



progressive news • events • directory

# The Gainesville Iguana

Jan./Feb. 2025 ~ vol. 39, issue 1/2

'a soapbox for Alachua County activists'

## From a dirt farm to the White House Jimmy Carter was among a new breed of progressive Southerners

by *Diana Roberts*

Jimmy Carter was, first and foremost, a Southerner — the best kind of Southerner.

He represented the New South we never quite achieved after Lee surrendered at Appomattox, but got occasional glimpses of — a South that was diverse, cognizant of its painful past, but also proud of its culture.

Though the South was — and is still — considered a bastion of rock-ribbed conservatism, evangelical zealotry, and racial bigotry, Carter was shaped by our long history of progressive leaders, people like anti-lynching campaigner Jessie Daniel Ames, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Terry Sanford, the pro-integration governor of North Carolina, and Floridians LeRoy Collins, who marched with King in Selma, and Claude “Red” Pepper, the only Florida congressman to vote in favor of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Carter had much in common with Florida governors Reubin Askew, Bob Graham, and Buddy MacKay: they all aimed to drag their states out of the Old South into the New.

As an Annapolis-trained nuclear engineer who lived his faith yet embraced difference and fought for equal justice, he defied the Southern yahoo stereotype.

When he ran for president in 1976, the press portrayed him as an unsophisticated farm boy, jeans-wearing and grits-eating, a rube whose wife offended against First Lady fashion by wearing what the *The New York Times* sniffily called an “old blue chiffon dress” from 1971 to the inaugural balls.

Carter’s disarming friendliness and jokey manner belied a formidable grasp of the issues (he shared this trait with Bob Gra-

ham); he was almost always the smartest guy in the room.

Twenty years before the first U.N. conference on climate change, Carter understood we were heading for a crisis and had solar panels installed on the White House.

His successor, deriding sustainable energy as a “joke,” removed them.

### Uncomfortable realities

You don’t solve centuries of prejudice in a few decades, and you don’t fix greed and ignorance in four years: Most Americans didn’t then, and don’t now, want to give up their gas-guzzlers.

Too many Americans don’t want to contemplate uncomfortable realities, ac-

*See CARTER, p. 24*



## On domestic violence

HB 19/ SB 240: Having safe HAVEN with HAVEN Act

By *Amy Trask*

*Amy Trask is an activist, a mom and passionate public servant who ran for Florida House District 22.*

This week, I met with over fifty legislators at the Capitol. With my briefcase tucked underneath my arm, my padfolio stuffed with copies of my bill, and my feet racing amidst a sea of other folks running to their next meetings, I was ready to answer the call, and the many questions about domestic violence.

Ten years ago, my baby woke up and would not stop crying. It was five in the morning, I was juggling life — and the day — as best I

could in a spit up covered t-shirt. His father had come in just hours earlier and demanded that I force our little one to be quiet. Of course, my baby couldn’t; he was awake, alive, and ready for the world! He wanted to get out of his crib — his barrier to freedom — and he wanted to get moving *now*.

I saw things escalating quickly, so I dropped my pan of eggs and raced toward my little. When I grabbed my son and tried to dial 911 on my phone, the realization hit him that I was leaving and all hell broke loose. My phone was thrown and broken, and so was I. I’ll never forget the look in his eyes, the lesson he tried to teach me,

*See HAVEN, p. 25*

## In this issue ...



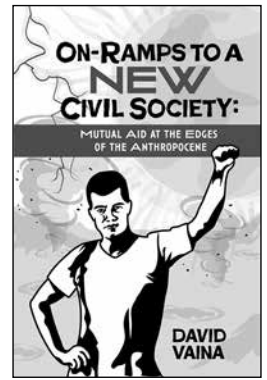
President Jimmy Carter remembrance .....	1
A story of domestic violence .....	1
Mutual aid talk at CMC Feb. 23 .....	2
On corporate control of higher education .....	2
From the publisher: The times we are in .....	3
Veterans for Peace Scholarship Program .....	4
WEIRDO: the story of Five Eight .....	5
A local remembers Jimmy Carter .....	6
President Joe Biden's Farewell Speech .....	7
On quitting the Washington Post .....	8
Wildflowers: A new concert/culture/nature venue .....	9
Liz Cheney responds to Trump .....	10
Birding the Caribbean, Central, South America .....	11
Crisis Line Counselors needed .....	11
Restructuring United Nations Security Council .....	12
Luigi Mangione's manifesto .....	13
Bob Karp's Gainesville legacy .....	14
Hoggetowne Medieval Faire Jan 25-26 .....	15
The Dreamer's dilemma/uncertainty of DACA .....	16
The good news .....	17
DOGE targets Social Security, Medicare .....	18
New UF trustee insults/denegrates women .....	19
Groups on frontline of MAGA repression .....	20
Sacred Springs Stories Feb. 6.....	21
Recommended blogs/ web sites .....	22
Editors' picks: News that didn't fit .....	23
Carter: A good man, an imperfect record .....	24
Gainesville area events .....	26
Iguana directory .....	28
Spotlight on: Gainesville Women for Democracy .....	28
Abortion-rights organizers on failed ballot measures..	28
Assault on GRU Referendum halted .....	32
Recommendation for 2024 election analysis .....	32

### The Iguana mission:

*We believe in advocacy journalism and strive to deliver grassroots progressive news written by those on the ground. We aim to engage readers, get them thinking critically, and ultimately join the activists who fill our pages in the fight for a more just, equitable world. We're also a community calendar, promoting cultural events, because we believe having fun and enriching the heart and soul are as important as engaging the mind when it comes to community building and solidarity.*

## Mutual aid talk at CMC, Feb. 23

Alachua County-based David Vaina will share his new book, "On-Ramps to a New Civil Society," an autonomist reimagining of labor, value, mutual aid, and revolution, at the Civic Media Center on Sunday, Feb. 23, at 2pm.



He will be in conversation with Jimmy Dunson, the Tampa-based co-founder of Mutual Aid Disaster Relief, and welcomes local organizers of mutual aid to join the discussion. Books will be on sale at the event or to borrow from the CMC.

**Book description:** Climate change has long degraded human communities and the natural world but is increasingly articulated on a more profound scale. In "On-Ramps to a New Civil Society: Mutual Aid at the Edges of the Anthropocene," David Vaina explores this historical moment of institutional decline, where a political void has emerged in addressing our life-giving needs through the human and non-human worlds. Mutual aid continues to develop as a long-term social practice operating to heal and regenerate these two worlds. As it matures and seeks to acquire dual power, mutual aid is advancing a three-part strategy realized by new labor, political, and ontological forms that are collectively contributing to a new, radical civil society.

The Civic Media Center is located at 433 South Main St. in Gainesville. ✨

### On corporate control of higher education

"I talked with another professor at Chicago, who does not want his name used. I asked him what he thought about the status of his profession, and he gave the best description of academic freedom in America that I have yet come upon. He said, 'We are good cows; we stand quietly in our stanchions, and give down our milk at regular hours. We are free, because we have no desire to do anything but what we are told we ought to do. And we die of premature senility.'"

~ Upton Sinclair (1923)

### Hey, Readers!

We have switched to Venmo for online donations and payments. Find us under our username **gnv-iguana** or scan the QR code to the right.



**Want your article, ad, event or PSA in the next Iguana?**  
**Deadline is Wednesday, Feb. 26**  
 Submit events, content, questions to:  
[gainesvilleiguana@cox.net](mailto:gainesvilleiguana@cox.net)

*From the publisher ...*

# The times we are in

Well here we go. This paper's print date was Jan. 20, which means as the presses were running, Donald Trump was being sworn in as president. So much wacko stuff in the news as I write this, and that unfortunately will be the tone of the next couple years at least. Don't give up, get out and find community as you will ... we will need each other and that starts with finding one another.

It has occurred to me that we are living in a time of obvious extremism. It hit me watching the Jimmy Carter memorial service, a powerful review of one man's life as an exemplary human, not only as president, but as a sensitive, empathetic person committed to doing good works for others for the duration of his post-White House life. And there in the second row was Donald Trump, a man/child of such an extreme opposite in temperament and life work that I can find no words to compare them. I could not even fathom that all those heartfelt words about Carter's life, his achievements and values, even the lyrics of "Imagine," were going into Trump's ears. Is he really that cold and hard-hearted that they had no effect? I fear so, and I fear for this democracy as he moves into command.



*Joe Courter*

Also rather striking, a few weeks earlier there was Luigi Mangione allegedly performing an extremely bold act, making a statement about the corrupt health insurance industry (see page 13), then a couple weeks later, within hours, two separate events where US military vets used motor vehicles in their own extreme statements of sorts, one a mass attack on revelers in New Orleans, the other a blown-up Tesla at a Trump hotel. Mangione's was a calculated direct action of extreme nature. The other two, not so calculated at a direct target, but an extreme general lashing out over perceived grievances and fears about societal direction.

We can't all live like Jimmy Carter, and we shouldn't go to the extreme of Luigi Mangione, but the passion to help others and make the world better needs to be in our hearts. The self-centered, cold, reactionary attitude shown by those two miscreants in their vehicles, or with that other miscreant in row two, unfortunately is on the rise. We can see it in their lack of empathy, their fear of immigrants, their utter hostility toward the idea that transgender people exist, that lesbians and gays deserve equal rights, that women should not have control over their own bodies. They are on the rise, and indeed on the rise around the world, as social media allows for multiple versions of truth, and facilitates the power of fear-mongering and scapegoating to infect the functioning of a cooperative forward-thinking society. Humanity is rolling into an extremely dangerous time.

So what can we do? It would not hurt to step back from intense news following, if you are one who is afflicted with that habit. The breathless corporate media channels live to keep you on edge, engaged, and addicted to their endless soap opera. Maybe zero in on a few more reflective sources, as we highlight on pg 20, or by all means find your own if you haven't already.

Getting out of the house and around other humans for socializing, with music, or just a few beers or coffee; we need to find each other and not worry in isolation. Plug into an organization that is working on an issue you care about. The election happened, it is over. We learned that some of our fellow citizens chose to abdicate their civic responsibility to vote (yeah, all those Democrats who stayed home rather than vote for Harris — see p. 32) or who ignored the Trump track record to give him another shot. And this time, no guardrails, and the shit show has started! Musk vs Bannon; ridiculously unqualified nominees being rammed through as quick as they can; meanwhile, I have not heard the word "transition" once.

So we wait and watch a while, and hope our elected representatives can muster some oppositional roadblocks and encourage the good ones to keep pushing back. Get ready for local defensive action against deportations of our neighbors, of crackdowns on our rights. Beware of sane-washing and normalization. They will keep winning unless enough good-hearted folks can mobilize in whatever ways we can to turn them back. And if we still have elections in 2026, we can begin to turn it around. ✨

## Subscribe!

*The Gainesville Iguana* is Alachua County's independent progressive newsletter.

Individuals: \$15

(or more if you can)

Low/No income: what you can

Groups: \$20

*Gainesville Iguana*

P.O. Box 14712, Gainesville, FL 32604

Comments, suggestions, contributions (written or financial) are welcome. To list your event or group, contact us at:

- 352-378-5655
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- www.gainesvilleiguana.org
- facebook.com/gainesvilleiguana
- Instagram: gnv\_iguana

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### **Publisher:**

Joe Courter

### **Editors Emeriti:**

Jenny Brown

Mark Piotrowski

### **Editorial Board:**

Pierce Butler

Joe Courter

Beth Grobman

Jessica Newman

### **Production work, contributors:**

Joye Barnes

Jenny Brown

Barbara McDade Gordon

Alex Leader

Bobby Merner

### **Distribution:**

Joe Courter

Susan Kaar

Alex Leader

Leon Plympton

Jon Reiskind

Anita Sundaram

Contact us if you can help with distribution in outlying areas.

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# Announcing: Veterans for Peace 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Educational Scholarship Program for Alachua County students

## Deadline for submitting application, Friday, April 25

Gainesville Veterans for Peace Chapter 14 is excited to announce our 11<sup>th</sup> annual Peace Scholarship Program for the spring of 2025. Thanks to community support for our annual Winter Solstice Concert and other donations, VFP will be awarding three college scholarships of \$1,500 each for high school seniors, college students or adults. Recipients must demonstrate commitment to one or more social justice activities which may include: peace and nonviolence, intersectional coalition building, Black Lives Matter, women's reproductive freedom, environmental sustainability, economic justice, education and social change.

Veterans for Peace created these scholarships to give financial support to students in Alachua County, Florida, who are planning careers in pursuit of a world of social justice and equality.

Most Veterans for Peace scholarships awarded thus far have gone to first-generation college students as well as to community college students. Students enrolled in vocational, apprenticeship and career training programs including building trades, nursing, counseling and other fields are eligible to apply.

Mariana Castro, a UF student and community activist, was a recipient of the 2016 Peace Scholarship. Mariana notes, "To me receiving the Veterans for Peace Scholarship meant that there are people in our community who truly believe in helping change and shape our society for the betterment of all. There are not many scholarships such as VFP Peace Scholarship because work for social justice is often overlooked in our world." Mariana writes: "It's tough being a college student and fighting for your community and overall peace. We don't get graded for our movement-building work, and we don't get graded for our campaigns. As an immigrant advocate and social justice activist

I feel blessed to have received this opportunity that will help me continue with my college education." Ms. Castro's narrative is an important reminder that while we often say, "Another World Is Possible," we must provide tangible alternative funding to people who want to pursue peace and social justice in a society that is heavily based on funding war and violence.

Please help Gainesville Veterans for Peace spread the word about this scholarship program!

To be eligible to apply for the Peace Scholarship, the applicant must be:

1) a resident of Alachua County, either a high school senior planning to enroll in full-time undergraduate study at an accredited two- or four-year college, university or vocational-technical school or apprenticeship program in the United States for the upcoming academic year;

or: 2) a student currently enrolled in one of these programs and in good standing;

or: 3) an adult student enrolling in higher education who needs financial assistance. VFP encourages military veterans and first-generation students to apply for the scholarship.

Peace Scholarship applicants will also be asked to provide a brief personal statement and evidence of leadership and/or personal initiative in activities in an organization (including volunteer or paid work) relating to peace and social justice, community organizing and/or nonviolence. Applicants will also need to provide two letters of recommendation.

### SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE: APRIL 25


The application (PDF file) must be downloaded from the Gainesville Veterans for Peace website at <https://vfp Gainesville.org/> The completed application should be emailed to: Paul Ortiz at [ortizprof@gmail.com](mailto:ortizprof@gmail.com). Include the Subject Line: Veterans for Peace Scholarship Program. The email deadline for the scholarship application is April 25.

Peace Scholarship recipients will be awarded in early May in a community celebration. For questions about the Peace Scholarship, contact Paul Ortiz at: [ortizprof@gmail.com](mailto:ortizprof@gmail.com) or 831-334-0131.

The full announcement and instructions for applying may be found on our web site, at <http://www.vfp Gainesville.org/>.

### 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Alachua County Peace Poetry Contest 2025

The Gainesville Chapter of Veterans for Peace invites all students, K-12, in Alachua County to create and submit one original poem on the subject of *peace and social justice*.



**SUBMISSION DEADLINE: March 28, 2025**

Entries should be emailed to [vfppeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com](mailto:vfppeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com).

**REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBMISSION:** Please include (1) the poet's name; grade level; school; parent/guardian and/or teacher's name; and (2) two preferred methods of contact (e-mail, phone number and/or mailing address).

Winners will receive a valuable prize and have their poems published in the 2025 Peace Poetry Contest Book. Winning poets will have the opportunity to read their pieces aloud at the public Peace Poetry Reading in May in Gainesville. All poets will be notified, whether their poems place or not.

For additional information, email [vfppeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com](mailto:vfppeacepoetrycontest@gmail.com).

### Gainesville Quaker Meeting

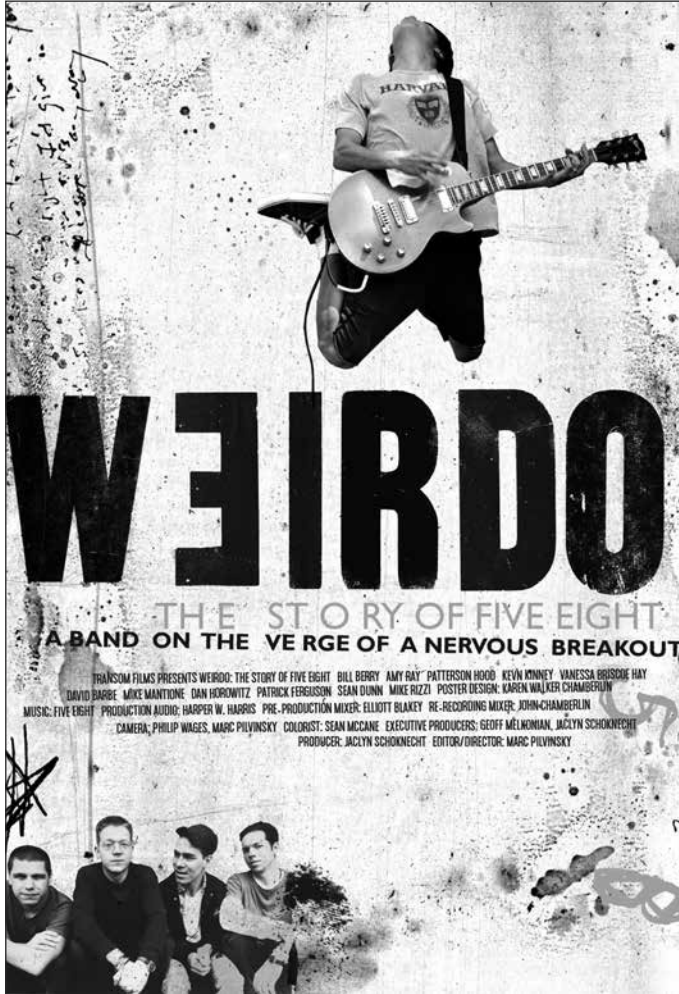
You are welcome here, where together we seek to live lives committed to peace and justice.



[www.gainesvillequakers.org](http://www.gainesvillequakers.org)  
352-372-1070  
702 NW 38<sup>th</sup> St.  
Worship each Sunday @ 11 am.

## **WEIRDO: the story of Five Eight** **A band on the verge of a nervous breakout**

The feature documentary, WEIRDO: THE STORY OF FIVE EIGHT, will be shown at the Hippodrome on Saturday, Feb. 15 at 4pm. It is about the Athens, Georgia rock band Five Eight and their singer's journey from a mental asylum, to being yanked out against doctor's orders, to picking up a guitar, to building an almost 40-year-long career with his rock band. After the screening, there will be a filmmaker/band Q&A and then Five Eight and Orlando's The Pauses will play a rock show across the street at The Backyard at Boca Fiesta & Palomino. 🐾



The Civic Media Center is a reading room, a library of the non-corporate press, and community space.

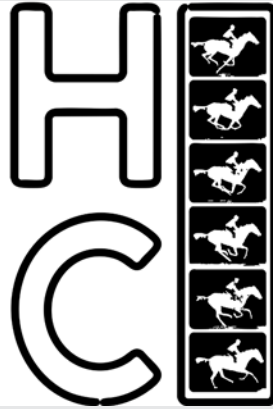
Get involved in something for the greater good. Stop by.

**civicmediacenter.org**

433 S. Main St., Gainesville 352-373-0010

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 1/19 @ 2pm

**The Purge Election Year (Inauguration Day Screening)**  
 1/20 @ 7pm

**Queer**  
 1/24 @ 6:30pm  
 1/26 @ 2:30pm

**Babygirl**  
 1/23 @ 7:30pm  
 1/25 @ 10pm  
 1/26 @ 5:30pm  
 1/31 @ 7pm  
 2/1 @ 4pm  
 2/2 @ 7pm



**A Knight's Tale (Hoggetowne Medieval Faire Screening)**  
 1/25 @ 7pm

**DIG!XX**  
 1/29 @ 7:30pm

**Theater of Thought**  
 1/31 @ 9:30pm  
 2/1 @ 1:30pm  
 2/2 @ 4:30pm  
 2/7 @ 8:30pm



**Cocktails and Classics: Purple Rain**  
 2/8 @ 7:30pm

**Twilight (Valentine's Screening)**  
 2/15 @ 8pm

**Koyaanisqatsi Live: Music Event**  
 2/20 @ 7:30pm

**Wallace and Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl**  
 2/22 @ 2:30pm

**National Theatre Live: The Importance of Being Earnest**  
 2/23 @ 2:30pm

# A local remembers Jimmy Carter

by Lee Malis

In the 1970s there were hundreds of thousands of young homeless people living on the streets and around the countryside. There was a big “back to the country” movement, the Vietnam War was over and there was a bit of a mess in the US. Jimmy Carter was elected president in the hopes that he could bring us back together. His message was one of brotherhood and unity, equal rights for women and the disenfranchised, amnesty for the conscientious objectors. Amongst his many reforms was free education for the poor and homeless.

Around this same time, I was traveling around in my 59 Dodge pick-up truck. It had been pretty faithful. It had an old flathead 6 motor I'd taken out of a forklift, back in California. I drove it across the country, hung out in Key West for the winter of '78 and it finally died around NW 10<sup>th</sup> St. and University Avenue in Gainesville.

I had \$5 when I left Key West and nothing by the time I got to Gainesville. I was living in the back of my truck with a seized motor. I had been living on the streets and mountains since I was 13 years old, so this was nothing out of the ordinary. I had been taken away from my family and made a ward of the court at the age of 13 and had escaped three different jails before I turned 15. My last grade completed in school was the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

Not too long after I arrived in Gainesville, I heard about the program initiated by President Carter to get people off the streets and into schools. The requirements were pretty simple: pass the High School Proficiency exam, and poverty.

That helping hand got me off the streets and into Santa Fe Community College, where I got my AA degree. From there I got a second degree from the University of Florida and graduated from the School of Journalism.

In my opinion, President Carter was one of the last presidents of the people, for the people, and by the people.

After I graduated I went on to cover civil wars and revolutions in Chile, under Pinochet, genocide of the Mayans in Guatemala, corruption in Peru, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the fall of the Soviet Union, the former Yugoslavia wars, Poland, Lithuania, and the breakup of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Lithuania. I worked for Time Magazine, Newsweek, US News and World Report, as well as Der Spiegel, Stern, almost all the English Sunday magazines and many more. I also paid back my student loans.

His programs changed so many lives! Think of his work at Camp David, locking himself away from the world with the leaders of Egypt and Israel working every day for weeks for a peace treaty. It is still in place today. Refusing to go to war in Iran. His policies were not popular with the Right and they brought about Ronald Reagan and the messes Reagan created in Central America. Sadly doing the right thing is not always the popular thing. When will we ever learn?

I remember in Davos, Switzerland, I was taking pictures for the World Economic Forum (WEF), an organization of the owners of the world and corporate wannabes, (the wannabes want to be the owners of the world). At one of the forums some wannabe was talking about the failure of Jimmy Carter's program of getting the poor off the streets and into schools. I explained to him he was totally full of shit and it felt to me that I had definitely succeeded due to that program.

The right wing, the super wealthy and their ilk would have us believe that Carter was a failure, because he wasn't reelected. I feel he wasn't reelected because he didn't play the game like the rest of the power hungry devourers of the planet. The right wing and the owners of the world are much better at getting their way than working people. The billionaires' motives are not to make the world a better place, but to make themselves more powerful and tighten their control on the planet for their own gain. Carter's motives were a bit more evident, with his continued work until he was 100 years old, of working to help people around the world have a home, to have clean drinking water, to protect our environment here in the USA and in the world.

I am proud/grateful to say, I was a product of one of Jimmy Carter's many successful initiatives ... Thank you Jimmy Carter! ✨



## Excerpt from President Joe Biden's Farewell Speech, Jan. 16

"... That's why my farewell address tonight, I want to warn the country of some things that give me great concern. And this is a dangerous — and that's the dangerous concentration of power in the hands of a very few ultrawealthy people, and the dangerous consequences if their abuse of power is left unchecked. Today, an oligarchy is taking shape in America of extreme wealth, power and influence that literally threatens our entire democracy, our basic rights and freedoms and a fair shot for everyone to get ahead. We see the consequences all across America. And we've seen it before.

"... You know, in his farewell address, President Eisenhower spoke of the dangers of the military-industrial complex. He warned us that about, and I quote, "The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power." Six days — six decades later, I'm equally concerned about the potential rise of a tech-industrial complex that could pose real dangers for our country as well.

"Americans are being buried under an avalanche of misinformation and disinformation enabling the abuse of power. The free press is crumbling. Editors are disappearing. Social media is giving up on fact-checking. The truth is smothered by lies told for power and for profit. We must hold the social platforms accountable to protect our children, our families and our very democracy from the abuse of power. Meanwhile, artificial intelligence is the most consequential technology of our time, perhaps of all time.

"Nothing offers more profound possibilities and risks for our economy, and our security, our society. For humanity. Artificial intelligence even has the potential to help us answer my call to end cancer as we know it. But unless safeguards are in place, A.I. could spawn new threats to our rights, our way of life, to our privacy, how we work, and how we protect our nation. We must make sure A.I. is safe and trustworthy and good for all humankind."

For a full transcript, see: [tinyurl.com/iguana2130](https://tinyurl.com/iguana2130)

### A quick publisher comment:

*It was great for Biden to say the word "oligarchy" in his farewell address and point out its danger, but that oligarchy has been allowed to grow for years. It's not just his fault, the privatization of the space technology sector has enriched certain unsavory folks, and likewise, same with the growth of the communications and tech sector.*

*This train has been coming down the track for well over a decade. With Harris running such a short campaign, even if she has wanted to point it out, there wasn't time. Or inclination probably. The tech-industrial complex has been funded and groomed by both parties. And now ... "our turn to stand guard"? Well okay, thanks. And we also can't forget Gaza. 🐸*

# UPCOMING EVENTS


## HEARTWOOD

SOUNDSTAGE

Every Wednesday	<b>COMMUNITY NIGHTS</b> AT SOUTH MAIN STATION
1/24	<b>MICHIGANDER</b> WITH SYDNEY SPRAGUE
1/24	<b>NICK SHOULDERS &amp; THE OKAY CRAWDAD</b> WITH SABINE MCCALLA
1/30	<b>AJEVA</b> WITH TAMAYO
1/31	<b>HOTEL FICTION</b> WITH THE NANCYS & JORDAN BURCHEL
2/14	<b>DRAKE MILLIGAN</b>
2/16	<b>AMERICAN AQUARIUM</b>
2/26	<b>JOHN MORELAND</b> WITH JORDAN FOLEY
2/27	<b>Sunshine Music &amp; Arts Festival</b> Jacob Sigman, Prizilla, Madwoman & more
3/5	<b>WINYAH</b>

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- Panel discussion: Perspectives on Climate Change in Literature
- Storytelling for Kids



**Bringing Readers & Writers Together**

Funded in part by Florida Humanities, National Endowment for the Humanities, & Visit Gainesville, Alachua County, FL

# Why I'm quitting the Washington Post

## Democracy can't function without a free press

by Ann Telnaes

I've worked for the Washington Post since 2008 as an editorial cartoonist. I have had editorial feedback and productive conversations — and some differences — about cartoons I have submitted for publication, but in all that time I've never had a cartoon killed because of who or what I chose to aim my pen at. Until now.

The cartoon that was killed criticizes the billionaire tech and media chief executives who have been doing their best to curry favor with incoming President-elect Trump. There have been multiple articles recently about these men with lucrative government contracts and an interest in eliminating regulations making their way to Mar-a-lago.

The group in the cartoon included Mark Zuckerberg/Facebook & Meta founder and CEO, Sam Altman/AI CEO, Patrick Soon-Shiong/LA Times publisher, the Walt Disney Company/ABC News, and Jeff Bezos/Washington Post owner.

While it isn't uncommon for editorial page editors to object to visual metaphors within a cartoon if it strikes that editor as unclear or isn't correctly conveying the message intended by the cartoonist, such editorial criticism was not the case regarding this cartoon.

To be clear, there have been instances where sketches have been rejected or revisions requested, but never because of the point of view inherent in the cartoon's commentary. That's a game changer ... and dangerous for a free press.

Over the years I have watched my overseas colleagues risk their livelihoods and sometimes even their lives to expose injustices and hold their countries' leaders accountable. As a member of the Advisory board for the Geneva based Freedom Cartoonists Foundation and a former board member of Cartoonists Rights, I believe that editorial cartoonists are vital for civic debate and have an essential role in journalism.

There will be people who say, "Hey, you work for a company and that company has the right to expect employees to adhere to what's good for the company." That's true except we're talking about news organizations that have public obligations and who are obliged to nurture a free press in a democracy. Owners of such press organizations are responsible for safeguarding that free press — and trying to get in the good graces of an autocrat-in-waiting will only result in undermining that free press.

As an editorial cartoonist, my job is to hold powerful people and institutions accountable. For the first time, my editor prevented me from doing that critical job. So I have decided to leave the Post. I doubt my decision will cause much of a stir and that it will be dismissed because I'm just a cartoonist. But I will not stop holding truth to power through my cartooning, because as they say, "Democracy dies in darkness."

Thank you for reading this.

*This letter was originally published on Ann Telnaes's Substack on Jan. 3. See more at [anntelnaes.substack.com/](http://anntelnaes.substack.com/). For Jim Hightower's take, see "A Billionaire v. A Cartoonist — I'm Betting on the Cartoonist" at [tinyurl.com/Iguana2120](http://tinyurl.com/Iguana2120)*



*This editorial cartoon drawn by a Washington Post staffer shows Mark Zuckerberg, Sam Altman, Patrick Soon-Shiong, Jeff Bezos (the Washington Post owner) and the Walt Disney Company bowing down and offering cash to Trump in order to win his favor. In an unprecedented move, the Washington Post refused to publish it; the cartoonist subsequently resigned.*

## Susan B. Anthony's 205<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration

The Friends of Susan B. Anthony invite you to join us for an afternoon of music, cake, and fellowship as we honor the legacy of Susan B. Anthony and other champions for social change and justice. This gathering will be a time for celebration and a moment to reflect on the tireless efforts of those who have shaped the fight for equality.

Enjoy appetizers and cake while engaging with a brief presentation on the life and work of American activist Fannie Lou Hamer, presented by Pamela Marshall-Koons.

The events takes place Sunday, Feb. 16 from 3-5pm at the Cotton Club Museum and Cultural Center at 837 SE 7th Avenue in Gainesville.

Seating is limited. Please RSVP by clicking on "GOING" on our Facebook Event Page or email us at [fosbagnv@gmail.com](mailto:fosbagnv@gmail.com).



# Nature and culture to meet soon in Alachua County

## Wildflowers will host concerts, offer environmental education

by Robert "Hutch" Hutchinson and Jordan Puryear

A new nature park and festival venue is taking shape south of Melrose. WildFlowers Music Park, a 270-acre property in eastern Alachua County, is being acquired by a nonprofit charitable trust with a dual mission: preserve the land and host arts events to help cover associated costs. The model combines environmental protection with a large outdoor gathering space that the area has been lacking.

GrassRoots festivals, a series of events that originated outside Ithaca, New York, serve as inspiration for this venture. Founded more than three decades ago by the band Donna the Buffalo to address the growing AIDS crisis, the Finger Lakes festival has raised millions of dollars for community causes.

The GrassRoots concept later expanded to Shakori Hills in Pittsboro, North Carolina. WildFlowers Music Park intends to bring the same ideals to North Florida.

A key feature of GrassRoots gatherings is multi-day camping. Mornings typically include workshops in the arts, wellness, and nature awareness, while afternoons and evenings feature performances by local, national, and international musicians. Past GrassRoots festivals have offered early career opportunities to artists such as Rhiannon Giddens, Billy Strings, and Rusted Root.

Formed in November 2024, WildFlowers Music Park will spend the next year collaborating with local community members and agencies to ensure the venue meets regulations and aligns with public expectations.

Organizers plan to recruit volunteers, contractors, and vendors to build necessary infrastructure and restore the landscape. Their goal is a festival site designed to harmonize with the surrounding environment.

Once complete, WildFlowers will host a range of concerts and other activities with an emphasis on community connections, creativity, and environmental education. Plans include establishing trails through live-oak hammocks and along sinkhole wetlands. During the off-season, the park may offer smaller events like art retreats, nature programs, and school visits.

Financial backing for the property purchase includes a \$1 million mortgage loan from the Community Foundation of North Central Florida's new Arts and Culture Fund. Repayment will come from ticket sales with the funds being reinvested in local arts groups. This approach aims, in part, to address shortfalls created by sweeping budget cuts at the state and federal levels to local arts organizations.

Organizers hope the first festival at WildFlowers Music Park will take place by winter 2026. They encourage community members to share ideas and support in the coming months, with the aim of providing an outdoor music and arts experience that also promotes environmental awareness and a sense of togetherness.

For more information, see [wildflowersmusicpark.org](http://wildflowersmusicpark.org)

*Robert Hutchinson is Chief Petty Officer for Existential Logistics with WildFlowers Music Park Finance, LLC, representing the 13 private lenders who financed the property acquisition.*

*Jordan Puryear co-founded the Finger Lakes and Shakori Hills Grassroots Festivals, founded the WildFlowers Music Park, and serves on the non-profit board of directors. 🐾*



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## Liz Cheney responds to Trump after receiving Presidential Metal

by Heather Cox Richardson

On Jan. 9, President Joe Biden awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal, given to those “who have performed exemplary deeds of service for their country or their fellow citizens,” to twenty Americans including former Representative Liz Cheney (R-WY), who served on the House committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

On Jan. 10, Trump attacked Cheney and others who investigated the events surrounding the attack as “dishonest thugs.”

Cheney responded:

“Donald, this is not the Soviet Union. You can’t change the truth and you cannot silence us. Remember all your lies about the voting machines, the election workers, your countless allegations of fraud that never happened? Many of your lawyers have been sanctioned, disciplined or disbarred, the courts ruled against you, and dozens of your own White House, administration, and campaign aides testified against you. Remember how you sent a mob to our Capitol and then watched the violence on television and refused for hours to instruct the mob to leave? Remember how your former vice president prevented you from overturning our Republic? We remember. And now, as you take office again, the American people need to reject your latest malicious falsehoods and stand as the guardrails of our Constitutional Republic — to protect the America we love from you.”

*This is an excerpt from Heather Cox Richardson’s newsletter on Jan. 10. See more at [heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/](https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/)*

## The Gainesville Free Grocery Store

is a mutual aid project hosted by the Civic Media Center. We aim to provide healthy and accessible food to our community and to support food justice in the greater Gainesville area.

For more info:

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# Birding from Caribbean to Central, South America

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 Cypress & Grove Brewing Company  
 1001 NW 4th St, Gainesville

During an evening program, Ernesto Reyes Mouriño will give a talk titled Birding from the Caribbean to Central and South America. Topics include the value of Cuba as a biodiversity hotspot in the Caribbean, the National System of Protected Areas including the areas nominated by UNESCO as Biosphere Reserves, and the threats for most of our Cuban birds with focus on those that are under some of the UICN categories (CR, EN, TH, LR) especially Cuban endemic birds.

He also will talk about the positive impacts of the birdwatching in Cuba and include a short history from the past to the present and his experiences contributing to work with ornithologist and local groups to do social science (eBird for example) and the impacts in the knowledge about Cuban birds.

His talk will be illustrated by photos of Cuban birds, as well as a selection from Columbia and Brazil.

Ernesto Reyes Mourino (mycubabirdguide.com) is a biologist, award-winning wildlife photographer, conservationist, and bird tour guide with more than 15 years experience with birds in Cuba, Honduras, Dominican Republic and the Bahamas. He is well known as one of the premiere guides in Cuba with a keen ability to find and share Cuba's amazing birds and biodiversity. 🐦

## Crisis Line counselors needed

The Alachua County Crisis Center is accepting applicants for Volunteer Crisis Line Counselors. The training includes 80 hours of in-depth training in active listening, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention. Training is held over Zoom and starts with an initial Saturday followed by Tuesday and Thursday evenings for eight weeks. Spring online training starts Saturday, Feb. 1.

For more information contact Kevin Sosa at: 352-264-6781 or ksosa@alachuacounty.us, or go to: <https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2121>. 🐊



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# Call for restructuring United Nations Security Council

Two critical changes needed to preserve relevance, renew commitment to principles

*by United Nations Association of the United States of America, Gainesville Chapter*

World War II was the deadliest and most destructive conflict in human history, claiming the lives of 40 to 50 million people and leaving much of the world in ruins. In its aftermath, world leaders called for enduring peace.

To achieve this, representatives of 50 Allied nations convened in San Francisco from April 25 to June 26, 1945, to draft the charter of an international organization dedicated to peace. Thus, the United Nations was born on Oct. 24, 1945.

As we commemorated the 79th anniversary of the UN's founding on Oct. 24, 2024, the organization continues to pursue its mission to maintain peace, provide humanitarian aid, protect human rights, uphold international law, and promote its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

One of the six principal organs of the UN, the Security Council, bears the responsibility of ensuring international peace and security, recommending new members to the General Assembly, and approving amendments to the UN Charter.

Its powers, as outlined in the Charter, include establishing peacekeeping operations, imposing sanctions, and authorizing military actions.

As the only UN body with binding authority, the Security Council holds immense power. Yet, its track record reveals significant shortcomings, especially during the Cold War and in times of regional crises.

Many observers and studies have concluded that the veto power exercised by the five permanent members (United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China) is the most undemocratic element of the UN. This mechanism often paralyzes decision-making and hinders action on critical issues such as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The veto grants any of these five nations the ability to unilaterally block any substantive decision.

In effect, it poses an existential threat to the future of the United Nations and global peace.

In light of these concerns, the Gainesville Chapter of the United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA), established in 1964 to support the principles of the

UN, calls for urgent restructuring of the Security Council.

We propose two critical changes to preserve the UN's relevance and renew its commitment to its founding principles:

1. **Eliminate the one-country veto power** and adopt a two-thirds majority rule for substantive decisions.

2. **Expand the number of permanent members** by adding four seats: two members from Africa, one member from Brazil, and one member from India. This reform would reflect the racial and cultural diversity of the global community, ensuring a more representative and equitable Security Council. A more democratic and representative UN is essential for achieving peace now and in the future.

These changes are long overdue. However, it is never too late to do what is necessary and just. Restructuring the Security Council would align the UN with its mission and pave the way for a more democratic and effective global governance system.

By implementing these reforms, the international community can strive toward achieving the "UN We Need" for the 21st century and beyond. 🐐

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# Accused killer Luigi Mangione explains Read the manifesto largely ignored by media

by Ken Klippenstein

Luigi Mangione is accused of fatally shooting UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson in December. This manifesto outlines his motives.

I've obtained a copy of suspected killer Luigi Mangione's manifesto — the real one, not the forgery circulating online. Major media outlets are also in possession of the document but have refused to publish it and have not even articulated a reason why. My queries to The New York Times, The Washington Post, CNN and NBC to explain their rationale for withholding the manifesto, while gladly quoting from it selectively, have not been answered.

I'll have more to say on this later — on how unhealthy the media's drift away from public disclosure is — but for now, here's the manifesto:

"To the Feds, I'll keep this short, because I do respect what you do for our country. To save you a lengthy investigation, I state plainly that I wasn't working with anyone. This was fairly trivial: some elementary social engineering, basic CAD, a lot of patience. The spiral notebook, if present, has some straggling notes and To Do lists that illuminate the gist of it. My tech is pretty locked down because I work in engineering so probably not much info there. I do apologize for any strife of (sic) traumas, but it had to be done. Frankly, these parasites simply had it coming. A reminder: the US has the #1 most expensive healthcare system in the world, yet we rank roughly #42 in life expectancy. United is the [indecipherable] largest company in the US by market cap, behind only Apple, Google, Walmart. It has grown and grown, but as our life expectancy? No the reality

is, these [indecipherable] have simply gotten too powerful, and they continue to abuse our country for immense profit because the American public has all[o]wed them to get away with it. Obviously the problem is more complex, but I do not have space, and frankly I do not pretend to be the most qualified person to lay out the full argument. But many have illuminated the corruption and greed (e.g.: Rosenthal, Moore), decades ago and the problems simply remain. It is not an issue of awareness at this point, but clearly power games at play. Evidently I am the first to face it with such brutal honesty."

This article originally appeared on Ken Klippenstein's Substack on Dec. 10. See more at [kenklippenstein.com](http://kenklippenstein.com).



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# Bob Karp's Gainesville legacy

Former City Commissioner campaigning for permanent marker in his honor

by Ron Cunningham

Whenever I saw Bob Karp moving around Gainesville — and that was frequently — he was either on a bicycle, on foot or getting on or off an RTS bus.

I never once saw him in a car during the many years of our mutual acquaintance.

I was an unabashed Bob Karp fan. And not just because he shared my passion for perambulating about town on two wheels. Bob was many things, but most of all he was a visionary who was constantly working to make Gainesville a more livable, walkable city.

And Bob was the best kind of community activist. He didn't just show up at public meetings to speak his mind. He was hands-on.

A hands-on urbanist determined to make his city safer and more pleasurable for people who choose to get around without cars.

A hands-on organizer and a founder of

GCAT (Gainesville Citizens For Active Transportation).

A hands-on activist who managed countless local political campaigns—and who insisted that, so long as he was involved, his candidates conduct their campaigns in the most ethical fashion.

It is no surprise that, after Bob passed away last year, the City Commission proclaimed Bob Karp Day in Gainesville. An honor befitting “a true friend, trusted confidant and moral compass to uncounted leaders in the Gainesville community.”

But some of his friends think a proclamation isn't nearly enough to truly honor Bob Karp's legacy.

Former City Commissioner Warren Nielsen is spearheading a campaign to install a permanent marker in Bob's honor. And in the most appropriate location imaginable — on the roundabout where the Gainesville rail-trail crosses South Main Street.

Depot and South Main are Gainesville's

most “complete streets.” And Bob was nothing if not GNV's most dedicated complete streets champion.

As Nielsen pointed out in a letter to GNV city officials:

“Bob was an enthusiastic advocate for what has become the transformation of Main Street south of Depot Avenue and he energetically participated in the city's planning process for the project. In fact, the current roundabout on South Main at the rail-trail was his idea.

“We propose to place a modest slanted stone monument imprinted with the words of the city's proclamation at the roundabout's NE intersection of Main and the rail-trail.

“Additionally, an attractive sign could be placed on each of the two medians on Main leading to the roundabout itself indicating ‘Robert Karp roundabout.’”

It is important to note that Nielsen and other involved in the project are not asking the City to spend public funds on

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this. They are just seeking City approval of the memorial.

“Our group of citizens will cover all costs of the monument and signage,” he said in his letter.

Bob Karp was the least self-aggrandizing individual I’ve ever known. And if he had an ego, he kept it well hidden.

But if Bob was the soul of modesty, his friends know that Gainesville would be a different, and a lesser, community but for his involvement.

His is a legacy worth remembering.

Please join me in asking City Commissioners to sign on to this worthy project lest Bob Karp’s legacy be forgotten.

*Ron Cunningham is a retired Gainesville Sun columnist and reporter. He now blogs at freegnv.com/. 🐘*



*South Main Street and Depot Avenue are Gainesville’s most complete streets. And that is in no small measure thanks to Bob Karp (pictured). Photo illustration courtesy of Ron Cunningham.*

## Hoggetowne Medieval Faire, Jan. 25-26

Behold, as the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire transforms Gainesville’s Depot

Park into a bastion of medieval revelry on Jan. 25-26 from 10am-6pm.

Witness royal knighting ceremonies with the King and Queen, indulge in food court favorites, and savor the timeless delight of turkey legs!



Artisans and craftspeople shall ply their trades with skill, olde world demonstrations shall enchant, and the clash of swords in stage combat shall resonate through the air. Medieval music and dance shall lift thy spirits, and a living chessboard shall unfold its strategic dance.

May the spirit of merriment and camaraderie prevail as we embark on this adventure, and may the echoes of the medieval revelry resound through Gainesville’s Depot Park in celebration of 38 years of grand tradition! 🐘

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# The Dreamer's dilemma and the uncertainty of DACA

## 'I've known America all my life ... All I know is here'

by Elizabeth Andarge

"If I knew anything else, I'd be like, 'OK, maybe we can.' But I've known America all my life. I was in kindergarten singing the Pledge of Allegiance every morning. All I know is here."

For many, the term "Dreamer" symbolizes hope and perseverance. But behind that word lie stories of sadness, struggle, and often sacrifice. Meet Luz Maria Tubb, formerly Luz Maria Castaneda, a DACA recipient. Her journey to the U.S. began 32 years ago.

"My parents moved from Mexico with my sister and me — or with me first, because I was 6 months old. At some point, immigration got really bad. One of my last memories from that area was lying down in an RV, in the dark, hiding. They were having a Christmas party or something, and the neighbors had called the police. Immigration showed up. My mom says we packed our van with just the stuff we had and drove all the way to Oregon. That was our initial move to the town I grew up in."

The emotional weight of that moment didn't sink in at first. It wasn't until Tubb turned 15 that she realized her dream had turned into a sobering reality.

"I asked my mother, 'Hey, Mom, when can I get my permit?' And that's when she kind of let me know, 'You weren't born here. You don't have the same luxury as your friends. You don't get to go out and learn how to drive.' I wouldn't say my world shattered, but it definitely made me look at things differently."

A few years later, news spread that the Obama administration had established the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. At 23 years old, Tubb received her first DACA card. For the first time, she could work legally. It was a milestone, but not without its challenges.

"I have it right here — the very first one that was given to me. But I lost hope in this card. There was a time when I lost my ID, and the only form of identification I had was this DACA card. I showed it to the TSA, and the officer looked at me, smirked, and said, 'This isn't a valid ID.' They wouldn't let me through TSA. I had to talk to a bunch of different people, and they finally let me through after patting me down. This card signifies a lot, but at the same time, people aren't validating it."

Now a mother of two U.S.-born children, Tubb says the stakes feel higher than ever. DACA recipients are required to reapply every two years. If they want citizenship, they're encouraged to return to their home country and lawfully re-enter the U.S.

"And that's what's so frustrating. The lawyers I've spoken to have given me the option: You can pay \$17,000 to start the process and go to Mexico, plead for forgiveness. What I was told is that their goal is to keep me there. And that's so terrifying when you have two small kids who depend on you."

Despite the challenges, Tubb remains a fierce advocate for her peers.

"Don't give up. That's why we're Dreamers. We have a right to be here. I say that with all the respect in the world. I'm not saying it because I feel like we're entitled to it, but I do feel that we weren't given an opportunity to choose whether we wanted to come here or not. We were brought here young. But to tell us, 'OK, now go back' — go back to what?"

*This article was originally published by WGCU in southwest Florida on Jan. 15. See more at [wgcu.org](http://wgcu.org).*



# And the good news is ...

## Biden to ban future offshore drilling across more than 600 million acres

With just two weeks left in his presidency, Joe Biden prohibited future oil and gas drilling off the entire East and West coasts, the eastern Gulf of Mexico and the remaining portions of Alaska's Northern Bering Sea. Biden signed two memoranda to permanently ban offshore drilling

over more than 625 million acres of ocean to advance his commitment to conserve 30% of U.S. lands and waters by 2030, a White House statement said. The orders came at the request of bipartisan state and local leaders in coastal areas, Biden said, and reflect that the paltry fossil fuel re-

sources in those areas would not be worth the risks of environmental, health and economic harms that could result from oil and gas exploration.

*From an article by Jacob Fischler in the Florida Phoenix on Jan. 6. See the full story at: [tinyurl.com/Iguana2125](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2125)*

## Citing inhumane conditions, Maxwell Frost seeks closure of Florida detention facility

Central Florida Democratic U.S. Rep. Maxwell Frost took to his Instagram page to call for closure of Baker Detention Center because of "inhumane conditions for immigration detainees." The center, a county jail near Jacksonville, operates in part as a federal immigration detention fa-

cility. "What I saw was horrible, and I saw conditions that no human should live in," he said. Previous charges and allegations include that guards beat one detainee severely enough to damage his ear, pepper sprayed someone while kneeling on the person's body, sent someone into a dia-

betic coma from medical neglect, denied women sanitary products, and denied water to detainees who attempted to protest conditions through a hunger strike.

*From an article by Mitch Perry in the Florida Phoenix on Nov. 19. See the full story at: [tinyurl.com/Iguana2123](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2123)*

## Democrats introduce bill to boost migrant family reunion

Facing the looming specter of revived anti-migrant policies during Trump's second term, congressional Democrats introduced bicameral legislation to authorize a Biden administration task force "to continue its work to reunite the thousands of families torn apart by Trump's zero-tol-

erance policy that inhumanely separated children from their parents," and "prevent future separation." On International Migrants Day (Dec. 18), Democratic Congress members introduced the Family Reunification Task Force Act, which comes on the heels of a report by human

rights groups revealing that as many as 1,360 migrant children who were separated from their parents during Trump's first term have yet to be reunited.

*From an article by Brett Wilkins in Common Dreams on Dec. 18. See the full story at: [tinyurl.com/Iguana2126](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2126)*

## Florida has installed the second most solar power capacity in the country in 2024

Nearly 30,000 Floridians have installed solar power this year, bringing the number of installations to over 253,000. The state as a whole has installed 3.1 gigawatts of

solar-generation capacity through the first three quarters of this year. That's the second most in the nation, ranking behind only Texas.

*From an article by Mitch Perry in the Florida Phoenix on Dec. 6. See the full story at: [tinyurl.com/Iguana2127](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2127)*

## Medicare for All tops Sanders' prescription to 'Make America Healthy Again'

Independent Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders has an ambitious New Year's resolution: a nine-point policy proposal to "Make American Healthy Again" by reforming the United States' "broken and dysfunctional healthcare system ... We are the wealthiest nation on Earth," Sanders

wrote. "There is no rational reason as to why we are not the healthiest nation on Earth. We should be leading the world in terms of life expectancy, disease prevention, low infant and maternal mortality, quality of life, and human happiness. Sadly, study after study shows just the

opposite. Despite spending almost twice as much per capita on healthcare, we trail most wealthy nations in all these areas."

*From an article by Olivia Rosane in Common Dreams on Jan 1. See the full story at: [tinyurl.com/Iguana2124](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2124)*

## New rules will ban medical debt from your credit report

The federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau issued new regulations barring medical debts from American credit reports, enacting a major new consumer protection just days before President Joe Biden is set to leave office. The rules ban credit agencies from including medical

debts on consumers' credit reports and prohibit lenders from considering medical information in assessing borrowers. These rules could be reversed after President-elect Donald Trump takes office Jan. 20. But by finalizing the regulations now, the CFPB effectively derailed the incoming

Trump administration and its Republican allies in Congress to undo rules that are broadly popular and could help millions of people who are burdened by medical debt.

*From an article by Noam Levey on NPR on Jan. 7. See the full story at: [tinyurl.com/Iguana2128](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2128)*

## Unlikely Trump can actually eliminate Education Department, experts say

President-elect Donald Trump's pledge to get rid of the U.S. Department of Education will be far easier said than done. As Trump seeks to redefine U.S. education policy, the complex logistics, bipartisan congressional approval and

redirection of federal programs required make dismantling the department a challenging — not impossible — feat. It's an effort that experts say is unlikely to gain traction in Congress and, if enacted, would create roadblocks for how Trump

seeks to implement the rest of his wide-ranging education agenda.

*From an article by Shauneen Miranda in the Florida Phoenix on Nov. 25. See the full story at: [tinyurl.com/Iguana2129](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2129)*

# Budget cuts could be in the trillions of dollars

## Dystopian DOGE committee targets Social Security, Medicare

by Mary Savage

You're driving down a long stretch of road and see a sign that warns: "DANGER. BRIDGE OUT AHEAD!" Are you going to just keep on driving and hope for the best? Of course not! But have you missed the warning signs about Republican cuts to Social Security and Medicare — your earned benefits?

In a tragic turn of events this past November and in spite of many Democratic Party successes, Republicans won a majority of seats in the U.S. House and Senate and won the presidency. Now, many of these seemingly lost souls from the Dark Side have publicly and brazenly announced their intent on cutting Social Security and Medicare, programs senior citizens, the disabled and others depend on and have paid into all their working lives, among other malign and dangerous schemes.

Republicans continue to say Social Security is a target for deficit reduction even though Social Security adds nothing to the debt.

The Florida Alliance of Retired Americans reports that a growing number of Republican lawmakers are calling for Congress to cut Social Security and Medicare in 2025.

Rep. Rich McCormick (R-GA) said cuts are "on the way" and Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) restated previous calls to dismantle Social Security in a thread post on X, which Elon Musk, who many call "the real U.S. president," promptly retweeted.

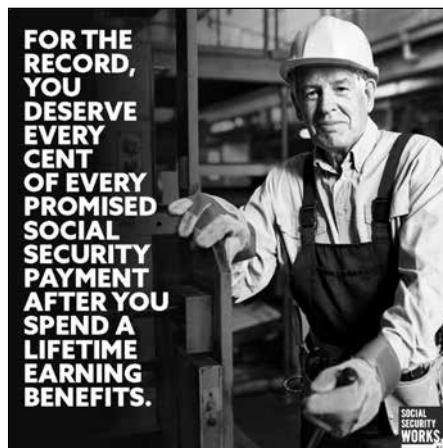
Even more alarming is the unelected Musk who chairs the dystopian sounding Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, committee. Musk's stated goal is to slash one-third of government spending, which means budget cuts would be in the TRILLIONS of dollars! This is essentially impossible to do without cutting Social Security, Medicare and other vital programs.

Another unelected Trump appointee to DOGE is Vivek Ramaswamy, who has lamented the failure of George W. Bush's Social Security privatization scheme.

Today, a younger generation is being led astray with the idea of privatization — the syphoning of a portion of a worker's FICA tax to a private account, which would undermine Social Security's original intent and add Wall Street risks to benefits that now are secure in the Social Security system. Thankfully, some in Congress are speaking up.

House Minority Leader Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) recently declared from the House podium in Washington, D.C., that House Democrats will fight to protect working class Americans "and the things that matter to them, not the wealthy, the well-off and the well-connected. Keep your hands off Social Security and Medicare!"

The watchdog organization Social Security Works has pledged to publicly amplify the breach of faith of any member of Congress who supports cuts.



We at the grassroots should take an "I'll believe it when I see it" mindset until Congress passes real legislation that truly protects our earned benefits.

For example, the Social Security 2100 Act, introduced by Rep. John Larson (D-CT), should be passed and signed into law. This legislation calls for fair and common-sense enhancements, such as raising the wage cap, which would make the Social Security Trust Fund solvent through the 21st century.

While the recent repeal of the WEP & GPO penalties on Social Security benefits for certain public sector workers is a positive step, more needs to be done. With Republicans controlling all three branches of government for the immediate future, we all have to join together and commit to the fight.

Time is of the essence. The National Alliance to End Homelessness reports that nearly 1 in 4 people experiencing homelessness (living in places not meant for human habitation) are over the age of 55. Homelessness among the elderly is expected to nearly triple by 2030. Florida especially is where the elderly homelessness population has dramatically increased because of outrageous rent and insurance hikes, runaway inflation and a deregulated system that bends the knee to "The Market."

So, make it a habit to monitor your elected officials' views on Social Security and Medicare. Let them know you want them to protect our earned benefits and not privatize any part of them. Remember: The next round of major elections is only two years away. Don't wait. Heed the warning signs and speak up today. 🐘



# How dare women go to college? DeSantis' new university trustee will fix it

by Frank Cerabino

All roads in Florida these days lead to blaming diversity, equity and inclusion for society's ills.

It's all about extending a hand up to we beleaguered white men, the real victims of discrimination, who have suffered mightily by failing to return Black people, women and LGBTQ+ folks back to the days of Ozzie and Harriet.

Thank you, Gov. Ron DeSantis, for feeling our pain. We white guys shall overcome DEI with your much-needed help.

Most recently, brother DeSantis reached out all the way to Idaho to find a white guy with the proper views on how women are ruining higher education and turning us men into what he calls "soy boys."

Florida's governor appointed Scott Yenor, a political science professor at Boise State University, which is conveniently located 2,273 miles from Pensacola, to sit on the board of trustees at the University of West Florida, a public state university.

Yenor frequently mouths off from his perch at the Claremont Institute, a right-wing think tank in California, where he has written fondly of DeSantis for fighting "cancerous DEI programs" in public universities.

"Florida's university system was beginning to rot from DEI sickness. Governor DeSantis has targeted the blight and occupied the moral high ground in defense of the American university," Yenor wrote in a Claremont Institute piece entitled "Making Woke-ism Die."

Yes, Gov. Ron, inject that fawning white lad into Florida's university system.

Yenor has zeroed in on the real problem of higher education: That it is populated by too many women who should be off making babies instead of advancing their careers and furthering the "personal and political evils of feminism."

Yenor goes as far as calling colleges and universities "the citadels of our gynecocracy" that further the "personal and political evils that flow from feminism."

He describes highly educated women as "more medicated, meddlesome and quarrelsome than women need to be."

And that by not encouraging women to seek marriage, childbirth and homemaking, we are ruining our country and robbing educational opportunities that need to be available for our cherished men.

"There is no way to go from an ethic of individual vanity in the service of fleeting beauty and middling feminine careerism to an ethic of self-sacrifice in the service of higher things," Yenor explained during a 2021 speech at the National Conservatism Conference.

Instead of higher education, women should be encouraged to marry quickly and start having babies before their eggs dry up, he said.

"Without connections to eternity delivered through their family, such medicated, quarrelsome and meddlesome women gain their meaning through the seeming participation in the global project. They are agents of the new world, but not new life ..."

"If we want a great nation, we should be preparing young women to be mothers, not finding every reason for women to delay

motherhood until they are established in a career or financially independent."

Meanwhile, higher education needs to focus on empowering men.

"Male achievement in our country is not celebrated, though males continue to be the highest achievers," Yenor said. "In fact, we go out of our way to stop celebrating it.

"Our feminist culture leads us to want less male achievement," he continued. "Their excellence, after all, creates inequities."

That needs to change, he said.

"If every Nobel Prize winner is a man, that's not a failure, it's kind of a cause for celebration," he said. "More successful men will mean more happy citizenry and a stronger nation."

And we're talking manly men here, ones looking to impregnate these happily uneducated women before they lose their primary value as birthing vessels.


"Perhaps mandatory gun training and promotion of wrestling and other acts of physical courage are necessary in our age of soy boys," Yenor continued.

Yes, Florida needs more wrestling! We have to take the chance, even though it may encourage the kind of man-on-man contact that can lead to unintentional soy-boying, if you know what I mean.

Thanks, Gov. DeSantis, you've outdone yourself once again, demonstrating bold leadership with ideals that embody a new century – maybe the last one.

*This op-ed was originally published in the Palm Beach Post on Jan. 15. See more at palmbeachpost.com. ✨*

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# How to plug in, fight back

## Groups on frontline of MAGA repression

by Joe Courter

We can't predict what the next months will bring, but there will no doubt be a need to mount both resistance to some of the changes being dictated to us, and support for those who are suffering the impact of these changes. With that in mind, here are three profiles provided to us by some of the groups on the frontline of the MAGA repression coming at us from both Washington and Tallahassee.

I expect we will have more to report on in the next Iguana in March; your input is welcome to suggest organizations that are doing the work that needs to be done. So plug in as you can, your labor, your dollars, and your voice as you communicate with friends. Resist dooming, keep hope alive.

### North Central Florida Indivisible

Join the movement for justice and democracy!

Urgent: We are working with urgency to support immigrant communities as they prepare for the threatened mass deportations and family separations. Please donate to this link to support the due process rights of those who may be impacted under the new administration. This fund will help secure release from detention while awaiting immigration hearings, ensuring family reunification and assuring access to legal representation:

<https://bit.ly/ImSFund>

At North Central Florida Indivisible, we create and support robust, transparent structures and procedures to enable the exercise of a just, equitable, and representative democracy. We work to decouple access and success from identifiers like race, religion, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. We work throughout North Central Florida, including the City of Gainesville, Alachua County, Putnam County, and Marion County. Join us or start an NCFI team in your town.

For over six years, NCFI has been a cornerstone of activism in this region. From Alachua to Putnam and Marion counties, our work has included:

**Environmental Justice:** Campaigning for energy democracy in Gainesville, combating energy burdens, and supporting clean energy initiatives. Fighting to

close the Florence dump in East Gainesville. Developing a Brownfields neighborhoodscoalition.

**Education Equity:** Tackling the school-to-prison pipeline, championing the teaching of whole unvarnished history.

**Immigrant Support:** Promoting language access and welcoming cities, and providing aid during crises like threatened deportations, or rising waves of violence.

**Defense of Democracy:** Registering voters, defending voting rights, advocating for changes in our electoral systems

Join Us!

If you're passionate about social justice and want to make a difference in North Central Florida, now is the time to get involved! Connect with us on Facebook to stay updated on upcoming events and meetings or email us at [NCFindivisible@gmail.com](mailto:NCFindivisible@gmail.com), or call us at 352-641-0095

Together, we can create a fairer, more equitable future.

### PFLAG

Never underestimate what one mother can accomplish.

Over 50 years ago, Jean Manford formed PFLAG after she marched in a New York City Gay Pride parade with her gay son. One mother started a PFLAG movement that has grown to more than 250,000 members and supporters in 500 chapters throughout the United States. It has become the nation's foremost family-based organization committed to work for the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) people.

PFLAG Gainesville is one of these important chapters. Our mission is to create a better future for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) youth and adults through a partnership of parents, allies and LGBTQ+ people.

Our mission has three active prongs:

### Support

PFLAG Gainesville hosts monthly support meetings geared toward preserving relationships within families when someone comes out as LGBTQ+. We facilitate resources and supportive connections for LGBTQ+ individuals whose families are not accepting.

### Education

We actively promote an inclusive society through participation in local community events and diverse educational opportunities, religious institutions and other organizations. We have excellent printed material that we provide at each occasion.

### Advocacy

We are a 501c3 organization, so we do not support candidates, but we speak loudly about our issues. No voice is more powerful or persuasive than that of a PFLAG member or supporter. As people who are LGBTQ+, their parents, families, friends and allies, we know firsthand the impact that discriminatory laws have on ourselves and our loved ones.

In December 2022 PFLAG Gainesville learned that the State of Florida had ordered Alachua County Public Schools (ACPS) to remove their LGBTQ+ Support Guide from the district website. In January 2023, we put together a coalition of over fifteen organizations and individuals to form the Inclusive Schools Committee. The goal was to work with the district to develop new a guide.

From the beginning the district was supportive but they had an overwhelming number of important issues on their plate. We felt that the safety of our students was also important. A key player was Ian Siljstrom of Equality Florida. He had worked with ACPS to develop the guide that had been removed so he joined the committee and led the charge to develop a new support guide to replace the original.

The work was slow going. There were new and vague laws to consider, so it took a year but the official Guide is once again on the district website. In March of 2024, PFLAG and Equality Florida held a parent's summit to introduce and explain the guide as well as answer questions. The Inclusive Schools Committee is now prepared to see that the guide is implemented throughout every level of the district.

Additionally, PFLAG has taken the lead in addressing books that have been challenged – those that someone has requested be removed from our schools. Our goal is to ensure that a variety of age-appropriate inclusive books be available to all students in ACPS. As it has always been, parents can easily control what their child

reads. PFLAG will continue to review book challenges and address them as they arise.

As you can see, PFLAG Gainesville is busy. There is much to do to support those who are at greatest risk in our community. We hold support meetings at 7pm on the second Tuesday of each month, held at the Pride Center of North Central Florida, 3850 NW 83rd St. Unit 201, 32606. We hope you'll join us. Learn more about us at [www.pflaggainesville.org](http://www.pflaggainesville.org).

### Southern Legal Counsel Inc.

Southern Legal Counsel, Inc. (SLC) is a Gainesville, Fla.-based statewide not-for-profit public interest law firm committed to the ideal of equal justice for all and the attainment of basic human and civil rights. SLC primarily assists individuals and groups who otherwise would not have access to the justice system and whose cases have the potential to bring about systemic reform.

SLC uses a range of strategies to achieve its goals, including litigation, policy advocacy, and training and technical assistance. Their Decriminalizing Poverty Project and Transgender Rights Initiative, as well as their advocacy in the areas of children's rights, healthcare access and civil rights, impact thousands of Floridians each year. SLC protects and defends the rights of Floridians who are being persecuted for struggling to survive outdoors, LGBTQ+ Floridians who are under attack by their own government, and children with disabilities who are being treated as troublemakers instead of kids in need of extra support.

SLC's small, highly effective team of attorneys are the voice for these vulnerable groups in the legal system and their guide to understanding their rights. SLC does not provide legal assis-

tance for individual cases involving foreclosure, family law and immigration, which are often handled by other legal aid organizations. However, thanks to new grant funding from Funding Florida Legal Aid, SLC is now taking on cases involving housing discrimination, residential rent and security deposit disputes, consumer fraud, and public assistance. If you are interested in supporting their work as a volunteer, pro bono attorney or donor, visit [southernlegal.org](http://southernlegal.org) or call (352) 271-8890. ☼

## Sacred Springs Stories

Thursday, Feb. 6, 7-9 pm

Springs Welcome Center (Florida Springs Institute)

18645 High Springs Main Street, High Springs

Free admission – everyone invited

Science alone cannot solve the problems that plague Florida's freshwater springs. To create effective solutions, we need to examine the human dimension of our water problems. At "Sacred Springs Stories," area artists, writers and academics will begin that examination by sharing stories about sacred springs they have visited in other countries. Those stories will reveal how people in different cultures define their relationships with water.

Participants include springs defenders Margaret Ross Tolbert, Joon Thomas, Wendy-Lin Bartels, Victoria Machado, Johnny Dame, Steven Earl and Lucinda Faulkner Merritt.

The event is sponsored by the Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute/Springs Welcome Center and Rights of Water – ROW. For information, see <https://belovedblueriver.org/sacred-springs-stories/> or call 386-454-0415. ☼



ALACHUA  
CONSERVATION  
T R U S T

## Conservation Stewards Awards on March 15

Join Alachua Conservation Trust on Saturday, March 15, from 5-9 pm for the Annual Conservation Stewards Awards at Prairie Creek Lodge.

This event honors individuals in our community who are influential in a wide variety of ways —the arts, historic preservation, and particularly, in protecting our wildlife and natural resources. Past Conservation Stewards Awards have been some of the largest gatherings of community leaders and supporters of wild Florida in the region.

The 2025 CSA honorees will be Freddie Johnson and The Greene Family of Lake City.

Visit [www.AlachuaConservationTrust.org/2025csa](http://www.AlachuaConservationTrust.org/2025csa) for additional event info and to purchase tickets.

The event will include dinner, drinks and a musical performance. Tickets for this event will go on sale by Feb. 1. All funds from the event will support Alachua Conservation Trust's work towards land conservation.

As Florida's biggest conservation event of the year, you won't want to miss it. ☼



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# Recommended blogs / web sites



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or listen at:  
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Mon - Fri, 8am and 1pm



## Letters from an American

One of the smartest daily reads out there.  
Great analysis and observations from a historian.  
No BS, no hype. Read it.

[heathercoxrichardson.substack.com](http://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com)

**Robert Reich** writes at [robertreich.substack.com](http://robertreich.substack.com). He is a professor of public policy at Berkeley and served as Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration. He writes a daily newsletter "not just to inform (and occasionally amuse)



you, but also to arm you with the truth — about how the system works and doesn't, where the power is located and where it's lacking, and the myths and lies used by those who are blocking positive social change."

## Belle of the Ranch

(formerly Beau of the Fifth Column)

Beau has stepped away from personally doing his commentaries and his wife has taken them over. Her softer presentation conveys great information and analysis on the turbulent times we are in. The available online archive is a valuable resource of Beau's prior programs regarding politics, foreign policy and human rights.



Check them out at:

[youtube.com/c/BeauoftheFifthColumn](https://youtube.com/c/BeauoftheFifthColumn)

## The Point

Daily Roundup from WUFT News

WUFT at the University of Florida has created a portal to news that comes to your email box five days a week. It has items from multiple sources to click on for local, regional, and national coverage. It is useful and free. Go to [WUFT.org/theptpoint](http://WUFT.org/theptpoint) and enter your email.

## Today's Edition Newsletter

### Robert Hubbell

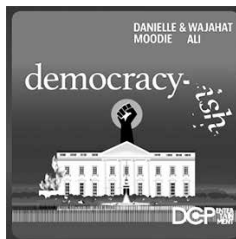


Citizen. Optimist. Realist.  
[roberthubbell@substack.com](mailto:roberthubbell@substack.com)

Robert B. Hubbell is a former lawyer who writes about current political issues and policies. He is the author of Today's Edition, a daily newsletter emailed for free on Substack with as many as 80,000 readers.

## Florida Phoenix

FloridaPhoenix.com is a free, nonprofit news site that covers Florida government and politics with a mix of in-depth stories, briefs, and social media updates on the latest events, editorial cartoons, and progressive commentary. Many stories focus on emerging innovative ideas or report on the people who are trying to help solve problems and shift policy for a more compassionate world.



In a series of videos and shorts, Danielle Moodie and Wajahat Ali of Democracy-ish discuss how we can achieve a multiracial democracy, cover the ground left behind by mainstream media, and seek to make sense out of the nonsense. Check them out on YouTube:

<https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2122>

# Editors' picks: News that didn't fit

## 2024 in review: Strikes and organizing score gains, but storm clouds loom

by *Jenny Brown ~ Labor Notes ~ Dec. 18 ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana2132](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2132)*

Labor Notes reports both good and bad news from this past year. Workers gained ground including service workers in the private sector who saw a 6 percent real wage increase for the year, strikes were easier to maintain because of unemployment rates of around 4 percent, and several groups won significant raises. On the other hand, working conditions are “often abominable” and weak labor laws and safety enforcement are “on Trump’s chopping block.”

## 2025: Keep democracy alive. Our New Year’s Resolutions

### (Advice for defeating the authoritarian threat)

by *George Lakoff and Gil Duran ~ FrameLab ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana2131](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2131)*

FrameLab goes into detail over resolutions for the new year: be brave, cultivate empathy, stay focused, be proactive, foster real connections, avoid brain rot and lies, share a positive message when possible, demand accountability, engage young people, don’t help Trump, don’t argue with his supporters, remember: this is a regime, learn from history, support artists and the arts, take care of yourself, celebrate victories, and persist!

## ACLU responds to election of Donald Trump

by *ACLU ~ Nov. 6 ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana2098](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2098)*

“At the ACLU, we’re clear-eyed about the chaos and destruction a second Trump administration will cause to our nation. That’s why we’re done with handwringing, admiring the problem, or waiting anxiously to see which unlawful action President-elect Trump will take on Day One. We are ready to take action the minute Trump takes the oath of office.”

## Family of Malcolm X files \$100M lawsuit, alleges FBI, CIA, NYPD had a role in murder

by *Grace Hills | Florida Phoenix | Nov. 19 | <https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2140>*

Malcom X’s family’s legal team has uncovered new evidence detailing nine causes of action against the Department of Justice, FBI, CIA and the New York Police Department, saying they played a “significant role” in events leading to Malcolm X’s assassination, and that they engaged in a decades-long coverup.

## Hegseth confirmation hearing as a lens for 2026 and beyond

by *Robert B. Hubbell ~ Today’s Edition Newsletter ~ Jan. 15 ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana2133](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2133)*

It appears that a nominee, Pete Hegseth, credibly accused of sexual abuse and who opposes women in combat roles in the military will be confirmed as Secretary of Defense. He is “manifestly unfit and morally unqualified to lead the U.S. military.” Find out why.

## How labor can fight back against Trump’s mass deportation agenda

by *Natascha Elena Uhlmann and Sarah Lazare ~ Labor Notes ~ Jan. 16 ~ [tinyurl.com/Iguana2136](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2136)*

It is a frightening time for immigrant workers with the president-elect running on the slogan “mass deportations now,” and many Democrats who have moved to the right on immigrant rights. Unions, however have been working on a robust defense using direct action, political action and negotiating protections into union contracts.

## In blow to Open Internet, Federal appeals strikes down Biden FCC’s Net Neutrality Rules

by *Julia Conley ~ Common Dreams ~ Jan. 2 ~ <https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2137>*

The ruling creates a “dangerous regulatory gap that leaves consumers vulnerable and gives broadband providers unchecked power over Americans’ internet access,” said one advocate.

## The Coming Fires

by *David Rovics ~ Counterpunch ~ Jan. 13 ~ <https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2139>*

The horrific Los Angeles Fires send a message to the entire country: “As terrible as the ongoing burning of LA continues to be, if we don’t radically change course as a society, the future is absolutely guaranteed to be astronomically worse.” Fire insurance will continue to be more expensive, or not available at all. The cost of buying or renting becomes more expensive and people will move away from urban centers into more fire-prone rural areas. “It could all be radically different, but then we’d have to first collectively acknowledge that there’s such a thing as society, and that we need to live in a country that makes policies accordingly.”

## These nine laws went into effect on Jan. 1

by *Jackie Llanos and Christine Sexton ~ Florida Phoenix ~ Dec. 31 ~ <https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2138>*

Several new Florida laws went into effect on New Year’s Day. This article gives details on each one: online protections for minors, voter registration applications, Impeding first responders, Medical treatment under workers’ comp law, Protection of specified adults, Private activity bonds, dental insurance claims, and the Florida Uniform Fiduciary Income and Principal Act. 🐸



**SCAN ME**  
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**From CARTER, p. 1**

knowledge the humanity of those who don't look like them or love like them or vote like them, or move beyond their dream of an imagined past when men were men, women were ladies, and people of color knew their place.

Jimmy Carter, like many white Southerners, was the descendant of dirt farmers, Confederate soldiers, and plantation owners.

Also like many white Southerners, Jimmy Carter had Black kin, most notably Motown Records founder Berry Gordy, his third cousin: Gordy and Carter shared a great-grandfather in James Thomas Gordy, who had a child with an enslaved woman named Esther Johnson.

Unlike most white Southerners of his vintage would have been, Carter was relaxed about it.

Plenty of white folks have Black cousins, though these days the likes of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and top Trump adviser Stephen Miller are determined to play down systemic racism and define "American" as white.

Carter saw slavery as an abomination and Jim Crow a curse on the land, but recognized that the richness of American music, literature, language, and art grew out of its mix of the European, Native, and African.

He and Berry Gordy called each other "cuz."

**Progressive Christian**

Carter may have been a peanut farmer, Navy man, and straight-arrow Baptist deacon famously ridiculed during his presidential campaign for confessing to committing "adultery many times in my heart," but he was also a seriously cool guy.

He didn't have a problem with gay marriage, pointing out that Jesus never said a word about homosexuality. He promoted women's rights, appointing twice as many minority and women jurists to the federal bench as all his White House predecessors combined.

Sixteen years before Hillary Clinton made it clear to freaked-out traditionalists that she was not the kind of First Lady who'd devote herself to giving teas in the Red Room, Jimmy Carter established a White House office for his wife Rosalynn: He regarded her as "an equal partner in everything."

He quit the Southern Baptist Convention because it wouldn't allow women to be ministers, explaining his decision in an essay titled "Losing My Religion for Equality."

Invoking the Georgia band R.E.M. was not accidental.

Jimmy Carter loved musicians, hosting gospel concerts, jazz men (and women), country music stars, and R&B bands at the White House.

He was friends with Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash, Jimmy Buffet, and the Allman Brothers, who raised money for his campaign and helped him win young people's votes.

In Florida filmmaker Mary Wharton's superb documentary, "Jimmy Carter, Rock & Roll President," an amused Carter recounts how his son smoked weed with Willie Nelson on the White House roof.

**Human rights**

Carter's four years in Washington and subsequent 45-year career working for human rights and free and fair elections across the world exemplify what our politics could have been like if we were less in thrall to big money, less fearful, and less selfish.

Despite the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, the Civil Rights Movement, the election of Barack Obama, and other encouraging but too often timid attempts to cure intolerance and racism, the vision of an America for all is still unrealized.

Carter tried: After he was elected governor of Georgia in 1970, he stood on the state capitol steps and declared, "The time for racial discrimination is over."

"No poor, rural, weak, or Black person should ever have to bear the additional burden of being deprived of the opportunity of an education, a job, or simple justice."

There was applause, but outrage, too. Georgia was still the state of Lester Maddox, who was Carter's predecessor as governor and also served lieutenant gov-

ernor. Maddox famously refused entry to three Black seminary students trying to integrate his chicken restaurant, threatening them with a pickaxe handle.

Carter was not a saint, however: he was a politician. In 1970 he told Vernon Jordan, then director of the United Negro College Fund, "You won't like my campaign, but you will like my administration."

Carter courted the white rural vote, avoided making promises to Black people or talking about civil rights, and sought the endorsement of George Wallace.

But by the time he became president, Carter had ditched the politics of the Confederacy and tried his best to make America a leader in social justice, women's rights, and anti-racism.

**Grace**

In the end, it didn't work.

Although he negotiated the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel, normalized ties with China, created the Departments of Energy and Education, and negotiated the return of the Panama Canal to Panama, vastly improving U.S. relations with Latin America, he stumbled over high energy prices, inflation, and the hostage crisis.

In 1980, he lost to the shiny, shallow Ronald Reagan who, in defiance of demonstrable reality, promised sunshine and rainbows.

The hostage crisis killed Carter's reelection bid. Now we know that the Republicans, ever masters of dirty tricks, colluded with Iran to help engineer his election loss.

John Connally, Richard Nixon's secretary of the treasury, Ben Barnes, a Republican politician from Texas, and others almost certainly cut a secret deal with Iran to hold those 53 Americans until after the election.

**Carter: A good man, an imperfect record**

All the praise for Jimmy Carter, an undeniably good man, needs to be balanced with the fact that he made some dreadful foreign policy decisions. Carter followed US policy in open support of the Shah of Iran, a dictator the US helped install after a CIA overthrow of the elected government of Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953. When the Shah was overthrown in 1979, the US gave him shelter. The rise of Muslim fundamentalism followed and began to spread in the region. Carter and his national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski used US weapons, money, and agents to instigate Islamic rebellion in Afghanistan starting July, 1979, to "give the Russians their own Vietnam," provoking Kremlin military intervention that December. Their policy continued under Reagan, and from that jihadism has expanded to the troubles we see in many countries. Carter also continued the Ford/Kissinger practice of sending arms to Indonesia, which had perpetrated a massacre in East Timor in 1975 and brutally occupied the smaller nation all during his presidency and beyond. So, yes, a good man, but with an imperfect record. 🐾



Carter left Washington with the same grace he entered it and went on to live a life of service, dedicating himself to building houses for the poor, eradicating diseases such as river blindness and guinea worm, and, as he put it, “waging peace.”

It’s painful to contrast the promise of his administration with where we are now: a convicted felon president-elect who’s been adjudicated to have committed sexual assault,

### **From HAVEN, p. 1**

or how every part of me shattered – and remained unfixable – for years.

I did move into a DV shelter, where they helped me file an injunction, a police report, held my hand in the emergency room through the SA examination, and even testified on my behalf.

When he disappeared with my son for two and half years, they were steadfast in their resolve to help me find him, supporting me as I contacted every attorney in the area on the Bar’s website, as I studied the entire chapter of statutes pertaining to child custody, and through my subsequent move to Gainesville to start over. I had years of emotional and physical recovery from the injuries I sustained, and started seeing where the holes in our justice system were firsthand in this area of law.

Fast forward, recently, I ran for office, and met so many with similar stories. One woman, let’s call her Jennifer, cried at one of our events because — according to her — “no one tells our stories, no one knows what it’s like, and because of that .... no one changes anything.”

I carry her face, her story, along with my own and others, in those hallways. I also carry my children’s faces with me — because they, too, deserve justice, a future free of violence, a future that protects them should they ever be forced to need it.

So I wrote The HAVEN Act (“Helping Abuse Victims Escape Now”). It’s currently filed with bipartisan support in both chambers (HB-19 and SB-240). I’ve shared coffee, hugs, and tears with many of the legislators I’ve met with and work with now, and I’m encouraged by the conversation we’re having to ensure victims have a chance to become survivors.

HAVEN is a critical and common-sense piece of legislation that has already garnered large support across the state. Statistically, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men will experience domestic violence. Twenty percent of homicides are attributed to it. Five million kids

determined not to build but destroy, threatening to dismantle the Department of Education, jail political opponents, strong-arm NATO allies, abandon the fight for freedom in Ukraine, roll back green energy policies, and somehow requisition the Panama Canal.

To think that Florida, once a progressive Southern state that helped propel Carter to the White House, has now turned its back on everything that Carter, Graham,

witness it every year, and one in three of those will become victims themselves. The FDLE’s Uniform Crime Report stated that in 2020, the most recently reported year, Florida saw over 106,615 cases.

First, HAVEN aims to make the definitions of “dating violence” and “domestic violence” statutorily congruent. The latter charge applies when two people live together, share a child, or are blood related. Making the two weigh the same can go a long way for holding abusers accountable and ensuring justice for the victim regardless of co-habitation status.

The second objective of the HAVEN Act is expanding who can apply for the AG’s Domestic Violence Address Confidentiality program, to include victims of dating violence. We also included clarifying language to ensure victims of stalking are also eligible.

Finally, HAVEN creates a coordinating council under the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) that, along with other responsibilities, is responsible for creating a website that allows victims a direct means to discreetly notify police, and see a response, before their abuser knows they’ve been contacted. With real-time data sharing to the police, and added layers of security, this piece could save thousands of lives by eliminating — or directly reducing — exit violence.

Just like many subscription services, a victim would go online to the site and fill out their information, along with a numeric code or a code word/phrase that they could naturally integrate into their speech. Once they press “submit,” that information is then sent to police databases and the site spits out a phone number for victims to save into their phone.

It could be saved as “Dad,” “Aunt Mary,” or whatever else. When they’re ready-meaning, they’ve picked their kids up from school, or their bags are packed, or even without notice at all, when things begin to boil, victims call that number and — if they can’t speak — they dial that pin number, or they use that code word/

Askew, Pepper, and Collins stood for.

America is walking backward into what looks like a dark future.

It’s sadly fitting that he, one of the best people in American politics, died just before the presidency falls into the hands of one of the worst.

*This article was originally published by the Florida Phoenix on Jan. 6. See more at [floridaphoenix.com](http://floridaphoenix.com). 🌟*

phrase. That triggers a response from dispatch and police are sent to the location (or wherever the phone is), thus eliminating the need to tell the abuser you’re leaving until safely with police.

This system is unique and critical for a few reasons — if an abuser takes your phone mid-text, you’re texting “Aunt Mary” at a 352-365-XXXX/whatever number; the same is true if they check the call history.

There’s an opportunity to prevent continual escalation if the abuser doesn’t see 911 dialed in. If everyone had one number to text or call, it would present the exact same dangers as calling or texting in to 911; the abuser would likely know the number and react accordingly. This system gives the gift of time and security until police can arrive, so victims don’t have to fight to leave like I did, and so abusers don’t have time to escalate and boil over like mine did.

This bill has been assigned to two subcommittees before going before one big committee, and we’re already underway in committee weeks. I hope that our legislators will see beyond just the words on paper and see in their minds stories like mine, see the faces of those that could be saved by this; imagine the relief of a victim who now knows there IS a way out, and the relief they would feel when they open the door to see safety just beyond the threshold.

By ensuring accountability for dating violence and domestic violence, expanding the Address Confidentiality Program, and creating the site, I’m hopeful that we can begin a new conversation, a new path forward, a new chapter for survivors to embark on. We can make a powerful stand and statement that abuse will not be tolerated, and that we — as a society — are committed to providing safety and support to our neighbors and our constituents. This is a big bold step toward eliminating exit danger from victims of domestic violence, but I know it’s a step that we can take, and if we can save even one life by doing so — and potentially thousands—we have to take it. 🌟

# Gainesville area events

## WEEK OF JAN 19-25

### WED 1/22

**Zora Neale Hurston** panel talk, 6pm, Inst. for Black Culture (1510 W Univ Ave), free; afrofuturismweek.org

### THU 1/23

**Serling@100: Twilight Zone Marathon**, 11am-11pm, UF Reitz Union Atrium (655 Reitz Union Dr), historic tv episodes, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9137

### FRI 1/24

**Afrofuturism Exhibit** closing reception, 6-9pm, Gvl Fine Arts Ass'n Gallery (1314 S Main St), \$?; afrofuturismweek.org

**Mary Gauthier**, 6-7pm, The Lynx Books (601 S Main St), author of *Saved by a Song*, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9138

**"Furious Joy"**, 7-10pm, Gvl Fine Arts Ass'n Gallery (1314 S Main St), \$?; tinyurl.com/iguana9139

**"BKLYN: The Musical"**, 8-9:30pm (through 2/9), Star Center Theatre (11 NE 23rd Ave), \$12-20; starcentertheatre.org

**"Complete Works of W Shakespeare (Abridged) (Revised)(Again)"** opens, 8pm (through 2/16), Hipp Theatre (25 SE 2nd Pl), pastiche of all WS plays, \$55; thehipp.org

**"20th Century Blues"**, 8 pm, Gvl Community Playhouse (4039 NW 16th Blvd), women facing life together, \$12-24; tinyurl.com/iguana9140

### SAT 1/25

**Hoggetowne Medieval Faire**, 10am-6pm (also 1/26), Depot Park (874 SE 4th St), free; see pg 15 & hoggetownemedfaire.com

**"Riding the 33rd Parallel"**, 11am-1pm, Harn Museum (3529 Hull Rd), photography + dance, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9141

**Bearers of Hope Award**, 1-3pm, Cotton Club Museum (837 SE 7th Ave), honoring followers of ML King tradition; tickets at tinyurl.com/iguana9142

**Lee Hunter & Joey Kerr**, 7:30-9:30pm, Theatre of Memory (1705 NE 6th St), fine folkies, \$21.50; tinyurl.com/iguana9143

## WEEK OF JAN 26-FEB 1

### SUN 1/26

**Gvl Record Fair**, noon-5pm, Cypress & Grove (1001 NW 4th St), 20+ vendors, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9144

### MON 1/27

**Homelessness Town Hall Meeting**, 10-11:30am, Alachua County Community Support Services auditorium (218 SE 24th St), held by Task Force for Ending Homelessness for 5-county area

### TUE 1/28

**Florence Landfill** on County Commission agenda, 4pm, County Admin Bldg Durrance Auditorium (12 SE 1st St), closure requested by Sierra Club; tinyurl.com/iguana9145

**Afrofuturist Films** watch party, 6pm, SFC Blount Ctr Room DB 109, 3 films + panel with filmmakers; afrofuturismweek.org

**Alachua County Labor Coalition** meets, 6pm, Emmanuel Mennonite Church (1236 NW 18th Ave), w/ sendoff for Dr. Chad Hood; laborcoalition.org

### WED 1/29

**State of the City** address, 10 am (also live on Facebook), Cade Museum (811 S Main St), Gvl Mayor Harvey Ward's report, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9146

**The Sound of Music**, 7:30pm, UF Phillips Ctr (3201 Hull Rd), youth edition via Star Center Theatre, \$12-18; tinyurl.com/iguana9147

### THU 1/30

**Globalization** talk, 5:30pm, UF Pugh Hall Ocora (296 Buckman Dr), Prof. Nita Rudra, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9148

**Art After Dark Afrofuturism celebration**, 6-9pm, Harn Museum (3259 Hull Rd), w/ talk, fashion, music; afrofuturismweek.org

### FRI 1/31

**Queering Conversation** series launches, 6:15pm, Pride Ctr (3850 NW 83rd Blvd), LGBTQIA film & discussion (minors must be accompanied by caregiver), free; gainesvillepride.org

**Artwalk**, 7-10pm, downtown Gvl, free; pg 6 & artwalkgainessville.com

**"10 Minute Musicals"**, 7:30pm, SFC Sasser Fine Arts Hall (3000 NW 83rd St), 6 Broadway songs, \$10-16 (free for SFC students/staff); tinyurl.com/iguana9149

**Indie Rock**, 8-10:30pm, Heartwood Soundstage (619 S Main St), Hotel Fiction, The Nancys, Jordan Burchel, \$18; see pg 6 & tinyurl.com/iguana9150

**Homelessness Town Hall Meeting**, 10-11:30am, Freedom Community Ctr (7340 NW 41st Lane), held by Task Force for Ending Homelessness for 5-county area

### SAT 2/1

**Living History**, 9:30am-1:30pm (1st Sats through 5/3), Morningside Nature Ctr (3540 E Univ Ave), historical farm life, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9151

**Sunshine State Book Festival**, 10am-4pm (writing workshop 1/31), Best Western Gateway Grande (4200 NW 97th Blvd), authors & workshops, keynote Cynthia Barnett 1-2pm, free; see pg 6 & sunshinestatebookfestival.com

**2025 Flatwoods Fire & Nature Festival**, 10am-5pm, UF Austin Carey Forest (10625 NE Waldo Rd), family activities, exhibits, prescribed burn demos, food trucks, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9152

**Springs Run 7.2K**, 11am-1pm, 1st Magnitude Brewing (1220 SE Veitch St), 7.2K & 1K runs fundraising for Fla Springs Inst, \$45/\$10; tinyurl.com/iguana9153

**"Hats"** exhibition, 6:30-10pm, A. Quinn Jones Museum (1013 NW 7th Ave), art exhibit plus live jazz and Smooth Flava dance, free; https://tinyurl.com/iguana9154

**José Valentino & Charlton Singleton**, 7 & 9pm, Phillips Ctr (3201 Hull Rd), Latin jazz stars, \$55 & \$35 (\$12 UF students); tinyurl.com/iguana9155

## WEEK OF FEB 2-8

### SUN 2/2

**"020 - The Path to Connection"** screening, 1-2pm, Hogtown Creek Headwaters Nature Ctr (1500 NW 45th Ave), documentary on Fla Wildlife Corridor, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9156

**"Doubt - A Parable"** final performance, 2pm, Acrosstown Repertory Theatre (3501 SW 2nd Ave), play of religion & sexual abuse, \$20-25; acrosstown.org

**Weeds of Eden**, 2pm, Rum 138 (2070 SW County Rd 138, Ft White), quirky-folky music, free; rum138.com

### TUE 2/4

**"2024 & Beyond"**, 8am-4pm, Emerson Hall (1928 W Univ Ave), campaigning insights, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9157

### WED 2/5

**"The Struggle from Below: Democracy & Civil Society in the Age of Backsliding"**, 9am-5pm (2/5-7), UF Reitz Union (655 Reitz Union Dr), conference on democracy around world, RSVP required; tinyurl.com/iguana9180

**Volunteer Fair**, 11am-2pm, UF Reitz Union North Lawn (655 Reitz Union Dr), >50 local organizations seeking student volunteers; tinyurl.com/iguana9159

### THU 2/6

**Climate Communication Summit**, 2-4pm, UF Reitz Union Aud (655 Reitz Union Dr), free; tinyurl.com/iguana9160

**"Sacred Springs Stories"**, 7-9pm, High Springs Welcome Ctr (18645 Main St, High Springs), authors & speakers on humans, earth & water, free; see pg 21 & tinyurl.com/iguana9161

### FRI 2/7

**Clubes de Escucha**, 6-8pm, Curia on the Drag (2029 NW 6th St), primer y tercer Viernes de cada mes; clubesdeescucha.com

**"MacBeth"**, 7:30pm (through 2/16), UF Black Box Theatre (1800 McCarty Dr), Shakespeare classic, \$20 (\$15 UF student/faculty); tinyurl.com/iguana9162

**Edward White Quintet**, 7:30pm, SFC Sasser Fine Arts Hall (3000 NW 83rd St), jazz, \$10-16 (free for SFC students/staff); tinyurl.com/iguana9163

**"Calming the Man"** opens, 8pm (through 2/9), Acrosstown Repertory Theatre (3501 SW 2nd Ave), play of family in Greenville, SC, \$20-25; acrosstown.org

### SAT 2/8

**"The Other Book: Black History/Enslavement in Alachua County"**, 10am-noon, UF Harn Museum (3259 Hull Rd), local history classes 2nd Sats Jan-April at 4 locations, \$5 per class requested; tinyurl.com/iguana9164

## WEEK OF FEB 9-15

### TUE 2/11

**PFLAG** meeting, 7pm, Pride Ctr (3850 NW 83rd St, Ste 201), parents & friends of lesbians and gays; gainesvillepride.org

### WED 2/12

**Brennan**, 8pm, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), formerly of Bear and the Lady, \$10

### THU 2/13

**Artist Meetup**, 5:30-7pm, Gvl Fine Arts Ass'n Gallery (1314 S Main St), all artists & public welcome, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9165

**Birds of Caribbean & Central America**, 6:45pm, Cypress & Grove (1001 NW 4th St); see pg 11 & tinyurl.com/iguana9166

### SAT 2/15

**Pints & Predators**, 10am-3pm, 1st Magnitude Brewing (1220 SE Veitch St), wildlife rehab fundraiser w/ birds, bats, more, \$12 (\$5 ages 1-12); tinyurl.com/iguana9167

**Ben Cosgrove**, 7:30-9:30pm, Theatre of Memory (1705 NE 6th St), land & environment in music, \$21.50; tinyurl.com/iguana9168

**Gvl Free Store**, noon-6pm, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), free stuff for all (masks required); civicmediacenter.org

**Celebration of Black Love, Art & Poetry**, 6-8:30pm, BLAAC (530 W Univ Ave), art, poets, open mic, food, free; tinyurl.com/iguana-9169

## WEEK OF FEB 16-22

### SUN 2/16

**Sunday Assembly**, 11am, Pride Ctr (3850 NW 83rd St, Ste 201), speaker tba, free; sagainesville.weebly.com

**Susan B. Anthony Birthday Celebration**, 3-5pm, Cotton Club Museum (837 SE 7th Ave), music, cake, & brief talk on Fannie Lou Hamer, \$5 & RSVP requested; see pg 8 & fosba.com

### THU 2/20

**Banned Books Book Club**, 6-7pm, The Lynx Books (601 S Main St), on Stephen Chbosky's *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9170

**Deven Kay & Tiny Stills** in concert, time tba, How Bazar (60 SW 2nd St); thehowbazar.com

### FRI 2/21

**"4th Light Project"**, 7:30pm, UF Phillips Ctr (3201 Hull Rd), multi-media based on ancient Iranian poetry, \$25-45 (UF students \$12); tinyurl.com/iguana9171

### SAT 2/22

**Great Invader Raider Rally 2025: Evolution**, 9am-1pm, Morningside Nature Ctr (3540 E Univ Ave), celebrating year-round invasive plant removal, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9172

**Gvl Free Store**, noon-6pm on 3rd Saturdays, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), free stuff for all (masks required); civicmediacenter.org

**Step Show/Stroll**, noon-3pm, Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E Univ Ave), Black Greek & youth groups dance, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9173

**Swamp Fest 17**, noon-11pm, Swamp Head Brewery (3650 SW 42nd Ave), music, food, & beer; free; tinyurl.com/iguana9174

## WEEK OF FEB 23-MAR 1

### SUN 2/23

**"Onramps to a New Civil Society"**, 2pm, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), author David Vaina on mutual aid, free; see pg 2

### WED 2/26

**Virtual Open House**, 6pm, online, Fla School of Traditional Midwifery 3-Year Direct-Entry program intro, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9175

### THU 2/27

**Sunshine Music & Arts Festival**, 5pm, Heartwood Soundstage (619 S Main St), 6 music acts + massive art market, \$10-30; tinyurl.com/iguana9176 & pg 7

**Fla Abolitionist Gathering**, 5pm, Heartwood Soundstage (619 S Main St), 6-10pm (also all day 2/28-3/3), Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St); fagathering.noblogs.org

### FRI 2/28

**Artwalk**, 7-10pm, downtown Gvl, free; pg 6 & artwalkgainesville.com

**Derek Gripper**, 7-9:30pm, Thomas Ctr (306 NE 6th Ave), classic/African guitar, \$20[adv]-25; tinyurl.com/iguana9177

## WEEK OF MAR 2-8

### MON 3/3

**Submission deadline** for 2025 Survivors of Violence Art Exhibit, online, for display at Harn Museum April 1-30; contact 352-262-7748 or camoore@alachuacounty.us

### TUE 3/4

**"The Book of Mormon"**, 7:30pm (also 3/5), UF Phillips Ctr (3201 Hull Rd), sacrilegious musical, \$59-119 (UF students \$30); tinyurl.com/iguana9178

### FRI 3/7

**"The Importance of Being Earnest"**, 7:30pm (through 3/14), UF Constans Theatre (1800 McCarty Dr), Oscar Wilde comedy classic, \$20 (UF students/faculty \$15); tinyurl.com/iguana9179

## RECURRING EVENTS

**Monday Farmers Market**, 4-8pm: Cypress & Grove

**Saturday Farmers Market**, 8:30-noon, 5920 NW 13th St

**Thursday evening Poetry Jam**, 8pm at Civic Media Center

**Civic Media Center volunteer meetings**, 1st & 3rd Wednesday, at CMC (433 S Main St) & Zoom

**Live Community Music**, Wednesdays, 8pm Heartwood Soundstage inside & out

**Public Astronomy Night**, 8:30-10pm Fridays when fall/spring semester classes in session, SFC Campus Teaching Observatory (see link for map), free; tinyurl.com/iguana9054

**Democratic Women's Club** meets 3rd Mondays, 11:30am (except Dec & Jan), B'Nai Israel (3830 NW 16th Blvd); gvilledoris@hotmail.com

**Clubes de Escucha**, 6-8pm, Curia on the Drag (2029 NW 6th St), primer y tercer Viernes de cada mes; clubesdeescucha.com

**PFLAG** meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7pm at the Pride Center, 3850 NW 83rd St, second floor.

**Food Pantry**, Tue/Wed/Fri 10am-4pm Mon/Thu 12-4pm, UF HealthStreet (2401 SW Archer Rd), free, best choice available Mons & Thurs (health interview requested for repeat membership); 352-294-4880 & facebook.com/UFHealthStreet

**Artist Meetup**, 5:30-7pm 2nd Thurs, Gvl Fine Arts Ass'n (1314 S Main St), exhibit & conversation, free; gainesvillefinearts.org

**Jazz on Main St**, 7-10pm on 3rd Thursdays, Gainesville Fine Arts Ass'n (1314 S Main St), free; gainesvillefinearts.org

**Basement Sessions**, 7pm, The Hipp Basement (25 SE 2nd Pl), mostly jazz, \$10 sliding scale; thehipp.org/events

## GAINESVILLE OPEN MICS

Gainesville is a talent-rich town, and open mics are a great way to have an evening of varied entertainment out of the house. Here is a list of open mics for a variety of music and other entertainment. Also, of course, for you performer-types to go perform at. Each have their own character.

**The Bull**: Monday, 7pm, sign up at 6:30pm

**Mai Kai**: Monday, 8:30pm, sign up at 8pm

**"The Reverend Angel Dust's Tabernacle of Hedonism Hosted by Tom Miller"** at the University Club (UC): Every Monday (until December), 10:30pm, sign up at 9

**How Bazar**: 3rd Wednesday of the month, 8-10pm, DM to sign up

**Satchels**: first Wednesday of the month, 6-9pm, sign up at 5:30pm

**"Front Street" at Boca Backyard**: 4th Wednesday of the month. 7:30-11pm

**Swamp Head Brewery**: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7-9pm, sign up at 6:30pm

**The Midnight**: every Tuesday, 8pm-?, sign up at 7:30

## OTHER CALENDARS

Please support GNV live music venues, they all have calendars: Heartwood Soundstage, Satchel's, Loosey's, Boca, Backyard, the Woolly, Wormhole, One Love Café, Cypress & Grove, etc.

See [visitgainesville.com/events](http://visitgainesville.com/events) for an event list, updated Thursdays; also try [352arts.org](http://352arts.org); and don't forget [civicmediacenter.org](http://civicmediacenter.org)!

More than we can list each month at The Lynx: [thelynxbooks.com/events](http://thelynxbooks.com/events) 🐢



# Iguana Directory

Call 352-378-5655 or email [gainesvilleiguana@cox.net](mailto:gainesvilleiguana@cox.net) with updates and additions

**Readers:** If there is inaccurate information here, let us know. If you are connected to an organization listed here, please check and update your listing so others can be accurately informed. Readers should confirm times of meetings with individual organizations.

**Alachua Audubon Society's** mission is to foster appreciation and knowledge of birds and other native wildlife, to protect and restore wildlife populations and their habitats, and to promote sustainable use of natural resources. We offer free birding field trips open to all, college internships, birding for kids, conservation activism, volunteer opportunities. [AlachuaAudubon.org](http://AlachuaAudubon.org) | [facebook.com/AlachuaAudubon/](https://facebook.com/AlachuaAudubon/)

**Alachua Conservation Trust, Inc.** is a non-profit land trust protecting North Central Florida's natural, historic, scenic and recreational resources for over 36 years. 352-

373-1078 | [AlachuaConservationTrust.org](http://AlachuaConservationTrust.org)

**Alachua County Labor Coalition** organizes to support local labor and advance the Medicare for All and A Living Wage campaigns. Meets monthly on the 4th Tuesday at 6pm: on Zoom. 352-375-2832 | [info@laborcoalition.org](mailto:info@laborcoalition.org) | [LaborCoalition.org](http://LaborCoalition.org)

**Alachua County Organization for Rural Needs Clinic** is a not-for-profit in Brooker providing low-cost, high-quality dental care for people with and without health insurance to Alachua, Bradford and Union County residents. The Clinic fulfills its mission with the help of volunteers. 352-485-2772 | [acornclinic.org](http://acornclinic.org)

**American Civil Liberties Union** has no Alachua County chapter. For info on forming a new chapter, or for ACLU info, contact the Northeast Chapter at [firstcoastaclu@gmail.com](mailto:firstcoastaclu@gmail.com).

[northeastflorida.aclufl.org](http://northeastflorida.aclufl.org)

**Alachua NAACP**— With 2+ million activists across the country, we work to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all people and to eliminate racial hatred and discrimination. Everyone invited to join. [Facebook.com/alachuaNAACP](https://facebook.com/alachuaNAACP) | [NAACPacb.org](http://NAACPacb.org)

**American Promise Association** is a cross-partisan, citizen-powered endeavor to amend the US Constitution to ensure We The People — not big money, corporations, unions, or wealthy special interests — govern the United States of America. [americanpromise.net](http://americanpromise.net)

**Avian Research and Conservation Institute** is a non-profit research group working to stimulate conservation action to save threatened bird species in the southeast. 352-514-5606 | [arcinst.org](http://arcinst.org)

## Spotlight on: Gainesville Women for Democracy

Gainesville Women for Democracy, previously Gainesville Women for Harris, are a group of women whose number one focus is to build coalitions with like-

minded groups and individuals for the purpose of strengthening our communities, including surrounding rural counties, and preserving our democracy. If

you have any interest in getting involved, please contact us on [Facebook/gainesville women for democracy](https://facebook.com/gainesvillewomenfordemocracy). 🐾

## Abortion-rights organizers talk failed ballot measures

by Elisha Brown

Most abortion-rights ballot measures succeeded in 2024, but November marked the first time since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* that some citizen-led bids to restore access failed.

Lack of money wasn't an issue in Florida, where voters weighed whether to allow abortion before fetal viability and when a provider determines the procedure is medically necessary. The abortion-rights group behind Amendment 4 had more than \$121 million in total contributions, according to state campaign finance data.

Several opposition committees popped up ahead of the election, including Do No Harm, Florida Voters Against Extremism — publicly known as “No on 4” — Keep Florida Pro Life and Life First PC. Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis created the Florida Freedom Fund to oppose abortion and marijuana initiatives. DeSantis' PAC had \$7.3 million in contributions, according to state campaign finance data.

What set the counter-campaign apart was the DeSantis administration's tactics

in opposing the effort. It's unclear how much the state government spent to oppose the abortion-rights ballot measure, but the governor ramped up critiques — even against members of his own party — as the election approached. A health agency created a government webpage warning against Amendment 4, DeSantis appeared alongside anti-abortion physicians, and he got a former NFL coach to speak out against the proposal.

“There were misconceptions and flat out lies about what Amendment Four was and what Amendment Four was not,” said Keisha Mulfort, spokesperson for the state's American Civil Liberties Union affiliate.

In October, state health officials sent cease-and-desist letters to TV broadcasters threatening to sue them over a Yes on 4 ad featuring a cancer survivor. The group sued the administration, saying officials were trying to chill free speech. U.S. District Judge Mark Walker agreed, saying the Florida Department of Health could not intimidate broadcasters. Litigation in the case continues.

The abortion-rights group is also disputing a \$328,000 fine stemming from a Florida Office of Election Crimes & Security preliminary report released in October accusing Floridians Protecting Freedom of “widespread election fraud.” Campaign Director Lauren Brenzel refuted the allegations, and Mulfort said the fine is also being litigated but can't comment further on either case.

Fifty-seven percent of Florida voters approved the abortion-rights measure, but Amendment 4 fell short of the 60% threshold required. Although a majority of Floridians voted in favor of abortion rights, the supermajority requirement means most abortions are banned after six weeks.

“We all will continue to look at the ways in which we can ensure that reproductive freedom is seen in Florida and that these abortion bans come to an end,” Mulfort said.

*This is a condensed version of an article published in the Dec. 18 Florida Phoenix. For the complete story, see [tinyurl.com/Iguana2143](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2143). 🐾*

**Baker Interfaith Friends Volunteers** visits people in immigration detention in Baker County, volunteers welcome! Contact: bakerinterfaithfriends@gmail.com or on Facebook.

**Black Graduate Student Organization** helps UF Black graduate and professional students foster meaningful and lasting relationships that aid in academic achievement and success. bgsoutuf@gmail.com | facebook: UF BGSO

**Central Florida Democratic Socialists of America** is a chapter of DSA focusing on local social and political activism issues to better our community. Meetings are the 4th Monday of the month on Zoom. centralfldsa@gmail.com | facebook.com/NCForidaDSA

**Citizens Climate Lobby** builds awareness and lobbies for sensible climate policies. 352-214-1778 | btancig@gmail.com | citizensclimatelobby.org/chapters/FL\_Gainesville | facebook.com/CitizensClimateLobbyGainesvilleFL

**Civic Media Center** is an alternative reading room and library of the non-corporate press, and a resource and space for organizing. 433 S Main St., Gainesville | 352-373-0010 | civicmediacenter.org | coordinators@civicmediacenter.org |

**The Climate Reality Project Gainesville Area Chapter** is the local chapter of an international nonprofit group dedicated to accelerating urgent action globally on the climate crisis. Join the chapter (see website) for news, action alerts, meeting alerts. ClimateRealityProjectgmv@gmail.com | facebook.com/GlobalClimateEducation | ClimateRealityProjectGNV.wordpress.com | ClimateRealityProject.org

**Coalition of Hispanics Integrating Spanish Speakers through Advocacy and Service** is a UF student-run group focusing on immigrant rights and immigrant advocacy. chispasuf@gmail.com | chispasuf.com | facebook.com/chispasUF

**Code Pink: Women for Peace** is a women-led grassroots peace /social justice movement utilizing creative protest, non-violent direct action and community involvement. Facebook.com/CodePINKgainesville | CodePink4Peace.org

**Community Spring** is a local organization to help people get a step up on re-entering society after incarceration with financial & housing assistance as a means of overcoming structural poverty. 352-363-1259 or info@csgnv.org

**Community Weatherization Coalition's** mission is to help their neighbors save energy and water and reduce utility bills by engaging volunteers, building community, and learning together. info@communityweatherization.org | 352-450-4965 | communityweatherization.org

**Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc.** is a Gainesville non-profit land trust working to protect Florida's rural landscapes, wildlife

corridors and natural areas. 352-376-4770 | info@conserveflorida.org | conserveflorida.org

**Current Problems** cleans up waterways across north Florida, removing over 1,000,000 pounds of trash (& recycling/reusing 63% of it) since 1993, and finding ways to reduce pollution sources; volunteers welcome. 352-222-6727 | currentproblems.org

**Democratic Party of Alachua County** meets monthly on the second Wednesday at 6pm: on Zoom. 352-373-1730 | alachua Dems.org

**Divest Gainesville** advocates divesting City financial assets from fossil fuel industries and educating on racial justice and climate change. youngersn@outlook.com | facebook.com/DivestGainesville

**Divest UF** is a student-run organization and a loose collective of Gators seeking to divest the university from fossil fuels, the prison industry, and arms and surveillance companies. Divestuf.org | facebook.com/Divest UF

**Edible Plant Project** is a volunteer-run, non-profit Gainesville collective aiming to create positive alternatives to the unsustainable food system in this county. facebook.com/groups/edibleplantproject

**Families Against Mandatory Minimums** works to reform Florida's sentencing laws and restore fairness to Florida's criminal justice system. PO Box 142933, Gainesville, 32614 | gnewburn@fam.org | 352-682-2542 | FAMM.org

**Final Friends**, run by volunteers, helps families learn how to accomplish legal home funeral care as an alternative to a commercial funeral home. 352-374-4478 | FinalFriends.org@gmail.com | FinalFriends.org

**Flipping the System** is a non-profit organization dedicated to eradicating sexual violence on campuses. Through educational programming and events, FTS believes that a future free of sexual violence is possible. www.flippingthesystem.org | flippingthesystemtoday@gmail.com | @flippingthesystem | 954-589-7626

**Florida Coalition for Peace and Justice** provides space for meetings, workshops, and educational activities that promote peace, human rights, social justice awareness, conflict resolution, self-empowerment and environmental awareness. 352-603-3680 | florida4peace.org

**Florida School of Traditional Midwifery** is a clearinghouse for information, activities, educational programs regarding midwifery. 352-338-0766 | info@MidWiferySchool.org | midwiferyschool.org

**Florida Defenders of the Environment** works to protect freshwater resources, conserve public lands, provide quality environmental education. 352-475-1119 | FloridaDefenders@gmail.com | FlaDefenders.org

**Florida Prisoner Solidarity** is a carceral abolitionist collective with members inside and outside of prisons. Efforts focus on incarcerated individuals' needs and their care networks. P.O. Box 358439, Gainesville, FL 32635 | 850-895-1505 | FLPrisonerSolidarity@gmail.com | facebook.com/FLAbolition | FLPrisonerSolidarity.org

**Floridians Protecting Freedom** is a campaign of allied organizations and concerned citizens working together to protect Floridians' access to abortion as reproductive health care and to defend the right to bodily autonomy. Contact Laura at 617-767-6664 or go to floridiansprotectingfreedom.com.

**Friends of Susan B. Anthony, Gainesville** recognizes local women who exemplify some of the qualities of Susan B. Anthony, that is, concern for full enfranchisement of women and minorities and equal rights for all citizens. fosba@fosba.com | fosba.com

**Gainesville Area AIDS Project**, a program of Pride Community Center of North Central Florida, provides toiletries, household cleaners, hot meals, frozen food at no cost to people living with HIV/AIDS. 352-377-8915 | info@GAAPonline.org | Facebook.com/GAAPonline | gainesvillepride.org

**Gainesville Area Chapter of Climate Reality Project** addresses the climate crisis for future generations. The chapter mobilizes people to become powerful activists and push for aggressive climate action. The hope is to transform society and to change the world. climateralityprojectgmv@gmail.com | @climateralityprojectgmv | climateralityprojectgmv.wordpress.com

**Gainesville Books to Prisoners** is a volunteer-run, donation-based organization that sends hundreds of books monthly to incarcerated people in Florida. We pack books at the CMC on the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month, 6-7:30pm. We also need brown paper grocery bags and packing tape. Instagram: @gnvbooks2prisoners. Donate funds at paypal.com/gnvb2p.

**Gainesville Citizens for Alternatives to Death Penalty** works to abolish the death penalty. Join vigils when Florida has an execution. 352-378-1690 | mark1343@juno.com | www.fadp.org

**Gainesville for All** The Gainesville Sun's GNV4ALL initiative is an effort to identify and address problems related to inequities and racial injustice in our community. See Facebook for online activities. GNV4ALL@gmail.com | facebook.com/GNV4ALL

**Gainesville Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice** organizes faith communities to work together for immigrant justice. Meetings are the second Monday of the month on Zoom. Richard@371-6772 | Gainesvilleiaij@gmail.com | gainesvilleiaij.blogspot.com

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**Gainesville National Organization for Women** focuses on reproductive rights, ending sex discrimination, constitutional equality, promoting diversity, ending racism, economic justice, stopping violence against women, lesbian rights including marriage equality. Contact Lisa@352-450-1912 for meeting info | info@gainesvilleNOW.org | facebook.com/gainesvilleNOW

**Gainesville Quakers** have a 350-year tradition of working peacefully for social justice. Silent, unprogrammed worship Sundays at 11, followed by potluck. Visitors welcome. 702 NW 38th St., Gainesville | 352-372-1070 | GainesvilleQuakers.org | facebook.com/GainesvilleQuakers

**Gainesville Residents United** educates, advocates, negotiates, and litigates issues of community concern – currently the State takeover of Gainesville Regional Utilities. www.GRUnited.org

**Gainesville Roller Rebels**, a women's Flat Track roller derby team, needs skaters and volunteer assistance. join@gainesvillerollerrebels.com | gainesvillerollerrebels.com

**Gainesville Stamp Club**, established in the 1960's, is open to all interested in philately. Auction held every meeting. Advanced level program occasionally. Under 18 must be accompanied by adult. First and third Tuesdays starting at 7:30pm; no meetings in December/holidays. For meeting locations and info. call 352-371-1991 | Stamps4Laffs@yahoo.com

**Gainesville Women for Democracy**, previously Gainesville Women for Harris, are a group of women whose number one focus is to build coalitions with like-minded groups and individuals for the purpose of strengthening our communities, including surrounding rural counties, and preserving our democracy. Contact Julie Thaler via Facebook Messenger.

**Generation Action UF**, a student organization dedicated to promoting reproductive justice and health care on campus provides UF students with free contraceptives, Plan B, and other key reproductive health care materials through The Brown Bag Project <3. UF students can discreetly request and receive condoms, internal condoms, dental dams, pregnancy tests, and Plan B. Instagram @ppgenactionuf.

**Graduate Assistants United** union represents UF grad assistants by fighting for improved working conditions, community involvement and academic freedom. 352-575-0366 | organizing@ufgau.org | UFGau.org

**Greater Gainesville International Center** celebrates and elevates our diverse international community by serving as a hub between cultural, economic, educational and governmental partners, to unlock the full potential of our unique global city. Programs include 10 sister cities and refugee

resettlement. Lauren Poe | poe@gnvc.org | 352-871-0895.

**Grow Radio**, a non-profit podcast station, provides opportunities for the community to create/manage engaging, educational, locally-generated programming promoting music, visual arts, humanities for enrichment of the community. 352-219-0145 | Bryson66@gmail.com | growradio.org

**Ichetucknee Alliance** focuses on ensuring the restoration, preservation and protection of ecosystems along the 5.5-mile length of the Ichetucknee River, including associated springs. Meetings are on the 4th Tuesday every other month via Zoom. 386-454-0415 | ichetuckneealliance@gmail.com | ichetuckneealliance.org

**Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)** Gainesville General Membership Branch Union represents all workers, regardless of industry, trade, job, employment status. gainesvilleiww@gmail.com | iww.org

**Institute for Tropical Ecology and Conservation** is an academic nonprofit that provides undergraduate field courses in tropical marine and terrestrial ecology, hosts biology-based study abroad programs, provides a venue for researchers, conducts conservation and community service programs. 352-367-9128 | itec1@itec-edu.org | itec-edu.org

**Jewish Voice For Peace** in Gainesville was inspired by the JVP actions nationwide calling for ceasefire in Gaza. JVP envisions a world where all people live in freedom, justice, equality and dignity. jewishvoiceforpeace.org/resource/our-vision | Instagram: @jvp\_gnv | jvpgnvpod@gmail.com

**League of Women Voters of Alachua County** Nonpartisan grassroots political group of women and men who fight to improve our system of government and impact public policies such as fairness in districting, voting and elections, through citizen education and advocacy. info@lww-alachua.org | LWValachua.org

**Madres Sin Fronteras** (Mothers Without Borders) is a local grassroots immigrant-led organization working to protect the rights of immigrants' families in our community and to ensure all are treated with dignity and respect msfgainesville@gmail.com | facebook.com/MSFGainesville

**MindFreedom North Florida** is a human rights group for psychiatric survivors and mental health consumers, working to educate the public about harmful psychiatric practices and about humane alternatives to those harmful practices. 352-328-2511 | facebook: MindFreedom Florida

**Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America** is a grassroots organization working to end gun violence by electing gun sense candidates, advocating for policies that save lives, educating parents on responsible gun

storage. Alachua County events listed at momsdemandaction.org/events

**Move to Amend, Gainesville** is an organization dedicated to amending the US Constitution to establish that money is not speech, and that only human beings have constitutional rights. Contact Alachua County Green Party for information. Facebook.com / MoveToAmendGainesvilleFL

**National Alliance on Mental Illness | Gainesville** offers support, education and advocacy for families and loved ones of persons with mental illness and/or brain disorders. 352-320-0457 (information) | 352-335-7770 (helpline) | namigainesville.org

**National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare** works to preserve these threatened programs for senior citizens and families. Local volunteers needed. Marion.Co.Fl.1590@gmail.com | ncpsm.org

**National Lawyers Guild** consists of lawyers, law students, legal workers and jailhouse lawyers who use the law to advance social justice, support progressive social movements. gainesvillengl@gmail.com | nlg.org

**National Women's Liberation** is a feminist group for women who want to fight back against male supremacy and win more freedoms for women. Inequalities between women and men are political problems requiring a collective solution. 352-575-0495 | nw1@womensliberation.org | womensliberation.org

**North Central Florida Association for Women In Science** is an advocacy organization championing the interest of women in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) across all disciplines and employment sectors. ncfawis@gmail.com | leanin.org/circles/ncfawis

**Our Santa Fe River** is a non-profit composed of concerned citizens working to protect the waters and lands supporting the aquifer, springs and rivers within the watershed of the Santa Fe River. 386-243-0322 | oursantaferiver.org

**Paynes Prairie Chapter, Florida Native Plant Society** promotes the preservation, conservation and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. paynesprairie.fnpschapters.org | https://tinyurl.com/Iguana1952

**PFLAG Gainesville** is a local chapter of Parents and Families of Lesbians and Gays, the nation's foremost family-based organization committed to the civil rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. 352-340-3770 | info@pflaggainesville.org | pflaggainesville.org

**Planned Parenthood Clinic at Gainesville Health Center** is a full-service health center for reproductive and sexual health care needs. Offering pregnancy testing and options counseling. 914 NW 13th St., Gnv. | 352-377-0881 | plannedparenthood.org (enter

Gainesville FL in “find a health center” box)

### **Prairie Creek Conservation Cemetery**

promotes natural burial practices that conserve land and reunite people with the environment. 352-317-7307 | info@prairiecreekconservationcemetery.org | prairiecreekconservationcemetery.org

### **Pride Community Center of North**

**Central Florida** has resources for the LGBTQ+ community. 3850 NW 83rd St, 2nd floor, Gnv. Pccncf@gainesville.pride.org | GainesvillePride.org. Library & community room open Mon-Thu 9am-7pm, Fri 9am-5pm (unstaffed).

**Repurpose Project**, a nonprofit junk shop/community center, diverting useful resources from landfills and redirecting items to the public for art and education, rethinking what we throw away. Help protect the planet and buy used. Check website for hours. 1920 NE 23rd Ave, Gnv | 352-363-8902 | info@RepurposeProject.org | repurposeproject.org

**River Phoenix Center for Peace-building** provides solution-based innovative ways to resolve conflicts, and offers related services such as mediation, communication skill building and restorative justice. 352-234-6595 | info@centerforpeacebuilding.org | centerforpeacebuilding.org

**Rural Women’s Health Project** is a local health education organization that develops materials promoting health justice for migrant and rural women. Robin or Fran @ 352-372-1095 | info@rwhp.org | www.rwhp.org

### **Samuel Proctor Oral History Program**

focuses on story-telling, social justice research, social movement studies, oral history workshops. oral.history.ufl.edu

**Sandhill Chapter, Florida Trail Association** is the local organization to develop, maintain, protect, and promote the Florida National Scenic Trail, a 1,500 mile federally designated trail beginning at big Cypress National Preserve and ending at Gulf Islands National Seashore. 352-378-8823 | Floridatrail.org/Sandhill | Facebook.com/SandhillChapterFTA

**Sister City Program of Gainesville** links Gainesville with sister cities in Russia, Israel and Palestine, Iraq, Haiti. 352-376-8600 | Steve@gnvsistercities.org | gnvsistercities.org

**Student Animal Alliance** is a UF-based group whose purpose is to educate and bring fellow animal lovers together to better the lives of the animals around us. StudentAnimalAllianceUFL@gmail.com | facebook.com/SAAatUF | instagram@studentanimalallianceUF

**Student/Farmworker Alliance** is a network of youth organizing with farmworkers to eliminate sweatshop conditions and modern-day slavery in the fields. billy@sfalliance.org or brett@sfalliance.org | facebook.com/sfalliance

**Sunday Assembly Gainesville** is a secular congregation celebrating life with talk, music, sing-along, discussion, fellowship. Meets the 3rd Sunday of the month. SundayAssembly32601@gmail.com | SAGainesville.weebly.com

**Sierra Club, Suwannee-St. John** is a local group within the nation’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, representing 14 North Central Florida counties. ssjsierra@gmail.com | sierraclub.org/florida/suwannee-stjohns | 561-707-4565

**The Majorie** is Florida’s independent reporting outlet dedicated to the critical intersection of social justice and the environment. themajorie.org

**The Party for Socialism and Liberation - Gainesville** pre-branch exists to carry out the struggle for Socialism inside the U.S. | Linktr.ee/psl\_gainesville | psl\_gainesville@proton.me | pslweb.org/join

**UF Black Student Union** strives to create, cultivate, and challenge all minority Gators to be better citizens of the Gator Nation. Facebook.com/groups/BlackStudentUnionUF

**UF College Democrats** is the official voice of the Democratic party on UF campus. 407-580-4543 | president@ufdemocrats.org | facebook: UF College Democrats | UFFcollegedems.org

**UF Pride Student Union** is an LGBT+ group open to queer folk of all sorts, including students, non-students, faculty and staff, that educates and provides a safe space for those of marginalized sexualities and gender identities. UFPridesu@gmail.com | facebook.com/ufpsu | plaza.ufl.edu/jsoto19/PSU

**UF Students for Justice in Palestine:** In stark recognition of the failure of modern society to produce a just and reasonable solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict, Students for Justice in Palestine promote public awareness and activism in our community. We promote international law, human rights, and justice for all affected by this conflict. We welcome a diverse membership from all faiths and nationalities who believe in the attainability of peace. sjpuflorida@gmail.com

**UF Young Democratic Socialists of America** is a student-run socialist organization dedicated to organizing students to fight for the needs of workers and students while building the capacity to fight radical and structural changes. Weekly meetings. ufydsa21@gmail.com | facebook.com/ufydsa

**United Faculty of Florida, UF chapter** is run by and for faculty, and represents over 1600 faculty and professionals at UF. Its origins lie in efforts by faculty to protect academic freedom, defend civil liberties, end racial discrimination at UF. 352-519-4130 | officemanager@uff-uf.org | www.UFF-UF.org

**United Nations Association - Gainesville Chapter** works to heighten citizen awareness/knowledge of global problems and the UN’s efforts to deal with them. facebook.com/UNAUSAGainesvilleFICChapter | UNA-USA Gainesville FL.org

**United Way Information & Referral** is a human-staffed computer database for resources and organizations in Alachua County. 352-332-4636 or simply 211 | UW211help@gmail.com | unitedwayncfl.org

**University of Florida HealthStreet** is a community engagement program that employs community outreach practices to reduce disparities in healthcare and research. Free services include medical and social service referrals, health screenings, Narcan Nasal Spray Kits, clothing/toiletry items, health education, events, support groups. 352-294-4880 or healthstreet.program.ufl.edu/

**UF Un-PAC** is a non-partisan organization working to reform our democracy and get big money/lobbying out of politics. Our Youth Power Campaign works to make UF work better for students to participate in/understand our democratic system, including demands such as voter registration at Freshman Preview, classes cancelled on election days, more transparency on how our tuition money is spent on lobbying and political influence. Go to: un-pac.org, @un\_pac\_uflorida, or email un.pac.uf@gmail

**Veterans for Peace Gainesville Chapter** is an anti-war organization that raises awareness of the detriments of militarism and war, as well as seeking peaceful and effective alternatives. 352-375-2563 | Facebook.com/VFPchapter14 | vfp Gainesville.org

**WGOT-LP 100.1 FM** is a community low-power radio station operating as part of the Civic Media Center. info@wgot.org | www.wgot.org

**Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) at UF** aims to foster the success of women, non-binary folks, other underrepresented genders in science and engineering. People of all genders are welcome. uf.wise@gmail.com | Facebook.com/UFWiSE | wise.group.ufl.edu/about-wise

**Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom** has been promoting peace since 1915. Donate or join the at-large Jane Addams Branch. Local info: juned@stevellittler.com | wilpfus.org

**World Socialist Party of the United States** welcomes anyone wanting to know more about Marxian socialism and our efforts to transform the dog-eat-dog – Devil take the hindmost world that’s been created by capitalism, into a democratically arranged world society of equality. wspan.org. 🐾



# Legislative assault on GRU Referendum halted by community mobilization

by Gainesville Residents United Exec. Board

State Rep. Chad Johnson, successor to GRU Takeover architect Rep. Chuck Clemons, announced a GRU Takeover 2.0 bill on Jan. 7. The bill voids the Local Public Utilities referendum approved by 73 percent of City of Gainesville voters. It also extends the GRU Authority's powers to include unilaterally amending its agreements with the City and triggers millions of dollars in budget cuts to the City by effectively eliminating the payment that GRU makes in lieu of taxes.

In a nutshell, it gives the Authority what they want in every disagreement they have with the voters and locally elected officials. Rep. Johnson planned to begin moving the bill through the legislative process at the Jan. 9 County Legislative Delegation meeting.

But thanks to the efforts of hundreds of City (and unincorporated) residents who sent emails to the delegation, made phone calls, and spread the word, he quickly changed course and tabled the legislation. This means GRU Takeover 2.0 is dead for now, thanks to procedural requirements and deadlines for introducing local bills.

It is also a testament to the power of collective action. Gainesville Residents United extends a giant thanks to the Alachua County Labor Coalition, League of Women Voters, Sierra Club, and their supporters who stepped up to defeat this assault on local

democracy. Rep. Johnson deserves thanks for tabling his GRU 2.0 bill, as well as for soliciting feedback from GRU stakeholders on the future we want for the utility.

Now the fate of home rule for GRU is in the hands of Judge George Wright, who is expected to issue his ruling on the Authority's lawsuit against the referendum in the coming months. Of note, this lawsuit against the referendum, and therefore the 73 percent of City voters and taxpayers who supported it, is being entirely financed by City taxpayers — the Authority is deducting their (undisclosed) legal fees from the utility's payment to the city.

Using taxpayer money to fund their assault on the will of voters is just one of many unforced errors made by the Authority.

They've raised rates on solar customers by effectively ending net-metering. They've put ratepayers at risk of future massive bill hikes through the fuel adjustment charge by doubling down on using natural gas for power generation a fuel with notorious price instability. They've eliminated City jobs by vindictively cutting the Government Services Contribution, as well as threatened rural jobs by reducing the wood purchased from local foresters for biomass fuel.

Rep. Johnson did right by Gainesville residents by tabling his bill. Now, we ask that he and the rest of the Delegation continue to respect our community by respecting the will of its voters.

That means one of two things, depending on Judge Wright's ruling. If His Honor rules in favor of the successful referendum, we ask the Delegation to encourage an orderly transfer of power over GRU. If the ruling goes the other way, we ask the Delegation to work with stakeholders to abolish and replace the Authority.

GRU stakeholders and ardent referendum supporters acknowledge the concerns of both sides of the GRU governance issues. Many of us want to see the Authority replaced with a Governing Board possessing checked powers to direct GRU and composed of members appointed by both the City and County Commissions. If the referendum result is upheld by Judge Wright, we will seek this from the City Commission. If it is not, we expect Rep. Johnson and the rest of the Delegation to make it a reality. ✨

## Our recommendation for insightful analysis of the 2024 election

by Pierce Butler

Michael Podhorzer has written some of the most original and insightful analyses of the 2024 election, which rebut a lot of the shallow reportage of the last few months.

Particularly, he notes how recent bent decisions of the Supreme Court tilted the electoral and legal playing field (see "This is NOT a year-end appeal" at [tinyurl.com/Iguana2134](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2134)) and how Trump did not win the election so much as Harris lost (see "How Trump Won" at [tinyurl.com/Iguana2135](https://tinyurl.com/Iguana2135)):

- Trump was no more popular this year than four years ago, while Harris significantly underperformed Biden 2020

- Most of Harris's losses were due to anti-MAGA surge voters staying home. She lost the most ground in deep-Blue urban areas
- About 19 million Americans who cast ballots for Biden in 2020 did not vote in 2024
- About 15 million fewer votes were cast "against" Trump than in 2020.

Podhorzer supports his case with numbers, charts, and maps — but readers who plow through his work will come out much better informed about US elections — and the need for progressives to turn out — than they were before. ✨

## The Gainesville Iguana

*Gainesville's progressive newsletter*



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