

# Mandarin NewsLine

SEPTEMBER 2020 Volume 14 Issue 11

A Florida NewsLine Publication



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## Historic bell project underway

By Susie Scott  
mail@floridanewsline.com

For those following the saga of the historic 1855 bell discovered at the Mandarin Community Club, the bell is now on its way to Charleston, S.C., for restoration.

The bell, determined to be solid bronze and weighing in around 200 pounds, was removed from the belfry of the historic building in preparation for transport to the Christoph Paccard Bell Foundry. The bell will be polished, sealed, a new clapper installed and the mounting "yoke" and A-frame will be sandblasted and refinished. Once complete, the bell and its mount will be placed on a specially constructed display where it can be rung on special occasions.



Club members Ginny Barker and Brett Nolan with the historic bell.

In its original use in the The Mandarin School (as it was known), the bell summoned the villagers of Mandarin to community meetings, church services, and other important events. Harriet Beecher Stowe founded and oversaw the construction (and reconstruction after a fire) of the building during her time as a part time winter resident of

Historic bell cont. on pg. 9

## DUVAL COUNTY STUDENTS HEAD BACK TO SCHOOL

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewsline.com

The minivans, bikers, and walkers are back, in addition to a sea of yellow buses. School started on Thursday, Aug. 20 for Duval County Public Schools with new protocols amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"Teachers and staff were happy to see the students come back," said recently reelected School Board member for District 7, Lori Hershey, who spent the day volunteering at Crown Point Elementary School. "It was a fun and exciting day."

Crown Point's principal Brett Hartley, starting his fifth year as the school's leader, was likewise impressed with how his staff and students handled the first day after an elongated time away from the school's campus.

"I am so pleased with how this year is starting off," Hartley said. "With all of the changes due to COVID, I am simply amazed by how flexible and understanding our students, staff, and families have been. I know this is going to be an incredible year."

According to statistics provided by Duval County Public Schools, this

year 111,187 students are enrolled in grades kindergarten through 12 in 165 schools (excluding charter schools). Of those, just over 40,000, or 36 percent, are enrolled in Duval HomeRoom, the district's school-based distance learning program. Another 1,452 are enrolled virtually in the Duval Virtual Instructional Academy. Mandarin's student count stands at approximately 7,400 in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Sara Bravo, principal at Mandarin High School, was pleased to welcome her students back and echoed Hershey's and



Photos courtesy Mary Elyer  
Crown Point Elementary School principal Brett Hartley taking a student's temperature before school.

Hartley's first day comments.

"The first day at Mandarin High School was outstanding," Bravo said. "All students wore their masks and appropriately social distanced without issue or prompting. The teachers and staff were positive and excited to see students. Parents should be extremely proud of their children and students should be proud of themselves."

Duval County's protocols for defense against COVID-19

include the wearing of face masks by everyone in the school all day. Additionally,

temperatures are taken when students arrive at school and handwashing and social distancing are encouraged. The district has communicated with parents the important request to keep children at home if they are sick or have any symptoms of COVID-19.

To keep families well-informed of COVID-19 impacts to their school communities, the district is creating a COVID-19 dashboard. The dashboard,

which is under construction as of press date, will display an aggregate number of confirmed positive COVID-19 cases on school campuses among students and staff. It will be updated overnight with known cases.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Diana Greene taught a third grade class at Loretto Elementary School on the first day of school.

"Despite the challenges I am absolutely thrilled that we are back in school, and even more thrilled that our students



Amanda Redmond with a few of her first graders at Crown Point.

are back with their teachers whether that's in class or online," Greene said. "I believe passionately that both from the academic perspective and from the perspective of living through

this pandemic experience there is no better place for a child than in the care of their teachers. There is no better place for a child to grow than when they are in the care of our teachers, and it doesn't matter whether they're face-to-face or online."

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St. Johns, Florida 32259  
(904) 886-4919  
www.FloridaNewsLine.com

**Publisher**  
Mark Pettus  
Publisher@FloridaNewsLine.com

**Editor**  
Martie Thompson  
Editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

**Creative Director**  
Julie Gerona  
Graphics@FloridaNewsLine.com

**Bookkeeper**  
Emily Whitehead  
Accounting@FloridaNewsLine.com

**Social Media**  
SocialMedia@FloridaNewsLine.com

**Advertising Sales**  
Rebecca Thomson  
Rebecca@FloridaNewsLine.com  
(724) 968-7602 cell

Linda Gay  
Linda@FloridaNewsLine.com  
(904) 607-5062 cell

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## BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Simon!



**BREED:**  
Pug

**FAVORITE ACTIVITY:**  
Eating and sleeping on one of his four pillows

**FAVORITE TREAT:**  
Peanut butter filled Smart Stick

**FAVORITE FRIEND:**  
Cherry tomatoes

**HOW YOUR BFF GOT THEIR NAME:**  
Angus, his shiba inu big brother

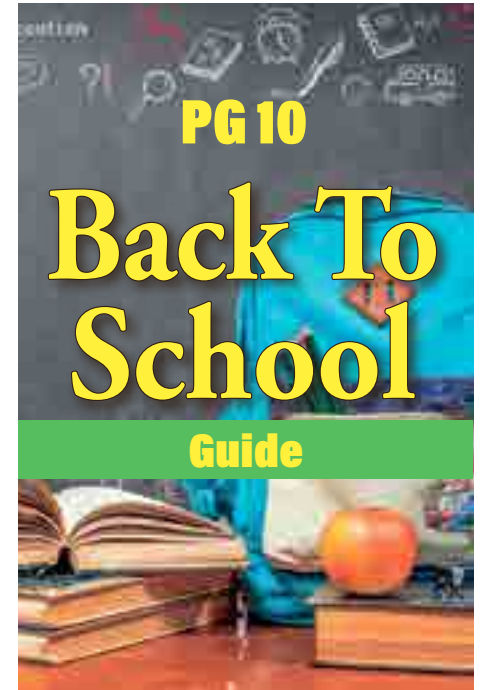
This month's contest sponsored by:  
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Do you have a cute pet? Send us your pet's picture and the answers to the five questions above before the 10th of the month. Your pet could be our BFF of the month and you could win a Gift Certificate!  
**Does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

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## MYSTERY PHOTO

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

Last month's Mystery Photo was the seat at the end of County Dock.  
Our winner was Richard Gareau. Congratulations!

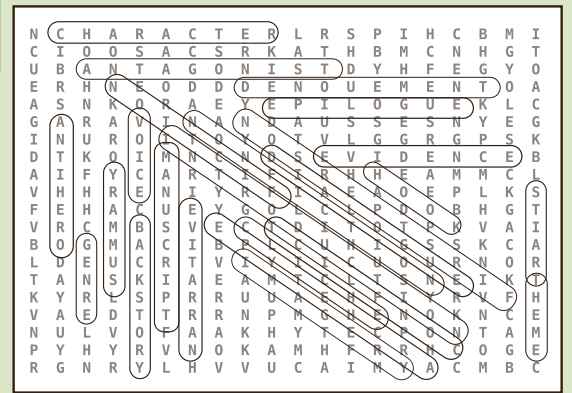


Answers  
to our  
Puzzles  
PG 12

### CRYPTO FUN

Substitute the code to reveal the answer!

Answers: A. compose B. draft C. edit D. ideas



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# September

## Community Calendar

### What's Going On in Mandarin? A modified calendar of events

Email [editor@floridanewline.com](mailto:editor@floridanewline.com) to have your community group's event included.

**Shuffleboard at Mandarin Park** is on hold for now. Keep an eye out for the announcement of resumption of play in a future issue of Mandarin NewsLine.

**The Italian American Club** of Jacksonville announces its Board of Directors meeting on Sept. 2 at 6:30 p.m., a General Membership dinner meeting on Sept. 13 at 1:30 p.m. and the popular Spaghetti to Go on Sept. 25, from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. All activities are at the club building, 2838 Westberry Road. Visit [www.iacofjacksonville.com](http://www.iacofjacksonville.com) or call (904) 586-2700 for more information.

**Northeast Florida AHEC** announces the following free Quit Tobacco Class, which includes free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges: Wednesday, Sept. 30 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at

5927 Old Timuquana Road. Call (904) 482-0189 for more information or to sign up.

**Coast Guard Flotilla 14-8** has resumed its free vessel safety check program in service to the boating public. Examiners will be following CDC guidelines for PPE and social distancing while conducting the free vessel safety checks. To schedule your free vessel safety check, visit [www.safeboatingjax.com](http://www.safeboatingjax.com); an examiner will contact you to set up an appointment.

**ElderSource** will host a community donation Shop & Drop event at its Mandarin headquarters parking lot at 10688 Old St. Augustine Road on Saturday, Sept. 26 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. to benefit local seniors. Requested items include hand wipes, sanitizer, tissues, adult coloring books, colored pencils, crayons, pens, activities books and toiletries.

### Q&A with Duval School Board Member, District 7, Lori Hershey

**Q: Can you give an update on the first day of school, which was yesterday, Aug. 20?**

**A:** I spent the first day volunteering at Crown Point Elementary School, mostly helping students find their classrooms. I was amazed at how many students were new to the school. It was a very fun and exciting day, with students, teachers and parents all happy to be coming back. Things went smoothly; students' temperatures were taken in the car if they rode to school or prior to entering the building if they walked. I also visited Twin Lakes Academy Elementary, Twin Lakes Academy Middle School, and Mandarin Middle School — and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Diana Greene taught third grade on the first day of school at Mandarin's oldest school, 78-year-old Loretto Elementary.

**Q: What was your experience like at the middle schools?**

**A:** The principals at both middle schools commented that the first day back went well. I felt that the sixth graders especially were more at ease due to there being fewer students on campus. This is because middle schools and high schools are utilizing a hybrid learning model, where not all students are on campus at the same time.

**Q: How long will this hybrid learning model be offered?**

**A:** The Duval County Schools positivity rate on the first day of school, per the Duval County Department of Health, was 4.2 percent. The school board's goal is to watch this trend over the next few

weeks. The state approved our plan for the hybrid learning for middle and high schools until Sept. 14, so the board will decide by Sept. 8 if we will ask the state to extend this option for us or if we will need to go to five-day-a-week school. (Elementary schools are presently already going to school all five days.) The good news is that this gives us time to study the trends in our area and see the impact that opening school has had on the positivity rate.

**Q: Can you give us a brief overview of the safety precautions being taken?**

**A:** We are requesting that parents take their student's temperature at home before coming to school. (Their temperature will also be taken at school.) Reasons to stay home include a temperature in excess of 100.4 degrees, a new cough, shortness of breath, or loss of taste or smell. Since Jacksonville has a city-wide mask mandate, the school district also requires masks to be worn all day in schools.

**Q: What can you tell us about the Duval Homeroom learning option?**

**A:** About 70 percent of our students opted to return to school in person and about 30 percent opted to start the year online via Duval Homeroom. Since we've staffed based on these numbers, it's important to note that if your student is registered for Duval Homeroom, it is a nine-week commitment. At the end of the first nine weeks, parents and students can evaluate if they want to continue for

Lori Hershey cont. on pg. 5

## Medicare Open Enrollment October 15 - December 7



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with Jacksonville City Council Member, District 6, Michael Boylan

**Q: Do you have any updates on rezonings in Mandarin?**

A: We have three right now that are garnering a great deal of interest. First, the Loretto Road project is still in deliberations. We are working diligently with neighbors and the developer to come to an agreement. A revised site plan will soon be going to the Planning Department.

The O'Connor Road/Melcon Farms rezoning application is also still in progress. A Town Hall meeting has taken place.

Finally, the LUZ (Land Use and Zoning) Committee did approve the Barkoskie Road application by a vote of 5 – 2 on Aug. 18. I voted against the application due to traffic safety concerns at the Old St. Augustine Road/ Barkoski Road intersection. The application will be part of the consent agenda at the City Council meeting on Aug. 25 due to the support of the Planning Department and now the LUZ.

**Q: What is the issue that you are hearing the most about lately from constituents?**

A: We are having an ongoing issue with respect to water management/flooding, especially during the heavy rains of early August. I've been working with the Public Works Department daily since the beginning of August; they are working to clear drains and mediate what was developed privately with city owned property. Our infrastructure just can't handle this kind of rainfall in such a short time and I'm very aware of the challenge.

One way I've been working to address this is through CIP (Capital Improvement Program). The city administration has agreed to put a significant amount of

money over a five year period to things such as under drains and drain cleaning throughout the city. My priority is to keep Mandarin a priority for this work.

**Q: Can you outline your new committee responsibilities with the new council year?**

A: I have a number of new responsibilities this year. I'll be the chair of the LUZ (Land Use and Zoning) committee, and as such will help manage growth throughout the city. I'll also continue as liaison to the Cultural Council. I've been named the Council representative to the Supervisor of Elections' canvassing board. Finally, I'm actively involved with several special committees, including the Social Justice Committee, the Opioid Epidemic Committee and the Resiliency Committee.

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

A: Over the course of the past two months I have been inundated with emails on a variety of national topics. These emails are sent to all council members plus the mayor and other elected officials simultaneously and I call them "broadcast emails." I don't necessarily think they merit a response; I take note of them, but don't generally respond. My suggestion is if you have an issue, please send an email to me personally and include your address. I always make sure to respond to these types of individual emails. I do take pride in our office's responsiveness and customer service.

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

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

## Donations sought to help elderly residents

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewline.com

ElderSource will host a community donation Shop & Drop event at its Mandarin headquarters on Saturday, Sept. 26 to benefit local seniors.

The local nonprofit organization is asking people to purchase and drop off nonperishable items that seniors need. ElderSource staff members will accept donations in their parking lot at 10688 Old St Augustine Road from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. They will sort, bag and deliver the items to elderly in the community who are in need.

Items that EderSource officials hope will be dropped off include:

- Hand wipes, sanitizer
- Tissues
- Adult coloring books, colored pencils, crayons, pens
- Activities books (word search, Sudoku, playing cards)



Photos courtesy MetroCreative

- Toiletries (soap, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrush)
  - No sweets, canned or boxed food or perishables.
- Note that donations are only being accepted on Sept. 26 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. as ElderSource staff continues to work remotely and office hours are limited.

Lori Hershey cont. from pg. 4

another nine weeks or return to in person school. I think one of the neat components of Duval Homeroom is it allows students to remain connected to their home school.

**Q: How can our readers contact you?**

A: They can email me at [HersheyL@duvalschools.org](mailto:HersheyL@duvalschools.org) or call me at (904) 316-3609.

## Eat, Drink, Shop *Locally*

### FYI Contact Numbers

**Duval County Local Government (coj.net)**

**Sheriff's Office:** Sheriff Mike Williams, (904) 630-2120  
Patrol Zone 3: Assistant Chief Paul Restivo, (904) 630-8100

**Property Appraiser:** Jerry Holland, [jholland@coj.net](mailto:jholland@coj.net); (904) 630-2011

**Supervisor of Elections:** Mike Hogan, [mhogan@coj.net](mailto:mhogan@coj.net), (904) 630-1414

**Tax Collector:** Jim Overton, [taxcollector@coj.net](mailto:taxcollector@coj.net), (904) 630-1916

**Clerk of Court:** Ronnie Fussell, (904) 255-2000

**Jacksonville City Council**

District 6: Michael Boylan, [MBoylan@coj.net](mailto:MBoylan@coj.net), (904) 255-5206  
At Large, District 3: Tommy Hazouri, [thazouri@coj.net](mailto:thazouri@coj.net), (904) 255-5217

**Duval County School Board**

([www.duvalschools.org](http://www.duvalschools.org))  
District 7: Lori Hershey, [hershey@duvalschools.org](mailto:hershey@duvalschools.org), (904) 390-2375

**State of Florida Elected Officials**  
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State House District 16: Representative Jason Fischer, (850) 717-5016

State Senate District 4: Senator Aaron Bean, (904) 757-5039

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### Annual Medicare Enrollment Period

October 15th through December 7th



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**Briefs**

**July real estate: Hot streak with higher median and average sales prices**

Following a June market that saw substantial spikes in both number of sales and sales prices, July's real estate market turned up the heat even more. There were 3,514 sales, a 15.8 percent increase from a year ago and higher than June's 3,175.

The median sales price was \$265,000, a 9.8 percent increase over July 2019, and up \$10,000 from June's \$255,000 median. The average price was 15.3 percent higher than a year ago, coming in at \$325,665. June's average price was \$309,757.

Vigorous demand for homes, coupled with fewer sellers entering the market (3,523 new listings in July, 3.8 percent fewer than a year ago), continues to create a supply imbalance. While five- to six-months is considered a market that is balanced between buyers and sellers, Northeast Florida's July market closed with just two-and-a-half months' supply, a drop of 34.2 percent from a year ago.

July 2019 had an inventory of 9,905 homes, whereas this July closed with only 6,943 in the hopper, a 29.9 percent plunge. A consequence of the inventory shortage is competitive bidding among buyers vying for the property of their choice. Because of this, 15.8 percent of home sales in July were for more than the original sales price.

2020 NEFAR President Ron Harris said, "Buyers are taking full advantage of extremely low interest rates, despite dealing with fewer available home choices. If any homeowners are even considering becoming sellers, there couldn't be a better time

for them to make their move."

*The Northeast Florida Association of Realtors provides professional development, political advocacy, professional standards administration, media relations, and promotional activities and exchange of information among its members. Visit [www.nefar.com](http://www.nefar.com) for more information.*

**Junior Achievement accepting resumes for new president through Sept. 25**

Junior Achievement (JA) of North Florida is looking to fill the position of president and the nonprofit is now accepting resumes from qualified candidates. Current president and CEO Steve St. Amand recently announced his retirement and JA is accepting resumes to fill his position from now through 5 p.m. on Sept. 25.

"We are accepting resumes from both internal and external candidates with a record of demonstrated success at the executive level," said Mary Ann Callahan, chair of JA of North Florida's board of directors. "We are looking for a strategic leader who can take and build on what Steve has accomplished over the last 20 years. We encourage everyone who meets the required qualifications to send us their resume for review."

The president of JA of North Florida will oversee the entire organization and will be responsible for finances, fundraising, staff management and development, administrative operations and public and community relations. He or she will also take part in board development and program management.

The position requires a candidate with a bachelor's degree or equivalent business experience who is a strategic thinker and decision maker. The candidate should

have at least four years of experience in a related field with a successful track record and be a relationship builder with excellent management, communication, organization and interpersonal skills.

Resumes, cover letters and salary requirements should be sent to Junior Achievement at One Education Way, Colorado Springs, CO, 80906 or emailed to [presidenthiring@ja.org](mailto:presidenthiring@ja.org) with Jacksonville noted in the subject line.

St. Amand will be stepping down from the position on Dec. 31, 2020.

*Junior Achievement is the world's largest organization dedicated to educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy through experiential, hands-on programs. Visit [www.janfl.org](http://www.janfl.org) for more information.*

**Symphony moves forward with 2020 - 21 season**

The Jacksonville Symphony will begin its 2020 - 21 season on Saturday, Sept. 26. Having not performed in Jacoby Symphony Hall as a full orchestra since March 2020, the Symphony staff has spent the summer planning, rearranging, and finalizing plans to safely open the hall to the public in September.

"It's not been easy," said Symphony president and CEO Steven Libman. "No one has ever had to do this before. It's all new — distancing an orchestra, distancing an audience, changing the way the experience in the concert hall looks and feels. The good news is the one thing that COVID-19 will not change is the way the orchestra sounds."

The safety of patrons, musicians and staff remains the Symphony's top priority. Based on CDC guidelines, and the results of the survey sent to patrons in June, the

Symphony has developed a comprehensive list of safety protocols that will be in place when the hall opens in September. Seating in Jacoby Symphony Hall will be physically distanced, guaranteeing six feet of separation between most groups of patrons (those who are not physically distanced will have plexi-glass screens between sets of patrons). This has reduced the capacity of the hall from nearly 1,800 to 582. In addition, patrons will be required to wear masks at all times in most parts of the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts, including in Jacoby Symphony Hall. Patrons will also be required to have their temperatures taken before entering the building. There will be no intermissions held at Symphony concerts during the 2020 - 21 season in order to reduce unnecessary lines and groups of people. Performances will range from 60 - 75 minutes.

As a result of new safety guidelines, Music Director Courtney Lewis and the Symphony Artistic Team have had to rework programming for the 2020 - 21 season multiple times, and they have successfully created a dynamic season in the span of a few months.

The Florida Blue Masterworks Series has undergone the most changes because of the time constraints of a concert without an intermission. But what had a greater impact is the number of musicians who can safely perform on the Jacoby Symphony Hall stage. This season, patrons will see no more than 54 musicians on stage at any given time. During a normal season there are often 70, or more, musicians on the stage. All pieces chosen for each concert had to be specifically selected to conform to the necessity of having a smaller orchestra.

Visit [www.jaxsymphony.org](http://www.jaxsymphony.org) for more information.



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# Walter Jones Historical Park benefits from Eagle Project

By Sandy Arpen  
mail@floridanewline.com

In July the Walter Jones Historical Park was the beneficiary of an Eagle Scout Award Project. Brigham Pratt, an Eagle candidate from Troop 110, based at the Episcopal Church of Our Saviour, noticed the terrible condition of the garbage can enclosures around the park and decided to make five new ones.

Pratt said, "I originally looked at a number of projects to complete, but ultimately decided to help the Walter Jones Historical Park by building new trash can enclosures, which were very much needed. I was very glad to be able to do a service project for the park because I've been visiting this park since I was about five years old."

Sadly, the ones that were replaced were from an Eagle project that served well for about five years until the weather and the constant use wore them down into disrepair.

Pratt signed the new boxes, built them in separate sections and brought them for assembly on July 18. He was helped by members of his troop, his dad, the troop leader and family members of the scouts. The containers were well built — each having four posts buried in the ground for extra strength.

Pratt was raised in Mandarin, and attended Loretto Elementary School. He recently graduated from Stanton College Preparatory High School and will attend the University of North Florida this fall. He has an interesting hobby of working on cars and is currently "restoring a 1987 Nissan 300zx — my first car — back to working order with the help of my dad."

Scouting has been part of Pratt's life for as long as he can remember and he feels his involvement has given him "tons of

great opportunities to help the community and make great memories."

This project took much planning, coordinating and many hours of hard work to complete. In fact, he and the other volunteers spent more than 220 hours on his Eagle Scout Project. This includes meeting with folks at the museum, gathering supplies, and constructing/installation of the enclosures.



Photo courtesy Mandarin Museum & Historical Society  
Brigham Pratt with his Eagle Scout project at Walter Jones Historical Park.

"It couldn't have been possible without the gracious support and donations from my

grandparents, the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society, Lowe's, and Chick-fil-a," Pratt said. "With their help, I was able to exceed my original goal of making four enclosures, ending up with five instead. I'm also thankful for the support of my troop, both with donations and volunteers to help work on the project."

Pratt said he'd also like to give special thanks to Wayne Dealing, his Scoutmaster during his entire time with the Boy Scouts of America.



Brigham Pratt (kneeling) with BSA Troop 110 at Walter Jones Historical Park.

"Mr. Woodward and Mrs. Arpen with the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society, and Mr. Burket with the City of Jacksonville were also instrumental in the development and completion of this project," Pratt said.

According to the Boy Scouts of America, Eagle Scout is the highest achievement or rank attainable in the Scouts BSA program of the Boy Scouts of America. Since its inception in 1911, only four percent of Scouts have earned this rank after a lengthy review process.

*Sandy Arpen is a volunteer with the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society. Visit [www.mandarinmuseum.net](http://www.mandarinmuseum.net) for more information about Mandarin's history and museum schedules.*



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## Bolles launches 2020-21 school year on campus, online

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

The first day of school on all four Bolles campuses and in home-based classrooms around the world went off without a hitch on Aug. 13.

The Bolles Lower School Whitehurst and Ponte Vedra Beach campuses, as well as the Bolles Middle School Bartram Campus, opened the year in a “Operating Scenario 2.” That means classes are being held on campus with synchronous online instruction available for students wishing to take classes from a distance. The Bolles Upper School San Jose Campus is in “Operating Scenario 3,” meaning half the student body is on campus each day while the other half participates in at-home learning. Facilities and classrooms on all four campuses have been redesigned for appropriate physical distancing, including the addition of partitions and relocation of some classrooms to larger spaces.

“Thanks to the hard work and diligence of our faculty and staff this summer, we are well prepared for a safe and healthy return to campus,” said Bolles President and Head of School Tyler Hodges. “I am grateful for the opportunity to learn together during this unusual season — we are ready for a safe and productive school year.”

The focus on health and safety is paying off. The Bolles School has a higher enrollment number this year than last year, with numbers expected to grow as prospective student paperwork is processed in the weeks ahead.



Photos courtesy The Bolles School  
A student at the Ponte Vedra Beach campus practices safe handwashing.

On the first day of school, students practiced new arrival protocols on each campus, including arrival health screenings. Prior to campus entry, all students must have their temperature taken from their vehicle. They also must answer a standard set of questions regarding their physical condition, symptoms and any known exposure to COVID-19. All faculty and staff also must answer the same questions and log their temperature before beginning the work day.

Masks are mandatory on all Bolles campuses this year. Students also are getting used to new classroom seating charts, physical distancing standards and new class dismissal and arrival bells that allow for adequate spacing between classes. Many classes enjoyed connecting with classmates learning from home via large screens and video technology.

On Aug. 13, half of the Class of 2021 enjoyed the Senior Breakfast, an annual tradition hosted by the Bolles Parent Association. Clad in black dresses and shirts, tiaras and sunglasses, students convened at a distance on the Bolles River Campus for grab-and-go breakfast snacks and camaraderie. The second half of the Class of 2021 enjoyed the festivities on Aug. 14.

## Popular Cupcake Run to be virtual this year

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

Due to concerns about COVID-19, the annual Girls on the Run Cupcake Run and Cake Walk was moved from April to September; however, with CDC guidelines still restricting large gatherings, Girls on the Run has decided to make the Cupcake Run a virtual run this year. Scheduled for Sept. 19, it is not too late to sign up and receive the race swag (medal, mini cupcake, technical shirt, cupcake coupons and a race bib). Registration for the 5K only will take place until Sept. 13 at midnight (or until the medals are gone).

For local participants (within 50 mile radius), race packet pickup will be Tuesday, Sept. 15, Wednesday, Sept. 16 and Thursday, Sept. 17 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. each day at Sweet by Holly at the St. Johns Town Center, 4624 Town Crossing Drive #137. For out of town participants (outside 50 mile radius), all swag (except cupcake and coupons) will be mailed no later than Sept. 16.

Once you receive your packet,

run your race your way on Saturday Sept. 19 and post it to the GOTRNEFL Facebook page to win a dozen Sweet by Holly cupcakes.

For the past 16 years, Girls on the Run Northeast Florida has been a champion for girls, helping them to see that their potential isn't just enormous — it's beyond measure! Girls on the Run staff know that their programs are needed now more than ever, so they are hard at work to ensure that girls will continue to build connectedness, strengthen their social-emotional health and increase their physical activity during this upcoming school year. Their commitment to inspiring girls to be joyful, healthy and confident is stronger than ever.



## Mandarin Women's Club invites members to join or renew membership

By Gail Packard  
mail@floridanewsline.com

The Mandarin Women's Club has been in existence since the early 1980s, and each year the club has produced a directory of the membership. This year has been an unusual one, but the club still intends to produce a directory of all members. To that end, the membership renewal period will be open until Sept. 10, 2020.

Due to the shortened year, the cost of membership will be \$15 and will be for club year October 1, 2020 – May 31, 2021. When club members are able to finally meet again, there will be no cost to members for the first luncheon, which will not have a program; it will be a time for members to visit after such a long absence.

To join or renew your membership, complete a membership form and send it to Sue Wojtowicz along with a check (no cash). Your form must be received by Sep. 10 for your information to be included in the directory. The directory will be mailed to you as soon as it is returned from the publisher. Visit [www.mandarinwomensclub.com](http://www.mandarinwomensclub.com) to download the membership form and review the mailing instructions.

Due to the current restrictions on large gatherings, the club is still on hold for luncheons as well as all activities. In the meantime, members will continue to look out for each other and neighbors and continue to wear masks and social distance.




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# Life

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## Get to Know . . .

Jessica Mechell

By Martie Thompson  
editor@floridanewsline.com



Photo courtesy Juan Kurtis  
Jessica Mechell

whose hobby is songwriting and performing Christian rap music. She loves to travel and feels called to volunteer — but most of all, she strives to inspire. As she points out, there are a lot of things going on right now that can bring people down and she thinks it is important to find the positive wherever possible.

Mechell was born in Biloxi, Miss., into a military family; her father retired after serving 30 years in the Air Force. Growing up, the family moved regularly and she says that to this day she starts getting the “itch” to move after living somewhere for three years. She has lived in North Dakota, Texas, Japan, Arkansas, California and now calls Mandarin home. She earned her degree in computer information systems from Florida A&M University and her MBA from the University of Texas at Tyler. She has been married since 2018 to Jacksonville native T.J. Griffin.

**Q: How did you come to live in Mandarin?**

A: I met my now-husband, T.J., when we were both in college at Florida A&M. After I graduated, I went to work for Microsoft in North Dakota, which is actually where Microsoft Office Suite was developed. Then I went to Texas to work on my MBA and he wanted me to move with him back to Florida. I told him I would only do so with a ring on my finger!

**Get to Know . . .**

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editor@FloridaNewsLine.com

So we were married on May 19, 2018 — the same day as the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. Now I work in the banking industry, managing the law firms that support the bank’s mortgage business.

**Q: How old were you when you first became seriously interested in music?**

A: I started rapping at age 11. I was inspired by my aunt, who was very musical. I looked up to her as a big sister. My passion for music continued to grow, including participating in rap battles at lunchtime in middle school. As I grew older, I transitioned to singing about faith-based topics. So far, music has been a hobby of mine; I’m trying to do it full time, but I haven’t made that transition yet. Before the pandemic, I would perform at churches and events all over town, but now I’m more in the online environment.

**Q: What are you doing in this time of COVID to share positivity?**

A: I just released a single, “Keep Hope Alive,” which aims to recognize those who are helping us win the fight against COVID-19. (Visit [www.jessicamechell.com](http://www.jessicamechell.com) for more information.) I’m also introducing a campaign that invites people to send me their testimonies so I can share them with others. For example, I have heard from someone who lost his job, but then was able to become an entrepreneur and start his own business. I feel like people are feeling discouraged; they are stuck in their house, their plans are falling through, maybe they have been laid off . . . it’s a stressful time and everywhere we are bombarded with negative news. I want people to know that this is just temporary and things will get better! I

was supposed to open for a Grammy Award-winning artist recently, but it too was cancelled. So I am using this time to perfect my craft so when this is all over, I’ll be ready.

**Q: Where do you volunteer?**

A: Pre-COVID, I volunteered once a month at Edward Waters College, talking to students about topics like financial planning and professional development. This past spring, I had the opportunity to host a panel of experts in an online workshop for high school students who are preparing to apply to college. (Editor’s Note: This workshop is still available to view online at [www.jessicamechell.com/jminspires](http://www.jessicamechell.com/jminspires).)

**Q: What do you like to do for fun?**

A: We enjoy travelling and have visited lots of places including the Bahamas and Jamaica. I consider myself somewhat of an ice cream connoisseur and I look for the best ice cream in every city we visit. Locally, I like Whit’s in Jacksonville Beach and Mayday in San Marco. But the very best ice cream I have found is in Charleston, S.C. at a place called Peace Pie. They serve two shortbread cookies with pecan pie filling and vanilla ice cream in the middle. It is delicious!

Historic bell cont. from pg. 1

Mandarin from the 1860s to 1880s.

Fundraising for the restoration has been ongoing since the late 2019 launch with a “Bingo for the Bell” event. Stay tuned as we follow the progress of this part of Mandarin’s history.



Photos courtesy Susie Scott  
Christopher Paccard Bell Foundry team members moving the bell for transport.

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# Back To School

## Energize your child's mind with JEA Power Pals @home

By NewsLine Staff  
mail@floridanewsline.com

A great way to jump-start your child's learning this back-to-school season is to tap into a new JEA at-home learning opportunity, JEA Power Pals @home. This free program, designed for children in kindergarten through second grade, focuses on teaching kids (and their parents) how to be safe around electricity and practice energy conservation. It's all in a free workbook full of fun and engaging activities, available as a free download from JEA's website.

"JEA Power Pals @home makes it easy to teach your kids about electric safety at home, where we're all spending a little more time these days," said JEA spokeswoman Simone Garvey-Ewan. "It's a great tool to get your kids back into learning mode as our schools reopen for the fall."

For years, JEA has offered Power Pals as an in-person, four-week long program led by JEA Ambassadors. With the ar-

rival of the pandemic, JEA adapted the program for home use with a downloadable, self-guided workbook.

JEA Power Pals @home teaches kids that electricity and water don't mix, how electric cords can start fires, and how to choose light bulbs that save you money (a benefit for parents' wallets).

"The program provides great material, and kids always seem to love learning about electricity," Garvey-Ewan said.

When kids start the program, they're known as "JEA Power Pals-in-Training." When they finish, parents can present them with their very own official JEA Power Pals certificate, included in the downloadable workbook, which can be fun if parents make the "ceremony" creative.

Visit [jea.com/Power\\_Pals\\_at\\_Home/](http://jea.com/Power_Pals_at_Home/) to learn more about JEA Power Pals @home and download the workbook.

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# Fishing

## Capt. David's Fishing Report

By Captain David Lifka  
mail@floridanewslines.com

Too much rain has put a real damper on the start of this year's shrimping season. Sporadic catches with various sizes have been the norm. Hopefully now as we get into the peak of the season, shrimping will turn around. It's happened in the past.

Redfish on the docks north of the Buckman Bridge all the way to San Marco area docks has been very productive in recent weeks. Fishing artificial or live baits during moving tides has been working best.

The best fishing we can expect this time of year is that of croaker and yellowmouth (weakfish). Good numbers of both are being caught in the Green Cove Springs area of the river and farther south of Shands Bridge.

These fish are usually easy to catch, and without any real size or quantity limits, this can add up quickly to make a nice sized pile for a fish fry. Live or dead local shrimp make the best bait for either. You can also try cut croaker for the chance of some really nice sized yellowmouth, as the larger fish sometimes prefer cut bait.

Do not let inconsistent shrimping mess up your day. Always have rods in the boat for an alternative, and switch to fishing when necessary. After all, something in the cooler is always better than nothing at all. Also, baiting an area at dusk and shrimping under a couple of lanterns after dark may be the answer to attracting shrimp for some decent catches.

Fishing Report: Good numbers of reds on docks. Marker 18 at Green Cove Springs seems to be the best first stop for croakers and yellowtails. If you make it to the beach, surf fishing has been surprisingly good for a variety of species.

Whether you catch one, some, or none, the family time spent fishing will last a lifetime.



Photo courtesy Andrew White  
Andrew White caught these two redfish north of the Buckman Bridge near Beauclerc using a white strike king spinner bait. One was 34" and the other 30". Both fish were released with no issues.

Email your Catch of the Month photo to [catchofthemonthpictures@gmail.com](mailto:catchofthemonthpictures@gmail.com). Be sure to include the name of the person(s) in the photo, the name of the person who took the photo, the type of fish and date and location of the catch. We will select a photo each month for publication.

## US Coast Guard Auxiliary update

By Paul Tynda  
mail@floridanewslines.com

Like everyone, the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Flotilla 14-8 has had to adjust with the ever-changing COVID-19 pandemic situation. The Coast Guard Auxiliary across the nation had suspended a vast majority of activities where members would be at risk of exposure or in direct contact with the public. Flotilla 14-8 had also followed the guidance to suspend activities and awaited approval to return to work.

As the country starts to reopen, the Coast Guard Auxiliary is also slowly getting back to work. Flotilla 14-8 is currently able to resume its free vessel safety check program in service to the boating public. Examiners will be following CDC guidelines for PPE and social distancing while conducting the free vessel safety checks. During the exam, the examiners will be wearing face masks and disposable gloves. Where possible, examiners will also be

maintaining a minimum of six feet of distance between people. To schedule your free vessel safety check, visit [www.safeboatingjax.com](http://www.safeboatingjax.com); an examiner will contact you to set up an appointment.

At this time, the Coast Guard Auxiliary is not resuming safe boating classes or public outreach events. This includes vessel examiners at the boat ramps and docks in our area. The auxiliary's website will be updated regularly to show the current schedule of safe boating classes once they are able to resume.

To schedule your free vessel safety check, for information on how to join the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and for updates on the safe boating course schedule, visit [www.safeboatingjax.com](http://www.safeboatingjax.com).

Paul Tynda is a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary Jacksonville Flotilla 14-8.

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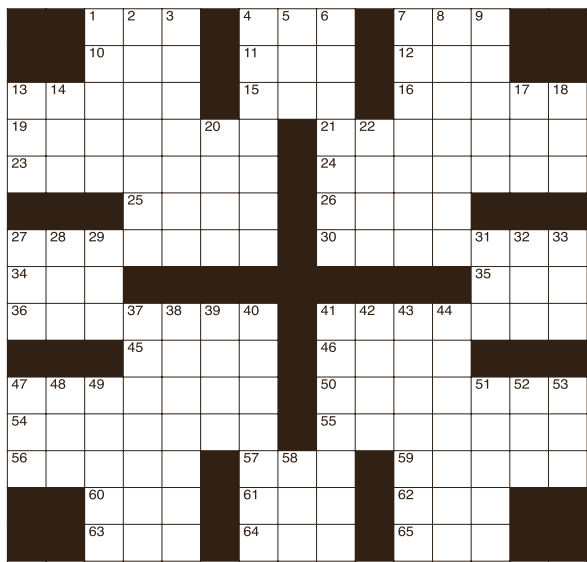
Return the favor.

## Take Care of Your Mental Health

Right now, we are all experiencing a lot of emotions and a range of impacts due to COVID-19. Please take care of yourself, check on your loved ones, especially those who live alone, and seek help when you need it.

# Puzzles

Answers on page 3  
Provided by MetroCreative



**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Chop with an ax
- 4. Where a bachelor lives
- 7. Indicates near
- 10. Doctors' group
- 11. It's just a number
- 12. Type of bread
- 13. Lively ballroom dance
- 15. Charles S. Dutton TV series
- 16. A way to use up
- 19. Singular event
- 21. Home of Disney World
- 23. Minerals
- 24. Most insightful
- 25. Consult
- 26. In addition
- 27. Agents of downfall
- 30. Organizations
- 34. Supervises flying

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Czech monetary unit
- 2. Arousing intense feeling
- 3. Elks
- 4. Muscular weaknesses
- 5. Before the present
- 6. Figures out
- 7. Infinite
- 8. A low wall
- 9. Silly
- 13. Political organization
- 14. Used of a number or amount not specified
- 17. Divisions of the psyche
- 18. Denial
- 20. Ancient Iranian person
- 22. Count on
- 27. Popular sports league
- 28. Water (French)

**CLUES DOWN**

- 29. Partner to cheese
- 31. When you hope to get there
- 32. Angry
- 33. One point east of due south
- 37. Respects
- 38. Organize anew
- 39. French wine grape
- 40. Intrinsic nature of something
- 41. Neural structures
- 42. Brews
- 43. Where ships take on cargo
- 44. Holiday season singer
- 47. Shock treatment
- 48. Popular average
- 49. Products
- 51. A type of bear
- 52. Utilize
- 53. Old world, new
- 58. Swiss river



Solve the code to discover words related to writers.  
Each number corresponds to a letter.  
(Hint: 8 = D)

**A. 2 11 20 23 11 9 26**  
Clue: To write or create

**B. 8 12 22 16 5**  
Clue: Rough copy

**C. 26 8 15 5**  
Clue: Correct or modify

**D. 15 8 26 22 9**  
Clue: Thoughts about a course of action

## WRITER'S CORNER WORD SEARCH

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

**WORDS**

- ANTAGONIST
- ANTIHERO
- ARCHETYPE
- BACKSTORY
- CHARACTER
- CLICHE
- CONFLICT
- DENOUEMENT
- DIALOGUE
- EPILOGUE
- EVIDENCE
- FICTION
- FIRST PERSON
- GENRE
- HOOK
- IMAGERY
- INTRODUCTION
- MANUSCRIPT
- NARRATIVE
- NONFICTION
- SUMMARY
- THEME
- TRAITS
- VOICE

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

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# Mandarin Garden Club well positioned for "new normal"

By Diana Openbrier  
mail@floridanewslines.com

So far, we have all looked at the pandemic as a short term problem and have secluded and waited this out. Now we do not know how long our lives will be changed. What are we to do? Gardeners are believers in the future and will find a way to plan for the future and grow our gardens. Keeping with the spirit of tomorrow, the Mandarin Garden Club has a busy schedule planned for its new year which officially begins Sept. 1, 2020.

The Mandarin Garden Club is well positioned to meet the new requirements to stay safe in the face of pandemics. The club property has a large garden

area divided into many individual gardens: native plants, succulents, butterfly, repurposing garden, and ginger, among others. Members volunteer time to work in the gardens and under the direction of Joyce Buscalia and master gardeners they have the grounds in beautiful condition. Visits to the club by members and people in the community provide calming and beautiful walks that help people center on what needs to be done in these times. The clubhouse is also large enough to allow for social distancing. Following CDC guidelines is the new normal.

The club's facilities are a great place to meet, not only for Mandarin Garden Club members but also other gardening groups and artists, photographers and walkers. Meetings of the Jacksonville Herb Society, North Florida Bonsai Club, and board of the Rose Society are held at the Mandarin Garden Club. Just this month the Mandarin Garden Club has welcomed the Jacksonville Orchid Society to hold its monthly meetings at the club. The club encourages interaction with these groups and there is no charge for the use of facilities by these clubs; it is part of Mandarin Garden Club's support and commitment to the community and has been since 1950.

A video of the club and grounds is available on the Mandarin Garden Club website, [www.mandaringardenclub.org](http://www.mandaringardenclub.org).

## Travel

### Explore Sanibel, Captiva and Cabbage Key

By Debi Lander  
mail@floridanewslines.com

Just south of Fort Myers, you'll find a chain of small remote islands except Sanibel and Captiva. They're known for their quiet residential communities, their sparkling white sand beaches, and the Gulf's pristine turquoise water. Seashells, however, bring them distinction.

Sanibel lies in an east-west position making it one of the few islands that run perpendicular to Florida's coast. This lineup causes the ocean currents to flush water downward and allows Sanibel to capture shells — thus earning the nickname "Shelling Capital of the World." The laid-back isle attracts seashell collectors from all over the globe with more than 250 varieties. Add the many outdoor activities to the natural attractions, and you've got a wonderful getaway for couples, families, or solo travelers.

I was impressed with the 25 miles of bike paths, most of them shaded and off-road, making them far safer. Half of Sanibel's acreage has been preserved against development, and buildings must stand no taller than the tallest palm tree.

Nature lovers, especially birders, are drawn to J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge. This area becomes home to many seasonal mating birds who build their nests in the protected landscape. Best time to visit is late winter through spring.

In addition to beaching, boating, kayaking, golf, and tennis, the east end allows a peek at the historic 98-foot tall Sanibel Island Lighthouse. Don't expect a circular building. Sanibel Lighthouse was built with an iron skeleton tower back in 1884 and lit with kerosene oil. To get to the top of the lighthouse, the lighthouse keeper had to walk up an external spiral staircase with 127 steps.

The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum is the only museum in the U.S. devoted entirely to shells and mollusks. The octagonally-shaped building looks impressive, but so was the entrance fee of \$25. I skipped it and browsed shells in a seashell shop nearby.

Cross a small bridge at the northern end of Sanibel, and you're on Captiva, where magnificent villas hide behind lush tropical foliage. At the tip, you'll

discover the Seven Seas Resort with a full marina and sailing school and the place where day-trippers board cruises to Cabbage Key or Useppa Islands. Sunset viewing on Captiva becomes a daily ritual, except when those late afternoon thunderstorms creep up. I missed the sunsets!

I'd heard about the famous Dollar Bill Bar on Cabbage Key and decided to take the cruise. Once I arrived on the rustic, Old Florida style island, I ate lunch outdoors overlooking the marina. Afterward, I popped inside the inn to find walls thickly papered with old dollar bills. The ceiling, beams, and rafters all drip with hanging currency. When the old bills fall off, the staff collects them for an annual gift to a charity. Guests enjoy signing a dollar and adding it to the wall, wondering if it will still be there, should they return. Cabbage Key offers a few rental properties, but most of the 100 acres remain undeveloped, with no paved roads and no cars. A short nature trail near the inn proved interesting.

Back on Sanibel, I indulged in the relaxing vibe. The islands offer a variety of fine restaurants, so dining out becomes the treat. Unlike the Keys, Sanibel and Captiva's nightlife remains low-key. I look forward to returning.

If you go: [sanibel-captiva.org](http://sanibel-captiva.org)

Visit [www.bylandersea.com](http://www.bylandersea.com) to read more of local travel writer Debi Lander's stories and travel tips.



Photos courtesy Debi Lander  
Dollar bills on the wall and ceiling, Cabbage Key Inn.



Nature walk on Cabbage Key.




Sunrise, shelling and the Sanibel Lighthouse.

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# Gardening

## Watching the summer weather

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale  
mail@floridanewsline.com

When considering garden chores, the first thing I look at is a weather forecast. There are times when I simply start early in order to get some slight relief from the sun and high humidity, but it can be good to be able to sit back, relax, and say “No — another day will do.” When there are cloudy skies it’s usually a good day to get some weeding done and that feels worthwhile; it’s comforting that small achievements in the garden can take our minds off bigger worries.



Large bee on dotted horsemint (*Monarda punctata*)

Here are some of my small achievements:

Check out the September/October issue of A New Leaf for the latest news; it’s an informative and useful read: <https://tinyurl.com/yxo8ozsj>. See also <https://tinyurl.com/y6bps28w>. With higher than usual temperatures combined with my immediate microclimate, I am inclined to follow the monthly schedule for central rather



Zebra long-wing (*Heliconius charithonia*) on fire bush (*Hamelia patens*)



Photos courtesy Lesley Arrandale  
Purple passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*)

than northern Florida, but Jacksonville falls within the north Florida area.

It was a relief when tropical storm Isaias passed us by; unfortunately not everyone was as lucky as the storm cut quite a swath of damage farther north. As the peak of the hurricane season is almost upon us, I hope we — and our yards and gardens — will be spared the worst.



Dragonfly (family Libellulidae)



Newly eclosed cicada on coontie (*Zamia floridanum*)



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— Resident Mary M. (with her dog, Jade)

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