

Neo-Nazi group founder pleads guilty to explosives charges

The Associated Press

TAMPA — The leader of a small Florida-based neo-Nazi group pleaded guilty on Wednesday to charges associated with having explosives in his apartment's garage. Court documents show that Brandon Russell entered his pleas in a federal courtroom in Tampa. He faces up to 11 years in federal prison on charges of possessing illegal firearms and a destructive device, and storing explosives. The bomb-making materials — including



Russell

the highly explosive substance HMTD, several pounds of ammonium nitrate and homemade fuses — were discovered during a murder investigation involving Russell's roommate, Devon Arthurs. Arthurs is charged with two counts of first-degree, premeditated murder in the deaths of two other Tampa roommates, Andrew Oneschuk and Jeremy Himmelman.

All three were at one time members of Atomwaffen, the white supremacist group Russell admitted to starting. Russell was arrested in the Florida Keys. He had fled Tampa with a friend after coming home and finding the bodies of his two slain roommates, prosecutors said. Police found the illegal weapons — two rifles and hundreds of rounds of ammunition — in the trunk of his car. In entering his guilty pleas, Russell filed an objection to the allegation he intended to assemble

a bomb. His attorney, Ian Goldstein, said in an email that Russell is taking responsibility for his actions despite this objection. "Any deal with the government would have involved cooperation against other individuals. Mr. Russell does not wish to shift blame to others in order to obtain extra leniency for himself. He did what he did and he has accepted responsibility for his actions," Goldstein said. Russell is scheduled to be sentenced on Jan. 9.

Why is internet still out for some in Florida?

By Tali Arbel
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The power's back on in Florida. So why is the internet still out for some people, more than two weeks after Hurricane Irma struck? When power fails, so do home and business internet connections. When Hurricane Irma hit Florida on Sept. 10, 6.7 million customers lost electricity, or nearly two-thirds of the state. Nine days later, all but 1 percent of the state — 100,000 — had the power back on. With internet service, it's less clear where things stand. The Federal Communications Commission, which tracks home phone, internet and TV outages, published its last update more than a week ago, on Sept. 18, when there were still close to 900,000 customers without service from cable providers. Major internet providers such as Comcast, Charter and Cox now say 98 percent to 99 percent of their affected customers have had service restored. (AT&T cites similar figures for its overall network.) But it's not clear how many actual people still lack service. In Houston, Hurricane Harvey caused widespread flooding that led to power losses and interrupted home phone, TV or internet service for at least 284,000, according to FCC numbers. As of Sept. 5, the last FCC report, almost 154,000 customers remained without service. AT&T says Texas is operating normally, Comcast says Houston has been back to normal for several

weeks, Charter and CenturyLink say a small number of customers are still affected. **Why outages drag on** Many homes will get internet back once power is restored. But that's not true for everyone. Even if a home's power is back on, there could still be problems with the underlying cable network or central facilities. Sometimes equipment in a home or street is damaged and needs to be repaired or replaced. (Mobile service tends to bounce back faster. Cell towers are more easily fixable and carriers can use each other's networks to get texts and calls through.) On top of that, there are a variety of challenges associated with conducting repairs in a disaster zone. "We are not allowed to enter disaster areas until power is restored, then we move in," said Todd Smith, a spokesman for cable company Cox. Sometimes the damage isn't at all obvious. "There are also occasionally situations where power and (network equipment) in one area may be fine, but the network that feeds it could be damaged further down the line," Smith said. **Lines of communication** For some customers, though, a major frustration has been trying to figure out just when their service is coming back. Laura Sagar, a real estate agent in hard-hit Naples, said her power was restored the evening of Sept. 19,



A week after Hurricane Irma hit Central Florida, a cable belonging to Spectrum/Charter Communications remains just a few inches off the ground in a Maitland neighborhood, on Sept. 18. (JOE BURBANK / ORLANDO SENTINEL VIA AP/FILE)

after being out for 10 days. Internet service didn't flip back on until Sept. 25. She said she saw Comcast came to fix a downed line only after a neighbor called to report a problem. The local power company "communicated often, frequently," she said. "Comcast, zippity doo dah." Comcast said it has thousands of technicians in Florida working on restoring service, including some from out of state. It said it sent customers emails and told them to check a Comcast app for information. But Sagar said she expected public announcements and didn't see an email. When she called, the company told her service would be restored within 10 days; it was back near the end of that period. **Information please** The FCC collects voluntary feedback from home phone and cable companies about outages after disasters and makes that information public

in daily reports. But in the aftermath of Irma, it ceased those reports while almost a million people still lacked internet service. Stopping the public updates on Irma was "unconscionable," said David Simpson, a former FCC public-safety official. The result, he said, was consumers and communities left in the dark, "with no insight into the scope of the problem on any given day since the 18th." The agency says it stopped its disaster-reporting system for Irma at the request of another agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA. The daily outage reports are meant to "provide situational awareness in the immediate aftermath of a disaster." The agency started daily reports on Hurricane Maria, which has wreaked chaos in Puerto Rico and left the island without power or working phone or internet, three days later.

ROUNDUP

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"There should be no variation between restaurants," said Trevor Sturm, community leader of Maple Street's Archer Road location. "That's the Maple Street way." The store is scheduled to open next year sometime between January and March. **Closings** As doors open to new restaurants in Gainesville, others have been forced to close. Caribbean Spice, a restaurant known for its beef patties, will close within the coming week. MSC Retail, a real estate development company, bought the strip

that the restaurant operates out of, which will be destroyed to build Hub On Campus, a new mixed-use student housing facility. MSC Retail officials gave tenants until Oct. 1 to get out, said Debu Tiwari, part owner of neighboring Indian restaurant Kabab House. Tiwari said his restaurant will close, but he's pushing the developers to allow the restaurant to operate until the end of October. "We're not ready," he said. Owners of both Caribbean Spice and Kabab House have yet to decide if they will reopen in new locations. *Contact reporter Daniel Smithson at daniel.smithson@gvillesun.com or on Twitter @DanielTSmithson.*

PILLS

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a month and operated as freeworldpharmacy.com and medsindia.net, according to court documents. The online pharmacies sold 90-day prescriptions for generic versions of Darvocet, Xanax, Soma, codeine and Valium, among other controlled substances, that were shipped throughout the country. The suppliers for orders were in Romania and India. A Gainesville police detective, assigned to the DEA, began making purchases from the sites, in amounts from \$230 to \$254, without prescriptions in 2012 and 2013.

In July 2015, the sites sold 120 codeine tablets for \$166 and shared a disclaimer that the company operating the site wasn't a pharmacy, according to court documents. In 2012 and 2013, the duo sold more than 148,000 pills. In 2015, customers placed 1,598 orders for 219,197 pills, for roughly \$385,589. Burstein and Leonforte received more than \$7 million from prescription drug sales without requiring customers to provide a prescription, according to U.S. Attorney Christopher Canova's office. The joint investigation ultimately led to Burstein and Leonforte's arrests in May and June 2016. *Contact reporter Andrew Caplan at andrew.caplan@gvillesun.com or on Twitter @AACaplan.*

PUBLIC NOTICE OF ENACTMENT OF AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ALACHUA, FLORIDA

Notice is hereby given that the City Commission of the City of Alachua will hold a public hearing on a proposed ordinance. The hearing will be held on October 9, 2017, at 6:00 p.m., in the James A. Lewis Commission Chambers in City Hall, located at 15100 NW 142nd Terrace, Alachua, Florida.

The ordinance title is as follows:

ORDINANCE 18-01

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF ALACHUA, FLORIDA, RELATING TO THE AMENDMENT OF THE CITY'S LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS ("LDRS"); AMENDING SECTION 2.4.11(A) TO CORRECT A SCRIVENER'S ERROR; AMENDING SECTIONS 2.4.11(C)(5) AND (6), RELATING TO ON-SITE SIGNS AND INCIDENTAL SIGNS; AMENDING SECTION 3.7.2(C)(5)(b)(i) FOR INTERNAL CONSISTENCY; AMENDING SECTION 6.5.1, RELATING TO THE FINDINGS AND PURPOSE OF THE CITY'S SIGN REGULATIONS; AMENDING SECTION 6.5.4(C)(2), RELATING TO FREESTANDING SIGNS FOR MULTI-TENANT BUILDINGS OR DEVELOPMENTS; AMENDING SECTION 6.5.4(C)(3), RELATING TO WALL SIGNS; AMENDING SECTION 6.5.4(F), RELATING TO SIGNS IN THE PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY; AMENDING SECTION 6.5.5(B)(1), RELATING TO THE GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR TEMPORARY SIGNS IN BUSINESS DISTRICTS; AMENDING SECTION 6.5.5(B)(4), RELATING TO SANDWICH BOARD SIGNS; AMENDING SECTION 6.5.5(C)(1), RELATING TO TEMPORARY BANNERS; AMENDING SECTION 6.5.6, RELATING TO FLAGS; AMENDING SECTION 6.5.7, RELATING TO PROHIBITED SIGNS; AMENDING SECTION 6.5.9(D), TO CORRECT A SCRIVENER'S ERROR; DELETING SECTION 8.5.2 AND AMENDING SECTIONS 8.5.3 AND 8.5.4, WHICH RELATE TO THE REMOVAL OF NONCONFORMING SIGNS, THE REMOVAL OF NONCONFORMING SIGN LIGHTING, AND THE REMOVAL OF SIGNS RENDERED NONCONFORMING DUE TO A LACK OF MAINTENANCE, AND RENUMBERING SUBSEQUENT SUBSECTIONS OF SECTION 8.5; DELETING SECTION 8.5.5(E), WHICH RELATES TO THE REMOVAL OF NONCONFORMING FLAGPOLES; AND AMENDING SECTION 10.2 TO REVISE THE DEFINITION OF "FRONT FAÇADE" TO ALSO DEFINE THE TERM "FRONT ELEVATION"; PROVIDING A REPEALING CLAUSE; PROVIDING SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

At the public hearing, all interested parties may appear and be heard with respect to the application. Copies of the application are available for public inspection at the Planning and Community Development Department, 15100 NW 142nd Terrace, Alachua, Florida, on any regular business day between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Written comments on the application may be sent to the following address: City of Alachua, Planning and Community Development, P.O. Box 9, Alachua, FL 32616. Notice is given pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, that, in order to appeal any decision made at the public hearing, you will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, you may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any persons with a disability requiring reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this meeting should call the City Clerk at (386) 418-6100 x 101 at least 48 hours prior to the public hearing.

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STURM

Continued from B1

customer. Sturm grew up in Las Vegas, living in the same home most of his life before moving to Florida in 2016. He said his parents always had an open-house policy. Anyone was welcome. Sturm said he tries to give the restaurant that same homey feel. "People here want to hear your story; they want to hear where I came from and what I like to do outside of Maple Street," he said. "I want to hear the same from them. It made it an easy transition from Vegas to Gainesville to be able to have that sort of connection with the folks that are out here." Before Maple Street, Sturm said he tried higher education at the College of Southern Nevada. Home-schooled most of his life, a return to the classroom seemed terrifying, but two years after high school, he said, he gave it a go. Sturm loved one of his business classes, he said,

and still uses what he learned in a class he calls "Business 101." But after two semesters, he decided college wasn't for him. "I thought, 'Why get in all this debt for a piece of paper when I'm not even guaranteed a job in that field?'" Sturm said. "I'd be paying money for a job when I could go and get a job for free, give it my best and kill it." He's had many jobs, from wearing a royal flush deck of cards costume and flipping a sign for a Halloween costume store, to working at his uncle's ranch. But no job came at a better time than the one here, Sturm said. While still working at his dream job at the time, Guitar Center, Sturm said his uncle, Troy Gibson, started a corporate partnership with Maple Street and reached out him to see if he was interested in serving as an assistant manager at Maple Street's Gainesville store. "I was truly ready for a change of place — greenery, we don't have any of this back in Vegas," he said. "It's asphalt and palm trees." But he still had to prove himself to his uncle, he

said. Sturm moved from management at Guitar Center to a dishwasher at Maple Street's St. Augustine location. Then he moved from dishwasher to kitchen staff. When Gibson was ready to open up the Gainesville location, Sturm still had to prove to Gibson he could handle being a manager. "My uncle rode me hard," he said. When he became assistant manager, he said he worried employees would think he got the job only because of his uncle's largesse. He said it made him work even harder. As community leader of Maple Street's Gainesville restaurant, Sturm is something between spokesman and store manager. Sturm said his ultimate goal is to travel to different Maple Street restaurants as the company opens new locations, to "be a shoulder for these community leaders, someone to vent to." "I want to be the person who makes the corporate jump as someone who's worked in the front lines, where when something is trickling down, I can

say, 'Hey guys, I've been where you're at; I know it's tough; but it's going to be worth it,'" he said. Spencer Hawkins, a Maple Street employee, said he enjoys working with Sturm. "(Sturm's) a great boss, but he is more of like one of our really good friends," he said. At the end of work Wednesday, he walked around the restaurant, pushing in chairs and looking for ways to speed the closing process. Behind the counter, an employee asked a coworker if he needed to clean the bathrooms. "Oh, Trevor already cleaned them," the coworker responded. April Franz, the mother of Stephanie and Ashley Franz, said they come to the restaurant at least once a week, and Sturm remembers her, every time. "He's just so customer oriented," April Franz said. "You can tell he puts love in it." *Contact reporter Daniel Smithson at daniel.smithson@gvillesun.com or on Twitter @DanielTSmithson*



City of ALACHUA

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