

SATURDAY
TODAY & next morning
HIGH 70
LOW 31
Thunderstorms. Windy and colder by evening.
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IN BRIEF
Spring forward
Daylight saving time starts Sunday at 2 a.m. local time. Set your clocks ahead one hour before bed Saturday.

It's time to 'spring forward' this weekend in most of the U.S.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Even though winter doesn't slip away until next weekend, time has its marching orders. In the United States, it's time to "spring" forward.

Daylight saving time announces its entrance at 2 a.m. local time Sunday for most of the country. Standard time hibernates until Nov. 6. It will stay lighter for longer into the evening but the sun will rise later in the morning than it has during the months of standard time.

Remember to set clocks an hour ahead, usually before bed Saturday night.

No time change is observed in Hawaii, most of Arizona, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Marianas.

A poll conducted last October shows that most Americans want to avoid switching between daylight saving and standard time, though there is no consensus behind which should be used all year.

The poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found only 25 percent of Americans said they preferred to switch back and forth between standard and daylight saving time.

Forty-three percent of Americans said they would like to see standard time used during the entire year. Thirty-two percent say they would prefer that daylight saving time be used all year.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,083 adults was conducted Oct. 21-25 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Daniel Webster qualifies for reelection

U.S. Congressman Daniel Webster, R-Clermont, announced Tuesday he qualified for reelection via citizens' petition.

Under Florida Law, candidates may qualify for office by collecting petitions signed by registered voters.

Webster for Congress campaign submitted more than the required 2,500 certified petitions to local supervisors of elections.

"Thanks to the outpouring of voter support in my district, I have once again qualified for re-election by citizen petition," Webster said in a statement. "I work hard every day to serve my constituents and rather than writing a check to run for office, I believe in building grassroots support every year."



Freezing temperatures headed to Citrus

Severe thunderstorms, possible flooding expected

By MICHAEL D. BATES
Chronicle Reporter

Just when you thought winter was over.

Saturday promises to be a nasty day for Citrus County and residents could wake up Sunday morning to 31-de-

gree temperatures.

The National Weather Service (NWS) said Saturday will start off rainy and warm (72 degrees) with a thunderstorm or two popping up in the county. Citrus County could get up to a half- and three-quarters of an inch.

"We are anticipating severe thunderstorms with some damaging winds, possible tornadoes, waterspouts (and) possible street flooding," said NWS meteorologist Richard Rude.

Needless to say, it will not be a good day for boating.

Conditions should change rapidly toward evening, with temperatures falling to around 57 degrees with breezy, gusty conditions. After sunset Saturday, temperatures will plummet and 31 degrees is expected overnight into Sunday.

Sunday will be a cool day, with highs near 64 degrees during the day and 46 degrees overnight.

By Monday, typical March conditions will return with sunny skies and a high about 74 degrees.

It will be worse in north

and northeastern Florida, where temperatures overnight Saturday could reach as low as the mid-20s.

"As such, there are freeze watches that will go into effect beginning Saturday night for most of the Big Bend and the entirety of the Panhandle," said Bryan Williams, a meteorologist with the Florida Forest Service.

More rain is on the way early next week.

The rains will somewhat alleviate the drought conditions in parts of the state "but chances are much of

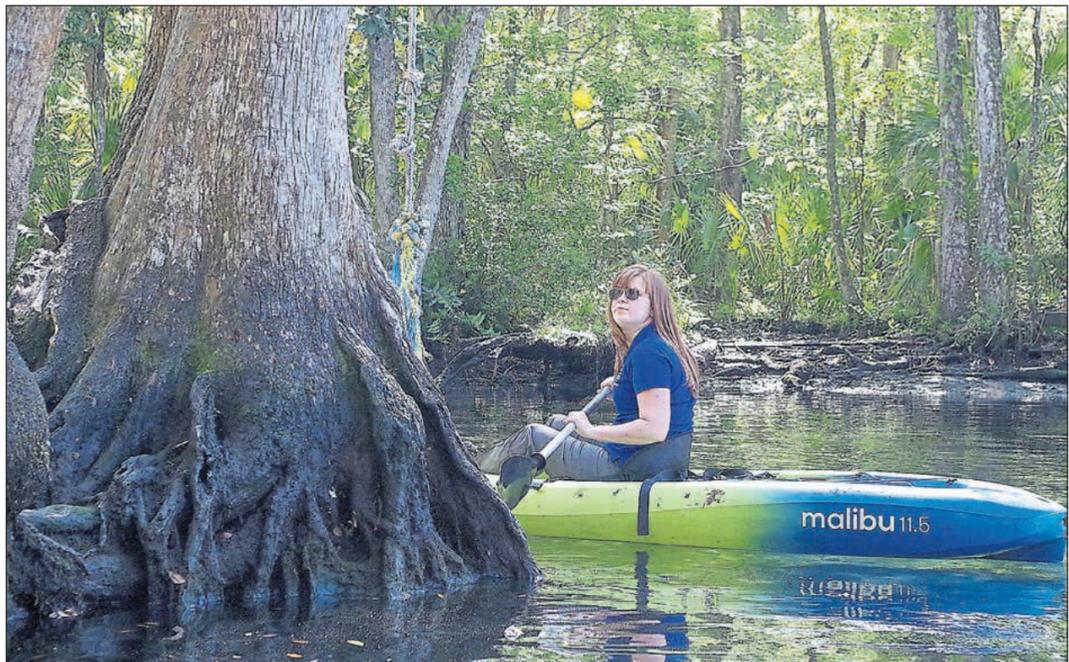
the drought area will still be below average," Williams said.

Will this be the last gasp of Florida winter?

Rude is not ruling out one or two more cool spells.

"We still have a couple weeks of March to go through so we could have some cooler temperatures," Rude said. "Whether it will hit freezing again, I don't know."

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Southwest Florida Water Management District Springs Scientist Dr. Madison Trowbridge looks up at rope swing tied to a tree along the riverbank of the Chassahowitzka River in southwest Citrus County. On March 1, 2022, SWFWMD launched an education campaign to help protect the river against harmful recreational practices.

Photos by Buster Thompson / Chronicle Reporter

Water management district launches Chassahowitzka River education campaign

By BUSTER THOMPSON
Chronicle Reporter

Dr. Madison Trowbridge paddled her kayak into a small cove within a tree line along the Chassahowitzka River in southwest Citrus County.

Her head tilted up to face a dangling line of knotted rope hanging from a tree branch curving down toward the clear water of the spring-fed river. Short planks of wood screwed into and up the tree trunk formed a makeshift ladder for climbers to reach the rope swing.

At low tide, the tree's hand-like root system appeared to be just holding on to what was left of a receding shore.

Trowbridge passed by the remains of another tree, which had been sawed down to a stump protruding toward the river. Its weathered bark leading up to a second set of wooden planks looked like the



Southwest Florida Water Management District staff are asking boaters traveling on the Chassahowitzka River to trim their motors to help prevent propeller scarring, show here, to either the river bottom or its wildlife.

stump became a jumping point into the river when the tide's higher.

Farther upriver, where a bubbling springhead attracts many of the river's visitors, a handful of kayakers beached their vessels on

soft, barren banks marked with footprints.

Guests of the Chassahowitzka River might not think about it when they disembark onto the riverbank, step on its plant life and climb up its trees to take a plunge,

but their actions — little by little, ripple by ripple — are taking a toll on the river.

"Shoreline erosion isn't good because it's changing our vegetation," said

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State lawmakers plan for gas tax suspension

TALLAHASSEE (AP) — Florida lawmakers on Friday voiced bipartisan support for a record \$112.1 billion state budget proposal that includes pay raises for state workers and a gas tax suspension before the November election.

The Republican-controlled legislature is expected to approve the budget Monday.

Lawmakers were forced to extend the 60-day legislative session because of lengthy budget negotiations and state rules that require a 72-hour cooling off period before they can vote on the spending plan. This year's session has been dominated

by bitter debates on legislation involving abortion, critical race theory and education about sexual orientation and gender identity.

The budget raises the minimum wage for state workers to \$15 per hour and all state workers will get a 5.38 percent pay raise to account for inflation. It would also give public defenders and assistant state attorneys a \$5,000 to \$10,000 pay increase, boost the minimum salary for state law enforcement officers to \$50,000 and raise the minimum salary for teachers to at least \$47,500.

"This budget invests in the workers who serve our state

and her people," Republican Senate President Wilton Simpson said in a statement.

The budget bill hits on many of the priorities laid out by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis in his budget proposal made in December, in which he pushed for worker pay raises and a five-month pause on the state's gas tax. He said the gas tax suspension was needed to offset rising gas prices and inflation he blames on President Joe Biden, a Democrat.

Lawmakers instead agreed to suspend the gas tax for one month, in October, and plan to recoup the lost revenue with federal coronavirus stimulus dollars. Repub-

lican Sen. Kelli Stargel said lawmakers chose October, just before the election, because there are typically fewer tourists in the state at that time.

Proposals to suspend gas taxes have gained momentum nationwide recently as gas prices rise to record highs after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

DeSantis, who is running for reelection and is considered to be a potential 2024 presidential candidate, has final say on the budget bill.

Democrats focused most of their criticism on a provision that would bar 12

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Lecanto woman arrested for neglecting two horses. One animal euthanized

By BUSTER THOMPSON
Chronicle Reporter

Authorities took a Lecanto woman into custody after finding two of her horses malnourished to the point where one of them had to be euthanized.

Citrus County Sheriff's Office deputies arrested 25-year-old Tiffany Ann Young the morning of Thursday, March 10,

on two felony counts of aggravated animal cruelty.

Young was also jailed on a misdemeanor charge of possessing drug paraphernalia for allegedly having a piece of cut straw with fentanyl residue inside it.

Young's total bond at booking was set at \$5,000, which a judge left unchanged at her first court appearance on Friday, arrest and court records show.

According to Young's arrest report, deputies responded Thursday to the 6100 block of South Lecanto Highway as a result of a sheriff's office animal control investigation at the property.

Authorities discovered several animals, but a pair of horses belonging to Young were in poor health, with one, named Jim, lying on his side in dirt by the front porch.

"This horse was hardly breathing," a deputy wrote in Young's probable cause affidavit, "and it was evident it had been lying there for some time due to the hoof marks in the dirt around it."

According to Young's arrest report, the second horse's ribs and hip bones were visible.

A veterinarian told animal control officers Jim needed to be euthanized because of his neglected condition.

According to her arrest report, Young was informed by the veterinarian the week before that Jim needed to be euthanized, but she refused and became angry with animal doctor.

Young told deputies she was feeding her horses but couldn't understand why they were so thin.

"The defendant went



YOUNG

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