

Lake City Reporter

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SUNDAY EDITION

Rachel Grubb's first album to be released

1D



No Rio for Burns

SEE SPORTS, 1B



Brewery on its way

Halpatter sets spring opening for new downtown headquarters

1C



A GRAND NEW FLAG

Camping World raises banner just in time for the Fourth.

Photos by SAM BURROUGHS/Lake City Reporter

Employees at Camping World raise a 40-by-80-foot flag on a newly erected flagpole Friday at the local store, 530 SW Florida Gateway Drive. The flag and the pole cost \$80,000, according to business development manager Don Cadmus. The pole is anchored about 12 feet deep and rises 130 feet above the ground. "I [wanted] it up before the 4th," Cadmus said. "It's the largest [flag] in Columbia County. It's symbolic. A lot of our customers are veterans and this is how we thank them."



Every three weeks the flag will be taken down and sent for repairs, which will cost an estimated \$600 per repair. A second flag will be raised in its place.



The new flag waves gently in the breeze. All major Camping World stores are participating in an initiative to put up the large flags to pay homage to their customers, many of whom are veterans.

CCSD considers hiring STEM coordinator

But School Board questions the need to make it an upper-level position.

By KAYLA LOKEINSKY
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School Board Chairman Steve Nelson is determined

to get a STEM coordinator position established for the district.

However, the rest of the board isn't yet convinced.



Nelson

program coordinator came

When the prospect of having a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) before the board, questions were raised on why the district needed the upper-administration level position.

According to Nelson, a STEM coordinator is necessary if the district wants to

STEM continued on 2A

County rec director recovering after stroke

Mario Coppock spent a month in rehab facility.

By TONY BRITT
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Mario Coppock, the longtime leader for recreational sports in Lake City and Columbia County, is working to regain his health following a debilitating stroke close to two



Coppock

Department director for seven years and served in a similar capacity for Lake City for 30 years before the county took over the department.

COPPOCK continued on 3A

months ago.

Coppock has been the Columbia County Recreation



NICK ROLLISON/Lake City Reporter

Swing, batter, swing!

Orange Park Oakleaf Knights catcher Kaylee White waits to see if Valrico Bloomingdale batter Rylie Ham will score a hit Saturday during the 2016 Florida State Babe Ruth Softball Championship at the Southside Sports Complex. TDC Director Paula Vann says it's one of the largest tournaments the complex has hosted. There are 85 teams competing in six divisions, with players ranging in age from 6 and under to 16 and under. The tournament continues through Monday.

ANIMAL SHELTER

Salary reports don't add up

Figures vary by more than \$70,000, says County Manager Ben Scott.

By CARL MCKINNEY
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Negotiations between the county and the Lake City Humane Society are wrapping up for a new animal control contract, but concerns remain over inconsistent financial information provided by the humane society amid its request for a funding increase.

The county and the humane society are close to an agreement a new animal control services contract, said County Manager Ben Scott, but the organization's lack of fiscal transparency has been an issue.

On a handwritten document provided during contract discussions, humane society executive director Laura Page claimed the group spends \$253,004 on salaries for animal control services alone. But on other budget documents, the number was \$325,080.

"That's what I have a problem with," Scott said. "They didn't have an explanation for me as to why the funds were different."

There's no practical way to verify salary information, he added.

Page told the Lake City Reporter the handwritten document reflected current salary expenses, while the larger figure represented what the salary expenses would be with a full staff being paid what Page called fair wages.



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'MasterChef Jr.' auditions set

From staff reports

Local youngsters who like to cook may audition Saturday for the Fox Network's new "MasterChef Junior" series.

Auditions will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Omni Hotel, 245 Water St. in Jacksonville.

Producers are interested in auditioning any youngster between the ages of 8 and 13 who has a passion for the culinary arts.

The nationwide search for talented young cooks also includes open auditions in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New Orleans and New York.

Minors must be accompanied by an adult guardian at all times.

Participating in the audition is free.

To apply online, visit www.masterchefjunior-casting.com. For more information, call 818-824-9610.

STEM

Continued From 1A

move forward in these fields.

"It's time to suck it up and just do it," he said.

Nelson spearheaded the creation of a STEM coordinator position for the county, citing a lack leadership and cohesiveness in the school's programs.

"I think there's a drastic need at this point," Nelson said. "If we don't get someone out there who knows what they're talking about and keeps us on the cutting edge, then we'll fall further behind. We need some direction."

The STEM program coordinator would develop and coordinate a districtwide STEM program for all grade levels. He or she would work year-around. The district's base salary for the position is \$71,293. With benefits, the coordinator would earn \$87,608.

The staffer would also oversee robotics programs at all district schools.

At the school board meeting Tuesday, the creation of the position was originally on the consent agenda, along with such items as the approval of the minutes of previous meetings.

However, it was changed to an action item at the beginning of the meeting, which resulted in an hour-long discussion on reservations the board had on creating such a high-paying position without being sure it was needed.

According to District 4 representative Keith Hudson, this should have "absolutely been an action item."

"Creating a position of that expense couldn't be done without the board taking a good look at it," Hudson said.

Nelson said creation of the new position falls under personnel items, so it was automatically placed on the consent agenda. He said he was planning to make the STEM coordinator an action item before District 2 representative Dana Brady-Giddens requested it.

Still, the item "probably should have been on the action agenda to begin with," Nelson said.

While the salary was a main issue for the board members, there were also concerns about whether the district needs a full-time administrator to do the job.

"I'm not opposed to the idea, I'm just opposed to it being an administration position," Brady-Giddens said. "I do think it's a big job, and I'd like to see some sort of incentive to do that position, but I don't think it's a position that should cost over \$80,000."

The decision to table the idea of a STEM coordinator came after seven members of the Columbia County school community, including teachers, parents and STEM advisers, got up and spoke in favor of creating the position.

"The lack of research that went into this decision dis appoints me," said Columbia

High School math and science instructional coach and robotics team coach Celena Crews. "There's a total lack of understanding in our district of STEM education."

Crews, a former NASA engineer, has already taken on a similar role by helping start the STEM programs and robotics teams at the district's elementary and middle schools. Crews did all that work without compensation and was frustrated by the board's decision.

"I would've loved to apply if it happened," Crews said. "I think I'd be a quality candidate. I got into teaching because I wanted to make improvements in the STEM programs, and I feel like it's being taken for granted."

According to Crews, by the time the board brings up the topic at the next meeting, which doesn't take place until July 26, it will be too late to bring a quality person in before the school year starts on Aug. 15.

"You may get somebody, but are they going to be qualified and have an understanding of what to do? No," Crews said. "High-quality educational professionals already have positions by the end of summer. You're going to be sitting where you have to take the best of the worst."

By tabling the decision, the board is giving the administration time to find alternative ways to pay someone to take on the role of a STEM coordinator. Superintendent Terry Huddleston agreed to look into the budget and see where some areas can be trimmed to help keep the position revenue neutral.

"It's evident that the board wants me to look at ways to fund it differently, and I have no problem with that," Huddleston said.

The amount of work that the STEM coordinator would be responsible for and the high qualifications required to get the position are two of the reasons why the salary is that of an upper-level administrator.

"I look at this job description and I see a ton of work," Crews said.

Whoever gets the job, if the board decides to approve it, would coordinate all aspects of STEM education districtwide, provide support for instructional coaches, math and science teachers and STEM teachers, serve as the district contact for STEM education and coordinate competitive robotics teams at all levels, in addition to a number of other responsibilities.

The staffer would also be required to have very specific qualifications, including experience in a STEM-related field and a minimum of five years of teaching experience in a STEM-related subject area.

The board will discuss the STEM coordinator position at its next meeting on July 26.

"The board supported the concept," Hudson said. "I fully support the STEM program. But I personally want to know where our budget is at before I vote on such a costly position."

ROTARY CLUB OF LAKE CITY



COURTESY

An Independence Day primer

Longtime Columbia County educator and historian James Montgomery speaks to the Rotary Club of Lake City during a recent meeting. His topic: the Declaration of Independence. Montgomery said the fighting with England began in April 1775 but the Continental Congress was split on independence. A county in North Carolina actually declared its independence in May 1775. In January 1776, Thomas Paine wrote in the best-selling pamphlet "Common Sense": "It's time to part." The following June, the debate began in the Second Continental Congress, but a vote was delayed until a "declaration" could be written. Thomas Jefferson took the lead role. Much of what he wrote came from the words and ideas of John Locke and other writers. The Continental Congress voted on July 2 for independence and then on July 4 to approve the Declaration of Independence itself. Interestingly, the first draft addressed slavery, but that section was removed to get the Southern states to support the vote for independence.

Swimming lessons set July 11-21

From staff reports

Registration begins this week for swimming lessons at the Columbia Aquatic Complex, 426 SW St. John's St. in Lake City. The lessons will be

offered July 11-21. Registration will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Wednesday and from 1 to 7 p.m. Thursday and Friday. For more information, call 755-8195.

QUICK HITS

Scripture of the day

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jeremiah 17:9-10, KJV).

Thought for today

There is nothing impossible to him who will try. — Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.), king of the ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon. Tutored by Aristotle, he also became a top military leader. By age 30, he had created one of the largest empires of the ancient world.

Winning lottery numbers

Cash 3: (Saturday) 4-4-1
Play 4: (Saturday) 2-9-3-1
Fantasy 5: (Friday) 7-22-27-33-36
Florida Lotto: (Wednesday) 1-5-24-35-42-53-x3
Powerball: (Wednesday) 23-29-37-60-64-6-x2

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- **SUBMISSIONS:** Send announcements to eransburg@lakecityreporter.com or fax to 752-9400. For more information, call 754-0424.

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REUNIONS

Cannon family

The annual Cannon reunion will be held Monday in the pavilion at Hart Springs. All descendants of William "Bill" Jackson and Henrietta ("Aunt Hett") Clementine Townsend Cannon are invited. Please bring a covered dish and family photographs to share. The meeting begins at noon, and lunch begins at 12:30 p.m. For more information contact Rose Williamson at 352-463-7320 or Karen Prescott at 904-708-3399.

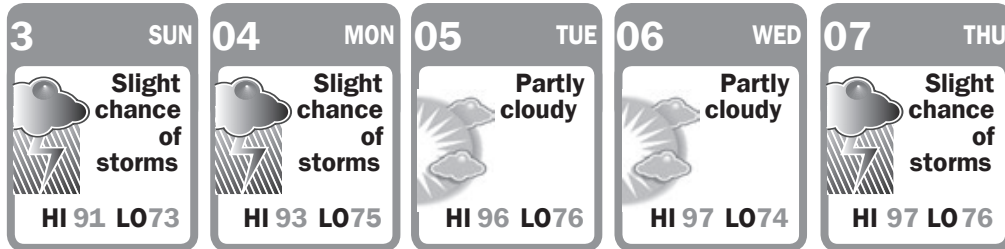
CHS Class of 1986

The Columbia High School Class of 1986 will hold its 30th reunion this month. A free fellowship begins at 6 p.m. July 22 at Gondolier's. On July 23, a paid event begins at 7 p.m. at the American Legion. The cost is \$30 for those who register by July 18 and \$40 at the door. For more information, send an email to columbiaclassof86@gmail.com.

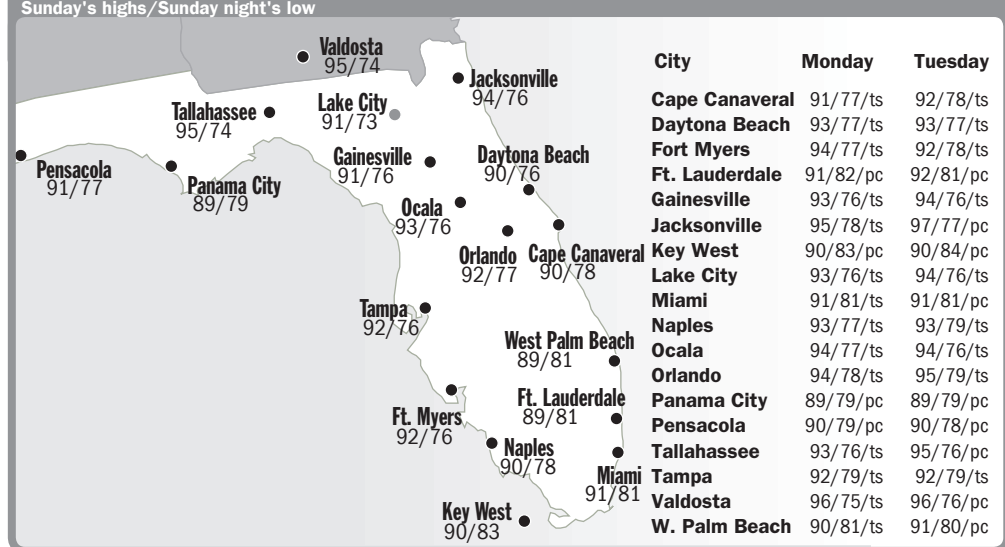
CHS & Richardson Class of 1971

The Columbia High School and Richardson Class of 1971 will hold its 45th reunion on Labor Day weekend at the National Guard Armory on Northwest Lake Jeffery Road. Events include a seated reunion dinner and disco from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Sept. 3 (semiformal attire). The cost is \$20 per person. For more information, call 867-6600.

THE WEATHER



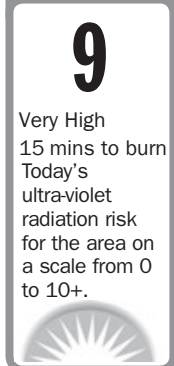
REGIONAL FORECAST MAP for Sunday, July 3



LAKE CITY ALMANAC

TEMPERATURES		SUN	
High Saturday	86	Sunrise today	6:33 a.m.
Low Saturday	73	Sunset today	8:36 p.m.
Normal high	91	Sunrise tom.	6:34 a.m.
Normal low	71	Sunset tom.	8:35 p.m.
Record high	99 in 1902	MOON	
Record low	64 in 1962	Moonrise today	5:50 a.m.
PRECIPITATION		Moonset today	7:51 p.m.
Saturday	0.45"	Moonrise tom.	6:48 a.m.
Month total	0.54"	Moonset tom.	8:47 p.m.
Year total	25.47"	● ☾ ○ ●	
Normal month-to-date	0.43"	July 4	July 11
Normal year-to-date	23.54"	New	First
		July 19	July 26
		Full	Last

UV INDEX

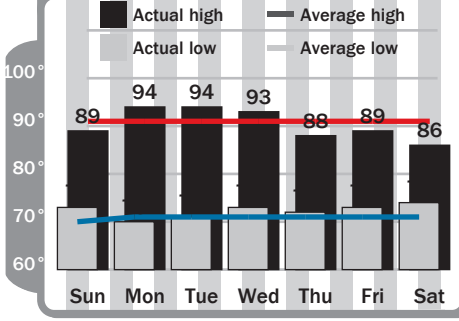


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WEATHER BY-THE-DAY



WEATHER HISTORY

The "Dog Days of Summer" officially begin on this date and end August 11. This period got its name from the Egyptian belief that the Dog Star, Sirius, added heat to the Earth as it rose and fell with the sun during this time period. On this date in 1966, the "Dog Days" were in full force as New York City set a record high temperature of 107 degrees.

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