

Mandarin NewsLine

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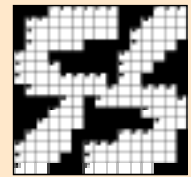
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Photos courtesy Olis Garber
The Harriet Beecher Stowe Pavilion.

Harriet Beecher Stowe Pavilion is dedicated

By Emily R. Lisska
mail@floridanewsline.com

A brilliant blue sky and a steady soft breeze set the scene for the Mandarin Community Club's June 1 dedication of the Harriet Beecher Stowe Pavilion. The "Picnic at the Pavilion" dedication also featured an early 20th century-style celebration for the recently completed open-air space on club property fronting Mandarin Road.

The pavilion, next to the historic Mandarin Community Club, echoes gingerbread trim and architectural appointments used on the long-demolished 19th century Stowe cottage once situated across the road. Underwritten by Susie Scott and the late Bruce Scott, the pavilion was completed in time for the 2024 Mandarin Art Festival.

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Brooke Davis Angel Fund: Helping Hands for Paws in Need

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Sometimes, from grief comes an act of kindness and good will. This is the case with the Brooke Davis Angel Fund, named in memory of Dr. Brooke Davis, a well-loved local veterinarian who tragically lost her life in an auto accident in 2021. Following this, close friends and family members decided to carry on her legacy of caring for sick and injured animals, many of which she took into her home as pets.

"I miss Brooke terribly," said Tabatha Strauder, who founded the Brooke Davis Angel Fund. "She was my best friend for 24 years."

Davis was serving as president of the Jacksonville Veterinary Medical Society and practicing at San Jose Beauclerc Animal Hospital at the time of her death. She had been instrumental in setting up an Angel Fund, which



Photo courtesy Tabatha Strauder
Brooke Davis with her dog, Kodie.

accepts donations to help people who can't afford to pay for their pets' care, at her veterinary hospital.

Strauder said that on the day of Davis' passing, they had to rehome all of her pets, which included 14 dogs, nine cats, two horses and five tortoises. San Jose Beauclerc Animal Hospital made a posting on Facebook to accept donations for the care of her animals. Many clients, shocked and saddened by the death of their

favorite veterinarian, stepped up.

"The community of Jacksonville was amazing and generous," Strauder said. "Many of her animals required the care of specialists."

Donations continued and Strauder, with the blessing of Davis' mother, formed the Brooke Davis Angel Fund as a non-profit organization in 2023. Now, the mission of the organization has expanded to include not just the care of Davis' animals, but others as well.

"Our mission is 'Helping Hands for Paws in Need,'" Strauder said.

Animal hospitals in the four-county area can refer cases to the Brooke Davis Angel Fund, as well as individuals, who may submit an application online. Some of the criteria to receive funding includes that the money

Brooke Davis cont. on pg. 2



Photo courtesy Tabatha Strauder
Dr. Brooke Davis taught Addy Strauder how to bottle feed a baby kitten.



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Photo courtesy Christina Alder

Dr. Brooke Davis' veterinary technicians at the organization's spring fundraiser, Cars and Canines.

Brooke Davis cont. from pg. 1

cannot be used for routine spaying or neutering, nor can it be used for emergency care.

“Our board makes the decision on funding,” Strauder said. “If they meet the criteria and we can afford it, we help.”

One animal they were able to help is a dog named Gino, whose owner needed help with diagnostic tests for leukemia. Thankfully, Gino ended up testing negative for leukemia, and he is doing well today.

This month, the Brooke Davis Angel Fund is hosting one of their semi-annual fundraising events: Bingo Night, to be held on Sunday, July 21 from 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. at 2892 Loretto Road (Mandarin Garden Club). There will be prizes and a 50/50 split the pot. Also they are raffling off pet paintings by two local artists. Snacks and soda are available for purchase.

On Nov. 18, another fundraiser will be held at Wicked Barley from 4 p.m. – 9 p.m. Visit <https://brookedavisangel-fund.org/> for more information or to make a donation online.



Photo courtesy Tabatha Strauder

Tabatha and Addy Strauder with pet food collected at a pet food drive at Addy's elementary school.



Photo courtesy Tabatha Strauder

Dr. Brooke Davis in her element.

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BFF Best Furry Friend of the month

Meet Carbon!

Breed:
Labrador Retriever

Favorite activities:
Hiking, swimming, and sunbathing. Retrieving bumpers, tennis balls, and birds.

Favorite food:
Strawberries

Favorite friend:
His uncle Jerm and his pepa!

How did your BFF get their name:
From his human mom's love for science! (Carbon)

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.

Back to School Guide Coming in August!
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MYSTERY PHOTO

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Submit your answer to: mail@FloridaNewsLine.com.
Last month's Mystery Photo was Loretto Elementary School.

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A. sunscreen B. hat C. morning D. shady

Answers to our Puzzles
PG 10

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July

Community Calendar What's Happening in Mandarin

Shuffleboard is played on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. at Tommy Hazouri Park (formerly 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 8:30 a.m. at Baha'i Community Center, 5034 Greenland Road. 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.

GriefShare group will meet on Tuesdays through July 23 from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. at the Cody Enrichment Center at St. Joseph's Catholic church, 4152 Loretto Road. Registration is never closed and each week a different topic is covered. Call (904) 318-9308 for more information and sign up.

2nd: **Honeybee Quilters** Guild will meet on Tuesday, July 2 at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Presbyterian Church's Loretto Road Campus in the Kids Space at 2501 Loretto Road. September QuiltFest Jacksonville information and volunteer signups will be covered. Wearing masks is optional. New members/guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

6th: **Walter Jones Historical** Park buildings, including the 1898 St. Joseph's Mission Schoolhouse for African American Children, the 1875 Webb Jones Farmhouse, the 1876 Barn, and the Losco Winery, will be open on July 6 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. The Historic Mandarin Store & Post Office, located at 12471 Mandarin Road, will also be open. Museum volunteers will be inside each building for guided tours. Admission is free; Donations help support the museum's programming and operations. Visit www.mandarinmuseum.org for more information.

6th: **Meet the Maple Leaf** Divers at the Mandarin Museum, 11964

Mandarin Road, from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. on Saturday, July 6. This is an informal, conversational-style event; drop in anytime within the two hours to chat with Dr. Keith Holland and his team and view the museum's expanded Maple Leaf exhibit. Admission to Meet the Maple Leaf Divers and Mandarin Museum is free. Donations help support the museum's programming and operations. For more information, visit www.mandarinmuseum.org or call (904) 268-0784.

6th: **Mandarin Frog Painting** will be held on July 6 at 10 a.m. at the Mandarin Museum. Attendees may purchase, paint, and take home their own Mandarin Frog (or sea turtle, squirrel, or alligator). The cost starts at \$22 per person and advanced registration is required. Email info@mandarinmuseum.org to register.

13th: **The Southern** Genealogist's Exchange Society will meet from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on July 13 at the SGES Library, 6215 Sauterne Drive in Jacksonville. The topic will be a one-on-one free consultation with a conservator who can advise how best to preserve the family heirloom that attendees bring with them. Email sgesjax@att.net to reserve a space. Visit www.sgesjax.org to register for the meeting or call (904) 778-1000 for more information.

13th: **Second Saturday** Arts and Farmers Market at First Chris-

tian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. on July 13 from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Visit www.facebook.com/SecondSatMarket/ for more information.

15th: **The All Star Quilters Guild** will meet at 9:30 a.m. for socializing prior to the 10 a.m. meeting on Monday, July 15 at First Christian Church, 11924 San Jose Blvd. The program will be a reveal of the annual All Star Challenge which is "Make it Modern" for 2024. Sew and Tell is always a feature. Guests are welcome. Visit www.allstarquilters.org for more information.

21st: **Bingo Night** to benefit the Brooke Davis Angel Fund will be held on Sunday, July 21 from 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. at 2892 Loretto Road (Mandarin Garden Club). There will be a 50/50 split the pot; cost is \$25 for the first pack of cards. Proceeds will benefit animals in need of medical veterinary care. Visit brookedavisangelfund.org for more information.

25th: **Mandarin Republican** Club will meet on Thursday, July 25 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. Guest speaker will be Clay Yarborough, a member of the Florida Senate who also served in the Florida House of Representatives. First time visitors are welcome.



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with Duval County School Board Member Lori Hershey, District 7

Q: Can you share some insight about the newly hired superintendent of Duval County Public Schools?

A: First, I'd like to welcome Dr. Christopher Bernier as our new superintendent. He begins his duties on July 1. He brings more than 30 years of educational experience, including as a coach, a teacher, a principal, and a superintendent in Lee and Orange counties in Florida and Clark County in Nevada. He has a record of transformational leadership and he employs Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People in his leadership style.

Q: What are some of the items being addressed by the school district over the summer?

A: During the month of June, the School Board held community meetings in each board member's district.

A focus group was also developed with members appointed by each board member as well as representatives from SAC committees and school principals. The District 7 focus group members are Ellye Aull and Paula Mickler (Mandarin High School) and Maxine Morgan (Atlantic Coast High School). Over the summer, this focus group will be meeting to discuss boundary changes, school consolidation, and feeder patterns for the Master Facilities Plan. It is anticipated that by fall, the plan for these adjustments and changes will take shape. I expect the board to vote on proposed changes in November.

Q: Are there any anticipated effects for District 7?

A: One particular thing to note is that although we will have no school closures or consolidations in District 7, there are proposed changes to bound-

aries and feeder patterns for the north Mandarin area (south of Sunbeam Road and north of Interstate 295). If you live in this area and want to have input, please feel free to email me.

Q: Are there any administrative changes in schools in Mandarin?

A: We only have one principal change in District 7. I'd like to welcome

Matt Walker, previously the principal at Beauclerc Elementary, as the new principal of Loretto Elementary School.

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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Mandarin Rotary honors Teachers of the Year



Photo courtesy Steve Gallagher
Mandarin Rotary's Teachers of the Year.

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

The Rotary Club of Mandarin recently honored seven Mandarin teachers who were selected by their peers as Teachers of the Year in their respective schools.

Honored for their exceptional performance were:

Kelly Varano of Crown Point Elementary

Leticia Llorens of Bartram Springs Elementary

Ana Adenmatten of Mandarin Oaks Elementary

Brittnee Ayers of Greenland Pines Elementary

Jodi Sands of Mandarin Middle School

Kevin Desrosiers of Mandarin High School

The teachers were accompanied by their respective principals, all of whom expressed gratitude for their teachers' extraordinary professionalism, hard work, and dedication to the progress of their students.

The Rotary Club of Mandarin is a community service organization, with the motto of "Service Above Self." It meets every Tuesday morning for breakfast at the Ramada Inn on Hartley Road in Mandarin. Contact Membership Director Michael Sullivan at michaels@coj.net for more information.

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with Jacksonville City Council Member Michael Boylan, District 6

Q: What is the latest on the Orange Picker Road realignment construction project [as of interview date of June 18]?

A: Orange Picker Road reopened as projected on June 17. This morning, I walked the road and found there are some adjustments to be made which I communicated to the traffic engineers. First, the sign that warns about the curve in the road is hidden behind some trees and is not easily visible. Second, the stop sign is not positioned properly to give adequate line of sight. These suggestions are to help secure the safety of drivers on the road. The next steps will

be to complete the parking area by the ballfield and continue with the dog park upgrades.

Q: Are there any pending rezoning applications to discuss?

A: At this time and to my knowledge, there are actually no pending rezoning applications in Mandarin.

Q: Can you address some of the upgrades and improvements coming to Mandarin area parks?

A: There are a number of planned and pending improvements for our parks, but unfortunately since these things

tend to take awhile, we can't put a timeline on them at this point.

Designs are in place for new interactive sculptures at Losco Park and Chuck and Corky Rogers Park. The plans are just getting modified to meet the safety requirements of the city, but these will be exciting additions to these parks.

Restroom facilities are being completed at the Durbin Preserve Park.

The design state is nearly completed for a new playground facility at Tommy Hazouri Sr. Park.

Finally, the playground at Palmetto Leaves Park had to be removed for safety concerns. Parks and Recreation is looking for funds to replace it; this will likely be sometime next year. At this same park, the completion of the northern field design will be going out to bid soon.

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

A: Right now (mid June) the City Council is busy working on the stadium deal. I anticipate that the stadium deal will be finalized by the end of June, but the CBA (Community Benefits Agreement) will likely be carried into July.

As usual, the City Council will take its annual hiatus the first two weeks of July and I will be taking some time off with my family. Our office will still be attentive to constituents' needs; communication via email is preferred for a timely response.

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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Mandarin Garden Club hosts annual award ceremony and installs new board of directors

By Joann Butler
mail@floridanewsline.com

On May 23, 2024, several annual awards were presented to various deserving individuals at the Mandarin Garden Club's annual meeting. Wanda Bosworth presented a special Daisy Award and a Service Award to Joyce Datz, the leader of the Crafty Ladies group, which uses its fundraising dollars to pay for items that are lacking in the Garden Club budget.

Circle Life Awards are given to people who have been of outstanding service to their circle and the club. This year's awards were given to the following: Cherokee Rose Circle Life Award to Christine Morrow; Dogwood Circle Life Award to Karen Stanley; Live Oak Circle Life Award to Jan Holder and the Magnolia Circle Life Award was given to Angie VanDerVellen.

An Honorary Membership Award was given this year to Truitt Kelley for his outstanding and extraordinary contributions to the club. Outgoing president Laura Miller presented the optional President's Award to Marian Swain for her selfless dedication to the Mandarin Garden Club.

A new slate of officers for the Mandarin

Garden Club for fiscal year 2024 – 25 was elected and installed at the meeting. The new board members are: President, Marvine Thompson; First Vice President, Juliet Johnson; Second Vice President, Mary Forester; Treasurer, Pam Morgan; and Recording Secretary, Sarah Mann. The Circles are taking the summer off from meetings and will gather again in September to host various programs.

On Friday, Aug. 2 and Saturday, Aug. 3, the Mandarin Garden Club will hold its \$1 Clothing and Jewelry Sale from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. each day. Attendees will find plenty of gently used clothes, shoes and accessories for women, men and children for \$1 each. Boutique and jewelry items will be priced slightly higher. The Boutique will showcase popular brands and even some never worn items. A pop-up plant sale will be held outside in the gardens and will showcase additional bargains on green plants for the yard. The Masons will be selling barbecue.

Also upcoming, the Mandarin Garden Club's Craft Fair will be on Nov. 9 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. The fee for an outside 10 ft. by 10 ft. space is \$40. Email mgccraftyladies@gmail.com for more information.

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Summer reading, learning and fun continue through Aug. 3 at your library!

By Jeremy Yates
mail@floridanewsline.com

Don't miss our popular Live from the Library (for ages five through 12) series — these engaging and educational performances are made possible through the generous support of the Friends of Mandarin Library and the Friends of South Mandarin Library.

Kaye Byrnes Storytelling returns Tuesday, July 16 from 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. to the Mandarin Library with more folktales, fairy tales, and legends. Or join us Wednesdays from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. at South Mandarin Library:

- Just Add Rhythm, July 3
- Clark's Critters Reptile Show, July 10
- Jazz It Up! with Noteworthy Live Band, July 17
- Dadian, the Family Magician, July 24

Attendance is limited and is first-come, first-served. Be sure to arrive early. Check in starts 30 minutes prior to the start of the program.

Little Readers storytime (children up to age five) continues Fridays at 10:15 a.m. or 11 a.m. at Mandarin Library or Thursdays at 10:15 a.m. or 11 a.m. at South Mandarin Library. Note: Pre-registration is no longer required but space is limited.

For reading and hands-on activities for children aged five to 12, check out STEAM & Stories Mondays at 3:30

p.m. at Mandarin Library. Each program is an opportunity for your child to engage with their peers, enjoy a good story, and participate in themed games or crafts. For even more art and reading fun (for ages five through eight), don't miss Junior Artists Tuesdays at 4 p.m. at South Mandarin Library.

Kids (aged five through eight) can explore even more Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math at Junior Scientists Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m. at Mandarin Library. Engineer Your Adventure Lab (for ages nine through 12) continues Wednesdays from 4 p.m. – 5 p.m. at South Mandarin Library and Thursdays from 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. at Mandarin Library. It combines the problem-solving approach of an engineer with the fun of a fantasy roleplaying game! In July, you'll learn about catapults and rope ladders and finish the design of your own fantasy kingdom.

Teen Mad Science Lab (for ages 12 – 17) continues Fridays from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. at South Mandarin Library. Help Dr. Hyde, Dr. Jekyll's dubious alter ego, protect The Society for Arcane Science from outside threats with a series of increasingly mad science experiments.

The Teen Advisory Board meets at the South Mandarin Library on Friday, July 12 at 4:45 p.m. for some magical mayhem with Caraval by Stephanie Garber. On July 26, they talk Five Nights at Freddy's by Scott Cawthon.

Visit jaxpubliclibrary.org/events for more information.

Annual Leadership Day held at Crown Point

By Mary Eyster
mail@floridanewsline.com

On Thursday, May 23, Crown Point Elementary held its annual leadership day highlighting the principles of the seven habits of the "Leader in Me" program launched at the school. Dana Driver, with the help of her "Lighthouse Leaders," a selected group of proactive and responsible fifth graders, planned the leadership assemblies for all grade levels, from kindergarten to fifth grade. Parents were invited to attend their children's assemblies held at various times throughout the day. The Lighthouse Leaders greeted students and their parents and

led all the assemblies.

The assemblies highlighted the leaders of the year from each class. Each leader received a certificate of recognition for demonstrating and living the seven habits throughout the school year. Also, a slideshow introduced the different Genius Groups and showed how, through these groups, the students learned to build friendships, synergize, share, and care for their school and the community. The assemblies ended with each class synergizing to win a game of hula hoop and being recognized by getting a trophy.



Assistant Principal Elisha Carr and Dana Driver with kindergartners leaders of the year. Photos courtesy Mary Eyster

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- Move it to your new employer's 401(k) plan, if you've changed employers and your new employer plan allows for it.
- Roll the account over to an individual retirement account (IRA).
- Cash it out, which is subject to potential tax consequences.



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Paid for by Melody Bolduc candidate for Duval County School Board District 7

Briefs

New organization for moms seeks members

MomCo (formerly known as MOPS) is coming to Mandarin Presbyterian Church this fall. This is a fun and safe place to connect with other moms, share breakfast, and hear from guest speakers

on various topics for these seasons of motherhood.

This group is for moms from pregnancy – fifth grade. Gatherings will be every other Tuesday, from 9:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. on the Mandarin Presbyterian

Church's Loretto Road Campus with childcare provided. Space is limited, so register now at mandarinpres.com/momco to save your spot. Contact MOPS@mandarinpres.com with any questions.

Local teacher to compete in Miss Florida USA

Mandarin resident Callie Johnson will compete in the Miss Florida USA pageant from July 5 – 7 in Coral Springs. Johnson is currently the reigning Miss Jacksonville USA, and a full-time teacher in English Language Arts (ELA) for seventh grade students at Switzerland Point Middle School in St. Johns County. She also owns and operates Callie's Collection Cakes and Confections as a cottage industry baker based in Jacksonville.

Johnson, 27, began her professional career in Jacksonville focusing on retail, food, non-profit programs, events, and administration. Johnson developed her intensive interest in pageantry while her mother was the pageant director at Creekside High School in St. Johns County. Johnson was inspired by a mentor to follow and compete in the Florida Forestry pageants. She served as a state title holder within that organization three times as Teen Miss Florida Forestry, Miss Florida Turpentine, and Miss Florida Forestry, where she honed her interview and communication skills. She became involved in community volunteering at Ronald McDonald House Charities, raising awareness for the Florida Forest Service, and appearances at local elementary schools to read to students.

After a seven-year break from pageantry, Johnson returned to competing to pursue her goal of becoming Miss Florida USA, the precursor to Miss USA which she hopes to qualify for as a future competitor. "As a teacher and a role model, I hope to inspire women of all ages that it's never too late to pursue your dreams," said Johnson. "Qualifying and participating in Miss Florida USA holds a special place in my heart while being able to gain access, visibility, and experience to help others and reach my professional, business, and philanthropic

goals," she said.

Johnson was born and raised, and currently resides in Mandarin. Johnson holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Strategic Communications from Jacksonville University and a Master of Science degree in Communication Management from the University of North Florida in Jacksonville. She was active in Alpha Delta Pi sorority, public relations organizations, and cheerleading in college. She is a Certified Development Executive with NANO (National Association of Nonprofit Organizations and Executives) and a Certified Wedding and Event Planner (CWP). Johnson currently volunteers for a variety of faith-based activities which help women and children, and she mentors young women with interests in pageant competitions.

Prices rise slightly as spring stabilization hits real estate market

Have buyers finally had enough of the crazy high housing market? That is the question presented by the market statistics for May. At a time when one would expect to see the market showing signs of an approaching busy summer season, the numbers present a different story. In May's single-family home market in Northeast Florida, prices and the number of closed sales increased only a tiny bit, while the percentage of list price received was flat and pending sales were down. Meanwhile active inventory and new listings continued to climb, giving buyers a wider selection of homes to choose from this summer for the first time in years.

In May, Northeast Florida's median sales price was \$400,203, a slight .3 percent gain from \$399,990 seen in April. Days on the market climbed 13 percent to 34 days, and closed sales were up 7 percent to 2,060. Closed over list price fell 5.2 percent and pending sales dropped 22 percent to 1,490. New listings increased 4.9 percent to 3,602 and active inventory skyrocketed 21 percent to 7,586 — 3.7 months of supply.

Meanwhile, Northeast Florida's Home Affordability Index inched down only slightly to show that the region is regaining some equilibrium. The Home Affordability Index measures housing affordability for the region. In other words, 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.

In Duval County, the May 2024 median price of single-family housing was \$345,500, the same as the month before. The median number of days on the market in May fell to 26, a 3.7 percent increase from April 2024. Month-to-month closed sales rose .2 percent to 1007, pending sales fell 23.5 percent to 731, and new listings increased 13.6 percent to 1,876 homes. Active inventory for the county climbed 28 percent to 3,435 homes, a 3.4-month supply. In May, the Home Affordability Index fell to 73.



Photo courtesy Delisa Keller with DKellerDesigns Photography Callie Johnson.

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Get to Know ...

By Martie Thompson
editor@floridanewsline.com

Danielle Wirsansky

Danielle Wirsansky was born in Israel, but moved to Jacksonville as a young child. She became a Mandarin resident in 1998 and, although she has moved on to new places, her family still lives in the same Mandarin home and she considers herself a product of Mandarin. She attended Pine Forest Elementary and La Villa Middle School, both Duval County magnet schools of the arts and graduated from Douglas Anderson School of the Arts. Her major at Douglas Anderson was a dual one: theater and creative writing. While in high school, she penned a monthly arts column for The CreekLine's sister publication, Mandarin NewsLine. She began writing and producing plays while in high school and developed an interest in World War II and the Holocaust. After graduating, she attended Florida State University and earned two bachelor's degrees — one in theater and one in English creative writing — and continued to explore her passion for writing about the Holocaust. Deciding that she needed to be an expert on what she was writing about, she earned a Master's degree in history at FSU and is currently a PhD candidate, all but dissertation. Danielle founded her own theater company, White Mouse Productions, and her latest musical, "The Secrets We Keep," recently had performances in Tallahassee, Jacksonville, and Off Broadway in New York City.

Q: How did you start writing about World War II and the Holocaust?

Get to Know ...

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



Photo courtesy Danielle Wirsansky
Danielle Wirsansky

A: I made a documentary about Jewish World War II veterans while I was in high school. I was able to get testimony that led to my production of "Son of a Gun," which won the Critics Choice for a World War II verbatim piece of theater. Then in college, my undergrad thesis was a musical geared towards Holocaust education called "City of Light." I won several research grants to write and produce this. I also produced a number of my own plays and musicals during this time at college.

Q: When did you found White Mouse Productions?

A: This was in 2016. I named the company after the code name of a woman World War II spy named Nancy Wake. At first, this theater company was to teach about World War II history, but by 2017 our mission statement had evolved and became broader: "Creating theater for social change." I served as White Mouse Productions' artistic

director from 2016 until 2018, when I graduated with my Master's degree. Over the years, I have held pretty much every position with the company and am currently the finance director.

Q: What can you tell us about "The Secrets We Keep?"

A: This is my fifth musical; I served as book writer and lyricist. It's my third musical geared toward Holocaust education and it was developed through a grant from the Elie Wiesel Foundation. Our initial goal was just to produce it in New York, but then decided to raise a bit more money and stage it in an Off Broadway theater (the number of seats in the theater determines if a show is Off Off Broadway, Off Broadway, or Broadway). The show closed at the end of May, but we are still looking for more opportunities for this musical.

Q: Where do you see yourself in five years?

A: I will have graduated with my PhD and hopefully be working at a research unit. I enjoy teaching (and have done so at Jacksonville University and FSU), but my passion is still research and writing. I know I'll still be writing plays and musicals.

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I spend a lot of time on research because I really enjoy it. I also like photography. I enjoy knitting, even though I can only knit squares. And one of the rare times I'm not moving is because I have a bunny on my lap. I have two rabbits, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ... they make me stop working.

Did you know?

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The adage, "Success has many fathers, but failure is an orphan" is an applicable turn of phrase in many instances, and it seems to ring true when trying to pin down the origins of ice cream. A 2019 study from Datassential that surveyed more than 2,500 consumers about their dessert habits and preferences found that ice cream is the No. 1 dessert.

If that's a fairly straightforward pursuit, identifying the origins of this beloved treat is not so easy. Many attribute the origins of ice cream to China's Tang dynasty, which was in power from 618 to 907. History.com notes that sources from that period reference a sweet drink made from iced, camphor-laced water buffalo milk, which certainly sounds similar to modern day ice cream. But others point much further back, noting that iced drinks and desserts were sold along the Euphrates River as far back as at least 4000 B.C. History.com also notes that the first European ice creams can be traced to Italy in the 1600s.

The difficulty with distinguishing the exact origins of ice cream, and the various claims that trace those beginnings to one place or another, support the notion that success, in this case the confectionary triumph that is ice cream, indeed has many fathers.

**What do you want to see
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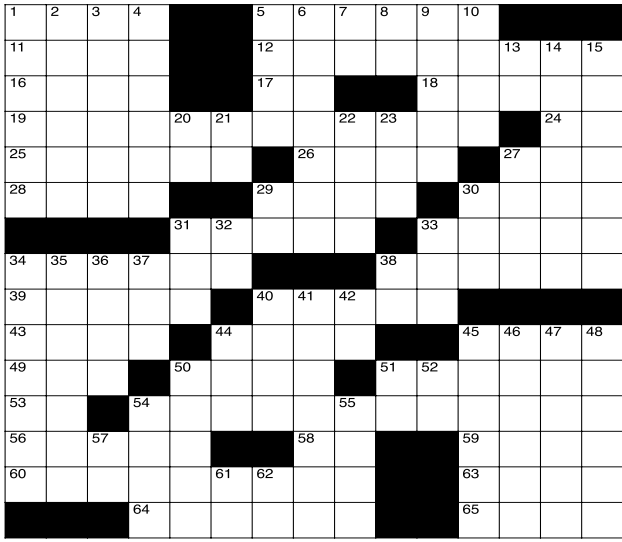
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Puzzles

Answers on page 3
Provided by MetroCreative



CLUES ACROSS

1. Average damage per system (abbr.)
5. Lustful woodland gods (Greek mythology)
11. Colombian Town
12. Sour
16. A way to stuff
17. Former AL MVP Vaughn
18. Carried or transported
19. Cannot even fathom
24. Hammer is one
25. A way to separate
26. Not moving
27. Women's service organization (abbr.)
28. German river
29. Quantitative fact
30. A person's head
31. Process that produces ammonia
33. French modernist painter
34. Too much noise
38. Agree to a demand
39. One a line at right angles to a ship's length
40. Employees
43. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
44. Component of hemoglobin
45. Quick and skillful in movement
49. Passing trend
50. Part of the eye
51. One who acclaims
53. Deadly amount (abbr.)
54. Taste property
56. Genus of mosquitoes
58. Blood type
59. A group of countries in special alliance
60. Institute legal proceedings against
63. Shade of a color
64. Spoke
65. Work units

CLUES DOWN

1. Charge with a crime
2. Mended with yarn
3. North Atlantic flatfish
4. Boil at low temperature
5. Lapps of northern Scandinavia
6. Poisonous plant
7. Atomic #22
8. 36 inches
9. Monetary unit of Russia
10. Type of gin
13. An alternative
14. Alone
15. A way to ooze
20. Publicity
21. American firm
22. Jewish calendar month
23. Popular sandwich
27. Comedian Cook
29. The NFL's big game (abbr.)
30. Political action committee
31. Make a low, steady sound
32. Legendary sportscaster Michaels
33. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
34. Designed to keep ears warm
35. One who scrapes
36. Tear into two or more pieces
37. Supervises flying
38. Flying arm of the U.S. military (abbr.)
40. District in Peru
41. One died leaving a will
42. Morning
44. The world of the dead
45. Widen
46. Drink containing medicine
47. Celebrating
48. Secret encounters
50. A type of tag
51. Halfback
52. Modern tech
54. Monetary unit
55. Resigned to one's sleeping chamber
57. Execute or perform
61. "The Golden State" (abbr.)
62. "The Beehive State" (abbr.)

SUN SAFETY WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- CANCER
- COVER UP
- DERMATOLOGIST
- HEAT
- INDEX
- INDOORS
- MELANOMA
- MORNING
- PROTECT
- RADIATION
- RASH
- REFLECT
- SHADE
- SKIN
- SPOTS
- SUNBLOCK
- SUNBURN
- SUNGLASSES
- SUNLIGHT
- ULTRAVIOLET
- UMBRELLA
- WIDE-BRIMMED

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(Hint: 15 = N)

- A.** 3 6 15 3 4 1 10 10 15
Clue: Skin protectant
- B.** 9 23 16
Clue: Headgear
- C.** 24 20 1 15 12 15 26
Clue: Early day
- D.** 3 9 23 17 5
Clue: Not sunny

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Pavilion dedicated cont. from pg. 1

Councilman Michael Boylan performed the official dedication, thanking Susie Scott and her late husband for their many community contributions. A plaque will mark the site as the Harriet Beecher Stowe Pavilion and recognize the donors, both club past-presidents.

"It was a beautiful day," said Mandarin Community Club President Mark Waterman, who welcomed 75 people to the dedication and a lunch of fried chicken, biscuits, ham, homemade cakes and other picnic fare. Early 20th century music was provided by Man-

darin's Patrick Plumlee and the five-person group Underdawg. Mandarin-area businesses supporting the event included Metro Diner Julington Creek, Olis Garber Photography and Dennis Chan of Blue Bamboo.

Available for rentals and as a site for community events, the pavilion and its acre plus property adjoin the club. The land was donated to the club in 2022 by longtime Mandarin resident Marilyn Carpenter. While the pavilion is now in use, the club seeks funds for enhancements including fans, additional lighting and landscaping.



Photos courtesy Olis Garber
The Harriet Beecher Stowe Pavilion.

Heat stroke or heat exhaustion?

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewslines.com

Particularly hot days, which can arise in the dog days of summer, can be both uncomfortable and unhealthy. Such days also can prove deadly. Despite that threat, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that heat-related illnesses are preventable. Harmful outcomes also are preventable when people learn to distinguish between heat-related illnesses. Heatstroke and heat exhaustion are easily confused, but the two conditions produce noticeably different symptoms. Recognition of that can help anyone stay healthy or help someone in need as the mercury rises this summer.

Heatstroke symptoms

- Elevated body temperature, typically 103 F or 104 F or higher
- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness

Heat exhaustion symptoms

- Heavy sweating
- Cold, pale and clammy skin
- Fast, weak pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps

- Feelings of tiredness or weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Fainting

Anyone experiencing these or other abnormal symptoms on hot days is urged to immediately move to a cool place and seek medical help. The CDC notes that heatstroke is a medical emergency, so individuals who suspect they or someone in their presence is experiencing heat stroke should call 911 immediately. If heat exhaustion is suspected, seek immediate medical help if a person is vomiting, experiencing symptoms that are worsening or sticking around for one hour or longer. More information about heat-related illnesses is available at cdc.gov.



Photo courtesy MetroCreative

Fishing

Jimmy's Fishing Report

By Jimmy Tomazinis
mail@floridanewslines.com

Ah, such comfortable weather we have in the month of July. High humidity and daytime temperatures rarely dip below 90. A glorious time to venture outside. I'm hoping you could sense the sarcasm as I write this, but with all the heat and humidity comes hot fishing.

I recall writing similar things just last year about the struggle to find comfortable times and places to fish this time of year. Comfort for us might also be better fishing as well. Early and late, deep water, and shade all being positive things to improve the chances of catching fish and the length of time you can pursue them.

Shrimp have trickled into the river and this month we should be happy to have fewer throws of the cast net to make for a day's fishing. Fishing them under docks and area bridges can catch just about everything in the river right now — stripers, redfish, flounder, and sheepshead just to name a few. Presenting them with jig heads, floats, and free lined will all work, but few methods

catch everything like the jig head. You can experiment with different colors but chartreuse always has a place in my jig head collection. I use either a 1/8 oz. or 1/4 oz. depending on the size of the shrimp, depth of the water, and speed of the current. I want the shrimp to reach the bottom, but I don't want it to sink too fast since a lot of fish like to hit it as it falls. I also don't spend a ton of money on them since you're bound to lose some jig heads to fish around structure. If you rig the shrimp on the hook just right, you'll rarely get snagged except on crab traps. Pass the hook through the shrimp from top to bottom near the tail and then twist the hook around and bury it into the bottom of the shrimp near its head or mid section. Don't let the hook point poke through the top of the shrimp since that's what makes it almost snag proof. I hope the short description helps, but if not send me an email and I'll send you a picture or diagram to explain it better. Give it a try this month and be sure to stay hydrated out there. Tight lines.

Mandarin Women's Club installs new officers before summer hiatus

By Gail Packard
mail@floridanewslines.com

The newly-elected board members for 2024 – 25 were installed at the Mandarin Women's Club's May meeting. The new board members are Sue Wojtowicz (President), Judy Witte, Susan Pearson, Jo-Ellen Baxley, Patty Blalock, Gina Wills, Andrea Braun, and Sharon Rosenblum.

After the installation ceremony, club members who were all "glammed out" enjoyed a presentation ceremony where members were presented awards for their outstanding participation in the club's activities. The "Miss Congeniality" Award was presented to Jo-Ellen Baxley.

There will be no luncheons during June, July or August, but active members will still enjoy Bunco, Mah Jongg, Mexican Train, and other events. If you would like to participate in these activities, visit www.mandarinwomensclub.com for more information and to obtain a Membership Form.



Photo courtesy Gail Packard

Mandarin Women's Club 2024 – 25 Officers: Sue Wojtowicz, Judy Witte, Susan Pearson, Jo-Ellen Baxley, Patty Blalock, Gina Wills, Andrea Braun and Sharon Rosenblum.

UF scientists finding new way to keep broccoli – and perhaps other vegetables – fresher, longer

By Brad Buck, University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS)
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When consumers go to the grocery store, they want their produce, including broccoli, to look, feel and taste fresh. This desire compels University of Florida scientist Tie Liu to study ways to keep vegetables fresh. In newly published research, Liu and his colleagues studied the physiological and molecular mechanisms of two treatments: 1-Methylcyclopropene (1-MCP) and controlled atmosphere (CA) storage. They found that these treatments delay the aging process in broccoli in different ways.

"Studying the molecular mechanisms of these treatments offers valuable insights into how we can improve vegetable preservation techniques, enhance food safety and promote sustainability in the food industry," said Liu, a UF/IFAS assistant professor of horticultural sciences and corresponding author of the study. "Those technologies are like superpowers for keeping vegetables and fruits fresh."

Controlled atmosphere and 1-MCP both slow broccoli deterioration beyond what can be accomplished by low temperatures. While CA slows broccoli metabolism, 1-MCP makes it insensitive to ethylene, the plant hormone that controls stress responses and ripening.

"By controlling things like temperature, humidity and the levels of gasses like oxygen, carbon dioxide and ethylene, we can slow down the natural processes that cause food to spoil," Liu said. "It's like giving them vegetables a safe home, where they can stay fresh."

The new UF/IFAS research will help scientists around the world preserve broccoli and other vegetables. It will also help plant breeders find the right genetics for fresher produce.

"The better we understand the genes that are turned on

and off within the context of post-harvest quality deterioration and loss of shelf life, the better we can target genes to either be turned on or off by gene-editing techniques," Liu said. "Knowing this, vegetables such as broccoli will stand a better chance of being purchased and eaten rather than wasted."

As soon as broccoli comes off the plant, the clock starts ticking on its freshness. Typically, broccoli is harvested when floral bunches reach full size, but with the florets (immature flowers) still tightly closed, said Jeff Brecht, a UF/IFAS professor of horticultural sciences and co-author of the study. In previous research, Liu and Brecht showed harvesting prematurely triggers the onset of aging and deterioration.

"So, since the broccoli quickly switches from growing to deteriorating when it's harvested, it's very quickly taken from the field to a cooling facility and cooled to as close to 32 degrees as possible," Liu said. "The low temperature slows the decline of the broccoli tissue."

Everyone involved in getting the broccoli to the store tries to keep it chilled, a process produce handlers call the "cold chain." Usually, chilled broccoli lasts about 30 days, but if the cold chain is broken, the broccoli can yellow in just a few days.

"The reality is that once the cold chain is broken, even if the broccoli is returned to a low temperature, there's no way to cool the product again," Liu said.



Photo courtesy Jeff Brecht, UF/IFAS. Broccoli shipped in a box.

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Gardening

Drought and heat: What's next?

By Master Gardener Volunteer Lesley Arrandale
mail@floridanewsline.com

I'm writing this on June 12, and there has been no appreciable rain in my area for several weeks. Without an irrigation system, it has been tricky to keep plants going. But if this is a foretaste of things to come, it will be useful to see what survives and what perishes. Anything that is lost in the excessive heat we've been experiencing won't be replaced unless I install a low volume irrigation system for selected areas. And I shall aim to group plants according to their need for water, which is a standard requirement when choosing the Right Plant for the Right Place.

I have been watering my favorite shrubs with a hose. The few perennials I planted, in anticipation of rain, have needed water nearly every day. Unfortunately, once our sandy soil dries up it is difficult to rehydrate and water can simply run off. It's worth repeating that adding organic matter regularly and using two to three inches of mulch to conserve moisture does help. Clearly I need to try harder!

For people who have lawns, the lack of rain has been difficult. The summer watering schedule of twice a week is usually adequate to keep a healthy well-established lawn going through dry times, but especially if turf is accustomed to being over watered it probably won't adjust very easily to lack of rain and high temperatures. Turf only needs watering when it begins to show at least one of the following signs of stress: grass blades become slightly blue and begin to fold, and footprints in the grass don't spring back quickly. It's also important not to mow a lawn too short. Standard St. Augustine grass should be three-and-a-half to four-inches high to encourage healthy deep roots. Other species have their recommended heights so it's important to know which grass you are dealing with.

It's a shame when people don't appreci-

ate the best ways to take care of their lawns. Replacing turf is costly, and overuse of water is wasteful, considering most of us use potable water for irrigation. Even an irrigation system that runs off a well uses precious groundwater. If you need detailed advice, check out this article: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/ep236>. It covers all you need to know to take care of a lawn successfully and sustainably.

Working outside in the heat can be downright dangerous. Try to work early in the day. Take care to drink plenty of water, slather on the sunscreen, and rest indoors or at least in the shade to cool down when you get weary. For more information, visit <https://gardeningolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/care/weather/heat-safety/>

It's also a difficult time for our backyard birds. One of my favorite species, the brown thrasher, really seems to enjoy bathing in our bird bath, but they all need access to clean water. It is important to clean a birdbath regularly as algae grows quickly in the heat and the water doesn't stay fresh for long.

The new flower bed outside our kitchen window is doing well, but as the plants were installed only recently, they need watering until they're established. The manyflower beardtongue (*Penstemon multiflorus*) is living up to its reputation as a food source for hummingbirds. In among bunch grasses and teamed up with white wandflower (*Gaura lindheimeri*) the effect is lovely.

As for what we can expect after this horribly dry period, we only need look at what happened recently in central and south Florida, where some areas experienced up to 20 inches of rain in two days. We may well be dealing with similar conditions before the summer is out. Let's hope the hurricane season won't be as bad as predicted.

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Watering restrictions: What you need to know

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

The St. Johns River Water Management District's watering restrictions are designed to ensure the efficient use of water for landscape irrigation. The restrictions allow enough water to maintain healthy landscapes year-round.

The mandatory restrictions specify the time when watering may occur, the amount of water that may be applied, and the days when watering may occur for residential and nonresidential locations. These days depend on whether the address ends in an odd or even number, and on the time of year.

During Daylight Saving Time, homes with odd numbered or no addresses

should water on Wednesdays and Saturdays, while homes with even numbered addresses should water on Thursdays and Sundays

During Eastern Standard Time, homes with odd numbered or no addresses should water on Saturday, while homes with even numbered addresses should water on Sunday.

In all cases, homeowners should water only when needed and not between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Also, water for no more than one hour per zone. Restrictions apply to private wells and pumps, ground or surface water and water from public and private utilities.

Visit <https://waterlessflorida.com/> for more information.

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Summer pool party safety

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Americans gather in backyards across the United States in celebration of the summer each July. Festivities often include delicious foods cooked on the grill, music, laughter, and, if there is a pool in the yard, hours of splashing around.

Pools are great places to cool off from the hot sun — but pools also can be dangerous. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, drowning remains the No. 1 threat to children. Simple precautionary measures can save lives.

- Never leave a child unattended in a pool or around any body of water no

matter how small, even for a minute.

- Teach children basic water safety.
- Avoid overloading the pool with too many boisterous swimmers, especially if adults, older kids and young kids are in the water. Small children can quickly get lost in the fray.
- Avoid swimming if you have been consuming alcohol.
- Designate a lifeguard, whether it's a hired, certified professional, or someone who has taken on the task and will keep eyes fixed on the pool at all times while swimmers are present.
- Establish rules and enforce them. Pro-

hibit diving into shallow water and running around the slippery edge of the pool.

- Learn how to administer CPR to both children and adults.
- If a child goes missing, look for him or her in the pool first.
- Minimize the use of pool floats that can obscure the view of the pool floor when there are many swimmers present.
- Keep a phone handy at all times. Promptly call for emergency services if the need arises.
- Ensure everyone immediately exits the pool if thunder is heard or lightning is seen.

- Turn off the filter pump while guests are swimming, particularly to protect against entrapment on pool drains or pipes.

- The American Association of Pediatrics advises against allowing infants and toddlers in hot tubs. Older children should not be in a hot tub for more than 20 minutes at a time.

- Be sure the water chemistry is balanced in pools and spas so that swimmers are not irritated by the chemicals and the water is sanitary. Also, keep in mind that swim diapers are not foolproof. Check youngsters often so that waste does not end up in the pool.



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The Pantry Raiders

Give chips and dip a sweet twist

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Tortilla chips dipped in a tangy salsa often make the perfect opener to a meal. Salsa traditionally is made with tomatoes, but people often can find different fruits filling in for tomatoes or complementing them in various salsa recipes. During the height of the summer entertaining season, salsa can be transformed by watermelon, a popular summertime fruit. Watermelon's high water content and subtle, sweet flavor contribute to its refreshing, some might say addictive, nature; however, this recipe for "Watermelon Fire and Ice Salsa," courtesy of the The National Watermelon Promotion Board, adds jalapeño peppers to the mix to bring a little heat to those cool watermelon pieces.

- ½ cup green peppers
- 2 tbsp. lime juice
- 1 tbsp. chopped cilantro
- 1 tbsp. green onions
- 2 tbsp. jalapeño peppers

Combine ingredients. Mix well and cover. Refrigerate for 1 hour or more. Watermelon Fire and Ice Salsa



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Photo courtesy MetroCreative

Watermelon Fire and Ice Salsa
Makes 3 cups
3 cups chopped watermelon



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Travel

Bentonville, Arkansas: Artful adventures will surprise you

By Debi Lander
mail@floridanewsline.com

If you were a billionaire, what would you do with your money? Alice Walton, daughter of Walmart founder Sam Walton, is one of the richest women in the world. She decided to collect American art and build a museum to showcase it in her hometown, Bentonville, Arkansas. The little city in the Ozark Mountains has a population of around 55,000. Alice Walton wanted to make great works of American art accessible to the public, particularly in a region that lacked major cultural institutions. Her vision was not just about housing art but creating a space where art and nature coexist harmoniously.

She succeeded! The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art is like no other art gallery I've toured; it's a really stunning and fun space. I found attractive wood and glass buildings surrounded by ponds that bring the outdoors in. Walkers and bikers enjoy

five miles of trails on 120 acres, including outdoor sculptures.

I wandered through five centuries of galleries featuring masterpieces like Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington, Norman Rockwell's Rosie the Riveter, Georgia O'Keeffe's painting White Flower, which was purchased in 2014 for \$44.4 million, Chihuly glass chandeliers, and Andy Warhol pop art. I entered the "Infinity Mirrored Room," being thrown off balance by dancing spots of light and reflections. Best of all, the museum is free.

A visit to the world-class Crystal Bridges Museum would be enough to bring one to Bentonville, but downtown offers much more. The Momentary, a former cheese factory, houses an extension of more contemporary art installations. These provocative and whimsical pieces are shown on a rotating basis. The Momentary also includes a coffee



Photos courtesy Debi Lander
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.



Sculpted tree outside of Art Museum entrance.



Downtown Bentonville.

house, a Tower Bar with the city's best views, and live music performances.

I also visited the Museum of Native American History (MONAH), founded by David Bogle, a member of the Cherokee Nation. The museum aims to preserve and promote an understanding of Native American cultures from prehistoric times to the present through artifacts, textiles, and artworks. I especially liked a collection of historic handmade dolls and the Hopi tribe's Kachina figures.

Bentonville holds Walmart's headquarters, so naturally, you'll find the Walmart Museum. Located in Sam Walton's original 5 & 10 store on the town square, the museum chronicles Walmart's rise from a single-dime store to a global retail giant. The Interactive exhibits, a hologram of Sam, and historical artifacts provide a likable experience. End your visit with a treat from the old-fashioned soda fountain. To me, Bentonville's main square resembled a Norman Rockwell painting of a typical small American town.

Bentonville, known as the Mountain Bike Capital of the World, offers cyclists the impressive Coler Mountain Bike Preserve and Slaughter Pen Trails. Find umpteen miles of trails from beginner to expert.

Bentonville played a significant role in the Civil War, culminating in the Battle of Bentonville, one of the largest battles fought in the state. Visitors can explore the Pea Ridge National Military Park and the Benton County Courthouse, which served as a Union hospital during the war.

I spent one night (not enough) at the 21c Museum Hotel in the heart of Bentonville, within easy walking distance of the attractions and restaurants. This boutique establishment blends an immersive modern art experience with luxury accommodations. I found life-size green penguins, the hotel trademark, scattered about. Placing one outside a door or elevator lets you make another traveler laugh. Breakfast in the Hive restaurant was outstanding.

I'd never heard of Bentonville or been to Arkansas before my recent trip (combined with Little Rock), but I can honestly say I'd love to return. I'd spend more time in the museums and enjoy the small-town feel and fine restaurants.

If you go: Visitbentonville.com

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



Exhibit at Museum of Native American History.

Interesting facts related to Independence Day

By NewsLine Staff
mail@floridanewsline.com

Americans celebrate Independence Day every July 4. The holiday has become synonymous with summer fun, as grand fireworks displays and backyard barbecues are integral components of many people's July 4 celebrations. Here are some interesting facts related to Independence Day:

- There have been many iterations of the American flag. The American flag has become an iconic symbol of freedom recognized across the globe since the United States declared their independence from Great Britain in 1776. But few July 4 celebrants may know that the current version is the 27th iteration of the American flag. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the current version of the flag officially became the flag on July 4, 1960.

- More than half of all Americans own an American flag. A 2023 poll from WalletHub found that 57 percent of Americans own an American flag. And that's not the only way Americans show their national pride, as the same poll found that roughly one in three Americans intended to purchase patriotic merchandise for July 4.

- The United States is not the only place to celebrate American independence. Such celebrations occur in various countries, including Australia,

Denmark, Ireland, and Norway. The festivities in Rebild National Park in Denmark are believed to be the largest celebration of American independence outside the United States.

- The National Hot Dog and Sausage Council estimates that 150 million hot dogs are consumed on July 4. Though there's no corresponding estimate related to how many hamburgers Americans eat on July 4, various reports suggest Americans eat roughly 50 billion burgers annually, so it's fair to conclude many a burger will be consumed this Independence Day.

- July is a popular month for nations to celebrate their independence. In addition to the United States, various countries, including Algeria (July 5), Argentina (July 9), The Bahamas (July 10), Belarus (July 3), Burundi (July 1), Canada (July 1), Cape Verde (July 1), Colombia (July 20), Kiribati (July 12), and Liberia (July 26), celebrate their Independence Day in July.

- John Adams, a Founding Father of the United States and the second president in the country's history, felt Americans should celebrate their independence from Great Britain on July 2. That's because the Continental Congress voted for independence on July 2, 1776; however, the Declaration of Independence was not approved for two more days, thus making July 4 the day to celebrate America's independence from Great Britain.



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