members. To join or renew membership, complete a membership form and send it to Judy Witte along with a check (no cash); the Membership Form and instructions can be downloaded at www.mandarinwomensclub.com.

There are no luncheons in August, but active members still enjoy Bunco, Mah Jongg, Mexican Train, and other events. Visit www.mandarinwomensclub.com for more information about how to participate in these activities.

QuiltFest returns to Jacksonville
One of the largest quilt shows in the Southeast returns to Jacksonville's Prime Osborn Convention Center Sept. 14 – 16, 2023 for its annual event. The Jacksonville Quiltfest is an all-volunteer organization and show, whose purpose is to showcase quilts, and to encourage and inspire quilters, both new and experienced. Quiltfest is a 501c3 nonprofit with significant charitable giving.

Show hours are Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Free parking is provided and entrance tickets are \$15 daily. Advance tickets are now on sale and may be purchased at Cinnamon's Quilt Shoppe, Bee's Quilt Shop and the Tilted Quilters or via Ticketmaster. Visit www.quiltfestjax.com for more information.

Church to host Family Fun Night
Hope Lutheran Church, 8570 Philips Hwy., Suite 104, will host a fun evening for families on Friday, Aug. 11 from 5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. This inter-generational evening promises prizes, refreshments, and a joyful atmosphere that will have everyone smiling and creating lasting memories. Start the evening with a delicious sloppy joe dinner while you play a quick game of Bible Pictionary. Then, at 6 p.m., the games will continue.

If you like fast-paced exciting games, Bunco is for you. A dice game that has gained incredible popularity over the years. It will keep you on your toes and create an atmosphere of friendly rivalry. A game of complete chance; no skill needed. The thrill of rolling the dice, yelling "Bunco!" changing partners and winning fantastic prizes promises to keep the evening interesting and buzzing.

If you're not up for a fast-paced game like Bunco, the classic Bingo game will keep everyone entertained with its suspenseful moments and unexpected wins. With each call of the numbers, anticipation will mount and everyone will hope to yell "Bingo!" before the night ends, earning themselves an unforgettable, or maybe forgettable prize.

Email outreach@hopelutheranjax.com or visit fun.hopejax.org for more information.

Rising prices make it pricy to live in Northeast Florida
In June, it became more expensive to live in Northeast Florida. The Home Affordability Index for single-family homes in the six-county region fell 4.3 percent to 66, which is the lowest it has ever registered in the region. The Housing Affordability Index measures housing affordability for the region; it measures whether a typical family earns enough to qualify for a mortgage on a typical home, based on current interest rates, median income, and median home prices. A higher number means greater affordability. An index value of 100 means that the average family has exactly enough income to qualify for a mortgage.

In June, Northeast Florida's median sales price on single-family homes settled in at \$394,900, a rise of 1.8 percent from the previous month. New listings — 3,212 homes — jumped 16.6 percent and active inventory rose to 4,891 homes, a 15.1 percent increase. Also in June, homes remained on the market a little longer — 33 days, which is a 3.1 percent increase from May.

"More homes were introduced to the market and buyers are taking a little extra time to shop with increased days on market to just over a month," said NEFAR President Diana Galavis. "In June, the summer heat made its way to the housing market. It is a sellers' market with the buyers in control. The median sales price and closed sales were up from May. Sellers received over 98 percent of the list price. Sellers are pricing their homes in line with the market. This brought the median price down slightly and settled it at a median price of \$206 per square foot."

Pending sales dropped 10.2 percent, falling to 1,901 in June from a May high of 2,116. Meanwhile the housing supply continues to hover at a low of 2.3 months' supply.

In Duval County, the June 2023 median price of single-family housing was \$335,000, a 1.5 percent climb from May 2023 when it registered \$330,000. The median days on the market in June remained at 30. Month-to-month, closed sales dropped half a point to 1,043, pending sales fell 8.4 percent to 974, and new listings increased 23.8 percent to 1,662. Active inventory for the county rose 20.3 percent to 2,195 homes, a 2.1-month supply. In June, the home affordability index showed housing was becoming less affordable by registering at 78, a 3.7 percent drop from the month before.

In St. Johns County, June 2023 median prices decreased slightly to \$555,000 for single-family homes. The median days on the market were 34, a 2.9 percent drop from the month before. Month-to-month, closed sales rose 4.7 percent to 560, pending sales dropped 11.2 percent to 478, and new listings jumped 11.5 percent to 865. Active inventory rose to 1,544 homes, an increase of 14 percent from May 2023, and 2.8-month supply. The affordability index slid to 47, demonstrating that St. Johns County continues to be the most expensive area to live in the region.

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Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Melanie Matrascia

Melanie Matrascia is a proud sixth generation Floridian. A member of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), she said her great great grandparents and great grandparents were Florida pioneers who helped establish north Florida. She was born right here in Jacksonville in St. Vincent's (now Ascension) Hospital in Riverside. As a child, her father moved the family to Dade County when it became necessary for him to find work. She grew up there and met her husband and had children before returning to north Florida about 10 years ago, once her husband retired from the Miami Dade Fire Department, where he was a paramedic. She and Mike have been married for 52 years. They have a daughter and a son and five grandchildren. Melanie currently serves as the president of the Italian American Club in Mandarin and Mike serves as treasurer.

Q: How did you meet your husband?

A: Mike and I have known each other since second grade. We started dating when I was 16 and he was 15; we were married when I was 18 and he was 17. He needed a notarized letter from his mother to get married, but even that wasn't enough in Florida unless there were "special circumstances" ... and there were no "special circumstances!" So we were married in Dothan, Alabama and spent our



Photo courtesy Melanie Matrascia
Melanie and Mike Matrascia.

honeymoon there as well.

Q: Did you work outside the home?

A: I did some secretarial work when we were first married, but was fortunate to be able to quit and stay home and raise our children. Once they were older, I took a job with Princess Cruises. I worked the "meet and greet" at the hotel for cruise guests. One perk was we were able to go on one free cruise per year and Mike and I celebrated our 22nd anniversary on the original Love Boat from the television show. We also celebrated our 25th anniversary aboard the Crown Princess.

Q: How did you become involved with the Italian American Club?

A: When we moved up here, my husband was newly retired and said he didn't know what to do with himself. I recalled a friend who was the president of the Italian Club of Hialeah and I wondered if we had such a club here. I found the Italian American Club in Mandarin and we joined in 2017 because I wanted my husband to meet people. After being a member

for a year, I ran for the office of president and was elected. I'm the first woman president of the club.

Q: What's your favorite part about being a member of the Italian American Club?

A: Everyone at the club is very social. I like mixing with people, meeting new people and learning their stories. This is an all volunteer club and everyone works very hard on our fundraisers that we need to help keep up with the club building. Our monthly Spaghetti to Go meals (which are on hiatus for the summer until Sept. 29) are very popular and, along with dues and rentals of our club building, allow us to maintain the club and offer social activities for members. We have Bingo and trips to the Alhambra. The end of the year is very busy for us, as we have a Halloween party, a Christmas party and a New Year's Eve party. Also, our monthly general meetings each have a fun theme; this month's is a Hawaiian luau.

Q: How does one become a member?

A: We are always looking for new members who want to socialize and help with the club. You don't have to be Italian! Just call the club (904-586-2700) or visit our website.

Q: What do you like to do in your spare time?

A: My husband and I both enjoy bowling and I like to grow orchids. I even have an orchid house.

[Editor's note: Visit <https://iacofjacksonville.com> for more information about the Italian American Club.]

Mandarin Museum cont. from pg. 1

"Old Mandarin: Artists and Landscapes" on display in the museum's art gallery.

In addition, the day will feature Mandarin Museum's monthly Mandarin Frog painting at 10 a.m. (registration required), a return of "Meet the Divers" with Keith Holland, and more.

The historic buildings throughout Walter Jones Historical Park will be open until 2 p.m., at which time the museum will host a ceremonial ribbon cutting on the museum's front porch with refreshments.

Following the grand reopening, Mandarin Museum will be open to the public every Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Visit mandarinmuseum.org or call (904) 268-0784 for more information. To register for Mandarin Frog painting, email info@mandarinmuseum.org.

School bus safety cont. from pg. 7

ing six feet, or three giant steps, away from the curb while waiting for the bus. Young children should be carefully supervised.

- Be visible. Always cross in front of the bus, making eye contact with the driver so that he or she knows your intentions before crossing. If you drop something, do not bend down to pick it up. Tell the driver instead.

- Remain seated. Find a seat promptly and remain seated for the duration of the ride. Do not stand up and proceed down the center aisle until the bus has stopped.

- Minimize distractions. Always speak softly and behave so that you do not distract the driver.

Get to Know ...

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

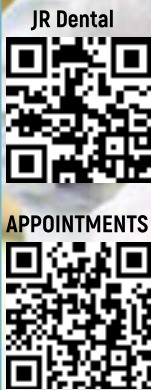
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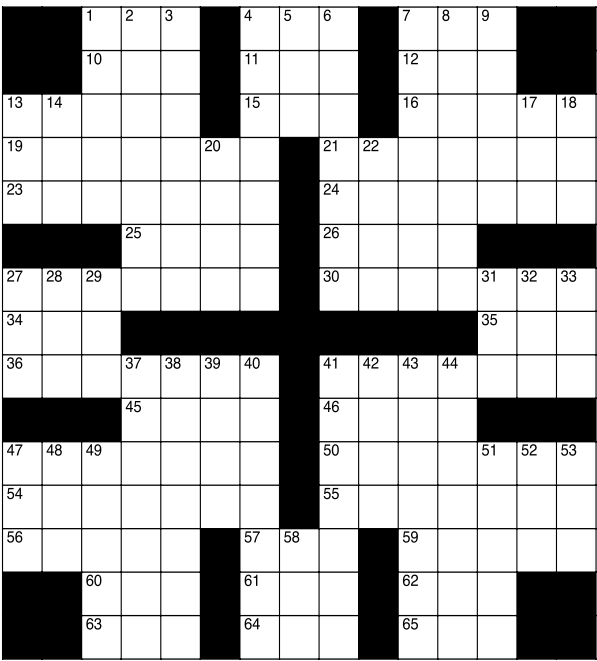
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Indicates tire pressure

4. Request

7. Clairvoyance

10. 007's creator

11. Adult male

12. Scandinavian god of battle

13. Cloths spread on a coffin

15. Breeze through

16. Ladyfish genus

19. It's good to take them

21. Noble-governed territory

23. Members of U.S. Navy

24. Card game resembling rummy

25. Affected by injury

26. Member of a Semitic people

27. Left

30. Woman's cloak

34. S. American plant
35. Prohibit

36. Offense

41. Dish soap brand

45. Ottoman military commanders

46. Ancient Greek City

47. Makes unhappy

50. Discuss again

54. Medical instrument

55. Promote

56. A beloved carb

57. Tag the base runner to get him out

59. Prehistoric people

60. Large African antelope

61. Vehicle

62. Georgia rockers

63. Scientific instrument (abbr.)

64. A major division of geological time

65. Attempt

CLUES DOWN

1. Plant of the nettle family

2. Fit to be sold

3. Rather

4. Collected

5. A baglike structure in a plant or animal

6. Patella

7. Ageless

8. Lists of course requirements

9. Pokes at

13. TV network

14. They __

17. Cooking hardware

18. U.S. Army title

20. Iron-containing compound

22. Swiss river (alt. spelling)

27. Former French coin

28. Electronic countermeasures

29. Taxi
31. Helps little firms

32. Woeful

33. Midway between northeast and east

37. Glowing

38. Tasks which should be done

39. An informal body of friends

40. Intrinsic nature

41. Neural structures

42. Brews

43. Where ships unload cargo

44. Singer

47. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)

48. Southwest Scotland town

49. Most worthless parts

51. Viscous

52. Put to work

53. Old world, new

58. Swiss river

DOG DAYS WORD SEARCH

D I V I N G B H U M I D D V G I D P S C
R E Y D R E N O I T I D N O C R I A L F
A G U T E A A Y B C H E A T A H E L T P
L G T Y L E V T E V B C A L L G A Y E A
M Y A M C N I E A C N A E T S B F E S H
I E D G I Y F M N A O M N M E P O R A N
D Y E A S B A P B B R P R S U N N E B A
H C R R P G O E O M P N A N A G H S Y E
H C A D O S N R L T U B C C L F G P O C
C O M E P U I A E V D Y D C U B S Y B O
E D T N E M C T T H U N D E R S T O R M
E V S I D M Y U I R T G Y L H H A S T Y
O R H N Y E I R N P C F D O Y T U H N M
S I A G G R U E Y V Y L U F I I C Y D I
D N D H M I C E C R E A M N A A I N I Y
U D E U A R T N G F I U G B E P L S I M M
O O M R T T P D V P R A N B N R R Y M P
L O M D Y N Y S F A N S R A O C N Y D M
C R O V V A C A T I O N H I A U G U S T
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CAMP
CANOE
CLOUDS
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FANS
GARDENING
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HOT
HUMID
ICE CREAM
INDOORS
MUGGY
OCEAN
POPSICLE
SHADE
SUMMER
TEMPERATURE
THUNDERSTORM
VACATION



Solve the code to discover words related to the dog days of summer.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 11 = M)

A. 12 8 11 15 10
Clue: Water vapor in the air

B. 3 13 22 6 11 9
Clue: Warm and moist

C. 3 8 11 11 22 5
Clue: Hot season

D. 3 4 9
Clue: Atmosphere seen from earth

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Mandarin Community Club celebrates centennial

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The 100th anniversary celebration for the Mandarin Community Club was not only a fun event, but a total throwback to the 1920s. It was 1923 again in 2023!

As guests arrived, they were greeted by the sight of four vintage vehicles on the front lawn of the club to admire and use as photo backdrops. A hostess station outside welcomed guests with chilled watermelon wine and sparkling cider to break the July heat. Inside the clubhouse, the "Ice Cream Parlor" (aka Speakeasy) was open to serve orange blossom cocktails in brown bagged mason jars while the DJ turned 1920s tunes. Many guests joined in the spirit of the '20s and sported Gatsby style apparel. Their outfits and

their friendships were memorialized in a free photo booth.

A typical 1923 Mandarin supper buffet fed guests and was followed by a Gatsby-era demonstration by the dance pros from All About Ballroom. Some guests even joined in and tried out their moves on the dance floor. After dancing, guests settled in for a short "Thank you for the 100 years of support and memories" speech by President Susie Scott that was interrupted by an other-worldly visit from club founder Walter Jones — who dropped in from "The Grove" to share the story of his life and the founding of the Mandarin Community Club in 1923.

That original and marvelously entertaining skit was the brainchild of Emily Lisska, past president, who wrote and directed the performance given by board member Brett Nolan with the help of club member Ginny Barker, who served up some divine guidance to Walter Jones including directing him back to

"The Grove" after his visit to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Mandarin Community Club.

The Mandarin Community Club is forming a steering committee to help with ideas and direction for the next 100 years — and members and the public alike are encouraged to join to help ensure the viability of the community club in that future. Email mandarincommunityclub@gmail.com or call the club if you are interested in serving.

Mandarin Community Club is deeply appreciative to Councilman Michael Boylan for the honor he bestowed at the June 27 Jacksonville City Council meeting with a resolution honoring the club's 100 years of commitment, achievement and community engagement. As his final proclamation, Mayor Lenny Curry issued a proclamation recognizing and congratulating the Mandarin Community Club.

"The club would also like to thank the Mandarin Museum and Historical Society and the Mandarin Garden Club, both of which were born from the Mandarin Community Club, for their letters of congratulations along with letters from Senator Marco Rubio and Representative John Rutherford," said Susie Scott, club president.



Photos courtesy Susie Scott
Susie Scott and Emily Lisska pose in period attire with antique cars.



Brett Nolan and Ginny Barker.

"It's been a proud year for the Mandarin Community Club since the 100th Anniversary countdown began with a party in July 2022," Scott said. "The club looks forward to the future with great enthusiasm."

Pen Pal meetups at Crown Point

By Mary Eyer
mail@floridanewsline.com

At Crown Point Elementary School, Jessica Radabaugh’s fifth graders, Angela Stephenson’s third graders, and Ginger Manning’s first graders took part in the Dialogue Journals Project sponsored by Rebecca Mott. The project is adopted from “The Young Writers,” an intergenerational program that was designed by Mott in Memphis, Tennessee during the early ‘90s.

The project was started at Crown Point last school year in mid-September. The classes wrote letters to members of the Mandarin Senior Center, where the students were paired with pen pals and

sent letters back and forth on a weekly basis throughout the school year. In early June, three receptions were held to allow the pen pals from each class to meet with their friends at the Mandarin Senior Center.

The receptions were filled with many different, engaging stations. Some of these stations included getting matching temporary tattoos for both students and seniors, taking photos together, playing word searches, and a fishing game to “fish for good friends.” Another activity involved the students and their pen pals using post-it notes on a map of the world to share where they are from. Another station featured a spinning corner where students learned that friends are like spinners — they help you see things in a whole new way. All the pen pals had a wonderful time looking through their journals and singing songs such as, “I’m Gonna Catch You,” “Let it Go,” and “You’ve Got a Friend in Me.”

The Dialogue Journal project allowed Crown Point students to employ their language arts skills in writing letters and cultivate a sense of community in the process. Mott is hoping to expand the project into more community settings this fall. She welcomes help finding volunteers, participants, and sponsors. If your school or organization is interested, email Rebecca Mott at mott.rbh@gmail.com or call (904) 248-8595



Photos courtesy Mary Eyer
Ginger Manning's class with their friends from the Mandarin Senior Center.



Third grader Jordan and pen pal Keith getting matching "tattoos."

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Nutrition Check

Back to School

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

As we are closing out summer, the time comes when schools resume, which means kids and young adults are no longer at home 24/7. (As a parent myself, I think all those parents out there can relate!) Back to school brings opportunities to support healthful food choices for all ages. So what can you do? Let’s focus on three main concepts in nutrition and how you can support positive food choice.

Balance:

1. Aim to get at least one fruit, vegetable, whole grain and lean protein at meals and/or snacks. See MyPlate for examples (www.myplate.gov).
2. Get your children, teens and young adults involved. Give them choice with meal planning, at the grocery, during meal prep and when eating out. Food choice does not have to be a battle, but rather embrace preference, culture and food enjoyment.

Variety

1. Change up your routine eating plans periodically. Once per week (or every other), explore all your food options by looking at adding either a new fruit, vegetable, whole grain or lean protein in the menu.

2. Within each food group (e.g. proteins), there are many options available to us. Try different cuts or cooking methods of popular animal proteins like pork, or explore the possibilities of plant-based proteins such as legumes and beans.

Moderation

1. Food can bring happiness to our bodies, our moods and our mouth. All foods can be part of your dietary pattern, just some less frequently or in smaller amounts than others.
2. Start a positive mindset with food for you and your family. Let’s eliminate food stigmatization by not classifying healthy vs. unhealthy or good vs. bad. Let’s be a friend to all foods!

As parents and caregivers, it is a premier opportunity to instill and inspire positive eating patterns and embracing that all foods bring nutrients to our bodies. Focusing on balance, variety and moderation are key.

Kristen Hicks-Roof PhD, RDN, LDN, CLC, FAND is an associate 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

To be completely honest I haven't fished the river much lately, so I don't have too much firsthand information for you this month. I've been fishing — it's just been a little farther from home than usual and you know, that's not a bad thing. Not that fishing in the river is bad right now, but it's nice to have some new water to explore.

Fishing familiar water is great, but you can easily fall into routines and fish the same spots over and over because you've caught fish there before, and you keep catching fish there now, but what happens when that stops? I think it can really hamper your development as an angler. I'd rather find a spot and then go find a similar spot and see if you can work out a pattern. Gain some understanding into what makes that dock or that shoreline the spot that it is. Once you do that you have something you can take with you, wherever you fish next. All I'm saying is don't be afraid to leave fish to find fish. You're never going to find them if you don't go looking.

This is what I'd be looking for in the river this month: the shrimp will be

bigger and I'd expect some eating-size shrimp to start being mixed in so you can cull a few for yourself. Those smaller shrimp will be great for the stripers and drum on the bridges and the reds, flounder, and sheepshead on the docks. I'd also see if I could locate some croakers or yellowmouth trout on the ledges and shell beds that I mentioned a while back. A trip into the fresher water with a few bigger live shrimp could be a great way to catch some nice bass and see why they're my favorite fish to catch with shrimp.

I've also got to mention the surf right now because tarpon will be very active in the bait pods this month and a few mullet might even be showing up already — so grab a cast net and some heavy gear. Fish near the bait and you could find out why you really need that much line on your reel. It's not a numbers game. Jumping one makes your day and landing one makes your month.

Maybe I'll have some better intel for you next month but until then: Tight lines.

Mandarin Rotary Club honors Police Officer of the Year

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Rotary Club of Mandarin recently honored Officer Margeaux (Maggie) Dunlap as its 2023 Police Officer of the Year. During a two week period in August, Officer Dunlap, showing a very high degree of initiative and investigative skill, was able to recover four stolen vehicles in the Mandarin area. She also identified the auto theft suspects, who were later arrested. In addition, while reviewing security camera footage regarding the auto thefts, she noticed the presence of two other suspects wanted for unrelated armed robberies. Those suspects were later arrested solely because of her outstanding investigative work.

“Officer Dunlap's high degree of



Photo courtesy Steve Gallagher
Officer Maggie Dunlap and Mandarin Rotary member Fred Pozin, who presented the award on behalf of the club.

professionalism was truly exemplary and was most worthy of this year's award,” said Mandarin Rotary Club member Steve Gallagher.

Pickwick Park residents on the move



Photos courtesy Isabel Balotin

By Isabel Balotin
mail@floridanewsline.com

A group of dedicated Pickwick Park residents recently worked tirelessly to clear Elizabeth “Betty” Wolfe Park of brush, ferns, vines and poisonous plants. While the city does a good job maintaining the larger areas, the smaller wooded sections where children play and animals are walked needed some extensive clearing out for their safety.

Although it was a hot and humid day, the group was determined to complete the job, and they did. Neat piles of yard waste were ready for pickup and now the area is beautiful and safe for our families.



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And the heat goes on ...

During the first week of July the monsoon rains settled in. Hotter than normal temperatures led to stormy conditions in the afternoons and evenings, and sometimes overnight. If you have sandy well-draining soil, then you can appreciate taking a break from watering.

If you garden in a location over a high water table or hard pan, then you may find some of your plants or lawn areas are really suffering from poor drainage. This article explains how to recognize plant problems and how to help your plants recover from too much rain: <https://tinyurl.com/4cd9u29r>.

If the problem is ongoing, though, a rain garden could be a good solution. Since some plants are well adapted to intermittent wet conditions, you don't necessarily need to do anything elaborate to make such a garden. For more information check out <https://tinyurl.com/2s3p3ddv>. However, if run-off from your roof via a downspout is exacerbating your drainage issues, you may want to manage the water more efficiently. If so, this article by Tonya Ashworth, our Duval County Horticulture Extension Agent, gives an in-depth account of how to construct a rain garden. She also supplies a great list of suitable plants: <https://tinyurl.com/mu8k5k2h>.

A major issue with run-off is the transport of excess nutrients and chemicals onto our streets into the storm drains, and subsequently into our rivers and aquifers. The ability of a rain garden to filter and clean rainwater as it's retained in the garden is very important.

The summer heat can make us all crave an easier gardening experience. While "low maintenance" means different things to different people — mow-

ing a lawn in high summer is not my idea of low maintenance — this is an aspect of design that appeals to many a gardener. For inspiration check out "Twenty-two Ideas for a Low-care, Low-cost Landscape" (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP442>). Some of the plant suggestions are more familiar in a traditional front yard, but native, wildlife-welcoming plants could be utilized in a similar way. If you're a fan of free phone apps, UF has one for the gardener looking for Florida friendly plants while on the go: <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/resources/apps/plant-guide/>. It should prove a useful aid at the nursery. For more gardening-related apps, check out <https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mobile/>.

As the year has progressed, some of my plants have been growing faster and blooming earlier than usual. Although the dry weather should have slowed them down, once the rains arrived, coupled with higher temperatures, established perennials like ironweed have been flowering for several weeks. Although seeds would be useful food for our backyard birds, cutting back spent flowers as soon as they fade will encourage branching and more flowers. Since summer is a time of plenty for our wildlife, it makes more sense to leave seedheads for the birds at the end of the season. Firespike (*Odontonema cuspidatum*) is also beginning to bloom and is attracting hummingbirds. It will flower until cut down by a freeze.

While the summer heat is on, we should all take care to avoid over strenuous outdoor activities. If you can, avoid being out during the hottest hours of the day, take plenty of water, cover up, and use sunscreen. You know the recommendations make sense. If you need more information, see <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/features/extremeheat/index.html>. Take care, especially if you work outside, and have a safe summer.

Mandarin Garden Club announces upcoming sale

By Joann Butler
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Mandarin Garden Club's \$1 Clothing and Jewelry Sale will take place on Friday, Aug. 4 and Saturday, Aug. 5 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. both days. The sale will feature plenty of gently used clothes, shoes and accessories for women, men and children for \$1 each. Some boutique and jewelry items will be priced slightly higher. A pop-up plant sale will be held outside in the gardens and there will be additional bargains on green plants. The Masons will be offering their delicious BBQ for sale.

at (904) 654-6945 or mgccraftylandies@gmail.com or Joyce Datz at (904) 287-3602 or jdatz@bellsouth.net for more information or to reserve a space.

The four circles are taking a summer break from meetings; they will continue in September. On Sept. 14 at 10 a.m. Magnolia Circle will have a meeting about herbs. The Dogwood Circle will talk about bromeliads on Sept. 19 at 10 a.m. Watch the Community Calendar in "Mandarin NewsLine" for more circle news each month.

Mandarin Garden Club is available for rent for parties, weddings, reunions, and all kinds of special occasions. Schedule a tour of the building and grounds by appointment only by contacting Paula Zumot at (904) 268-1192. Visit www.mandaringardenclub.org for more information.

Crafters are wanted for the club's annual Craft Fair, to be held on Nov. 18 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. The fee for an outside 10-foot by 10-foot space is \$40. Interested crafters should return their application promptly as spaces fill up quickly. Contact Wanda Bosworth

Travel

Legendary Music in Muscle Shoals

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

Small towns often bring big surprises, which was the case with Muscle Shoals in northwest Alabama. Muscle Shoals was and continues to be a city where high-profile musicians come to record music in the local sound studios. It earned the title "Hit Recording Capital of the World."

Baby Boomers especially recall musical memories when touring FAME Studios. It all started in the 1960s by a group of local musicians and producers. The establishment quickly gained a reputation for its high-quality recordings and unique sound, which blended elements of soul, R&B, and rock. One of the most famous producers to work at FAME was Rick Hall, who helped launch the careers of artists like Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding. Another notable producer was Jerry Wexler, who brought Aretha Franklin to Muscle Shoals to record her classic album "I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You."

In addition to FAME Studios, you can connect with nostalgia at Muscle Shoals Sound Studio, founded by a group of former FAME musicians in the 1970s. They typically worked as the backup rhythm band for the artists and were known as the Swampers. Their studio recorded albums by the Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, Willie Nelson, and many more.

"The magic must be in the water," said the former Swampers when asked why the hits happened there. Native American legends called the Tennessee River the Singing River and claimed it sang songs to protect them. Myth or not, the town's small size and tight-knit community allowed musicians and producers to work closely together, giving us some of the most iconic songs in music history, from "Respect" by Aretha Franklin to "Sweet Home Alabama" by Lynyrd Skynyrd.

You'll also find the Alabama Music Hall of Fame in the Shoals. This fantastic museum highlights Alabama's musical icons with portraits and memorabilia from 82 inductees. Some are giants like country music's Hank Williams and jazz/R&B crooner Nat "King" Cole and the ever-popular Lionel Richey.

WC Handy, known as the "Father of the Blues," was a prominent musician and composer born in Florence, Alabama, just a few miles from Muscle Shoals. In the early 1900s, Handy moved to Memphis, where he became a key figure in the development of the blues genre. His birthplace, a small log cabin, is now a music-centric museum, still owned and operated by his family.

If music is not your passion, the Shoals area offers diverse reasons to



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Muscle Shoals studio artists.

visit. A rock star of a different type is the Wichahpi Commemorative Wall, better known as Tom's Wall. Tom Hendrix spent 33 years hauling rocks and constructing a memorial wall for his great-great-grandmother. She was forced to leave her home and walk the Trail of Tears to Oklahoma. A member of the Yuchi Indian tribe, she eventually walked 700 miles to return to the Singing River. Each stone represents one step of her journey. Meandering along the wall becomes a moving experience like nothing I've seen before.

More notable attractions include the Coon Dog Cemetery with graves and decorative tombstones for coon dogs, the 1939-designed Frank Lloyd Wright

"Rosenbaum" House with original furnishings open to the public, and the Florence Indian Mound and Museum. Another must-see in nearby Tuscumbia is Ivy Green, the house where Helen Keller connected the spilling water at the pump with the letters in the word w-a-t-e-r traced in her hand. Anglers like to come to the "Smallmouth Bass Capital of the World" for excellent freshwater fishing. I'm sure something in Muscle Shoals will hit the right chord for you.

For more information: <http://colbert-countytourism.org> or alabama.travel

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



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*"My feet feel like they're on fire."
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"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!

Call (904) 720 - 8887 to schedule an initial consultation or visit www.RiverplaceAcupuncture.com to read more incredible success stories.



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