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Wednesday, April 1, 2026 • www.mainstreetdailynews.com



SPORTS & MORE
GHS wins thrilling pitcher's duel
Read more | B1

Aquifer hits lowest level since 2011

Plus, numbers on who uses the most water

By Seth Johnson
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

With no rain in the forecast, Alachua County and North Central Florida continue to draw more from the Floridan aquifer than it gets recharged, and the overall upper aquifer level dipped below the 20th percentile for the first time since 2011.

Alachua County is split between the Suwannee River Water Management District and the St. Johns River Water Management District. Both districts are in Phase II Severe Water Shortage, which includes mostly voluntary measures with some mandatory reduction measures.

Last week, the Southwest Florida Water Management District issued a modified Phase III Severe Water Shortage that includes more mandatory restrictions.



COURTESY COLUMBIA COUNTY TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

DROUGHT, A4 Ichetucknee Springs sits in Columbia County.

Homeless agencies pivot as St. Francis House closure nears



PHOTO BY GLORY REITZ

Jacob Torner, vice president of programs for TaskForce Fore Ending Homelessness, said \$35,000 was provided to Family Promise to help homeless families under St. Francis House's care find transitional housing.

Empty schools seen as potential solution

By Seth Johnson
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Even before St. Francis House announced to the public that it would shutter its downtown Gainesville shelter in April, homeless service providers coordinated to create pathways for the people left unserved by the closure.

The TaskForce Fore Ending Homelessness, Alachua County's lead agency for the Continuum of Care that coordinates homeless providers, approved \$35,000 last week in extra Rapid Rehousing funds for Family Promise of Gainesville.

Jacob Torner, vice president of programs for the TaskForce, told Mainstreet that the funds come on top of what Family Promise already receives and will ensure the homeless families at St. Francis House continue to have access to services and shelter.

"We appreciate St. Francis House for its continued service to families and Family Promise, without even a hesitation, stepping up immediately to the plate," Torner said. "We're committed to ensuring that no family has to return to the streets as a result of the closure, but also that families do have a place to seek refuge."

Torner said two local domestic abuse organizations also received Rapid Rehousing funds. The TaskForce has had regular meetings with the involved organizations to discuss how the people get served.

St. Francis House publicly announced last week that the downtown shelter would close. The nonprofit has focused on families, women and children at its shelter, but also provided cold night shelter and services like laundry, phones and meals. The shelter was bought by the nonprofit in 1993.

ST. FRANCIS, A5

GATOR FLY-IN AND ARMED SERVICES APPRECIATION DAY



PHOTO BY SETH JOHNSON

Michael Hare (center) earned the FAA's Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award for 50 years of flying without accident or incident. He was presented the award at the Gator Fly-In and Armed Services Appreciation Day, flanked by Dr. Mike Lukowski (right), owner of the University Air Center, and Carter Nute (left), a former award recipient and trainer at the University Air Center. Hare served for 34 years in the military before switching to civilian flying, and he works as a senior flight instructor at the University Air Center.

NEWBERRY COMMISSION 2026

Voters to pick three seats from seven candidates

By Lillian Hamman
REPORTER

On April 14, Newberry residents will take to the voting polls to decide who will serve new two-year terms in City Commission Seats 1, 2 and 3.

Stay-at-home mom Brandy Oldman will challenge Seat 1 incumbent and retired property appraiser Rick Coleman. Oldman was elected to serve on the New-

berry Elementary School advisory council in 2024 and currently serves on the district advisory council for the Alachua County School District.

Mark Clark, Seat 2 incumbent and retired U.S. Marine, will run against David Wallace, a maintenance tech for Oak Hammock at the University of Florida and a Newberry youth sports coach.

Newberry Planning and

Zoning Board Member Naim Joseph Erched and local ophthalmic technician JD Mercado will challenge current commissioner and retired nurse Monty Farnsworth for Seat 3.

With over 22 years as a commissioner, Farnsworth is Newberry's longest-serving elected official. Clark and Farnsworth have announced this year's cam-

NEWBERRY, A6

ALACHUA COMMISSION 2026

Three way race set for lone open seat

By Lillian Hamman
REPORTER

Alachua City Commission Seat 3 will be contested by incumbent Dayna Williams, Jackson Youmas and Bill Menadier during the April 14 election, and Mainstreet wants to help you cast an informed vote.

The following questions about term goals and initiatives were emailed to each candidate and their answers

are printed here with minor edits for style. You can find the full interviews on Mainstreet's website.

Williams, who has been on the commission since 2018, will run for re-election. She also served on Alachua's Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) and works as the North Florida director of government affairs for Waste Pro of Florida, Inc.

Youmas and Menadier are campaigning for the first

time. Menadier, an engineer and entrepreneur, currently serves on the city's PZB, while Youmas is a store manager for CVS, where he's worked for 20 years.

• What prompted you to run for election or re-election?

Williams: I decided to run for re-election for Seat 3 after conversations with many of our residents, lo-

ALACHUA, A7

GAINESVILLE REGIONAL AIRPORT

You could be in the AIR by now!

Newberry Community School enrollment rises, board adopts comment policy

475 students enrolled in charter school as of March 23 board meeting

By Nick Anschutz
REPORTER

The Newberry Community School Board (NCSB) received an update on school enrollment numbers and approved a public comment policy at a meeting on March 23.

Enrollment

At the board's Feb. 23 meeting, Newberry Community School (NCS) Principal Lacy Roberts said 427 students were enrolled in the new conversion charter school, which is taking over the Newberry Elementary School (NES) building in the fall.

Based on the numbers Roberts shared at the March 23 meeting, the number of students enrolled at NCS is now up to 475.

Roberts explained to the board that there is a two-step process for enrollment, noting that after parents enroll their student(s) into the school, they then must accept their child's seat.

While 475 students, including 81 kindergarteners, 105 first graders, 119 second



PHOTO BY NICK ANSCHULTZ

Chairman Derek Danne voted in favor of the board's public comment policy.

graders, 90 third graders and 80 fourth graders, have enrolled, Roberts said only 380 have accepted their seat. She noted that this number included 64 kindergarteners, 84 first graders, 92 second graders, 78 third graders and 62 fourth graders.

"We are continuing to email, call, text, and get in touch with those parents [who haven't accepted their child's seat]," Roberts said.

Roberts said they've only had seven students whose parents declined to enroll their child in NCS.

Regarding teachers, Roberts said she has received "80-something" applications so far.

"I have not hired some [teaching] vacancies because I'm watching enrollment," she said. "I'm only trying to hire what we need."

Roberts said eventually, they will need to decide on a target number of where they want to enroll to and staff to before creating waiting lists.

"We do want a waiting list," Roberts said. "Remember, as you have kids move, then we want to be able to

pull kids up so that we maintain our [enrollment] number, because that correlates to funding."

Setting that target number for enrollment and staff is also important for budget purposes, as Roberts said NCS's budget is "built around" the school's enrollment numbers.

"We will have to commit to that, but that can be a little later," she said. "We can watch it [enrollment] a little longer."

While discussing the budget later in the meeting, Roberts

said she liked it being developed for around 520 students, adding she believes they can reach that number and then have a waiting list by the time she brings forward a new budget to the board in April. The original budget, she said, was created based on 694 students.

"So, that's my plan is to bring a budget based on that kind of a number [520 students], with contracts a little more in place, where we know our numbers, not estimates, because that entire budget was built on estimates, and everything costs more than it did three years ago, or four years ago, when that budget [was] signed," Roberts said.

Public comment policy

Also, during the March 23 meeting, the board unanimously approved a public comment policy for its meetings. The board had not had a formal rule or policy in place for public comment at meetings before. Citizens were given a two-minute time limit to address the board before it got into agenda items.

Under the approved policy, which takes effect at the board's next meeting, speakers will still be able to comment on agenda items before the board acts. However, citizens will have up to three

minutes to address the board instead of two. That time may not be given to others.

Some other rules outlined in the adopted policy:

- Only individuals who are recognized for public comment or acknowledged by the chair may address the board.
- The board or staff is not obligated to respond to public comments during the meeting.
- No additional comments are allowed after the speaker's time has elapsed.
- Speakers may not engage in obscene acts or speech, threats, and/or disorderly conduct. Disruptive individuals may be removed from the meeting.
- Cell phones must be silenced during public comments and the meetings.

The next NCSB meeting will take place on Monday, April 20, at Newberry City Hall inside the Commission Chambers. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m.

Nick Anschutz is a Report for America corps member and writes about education for Mainstreet Daily News. This position is supported by local donations through the Community Catalyst for Local Journalism Fund at the Community Foundation of North Central Florida.

Newberry to dedicate Liberty Tree on April 11 for America's 250th birthday

City partnered with Gainesville's Sons of the American Revolution

By Lillian Hamman
REPORTER

The city of Newberry is partnering with Gainesville's Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) to plant and dedicate a Liberty Tree at City Hall on Saturday, April 11, in honor of the 250th anniversary of the United States.

Gainesville SAR President Randy Highsmith said Liberty Trees serve as living monuments of a tradition dating back to colonial times, when patriots would gather around a tree to discuss issues about taxation and liberty.

Newberry will dedicate the tree at 1 p.m. at City Hall (25440 W Newberry Rd.) following a reenactment of

the Battle of Lexington and Concord.

The ceremony will feature a bronze plaque detailing some of the Liberty Tree's history, the Buchholz High School ROTC color guard and comments from Highsmith, Newberry Mayor Tim Marden and potentially U.S. Rep. Kat Cammack. The first 50 attendees will receive exclusive event pins.

"We are excited to commemorate the 250th in such a way," said Marden in a text to Mainstreet. "People can see this tree in the years to come and remember the goodness of America every time they do."

According to Highsmith, SAR is a nonpartisan non-profit organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history and educating future generations. It's made up of nearly 40 descendants of those who supported the cause of American independence.



COURTESY GAINESVILLE'S SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Newberry plans to plant its own Liberty Tree that hearkens to the colonial tradition.

Highsmith said SAR reached out to multiple cities in Alachua County about partnering for Liberty Trees

and Newberry was the first to accept.

The original Liberty Tree was a large American Elm tree

in Boston, Massachusetts, planted in 1646 and frequented by protestors of the Stamp Act in 1765. British soldiers

cut the tree down and burned it during the Siege of Boston 10 years later.

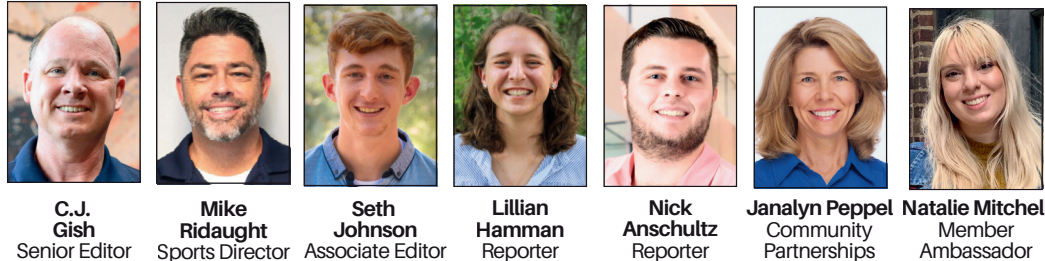
Liberty Trees like Newberry's have since been planted across the U.S., aiming to provide new gathering places while reminding communities about the price of freedom fought for during the Revolutionary War.

Newberry will plant a Winged Elm, a species native to Florida, procured from Blooming House Nursery.

Highsmith said the tree stands for legacy and the freedoms enjoyed today began with ordinary people willing to stand together.

"I remember [America's] Bicentennial in 1976 and the pride it created. In a small way, I hope this does the same for the next generation," he said. "I hope people leave remembering that liberty is not automatic. Every generation has to understand it, value it and protect it. This tree is a reminder of that."

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This tradition began more than 25 years ago, and brings hundreds of community members together in the beautiful setting of North Florida Duck Pond for a meaningful program. Scott Whitaker of Impact for Living will deliver a non-denominational message of peace, hope and joy. Live music, refreshments and shuttle service will be provided.

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Join us in-person at the North Florida Duck Pond or on Facebook Live.

HCA Florida launches air ambulance service for Tri-County service

Helicopter to bring patients into Gainesville, Ocala

By **Seth Johnson**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

HCA Florida and Air Methods team up for air ambulance service in North Central Florida, starting its 24/7 response early Thursday morning, officials announced at a March 25 press conference.

Transporting patients into HCA Florida facilities in Gainesville and Ocala, the helicopter will be based out of Chiefland and bring the biggest benefit to rural Tri-County residents.

HCA Florida North Florida Hospital receives around 3,300 ambulance trips from Gilchrist, Levy and Dixie counties. Those trips can take 46 minutes or longer, hospital staff said.

Officials said the air service will significantly reduce travel time for trauma patients in rural areas while also freeing up transport time for EMS in those



PHOTO BY SETH JOHNSON

HCA Florida, Air Methods and Tri-County officials cut the ribbon on the new helicopter that will provide medical transport into Gainesville and Ocala.

counties. Plus, the helicopters contain equipment to serve as "flying ICUs" and to give lifesaving care while en route to hospitals.

Mark Amox, COO of HCA Florida North Florida Hospital, said time is of the utmost importance when people have medical emergencies. Every minute without care after a stroke is increased damage to the brain, he reminded attendees.

"The work that we're doing every day to deliver the best of medical care to our communities is really the purpose of being here," Amox said.

HCA Florida already contracts with Air Methods. In 2025, the company transported 2,800 critical care patients to 83 Florida-based HCA facilities.

Air Methods owns and operates the helicopters and flight crew, while HCA Flor-



PHOTO BY SETH JOHNSON

Chiefland Mayor Rissa Johns said the new air ambulance service represents a stronger safety net for rural areas.

ida provides the medical staff.

Brandon Ryan, Air Methods vice president of business development, said the coordination came together quickly and seamlessly for this air service expansion. He said it takes each of the counties working in unison with each other, HCA Florida and Air Methods to work.

Without any one of them, he said the air ambulance might not be feasible for the

area. But with contracts in place, Ryan said Air Methods estimates flying a patient every day from the Tri-county area to HCA Florida services.

Whether the helicopter heads to Ocala or Gainesville will depend on each patient's needs and location, Ryan said.

He added that people will see the helicopter overhead, but not the hours of training to be ready for the moment. He said Air Methods provid-

ed more than 100,000 transports across the country in 2025 and is proud to partner with HCA to service the Tri-County area.

"It's an honor; it's an obligation that we take very seriously in terms of partnering not just with HCA but also with the local communities here," Ryan said.

Ryan said he can count on one hand the number of times a new air service has started with such coordination between partners, calling it "absolutely admirable."

Chiefland Mayor Rissa Johns spoke at the launch and said the helicopter represented hope and a stronger safety net for Tri-County communities. She said the air ambulance service is an investment in lives saved, families supported and futures protected.

"Thank you for helping ensure that no matter where someone lives, they have access to the care they deserve," Johns said.

The helicopter, a Bell 407GX, already made its first transport on March 23 with a second on March 24.

Florida Board of Governors hears update on UF presidential search

Search committee currently focused on developing 'good pool of candidates'

By **Nick Anschutz**
REPORTER

The Florida Board of Governors received a brief update on university presidential searches at a meeting on Thursday, including the University of Florida.

At its Feb. 23 meeting,

the UF Board of Trustees approved a set of revised presidential qualifications and criteria recommended by the 15-member Presidential Search Advisory Committee. The search advisory committee was established in December 2025 to lead the search for the university's 14th president.

The modifications to the qualifications and criteria were based on feedback the search advisory committee had received from three listening sessions held in Jan-

uary and February, as well as an online stakeholder survey.

Also, during the Feb. 23 meeting, the board approved the search advisory committee's recommended presidential prospectus and advertisement based on those qualifications and criteria and other "updated information regarding UF's accomplishments and stature," according to the meeting agenda. The Board of Trustees also voted to pay UF's next president an annual sal-

ary of up to \$3 million.

During Thursday's meeting, Board of Governors Member Edward Haddock, who also serves on the search advisory committee, said the current focus is on "developing a good pool of candidates that the search committee can review and use to identify prospects."

"I think we're making good progress there," he said. "We'll get that wrapped up in due time."

UF has not had a permanent president in place since

Ben Sasse took over the role in 2023. After 17 months in the position, Sasse, UF's 13th president, resigned in July 2024, citing his wife's health issues and a need to spend more time with family.

A months-long search brought UF leaders to Santa Ono, who, at the time, was serving as the president of the University of Michigan. However, Ono, after being selected as the sole finalist for UF's president position and receiving unanimous

support from the Board of Trustees, was rejected by the Board of Governors by way of a 10-6 vote in June 2025.

In August 2025, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to appoint Donald Landry, then-Columbia University professor, as UF's next interim president. He succeeded Kent Fuchs, who had been serving in an interim capacity following Sasse's resignation. Fuchs served as UF's 12th president from 2015 to 2023.

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‘No Kings III’ protest draws large crowd in Gainesville

STAFF REPORTS

Thousands of protesters gathered at Cora Roberson Park in Gainesville on Saturday for the nationwide “No Kings III” rally to protest President Donald Trump and his policies.

The rally, one of over 100 in Florida and 3,100 across the country, started with people marching from the Cade Museum roundabout to Cora Roberson Park. A coalition of groups joined with signs, costumes and noise makers to protest the Trump administration’s war

in Iran, the economy and immigration policy.

According to a press release, the event drew around 4,000 people and the keynote speakers included Warren Goldstein, an award-winning author and former Chair of the Department of History at the University of Hartford, and Zorhara Simmons, Senior Lecturer Erimita at the University of Florida, and an activist who worked in the Civil Rights Movement as a member of Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee.

Other local speakers included David Arreola, former Gainesville City Commissioner and founding member of Gainesville 50501; Carmen Ward, President of the Alachua County Education Association; and Evelyn Foxx, President of the Alachua County Chapter of the NAACP.

Local elected officials and candidates who attended:

- Sarah Rockwell, Alachua County School Board
- Casey Willits, Gainesville City Commissioner
- Bryan Eastman, Gaines-

- ville City Commissioner
- Ken Cornell, Alachua County Commissioner
- Seth Harp, Democratic candidate for US House District 3
- Amy Trask, Democratic candidate for Florida State House District 22

The sponsors of the rally included the Gainesville Women for Democracy, Badass Feminists Gainesville, Democratic Women’s Club of Alachua County, 50501gnv, Party for Socialism and Liberation, Indivisible Gainesville and others.



PHOTO BY MEGAN V. WINSLOW

UF graduate student Kai Blades, an organizer for the Party for Socialism and Liberation and Students for Socialism, leads a crowd in chants Saturday as part of the “No Kings III” protest in Gainesville.

DROUGHT FROM A1

The Suwannee River Water Management District (Suwannee District) sat at a 15-inch rainfall deficit compared to the 12-month average at the end of February. At its March meeting, Hydrologic Program Manager Robbie McKinney said the rainfall deficit could have a decent increase because of the March 2025 data, leaving the 12-month average.

According to provisional data from its Live Oak station, March 2026 has only brought 1.13 inches of rain so far compared to 5 inches for the same month in 2025.

Troy Roberts, communications and outreach chief for the Suwannee District, said the district doesn’t have numerical thresholds to increase from one restriction level to another. Instead, staff continue to monitor drought conditions and water levels to see if additional restrictions are needed.

“We just ask people to voluntarily reduce their water use as much as possible,”

Roberts said. “We understand that everybody needs access to water, and we also understand that drought conditions could worsen before they get better. We just want to make sure that we’re in a good spot for that.”

Roberts said the Suwannee District reaches out to large water users and permittees, asking them to conserve water where possible and to plan for a prolonged drought.

The primary water use in the Suwannee District, which ranges north and west from Alachua County, is agriculture at 64% of total water use in 2023. Each of the five water management districts in Florida produces annual water use reports, and the most recent reports are from 2023.

Roberts said the Suwannee District is the only one where agriculture is the primary water user. As spring and the growing season arrive, he said agricultural producers will need more water to support crops.

“Our farmers are going to need that water for crops, especially when we’re not seeing any rainfall,” Roberts said. “So that typically does have an impact on our groundwater levels, and again, we want to make sure that they have water, but we also want to make sure that people do as well.”

The district operates a series of Agricultural Cost-Share programs that help farmers pay for efficient equipment like field sprayers. But Phase III Severe Water Shortage restrictions could put some mandatory restrictions in place for agriculture operations, as well as other users.

While levels are low, Roberts said they’ve been low before as Florida cycles through high and low rainfall years. And with hurricanes a perennial possibility, the water situation could quickly change.

Florida experienced extremely low aquifer levels in May 2012 before Tropical Storm Debby arrived in late

June and, along with other seasonal showers, helped quickly boost the levels to nearly 65% by the end of July.

Overall, the Suwannee District averaged 260 million gallons of water used per day (MGD) in 2023—nearly the same as the 2016 average of 259 MGD.

In the St. Johns River Water Management District (St. Johns District), the average daily water use hit 1.49 billion in 2023—a 25% reduction compared with 2004, despite an increased population.

Public supply water taken out of a central supply system like a utility, is the largest water use for the St. Johns District at 609 MGD in 2023. Of that number, the portion of Alachua County within the district consumed 23.86 MGD. This district also includes Duval and Orange counties with their large population centers.

On the Suwannee District side of Alachua County,

public supply water use in 2023 hit just over 3 MGD.

Between the two districts, Alachua County used 49.3 million gallons per day in 2023. Public supply is the largest category at 26.86 MGD (54.4%), with agriculture at 15.94 MGD (32.3%).

Roberts said the Suwannee District encourages small water-saving efforts people can implement at home. While only a few gallons per day, he said those savings compound when multiplied across all the residents in the district.

“I know a couple gallons in the grand scheme of things doesn’t seem significant, but if you have half of the population doing that, that’s a huge water savings every single day,” Roberts said. “We try to encourage people just to be mindful of that because when we are in drought conditions like this, every drop does count.”

Public feedback from water conservation messaging often touches bottling

plants pulling water from springs. These comments on water districts’ Facebook posts and Mainstreet stories pop up frequently.

Roberts said the district reaches out to bottling companies just like agriculture producers and other large water users, asking them to conserve where possible. He noted that bottling spring water is a permitted use in Florida.

“We can’t really single out individual permittees, and so, any of those regulatory measures would have to affect all of our permittees,” Roberts said.

The industrial/commercial/institutional/mining category is responsible for around 22% of the daily water used in the Suwannee District, with 58 MGD. The bottling company pulling from Ginnie Springs, perhaps the most frequently cited example, is permitted to pull 1 MGD—less than 2% of that category’s water use and 0.38% of the total district.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT



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Queen of Peace readies for Easter with Mozart's final requiem

By Lillian Hamman
REPORTER

On Sunday, Christians around the world will celebrate Easter as they reflect on what they believe to be the atoning death of Jesus Christ for sins and rejoice in the hope of his resurrection.

Traditions during Lent—the 40 days before Easter—and Holy Week—the last eight days leading up to Easter—include various religious services marking events preceding Christ's crucifix-

ion, such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Palm Sunday.

Other celebrations like Easter egg hunts and chocolate-filled baskets have also become synonymous with the holiday and spring season.

Gainesville's Queen of Peace Catholic Community (QPCC) is holding fast to the roots of church tradition with a performance of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's final composition, the Requiem Mass in D Minor. A Requiem Mass is a Catholic liturgy

offered for the repose of deceased souls.

Mozart's requiem will be performed at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday in the QPCC sanctuary (10900 SW 24th Ave.) by the church's Regina Pacis Chorale and Strings of Peace, including classically-trained violinist QPCC Father Alberto Esposito.

While the church will perform the piece in light of Christ's death, Esposito said the whole community, Christian or not, is invited to hear the famous composer's ulti-

mate work, written with universal appeal to all.

"I encourage people to come early to procure good parking, and hopefully to see it not only as a concert, but also as an opportunity to enter into the spirit of Holy Week," Esposito said.

QPCC Music Director Gary Kneal started the Regina Pacis Chorale a few years ago after some members of the worship team expressed interest in classical Catholic choral music, including chants, Renaissance motets and re-

quiems.

Esposito said music is rooted in the religion's core and how it aims to magnify God. He said the Catholic theology was influenced by Greek philosophy and its four transcendentals: the One, the True, the Good and the Beautiful.

Music has a unique ability to glorify God as it becomes a mode of evangelization through beauty, he said, and the beauty of music calls forth emotions and feelings too deep for words.

"And also, during Holy Week, [it] invites people to ponder more deeply the death and resurrection of Christ, since the requiem itself is a profound reflection on the mystery of death and the encounter with God in the ultimate sense," he said.

According to a program for QPCC's concert, Mozart, a member of the Roman Catholic Church, expanded on the ordinary parts of the Mass in his requiem with movements like Dies Irae (Day of Wrath), Tuba Mirum and Lacrymosa.

ST. FRANCIS FROM A1

Many in the homeless services community expected the closure. St. Francis House started trying to sell the shelter building several years ago and recently sold its Sunrise Inn in an effort to stabilize finances.

Lauri Schiffbauer, executive director at St. Francis House, released a letter on Monday thanking the community for its messages of support since the closure announcement. The letter emphasized that the nonprofit would continue to serve women and children through the Arbor Home, a transitional housing program.

"At this time, we must consolidate our services to stabilize, rebuild, and ultimately return stronger — better able to serve our community," Schiffbauer said in the letter.

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the Arbor Home, a transitional housing program.

"At this time, we must consolidate our services to stabilize, rebuild, and ultimately return stronger — better able to serve our community," Schiffbauer said in the letter.

Schiffbauer told Mainstreet that Family Promise would have funding to help 40 people rehouse while St. Francis House continues to provide case management. She said the partnership has been excellent.

Schiffbauer said the downtown shelter is too costly to keep operational, calling the expenses outrageous. Even though fundraising has also increased, it hasn't kept up with costs, like a \$3,400 monthly garbage bill. She added that the day services (like food and laundry) were just managing people's homelessness, not solving the problem.

St. Francis House wants to double down on people and families entering for long-term help and case management. She said these 98% of these people are homeless for the first time after a



PHOTO BY TARYN ASHBY

St. Francis House announced on March 16 that its downtown shelter and service center would close by mid-April.

one-time cost threw their lives out of sync. On the other hand, homeless individuals using day services rarely talk with case managers to enter rehousing programs. Schiffbauer said the vast majority are chronically homeless and qualify for service at GRACE Marketplace.

Schiffbauer said staff have reached out to other food providers and given information to people using their ser-

vice about where to go for meals or beds after the closure.

She said St. Francis House is looking for facilities without the unsustainable operational costs of the current shelter. But moving forward on a new site will need to wait until a sale. The downtown shelter is listed for \$2.9 million.

Darius Williams, the new CEO of GRACE Market-

place, said its shelter has seen no impacts yet from the closure announcement—and the St. Francis House shelter remains open as it winds down for an April closure.

GRACE Marketplace only serves adults. With Family Promise equipped to help with families, Williams said GRACE has set aside six women's beds in case of additional occupants in the coming weeks. Plus, a new GRACE shelter with 20 beds aimed at mental health, substance abuse and employment services guests will open soon, he said, providing more flexibility.

Williams said the overnight shelter population has been hitting capacity, but long-term beds are available. He said GRACE staff believe many of the adults served by St. Francis House might not make the trip up to their shelter, staying in the downtown area instead.

Gainesville Mayor Harvey Ward told Mainstreet that people will be left reeling from the closure, but he said the TaskForce and other service providers are already working to minimize impacts

and knew the closure would be coming. "There's a whole lot of prep work that has gone in among the homeless services community to be ready for this when it finally went down," Ward said. Ward said the next conversation is addressing families who are homeless and living in cars or moving from couch to couch—a more visible form than panhandlers or people sleeping on sidewalks. Ward said he'd like to see if stakeholders could turn empty buildings, especially schools, into family centers with education and health assistance and perhaps short-term housing. He said it's a conversation worth having. And the school district will end up with some unused buildings after its school board voted to finalize a new rezoning plan. Torner said the TaskForce has a safety net in place, and it wants to further support family homelessness. The TaskForce is hosting a Collaborative Summit on Family Homelessness on March 30, with capacity already reached.



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B'z Gelati opens 'The Hive' permanent storefront

Celebration to feature exclusive homemade Italian ice and ice cream flavors

By Lillian Hamman
REPORTER

Gelati dessert truck B'z Gelati celebrated the grand opening of a permanent storefront in Gainesville on Saturday with exclusive Italian ice and ice cream flavors and giveaways.

Known as "The Hive," B'z's new location at 1130 NW 23rd Ave. shares space with Baloo's Donuts and Coffee, which B'z owner Brandon Grabhorn opened in 2024.

The Hive's grand opening day and week will feature buy-one-get-one specials, gelati flavors crafted especially for the celebration, a daily

drawing to win five free small gelatis, a chalk art station for kids and University of Florida (UF) Gator swag giveaways.

The Hive will be open from 2 to 10 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and noon to 10 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

B'z will also continue serving the community through its two food trucks, Queen Bee and Lil Honey, for catering and private events. Its Turlington Plaza Food Court storefront "where Gators chomp dessert" on UF's campus (1701 Stadium Rd.) will also remain open from noon to 6 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

"The Hive marks a major milestone for the local favorite, offering a home base for the signature, homemade honey-sweetened gelati that has captivated Gainesville since 2018," said B'z in a press release.

Gelati was a regular treat for Grabhorn growing up in



PHOTO BY LILLIAN HAMMAN

B'z Gelati opened its permanent Gainesville storefront with Baloo's Donuts and Coffee on NW 23rd Avenue.

Orlando. While studying business at UF, he noticed a

need for the sweet Italian ice and ice cream-fused treat in

Gainesville and developed a business plan during his se-

nior year for his own shop. After graduating in 2018, Grabhorn purchased the necessary machines and equipment to start crafting the recipes he now serves with a goal of spreading kindness and love to the community with every gelati.

Unlike other gelati shops that use soft serve ice cream, B'z Gelati crafts fresh, homemade ice cream using unfiltered organic honey and layers it with homemade Italian ice, according to the release.

One food truck eventually turned into two before B'z opened its Turlington storefront in the fall of 2025. Now, B'z will set up shop on NW 23rd Ave.

"We are super excited, on March 28th, we will open our permanent storefront, 'The Hive,'" Grabhorn said in an email to Mainstreet. "We will continue to operate all other channels to accommodate our catering and customer base."

NEWBERRY FROM A1

paigned as their last, win or lose.

The following questions were emailed to each candidate and their answers are printed with minor edits for style. Campaign Facebook pages can be followed for more information, and a longer version of these interviews can be found on Mainstreet's website.

Seat 1: Rick Coleman (incumbent), Brandy Oldman

• **What prompted you to run for re-election or election?**

Coleman: The city of Newberry is at a critical time in our history. We have three vital projects for our future that will be happening in the next three years: our regional wastewater treatment plant, the second feed for our electric grid and the two-way pairs in partnership with FDOT. These projects require seasoned leadership and absolute focus to see them through successfully.

Oldman: To be completely honest, it was the takeover of our local public elementary school. That took away the public option of an A-rated school with the Pre-K, ESE and VPK programs, and then the commission approved a line of credit of \$2.2 million for that new school, which in effect made Newberry have fewer options for schools and higher taxes, all for fewer services and less options. Since then, I've become a lot more aware of issues within the city that concern me as a working-class person, such as utility rates going higher and at a point of surpassing even [Gainesville Region-

al Utilities]. Our fire assessments went up 50% last year alone. Newberry has become more and more expensive to live here. I love my town and want to stop the rate hikes!

• **What decisions do you think need to be made to address citizen hopes and concerns about development and growth coming to Newberry?**

Coleman: The decisions that are in front of us are the very reason I decided to run again. There are crucial decisions about the regional wastewater treatment plant, the second electric feed for the community and the two-way pairs project with the state. On top of that, we have decisions on a second fire station, when and where. We need to continue monitoring Newberry's eventual need for our own police department.

Oldman: Growth in itself isn't a bad thing; we need it to thrive. But unchecked growth is a huge issue. I would advocate for impact fees and spacing developments out over more time so our infrastructure can catch up.

Seat 2: Mark Clark (incumbent), David Wallace

• **What prompted you to run for elected office?**

Clark: Many citizens and people in the community asking me to do it again, that as far as they thought, I was doing a good job and doing what was needed for the city. So, I was asked by multiple people and multiple city people to continue, and so I did.

Wallace: It was always a goal to continue serving the city after I hopefully retired from the city. I have always

served in one way or another [in] Newberry and representing the citizens from the dais just seemed like a final goal.

• **What are the two most important issues facing Newberry and how should the City Commission address them?**

Clark: We've got two things going on; we want to get some of the infrastructure in that we've promised, and now it's coming to fruition. We've got what we call the second feed coming in, which will help Newberry have power. If there's a main failure on the main line, we'll at least have another source of electricity for the town. So that's a good thing. We've got the twin pairs coming in.

Wallace: The continued growth and how we adapt and adjust to that growth. The other biggest issue will be the charter [school]. There will be a lot of pressure to show improvement over being a district-run school. I and others believe in this community, but as a community we have to deliver.

Seat 3: Monty Farnsworth (incumbent), Naim Joseph Erched, JD Mercado

• **What prompted you to run for election or re-election?**

Farnsworth: Having lived here my entire life and going to school here from kindergarten to 12th grade, I've got a vested interest in Newberry and am always looking out for the citizens. I'm not someone that just moved here and wants to change things to mirror where they moved from. I want to be sure that any growth is not



PHOTO BY LILLIAN HAMMAN

Seven candidates are running for three seats on the Newberry City Commission.

a financial burden to current citizens.

Erched: Serving on the Planning and Zoning Board over the past several years has given me a unique perspective on the decisions shaping Newberry's future. Through that experience, and through conversations with neighbors and families in our community, I felt called to step forward and serve in a greater capacity. Newberry is a special place to live and raise a family, and I want to help ensure that as our city continues to evolve, we protect the character, safety and quality of life that make people proud to call Newberry home.

Mercado: I was invited by the former mayor and current City Manager Jordan Marlowe at the grand opening of the new city hall. I believe he may have been speaking hypothetically, but I did qualify and now my name is in the hat.

• **What are the two most important issues facing Newberry and how should the City Commission address them?**

Farnsworth: Growth and taxes. Growth will happen, but it needs to be controlled growth. We don't need someone in the office who will rubber-stamp every development that's presented.

Erched: One of the biggest issues is making sure our infrastructure keeps pace with the needs of a growing community. Another important priority is continuing to invest in parks and recreation, so families have safe places to gather, children have places to play and neighbors have spaces where they can enjoy time together.

The commission should continue focusing on long-term planning and thoughtful decision making. That means making sure infra-

structure improvements are planned ahead of community needs, supporting strong public safety services, and continuing to expand parks and recreation opportunities for families.

Mercado: Slowing the city's growth and spending in the face of the possible loss of revenue due to the dissolution of property taxes. It is also important for the city to develop new lines of revenue in the face of the potential revenue shortage that could be faced by the dissolution of property taxes.

I believe the commission should limit any expenditures until the outcome regarding property taxes is decided and focus on the repair and upkeep of the existing infrastructure. I believe the commission should develop new lines of revenue to supplement or replace property taxes.

Good In Gainesville



A Connected Ecosystem: The Organizations Advancing Entrepreneurship in Alachua County

By Scott Schroeder

North Central Florida is one of the most dynamic hubs for innovation in the Southeast, fueled by a highly connected network of academic institutions, incubators, and community driven organizations. Anchored by the University of Florida, this ecosystem has helped launch more than 300 startups, generating over \$11 billion in private investment and creating thousands of high quality jobs, positioning the region as a leader in entrepreneurial growth.

At the center of this ecosystem is the University of Florida's UF Innovate, a comprehensive commercialization and startup support system that connects research, entrepreneurs, and investors. Through its programs in technology licensing, venture development, and acceleration, UF Innovate has helped launch hundreds of companies and generate billions in private investment while creating thousands of jobs. Its facilities, including The Hub and the Sid Martin Biotech Incubator, provide state of the art lab space, mentorship, and access to funding networks that are critical for early stage companies.

Complementing these efforts is Santa Fe College Center for Innovation and Economic Development (CIED), which is particularly valuable for local and non university affiliated entrepreneurs seeking practical guidance and affordable infrastructure.

The ecosystem continues to expand geographically with major new initiatives. In Newberry, the F 300 AgFoodTech Innovation Park is positioning the region as a leader in agricultural innovation. Spanning more than 170 acres, the park is designed as a research and business incubator. It is expected to generate high skill jobs while supporting startup growth through accelerator programs, mentorship, and access to production facilities.

In the City of Alachua, Good Life Station is emerging as a unique community driven hub that blends entrepreneurship, technology, and culture. Through its THRIVE Entrepreneur Incubator and on-

going workshop series, the organization provides training, mentorship, and access to business incentives. By partnering with local organizations and hosting educational programming, Good Life Station is helping local business owners build practical skills while strengthening connections across the community.

Beyond incubators, business advocacy organizations play a critical role in supporting growth. The Alachua Chamber of Commerce has been instrumental in fostering a business-friendly environment by connecting entrepreneurs to resources, promoting local companies, and supporting economic development initiatives. Chambers help ensure that startups and established businesses alike have access to the networks and visibility needed to succeed.

North Central Florida is a model for how strategic collaboration and investment in innovation can transform a regional economy into a thriving community for businesses of all types and sizes.



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Scott Schroeder is Executive Director, StartGNV

ALACHUA
FROM A1



COURTESY OF CITY OF ALACHUA

Dayna Williams

cal businesses and my family. The message I heard was clear: steady leadership and a strong community matter. Over the last several years, we have expanded and upgraded our parks, recreation facilities and community spaces, invested in infrastructure and utilities, revitalized our downtown, and planned strategically for housing and population growth—all while maintaining high-quality municipal services. But there is still more to accomplish. I am committed to continuing that progress and using my experience to help guide our city forward in a positive and responsible way.

Youmas: A few years ago, CVS offered me a position managing the store in the city of Alachua. Having lived all across the state of Florida, I quickly found Alachua offered the quiet, close-knit life my family and I were looking for. The kind of place where neighbors still look out for each other.

But the more I listened to the people who came through

the doors of my store every day, the more I heard the same frustration: our government isn't listening to us. I watched experienced city planners resign and walk away rather than be forced to put developer interests ahead of the best interests of the citizens. I watched a commission that rubber-stamped decisions without any real debate or understanding of community impact.

I am not a career politician. I am a father, a health-care professional and your neighbor. I'm running because the soul of Alachua is worth fighting for and it deserves someone at City Hall who actually stands up for it.

Menadier: Through my work on the Planning and Zoning Board since 2022 and the Alachua Chamber, I have heard consistent feedback about growth, transparency and long-term planning. My professional experience has prepared me to step in and help address those concerns for my clients. As a consulting engineer working with multi-



COURTESY OF JACKSON YOUMAS

Jackson Youmas

ple cities and counties, I have worked on capital improvement planning, infrastructure assessments and budgeting decisions that shape how communities grow. This combination of local involvement and technical experience led me to run for office. I want to apply what I have learned to help guide responsible growth and support decisions that reflect the priorities of our neighbors.

• What are the two most important issues facing Alachua and how should the City Commission address them?

Williams: Two of the most important issues facing Alachua are managing growth and protecting our local schools.

Growth is both a blessing and a challenge—we all feel it. Alachua is becoming an increasingly attractive place to live, work and raise a family, thanks to our strong recreation and cultural programs, low electric rates, proximity to a major university and a thriving business environ-



COURTESY OF BILL MENADIER

Bill Menadier

ment. As more people and businesses choose to call Alachua home, we must be thoughtful and intentional in how we manage that growth so it enhances our community while preserving the character and quality of life our residents value.

Another immediate concern is the potential impact of changes to our local schools. The Alachua County School Board has adopted a countywide rezoning plan and is considering the closure of our two elementary schools. When our local schools were at risk, I made it a priority to step forward, speak up and ensure that the voices of our Alachua families were clearly heard.

Youmas: First: Accountable, community-driven, smart growth. Growth is not the enemy, but rushed, reckless growth is. We watched experienced planners resign rather than rubber-stamp developments that weren't ready. We watched proposals advance near Mill Creek Sink, a direct pathway to

our drinking water, without an adequate study of the environmental impacts. Our community deserves growth that is smart, safe and honest. Growth that passes one simple test: does this protect the Alachua we love?

Second: Restoring trust through real transparency. Too many residents feel like decisions are made for them, not with them. A city manager resigned with no public explanation. An investigation into the planning crisis was started and killed—twice. A precinct with the city's highest minority voter turnout was closed weeks before an election. Each of these decisions erodes the trust that democracy runs on. We cannot build a "good life" community on a foundation of secrecy and lies.

Menadier: Our neighbors want to restore transparency at City Hall and manage growth in a way that preserves the Good Life Community charm.

We should focus on transparency, access and ear-

ly public input. By making meetings available online, residents who cannot attend in person can still participate. I believe the commission would benefit from holding regular workshops and open forums to gather input before major decisions are made. Managing growth starts with strong planning. The city is now reviewing its comprehensive plan through the Evaluations and Assessment Report, which is a required update process. This gives the commission a clear chance to review current policies and make deliberate changes. After updates to the comprehensive plan are approved, they guide changes to land development regulations, which directly shape how and where growth happens. The commission can encourage residents and community leaders to take part in this process and submit specific recommendations. This approach helps ensure future development reflects the voice of the community.

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2026 UF cornhole tournament



By Isabel Bequer

More than \$130,000 will flow into North Central Florida nonprofits this year thanks to a cornhole tournament at the University of Florida — a fundraising haul nearly four times greater than what the same event raised just a year ago.

The UF Department of Planning, Design and Construction's Annual Cornhole Tournament Fundraiser, held at the end of February at the university's band practice field, has become one of the bigger contributors to the UF Campaign for Charities — a decades-old initiative that funnels donations from the campus community to more than 100 local nonprofit organizations.

"It takes a whole team effort," said Kate Farmer, a project manager for the Department of Planning, Design and Construction, also known as PDC. "We couldn't have done it without all the staff and the vendors that support PDC."

The cornhole tournament began around 20 years ago and has since grown exponentially, with a total of 56 cornhole boards, 224 participants and 325 people in attendance this year.

The event raised about \$35,000 in 2025, but organizers at PDC came together to brainstorm ways to top that amount this year. One way they decided to increase the draw of the event was to include the Guinness World Record Competition, to encourage more participation in the tournament. PDC's sustainability coordinator, Dustin Stephany, got in

touch with the world record organization to set up the cornhole toss. The communications team worked with the Guinness team to film each toss based on the organization's specific guidelines.

This innovative idea helped the tournament succeed significantly in its fundraising efforts, and the UF Campaign for Charities — the campus-based initiative that encourages members of the UF community to give back to charities that make a local impact — benefited greatly.

Since 1993, the campaign has raised more than \$29 million for groups providing everything from medical assistance and legal aid to hospice care and early childhood education across the region.

Last year, the campaign raised \$783,088, much of which came from individual donations, as well as contributions from various UF colleges and departments.

"Some of it was just kind of a reinvigoration of our department and a change in our culture recently," Farmer said about the event's success this year.

The main group of sponsors for the event were vendors for construction projects on the UF campus. These vendors range in size, from small companies that provide equipment to larger companies that build entire buildings. The main fundraising push for the 2026 Campaign for Charities will kick off in September and run through November.



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Santa Fe's Boone, Dall'Acqua finish third in Class 3A voting



PHOTO BY C.J. GISH
Santa Fe's Wayne Boone

Raiders advanced to their first final four in program history this past season

By Mike Ridaught
SPORTS DIRECTOR

Coming off its first final four in program history, the Santa Fe (Alachua) boys soccer team is reaping the rewards with a couple of post-season honors.

On March 20, senior midfielder Wayne Boone finished third in the voting for the

Florida Dairy Farmers Class 3A Player of the Year.

"Wayne is just a phenomenal young man," said Santa Fe coach Morgan Dall'Acqua. "He's excellent in the classroom, excellent in training, excellent on the surface, really a leader of our team. There's a very, very bright future for this young man."

Boone, who had the game-winning goal against Suwannee (Live Oak) in a 2-1 win in the Class 3A-Region 1 Quarterfinals on Feb. 3, led the Raiders (14-5-3) with 16 goals and seven assists.

He finished behind 3A POY Jadyn Senger of Cocoa Beach and runner-up Jordan Brifil of Avon Park.

"Everything that he does, he brings an intensity, and it doesn't just elevate his performance but everyone around him," Dall'Acqua said. "Just a wonderful guy to have in the locker room, and it's going to be very, very difficult to replace a player like that."

Dall'Acqua finished third in the voting for Class 3A Coach of the Year.

"The success came together this season because of the

stuff that we put in place several years ago," he said. "We work with these boys and get them in the weight room, doing our training stuff over the summer. They're grinding when everybody else is resting. They're putting in the work. They're putting in the effort when other folks are not and all of that hard work culminated in a really, really solid season."

Dall'Acqua, the 2025 and 2024 Bosshardt Realty Big School Coach of the Year, finished behind Jonathan Rosas of state champion Downtown Doral and Eric DeSousa of

state runner-up Somerset Academy-Canyons (Boyn-ton Beach), who defeated the Raiders in the Class 3A state semifinals.

Both of those programs were nationally ranked.

"Last year, it seemed like we were giving up goals the last three to five minutes of the game, or halves," Dall'Acqua said. "This season, we were finding the back of the net in those last four to five minutes. It's not a surprise that Wayne hits a goal to tie with just a couple sec-

SANTA FE, B3

GHS evens series against Trenton

UF commit Addison Allaire struck out 20 in a losing effort

By Mike Ridaught
SPORTS DIRECTOR

University of Florida commit Addison Allaire was flawless on Thursday night.

But one pitch ruined a nearly perfect game.

Texas A&M commit Leanna Bourdage had an RBI single in the bottom of the ninth as GHS edged Trenton, 1-0, at Boulware Ballpark.

As part of the "Kansas Tiebreaker," Trenton's second in as many days, Aubree Suarez led off the inning in scoring position at second base and went to third on a sacrifice bunt by catcher Roxy Walsh.

However, leadoff hitter Taylor Rogers bunted a line drive to third and Trenton third baseman Madison Hinote made a diving catch for the second out of the inning.

Bourdage then hit a 0-1 pitch into center field for the game-winner as the Hurricanes (7-6) split the 2-game series.

"I knew she was going to throw me a changeup," Bour-



PHOTO BY C.J. GISH

Gainesville players celebrate after Leanna Bourdage drives in the winning run in the bottom of the ninth inning for a 1-0 victory over visiting Trenton.

dage said. "I was so ready. I was like, okay sit back, you're going to drive it."

She also accounted for their only run on Feb. 19, a solo home run off Allaire, which was one of just two hits the junior allowed in the first meeting.

The All-SEC matchup in the circle between Allaire and Bourdage lived up to its billing.

"Obviously a pitcher's

duel," said Gainesville coach Chris Chronister. "You can't go nine innings scoreless, or eight innings scoreless, and not have good pitching, and they both were on their game tonight. Addison did a great job pitching. We were having a hard time barreling it up and Leanna was also on her game, so just a fantastic effort by both teams. Defensively, both teams played incredible, so just an overall great soft-

ball game."

Allaire only allowed two base runners through the first eight innings with no walks and 20 strikeouts.

She carried a no-hitter into the ninth.

"Addi did her job in the circle, for sure," said Trenton coach Kevin Benson. "We just didn't do anything to help her at the plate. We failed to ex-

GHS WINS, B3

Buchholz's Wilburn pitches gem in 2-1 win over Santa Fe

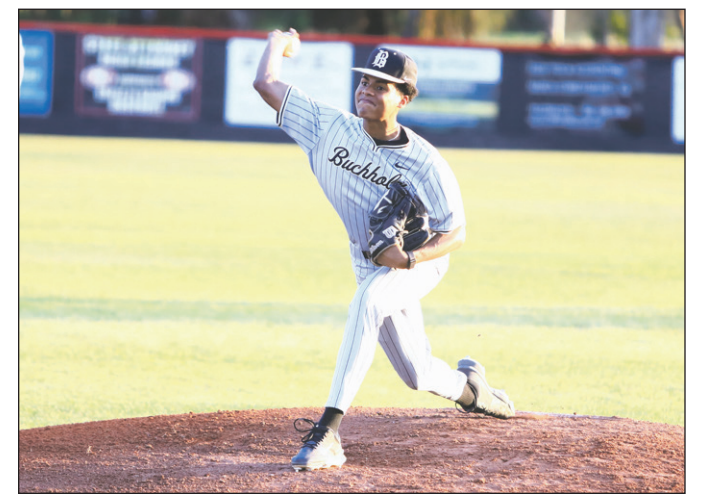


PHOTO BY C.J. GISH

Buchholz pitcher Dion Wilburn (17) struck out 12 batters in a 2-1 win over Santa Fe.

By Marty Pallman
CORRESPONDENT

Buchholz took a trip up to Alachua on Friday to play Santa Fe in the first of two meetings between the teams over back-to-back days.

Senior pitcher Dion Wilburn allowed only two hits and one walk with 12 strikeouts and went the distance as Buchholz edged Santa Fe, 2-1.

"When he (Dion) woke

up this morning, he didn't know if he was going to pitch or not due to flu-like symptoms," Buchholz coach Chris Malphurs said. "It was a four o'clock type decision if he was going to go and we were going to keep him on a pretty tight pitch count. The game was tight and he kept wanting to go out there."

Buchholz (10-6) took the lead right away in the

BUCHHOLZ, B2

Trenton softball rallies past Santa Fe in 9 innings



PHOTO BY C.J. GISH

Trenton celebrates after Lexi Faught drove in Montana Moen for the winning run in the bottom of the ninth inning against visiting Santa Fe (Alachua).

Sophomore Lexi Faught has walk-off RBI single for Tigers

By Mike Ridaught
SPORTS DIRECTOR

Two of the top softball teams in the state went head-to-head on March 24 at John A. Vickers Field in Trenton.

It took extra innings to determine the winner.

Sophomore Lexi Faught's bases-loaded base hit to left

field scored senior Montana Moen for the winning run as Trenton rallied past Santa Fe (Alachua), 4-3, in nine innings.

"It was a battle in the circle, two really good pitchers dueling it out," said Trenton coach Kevin Benson.

Two-time defending state champion Trenton, which is ranked No. 1 in the FHSAA Rural classification and No. 7 overall in Florida, had University of Florida commit Addison Allaire in the circle.

Santa Fe countered with the nation's No. 1 freshman pitcher, according to Line

Drive Media, Rylee "Roo" Swilley, who is teammates with Allaire during the summer.

It was textbook small school ball early by the visiting Raiders.

Following an Allaire strikeout to start the game, Santa Fe junior Madisen Crosby walked and then used her speed to go from first to third base on a sacrifice bunt by sophomore third baseman Callie Blair.

The wind was blowing in for most of the night, and freshman Corie Wheeler (2-for-3, 2 RBI) hit a soft line

drive to right field, which dropped for a hit and drove in Crosby for a 1-0 lead.

"She's been a clutch hitter for us," said Santa Fe coach Gene Findley.

Allaire (9 IP, 3R, 3 ER, 2 BB, 13K) struck out the side in order in the bottom of the second, but the Raiders (13-2), who are ranked No. 2 in Class 3A and 13th in Florida, manufactured another run.

Sophomore Maren Hornsby had an infield hit to third to start the top of the third inning.

TRENTON, B2



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TRENTON
FROM B1

After consecutive sacrifice bunts by Crosby and Blair to move Hornsby to third base, Wheeler hit a ground ball single to right field, scoring Hornsby, for a 2-0 lead.

Trenton (12-1) answered in its half of the third with three runs on just two hits and two costly Santa Fe errors.

Moen reached on an error at shortstop and senior Presley Akins walked to put two on with zero outs. Swilley struck out sophomore leadoff hitter Addilyn Welbers, but Faught (2-for-5, RBI, RS) beat out a ground ball to third for a hit to load the bases.

However, a pop-up by Allaire to second base was misplayed for an error, allowing Moen to score.

"In these types of games, you've got to keep the errors down to a minimum," Findley said.

Junior MacKenzie Fisher singled to left field and drove in Akins to tie the game at 2-2.

Fisher was 4-for-4 against Swilley.

"That kid is phenomenal," Benson said. "There's no quit in that kid. She's constantly looking for improvements, and she loves to be coached. She loves to be pushed hard and challenged. She's just got the heart of a Tiger. That kid is so fun to coach, always brings great energy and gives 100% in everything she does."

The final run of the inning came on a groundout to third base by sophomore catcher Khloe Kirby, but Swilley struck out senior Madison Hinote with two runners on base.

Swilley, who went 2-for-4 at the plate with a home run, tossed 8+ innings and allowed four runs, all un-



PHOTO BY C.J. GISH
Santa Fe's Callie Blair (3) lays down a bunt in the top of the ninth inning against Trenton.



PHOTO BY C.J. GISH
Santa Fe coach Gene Findley congratulates Rylee Swilley (19) on a solo home run that tied the game at 3-3 in the top of the sixth inning at Trenton.

earned, on seven hits with three walks and 10 strikeouts.

"Roo is a great pitcher," Benson said. "She throws it well, she proves she's got a big stick at the plate, and she's just an all-around, real-

ly good softball player. Couple that with the speed and athleticism that Santa Fe has behind her, that's a great team over there that it took us nine innings."

Swilley crushed a foul ball down the left field line

that just missed being a 2-run home run in the third inning.

Allaire struck her out to end the third inning, but the freshman got revenge with a solo home run to left field to tie the game at 3-3 in the top of the sixth inning.

That forced extra innings and the "Kansas Tiebreaker," which puts a runner on second base to start each inning.

Santa Fe loaded the bases with no outs in the top of the eighth inning, but Allaire worked out of the jam thanks to a couple of put-outs at the plate by Hinote and Fisher, followed by Allaire's 12th strikeout of the night.

"We work every day on plays at the plate," Benson said. "And she did a great job generating two good ground balls that we were able to get two quick outs there at the plate, and then she did the rest herself for the third out."

One of the stranger plays in the game occurred in the bottom of the eighth inning.

With the winning run at third base, Moen popped it up between third base and the circle. Blair charged it, but it dropped just beyond her reach, and it appeared to give the Tigers the victory.

However, Blair didn't touch the ball, and it bounced and rolled foul past the third base line. Swilley struck out Moen to end the inning.

After Allaire struck out her 13th batter of the night, Blair grounded out with two runners in scoring position in the top of the ninth inning, setting up the heroics in the final at-bat.

Akins, Welbers and Faught all had hits in the bottom of the ninth inning with nobody out.

BUCHHOLZ
FROM B1



PHOTO BY C.J. GISH
Santa Fe catcher Cole Crevasse (7) tags out Buchholz's Aidan Kastensmidt (2) in the second inning.

top of the first. Senior lead-off hitter Zac Brown singled and eventually scored on an infield single by senior Blake Brewer for a 1-0 Bobcats lead.

Buchholz had plenty of opportunities to add to the lead, but Santa Fe senior starter Cohen Bennett worked out of multiple jams to keep the Raiders within a run.

"If you look at his (Bennett's) numbers, you aren't going to get big-eyed or amazed by them," Santa Fe coach Kyle Brooks said. "If you watch the guy pitch, he's been unbelievable. He's cool, calm, and collected, he trusts his stuff and he trusts the guys behind him."

Bennett worked out of a runner at third and one-out jam in the second inning and a bases-loaded, one-out situation in the third inning to keep Santa Fe within one run.

In fact, Buchholz had 10 hits and left 11 men on base for the game, but they did get an insurance run against reliever Jackson Ruppert in the sixth as Ashton Norris sin-

gled in Hudson Sapp for a 2-0 Bobcats lead.

Meanwhile, Wilburn was rolling. He retired the first 12 Santa Fe hitters he faced with five strikeouts.

"I don't know if I've ever been part of a game where we had 10 hits and only scored two runs," Malphurs said. "It was a weird-type night, just couldn't get that timely hit. But give our kids credit, they kept battling and got that late run and stayed ahead and got the win."

Santa Fe got its only run in the bottom of the sixth inning as Ruppert singled and scored on a passed ball. But Wilburn struck out the final five Raiders' batters for the complete game win.

Santa Fe falls to 4-13 with their sixth one-run loss of the season and third one-run defeat in a row.

"The one-run losses are haunting us right now," Brooks said. "But we are getting better as a team and the goal is to get better by the end of the year. We are going to get over the hump and when we do, we could be a scary team."

WEEK OF MARCH 23, 2026

Taylor Booth
Buchholz Flag Football

This week's Meldon Law Scholar Athlete is one of the premiere Florida flag football players. Buchholz senior Taylor Booth is one of the top-ranked flag football athletes not only in the state but nationally as she is averaging over 180 receiving yards per game for the 8-0 Bobcats. She was named to the Jaguars All Prep 25 team following her junior season in 2025.

Flag football, a sport invented in World War II as a non-contact recreational sport for military personnel to maintain fitness without injuries during war originally called touch and tail football. This became a sanctioned sport for women in the Florida High School Athletic Association in 2003 and continues to make a boom in North Central Florida.

Booth was also the leading scorer, averaging 15.6 points per game, for the 19-8 Buchholz girls basketball team that advanced to the Class 6A-Region 1 quarterfinals.

Scan here to nominate a TV20 Meldon Law Scholar Athlete of the Week in 2025-26.

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GHS WINS
FROM B1



PHOTO BY C.J. GISH

Gainesville's Leanna Bourdage (14) tags out Trenton's Lexi Faught (12) just before she reaches home plate in the top of the eighth inning.

ecute several bunts, and I think we had probably had seven or eight batters in scoring position that we just couldn't push across because we weren't executing at the plate and situational hitting. It was a very frustrating night at the plate for us. Leanna did a good job keeping our batters off balance."

Both teams had a chance to win it in regulation.

Trenton (12-2) No. 9 hitter Presley Akins doubled, sending Santa Fe College commit Montana Moen, who had walked, to third base. After a line drive bunt was caught at third base, Bourdage struck out Lexi Faught to end the threat.

In the bottom of the seventh, FSCJ commit Lana Renicks was hit by a pitch and went from first to third on a sacrifice bunt by Emma Barton. However, Allaire struck out No. 5 hitter Makenna Young to send the game into extra innings.



PHOTO BY C.J. GISH

Gainesville's Aubree Suarez (7) scores the winning run in the bottom of the ninth inning against Trenton.

The Tigers almost scored again in the top of the eighth inning.

With Faught at second base to start the inning, Allaire moved her to third with a sacrifice bunt. Faught came home on a passed ball, but

Walsh was able to get it to Bourdage for a tag out at the plate.

"That's just a great play by Roy Walsh, I mean, she just made the play, get the ball into Leanna and Leanna did her job covering the plate,

and was there in time, and they made the play," Chronister said. "But those are the types of plays that you have to make in games like this, right? You can't beat good teams by just playing average ball. You have to play the top of your game, and I felt like we did that tonight."

Trenton didn't get its first hit until St. Leo University commit MacKenzie Fisher (2-for-3) singled to center field in the top of the fourth inning. She had two of their four hits.

Allaire struck out 11 in a row and 15 out of 16 from the second through the seventh and she struck out four in a row prior to the final inning.

"It was a really good game," Allaire said. "Leanna did great. I had a pretty good night for myself, but my team stayed up, stayed behind me. I knew they were going to have my back behind me. It's a tough loss, but we'll learn from it and come back better."

SANTA FE
FROM B1



PHOTO BY C.J. GISH

Santa Fe boys soccer coach Morgan Dall'Acqua.

onds left and puts the game into overtime (regional semifinals). We were in really, really good shape this season, and the boys were not willing to compromise. They were going to fight for 80 minutes. If you came to Santa Fe High School, you were coming for a battle."

Santa Fe, which defeated Pensacola Catholic in the region final to advance to its first final four, repeated as district champions and made its deepest post-season run in school history despite losing several players to graduation. Plus, goalkeeper Mayer Steen decided to focus on football and the Raiders played with a freshman goalie this year in Hunter LaLonde.

"We always did a kind of preseason look forward and how things are going to go and a lot of my questions that I think I had coming into the season is what we were going to do in our defensive third, and how we were going to come up with a way of replacing four all area players of the year,"

Dall'Acqua said. "Wayne took over the center third of the field, was our leading goal scorer on the back end of the season, really picked the team up, kind of carried the program on his back, led by example, and the boys that surrounded him kind of met that effort that he was fighting with...this was a self-motivating team, and it was really a special thing to be a part of."

The seven individual class finalists for the 2026 Florida Dairy Farmers Mr. Soccer and Boys' Soccer Coach-of-the-Year were also announced following balloting by a statewide panel of high school boys' soccer coaches and prep media representatives.

Every finalist was the leading vote-getter in their classification, making each one the Player-of-the-Year or Coach-of-the-Year in that class. The 2026 Mr. Soccer and Boys' Soccer Coach-of-the-Year will be announced following a final round of balloting by coaches and media.

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Celebrating the Lives of Our Community

Sarah Louvenia McCants - 11/5/1921 - 3/20/2026 With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Sara Louvenia McCants, 104, of Claxton, GA. Services took place on March 31st at 11 AM at the Forest Meadows Funeral Home Chapel. Arrangements have been entrusted to Forest Meadows Funeral Home, 725 NW 23rd Avenue, Gainesville, Florida 32609, (352) 378-2528

Donna Jean Hoffman - 7/12/1962 - 3/20/2026 Arrangements have been entrusted to Forest Meadows Funeral Home, 725 NW 23rd Avenue, Gainesville, Florida 32609, (352) 378-2528

Mickey E. Atkinson - 1/21/1942 - 3/20/2026 With profound sadness, we announce the passing of Mickey Atkinson, 84, of Fort White, Florida. Services took place on March 26th. Evans Carter Funeral Home, High Springs Main St, High Springs, FL 32643, (386) 454-2444

Roy Lee Brandon - 10/17/1943 - 3/19/2026 With deep sadness, we announce the passing of Roy Lee Brandon, 82, of Fort White, Florida. Services took place at Evans Carter Funeral Home on March 30th. Evans Carter Funeral Home, High Springs Main St, High Springs, FL 32643 (386) 454-2444

Constance King - 9/17/1931 - 3/23/2026 With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Constance H. King, 94, of Gainesville, Florida. Services took place at Forest Meadows Funeral Home on March 31st, at 5:00 PM. Arrangements have been entrusted to Forest Meadows Funeral Home, 725 NW 23rd Avenue, Gainesville, Florida 32609, (352) 378-2528

Joseph Peter Castronovo - 7/30/1947 - 3/23/2026 We are saddened to announce the passing of Joseph "Joe" Castronovo, 78, of Blue Ridge, Georgia. Mass took place at St. Madeleine Catholic Church on March 30th at Evans Carter Funeral Home, High Springs Main St, High Springs, FL 32643, (386) 454-2444

Ronald Clarke Wallcraft - 8/19/1960 - 3/21/2026 - Arrangements have been entrusted to Forest Meadows Funeral Home, 725 NW 23rd Avenue, Gainesville, Florida 32609, (352) 378-2528

Larry Moore - 5/10/1947 - 3/24/2026 Arrangements have been entrusted to Evans Carter Funeral Home. Evans Carter Funeral Home, High Springs Main St, High Springs, FL 32643, (386) 454-2444

Robert Collins Sutton - 8/25/1945 - 3/24/2026 Arrangements have been entrusted to Evans Carter Funeral Home. Evans Carter Funeral Home, High Springs Main St, High Springs, FL 32643, (386) 454-2444

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What's Going On, GNV?

A premier guide for local events

The weekly events listing is a selection of items pulled from Mainstreet Daily News' website calendar.

To submit an event, you can visit mainstreetdailynews.com and click on the events section or you can send us an email at submissions@mainstreetdailynews.com.

Wednesday, April 1

April Fool's Day STEAM tricks
3 p.m. at Tower Road Branch Library, 3020 SW 75th St. Make a paperclip float and create a rainbow bridge. Free.

Gatorball Academy Pitching Clinics
5:30 p.m. at Gainesville Park, 3401 NW 143rd St. Training areas: pre-throwing, warm up, throwing program, long toss, mechanical training, bullpens and post-throwing arm care for ages 9-14. \$40.

Chabad Passover
6 p.m. at the O'Connell Center, 250 Gale Lemerand Dr. Celebrate the eve of Passover and a mingle with appetizers of fish, salads, dips, soup, fruit and macaroons. Free.

Community Nights
6 p.m. at South Main Station, 619 S Main St. A unique itinerary boasting a range of skill-share workshops, live music and special bar offerings at Heartwood Soundstage. Free.

Gainesville Frisbee
6:15 p.m. at The One Love Cafe, 4989 NW 40th Pl. Learn how to play frisbee, all ages welcome. Free.

Swan Lake
7 p.m. at the Phillips Center, 3201 Hull Rd. World Ballet Company's Swan Lake is a breathtaking production featuring 50 professional dancers, over 150 hand-crafted costumes and a live orchestra performing Tchaikovsky's unforgettable score. \$45-115.



Athens, Georgia indie rock band The Ocho will perform Friday, April 3, bringing their distinctive sound and growing fanbase to the stage.

Thursday, April 2

UF Mobile OBGYN Outreach
10 a.m. at Partnership Branch, 912 NE 16th Ave. The UF Health OB/GYN Mobile Outreach vehicle will be on site to offer services regardless of insurance or ability to pay. Free.

Tiny Tots & Homeschoolers Skate
11 a.m. at Skate Station Funworks, 1311 NW 76th Blvd. Grab your scooters, trikes or skates and get ready to jump into the fun. \$10.

All About Blueberries
11 a.m. at UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County Office, 22716 W Newberry Rd. Learn more about blueberry production in Florida and how to create healthy, tasty recipes. Register online. \$20.

UF Health Lactation Drop-in Clinic
2 p.m. at Metcalfe Elementary School, 1250 NE 18th Ave. Expectant parents are welcome to ask questions, create a plan and address concerns about breastfeeding. Free.

STEAM Crafts
3 p.m. at Headquarters Branch, 401 E University Ave. New science and art projects inspired by seasonal themes with all crafting supplies provided. Free.

Art After Dark Museum Nights
5 p.m. at The Harn Museum, 3259 Hull Rd. An opportunity to browse current exhibitions on a weekday evening. Free.

Friday, April 3

Meow Meow
7 p.m. at the Phillips Center, 3201 Hull Rd. Mixing laugh-out-loud comedy with powerhouse vocals, this leading-edge artist is bold, outrageous and full of surprises. \$35-55.

"Mary Poppins - The Broadway Musical"
7 p.m. at Ripple Theatricals, 5505 SW 63rd Blvd. A live orchestra and lots of fun for audience members of all ages. \$15-20.

Elements of Style
7 p.m. at The Jackson N. Sasser

Fine Arts Hall, 3000 NW 83 St. New works by the distinguished Santa Fe College dance faculty featuring a guest artist. \$20.

All Your Friends
8 p.m. at The Woolly, 20 N Main St.

An indie dance party for the ones who still romanticize a scratched iPod, American Spirits, and a blurry night soundtrack by bloghouse and post-punk revival. \$23.

The Ocho
8 p.m. at Heartwood Soundstage, 619 S Main St. A 5-piece indie rock band, fueled by an eclectic array of musical influences, their distinctive sound pulls listeners through diverse moods, styles and reflections. \$19-25.

UF Observatory Public Night
8:30 p.m. at Bryant Space Science Center, 1772 Stadium Rd. The Department of Astronomy operates an on-campus teaching observatory for educational and public programs. Free.

Saturday, April 4

15th Annual Gator Clot Trot
9 a.m. at Depot Park, 874 SE 4th St. A Fun Walk and 5K Run including an easter egg hunt and special guest with floppy ears. \$10-25.

Living History Saturday
9 a.m. at Morningside Nature Center, 3540 E University Ave. Plant a seed in the garden using period tools in the wood shop and say hello to the animals at the farm. Free.

Gainesville Cars & Coffee
9 a.m. at Tioga Town Center, 150 SW 129th Terr., Newberry. A family-friendly car meeting open to all automotive fans. Free.

Rim Ramble Hike at Paynes Prairie
10 a.m. at La Chua Trail Horse Barn, 4801 Camp Ranch Rd. This 1.5-mile trail meanders through a dense upland forest and sinkhole rich topography. Free with park admission.

Gainesville Asian Festival
10 a.m. at Bo Diddley Plaza,

111 E University Ave. The event features a captivating schedule of performances, food trucks, craft vendors and tabling organizations. Free.

Emmet Cohen Trio
7 p.m. at The Phillips Center, 3201 Hull Rd. With his signature hard-bop style and infectious groove, Cohen leads his top-tier trio in music that's melodic, accessible and downright fun. \$25-60.

Sunday, April 5

Unicorn Party
10 a.m. at Possum Creek Park, 4009 NW 53rd Ave. Come learn how to join Girl Scouts, enjoy snacks, water, and a whimsical story. Unicorn Fashion Show and Dance Party. Free.

Easter Brunch Buffet
10:30 a.m. at Best Western Gateway Grand, 4200 NW 97th Blvd. Join for a delightful Easter Brunch. \$20-50.

Bloom: A Concert of Renewal
11 a.m. at Unity of Gainesville, 8801 NW 39th Ave. A concert celebrating themes of transformation, hope and renewal. Free.

Birds and Brews Guided Walks
5:45 p.m. at First Magnitude Brewing Company, 1220 SE Veitch St. There will be an hour-long guided tour identifying the aerial friends. Free.

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- Double's trick
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- North one or South one, in Asia
- Morse Code dash
- Root of iris
- Indian black tea
- Mother lode stuff
- Disinclined
- *Mad as a ____
- *Fit as a ____
- Pilgrimage to Mecca
- * ____ A Sketch
- R&R destination
- Table, in Mexico
- Aerie baby
- Otter's den
- * ____ as a button
- Type of union
- Axillary, in biology
- *Bored to ____
- Fit of shivering
- Treated with calcium hydroxide
- Recipe amt.
- Not fiction
- *Lawrence and DiCaprio movie "Don't ____"
- Like some hard times
- *To the ____ degree
- Not less
- *Hi- ____ graphics
- *Fly off the ____
- *Storm in a ____
- Louisiana swamp
- *" ____ whiz!"
- Did like a lunatic
- Mr. T and friends
- *Am is to I a ____ is to we
- Certain pudding ingredient
- Mosquito net, e.g.
- Local area network
- Leavening agent

DOWN

- Reggae's cousin
- Silly talk
- Minor one in the sky
- Not o'er
- Type of gong instrument
- * ____ -Eaters
- * ____ for the course
- *"Grand ____ Auto"
- Walked on
- Caspian Sea feeder
- *"Take a ____ Out of Crime"
- Type of tree
- Idiom for outdated or trite (2 words)
- Tape deck button
- *Break the ____
- Palatable
- * ____ we dance?
- President Franklin Roosevelt's diagnosis
- *"Remember the ____!"
- Cooking grease
- Tennis' Steffi
- Flotsam and jetsam alternative
- Something educed
- *By the skin of your ____
- Hiker's journey
- Gaelic language
- * ____ tire
- Lollipop brand
- D.C. mover and shaker
- Not very far
- Fit for a king
- Go "Boo!"
- *A ____-hate relationship
- Pirates' affirmatives
- Famous flood survivor
- *Nirvana's "Smells Like ____ Spirit"
- Iris holder
- *Three ____ in a pod
- "Kapow!"
- Pitcher's stat
- Banned insecticide, acr.

CROSSWORD

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Meet the Candidates: Archer Commission 2026

Lewandowski secures Seat 4, Penny and Rossi vie for Seat 5

By Lillian Hamman
REPORTER

On April 14, the city of Archer will hold an election for City Commission Seats 4 and 5, with one seat going unchallenged.

The race for Seat 4 has been settled as Commissioner Marilyn Green chose not to run again, and retired Army lieutenant colonel and business developer Bill Lewandowski is running as the sole candidate.

Mainstreet sent the following questions to each candidate, and their answers are printed here with minor edits only for style.

Seat 5 Kathy Penny

Penny is the incumbent and did respond to the questionnaire in time for publication of this story. According to the city of Archer's website, Penny was first elected to the City Commission in July 2021 and re-elected in April 2022.

Jennifer Rossi

Occupation: I'm an artist and small business owner. I host painting events and create custom artwork, and a big part of my work is bringing people together in our community through creativity.

Previous experience in elected office: I have served as a department manager in a historic town where I was responsible for preparing and managing my department's yearly budget. In that role, I worked on special projects alongside the police department and public works, which gave me valuable experience in how different departments work together to serve the community. I also have experience in municipal waste management and working with Edmunds [GovTech] government software. In addition, I've worked in a county tax office, which gave me insight into the financial side of local government.

Website: Voters can learn more about me on my personal Facebook page, where I'll be sharing updates. I also encourage people to reach out, ask questions or visit with me in person. Connecting with the community is very important to me.



COURTESY KATHY PENNY
Kathy Penny

What prompted you to run for election?

I chose to run because I truly love this community and believe in its potential. Archer deserves leadership that listens and works for the people. I want to help restore financial stability while rebuilding the sense of community that makes this town so special. I'm running because I care deeply about the people here and the future we're creating together.

What vote are you proudest of the commission making in the past year?

I'm proud of the vote to stop approving monthly fi-



COURTESY OF JENNIFER ROSSI
Jennifer Rossi

Financial reports without first having a clear understanding of our full budget. Financial transparency and accuracy are essential for good governance, and it's important that we make decisions based on complete and reliable information.

What has changed the most about the city since you first campaigned?

One of the most important changes is the addition of our new city manager and assistant city manager and also the addition of an accountant to help move us forward with our finances. I believe this gives us an



COURTESY OF BILL LEWANDOWSKI
Bill Lewandowski

opportunity to work together more effectively and focus on stability and responsible financial planning.

What are the two most important issues facing Archer?

The two most important issues facing Archer right now are rebuilding trust between the community and city leadership and restoring financial stability. Many residents feel disconnected from some of the decisions being made, and it's important that we work to rebuild that trust through transparency and accountability. At the same time, we must fo-

cus on responsible financial decisions that put our city on a stable path forward.

How do you think the City Commission should address those issues?

I believe the commission can begin addressing these issues by focusing on transparency, accountability and responsible financial planning. Rebuilding trust starts with open communication—making sure residents feel heard and understand how and why decisions are being made. At the same time, we need to take a careful look at our city's finances and prioritize responsible budgeting so we can restore stability and plan for the future.

What decisions do you believe need to be made to address Archer's budget concerns?

I believe addressing Archer's budget concerns starts with taking a careful look at our current finances and making responsible decisions about spending. We need to prioritize the services our community depends on, look for ways to operate more efficiently and make sure we're planning for the long-term financial health of our city.

Every decision we make should be with the goal of putting Archer on a stable financial path for the future.

North Florida Hospital receives 2026 America's 250 Best Hospitals Award

Gainesville hospital earns award for fourth straight year

STAFF REPORTS

Healthgrades named HCA Florida North Florida Hospital one of Ameri-

ca's 250 Best for the fourth straight year.

In a release sent on March 19, Healthgrades, the No. 1 site Americans use when searching for a doctor or hospital, selected HCA Florida North Florida Hospital in Gainesville among the top 5% of U.S. hospitals for overall clinical performance.

According to the release, last fall, Healthgrades ranked HCA Florida North Florida Hospital No. 1 for GI surgery; No. 2 for surgical care; No. 3 for joint replacement and orthopedic surgery; and No. 4 for GI care and vascular surgery.

"HCA Florida North Florida Hospital is honored by

Healthgrades' recognition of our exceptional team's dedication to providing the highest quality of patient care," said HCA Florida North Florida Hospital CEO Gabe Bullaro in the press release. "As a top-performing hospital, our focus is always on saving and improving lives, and this recognition underscores our

hospital's longstanding commitment to our community."

Healthgrades evaluates risk-adjusted mortality and complication rates for over 30 procedures and common conditions at nearly 4,500 hospitals nationwide.

"This year's America's Best Hospitals list gives patients a clearer picture of

where high-quality care is delivered most consistently,"

said Dr. Alana Biggers, medical advisor at Healthgrades, in the press release. "Patients can feel confident in their decision to seek care at HCA Florida North Florida Hospital, a hospital that is setting the standard for clinical excellence nationwide."

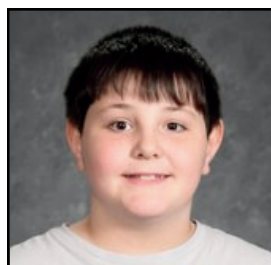
The Kiwanis Club of Gainesville is proud to present the

CITIZENS OF THE MONTH



awards, recognizing one student from each elementary school in Alachua County. At the end of the school year, each school picks a Citizen of the Year. This award by their teachers and peers is based upon their scholastic standing, attitude, conduct, their contribution to the community (for example, 4H, Scouts, church), and their extracurricular activities. The Kiwanis Club wishes to thank its partners and supporters in this program:

Mainstreet Daily News, IQ Fiber, Campus Credit Union, Insomnia Cookies, Domino's Pizza, Dave and Busters, Crime Stoppers, Santa Fe College Zoo, McAlister's Deli, Zaxby's, PF Chang's.



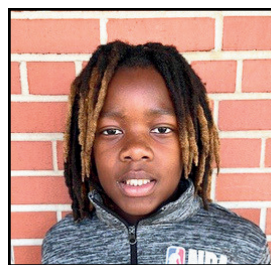
Lucas Tyler
Alachua



Kerra Young
Archer



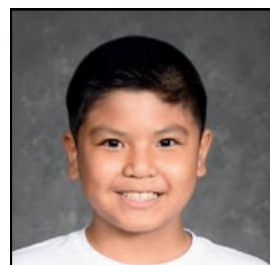
Alisa Uriasieva
Chiles



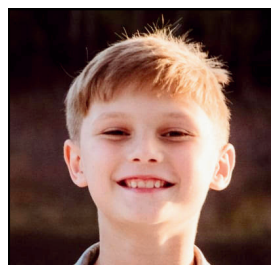
Carlos Washington
Foster



Bailey Depeiza
Glen Springs



Tyzane Win
Hidden Oak



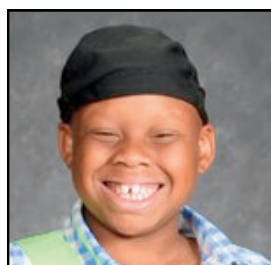
Reid Gilhooly
High Springs



Jamylah Calhoun
Idylwild



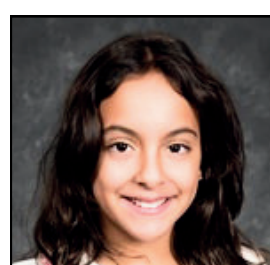
Ramon Smith
Irby



Lavelle Flowers
Lake Forest



Margay Ferraro
Littlewood



Lupe Hudtwalcker
Meadowbrook



Ariah Sims
Metcalf



Zelda McDonald
Micanopy



Meagan Huff
Newberry



Londyn Cloud
Norton



Grace Berger
Parker



Khloe Felipe-Tomas
Rawlings



Mia Brown-Campbell
Shell



Tristan Matthews
Sidney Lanier



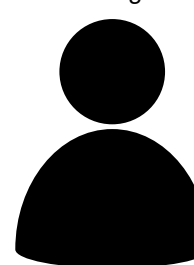
Jennifer Recarte-Varela
Talbot



Londyn Johnson
Terwilliger



Mia Wang
Wiles



Williams

Sponsored by



BOSSHARDT
REALTY SERVICES



CHILDREN'S TRUST
OF ALACHUA COUNTY

www.childrenstrustofalachuacounty.us

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA PROBATE DIVISION

012026CP000675XXXXXX
Division PROBATE
IN RE: ESTATE OF
MAUREEN ROBYN SUR-
DEZ
Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

The administration of the estate of Maureen Robyn Surdez, deceased, whose date of death was January 8, 2026, is pending in the Circuit Court for Alachua County, Florida, Probate Division, the address of which is 201 E University Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601. The names and addresses of the personal representative and the personal representative's attorney are set forth below.

All creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate on whom a copy of this notice is required to be served must file their claims with this court ON OR BEFORE THE LATER OF 3 MONTHS AFTER THE TIME OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE OR 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF SERVICE OF A COPY OF THIS NOTICE ON THEM. All other creditors of the decedent and other persons having claims or demands against decedent's estate must file their claims with this court WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER THE DATE OF THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

The personal representative has no duty to discover whether any property held at the time of the decedent's death by the decedent or the decedent's surviving spouse is property to which the Florida Uniform Disposition of Community Property Rights at Death Act as described in ss. 732.216-732.228, Florida Statutes, applies, or may apply, unless a written demand is made by a creditor as specified under s. 732.2211, Florida Statutes. The written demand must be filed with the clerk.

ALL CLAIMS NOT FILED WITHIN THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH IN FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 733.702 WILL BE FOREVER BARRED. NOTWITHSTANDING THE TIME PERIODS SET FORTH ABOVE, ANY CLAIM FILED TWO (2) YEARS OR MORE AFTER THE DECEDENT'S DATE OF DEATH IS BARRED.

The date of first publication of this notice is April 1, 2026. Attorney for Personal Representative:

Personal Representative:
BEACON LEGACY LAW
John J. Mangan, Jr., Esq. / FL
Bar #: 10020

Heather Smith, Esq. / FL
Bar #: 610593

For the Firm
901 SW Martin Downs
Blvd., Ste. 205

Palm City, FL 34990

Telephone: (772) 324-9050

Fax: (772) 919-4291

E-Mail: hsmith@beaconleg-

acylaw.com

Secondary E-Mail: parale-

gals@beaconlegacylaw.com

Attorney for Petitioner/Per-

sonal Representative

Paul Leon Surdez

23845 320th Street

Bagley, Minnesota 56671

April 1, 8, 2026

NOTICE UNDER FICTITIOUS NAME LAW

PURSUANT TO SECTION 865.09

FLORIDA STATUTES

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIV-

EN that the undersigned, des-

iring to engage in business

under the Fictitious Name

of TMJ Sleep Airway Ortho-

dontics, with a mailing ad-

dress of 9161 SW 49th Pl,

Gainesville, FL 32608 and

a principal office located in

register the said name with the Florida Dept. of State, Division of Corporations, Tallahassee, Florida. Owner: Aguirre Orthodontics, PA April 1, 2026

NOTICE OF SALE

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO.: 2025-CA-001576
MILLENNIUM BANK, formerly known as COLUMBIA BANK, a banking corporation organized and existing under the law of Tennessee,
Plaintiff,

vs.
RAWSAN AKTHER and
MAMUNUR MEAH
RASHID,
Defendants.

NOTICE OF SALE

Notice is given that pursuant to the Report and Recommendation of the General Magistrate, Final Judgment of Foreclosure entered on December 12, 2025 in the above-styled cause, that J.K. "Jess" Irby, Esq., as the Clerk of the Court, shall sell, at a single public sale, to the highest and best bidder for cash by electronic sale on Thursday, April 30, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at <https://www.alachua.realforeclose.com/index.cfm> in accordance with F.S. §45.031, the following-described property:
The North 2/3 less the N 1/3 of the SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 33, Township 9 South, Range 18 East, subject to right-of-way over and across the Westerly Boundary thereof.

and the real property is identified as Tax Parcel No. 04283-007-000.

Any person claiming an interest in the surplus from the sale, if any, other than the property owner as of the date of the lis pendens must file a claim BEFORE THE CLERK REPORTS THE SURPLUS AS UNCLAIMED.

SIGNED on this 24th day of March, 2026.

/s/ Stephanie L. Emrick
STEPHANIE L. EMRICK
Florida Bar #287320

SCRUGGS, CARMICHAEL & WERSHOW, P.A.

4923 NW 43rd Street

Gainesville, Florida 32606

Telephone: (352) 376-5242

Facsimile: (352) 375-0690

Primary E-Mail: emrick@

scwlegal.org

Secondary E-Mail: jrdla@

scwlegal.org

Counsel for Plaintiff

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a

copy thereof was furnished

this 24th day of March, 2026

via the Florida Courts E-Filing

Portal to: Kinley I. Engval-

son, Esq. at servicehad@

kraskerlaw.com, kengval-

son@kraskerlaw.com, david@

kraskerlaw.com, and dreyes@

kraskerlaw.com.

/s/ Stephanie L. Emrick

Stephanie L. Emrick, Esq.

April 1, 8, 2026

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

PERSONAL PROPERTY OF THE FOLLOW-

ING TENANTS WILL BE

SOLD FOR CASH TO SAT-

ISFY RENTAL LIENS IN

ACCORDANCE WITH

FLORIDA STATUTES,

SELF STORAGE FACILI-

TY ACT, SECTIONS 83.806

AND 83.807. CONTENTS

MAY INCLUDE TOOLS,

FURNITURE, BEDDING,

KITCHEN, TOYS, GAMES,

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS,

PACKED CARTONS,

CARS, TRUCKS, ETC.

THERE IS NO TITLE FOR

VEHICLES SOLD AT LIEN

SALE. OWNERS RESERVE

THE RIGHT TO BID ON

UNITS. LIEN SALE TO BE

COM BEGINNING AT LEAST 5 DAYS PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED SALE DATE AND TIME.

PERSONAL MINI STOR-

AGE GNV 34 - 4432 SW

34th St, Gainesville, FL

32608 - at 10:00AM:

241 Jonathan Dupree

151 Tarsha Torrance

March 25, April 1, 2026

NOTICE OF ACTION IN EMINENT DOMAIN AND NOTICE OF HEARING OF CONSTRUCTIVE SERVICE OF PROCESS

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: 2026CA000646

Parcel: 176

STATE OF FLORIDA

DEPARTMENT OF

TRANSPORTATION,

VS.

Petitioner,

The Estate of Orbia Pearce,

all Heirs, Beneficiaries, Devi-

sees, Legatees, Spouses, and

Creditors of Orbia Pearce,

John Power, Alachua County

Tax Collector, and any Un-

known Occupants in Posses-

sion of the Property,

Defendants.

NOTICE OF ACTION IN

EMINENT DOMAIN AND

NOTICE OF HEARING OF

CONSTRUCTIVE SER-

VICE OF PROCESS

STATE OF FLORIDA TO:

To the above named Defen-

dants and all said Defendants

who are living, and if any or

all Defendants are deceased,

the unknown spouse, heirs,

devises, grantees, credi-

tors, lienors, or other parties

claiming by, through, under

or against any such deceased

Defendant or Defendants, if

alive, and, if dead, their un-

known spouse, heirs, devi-

sees, legatees, grantees, credi-

tors, lienors, or other parties

claiming by, through, under,

or against any such deceased

Defendant or Defendants, and

all other parties having

title or interest in and to the

property described in the Pe-

tition, to-wit:

Item # 2078502

Parcels 176

SR 26 Alachua County

Section No. 26070

State Road No. 26

Alachua County

F.P.No. 2078502

Parcel No. 176

"2026 CA 000646"

243473746 Filed at Ala-

chua County Clerk

03/10/2026 03:02:18

PM EDT Fee Simple

A Part Of A 50 Foot Right Of

Way, Also Known As Eighth

Street Per J.D. Hodge's

First Addition To Newber-

ry, A Subdivision, As Per

Plat Book A, Page 87 Of

The Public Records Of Ala-

chua County, Florida, Lying

In The Northwest Quarter

Of Section 4, Township 10

South, Range 17 East, City

Of Newberry, Alachua Coun-

ty, Florida, More Particularly

Described As Follows:

Commence At The Nail And

Disk Marked "RLS 2047" Lo-

cated At The Northeast Cor-

ner Of Section 4, Township

10 South, Range 17 East, City

Of Newberry, Alachua Coun-

ty, Florida; Thence South

01°24'02" East Along The

East Line Of The Northeast

Quarter Of Said Section 4, A

Distance Of 2412.20 Feet To

The Baseline Of Survey Of

N.W. 1st Avenue (A 50 Foot

Right Of Way, As Per Florida

Department Of Transporta-

tion Right Of Way Map, Sec-

tion 26070, F.P. No. 2078502,

3143.28 Feet; Thence South

05°42'05" East, Departing

Said Baseline Of Survey, A

Distance Of 25.00 Feet To

The Intersection Of The

Southerly Existing Right Of

Way Line Of Said N.W. 1st

Avenue (A 50 Foot Right

Of Way, Also Known As C

Street Per Said J.D. Hodge's

First Addition To Newberry)

And The Westerly Existing

Right Of Way Line Of Eighth

Street (A 50 Foot Right Of

Way, Per Said J.D. Hodge's

First Addition To Newber-

ry), And To The Point Of

Beginning; Thence North

84°17'46" East Along Said

Southerly Existing Right

Of Way Line, A Distance

Of 50.00 Feet To The East-

erly Existing Right Of Way

Line Of Said Eighth Street;

Thence South 05°42'05" East

Along Said Easterly Exist-

ing Right Of Way Line, A

Distance Of 8.55 Feet To A

Curve To The Left, Having

A Radius Of 2003.00 Feet;

Thence Along The Arc Of

Said Curve, Through An An-

gle Of 01°25'56", An Arc Dis-

tance Of 50.07 Feet And A

Chord Bearing And Distance

Of South 81°17'22" West,

50.07 Feet To Said Westerly

Existing Right Of Way Line

Of Eighth Street; Thence

North 05°42'05" West Along

Said Westerly Existing Right

Of Way Line, A Distance Of

11.18 Feet To The Point Of

Beginning.

Containing 488 Square Feet,

More Or Less.

Being a Part of Tax Parcel

No. 02266-000-000

A petition in eminent do-

main has been filed to acquire

certain property interests in

Alachua County, Florida.

Each Defendant is required

to serve written defenses to

the petition on Petitioner's

attorney, whose name and

address are shown below, on

or before April 17, 2026, and

to file the original of the de-

fenses with the clerk of this

court either before service on

Petitioner's attorney or im-

mediately thereafter, show-

LEGAL NOTICES
FROM B6

Disk Marked "RLS 2047" Located At The Northeast Corner Of Section 4, Township 10 South, Range 17 East, City Of Newberry, Alachua County, Florida; Thence South 01°24'02" East Along The East Line Of The Northeast Quarter Of Said Section 4, A Distance Of 2412.20 Feet To The Baseline Of Survey Of N.W. 1st Avenue (A 50 Foot Right Of Way, As Per Florida Department Of Transportation Right Of Way Map, Section 26070, F.P. No. 2078502, Also Known As C Street, As Per Map Of Newberry, A Subdivision, As Per Plat Book A, Page 129 And Also J.D. Hodge's First Addition To Newberry, A Subdivision, As Per Plat Book A, Page 87 Of The Public Records Of Alachua County, Florida); Thence South 84°17'46" West Along Said Baseline Of Survey, A Distance Of 3143.28 Feet; Thence South 05°42'05" East, Departing Said Baseline Of Survey, A Distance Of 25.00 Feet To The Intersection Of The Southerly Existing Right Of Way Line Of Said N.W. 1st Avenue (A 50 Foot Right Of Way, Also Known As C Street Per Said J.D. Hodge's First Addition To Newberry) And The Westerly Existing Right Of Way Line Of Eighth Street (A 50 Foot Right Of Way, Per Said J.D. Hodge's First Addition To Newberry) And The Northeast

Corner Of Lot 5 Of Block 11 of Said J.D. Hodge's First Addition To Newberry, And To The Point Of Beginning; Thence Continue South 05°42'05" East Along The Westerly Existing Right Of Way Line Of Said Eighth Street And The Easterly Line Of Said Block 11, A Distance Of 11.18 Feet To A Curve To The Left, Having A Radius Of 2003.00 Feet; Thence Along The Arc Of Said Curve, Through An Angle Of 07°12'48", An Arc Distance Of 252.17 Feet And A Chord Bearing And Distance Of South 76°58'00" West, 252.00 Feet To The Westerly Line Of Lot 5 Of Block 11 Of Said J.D. Hodge's First Addition To Newberry; Thence North 05°40'37" West Along Said Westerly Line, A Distance Of 43.33 Feet To The Northwest Corner Of Said Lot 5 And The Southerly Existing Right Of Way Line Of Said N.W. 1st Avenue; Thence North 84°17'46" East Along Said Southerly Existing Right Of Way Line, And The Northerly Existing Right Of Way Line Of Said Block 11, A Distance Of 249.93 Feet To The Point Of Beginning, Containing 6,144 Square Feet, More Or Less.
ALSO:
Part "B"
A Part Of Lot 6 Of Block 10 Of J.D. Hodge's First Addition To Newberry, A Subdivision, As Per Plat Book A, Page

87 Of The Public Records Of Alachua County, Florida, Lying In The Northwest Quarter Of Section 4, Township 10 South, Range 17 East, City Of Newberry, Alachua County, Florida, More Particularly Described As Follows: Commence At The Nail And Disk Marked "RLS 2047" Located At The Northeast Corner Of Section 4, Township 10 South, Range 17 East, City Of Newberry, Alachua County, Florida; Thence South 01°24'02" East Along The East Line Of The Northeast Quarter Of Said Section 4, A Distance Of 2412.20 Feet To The Baseline Of Survey Of N.W. 1st Avenue (A 50 Foot Right Of Way, As Per Florida Department Of Transportation Right Of Way Map, Section 26070, F.P. No. 2078502, Also Known As C Street, As Per Map Of Newberry, A Subdivision, As Per Plat Book A, Page 129 And Also J.D. Hodge's First Addition To Newberry, A Subdivision, As Per Plat Book A, Page 87 Of The Public Records Of Alachua County, Florida); Thence South 84°17'46" West Along Said Baseline Of Survey, A Distance Of 3093.28 Feet; Thence South 05°42'05" East, Departing Said Baseline Of Survey, A Distance Of 25.00 Feet To The Southerly Existing Right Of Way Line Of Said N.W. 1st Avenue (A 50 Foot Right Of Way,

Also Known As C Street Per Said J.D. Hodge's First Addition To Newberry) And The Northwest Corner Of Lot 6 Of Block 10 of Said J.D. Hodge's First Addition To Newberry, And To The Point Of Beginning; Thence North 84°17'46" East Along Said Southerly Existing Right Of Way Line, And The Northerly Line Of Said Block 10, A Distance Of 50.00 Feet To The Northeast Corner Of Said Lot 6; Thence South 05°42'05" East Along The Easterly Line Of Said Lot 6, A Distance Of 7.18 Feet To A Curve To The Left, Having A Radius Of 2003.00 Feet; Thence Along The Arc Of Said Curve, Through An Angle Of 01°25'51", An Arc Distance Of 50.02 Feet And A Chord Bearing And Distance Of South 82°43'15" West, 50.02 Feet To The Westerly Line Of Said Lot 6; Thence North 05°42'05" West Along Said Westerly Line, A Distance Of 8.55 Feet To The Point Of Beginning, Containing 388 Square Feet, More Or Less.
Being a Part of Tax Parcel No. 02266-000-000
A petition in eminent domain has been filed to acquire certain property interests in Alachua County, Florida. Each Defendant is required to serve written defenses to the petition on Petitioner's attorney, whose name and address are shown below, on or

before April 24, 2026, and to file the original of the defenses with the clerk of this court either before service on Petitioner's attorney or immediately thereafter, showing what right, title, interest or lien defendant has in or to the property described in the petition and to show cause why that property should not be taken for the uses and purposes set forth in the petition. If any Defendant fails to do so, a default will be entered against that Defendant for the relief demanded in the petition.
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a declaration of taking has been filed in this cause and that Petitioner will apply for an Order of Taking and any other order the court deems proper before the Honorable Judge Gloria R. Walker, one of the Judges of this Court, on Thursday, July 23, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., (1 hour reserved) a via Zoom conferencing (<https://zoom.us/j/98387758414>, Meeting ID: 983 8775 8414, Passcode: 248732; Mobile +17866351003). All Defendants to this suit may request a hearing at the time and place designated and be heard. Any Defendant failing to file a request for hearing shall waive any right to object to the Order of Taking. WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL of this Court on the 19 day of

MARCH, 2026.
Wynn S. Vickers
110 North Magnolia Avenue
Ocala, Florida 34475
(800) 705-5457 Telephone
wynn@dhclawyers.com
samantha@dhclawyers.com
J.K. "Jess" Irby, Esq.
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
By
Franita Thomas
Deputy Clerk
J.K. "JESS" IRBY, ESQ.
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
CIVIL DIVISION
201 E UNIVERSITY AVE
GAINESVILLE, FL 32601
April 1, 8, 15, 22, 2026

NOTICE UNDER FICTITIOUS NAME LAW
PURSUANT TO SECTION 865.09 FLORIDA STATUTES NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, desiring to engage in business under the Fictitious Name of Live Through It Enterprises, LLC, with a mailing address of 802 NW 16th Ave Suite B, Gainesville, FL 32601 and a principal office located in Alachua County, intends to register the said name with the Florida Dept. of State, Division of Corporations, Tallahassee, Florida. Owner: Tamika Powell
April 1, 2026

CLASSIFIEDS

AUTOS WANTED
Donate Your Car to Veterans Today! Help and Support our Veterans. Fast FREE pick up. 100% tax deductible. Call 1-800-245-0398
TOP DOLLAR PAID for old vintage guitars! Gibson, Fender, Martin, Greesch, Rickenbacker, Epiphone, Etc. 1930's to 1980's. Call 866-433-8277
REACH MILLIONS OF HOMES nationwide with one easy, affordable buy in the ADS Network! For more information www.communitypublishers.com/category/all-products
PEACE OF MIND AND EARLY DETECTION - Now more than ever, it's important to get screened for Stroke & Cardiovascular Disease risk. Life Line Screening is simple & painless. 833-970-4172
NEED CASH QUICKLY? WE BUY HOUSES IN ANY CONDITION. Get a fair cash offer within 24 hours! Call today. Liz Buys Houses: 833-359-4707
PORTABLE OXYGEN CONCENTRATOR May Be Covered by Medicare! Reclaim independence and mobility with the compact design and long-lasting battery. Inogen One info kit! Call 877-305-1535
CONSUMER CELLULAR - same reliable, nationwide coverage as the largest car-

riers. No long-term contract, no hidden fees free activation. All plans feature unlimited talk & text, starting at just \$20/mo. Call 1-877-751-0866
BECOME A PUBLISHED AUTHOR
We want to read your book! Dorrance Publishing trusted since 1920. Consultation, production, promotion & distribution. Free author's guide 877-729-4998 or dorranceinfo.com/ads
NO MORE CLEANING GUTTERS. GUARANTEED! LeafFilter backed by no-clog guarantee & lifetime warranty. Call 1-833-610-1936 to schedule FREE inspection/estimate. Get 15% off your entire order. Military & Seniors get additional 10% off. Limited time. Restrictions apply, see rep for details.
REPLACE YOUR ROOF w/the best looking & longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! 3 styles & multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited time offer up to 50% off install + additional 10% off install military, health & 1st responders. 833-370-1234
INFLATION IS AT 40 YEAR HIGHS. Interest rates are up. Credit cards, medical bills, car loans. Have \$10k+ in debt? Call Nation-

al Debt Relief to find out how to pay off your debt for much less than you owe! Free quote: 844-955-4930
DON'T LET THE STAIRS LIMIT YOUR MOBILITY! Discover the ideal solution for anyone who struggles on the stairs, concerned about a fall or wants to regain access to their entire home. AmeriGlide 833-399-3595
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Gainesville schools sweep state chess championships

By Nick Anschutz
REPORTER

Three Gainesville schools had successful showings at the 2026 Florida State Scholastic Chess Championships this held March 21–23 in Orlando, with the Frazer School and Oak Hall School winning all five of the championship sections, and Queen of Peace Catholic Academy earning multiple top 5 finishes.

Frazer School

The Frazer School led the way with three first-place victories for the K-1, K-8 and K-12 sections. The school also placed second in the K-5 section.

Andrew Yang-Fang was the K-1 state champion, earning a perfect score and winning all five of his matches. Meanwhile, Aakash Jani, the current fifth-grade U.S. national champion, tied for the state title in the K-5 section, with a near-perfect 4.5/5 score (four wins and one draw) and finished second on tie-breaks.

The Frazer School also had several students finish the tournament with 4/5 scores, helping contribute key points to the team standings. This included Abhiram Pothuri, Sophie Li and Damian Alexander.

The Frazer High School team will compete in the 2026 National High School K-12 Championship on March 27-29 in Chicago, Illinois.

Oak Hall

Oak Hall had three first-place finishes for the K-3 Under 600, K-3 and K-5 sections. While the school placed first in the K-3 Under 600 section, it is not consid-



COURTESY OF TIM TUSING

Oak Hall's K-5 team placed first at the 2026 Florida State Scholastic Chess Championships.

ered a championship section, according to chess coach Tim Tusing, meaning Oak Hall won just two state championships.

With those two titles, Oak Hall has now won 41 state chess championships, according to Tusing.

In the K-3 Under 600 section, Oak Hall was led by Natalie Roth and Sam Lin, who combined for 8 of the 14 total first-place points.

For the K-3 section, Hayden Webb and Andrew Pinkoson combined for a score of 6.5. Aiden Kropp and Arjun Setty also combined for 4.5 points to add to the 11-point total.

In the K-5 section, Oak Hall placed first with 14 points, narrowly defeating The Frazer School, which came in second with 12.5 points.

Three Oak Hall students placed in the top 10 individually for the K-5 section.

- Addison Baumstark, fifth place
- Asher Austin, ninth place
- James McDonald, 10th place

Asher Austin also placed second in the Blitz competition.

Queen of Peace

Queen of Peace placed fourth in the K-1 section, second in the K-3 section and third in the K-5 section.

In the K-1 section, Bradd Mackey, Wyatt McKittrick and Paul Dickert combined for 5.5 points to help lead the way.

For the K-3 section, Queen of Peace was led by Weston McKittrick, John West Gray, Quinn Gray and Luna Flores, who combined for a total of 8 points.

Flora Rabi led the way for Queen of Peace in the K-5 section, scoring a 3.5 and finishing just outside the top 10 by once spot.

Nick Anschutz is a Report for America corps member and writes about education for Mainstreet Daily News. This position is supported by local donations through the Community Catalyst for Local Journalism Fund at the Community Foundation of North Central Florida.

Frazer School wins second straight MATHCOUNTS



COURTESY OF THE FRAZER SCHOOL

Four middle school students from The Frazer School finished in the top 17 at the MATHCOUNTS state championship.

State competition was held on March 20

STAFF REPORTS

Trailing at the end of the individual rounds, middle school students from The Frazer School came together in the team round, rallying from behind to win the school's second straight MATHCOUNTS state championship on March 20.

According to a Frazer School release, "MATHCOUNTS is a national program that provides students in grades sixth through eighth the opportunity to compete in live contests against and alongside their peers."

This year, roughly 200 middle school teams across Florida competed in local chapter competitions, with 42 advancing to the state competition. School teams

consisted of four students and one alternate.

Making up the first-place Frazer School team were Jason Zhang, Vivek Kolli, Isabella Mendoza and Jacob Paret.

According to the release, the top four individuals at the state competition move on to represent Team Florida at the national competition. The Frazer School team had four students who finished in the top 17. This included:

- Zhang, first place. He is the third student from Alachua County to win the state competition, the release said. The other two were Jake Frazer (2017) and Eric Gao (2023).
- Abby Guo, 10th place.
- Vivek Kolli, 12th place.
- Paret, 17th place.

According to The Frazer School's founder, Will Frazer, the team was losing to

Orlando Science at the end of the individual rounds of sprint and target. During the team round, The Frazer School passed Orlando Science by scoring nine out of 10 questions correctly. No other team in the 42-team field scored higher than a six on the team round.

"We expected the competition to be very close," Frazer said in the release. "Orlando Science had all four members of last year's team returning. Some of our kids had an off day during the individual rounds, but they maintained their composure during the team round. This group is very mature and knows how to work well as a unit. Their ability to handle the team round has been a huge strength this year during practice."

The 2026 RTX MATHCOUNTS National Competition will be held May 10-11 in Orlando.

SAVE THE DATE **Tuesday, April 21 | 6-8 p.m.**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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Funding for this program was provided through a grant from the Florida Humanities with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of Florida Humanities or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

For more information contact janalyn.peppel@mainstreetdailynews.com