

THE
Magnolia
NEWS

NEWS OF INTEREST TO THE RESIDENTS OF MAGNOLIA POINT

VOLUME 7 • ISSUE 7

JULY 2026



2026
WINNER CHARLIE AWARD
 Association/Non Profit
 Best Overall: Magazine

WINNER CHARLIE AWARD
 Association/Non Profit
 Best Overall: Design



Happy 250, USA!

Lotta 'new' in this new issue: a newer 'MPCA Review', a YTD summary of each committee's accomplishments. And, we've added a YTD 'Board Notes'. There are three, count 'em, **three** new features: '**Dear Miss Puddles**', '**Bird Break**', and '**Southern on the Side**'. There's a new contribution, a first for TMN, by neighbor Jennifer Moore, in the just-new-last month's 'Don't Even Start' also introduced in June with 'The Potting Bench' and 'Tool Talk', also with new installments in this issue!

First up: MPWC 2026 Scholarship Winners, **pages 4-5**.

2025



FIRST PLACE
 BEST USE PHOTOS

National Newspaper Foundation

SECOND PLACE
NUSA
 COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER
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One we just had to feature, if just for the name, 'American Beautyberry'. It's this month's **Potting Bench**, **pages 12-13**.



We take a 'Bird Break', using our phone to dial in those morning birds that wake up the neighborhood, **page 28**.



'Tool Talk' takes a look at installing a railing to steady your late-night pool plunges, **page 15**.



Keep your friends near, and your putter closer! Christian drills down on the flat stick, **pages 29-30**.

A 'new' one, 'Dear Miss Puddles' a pet-advice column, tackling those thorny health, behavioral, and emotional issues of pet ownership, **pages 18-19**.



Our own Kelly Weaver, part-time Magnolia thespian, full-time theatre promoter, invites us along in 'The Play's The Thing', **pages 32-33**.



Our recipe this month is a quick 'Lowcountry Chicken Bog', comforting, smoky and peppery, a staple in southern households, **pages 22-23**.

Followed by the **all new 'Southern on the Side'**, side dishes with a Dixie flair. This month, it's collard greens variant in the jet age, **page 24**.



(And leave room for a storied, fruity magic elixir, 'Paw Paw 2.0, this month's **MIXmagic** beverage, a crowd-pleaser, on **page 26**.)

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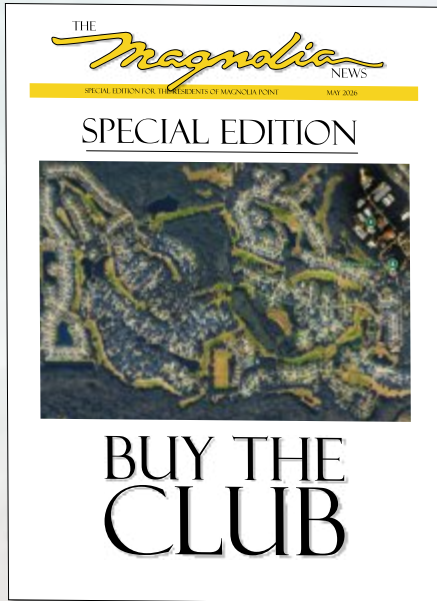
EXTRA!

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 7

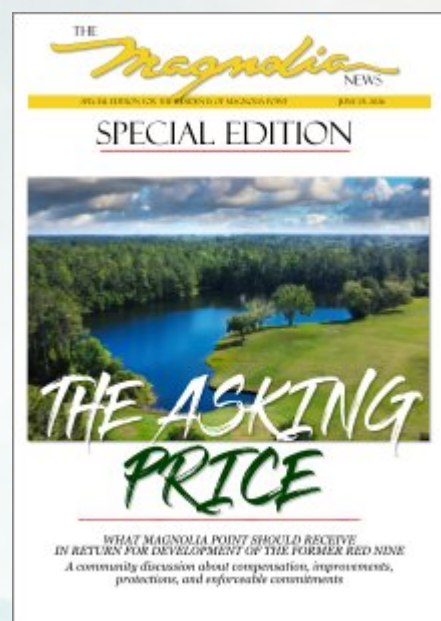
“BREAKING NEWS FROM BEHIND THE HEDGES”

JULY 2026

Special Editions by The Magnolia News focused on the sale of the club and associated properties, the potential impact on the community, and strategies to mitigate the effects of proposed development in our back and front yards. These editions were published in June on social media, and are available here for download.



Click on the covers to download a copy



Scholarships Awarded to Six at Clay High School

The **Magnolia Point Women's Club** awarded a record-setting amount of scholarships to six young women graduating from **Clay High School** this year. The Women's Club awarded **\$20,000** to the six young women, the most ever awarded since the inception of the scholarship fund. The Club's scholarship fund, awarded annually to senior girls graduating from Clay High School, began in 2003 to honor former Women's Club founder and member **Gisela Ferrell**. Scholarships are funded by proceeds from the annual Women's Club luminaria event held each December in Magnolia Point, as well as proceeds from directory ads sales for the member directory. Since the start of the scholarship program, the Women's Club has awarded **\$205,850** in scholarships to young women at Clay High School.

This year's recipients were introduced formally at the Club's meeting on June 10. The recipients were also recognized at Clay High School's senior awards program on May 18.



Pamela Hernon was awarded a \$4,000.00 scholarship. Pamela will be attending the University of Central Florida. She participated in many school activities, including Weightlifting and Thespians, and was Senior Class Secretary. She also held down a part time job while attending school. Her future includes a career in health sciences and kinesiology, studying to become a physical therapist.

the Basketball Team and played Flag Football. She held offices in various athletic endeavors. Teaghan also volunteered at Charles E Bennett, Clay High Basketball Camp and Clay County Athletics Golf Tournament.



Teaghan Moses also received a \$4,000 scholarship and will be attending UNF. Teaghan plans to pursue a degree in Athletic Training. While at Clay High, she was Captain of



Milana Ayres received a \$3,000 award and will be attending UNF after graduating with her diploma as well as her AICE diploma. She plans to pursue a career in Biomedical Sciences with hopes of becoming a pediatric Hospitalist. Milayna founded Moving Forward Clay County, a service initiative focused on helping local families access essential resources. She mentored incoming freshmen and was an officer with HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America).

Continued



Monica Alexandra Sanchez-Cruz, another \$3,000 award recipient, will be attending Santa Fe Community College, pursuing a career in construction management. At Clay High, she was the Founder of the Hispanic Heritage Club, and was a member of the weightlifting team. Monica aided with the Clay High Valentine Dance, which presented children with special needs and was heavily involved with Hispanic Heritage Club events, including the homecoming float and Clay High culture night.

Kylie Elrod also received a \$3,000 scholarship and will be attending the Aveda

Institute, studying cosmetology and will become a licensed esthetician.

While at Clay High, she was a Chaplain and Student Advisor for FFA and came away with awards for Tractor Driving and livestock judging. Kylie was named Miss Clay County Fair in 2026. She also volunteered at Charles E Bennett, First Baptist Church of Middleburg and Rideout Elementary School.



Chloe Turner received a \$3,000 scholarship and will be attending St. Johns River State College. While attending Clay, she was a member of the National Honor Society, Future Farmers of America and the American Sign Language Hoors Society. Chloe sang the National Anthem at Clay High's graduation ceremonies. She will be pursuing a degree in law enforcement.



All the girls have a bright future ahead of them and the Magnolia Point Women's Club wishes them the very best. Special thanks go to the Scholarship Committee, led by outgoing Director **Marsha Fields** and members **Lorna Broughton, Marty Essex, Clara Gilbert, Marguerite Martin, and Judy Sessions.**

- MARSHA FIELDS



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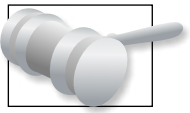




CURB DROP 



- EDITOR

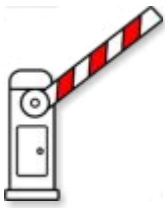


MPCA REVIEW



Hello again! As we cross the midpoint of the year, it is time to update our year-to-date look at the hard work, challenges, and decisions guiding the Magnolia Point Community Association and shaping its future. By incorporating the latest June 2026 Committee reports into our January through June analysis, we have put together a summary of what is happening behind the scenes.

Here is your updated summary of our core accomplishments, ongoing challenges, shifts in strategy, and action items, organized alphabetically by committee. (NOTE: the CLC and Covenants Consolidation Committees are not included, due to lack of activity.)



ACCESS CONTROL

Chair: Chuck Cox

The ACC has managed major infrastructure upgrades this year, including guard house remediation, new photobeams, and a CMCE lightning suppressor. The biggest recent win was the activation of the

new, synchronized rear gate barrier arms on May 22, which feature a new swing-away design

- Unfortunately, the community's biggest ongoing challenge remains vehicles damaging the gate equipment. On the very day the new arms were installed, a white pickup truck hit and ruined the brand-new operator unit, and later, both a silver Toyota SUV and an Arctic Air service truck knocked the new arms off while attempting to tailgate.
- Year-to-date, gate damages billed to drivers have reached \$16,800, but the HOA has only recovered \$8,100

Equipment fatigue is another bottleneck. In May, technicians discovered that the gearboxes in all four metal gate operators were leaking oil due to blown seals. One was replaced in mid-May, with the rest scheduled to follow.

Meanwhile, the front gate resident lane continues to suffer an intermittent issue where the reader board sends a continuous enable signal; a new reader board is on hand to address this.

Shifts in Priorities, Reversals, & Action Items

The longest-running bottleneck has been the final rollout of the RFID access system. After months of Board hesitation and a resident-driven reversal on who pays for the \$25 stickers (shifting the cost from residents back to the HOA), the RFID reader panel has finally been installed at the rear gate, though it is not yet fully operational.

In a major personnel shift, Chairman Chuck Cox announced he will step down from his leadership role

at the end of July, though he will remain on the committee to assist with the transition.

June Action Items

No new formal motions were submitted. Future plans focus on RFID integration, running a dedicated water line to the guard shack, and obtaining maintenance quotes for all gate and video equipment.

From 6 reports submitted of a total of 6 year to date.



ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

Chair: William M. (Wally) Bransford

The ARC has been the quiet, highly efficient engine of our community. Year-to-date, they have processed around 90 homeowner requests, expertly turning around reviews for roofs, tree removals, pool enclosures,

and fences so residents can secure city permits. In May alone, they successfully processed 11 new projects.

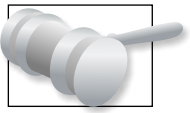
Shifts in Priorities, Reversals, & Action Items

The ARC had to navigate a significant strategic shift earlier this year due to changes in Florida Statute 720, which reversed the HOA's long-standing prohibition on separate structures (sheds). The committee must now approve these structures as long as they cannot be easily seen from adjacent properties or the golf course. The most pressing unresolved challenge for the ARC is leadership transition. Chairman Wally Bransford has repeatedly noted his intention to resign and the urgent need to find a replacement.

June Action Items No formal motions or informal recommendations were submitted. The primary focus remains on finding a new chairman.

From 6 reports submitted of a total of 6 year to date.





MPCA REVIEW



VOLUME 7 ISSUE 7

- SOURCE: magpt.org • SUMMARIES BY EDITOR -

JULY 2026



COMMUNICATIONS

Chair: Joanne LaBeouf

The Committee reached its biggest milestone of the year: the brand-new MPCA website officially opened on May 18, and the old HOA-Express platform was officially retired on June 1. Furthermore, the transition of the community database to Constant Contact is complete, and community emails have been flowing through the new system since mid-May. The committee has also clarified internal roles, successfully developed a newsletter timeline, and delivered Welcome Packets to new residents.

The massive migration did not come without bottlenecks. Approximately 120 residents experienced difficulties with the new registration process, requiring the web programmer to be on standby for assistance. The committee also fielded several complaints about the inefficiency of the registration process and the look of the new site.

Shifts in Priorities, Reversals, & Action Items

A key point of conflicting expectations arose around the database: some residents assumed the Committee would manually update their personal information, but the committee had to clarify that each resident is strictly responsible for managing their own account. Furthermore, because emails sent via Constant Contact are on a separate system from the website, they cannot be directly linked; as a workaround, the committee is posting notifications on the website to remind residents to check their Constant Contact emails.

June Action Items

No formal motions were submitted. Near-term plans were the completion of the June newsletter, continuing registration support, and reviewing the community database once a majority of residents are registered (currently at 1,386 users)

From 6 reports submitted of a total of 6 year to date.

However, the weather has dictated their success. An unseasonable freeze in early 2026 caused massive plant die-back, immediately followed by an extended drought that pushed the community into a Phase II Severe Water Shortage. Aging infrastructure, broken pond pumps, and damage to lines caused by the front gate road-widening project have created constant bottlenecks. (Note: Committee leadership data has conflicted throughout the year, with reports alternating between Larry and Cindy Francisco as Chair).

Shifts in Priorities, Reversals, & Action Items

The severe weather forced a massive shift in priority from community enhancement to damage control and freeze restoration. Furthermore, they recognized that the center median irrigation zone is too large and inefficient, requiring a proposed strategy change to split it into two distinct zones.

From 4 reports submitted, of a total of 6 year to date.

EDITOR

ROADWAYS, DRAINAGE & WATERWAYS



Chair: Unassigned

RDW successfully managed heavy-duty infrastructure projects, including massive drainage repairs on Muirfield Drive and Winged Foot Circle, opportunistic asphalt patching, and the emergency repair of a sinkhole on

Shinnecock caused by a broken 30" pipe. The collapse of a 15" deep HDPE pipe at Oglebay Drive remains a massive bottleneck, requiring pond drainage and custom fiberglass liners that delayed progress.

Shifts in Priorities, Reversals, & Action Items

The entryway widening project faced a notable strategic reversal. Originally told by the city four years ago that no permits were required, the committee completely changed the execution design this year, opting to widen the entry from the inside rather than the outside to expedite the process. Moving forward, the committee is also shifting strategies to adopt modern CAD-driven maps for tracking stormwater system repairs.

2 reports submitted, of 6 year to date.

LANDSCAPE & IRRIGATION

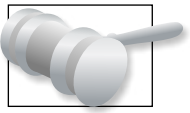
Chair: Cindy Francisco

Despite brutal weather conditions, L&I successfully managed the vinyl wrapping of utility boxes, pruned roughly 80 crepe myrtles, mulched common areas, and implemented a new blue-tooth irrigation system.



Continued





MPCA REVIEW



RULES ENFORCEMENT

Chair: Larry Francisco

The REC has aggressively maintained community standards, closing hundreds of violations year-to-date. General maintenance and landscaping issues continuously account for the vast majority of infractions. A recurring challenge is resident apathy, with many homeowners simply ignoring notices or failing to appear at violation hearings.

Shifts in Priorities, Reversals, & Action Items

The most significant strategy shift for the REC was a reversal toward leniency driven by environmental conditions. Due to the Phase II Severe Water Shortage, the committee intentionally held violations for dead lawn spots in abeyance, giving residents a fair chance to repair the damage once the drought lifted.

From 4 reports submitted of a total of 6 year to date.



STRATEGIC PLANNING

Chair: Ann Sims

The SPC has spent the year successfully looking over the horizon. In June, they crossed the finish line on a major initiative: the completion of the Club Continuity Handbook. This extensive document details the steps the Board can take to stay abreast of the financial and operational conditions of the Club. Their other massive project, the high-level 5-year Strategic Plan (which outlines key operations and Performance Indicators), is currently undergoing final Board review with comments addressed by the committee.

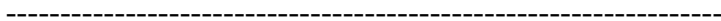
Shifts in Priorities, Reversals, & Action Items

With the heavy lifting of drafting these major contingency and strategic plans complete, the committee is shifting its focus toward drafting community surveys regarding traffic and speeding, and is considering taking a summer hiatus.

June Action Items

The committee's informal recommendation to the Board this month is to officially accept the newly completed Club Continuity Handbook.

From 5 reports submitted of a total of 6 year to date.

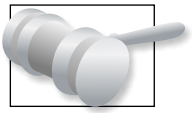


Thank you to all the committee members and volunteers who continue to dedicate their time and energy to Magnolia Point as we head into the second half of 2026! Summaries of reports as of June 30, and photo, by Editor.



dp





BOARD NOTES



Between January and June 2026, the Magnolia Point Community Association (MPCA) **Board of Directors** navigated a highly dynamic six-month period characterized by leadership transitions, evolving communication strategies, and an urgent financial mobilization to address the potential sale of MPG&CC. The evolution of the Board's focus shifted dramatically from routine, albeit heavy, infrastructure maintenance and restrictive community engagement toward high-stakes asset acquisition and proactive transparency.

The year commenced under the presidency of David Sprinkle, marked by an authoritative governance style and a unified front where all recorded votes were unanimous. In January, Sprinkle explicitly established the Board's posture, stating they were *"not committed to making changes to please everyone"*. Desiring more control over community narratives, the Board abruptly voted to terminate the community's online Members Forum, effective immediately, Sprinkle arguing it had outlived its usefulness. Simultaneously, the Board decisively dismissed persistent resident speeding complaints. They asserted that people simply speed as a "fact" and relied on two Green Cove Springs Police Department (GCSPD) studies to argue that no true speeding problem existed. Early financial actions were relatively modest and focused on infrastructure upkeep, including \$14,100 for a rear gate lightning suppressor, a \$4,700 initial investment to upgrade the website, and \$3,300 for tree work and landscaping. However, the Board also signaled a looming legal battle by announcing their intent to follow a legal opinion to force the local Club (MPI) to comply with its Use Agreement.

By February, Sprinkle's tone shifted noticeably, urging residents and the Board to reflect on what is most important and to *"work harder to come together"*. This meeting was dominated by the authorization of massive capital expenditures to address aging community assets. The Board unanimously approved an \$80,000 front entrance expansion contract with Duval Asphalt, \$56,300 for comprehensive Medinah Gate mechanical upgrades, \$5,000 for gate painting, and nearly \$40,000 to HEB Services for emergency stormwater catch basin repairs on Shinnecock at Wentworth. Concurrently, the Board's dispute with the Club escalated significantly, transitioning from demanding basic compliance to issuing a formal Notice of Default regarding the Use Agreement.

A substantial governance change occurred in April when David Miller assumed the presidency, moving Sprinkle to Vice-President, and instituted strict adherence to Roberts Rules of Order. This transition

brought visible internal friction, with several major strategic initiatives passing on narrow 4-1 or 3-2 votes. Under Miller, the Board fundamentally pivoted its communication strategy. To replace the canceled digital forum, they committed a not-to-exceed amount of \$2,000 to fund a printed monthly newsletter for the rest of 2026, a motion that passed 4-1 with Director Ann Sims dissenting. The new Board focused on long-term financial health, unanimously approving the 2026 Reserve Study and strategically transferring \$525,000 from a reserve ICS account into high-yield Certificates of Deposit. Demonstrating an appetite for broad organizational changes, they passed a new Records Retention Policy (in a tight 3-2 vote) and began drafting a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit a new HOA management company within sixty days.

In May, several previously delayed initiatives were finally executed. The Board officially approved the heavily debated RFID gate conversion and access credential policy, both passing on 4-1 votes, while also launching a replacement community website, magpt.org. Additional infrastructure spending continued with unanimous approvals for rear gate gearboxes (\$5,160), mail kiosk bollards (\$2,356), and a gatehouse water line (\$6,000). However, the defining moment of the year occurred when MPI owner Trevor Rothfels announced a pending agreement to sell all club assets and the Red 9 to a third party, RCBF Properties, LLC. The HOA responded immediately, stating it would review its strategic options, including its inherent right to purchase the assets.

This catalyst fundamentally altered the Board's June agenda, shifting them into a proactive, crisis-management footing. Pausing long-term operational plans, they tabled the management company RFP entirely to focus on stabilizing the MPI transition. The Board swiftly mobilized community funds to evaluate a potential acquisition, approving \$9,000 for a CBRE golf course appraisal, \$7,500 to retain a new land use attorney (Brennen Manna Diamond), and a contingent \$3,500 for a USGA course evaluation. Reversing their previous restrictive communication style, the Board embraced transparency by issuing "fluid" living-document updates, publishing the results of a community survey, and directly answering resident questions regarding the confidential MPI sales agreements. Finally, in a distinct reversal of their January stance on traffic concerns, the Board approved \$1,200 to purchase and beta-test two radar speed signs to determine their actual value to the community.





The Potting Bench



Welcome to this month's installment of "The Potting Bench"! For our North Florida suburban yards, finding a shrub that offers brilliant color, supports local wildlife, and thrives in our climate with minimal fuss can feel like striking gold. This month, we are spotlighting the **American Beautyberry** (*Callicarpa americana*), a native shrub beloved for its striking clusters of iridescent purple, pink, or white berries that hug the branches from late summer well into winter. While it can grow to be a large, flowing shrub in the wild, the American Beautyberry can easily be managed as a compact, show-stopping focal point or border hedge for your landscape.

Here is your guide to sourcing, transplanting, and maintaining the American Beautyberry:

Sourcing Your Beautyberry

What to Look For: You can find these shrubs at local independent garden centers, often sold in one- to three-gallon pots. Be sure to check the plant tag for the botanical name *Callicarpa americana* to ensure you are getting the true native species, as Asian cultivars are sold under the generic "Beautyberry" name.

Color Varieties

While the classic deep purple is stunning, you can also

look for unique native selections like *Callicarpa americana* var. *lactea* for pure white berries, or 'Welch's Pink' for lovely light pink fruit. And, if a neighbor already has one, they are incredibly easy to propagate by digging up natural volunteers, growing from seed, or taking softwood cuttings in the spring.

Transplanting and Placement

Light and Spacing: Beautyberries are highly adaptable, but planting them in a spot that receives full sun will reward you with a denser, more compact shrub and heavier berry production. If placed in the shade, they tend to grow leggier and more open. Be sure to give each plant about 4 to 6 feet of space to flourish.

Soil: This hardy native isn't fussy; it tolerates sandy, loamy, and even heavy clay soils, though it prefers well-drained conditions.

When and How to Plant

The optimal time to transplant is during the late fall, winter, or early spring while the plant is dormant, allowing the root system to establish before the harsh summer heat arrives. Dig a hole twice the width of the root ball, ensure the plant is level with the ground, and water generously to settle the soil and minimize transplant shock.

Continued



Bench Courtesy the Stevensons



application of a balanced fertilizer in early spring is sufficient, but never fertilize in the fall or winter.

Pruning for a Compact Shape

Because the American Beautyberry produces its flowers and berries on new growth, it responds beautifully to hard pruning. To maintain a manageable size and encourage a dense, bushy habit packed with berries, you can cut the shrub back to 6 to 12 inches above the ground each winter.

Happy planting, and enjoy the spectacular burst of color and the songbirds your new American Beautyberry will surely attract!

Ongoing Maintenance

Watering: During its first year, keep the soil consistently moist so the roots can properly establish.

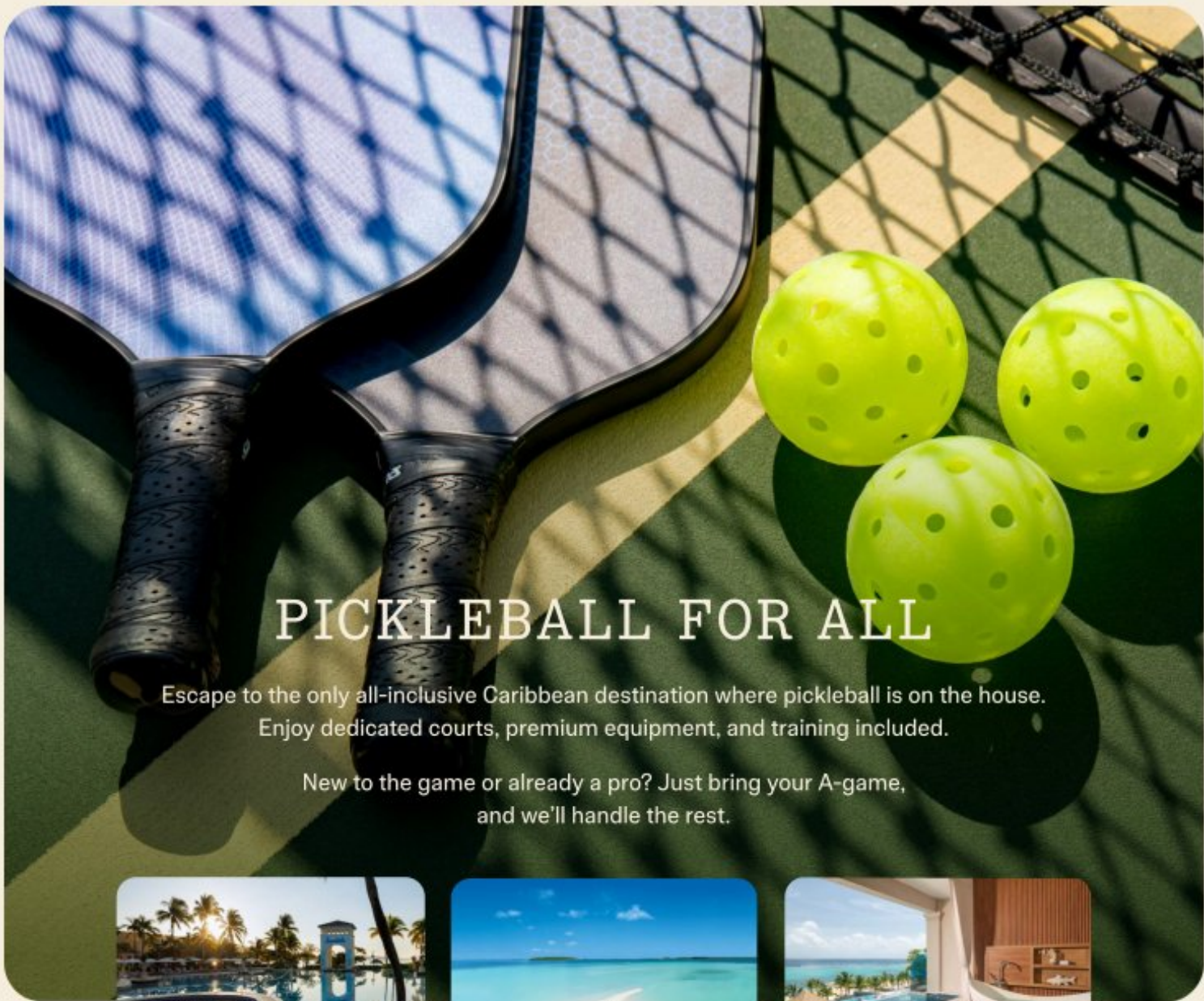
Once established, the beautyberry is impressively drought-tolerant. Its leaves may wilt early during a dry spell, but it bounces back remarkably quickly once watered.

Feeding

This plant thrives on a bit of neglect! It is best not to fertilize it, as excess nutrients can actually cause floppy, leggy growth. If your soil is exceedingly poor, a light



- STORY, PHOTOS: EDITOR



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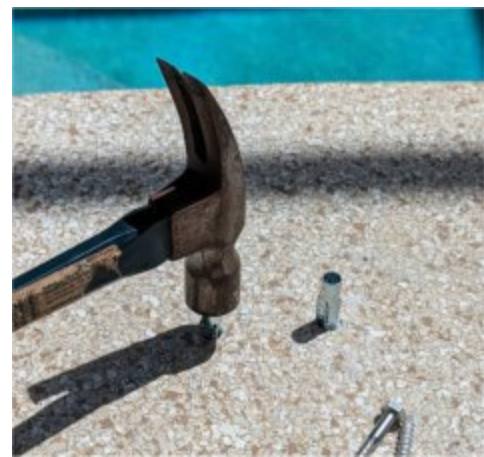


TOOL))) TALK



Entering or exiting in-ground pools without railings is rolling the dice. It's a no-brainer that navigating wet, slick steps, railings are critical for providing secure footing. Without them, you face an increased risk of slips or falls, joint or muscle strain, or a very awkward public display of complete loss of balance.

For this project, tools you'll need: railing kit, drill, hammer, ruler, 1/2 inch socket wrench. The railing kit, a beautiful, welded stainless steel construction, was purchased online. The shape shown is pretty much the best for most pools. As you can see, we set it off towards the edge of the steps. No firm and fast rules there.



Now, drilling. Many of the male of our species make noises about having a drill for concrete with some 'beef', namely, the muscular 'Half Inch', preferably an official 'Concrete' drill, one with a 'hammer drill' function. These are strictly two-handed affairs, big, and heavy. And satisfying to use. Here, I used my trusty 30 year-old 3/8 inch drill, no fancy hammer-drill function, just 'spinnny-spin'. Since most pool deck is 'cool deck', a lighter mix of concrete, this was like drilling butter: no big deal. After measuring and marking the four holes for the base, the drilling was kind of a buzz-kill.

The railing kit included the fasteners, 1/4 stainless lag screws, and the anchors to hold it all down. These are hammered into the holes you drill. Regardless of drill used, the dust fills the holes, and must be removed before you can hammer in the anchors. I used one of Karla's fancy vacuums with a skinny attachment that sucked all the dust out instantly. A shop-vac would do just fine. Important: make sure the anchor hole is deep enough for the anchor! Once you hammer one in, there's hell to pay to try to get it out to go 'just a little deeper'. Like, impossible! Either mark the drill bit with a piece of tape, or send a lag screw down the hole to test the depth. Then, bang each anchor down to its hole, and get your pool float on notice.

We specify '1/2 inch' socket wrench. That means 'big'. Getting the last little bit of these bolts 'home' should really put your muscles to the test. If you don't have a wrench that big, and know what a 'breaker bar' is, get one on standby.

Everyone in the pool!

- STORY, PHOTOS: EDITOR



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DEAR MISS PUDDLES



Residents, pets, and those golden retrievers currently pretending not to hear your names! Allow me to introduce myself. I am Miss Puddles Bellingham-Worthington III, though close friends may call me “Miss Puddles”, and close enemies generally call me “Your cat is on the dining table again.”

After twelve years supervising a screened lanai, three years monitoring a koi pond for suspicious behavior, and one regrettable Thanksgiving involving a decorative turkey centerpiece, I have retired from household management to devote my remaining years to community guidance.

You're welcome.

Over the years, I have observed many things about humans. You are capable creatures. You invented air conditioning, canned tuna, and those little crunchy salmon treats shaped like lobsters. Yet somehow you continue to lose arguments with animals weighing under fourteen pounds. Hmm, curious!

This column exists because pets have concerns. Deep, sometimes emotional concerns. Occasionally concerns involving squirrels. Every month, residents may submit questions regarding pet etiquette, behavioral confusion, emotional turmoil, mysterious barking, unexplained zooming, patio gecko diplomacy, or tensions involving robotic vacuum cleaners. I shall answer them with compassion, wisdom, and the quiet disappointment of a cat who watched someone buy “designer rain boots” for a Labradoodle.

Letter #1 - “My dog barks at everything!”

Dear Miss Puddles,

Our terrier barks at joggers, golf carts, leaves, clouds, and once at a decorative heron statue. We love him dearly, but the entire cul-de-sac now knows when Amazon arrives. Help!

- Exhausted on Medinah



Dear Exhausted,

Your terrier is not “overreacting.” Your terrier has appointed himself Director of Homeland Security. This is common among small dogs and retired neighborhood watch captains. The key here is redirection. When barking begins, avoid shouting “QUIET!” repeatedly from across the room like an increasingly emotional cruise director. Instead, approach calmly.

1. Interrupt with a cue such as “Thank you, all secure!” in a happy, indoor voice.
2. Every time he barks at a cloud, bark back. Do this once. You will never have to do it again.
3. Approach the terrier slowly, making firm eye contact. Say “Stand down, Sergeant.” If he continues barking, he outranks you now. Salute and walk away.

Dogs bark because barking *works*. The mail carrier leaves every single time, in a hurry. From the dog’s perspective, this is self-affirmation.

Miss Puddles’ Holistic Suggestion:

Lavender calming wipes are lovely. However, I have found that playing a recording of a *vacuum cleaner* causes most terriers to briefly reconsider their entire career. Try also: a recording of another dog barking, played from the opposite end of the house. Watch him attempt to file a report on himself.

Continued

Letter #2 - "Our cat attacks our feet at 3 AM"

Dear Miss Puddles,

Our orange tabby hides under the bed and attacks ankles at night. We are beginning to suspect he enjoys this.

— Sleep Deprived on (sore) Winged Foot

Dear Sleep Deprived,

Of course he enjoys this. Your cat is nocturnal, athletic, and unemployed. Cats often develop nighttime ambush habits because humans unintentionally reward them with dramatic screaming, dancing, and immediate engagement. He has constructed an entirely legal after-hours ankle economy, and you are the inventory.

1. Wear oven mitts on your feet to bed. Say nothing. The cat will be unsettled for weeks.
2. When he attacks, blow a party horn, firmly, once. Not twice. Once is theater. Twice is war.
3. Fake a dramatic slow-motion fall. Collapse entirely. Make it a whole thing. The cat expects screaming and fleeing, not theater. Confusion is your friend.



Miss Puddles' Holistic Suggestion:

Puzzle feeders are excellent. I personally recommend hiding one underneath a second puzzle feeder, creating a puzzle feeder *ouroboros* that occupies the feline intellect until approximately Thursday. A tiny emotional pirate with no time to plan is a manageable tiny emotional pirate.

Letter #3 - "Our Golden Steals Pool Noodles"

Dear Miss Puddles,

Our dog drags pool noodles around the neighborhood like captured trophies. Neighbors are amused for now.

— Concerned but Slightly Impressed

Dear Concerned,

Golden retrievers are optimists with fur and zero awareness of property rights. Your dog does not believe he is stealing pool noodles. He believes he is *liberating* for a better life. There is a difference, legally speaking, though I am not a lawyer.

1. Construct a decoy pool noodle. Leave it in the yard, labeled with a small flag. When he takes that one, applaud as though he has won a ribbon at a county fair. He will tell no one about the other noodles, but he will feel closure.
2. Introduce a "Pool Noodle Treaty" by placing a designated noodle by the front door with his name on it, written in permanent marker, because he will check! Dogs do not read, but they respect ceremony.
3. Dogs repeat behaviors that produce joy, praise, or startled retirees pointing from golf carts. Attach a small GoPro. Enter the footage in a film festival. Recoup your losses.



Miss Puddles' Holistic Suggestion:

For highly social dogs, scent-based enrichment can reduce attention-seeking mischief. Scatter-safe sniffing games in the yard often work wonders. Also, hydration matters in Magnolia Point heat. Add pet-safe frozen watermelon treats during summer months. But serve them on *plates*; he's earned that.

- STORY, PHOTOS: EDITOR

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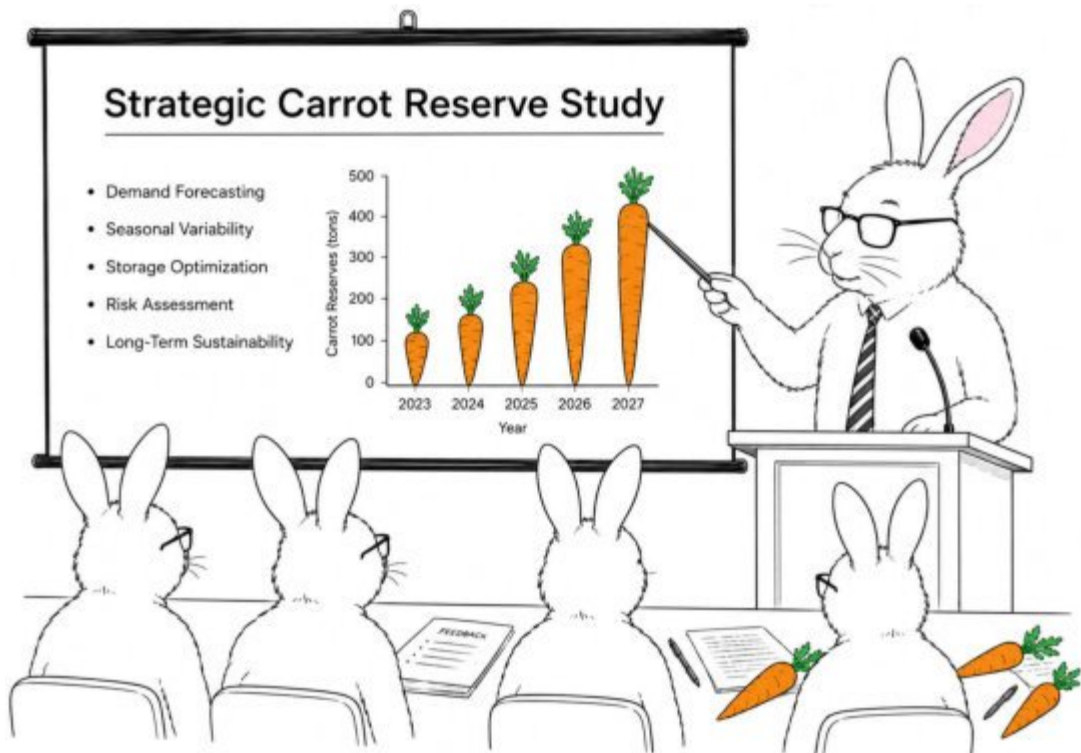
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"Caps Lock is now doing the work of 3 committees."

TOONS



"We're not hoarding carrots. We're preserving property values."

GOOD 2 GO

MAGNOLIA • HOMEGROWN • RECIPES



In honor of our nation's 250th birthday, we're elevating 'heritage' with a nod to those large Lowcountry family gatherings which meant one thing to so many: a massive, steaming pot of Chicken Bog. Traditionally, this deeply comforting dish involves simmering a whole chicken for hours until it falls off the bone, then cooking the rice right in the rich, fatty broth

along with peppery smoked sausage. It is hearty, unapologetically simple, and designed to feed a crowd.

However, for our new 'Good 2 Go' format, we're adapting this regional staple for the busy Magnolia Point home cook. By utilizing a few smart shortcuts, we capture the savory, stick-to-your-ribs essence of a classic bog without spending all afternoon over the stove. It's the one-pot meal that puts the 'comfort' in 'comfort food'.

The 'Good 2 Go' Fast Fact: Using a pre-cooked rotisserie chicken and quick-browning smoked turkey sausage cuts hours of simmering down to just 30 minutes! This lean protein swap also makes the dish lighter and more nutritious while keeping all that signature smoky flavor!

QUICK LOWCOUNTRY CHICKEN BOG

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pre-cooked rotisserie chicken, meat pulled and shredded (about 3 cups)
- 1 lb. smoked turkey sausage (or kielbasa), cut into 1/4-inch rounds
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil or butter
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 1/2 cups long-grain white rice (uncooked and rinsed)
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp black pepper, salt to taste, fresh parsley garnish

Continued



DIRECTIONS Heat the olive oil or butter in a large Dutch oven or a heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat. Add the sliced smoked sausage and cook until nicely browned on the edges, usually about 5 minutes. Remove the sausage with a slotted spoon and set it aside, leaving the flavorful drippings in the pot.

Add the chopped onion and celery to the pot. Sauté them in the sausage drippings until they are soft and translucent, about 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic powder, black pepper, add your rinsed white rice, toasting the rice in the mixture for just a minute to absorb the flavors.

Pour in the chicken broth and return the browned sausage to the pot. Bring to a rolling boil, then immediately reduce the heat to low. Cover tightly with a lid and let simmer undisturbed for 20 minutes, until the rice is tender and has absorbed most of the liquid.

Remove the pot from the heat. Gently fold in your shredded rotisserie chicken, replace the lid, and let it sit for another 5 minutes so the chicken warms through and the starchy rice settles into that classic, slightly wet "bog" texture. Serve hot in deep bowls, and garnish with a little fresh parsley if you like some color.

RECIPE, PHOTOS: EDITOR



NEW! SOUTHERN ON THE SIDE



Collards

If you're from the south, or take a particular, fierce pride in that and have an unyielding passion for strict accuracy in preparing southern cuisine, **stop reading here**. If you want to enjoy collard greens celebrated for their amazing flavor and texture, prepared simply and quickly, in 'Good 2 Go' style, and in a somewhat healthier way than traditional methods, 'Collards' is here for you. WARNING: Blasphemies Ahead!

We do not 'slow cook' our collards here. We fly in the face of tradition, rejecting the notion that 'low and slow' is not the collard's friend, regardless of the loss of that bubbling communal pot, the centerpiece of

* **'Dave's Back Browning'** is my hack for a 'healthier' preparation of ham hocks, or similar fatty 'flavoring meats'. It's simple: boil until the meat is 'fall off the bone' tender. Let the pot cool on the stove, then place in the refrigerator overnight. In the morning, skim off the 'fat cap' from the pot, retaining a bit on the side. Pick the meat off the bones, put in a skillet warmed with a bit of the retained fat, then brown the meat. Done! Way less fat, all the taste!



DIRECTIONS:

Saute the onion in a little oil in the pressure-cooker. Pour in the stock. Start feeding handfuls of the chopped collards into the pot; which will cook down pretty quickly, making more room. When all the greens are in, add the meat and red pepper; switch to pressure-mode, cook on 'high' for five minutes. Important: 'quick release' when done. You're done!

In the bottom of the pot is a highly prized treat, the combination of the remaining stock and collard juices, known as **'Pot Likker'**. To some, this is the only reason collard greens exist, that silky, flavorful *au jus!* It's a heavenly dip for the fresh cornbread you're cooking up to accompany this glorious 'Southern Side'!

community gatherings. That said, we're as proud as any Child of Dixie to present our Thanksgiving, Christmas, or any other meal a dish of these.

(A smoked turkey leg in place of the ham hocks is delightful variation; no 'back browning' required.)

We're sorry. After hours on 'simmer', collards reduce to an unrecognizable gray paste, with a flavor equally indistinct. And bitter. Ours show a brighter green, slightly firmer texture, and an equally bright, clean taste.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 16oz bag chopped Collards
- 1 Onion, small, chopped
- 1 Cup Chicken Stock
- 1 Dash Red Pepper Flakes
- 2 Ham Hocks, smoked and 'Back Browning'*



RECIPE, PHOTOS: EDITOR



Moving to Magnolia Point was the first time Richard Petty had felt truly retired. Pulling his 1970 Petty Blue Plymouth Superbird through the gates, the King realized he'd found a sanctuary where the Florida Driver's Handbook had been tossed into the infield grass.

Word on the circuit was that Magnolia Point was Florida's last great unsanctioned track. Here, the 25 mph speed limit wasn't a law; it was a qualifying time to beat. "Finally," Richard chuckled, barreling down Colonial Drive. He watched a white Honda CRV swerve around a neighbor, nearly clipping a mirror. Richard tipped his feathered cowboy hat; it was the kind of paint-rubbing that made fans go wild at Talladega, now just a Tuesday afternoon on the way to the clubhouse.

At the intersection of Muirfield and Colonial, Richard didn't bother to lift his foot. The red octagonal sign was clearly a decorative lawn ornament. Since some believed these signs were unenforceable on private roads, Richard was happy to maintain the neighborhood myth that they were merely suggested yield points for the weak and faint of heart.

DON'T EVEN START

Drifting onto Medinah, Richard spotted a jogger with a stroller. The local culture was infectious; he watched a teal car ahead essentially run the pair off the road and into the grass to avoid a head-on collision. "Rubbing is racing," Richard muttered, noting the driver never looked up from his phone. It was a level of distracted driving that would make a pit crew sweat, but here, it was standard operating procedure. He soon hightailed it toward Shinnecock without a flicker of a turn signal; blinkers in the Point were expensive aftermarket upgrades nobody bothered to buy.

As May arrived, the track conditions began to shift. With school ending, miniature humans on bikes and stray soccer balls dotted the curbs like moving pylons. While a lesser driver might slow down, the King knew the end of school bus routes meant the no-passing zone was officially lifted. He watched a white Mazda treat kids waiting for the ice cream truck like a slow-moving caution flag to be ignored. This summer influx was just a high-stakes obstacle course, and Richard wasn't going to let pleas for safety stop him from holding his line.

That evening, Richard watched the "I'm-going-to-the-club" crowd cut through traffic and treat the back gate like a checkered flag. He'd heard residents would joke about the streets being a racetrack, and he finally felt he belonged. In Magnolia Point, the King didn't need a pit crew; just residents and nonresidents who continued to show a complete lack of consideration for their fellow man. He had spent his life looking for the perfect track; it turned out to be a residential neighborhood in Green Cove Springs on streets that turn a blind eye.

- JENNIFER MOORE

'Don't Even Start' welcomes resident's tales of neighborhood life.



MIX *magic* PAW PAW 2.0

2 oz Bourbon
1 oz Fresh Pawpaw Puree
½ oz Pecan-infused simple syrup
½ oz Fresh Lemon Juice
2 dashes Angostura bitters
Splash of Club Soda
Garnish: Mint sprig & pecan half

- Make the pecan simple syrup ahead of time: whisk ½ cup chopped pecans, 1 cup granulated sugar, and ½ cup water over medium heat, simmering until the sugar dissolves. Let cool and strain.
- Fill a cocktail shaker with ice.
- Combine bourbon, pawpaw puree, pecan-infused simple syrup, lemon juice, and Angostura bitters.
- Shake vigorously for about 30 seconds until well-chilled.
- Strain the cocktail into a rocks glass of ice.
- Top gently with a splash of club soda.
- Garnish



In the early 1900s, Dr. James Munyon created the “*Paw-Paw Elixir*,” a tonic served at his wellness resort on Munyon Island, now a state park. The low-proof beverage is a distillation of papaya, hibiscus, grapefruit, orange blossom, and ginger. Its name refers to the colloquial term once used for Papaya, ‘paw-paw’. A delightful blend of sweet, nutty, and slightly spicy flavors, it balances the creamy, tropical notes of the ‘pawpaw’ with a warm and oaky good Southern bourbon. Pecan-infused simple syrup adds a rich, nutty sweetness, while the fresh lemon juice and club soda keep the elixir refreshingly balanced and lively, saving it from cloying sweetness.

RECIPE, PHOTOS: EDITOR

JULY 4th FUN!

250



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KiMi ♥



BIRD BREAK

Ah, those early mornings on the lanai, the silence broken by the odd frog, a NAS JAX flyover, a too-early leaf blower, and *those birds!* Hard to ignore, with over 520 recorded species in our neck of the woods, including year-round residents, wintering migrants, and seasonal visitors. And those early-rising vocal few who take up the stage in the trees and bushes of our backyards. And ring in the day. As we plan our attack on the daylight hours with a cup of coffee and open ears.

The **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** is the anxious intern of the bird world, perpetually in motion, never quite sure why. Its call is a thin, reedy “*spee spee spee*”, the sonic equivalent of a complaint submitted through proper channels that will accomplish nothing. Its song riffs on and off its call, a kind of “*spee-you-boink-whibbidy-whibbidy*”. It’s approximately the size of a thumb but has apparently not been told this. The tail bobs constantly, like someone who needs to use the restroom but is too polite to mention it. It builds nests the size of a walnut, which seems optimistic. Ornithologists call it “energetic.” Therapists would call it something else entirely.



The **Northern Cardinal** begins with a few smug warm-up whistles: “*tweet tweet tweet*”, like a tiny red life coach who has already read the book and just wants you to know it. Then comes the main event: a looping, liquid slur that sounds remarkably like someone saying “*pretty pretty pretty*” or possibly “*cheer cheer cheer*”, depending on your emotional needs that morning. The female occasionally sings back, which ornithologists call “duetting” and married couples call “arguing.” Volume is non-negotiable. The cardinal has precisely one setting: louder.

It starts at 5 a.m. Every day. Forever. The song is aggressively punctual, with zero remorse



The **Carolina Wren** is the loudest small object on Earth, a fact it celebrates without restraint. Its song, “*teakettle teakettle teakettle*”, erupts from dense underbrush at a volume that suggests a bird four times its size has sublet the body. It weighs less than a AA battery and has the confidence of someone who has never once considered consequences. The cocked tail is non-negotiable, a permanent exclamation point on every opinion it holds, which are many. It will nest in your hanging flower basket, your garden boot, your soul. It did not ask permission. It does not require it.

“The wren is a small bird, how pretty she sings. She bested the eagle, when she hid in its wings.” *Hunting the Wren, by Lankum*



Full disclosure: my thanks to Cornell Ornithology Lab for their brilliant ‘Merlin Bird ID’ app, which uses your phone to identify the birds in your backyard by their calls! You gotta try this! The rest I noodled up on my own. You know, before coffee when I have some sense!



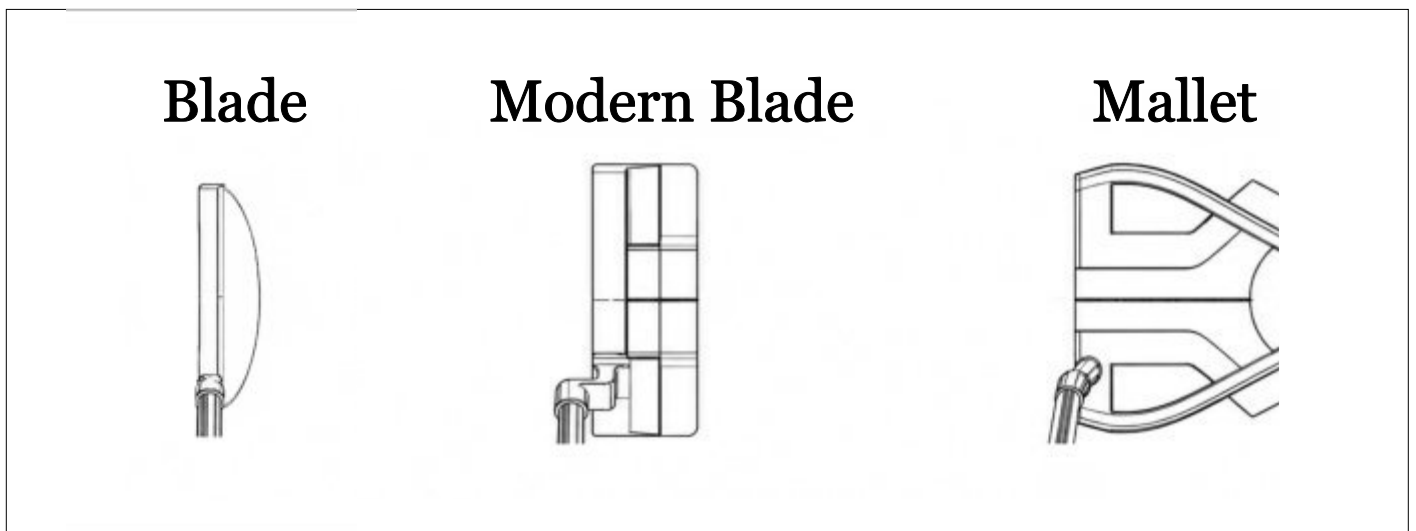
Playing Through

- CHRISTIAN SMITH

SPRING EQUIPMENT REVIEW: PUTTERS

In this month's article, we'll delve into the last of our series on equipment which is the putter. There have been a lot of technical advances in putter design over the last few years, mostly surrounding the new face-balanced putters and the increased usage of the mallet style. I'll address those, but also the other styles and how they work with how you putt plus some nuances

friendly than their predecessors. The mallet has always been considered the most forgiving because of the mass in the head. The trade off is that they don't create the same sort of feel as the other putters. It is typically easier to get a putt online (especially from short distance) with a mallet putter due to the weight and balancing, but long range putts over hills and slopes



that affect which ones are most likely suited for you.

Putter Styles: The main three putter styles are the traditional **blade** (rarely used), the **modern blade** (even though the Ping Anser style has been around a long time), and the **mallet** (which Zebra really started).

There are obviously different variations and brands of these, but they all have similar attributes. The blade putter was the most original design in the modern era. Players like Ben Crenshaw and Arnold Palmer used these to perfection. They are very feel friendly, but mis-hits are very unforgiving because the head of the putter extends outwards from the shaft and has very little backing. This causes this putter to twist when a putt is hit off center. To combat that, Ping came out with the Anser putters (like the modern blade above) because it had some of the attributes of the original blade but had more stability due to the increased depth of the blade (more backing). Nicklaus, Watson, Woods did OK with these! These putters now contain some face weighting options that make them a little more

friendly than their predecessors. The mallet has always been considered the most forgiving because of the mass in the head. The trade off is that they don't create the same sort of feel as the other putters. It is typically easier to get a putt online (especially from short distance) with a mallet putter due to the weight and balancing, but long range putts over hills and slopes

The MOI (Face-Balanced) Trend: In the last few years, the new face balanced putters have become in-vogue. This technology, mostly used in mallet style putters counteracts any mis-hit to direct the ball in a straight line. If you hit the ball on the inside of the putter face, these new putters through weight balance technology will tend to correct that by having the toe (outer end of the putter) twist slightly to correct. It is unnoticeable to the eye but really does happen. This design encourages more of a straight back – straight through stroke. It also removes a lot of feel from putting because this auto-correct feature doesn't give you feedback if you mis-hit the putt.

Shaft Orientation to the Putter Head: Another factor is where the shaft is anchored into the head of the putter. As you could see in the blade, the entire putter head is outwards (toe-hang) to the shaft. There are putter designs used commonly now where the shaft is in the middle of the clubface (center shafted). The

Continued



center shafted design is also meant to reduce twisting at impact if you hit the putt off center.

Offset/Non Offset Putter Design: In the photos above, the shaft is aligned perfectly with the putter face with the blade putter. Conversely, in the other two designs, you can see that the shaft is positioned in front of the putter head (offset). This matters.

Stroke Path & Putter Style: Stroke path is a debated topic but it really revolves around if you try to keep the putter going straight back and through or if you let the putter arc as you turn your upper body during the putt. In all actuality, you have to manipulate the putter path not to have an inside (going back) and inside (after impact) type of stroke. Our bodies are tilted at address so when we turn our upper body, the putter will want to come inside going back and return to the inside as we go through. The degree to which you fight that or embrace it impacts which putter style will fit you best. If you fight it, you will take the putter outside of the arc going back and then keep it going at the hole into your follow through.

Arc Putting Style: If you're like me and lets the putter swing on its natural arc you will want a putter with 'toe hang', not 'center shafted'. You would also not want a face-balanced putter because you don't want it to auto-correct based on the path the putter is swinging upon. The downside to this is that you are not getting some of the technology benefits, but you can feel when something is off. Letting the putter swing naturally with my upper body, I don't feel like I am having to manipulate anything.

Straight Back – 'Straight Through' Style: If you are someone that likes to keep the putter blade square to the target line the entire time, then the center

shafted and face-balance putters are really a perfect solution. There is very little manipulation to the face angle when you putt this way, and these putters are designed to correct whatever measure you are off. The downside is that there is more of a muted feel due to this auto-correction, and that you are fighting the natural path.

Offset/Non-Offset based on Eye Dominancy:

Knowing which eye is dominant is important! If you don't know, there is a simple drill. Put your hands together in front of your face (about 2") and then create a gap (circle) between the base of your palms and tips of your fingers just wide enough so you can see something small in the distance with BOTH eyes. Once you are focused on that object with both eyes, see which eye you can see the object with when the other eye is closed. The one you see it with is your dominant eye. Here are some tips based on this 'dominance':

Right-Eye Dominant

If you are a right-handed golfer and right-eye dominant, your dominant eye sits further away from the target.

- **Ball Position:** Position the ball slightly back in your stance (closer to the center) so it aligns directly with your right eye.
- **Head Position:** Tilting your head slightly forward can help your dominant eye trace the putting line clearly.
- **Stance:** Some players find success with a slightly open stance to clear their nose and get a better look at the line.
- **Right-Eye Putter Selection:** Players typically prefer center-shafted putters or putters with minimal offset to align their eyes naturally over the ball

Left-Eye Dominant

If you are right-handed and left-eye dominant, your lead eye is closest to the target.

- **Ball Position:** Position the ball more forward in your stance to place your left eye directly over or closely behind the ball.
- **Head Position:** Keep your head slightly further back so your left eye can comfortably see down the entire target line.
- **Lining Up:** Because your lead eye perceives the line differently, it's often recommended to read the putt from behind the ball and trust your initial alignment over the ball.
- **Left-Eye Putter Selection:** Players usually favor putters with some shaft offset (like the classic Newport style) to help frame the ball and create a consistent setup.

As you can see, there is a lot that goes into putting that people don't consider. Path, eye dominance, and feel are huge factors! I know when I addressed the eye-dominance issue, my putting got incrementally better. I was no longer fighting myself.

I hope this helps and let's go hole some putts!!

- CHRISTIAN

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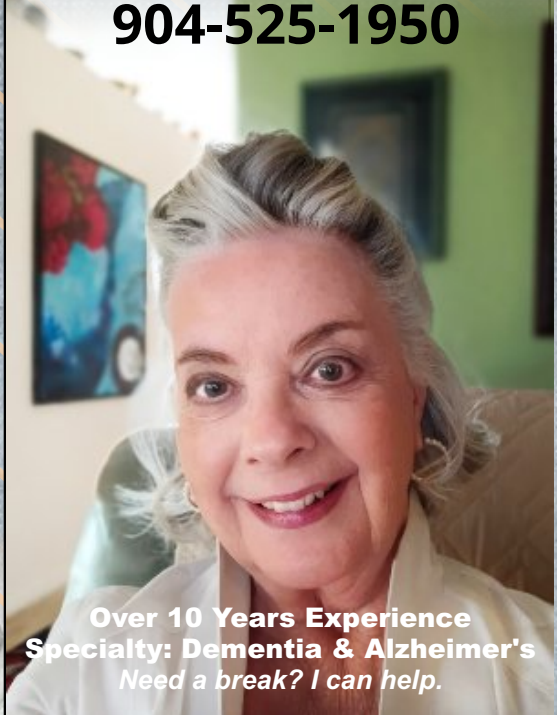
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THE PLAY'S THE THING

I've lived in Magnolia Point since 2008.

I have 3 cats that are my Island of Misfit Toys. I have an adult daughter who lives in Atlantic Beach and is a social worker.

I became involved with Orange Park Community Theatre in 2013 because my daughter was involved in shows. I was spending so much time at the theater that they convinced me to audition. Since then I've appeared in several productions, *White Christmas*, *Music Man*, *Unnecessary Farce*, *Phantom*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Freaky Friday*, *Footloose*, *Steel Magnolias*, *The Wizard of Oz*, and *Young Frankenstein*. I've assisted with youth workshops, in concessions and box office, and served on the board of directors.

Our shows typically hold auditions about 2-3 months prior to the run. Following the casting announcement rehearsals will promptly begin with separate vocal and choreography sessions, usually 3 or 4 evenings and on Saturday morning. The closer we get to opening night the more frequent rehearsal will be. The week

prior to opening is affectionately known as "hell week". During Hell Week rehearsal is every night, lasting as long as necessary to ensure everything is stage ready. My acting and vocals have always been my stronger talents and I'm NOT a good dancer- I consider myself more of a "mover" so I really have to put in maximum effort to learn the choreography. Once the show opens the hard part is done and it's just 3 or 4 weekends of fun.

My most memorable experience at OPCT was last year when I was cast as Truvy (the Dolly Parton role) in *Steel Magnolias*. It's such an iconic role in a beloved southern women comedy. I loved playing Truvy and I hope I did her justice.

I've learned so much through my time at OPCT. How to improv if lines are forgotten or props malfunction. How to truly be a theatre family- respecting each other, helping out fellow actors or stage crew, volunteering behind the scenes at concessions or the box office. Being involved in shows is the best cure for loneliness or sadness. It keeps me young both mentally (learning songs & lines) and physically (did I mention I'm NOT a dancer?). Theater attracts such a wide range of ages and people with varied backgrounds and life experiences. At OPCT we have teachers, mental health specialists, former CEO's, kids of all ages, nurses, paramedics, and even an archeologist that are all involved.



Continued

Something that people would probably be surprised to learn about the theatre is how much we rehearse. Nothing that happens onstage is random-every turn, every gesture, every expression is all planned. When it's done correctly it seems completely natural.

We are always in need of volunteers! There are many opportunities for all and most don't involve being in front of an audience. We have a concession area to staff, box office for tickets, raffle table, set building, set painting, seamstress, hair/makeup, prop gathering, light & sound booths, assisting with teen & youth workshops. So much! An added bonus is if you volunteer you can see a show for free providing it's not previously sold out, and our volunteer hours count towards Bright Futures scholarships.

Of course if anyone is interested in performing I encourage it. Our audition notices are posted on our website along with the requirements. If teens or children are interested I highly recommend our workshops. They are a fantastic way to gain confidence and learn about performing. Information about workshops can also be found on the website.

Our new season is officially underway. We kick off with Dear Evan Hansen. I am not a part of that production, however several of my theatre friends are and I highly encourage seeing it. My next audition will be for Calendar Girls, a play based on the Helen Mirren film. The competition will be stiff, so fingers crossed! Theater attracts such a wide range of ages and people with varied backgrounds and life experiences. At OPCT we have teachers, mental health specialists, former CEO's, kids of all ages, nurses, paramedics, and even an archeologist that are all involved.



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- KELLY WEAVER



CURB DROP II



- EDITOR



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And thanks to our contributors, whose work each month makes TMN a great place to spend some time!

Muralist Kathy Plante, commissioned by the Sophia Fleming Chapter of NSDAR, recently graced the east wall of VFW Post 1988 with a scene honoring America's service men and women. Kathy braved the brutal heat and storms of late June to complete the mural, an enduring legacy for the residents of Green Cove Springs and veterans past and future.



PHOTOS: EDITOR

