

alligator



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Suspect in custody after shooting left two dead, police say

THE TWO VICTIMS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED.

By Meryl Kornfield
Alligator Staff Writer

Two hours after shooting and killing two people and abducting the office manager at Summer Place Villas on Tuesday, a Gainesville man was taken into custody in another state, Gainesville Police said.

Police said Cedric Tremaine Plummer, 23, shot two people in the leasing office of Summer Place Villas apartment complex, located at 3316 SW 41st Place, before fleeing to Lowndes County, Georgia, where he was arrested. He was found driving north on Interstate 75 at about 3:30 p.m. with a gun and the office manager — at least an hour and a half's drive from Gainesville.

Police identified the two employees killed as 28-year-old Jude Onyegbulam Osuji, Jr. and Robert Earl Brumbaugh.

Police are unsure if the gun found was used in the shooting, GPD spokesperson Officer Ben Tobias said. Officers responded to a call at the apart-

ment at about 1:30 p.m. and found a bullet hole in window and two bodies, Tobias said.

Tobias said police used witness accounts and electronic communications to figure out who the suspect was. Within about two hours from when GPD started investigating, Georgia law enforcement had the suspect within custody and had recovered a woman who was taken by the shooter.

The shooter, who was a resident of the complex, had taken office manager Hailey Roberts, 19, against her will, said Roberts' boyfriend, Troy Matthews, 22. He received a call at about 2:30 p.m. at his job at Zaxby's. He went to the scene and was told she was missing.

Less than an hour later, Matthews and friends and family of Roberts, who were gathered at the entrance of the apartment's driveway, learned that she had been found by police. They cheered, cried and hugged in front of the crime scene tape blocking off the parking lot.

"She's going to come home safe," Matthews said. "That's



Andrew Stanfill / Special to the Alligator

Police investigate a scene at Summer Place Villas apartment, 3316 SW 41st Place, Tuesday afternoon after an apparent shooting left two dead. A woman, who police said was held hostage by the suspect, was later found.

SEE SHOOTING, PAGE 5

Impact still supporting candidate after learning of criminal charges

By Christina Morales
Alligator Staff Writer

Student Government's Impact Party chose to continue supporting one of its candidates despite learning about his prior criminal charges after questions from The Alligator on Tuesday.

At first, Impact President Omarley Spence said the party would stop supporting Charles McMillan, its 20-year-old Public Health & Health Professions candidate. However, after Supervisor of Elections Erica Baker said McMillan could not be removed from the ballot because absentee ballots were

mailed already, Spence said the party would still provide resources to McMillan during the election.

The party didn't run an initial background check on McMillan, Spence said.

"I feel like we didn't need to do that because of his service, and the service he's done on campus and the community," he said.

McMillan, a UF health science and pre-occupational therapy junior, was charged for possessing a fake driver's license in Fall 2015, according to a sworn complaint. The felony charge was downgraded to a misdemeanor, and prosecu-

tion was deferred, according to court records.

McMillan was arrested twice for stealing signs on campus during his sophomore year, according to sworn complaints. Charges were dropped before trial in both cases.

McMillan said he's tried to improve his life through SG and Dance Marathon.

"I take responsibility for this incident," McMillan said. "My charges have been dropped, and I have learned from this. I don't want this to be my main focus here at my time in UF."

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SG executive candidates debate qualifications

By Christina Morales
Alligator Staff Writer

In a fiery debate between the candidates from three UF political parties, Student Body president hopefuls bickered about politics and tokenization.

During the debate, presidential candidates Janae Moodie (Challenge Party), Ian Green (Impact Party) and Revel Lubin (Inspire Party) went back-and-forth about tokenization in Inspire and Impact after a student questioned if candidate selection was based on identity rather than qualifications.

"I've never been anyone's puppet," Green said in the debate.

He added that he found it con-

venient that Moodie and Lubin left Impact a month before the election. Moodie resigned from her position as Senate Pro-Tempore in early January, and Lubin disaffiliated from Impact the next week.

Moodie rebutted Green, saying she didn't resign for her own personal gain.

"One of the primary reasons I resigned from Student Government was because of the hostile work environment," Moodie said.

Moodie said the arguments about each party's history and all three candidates' past with Impact was tense.

"It was definitely emotionally charged, but I think that's what you can expect when you're passionate

SEE DEBATE, PAGE 5

GATORS HOST BULLDOGS TONIGHT AT 9

Florida's men's basketball team is looking to improve its SEC record to 9-4, pg. 14



See Valentine's Day coverage in The Avenue
You can find out things to do for Galentine's, pg. 8

Tommy Hilfiger store coming to Gainesville
It will open within the next two years, pg. 4

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Today's Weather



AM



NOON



PM

HIGH 74° LOW 57°

Local Events / News in Brief

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Student Government Spring Elections

Spring SG elections will be held 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Feb. 20 and 21 at locations across campus. These elections include the Student Body president, Student Body vice president and Student Body treasurer, as well as 50 senate seats representing the various colleges and classifications. For more information, visit sg.ufl.edu/elections.

Y-Not Theatre Trivia Fundraiser

The Y-Not Theatre's First Anniversary Theatre Trivia Fundraiser will be held Saturday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. It costs \$25 per person to play. Cash and card will be taken at the door. Y-Not develops new American plays in North Central Florida.

Got something going on?

Want to see it in this space? Send an email with "What's Happening" in the subject line to jtavel@alligator.org. To request publication in the next day's newspaper, please submit



Have an event planned? Add it to the **alligator's** online calendar: alligator.org/calendar

the event before 5 p.m. Please model your submissions after the above events, and keep them to 150 words or fewer. Improperly formatted "What's Happening" submissions may not appear in the paper. Press releases will not appear in the paper.

The Alligator strives to be accurate and clear in its news reports and editorials. If you find an error, please call our newsroom at 352-376-4458 or email editor@alligator.org.

The Board of Directors of Campus Communications, Inc., publisher of



announces the opening of the following positions for the summer semester:

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a paid position as head of the Editorial Division and as an unpaid member of the Board of Directors

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paid positions and unpaid members of the Board of Directors.

The applications for these positions are available at the Alligator office, located at 2700 SW 13th Street, **each weekday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. from now until Friday, March 2.** Look for the Alligator sign located in the lobby. Further written information is available at the time an application is picked up. No phone calls, please. Allow up to 15 minutes at that time to read information regarding the application process. The application must be returned to The Alligator by **Tuesday, March 13 at 4 p.m. THIS IS AN ABSOLUTE DEADLINE.** Interviews and selections by the Board of Directors will be held at the new Alligator offices in a meeting open to the public on **Friday April 6 at 9 a.m.** Applicants must be present at that meeting to be considered. Applicants must be degree-seeking college or university students. Preference will be given to those who have experience with The Independent Florida Alligator.

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More than 14,000 students admitted for incoming class

THE CLASS OF 2022 IS EXPECTED TO BE ABOUT 6,400 STUDENTS.

By Elliott Nasby
Alligator Staff Writer

Maddie Schmidt waited anxiously all day until 6 p.m.

Since submitting her application to UF back in September, the 18-year-old senior at Collins Hill High School in Suwanee, Georgia, has anticipated the school's decision for months. On Friday night, Schmidt was one of 14,866 applicants who opened the portal to find the same message. "Congratulations!" the screen read.

"I was very relieved," she said. "UF has always been my dream."

Out of the 40,849 applications UF received for the class of 2022, the school accepted 36 percent, UF spokesperson Steve Orlando wrote in an email. The university expects 43 percent of the students accepted — about 6,400 students — will choose to attend UF.

The average GPA was 4.4 for the 11,741 admitted for Fall 2018. Orlando said 3,125 were admitted for Summer B.

Although more than 1,000 applicants were accepted this year compared to last, admission rates for the Innovation Academy and

Pathway to Campus Enrollment were less than last year. IA admitted about 600 students compared to the 979 accepted to the class of 2021, and PaCE accepted 2,271 applicants, 149 less than last year.

Schmidt said she was admitted for the Fall and plans to study in the College of Journalism and Communications. She wants to be a sports broadcaster one day.

After the good news, she took to Twitter to announce her acceptance. UF saw her post and replied with a GIF.

Orlando said UF's social media team had been working for weeks on a new social media scheme to make admitted students feel excited and welcome.

Social media specialist Ryan Morejon, one of seven members of the social media team, said they started planning in early January for creative ways to interact with students on the platforms they use, like Twitter and Instagram.

But, not everything can be planned. Morejon said his team had to adapt when Instagram's new GIF sticker feature launched less than three weeks ago. The GIF stickers are animated icons users can paste over their pictures. The team designed more than 20 stickers, including a dancing Albert Gator and a 'UF22' ani-

mation.

Morejon said the stickers were one of their most popular posts on decision day, bringing in about 15 million views.

GIFs, photos and memes are incredibly useful tools, especially when it can be hard trying to reach thousands of different students in a way that is still personal and organic, Morejon said.

"You want to make these students feel like they're part of a family, part of a community," he said. "And just that one message coming from UF goes a long way."

#UF22 was trending on Twitter last Friday when decisions were sent out — despite the start of the Winter Olympics at the same time, he said.

The team also tabled last Wednesday at the O'Connell Center and on Turlington Plaza to film current students reacting happily or surprised in GIF video form. Morejon said he was surprised by how many students were willing to be filmed for it.

"There's a lot of different ways to engage," he said. "And I think a lot of units on campus have totally embraced that."

@_ElohEl
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We asked students where they were when they found out they got accepted to UF. Here are our favorite responses.

"I was sitting by the fire I had ignited using my Florida State University acceptance letter as tinder when I decided to check to see if UF decisions were out. I saw the word "Congratulations" and poured some more igniter fluid into the flames as I maniacally laughed."

- Tyler Sommer

"I checked my application status at a basketball championship surrounded my coach and players and found out I got

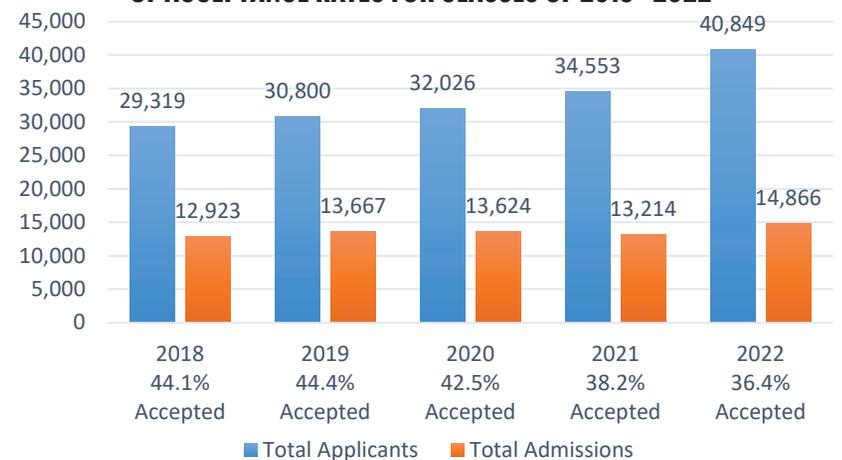
in! They were all so excited for me. My coach is a huge Ohio State University fan, but he did a Gator chomp in the bleachers in celebration of my acceptance. I could've cried."

- Sophia Goodwin

"I was so nervous throughout the entire school day, and I had cried out of anxiety about four times leading up. I was at water polo practice until 7 p.m. After it ended I looked at my phone, and I started crying out of excitement and happiness! This has been my dream since I was 9 years old, and I still can't believe I'm going to be a Gator!"

- Mia Minkin

UF ACCEPTANCE RATES FOR CLASSES OF 2018 - 2022



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- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**
- **Clean surfaces frequently. (Door handles, work areas, keyboards)**
- **Practice self-care for a good overall health!**

Most people with the flu have mild illness and do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. If you get sick with flu symptoms, in most cases, you should follow the CDC's advice and **stay home for the first 24 hours** until after your fever is gone. Additionally, avoid contact with other people except to get medical care.

For more information on preventing and treating flu, visit shcc.ufl.edu/flu

UF | Student Health Care Center
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
(352) 392-1161 | shcc.ufl.edu | @ufshcc

Tommy Hilfiger store to open in Gainesville

By Elliott Nasby
Alligator Staff Writer

UF student Bianca Barrera looks forward to strutting on campus with the signature red, white and blue logo of Tommy Hilfiger on her clothes.

A Tommy Hilfiger store, which sells luxury clothing and jeans, will join the slew of stores opening in Celebration Pointe, north of the intersection of Interstate 75 and Southwest Archer Road within the next two years.

Barrera, a UF business junior, said she's excited for Tommy Hilfiger to open, as it will be closer than a store in St. Augustine.

"It's a good brand that's worth the extra

cost," the 21-year-old said.

Ralph Conti, a principal and managing member of RaCo Real Estate, which is partnering to oversee the development, said there is no set opening date for the store.

Celebration Pointe, a 160-acre mixed-use development, will be a space for people to shop, hang out, work and live, according to a press release. The space should be complete by 2020, according to the developer's website.

"It's going to be a pretty cool place," Ralph Conti said.

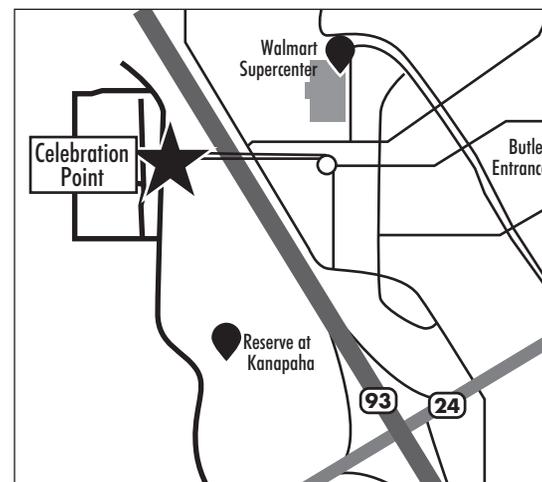
Brands like Bass Pro Shops and Regal Cinemas are considered the anchor brands for the space, said Chris Conti, marketing di-

rector for RaCo Real Estate and Ralph Conti's son. He said tenants and tenant coordinators work together on designing the store space.

"The overall idea is for the development to be a great place to basically celebrate life's moments," Chris Conti said.

Other stores have opened or are scheduled to open soon in the development. Bass Pro Shops opened in November 2016, and Regal Cinemas will open this spring, according to a press release. Celebration Pointe also announced in January it will open a Nike Factory Store in spring, according to Alligator archives.

@_ElohEl
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Jordan Bourne/Alligator

A star marks the Tommy Hilfiger store location.

GUIDE TO DINING OUT



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Bagels & Noodles

Serving breakfast and fresh bagels 6:30 am - 3:00 pm. Serving Vietnamese cuisine Pho noodle soup and more.
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ORGANIC

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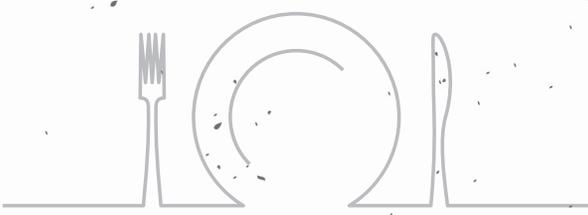
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SOUTHERN

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Students support part-time employees at Senate meeting

By Romy Ellenbogen
Alligator Staff Writer

Dozens of anonymous people told the same story.

Financial burden. Choosing between rent or food. Playing catch-up from time missed. Feeling undervalued.

At Tuesday night's Senate meeting, 13 supporters of the Alachua County Labor Coalition read out responses to its survey of UF's Other Personnel Service, or OPS, employees, who are paid by the hour and are not given benefits.

The survey, which asked about the feelings of OPS employees, was sent out to about 5,000 workers and got 535 responses, said Timothy Tia, a UF economics senior and labor coalition communications organizer and director.

"It is quite frustrating to be reminded how optional you are to the university," one response said.

Tia said the group was trying to get different voices across campus to support OPS workers,

who he said are vital to the university. In November, members met with UF's faculty senate to ask for support, according to Alligator archives.

The group proposed a resolution asking for Senate to support paying OPS workers for time missed due to Hurricane Irma, and another to reclassify OPS workers out of temporary status if they've had the position longer than a year. The resolutions will be heard in the Judiciary Committee in about two weeks, Tia said.

Tia said though OPS workers don't typically get paid for time off, UF could have given the pay.

Vice President of Human Resources Jodi Gentry has previously said the OPS work agreement says employees are not eligible for paid leave, according to Alligator archives.

"If it was a priority for the University of Florida they would have already done it," the 21-year-old said.

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The woman who was held hostage was later found

SHOOTING, from pg. 1

all that matters."

A detective took Roberts' parents to Georgia to pick up their daughter. Police are still investigating why she was taken, Tobias said.

Police closed Southwest 41st Place for about three hours and told residents to avoid leaving shelter while they tried to locate the shooter.

Some UF students in the area were concerned UF Public Safety didn't share an alert for the shooting, which happened about a mile from campus. UF spokesperson Steve Orlando said alerts are sent out when the incident happens less than 1,000 feet from campus.

Dillon Edens, a UF biology sophomore passed the crime scene on their way to Dollar General.

"It would be nice to know to take

some precautions," Edens, 19, said.

James Workman, 60, lives in the apartment complex and heard the news about the shooting from police who asked him to leave his apartment during the investigation. He watched detectives go in and out of the leasing office and worried about Roberts, who he said was a "sweet-heart."

The apartment manager declined to comment.

Residents who could not drive on the street gathered in the parking lot of Dollar General. They were shocked to see patrol cars in their neighborhood. Tobias said crime like this is uncommon for the area.

"When I heard the call go out, I said to myself, 'This is too weird in this area to be a call,'" Tobias said. "Unfortunately, it was a real call."

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Shelbie Eakins / Alligator Staff

UF Student Government presidential candidates answer questions submitted by students during the debate Tuesday night in the Reitz Grand Ballroom.

They spoke about tokenization

DEBATE, from pg. 1

about student issues," she said. "People are passionate about the fact that there's no access to Student Government."

David Enriquez, who is running for Student Vice-President with Impact, said the debate was competitive.

"We were honest when we needed to, even when some would consider too blunt," Enriquez said.

Enriquez said a party that grants people positions based on identity does not exist within Impact.

"I think it's a distraction from the real conversation, which is that Janae and Revel want to be Student Body president," he said. "The question is who is qualified and who has the best platform. Rather than addressing that, they kept going back to this ridiculous accusation."

Impact plans to do more to increase diversity by co-sponsoring events and increasing the rate of black students coming into the university, Enriquez said. He said Green plans to travel to local high schools to help minority students learn how to apply to UF if he is elected.

"We've had a historic commitment to diver-

sity," he said. "It's the Impact Party that has produced pro-Latino legislation on the Senate floor."

Alyssa Bethencourt, Inspire's Student Body treasurer candidate, said the party stands for a positive campaign and would never speak down to other candidates.

"I think some of the slander that was thrown, specifically between Impact Party and Challenge Party, could've been limited," Bethencourt said. "I felt that we were actually losing purpose of the questions that were being asked. That's a disservice to the students."

During the debate, Challenge accused Inspire of releasing a platform that mirrored many of their own points.

"I think it's important to realize that a lot of the points Inspire has on our Spring platform is also on our Fall platform," Bethencourt said. "Challenge Party and Inspire party do stand for the same thing, and I'm happy to see whoever is elected in this position will serve our Student Body."

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Editorial

This Valentine's Day, love yourself first

On Valentine's Day, we're reminded to think of others — waffles with your friends for the Galentine's Day crowd or a candlelit dinner with your significant other.

Some argue that actions on Valentine's Day should be an everyday thing; you should always be showing the people you love that you care for them.

So why aren't you showing that same love to yourself on a daily basis?

Stress, anxiety and depression are familiar feelings. For some readers, they may feel exponential if your plans don't fall between the ideals of Valentine's Day. But today, we at The Alligator want you to focus on yourself.

It's especially important to appreciate your own talents and skills as a college student, especially when school and life can feel overwhelming. A recent story from the Chronicle of Higher Education noted that college students across the country are suffering from anxiety. A national survey, the Healthy Minds Study, found one in four undergraduates and graduates students reported feeling symptoms of anxiety. But less than 40 percent of students who are feeling anxious and depressed get help.

We at The Alligator understand those feelings. It's no secret that the majority of students who make up our staff are student journalists, and sometimes it can be hard to remember that our self-care comes first.

Social media has its pros and cons in helping the uphill battle to understand our self-worth. For instance, if you check the UF class Facebook pages, you can find the occasional photo of a positive message left somewhere on campus. "Love yourself," the notes read. "You are beautiful." "Smile. You are worth it."

With midterms coming up, we're sure you feel stress, too. But it's important to step back and take a moment for yourself. It's easy to let stress levels build up, and it's easy to skip a meal or trade away an hour of sleep for an hour of studying. But there needs to be a balance, and Valentine's Day presents a perfect opportunity for that.

We know you might walk into Publix and roll your eyes because of the overflow of flowers and chocolates. Don't. Even if you're nursing a broken heart or if you've never been in love, no matter what your relationship status is, we want you to smile until your cheeks hurt today.

It's the day you get to treat yourself. Eat that pizza for a cheat meal. Spend the extra money for guac at Chipotle. Finish the pint of Ben and Jerry's tonight. If food is not your No. 1 passion as it is ours, take time to drive to Bo Diddley Community Plaza or Lake Alice, and relax. Buy those shoes or that video game you've been dreaming about for the past few weeks. Listen to your favorite song on repeat.

Make sure that five years down the road, you'll be able to look back to Valentine's Day 2018 and excitedly reflect on a memory that makes your heart happy.

Melissa Gomez	Abby Miller	Caitlin Ostrhoff	Jimena Tavel
EDITOR	OPINIONS EDITOR	MANAGING EDITOR, ONLINE	MANAGING EDITOR, PRINT

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Column

The regressive politics of "The Bachelor"

Feminists, as well as fans of generally entertaining television, would like to thank Arie Luyendyk Jr. for two more hours of productivity each week. To be frank, his season makes many previously devoted fans cringe, and many of us just can't watch "The Bachelor" anymore.

This season is unequivocally the most boring season in the franchise's recent history. The show is heading for a crash with Luyendyk, the newest bachelor, in the driver's seat. (Get it? Because he's a race-car driver, which is arguably the only moderately exciting thing about him.)

The biggest problem with Luyendyk isn't that almost all of what he says is some version of "this process is difficult, but it will be worth it if my wife is in this room." It's not that he speaks exclusively in clichés, or that when asked what excites him, he replies with "excitement." It would have been fine that he is just a mild-mannered, run-of-the-mill 36-year-old — but the operative phrase here is "would have." As in, it would have been fine before the show gave us Rachel Lindsay as its Bachelorette.

The franchise has taken a step backward with Luyendyk. In the last season, Lindsay brought the show, and the role of Bachelorette, to a new level. She was open-minded but straightforward. She was kind but outspoken. She let viewers in on her decisions to send home certain men, many of whom were crowd favorites. She had no tolerance for immaturity or unnecessary drama between the contenders, and she often left the instigators without a rose for that reason. Despite the stigma, she spoke openly about her struggles with mental health after a difficult break-up.

When it was revealed that one of the contestants had espoused racist and hateful views on Twitter, Lindsay shut him down, later saying it was an "opportunity to be a spokesperson for African Americans, for women."

Fresh off the high of watching the genuine, dimensional Lindsay find love, we are now forced to watch her polar opposite, Luyendyk, attempt do the same. He's the typical Bachelor: a good-looking guy searching for a wife who will



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uproot her life and follow him around the country for his career.

That's why when Jacqueline Trumbull, a contestant this season, brought up the fact that she was planning on getting her Ph.D. in chemical psychology, Arie implied that their relationship might not work out.

"I don't really see her ambitions and dreams as a hindrance," he told the camera later. "It would just be another obstacle that we have to get through together." She still got a rose — this time.

Feminist viewers never used to watch "The Bachelor," wine in hand, our Twitter apps open, every Monday night to see real people find real love. In fact, for many, the show was happily hate-watched. We expected to be disappointed with outdated ideas about gender roles and a woman's place in a marriage. But then came Lindsay, and for the first time, we stopped hate-watching, and we just watched, cheering her on the entire time.

In a post-Lindsay world, it's tough to justify spending two hours watching Luyendyk fumble every opportunity to show he's anything more than a pretty face with antiquated ideas. Why did the show regress instead of feeding off of Lindsay's season? Simply put: ratings.

The show's creator, Mike Fleiss, said Lindsay's season saw a ratings drop that was "incredibly disturbing in a Trumpish kind of way." That is as if to say that a strong-minded, feminist black woman was not appealing to the franchise's usual audience. If that is the case, Fleiss's choice of Luyendyk was one that ran from the problem to appease viewers who tuned out for Lindsay's season.

Of course, "The Bachelor" is a business, and ratings are a measure of its success. But after 22 seasons on air, it's acquired a cult following, and it has the power to showcase diverse people who stand up for what is right. Until the show starts using that power for the right reasons, it will not receive my final rose.

Carly Breit is a UF journalism senior. Her column focuses on feminism.

The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the Alligator.

Column

The Olympics highlight socioeconomic class division in the United States

The Olympics, at its best, pick up the slack of politics, culture, education and everything in between. It does what these areas often fail to do: bring the many into one. It's the simplicity and honesty of competition that does this. Either you receive a medal or you don't, and you earn a medal by doing better than the next person. I can only wish the government was this transparent.

The Olympics give nations something to root for and rally around. Part of the thrill of watching the Olympics is knowing that millions of Americans are watching too.

But at its worst, the Olympics reflect a nation's division and stratification. For those of us who watched the opening ceremony of the 2018 Winter Olympics, we witnessed this paradox in action.

The big story surrounding Pyeongchang was the unification of South and North Korea, who mutually decided to share representation for their athletes. They are not competing separately but instead as one unified Korea.

Not only that, but just four days ago, Kim Jong Un extended a personal invitation to South Korea's President, Moon Jae-in, to travel to Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea. North and South Korean leaders have not officially met in 10 years. This is historic and the best example of the healing power of sport in recent memory.

Regardless of what else happens during the Winter Olympics, the possibility of a friendship between North and South Korea is by far the best storyline of the competition. The ramifications of this are global; we would all benefit from a calmer, friendlier and less trigger-happy Kim Jong Un.

Watching the two Koreas walk together during the opening ceremony, the athletes waving a flag displaying one single Korea, was a treat. Everything that is good about the Olympics were expressed in that moment.



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Who knows what will happen after the competition is finished, whether North and South Korea will be at each other's throats again or whether real peace comes from this, but we shouldn't worry about that now. We should enjoy seeing the two Koreas compete and struggle together, hoping this is just the prologue to a great, unified future.

While I watched two bickering nations complete as one, it made me think America needs to follow suit. Sure, we aren't technically divided into two nations. But we might as well be when it comes to class distinction.

I don't know why, but while watching the opening ceremony, I was particularly struck this year by the sea of white, smiling faces who represent our country.

For a second, I thought we were Norway or Russia. According to The New York Times, 243 athletes are competing for America, the most out of any nation, of which 10 are African American and 10 are Asian American (the U.S. Olympic Committee does not release data on other ethnicities because they do not think said data is reliably collected.) It doesn't take a sociologist or political scientist to deduce from those numbers that America's multiethnic state isn't accurately reflected.

This is a problem that I doubt will change soon. The pursuit of Winter Olympic sports — snowboarding, skiing, hockey, bobsled — is an expensive one, plain and simple. In America, wealthy people are mostly white people, hence why most of the athletes are white. How can a nation root for itself if a portion of its population is competing? It is a shame. Winter Olympic sports are not the most entertaining, but they are beautiful and require admiration.

In any case, the Summer Olympics are always better anyway.

Scott Stinson is a UF English junior. His column focuses on popular culture.

Column

Social media is shaping dating, but it shouldn't define relationships

When people say that dating just isn't the same as it used to be, they're right.

Romance isn't dead, but in a culture shaped by technology, it sometimes feels like modern love should come with a handbook — one that can be opened on an iPhone or tablet, of course.

Today's couples face socially constructed norms that dictate acceptable and annoying social media behavior, and when these norms are violated it can lead to conflicts that were nonexistent 20 years ago.

Social media has the potential to play a role in each stage of a budding relationship. For starters, dating apps give people the odd ability to browse the fish in the sea, then accept or reject a potential partner without actually facing them in person.

Then comes the meet-the-parents-and-grandparents phase, which often occurs for the first time on Facebook when a new person is tagged in our photos and excited messages from friends and family members blow up our notifications.

On Snapchat we're expected to maintain the messaging streak with the most important people in our lives, which likely includes romantic partners. On Instagram and Facebook it's considered normal for people to post pictures of the person they're dating. It's become out-of-the-norm or deviant for someone in a relationship not to share photos of their partner.

On one hand, I think these norms associated with modern dating are par-for-the-course. Posting pictures on Instagram and messaging through Snapchat with our friends and significant others have become mainstream ways of communication and documenting glimpses of our lives.

And, in all honesty, it simply feels good to share happy memories on our profiles. Some psychologists refer to this as the "slot machine effect" — it's the euphoric, rewarding feeling



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that stems from positive reactions on a social media post.

That being said, it's easy to get trapped in the profiles of other couples, and this can pave way for unhealthy social comparisons. According to a recent study in the Journal of Youth and Adolescence, young adults who admitted to comparing themselves to others online were more likely to have a weaker

sense of themselves and their identities when compared with those who didn't.

In the study, researchers Chia-chen Yang, Sean Holden and Mollie Carter from the University of Memphis surveyed more than 200 college freshmen and found that in students who compared themselves to others on Instagram had lower levels of overall self-esteem and psycho-emotional wellbeing.

Though social comparisons have always been ingrained in American culture, social media has made it easier to compare ourselves to others and reap negative emotional side effects, especially when it comes to dating.

Today, we're faced with scrolling photo streams showcasing other couples celebrating random milestones with gold-foil balloons. We see constant posts showing the whereabouts of every romantic duo in or out of our social circles. Today's couples can easily spiral into feelings of doubt or even question their friends' relationships solely based on their social media posting habits.

But despite how frequently or infrequently one chooses to document their dating lives, what matters most are the stories behind the snaps and the off-camera interactions that make each relationship unique and impossible to capture on a social media profile.

Even in a world infiltrated by cute puns and pictures, the truth is that actions will always speak louder than Instagram captions.

Darcy Schild is a UF journalism junior. Her column focuses on human behavior and sociology.

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Seven unconventional spots to spend Valentine's Day

By Emma Witmer
and Gabriella Paul

Avenue Writers

It's Valentine's Day and you still don't know what to do? Gainesville has plenty of ways to impress your valentine with something different than last year. If the standard dinner and a movie isn't your style, don't worry — we've got you covered. Here are seven nontraditional ways to spend the holiday with that special someone.

For beer and cookies...

Midnight Cookies has partnered with Swamp Head Brewery for a sweet and tipsy evening. Guests will have four Valentine's Day inspired beers to taste, created by the brewers at Swamp Head, and fresh cookies from the bakers at Midnight Cookies. The event begins at 4 p.m. and continues until 10 p.m. Swamp Head is located at 3650 SW 42nd Ave.

For beer, cupcakes and romcoms...

First Magnitude Brewing Company is hosting a reservation-free event with food, booze and a romantic comedy on the big screen at 7 p.m. "Crazy Stupid Love" will be streamed live in the warehouse alongside Patticakes cupcakes and specialty beers. All you need is a blanket, an appetite and someone to cuddle with. First Magnitude is located at 1220 SE Veitch St.

For the nature lovers...

Paynes Prairie is a National Natural Landmark with alligators, bison, horses and hundreds of bird species. The park is full of trails where you can get away from the city and find yourself face-to-face with Florida's natural beauty. Paynes Prairie is located at 100 Savannah Blvd. in Micano-py, Florida.

For the artsy valentines...

If you have an artistic bone in your body, date night at Painting with a Twist was made for you and your valentine. From 7 to 9 p.m. at Gainesville's studio location, you can grab an empty canvas, create art and make some memories. All you need is a prebought ticket online at paintingwithatwist.com/studio/gainesville/event/1420160/ and a bottle of red or white wine from home.

For the die-hard Gator duo...

If you and your valentine are as in love with the Swamp as you are with each other, you're in luck. A romantic evening cheering on Gator basketball at the O'Connell Center is calling your name tonight. The men will take the court in the O'Dome against the Georgia Bulldogs at 9

p.m.. Can I get a "go gators"?

For some competition...

Nothing says romance like bowling shoes. Splitz Bowling, located at 1301 NW 76th Blvd., is offering special deals to couples looking for a bit of competition. This Valentine's Day "Deal for Two" includes four two-person games, shoe rental and a

Four ways to keep your Galentine's Day going

By Taylor McLamb

Avenue Writer

The hit NBC show "Parks and Recreation" gave us a lot of memorable gems like "treat yo self," DJ Rumba and every single one of Ann Perkin's nicknames but, most importantly, it gave us the most significant holiday of the year, Galentine's Day.

Valentine's Black Hearts Ball/Retro Video Dance Party

Tease your friend's hair, find your best neon spandex and scavenge for the most oversized pair of parachute pants you own, because this is your night to get wild. Tonight the Atlantic will be hosting a retro video dance party featuring music from the '80s, '90s and 2000s. There's nothing more empowering than getting down to TLC's "No Scrubs" or Destiny Child's "Jumpin' Jumpin'" with some of your closest friends. The five-hour dance party starts at 9 p.m. and ends at 2 a.m., so stay safe, dance your heart out and try not to drink too much of Tom Haverford's signature Snakejuice.

A Valentine's Night at the Museum

There's no better way to spend Valentine's Day than with a group of your closest, competitive friends, fighting over trivia questions like your life depends on it. However, I have to warn readers that depending on your competitive nature, you could potentially lose friends from this.

The Florida Museum of Natural History will be hosting this event, which includes trivia as well as a scavenger hunt that makes its way through the exhibits. The night runs from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. with a dessert bar provided by Celebrations Catering, so hunger won't get in the way of your winning glory.

Farmers Market

Make Leslie Knope proud by supporting Gainesville's very own Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs department who devotedly organize the Union Street Farmers Market every Wednesday on Bo Diddley Community Plaza. Eat your way through downtown by enjoying more than 40 local vendors selling an assortment of fresh and local produce, bakery items, jams and more. Enjoy organic coffee and snack on some freshly baked German pretzels while taking in the lively, diverse Gainesville community. While the market only runs from 4 to 7 p.m., you don't have to wait another year to take your friends, as it returns every Wednesday.

Netflix and Chill

While going out on the town is always fun, there's nothing better than just spending a comfy night inside with some good snacks, and best of all — you don't need to wear pants. Invite a few friends over and watch a good TV show or movie that reflects the same girl power that you're celebrating. Netflix contains a large selection of movies and TV shows that would be perfect to commemorate female friendship. You could watch "Jessica Jones," "New Girl," "The Incredible Jessica James," "Garfunkel and Oats" or, heck, you could go ahead and binge-watch all seven seasons of "Parks and Recreation" to really commit to Galentine's Day. Make your friends a fresh batch of waffles, douse those bad boys in maple syrup and spend the night quoting our holiday's founder, Leslie Knope herself.



Courtesy to the Alligator

Midnight Cookies and Swamp Head Brewery are teaming up this Valentine's Day, making for a great event for lovers and Galentines alike.

\$10 game card to Splitz's arcade.

For the trivia (and pizza) lovers...

Grab your teammate and head to Satchel's Pizza at 7 p.m. for 20 "mind bending" trivia questions from Imagine Trivia. Satchel's, a quirky Gainesville hot spot, is located at 1800 NE 23rd Ave. This trivia event is actually available every other Wednesday night, so you can start a new couple's tradition this Valentine's Day.

The show follows Leslie Knope, the feminist, trailblazing lead who is in charge of Pawnee Indiana's Parks and Recreation department, who quickly makes it clear that she adores her girlfriends possibly even more than she loves her waffles drenched in maple syrup. Even though Leslie made her story by coining Galentine's Day on Feb. 13, why stop the festivities then? Here are a few fun events that you can do in Gainesville to celebrate the greatest love of all — sisterhood.



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Impossible Burger:

Loosey's is the first to serve this meatless alternative (pg. 9)

Destination Okeechobee:

Six groups will battle it out for a spot (pg. 10)

Loosey's becomes first local venue to serve Impossible Burger

By Gabriella Paul
Avenue Writer

It was a Midtown fairytale.

Ten years ago, two Gainesville bartenders fell in love.

Now Danny and Joy Hughes are the founders and co-owners of Loosey's, a local dive bar named after the first thing they ever owned together: a lanky, golden-coat dog from Gainesville Pet Rescue.

Loosey's downtown pub is now one of two Gainesville locations serving burgers off the cast iron grill and brews from around the country.

Joy, a UF alumna with a degree in finance, said she thought after graduating in 2008 she would work an office job from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"I guess it's time to get a real job," she said. "And I hated it."

She said at that point, she and Danny had a combined 25 years experience in the restaurant industry.

"We talked a lot about the future as people who are in love do," she said.

By 2010, they were engaged and the proud new owners of a bar.

Two days after Market Street Pub, a locally renowned downtown bar of 22 years, shut down, Danny and Joy signed the lease for it.

At first, she said, the kitchen was slow to open. But once it did, the menu evolved. Their half-pound burgers became a best-seller.

"I think now more than it used to be we're, like, half-and-half food versus booze," she said.

Adding to the burger menu in January, Loosey's is now the first venue in Gainesville to serve the Impossible Burger, a revolutionary

vegan patty that tastes like real meat. The creation was crafted by Impossible Foods, a team of scientists, engineers, farmers and chefs with headquarters in California.

Danny said local customers are lovingly calling it the "science burger."

They weren't actively pursuing a vegetable-based alternative when it was brought to their attention by partner and co-worker Tim Hutchens, he said.

However, this patty is extraordinary.

"For us to be bringing it in, it kind of already has a tall mountain to climb because we have a really good burger, and we have a really good veggie burger," Danny said. "And it's still holding its own."

In fact, he said, he has been surprised by the number of return customers for the Impossible Burger so far.

"I expected it to be a novelty flash," Danny said. "I figured it would hold on, but it's definitely done better than I anticipated."

Danny thinks there's a handful of people he could hand the burger to and they would never know it wasn't real meat.

Joy said she encourages any meat-lover like herself to have an open mind and come out to try it.

Confident that they have mastered the diner-style burger with the impossible patty, the young couple said they are now playing with the idea of using it in other applications like lasagna or shepherd's pie.

For more information on the Impossible Burger, including its environmental benefits, check out <https://www.impossiblefoods.com/burger/>.



Courtesy to the Alligator

The Impossible Burger is a meatless option that tastes, looks and feels like real meat.

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Musicians and producers to battle for Okeechobee Spot

By Emma Witmer

Avenue Writer

Every year, artists compete in Destination Okeechobee competitions throughout Florida in hopes of earning a spot on the Okeechobee Music and Arts Festival line-up. The first round, which concluded about a month ago, consisted of online voting exclusively. Flipturn, a Gainesville alternative indie group, beat out nearly 3,000 other artists and bands for their spot.

The second round of Gainesville's Destination Okeechobee is Thursday night. This round is called the Battle of the Bands, and local and regional performers will fight for their spot on the stage at High Dive. The online voting process from the first round also determined what artists would qualify.

The show will begin at 8:30 p.m., with doors opening at 8 p.m. Tickets for the show are available at HighDiveGainesville.com for \$6 in advance and at the door for \$8. An additional \$3 charge applies to all guests under 21.

The 2018 Battle of the Bands will feature performances from competing musicians The Savants of Soul, Retrolux, Faze Wave, N.W. Izzard, Venm and Losa Fólk. In addition to the competing bands, Battle of the Bands will feature a performance from the 2017 winner, Side Trakd, and dynamic décor from Eclectic Electric.

From indie to electronic to soul, Thursday's performers embody a wide span of genres along with the raw talent that they'll bring to the stage. Here's what you need to know about each of them.

Retrolux

Retrolux is a Gainesville indie-electronic duo made up of Anna James and Maynard Shaye. James and Shaye have quite the story, involving a Craigslist ad, a Halloween party and some skeptical parents. Today, however, the duo has fully embraced the Gainesville music scene together, signing to Swamp Records in 2015 and releasing their first two EPs in 2017.



On Thursday, six groups from across genres will battle for a spot at March's Okeechobee Music and Arts Festival.

Courtesy to The Alligator

"With the first EP, we didn't really understand our style, and we were just learning how to work together and write together. I feel like with the second EP we figured out a more efficient way to write songs together and get them out," James said.

Retrolux, Shaye said, realized that they had to compete in Destination Okeechobee since The Delta Troubadours' victory in last year's competition. Now, James and Shaye are flooding the internet and the streets with posters and video content reaching out to fans to come out and support their journey.

"We have a lot of room to grow, and we're excited to put in the hard work to get us there," James said.

For an idea of what to expect from Retrolux, check out their smooth release "Silhouettes."

Faze Wave

Faze Wave is a four-piece alternative band from Jacksonville made up of Matthew Flynn, Jacob Nemeth, Hunter Hileman and Zachary

Stickler.

The guys of Faze Wave are a modern alternative take on the beach band, combining that nostalgic, iconic beach-style with more complex instrumentals and production. This style shows best in their recently released single and accompanying music video, "Leagues."

N.W. Izzard

N.W. Izzard, with its bouncing, folk-influenced, soulful sound, takes the High Dive stage Thursday night as well. After two years of performing under the moniker N.W. Izzard, the band announced that it would change its name to Honey Hounds on the night of Battle of the Bands. Honey Hounds' song, "Easy Like the Breeze," is a must-hear for those new to their music.

VENM

VENM is a dubstep duo composed of Berkeley College of Music student Julian Beal and UF student Nate Green. The two hone relentless bass and an overall heavy style of produc-

tion to create one of the most explosive sounds to battle it out Thursday. The duo just released a clip of their next single, "Unbelievable," to SoundCloud, a release that takes things to fiery new heights.

Losa Fólk

Losa Fólk may have the most to prove at Battle of the Bands, as he did not originally qualify. Losa Fólk, or Brady Bauer as he is known offstage, is a Gainesville native DJ who is passionate about "quality electronic music." Originally, Bauer was the runner up in online voting, one space short of competing at the Battle of the Bands. However, after one of the original acts unexpectedly dropped out, Bauer secured a spot.

As for who he is, Bauer describes himself in a straightforward way.

"I'm a pretty average person who finds a lot of peace and happiness in music, so I'm trying to spread that to other people," Bauer said.

Now that he has found his way into the Battle of the Bands, Bauer is excited for the possibility of performing at Okeechobee Music and Arts Festival.

"Okeechobee is home for me, in all honesty," Bauer said. "I've never felt more comfortable at a music festival or just surrounded by a huge group of strangers. So, I mean, I've been going every year since it started. I look at it as my key festival, so to be able to go back and actually play there, it would be jaw-dropping."

For an idea of what to expect from Losa Fólk, check out his more than 20-minute "take me to okee" mix on SoundCloud.

The Savants of Soul

The Savants of Soul are a Gainesville staple, bringing their energetic signature to stages around Gainesville and all of Florida since 2010.

The massive group is known for their dynamic performances and distinctly soulful sound. To get a taste of The Savants of Soul powerhouse style of music, check out "Second Chance Lover," the single from the 2016 EP, "Sunday Best."

Bass-heavy producer Digital Ethos to perform

By Natalie Rao

Avenue Editor

Mind-bending producer Digital Ethos hits Gainesville this Sunday at Simon's. The show will run from 9 p.m. - 2 a.m., with tickets available via Eventbrite for \$12.61 to \$17.89.

Never one to shy away from gritty basslines and alien synth melodies, the artist sounds like a blend of Bassnectar, G Jones, Bleep Bloop and something wonky and wonderfully unique from the three. He's a precise embodiment of underground, downright odd bass music that is confusing to some but loved by a niche community. And while he's certainly not for the faint of heart — he's guaranteed to blow the doors off Simon's on Sunday.

In addition to the sound, Digital Ethos' name is on the rise.

After dropping a menacing collaboration titled "Slather" with Bassnectar in December 2017, the artist and his unorthodox tracks are gaining speed. And although this collaboration rose to be one of Bassnectar's most-loved releases

of 2017, Digital Ethos' discography literally goes much deeper than "Slather." Here are some of the producer's must-hear tracks.

Slather

Through teaming up with a household electronic name, Digital Ethos and Bassnectar strike gold with this in-your-face collaboration. If there's one song you should hear going into the night, it really is this one.

Paroxysm

With furious-paced percussion and clean drops, this could be one of Digital Ethos' best.

The Jungle

This abstract release sounds more robotic than jungle-like, and the subtle hip-hop beat gives you something to hold on to.

Cortex

"Cortex" slows things down with both wobbling and constantly cascading synths, making for a moody but subtle mood.

Wormhole

As one of Digital Ethos' earlier releases, "Wormhole" sounds just as odd and alien as you'd expect it to.

VegFest returns to Depot Park

By Taylor McLamb

Avenue Writer

VegFest, a celebration of a healthy, sustainable and compassionate lifestyle, will return due to high demand Saturday at Depot Park.

The free, family-friendly event was created with the goal for people of all ages to have fun while learning about ways to improve health and lessen impact on the environment.

This year's VegFest will include 30 restaurants specializing in either food, beverage or dessert, and all of them encompass what VegFest is all about — fresh, natural ingredients and a healthy lifestyle.

According to the website, there will be popular local vendors at the event such as Curia On the Drag, Daily Green, Humble Wood Fire, Big Island Bowls and more. However, there will also be a few who will travel to the event.

Tea Nation USA is a web and event-based store originating in Jacksonville. The team behind the store travel all over North Florida selling their organic hand-crafted tea blends that are geared towards healing.

Kayla Taylor, a co-founder of Tea Nation USA, was a nutritional therapist and holistic healer producing healing teas for 15 years. Kayla started the business with her husband,

Samuel Taylor, where she said they work together to make natural healing mainstream.

"We've found that those who have committed to a vegan lifestyle are typically highly health-conscious," Kayla said. "At Tea Nation we aim to educate people about natural alternatives, so VegFest is a perfect fit for us."

Kayla said she makes each individual tea by hand to ensure consistency, only using organic ingredients. She added that if you aren't drinking organic, then you're drinking a cup of carcinogens, which negates the healing properties of the tea.

"We get positive feedback all the time, and that is exactly why we are in this business," she said. "We are helping people take back control of their health and thus their lives."

Kayla said that her husband and she both highly recommend their immuniTEA, which was one of the first blends that Kayla developed and has worked miracles for her weak immune system. She said she used to get sick four times per year consistently but hasn't gotten sick since she first made the tea.

"Not only does this tea seriously work, but the blend of eucalyptus, elderberry, ginger, hibiscus and other herbs is just delicious," Kayla said. "We always have a pitcher in the

fridge."

Kayla said she's looking forward to the event to meet all of the health-conscious people as well as to try some kombucha from their friends at Wellspring, who specialize in sparkling probiotic tea.

"People should come by and see us because we will be sampling one of our signature teas in addition to offering custom blends on site, so attendees will have the option to design their own teas," said Taylor.

In order to promote their goal of reduced animal suffering, VegFest will also include a variety of animal rescues and sanctuaries. These include the Alachua County Humane Society, CJ Acres, Gainesville Rabbit Rescue, Pug Rescue of Florida, Plenty of Pit Bulls, Jungle Friends Primate Sanctuary, Kindred Spirits Sanctuary and Another Chance Ranch.

Felicia Sobieska, a 21-year-old UF speech therapy senior, said she was inspired to go to the event due to the countless healthy vegetarian options.

"It's important for everyone to respect food and understand how badly animals are treated," Sobieska said.

The event, which runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., will include speakers, vendors, exhibitors, educational booths, music and children's activities.

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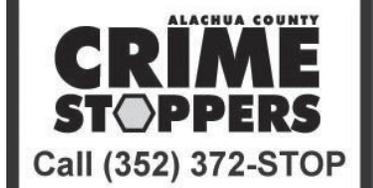
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10. AD SLOGANS: What company advertised its products as "the best a man can get"?

- Answers**
1. Filament
 2. Robin Williams
 3. Portuguese
 4. A pen
 5. Gatwick, London
 6. Modern-day polygamy
 7. Eight
 8. Nathaniel Hawthorne
 9. Iceland
 10. Gillette, razors
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MEN'S BASKETBALL

Gators geared up for tonight's matchup with Bulldogs



Nate Bustamante / Alligator Staff

Florida men's basketball coach Mike White isn't satisfied with his team's defense despite it holding South Carolina to a season-low 41 points on Saturday. "I don't want to act like... we've got it all figured out," he said.

By Andrew Huang
Sports Writer

More than three quarters of the way through a season filled with highs and lows, the Florida men's basketball team faces Georgia tonight at 9 in the O'Connell Center in the teams' second meeting of the year. The Gators (17-8, 8-4 SEC) fell 72-60 at Georgia (13-11, 4-8 SEC) on Jan. 30, their second of three straight SEC losses, but enter tonight's matchup riding momentum from convincing wins over LSU and South Carolina. Here are three things to look for in tonight's rematch, which will air on the SEC Network.

(1) Georgia's Yante Maten

The 6-foot-8, 240-pound Maten appears to be on his way to a third-straight All-SEC selection, despite the Bulldogs being a middle-of-the-pack SEC team. The senior forward is having a career season, leading the league in scoring (19.4 points per game) while pulling down the third-most rebounds (8.7 per game).

In UGA's first game against Florida, Maten led all players with 20 points, made all five of his free throw attempts and pulled down seven rebounds in 31 minutes of action.

Florida coach Mike White said he doesn't anticipate making a lot of changes to his team's game

plan this time around. Instead, he wants to see the Gators compete with more energy than they did the last time they faced the Bulldogs.

"The game at Georgia isn't the only one that we've lacked in those areas," White said. "It's kind of who we've been."

(2) Florida's defense

Fresh off one of its best performances of the Mike White era — holding South Carolina to 41 points on Saturday — Florida's defense is looking to clamp down on a Georgia offense that outscored the Gators 24-9 over the final 10:29 of the two teams' previous matchup.

Bulldogs guards William Jackson II (16 points) and Juwan Parker (12 points) helped Maten keep the Gators' defense on its heels, something UF will look to avoid tonight.

"We put a big emphasis on guarding Yante Maten," Florida guard Jalen Hudson said. "So much of an emphasis that we let their guards kind of get free and do whatever they want."

Hudson and White said the team has spent a lot of time focusing on defense this week. While it was encouraging to see his players shut down South Carolina on Saturday, White said what really matters is for the team to maintain its elevated levels of defensive energy moving forward.

SEE MEN'S BBALL, PAGE 16

SOFTBALL

Matthews off to a hot start for UF heading into today's home opener

By Mari Faiello
Sports Writer

With runners on second and third base deep into the seventh inning, Florida freshman outfielder Jordan Matthews had one job.

She stepped up to the plate, awaited a pitch from Illinois State's Morgan Day and swung.

In her first collegiate game as a Gator, Matthews not only hit the pitch well enough to help teammates Aleshia Ocasio and Sophia Reynoso score, but she hit a home run to left field, UF's first long ball

of the year.

Her three-RBI blast pushed the Gators to a 9-0 lead in their season opener against the Redbirds on Friday.

"That just has to be a special moment to finally see her play college softball," coach Tim Walton said. "And for her to get a home run in her first collegiate game is really special."

Coming off a solid weekend at the USF Softball Stadium, the Gators (5-0) will host their first home game of the season at Katie Seashole Pressly Stadium tonight at

6 against North Florida (2-3). Tonight's matchup is one of 29 regular season games they'll host this season.

The No. 2 Gators are coming off an opening weekend that saw them record four shutouts in five games, a good start for a team that's hoping to make up for its defeat in last year's Women's College World Series.

Matthews is just one reason the Gators have a lot to look forward to this season.

The Anaheim, California, native
SEE SOFTBALL, PAGE 16

Jake's on a Plane / Opinion

Sports stories go deeper than scores. We too often forget that

It might be a little late to the party on this one, but something happened this past weekend that deserves recognition.

Usually, interesting storylines involving non-revenue college sports receive little to no coverage by the media. College sports fans tend to only care about basketball, football and baseball.

Consequently, they miss out on some of the best stories, ones that bring to light topics more important than any game or player.



Jake Dreiling
Twitter: @DreilingerJake

What I'm referring to is from this weekend's UF lacrosse game against Colorado. The average fan might recall that the Gators won the game 16-9 and that it was the season opener. That's it.

But the story surrounding the lacrosse game was much more important.

Colorado senior attacker Julia Sarcona died in a single-car accident on Jan. 13, nearly four weeks before the Buffaloes' season opener against

SEE COLUMN, PAGE 16



The Florida women's golf team finished seventh at the Northrop Grumman Regional Challenge on Tuesday. Sophomore **Carlotta Ricolfi** led UF with a score of 6 over par.

UF swimming and diving kicks off SEC Championships

The Florida men's and women's swimming and diving teams are in College Station, Texas, this morning for Day 1 of the SEC Championships. The men are defending conference champions, while the women finished seventh in last year's competition.

Follow us for updates

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MEN'S TENNIS

Kessler, Vale play top position as UF experiments with doubles lineup

By Benjamin Brandt
Sports Writer

The loudest voices on the courts of the Ring Tennis Complex prefer quiet before a match.

Freshman Duarte Vale and junior McClain Kessler played at the No. 1 doubles position as the Florida men's tennis team took on No. 13 Michigan and No. 2 Ohio State in last weekend's road trip. Home crowds in Gainesville have only seen the duo on the No. 2 court, but recognize it for its loud cheers and pumping fists.

In the hours leading up to a match, however, the two enjoy relaxing in each other's company.

"I'll come over to (Vale's) room and we'll put on some chill music and just sit back," Kessler said of

their pre-match routine. "And then closer to the match we'll get hype and more hype."

That hype led Kessler and Vale to an upset victory over a pair from No. 1 Wake Forest last fall, to a top-five ranking this spring, and – most recently – to the team's No. 1 doubles position last weekend.

On Friday, the Gators defeated Michigan 4-2 for their strongest win of the season so far. Florida recovered from a slow start in singles because of an early advantage after winning the doubles point. Kessler and Vale were the reason for that advantage.

Up against the nation's ninth-ranked doubles team, Kessler and Vale defended two match points before securing a 7-6(6) victory and

breaking the tie from the No. 2 and No. 3 positions. Without the point, the match's outcome would have been determined by the closely fought third set at the No. 5 singles position, which was not finished once the Gators clinched.

Against OSU on Sunday, the importance of the doubles point revealed itself again.

After Kessler and Vale lost 6-2 on the No. 1 court and junior Alfredo Perez and freshman Oliver Crawford defeated the Buckeyes' No. 2 duo, the point was decided at the No. 3 position. Sophomore Johannes Ingildsen and senior Chase Perez-Blanco were unable to overcome a late deficit and lost Florida the advantage. The Gators never recovered and eventually lost to OSU 5-2.

"Playing on the road against one of the top two or three teams in the country, it's kind of tough after losing the doubles point," coach Bryan Shelton said. "I definitely have a lot of trust in our guys to get that win the next time."

Shelton expects to keep the doubles lineup relatively intact with only a few small changes going into the ITA National Team Indoor Championships this weekend. Kessler and Vale will have a heavy responsibility to keep their team alive in doubles play against some tough competition.

With the new challenge, the two rely on a strong dynamic rooted in their high energy.

"I've played with a lot of different partners," Vale said. "But McClain is definitely the player I have the biggest connection with. We're hyped all the time."

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Alan Alvarez / Alligator Staff

Florida's No. 1 doubles pair — Duarte Vale (left) and McClain Kessler (right) — helped lead UF to a 4-2 win over No. 13 Michigan on Friday.

LACROSSE

Freshmen making an early impact for Florida

By Tyler Nettuno
Sports Writer

Heading into the 2018 season, the biggest question facing the Gators was how they would replace the production of last year's seniors.

Florida appears to have answered that question.

Although the team returned many key contributors from 2017's Big East championship-winning squad, it lost its top two points leaders in Sammi Burgess and Mollie Stevens. The Gators knew they needed to replace that scoring prowess, and after one game, coach Amanda O'Leary seems to have found the solution in a class of talented freshmen.

Freshman attackers Cassidy Bresnahan and Grace Haus swiftly made their mark in the first half of Florida's 16-9 home victory over Colorado on Sunday, combining to score four of UF's first five goals.

"It was exciting to see them get on the board early," O'Leary said.

Bresnahan, whose older sister, Taylor, was a senior on the team last year, scored two goals and an assist in the victory. Haus also had two goals and an assist. Both players started in the Gators' season opener.

Freshman midfielder Shannon Kavanagh also started on Sunday, and O'Leary trusted her to take the majority of the draws. She won eight draw controls in

the victory, facing off against Colorado's Darby Kiernan. Kiernan led the Buffaloes in points, goals and assists a year ago, and her 120 draw controls in 2017 ranked 11th nationally. However, she was held to only one goal in the loss.

Kavanagh also had a goal and an assist for the Gators.

Junior midfielder Madi Hall was impressed by the contributions of the young players.

"They definitely stepped up," she said after the game.

Freshman contributions in the game were not limited to the offensive side. Defender Sabrina Cristodero was matched up against one of Colorado's best scorers, Miranda Stinson, for the entire game.

Stinson scored seven goals in the Buffaloes' 20-10 victory over Michigan on Friday night, but scored only one goal on 10 shots in a losing effort against the Gators.

With No. 1 Maryland coming to town on Saturday, UF will need another strong performance from its freshmen.

Competing with the top-ranked Terrapins won't be easy, but Hall believes the team's newcomers have something to build on after a promising start to the season.

"I thought they did awesome," she said. "They definitely need to keep that up."

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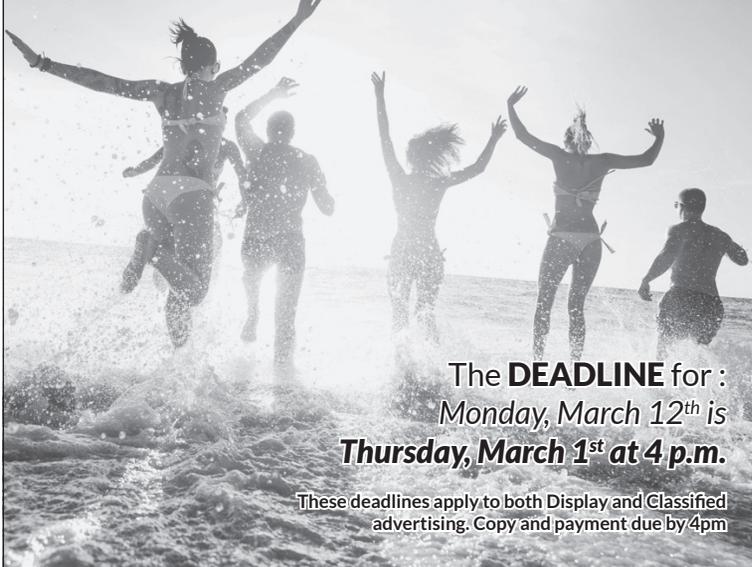
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Matthews hitting .462 five games into career



Alan Alvarez / Alligator Staff

Florida softball coach Tim Walton was pleased with the production he received from freshman Jordan Matthews during the team's opening weekend.

SOFTBALL, from pg. 14

tive was one of their most impressive players during opening weekend. After hitting a home run in UF's first game of the season, Matthews started the next four at either right field or designated player.

Overall, she recorded 10 RBIs, two home runs and 12 total bases in the five-game stretch, the most on the team for each of those categories.

Her slugging percentage so far this season isn't something to scoff at either. She's second behind sophomore utility player Jamie Hoover (1.000), coming in at .923.

Matthews also ranks third on the team in batting average at .462, just behind Hoover and junior outfielder Amanda Lorenz, who are tied for first at .500.

"Jordan was out there playing a new position and looked good," Walton said.

North Florida is on a three-game losing streak coming into tonight's game with the Gators.

Junior utility player Navia Penrod holds one of the highest batting averages (.526) and slugging percentages (.579) on North Florida's roster and also has a team-high four RBIs.

With the help of Matthews, the Gators will look to extend their 7-0 all-time record against the Ospreys tonight.

"That's all you need to say," Walton said. "Jordan Matthews, pretty good."

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Allen started 22 of first 23 games

MEN'S BBALL, from pg. 14

"I don't want to act like this is a new season and we've got it all figured out," White said. "Let's see if we can get it three games in a row."

(3) White trying different lineups

Junior guard KeVaughn Allen started 22 of UF's first 23 games but has come off the bench in the Gators' last two contests against LSU and South Carolina. Allen has struggled to find a rhythm in a guard-heavy rotation featuring new additions in Hudson and graduate transfer Egor Koulechov, the top two scorers on the team.

White said that Hudson, Florida's sixth man in 10 of the previous 12 games, started in Allen's place against LSU as discipline for Allen being late to the team's shootaround. But after a 73-64 victory over the Tigers, White elected to start Hudson again against the Gamecocks.

White has also started to rely on his second unit more and more as the season has gone on. He said the team's younger players have gotten better at playing their roles and bringing enough intensity to the court.

Hudson said giving the bench a longer leash is good for the team and said he felt encouraged knowing there isn't any drop off when the subs come in.

"When you play guys and everybody gets their turn, you get more confident," he said.

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COLUMN, from pg. 14

Michigan on Feb. 9.

A team preparing for the upcoming season had to turn its attention to comforting one another as well as Sarcona's family. Nearly 1,751 miles away, UF senior midfielder Allie Pavinelli felt the same pain.

Pavinelli and Sarcona grew up together

playing lacrosse in Northport, New York, as neighbors. Instantly, a story covered extensively in the Boulder, Colorado, area now has a unique tie to Gainesville. It could have been an article that was picked up right away. It wasn't, not even by us, the Alligator.

Even after the game had passed, and both teams wore shirts and wristbands remembering Sarcona, not much was mentioned in news stories outside of maybe a sentence or two or a

quote from coach Amanda O'Leary.

"This was an emotional game for us," she said. "We asked our team to honor Julia (Sarcona) by playing as hard as they can, and I feel like we accomplished that."

But like I said, most people were too focused on what was going on with the Florida football, baseball or men's basketball teams rather than pay attention to this tragedy.

This was the type of story that had the

potential to garner a lot of national attention, even bringing more focus to the sport itself. But more importantly, it's a rare story that meant a lot more than sports in general.

Sometimes it's important to take the player out of the game and focus on the story at hand.

Jake Dreilinger is the Alligator's assistant sports editor. Contact him at jdreilinger@alligator.org.

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