

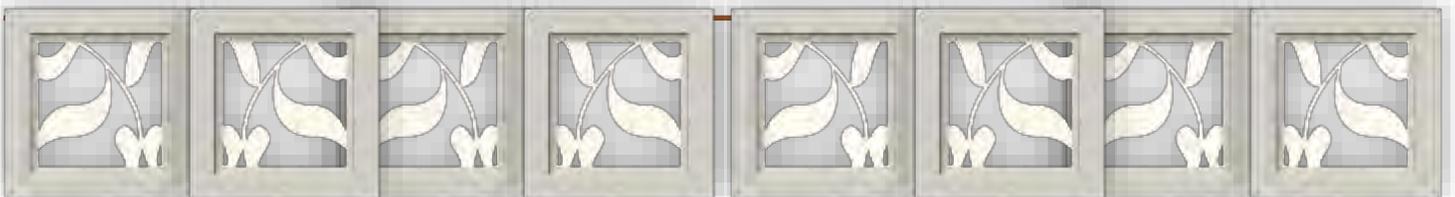
# IN THE NEWS

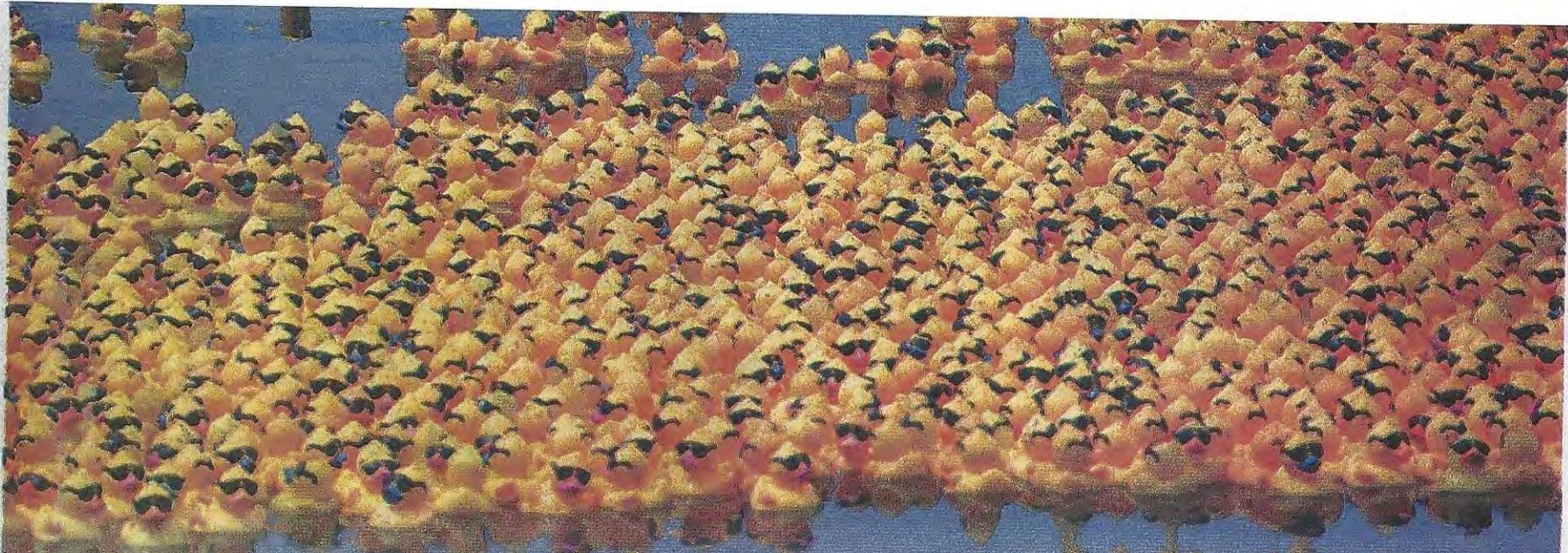
*May 2019*

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





LAYNE SALIBA | The Times

Rubber ducks sprint toward the finish in Lake Lanier on Saturday, May 5, to begin the annual Rubber Duck Derby Fundraiser at Lake Lanier Olympic Park. Proceeds benefit the Boys and Girls clubs of Lanier.

# Crowded field for Rubber Duck Derby

BY LAYNE SALIBA

lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

The ducks are on their way for the 21st-annual Rubber Duck Derby on Lake Lanier.

About 20,000 rubber ducks will be dumped into the lake at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, May 11, on a 176-yard course at Clarks Bridge Park, with one duck being crowned champion and winning one lucky person \$10,000.

"We put 20,000 rubber ducks on a truck, the truck goes on a barge, the barge goes on the lake and we dump them all into Lake Lanier right in front of the course," said Regina Gore, director of development and communications for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Lanier.

As the ducks float down the course, volunteer kayakers make sure none get stuck by making waves and splashing along the way

with their paddles.

The Rubber Duck Derby is the largest community fundraising event for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Lanier. The proceeds raised during the derby go back to the organization, which has 15 different clubs in the area, to help provide programs and opportunities for the kids who take part.

"We see about 1,000 kids every day at our 15 sites," said Abb Hayes, duck sales coordinator for the event. "As you can imagine, it takes a lot of money to handle that many kids, so this is just part of what we do to raise the money we need to serve the children and youth every day."

Leading up to the event, until an hour before the ducks are released, ducks can be "adopted." Purchasing one duck will set you back \$6, but if you want a greater shot at winning the top prize, you can purchase multiple ducks and receive

## Rubber Duck Derby

**Where:** 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville

**When:** 3 to 9 p.m. Saturday, May 11; Festival at 3 p.m., derby at 5:30 p.m., concert at 6 p.m.

**More info:** [www.duckrace.com/gainesville](http://www.duckrace.com/gainesville)

a discount.

A "quackpack" of six ducks is \$30 and a "grandpack" of 25 ducks is \$125.

"As much as it is about fundraising, it's just as much about what we call 'friendraising,'" Gore said. "It keeps our signature event in the public's eye and also keeps us associated with a really fun event and helps introduce donors to the Boys and Girls Clubs."

Whether people buy a duck, donate or go as far as to volunteer with the organization, Gore said

they're appreciate all the help they can get.

Apart from the \$10,000 grand prize, runners-up can take home a \$5,000 diamond from Gainesville Jewelry, a 5,500-watt generator, a Yeti cooler and more.

Each duck that gets adopted will have a number on the bottom that's associated with its "adoptive parent." So far, 11,161 have been adopted. Most of the adoptions come in the last couple days and on the day of the event.

"We're just over the halfway mark," Gore said. "And we always have a lot of excitement toward the end. So I'm shooting for us to be just about sold out on the day of the event."

If you get there early, you'll be able to check out the bounce houses, pony rides and petting zoo along with food trucks like Kona Ice, Hot Dog Ninja, Jimmy's Real Pit BBQ

and drinks provided by Tap It. In recent years, they've tried to make it more of a festival that families can enjoy for the whole evening. After the derby, the Fly Betty Band will be there to perform.

"I think people will really have a good time," Hayes said. "Hang out by the lake and watch the duck race, get something to eat, listen to the band. It will be a fun time."

Hayes is hoping the event raises even more money this time around than it has in years past. It's all going to a good cause and one he's been involved with for 20 years, so he knows how much of a difference the Rubber Duck Derby makes.

"At the end of the day, we're serving a ton of kids that really need our services," Hayes said. "So we encourage everyone to pitch in and buy some ducks to help us out. We've got a lot of needs and this just helps us meet them."

5-2-19

## John Jarrard Lake Show is June 1



Summer kicks off at the **5th Annual John Jarrard Lake Show on Saturday, June 1 at Lake Lanier Olympic Park (LLOP)** featuring Lori Hall & the Soul Shakers. Gates open at 6pm for a fun filled night of music, food, drinks, dancing and **FIREWORKS** on beautiful Lake Lanier. Boats are welcome, and delicious food trucks will be on hand. LLOP is one of North Georgia's most amazing waterfront venues – right here in Hall County! A wakeboard competition will take place all day, so go early to the park early. With proceeds from the event, **John Jarrard Foundation (JJF)** will support the **Boys & Girls Clubs of Hall County, Good News Clinics, SISU (formerly Challenged Child & Friends)** and the **Georgia Mountain Food Bank**. Over the past 17 years, more than 10,000 supporters have enjoyed some 30 JJF shows, raising over \$2 million for local charities. General Admission \$20; Boats \$25; VIP Table \$500 (seats 6 with meal & drink tickets). Tickets & concert info: [johnjarrardfoundation.com](http://johnjarrardfoundation.com). Sponsorship opportunities: Robyn Lynch, 855-536-1996, or email: [robym@lakelanierolympicvenue.org](mailto:robym@lakelanierolympicvenue.org)

## Leadership Hall Alumni Party

A **Graduation Ceremony & Reunion Reception** celebrating the **38th Class of Leadership Hall County** is **Thursday, May 9** from 6:00-7:30 pm at the Ramsey Conference Center at Lanier Technical College. All alumni, 900 strong, are invited to join us as we recognize the graduates

of Leadership Hall's Class of 2019 and introduce the Class of 2020. **Network with Leadership Alumni and connect again!** \$20 per person; No charge for Class of 2019. Registration Required. Includes heavy hors d'oeuvres and first drink complimentary. No registration at the door. Thank you sponsors: **Dominguez & Jones Wealth Management, Georgia Power, Jackson EMC, Lanier Technical College, Smile Doctors and Wells Fargo**. To register, call Andi Harmon, 770-532-6206, email: [aharmon@ghcc.com](mailto:aharmon@ghcc.com) or online: [GreaterHallChamber.com/Events](http://GreaterHallChamber.com/Events)



5-2-19

# New Youth Leadership Class

The Greater Hall Chamber announces the **15th Class of Youth Leadership Hall (YLH)** and one of the largest classes yet with **80 students**. Initiated in 2005, the program now has **865 student graduates**. Developed for high school juniors and seniors, YLH seeks to provide an investment in the community's future leadership by fostering interest in the community and inspiring students to become the leaders. The program begins with a kick-off in August at the Gainesville Civic Center with educators, principals, superintendents, volunteers and parents. Students will participate in monthly programs on topics on the judicial system, healthcare, servant leadership, state government, quality of life, and economic development.

## **Cherokee Bluff High School**

Allison Fletcher  
Elizabeth Tuck  
Faith Brown  
Griffin Neville  
Kennedy Turpin  
Mallary Bales  
Ryan Brownlee

## **Chestatee High School**

Carragan Moody  
Ethan Popham  
Grant Siegfried  
Grant Smith  
Ivy Hinchliffe  
Jackson Farris  
Jacob Gipson  
Jordan Jackson  
Lela Grace Mize  
Sophie Davis

## **East Hall High School**

Abigail Ivey  
Cindy Argueta  
Drew Highfield  
Erick Villanueva  
Jacob Brewer  
Luke England  
Yami Anariba

## **Flowery Branch High School**

Alex Campo  
Macy Meador  
Naia Vincent  
Olivia Nance  
Tessa Black

## **Gainesville High School**

Camille Calkins  
Camille Holcomb  
Donangelo Marshall  
Elizabeth Stewart  
Emma Fockele  
Hannah Williams  
Jenna Pannek  
Kat Le  
Karina Collins  
Lily Kempker  
Madeline Gruhn  
Symone Turner

## **Johnson High School**

Ariana Guerrero  
Grace Yancey  
Noel Yanez  
Noemi Leal-Lara  
Sara Browning  
Vanessa Alfaro  
Wynne Kelly

## **Lakeview Academy**

Adeline Bryant  
Elise Roark  
Lindy Kanaday  
Mani Reddy  
Reagan Kilroy  
Sam Stewart  
Sarah Miguel

## **Lanier Christian Academy**

Adelia Morris  
Charlie Cavadas  
Rebekah Crozier

## **Lanier College & Career Academy**

Ashleigh Rose  
Katheryne Cline

## **North Hall High School**

Carsen Baumgardner  
Elli Kennedy  
Kristen Dowdy  
Lia Rodriguez  
Mikayla Dubnik  
Noah Deal  
Walker Moffett  
Yvette Diosdado

## **Riverside Military Academy**

Areeb Ahmad  
Ben Petrella  
Chad Andrews  
Chaoling Hsu  
Jackson Roach  
Juan Pablo Nava  
Pablo Yesaki Serrato

## **West Hall High School**

Amy Ramirez  
Benjamin Pendley  
Dawson Beardshaw  
Jackson Swafford  
Tad Davidson

# Sponsor Youth Leadership

Promote your company while supporting Youth Leadership Hall. Due to number of students, class is divided in two teams. Per event/program:

Graduation – \$1,000  
Lunch – \$1,000 for both teams; \$500 for 1 team  
Program – \$750  
Breakfast – \$500 for both teams; \$250 for 1  
Snack – \$250 for both teams; \$125 for 1 team

Sponsors may speak to students and distribute materials at some events as well as being recognized in promotional pieces. Some sponsorship fees can be divided with several other sponsors. Andi Harmon, 770-532-6206 or [aharmon@ghcc.com](mailto:aharmon@ghcc.com)

5-2-19

# Dragonboats paddle on despite rain



Photos by AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

The Mekong Dragons paddle towards the start line during the Annual Dragon Boat Challenge at Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Saturday, May 4. The challenge brings various organization from around Hall county and beyond for a day of racing.

## Annual challenge looks to make close to 5K for Special Olympics

BY QUINN SHREVE  
jshreve@gainesvilletimes.com

Despite some rolling thunder and torrential downpour, the sixth annual Gainesville/Hall Dragonboat Challenge finished ahead of schedule on Saturday, May 4.

The final race had a finish so close that it needed a video review. In the end, The Good Guys walked away with the first-place trophy. Jim O'Dell, dragon boating director for the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club, announced the victors amid a roar of rainfall.

The annual challenge is a six-year partnership between the LCKC and Hall County Special Olympics. The teams' \$400 registration fees are split between the two organizations. The money that teams raise prior to the event, however, goes entirely to Special Olympics. This year, the nonprofit is looking at making close to \$5,000.

When the event began at 9 a.m., more people gathered near the tents than by the water. The deluge of rain, beginning around noon, chased many away. Others huddled in the middle of the large tent as strong winds swept spray at exposed faces. But when the storm passed, supporters dragged their chairs away from the drizzle to watch the final races.

Jamie Willis, a youth pastor from



Cheri Young of the Wayne Farms Clucking Dragons wears a chicken mask during the Annual Dragon Boat Challenge at Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Saturday, May 4.

Lakewood Baptist Church, sat with his daughter at the edge of the tent's shelter to watch members of his church participate in the race.

"Even with the rain, it's still kinda cool," Willis said.

In the races, teams of ten people

paddled long dragon boats around a line of orange buoys on Lake Lanier. The competition had an award for best drummer, which went to Gainesville's Clucking Dragons.

■ Please see DRAGON, 3C

5-5-19

# DRAGON

■ Continued from 1C

One of the teams was North Carolina's Healing Dragons, a group of breast cancer survivors and athletic supporters who travel all over the world to participate in dragon boating competitions.

Team member Wanda Williams said her group mostly competes for fun.

"I encourage everyone to join a team," she said. "You will make some of the best friends, laugh the hardest you've ever laughed."

The Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club is a premier spot for dragon boating, kayaking, and other flat water sports. The club hosts dragon boating events at least once a month, including the International Canoe Federation's World Dragon Boat Championship in September.



Dragon boats are prepared to be raced in during the Annual Dragon Boat Challenge at Lake Lanier Olympic Park Saturday, May 4.



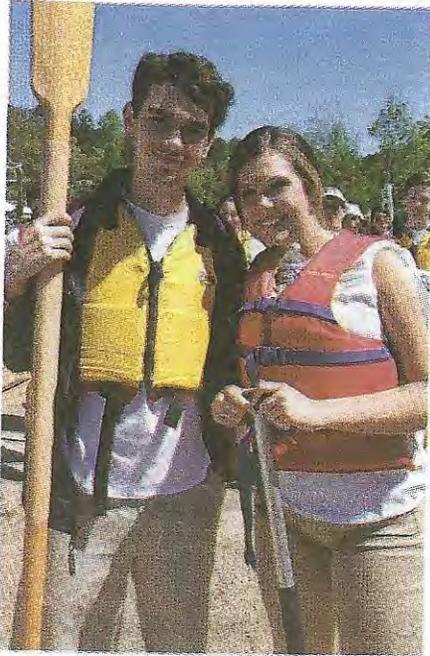
Photos by **AUSTIN STEELE** | The Times

Boats race each other during the Annual Dragon Boat Challenge. The challenge brings various organization from around Hall county and beyond for a day of racing.



**Far left:** Competitors make their way to the dock during the Annual Dragon Boat Challenge. **Left:** Wayne Farms Clucking Dragons exit the dock after racing during the Annual Dragon Boat Challenge at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

# Youth Leadership Hall



**Alec Wilson, North Hall High School, and Andrea Farmer, Flowery Branch High School, prepare for Dragon Boat Racing at Lake Lanier Olympic Park. The 14th Class of Youth Leadership Hall graduated in April with 81 students.**

The students enjoyed a scavenger hunt and social media challenge at Atlanta Botanical Garden Gainesville. After lunch at Lake Lanier Olympic Park, the students took to the water to

race Dragon Boats! A graduation celebration was held at Lanier College and Career Academy. Thank you sponsors: **Butch Miller, State Senate, Atlanta Botanical Garden Gainesville, Lake Lanier Olympic Park and Hall County School System.**

5-2-19

## Hall could pay city \$400K for operations at Olympic Park

BY MEGAN REED  
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

Hall County would pay the city of Gainesville \$400,000 over the next two years to support operations at Lake Lanier Olympic Park under an agreement unanimously approved Tuesday by the Gainesville City Council.

The city and county had been jointly operating the park and contributing \$150,000 each annually. The state legislature has approved the city's annexation of the park on Clarks Bridge Road, allowing Gainesville to take over operations. The legislation still needs final approval from Gov. Brian Kemp.

Hall would pay Gainesville \$200,000 in July 2019 and \$200,000 on or before July 2020 "in recognition of the benefits provided" to residents of both the city and county. That money would only be allowed to be used for maintenance and operation of the park.

"We fully support this agreement, and look forward to the continued success of this important, historic asset in our community," Hall County Administrator Jock Connell said in a statement.

The Hall County Board of Commissioners will also need to approve the agreement.



Connell

5-9-19



Times file photos

**Above:** Sydney Lewis blows bubbles and tries to catch them at the Sunday, May 20, 2018, butterfly release at Wilshire Trails Park in Gainesville. **Left:** A butterfly rests on a tablecloth at the 2018 butterfly release.

# Ready to fly

## 1,500 butterflies to be released at annual event

**BY LAYNE SALIBA**  
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

There's something special about seeing 1,500 butterflies released into the sky at once, and that's what makes the annual Friends of Gainesville Parks and Greenways' Butterfly Release an event you don't want to miss.

Back for its 23rd year, the event will run 1-4 p.m. Sunday, May 19, at Wilshire Trails Park.

"The kids get the biggest kick out of it," said Andy Stewart, president of the board for Friends of Gainesville Parks and Greenways.

Each child will receive an envelope with a painted lady butterfly inside to release at 3 p.m.

"(The butterflies) arrive to us on the Friday before the event in coolers and we keep them at a certain temperature," said Julie Butler Colombini, marketing and communications manager for Gainesville Parks and Recreation. "We take them out several hours before the event so they start to wake

### 23rd-annual Butterfly Release

**When:** 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, May 19

**Where:** Wilshire Trails Park, 849 Wilshire Road, Gainesville

**How much:** Free

**More info:** <https://www.gainesville.org/friendsoftheparks>

up and so by the time it's 3 p.m., as soon as we open the envelopes and the light and air hits them, they're awake and they fly. It's amazing."

Throughout the event, children and families will get to learn from and interact with different exhibitors like the Hall County Master Gardeners about different aspects of nature.

"It's a fun event, but it's also to get families and kids outdoors," Stewart said. "Our parks system is great and this is just one way we highlight it."

There will also be facepainting and paper sailboat races for the kids to enjoy.

The event is rain or shine. The butterflies have to be released, so if it

rains, Butler Colombini said everyone gathers under the pavilion at the park.

"We still have to release the butterflies," Butler Colombini said. "We have to set them free."

Stewart said he took his 16-year-old daughter to the event when she was 3- or 4-years-old. It was a fun event back then and has been growing ever since. He said the crowd "is definitely bigger."

"It is a signature event for Gainesville," Stewart said. "Seeing the butterflies released and seeing the smiles on the kids faces is worth the trip alone."

There will be a shuttle from Gainesville High School that will take attendees to and from the event. They're hoping the rain stays away so everything goes smoothly. If it does, Stewart said the event is one you'll always remember.

"When it comes off perfectly ... it's quite a site to see," Stewart said. "And seeing all the smiles on the kids faces is awesome. And even the parents who take them there enjoy it."

# Adopt A Duck Help A Child



**McKinney-Geib**  
foundation

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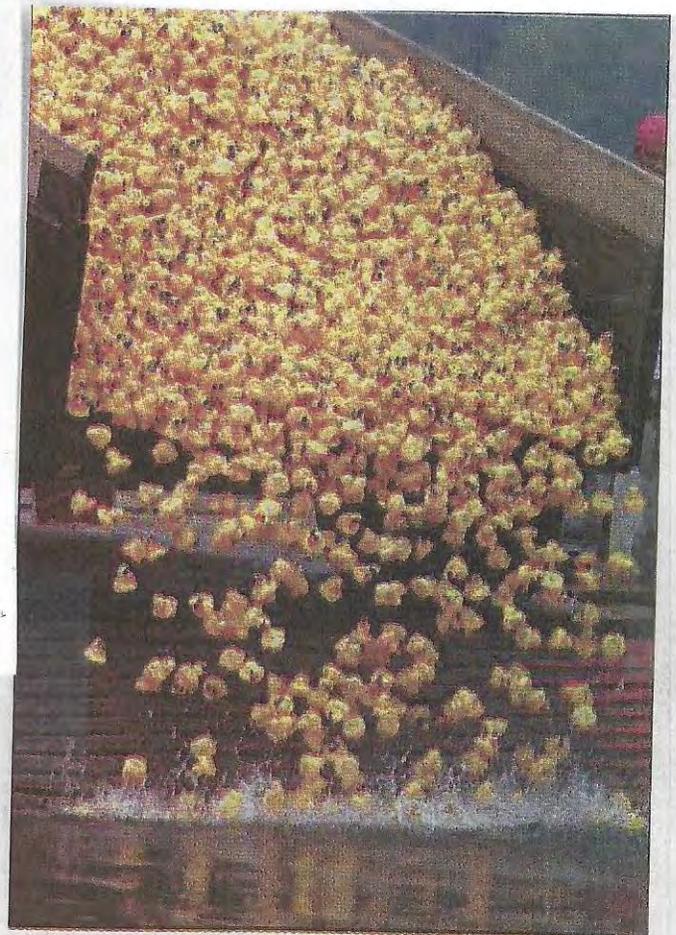
PUBLIX SUPER MARKETS  
CHARITIES



RUBBER DUCK DERBY  
BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF LAKEVIEW

## 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Rubber Duck Derby

Saturday, May 11, 2019  
3-9 pm | Free Admission 5-10-19



### Rubber Duck Derby

**Where:** 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville  
**When:** 3 to 9 p.m. Saturday, May 11; Festival at 3 p.m., derby at 5:30 p.m., concert at 6 p.m.

**More info:** [www.duckrace.com/gainesville](http://www.duckrace.com/gainesville)

**How much:** Free to enter

Thousands of rubber ducks get dumped into the water at Clarks Bridge Park, kicking off the 2017 Rubber Duck Derby benefitting the Boys and Girls Club of Hall County.

Times file photo

5-9-19

# Storms could affect weekend events

## Lula's Railroad Days happening rain or shine, says city's mayor

BY NICK BOWMAN  
nbowman@gainesvilletimes.com

If you've got the Rubber Duck Derby or Vision 2030's block pARTy on your calendar this week, the weather is going to be a factor.

Organizers of both events, the block party on Friday and the derby on Saturday, say they're making some changes to their events because of thunderstorms rolling through Northeast Georgia in the next 72 hours.

The National Weather Service has a gloomy outlook on the next few days, posting a notice saying that there's "chance of thunder-

storms across the area Friday into early Monday, with the greatest coverage on Saturday and Sunday. A few storms could be strong and possibly severe with gusty winds and frequent lightning. Heavy rainfall will also be possible, especially across far north Georgia where localized flooding could occur."

Friday's party is moving ahead as scheduled in the Royal Space — the parking lot and open area between Hunt Tower and Collegiate Grill on Main Street — but some of the event is likely moving indoors under threat of rain.

"We will have the art and band inside Hunt Tower and there will

be a large tent connected to the building so people can go outside and stay covered," said Whitney Brown, one of the organizers of the downtown party. "The food trucks will be pulled right up to the tent so people can access them without being out in the rain."

The party includes Atlanta-based food truck Yumbii, alcohol from Tap It and music by Fire & The Knife. Tickets cost \$35 and are still available, and attendees can pay by cash, card or check at the door.

Keep an eye on the party's Facebook page and Instagram for updates.

Meanwhile, Rubber Duck Derby organizer Regina Gore said a final decision about the Saturday event, which is scheduled to last most of the day, won't be

### Rubber Duck Derby

**Where:** 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville

**When:** 3 to 9 p.m. Saturday, May 11; Festival at 3 p.m., derby at 5:30 p.m., concert at 6 p.m.

**More info:** [www.duckrace.com/gainesville](http://www.duckrace.com/gainesville)

made until 9 a.m. Saturday.

However, organizers will give an update on their plans Thursday afternoon.

Both events are major fundraisers for their causes; the Rubber Duck Derby raises a huge sum for the Boys and Girls Club of Lanier and the Vision 2030 block pARTy raises cash for public art. Its first project was just installed at the Sardis roundabout.

And up in Lula, the North Hall community is moving ahead with

### Railroad Days

**Where:** 5959 Athens St., Lula  
**When:** 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, May 11

**More info:** [www.cityoflula.com](http://www.cityoflula.com)

### Vision 2030 block pARTy

**What:** A downtown party and art auction

**When:** 6-10 p.m. May 10

**Where:** Hunt Tower, Gainesville

**How much:** \$35

**Contact:** [www.vision2030blockparty.com](http://www.vision2030blockparty.com)

its Railroad Days festival Saturday, May 11, rain or shine.

Lula Mayor Jim Grier said there are no changes to the location or time of the festival, which is set for 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 5959 Athens St. in Lula.

5-10-19



Photos by **AUSTIN STEELE** | The Times

Rubber ducks are dumped into the lake during the Rubber Duck Derby at Clarks Bridge Park on Saturday, May 11. The event is put on by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier with the first rubber duck across the finish winning its owner \$10,000.

## Rubber Duck Derby salvages day of rain-cancelled festivities

**BY KENNETH HUCKS**  
khucks@gainesvilletimes.com

Even though the majority of the events with the 21st Rubber Duck Derby were cancelled due to rain, the race at the lake of Clark's Bridge Park was salvaged on Saturday, May 11 to put a positive ending on things.

The Rubber Duck Derby is an annual fundraising event supporting the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier, a local youth development organization focusing on helping children with academic success, encouraging them to serve the community, and adopting healthy lifestyles. The company serves over 6,000 kids in the Hall County area,

Derby both as a charity for the group, and as a chance for public outreach.

According to Director of Development & Communications Regina Gore, while the fundraising is important, the loss of face time with the community wasn't an easy loss for members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier.

"Having the family fun part of it is so dear to us because we get a chance to make sure that we connect with the community and keep our name out there," Gore said. "So it's very sad for us to have to cancel that."

Gore said that several local businesses, including Tap It, Kona Ice and Hog Dog Ninja



Attendees watch rubber ducks race to the finish during the

■ Please see **DERBY, 4C**



17,527 rubber ducks are dumped into the lake during the Rubber Duck Derby at Clarks Bridge Park on Saturday, May 11. The event is put on by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier with the first rubber duck across the finish winning its owner \$10,000.

Photos by AUSTIN STEELE  
The Times



**Above left:** Linden Martin, 14, a volunteer with the event, begins the process of removing rubber ducks from the lake following the Rubber Duck Derby at Clarks Bridge Park on Saturday, May 11. **Above right:** Judge Larry Baldwin tosses one of the winning ducks to a volunteer to record the result during the derby.

## DERBY

■ Continued from 1C

were set to attend, all culminating in a live performance by Atlanta-based band Fly Betty that night. All of these moving parts make Rubber Duck Derby hard to postpone, as plans are made as early as a year ahead of time.

"It's not a duplicatable event," Gore said. "I don't want to put us in the same category as the Boston Marathon, but they don't have a postpone date for that either, you know? Once you head outside and do the very best that you can. We want to make sure that everybody's safe and comfortable, and then you make the decision when you make the decision and do your very best to get ahead of everybody and make sure that nobody packs up their truck or puts 100 pounds of barbeque to smoke when they know they're not gonna

use it."

In the race, over 20,000 rubber ducks were dropped into Lake Lanier, each labeled with a number corresponding to donors who pay \$6 per duck. The funds went to support Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier, while the owners of the first ten ducks to reach the finish line will win prizes such as a one-carat diamond donated by Gainesville Jewelry or free Chick-fil-a for a year for two, with the grand prize being \$10,000, which went to Antwanne Jackson.

The race drew volunteers and workers from across Hall County, including Tom Child, owner of Marine Specialties, who has supplied the barge used to release the ducks into the lake since Rubber Duck Derby's inception.

"We've come a long way," Child said. "I've been doing it since the beginning. I tell them every year you can count on me."

Jerome Yarbrough, the fire chief of the City of Gainesville, as well as

a board member of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier, helped in coordinating the transfer of the rubber ducks throughout the event. Yarbrough expressed a pointed interest in the funds the Rubber Duck Derby and the programs it will help keep afloat, having been part of the club as a child.

"It means a lot to me," Yarbrough said. "I was a Club kid, so I benefited from the same type of programs and it just keeps the kids focused and leads them in the right way, you know? We've got a lot of kids that's disadvantaged and just need help and just needs somebody to reach out and show them a better way. So it means a lot to me to get out here and pretty much raise awareness to Boys & Girls Club. And it gives somebody a chance to win a good prize and help them out. But the long term is we get to do a lot of programming and keep these kids on the right path to being successful in Hall County."

5-12-19

## LANIER CANOE AND KAYAK CLUB

Summer camp at the Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club will get your children out on the lake, enjoying the sun and water. They'll learn all about the sport of canoe, kayak and dragon boat. Trained staff and counselors will be on site to make sure everyone is safe and has fun. Life jackets are provided.

Camps are available 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. June 17-21, June 24-28, July 8-12 and July 15-19.

### Typical daily schedule

- 9 a.m. drop-off and group game
- 9:30 a.m. canoe and kayak exploration and instruction
- 11:30 a.m. free swim
- Noon lunch in the shade
- 1 p.m. group activity/afternoon paddle
- 3 p.m. pick-up

Cost for members is \$145 per week and \$175 for non-members. If you'd like to drop your child off at 8 a.m., an additional \$20 per week is required. If you'd like to pick your child up at 5 p.m., an additional \$45 per week is required.

For more information, visit [www.lckc.org/programs/introductory-instructional-programs/summer-camp](http://www.lckc.org/programs/introductory-instructional-programs/summer-camp) 5-17-19

BY LAYNE SALIBA  
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

If your children are looking for ways to have fun this summer, there are plenty of opportunities in the area.

## GAINESVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and Rec offers more summer camps and activities than you could ever imagine. Here is what will be available in 2019.

### DAY CAMPS

■ Horizon Day Camp will give children 6 to 12 years old the chance to do arts and crafts, sports and other group games to keep them active during the summer months.

■ 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. May 28-31. Cost is \$60 for Gainesville residents and \$80 for non residents.

■ Discovery Day Camp will give children 6 to 12 years old the chance to learn all different things, including swimming lessons and weekly field trips.

■ 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. June 3 through July 12. Cost is \$90 per week for Gainesville residents and \$120 per week for non residents

■ Camp Kazoo Day Camp will give children ages 6 to 12 years old the chance to have "wild and crazy" fun with a variety of different activities, arts and crafts, water games and sports.

■ 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. July 15-19, July 22-26 and July 29 through Aug. 2. Cost is \$70 per week for Gainesville residents and \$95 per week for non residents.

5-17-19

### SPECIALTY/TRAVEL CAMPS

■ Kids on the Go Travel Camp for children 6 to 12 years old 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 28-31. Cost is \$120 for Gainesville residents and \$160 for non residents.

■ Air and Space Camp for children 6 to 12 years old 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. June 10-14, June 24-28 and July 15-19. Cost is \$125 per week for Gainesville residents and \$170 per week for non residents.

■ Pastry Decorating Camp for children 9 to 15 years old 9:30 a.m. to noon June 10-14. Cost is \$200 for Gainesville residents and \$260 for non residents.

■ Engineering for Kids Camps for children 4 to 7 years old 9 a.m. to noon for morning camp and 1 to 4 p.m. for afternoon camp June 10-14. Cost is \$150 for Gainesville residents and \$200 non residents. For both sessions, cost is \$250 for Gainesville residents and \$330 non residents.

■ Princess Ballet Camp for children 3 to 5 years old 10 a.m. to noon June 17-21. Cost is \$130 for Gainesville residents and \$170 non residents.

■ Vet Camp for children 6 to 12 years old 8 a.m. to noon June 17-21, 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. July 8-12 and 8 a.m. to noon July 22-26. Cost is \$100 per week for Gainesville residents and \$135 per week for non residents.

■ Chef Camp for children 6 to 12 years old 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. June 17-21, 8 a.m. to noon July 8-12 and 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. July 22-26. Cost is \$90 per week for Gainesville residents and \$120 per week for non residents.

■ Summers-end Travel Camp for children 6 to 12 years old 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. July 22-26 and July 29 through Aug. 2. Cost is \$150 per week for Gainesville residents and \$200 per week for non residents.

For more information, visit [www.gainesville.org/fullpanel/uploads/files/2019-camp-guide.pdf](http://www.gainesville.org/fullpanel/uploads/files/2019-camp-guide.pdf).

5-17-19

Gainesville  
Parks & Recreation  
**SUMMER FUN  
IN THE CITY**  
**2019 CAMP GUIDE**

Download the Digital

[WWW.GAINESVILLE.ORG/CAMPS](http://WWW.GAINESVILLE.ORG/CAMPS)

5-10-19

# HERE'S THE NEWS

**Melvin Cooper**, Director of Gainesville Parks & Recreation,  
is retiring after 47 years with the City  
(and 30 years as Parks Director)!

**On May 22 from 4:00-6:00 PM**

come celebrate a wonderful servant  
of both the City and this Church  
at a drop-in reception in the Ballroom of the Civic Center.

## Did you know

that for several weeks in June our Sanctuary  
will be closed for maintenance?

## The Good News is -

we have a Banquet Hall!!

So - on June 9 & 16 that is where we will gladly  
worship at 10:50!

(8:30 will continue to worship in the Chapel.)

## August 24

(from 3:00-5:00 PM in the Banquet Hall)

## YOUTH & FAMILY WORSHIP

Will Dyer - *who is very happy at his church in Augusta* - will be in town for a wedding and has agreed to be our guest speaker for the day! David Warren, FBC Hamilton, Texas (formerly a Passport Leader) will be our guest worship leader.

## weekend ahead



SCOTT ROGERS | The Times

A color guard leads the annual American Legion Post 7 Memorial Day parade Monday, May 28, 2018 along Green Street in Gainesville. This year the parade will begin 10 a.m. May 27 at the Gainesville Civic center, heading south.

Flowery Branch  
**How much:** \$10-15

Memorial Day  
Parade

**When:** 10 a.m. Monday  
May 27

**Where:** Begins at the  
Gainesville Civic Center

**More info:** [www.gainesvilleamericanlegion.org](http://www.gainesvilleamericanlegion.org)

**How much:** Free

## month ahead

Adult Prom 2019

**When:** 8 p.m. Saturday June 1

**Where:** Downtown Gainesville

**How much:** Free

Georgia Wake Series

**When:** 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, June 1

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

**More info:** [www.gawakeseries.com/  
events/2019/lake-lanier](http://www.gawakeseries.com/events/2019/lake-lanier)

**How much:** Free

John Jarrard Lake Show

**When:** 6 - 10 p.m. Saturday, June 1

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

**More info:** [www.johnjarrardfoundation.  
com/event/5th-annual-lake-show](http://www.johnjarrardfoundation.com/event/5th-annual-lake-show)

**How much:** \$20 for general  
admission, \$25 for two tickets if you  
come by boat, \$500 for a table of six  
with drink and meal tickets included.

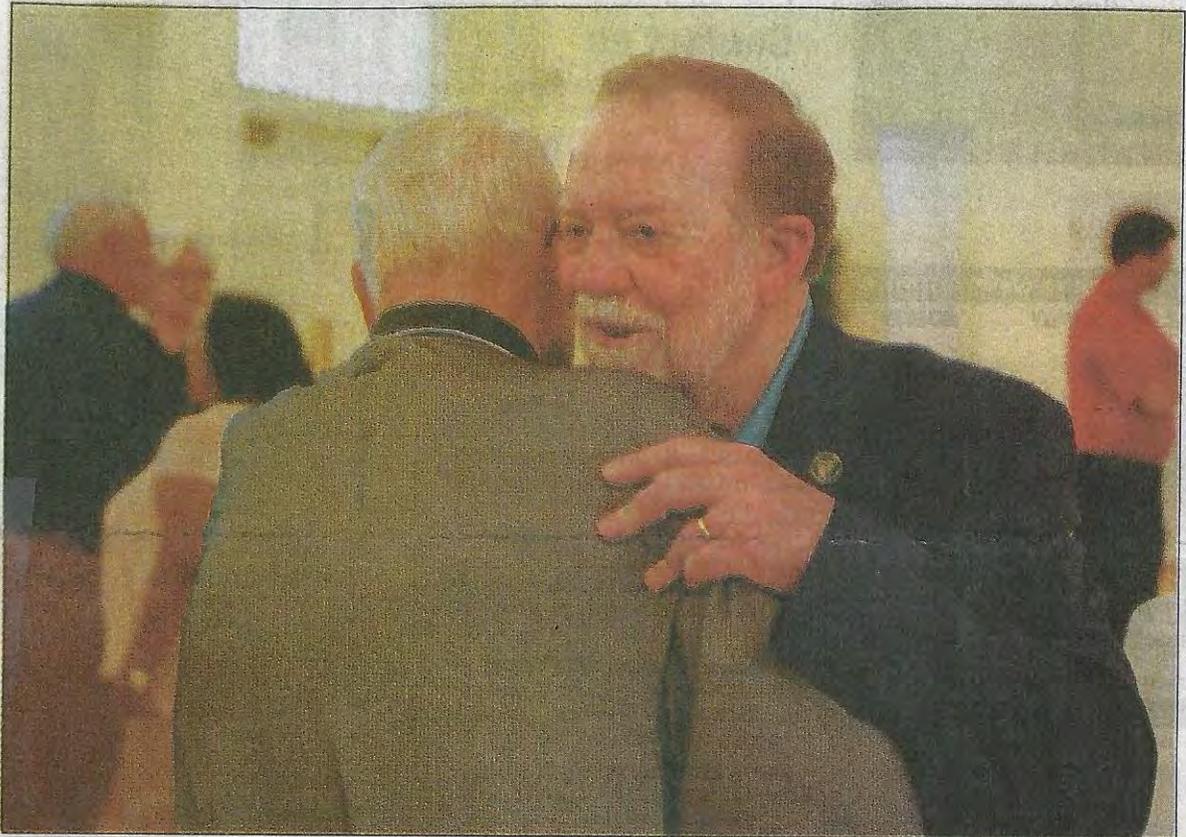


Photo courtesy Pixabay

Georgia Wake Series is a wakeboarding tour and championship, with dates and locations across the state. The series will be held at Lake Lanier Olympic Park June 1.

5-23-19

# 'An asset to the city'



AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

Melvin Cooper greets attendees during his retirement party Wednesday, May 22, at the Gainesville Civic Center.

## Cooper honored for 47 years with Gainesville parks department

BY MEGAN REED  
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

Melvin Cooper's 24.7 million minutes of service to the city of Gainesville are soon coming to an end as he retires May 31.

Cooper, Gainesville's parks director, has worked for the parks department for 47 years and been director since 1989. It's the only job he's ever had — he even did an internship with the department while he was studying at the University of Georgia.

He was honored at a retirement party Wednesday at the Gainesville

Civic Center, which is also home to Gainesville Parks and Recreation offices.

Cooper said the highlight of his career has been the personal connections he has made.

"It's an awe-inspiring day to see all these people here and that's what I'm going to miss the most," he said.

Cooper and his wife Deborah have two daughters, and Cooper said he hopes to spend more time with his grandson in St. Marys.

He was first hired as a program coordinator and also served as assistant director for 16 years. Cooper has seen

Gainesville's population about triple. During his tenure, the Frances Meadows Aquatic Center and several other facilities have opened, Gainesville has hosted events for the 1996 Summer Olympics, and the Gainesville Civic Center has been renovated.

He said he always knew he wanted a career where he could work with people and have a positive impact, and he is proud of what Gainesville Parks and Recreation has done to better the community.

"I look at the people in my life and

■ Please see **COOPER, 8A**

'It's an awe-inspiring day to see all these people here and that's what I'm going to miss the most.' **Melvin Cooper**, Gainesville's parks director



AUSTIN STEELE | The Times

Attendees line up to speak with Melvin Cooper during his retirement party Wednesday, May 22.

## COOPER

■ Continued from 1A

see so many faces. ... We, all of us and all of the people behind me, can make a difference one person at a time," Cooper said.

Jane and Charlie Moore, longtime friends of the Coopers, attended the retirement party Wednesday to show their support.

"Melvin has been an asset to the city of Gainesville and the parks and rec department," Charlie Moore said. "I can't think of anybody that could easily fill his shoes, but I'm sure they will."

And of Deborah, Jane Moore said "they're very special, and she is just as sweet as her husband."

State Rep. Matt Dubnik, R-Gainesville, presented Cooper with a flag flown at the Georgia Capitol and thanked him for his dedication.

"24 million minutes," Dubnik said. "... There's one thing that we can never make more, get more or buy more, and that's time. Melvin, without a doubt, you have forged your heart and soul and career of time in this community, and we're very thankful."

And Gainesville Mayor Danny Dunagan read a proclamation and declared the day "Melvin Cooper Day."

"This crowd, it shows you the appreciation everyone has for you and how much we love you," Dunagan said.

John Simpson, chair of the Gainesville Parks and Recreation Board, also thanked Cooper.

"What Melvin Cooper has done is make generations like me, and all of the people my age that aren't even 47 years old, say that you've put them somewhere," Simpson said. "It's our job to keep them there."

A new youth sports complex the city will be developing will be named after Cooper to honor his work with the parks department. Plans for the complex include baseball fields, a playground and pavilion, trails and two fields that could be used for soccer, football or lacrosse.

Kate Mattison, previously a recreation services administrator in Dublin, Ohio, has been named the new parks director and will start working May 28. Cooper's last day is May 31.

5-23-19

## LETTERS

### Cooper always helpful, genuine as parks leader

I don't know how I missed the announcement of Melvin Cooper's retirement party. I would have been there with bells on to offer my congratulations and best wishes for a great retirement to a guy who is someone everyone wants as a friend.

I met Melvin in 2002 as the city was preparing to host the 2003 Sprint Canoe and Kayak World Championships at the Olympic venue. I was the officials coordinator, and I was going to need the civic center's vans to pick them up at the airport as well as shuttle them around Gainesville. Melvin was so cordial and helpful, making my job so much easier as he made arrangements for me to use the vans.

Through the years following, I would run into Melvin around town and he always remembered me with a smile and a handshake. As genuine a gentleman as you'll ever find.

Melvin, I wish you the best and happiest years of retirement, and I for one will know you will never get bored! Congratulations!

Charlotte Williams  
Flowery Branch  
5-24-19

# Catch competition and a concert

## Lake Lanier ready for all-day fun with wake series, lake show

BY LAYNE SALIBA

lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

The John Jarrard Foundation is ready to kick off summer with its fifth-annual Lake Show.

The concert, set to take place 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday, June 1, at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park will feature live music, food trucks and drinks. And if you're looking for even more fun, show up early and catch the third stop on the Georgia Wake Series wakeboard competition on Lake Lanier.

"I can guarantee it's going to be the best party going on June 1," said Jody Jackson, executive director of the John Jarrard Foundation. "I know it will be a great event."

Tickets for the Lake show are \$20 for general admission. You can come by boat, too, and get two tickets for \$25. If you'd rather have a table at the event, you can reserve one for \$500 and get six meal tickets and 12 drink tickets. If you'd like to be a sponsor and get your own tables that way, prices start at \$1,000.

John Jarrard, a Gainesville native, died in 2001 after a long battle with Type 1 diabetes. Before his death, Jarrard was a songwriter whose music was recorded and performed by acts like Don Williams, Alabama, George Strait and Tracy Lawrence. He was inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 2010.

"John, he was just an amazing guy and was an inspiration," Jackson said. "He just had a lot of charisma and a lot of people really, really liked John. He's just a hometown hero and when he passed away, I think people wanted to remember John."

The foundation, set up by other local musicians and friends of Jarrard, has raised money for numerous charities in Hall County since his death. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier, Good News Clinics, Good News at Noon, SISU and Georgia Mountain Food Bank all benefit

from the foundation's concerts.

The Lake Show is the perfect setting for a concert and reminds Jackson of his time in Nashville, where artists would perform near the Cumberland River. He wanted to bring that kind of event to Gainesville and the Lake Lanier Olympic Park was just the spot.

"It's just a great place," Jackson said. "It's just a beautiful, beautiful venue. So it's a lot of fun for this type of event."

This year, Lori Hall and the Soul Shakers will be performing, and Kebbi Williams from the Tedeschi Trucks Band is opening the show. With the mix of music, Jackson is hoping everybody will find something they like. If past concerts are any indication, they will. Attendees are usually out of their seats dancing along to whatever music is playing.

"(Lori Hall) is incredible and she sings everything from country to soul to blues to gospel," Jackson said. "It's party music, dance music. There will be a little bit of everything."

Not only is Lake Lanier Olympic Park an inviting environment that allows live music, fireworks and food trucks like Oba! Brazilian Cuisine, El Griton Mexican Grill and Daddy's Girl! Gourmet Dogs, but it's one of the stops on the Georgia Wake Series, a wakeboard competition that travels the state.

"It's a really good way to showcase what wakeboarding is," said Brandon Lee, director of Georgia Wake Series.

The competition has eight stops and is what Lee said is a "grassroots" competition, meaning anyone — novice or expert — can join. Walk-up registration is \$75 or \$50 in advance. Riders must also have World Wake Association insurance, which is \$30 for a one-time event.

"It really is grassroots," Lee said. "There are riders that have only been riding for a couple months that are going out there



Times file photo

Attendees wait in line for food and refreshments during the fourth annual John Jarrard Foundation Lake Show at Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville.

### John Jarrard Lake Show

**What:** Concert benefiting Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier, Good News Clinics, Good News at Noon, SISU and Georgia Mountain Food Bank

**When:** 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday, June 1

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

**More info:** [www.johnjarrardfoundation.com/event/5th-annual-lake-show](http://www.johnjarrardfoundation.com/event/5th-annual-lake-show)

**How much:** \$20 for general admission, \$25 for two tickets if you come by boat, \$500 for a table of six with drink and meal tickets included

and competing, so it's not just for the experienced people."

The two organizations partnered together last year, but the concert and competition were on different days. This year, they're on the same day, so families can make an entire day of it by watch-

### Georgia Wake Series

**What:** Wakeboard competition

**When:** 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, June 1

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

**More info:** [www.gawakeseries.com/events/2019/lake-lanier](http://www.gawakeseries.com/events/2019/lake-lanier)

**How much:** Free

ing the wakeboard competition from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. then hanging around for the concert later.

"Theirs is during the day and ours is more of a nighttime event," Jackson said. "So we got together and kind of made a whole day of it and it should be something really neat because you've got a lot of spectators out there watching the wakeboard competition and it will kind of flow right into our show."

Riders in the wakeboard competition will ride behind a boat from the Olympic tower to the opposite side of the grandstands, performing their best tricks. The boat will turn around and head back toward

the tower while riders do more tricks. Once they reach the dock, their run is complete.

"It will hopefully expose wakeboarding and what we're doing to more people that will be coming to the concert," Lee said. "It also gives our participants and spectators that are already coming, something bigger than what's going on, with the concert and food and all that immediately after that. So it turns into a bigger weekend than it would be."

Partnering with the wakeboard series was an obvious step for the John Jarrard Foundation to take. Jackson said it's what Jarrard would have wanted, and any excuse to bring more people to the venue and raise more money for charity is a good excuse in Jackson's eyes.

"I knew John in Nashville and he loved events like this," Jackson said. "People getting together and having great music and fellowship and fun, that's what John Jarrard was all about."

AMERICAN COLLEGIATE ROWING  
ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS

# Bringing the best to town



Rowers practice at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Thursday for the American Collegiate Rowing Association championships in Gainesville.

Photos by **AUSTIN STEELE** | The Times

5-24-14

# Gainesville hosting top college talent from across the country

BY KATHERINE WRIGHT  
kwright@gainesvilletimes.com

The traditions continue on Memorial Day weekend at Lake Lanier.

Beginning at noon today, 75 colleges from across the country will be represented in the National Rowing Championship (NRC) at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

The annual Memorial Day weekend event starts Friday from noon-5:30 p.m., Saturday from 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Sunday from 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

The event is free (with a small parking fee) and food trucks and concessions are set to line the site.

Robyn Lynch, the organizer of the event, looks forward to this weekend every year, specifically because of the influence it has on the Gainesville community.

"The economic impact is tremendous," she said. "There are 1,500 athletes plus their families. All of the hotel rooms are full. They go to the restaurants, they buy gas, they go shopping."

Jay Singh, the owner and general manager of Gainesville's Guest Lodge, is just one of many business owners that experiences an influx of economic growth as a result of the NRC.

"It has put us on the map," Singh said. "It's what Gainesville is — an outdoor community. (There's) a lot of good venues and good places around; it highlights that better than anything else could."

What was once an underutilized facility, the Lake Lanier Olympic Park continues to be a fixture of the rowing community, specifically within college athletics.

For more than a decade, Singh has sold



Rowers practice at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Thursday for the American Collegiate Rowing Association championships in Gainesville.

out his rooms to NRC competitors. Most of his patrons are returning customers, including two top 10 nationally ranked schools — No. 5 University of Michigan and No. 10 University of Virginia.

"I think it's the passion of our team," Singh said of why the same schools return every year. "It's our team meeting the expectations of their team."

The relationships with the rowing teams were inherited when Singh bought the Guest Lodge in 2005. He prides himself in cultivating relationships and has developed and nurtured the bonds ever since.

"When a phenomenal group of people comes together, phenomenal things start to happen," Singh said. "Over the years, ACRA has turned out to be a great event."

Mark Rothstein, the University of Michigan rowing coach, and Singh made a pact years ago that has turned into a documented Facebook tradition.

"I've got about 10 pictures with the Michigan coach," Singh said. "We just made a funny tradition that everytime he wins a trophy, we take a picture with him holding a trophy."

■ Please see **ROWING, 2B**

5-24-19

## ROWING

■ Continued from 1B

To accommodate the ever-changing entertainment landscape, Singh has incorporated fast wireless internet for students who come with homework and has installed cornhole, horseshoe and spikeball to the pool area for those wanting to unwind. In the past, the staff has even turned the

conference room into a yoga studio to fit the athletes' needs. The NRC's effects continue throughout the year economically, and it's people like Singh who keep them coming back.

"Other coaches around the country talk to eat other and will ask where's a good place to train, and they'll say Lake Lanier," he said. "Then they'll come here. I think there's a much bigger long term economic impact."

The impact trickles down to Singh's personal traditions. When he gets a chance to withdraw from the lodge, he attends the annual event alongside his son.

"It's good to look at a bunch of young people working together for one goal, and that's what creates a team," he said. "They're putting their differences aside and becoming a team."

"It's a lesson we can learn as a city, as a business and as individuals."

5-24-19

## AMERICAN COLLEGIATE ROWING CHAMPIONSHIPS



Photos by **AUSTIN STEELE** | The Times

Rowers compete in the women's novice four-plus repechage 1 during the NCAA Rowing Championships on Saturday at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville. For more pictures, see page 4B. For results, go to [www.americancollegiaterowing.com](http://www.americancollegiaterowing.com).

5-26-19



Ohio State University team members carry their boat to the water during day 2 of the American Collegiate Rowing Championships at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville.



University of Georgia rowers compete in the womens novice 4+ repechage 2 during the American Collegiate Rowing Championships on Saturday in Gainesville.



Rowers carry their boat from the dock after racing during the 2019 NCAA Rowing Championships at Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Saturday in Gainesville.

5-26-19



University of New Hampshire team members cheer on teammates as they take first in the women's novice 4+ repechage 2 during the 2019 NCAA Rowing Championships on Saturday at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park.



Bucknell University team members carry their boat to the water during the American Collegiate Rowing Championships at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville.

5-26-19

## Atlanta Dragon Boat Festival

The annual festival brings teams from all over the state to Lake Lanier to compete against each other in this iconic Hong Kong-born race on the water. The boats — fitted with ornate dragon heads on the front and tails on the back — are packed with competitors who then paddle their way down the course, hoping to beat the others. On top of the races, you'll be able to learn about Chinese culture through traditions in the opening ceremonies as well as taste food from around the world from vendors on site.

**When:** Noon to 5 p.m. Sept. 8

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

**More info:** [www.dragonboatatlanta.com/](http://www.dragonboatatlanta.com/)

5-30-19

## Georgia Wake Series

**When:** 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, June 1

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

**More info:** [www.gawakeseries.com/events/2019/lake-lanier](http://www.gawakeseries.com/events/2019/lake-lanier)

**How much:** Free

## John Jarrard Lake Show

**When:** 6-10 p.m. Saturday, June 1

**Where:** Lake Lanier Olympic Park,

3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville

**More info:** [www.johnjarrardfoundation.com/event/5th-annual-lake-show](http://www.johnjarrardfoundation.com/event/5th-annual-lake-show)

**How much:** \$20 for general admission, \$25 for two tickets if you come by boat, \$500 for a table of six with drink and meal tickets included

## BRAG birthday concert

**What:** A concert, food and drinks event to celebrate Bicycle Ride Across Georgia's 40th birthday

**When:** 6-8 p.m. Sunday, June 2

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

**More info:** [www.lakelanierolympicvenue.org/calendar](http://www.lakelanierolympicvenue.org/calendar)

**How much:** Free to attend

# Want to enjoy BRAG without biking 350 miles? Here's your shot

BY NICK BOWMAN

[nbowman@gainesvilletimes.com](mailto:nbowman@gainesvilletimes.com)

Want to be a part of the 2019 Bicycle Ride Across Georgia without cycling 350 miles? The Lake Lanier Olympic Park has you covered with its Sunday concert.

The June 2 event at the Clarks Bridge Road park is part-welcome, part-birthday celebration for BRAG and its cyclists, which kicks off Sunday morning in Ellijay. This year is BRAG's 40th in the Peach State.

The first cyclists are expected to hit Gainesville close to noon Sunday, according to Regina Dyer, manager of the Gainesville Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Robyn Lynch, manager of the Olympic Park.

"We're going to stay at the Olympic Park in Gainesville," Franklin Johnson, executive director with BRAG, told The Times in February, "and that will give us the opportunity for participants to enjoy the lake life that everyone has come to know and love from Gainesville as well as do a concert there at the Olympic Park that night."

After they've had some time to settle in, the park is opening the park to the community

■ Please see BRAG, 7A

5-30-19

## BRAG

■ Continued from 6A

beginning at 6 p.m. with a concert by the Fabulous Cover Hogs band, food trucks and kayak and paddleboard rentals.

Many of BRAG's 1,200 riders camp out along the path from Ellijay to Darien, which sits between Savannah and Brunswick. Their camping equipment and bikes will be stored on the boathouse side of the park, leaving parking available for the community on the tower side, Lynch said.

There won't be any hard road closures along the BRAG route in

## BRAG's 40th birthday party

**What:** A celebration to mark the 40th anniversary of the Bicycle Ride Across Georgia

**When:** 6-8 p.m. Sunday, June 2

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

**How much:** Free

Gainesville, according to Dyer, but the cyclists will have a police escort through the city and populated areas of the county when the group leaves on Monday.

Motorists should expect delays near Green Street at 7 a.m. Monday, June 3.



Photo courtesy BRA

Riders take part in a Bicycle Ride Across Georgia event. BRAG will make a stop in Gainesville this year during its 40th anniversary.

5-30-19

# No city tax hike, but more spending

## Gainesville officials able to roll back rate, but add funds for police, parking

**BY MEGAN REED**  
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

Gainesville officials are recommending the city roll back its millage rate to 3.322 mills from 3.364 mills, the amount needed for the average city property owner to maintain their rate in light of increased property valuations.

City Manager Bryan Lackey presented the recommended budget to the City Council on Thursday and also outlined some proposed capital projects and improvements for the police and fire departments.

The city is seeing some growth — the estimated population is now 44,000 and there are about 15,000 housing units — that has led to some increases in revenue, including in the title ad valorem tax, sales tax and franchise fees.

Assessed property values also went up, and the proposed millage rate decrease reflects the average amount a property owner would need to see in order to avoid paying higher property tax rates,

Lackey said.

“Because of the new construction in the city limits, assessed property values are going up. That is a good thing for property owners,” Lackey said. “As a result, the city was able to roll back the property tax rate.”



Lackey

Water and sewer rates for Gainesville Water Resources, which provides service to much of Hall County, are remaining steady under the proposed budget.

The proposed \$31.9 million budget for Fiscal Year 2020, beginning July 1, gives the city 1.8 percent more money to work with compared to the current fiscal year. Projects planned include a new skate park and a rebuilt fire station.

Community members can provide input on the budget at a hearing on June 4, and council members will vote to approve the budget and millage rate on June 18.

### Police

The budget includes a new full-time position for the Gainesville

Public hearing on proposed budget

**When:** 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 4 (general meeting begins at 5:30 p.m.)

**Where:** Public Safety Complex, 701 Queen City Parkway

Police Department, a crime scene technician. The position currently also includes investigation duties. Having a dedicated crime scene technician will allow police to keep more of this work in-house, as they are currently outsourcing crime scene technician work to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

■ Please see CITY, 4A  
5-31-19

## CITY

■ Continued from 1A

The capital improvement fund also includes \$275,000 to replace some aging police vehicles.

Police also plan to continue increased patrolling in the Park Hill Drive area, which experienced several crimes including a murder and robbery earlier this year.

The city will be expanding its Park Hill Drive neighborhood study, which began last year and was intended to look at traffic in the area but will now also examine more general quality-of-life issues.

### Parks

Almost \$2 million has been set aside in the capital improvement fund for a

new skate park to be built at the intersection of Pine Street and High Street in midtown. Construction is set to begin in July.

Also, Lake Lanier Olympic Park on Clarks Bridge Road officially becomes a city park on July 1.

The city has set aside \$250,000 in the capital improvement fund for some renovations at the park, which officials have said will likely include boathouse renovations and a pavilion.

### Fire Station No. 2 relocation

Gainesville's Fire Station No. 2 is currently on Holly Drive near the Gainesville Civic Center, but the new budget includes some money to build a new station on Cleveland Highway.

The budget allocates \$600,000 for the new project.

The coverage area for the new station will include the areas currently served with the potential to expand as more developments come in.

Moving the station, which was built in the mid-1950s, has been planned for years. The city purchased the land at 1741 Cleveland Highway, a former appliance shop, last year.

### Parking deck near Gainesville library

The site at 100 Brenau Ave., currently home to a temporary branch of the Hall County Library System, has long been on officials' radar as a possible place for a new parking deck. The city will now move forward with those plans and has allocated \$250,000 in the capital improvement fund for a design of the deck,

## Key City Services

40,359 Citizens served	6,763 Tons of trash collected	18,750,000 Gallons of water consumed a day
8,550 EMS & Fire Runs	710 Employees	2,366 Youth enrolled in athletics
658 Acres of Parks	83,252 Police calls for service	11,101 Sewer connections
119 Sworn Officers	1,951 Sq. feet of sidewalk replaced	37 Sq. miles of police jurisdiction

\*The data shown are available from the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report 2018

which will be at the former Turner, Wood & Smith site.

Lackey said construction would only begin after the library moves back to its permanent location across

the street. The building is being renovated, with work set to be complete in summer 2020.

The city hopes to use funds from the next Spe-

cial Purpose Local Option Sales Tax to pay for the construction of the deck. SPLOST VIII, a penny sales tax, will go before voters in November.

