Vendors to focus on wellness, finances at Healthy Aging Expo

BY JEFF GILL
jgill@gainesvilletimes.com

Healthy aging means more than just regular checkups at the doctor. It's also about preparing for the golden years through finances, housing and fitness, ideas vendors hope to stress at The Times' Healthy Aging Expo set for Sept. 26.

"One of the most important things for me, as a 52-year-old woman, is helping women age gracefully, and men, too," said Teryl Worster, owner of The Spa on Green Street in Gainesville.

Area residents of all ages can get information from wide range of vendors at the expo, taking place at the Frances Meadows Aquatic Center, 1545 Community Way NE, Gainesville.

"There is a challenge today ... in that everybody is trying to sell you something to slow down aging or make claims that sound wonderful but more than likely are just going to take your money," Worster said.

"We just want people to understand the route to a healthy aging process — what we put in our bodies, the things we have absolute control over — and teaching people how to focus on that."

She believes the expo "is a great way for people to cut to the chase and get to the truth of the matter, relative to nutrition, good skin care, healthy habits."

The Spa will have a chiropractor at the expo doing free nervous system scans, as well as a couple of massage therapists on hand.

Many of the vendors are medical or health-related businesses, but other concerns will be addressed.

The biggest part of Gainesville financial firm Rushton's presentation will be about "risk management, or identifying all those things that need to be considered, whether it's long-term care, taking care of a child or college education," said Perry Barnett, a certified public accountant and Rushton partner.

"Also, we'll be reminding everybody you can't mitigate all your risk, you can't insure them all away," he said. "You just try to get your arms around and manage everything the best you can, so your assets last as long as they can."

Judy Paul of Keller Williams Realty specializes in helping seniors with housing needs.

"If they do have a need to sell their home, they will think of me, but I also address the fact that they may not have to sell their home," Paul said. "They can probably age in place if they do the right things."

Sometimes, children have to act their parents' behalf.

"My passion is other people can learn from mistakes and be better prepared for when the time comes and they have to make decisions about their parents," Paul said. "What I'm hoping to convey to people is they need to have this conversation sooner than later. It makes life so much easier for everybody."

In addition to presentations, the expo will feature vendors, prizes, screening and classes in Zumba, yoga and other activities.

"We are proud to be able to host the Healthy Aging series of expos and appreciate the support of our sponsors in making them happen," said Norman Baggs, general manager of The Times. "We hope a lot of people will take advantage of this opportunity to obtain information that may be vital to their health and overall well-being.

"We will have experts in many different fields on hand to answer questions and offer advice to those in attendance. Past experience has shown us that those who attend also have a lot of fun while taking advantage of opportunities to learn."

The aquatic center already helps to serve a "very active aging population," said Julie Butler, marketing and communications manager with Gainesville Parks. "We feel like we're part of a whole communitywide effort to keep Gainesville healthy."

Healthy Aging Expo

What: Speakers and vendors focusing on aspects of growing older
When: 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Sept. 26
Where: Frances Meadows Aquatic Center, 1545 Community Way NE, Gainesville
How much: Free

9-9-18

6 things to know about the dragon boat championship

Lake Lanier is host of the International Canoe Federation Dragon Boat World Championships set for Sept. 12-16. And it's kind of a big deal.

What is a dragon boat, anyway?

Dragon boats are similar to canoes but longer, seating 12 or 22 people. Paddlers sit side-by-side on benches with a drummer and steerer in each boat. As the name suggests, there's an ornate dragon head on the front of the boat and tail at the back, a design that originated with fishing boats in Asia 2,000 years ago. The boats are made of plastic and fiberglass. The 10-paddler boats weigh 374 pounds and cost $5,887 each; the 20-paddler boats weigh nearly 600 pounds and cost $6,750 each. The boats were newly purchased for this event by organizers, who will in turn sell them when the championships are completed.

And what's happening during this event?

Teams from about 15 countries, including France, Germany, China and Japan, will race in a variety of competitions at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park. Paddlers will compete in various age groups — Junior, Senior and Master, 40-plus and 50-plus — in 10- and 20-paddler boats, men, women and mixed, at both 500- and 2,000-meter lengths. Various heats and time races will be held with the top qualifiers advancing to the semifinals and finals. Winners will be crowned in medal ceremonies throughout the weekend.

This sounds like the Olympics. When are opening ceremonies?

Officials tell us this event is on par with the scale of paddling and rowing events held there during the 1996 Summer Olympics. As far as opening ceremonies, you can expect a parade of athletes, dancing and Elton John tribute artist Craig A. Meyer at the free event Wednesday, Sept. 12. Food will be available from food trucks and beverages from Tap It starting at 5 p.m. The ceremonies start at 6 p.m.

If I want to watch the racing, what's the best time to go out there and what can I bring?

Races begin at 8 a.m. each day and run continuously through the afternoon, with medal ceremonies capping each day's events. Outside food and drinks are not allowed, but food will be available for purchase. People are welcome to bring chairs and blankets, but pets will not be allowed at the venue. Though the event is free to attend, parking is $10.

What can you tell me about Team USA?

Team USA has 112 athletes, with 29 coming from Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club. Jim O'Dell, a coach with LCKC, is also a coach for Team USA. Other Team USA athletes will be coming from all over the country, including Arizona, Texas and North Carolina. Tryouts were held on Lake Lanier in July.

Is this going to cause traffic problems?

Slowdowns and congestion should be expected with the expected volume of traffic from spectators, athletes and volunteers, Derreck Booth, spokesman for the Hall County Sheriff's Office, said. Officers also will be conducting extra patrols in the area.

9-9-18

Dragon boats bring Hall a rich bounty

SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

A Lanier Tent Rental crew assembles tents Thursday, Sept. 6, during rain showers at Lake Lanier Olympic Park as preparations get underway for this week's ICF Dragon Boat World Championships.

Thousands flock to Lanier for event

BY MEGAN REED
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

Gainesville and Hall County will be stepping in to the international spotlight Sept. 12-16, when more than 1,000 athletes from around the world compete in the International Canoe Federation World Dragon Boat Championships at Lake Lanier Olympic Park. With that influx of people comes a boost to the local economy — an estimated $3-4 million and the opportunity to promote the area to an international audience.

Inside
Dragon boat primer, **4A**
Lanier paddlers ready, **1B**
Hong Kong Atlanta Festival photos, **1C**

"We'll have the world's eyes on Gainesville, and you really can't put a price tag or a value on that type of publicity," Gainesville Convention and Visitors Bureau Manager Regina Dyer said.

That publicity may lead people from around the United States or the world to keep Gainesville and Georgia in mind when planning future trips, Dyer said.

"It spotlights Gainesville, and they may come back. They'll see that, 'we could have a vacation

■ Please see **DRAGON, 4A**

ICF Dragon Boat World Championships

Where: Lake Lanier Olympic Park, 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville
Opening ceremonies: 6 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 12, Olympic Park
Racing events: Beginning 8 a.m. Sept. 13-16
Closing ceremonies: 7 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 16, the Smithgall Arts Center Lawn, 331 Spring St., Gainesville; tickets $20
How much: Parking at Lanier Olympic Park is $10, racing events and opening ceremonies are free
More info: lanierdragonboat2018.com

9-9-18

SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Tyler Osmon, of Boat Dock Works, disconnects a dock Thursday, Sept. 6, at the Lake Lanier Olympic Center boathouse to use for the upcoming ICF Dragon Boat World Championships next week.

DRAGON

■ Continued from 1A

here, we could get away, why not come to Georgia?'" she said.

The athletes will not be the only ones filling Hall County's restaurants, hotels and stores this week. About 2,000 to 5,000 spectators are expected each day of the championships, with many of those people coming from outside the region and the country to cheer on their favorite team.

Practices begin Sunday, Sept. 9.

The championships will have a more significant impact than other athletic competitions because the athletes participating are older and will spend more, according to Stacey Dickson, president of the Lake Lanier Convention and Visitors Bureau. Athletes range in age from 17 to 70, and the median age is 30, she said.

"The expendable income and potential spending value of these guests is higher than your average athletic competition, which would be younger people who don't have as much expendable income. They're going to be going out at night, and going to dinner, and shopping in their off time," Dickson said.

Restaurants and hotels are not the only businesses affected, Dickson said. International travelers may also need to go shopping for essentials like over-the-counter medications that they cannot bring on an airplane, giving the retail industry in the county an unexpected boost, she said.

Dickson said because racing events will be held during the day, restaurants, especially in downtown Gainesville, will likely be crowded for dinner.

Ronnie DiOrio, owner of Mule Camp Tavern, said the restaurant will have some extra staff on hand this week to serve extra crowds. He said he wants international or non-local customers to get to know the Gainesville community, and they can hopefully do that by mingling with people from the area at his restaurant.

"You look for the dive bar around town, where the locals go," DiOrio said.

A shuttle will be taking athletes from their hotels in Gainesville and Oakwood to Lake Lanier Olympic Park. Dyer said hotels in Gainesville and Hall are almost fully booked for this week. Another event in Gainesville, a Fishing League Worldwide tournament at Laurel Park, will bring more visitors to the area.

Robyn Lynch, executive director of Lake Lanier Olympic Park, said the estimated economic impact is $3 to 4 million. The cost is about $1 million, and that bill is largely covered by sponsors and athlete participation fees. The Olympic venue also purchased 38 boats in January for about $100,000. Some of those costs will be recouped when the boats are sold after the event.

Hall County spokeswoman Katie Crumley said the county did not financially contribute to the championships. The Gainesville Department of Water Resources donated 21,000 water bottles valued at $4,200 for the championships, city spokeswoman Nikki Perry said.

Organizers have spent about three years preparing for the event, and now they are working with local businesses and hotels to help them get ready.

Volunteers are stepping in, too, helping out with everything from traffic control to transporting athletes and prepping boats.

"It takes teamwork, and when we have these events, as crazy and busy as we all are, in the end, the end result is great. It's great for our visitors and our community," Dyer said.

Closures at Lake Lanier Olympic Park

The boat ramp at the park will be closed through Sept. 16. The beach will be open, but there will be a $10 parking fee during events. The Hall County Sheriff's Office will have boats on the water in the area encouraging boaters to slow down and maintain the no-wake zone.

9-9-18

Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival makes a big splash

Photos by **SCOTT ROGERS** | The Times

Above: Teams compete in dragon boat races Saturday, Sept. 8, during the annual Atlanta Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival. **Left:** Buddhist monks prepare to bless the dragon boats

More pictures on page 3C

9-9-18-

HONG KONG DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

Photos by **SCOTT ROGERS** | The Times

A dragon boat team from Gainesville High School competes during the annual Atlanta Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival on Saturday, Sept. 8, at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

A Buddhist monk blesses dragon boats Saturday Sept. 8, at Lake Lanier Olympic Park to begin the annual Atlanta Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival.

The Lanier Canoe and Kayak baby dragons team celebrates a win during the annual Atlanta Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival on Saturday, Sept. 8, at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

9-9-18

ICF DRAGON BOAT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Chance to leave a mark

AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

Team USA athletes paddle during practice for the ICF World Dragon Boat Championships on Thursday, Aug. 23, at Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville.

Local paddlers eager to put Gainesville, US on international map

BY NATHAN BERG
nberg@gainesvilletimes.com

When the ICF Dragon Boat World Championships kick-off on Lake Lanier next week, competitors will be flocking to Gainesville for the first time. Teams will come in from all over, including the United States and Canada, as well as China, India and even New Zealand.

But a good portion of the American team won't have very far to travel at all.

Twenty nine members of Gainesville's Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club (LCKC) have qualified for Team USA. Of those 29, 15 are native to Gainesville itself.

"I think it was definitely crazy that we had this many people come from LCKC," said Aaron Dickson, one of the American team competitors from Gainesville. "I don't know that we expected this many people making the team from LCKC, but I think it's definitely good that we train here. We have a good advantage for what's coming up with worlds and everything, being on our water."

As Dickson explains, "all water is different," and racing on the lake he and his fellow LCKC members learned to paddle on gives him and the others a leg up on the competition.

Some of the team members even had an opportunity to test those waters at the current conditions at the Hong Kong Dragon Boat festival on Saturday, where LCKC raced two boats under the team name LCKC Super Dragons.

Alec Wilson, another member for LCKC and hailing from Gainesville, said the advantages go beyond just the physical. Wilson said he and the other local competitors will have a distinct mental edge come race day.

"We're going to sleep in our own beds," he said.

"That's something that a lot of people don't think about, but being able to just be at home while competing helps your mindset."

Wilson — a North Hall High student who will paddle for the junior team — added that the local setting will take away the stress of having to keep up with school work from a remote location, allowing him to stay focused on racing while in the water.

The LCKC members of the national team will also carry the advantage an already built-up level of camaraderie that is crucial to their success. Dragon boat racing — as Anna Crawford, another Gainesville native who is a part of Team USA, explained — is a team sport.

With many members of the team coming in from all over the country for the event, it can be hard to build chemistry in just a few practices. That won't be an issue for the 29 LCKC members who already have a long history of canoeing, kayaking and dragon boating together.

"Most of us grew up together," Crawford said.

"So we've been paddling together since we were like 10-years-old, and we've all become just really good friends."

Wilson said the event is even bringing back a few LCKC members who had branched out over the years, leaving Gainesville for school, work or other reasons. Welcoming back old friends is one of the main things he's looking forward to with the coming competition.

"We're definitely a little family," Wilson said of the LCKC community.

Wilson, Crawford and Dickson all added that they're looking forward to putting the United States — and Gainesville specifically — on the map in the international dragon boat scene. This year's competition brings the championships to the U.S. for the first time in its history.

Dickson said he thinks Gainesville will provide a good first impression on the foreign visitors, some of whom will be visiting the states for the first time ever.

"Everyone is pretty nice around here," Dickson said with a laugh.

"Southern hospitality."

But the Team USA. members, particularly the local ones, will hope to be a little bit less nice when they finally get in the boat on race day.

The U.S. national dragon boat team has not had a great deal of success in international competition thus far. But with the biggest event of the year finally on home turf, the competing members of LCKC — who will be paddling on the same waters they've trained a portion of their lives on — hope that will change.

"It's really scary but exciting to kind of show other nations that we are a threat, almost," Wilson said.

"We are competitors. We have a stake in this competition. You can't just throw us off to the side. And since we are hosting it this year, we have more of a chance than ever to show that."

ICF Dragon Boat World Championships

Where: Lake Lanier Olympic Park, 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville
Opening ceremonies: 6 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 12, Olympic Park
Events: Sept. 13-16
Closing ceremonies: 7 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 16, the Smithgall Arts Center Lawn, 331 Spring St.,
Tickets: $20
Parking: $10 at Lanier Olympic Park, racing events and opening ceremonies are free

For more info, visit lanierdragonboat2018.com

9-9-18

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10:30 AM
Atlanta Gastroenterology

11:00 AM
Judy Paul - *KW Lanier Partners*

11:30 AM
The Vitamin Shoppe

12:00 PM
The Insurance Source

12:30 PM
Rushton & Company

Frances Meadows Aquatic Center will be offering the following classes FREE during the event:

Land Classes - Wellness Room

10am-11am	Zumba
11am-11:45am	Strength in Motion
12pm-1pm	Gentle Yoga

Water Classes - Warm Pool

10am-11am	Water Works
11am-12pm	Gentle Movements
12pm-1pm	Aqua Moving & Grooving

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9-10-18

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ICF DRAGON BOAT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Right where he needs to be

Photos by AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

Jim O'Dell, the high performance coach for the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club, poses for a portrait on Thursday, Sept. 6, 2018.

Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club coach Jim O'Dell's passion for dragon boat helped bring World Championships to Gainesville

BY SARAH WOODALL
swoodall@gainesvilletimes.com

Sixteen years ago, Jim O'Dell was just working a regular job in occupational safety and health when he first discovered the 2,000-year-old sport of dragon boat racing.

Already a master's paddler for the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club at the time, O'Dell initially saw the long piece of watercraft as an avenue for team building for his corporate position. From that discovery also came the benefit of general wellness. And from that, stirred an inspiration to build something bigger at the LCKC.

This year, he said, will be the fruits of all their labor.

O'Dell, the high-performance coach for LCKC, will see 29 local paddlers from the club compete for Team USA in the International Canoe Federation Dragon Boat World Championships in the coming days. With over 1,000 athletes from 16 countries competing, it will be the largest international event at Lake Lanier since the 1996 Olympics.

The championships are Sept. 12-16 as rowers began practice on Sunday at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

"We're making up about a quarter of our Team USA from right here in Gainesville. ...It's just really exciting," said O'Dell, also a regional coach for Team USA.

"This year, there have been some exciting stories of people who were festival paddlers 1 1/2 to 2 years ago, and now they're on Team USA because they worked their rear ends off for the last 18 months to make the cut."

The 58-year-old O'Dell was somewhat responsible for bringing this prestigious event to Gainesville for the first time, holding a leading position within the local organizing committee for the ICF World Dragon Boat Championships. This is the first time in the ICF's history that these world championships will be held in the U.S.

Also, he has had a hand in transforming this local club into a national force over the years.

In 2009, O'Dell's club went head-to-head against a team stacked with paddlers from the U.S. national team during the Atlanta Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival, where the LCKC beat them outright. At the time, it preserved LCKC's five-year unbeaten streak at the festival.

"I just rallied up our kids, and it was exciting because we were not the fastest boat at the end of the first round of heats," O'Dell recalled. "Second round of heats, we were just a little bit faster than them. And when it came around to the final, we cleaned them up."

It captured the attention of U.S. national coach Mike Blundetto, who decided to fly down from New York to investigate. Blundetto was taken back by the quality facility that was Lake Lanier Olympic Park. It then sparked a lasting relationship between both coaches.

O'Dell's involvement with Team USA moving forward — having Blundetto down to attend multiple camps at the LCKC — not only grew the number of locals competing at the international level with each passing year, it also led to 11 LCKC paddlers (youth and adult) be a part of Team USA winning the 2014 World Dragon Boat Championships in Poland.

"That to me, turned the corner because that was the year that we came back as World Champions (for the first time)," said O'Dell, now in his second stint as chairman for Dragon Boat USA.

It also cemented a new path for O'Dell, who just six weeks prior to Poland was "downsized" from his occupational safety position in Gainesville. He has since been devoted to coaching full-time, and immersed in the world Dragon Boat.

Jim O'Dell, right, coaches athletes during practice on Thursday, Aug. 23, 2018 at Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club.

Looking back, the life-altering event could not have come at a better time.

"I am where God wants me to be," O'Dell said.

O'Dell is no stranger to the waterfront. A native of the west coast, O'Dell grew up around the long stretch of beaches in Santa Cruz, Calif. And in Gainesville, he took after his daughter in the sport of rowing in the early 2000s, winning several gold medals at the USA Canoe/Kayak Masters National Championships. His wife, Cathy, currently coaches Hall County Special Olympics program at the LCKC as well.

While O'Dell still dabbles in some part-time consulting, not even the highest paying gig will ever steer this coach away from his beloved sport.

"I work twice the hours for half the money, but I get twice the love out of it," he said.

"It's worth it seeing the smiles of people when they beat their personal bests, whether it's in a canoe or kayak or when you're a group of people in a dragon boat. The improvements are priceless.

"It touches me deeply when people are excited to train hard in this sport, working toward a goal."

ICF Dragon Boat World Championships

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Events: Thursday-Sunday
Closing ceremonies: 7 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 16, the Smithgall Arts Center Lawn, 331 Spring St.,
Tickets: $20
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For more info, visit lanierdragonboat2018.com

9-10-18

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9-11-18

SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

Dick Williamson paints a bowl Monday, Sept. 10, at the Gainesville Civic Center during a luncheon of the Hall-Gainesville Retired Educators Association. The bowls will be available at the Georgia Mountain Food Bank's upcoming Empty Bowl Lunch.

Empty Bowl Lunch helps hungry

Annual fundraiser hopes to provide over 500,000 meals for deprived

BY JOSHUA SILAVENT
jsilavent@gainesvilletimes.com

It's a good thing Phil Dennis was on hand for a meeting of the Hall-Gainesville Retired Educators Association at the Gainesville Civic Center on Monday, Sept. 10.

"I know I'm not talking to all retired art teachers out there," said Dennis, the community engagement coordinator for the Georgia Mountain Food Bank.

As the food bank prepares for its 10th annual Empty Bowl Lunch on Sept. 25, Dennis gave painting tips to the retired educators and assured them their help painting small rice bowls would go a long way to feeding children and families in poverty.

"I hear all the time, 'I can't even draw a straight line,'" Dennis told the retired educators. "Well, you're in luck, because God didn't make branches straight ..."

That was just one painting trick Dennis offered to the several dozen retired educators in attendance.

"You can do so much with dots," he added, such as making them look like teardrops, fruit or flowers by dipping the opposite end of the brush in paint and then dabbing color on the bowl.

Patterns and random placement work well, too, Dennis said.

The lunch, held every September to coincide with national Hunger Action Month, is designed to raise funds and awareness of the need to fill empty bowls.

Attendees can take home hand-painted bowls donated by local artists and community members, and there is also a live auction for bowls painted by local celebrities.

Empty Bowl Lunch

What: Georgia Mountain Food Bank's annual fundraiser
When: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sept. 25; program begins at 11:45 a.m.
Where: First Baptist Church, banquet hall, 751 Green St. in Gainesville
More Info: www.gamountainfoodbank.org

"We need lots of bowls every year," Dennis said, adding that last year's fundraiser helped provide about 500,000 meals for those who otherwise may not have consistent access to food.

Whatever the retired educators may have lacked in artistic talent, they made up for in commitment.

"Over the years, we have retired from helping children," said Angela Middleton, president of the local association. "We have an opportunity to help out the food bank in our own special way."

Middleton said the association is made up of teachers, support staff and cafeteria workers, for example, all of whom dedicated lives and careers to support the development of children in their community.

"When I took on the presidency, I started looking for opportunities in which we can give back," Middleton said. "My motto for this year is, 'We have one more thing to give.'"

Vanessa Ellison, who taught for 31 years, including in the Gainesville City Schools System, said a healthy kid is an educated kid, and supporting the food bank is like supporting today's educators.

"It's a wonderful way to close gaps, to build rapport with families," Ellison added.

Frank Lock, who taught chemistry, physics and astronomy for about three decades, said he understands the importance of a healthy diet for the brain development of students.

"It's a very important thing — just good nutrition," Lock said, adding that he particularly appreciates the food bank's "prescriptive food boxes," which are provided to patients at The Longstreet Clinic, Good News Clinics and Northeast Georgia Diagnostic Clinic.

"It's much easier to fix a child than take care of a broken man," Lock said.

For Kay Blackstock, executive director of the food bank, having the retired educators pitch in is an "important gift" to the community.

"There is no wrong way to paint a little rice bowl," she added. "And for every bowl that is painted here today and donated to the Georgia Mountain Food Bank, you can help us provide up to 100 meals."

Blackstock was honored by the retired educators with a community service award, and she explained how the food bank is making an impact in Hall County and Northeast Georgia in unique ways, such as opening a pantry this year for elementary students and their families at Enota Multiple Intelligences Academy in Gainesville.

"It's always about going where the people are," Blackstock said. "We find that's the most effective way to make a difference in people's lives."

9-11-18

Made from scratch by students

Photos by **AUSTIN STEELE** The Times

Left: Laila Young, a student at Lanier College and Career Academy, prepares meals for athletes and coaches at the ICF Dragon Boat World Championship on Tuesday, Sept. 11. **Right:** Eliud Guzman of Lanier College and Career Academy packages boxed meals. **Above:** Fernando Gonzales, a student at Lanier College and Career Academy, prepares a salad mix.

LCCA provides over 500 fresh boxed lunches per day for dragon boat event

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

When Chris Mitas was asked about providing food for the athletes, coaches, judges and volunteers at the International Canoe Federation World Dragon Boat Championship, he didn't have to think about it.

As a culinary instructor at Lanier College & Career Academy, he knew his high school students were ready.

They're preparing boxed lunches through Sept. 16 at the school off Atlanta Highway near Oakwood. But these boxes are filled with more than the average turkey sub; they're more along the lines of a pork banh mi sandwich or a roast beef sandwich with horseradish mayonnaise on fresh-baked brioche buns, for example.

Everything is made from scratch. They trim the fat from the meats and marinate, roast or grill. Toppings and sides are made and packed into the small, brown boxes, and 15-20 students deliver them to the Lake Lanier Olympic Venue off Clarks Bridge Road.

When the students do restaurant service for Bistro at the Oaks, LCCA's on-campus restaurant, they put out eight-course meals. So, 500 boxed lunches each day were no problem.

"The kids have been awesome," Mitas said. "A lot of schools think about teach, teach, teach and then we're going to do the projects. . . With this, it's like going to the field trip before you learn the project."

One of the unique things about catering an event so large is each item is made in bulk as opposed to individual plates based on what someone orders.

Senior Grayson Baker said he enjoys that a little more because once he and everyone else learns their one job, everything else goes smoothly.

"Cooking is definitely not for someone who is just looking for a lucrative job or just wants a way to get money," Baker said. "You have to actually have a passion. It's very stressful, and if it's not something you truly love to do, it's not for you."

The significance of the event and the importance of the meals aren't lost on the students. They understand they are providing food to people who have come to Gainesville from around the globe, including teams from Armenia, Canada, Japan, Italy, Russia, Ukraine and the Philippines, among others.

Making sure they are happy with their lunch and have a good experience is the most important part of what they're doing, so they all work together in the kitchen to make that happen.

"It just feels like another day almost," said Josh Johnston, a senior at the school. "But I also feel honored because it's a big event and they chose not a professional, they chose a bunch of high schoolers and we make it good."

9/12/18

Dragon boat championships bring food trucks to Lanier

BY KAYLEE MARTIN
kmartin@gainesvilletimes.com

Although dragon boating originated in China centuries ago, the food choices at the ICF Dragon Boat World Championships will come from around the world.

Dannella Burnett, owner of Oakwood Occasions and vendor coordinator for the championships set for Sept. 12-16 at Lake Lanier Olympic Park, said there will be "a little bit of everything" with something for everyone.

"We will have different food trucks and vendors every day, with 6-10 at a time," Burnett said.

"In addition to the trucks and vendors that will have food for lunch and dinner, we will have some trucks with breakfast foods, smoothies and coffee. Shaved ice and other frozen treats will also be available every day."

Along with typical American foods like burgers and barbecue, attendees can sample flavors from Jamaica, Hungary and Brazil.

Vegan options also will be available.

"Many of the food trucks that will be on-site for the Dragon Boat Championships also participate in the Food Truck Friday events that Lake Lanier Olympic Park holds regularly."

Food trucks will be on site 5-9 p.m. Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday.

Here's the breakdown of which trucks are coming and when.

Cabakis Catering Breakfast Fare

What: Breakfast burritos, biscuits and gravy, oatmeal, whole fruit, breakfast treats, coffee, orange juice
When: 8-11 a.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Frozen Frenzee

What: Full espresso bar, smoothies, shaved ice
When: 4:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday

Alice and Jacks BBQ

What: Ribs, chicken, pulled pork, barbecue nachos, chips and drinks
When: 4:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday

Hole in the Wall

What: Caribbean flavors including jerk chicken, rice, fish, shrimp, wings, sides and drinks
When: 4:30-9 p.m. Wednesday

OBA! Brazilian Cuisine

What: Beef and chicken skewers, empanadas, rice and drinks
When: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Saturday

Zil Catering

What: Beef fajitas and Asian wings and drinks
When: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday

Sherry's Bait and Barbecue

What: Barbecue pork, chicken, wings, slaw, potato salad and drinks
When: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Sunday

FOR THE TIMES

Brazilian style empanadas, turnovers filled with meat, chicken or other requested fillings, are among the menu items carried by OBA!

Cabakis Catering grilling station

What: Burgers, brats, hot dogs, appetizers and drinks
When: 4:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

CC Cantina

What: Street tacos and fixings
When: 4:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Flying Cloud Café

What: Vegan Skyeburgers, Skyeburger chili and salad, nachos and drinks
When: 4:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Oakwood Occasions

What: Caribbean Blue Water bottles, popcorn, cotton candy and coffee
When: 4:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Kona Hawaiian Shaved Ice

What: Flavored shaved ice
When: 4:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Chef's On Wheels

What: Hungarian langos (fried bread)
When: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Great American Cookie and Marble Slab Creamery

What: Cookies, sundaes, ice cream sandwiches, cookie cake slices and milkshakes
When: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Mug Mania

What: Souvenir mugs and refillable fountain drinks
When: 4:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Tap It

What: Beer and wine
When: 4:30-9 p.m. Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

9/12/18

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Jackson Boyum - *Humana*

10:30 AM
Atlanta Gastroenterology

11:00 AM
Judy Paul - *KW Lanier Partners*

11:30 AM
The Vitamin Shoppe

12:00 PM
The Insurance Source

12:30 PM
Rushton & Company

Frances Meadows Aquatic Center will be offering the following classes FREE during the event:

Land Classes - Wellness Room

10am-11am	Zumba
11am-11:45am	Strength in Motion
12pm-1pm	Gentle Yoga

Water Classes - Warm Pool

10am-11am	Water Works
11am-12pm	Gentle Movements
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9-13-18

'Just like watching the Olympics'

AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

Teams from various countries participate in the parade of athletes during the opening ceremonies for the ICF World Dragon Boat Championships at Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Wednesday, Sept. 12.

Dragon Boat worlds kicks off with parade, dances, music

BY NICK WATSON
nwatson@gainesvilletimes.com

With the white-and-blue International Canoe Federation flag waving above the Lake Lanier Olympic Venue Wednesday evening, the federation's vice president opened the Dragon Boat World Championships for "the world's best teams to show during the next four days great competition on this beautiful course."

Inside
Please see Welcome, dragon boats, OPINION **4A**

"Dragon boat is more than just a competitive sport. It's part of a special lifestyle, it's social interactions, it's sharing of common experiences and learning to rely on each other," said ICF vice president Thomas Konietzko.

The races are set for the next four days through Sunday, Sept. 16, with finals and medals ceremonies every day.

In his opening remarks, Gainesville Mayor Danny Dunagan thanked the numerous volunteers and planners on helping share Lake Lanier with the world.

"Your commitment and hard work is inspiring to all of us," Dunagan said

■ Please see **DRAGON, 8A**

9-13-18

AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

Kelly Lee of Atlanta Chinese Dance Company performs during the opening ceremonies for the ICF World Dragon Boat Championships at Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Wednesday, Sept. 12.

DRAGON

■ Continued from 1A

addressing the athletes. "It is a beautiful thing to see people from so many countries join together to share a common interest."

Hoisting their flags high, the participants walked along the venue in a parade of nations.

"It's wonderful to see them all coming through. Just like watching the Olympics on TV, they all come marching through," said Dennis Hartman, stepfather of regional Team USA coach Jim O'Dell.

Donning a red- and black-sequined jacket that sparkled at sunset, Craig Meyer kicked off the night with "Remember When Rock Was Young — The Elton John Tribute."

Members of the German team danced up and down the aisles while holding their nation's flag. The Swiss team formed a dance circle to the side of the stage, where members of Team USA and Team Canada later joined.

"I love to see younger people like this doing good, because there is too much bad stuff going on today," said O'Dell's mother Helen Hartman.

Meyer and the tribute band rolled through a number of Elton John's classic hits, including "Philadelphia Freedom" and "Bennie and the Jets."

He addressed a number of the often misheard lyrics in the repertoire — most famously being held closely by Tony Danza — before running through "Tiny Dancer," "I'm Still Standing," "Your Song," "Crocodile Rock," and "Saturday Night's Alright for Fighting."

9-13-18

Welcome, dragon boats

Weekend event on Lanier offers great exposure to region

AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

Team USA athletes paddle during practice on Thursday, Aug. 23, at Lake Lanier.

It was 22 years ago this summer the world came to Lake Lanier and Gainesville became "the hospitality capital of the world" for two weeks, in the words of NBC announcer Charlie Jones. International fans waved flags and cheered on their countrymen, athletes earned the experience of a lifetime and everyone left with a smile on their face from the Centennial Olympic Games events on Lanier.

Now the world is back. Or at least a piece of it, 14 teams from around the world competing this week in the International Canoe Federation Dragon Boat World Championships at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

Though nothing near the scale of the Olympics, this week's event is the latest opportunity for our community to put on its best face and create the same positive impression visitors left with in 1996.

About 1,000 athletes and as many as 5,000 spectators are expected to fill the shores of Lake Lanier along with local hotels, restaurants and shops, boosting the Hall County economy by an estimated $3 million to $4 million.

More importantly, perhaps, it will give North Georgia more worldwide exposure, especially in paddling sports that have become synonymous with Lake Lanier.

The Olympic venue is a source of local pride in knowing it remains one of the few sites from the 1996 Games still used for its original sport, most others abandoned, torn down or converted to other purposes. None have thrived and played host to top-level competition like Lanier's rowing and paddling course.

It's not hard to figure why. Though it wasn't the first choice of Olympic organizers, it became the perfect one. Competitors sing the praises of its straight, natural waters shielded by trees on either bank as the ideal venue, both practical and more aesthetically beautiful than manmade courses built elsewhere.

Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club coach Jim O'Dell, who will coach Team USA in this week's event, calls Lake Lanier one of the top three natural courses in the world.

"The water is very deep which makes the course very fast, and there is a lot of water even in the midst of a drought," he said. "All of the manmade courses I have been on are narrow. The 200-meter and 500-meter are done in a straight line, but the 2,000-meter is done in a large oval, so with this lake being so wide paddlers have plenty of room to turn."

The venue includes the original timing tower and boathouses at Clarks Bridge Park, while upgrades over the years have added spectator grandstands and further amenities to increase access and make visitors more comfortable.

Part of the allure is knowing Olympic gold medals were awarded along the lakeshore visitors can walk. That mystique will always help draw fans of flatwater sports back to Lanier.

Over the years, several key national competitions and team trials have been held at the venue, including the Pan American Games in 2016. Many collegiate and national teams also use the site for training.

Meanwhile, the LCKC continues to attract top athletes. It boasted of its first Olympian, Tim Hornsby in 2012, and could have more at the 2020 Games in Tokyo. And 29 Lanier paddlers are on Team USA's 112-person roster this week.

Now enter the dragons. For the uninitiated, dragon boats are basically large canoes seating 10 or 20 paddlers (not rowers; different sport) along with a coach, or steerer, and a drummer. The ornate dragon's head at the bow and tail at the stern harken to the sport's origins in China more than 2,000 years ago.

Organizers put on a big show for the opening ceremonies Wednesday night at the venue, including a parade of athletes and musical performers. Sunday's closing ceremonies at the Smithgall Arts Center promise more of the same.

Today through Sunday, competition will begin at 8 a.m. each day and continue through the afternoon, with medal ceremonies capping each day's events. Attendance is free, other than a $10 parking fee at the park.

We applaud the event organizers for their hard work in providing Gainesville and Hall County another chance to entertain the world. Let's be good hosts and make sure visitors feel welcomed and appreciated as they experience our Southern hospitality. If all goes well, this week's championships could lead to more such international events and help grow Olympic Park's stature in rowing and paddling circles.

We're delighted to welcome the dragon boat world to Lanier's shores, and hope everyone enjoys their time in our little slice of heaven. 9-13-18

SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

The USA 10-Seater junior mixed 500-meter team crosses the finish line with a time of 2:11.542 Thursday, Sept. 13, 2018 during their time race on Day 1 of the 2018 ICF Dragon Boat World Championships at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

9-14-18

ICF WORLD DRAGON BOAT CHAMPIONSHIPS

LCKC carries US junior squad to pair of victories

Associated Press

Day 1 of the 2018 ICF Dragon Boat World Championships was a big one for Team USA's junior team, every member of which is also a part of Gainesville's Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club.

The junior team swept gold, both in the 10-seater junior men's 500-meter race and the 10-seater junior mixed 500, winning all four junior races held on the day.

The senior teams also saw some success, particularly in the grand final of the 10-seater senior mixed 500, where Team USA finished third with a 2:11.876 mark, barely half a second behind the second-place Hungarian team.

The Philippines won gold.

The Americans finished the day up with a pair of fourth-placed finishes in the 10-seater master 40-and-over men's 500 and the 20-seater senior mixed 500 and a sixth place result in the 10-seater master 40-over mixed 500.

Teams from the Czech Republic, the Philippines and Germany took first place in those grand finals.

Day 2
When: 8 a.m. today
Where: Lake Lanier Olympic Park
Tickets: No charge to attend, $10 for parking
More Information: www.lanierdragonboat2018.com

Compiled by Nathan Berg

9-14-18

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