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Community Marketplace Call (904) 886-4919 for advertising rates

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Photo courtesy Mandarin Garden Club

Mary Katherine Howe holds a bouquet of flowers at the Mandarin Garden Club, where she was recently honored for nearly 50 years of community service.

Mandarin Garden Club honors life and legacy of Mary Howe

By Michele Alex, Mandarin Garden Club Publicist

The Mandarin Garden Club recently honored the life and legacy of longtime member Mary Katherine Howe during an April 21 celebration conducted by master gardener Mary Forester.

Joining the club in 1977, Howe was a cornerstone of the community for nearly 50 years. Throughout her tenure, she served as a circle leader, club president, Bumblebee children's group co-chair and club treasurer. A master gardener and liaison for the Duval County Extension Office, Howe also designed, founded and maintained the club's Butterfly Demonstration Garden.

Garden Club cont. on pg. 2

PATRIOTIC PICNIC



Photo courtesy of Mandarin Community Club

Brett Nolan, vice president of the Mandarin Community Club, holds an America 250 flag in front of the historic club building.

Mandarin Community Club to host June 14 event for America's 250th

By Brett Nolan

The Mandarin Community Club is inviting the community to come together in celebration of a historic mile-

stone as it hosts a Patriotic Picnic in honor of America's 250th anniversary. The event will take place on Flag Day, Sunday, June 14, from 12:30 to 3 p.m., offering an

afternoon of food, music and family-friendly activities in a uniquely historic setting.

Held beneath the shade of the club's iconic oak trees,

some estimated to be nearly as old as the nation itself, the picnic will take place at the Harriet Beecher Stowe Pa-

Patriotic Picnic cont. on pg. 2

Williams Family YMCA announces summer lineup

The Williams Family YMCA is launching its summer schedule of youth camps, community events and swimming programs, according to a recent release.

The branch recently celebrated the 10th anniversary of its annual Battle of the Bikes fundraiser, a recent release stated. The event drew 45 participants to the cycle studio and raised funds

for the YMCA's annual campaign, which helps keep local programs accessible to area families. The community center also hosted its "Moms in Bloom" afternoon tea party to honor local mothers and caregivers, the release noted.

Registration is currently open for the summer season,

YMCA cont. on pg. 2

Your voice, your choice

Who serves the best slice of pizza in Mandarin? Which local boutique has the most unique finds? Who is the most trusted mechanic in the neighborhood?

Mandarin NewsLine announces the launch of the Best of the Best Readers' Choice Awards, a premier community program designed to celebrate the businesses, organizations and people that make Mandarin a vibrant place to live and work.

Starting this summer, the power to decide is entirely in the hands of our readers. This program is more than just a list of local businesses; it is an opportunity for residents to give back to the go-to

Voice cont. on pg. 3

Think your business has what it takes to be Mandarin's Best of the Best?

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VOTING CLOSES JULY 31!

Patriotic Picnic cont. from pg. 1

vilion, a covered venue inspired by the architectural style of the famed author's former Mandarin home. The historic setting provides a rare opportunity to celebrate American history in a place that feels connected to it.

The event will feature a variety of classic picnic fare, including fried chicken and biscuits, potato salad, macaroni and cheese, and savory barbecue pulled pork and pasta salad, along with hot dogs and other all-American favorites. An additional highlight of the menu will be a special patriotic edition of award-winning mandarin orange cake, prepared by head chef Dennis Chan, adding a festive touch to the celebration.

Entertainment throughout the afternoon will include live patriotic music performed by local Theater Troupe 1776, along with a color guard presentation by the Jacksonville Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, Florida's oldest SAR chapter. These elements are intended to both honor the



Image courtesy of Mandarin Community Club
A QR code invites community members to scan and RSVP for the upcoming Patriotic Picnic on June 14.

nation's history and engage attendees of all ages.

Interactive activities will also play a central role in the event. Guests will have the opportunity to sign a replica

of the Declaration of Independence as a symbolic gesture of civic pride and participate in a lively, crowd-engaged reading of the historic document. A pie contest will invite club members to showcase their baking skills, with attendees sampling entries and voting for their favorites.

Tickets for the event are priced at just \$17.76 per person — a playful nod to the year of America's founding. Children 5 and under are admitted free. Advance online ticket purchases and RSVPs are strongly encouraged to help plan for the crowd, though tickets will also be available at the door, where space is limited.

Each ticket includes entry into a prize drawing featuring special commemorative items tied to America's 250th anniversary, including an official Betsy Ross America 250 flag. Mandarin Community Club members will receive additional drawing tickets as well as tokens for voting in the pie contest. Individuals who bring a worn and tattered U.S. flag to properly dispose of will receive an

additional prize drawing ticket.

The picnic also serves as an opportunity to support one of Jacksonville's longest-standing civic organizations. The Mandarin Community Club, which has served the area for more than a century, continues to host events aimed at strengthening community ties while preserving local history.

As a membership drive, attendees are encouraged to bring friends and family, enjoy the celebration and consider becoming members of the Mandarin Community Club to support and take part in future events like this one that bring the community together in meaningful ways.

With its combination of tradition, entertainment and community engagement, the Patriotic Picnic offers a meaningful way to reflect on the nation's history while looking ahead to its future.

Brett Nolan is the vice president of the board of directors for the Mandarin Community Club.

Garden Club cont. from pg. 1

Her expertise extended to the cultivation of perennial, Florida native, vegetable and ginger beds, but she also cultivated ideas and creativity.

The Mandarin Garden Club was honored and privileged to have her as a mentor and help for those in need. Howe will be missed and always remembered for her deep sense of community, love for nature and the environment. She received the 30-year Master Gardener Service Award and had the Butterfly Garden dedicated in her honor.

The celebration was attended by club members, friends and family who gathered to share refreshments and fond memories of Howe's profound impact on the Mandarin Garden Club. The club remains grateful for her lifelong commitment to nature, education and the community.

YMCA cont. from pg. 1

including full-day camp, specialty camps, tennis and sports camps, and the summer swim team, according to a recent release.

The branch pool is open with new Sunday afternoon recreational hours, a recent release explained. Aqua fitness classes are held Monday through Friday from 9 to 10 a.m., alongside themed pool social activities. Registration is also open for youth, teen and adult swim lessons, which range from basic water safety and confidence-building to advanced stroke development, the release detailed.

Additionally, the YMCA will host a "Wimbledon at Williams" tennis tournament on June 27, according to a recent release. Participants are encouraged to wear classic tennis attire and play with wooden rackets, which are available to rent for \$20. For registration details, contact Tennis Director Melissa Glasgow.



Photo courtesy Williams Family YMCA
A young swimmer works on water comfort skills with an instructor at the Williams Family YMCA pool.

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Best of the Best Reader's Choice Awards

Voice cont. from pg. 1

neighborhood spots that make daily life in Mandarin better. Whether it is a favorite morning coffee shop, a reliable family doctor or a beloved hair stylist, Mandarin NewsLine wants to know who deserves the ultimate title of "Best of the Best."

How to Vote

For the months of June and July, Mandarin NewsLine will publish the official ballot in every print edition of the newspaper and make a digital version available to download and print at MandarinNewsLine.com. To participate, readers simply need to clip the ballot from the paper or print out the digital copy, fill out the ballot with their favorite local nominees, complete the required contact fields and mail it in for counting.

Official Contest Rules

To ensure the absolute integrity and fair-

ness of the results, the program enforces the following official contest rules:

Ballot Location, Completion & Deadlines: Official ballots can be found in printed editions of Mandarin NewsLine, which can be picked up at Mandarin South Library, Mandarin Kori Rd Library, Mandarin Museum, UPS Store, 10950 San Jose Blvd Ste 6, and Fruit Cove Library, 60 Davis Pond Blvd. Ballots can also be downloaded and printed online at MandarinNewsLine.com. To be counted, all ballots must be at least 50% completed.

Mailing Address: Ballots must be mailed to: Mandarin NewsLine, 450-106 SR 13 N, #101, St. Johns, FL 32259 and post-marked by July 27, 2026.

Voter Information: All ballots must include the voter's full name, address, phone number and email address.

Envelope Limit: Mailed ballots can only

have one ballot per envelope. (The spirit of voting is one vote per person.)

Geographic Limits: All votes must be cast for businesses in and around Mandarin. Votes for any business located outside of a 30-mile radius of the city limits will not be counted.

Category Limits: A business can win the "Best of" award in no more than one category. If a business is the leading vote-getter in more than one category, that business will win only the "Best of" award for the category in which it received the most votes.

Cheating & Ballot Stuffing: Obvious attempts at ballot stuffing or cheating will result in immediate disqualification.

Business Standing: Any winning business must be in good standing with Florida NewsLine and still in operation by the date of the results printed in the magazine in order to be promoted as a "Best" winner.

Final Tabulations: Once ballots are officially counted, all tabulations are final.

Results Publication: Results will be published in the September issue of Mandarin NewsLine as well as online.

Don't let your favorite neighborhood spots go unrecognized. Grab a copy of Mandarin NewsLine and make your voice heard. Submitting a completed ballot is the ultimate way to show support for the local business owners who pour their hearts into serving our neighborhood every day.

For local business owners looking to maximize their visibility during the voting period, or for readers seeking more details on the program, advertising inquiries and information requests can be directed to Haley Cook by email at haley.cook@newslinedigital.com or by phone at 904-886-4919.

NAME THE BEST OF THE BEST IN EACH CATEGORY

Food & Drink

All-Around Restaurant _____

Brunch _____

Coffee Shop _____

Bakery _____

Pizza _____

Burger _____

Sushi _____

Mexican _____

Italian _____

BBQ _____

Wings _____

Sandwich Shop/Deli _____

Dessert/Ice Cream _____

Happy Hour _____

Home & Professional Services

Real Estate Agent _____

Real Estate Office _____

Mortgage Company _____

Insurance Agency _____

Home Builder/Remodeler _____

Kitchen & Bath _____

Landscaper/Lawn Service _____

Plumber _____

Electrician _____

HVAC _____

Pest Control _____

Handyman _____

Cleaning Services _____

Automotive

Auto Service _____

Car Wash/Detailing _____

Car Dealership _____

Health, Beauty & Wellness

Hair Salon _____

Nail Salon _____

Day Spa/Med Spa _____

Massage Therapy _____

Chiropractor _____

Dentist _____

Orthodontist _____

Medical Practice _____

Fitness Center _____

Yoga/Pilates _____

Personal Trainer _____

Retail & Lifestyle

Women's Boutique _____

Men's Clothing _____

Jewelry Store _____

Home Decor/Gift Shop _____

Furniture Store _____

Nursery/Garden Center _____

Liquor Store _____

Community & Family

Child Care _____

Church _____

Non-Profit Organization _____

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Dog Groomer _____

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Submissions

Community news and photos are due by the 10th of each month to ensure inclusion in the upcoming issue. Thank you for your support of trusted community journalism.

Mandarin NewsLine community newspaper is a free monthly publication delivered to all addresses in Zip Codes 32223, 32258, and selected neighborhoods in 32257. Submission of articles and photographs are received by mail or email, although email to editor@FloridaNewsLine.com is preferred. The writers' opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Florida NewsLine. Advertising Rates are available by request. Florida NewsLine is not responsible for advertisement content or accuracy of information provided by its advertisers. Nor does Florida NewsLine endorse any of the products or services included in this publication. Florida NewsLine reserves the right to refuse advertisement or copy from any advertiser. All rights are reserved and no portion of this publication may be copied without the express written consent of the publisher. ©2025.



June Community Calendar

What's Happening in Mandarin

To submit items for the Community Calendar, email editor@floridaneWSline.com.

**June 2
Honeybee Quilters Guild meeting**

The Honeybee Quilters Guild will meet Tuesday, June 2, at 6:30 p.m. at Mandarin Church of Christ, 12791 Old St. Augustine Road. Doors open at 6 p.m. to the right of the playground in the back. Program: Hunter's Star Quilt pattern and tools. Bring your Sew and Tell. New members

and guests welcome. Visit honeybeequilters.org for more information.

**June 13
North Florida Genealogical Society**

The North Florida Genealogical Society will meet Saturday, June 13, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Mandarin Branch Library, 3330 Kori Rd. The program, "Stitches of Time: A Social History of Quilting in Honor of Our Country's 250th Anniversary," will be pre-

sented by Alison McConoughey, president of the Jacksonville Modern Quilt Guild and board member of the Jacksonville Quiltfest. Topics include family heirlooms, quilts facts vs. fiction, and Amish quilts.

**June 25
Mandarin Republican Club meeting**

The Mandarin Republican Club will meet Thursday, June 25, at St. Mary's Seafood, 11290 Old St. Augustine Rd. Social time begins

at 6 p.m., and the meeting with speaker starts at 6:30 p.m.

**July 10
Trivia Extravaganza**

Mandarin Lutheran Church will host a Trivia Extravaganza Friday, July 10, to benefit the Baby Pantry, which provides diapers, wipes and formula to local families in need. Doors open at 6 p.m.; trivia starts at 7 p.m. at 11900 San Jose Blvd., Jacksonville. Prizes include gift cards from local businesses,

themed gift baskets and a 50-50 raffle. For more information or to reserve a spot, email Office@mandarinlutheran.org.

Shuffleboard

Shuffleboard is played Tuesdays at 10 a.m. at Tommy Hazouri Park in Mandarin. The courts are located at the park entrance next to the tennis courts. Beginners are welcome. Arrive a few minutes early for court assignments. Games are cancelled if it rains.

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Members of the Mandarin Women's Club model outfits from The Petunia Patch during the club's fashion show. Photo courtesy of Gail Packard

Mandarin Women's Club plans summer activities

by Gail Packard, Publicity, Mandarin Women's Club

The Mandarin Women's Club recently hosted its popular fashion show, drawing a large turnout as members modeled outfits from local boutique The Petunia Patch, according to a recent release. Following the fashion show, club members elected their officers for the 2026-2027 year, who will serve under the leadership

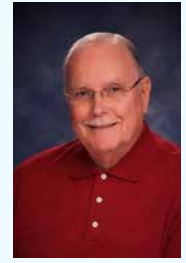
of club president Vickie Rumbers, the release stated.

Although the club is taking a break from its monthly luncheons during the summer, seasonal social activities will continue for active members, noted a recent release. Summer activities scheduled include Bunco, Continental Rummy, Hand & Foot, Mah Jongg, Mexican Train and Pennies Canasta, per

a recent release.

To participate in these summer activities and be included in the upcoming member directory, residents must join or renew their club membership as soon as possible, according to a recent release. Additional information about summer activities and membership forms can be found online at mandarinwomensclub.com, a recent release concluded.

In loving memory of...



George Herbert Koester
who passed away peacefully in Hospice Care, on April 1, 2026, at the age of 93.

George was preceded in death by his wife, Nardine, of 73 years who passed away November 24, 2025. Their two beautiful souls have now been reunited in Heaven.

George was a wonderful husband, father and friend to many. He was very strong in his Christian faith and beliefs and supported the church any way he could. He was also very successful with his career with various railroads and the railroad supply industry. George started at the bottom as a maintainer's assistant on the Pere Marquette Railroad in Michigan and completed his career at CSX Railroad as Director of Signals and Communications for Operations in Jacksonville Florida. After leaving CSX he started his own successful business in railroad lighting equipment. George always enjoyed family gatherings as well as activities such as fishing, golf and home improvement projects.

He is survived by his daughter Kimberly (Kim), son-in-law William (Bill) and their family dog Zippy who was his little fur buddy. We will hold his memory close to our hearts.

A Celebration of Life will be held on June 20, 2026, at 11am. At Church of Our Saviour with reception to follow.

His final resting place will be at The Church of Our Saviour Columbarium.

All that wish to attend are welcome.

The obituary is available on the Hardage Giddens website for those who wish to light a candle or share a memory.

Act II Players set for summer musical

NewsLine staff

Mandarin's community theatre group, Act II Players, recently hosted a cabaret fundraiser on May 3 to support and launch its upcoming summer musical, "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," according to a recent release.

The afternoon cabaret featured local actors performing songs centered on love, friendship and spring while attendees enjoyed food and specialty beverages, a recent release stated. Performers included Chloe Dresback, Lisa Hunt, Ryan Lemmon, Billy Lister, Avery Maxham, Katie O'Neill, Marilyn Painter, Julia Rigon, Karl Rogers, Sherri Snow, Ethan Walls and Camille Zeigler, per a recent release.



Performers sing during the Act II Players cabaret on May 3. Photo courtesy Act II Players

The cast features Cameron Haddock as Finch, Avery Maxham as Pilkington, Karl Rogers as J.B. Biggley, Ethan Walls as Frump and Julia Rigon as Hedy LaRue, according to a recent release.

The production will take place at the Mandarin United Methodist Church Theatre, located at 11270 San Jose Blvd., per a recent release. Five performances are scheduled, including 7:30 p.m. evening shows on July 16, 17 and 18, a 2 p.m. matinee on July 18 and a 3 p.m. matinee on July 19, the release detailed.

Tickets can be purchased online at actiplayers.org, and more information is available by emailing info@actiplayers.org.



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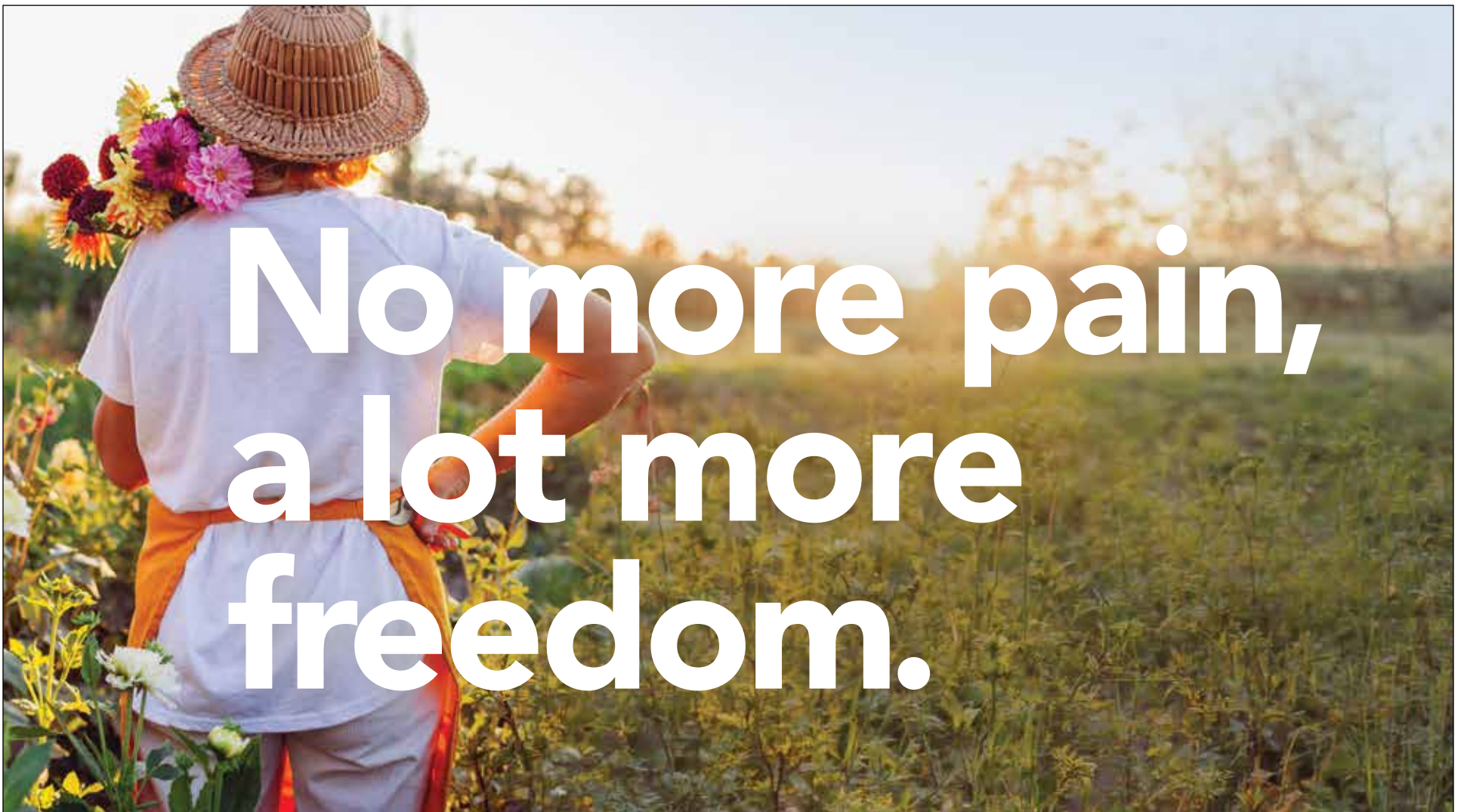


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