

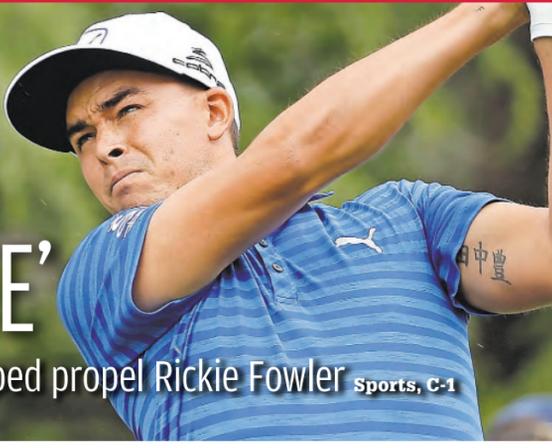
The Florida Times-Union

Wednesday
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'MORE CONFIDENCE'

How victory last year helped propel Rickie Fowler **Sports, C-1**



POLL FINDS TRUMP, CLINTON UNPOPULAR WITH MANY

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Joseph 'Joey' Kawchak, 22, was killed on April 6 when he was hit by a train in Hilliard.



Nicholas Hare, 34, an engineering major, was shot and killed on Aug. 28 in a home invasion. Hare was posthumously awarded his degree in civil engineering last month.

YEAR of GRIEF

In the past year, the University of North Florida campus has been shaken as a dozen students have lost their lives

By Joe Daraskevich
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A plane crash, car crashes, a train mishap, drugs, health issues, self-inflicted wounds and a homicide are the ways a dozen University of North Florida students lost their lives in the last year.

Their stories are unique. Their ages and majors are just as varied.

The deaths touched the lives of friends, family and acquaintances in a variety of ways, prompting counselors to be available time and time again.

The UNF school newspaper, The Spinaker, published an editorial about the aftermath when a classmate dies. The mother of one dead student received his degree late last month during the school's spring commencement.

The deaths cut short dreams of the future.

Maitland Harvey, 18, studied business and wanted to own her own coffee shop, but she also wanted to be a pilot. Harvey and her cousin died in a plane crash Dec. 17 on their way to Mississippi for a week of flight training.

Nicholas "Nic" Hare, 34, returned to Jacksonville when his nephew was born after living in California for several years. He was an engineering major, but he died during an Aug. 28 home invasion.

Joseph "Joey" Kawchak, 22, studied psychology because he wanted to help people with mental health issues. His mother said he died when he was hit April 6 by a train in Hilliard.

In all, 12 active students died since this time last year, according to UNF, and protocols are in place to help students and faculty deal with the lost lives.

"The Counseling Center contacts the professors and if the student lives on campus also contacts the Residence Life staff, and makes arrangements to have a counselor present in the classes or residence

UNF continues on A-4



Maitland Harvey, 18, a budding pilot and freshman hoping to major in business development, was killed along with flight instructor William Swiggart, her cousin, when their plane crashed in the Florida Panhandle on Dec. 17 in bad weather.



Nycole Branch, 22, a junior psychology major, died from a heart attack on Dec. 5. She was a member of the Sigma Lambda Gamma sorority.

Pension tax on Aug. 30 ballot

Voters will decide on half-cent sales tax after unanimous council vote

By Christopher Hong
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A half-cent sales tax to help pay down Jacksonville's crippling pension debt will be on the ballot in August, sending Mayor Lenny Curry into a high-stakes campaign to sell Duval County voters on his plan to solve the city's most daunting financial challenge.



Curry

The sales tax referendum was unanimously approved Tuesday by the Jacksonville City Council. It will be held on the Aug. 30 primary election for local and statewide offices and is open to all registered voters.

If it's approved by voters, the tax wouldn't go into effect until the Better Jacksonville Plan's half-cent sales tax expires in 2030. Beyond that, little is known

TAX continues on A-4

Corey campaign manager helps file for write-in

Write-in Leigh joining race effectively closed primary to non-Republicans

By Larry Hannan
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The State Attorney's election is expected to be one of Jacksonville's most high profile races this year, but about 440,000 registered voters in Duval, Nassau and Clay counties will not be allowed to cast ballots in the Aug. 30 primary because they are Democrats or have no party affiliation.



Corey

The election will be decided by about 320,000 registered Republicans in the 4th Judicial Circuit due to a candidate who qualified to run as a write-in in the election who appears to have had help qualifying from a senior campaign staffer of incumbent State Attorney Angela Corey.



Leigh

Corey's campaign manager, Alexander Pantinakis, told Florida Politics he helped local attorney Kenny Leigh file the qualifying papers to become a candidate in his role as a Republican Party state committeeman, not as Corey's campaign manager.

Leigh and Corey essentially disenfranchised the black population in Northeast

ELECTION continues on A-4

U.S. Navy dings Lockheed on ship quality controls

Littoral combat ships behind schedule, stymied by damages

By Tony Capaccio
Bloomberg

Lockheed Martin Corp. is under orders from the U.S. Navy to correct quality control failures in building its version of the Littoral Combat Ship, an issue that has delayed deliveries and resulted in

three citations from the service's shipbuilding inspectors.

The Navy's supervisor of shipbuilding issued "Corrective Action Requests" in May, June and July of 2015, with one of the three withdrawn after the contractor's plan to resolve the issue was accepted, Dale Eng, a spokesman for the ser-

vice, said in an email.

The quality questions, which hadn't been disclosed previously, add to concerns about the \$29 billion program that Defense Secretary Ash Carter has reduced to 40 vessels from 52. The citations also

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69 Thursday morning's low

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UNF

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hall if requested," said Tom VanSchoor, dean of students. "This gives us the ability to have immediate contact and provide hands-on support to students who are upset and grieving."

Dorinda Nettleton knows about grieving. Hare was her son.

Two semesters short of graduation, he was shot to death in August at his girlfriend's home in a neighborhood off Beach Boulevard.

The lone suspect in the shooting death remains jailed, but has not yet gone to trial. When that happens, Nettleton said, a new set of emotions will surface.

"He will always be in our thoughts, always," she said.

Hare was posthumously awarded his degree April 29 in civil engineering from the College of Computing, Engineering and Construction.

Nettleton sat in the front of UNF Arena with friends and family to accept his diploma.

"You don't want your loved one to be forgotten," Nettleton said.

Every day for six months after Hare died, Nettleton was reminded of his smiling face when she pulled into her driveway and saw his car.

Hare had just put a new engine into the Buick two weeks before he died. Nettleton's emotions continued to break the surface each day when she returned home from taking her grandson to school. She finally gave the Buick to one of Hare's best friends.

"I told Chris [Hare's friend] if he paid for the engine he could have the car," Nettleton said.

Many of Hare's friends participated in a 5K at the beach the day after his diploma was awarded, Nettleton said. She said he participated in the race in 2015. Nettleton walked most of the time this year, and her grandson even participated.

Nettleton said her grandson looked up to Hare and still wants to do everything he can to grow up to be just like him. "I tell him to eat his vegetables so he



Provided by Dorinda Nettleton

The University of North Florida awarded Nicholas Hare's mother his degree at this year's graduation ceremony. Hare was shot and killed in an August home invasion.

can grow up to be big and strong like Uncle Nic, and I tell him to study hard so he can get a degree like Uncle Nic," she said.

She can now show her grandson Hare's degree.

Maitland Harvey, the budding pilot, was a freshman hoping to major in business management, according to UNF.

Kim Harvey said she dropped her daughter off Dec. 17 at the airport in Apopka thinking she would see her again Christmas Eve.

She said her daughter fell in love with flying during a family vacation to Tennessee last summer when her cousin took her up in his plane.

"I just thought it was interesting because even though she wanted to learn how to fly, she didn't want to spend the rest of her life flying," Kim Harvey said. "She wanted to open a coffee shop."

Kim Harvey said her daughter started buying flight manuals and training books after the flight with her cousin. Her cousin promised if Maitland Harvey saved up money for fuel, he would teach her to



Matay



Perry



Demott



Erdelyi



Bushey



Swenson



McArthur

fly.

Maitland Harvey saved up \$1,000 working as a cake decorator while going to class at UNF, her mother said. So her cousin kept his promise to teach her to fly.

They never made it to Meridian, Miss., where 32-year-old William Swiggart worked as a flight instructor, Kim Harvey said.

Swiggart and Harvey died in a plane crash the same night they left from Apopka after the RV-4, two-person aircraft was reported missing in the Florida Panhandle.

Kim Harvey said the two were supposed to stop for fuel before they went down in bad weather.

She said the last text she

received from her daughter was to apologize for not texting when they took off.

The wreckage was located in the southwest corner of Madison County the next day, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Darien Matay, 19, was another aspiring pilot who went to UNF. He was a freshman psychology major who died July 16, just two days after his first solo flight, according to his obituary.

His cause of death was determined as a failure of the central nervous system due to drug toxicity, according to his forensic autopsy report.

Rebecca Perry, Keri Demott, Laura Erdelyi and Al-

lison Bushey all died in car crashes.

Perry was a senior nursing major, Demott was a sophomore sociology major, Erdelyi was a junior communications major and Bushey was a junior community health major, according to UNF.

Perry was 22, Demott was 20, Erdelyi was 20 and Bushey was 18.

Andrew Swenson, 19, died in August due to a drug overdose after a Fort Lauderdale concert, according to WPTV in West Palm Beach. He was a freshman hoping to major in psychology, according to UNF.

Elliott McArthur, 27, also died from drugs, said his mother, Dborah Skowronek Ross. She said McArthur was in the Army before he went to UNF to study sports management. He was always going to concerts and stayed in close contact with his Army buddies wherever they ended up.

She said he loved to play his music real loud and the speakers in his car were proof of that. "I remember I came down to visit from California and he turned

the car on and my hair blew back," she said of McArthur's speakers.

Nycole Branch, 22, was a junior psychology major who died from a heart attack Dec. 5, according to UNF and her autopsy report.

She was a member of the Sigma Lambda Gamma sorority.

Another student, a male, died Feb. 17 of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, according to his autopsy report. He was a post-baccalaureate student majoring in electrical engineering, according to UNF. The Times-Union does not name suicide victims.

Joey Kawchak is the most recent UNF student to die. He was hit by a train April 6.

He went to high school in Hilliard and still has family there.

His mother, Pauline Kawchak, said Joey Kawchak was in an Indie Rock band called Bachelor For Buchanan and he played lead guitar.

He was teaching his little brother to play guitar and had hoped to record an album with his band, Pauline Kawchak said.

She said the family hasn't received her son's ashes yet, but when they do the plan is to plant a tree on top of them at the Cherokee of Georgia Tribal Grounds.

Pauline Kawchak said Joey Kawchak was raised there before she adopted him and it was one of his favorite places. She said he used to dress in traditional Native American clothing and dance traditional Cherokee dances as part of a demonstration at area schools.

By comparison, Jacksonville University has had just one student who has not been accounted for in the last year. Patrick Jackson did not return from Thanksgiving break, but according to the school, it's unclear if he has been declared dead.

JU has about 4,000 students enrolled while UNF has about 16,000, according to their websites.

Statistics for student deaths are difficult to compare to other Florida state universities because there is no standard reporting for student deaths.

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ELECTION

Continued from A-1

Florida, said Marcella Washington, a Florida State College at Jacksonville political science professor.

"Democrats have no primary candidates," Washington said. "The minority vote in this race will not count."

According to a voter registration database, current as of March, 96 percent of black voters in Duval, Clay and Nassau counties are not registered as Republicans.

Attorney Melissa Nelson, who filed to run against Corey as Republican, said she bumped into Pantinakis, Corey's campaign manager, on Thursday in Tallahassee while she filed her papers with the Florida Secretary of State.

Leigh became a write-in candidate the same day, with Nelson and him both being listed as candidates on the Secretary of State's website within an hour of each other.

Nelson said she did not see Leigh in Tallahassee and wondered if Pantinakis played a role in his qualifying for the election.

"I believe Kenny Leigh was designed to close the primary," Nelson said. "A prosecutor's obligation is to seek justice. There is no place for gamesmanship."

That suspicion was confirmed hours later when Pantinakis told Florida Politics he filed Leigh's papers. Pantinakis and Leigh could not be reached Tuesday for comment by the Times-Union.

Leigh, who previously donated money to Corey's campaign, told the Times-

Union last week the state attorney had nothing to do with him entering the race and he didn't know who Pantinakis was.

Nelson campaign spokesman Brian Hughes pointed out that Corey previously denied having anything to do with Leigh getting into the race.

"We will let the previous denials and new information speak for themselves," Hughes said. "Whatever their reasons or tactics we are prepared to share Melissa's strong conservative record with her fellow Republicans."

Nelson, Corey and attorney Wesley White are all running for state attorney as Republicans. If they were the only three candidates in the race, all registered voters could vote in the primary.

When Leigh filed as

a write-in, the election closed to everyone who was not a Republican.

The winner between Nelson, Corey and White on Aug. 30 will now appear on the Nov. 8 general election ballot with a blank space next to the winner's name where voters will be able to write in Leigh's name.

White blamed Corey for closing the primary. He said she'd disenfranchised thousands of voters of color by putting up a write-in candidate.

"I'd like to see Mr. Pantinakis placed under oath, along with Mr. Leigh, to find out who actually signed what, and whether or not Corey gave her blessing," White said.

Meredith Beatrice, spokeswoman for the Florida Secretary of State, said the issue was outside her

office's authority to investigate.

Beatrice cited a Florida law that said her office would review the qualifying papers, but does not have the authority to determine whether the contents of the qualifying papers are accurate.

Washington said the maneuver is a common "shell game" with both Democrats and Republicans using write-in candidates to close primaries when it suits their interests.

"It is undemocratic on its face because the write-in is a ruse and usually a confidant of one of the candidates running in the primary," Washington said.

Primaries also were closed in the public defender's race and the Clay County superintendent race so that only Republicans could vote. The write-

in candidates in those races had a history of supporting incumbent Public Defender Matt Shirk and incumbent superintendent Charlie Van Zant Jr.

State Sen. Rob Bradley, R-Fleming Island, a Corey supporter, said the law allowing write-in candidates to close a primary needs to be reexamined by the Florida Legislature.

"I think closed primaries as a general rule are very appropriate; I think Republicans and Democrats should elect their own nominees," Bradley said. "But they're only appropriate when you have legitimate candidates for both sides."

Staff writer Andrew Pantazi contributed to this report.

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TAX

Continued from A-1

about how the city would use the tax money to pay down the city's \$2.87 billion pension debt — and how much, if any, money it would free up in future budgets.

Still, the council voiced strong support for the idea on Tuesday. Even Councilman Tommy Hazouri, who last week pushed for specific details about the plan, said on Tuesday that the sales tax was the "only pathway available."

"This is the only solution we have right now," Hazouri said.

Council members didn't press Curry's administration for specific details about the financial details of the plan. Instead, their discussions included broad speculation about the amount of money it could free up in the future and if it did, how the city would

choose where the money would be spent.

The city has for years looked for a solution to its rising pension costs, which eats away more than 20 percent of the city's budget and hinders spending on basic services like street paving, drainage, public safety, parks and libraries.

"We need it now. Our roads are falling in," said Councilman Al Ferraro.

Councilman Reginald Gaffney, who said his district is in dire need of assistance from the city, said he trusts Curry's plan will one day help his community.

"I'm going to support it," Gaffney said. "I want to believe that the conversations I've had with this administration, they understand the district's needs. I want to believe that."

Even with the lack of specific details, some of the council's veteran members said they believed the plan was the city's best option to pay off its pension debt and that they would have the opportunity in the future to sign off on the finer details once they become available.

"If the Curry plan passes

in August, additional legislation will be introduced in which details will be provided," said Council President Greg Anderson.

POSSIBLE OPTIONS

While Curry says his administration hasn't decided how it will use the tax money to pay off the pension debt, he and other city officials have discussed possible options and ruled out others.

It's also still uncertain how much money would be freed up in future city budgets if voters approve the sales tax. Curry initially said solving the city's pension debt could free up \$60 million to \$100 million each year when he unveiled his plan in January. But he has now shifted his message by saying budget relief is not the primary reason behind his push for the sales tax, which can only be spent to pay off the pension debt.

Curry said one option would be borrowing money each year against the future tax to help pay down its annual required pension payment.

A second, but more uncertain, option involves

the city estimating the value of the future sales tax over a 30-year period and converting that into a "present-day" value that would count on paper as financial assets for the pension plans. Counting the future sales tax as current assets would improve the financial condition of the pension plans for accounting purposes, which in turn would reduce what the city must pay each year toward the pension debt.

But doing so would require approval from the Governmental Accounting Standards Board and the state Division of Retirement. Mike Weinstein, the city's finance director, said it's "highly unlikely" the city would take that time-consuming route.

Another option would be to keep paying the pension costs entirely with current revenues until the sales tax money begins. That option would not help provide the city budget relief in the intervening years, so the trend of rising pension costs would continue to squeeze city services.

City Councilman Bill Gulliford said Tuesday he

isn't keen on the concept of issuing bonds that would be repaid later from the sales tax revenue. He said borrowing should be the "last alternative" because of the interest rates the city would have to pay for that kind of debt.

Instead, Gulliford said he would rather see the city try to get approval for counting future sales tax revenue as a current asset.

But the option of counting future sales tax as a present-day asset also would increase the city's pension costs over time. The city would be paying less each year to the pension plans, which means the pension plans would not have as much money to invest in order to build up their financial assets for paying pension obligations.

Even if voters approve the tax, the city still must complete tricky negotiations with six employee unions about potentially closing the existing plans

to new hires, who would instead be offered some other retirement plan that could be pensions or 401(k) style accounts.

SELLING THE VOTERS

With state lawmakers and the council convinced, Curry must now take his case to voters.

A University of North Florida poll of 380 Duval County residents showed 40 percent either didn't know or did not respond when asked whether they supported or opposed the tax referendum. The survey, which was conducted last week and has a 5 percentage-point margin of error, found 36 percent in favor and 24 percent in opposition.

Curry has enlisted a bipartisan team of civic leaders to co-chair a political action committee, which has already raised \$225,000. Curry said Monday he expects to raise seven figures to pay for the campaign.

Staff writer David Bauerlein contributed to this story.

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