

MUSEUM MUSINGS

ISSUE 33

SPRING 2008

BOARD ELECTS JOHN COOKSEY AS NEW PRESIDENT

John Cooksey, vice president and chief operating officer of McCall Service, has been elected president of the board of directors of the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society.

The board made the announcement following the annual meeting on Jan. 8. Cooksey joined the board in 2006 and has served as vice-president for the past year.

Other officers elected by the membership are Anne Morrow as treasurer and Kim McKenzie as secretary, both of Mandarin.

New members elected to the board include: Gabrielle Dempsey and Virginia Barker of Mandarin and

Fred Huellet of Orange Park. Other members who were re-elected or who continue to serve terms include: Mark Cowart, Susan Ford, Beth Meyer, Anne Morrow, Mary Ellen Potter, Steve Rawlins, Ben Stradley, James Towart, Sandra Webb and June Weltman, all residents of Mandarin, and Orren (Bo) Phillips and Karen Roumillat of Northwest St. Johns County. Robert Fitzpatrick of Mandarin, a former board member, serves as parliamentarian, and Amy Crane, also of Mandarin and a former board member, serves as an ad hoc member of the board.

"John brings many talents to the board," commented



John Cooksey is new MMHS President.

Beth Meyer, outgoing president. "Having grown up in Mandarin, he has a special commitment to the area. He has been active in programming, introducing Firefly Night and coordinating plans for the society's first (CONT. PAGE 6)

MMHS RECEIVES MEMPHIS WOOD DONATION

The Mandarin Museum & Historical Society has the distinct pleasure of announcing a collection of rare artwork by famed Jacksonville artist Memphis Wood donated by Fernandina Beach resident, Mike Barnhart.

The collection includes three prints and two paintings. The two abstract watercolor paintings are titled "Underwater Bugs and plants" and "Abstracted Thunderstorm." One of the prints is a woodcut depicting a very blocky, styl-

ized young woman with purple hair. Of the two etching prints, one is called "Debacle," which depicts a jumble car wreck, and the other is an abstract titled "Bottom of the Sea."

Memphis Wood was born (CONT. PAGE 3)

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Museum Musings is produced by the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society.

**The MMHS 2008-2009
Officers and Board of
Directors**

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John Cooksey
President

Anne Morrow
Treasurer

Kim McKenzie
Secretary

Board of Directors

Virginia Barker
Mark Cowart
Gabrielle Dempsey
Susan Ford
Fred Huellet
Beth Meyer
Orren (Bo) Phillips
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Steve Rawlins
Karen Roumillat
Ben Stradley
James Towart
Sandra Webb
June Weltman

Robert Fitzpatrick
Parliamentarian

Amy Crane
Ad hoc member

Andrew Morrow
Executive Director

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THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends:

This April, I'll be finishing my first year as the executive director of the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society. And what a great year it has been! We have seen some very popular programs, such as the annual River Celebration and Winter Festival. We have brought in some excellent nature programs conducted in conjunction with Jacksonville Parks. We have also acquired some new and exciting objects for our collection that we hope to make available to museum visitors soon.

Even though the museum has many projects constantly in the works, the MMHS has a mission statement that keeps us focused on the objective of our organization. A mission statement is a powerful tool, which conveys our purpose to ourselves and to people and

outside organizations that are interested in what we do.

This mission statement has helped guide the MMHS from its earliest days when it produced a small exhibit at the Mandarin Community Club to now, recognized as a great cultural organization for the city.

Although our mission statement has served us well for many years, from time to time it is necessary for an organization to re-evaluate its mission to ensure that it is still relevant in today's world.

A significant undertakings that the board of directors has accomplished this year is an assessment of the MMHS mission. After many months of discussion, the MMHS board adapted a new mission statement that they believe will help guide the MMHS as it continues to meet the needs of the community.

Our new mission statement recognizes the growing importance of preserving not only the culture of Mandarin, but also the St. John's River that has always been a vital part of the community since its beginning. The mission also recognizes that Mandarin did not flourish in isolation, but was connected with the greater world; a connections that must be appreciated and understood for the community to have a better understanding of our place in history. Through the new mission, the board hopes to keep the MMHS relevant and interesting to a greater population, allowing the organization to continue to grow and tell the story of Mandarin for generations to come.

Andrew Morrow
Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE MANDARIN MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Mandarin Museum & Historical Society's mission is to provide a venue to foster greater understanding, appreciation, enjoyment, and stewardship of the natural and cultural heritage of the lower St. Johns River basin through time.

To achieve this goal, the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society will research topics, collect, preserve, interpret and exhibit documents, objects, and oral histories that relate to the history of Mandarin within the context of regional, Florida, and national history.

As a private, not-for-profit, education and research institution, operated for the benefit of the community, the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society will disseminate this information to adults and children through tours, educational programs, special events, publications, and the museum archives.

HONOR THY RIVER: THE THIRD ANNUAL RIVER CELEBRATION

The third annual River Celebration Day will be held Saturday, March 29 at the Walter Jones Historical Park. Once again, the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society is teaming up with the St. Johns Riverkeeper and the City of Jacksonville Parks Department to celebrate our greatest natural resource – the St. Johns River.

The day starts early – naturally on the river. The inaugural Mandarin Biathlon will begin at 7:30 a.m. Participants will begin at the foot of County Dock Road and kayak to Mandarin Park, a distance of 5.78 miles. They will then run back to Walter Jones Park, 3.9 miles along Mandarin's oak shaded roads.

McCall Services is sponsoring the event, with Black Creek Outfitters supplying kayaks and 1st Place Sports managing the road race.

The rest of the day's events take place throughout the park and on the river. Beginning at 11 a.m., visitors can take 45-minute boat rides to the site of the *Maple Leaf* for a suggested donation of \$10. The boat tour includes talks by members of the St Johns Riverkeeper about the ecology of the river and what we should all be doing to insure its safety.

You can get even closer to the water by trying out one of the canoes and kayaks for your personal sail provided by Black Creek Outfitters.

Live entertainment will be available at the farmhouse and museum porches throughout the day. While you're awaiting your turn on the boat, you can listen to music from the Ashley Gang Band and the Palm Valley String Band, or hear a story from historical re-enactors (such as the Storytelling Sims and our own Lindsay Schwieterman as Harriet Beecher Stowe), and many others. Firehouse Subs will have scrumptious sandwiches for sale nearby. So have a bite as you listen and your children enjoy some old fashioned games in the area near the farmhouse.

Nature programs and demonstrations will be provided by
(CONT. PAGE 6)

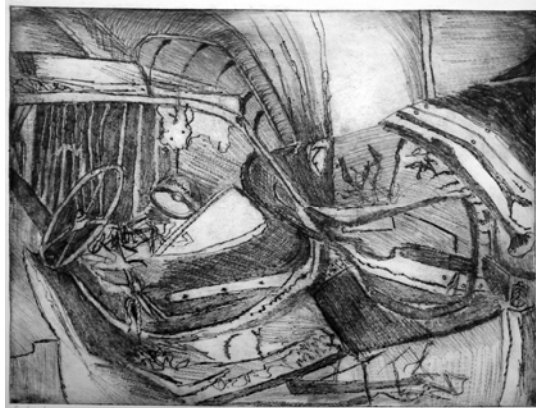
MEMPHIS WOOD CONT.

in 1902 in Dacula, Georgia, near Atlanta. She moved to Jacksonville in 1929. She studied at the University of Florida and received her MFA from the University of Georgia. Memphis taught at Landon High School for 33 years and Jacksonville University for 5 years. In 1957, she paid \$500 for a wooded acre of land in Mandarin, where she lived for thirty years.

Memphis was very involved in Jacksonville's budding art community and nurtured a small art club into what is now the Jacksonville Museum

of Contemporary Art. She influenced generations of artists and was attributed to being the "Grande Dame of Art in Jacksonville." Although Memphis is best known for her vibrant fabric collages, some of which are on display at MMHS, she also worked in diverse media, creating and teaching painting, pottery, sculpture, printmaking, and jewelry design. One of her students and neighbor was famed Mandarin potter Charlie Brown.

Memphis' works are also in the collections of the Univer-



"Debacle" by Memphis Wood.

sity of Georgia, Murray State Teachers College, Ringling Museum of Art, and Stetson University.

Memphis Wood passed away in 1989.

HELEN & ME: A MANDARIN CHILDHOOD PART II

BY NANCY HOOVER

Nancy Capps Hoover continues her reminiscences of growing up in Mandarin in the 1950s and 60s with Helen Walsh, her cousin and best friend. Nancy and her husband Jim are Charter and Stowe Society members of MMHS.

CONFESSING HELEN'S SINS

Helen was a good and a faithful attendee at St. Joseph's Catholic Church (i.e. her mother made her go). Saturday afternoon confession was a requirement. When we were 14 and 15, we drove (illegally) to her confession. Between her house and the church, we would think up "sins" for Helen to confess. We wanted something more interesting than lying, being disobedient or taking something without permission.

"BOYFRIENDS"

Identical twins, Bill and Cary Morrow, AKA "The Morrow Boys" were several grades ahead of Helen and me. We both had crushes on them. Between us, we kind of doled them out – "OK, you take Cary and I'll take Bill". In the long run, it didn't really matter because we couldn't actually tell them apart. Besides, they were "much" older and didn't pay us much attention.

CAPPY-WASHTUB

When we moved to Mandarin in 1954, my mother wanted the Capps/Walsh children (Joe, Jan, Judy, Parker, Carol, Helen and me) to be productively occupied. She created the "Cappy-Washtub", a newspaper for and about Mandarin. We all had titles from Editor-in-Chief (Joe) to copy-boy (Carol). The rest of us were "roving reporters". The paper sold for 2 cents and included items such as: "Carole Ansley and Judith Walsh are leaving Tuesday for Camp Burgis Glen near Greenville, South Carolina." "Joe Walsh got a nail in his foot Monday afternoon and had to have a tetanus shot." There were advertisements – "When you run out of food, send your children to Miss Aggie's. It's open till 5:30." Also, "Stepping out this weekend? Had your hair cut yet? If you haven't, go to Mr. Munger's Barber Shop. Just 50 cents. At the end of Faucher Lane (off Loretto Road)."



Nancy Capps and Carol Walsh on Colonel

SWIMMING

The Walshes had the most wonderful pool. Built by my Uncle Joe Walsh, it was about 45 feet by 32 feet, which meant it was actually good for swimming! Many Mandarin children learned to swim in it. In the summer, it was emptied every Friday night so that Saturday morning it could be scrubbed (mostly by the children), baked in the sun, and then refilled by a free flowing, artesian well. The filling pool was as much fun for us as the full one. We would run from the shallow end and dive into the deep end.

Marjorie Folds recently confessed that when she babysat at the Walsh's, she occasionally would go for a skinny dip after putting the kids to bed.

HORSEBACK RIDING

During the summer months, when Helen and I were 14 to 16 years old, we, along with our close friend, Ellen Fisher, would take late night horseback rides. Wearing swim-team tank suits under sweatshirts and cut-offs, we rode bareback to the only houses that had pools: the Knechts, the Maines, the senior Folds, and the Youses. We stripped to our tank suits, slipped into the pool, swam around, got out, got dressed and moved on to the next house.

Sometimes, we just rode to Orange Picker (then a deserted, narrow road) or out on State Road 13 (now San Jose), which had only two-lanes and not at all busy at that time of night. We sang,

HELEN & ME CONT

we laughed, we talked, and had best time of our lives. But our parents never knew until one night, five of us were a little too noisy going down Mandarin Terrace Road and we woke up the junior Folds, Sam and Marjorie. Parents were told and our nighttime activities ceased.

CELLAR STUDENTS

Helen and I did not lack a sampling of academic offerings. Between us, we must have gone to nine different schools (including Hendricks, Loretto, St Joseph's, Bartram, and DuPont) from kindergarten through high school. We had cellar grades. In fact, our grades were so awful that our graduation from DuPont High School, where Mandarin's youth attended, was down-to-the-wire iffy.

During our final year, Helen and a classmate, "Pam", were the only two seniors in Mrs. Kenning's sophomore geometry class and they were failing. Mrs. Kenning wanted to give them an opportunity to pass by giving them another test. "Pam" took the test and failed. Helen didn't even show up.

When Helen and I were much older, we often laughed over our early academic "accomplishments", particularly since she had earned two Master's degrees and I had earned one. She was the principal at Reynolds Lane Elementary School when she died in 2000.



Helen Walsh and Nancy Capps
at ninth grade c.1959.

WINTER CELEBRATION REVIEW

It was almost over. The eighth annual Winter Celebration in Mandarin had been our most successful. Almost 1,500 people had come to Walter Jones Historical Park to enjoy the weather, the food and the fun. Some children had tested their expertise at making peanut butter and pine cone birdfeeders while others had made Victorian ornaments to hang on the park Christmas tree. Folks had gathered outside the recreated Losco Winery cabin to see animal skins and skulls and learn how a hunter's family survived using the wildlife around them to provide food and warmth. Crowds had stood at the small campsite of the Confederate Army reenactors admiring their weap-

ons and camp fixtures and listening to Civil War tales. The train whistle, heard throughout the park, had summoned folks for a short ride on the rail car. Music played on the 1875 Farmhouse porch. Folks worked to get the melted marshmallow off their chins after enjoying s'mores by the fire. And of course, the hayride with Santa Claus had been a favorite with all ages.

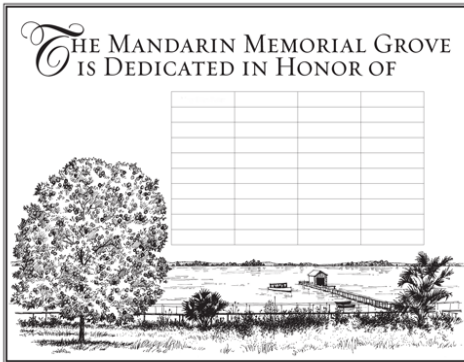
It was almost over. Maybe that's why it happened. Maybe Joe and Amos, the patient draft horses that had been pulling the hay wagon for hours had had enough. Maybe some noise spooked them. Maybe they just wanted to run a bit. Whatever their reason, they took

off - reins flapping, bells jingling and no one on board. Amazingly, Mandarin Road was empty of cars and people as they careened out the park gate at top speed. They tore along until they got to the trees at Loretto Road where the wagon got stuck and everything came to an abrupt halt. The horses stood patiently, a little frightened and winded, until their handlers, a lot frightened and winded, got to them. To everyone's relief, Joe and Amos were fine and the wagon had only slight damage.

The eighth Winter Celebration was almost perfect. No doubt the Ninth will be the same. Mark your calendars now - December 6, 2008 - and plan to join us again.

"THEY TORE
ALONG UNTIL
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LORETTO ROAD
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WAGON GOT
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TO AN ABRUPT
HALT."

MMHS UNVEILS NEW GROVE MEMORIAL



The new Mandarin Memorial Grove plaque features an image of the St. Johns River and an orange tree.

This past Winter Celebration, the MMHS dedicated the newest addition to the Walter Jones Historical Park: The Mandarin Memorial Grove. The grove features a variety of citrus trees that were

donated by the Mike and Billy Barwald of the Flying Dragon Citrus Nursery on Loretto Road. After a short ceremony, George DeMarino, the master gardener of the MMHS, and Beth Meyer, former president of MMHS, unveiled the Mandarin Memorial Grove plaque.

The plaque has an image based on a photograph from the MMHS collection. It shows a boat on the St. Johns

River, the old Mandarin boardwalk, and an orange tree, which were vital to the areas economy during the 19th century.

The plaque also has spaces for those who wish to honor or remember someone special. If you would like to donate to the Grove Fund and earn a spot on a lasting legacy in Mandarin, please contact the MMHS for details.

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

The MMHS has kicked off its 2008 membership renewal drive. For all those who have sent in your renewal, we ap-

preciate your continued support! For those who have not yet, please send your renewal as soon as possible. Your

membership helps fund our programs and keeps the Mandarin Museum open for all to enjoy. Thank you!

JOHN COOKSEY CONT.

Old Mandarin Biathlon scheduled for March 29. As a businessman, he is able to share his special perspective and expertise with the board."

Cooksey, the son of Bryan and Jane Cooksey, grew up along Mandarin Road. His strongest memories involve "spending most of my childhood fishing off a neighbor's dock."

Cooksey is married to the former Leyda Garcia who also grew up in Mandarin. Now, he enjoys taking their three children, Caroline, 10, Kate,

8, and Jack, 6, on bike rides through the Walter Jones Historical Park, which the society manages for the City of Jacksonville.

Cooksey attended St. Joseph's Elementary School and graduated from Wolfson High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in chemical science from Florida State University in 1993 and a master's degree in entomology from the University of Florida in 1996. After working as a research and analytical chemist, he joined McCall Service, a pest management company, in 1994 as a management

trainee. He became manager of the Neptune Beach office in 1996 and in 1998 moved to the corporate office as vice president and partner. He has been chief operating officer since 2005.

Cooksey's other community involvements include serving on the board of directors of the Orange Park Rotary Club and the board of trustees of Grace Episcopal Day School. He is past president of the Oil Fuel Institute of Florida and past regional director of the Florida Pest Management Association.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

This poem was originally written by the Rev. Henry D. Speakman, who was the rector at Church of Our Saviour 1911-1914. The poem was dedicated to the Rt. Rev Edwin G. Weed when he served as Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Florida (1885-1924).

My Mandarin, Dear Mandarin

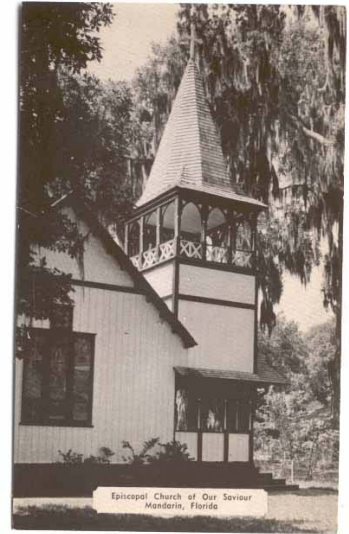
The Stately river flows slowly at my feet
 Upon it's bosom might rest many a fleet;
 It's banks are fringed with royal giant trees,
 And palmy scepters wave with every breeze.

Upon the land, the golden fruit in groves,
 With orange blossoms, the lily and the rose;
 The air is filled with fragrance, all peace within
 My Mandarin, Dear Mandarin

And gentle souls dwell in this place of rest,
 And hospitality is offered of their best,
 Love and kindness to each other is the dream
 Of these dear people, who are really all they seem.
 The church, a gem, which nestles in among the trees,
 Where prayers are said to help each other needs.

Yes, it is sweet unselfish life within
 My Mandarin, Dear Mandarin

The giant oaks deep draped by Spanish moss,
 Arch the highway, there is no sense of loss
 That the hot rays of sunshine like a blade
 Are broken, and the road is all in welcome shade
 To the weary seeking rest and peace,
 For here its found, both by the great and least;
 For rest and peace are all within
 My Mandarin, Dear Mandarin



Postcard of the old Episcopal Church of Our Saviour

RIVER CELEBRATION CONT.

the St. Johns Riverkeeper and the Florida Native Plant Society. Come to learn more about the river and how you maybe affecting it or maybe you can find out what that

funny little plant is that keeps springing up in your flowerbed.

Join us for a fun filled day while celebrating our beautiful river and unique heritage.

For biathlon information and signup form , visit 1st Place Sports website at www.1stplacesports.com/biathlon.htm

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 15-Miss Aggie Day At the Mandarin Store & Post Office. Join us as we honor a Mandarin woman who has helped the Mandarin community in the same spirit as Miss Aggie.

March 22,23-Mandarin Art Festival Artists will show their wares at the Mandarin Community Club. The MMHS will host its annual Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, March 23.

March 29-River Celebration Day—A day of music, ecology, and water fun on the banks of the St. John's River.

June or July-Firefly Night—Come to an evening of lightening bugs at the Walter Jones Historic Park. Date will be determined by our entomologist John Cooksey.

These are the events that the MMHS has planned for now. There may be others that you won't want to miss. Please watch the newspaper and website for upcoming events. If you want to be emailed directly, please contact the MMHS and requested that your name be added to our e-mail list.



Mandarin Museum
& HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Clip and Mail

Have a friend or family member with an interest in local history? Bring them to the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society. Even better, present them a gift membership to the MMHS. Make the story of Mandarin your story!



Yes! I want to support the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society and be a part of Mandarin history!

() New Member () Renewal

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIPS
() Orange Picker\$100
() Maple Leaf Society\$500

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP
() Orange Picker \$35
() May Garner Society ... \$50
() Maple Leaf Society \$100
() Walter Jones Society.. \$500
() Stowe Society \$1000

◆Here's extra support to help the Mandarin Museum! \$_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone # (____) _____

E-mail _____

() Send me information on becoming a volunteer!

WE'RE MAKING HISTORY...YOU'RE A PART OF IT!

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

() My check is enclosed for \$ _____, payable to the Mandarin Museum & Historical Society.

Please charge my: () Visa () MasterCard

Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date ____/____ CVV2 from back of card _____

Authorized Signature _____



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