



The three biggest SEC games on the Gators schedule

SPORTS, 1B

Stretched thin

Fewer Florida Highway Patrol troopers mean longer response times, growing risks for drivers

Jack Lemnus Treasure Coast Newspapers | USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

As Michael Heald was driving toward Pensacola on Interstate 10 in August 2023, the sky began to blacken and cascades of rain and lightning fell around his hybrid sedan. • He and his wife barely could see the road ahead of them when they heard a deafening crack overpower the onslaught of other thunderclaps. Heald recalled being engulfed in bright yellow light and the smell of charred metal. • Lightning had struck their car, sending it skidding and seizing its electrical systems. • “Thankfully, my wife and I weren’t hurt,” the Niceville resident told TCPalm. “But the car was still in an active lane, and it wasn’t particularly safe, either in or outside the car.” See PATROL, Page 2A



GETTY IMAGES

“Response times are unacceptable. ... You’ve got the public waiting an hour for a trooper to come to routine accidents. It puts lives in needless danger.”

Paul Novack
FHP Advisory Council member

DNA kit helps woman find her family

Maggie Menderski
Louisville Courier Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

LOUISVILLE – Heather Lally spent 47 years convincing herself she didn’t need a father. She’d never met the man her mother dated briefly in the mid-1970s, but he’d made it clear he didn’t want to be part of her life. After he died, she lost all hope of ever having a connection with her biological father. Then an Ancestry DNA test changed everything. When Heather’s results came back in June 2024, the Georgia-based woman was surprised to learn her dad wasn’t the absent, deceased man her mother had always pinpointed as her father. The test, instead, matched her with Henry Sullivan Jr., a Kentucky resident who had a single romantic encounter with her mother in Louisville in 1976. His picture smiled up at her from a large tree of other relatives she never knew existed. From there, the results revealed she had a half-brother, an aunt and numerous cousins. Heather had asked for the Ancestry DNA test for her 47th birthday, hoping it might shed light on her heritage and the father she’d never know. Instead, she found a whole family.

See FAMILY, Page 3A

2025 was unexpected year of the Kennedys

Family questions Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s moves, deals with declassified files

Swapna Venugopal Ramaswamy
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Stepping inside Kathleen Kennedy Townsend’s sun-filled apartment is like stepping into American history. A letter from her father, Robert F. Kennedy, hangs in the hallway. “Dear Kathleen, as the oldest of the Kennedy grandchildren you have a spe-

cial responsibility: Be kind to others and work for your country,” Kennedy wrote his 12-year-old daughter, two days after the assassination of his brother, President John F. Kennedy, in 1963. For members of the Kennedy clan, that sense of responsibility is being tested by one of their own: Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Townsend’s younger brother and a top member of President

Donald Trump’s administration. “I would not say there’s a lot of peace in my family,” she said, alluding to the tragedies and scandals that have preyed on the Kennedy dynasty, including the assassination of her own father in 1968 while running for the Democratic presidential nomination. That was certainly true in 2025, the 100th anniversary of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy’s birth, which saw his namesake

accused of spreading vaccine conspiracies and groping a babysitter during a televised Senate confirmation hearing, the release of government files on the John F. Kennedy and Robert F. Kennedy assassinations, and mass firings and scientific turmoil at the Department of Health and Human Services. Townsend, 74, the oldest grandchild of the Kennedy family matriarch Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy and power broker Joseph Kennedy, is unassuming and

See KENNEDY, Page 4A

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