

FAMU grad Shevrin Jones raises the bar in Florida

Delores Battle

Staff Writer

This election has seen multiple historical “firsts” and a record number of influential wins. Kamala Harris will become the first female vice president of the United States under the presidency of Joe Biden. But the successes do not stop there. A record number of LGBTQ candidates scored victories that made history across the United States.

According to the LGBTQ Victory Fund, there were approximately 574 LGBTQ candidates on the ballot and state election results show that more than 220 won their respective races. Never before has there been this much representation on an election ballot for LGBTQ candidates. Several FAMU voters are calling it a “rainbow wave.”

For Jada Haywood, a first-year food science student, the lack of representation for LGBTQ candidates in elections has deterred her from wanting to vote. But this election, she felt a renewed hope as hundreds of queer politicians filled the ballot.

“As someone who is a part of the LGBTQ family, I think it’s super important that we increase our representation in political offices,” Haywood said. “Who else could be a better advocate for our community than our own community members? We need people like us, for us.”

Supporting the election of LGBTQ candidates is not foreign to FAMU students. Florida state Senator Shevrin Jones, a FAMU alum, received immense support from the Rattler student body. Jones will

be the first openly gay man to serve in the state Senate, after previously serving in Florida’s House of Representatives.

According to an interview with NBC News, Jones said the election of a record number of lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual candidates “is a direct push-back on the hatred and bigotry over the last four years,” referring to President Trump’s open discrimination against immigrants, the LGBTQ community and people of color.

“Having Shevrin Jones be elected to the Florida state Senate and also be a FAMU graduate just shows the level of prestige we have at our school,” Haywood said. “Once a Rattler, always a Rattler.”

Other notable victories for the LGBTQ community came in the form of defeats from other incumbent candidates. One of Jones’ opponents, former state Senator Daphne Campbell, previously supported anti-gay legislation, specifically a ban on adoption for gay couples.

The election of LGBTQ candidates to the state Legislature despite the state turning red shows voters’ broad support for pro-queer and transgender rights.

This year has also been a record-breaking year for transgender elected officials across the nation as well. Voters elected six transgender candidates to state offices that will increase the current number from four to seven.



Photo courtesy NBC News
Shevrin Jones, a FAMU alum, makes history as the first openly gay man elected to the Florida State Senate.

Sentence reduced for FAMU ‘bathroom bomber’

Amari Jarrell

Staff Writer

Lawrence M. Lombardi was sentenced to life plus 39 years in federal prison for setting off two pipe bombs in the bathrooms of Lee Hall and Perry Paige in 1999, but his sentence was reduced this afternoon to 54 years.

Due to COVID-19, the re-sentencing hearing was held through a Zoom conference call, with U.S. District Judge Robert Hinkle presiding over it.

Hinkle said that Lombardi had a right to a re-sentence hearing based on a Supreme Court decision which resulted in two of the six counts against Lombardi to be vacated.

“I did that because I believe that is the correct application of [United States vs. Davis (2019)],” Hinkle said.

Lombardi apologized for what he did, something he did not do during his 1999 trial. “I’m so sorry for my words and actions of 1999. I take full responsibility for what I said and did then,” Lombardi said.

“My actions then were racist and violent and I scared so many people, but I have changed. I am asking for your mercy your honor.”

During the argument from the government, the prosecutor said that she felt like, “the court needs to send a clear and unambiguous message that these acts will not be tolerated and need to be met with the most severe punishment available.”

Lombardi was a white, unemployed funeral embalmer who was said to have called a local television station on Aug. 31 and Sept. 22 using racial slurs and profanity, warning them of the attack before both bombs went off.

Lombardi previously stocked the vending machines at the school, yet maintained his innocence, stating that authorities used him as a scapegoat while ignoring leads that may have led to someone else, during his sentencing in June

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Photo courtesy famuedu

Lee Hall, the site of where the first bombing took place on August 31st, 1999.

FAMU DRS hopes to reopen Nov. 30

Courtney Spry

Staff writer



Photo courtesy tallahassee.com

Due to positive test results, FAMU DRS closes campus again until November 30.

Cassandra Warner has mixed feelings about FAMU DRS switching to online instruction two weeks before Thanksgiving.

FAMU announced last week that the school’s superintendent, Micheal Johnson, informed all stakeholders at FAMU DRS that the campus will be closed until November 30 following two positive COVID results.

“During this time, all buildings will be thoroughly sanitized and cleaned per guidance and instructions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,” Johnson said in an email to parents.

While some may not agree with Johnson’s decision, Warner is appreciative that these measures are being taken to ensure the safety of her son Tamarien Donald-

son, who’s in the ninth grade, daughter Naiyima Warner, who’s in the fifth grade, and granddaughter Kamora Smith, who is in the second grade.

“DRS is doing a great job in managing COVID. I feel like we’re doing a better job than any other school in Leon County and I love that we shut down whenever there’s a case,” Warner said. She mentioned how the staff does temperature checks on all students before they enter the campus and is pleased with their precautions. She also insisted that shutting down the school should be mandatory and that other schools should follow suit.

Warner is a psychology professor at

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Student Senate confirms Chief Diversity Officer on second attempt

Tykeem McCray

Staff Writer

Florida A&M University's Student Senate filled multiple positions during its weekly Zoom meeting Monday evening. The senate confirmed appointees for Deputy Attorney General, Deputy Secretary of Athletic Affairs, Chief Diversity Officer and School of Law Associate Justice.

The candidates included Tareq Salley, Nikyya Smith, Jaelyn Guyton and Edward Lavant, respectively. Each candidate was provided a two-minute opening and closing period for remarks. The opening was followed by a 10-minute question and answer session, initiated by the Elections and Appointments Committee chairwoman Maya Robinson, followed by questions from other senators.

All the appointees were successfully confirmed. The Chief Diversity Officer's appointment was initiated in last week's senate meeting. However, it was unsuccessful at that time.

Like the last meeting, there was mild division among senators during Guyton's appointment as Chief Diversity Officer.

Senator Randall Leath urged senators to vote for the candidate based on the passion and qualifications the candidate would bring to the position.

"As I said last meeting, I believe that this candidate is definitely the best fit for this position," Leath said. "He already proved that he is qualified for the job and I think he has the passion to make this department work the best."

Senator Bria Calvin urged senators not to vote for the candidate. Calvin argued that when she asked the candidate what issues plagued minority groups on campus, his answers were inadequate.

"I believe that the questions asked to Mr. Guyton were pretty clear, simple and

related to the inclusion and addition of this department," Calvin said. "I think when I asked about who the minority groups on campus were and what their issues are, the answers were insufficient and that is an issue," Calvin said.

Ultimately, Guyton was successful and confirmed for the position of Chief Diversity Officer. In the roll-call vote, Guyton had a strong majority with an 18-7-0 vote. In his two-minute closing Guyton was optimistic about the position and working with the senate for the remainder of the academic year.

"I think moving forward we're going to have a wonderful rest of the year and I look forward to working with all of you," Guyton said. "Hopefully, we can come together and make something great out of



Logo courtesy of SGA

this position and the student body in the coming years."

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Local non-profits struggle amid pandemic

Kamryn Marshall

News Editor



Photo courtesy Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tallahassee

More than anything charities are eager to get back to serving the people in the Tallahassee community. Following the spread of the COVID-19 virus, charities across the nation have been negatively impacted, most notably by a lack of funding and the inability to provide aid to those in need.

"We have not been able to take any families in, which has been so hard and stressful. Not on just us but the families of course," Kim Curren said.

Curren is house operations and volunteer manager for the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Tallahassee. Also known as "the house that love built," the organization provides a safe place for families with children who are hospital-

ized and receiving medical treatments. Families can rest, heal, focus on the needs of their child, and receive support from others facing similar concerns.

While being associated with a Fortune 500 company, the non-profit organization is not as well-funded as may would believe. With almost 400 homes purchased worldwide, each is offered only three percent of its total operating cost from the McDonald's corporation, and the rest of the budget comes from fundraising and donations.

According to the Charities Aid Foundation of America nearly 68 percent of organizations reported a decrease in funding and difficulties reaching donors. Organizations were forced to move to remote

working conditions with the suspension of some client-facing programs. Difficulties in adapting to the current conditions include the lack of infrastructure and access to allow employees and volunteers to work remotely.

Kim Galbán-Countryman is CEO of the Lighthouse of the Big Bend, which specializes in serving the blind and visually impaired community in Leon County and its neighboring counties. In a world that is becoming more virtual, this organization seeks to help clients with vision impairments stay engaged in life independently and safely. Now that most employees are working from home, many have had

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COVID cases on the rise as holiday season approaches

Stephan Symonette

Staff Writer

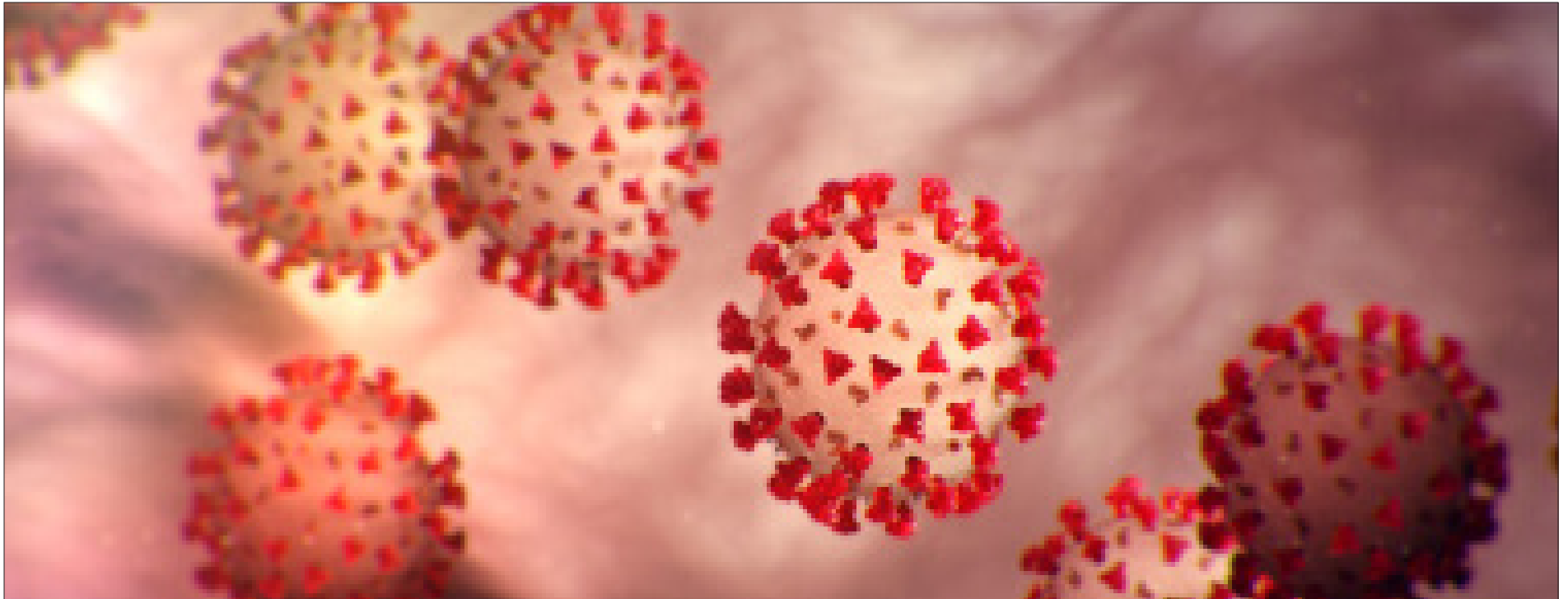


Photo courtesy [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Coronavirus cases in Florida climb as holiday season approaches.

The CDC has reported rapid growth of coronavirus cases across the country within the past week. The latest information shows that Florida has 36,065 new cases, bringing the total number of 846,321 cases currently.

In Leon County, there have been nearly 500 new cases reported over the past week according to the Florida Department of Health. With temperatures lowering into the winter, there is now a greater risk of catching the virus.

With the holiday season approaching, there could be an increase in cases due to traveling. Many students and faculty will be planning to travel across the country to visit families in the upcoming weeks. Staying safe and healthy is now a major concern during a time where people get to

reconnect with their loved ones.

Many people plan to handle travel procedures differently this year due to the coronavirus.

Nicholas McKenney, a FAMU graduate student, says he is prepared to travel amidst the virus.

“I plan on traveling during the pandemic, with safety being a priority. I plan to make sure that I am wearing a mask, and not being around people who have been exposed to COVID,” McKenney said.

Taking on different methods of travel is a consideration. FAMU student Heaven Jones plans to lower COVID stress by driving.

“As the holiday season approaches, I plan on driving back home. Although I have taken a flight to New York, I feel like

I will worry less by driving this time,” said Jones.

The numbers are steadily rising and many are concerned about how they are going to get through the season with the virus occurring. There are some solutions to still have a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Simon J. Lopez, MD, PGY-3 has some recommendations on how to approach this holiday season during the pandemic.

“Besides wearing a mask and promoting social distancing, consider other methods such as online or contactless reservations and check-in, alongside contactless payment methods,” says Lopez.

Lopez recommends taking early precautions by researching exactly where the virus is.

“Before you travel, check to see if COVID-19 is spreading at your destination. The Center for Disease Control website allows you to check each state’s COVID-19 cases for the last seven days. Consider that if you are asymptomatic and return from the holidays, you may infect loved ones when you return,” Lopez said.

Lopez also reminds students to wear a mask during any form of traveling, avoid close contact by staying at least 6 feet apart from anyone not from your household, and wash your hands often for 20 seconds with soap and water. Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can be used as an efficient substitute if hand washing is not possible.

New skatepark coming to FAMU Way

Noella Williams
Lifestyles Editor

A new skate park designed by Team Pain Skateparks is making its future appearance in Tallahassee on the northeast corner of FAMU Way and Pinellas Street.

A video that surfaced on Facebook last Friday showed the preliminary design of the park and shared information about the two public meetings for input. The first meeting was held Wednesday, Nov. 18, via the GoToMeetMe app.

To begin the meeting, Autumn Calder, the director at Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency, introduced Tim Payne and his company, Team Pain, who will be responsible for creating the park.

“Team Pain is a Florida based skate-

park design build specialist company, and they are leading this park project with Blueprint,” Calder said. “We couldn’t be more thrilled to have them be a part of the team.”

Team Pain is a Florida based skatepark specialist with a history of building custom skate structures, concrete skate park and indoor wood facilities. Their company attempts to gain advice from the local skating community to create an one-of-a-kind facility. Past projects include skateparks in Lakeland, FL, Breckenridge, CO, Apex, NC, and Tallahassee’s skatepark on Jackson Bluff Road.

According to the Blueprint Intergov-

ernmental Agency’s website, the preliminary concept includes several areas with different elements to skate, curved banks, rails, leisurely seating and a restroom. At the meeting, Tim Payne, founder of Team Pain, shared the biggest feature in their preliminary concept.

“We envision — what would be more perfect than the FAMU snake in the snake run,” Payne said.

The noticeable highlight of the park is their snake run, which features a large rattlesnake in the center. The snake run is designed to pay homage to Florida A&M University, but it is also a popular feature that is unavailable in Tallahassee’s

skateparks.

“A typical snake run is a long and winding path that flows downhill and contains undulating, transitional turns and hips,” the website stated. “There usually are multiple changes in elevation, making each turn or hip slightly different.”

Besides its architectural highlights, the park plans to include art from local artists, a graffiti wall and historic installations to honor the local neighborhoods and civil rights advocates. Team Pain is open to hearing any criticism, suggestions and ideas for the park via this survey.

The skatepark is estimated to be finished in Fall 2021.



Preliminary concept of new skatepark.

Photo courtesy Team Pain

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Demolition Diva recreates change she wants to see

A-Chai'a Jackson

Staff writer

A boss envisions what needs to be done and proceeds to take action to create change without validation. Tiarra Taylor, MBA, a 39-year old FAMU alumna from Washington, DC, fits that description.

Taylor has been an educator for 17 years, a Real Estate investor for two and a half years and someone whose moral purpose is to empower her people.

In light of empowering her people, the Demolition Diva honed into a plethora of personal investments. These include Taylor 2 U Homes, LLC, as a real estate agent with Fortune Builders and DC Invest, Taylor 2 U Fashion and Performance Institute as an educator in the arts, fashion and dance, Taylor 2 U Creations as an entrepreneur and a radio host on WOL 1450 AM at Radio One in DC.

A majority of what she earned requires undaunted sacrifice and risk-taking, which is why she expanded her investments during February 2020.

Taylor has to fuel herself to embody the superwoman persona she displays before her peers.

"I want to be able to pass something down to my daughters, and I want to leave a legacy. I want to make my daughters and my mother proud to assure her that all of her sacrifices did not go unnoticed," Taylor said. "No one is going to put me into a box to make me feel less than. I do not take it lightly that I have been positioned on a platform to help other people achieve success. One thing about FAMU alumni is we work very hard to exude Black excellence."

To be a superwoman and mogul in the

making requires proper branding to attract consumers. That is why her alter ego, the 'Demolition Diva' was introduced to her by a colleague.

We are the CEOs of our lives, therefore, she was given the name because of her bold fashion statements, her tenacity to transform minds and someone whose narrative is dependent upon demolishing whatever does not serve a purpose in her life.

Taylor admires a quote by Jay-Z that states, "I'm not a businessman! I'm a Business... man!"

What this indicates is that we are the representation of our brand, and if we want people to buy into our brand we first have to buy into ourselves, hence presentation and investments.

Taylor says that it is always important to look nice, as first impressions will set the tone as it relates to how people respect or dishonor what we stand for.

With a burning desire to elevate, encourage and inspire all generations, Taylor keeps her heels high and her standards higher.

While some people are complacent, she is none of the sorts. While some people sleep as if they are rich, she is wide awake as if she is broke and has a bag to secure. Of all the assets that she has inserted herself into, her pride and joy is educating her students as an academic interventionist to help prescribe solutions to better students' educational needs.

However, she does not only educate the future real estate agents, doctors and lawyers of her classroom; She also pours into older generations of today.

Educating her clients as a gentrifier, as she likes to describe herself, enables her to help them create happy lives as homeowners, in effort to educate them about financial stability to maintain their assets.

This Demolition Diva was positioned to

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Photo courtesy Tiarra Taylor

FAMU alumna and philanthropist, Tiarra Taylor after a productive day of closing a home in the greater Washington, DC area.

Celebrating Thanksgiving in Tallahassee? Here's a few restaurants that are open

Kyle Footman

Staff writer

With very scarce dining options in Tallahassee for Thanksgiving, there are some local restaurants offering catering and dine-in options.

Big Cory's Country Kitchen, located at 1812 S Monroe St, near FAMU's campus, is solely offering catering options ahead of Thanksgiving. Patrons can place an order of good ole' southern food and enjoy a hassle-free Thanksgiving dinner with family and friends.

Cory Corker, owner of Big Cory's Kitchen, recommends some items from their menu to have catered.

"Everything on our menu is good, but if you want something very comforting, I would suggest our fried chicken, collard greens and sweet potato souffle," Corker said.

Big Cory's Country Kitchen grants those with southern roots the opportunity

to experience home-cooked food here in Tallahassee.

In search of a fine dining experience on Thanksgiving? Shula's 347 Grill, located at 415 N Monroe St, inside Hotel Duval, is a great option. They're known for their upscale ambiance and outstanding service. On Thanksgiving day, they will be open from 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. with a limited menu and seating at 25% capacity, due to COVID-19 mandated restrictions.

A recommended item on Shula's menu is their highly desirable Shula Cut Steaks. Their center-cut steaks of premium Black Angus beef are hand-selected and aged to perfection. You can accompany the steak with asparagus, creme brulee and a glass of Daou Cabernet Paso Robles red wine.

Bill Holper, general manager of Hotel Duval Autograph Collection, encourages people to dine with them on Thanksgiv-



Photo courtesy NBC Chicago

Masks on the Thanksgiving dinner table.

ing.

"Come down to Shulas and enjoy dinner with us," Holpler said. "We're creating

an experience for our customers. We want everyone to enjoy themselves, including

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Four shows to binge watch over Thanksgiving break

Adrian Andrews

Staff writer



Photo courtesy BGR.com

Binge worthy shows.

Thanksgiving is the holiday that brings families close and the dinner plates even closer. This holiday break, there will be plenty of time to kick back, relax and con-

tinue piling your grandmother's traditional stuffing on the plate.

As the country combats the pandemic, student celebrations at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University will be extremely different this year. However, with time away from class, it is the perfect time to enjoy the trending TV shows on your favorite streaming services. Here is what some Rattlers recommend watching during this holiday break.

"Game of Thrones"

This multi-Golden Globe and Prime-time Emmy award winning fantasy drama became one of the most beloved television series of the century. Before its dismissal

in 2019, the hit drama flick gave audiences over 70+ episodes in eight thrilling seasons.

Sam Oliver, a junior criminal justice major, has binge watched the entire series since its finale late last year.

"It's a story about nine powerful families seeking for control and triumph in a mythical land," Oliver said. "I recommend it if you enjoy a really good plot and action scenes."

"Game of Thrones" is available to stream on HBO.

"Orange is the New Black"

Taylor Schilling stars as Piper Chapman, the rambunctious character who

is serving a year-and-a-half long prison sentence for an encounter with illegal drug money. The story is based on the real experiences of Piper Kerman, who published a memoir in 2010 of the same name.

Jordyn Bowers, senior psychology major, has been watching the show since it aired on Netflix in 2013 and has an interest in shows with a realistic spin.

"It's based on a true story, which makes it really intriguing," Bowers said.

"Orange is the New Black" is available to stream on Netflix.

"The Office"

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The battle between your sleep and COVID-19

Nikyya Smith

Staff writer

The COVID-19 pandemic has shuffled and changed many aspects of life that we once considered simple. It has totally flipped our normal day to day lives including when and how long we sleep.

Dr. Amara Emenike, medical director of the Tallahassee Memorial Sleep Center, spoke with The Famuan about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our sleep.

“The effects of the coronavirus pandemic have been two-fold, so there is the psychological effect where you feel uncertainty, you know living through a pandemic, the loss of livelihood and things like that can keep you up at night and then there’s also the increase of anxiety about personal exposure or exposure to loved ones,” Emenike said.

She added: “Sleep is a psychological state so if you are typically anxious about something you’re not going to relax enough to let yourself fall asleep, then there’s also the effects of the social restriction, with the stay at home orders, physical distancing, the limits of gathering, etc., all of these have disrupted our educational and professional life, these changes to our routine can help disrupt your internal biologic clock, which is essentially what determines your sleep wake cycle, also the fact that people are at home with increased screen time, electronic devices and exposure to high frequency light that can inhibit melatonin which is typically a hormone that promotes sleepiness.”

Sleep is an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and if your body doesn’t receive a sufficient amount, it can lead to negative effects and health problems such as disruption of brain function, weight gain, obesity and even death.

“Overall studies have shown a U-shaped mortality curve caused by in-



Photo courtesy Shutterstock

sufficient sleep duration, at one end of the U there is a sleep duration for less than 5 hours and the other end of the U is a total sleep time of 10 hours or greater. They are finding that if you are sleeping less than 5 hours a night you have an increased risk of dying just on that fact alone.” Emenike said.

Emenike also said that the definition of sufficient sleep is whatever amount you need to support alertness, performance and health, but there are some recommend hours of sleep we should be receiving.

“Sleep duration is variable among individuals and a lifespan, for some people

it’s 6 hours, some its 7 hours others its 9 hours. Generally, there are guidelines to what is considered sufficient sleep with infants needing 12 to 15 hours, college students 9 to 11 hours, teenagers 8 to 10 hours and adults 7 to 9 hours. Sleep is pretty important because historically most of the major disasters such as the chevron oil spill are linked to insufficient sleep,” Emenike said. “When you don’t get enough sleep there can be disruption to your brain function such as decision making or awareness, this can also affect your learning memory and your ability to regulate emotions, So it’s just very important that we are getting enough sleep to support our alertness and that you are not sleepy during the day, that’s how you know you’ve had enough sleep and not under the influence of caffeinated beverages,” she added.

Sticking to a sleep routine, limiting activities in bed and adding regular exercise to our schedules are just a few suggestions to help get a sufficient amount of sleep. Emenike has provided a few tips that you can adopt if you are struggling to sleep especially during stressful times such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Some tips that I would recommend is that it is pretty important to establish a routine, limit napping, create a comfortable sleeping environment, right temperature, dark room, it is very important that you have a healthy diet as well, you don’t want to consume high calorie foods just before bedtime, limit caffeine and alcohol intake, caffeine does keep you awake so it doesn’t make any sense to have a cup of coffee or energy drink at about 5pm and you wonder why you are unable to fall asleep at 10, allow at least 6 hours between your last drink and bedtime,” said

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You can stand your ground ... unless you are Black

Kayla McKinney
News Editor

Gov. Ron DeSantis pushes to expand the already controversial “Stand Your Ground” statutes in Florida. This new legislation could suppress Black voices and disproportionately affect the livelihood of African Americans in Florida.

DeSantis’ proposal for an expansion of what critics call the “shoot first” laws comes as response to several protests turned riots that occurred earlier this year in response to the unlawful killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery.

Currently, the law allows for the use of lethal force if a threat is perceived by any person who is not engaging in criminal activity and is in any place a person has a right to be.

The expansion of the vague law seeks



Photo courtesy Kevin Whipple

New Stand Your Ground laws can be disastrous for the racial divide in Florida.

to include the justification of lethal force against any person who causes the interruption, or impairment, of a business

and those involved in looting, which is a burglary within 500 feet of a “violent or disorderly assembly.”

The new amendment to the SYG laws, as part of DeSantis’ “anti-mob” legislation, specifically targets Black Floridians, whether intentional or not.

First, it seeks to suppress Black residents’ first amendment right to protest.

DeSantis’ proposal stemmed directly from Black Lives Matter protests that took over many large cities across the country. Writing legislation that specifically details the contents of these demonstrations is not only wrong, but very telling.

It is unfair to label protests for certain causes as “mob-like” and “disorderly” before they even occur; none of the organized protests were planned to be violent anywhere in the country, but rather

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A normal spring semester may be too good to be true

Tazjhani Baker
Staff writer

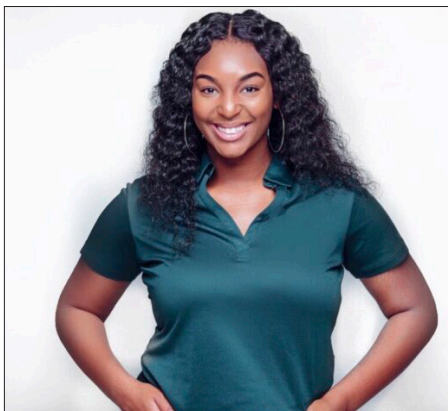


Photo by Baker

Columnist Tazjhani Baker.

While the fall semester has just about come to a close, most of us are left dissatisfied with the modified version of a college experience. Though many remain

hopeful that things will be different by the spring, a normal spring semester may be too good to be true.

Florida A&M University officials have made some strategic decisions as far as whether or not classes will be moving forward virtually or in person. Provost Maurice Edington released an email stating the re-opening plans for the spring. The plans to reopen left us hopeful for somewhat of a traditional spring semester on campus.

It is no question that FAMU is more than just an education. It is an experience you can’t find anywhere else. The decision to make the fall remote was both disheartening and painful to deal with. Many of us did however flock to the hills for the fall semester regardless of the new campus regulations, remaining optimistic that

the fall could give us our fix of the FAMU experience.

While some students were not allowed to come back to campus at all due to parental advice, others really didn’t see the need to return. The spring semester truly became a beacon of hope for many. With thoughts of spring football and possibilities of events — such as Be Out Day and Relay For Life — being in person, most of us thought that we may have had a chance to redeem our experience.

The light of the spring semester, however, is starting to slowly dwindle as reports of spring football being canceled have finally surfaced.

“Florida A&M Athletics’ decision to opt-out and forgo the 2021 spring football, indoor track & field and volleyball season was made with the health and

safety of our student-athletes as our top priority,” Florida A&M VP/Director of Athletics Kortne Gosha said. “This was a collective decision with our coaches and staff, given the varying circumstances that COVID-19 has created for our program.”

One student, Lawrenica Palmer said her hope for a normal spring semester died along with football season. “My hope for a normal spring has diminished due to the rise of Covid cases and the cancelation of football,” Palmer said. “It seems the school is going to move towards similar methods next semester.”

Several students took to Twitter to express their feelings towards the announcement of FAMU canceling spring games.

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This local lawyer has a side hustle: Cottontail Cookies

Taylor Berry
Staff writer



Photo courtesy Cottontail Cookies

Attorney and FSU graduate Kathryn McCain has always been a crafty person. While in law school, she took up crocheting and even made hats for children who were victims of domestic violence.

So, it was no surprise when she decided to give baking and decorating cookies a try, which was a failure at first, according to McCain. But it failed to induce McCain to throw in the towel. She found herself getting better after putting in the practice and, eventually, with the encouragement from friends and family, her interest transformed into a business that she owns and operates, Tallahassee-based Cottontail Cookies.

The company, name and logo were inspirations from her first bunny she got in law school named Milo.

"I made social media accounts and started posting everything I was making," McCain said. "I just made what I wanted to. I'd see something that someone else had made or thought of a cute idea and would just be like, 'I want to do that, I want to try that,' and the more and more I

put my work out there, the response was just great."

McCain's advertising was a success because Cottontail Cookies, launched in January 2019, began receiving orders from people who wanted decorated cookies that match the theme for their special occasion like a baby shower or birthday, which is the company's purpose — to make any occasion special. And as time progressed, Cottontail Cookies started to grow as more people ordered cookies for Christmas, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, Halloween, Greek initiation celebrations, and many more.

"Watching the growth of Cottontail Cookies over the last two years has been incredible," McCain's husband, James McCain, said. "Kathryn has put a ton of hard work into it and turned a hobby into a successful business. I'm very proud of her. My waistline has a love/hate relationship to being married to the

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Thanksgiving
THIS or THAT

turkey OR ham

cornbread OR rolls

dress up OR dress comfy

sweet potatoes OR mashed potatoes

help cook OR help clean

POST TO YOUR STORY AND TAG 3 FRIENDS

Will it really be the most wonderful time of the year?

Kyra Watts

Staff writer

It's mid-November and we all know what that means: Thanksgiving Break is near. It's so close that I can smell the Honey Baked Ham and yeast rolls. I can't remember the last time I was this ready for the Holiday Season.

This year has been one for the books. But I'm not too sure if I meant that in a good way or a bad way. Between the coronavirus pandemic, the recent presidential election, the Black Lives Matter protests, and the forced virtual learning, I know that I'm not the only one feigning for a mental break.

Many are awaiting the upcoming holidays in hopes that it will turn this year of frowns upside down. The holiday season usually promotes quality family time, peace, and joy. All of the things the majority of us haven't been able to enjoy because of this overwhelmingly devastating year.

"COVID-19 has taken its toll on the lives of thousands of people, with the holidays around the corner, I am looking forward to some of that Christmas cheer that we all need," said Beyla Walker, a sophomore from Apalachicola, FL. "I am excited about the holidays. Not just because of the gift-giving and good food, but because of the overall joy that the holiday brings."

A study conducted by OnePoll, on behalf of Hello Fresh surveyed 2,000 Americans who generally celebrate the holidays. The survey aimed to examine how the holidays will be different this year after all of the unprecedented events of 2020.

According to the survey, surprisingly two out of three Americans feel as though this Holiday Season will be more meaningful than ever thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year alone has shown us



A family enjoys their time together on Thanksgiving.

Photo courtesy [Ebony.com](https://www.ebony.com)

that life is not only short but unpredictable.

The survey also revealed that 56 percent of those surveyed had started their holiday preparations in September. The holidays are specifically devoted to enjoying the company of those you love the most. People are ready for the "what am I thankful for?" talks around the dining room table on Thanksgiving. People are ready to put up their Christmas trees with their families and experience that nostalgic Christmas spirit.

"All I Want For Christmas Is You' was added to my morning playlist the day after Halloween... I just couldn't wait any longer," said Walker. Students are especially looking forward to the multi-week Christmas break that is coming up.

"After a long semester with no real breaks, I am looking forward to the holidays. It seemed like every day I had a different assignment due, or I had to get up early and go to work. It was never-ending," said Ross Gordon, a senior student at Morehouse College. "I'm happy the

holidays are here because it's giving me real-time to relax and just indulge in the moment with my family and friends. With that being said I am hoping that this holiday season doesn't bring a jump in cases again."

This holiday season may just be the most wonderful time of 2020, but we'll just have to wait and see what the end of the year has in store for us. It's especially hard when the holiday season comes during a difficult time.

COVID-19 impacts high school recruits

Marissa Stubbs

Sports Editor

As the year progresses, COVID-19 continues to affect the sports world.

During this time of uncertainty, athletes all over the world are being forced to adjust to a new normal. For high school student-athletes hopeful of being recruited, adjusting to the pandemic has been challenging physically as well as mentally.

In the beginning of August, high schools all over Florida were skeptical about bringing high school sports back. Prior to the start of the 2020-2021 academic year, the Florida High School Athletic Association issued safety protocols followed by the CDC to provide safety for all athletes.

The FHSAA issued strict rules such as, no sharing of equipment, no shaking hands and a required COVID-19 course for all coaches and staff.

Brayden Phillips, a senior quarterback at North Florida Christian High School, said that when he first heard of the pandemic he didn't know what would happen.

"When COVID-19 first broke news, my teammates and I were planning a cruise for spring break. Once COVID became more serious, FHSAA was talking about taking our season to the spring. I thought the virus would last two or three months, then everything would be back to normal," Phillips said.

Phillips and his football team were forced to quarantine for two weeks after their season opener against Jefferson County. A player from Jefferson County had previously tested positive for COVID-19 during the game. Phillips says his team didn't receive the news until later that next week.

Phillips' teammate, Deandre McCray, a senior wide receiver at NFC, thinks the transition from in-person classes to virtu-



Photo courtesy Marissa Stubbs

Deandre McCray, senior wide receiver at North Florida Christian High School stares out at football field.

al learning has been chaotic.

"It was tough trying to adjust because you go from in-class learning to now learning everything online. One of my teachers came in contact with the virus and had to teach us from home. It's a tough way to learn but you just have to take it and get it done," McCray said.

The impact of COVID-19 has created many barriers for high school athletes. Juniors and seniors are trying to figure out ways to boost their profile and attract colleges. Due to travel restrictions, re-

cruits have not been allowed to travel or tour Division 1 athletic programs.

Sanaa Simmons, a junior volleyball player at Florida High, said she is unable to tour colleges this year, but she is still exploring her options.

"COVID-19 canceled all of my summer volleyball camps, so I've been sending my footage to recruiters. I haven't been able to get much footage, considering COVID canceled most of our games. It's going to be hard because the only thing colleges will be able to look at is my highlights.

They won't be able to come to my games, so it's going to be tough," Simmons said.

Prep student-athletes are trying to make the best of their last years in high school. The pandemic has stripped them of many opportunities, however, and they are learning to persevere through adversity.

"My coach always tells us to give everything we got, 100 percent, every game," Simmons said.