

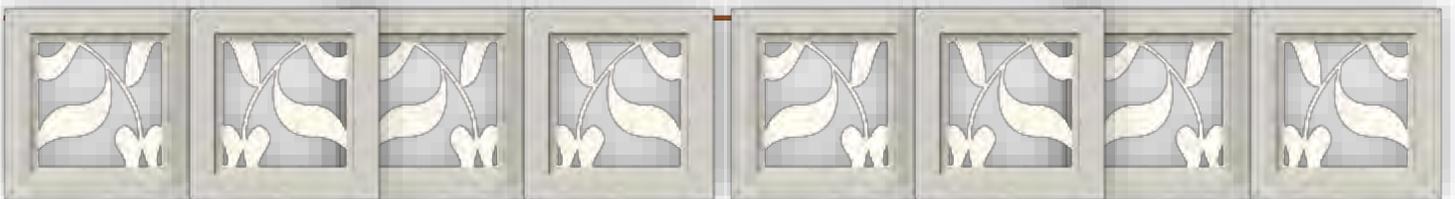
IN THE NEWS

April 2018

Parks & Recreation Programs
Frances Meadows Aquatic and Community Center
Gainesville Civic Center
Lake Lanier Olympic Center
City / County Issues
Miscellaneous



Gainesville Parks and Recreation Agency
830 Green Street
Gainesville, GA 30501



Getting close to God and nature with lake church services

By Pamela A. Keene

Did you know that on any Sunday you can attend a Christian church service on Lake Lanier? While some lake services only take place on Sundays from May through Labor Day, Gainesville Marina's Pavilion is home to year-round services every Sunday.

"If it's cold or rainy we can enclose the pavilion," said John Simpson, who often preaches at the services. His home church, Lanier Christian Church, is pastored by his father David Simpson. "We're there every Sunday for our 10 a.m. lake service, whether there are just a few people or 400, like we traditionally have at our Easter Sunrise Service. Typically, we have between 50 and 60 people in the warmer months."

Lanier Christian Church manages the lake services that are open to all denominations. "Visitors are always welcome and especially in the summer people from outside of the area attend. We've had people come from all over, including Atlanta, who are looking for a church service while they're spending the weekend at the lake. Instead of going home on Saturday nights or early Sun-

day morning to attend their home church, they celebrate and worship with us." People can come by car or boat. Dress is casual. "Wear your shorts, T-shirts and flip-flops," Simpson said. "Everyone is welcome. We always have coffee, and in the summer we also have lemonade."

Pastor David Simpson preaches many of the Sunday lake services. Pastoral needs of those who attend the lake service, whether members of Lanier Christian Church or not, are served by Simpson. The church offers two services at its main location, 22356 Dawsonville Highway, Gainesville. It's just down the road from Gainesville Marina. Bible studies, children, youth and teen programs, as well as community outreach, are coordinated through the church.

"We hope people will join us on Sundays when they're at the lake," Simpson said. "And if they'd like to join our church, they will certainly be welcomed."

For more information about Lanier Christian Church at Gainesville Marina, visit www.lanierchristianchurch.com or call 770 534-1422.

On the south side of the lake, Holiday Chapel at Holiday Ma-

rina has been hosting church services every summer Sunday since 1965. "We're an interdenominational chapel where everyone is welcome," said Diane Fox, who with her husband Dennis and four other couples volunteer to manage the logistics of the weekly summer morning services.

"Member of our group, Friends of Holiday Lanier Chapel, has been volunteering for more than five decades to provide church services for people at the lake."

The ministry began as an outgrowth of First United Methodist Church of Buford. Details of those early days are part of "Historic Buford," authored by Hand- sel Grady Morgan. "People would gather at the top of the hill at Holiday Marina back then, before the pavilion was built, and they're still coming to services on Sundays from the first Sunday in May through the Sunday of Labor Day Weekend," she said. "The men of Buford First United Methodist built the pavilion and it has been a win-win so that people away from their home churches or who want to can attend."

The dress is casual. Services are led by invited ministers or lay people. Traditional hymns ring through the hardwoods that sur-



PHOTO BY PAMELA A. KEENE

Holiday Marina Chapel sits on a hill overlooking the marina and Lake Lanier.

round the chapel. Because of when the chapel was built, it is not ADA accessible. "We always have coffee, juice and donuts or fruit before the service," she said. "And on the Sunday before Labor Day, we always host a pot-luck and people bring food to share. It's a warm and welcoming fellowship."

Pastoral needs are served by First United Methodist Church in Buford. Fox said that the chapel is involved in the community and has annually provided a scholarship for a ministerial student every year since 1965. The group also supports several charities in

Buford and Gainesville when they have extra funds.

While preachers and some musicians are paid, everyone else is a volunteer. The group is independently funded and relies on plate offerings to pay for operational costs. "But we do accept donations, like the keyboard that someone from the docks at Holiday gave us several years ago." She said the group is looking for a sound system to allow them to play recorded music. And they're always looking for more volunteers.

"All Christian denominations See Church, page 54

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LAKE LANIER OLYMPIC PARK

Paddlers, rowers keep busy with race, regatta



Lula Bridge Race

Team and recreational paddlers gathered in the fog at Lake Lanier Olympic Park March 17 for the annual Lula Bridge Race. The event, organized by the Lanier Canoe & Kayak Club, included 12K and 18K races, plus a 25K out and back to Lula Bridge.

PHOTOS BY JANE HARRISON

John Hunter Regatta

Crews from 43 college and youth rowing programs competed March 24-25 in the John Hunter Regatta at Lake Lanier Olympic Park. Collegiate athletes opened the regatta Saturday, followed by middle and high school rowers on Sunday. The annual regatta, organized by St. Andrews Rowing Club of Roswell, has been held at LLOP for 13 years. Above, a University of Georgia Women's Novice 8 crew approaches the finish buoys ahead of William and Mary University rowers to win their heat.



Sets at Sunset to recreate Miami Dance Vibe at LLOP

By Jane Harrison

The vibes of waterfront Miami will hit Lake Lanier April 28 in an 18-and-older music festival sure to make waves. Sets at Sunset returns to Lake Lanier Olympic Park with nearly 12 hours of electronic dance music spun by international and Atlanta-area DJs. The gig, produced by a Lake Lanier-area native, is predicted to bring droves of young downtown ATLers to the lakefront venue to gyrate to techno, house and trance sets.

Producer Cody Chesneau expects nearly double the event's debut crowd of 350. "It was a decent crowd for the first time ever. I was happy with it. The reviews were really positive," said the tech expert who moved the party from its experimental base at his lakeside home near Buford Dam to LLOP last year. He has described it as a mini-vacation for adults with Club/Miami-style music and fun. Headline DJs from Miami Beach club Don't Sit on the Furniture will crank out beats that keep tushes up and out of the stone grandstand seats.



Chesneau is expanding this year's rendition to the water and beach. About a dozen boaters can rent spaces at the new LLOP courtesy dock near the tower and come ashore for the full experience. Those anchoring in the Olympic channel won't get the same decibel levels as those on the Olympic plaza, but a ramped up sound system may send a few more waves across the water. Boat dancers beware! "We'll have three times the sound as last year ... it's a louder, more rich sound system," Chesneau said.

Across Clarks Bridge Road, festival goers can kick up some sand with beach volleyball and games, plus yoga sessions and flow dance lessons with hoola hoops and twirling props. Hot dancers can recline beachside on inner tubes to cool off.

A video of last year's festival

reveals the proper attire: skimpy swimsuits or cut-off denim shorts. Wear something comfortable to move around in. "We want people dancing. This is a chance to have a great time being active," Chesneau said.

Another change from last year is admission of slightly younger attendees. Chesneau dropped the minimum age from 21 to 18 to get college-aged music lovers in. The event flyer advertises "18 to party, 21 to drink."

Chesneau's new production studio in Flowery Branch, Creator's Lounge, incubates ideas from University of North Georgia students and others interested in launching video and techno projects. He expects the age drop will bring in some students. Last year's attendees ranged from 21 to about 40, "a diverse crowd," he said.

As of late March, the producer was still signing up food and alcohol vendors. A gamer truck and inflatable obstacle course are among the new offerings.

Chesneau is especially excited about DJs Behrouz and HOJ,

from the Miami dance club. He envisions a Lanier waterfront throbbing with hot beach culture.

LLOP manager Robyn Lynch expressed excitement "about bringing in a market of people out of Atlanta." She believes it will expose the 1996 Atlanta Olympic rowing and paddling site to people who don't frequently visit.

The venue stands to profit, too. Lynch would not disclose the rental arrangement, but the LLOP website quotes rental cost for the

grandstands, plaza and tower at \$1,600, with an additional \$1 per person facility. Additional fees may apply.

Information: Tickets \$40 advance, at the gate TBD; 5-person cabanas \$500-\$600, plus fees. Parking: \$7 paid in advance, \$10 festival day. Time/Date: 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m. April 28. Location: Lake Lanier Olympic Park, 3105 Clarks Bridge Rd., Gainesville.

INFO: www.setsatset.com

LAKE LANIER OLYMPIC PARK INFO

Lake Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club

Contact: Office Administrator, Jackie Hutton;

LCKC President, Tracy Barth

Phone: 770-287-7888

Fax: 770-287-3444

Email: info@lckc.org

Website: www.lckc.org

Address: Lake Lanier Olympic Park

3105 Clarks Bridge Rd., Gainesville, GA 30506

Club offerings: Recreational and competitive canoe and kayaking for ages 12 and up. Beginner to masters programs offered through regularly scheduled practices, classes, and summer camps. Also hosts local, regional, national and international competitions.

Calendar of events:

Apr. 20-22 - Canadian National Team Trials

Apr. 27-29 - Team USA Dragon Boat SE Regional Trials

Apr. 28 - BRL Practice Race

Lake Lanier Rowing Club

Contact: LLRC President, Sharon Heard

Phone: 770-287-0077

Email: LLRC@mindspring.com

Address: Lake Lanier Olympic Park

3105 Clarks Bridge Rd., Gainesville, GA 30506

Website: www.LakeLanierRowing.org

Club offerings: Recreational and competitive rowing for ages 13 to 80+. Beginner to elite offered through regularly scheduled practices, classes, and camps. Hosting of local, regional, national and international rowing regattas.

Calendar of events:

May 26-27 - ACRA Championship

Other LLOP Events

Apr. 20 - Food Truck Friday

Apr. 28 - Sets at Sunset

Venue seats +/- 2,000; parking capacity +/- 400 cars. The boathouse and tower are available to rent for meetings and special occasions.

• LLA

Continued from Page 2

Basin, Masters noted that the Special Master hearing the case last year had a copy of the ACF's Sustainable Water Management Plan on his desk during the proceedings. "His copy was dog-eared," Masters said.

Masters offered an encouraging outcome. "This is an immenently solvable issue and we

can get there," he said. "No matter what the ruling in June or July from the Supreme Court, it will mean a change and could create a vacuum. We hope that the work done by the ACF Stakeholders could provide a way to fill that vacuum."

For more info or to join the group, visit www.lakelanier.org.

Over 750 Attend Annual Job Fair

Presenting Sponsor of the Chamber's Job Fair on March 21, **Express Employment Professional's** (L-R): **Amanda Nguyen, Hollie Christy and Heather Tyner** with **Mark Butler**, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Labor. The event drew over 750 job seekers, all spending quality time with hiring managers. Some 70 employers were on hand and hiring for hundreds of positions. The Greater



Hall Chamber is dedicated to providing resources to match employers' job openings with skilled, quality employees. The Job Fair offers Chamber member businesses a unique partnership and opportunity to help find the area's best employees. **King's Hawaiian** (Gold Sponsor) and **Spherion Staffing Services** (Silver Sponsor) were hiring on-site at the event coordinated by **Lanier Technical College**, the **Gainesville Area Employers Committee** and **Georgia Department of Labor**. Other Job Fair sponsors included **McDonald's** (Meal) and Goods & Services Sponsors: Highland Mountain Water, McGarity's, Milton Martin Honda, Panera Bread, Signs by Tomorrow. Media Sponsors: AccessWDUN and The Times.

4-3-18

APRIL 2018

Thursday, April 19
Chamber Executive Committee
 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. | Chamber

Thursday, April 19
Business After Hours
 Sponsor: **Danley Sound Labs**
 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
 2196 Hilton Drive, Suite D | Gainesville

Wednesday, April 25
Network Over Coffee
 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
 Sam's Club | Oakwood

Thursday, April 26
Chamber Board of Directors
 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 Gainesville Civic Center

4-3-18

Upcoming Chamber Events

Tuesday, April 10
Small Business Seminar
 7:45 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. | Chamber

Wednesday, April 11
Network Over Coffee
 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
 Hilton Garden | Gainesville

Wednesday, April 18
Lunch 'n Learn
 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.
 Your Trusted Servant
 956B Dawsonville Hwy | Gainesville
 4-3-18

Thursday, April 19
Business After Hours
 Sponsor: **Danley Sound Labs**
 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
 2196 Hilton Drive | Gainesville

Wednesday, April 25
Network Over Coffee
 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
 Sam's Club | Oakwood

Thursday, April 26
Chamber Board of Directors
 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
 Gainesville Civic Center

Turner Wood & Smith Insurance



Turner, Wood and Smith Insurance (TWS) Owners/Partners (L-R): **Jimbo Floyd, Joe Wood Jr., Trey Wood, Brent Loggins, Rob Fowler, Brett Fowler**. TWS is Northeast Georgia's oldest and largest independent insurance agency and the recently broke ground with a dedication ceremony for a new, 16,000 square foot headquarters located between the Frances Meadows Center and Gainesville Middle School. The two-story facility is expected to be ready for occupancy this fall. TWS, founded in 1905, has 39 employees and works in the property and casualty arena serving commercial, auto and home insurance clients as well as Employee Benefit clients. The firm's current Brenau Avenue property has been purchased by the City of Gainesville. 770-536-0161. twsinsurance.com

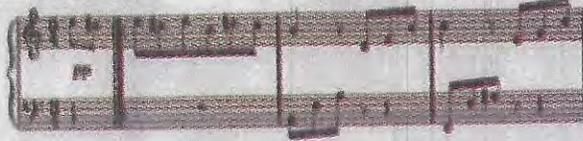
Sets at Sunset Music Festival

When: 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. April 28

Where: Lake Lanier Olympic Park, 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville

How much: \$30-700

More info: 678-592-7320, info@setsatsunset.com, www.setsatsunset.com



4-5-18

County seeks residents' input on new park

BY NICK BOWMAN
nbowman@gainesvilletimes.com

A new public park is coming to Athens Street near the Hall County Public Health Department, and the county wants residents' opinion on the layout of the park.

The park is at the back of the lot at 1280 Athens St., the public health building, just south of I-985. A new park in central Hall near Gainesville has been in the works for about two years, according to Jeff Stowe, a member of the Hall County Board of Commissioners representing District 4 in the center of the county.

Tucked behind the public health building, between it and Athens Highway, is a little more

■ Please see **PARK, 4A**

PARK

■ Continued from 1A

than an acre of land suitable for development as a pocket park.

"We're now ready to meet with the citizens and find out some things they would like to see in the park and what they prioritize," Stowe said Friday, April 6. "We don't have a huge amount of money, so as we get this thing started

we'll do a master plan of all the things we think we can get in there and the community would like to see and then have a list of what items people would like to see first."

There's about \$250,000 available for the work, according to Hall County spokeswoman Katie Crumley.

On Monday, Stowe is hosting a public meeting to get input from nearby residents on what they'd like to see done with that money.

Some ideas are already

rolling around for the property. Stowe said the area could host a playground, outdoor basketball court, pavilion with grills and a community garden. The sidewalks around the public health complex would be connected and new sidewalks could be added to form a loop of walking area.

Residents can weigh in beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Fair Street Community Center on 715 Fair St., Gainesville.

In addition to the type of equipment people would like to see at the park, the grounds need a name, Stowe said.

If you can't attend the meeting, an online survey will be available after the meeting on the county website.

The county intends to take public comment for the next month. Stowe said he hopes to have a request for proposals out in September, a bid awarded in November and work completed before spring 2019.

4-7-18

Area residents speak out on planned Athens Street park

BY JOSHUA SILAVENT
jsilavent@gainesvilletimes.com

The residents of the south side of Gainesville are taking the latest plans for a park in their neighborhood with a grain of salt.

Across Interstate 985, out along Athens Street, a few miles gone from the commercial centers of the downtown and midtown districts, is a largely residential, minority community of middle-class homes, public housing, trailers and immigrant enclaves.

"When it comes to African-Americans, or across the railroad tracks, we seem to get less and less," Carol

Park survey

To provide your opinion on what features the park should prioritize, fill out a county survey by visiting www.hallcounty.org/communitypark

Leverette said to grumbled agreement at a meeting Monday at the Fair Street Neighborhood Center. "We just seem to get overlooked."

But a new park is what these residents will have in one year if the latest proposal sticks to schedule.

"I completely understand," Hall County Commissioner Jeff Stowe, whose district includes the south side, told the audience of

several dozen.

The park will be located at the back of the lot at 1280 Athens St., where the county health department and old Butler gym sit, just south of I-985.

Residents were asked at Monday's meeting to fill out a survey of proposed additions to the park, prioritizing what they wanted as the development will have to occur in phases due to budget constraints.

"We're trying to prioritize with the money we have what you'd like to see first," Stowe said.

Is it a basketball court? Or a pavilion? What about walking trails and open space, or even fitness

areas? How about a water fountain for children to play in, a community garden or good old-fashioned playground?

Initial designs could come as early as this summer with construction to begin in November.

The project has been in the works for a dozen years, beginning in 2004 when plans were drawn up to develop affordable housing on the site adjacent to Harrison Drive, Athens Street and Interstate 985.

But that deal never came to fruition, and the property was later identified for a park.

Community groups, like Concerned Citizens of Gainesville-Hall

County, have helped keep the push going.

As recently as 2016, Hall County looked to purchase more than 21 acres behind the Harrison Square public housing complex for a large park encompassing a small community center. but that never materialized, either.

Even now, there is simply is not enough money to get everything desired.

Residents like Eugene Welchel said the community can't wait any longer, even if it means getting the park piecemeal.

■ Please see **PARK, 6A**

4-10-18

PARK

■ Continued from 1A

"You all got to find a way to take care of our side of town," he said, later adding that, "I'm ready to take what we got."

The county has \$250,000 lined up in funds from special purpose local option sales tax revenue to spend.

Officials said more money would likely come through applying for federal grants, and the annual budget process is an opportunity to explore additional expenditures.

Assistant County Administrator Marty Nix said the upside to the new location identified is that the county already owns some of the land, is seeking a donation of additional land from Fieldale, and development costs will run lower because the property is already laid for electricity and sewer.

"A lot of the infrastructure cost we don't have to absorb," Nix said.

But costs remain a determining factor in how residents will prioritize what goes in first at the park. And they want reassurances that the county will remain committed to building out the project sooner rather than later.

Belinda Hailey Dickey, a resident, said many people will agree that "something is better than nothing" but it remains "just a drop in the bucket."

"We have got to demand more," she said.

NABORS SIGNS TO SWIM AT NORTH CAROLINA-ASHEVILLE



For The Times

Anna Nabors, a homeschooled student from Flowery Branch, recently signed a swimming scholarship at the Frances Meadows Aquatics Center in Gainesville with the University of North Carolina-Asheville. Nabors is seated, while Lanier Aquatics coaches Crystal Tavares and Jim Young are standing.

4/14/18

Dragon boat event to draw hundreds to Lanier



Photos by **SCOTT ROGERS** | The Times

The ICF Dragon Boat World Championships is coming to Lake Lanier in September, the first time it's ever taken place in the United States. The competition will include more than 1,000 athletes from a dozen countries.

4.15.18

Team USA building squad for fall world championships at Olympic Park

BY NICK BOWMAN

nbowman@gainesvilletimes.com

Russia, Hong Kong, Poland: After competing in world championships around the globe, the United States' dragon boat team is staying home this year because the competition is coming to them.

For the first time in its history, the International Canoe Federation Dragon Boat World Championships is being held in the United States, and it's coming to Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

It's an enormous occasion for the park and for Gainesville, Olympic Park manager Robyn Lynch said last week. Olympic-level athletes, coaches, family and friends will fly into Georgia this September in what will be a \$5 million shot in the arm of the local economy, according to Lynch.

More than 1,000 athletes will swarm Olympic Park from Sept. 9, when practice begins for all teams on the lake, to the Sept. 16 closing ceremonies, according to the ICF calendar of events.

Jim O'Dell, a local canoe and kayaking coach who is also a regional coach for Team USA in the ICF championships, said more than 20 nations are expected to sign up for the championships.

So far, 15 countries are confirmed, according to Lynch: Armenia, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Puerto Rico, Switzerland, Ukraine, U.S. and Russia.

Just those 15 teams are bringing 677 people, including 587 athletes, to the championship. That figure doesn't include family and fans traveling to see the sport, which



Jim O'Dell is one of Team USA coaches taking part in the ICF Dragon Boat World Championships.

based on number of fans is the second most popular sport in the world outpaced only by soccer.

It's gaining a foothold in the United States, O'Dell said Friday, as hundreds of teams are cropping up along the coasts as enthusiasm grows for the sport.

"It's the battle. It's competition," said O'Dell, who has coached dragon boating since the 2000s and has been involved at the national level beginning in 2009. "It's being part of something greater than yourself."

O'Dell is now the chairman of Dragon Boat USA, a national organizing committee for the dragon boat team within the American Canoe Association. He's involved with the local committee working with Lynch to organize the world championships at Lake Lanier.

Dragon boat competitions usually occur as a festival. Georgia's event is the Atlanta Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival, held each year at Olympic Park. The 2018 festival will immediately precede the world championships.

IFC Dragon Boat World Championships

When: Sept. 12-16

Where: Lake Lanier Olympic Park

More info: www.lanierdragonboat2018.com

Dragon boating has pedigree, too. While its not yet an Olympic sport (O'Dell is keeping his fingers crossed that changes in 2024) the ICF championships are a feeder event for Olympic canoeing and kayaking teams.

And the championships put on an Olympic-level show. Lake Lanier is in for a treat come September.

"In 2014, Team USA ... took 110 people to Poland," said Laurie Moore, a tech-industry employee in Atlanta and dragon boat competitor trying out for Team USA this year. "You felt — it was so exciting. Even though it wasn't the Olympics, that's the caliber. The opening ceremony, the whole awards ceremony, the closing ceremony, it was run as if you were in the Olympics."

And among dragon boat teams, Lake Lanier and its athletes are serious competitors. Moore has medaled in previous world championships, and she's not alone among Georgia athletes.

The quality of Lake Lanier paddlers is what got O'Dell involved with Team USA in the first place.

"There's a team from New York that came down in 2008 (for our festival) with the specific goal of beating us, and we beat them," O'Dell said. "They were a feeder team for Team USA, so the head coach

■ Please see **DRAGON, 3C**

4-15-18



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

A Team USA dragon boat sits outside of the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club boathouse Friday, April 13.

DRAGON

■ Continued from 1C

found out about that and came down in late 2009 to see what we're doing."

Working with Team USA, O'Dell and other coaches have put together grueling tryouts that will through the summer narrow the field of athletes ready to compete in the various age and gender divisions for the world championships.

Moore said tryouts with Team USA head coach Michael Blundetto and O'Dell are intimidating, frustrating and thorough in the extreme.

"Tryouts consist of three days of intense, intense work," Moore said, laughing.

Athletes are put under the microscope, from video of paddling runs to a "data paddle," a smart paddle that records as much data as possible during train-

ing to track how an athlete is performing under pressure.

"It's very intimidating. The coach is sitting on the bench in front of you turned and facing you," Moore said. "You have some people getting the boat moving for you, and he hands you the data paddle and says, 'Go.'"

And athletes will go and go, over and over, for days this summer at Lake Lanier and lakes around the country as Team USA breaks down and rebuilds the athletes it intends to field this September — athletes who can be as young as 15 or older than 50.

"We put them through the ringer first," O'Dell said. "We start the trials on a Friday afternoon, working pretty hard Friday afternoon. Saturday afternoon, (we're) working pretty hard. We start testing Saturday afternoon. Why? Because at the end of the day, when finals are,

you're beat up. We want to test you to see how much endurance you have."

About 180 athletes will be invited to the team camp at Lake Lanier in late July. The pool will be narrowed to 100 or 120.

Those 100 men and women will be up against a wide range of amateur and professional athletes, to Russians who fill their teams with Olympians (and remain embroiled in a national Olympic doping scandal) to the Filipino dragon boaters who are sailors in the Philippine navy and train all day, every day in their sport.

And they can hang.

"In 2014, we had 11 people from Lanier who went to Poland for world championships," O'Dell said. "It's those kinds of opportunities we have here to springboard off of our sprint training and hopefully get some hardware around our necks on home water."

4-15-18

Light at end of tunnel seen for Green Street — in 2024



DAVID BARNES | The Times

Green Street could see road improvements as soon as 2024, depending on funding. The project would include a raised 5-foot median along Green Street and roundabouts at each end.

Traffic relief project includes roundabouts, raised median

BY JEFF GILL
jgill@gainesvilletimes.com

Green Street road improvements could take place a decade from now, but possibly sooner, depending on funding.

“We are always working to find funding,” said Sam Baker, transportation planning manager for Hall’s transportation planning agency, Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization. “We will definitely look into it.”

The project, expected to cost about \$15 million in 2024, calls for a raised 5-foot median along Green Street and roundabouts at E.E. Butler Parkway/Academy Street and at Thompson Bridge Road/Ga. 60 and Riverside Drive near the Gainesville Civic Center.

The project’s placement in Hall County road plans — happening between 2024

and 2032 — is set to be considered May 8 by the MPO’s Policy Committee, a group of top elected officials making up the agency’s decision-making arm.

The MPO’s Technical Coordinating Committee, a group including local and state transportation officials, recommended the measure earlier this week.

Green Street traffic has been a long-time thorny issue for Gainesville, as much of the city’s northbound and southbound traffic funnels through the four-lane stretch lined by historic homes.

And that includes truck traffic trying to reach Interstate 985.

Bypasses have been long discussed, with a project in the works to realign Oak Tree Drive to help direct some traffic off Green Street by directing traffic down Limestone Parkway and Jesse Jewell Parkway, heading toward I-985.

Making road improvements and easing traffic congestion are top priorities for Gainesville during this year’s budget process, officials said this week.

The Green Street project is being considered for placement on road plans because another project — the \$46 million widening of Martin Road — was removed by officials last year.

About \$1 million in improvements, including a possible roundabout at JM Turk Road, are now being eyed for Martin Road.

Also possibly filling the void would be widening Interstate 85 from four to six lanes between Hamilton Mill Road in North Gwinnett to Ga. 53 in Braselton.

The project is projected to be completed by 2023.

“I’m a huge fan of the widening,” Braselton Town Manager Jennifer Scott said.

Sign-ups for summer camp now underway

BY AMBER TYNER
atyner@gainesvilletimes.com

The Gainesville area will soon be host to numerous summer camps for children of all ages with varying interests.

For children who are animal lovers, the Humane Society of Northeast Georgia is offering its Pet P.A.L.S. Summer Camp.

"P.A.L.S. stands for 'Prepare Animals for Love and Shelter,' so we try to make it a lot about the rescues here and how to prepare them for love and help them find a new home but also help them live a healthy, happy life while they're at the shelter waiting for their forever home," said Samantha Threadgill, development and communications director at the Humane Society. "We have all kinds of things set up, all kinds of speakers."

She said campers will get to have a lot of interaction with their adoptable animals.

"A trainer comes in and teaches about socialization and how important that is to help the animals find their forever home, and they also get tips and tricks for their animals at home, too," she said. "This year we have something new. We have a horse veterinarian coming out who is going to talk about what he does. We're trying to incorporate all types of animals, not just animals we serve here, so the kids can learn about humane treatment of all animals."

Another educational camp opportunity can be found at Elachee Nature Science Center.

"We focus a lot on environmental education," said Mallory Pendleton, camp director and education programs manager at Elachee. "Parents send their kids here to get that outdoor, hands-on, inquiry learning experience at Elachee."

At Elachee's camps, kids can expect to have fun in the mud.

"We're going to be outside all day, every day trekking through the creeks and just trekking through the forests," she said. "We do try to give them that outdoor experience that sometimes they just don't get otherwise."

More information on these and several other camps can be found below. 4-22-18

Gainesville Parks and Recreation will host a variety of camps throughout the summer. Times for each camp vary, and costs range from \$60 to \$185 for residents and \$80 to \$245 for nonresidents. For information, visit www.gainesville.org/camps.

Day Camps

May 29 to June 1: Horizon Day Camp, ages 6-12
June 4 to July 13: Discovery Day Camp, ages 6-12
July 16 to Aug. 3: Camp Kazoo Day Camp, ages 6-12

Specialty/Travel Camps

May 29 to June 1: Kids on the Go Travel Camp, ages 6-12
June 4-8: Baton Camp, ages 4 and older
June 4-8, June 25-29 and July 9-13: Vet Camp, ages 6-12
June 4-8, June 25-29 and July 9-13: Chef Camp, ages 6-12
June 11-15: Camp Adrenaline, ages 8-12
June 11-15: Arcade Camp, ages 6-12
July 16-20 and July 23-27: Air and Space Camp, ages 6-12
July 16-19: Kodu Cart Racing Camp for grades third to eighth
July 16-19: Heroes Week Camp for grades third to eighth
July 23-27, July 30 to Aug. 3: Summers End Travel Camp, ages 6-12

Sport Camps

May 29 to June 1: Baseball Camp for grades first to eighth
June 4-6: Football Camp, ages 8-17
June 4-7: Softball Camp for grades first to eighth
June 9: Speed and Agility Camp, ages 6-17

4-22-18

■ Please see CAMPS, 5C

CAMPS

■ Continued from 1C

June 11-15: Soccer Camp, ages 6-12
June 18-20: Spirit Starter Cheer Camp, ages 5-11
June 25-29: Pee Wee All Sports Camp, ages 4-5
July 10-12: Lacrosse Camp, ages 4-15
July 16-19: Volleyball Camp, ages 9-14
July 23-25: Elite Cheer Camp, ages 5-11

4-22-

Gainesville
Parks & Recreation

SUMMER FUN
IN THE CITY
2018 CAMP GUIDE



Download the Digital

WWW.GAINESVILLE.ORG/CAMPS

4-22-18

McCall, Cooper set for April 30 primary debate

Dems aim for chance to face US Rep. Collins

BY NICK BOWMAN

nbowman@gainesvilletimes.com

A second Democratic primary debate is coming to Hall County, this one to help voters decide who will challenge U.S. Rep. Doug Collins, R-Gainesville, in November for his seat representing Georgia's 9th District in Congress.

Gainesville teacher Josh McCall and Clayton Army veteran David Cooper are running for the Democratic nomination in the 9th District, which covers Northeast Georgia from the western edge of Fannin County in the northwest to Elbert County on the South Carolina border.

The two men are set to debate at 6 p.m. April 30 at the Gainesville Civic Center, according to the Hall County Democratic Party, which organized the event. The primary is May 22, though early voting begins the same day as the debate.

McCall, a teacher at Riverside Military Academy, declared his candidacy in early 2017 and has been an active presence on the Hall County political scene since then. Cooper jumped into the race in 2018 but has been a busy volunteer for Democratic candidates nationwide, including Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential bid. He worked for the Environmental Protection Agency after leaving military service.

Jody Cooley, a Gainesville attorney who was a candidate against Collins for this seat in 2012, will moderate the debate. General topics — the environment, tax reform and others — will be provided to Cooley and the candidates by the executive committee of the party, according to Leigh Miller, second vice chair of

■ Please see **DEBATE**, 4A

DEBATE

■ Continued from 1A

the Hall Democratic Party.

Specific questions will be developed by Cooley based on the original list and feedback from the candidates, Miller said Friday.

While the 9th District is one of the most conservative in the nation, it has a dedicated, active bloc of Democrats that have been energized by Donald Trump's 2016 presidential victory and his time in office.

Groups like Indivisible Lumpkin and McCall himself have organized gun control rallies, health care marches and protests outside Collins' Gainesville office since Trump took office in January 2017.

And with a passionate base of support lifting their sails, the two candidates in the 9th District have come out strong for left-wing campaign platforms.

Both men support uni-

versal health care, and McCall has made it a major part of his campaign given the Republican attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act, popularly known as Obamacare, in 2017.

"From birth to death, every American must have guaranteed access to life-saving health care without a price tag, because our lives are worth more than money," McCall says in his platform online. Cooper is calling for a ban on "combat-style weapons," silencers and continuous-fire modifications, which includes bump stocks. He also believes the Second Amendment doesn't give an individual right to own firearms.

"Nothing in those 27 words authorizes unabridged gun ownership for other uses (outside of national defense): hunting, home defense, vigilantism, personal defense, or supplementing law enforcement," Cooper says of the amendment on his website.

He wants to restore net

neutrality and revive the Fairness Doctrine for the airwaves, and both men have made the roasting of Trump a major part of their campaigns.

On Twitter, McCall calls Trump a "tyrant" and says he "fanned the flames of xenophobia" that led to the deaths of child refugees trying to escape Syria. Cooper calls the 2017 tax reform legislation the "Trump Tax Theft of 2017."

But even set in bright contrast to Collins and Trump, the two Democrats aren't one-dimensional candidates.

McCall's campaign is shot through with Christian principles and rhetoric. He wants to eliminate federally required standardized testing in schools, and he believes international trade deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Trans-Pacific Partnership are "fundamentally un-American."

Cooper, meanwhile, is calling for term limits for members of Congress.

4-23-18

Hall County Democratic primary debate for 9th District seat in Congress

When: 6 p.m. April 30

Where: Gainesville Civic Center, 830 Green St.

Cost: Free

Key election dates

Registration deadline: Close of business April 24

Early voting: Starts April 30

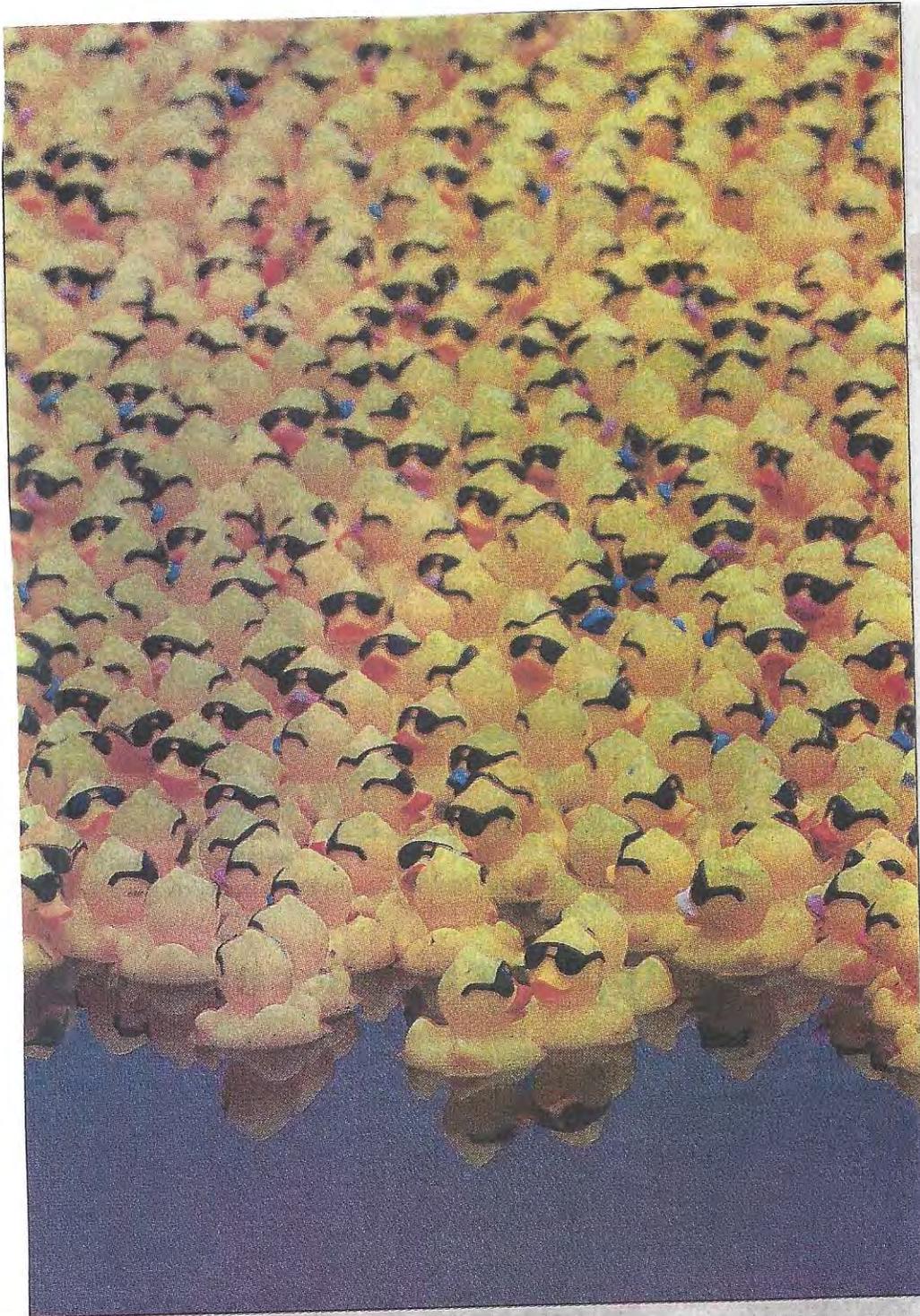
Primary: May 22

Last day to mail an absentee primary ballot: May 18

General election: Nov. 6

4-23-18

Rubber ducks race to support clubs



SCOTT ROGERS | Times file photo

The annual Rubber Duck Derby at Clarks Bridge Park will raise money for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier.

4-26-18

2018 event includes beer, band at evening Duck Fest

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

Thousands of ducks flock to Lake Lanier each spring. Well, they don't really flock as much as they get shipped to Gainesville then pushed off a barge into the lake.

It's all in an effort to raise money for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier during the annual Rubber Duck Derby, and this year's derby marks the 20th anniversary. It will take place at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, May 5, at Clarks Bridge Park.

"This event does directly support the hundreds of kids we serve every day," said Chelsea Clark, event marketing and volunteer coordinator with the Boys & Girls Clubs. "It's a great mission we have and I think everybody wants to be a part of it."

When the 21,000 ducks are "adopted," numbers associated with their "adoptive parents" will be written on the bottom of each. They're then poured out of a barge into Lake Lanier and begin floating down the one-tenth of a mile course to the finish line. The first one to reach the end wins \$10,000. The next five win prizes, too.

"Most of our duck adoptions come in the last week," Clark said. "We hit about 19,600 last year. I think that was the most duck sales we've ever had, and we want to overcome that for sure this year."

A single duck can be adopted for \$6, a quackpack of six ducks can be adopted for \$30 and a grandpack of 25 ducks can be adopted for \$125.

Clark said the event was able to take back more than \$100,000 last year to the more than 6,000 kids at the Boys & Girls Clubs to help with different programs they offer in Hall County. Over the 19 years the derby has been running, it's raised \$1.8 million, so they're hoping to hit the \$2 million mark this year.

"It's our biggest community fundraiser for sure," Clark said.

The Rubber Duck Derby will be an all-day event, though. Starting at noon,

Rubber Duck Derby

Where: 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville

When: Derby, noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 5; Duck Fest, 6-10 p.m.

More info: www.duckrace.com/gainesville; 770-532-8102, ext. 304

there will be bounce houses, a petting zoo, food, the Kona Ice truck and other family activities.

Something the derby is adding this year will be Duck Fest. It was canceled because of rain last year, so they're trying to debut it again this year. It will begin at 6 p.m., after the derby is over, across the street at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park

"We kind of wanted to celebrate Cinco de Mayo, so it's the perfect day to do that," Clark said. "We'll charge \$5 for that event, but all the money raised comes back to support our club members."

She said there will be food trucks for guests to enjoy along with a few beer taps from Wrenched Bicycles, who claims to have the largest craft beer selection in the Gainesville area. The band Stereotype will be there there for entertainment, too.

"In the past it's been just a family event, and I know some people have been disappointed," Clark said. "Because kids and families like to see the duck race, but we really wanted to make sure we had something for everybody this year."

She hopes the 20th anniversary is a success, just like it has been in years past. Ultimately, Clark said she wants to be able to help the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier grow, and she knows it wouldn't be possible without the community around her.

"It's really comforting to know that we have this much support throughout the community that doesn't just come directly from our organization," Clark said.

4-26-18

Sets at Sunset Music Festival

When: 11 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. April 28

Where: Lake Lanier Olympic Park, 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville

How much: \$30-700

More info: 678-592-7320, info@setsatsunset.com, www.setsatsunset.com

4-26-18

Food Truck Friday

When: 5-8 p.m. May 18

Where: Lake Lanier Olympic Park, 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville

How much: Free

More info: 770-535-0397, Robyn@lakelanierolympicvenue.org

4-26-18

Uniting in prayer



ERIN O. SMITH | Times file photos

The Rev. Mike Taylor leads prayer at the family station during the 2017 National Day of Prayer on the downtown square in Gainesville.

4-28-18

2018 National Day of Prayer event set for May 3 on Gainesville square

BY LAYNE SALIBA

lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

Residents from all over Hall County will gather on the downtown Gainesville square May 3. Not for a chicken festival or free concert but to pray.

Hall will join the National Day of Prayer as it has in years past by setting up prayer stations around the square at noon Thursday, May 3. Each station, which is led in prayer by a community member, will focus on a specific topic in society: media, business, education, family, church, military and government.

"It's the National Day of Prayer, and Gainesville and Hall County is a part of our nation," said Brandy Sandoval, a leader with Hall County Prayer, which is organizing the event. "So it's a way that the nation comes together to pray for all the areas that are primary and first in our nation."

There will also be a breakfast at the Gainesville Civic Center from 6:45 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. The 48 tables are sold out and will be filled with guests eager to pray for the nation and hear Dean Sikes speak.

"It's an inspiration for people to pray for our community and for our nation," Sandoval said. "The effect is bringing a greater awareness every year to the importance of praying for our men and women who are serving our nation in many ways."

Sikes, a speaker dedicated to encouraging young people, will be at the prayer breakfast to share ways to pray for young people as they grow into community leaders.

"Everyone who comes, almost everyone, has children or grandchildren they care about," Sandoval said. "So we're just bringing an awareness of this generation and how we can benefit

National Day of Prayer

Where: Downtown Gainesville square

When: Noon to 1 p.m. Thursday, May 3

More info: www.hallcountycollective.com/hall-county-prayer.html

and be a part of and help this next generation, whether or not they're in our family, church or neighborhood."

On the square, guests will hear from community members like the Rev. Brian Hall from Chestnut Mountain Church as he leads prayer at the government station. They'll also hear from Dave Ippilito from Riverside Military Academy, who will lead prayer at the military station.

"There's been an increase in our leaders that have been helping with the National Day of Prayer," Sandoval said. "And the people coming out and participating in it — there's definitely been an increase there. Last year it rained on us, yet people came from every which direction, umbrellas in hand, to pray for the nation. I just think that's amazing and makes me proud to be an American to see that."

In the end, it's all about unity. That's this year's theme, so Sandoval said they'll be praying for unity between everyone in Hall as well as across the nation.

In the midst of division in the country, she said it's important to remind each other to have "one heart and one mind over the nation," which is something she said the Hall County National Day of Prayer is always about.

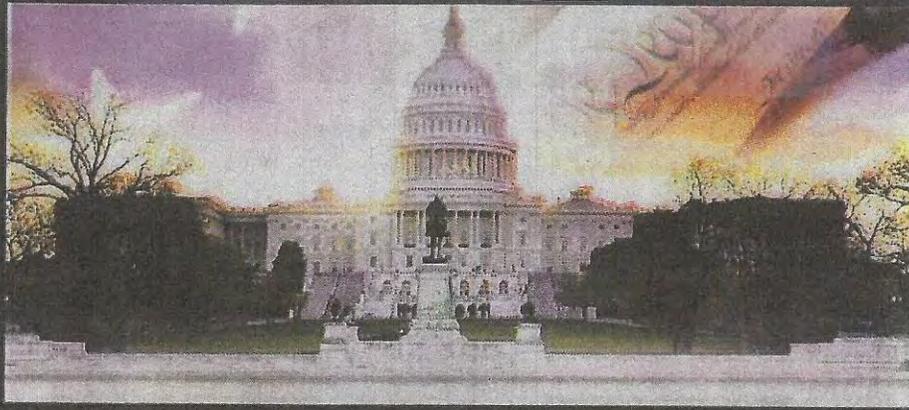
"It's just a real blessing to do that," Sandoval said. "And we get really positive responses from everyone. People have just been glad to join in from all walks of life."



Above: Jerry and Renate Howard of Oakwood pray during the 2017 National Day of Prayer event on the square in Gainesville. This year's event will be May 3. **Below:** The Rev. Roger Bourgeois leads prayer for the government station during the 2017 National Day of Prayer event on the square in Gainesville. Attendees rotated between seven stations to pray.



4-28-18



NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

THURSDAY – MAY 3, 2018

2 EVENTS

PRAYER BREAKFAST

GAINESVILLE CIVIC CENTER

SPEAKER – DEAN SIKES

6:45 A.M. — 8:15 A.M.

Seats—\$15.00

Includes Breakfast

PRAYER ON THE SQUARE

GAINESVILLE SQUARE

MAIN STREET-ON THE GREEN

12:00 Noon TO 1:00 PM

PRAYER PROGRAM BEGINS PROMPTLY

AT 12:00 P.M.

Contact prayerlife@att.net

Gainesville buying signs for trail

Highlands to Islands will connect Braselton with Gainesville, offer outdoor opportunities

BY JOSHUA SILAVENT

jsilavent@gainesvilletimes.com

Gainesville officials are developing signage for the Highlands to Islands trail that, when complete, will connect Braselton in South Hall with Gainesville and portions of North Hall to offer opportu-

nities for running, walking and biking.

City officials are looking to spend \$10,500 to design primary trailhead identification, wayfinding, regulatory and trail marker signs along with an interpretive kiosk.

City spokeswoman Catiel Felts

said it's important to "brand our portion," and Gainesville is working with the Vision 2030 group and Hall County officials to have them develop signage for portions of the trail in unincorporated parts of the county.

"So, we think this is a great opportunity for the city to go

ahead and lead the way," Felts said. "The county likes what we're doing so far."

City Manager Bryan Lackey said Gainesville still has work to do on the trail to connect it from Longwood Park on Lake Lanier to the University of North Georgia with existing paths, such as the

Midtown Greenway.

Work is particularly needed near the airport and Chicopee Mill, he added.

The Gainesville portion of the trail would ultimately include a 14-mile loop connecting UNG with downtown, businesses, scenic areas and schools.

4-29-18

Fighting student homelessness



Photos by **DAVID BARNES** | The Times

Ursula Harris, left, a Gainesville City School System social worker, speaks during a meeting on Thursday, April 26, discussing housing discrimination and its impact on families who have children in school.

4-30-18

Social workers, school officials speak at housing forum

BY JOSHUA SILAVENT
jsilavent@gainesvilletimes.com

A restlessness swept through the rows of attendees when two social workers spoke about the hundreds of homeless students enrolled in Hall County and Gainesville city schools during a workshop on affordable housing availability last week.

It was as though everyone shifted in their seat at the same time.

Just shy of 300 students enrolled in Hall schools are considered homeless, up from 158 two years ago, while the number in Gainesville schools spiked to 316 from 84 between 2014 and 2017.

Currently, the city school system reports having 268 homeless students enrolled this year.

The causes of homelessness are varied and sometimes obvious — substance abuse, split families, mental illness — but explaining why hundreds of students in the Gainesville and Hall County school districts are sleeping in cars, hotels, campgrounds, homes without basic utilities and emergency shelters each night exposes another network of roots.

Schools have been left to bear some of the burden of a homelessness problem that has metastasized locally in recent years, in part, by a severe shortage of housing considered affordable based on personal income.

So schools have worked to better identify which students qualify as homeless.



Gainesville City School System Superintendent Jeremy Williams speaks at the meeting.

And the potential for discrimination in rental housing based on race, disability, age, religion, family size and other social metrics prompted the Newtown Florist Club — a longtime civil rights organization focused on promoting youth development and organizing for social, economic and environmental justice — to host the forum for educators and residents to share testimonials about the struggles students and their families face in their everyday living

■ Please see FORUM, 6A

Community housing workshops

What: The third of three workshops on housing discrimination and affordability in Gainesville and Hall County (hosted by the local Newtown Florist Club civil rights organization)

When: 6 p.m. May 24

Where: Fair Street Neighborhood Center, 715 Fair St., Gainesville

More info: Call 770-718-1343 or email newtown193@gmail.com

4-30-18

FORUM

■ Continued from 1A

conditions. When you hear the stories, they come straight from the kids," Gainesville Superintendent Jeremy Williams said. "We've got to do a whole lot more than teach."

Gainesville school officials have hardened their focus in recent months on implementing and providing wraparound services for students, with the potential to expand mental health counseling, add a clothing closet or food pantry and develop new academic mentorships.

"We're just on the front end of that," Williams said. "We do have a lot of services now, but we don't do it in a way that's best coordinated to our students. Every child is different."

Ursula Harris, a social worker for Gainesville schools, said that by law students meet the criteria of homelessness if they "lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence."

Any students and their families may be "double- or triple-upped," Harris said, living with relatives or friends.

"When you look at that and you think about Gainesville, you can imagine the numbers that we have of families who fit that description," Harris said, adding that a large immigrant population and student body contribute to the high numbers. "So what do we do ...?"

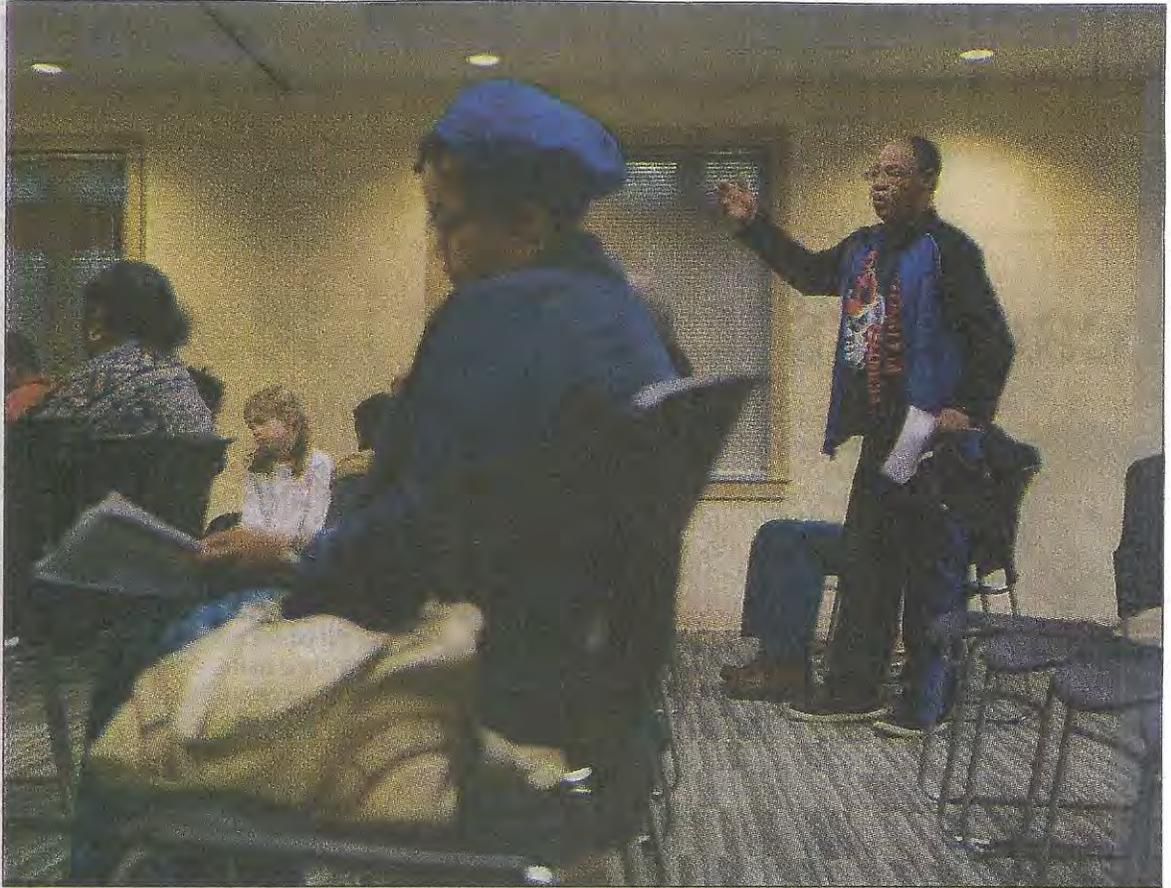
Holly Farmer, a social worker with Hall County Schools, said staff members are given training and educated about resources available to homeless students to assist schools in surveying who may be in need.

"Identification is a huge part of the process," she added.

When students are identified as homeless, Farmer said the immediate objective is keeping them in their "school of origin."

"The more a student has to move, the more class time they're missing," she added.

School systems, therefore, will continue to enroll and provide transportation for homeless stu-



Photos by DAVID BARNES | The Times

Gainesville City School System board Vice Chairman Willie Mitchell asks the panel a question during a meeting on Thursday, April 26, discussing housing discrimination and its impact on families who have children in school.

dents if and when they are residing in another city or district.

Farmer said all homeless students automatically qualify for free and reduced lunches, provided class supplies and resource guides are given to their families.

"But then we try to take it a step further," Harris said. "We want our families to feel supported."

Follow-ups are standard, and social workers will connect with housing agencies to assist families in finding a stable residence. This could include coordinating with shelters or having families apply with the Gainesville Housing Authority.

"With everything else that's going on in their life, there should be somewhere you can go where you know people, where you got support, where you feel safe, where you feel comfortable," Harris said.



Janice Thomas, center, a board member of Newtown Florist Club, reads an anonymous letter discussing housing discrimination and its impact on families who have children in school.

4-30-18

