

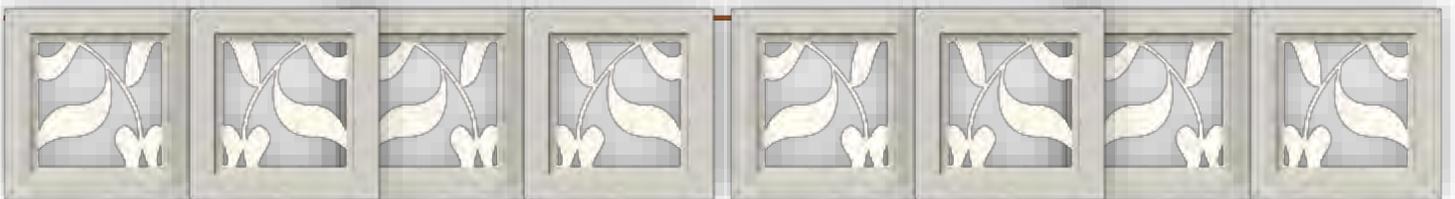
IN THE NEWS

May 2018

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



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



For The Times

Rubber Duck Derby

Where: 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville
When: Saturday, May 5; derby, noon to 3 p.m. and Duck Fest, 6-10 p.m.
More info: www.duckrace.com/gainesville; 770-532-8102, ext. 304

5-3-18

Food Truck Friday

When: 5-8 p.m. May 18
Where: Lake Lanier Olympic Park, 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville
How much: Free
More info: 770-535-0397, Robyn@lakelanierolympicvenue.org

5-3-18

Perfect Imperfections After

Dark. Concert fundraiser.
8-9:30 p.m. May 5. Fair Street Community Center, 715 Fair St., Gainesville.
470-234-3261, jimmy.whelchel@gcssk12.net. \$3.

5-3-18

LANIER CANOE AND KAYAK CLUB

28 athletes advance in US Dragon Boat qualifying

BY CLARK LEONARD
cleonard@gainesvilletimes.com

The Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club had 28 current and former members invited to the selection camp for the U.S. National Dragon Boat Team following the regional team trials held April 27-29 at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

An expected, 150 invitees will attend the team selection camp in July, with an expected cut of 10-20 percent after the camp has concluded.

Dragon Boat USA is in the

process of testing more than 700 paddlers nationwide to represent Team USA. The squad will include nearly 120 athletes among the expected 1,000-plus world-class paddlers from around the world competing in the International Canoe Federation Dragon Boat World Championships on Sept. 13-16 at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

The LCKC athletes are preparing for not only the World Championships, many of the Junior paddlers also are preparing for the American Canoe Association National

Championships for Sprint Canoe and Kayak in August.

Those invited (by division) include:

Junior (ages 15-18): Clay Baker, Maggie Bowmar, Nate Boyd, Joshua Burchardt, Caleb Copper, Drew Deppe, Ethan Deppe, Aaron Dickson, Owen Farley-Klacik, Paige Farley-Klacik, Jackson Hickerson, Allen Marsh, Caitlin Marsh, Lucas Pitts, Andrew Surles and Walker Peck

Senior (18 and older): Cannie Ash, Olivia Clark, Macy Dwyer (formerly of LCKC), Ethan Jackson, Ethan Palmer, Daniel Liu

and Tina Young

Masters (40 and older): Sean Allen, David Bittenbender, Anne Blanchard, Enoy Chanlyvong and Laurie Moore

Other members who had a conflict will test within the next two weeks and are expected to make the cut, LCKC coach Jim O'Dell said.

The next local race hosted by Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park is the fifth annual Gainesville/Hall Dragon Boat Challenge on June 2.

5-4-18

Hall gathers on downtown square for National Day of Prayer

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

Under the shade of trees, a large crowd gathered on the downtown Gainesville square around noon on Thursday, May 3, for the 2018 National Day of Prayer. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and singing along to "God Bless America," the guests formed groups at stations around the square.

Each station was led in prayer by a different community member and was focused on a different topic in society: media, business, education, family, church, military, life and government. Guests spent a couple of minutes in prayer at each station, and as a bell rung, they moved on to the next.

Some of the guests were there after also taking part in a prayer breakfast at the Gainesville Civic Center earlier Thursday morning.

Businesses, churches and organizations from around Hall sponsored tables and filled them with people to hear Dean Sikes, an author and speaker who has been all across the country encouraging young people. But for the day of prayer, he was there to use his experiences to encourage an



■ Please see PRAYER, 8A Suerita Thomas of Gainesville prays at a church prayer station Thursday, May 3.

5-4-18

PRAYER

■ Continued from 1A

audience a little older than he is typically in front of.

"You have a part to play in this thing called life, and prayer is a critically important aspect of this," Sikes said. "There's no way to do what we do without the power of prayer."

Just hours later, some of those same people, along with many more, gathered on the square to continue praying.

"Prayer, to me, is every-

thing," said Tracy Passmore, a Greater Hall Fellowship of Christian Athletes area representative and prayer leader at the education station. "Before we do anything, we have to soak it in prayer."

As guests walked from station to station, they heard prayers from Chris Pope, a former pastor at Trinity Baptist Church, who led the church station. They also heard from Tim Watkins with the radio station Victory 91.5 at the media station and Jimmy Hernandez with Milton Martin Toyota at the business station.

Hernandez thanked God with prayer by voicing his appreciation for businesspeople in Hall "submitting their business" to God and for using their businesses to "maximize" his kingdom.

Watkins prayed for the media and people in Hollywood to use their platforms to "serve and love" God.

Ralph Ratliff, an Oakwood resident, was in attendance at the gathering with his wife and said praying for the community and country as a whole "is important because it's the one thing anybody can do."

National Day of Prayer was a new experience for some, though. Joyce and Jerome Hoffer were traveling through Gainesville on their way back home to Minnesota. They heard about the gathering and decided to check it out, even though they had never heard of it before.

"I thought it was very unique, very interesting," Joyce Hoffer said. "I think that God listens to prayers, and the more that gather and pray together is a more profound prayer. I think the nation can handle all the prayers that can come its way."

5-4-18

Ducks take a dunking for kids



Photos by **LAYNE SALIBA** | The Times

Rubber ducks are released into Lake Lanier on Saturday, May 5, to begin the annual Rubber Duck Derby Fundraiser at Lake Lanier Olympic Park. Proceeds benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier. **5-6-18**



Rubber ducks are funneled toward the finish line on Saturday, May 5, to cap the annual Rubber Duck Derby fundraiser at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

LAYNE SALIBA
The Times

5-6-18

Annual Rubber Duck Derby raises funds for local Boys & Girls Clubs

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

Chelsea Clark took a deep breath as the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier's 20th annual Rubber Duck Derby got underway.

Clark, event marketing and volunteer coordinator with the Boys & Girls Clubs, said it had sold about 17,000 ducks to be released into Lake Lanier at Clarks Bridge Park on Saturday, May 5, all to raise more than \$85,000 during the organization's largest community fundraiser.

"It's always a ton of work, but we really have a lot of great employees at the Boys & Girls Clubs and a lot of great board members and volunteers that are willing to give up their time and resources to make this happen," Clark said.

The weather was overcast Saturday, but a bit improvement over last year when much of the event was rained out. Clark said a lot of people were disappointed there wasn't much of a festival last year, so this time, she



Turner Clark, 7, plays in the bounce house Saturday, May 5, at the annual Rubber Duck Derby.

made sure there were plenty of activities. That included music, free bounce houses, pony rides and a petting zoo for kids. A couple food trucks were on site and a tent dispensing cotton candy.

As 2:30 p.m. approached, though, those activities were left behind as all of the guests gathered near the shoreline.

Shay Lewis is new to the area and recently started working for the Boys & Girls

Clubs of Lanier. This was her first experience at the derby and she said she had similar feelings as Clark did.

"It was a lot of fun and it

■ Please see **DUCKS**, 3C

5-6-18

DUCKS

■ Continued from 1C

was a lot of work," Lewis said. "But it's nice to see everything come together and everybody having fun."

A barge carrying a large container filled with rubber ducks sounded its horn and slowly lifted the container, causing the ducks to fall out. As they slowly floated the 528-foot course, Hall County Sheriff Gerald Couch made his way to the

water. After a little more than 10 minutes, Couch was able to pull a \$10,000 grand-prize winner from the water, along with the runners-up.

"I didn't know what to think at first," said Demetrius Hartley, who was visiting from North Carolina. "But everything they're doing with the duck derby and the racing, it's awesome."

He was aiming to win free Chick-fil-A for a year, so he said he bought a grandpack of 25 ducks in hopes of getting one of the runner-up prizes.

All of the money raised from the event goes to help the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier. Clark said it helps in making sure there is enough staff to make things run smoothly and provide for the different programs offered. Without the derby, the clubs wouldn't be able to fund much of what they do.

"We're able to provide these services to kids either for free or a very, very low cost," Clark said. "We really couldn't do (it) without the community and those programs they're benefiting."

5-6-18



Butterfly Release

When: 1-4 p.m. May 20, rain or shine (at pavilion if it rains)

Where: Wilshire Trails, 849 Wilshire Road NW, Gainesville

How much: Free

LISET CRUZ | Times file photo

The 22nd annual Friends of the Parks Butterfly Release takes place Sunday, May 20, at Wilshire Trails in Gainesville.

5-10-18

Butterflies in the sky

Annual insect release returns to Wilshire Trails for 22nd year May 20

5-10-18

BY ANDREA CORONA
acorona@gainesvilletimes.com

The air in Wilshire Trails Park will be filled with 1,500 butterflies on Sunday, May 20, for the 22nd annual Friends of the Parks Butterfly Release.

Each child attending will be able to release at least one butterfly.

"We try to give all the butterflies to the children first, and then if we have any more we can give to adults," said Andy Stewart, president of the Friends of the Parks board.

The event is a major fundraiser for Friends of the Park through sales of butterfly-related items and other merchandise. The money is used for the park and for education.

"We also give out butterflies to second-grade classes in the Gainesville system, and they get to see the life cycle of the butterflies, and we actually donate those to the science teachers and local elementary school so they can be a part of the experience," Stewart said.

The butterfly release is popular with the community, so expect a crowd, said Julie Butler, marketing manager at Gainesville Parks and Recreation.

"If the weather is pretty, we expect at least 3,000 people," Butler said.

The event will also feature face painting and paper sailboat races, and of course, visitors can take advantage of the trails.

"People love to walk the trails of the Rock Greenway and play on the playground and in the creek," Butler said.

But the butterflies are the main attraction.

"It is amazing to see everyone's faces when the butterflies wake up and begin to take flight," said Butler. "It is a great way to bring people together and appreciate our parks system and the value it has on our lives."

Friends of the Parks is a volunteer-based organization that raises awareness for the park, and "whose advocacy and fundraising is responsible for much of what the Rock Creek Greenway has become today," Butler said.

5-10-18

United Way honors its volunteers



Photos by **SCOTT ROGERS** | The Times

The United Way of Hall County holds its volunteer recognition and annual celebration Thursday, May 10, at the Gainesville Civic Center.

Organization celebrates over \$1.5 million raised in annual campaign

BY MEGAN REED
mreed@gainesvilletimes.com

The United Way of Hall County, which raised more than \$1.5 million in its most recent annual campaign, honored its volunteers and partners at its annual end-of-year celebration Thursday, May 10, at the Gainesville Civic Center.

The organization funds more than 30 nonprofits that promote health, education and financial stability with the goal of alleviating poverty and increasing standards of living. Joy Griffin, the group's president and chief professional officer, reflected on the organization's work over the past year.

Griffin thanked United Way's funded programs, which address issues including domestic violence, food insecurity and child abuse, for their efforts to help people in Hall County.

"Because of each of you, this community experiences triumph over tragedy," Griffin said. "A child breaks through, a victim finds healing, someone at the end of their rope finds a helping hand. It is my honor to spend my days asking our community to support your work."

Griffin said the United Way's annual campaign haul was a goal reached largely through corporate campaigns and partnerships with businesses including Publix, Northeast Georgia Health System and Fieldale Farms. A half marathon and 5K in April drew almost 200 attendees and raised \$27,000, according to Tommy Howard, the campaign chairman and president of Norton Brokerage Services.

The people behind United Way's success were recognized Thursday with four of the organization's top awards:

The Longstreet Clinic received the Chairman's Award. The clinic sponsored United Way's half marathon and 5K and has emphasized child literacy by giving books to children and teaching the community about reading and language development.

The Give Award went to Jim Walters, who Griffin said is a fixture in the community and has given \$351,000 to United Way since 1989.

Doug Hanson received the Advocate Award for his commitment to service and his time spent volunteering in Hall County.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance volunteers received the Volunteer Award. The group spent eight Saturdays offering free tax preparation services.

This summer, United Way will work on establishing new goals to address health, education and financial stability and will present its ideas in September.



United Way of Hall County Resource Development Chairman Tommy Howard speaks Thursday, May 10, during the the event

'Because of each of you, this community experiences triumph over tragedy, a child breaks through, a victim finds healing, someone at the end of their rope finds a helping hand. It is my honor to spend my days asking our community to support your work.'

Joy Griffin, President and chief professional officer

SUMMER CAMP AT LCKC

LCKC's Summer Camp is all about having fun on Lake Lanier while introducing kids aged 7-12 to the sports of canoe and kayak. No experience necessary; our staff will teach the skills needed to paddle both canoes and kayaks. Pick one or more of our six week sessions that run each day from 9-3 (before and after care is available for an additional charge). Life jackets are provided or you can bring your own.

2018 SCHEDULE

June 4-8	June 25-29
June 11-15	July 9-13
June 18-22	July 16-20

COST AND REGISTRATION

LCKC Members: \$145 per week

Non-Member: \$175 per week (20% discount for additional child in immediate family)

Before Care: 8:00 drop-off, additional \$20 per week

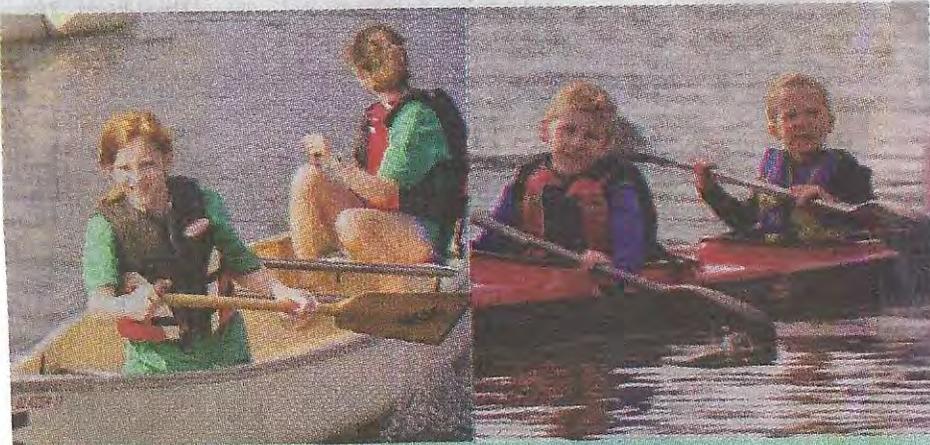
After Care: Until 5:00, additional \$45 per week

Register in person at the boathouse or register online at www.lckc.org.



WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

Sunscreen, towel, extra clothes, sack lunch, juice, snacks, water bottle, tennis shoes, sandals, hat and your enthusiasm!



Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club

3105 Clarks Bridge Rd.
Gainesville, Ga 30506
770-287-7888 | info@lckc.org

5-12-18

Piano adds art, music at park

BY JOSHUA SILAVENT
jsilavent@gainesvilletimes.com

Enota Elementary fifth-graders got the first crack at playing a piano at Wilshire Trails Park in Gainesville that is the latest addition of public art to strike a chord in the community.

Students played "Ode to Joy," Brahms' Lullaby" and "Frere Jacques" on a piano bedazzled in paint with a sunflower sprouting from the top end.

Elizabeth Higgins, executive director of the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce's Vision 2030 group, said the piano is one of a handful or more "Play Me Now" installations coming to public spaces across the city this summer, including on the downtown square.

Fifth-grader Eleanor Ritchie said "a lot of people know how to play" but don't have access to pianos.

"This is for everyone," she added.

Principal Wesley Roach, a bit of a maestro himself, said he hopes the publicly available pianos will inspire a new generation.

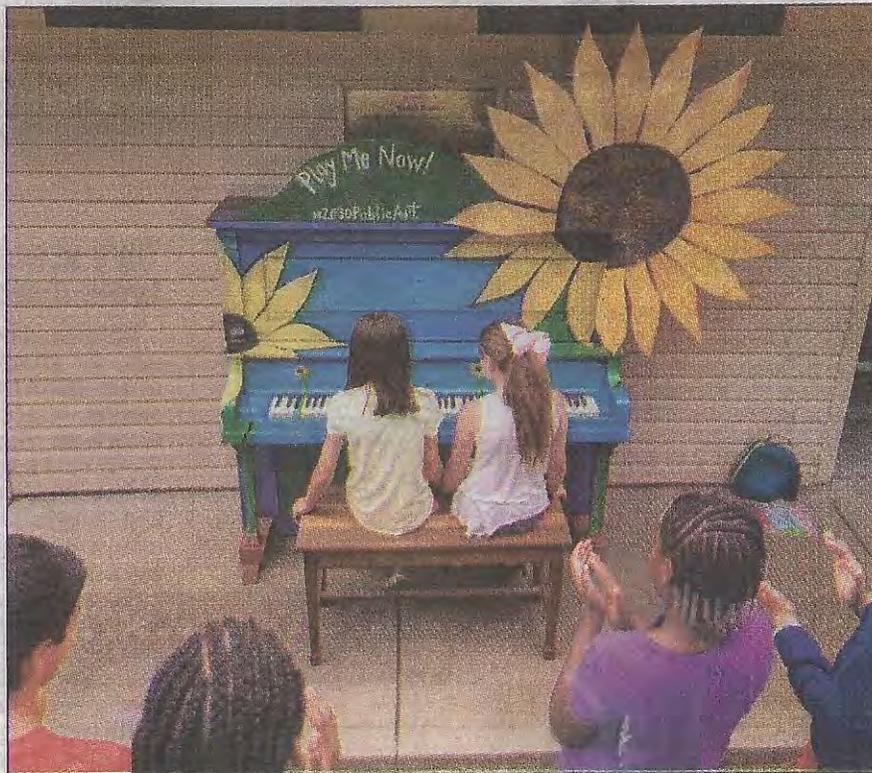
After all, research shows there is a correlation between music and positive brain development, especially in young learners.

"I think it's awesome," he said, then sat down at the keys and played a few gospel numbers for the students who sang along.

Julie Butler Colombini, marketing director with the Gainesville Parks and Recreation Department, said the piano at Wilshire Trails will be available during the annual butterfly release this Sunday, May 20.



Wesley Roach, principal at Enota Multiple Intelligences Academy, helps Andrew Mady, a fifth-grader at Enota, play the piano.



Victoria Heim, left, and Karis Lovell, both fifth-graders at Enota Multiple Intelligences Academy, play the piano.

 Online

View video of the new piano at www.gainesvilletimes.com.

5-19-18

Butterfly Release

When: 1-4 p.m.
May 20

Where: Wilshire Trails Park, 849 Wilshire Road, Gainesville

How much: Free

More Information: jbutler@gainesville.org, www.gainesville.org



Food Truck Friday

When: 5-8 p.m. May 18

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

How much: Free

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



Photos by DAVID BARNES | The Times

Ciana Godboldo, a fifth-grader at Enota Multiple Intelligences Academy, plays the piano on Friday, May 18, 2018, at the Play Me Now art installation at Wilshire Trails.

5-19-18

Wilshire Trails Park hosts 22nd annual butterfly release

5-21-18

BY KAYLEE MARTIN
kmartin@gainesvilletimes.com

Despite a rainy end to the day, children's smiles never faded away at the 22nd annual butterfly release Sunday, May 20, at Wilshire Trails Park in Gainesville.

There were family-friendly activities galore, including sailboat races, face painting, and arts and crafts. Of course, butterflies were the main attraction — and 1,500 painted lady butterflies took to the sky at 3 p.m.

There were many first-time attendees, as well as many who return year after year.

"I love playing at the park" Sydney Lewis said. "I am very excited to see the butterflies."

Nick Rosenberg, 12, has attended the release with his family for five years.

"I'm really interested in nature stuff, especially insects, so this is always really fun to come to," he said. "I want to study biology or environmental science when I go to college."

The event, sponsored by Friends of Gainesville Parks and Greenways, serves as a major fundraiser for the group. Through money received through sponsorships, sales and donations, they are able to educate children about the environment and give back to the community.

"I've been a member of the Friends of the Parks board for three years," said Andy Stewart, president of the board. "The butterfly release always draws a big crowd. We like to get the community out here and show off our park system, because we are very proud of it."

5-21-18



5-21-18

Left: Alayna Waldrep creates a pom-pom butterfly with the help of the event staff.

Below: Timothy Kemp and a friend test out their sailboats.



5-21-18



Above: Kileigh Rae Richardson and her father Rick make a paper sailboat at the 22nd annual butterfly release. **Right:** Sydney Lewis blows bubbles and tries to catch them.

Photos by **KAYLEE MARTIN**
The Times



Left: Attendees rush to take cover from the rain. **Below:** A butterfly rests on a table underneath a tent to avoid the rain.

5-21-18

22nd Annual Butterfly Release

Thank you!!

We appreciate the generosity of the following companies, organizations and individuals who helped make this community tradition possible.

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Gainesville Woman's Club
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Eunice McDonald
Huthwaite and Huthwaite
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Judy & John Girardeau
Lawson Air Conditioning & Plumbing, Inc.

T-Shirt Art Contest Winner: Fair Street
International School 3rd grade student,
Karen Lara.

A special thank you to volunteers,
Gainesville High School Cheerleaders.

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GAINESVILLE.ORG/FRIENDSOFTHEPARKS



Our Mission...

To serve as a cultural, educational, and recreational resource
to develop, beautify, maintain, restore and preserve
passive and active leisure pursuits in Gainesville, Hall County.

5-25-18

ROWING

TESTING THEIR TRAINING



Photos by **DAVID BARNES** | The Times

University of Illinois rower Raymond Pu prepares to go out on the water for practice on Friday, May 25 in preparation for the American Collegiate Rowing Association nationals this Saturday at Lake Lanier.

5-26-18

College athletes on Lake Lanier for ACRA championships

MARCUS ETIENNE

metienne@gainesvilletimes.com

Coming to Lake Lanier is a big deal for the rowing team from Vanderbilt University.

One of 79 teams competing in Hall County this weekend, the Commodores are seeking a national championship in the American Collegiate Rowing Association after finishing second in the women's standings last year. The two-day event starts today at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

"It's the highlight of the season. We train to compete for this event," Vanderbilt junior Noam Kosofsky said. "It is what we look forward to the most and (are) most excited about."

University of Michigan coach Greg Hartsuff thinks this is as big as it gets for his burgeoning program that has claimed 10 consecutive titles for points in the men's competition, along with 33 event titles in that time.

According to the Wolverines coach, there will be approximately 1,700 athletes competing over the next two days in Gainesville, a direct result of the growing popularity of the season-ending championship offerings to athletes across the country. To provide perspective, Hartsuff said just 747 athletes and 36 teams took part in the inaugural ACRA championship in 2008.

"More teams are committing to culminating their sea-



University of Michigan rowers dock their boats after practice Friday, May 25 as they prepare for the American Collegiate Rowing Association nationals this weekend at Lake Lanier.

sons at ACRA," said Hartsuff. "And those teams are bringing more student-athletes."

Even 22 years after the Summer Games came to Hall County, athletes recognize the prestige of competing where the world's best did in 1996.

"It was exiting when I saw the lake for the first time," Vanderbilt senior Matt Gu said. "I was like, 'This is the 1996 Olympic venue,' which is crazy."

"(The) Lake Lanier Rowing Club has a nice set-up (here)."

Vanderbilt freshman Salli Lowry got a good idea how big

the ACRA championship was to coach Jon Miller early in the season. The Commodores' coach signed off on every email with a weekly countdown to when they'd be coming to compete for the title on Lake Lanier.

"At the beginning of the season, he let us know that we have 40 weeks, then 38 and 20 ... and now its ACRA championship week, which is really exciting," Lowry said.

The Vanderbilt women have focused on specified training as they look to get over the hump to win the championship

ACRA national championships

When: 7 a.m. today

Tickets: Free to attend, \$10 for parking

in 2018. One of the programs the Commodores are eager to face is Wichita State, which handed them an early-season loss.

"We have been working super hard and focusing," Vanderbilt freshman Emma Baker said. "We just want to get those things right and row our hearts out."



Spectators gather for the 2016 Lake Show at the Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

Times file photo
5-31-18

Enjoy a show on the lake that benefits local charities

BY LAYNE SALIBA
lsaliba@gainesvilletimes.com

The John Jarrard Foundation has grown quite a bit over the years. It's gone from hosting its annual benefit concert on the lawn at the Smithgall Arts Center to taking up the entire front lawn at Brenau University to starting a lake show at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

That lake show is in its fourth year, and this time around will be a little different.

"This year is definitely unique," said Jody Jackson, executive director of the foundation. "We have a big fireworks show."

The John Jarrard Foundation Lake Show will be 6 to 10 p.m. Saturday, June 9.

With a wakeboard competition coming in the next day, the foundation partnered to have a fireworks show for guests.

Jackson said they expect over 1,200 people to be at the event, which supports local charities like the Good News Clinics, Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier and Georgia Mountain Food Bank.

"They're all charities that were near and dear to John Jarrard when he lived in Gainesville," Jackson said. "So we've kind of stayed along those lines when it comes to support."

Gainesville native John Jarrard was a successful songwriter who wrote hit songs for performers such as Don Williams, Alabama, George Strait and Tracy Lawrence. He battled diabetes before his death in 2001.

People of all ages from all over the county usually come to the event. Whether it be by boat, renting a table or setting up a lawn chair, Jackson said the dancing never stops. The lake show is a little



Courtesy Jody Jackson

The Atlanta Funk Society will perform June 9 at the John Jarrard Foundation Lake Show.

John Jarrard Foundation Lake Show

Where: 105 Clarks Bridge Road, Gainesville

When: 6-10 p.m. Saturday, June 9

How much: \$20; VIP tables \$500

More info: www.johnjarrardfoundation.com

more high energy than the event at Brenau since the music is a little more high energy.

This year, the Atlanta Funk Society will headline the event, with Mellow Steel opening.

"They play all kind of great dance music from the '60s and '70s I think people will love," Jackson said. "They're just a great band. And then opening up, we have a reggae band. A true, authentic reggae band."

When guests aren't dancing, they'll have the chance to enter a raffle for a Big Green Egg and other

prizes. There will be a few food trucks to try out along with beer and wine. Jackson said it's the perfect venue since it's terraced. They can sell tables for people to sit at or just general admission tickets, making everyone happy.

"It's a fun event," Jackson said. "It's kind of like a kickoff to summer. That's what we like to call it. The kickoff to summer on Lake Lanier."

At the end of the day, Jackson said they just want to bring good music for the community to listen to while raising money for charities. That's what it's all about for the John Jarrard Foundation.

And that's what they've done. This event alone brings in at least \$50,000. The foundation has given almost \$2 million to charities through the years.

"We just like to provide good musical entertainment in John Jarrard's name and do it for a good cause," Jackson said.

'Enough of the rain'



Tubers float Wednesday, May 30, down the Chattahoochee River in Helen during heavy rain.

Photos by **DAVID BARNES** | The Times

5-31-18

Heavy rainfall floods Helen; Dragon Boat Challenge postponed

BY NICK WATSON

nwatson@gainesvilletimes.com

HELEN — Cheryl Totherow sat under the Jerky Snack Shack roof Wednesday afternoon in Helen, trying to stay dry after recent flooding and yet another downpour.

"We've had enough of the rain. It's put a damper on our business this year," she said.

With waters climbing to pedestrians' ankles Tuesday night, May 29, on the alpine village's riverside streets, businesses were cleaning and preparing for what may come. The National Weather Service predicted showers and thunderstorms through Friday night.

Totherow said the business has been doing half of what they normally would because of the rain over the past several weekends.

Forecasters say heavy rain caused the Chattahoochee River to flood in Helen.

The National Weather Service said up to 7 inches of rain caused flooding to creeks and rivers in the city about 30 miles north of Gainesville. The weather service had issued a flash flood warning for White and Towns counties into Wednesday evening.

Several roads near the downtown area were shut down because of the rising water, which was about knee height.

No injuries or structural damage have been reported.

Helen Police said emergency officials are monitoring the water levels.

Cool River Tubing owner Terry Sims said his crew started cleaning and preparing around 8 a.m. Wednesday. A six-man hose brigade worked on cleaning the driveways and parts of Edelweiss Strasse



Cool River Tubing employees and volunteers pump water from the Chattahoochee River to wash silt from the road in Helen on Wednesday, May 30, after the river overflowed.

Wednesday afternoon. Some of the water from Tuesday's storms made it into Sims' property.

"We'll just have some sandbags ready and try to keep it out from under the building. We are hoping to get cleaned up and, if the river recedes, be ready to open maybe by the weekend, but it depends on the weather," Sims said.

Sims said his team had to move some 1,000 tubes and life jackets ahead of Tuesday's downpour.

"If we had not have done that, we would have lost them," he said.

Water that had crested the Chattahoochee River, which flows through downtown Helen, had receded into its banks by Wednesday afternoon, White

County Public Safety Director David Murphy said.

However, "it's still very dangerous to be around," he said. "We're asking people to stay off the creek banks, off the river bank and just stay safe by keeping their distance."

Motorists who come across a flooded road "need to turn around and go the opposite direction," Murphy said. "You don't know what's beneath the water."

North of Helen, Ga. 75 between Robertstown and Unicoi Gap is closed "because there are some parts of the road that have become unstable from the rainfall," he said.

■ Please see **FLOODS, 8A**

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Photos by DAVID BARNES | The Times

Redena Ladesic, from Dothan, Alabama, and her granddaughter, Halley Wilson, take shelter under a bridge Wednesday, May 30, during heavy rain.

S-3-18

FLOODS

■ Continued from 1A

Georgia Department of Transportation district spokeswoman Katie Strickland said Wednesday evening that crews would work "until dark to get the roadway back opened to traffic."

"As we closed the road and detoured traffic, we've been able to move in equipment and place large rocks and dirt to replace the slope that was washed away," said Cleveland area DOT manager Matt Needham in a news release.

Also closed was Sandy Flats Road around Gene Nix Road near Lumpkin County. A culvert washed out there, Murphy said.

"We have other roads that have some significant damage to them," he said. "They may be down to one lane but are still passable."

Downstream of Helen lies Lake Lanier, which has risen above 1,073 feet above sea level. The normal summer full pool is 1,071 feet.

Lake Lanier Canoe and Kayak Club coach Jim O'Dell said Wednesday night the Dragon Boat Challenge would be postponed from June 2 to June 16.

"We want to ensure we have a safe event above all else," O'Dell wrote in an email. "This postponement will hopefully allow the lake to settle down with all the debris and level drop a foot or so."

The Lake Lanier Olympic Park was calling for volunteers Wednesday afternoon as water threatened the boathouse and tower of the facility on Clarks Bridge Road north of Gainesville.

Lake Lanier Olympic Park venue manager Robyn Lynch pointed to an area that is "like an island of debris."

"You can almost walk across it. It's so much debris, and it's tangled up in our race course," she said.

Downstairs in the Olympic tower, Lynch and others stacked up chairs in fear of rising waters. Sandbags were also placed along the bay doors at the boathouse across the street.

The walking path at West Bank Park and Nix Bridge and Thompson Creek boat ramps will close, according to the Army Corps of Engineers.

News reporter Jeff Gill and the Associated Press contributed to this report.



Pedestrians in Helen on Wednesday, May 30, take shelter from the rain.



The Olympic tower at Lake Lanier Olympic Park is surrounded by water after heavy rain.



A Georgia Department of Transportation vehicle blocks Ga. 75 North in Helen as rain moves into the area.

'As we closed the road and detoured traffic, we've been able to move in equipment and place large rocks and dirt to replace the slope that was washed away.'

Matt Needham,
Cleveland area DOT
manager

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