BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

Each year, as summer rolls around and the temperature starts to rise, residents in Hall County head out to Lake Lanier. There are beaches for swimming and marinas for boating, but there's also another, sometimes overlooked, option out there: rentals.

In an effort to fill a niche market around the lake, Christine Breault helped start Northeast Georgia Paddling Company. She loved being outside on the lake and wanted to make sure everyone else had the chance to do it, too.

"We have kayaks, tandem kayaks and (stand-up) paddleboards," said Breault, who handles administrative tasks and deliveries for the business. "We offer delivery in and around Lake Lanier, and that includes waterways above the dam."

The unique thing about Northeast Georgia Paddling Company is it delivers everything they offer. And even though its located on the south end of the lake, Breault said they deliver just about anywhere nearby. That means people wanting to use its products don't have to have a truck or go out and buy enough rope to strap it to the top of their car.

Breault said she "likes the adventure" of getting out on the water in a kayak and wants to give the opportunity to others.

"It's a very different experience than when you're on a motorboat and you're blazing across the water, not putting any effort into it," Breault said. "It's a way, I think, to connect with nature in a different way and it offers a little more peace and quiet."

Northeast Georgia Paddling Company is open seven days a week for rentals and deliveries. All prices include delivery, pickup, paddles and life vests. For half-day rentals, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., it's $55 for a kayak, $65 for a paddleboard and $75 for a tandem kayak. For a full day, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., those prices increase by $20.

Breault said she always tries to offer discounts for multi-day use or larger groups, too. And it's all kid-friendly. The tandem kayaks can hold three people and up to 550 pounds, so Breault said that can be split up into any kind of group. She carries youth-sized paddleboards and children's life jackets as well.

"It's definitely a family thing," Breault said. "We try to make it so that the children can participate as well."

The Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club, on the opposite end of the lake, has some of the same rentals. It has single and double kayaks, canoes, paddleboards and pedal boats. Tracy Barth, past president with the LCKC, said double kayaks are pretty popular, but paddleboards beat out everything else.

"We started out with a fleet of five paddleboards three years ago," Barth said. "And last year, we purchased 10 more because it was so popular."

She said she thinks people like the "flexibility" of being able to sit down and stand up on a paddleboard. She said the LCKC offers some paddleboards that are wider for stability, but it also has some that are more "sporty" for guests that have a little more experience.

Barth said canoes are usually a good rental for families because "families that have smaller kids can ride in the boat while the parents do the work." Lot of families like that option because there's room to bring a cooler for a picnic if families want to stop and relax during the rental.

"We get a lot of people that are vacationing or spending a weekend on the lake camping," Barth said. "And they just come here to rent for just a little while . . or it's people that don't live on the lake and they don't want to deal with the hassle of transporting a kayak or stand-up paddleboard."

She said renting is a way a lot of people test out the equipment to see if they want to invest money in purchasing one, too. She tries to answer any questions people have.

Single kayaks, canoes and paddleboards are $20 for one hour, $30 for two hours and $45 for four hours. Pedal boats are $25 for one hour, $40 for two hours and $60 for four hours while double kayaks are $30 for one hour, $40 for two hours and $65 for four hours.

The LCKC offers discounts by way of a membership. Barth said the membership is popular for families because they get unlimited use of the equipment for the entire season, which typically runs through October. It's $150 for an individual or $225 for a family of four.

It also comes with free admittance to all moonlight paddles, which take place in the evening, with a professional instructor.

6-18-18

Photos by **DAVID BARNES** | The Times

Gainesville resident Heather Chandler uses a stand-up paddleboard she rented at the Olympic Park Boathouse in Gainesville, on Saturday, June 16.

6-18-18

Judy Williams

From: Gainesville Parks and Recreation <parkandrec@gainesville.org>
Sent: Friday, June 22, 2018 3:17 PM
To: Judy Williams
Subject: draft

If you're having trouble viewing this email, you may see it online.

Share this:

Tackle Football Registration Ends 7/20.

Download Football Information Download Cheer Information

Youth Cross Country Registration Ends July 27.

Download Cross Country registration information.

Announcing Youth Fall Baseball

Team Registration Only

Download team fees, dates and more information.

For additional information, contact Eason Spivey at 770.531.2680.

Gainesville Parks and Recreation
830 Green Street Gainesville, GA 30501
770.531.2680 | www.gainesville.org/recreation

This email was sent to **jwilliams@gainesville.org**. To ensure that you continue receiving our emails, please add us to your address book or safe list.

manage your preferences | **opt out** using **TrueRemove®**.

Got this as a forward? **Sign up** to receive our future emails.

POWERED BY emma

Double joy for southside parks

Photos by **DAVID BARNES** | The Times

Eno Slaughter, parks division manager of Gainesville Parks and Recreation, rakes mulch around the new playground at Desota Park in Gainesville, Wednesday, June 27, 2018, as final touches are made before reopening to the public.

Desota Park to reopen, Athens Street park making progress

BY JOSHUA SILAVENT
jsilavent@
gainesvilletimes.com

Gainesville is putting the finishing touches on the makeover of Desota Park just as Hall County officials begin to make progress on a separate park adjacent to the local health department.

The two parks on the south side of the city primarily serve minority, as well as many low-income, families.

Desota Park is the centerpiece of Newtown, a historically African-American neighborhood in Gainesville, playing host to birthday parties, family reunions and holiday celebrations, for example.

Gainesville parks and recreation board member Jerry Castleberry said earlier this spring that the park is a "focal point for Fourth of July celebrations."

And Bright Teens United for a Future, a youth leadership group, is sponsoring summer recreation programs at the park for the Newtown Florist Club, a local civil rights organization.

These programs include basketball tournaments, movie nights, dance classes, arts and crafts, and reading, bicycle and gardening clubs.

City officials approved about $350,000 to tear up and rebuild the park's basketball and tennis courts, while adding new playground features, exercise equipment, and additional space for public gatherings and cookouts.

Parks Director Melvin Cooper said a few "punch-out" items remain to be finished, such as paint touch-ups, but the bulk of the work is complete.

He said the park would be open to the public beginning this weekend.

"I think it's a fantastic park," Cooper added.

Final touches are made to Desota Park in Gainesville, Wednesday, June 27, before reopening to the public.

Meanwhile, a proposed park at 1280 Athens St., just south of Interstate 985 where the county health department and old Butler gym sit, is making headway after Hall County government officials sought public input in the spring.

Survey results shared

■ Please see **PARK**, 8A

6-29-18

PARK

■ Continued from 1A

with The Times show that residents want the park well-lit and secure, regularly maintained, with electrical outlets, water, restrooms and other amenities for hosting public gatherings.

A playground, pavilion, basketball court, walking trails and fitness equipment were among the leading features residents chose for the park.

Additionally, "E.E. Butler Park" was the leading vote getter for the park's name among the approximately 60 surveys filled out.

Fieldale Farms is providing adjacent land to the currently undeveloped property behind the health department.

Commissioner Jeff Stowe said preliminary work to control erosion, remove privet and kudzu, and improve drainage has been completed or is underway.

The county is applying for an approximately $350,000 grant from the state Department of Natural Resources to match what the local government is investing in the project.

The grant is specifically aimed at serving low-to-moderate income neighborhoods, and Stowe said he is hopeful, if not confident, that the county will be awarded the funding.

However, the grant funding would require some delays in the construction timeline.

Stowe said officials had hoped to break ground and begin developing some of the park's features by November.

But if awarded the grant, that funding would not be allocated until next spring.

Mulch is laid out at the playground at Desota Park in Gainesville, Wednesday, June 27.

Final touches are made to Desota Park in Gainesville, Wednesday, June 27, before reopening to the public.

6-29-18

Photos by **DAVID BARNES** | The Times

Workers with Talbot Tennis draw lines on the new basketball court at Desota Park in Gainesville, Wednesday, June 27, as final touches are made before reopening to the public.

6-29-18

JEFF GILL | The Times

Silver Shovel awards for top volunteers were presented Thursday at a Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce luncheon at the Gainesville Civic Center.

Hall Chamber of Commerce recognizes its top volunteers

The Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce handed its annual Silver Shovel awards on Thursday, June 28, recognizing top volunteers.

The 2017-18 winners are: Sues Alexander, Deb Bailey, Bonner Burton, Phil Bonelli, Chris Brown, Kathline Collins, Julie Ferguson, Rob Fowler, Logan Jones, Bernie Mastracchio, Christy Moore, Richard Oates, Gale Starich and Tread Syfan.

Also, the chamber saw a change leadership. Carol Burrell, president and CEO of the Northeast Georgia Health System, took over as the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce's 2018-19 chairwoman.

"I step into this role out of great confidence because of the leaders who are in this room and the many who aren't," Burrell said at the chamber's board meeting.

Jeff Gill

IN THE NEWS

July 2018

Parks & Recreatio 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

LAKE LANIER OLYMPIC PARK

'Legacy Continues' party to celebrate USA dragon boaters

Event to feature music, food, craft beer at Brenau Amphitheatre

By Jane Harrison

An evening combining craft beer, pop rock, and food with a chance to mingle with high achieving athletes is coming to the Brenau University Amphitheatre July 21. The event, entitled "The Legacy Continues," celebrates Team USA Dragon Boat hopefuls trying out for seats on National Team boats competing in the ICF Dragon Boat World Championships Sept. 13-16 at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

The Fly Betty Band, popular for churning out high energy dance cover tunes, will set the tone for the casual outdoor fundraiser organized by Gainesville Hall '96. The suds will flow from Tap It, a Gainesville micro brew pub. Brenau University is filling the plates.

The celebration honors 160 athletes in the heat of competition for a chance to represent the U.S. in the World Championships. "They are our honored guests," said Robyn Lynch, Lake Lanier Olympic Park manager. Attendees can meet national team aspirants, snap photos with them, and encourage them toward their dream, Lynch said.

Fly Betty Band.

GH '96 hopes the Legacy night will raise $100,000 to help host about a thousand participants and 10,000 spectators expected in three days of long-boat racing in September. The organization that helped bring Olympic paddling and rowing to Lake Lanier in 1996 has budgeted $600,000 for what it describes as the biggest sporting event on the lake since the Olympics.

Lynch said funds raised at the Brenau party will go toward medical and security needs, plus other necessities. Sponsors are contributing about $200,000. More funds are expected from the resale of 38 10- and 20-person dragon boats made and bought specifically for the world event. The boats cost $6,000 to $8,000 each. Half have already been sold, Lynch said.

Party organizers choose Brenau for the fundraiser because Team USA hopefuls will be staying there for a team camp beginning July 19. Competitors will know if they made the cut by camp's end July 22. Local paddlers are among the contenders.

The party offers "a great opportunity for people to come have their photo taken with Team USA and congratulate them for their efforts in bringing the world championships" to Lanier, Lynch said.

Dress for a hot summer evening, Lynch said. It's very casual ... wear shorts."

The Legacy Continues Party

When: 6-10 p.m. July 21
Where: Brenau University Amphitheatre, 500 Washington St., SE, Gainesville
Tickets: $30 Individuals; $10 kids; $400 table for 8. Individual ticket holders can bring their own chairs. Table tickets include food tickets.
Advance tickets: Email Robyn Lynch at robyn@lakelanierolympicvenue.org.

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:
July 14 - Summer Springs Regatta
July 27 - Moonlight Paddle

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:
July 10-21, July 31- Aug. 11- Learn to Row 1 Classes
July 10-21, July 31-Aug. 1, Aug. 14-25 - Learn to Row 2 Classes

Other LLOP Events

July 20 - Food Truck Friday

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

Atlanta, world dragon boaters heading to LLOP in September

By Jane Harrison

Dragon-headed boats and their handlers will invade Lake Lanier Olympic Park for eight straight days in September with back-to-back events. The day after local and Southeastern long-boaters beat their drums at the Atlanta Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival, international crews will hit the water to practice for the ICF Dragon Boat World Championships.

The Sept. 8 Atlanta festival traditionally brings about 1,000 participants and an equal number of spectators for a day of fun, recreational paddling, plus exotic and Southern cuisine, Asian music and dances. On Sept. 13, expect the food and Asian-inspired performances to continue, but a mood change will sweep over the water as well-trained athletes compete for awards on the world stage.

The world event "will still have venders, food and entertainment in a fest-like" environment, said Robyn Lynch, Lake Lanier Olympic Park manager. "But the competition will be very serious. Some are Olympic athletes."

Races feature 10- to 20-person boats outfitted with carved or plastic dragon heads and tails racing between 200 to 2,000 meters to the finish tower on the Olympic course. On each boat, a drummer beats out the rhythm and often yells encouragement to paddlers stroking in unison. Spectators can see strained shoulders heaving and hear drumbeats pounding as boats pass in front of the grandstands in the final 100 meters from the finish buoys.

Dragon boat racing, an ancient Asian tradition tracing back more than 2,000 years, has gained enormous worldwide popularity, expanding from its origin in China to Europe and North America. LLOP, site of the first ICF Dragon Boat world championship in the U.S. joins Russia, Italy, Poland and Hungary on the world map of ICF hosts.

Gainesville Hall '96, the LLOP governing body, has been preparing for about two years, since ICF gave Lake Lanier the nod for the 2018 races. Lynch said the organizing committee is working out transportation routes, training volunteers, and planning how to feed about 1,000 athletes and hundreds of volunteers. Teams will be staying in local hotels and eating catered lunches, she said.

The opening ceremony Sept. 12 at LLOP will feature a parade of nations and brief greetings from ICF and local officials. Food truck dining and entertainment follow. Lynch declined to elaborate on the entertainment. "It's a surprise!" she remarked. There is no cost to attend either the opening ceremony or competition. Parking is $10 daily, with multi-day passes available.

Scene from last year's Dragon Boat Festival at LLOP.

ICF Dragon Boat World Championships Schedule

- **Sept. 9-11:** Team Arrivals/Practice
- **Sept. 12:** 6 p.m. Opening Ceremony, Lake Lanier Olympic Park
- **Sept. 13:** 500 Meter qualifying
- **Sep. 14:** 500 Meter finals, 200 meter qualifying
- **Sept. 15:** 200 Meter finals
- **Sept. 16:** 2000 Meter finals, closing ceremony

Gainesville to extend, connect Greenway

BY MEGAN REED
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

The city of Gainesville will soon extend the Midtown Greenway south and connect it to the pedestrian bridge over Jesse Jewell Parkway.

Phase 2 of the Midtown Greenway project will extend the trail from its end at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard south to Industrial Boulevard, according to Rusty Ligon, Gainesville's community development director.

Ligon

The project also includes connecting the greenway where it crosses Parker Street to the pedestrian bridge over Jesse Jewell Parkway.

Ligon said work on the project will hopefully begin by the end of the year. The project has received $500,000 in state funding, which will be matched with $125,000 in city funds, he said.

The city also will look at other grant opportunities to further extend the trail from Industrial Boulevard to Palmour Drive near the Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport, Ligon said.

The goal is to connect to the Highlands to Islands Trail, a multi-use trail system that will connect several existing and future trails throughout Hall County.

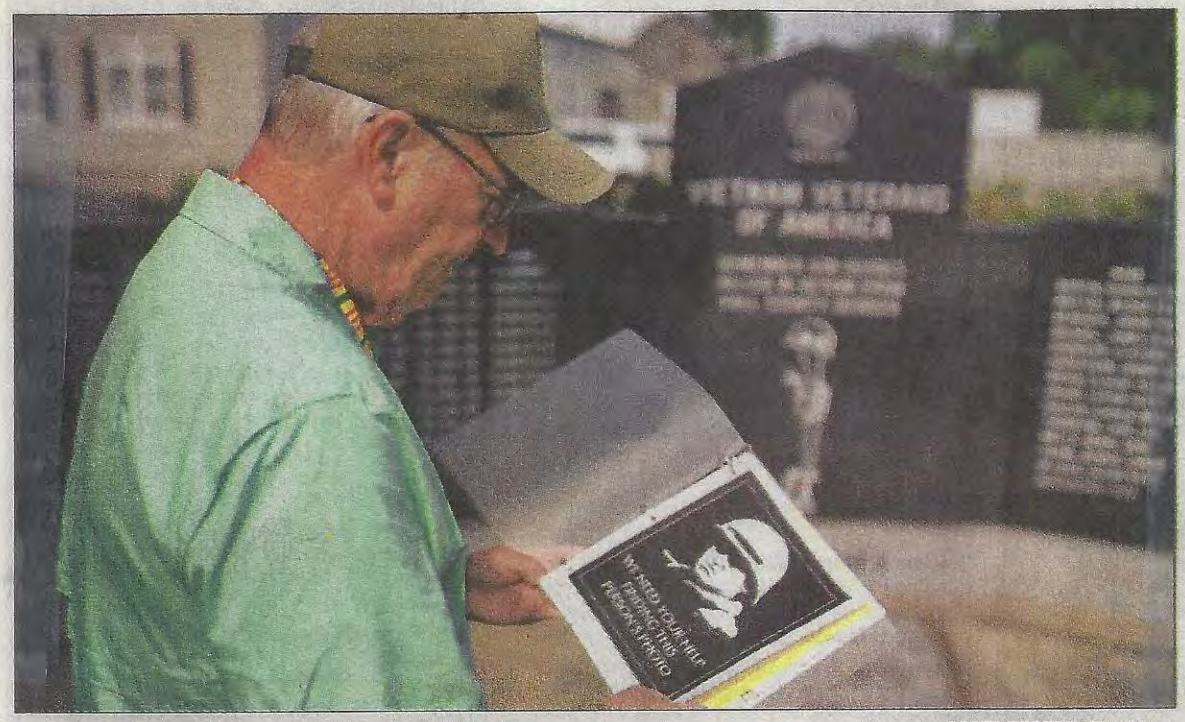
"There's a vision for a larger trail network. We're working on putting all those pieces together now," Ligon said.

DAVID BARNES | The Times

A sign guides pedestrians across a road near the Midtown Greenway in Gainesville. The city is planning to connect the greenway near its intersection with Parker and Grove streets to the pedestrian bridge over Jesse Jewell Parkway.

7-5 18

Picturing the memorial



Photos by **SCOTT ROGERS** | The Times

Vietnam veteran Barry Stinson visits Rock Creek Veterans Park in Gainesville on Friday, June 29, the first time he's been since he began his search for photos of those from Gainesville who were killed in the Vietnam War. He's working to add photos to the Wall of Faces, which shows information for those listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington.

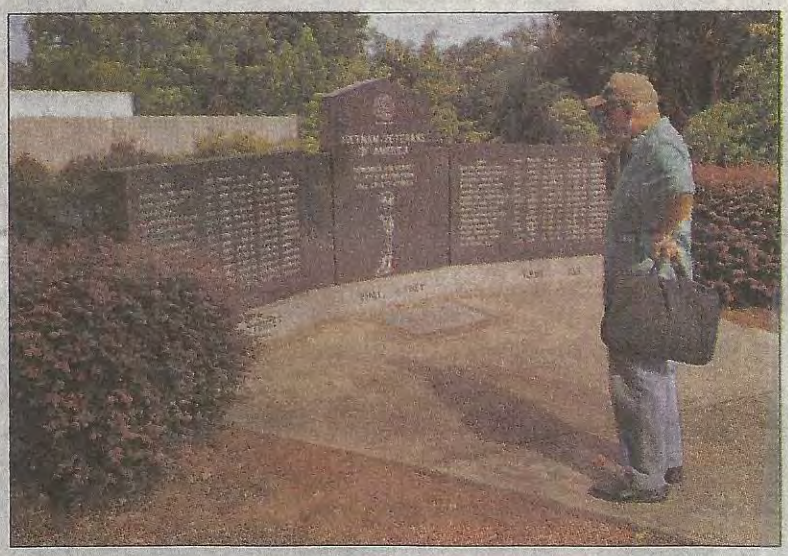
Vietnam vet honors local men killed with 'Wall of Faces'

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

The faces of those killed in battle are sometimes forgotten. That's why The Wall of Faces, a virtual representation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was created. It displays photos online with information for each veteran listed on the physical wall in Washington.

But there's not a photo provided with every name. So Barry Stinson, a Vietnam veteran who recently moved to Gainesville, set out to find photos for the seven from Gainesville who were killed during the war and didn't have a photo on The Wall of Faces.

"All I knew was they were from Gainesville," said Stinson, who served 13 months as a petty officer second class in the Navy. "So I started research like everybody else. I went to an online search engine, got the particulars I could get like the date of birth, date of death . . and I just started digging."



Vietnam veteran Barry Stinson visits Rock Creek Veterans Park in Gainesville on Friday, June 29.

Since he began, he's found photos for three veterans: Lufkin Scott Sharp, Claude Tillman Roper and Willard Winston Croy.

Stinson said it's been an emotional journey searching for the men's families and friends, some of

■ Please see **WALL, 9A**

7-4-18

WALL

■ Continued from 1A

whom he got to speak with.

"It's an emotional roller coaster," Stinson said. "The Vietnam wall to me is an atonement for the way that we as Vietnam veterans were treated when we came home. We were treated pretty poorly. We were blamed. And people know now, even those who were protesters and gave grief to returning veterans, they know that was the wrong thing to do."

Stinson found an obituary for Sharp's widow in newspaper archives. He kept searching for information and found she had been a member of Gainesville First United Methodist Church, which happened to be the church Stinson attends. Someone at the church was then able to get Stinson in touch with Cathy Burns, Sharp's daughter, who was 3 years old when her father, a captain in the Marines, died in 1968.

Burns said she was surprised to hear from Stinson because it had been such a long time since her father's death. She didn't know The Wall of Faces existed.

"I'm glad they're out there," Burns, who still lives in Gainesville said of the photos. "I'm sure there are some people that this is important to other than just me, so I am glad that everyone has the opportunity to look up, not just him, everybody on there. And I can show my children that this is who my daddy was."

After speaking with Burns, Stinson said "the significance of the project really came home to me."

Stinson never heard back from anyone who knew Roper, who was in the Army, but he was still able to find a yearbook photo from when Roper was a freshman at Gainesville High School.

Stinson found Croy's widow, Mary Croy, who had numerous items that belonged to her husband, a sergeant in the Army, in a big box. Stinson scanned everything he was able to at the Blackshear Place library. There was a shadow box with medals and a letter of sympathy from President Richard Nixon dated 1970, the year Croy died.

Mary Croy said her husband graduated from East Hall High School, then went to Lanier Technical College. She said she didn't know about The Wall of Faces either, so she's excited to share it with the rest of her family.

"They were doing what they were told by their country," Mary Croy said. "It wasn't a popular war, and they didn't let them use everything they had to fight the war, but so many people gave everything to go there and do what they thought was their part."

The remaining four veterans have been harder to find, Stinson said. Carl Lee Thornton, Wilbur Florence Mattox, Johnny Bill Robertson Jr. and George Lamar Young are all African-American, so he said he's trying to "harness the power of the pulpit."

"Black churches and the black community are very cohesive," Stinson said. "So I've found out one gentleman is buried in Mount Zion Baptist Church cemetery, so I emailed them and I got a response."

Stinson is relying on others to provide the information, so he said he's had to be patient

He's confident he'll find them all, though.

Stinson said he's looking forward to late October when the current version of The Wall That Heals, a mobile replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, is retired. It will be sent to a permanent home at Newtown Park in Johns Creek, located just less than an hour south of Gainesville.

It will be similar to the wall in Washington, but smaller — only 8 feet tall and 375 feet in length — and will have a kiosk nearby where visitors can view The Wall of Faces that Stinson has helped complete.

"I just feel a responsibility to them because I'm also a Vietnam veteran," Stinson said. "Just like we don't leave men on the battlefield, we don't leave their memories on the battlefield either."

WALL OF FACES

These 14 men from Gainesville died in the Vietnam War and are listed on the digital memorial.

Ronald Cleveland Clark
Branch: Army
Died: June 22, 1967

Willard Winston Croy
Branch: Army
Died: Jan. 8, 1970

Anthony Edwin Elliott
Branch: Army
Died: Jan. 30, 1968

Forrest Goudelock
Branch: Army
Died: April 19, 1968

Larry Bryson Hulsey
Branch: Army
Died: Feb. 6, 1968

Nicklos Byron Janes
Branch: Army
Died: Nov. 4, 1967

Wilbur Florence Mattox
Branch: Army
Died: April 25, 1968

Jackie Ray McKenzie
Branch: Army
Died: May 6, 1969

James Albert Michael
Branch: Army
Died: Feb. 13, 1971

Johnny Bill Robertson Jr.
Branch: Army
Died: June 8, 1969

Claude Tillman Roper
Branch: Army
Died: Oct. 3, 1968

Lufkin Scott Sharp
Branch: Marines
Died: June 19, 1968

Carl Lee Thornton
Branch: Army
Died: Nov. 28, 1971

George Lamar Young
Branch: Army
Died: Nov. 25, 1968

How to help

If you have information about Gainesville veterans on The Wall of Faces, contact JohnsCreekVets@gmail.com.

7-4-18

ICF Dragon Boat World Championships

Fundraiser is July 21 at Brenau University

Bill Fields, 1952 Olympic Gold medalist in rowing, voiced a vision for Lake Lanier when he pitched the site to be home to the rowing events in the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta. During the Olympics, rowers gathered from around the globe to compete here for the Gold; for the dream of being an Olympic Champion. Today, that legacy continues as teams continue to train and compete on the best water in the world.

Lake Lanier Olympic Park (LLOP) will host the largest international sporting event in the area since the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games with the **ICF Dragon Boat World Championships** (September 13-16) including 20 countries and 1,000 athletes. **Team USA** will be selected after over 800 athletes participate in five regional trials held across the United States and will gather at Lake Lanier Olympic Park in July for the only training camp prior to the world championships.

As a show of support for Team USA and a fundraiser for the ICF Dragon Boat World Championships, a concert will be held on **Saturday, July 21** featuring the **Fly Betty Band** at **Brenau University's Amphitheater** in Gainesville. Help support Team USA and prepare for the World Dragon Boat Championships by attending this concert.

The organizing committee for the 2018 ICF Dragon Boat World Championship invites you to explore the sport of dragon boat racing, which dates back more than 2,000 years. With ancient Chinese origins, the first participants were Chinese villagers who held races in the belief it would show worship to the dragon, a traditional symbol of water. Today, the sport is fast and exciting with crews of either 10 or 20 paddling to the beat of a drum over a set distance.

For more information on the exciting fundraising event, tickets or sponsorships or for volunteer opportunities for the Dragon Boat Championships: Robyn Lynch, Director, LLOP, 770-535-0397. Email: *robyn@lakelanierolympicvenue.org* 7-3-18

HealthSmart

Interactive Health & Wellness EXPO

Sponsorships Available!

October 17

EXPO/SCREENINGS – 7:30 am-1:30 pm

BREAKFAST – 7:30 am-9:00 am

Gainesville Civic Center

The **Greater Hall Chamber's 12th Annual HealthSmart Expo on October 17** will feature over 60 wellness exhibitors and FREE Community Health Screenings for men and women 18 years and older. Screenings include: Glucose, Cholesterol, Triglycerides Testing, Blood Pressure Checks, Body Mass Index Calculation, and many more. The HealthSmart Expo is free and open to the public, and a shuttle service will be provided. No Charge! No Fees! No Appointment Needed! The event kicks off with the **HealthSmart Breakfast** on **Wednesday, October 17 at 7:30 a.m. at the Gainesville Civic Center**. Presentation of the **Most Fit Company Awards** will take place during the breakfast program. Many sponsorship opportunities are available and range from Title Sponsor to Silver Level Sponsorships with booths in prime location at the HealthSmart Expo, tickets to the HealthSmart Breakfast, promotion including logo placements on advertisements, banners, and marketing materials. For HealthSmart Information or Sponsorships, contact Mandy Lathem, 770-532-6206 x 115. Email: ***mlathem@ghcc.com***

Upcoming Chamber Events

From the Business Expo to Hackers Holiday, the Greater Hall Chamber has a calendar packed with events to benefit members and grow business. Consider promoting your organization by sponsoring one of the upcoming events. **Great exposure and bang for the buck!** Mandy Lathem: 770-532-6206 x 115 or ***mlathem@ghcc.com***. For more on these and other events, visit the Chamber Online. ***GreaterHallChamber.com***

Wednesday, October 17, 2018: **HealthSmart Wellness Expo**
7:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. | Gainesville Civic Center

Tuesday, November 13, 2018: **Industry Appreciation Luncheon**
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Chattahoochee Country Club

Thursday, December 13, 2018: **Annual Eggs & Issues Breakfast**
7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. | Lanier Technical College NEW CAMPUS

Thursday, February 21, 2019: **Business Expo 2019**
11:30am – 6:00pm | Gainesville Civic Center

Wednesday, February 27, 2019: **Healthy Hall Awards Luncheon**
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Brenau Downtown Center

Thursday, March 14: **Annual Transportation Forum**
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. | University of North Georgia Gainesville

Wednesday, March 20, 2019: **2019 Job Fair & Career Expo**
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Gainesville Civic Center

Thursday, March 28, 2019: **Chamber Chase 5K & Wellness Walk**
6:00 p.m. | Riverside Military Academy

Friday, April 26, 2019: **Hackers Holiday Golf Tournament**
10:00 a.m. Shotgun Start | Legacy on Lanier at Lanier Islands

Thursday, May 16, 2019: **111th Annual Chamber Meeting & Gala**
6:00 p.m. | Chattahoochee Country Club

7-3-18

GAINESVILLE PARKS AND REC 8-UNDER ALL-STAR TEAM WINS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

For The Times

The Gainesville Parks and Recreation 8-Under All-Star baseball team won the Georgia Recreation and Park Association state championship Thursday, July 12, in Morgan County. The squad capped its undefeated season by beating Greene County, 12-7. Pictured in the front row from left to right are Cooper Papka, Thompson Billingsley, Sam Mallis, Henry Floyd, Evan Kalinauskas, Tyvion Carruth and Wyatt Clore. Pictured in the middle row from left to right are Rex Greene, Lewis Roberts, Wynne Billingsley, Robert Owenby, Ben Pollard and Ben Westbrook. Pictured in the back row from left to right are coaches Jacob Billingsley, Michael Westbrook, Jimbo Floyd and Andy Roberts.

7-13-18

Dragon Boats arrive on Lake Lanier ready to roar

Team USA will be training with the boats in preparation for the ICF World Championships

Photos by **DAVID BARNES** | The Times

Jim O'Dell, center, a regional coach for Team USA in the ICF championships, directs Team USA athletes as they prepare to lift a dragon boat in Gainesville, Friday, July 20, at the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club boathouse.

Spectators watch as dragon boats are unloaded from a delivery truck with a forklift in Gainesville, Friday, July 20, at the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club boathouse. Team USA will be training with the boats in preparation for the ICF Dragon Boat World Championships, which will be held Sept. 12-16 at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park venue.

7-20-18

ICF Dragon Boat World Championship selections underway

BY KAYLEE MARTIN
kmartin@gainesville
times.com

AJ Perez, center, and other Team USA hopefuls, carry a dragon boat in Gainesville, Friday, July 20, 2018, at the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club boathouse.

Over the weekend, 125 paddlers from across the US made a big splash at Lake Lanier Olympic Park with the hopes of landing a spot competing in the International Canoe Federation Dragon Boat World Championships.

From Sept 12-16, teams from 16 countries will race for a spot on the podium in junior, senior and master divisions. Boats have either 10 or 20 seats, with paddlers sitting in twos side-by-side and use a single-bladed paddle. Each boat also has a drummer and a steerer, with everybody in the boat paddling to the rhythm of the drum.

With previous championships being held in Russia, Poland, Italy and Hungary, this year marks the first time the event will be held anywhere in the Americas.

Jim O'Dell, coach with the United States National Dragon Boat Team, Dragon Boat USA, has been hard at work training and watching the athletes to prepare for the final team selection.

"Other regions across the US are currently going through the same selection process that we're doing now. About 110 paddlers total will make the final team," he said. "We currently have paddlers here from everywhere, the farthest away being from Seattle, Washington."

O'Dell explained that athletes will be selected based on their performance.

"This is honestly one of the best groups of paddlers I've seen in the past decade, so I have no doubt that there will be some medals won when the time comes. We video all of our practices and have coaches riding in separate boats on both sides of the dragon boats so that they can see every detail," said O'Dell. "Right now we're assessing the turns during the 2,000-meter race. Trying to turn feels like turning in semi-cured cement, but those turns are so important."

He described the feeling of being out on the boats as very exhilarating, depending on the condition of the water.

"It's also pretty edgy any day because these are some high-caliber athletes. Sometimes the athletes get a little carried away and paddle too fast, and one of the coaches will have to slow them down," he said.

■ Please see BOAT, 7A

7-23-18

BOAT

■ Continued from 1A

"Ten-seaters are definitely more unstable compared to the 20-seater because they're lighter. One even flipped over yesterday when a motorized boat went by racing across the water."

The team ran into some issues with unloading the dragon boats when they arrived on Friday afternoon, but overcame them quickly.

"That night, all of us left our dinners on the tables to rush over and help. Seeing a dragon boat balancing on two tongs on a forklift is so scary — all you see are dollar signs. My fingernails are completely gone after that," he said laughing. "Thankfully, our team manager took control, developed a plan, and we got them unloaded. We still have three more containers coming."

O'Dell expressed his deepest gratitude to the city of Gainesville and Lake Lanier Olympic Park for all they have done for the team.

"They have absolutely opened their arms to us and are so accommodating. Lanier Canoe & Kayak Club has even provided lunch to us every day," he said.

But he isn't the only one excited.

Anne Blanchard, originally from Connecticut, has been competing with the Lanier Canoe & Kayak Club in Gainesville for a number of years and is trying out for the master division.

"This is such a huge deal because it's the first time the championships have ever been held in the Americas. It's such a good feeling knowing that you're going to be competing in something like this on your own turf, and everyone is super proud," she said. "It's also super cool that an Olympic facility is still being used for its original purpose. There's so much history here."

Drew Deppe from Gainesville is trying out for the junior division.

"Team USA is going to have a lot of competition because Europe has some of the top athletes in the world," he said. "The movements are so unnatural and it's probably the most fun you'll ever have while getting hurt, but there's nothing that could even compare to the feeling you get when you're in that boat."

7-23-18

'This is such a big deal'

Photos by **DAVID BARNES** | The Times

Team USA hopefuls paddle during practice in Gainesville, Saturday, July 21, on Lake Lanier. Team USA will be selecting athletes to compete in the ICF Dragon Boat World Championships, which will be held at the lake in September.

DAVID BARNES | The Times

Team USA hopefuls paddle during practice in Gainesville, Saturday, July 21, on Lake Lanier. Team USA will be selecting athletes to compete in the ICF Dragon Boat World Championships, which will be held at the lake in September.

7-23-18

A head start on cross country

Gainesville Parks & Rec team open for ages 7-14

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

Long-distance running may sound like a high school sport or grown-up hobby, but Gainesville Parks & Recreation is offering it for kids 7 to 14 years old.

Some 30 children signed up for last year's inaugural cross country team. This year, 18 have signed up so far for the season starting Aug. 2.

Sam Ballinger, recreation program coordinator for youth athletics at Gainesville Parks & Recreation, said the organization wants to offer as many options for children as possible, and cross country was requested. She said a lot of "avid runners" are in the area whose children were interested after seeing them go for runs.

"A lot of the parents are avid runners and want to get their kids into it," Ballinger said. "And a lot of times, the kids want to run with their parents and they run year-round with them anyways."

The team competes against others in the North Georgia Youth Cross Country League. Joining is $65 for city residents and $90 for county residents, which covers the entry fee for each race, a race jersey and pullover for colder mornings.

The children practice twice each week, usually running at least 2 miles with their parents during practice.

"The races themselves are a 2-mile course," Cross-country team coach Brooks Clay said. "So in order to participate in that distance, they need to be able to run that far. And in training, we typically run even further than that. So it definitely proved challenging with the youngest runners."

During competitions on Saturdays, parents aren't allowed to run with their children, but that doesn't mean they aren't there cheering. Clay said "you know when Gainesville shows up," because all the parents and siblings have on team shirts.

Clay is a volunteer coach and avid runner. He and his family moved from Atlanta 4 1/2 years ago, but they couldn't find any programs in the area.

Now, he practices alongside two of his children, Lily Grace, 10, and Weatherly, 9.

Jason Everett and Brandon Young help coach the team as volunteers, too. Like Clay, they both have young children on the team.

"We do some neat stuff," Clay said. "The biggest challenge is making it fun, because that's the main goal, at least in my mind. I want these guys to really build a lifelong love of running."

Clay tries to keep the children interested by having celebrations and playing games. He said every now and again they will bring out Kona Ice, a truck that serves shaved ice and ice cream. They also play tag and other games the children like to play at school.

Last year, the team was open to children as young as 5.

"Doing what's required to get the conditioning to run, but also keep their attention is hard," Clay said. "As adults, we can go and just run and we understand that's what we need to do. Well, at 5, 6, 7 years old, they don't get that. When you're chasing a ball playing soccer, it's one thing. But when they're just running, it's different. It gets boring after a few minutes."

Clay said running at a young age doesn't really have any downsides except possible wear on joints.

"There's a fine line between pushing kids and then overdoing it," Clay said. "And at the end of the day, I want them to want to come and run. I don't want them to resent having to come to practice and having to participate in the sport."

Ballinger said cross country is an important sport to offer because of its accessibility to all children. Some aren't interested in sports like soccer, football or baseball. She said she's heard from parents that those sports don't suit some children, too.

"There's also kids doing cross country because they're not very athletic," Ballinger said. "Their hand-eye coordination isn't very great for sports like football and stuff like that. So they do running, which is a good alternative for them to be active."

And that's Clay's goal at the end of the day, too. He said by offering cross country to children as young as 7, as long as they're having fun, he's able to help reduce "the whole issue of childhood obesity" by getting them outside and moving.

"At least I can make sure that three times a week, for a couple hours, they're not in front of screens, they're not inside," Clay said. "They're moving, having fun, laughing, sweating and they're participating as a team."

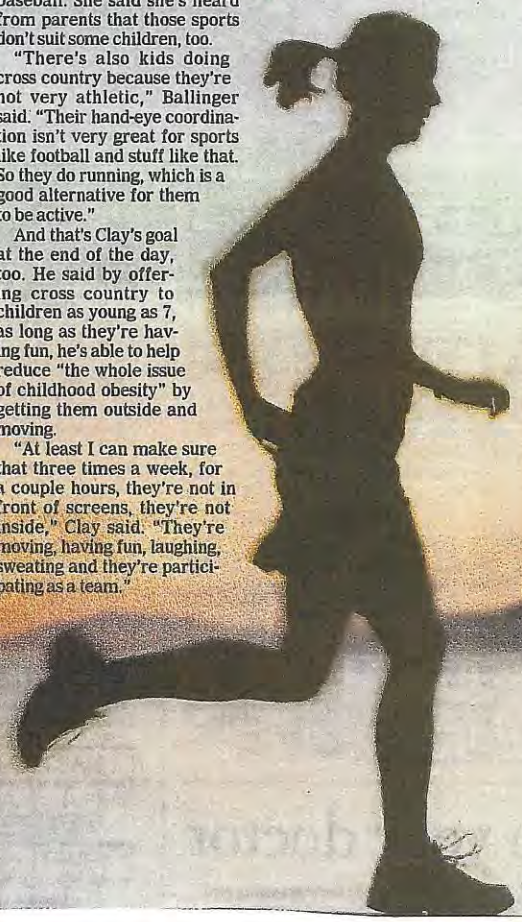
Photos courtesy of Gainesville Parks & Recreation

Members of the Gainesville Parks & Recreation cross-country team pose for a photo during the 2017 season. The team is open to children between 7 and 14 years old.

Kids cross country

What: Gainesville Parks & Recreation team for ages 7-14
When: Season starts Aug. 2
How much: $65 for city residents, $90 for county residents
More info: www.teamsideline.com/Gainesville, 770-297-5451

Above: Members of the Gainesville Parks & Recreation cross-country team include, from left, Jacky Gomez, Lily Grace Clay, Addie Kemp, Hudson Everett and Emiliano Perez. **Below:** Other members are, from left, Emily Pless, Weatherly Clay and Harper Everett.



7-24-18