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The Gainesville Iguana

April 2025 ~ vol. 39, issue 4

'a soapbox for Alachua County activists'

Fighting oligarchy

'The economic and political crises facing our country will NOT be solved in Washington, DC. The system is just too corrupt.'

by Jenn Powell

There is something to be said about Bernie Sanders attracting a crowd of 34,000 in Denver last month. That is a record, and he's not even running for anything.

WE need to pay attention, we need to stop challenging and gate keeping, we need to follow his lead. I had the pleasure of leading the local grassroots campaign for Bernie Sanders in 2015 and assisted organizers in 2020. I was elected as a delegate in 2016 and appointed in 2020. What we accomplished in 2016 was amazing, with no help from the Dem party, with no money from the official campaign, we only lost Alachua County by 45 votes. We accomplished this with the PEOPLE, not any PACs, but with small dollar grassroots donations. We paid for all our printing, our yard signs, our events, even rented an office fully funded by local Bernie supporters. The energy behind this was nothing I had ever seen. I long to feel that level of HOPE for the future again.

After the loss in 2016, I didn't leave the Democratic Party, I joined the Alachua County Democratic Executive Committee as a precinct leader, as did others from our grassroots Bernie Campaign. It's been 9 years now and I can say I am proud of the work we have accomplished with our local party. If only we could figure out how to reach our rural neighbors, maybe we could have stopped Donald Trump last year. One ride out to Keystone Heights and surrounding areas and I saw that we really didn't stand a chance.

See FIGHTING, p. 24



Over 1,000 people turned out for the Hands Off! rally in Gainesville on Saturday, April 5, to call for reversing the cutbacks imposed by the rogue Trump/Musk et al. regime.

Photo by Laura Gaudette

Hands Off!

by Joe Courter

Whether in hot sunny Florida, a rainy wet new York City, the cold of Burlington, Vermont, or whatever other weather across the country, and even in Europe, the turn outs at the Hands Off! rally on April 5 were huge. In cities big and small, the call was out to reign in and reverse the cut backs being imposed by the now rogue Trump/Musk et al. regime. An estimated 5 million people participated in Hands Off! rallies that day.

In Gainesville, well over 1,000 people turned out for the rally near the Cade Museum at the large roundabout intersection of South Main Street and Depot Avenue.

See HANDS OFF!, p. 28



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Want your article, ad, event or PSA in the May/June Iguana?

Deadline is Wednesday, May 7

Submit events, content, questions to:
gainesvilleiguana@cox.net

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.

One story among many

I am a fifth year Geography major at the University of Florida. I will soon begin to pursue my master's degree in urban planning in the fall, also here at UF. I am very lucky to have made it to where I am now, but it is all thanks to my parents, both Mexican undocumented immigrants, that I have been able to reach such heights.

My parents both crossed into the U.S. by land over twenty years ago, looking to escape poverty and start a new life so that their children would not have to suffer like they did. My parents have always told my brother and me to pursue an education and be moral upstanding citizens. Though they reached the U.S. by so-called "illegal" means, my parents have done nothing but work hard, pay taxes, and follow the rules, leading by example to teach my brother and me to do things in life the right way.

Besides my parents, I also have uncles, aunts, and cousins who are just as exemplary. Though I have lived with the fear of my parents being ripped away from me by ICE since kindergarten, the draconian mass deportation efforts currently being taken by the Trump regime have made a complicated situation much more difficult and terrifying.

Current developments have me afraid that my parents could be abducted by plainclothes ICE agents without due process, and shipped to Guantanamo or the CECOT prison in El Salvador, nowhere near Mexico. At least before Trump, I could rest assured that my parents would be sent back to their country of origin. Coupled with the abysmal conditions of deportation centers, like Krome in Miami, I have little faith that my parents would be treated like anything but animals.

As a Mexican American US citizen, I feel a very particular kind of rage at the system. The people in power claim that undocumented immigrants like my parents are nothing but dirty lowlife criminals, rapists, and drug dealers, when I have seen with my own eyes that it couldn't be farther from the truth.

My parents have done nothing but be upstanding citizens for twenty years, toiling away for the sake of a better future for their kids. They have paid taxes and contributed to the economy of a country that does nothing but offer them false promises of amnesty while exploiting the fact that they're illegal in order to pay them lower wages. It's a complete spit in the face, and it fills me with a special kind of hatred at the hypocrites in power, who actually are criminals.

Overall, it's a very messed up situation that has people like me at wit's end. I want to put my privilege as a U.S. citizen to use and be able to stand up for people like my parents, but I don't know where to begin.

- Name withheld 🐢

Hey, Readers!

We are now accepting both Venmo (gnv-iguana) and PayPal (gainesvilleiguana@cox.net) donations.

Links to both can be found on our website:
www.GainesvilleIguana.org

From the publisher ...

The need to resist

And here we still are: in a rapidly unfolding coup bent on overturning what has taken so long to build. I won't repeat what I wrote last month, but here is a link to it: tinyurl.com/Iguana2174 ... it holds up well.

What are our tools? How do we connect enough of us to focus our dissatisfaction in a meaningful way? How do we overcome our fears and seeming helplessness? We need to be able to communicate, to organize resistance. This has made me think about how we used to do that. Go back in history to the nation's founding, there were letters, pamphlets and newspapers, but principally oration at meetings or churches. Yet they got organized and got stuff done. The twentieth century had its first major change in organizing with amplified sound and then radio, words from one individual could be heard by thousands, even millions at the same time.

For good or ill, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Benito Mussolini and Adolph Hitler all became common voices reaching many millions. Radio preachers also exerted great influence, such as Father Coughlin, who went from an FDR supporter to an anti-Semitic profascist in his broadcasts. Later, television increased the power and reach of mass communication, but with TV came the live images, which were also powerful in creating critical awareness, and resistance; video of dogs turned loose on black folks in the South, thatched houses being torched by U.S. soldiers in Viet Nam.

Radio and TV also helped catalyze a progressive resistance. Music with social justice commentary, like Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie, were on the airways in the 1950s, followed by the explosion of protest music in the sixties with the rise of FM radio. George Carlin and The Smothers Brothers brought critical thought comedy to TV. But organizing on-the-ground resistance, local organizing, was still telephone trees, word of mouth, alternative newspapers, and the procured use of mimeograph machines. Massive protests were organized, and not one person had a cell phone or access to a computer! What we did have was a much more unified view of what was happening, a focus on stopping the war, on civil rights, women's rights. Unified national organizations and strong labor unions helped. Common credible mainstream news sources helped. Our communications had limitations compared to now, but we got a lot of stuff done!

And again, here we are. What has technology wrought? An endless amount of information at our finger tips, but very little quality control. We all have the capacity to not only read and see anything, but share whatever we find with a wide audience on multiple platforms to people of our choosing or the whole damn world. Corporations have taken advantage of this and are shaping our interests and tastes with marketers to benefit themselves. Amidst all this technology are tremendous tools for organizing, for notifying and gathering people, but then what? That harder, human-driven work of organizing and movement infrastructure building, civic organizing and labor union organizing, is sorely needed to be effective. A sense of purpose and strategies must overcome the distraction and brain rot our screens serve up to us.

There is no one way for people to deal with this coup, and its effects are just beginning; each person needs to find their means of coping. Mental health is #1. Break away from corporate media and curate your news intake; many alternative, independent news sources are rising to prominence. It is okay to dial back your news intake and make room for fun and self-nurturing. If you are doing okay, find some groups or actions you want to help out with. Just getting beyond isolation and working with others is healthful. There is a League of Women Voters site mentioned on page 7 ("What can you do?") where you can find activities. There is always contacting your government representatives.

This coup will not be overturned quickly — be ready for a long slog of recovery. And indulge in fiction, too: Sci Fi, some Vonnegut or Le Guin — this kind of thing helps me, I know. And get out in nature! Go enjoy live music! Leave the house (and screen).

One big key to effective resistance will be our grassroots organizing, our staying power, and our readiness to deal with the changing political landscape. AOC and Bernie showed us people are motivated and ready with their great town halls. There are signs of defections in the Republicans from being lockstep with MAGA. Stay strong. 🐾



Joe Courter

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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:

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The *Iguana* has been published monthly or bimonthly by volunteers for over 35 years. Circulation for this issue is 4,500.

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Iguana cover drawing by Daryl Harrison.

Printed on recycled paper.

Amendment 4, abortion rights: demand more

This is an excerpt of a speech by Kendra Vincent, who spoke representing National Women's Liberation, given on March 8 at the Democratic Women's Club Luncheon at the Best Western in Gainesville. NWL was asked to speak about Amendment 4 and abortion. Representative Angie Nixon was the keynote speaker and Representative Yvonne Hayes Hinson also spoke.

National Women's Liberation is a feminist group for cis and trans women and trans people who do not benefit from male supremacy who want to fight back and build a mass movement for our liberation.

We believe the inequalities and injustices we face due to male supremacy, white supremacy, and capitalism are political problems requiring a collective solution. We believe that change comes from the

actions of everyday people. And this is one of the many reasons we organized a coalition and helped lead on Amendment 4 in Gainesville.

Constitutional amendments organized by the people and voted on by the people are extremely democratic. Over 200 grassroots organizations worked on this amendment from May of 2023 through election day. Abortion and reproductive rights are necessary in order to have true freedom. If we do not have bodily autonomy we are not free. Roe was never enough, and neither was this amendment, but it was a step in the right direction, and it would have provided a lot of relief not just in Florida but in the South.

Where do we go from here?

One: We don't give up. We don't let them overwhelm us. We step up when someone

else has to step back. We build a stronger community. We remember that movement work is a marathon, not a sprint.

Two: We must stay informed with accurate information. Both PlanCPills.com and Progress Florida host trainings on using the abortion pill at home with the idea of helping people become a community resource. PlanCPills.com is a great resource for abortion and abortion pills with information by state. On a smaller scale, people can order the abortion pill, which has a long shelf life. One trusted resource to order abortion pills is Aid Access which was one of the international leaders in expanding abortion pills for self-managed abortions.

Three: We keep pressure on the institutions that are supposed to work for us. Florida Senate Bill 870 would repeal the 6 week ban, so we can lobby for this bill to move forward and pass. House Bill 1205 (which had its first subcommittee hearing on Thursday) and the companion bill in the senate which will be heard by the ethics committee on Monday, would further restrict the ballot initiative process. If we want citizen-led amendments, we must work to stop this bill. These are bills that need to be brought to the public's attention. We need to add these bills to every phone call or email folks are already making — both to the legislatures and to supporters and group members. They must be included as important issues for lobbying and at rallies and protests. But we can't just focus on Florida. We must fight any attempts for a federal abortion ban as well.



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These are mostly defensive tactics. These are reactionary. We also need to stay on the offensive — to do more than just hold the line; we need to always push for more.

So, how do we do this? One is to begin reorganizing around the abortion amendment. We would be in good company because both medicaid and marijuana amendments have already started organizing. We would have existing infrastructure and contacts from the last campaign as well as the lessons learned. However, we need a large organization, like Planned Parenthood, to step up again to lead this fight. People and groups are ready to work and be the boots on the ground, but we need the infrastructure and the funding if we are going to be successful.

Another possibility is to fight for the Abortion Pill to be available over the counter. The FDA has extra regulations on the Abortion Pill — Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy or REMS. There are plenty of doctors that have argued that these REMS are unjustified and unnecessary and the data supporting this only increased during the height of the COVID pandemic.

While more research is needed, so far abortion pills meet the FDA's own criteria for an over the counter medication, and is safer than Tylenol and Viagra. It is important to go for what we really want. We want free, safe, and legal abortions everywhere for anyone who needs one. If we fought for abortion pills to be over the counter, we would be making huge strides in this direction. National Women's Liberation led the fight for the Morning After Pill to be over the counter, which we won in 2013 after a ten year long campaign. We believe the many lessons we learned during that campaign apply to fighting for the abortion pill as well, including a consciousness raising strategy and demanding full access for all ages.

We must utilize the powerful feminist lessons we have learned over the years: We must use the word abortion and not talk about it like it is a regrettable last option. Abortion is health care. Consciousness raising is a powerful tool. Everyday people's lived experiences are important and our stories can make a difference.

When we make bold demands covering everyone, we gain more ground. White women must stop seeing ourselves as privileged helpers of the more oppressed and fight alongside women of color against our common oppressors. Women and trans people can also be strong allies in the fight for bodily autonomy. The

power structure wants to divide us, but we know we are powerful when we unite and work together. We need to understand that the power structure is worried about the birth rate, and instead of giving us incentives to make parenting more attractive like they have in most other industrialized countries with paid parental leave and universal child care, here, they have chosen coercion by taking away our reproductive rights. They want our reproductive labor, and they want it as cheap as possible. We will continue to demand more! ✨



11th Annual Peace Scholarship Program

**Sponsored by
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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.

The deadline for applications is April 25. See the application and more information at vfgainesville.org.



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Faith leaders stand up to Christian nationalism

by Clint Schnekloth

I'm thankful for the public witness of these Wisconsin Lutherans and their ecumenical colleagues, and have co-signed the public statement. I've included the letter written by Bishop Paul Erickson:

Trump on Feb. 6 established a new "Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias." This task force has the duty to "identify any unlawful anti-Christian policies, practices, or conduct by an agency." While some might think that all Christians would support an effort to root out "anti-Christian bias," that's not the case. We believe this executive order is a threat to the religious pluralism enshrined in the Constitution and does not actually protect Christians. Instead, this order aligns the federal government with Christian Nationalism, a dangerous conflation of fundamentalist Christianity, conservative politics, and fierce patriotism that distorts what it means to be an American citizen and an engaged Christian in society.

With this executive order, the federal government has given itself the authority to define what might be considered "anti-Christian," and therefore also the authority to define what is Christian — a power which belongs to the Church alone, not the federal government. This executive order violates religious freedom, corrupts the separation of church and state, and creates a more hostile environment for Christians and all citizens who believe differently than the current administration and its religious advisors.

We feel so strongly that this task force is a threat to our values

and our freedom that we wrote a public statement and invited religious leaders and others to sign on (For Religious Liberty and Against Christian Nationalism — Wisconsin Council of Churches). We now have over 250 signers, and we invite all who care about religious freedom and the preservation of our democracy to join us.

The full text of the public statement is below:

For Religious Liberty and Against Christian Nationalism

March 11, 2025

We, the undersigned, urge the federal government to protect the religious liberty of all people and we strongly condemn the rise of Christian Nationalism, a dangerous conflation of fundamentalist Christianity, conservative politics, and fierce patriotism which distorts what it means to be an American citizen and an engaged Christian in society.

An executive order signed by President Trump on February 6 established a new "Task Force to Eradicate Anti-Christian Bias." This Task Force has the duty to "identify any unlawful anti-Christian policies, practices, or conduct by an agency." This executive order is a threat to the religious pluralism enshrined in the constitution and does not protect Christians; rather it aligns the federal government with Christian Nationalism.

With the executive order for "Eradicating Anti-Christian Bias," the federal government has given itself the authority and mandate to define what might be considered "anti-Christian," and therefore also the authority to define what is Christian — a power which belongs to the Church alone, not the federal government. This executive order violates religious freedom, corrupts the separation of Church and State, and creates a more hostile environment for Christians and all citizens who believe differently than the current administration and its religious advisors.

As Christians, we follow Jesus' command to love God and love others. Christian Nationalism, which does not speak for all Christians, distorts the Gospel and turns Jesus and Christianity into a weapon for power and division instead of a movement towards love and justice. As U.S. Citizens, we uphold a system of government that tries to keep the common good central, defends religious freedom, and protects the rights of all. The dangerous ideology of Christian Nationalism demands that a particular brand of Christianity be privileged by the state and impose that singular belief system in order to be a "good American."

In order to protect religious freedom, the federal government must not align with one religious ideology but rather honor the constitutional mandate to defend space for religious pluralism and ensure that each member of society is free to practice their religion, or no religion, while keeping the peace and working together for the common good.

We call on the President of the United States and all elected officials to protect religious freedom in our country and uphold the constitution of the United States of America.

These are comments from Clint Schnekloth, author of "Lutheran Confessions: Reflections from a Progressive Lutheran Pastor in the South," on March 27. See tinyurl.com/Iguana2173 for more.

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What can you do?

by Janice Garry

President, League of Women Voters of Alachua County

Hear ye, hear ye (bells ringing vigorously!) The League of Women Voters of Alachua County is standing up and speaking out! We are answering the daunting question "What can I do?" in response to the current avalanche of information and the despair of having our country and democracy ransacked.

What can you do? Be a member of the What You Can Do Campaign created by your local League! We survey information, digest it (belch), and put it into succinct, scripted messages for our readers. In ten minutes or less you can read and act. Lots of recommended phone calls to legislators about specific topics. Also, info about local protests or issues. Whatever rises to the surface as useful and actionable.

But wait, there's more (bells ringing loudly!) We only send messages (emails) every week or so. You can bookmark them, print them, stick them on the fridge, whatever, and follow the actions each and every day. Grab your list, grab your phone and take action! Keep legislator voice mailboxes full! Keep their staff busy answering the phone! Keep the pressure on legislators! To be quiet is to be complicit. We won't be complicit.

To join the action, go to the LWVAC Action Alert on our webpage to see past and current messages. To get on the list for up-to-date messages, send a note to info@lwv-alachua.org and put **What You Can Do** in the subject line. Provide your name and email address and you can join some 250 people who are already taking daily actions. ✨

Florida Free Speech Forum upcoming luncheon, April 14

The Florida Free Speech Forum will hold its next luncheon on April 14. They will be meeting and dining at the Institute of Culinary Arts at Eastside High School at 11:30am. Speakers will be Brechner Center's 2025 Freedom of Information Award winners Tom Sheck, Alysia Santo, and Rachel Lippmann.

The Joseph L. Brechner Freedom of Information Project at the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications awarded the 2025 Brechner Freedom of Information Award to St. Louis Public Radio, APM Reports and The Marshall Project for their collaborative investigative project, "Unsolved." This groundbreaking project has been recognized for its commitment to transparency and for illuminating crucial issues of public interest through extensive reporting on unsolved murders in St. Louis, Missouri. The awardees' work highlights the importance of investigative reporting in holding governments accountable and igniting policy change that limits transparency for all.

Lunch costs \$20, but is optional. It includes a cold buffet with sandwiches, salads, drinks and desserts. Please register to attend as soon as possible, but no later than Monday, April 7. For more information and to register, go to tinyurl.com/Iguana2150. It is best to use the website to register, but if you can't, call in your registration to Jay Whitehead at 352-339-3010. Also, please consider helping the FFSF by renewing (or beginning) your membership at tinyurl.com/Iguana2151. Better still, become a patron or sponsor. ✨

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Expansion of legal assistance program for county residents

Alachua County is expanding its free legal assistance program to better support tenants facing legal challenges.

Funded through the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), this initiative provides no-cost legal aid to county residents dealing with evictions or legal barriers that threaten their housing stability. The program will be sunset in September 2025.

Previously, eligibility for assistance was limited to tenants within a specific area median income (AMI) threshold.

The program has been expanded to serve all tenants residing in Alachua County, re-

gardless of income level, before its end in September.

“By broadening access to this resource for the duration of the program, we are ensuring that more residents in need receive critical legal support to help them remain housed,” said Sarai Cabrera, director of the Division of Social Services.

Ways to access assistance:

Direct Legal Aid & Representation

Examples of cases that may be considered for legal assistance include housing issues (i.e. past evictions), background issues (sealing of record, expungement, etc.), child support enforcement and modification, dissolution of marriage, credit issues affecting eligibility to obtain affordable housing, garnishments and more.

Tenants facing eviction can contact the following legal service providers for direct legal case assistance:

- Florida Legal Services’ Eviction Prevention Helpline: 888-780-0443
- Three Rivers Legal Services: 352-372-0519

Monthly Tenant Legal Workshops

In collaboration with Florida Legal Services (FLS), Alachua County offers monthly legal workshops where residents can speak with attorneys, ask questions, and receive guidance on their specific situations. For details on upcoming workshops, call the helpline at 888-780-0443.

General Landlord/Tenant Helpline

Residents with additional questions or concerns about landlord/tenant issues are encouraged to call the helpline at 888-780-0443.

Since January 2021, Alachua County has received more than \$32.9 million in grants to go toward various ERAP initiatives, which included rent, utilities, housing stability, affordable housing and administrative costs. While there is no longer ERAP financial assistance, through this legal services initiative, more than 550 households/1,300 individuals have been impacted by the services.

For more information, contact an ERAP information and referral specialist at 352-264-6716. ☎

“In many respects, this country is becoming an oligarchy, with a tiny percentage of America owning the media, owning the country.”

~ Bernie Sanders, 2005



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Rise up, show up to preserve Social Security

by Mary Savage

The Trump-Musk-DOGE unholy trinity is sabotaging Social Security. Have you looked at the current Social Security Administration web site? Have you tried to set up your own account? What a confusing mess of cerebral-techno gibberish. How about a soon-to-be-retiree or a disabled person being able to speak to a live human being over the phone or in person instead of suffering through a confusing web site? The Trump-Musk-DOGE regime has made it difficult for seniors, the disabled and others to access their earned benefits and the services of the Social Security Administration. Watchdog groups and the still-free media are warning that Social Security is targeted for dismantling and privatization to Wall Street. But have you checked the stock market recently? Have you checked your 401(k)? The Trump economy has caused markets to tumble down. Wall Street keeps its fees while nest eggs decline in value. Do you want your Social Security dollars to go to a place of risky business called Wall Street? The answer is simple: NO YOU DO NOT.

Thankfully, high profile names also are sounding the alarm.

Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich recently posted to Facebook: "Trump's pick to run Social Security [Frank Bisignano] was once the second highest-paid CEO in the country. Do you think a millionaire ex-banker will defend one of our most important social safety nets? Or will he act on behalf of corporate interests that want to see the program gutted?"

Martin O'Malley, former head of the SSA under the Biden administration, said clearly in a recent MSNBC interview: "People need to rise up." O'Malley traveled to Florida last month on a tour that drew attention to the very real threats to Social Security. Alex Larson from Social Security Works came to Central Florida to sound the alarm, as well. And people rose up - and showed up. Both men spoke before crowds in rooms that were at standing room only capacity. So, word is slowly getting out and Americans are becoming aware.

The recent win by the Democrat in conservative Lancaster County, PA prompted political commentator James Carville to state: "There is an uprising in America. There just is." Carville talked with commentator Al Hunt on Politicon. Hunt agreed with Carville's assessment: "I think that's right. The policies are horrible. It's authoritarian. It may even be worse. It's a really sorry lot. ... When you are incompetent that really makes it worse. You have these DOGE henchmen throwing people out with important expertise. ... in nuclear power, nuclear energy, Social Security. It's really stunning and there's going to be a huge price to pay."

So, let's all rise up and show up to town halls, meetings, demonstrations and protests. Bring signs and American flags. Keep a cool head and be joyful, but keep writing and keep calling. Who? Your Congressional representative and two U.S. senators. Also talk with friends, family and neighbors. Write letters to the editor. Democracy is not a spectator sport and sitting on the bench these days is not an option. These are perilous times.

User-friendly Web sites for more information: the National Committee to Preserve Social Security (ncpssm.org) and Medicare and Social Security Works (socialsecurityworks.org). Keep up the good work. 🐢

Advertisement featuring a black and white image of Donald Trump and Elon Musk. The text reads: "Trump and Elon Musk's DOGE are a threat to our Social Security system." Below this are three boxes: "SSA website crashed four times in 10 days this month.", "Phone support is in shambles.", and "Mass firing of staff is causing systematic breakdown." At the bottom, it asks "Does this look *efficient* to you?"

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Trump goes nuclear on the federal workforce

by Joe DeManuelle-Hall

In his broadest attack on federal workers and their unions to date, President Donald Trump on Thursday announced an executive order that claimed to end collective bargaining rights for nearly the whole federal workforce. Early estimates have the move affecting 700,000 to 1 million federal workers, including at the Veterans Administration and the Departments of Defense, Energy, State, Interior, Justice, Treasury, Health and Human Services, and even Agriculture.

This gutting of federal worker rights has the potential to be a pivotal, existential moment for the labor movement. It is a step that recognizes that the Trump administration's rampage against the federal government is hitting a roadblock: unions.

Much remains to be seen: How quickly will the government move to execute the order? How much of it will stand up to challenges in court? Members of the Federal Unionists Network (FUN), who have been protesting ongoing firings and cuts, are holding an emergency organizing call on Sunday, March 30.

ECHOES OF PATCO

The move echoes past attacks on federal and public sector unions, including President Ronald Reagan firing 11,000 striking air traffic controllers, members of PATCO, in 1981. Reagan's move signaled "open season" on the labor movement, public and private sector alike. Reacting to the Trump executive order, Auto Workers President Shawn Fain said in a statement that after the PATCO firings, "The labor movement failed to act in that moment, and we have been paying the price ever since."

"The actions the administration has taken today are many times worse than PATCO," he said

The dubious mechanism that Trump is using to revoke these rights involves declaring wide swaths of the federal workforce to be too "sensitive" for union rights. The executive order claims that workers across the government have "as a primary function intelligence, counterintelligence, investigative, or national security work."

Historically the interpretation of this has been much narrower. While CIA operatives have not been eligible for collective bargaining, nurses at the Veterans Administration have. These rights have been law since the 1978 Civil Service Reform Act, and in various forms for years prior, starting with an executive order by President Kennedy in 1962.

For example, the Veterans Administration has the largest concentration of civilian workers in the federal government, with more than 486,000 workers. The Trump executive order declares all of them to be excluded from collective bargaining rights.

A MILLION WORKERS AFFECTED

The order names 10 departments in part or in full, and eight other governmental bodies like agencies or commissions, ranging from all civilian employees at the Department of Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency to all workers at the Centers for Disease Control (a part of the Department of Health and Human Services) and the General Services Administration.

Federal unions immediately denounced the executive order,

promising to challenge it in court. Everett Kelley, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, the largest federal union, said in a statement that AFGE “will fight relentlessly to protect our rights, our members, and all working Americans from these unprecedented attacks.”

It is unclear how quickly the federal government and its various agencies will act to nullify contracts and all that come with them.

At the Transportation Security Administration, where collective bargaining rights were axed in recent weeks, the impact was felt immediately: union representatives on union leave were called back to work, grievances were dropped, and contractual protections around scheduling were thrown out the window.

Some protests already in the works may become outlets for justified anger about the wholesale destruction of the federal labor movement.

Organizers with the FUN, a cross-union network of federal workers that has jumped into action as the crisis has deepened, are organizing local “Let Us Work” actions for federal workers

impacted by layoffs and hosting the Sunday emergency organizing call March 30.

This article was originally published by Labor Notes on March 28. See more at labornotes.org.



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The Repurpose Project prepares to expand (again)

by Sarah Goff

Co-Founder and Executive Director of The Repurpose Project

The dust has barely settled at Renovator Reuse (the third and newest thrift store), but The Repurpose Project is planning to expand again. This time, the goal is a bulk clearance store and donation processing center. Imagine clothing by-the-pound, electronics by-the-pound, and fill a bag or bucket deals. It will be one last chance for items.

The Repurpose Project hopes it will be a material supply source for artists and innovators to help us exponentially expand the local circular economy. It's dreamy, we know. Want to help us? Buy used! Tell your friends! Hang up a flyer! Share our social media posts! We need to raise funds to afford the electrical work and permitting required to occupy the 5,000 sq ft back building (that we own!) nestled behind the newly acquired Renovator Reuse building.

The Repurpose Project is a nonprofit organization, which means nobody owns it, nobody can sell it, and all the income generated by sales goes into running the operation: wages, utilities, mortgage, rent, supplies, etc. The vast majority of material sales goes toward paying our hardworking staff a wage they can live on. When you decide to spend your money with us, you are helping to create green jobs, you are voting for an alternative retail system that values the resources taken from our planet

instead of prioritizing profit, and you are supporting our efforts to innovate and expand reuse systems.

The Repurpose Project has seen rapid growth thanks to tremendous community support, a dedicated team of 40 hardworking staff members and a group of private lenders who decided to divest from Wall Street and instead loan us money to purchase buildings. Owning our properties has been a game changer for the organization with lower mortgage vs. rent, long term security without rent hikes, and a certainty that we can settle in and invest in upgrades without fear of being displaced.

Since 2012, The Repurpose Project has been working to innovate reuse systems and build a robust reuse economy that addresses all the various types of reusable material currently being wasted in our local community and it's working!

The first store, The Repurpose Project, focuses on arts and crafts materials. The second store, Reuse Planet, is focused on traditional thrift store material like furniture, clothes, shoes, and household items. The third store, Renovator Reuse, features used building material: tools, hardware, lumber, doors, windows, etc. We have expanded hours for all stores to seven days a week from 10am-6pm, except for Repurpose Project which is closed on Mondays.

Do you want to see a bulk clearance store next? The best way to help us get there is to buy used, buy local & spread the word! The Repurpose Project is primarily self-funded, meaning our growth has come from community support by way of material purchases. Vote with your dollar! Your dollar is your power! Thank you so much for supporting us and the reuse economy!

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Editors' picks: News that didn't fit

Bernie Sanders & AOC: 'Fighting oligarchy' with people power

Laura Flanders & Friends ~ You Tube ~ April 4 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2172

An overview of Bernie Sanders' "Fighting Oligarch" tour. Flanders talks with veterans, retirees and other concerned citizens at the rallies about their anger and fears over the direction the current administration is taking. In an interview, Bernie talks about what he hopes people will take away from his rallies, and how we can all push back against oligarchy.

Federal government's growing banned words list is chilling act of censorship

by AJ Connelly ~ Pen America ~ March 21 ~ pen.org/banned-words-list/

A growing list of words and materials are being scrubbed from government websites and documents in an attempt by the Trump administration to remove all references not only to diversity, equity and inclusion, but also to climate change, vaccines, and a host of other topics. PEN America has compiled a list of more than 250 words and phrases reportedly no longer considered acceptable by the Trump administration. As if we need further evidence of the authoritarian direct we are being propelled into, let's see the words being banned. Spoiler ... the list includes the words: abortion, birth, Black, dietary guidelines, equality, gay, legislation, measles, men, peanut allergies, people, political, privilege, race, stem cell, victims, and woman. C'mon, peanut allergies? People?

Florida's union-busting regime: A report from the front lines

by Jenn Powell ~ Labor Notes ~ March 19 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2167

Organizing in the South has always been challenging, and Florida's latest union-busting legislation has only made it harder. Public sector unions had successfully fought off these attacks for years, but the tide turned in May 2023. The new law imposed severe restrictions: requiring public sector unions to maintain 60 percent membership, banning payroll dues deductions, and mandating a cumbersome four-page membership form. Notably, police, fire, and corrections unions were exempt. Some unions — CWA, the American Federation of Teachers, the United Faculty of Florida, and many others — chose to fight back.

Progressive movement mourns loss of beloved media scholar Robert McChesney

by Brett Wilkins ~ Common Dreams ~ March 27 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2168

Robert McChesney — prominent media scholar, Free Press co-founder, and dogged defender of democracy died March 25 at the age of 72. He was the Gutsell endowed professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and author of nearly three dozen books including "Rich Media, Poor Democracy" and "The Problem With the Media." "The world of media scholarship, journalists far and wide, and anyone who cares about a free press, a functioning democracy, and a better world has suffered a tremendous loss," said Common Dreams' managing editor.

Radical change isn't free

by Ed Pilkington ~ Pressreader ~ March 25 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2169

Fred Hampton Jr. was days away from taking his first breath when his father was assassinated. Still in his mother's womb, he would have sensed the shots fired by police into his parents' bedroom at the back of 2337 Monroe Street, Chicago. Now 55, he self-identifies as "chairman" in his own right. Not of the Black Panther party, but of the Panther cubs - the children of the movement. The cubs paid a steep price, but also emerged with unassailable pride and burning lessons for today. In interviews with nine Panther cubs, they articulated a painful truth: that radical change does not come for free. It commands a price that so often is paid by the children of the revolution.

The thieves are in the White House

by Dave Zirin ~ Facebook post ~ March 24 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2170

Zirin posts that the barbaric Musk/Trump regime has not, even if it feels that way, created the madness that is going on. He shows that we are just at a terrible, frightening point of what has been a continuum, giving examples such as the doubling of the U.S. prison population in the 1990s, politicians campaigning for money instead of embracing harm-reduction solutions after Columbine and other horrific school shootings, and women dying in emergency rooms while fearful doctors wait for callbacks from attorneys to see if they are allowed to save lives.

When fascism comes to America

by Bill Durston ~ Common Dreams ~ April 3 ~ <https://www.commondreams.org/opinion/trump-fascism-america>

The list of common characteristics in the study of 20th-century fascist dictators and their regimes includes 14 categories in all, and Trump and his MAGA disciples have already exhibited characteristics in most of these categories. The question now is whether the people of the United States have the necessary critical thinking skills, moral compass, and political courage to reverse the rise of fascism in our country before further harm is done.

Why this Yale professor is fleeing America

Interview by A Martínez ~ NPR ~ April 1 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2171

The Trump administration says it is reviewing about \$9 billion in funding for Harvard. It's the latest school to be targeted for what the administration says is a failure to protect students from antisemitism. Philosopher and Professor Jason Stanley believes investigations like that with ultimatums tied to federal funding are a threat to academic freedom — such a threat that he's leaving Yale University and the United States to teach American studies at the University of Toronto. He explains his rationale for the move. 🐢

Spotlight on new group: Voices for Common Ground

From doomscrolling to doing: Our journey toward connection and action

by Voices for Common Ground members
Tanya Mickler, Michele Gutierrez, Tamara Martin,
Betsy Williams, and Lisa Wolcott

On a hot Gainesville day in July 2024, one of our founders sent out an email with deep resonance for many of us. She shared her thoughts on an alternative to the growing habit of “doomscrolling” — the act of mindlessly consuming negative news online, which had begun to feel like a futile attempt to make sense of the chaos around us.

But doomscrolling wasn’t working because our feeds didn’t have the answer to the question we were grappling with: where is our country headed? Conversations with friends, family, and co-workers often seemed to lack common ground. The constant churn of divisive politics deepened the sense of helplessness. Was there a way to break the cycle of despair and paralysis?

We identified a way forward when several of us saw Heather Cox Richardson’s appearance with Red Wine & Blue (RWB), a grassroots organization dedicated to empowering women to organize locally. Heather, a historian and author of the popular daily newsletter *Letters from an American*, spoke passionately about Project 2025 and the urgent need for people to step up and take action. Her message was clear: as a nation, we face deep

challenges, but by having one conversation at a time, we can counter the divisive rhetoric that is tearing us apart. Heather’s call to action resonated deeply with us, especially since Florida’s political climate is as intense as its humidity.

We started our chapter in August 2024 and named it Voices for Common Ground. It is associated with RWB/Trouble Nation and focuses on issues, not political parties. We are united by a shared commitment to civil rights (reproductive rights, anti-racism, LGBTQ+ rights, voting rights ...).

While we can’t support specific candidates or parties, our goal is to contribute meaningfully to the political conversation by focusing on values that matter to our community. A key part of our journey has been creating a space for respectful dialogue where people can engage thoughtfully, even when they disagree.

We realized we need more than just discussion: we need to support each other and extend that support to our local community. At our first meeting of the year, reflecting on the postelection climate, it became clear that many people we knew were struggling with similar emotions, such as fear, despair, and burnout. We wanted to offer a way to help. Since several mental health professionals are part of our group, the idea for a supportive workshop began to take shape. Together, we saw an opportunity to put the idea of sharing and mutual support into action, which inspired our upcoming workshop, *Staying Strong and Grounded During Political Turmoil*.

Scheduled for April 27 from 1:30-3:30 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, our *Staying Strong and Grounded During Political Turmoil* workshop is designed to help people manage their stress and emotions during these tumultuous times. We know that connection is key, and we wanted to create an event where people could come together and learn how to cope more effectively with the distress caused by our unprecedented political situation.

The workshop will cover strategies for stress relief, healthy boundary setting, and cultivating joy. We’ll also address how to navigate difficult conversations and relationships with empathy and understanding. In short, we’re providing tools to help people stay grounded and focused, no matter how overwhelming the world around us all may get.

As we reflect on how our chapter came to be, it’s impossible not to return to that email sent in July which sparked it all. It wasn’t just about finding alternatives to doomscrolling, it was about creating a space where we could step away from the cycle of despair and start acting with purpose. Our group is one example of how, when people are given the chance to connect, they can transform collective anxiety into action.

To RSVP for the workshop or join the chapter, please head to tinyurl.com/Iguana2152 or email questions to voicesforcommonground@proton.me.

For more information on Voices for Common Ground, visit tinyurl.com/Iguana2153. 🐢





Postal workers, supporters protest against cutbacks, privatization

On Sunday, March 23, the four corners of University Avenue and 13th Street in Gainesville were filled with over 80 postal workers and their supporters waving signs to show support for our US Postal Service, and against the cutbacks and imminent attempts to privatize our constitutionally enshrined government mail service. The event was coordinated by the National Association of Letter Carriers Union, and were part of nationwide protests that day.

There are no set plans in place, but in all likelihood, this May Day will see demonstrations across the country in support of workers' rights and immigration rights, and against the DOGE commanded layoffs and firings taking place at the Veterans Administration and the national parks, in the fields of scientific research, and in many other important areas. Photo by Chuck Ross. ✨



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Appeals court turns down Trump administration on reinstating OMB funding freeze

A federal appeals court denied a request from the Trump administration to overturn a lower court's preliminary injunction, which has so far blocked the White House budget office from implementing

a freeze on trillions in grants and loans. The three-judge panel said the Department of Justice failed to show that the federal government would "be irreparably injured absent a stay," or that a stay

of the lower court's ruling pending appeal would serve the "public interest."

From an article by Jennifer Shutt in the Florida Phoenix on March 27. See the full story at: tinyurl.com/Iguana2160

Deferred prosecution programs offer second chances for offenders

Young adults tend to fumble. Some drop a class; some get busted for marijuana or fake IDs. For the latter, former State Attorney and Florida Sen. Rod Smith introduced a still-thriving solution in the early 1990s: deferred prosecution agreements, or DPAs. A privilege offered to first-time offenders of nonviolent crimes, DPAs

are a contract between a defendant and the State Attorney's Office to complete community service hours or donate to selected nonprofits in exchange for dropped charges. Many of these offenders are college-age, especially in Gainesville, where college students make up a significant portion of the population, Smith said. He

wanted to avoid giving them a criminal record that would hurt job applications, professional school admissions or whatever their future holds, he added.

From an article by Vera Lucia Pappaterra in the Independent Florida Alligator on March 4. See the full story at: tinyurl.com/Iguana2161

Federal appeals court turns down Trump attempt to block rehiring of fired workers

A federal appeals court denied the Trump administration's emergency effort to block the reinstatement of federal employees at six government agencies. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit rejected the government's request to stay a Northern California district court's March 13 ruling ordering the departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, Interior, Treasury and

Veterans Affairs to reinstate thousands of probationary positions. The newly hired or promoted employees were fired as part of an agenda to slash federal jobs carried out by President Donald Trump and billionaire White House adviser Elon Musk. "Given that the district court found that the employees were wrongfully terminated and ordered an immediate return

to the status quo ante, an administrative stay of the district court's order would not preserve the status quo. It would do just the opposite — it would disrupt the status quo and turn it on its head," according to the 9th Circuit order.

From an article by Ashley Murray in the Florida Phoenix on March 17. See the full story at: tinyurl.com/Iguana2162

Judge bars DOGE access to sensitive personal information at 3 federal agencies

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Personnel Management and Treasury Department were temporarily barred by a federal judge from disclosing the "personally identifiable information" of a lawsuit's plaintiffs and organization members

to Elon Musk's U.S. DOGE Service. U.S. District Judge Deborah Boardman, who issued the preliminary injunction, wrote in her opinion that "no matter how important or urgent the President's DOGE agenda may be, federal agencies must ex-

ecute it in accordance with the law" and "that likely did not happen in this case."

From an article by Shauneen Miranda in the Florida Phoenix on March 24. See the full story at: tinyurl.com/Iguana2164

Pentagon restores purged Jackie Robinson article after outcry

Last week, it was discovered that an article about Jackie Robinson—the civil rights pioneer who broke Major League Baseball's color barrier in 1947—was removed from the U.S. Department of Defense website as part of the Trump Administration's purge of materials deemed related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). After a twenty-four-hour ground-

swell of criticism from the media and the public, the Pentagon then restored the article to its website. The article, which was published in 2021 as part of a series on veteran athletes called "Sports Heroes Who Served," outlines Robinson's life story and contributions to the Civil Rights Movement, including his 1944 court-martialing for refusing to move to

the back of an Army bus while serving in the military. Since Donald Trump's Inauguration, the Pentagon has removed tens of thousands of images and articles deemed DEI-related from its website.

From an article by Dave Kaufman in The Progressive Magazine on March 26. See the full story at: tinyurl.com/Iguana2165

U.S. Supreme Court sides against Trump in legal fight over \$2B in frozen foreign aid

The U.S. Supreme Court ordered the Trump administration to continue payments on \$2 billion in foreign aid that had been frozen, overturning an administrative stay that Chief Justice John Roberts entered in late February. American Civil Liberties Union Executive Director Anthony D. Romero released a written statement that the district court "rightly

held that President Trump exceeded his authority when he unilaterally declared he was freezing funding for programs Congress had already authorized, stifling federal contractors who had already done work ... We're pleased to see the Supreme Court uphold the Constitution and act as an essential check on the executive branch in this case brought by Public

Citizen," Romero wrote. "What happens next is critical," he added. "The Trump administration has a constitutional duty to comply with this order. At its core, this is a case about checks and balances and the rule of law."

From an article by Jennifer Shutt in The Florida Phoenix on March 5. See the full story at: tinyurl.com/Iguana2166

Working people under attack

by Carmen Ward, President, ACEA,
and Jason Bellamy-Fults, Recording
Secretary, IBEW Local 1205,
both proud members of the North Central
Florida Central Labor Council

Unfortunately, working people in our community are currently facing formidable labor struggles at the local, state, and national levels. Below are some updates and ways that you can be of support.

Support our Alachua County teachers!

When it comes to bargaining in the public school system, things are very complicated. Most employees are represented by the union, Alachua County Education As-

sociation (ACEA), if they are education support professionals (e.g., food service workers, bus drivers, facilities staff, and paraprofessionals) or instructional employees (i.e., teachers). The ACEA negotiates with the School Board's appointed district team for both units within ACEA.

Usually, we have a season of bargaining that lasts 6 to 8 months. We started in February of 2024. The ACEA education support professional team has been done with the 2024-25 bargaining since Jan. 15 when they ratified the joint agreement and so did the Board. This ratification came after an impasse from the union, a

federal mediation settlement agreement where the district refused to budge from the 1.6% increase and only agreed to also make it retroactively in place to the beginning of the contract.

The ACEA instructional team has been bargaining for the 2024-2025 school year salary and working conditions for nearly 14 months.

On Jan. 15 the School Board's proposal failed to be ratified by the instructional team bargaining unit. ACEA returned to the bargaining table in January of 2025. The union has proposed in the most recent proposal for a 3.5% salary increase and many equitable supplements or differentiated pay.

The district returned to the table with a smaller offer than the previous tentative agreement: only a 1% retroactive raise for instructional employees. According to ACEA's research, this 1% represents the lowest instructional raise amount offered in the state. It is concerning that employees during an employee shortage are not given priority. We are losing employees every day and Alachua County Public Schools needs to be competitive with its salary for the rank-and-file employees that serve the students in the public school system.

The district and the union return to the bargaining table on April 3, and our bargaining meetings are public meetings but do not allow for public input. To support our teachers, there is public comment at the Board meetings. The next one is April 15. If you can't make it in person, you can call or email our School Board members at boardmembers@gm.sbac.edu. Our message is that we want our School Board members to make competitive salaries a budget priority. Currently our teachers feel like an afterthought.

In Tallahassee, the legislative session is upon us, which means, as surely as the sun rises, more abysmal anti-worker legislation is being brought forward by our legislators and their corporate sponsors. This year's session includes: attacks on the state minimum wage, severely weakening child labor protections, further undermining the state's already knee-capped public sector unions, and making Florida's dreadful unemployment system even worse.

If you aren't already, please make reaching out to members of your state legislative



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delegation a priority. Things are moving quickly in Tallahassee, but if you want to keep on top of what's happening from a labor perspective, check out Caring Class Revolt's and Florida For All's substacks (tinyurl.com/Iguana2154 and tinyurl.com/Iguana2155) and/or action alerts from the Florida AFL-CIO (<https://flafacio.org/>). A shout-out to our own Jenn Powell for her recent column in Labor Notes on the attacks against our unions (tinyurl.com/Iguana2156).

And, of course, at the federal level, Trump and Elon's anti-worker Project 2025 agenda continues. Recently, our fellow workers at the U.S. Postal Service rallied in communities throughout the U.S. to oppose Trump's efforts to dismantle the Postal Service. There was a rally in Gainesville and we posted some of Chuck Ross's images from the action on our substack (tinyurl.com/Iguana2157). If you couldn't make the action but still want to register your support for Postal workers, visit tinyurl.com/Iguana2158.

As of this writing, Trump and his anti-union handlers have also launched a full-out assault on federal workers' very right to organize. They're doing so explicitly because, as we've pointed out previously, unions have been American institutions which haven't preemptively given in to Trump's demands.

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) has set up an action hub for people to make calls to their legislators (tinyurl.com/Iguana2159). According to the Economic Policy Institute, more than 150,000 federal workers reside in the Sunshine State. If you or someone you know has access to representation by AFGE, now is the time to sign up for E-Dues and to get involved in your union to defend your right to organize.

And lastly, the word from her office is that Scaredy-Kat Cammack is going to come out of hiding and actually hold some town halls throughout her district later this month. Let's make damn sure that we show up and hold her to account for all this nonsense; or at least hold a town hall without her if she can't be bothered to answer to her constituents.

The hits are going to keep coming until we organize together and hit back. But always remember the wise words of Big Bill Haywood: "If the workers are organized, all they have to do is to put their hands in their pockets and they have got the capitalist class whipped." 🐸

The 2025 Economic Blackout Tour

from blackdoctor.org

An economic blackout is a coordinated effort where a community collectively refrains from spending money at specific businesses or sectors for a determined period. The aim is to leverage economic influence to demand corporate accountability, fairness, and investment in Black communities.

Economic blackouts are not just about withholding spending but about fostering accountability, promoting equity, and encouraging long-term community investment. They serve as a catalyst for broader conversations about corporate responsibility, consumer power, and systemic change.

Blackout dates

- April 7-14:** Walmart Boycott
- April 18:** Economic Blackout 2
- April 21-28:** General Mills Boycott
- May 6-12:** Amazon Boycott 2
- May 20-26:** Walmart Boycott 2
- June 3-9:** Target Boycott
- June 24-30:** McDonald's Boycott
- July 4:** Independence Day Boycott

For more information, see tinyurl.com/Iguana2175 🐸



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Alachua County, FL





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This project is funded in part by Visit Gainesville, Alachua County, and in part by a grant from the City of Gainesville, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department.

Historic downtown block threatened

by Melanie Barr

The buildings in the 100 block of N. Main Street are threatened with demolition even though they are significant in terms of age, history and architecture.

The two former houses were built in 1879. One was later used by the Wine and Cheese Gallery for 43 years, and the other was a law office for over 100 years. Destroying them is an odd way to celebrate Alachua County's 200th anniversary this year.

The people who occupied the historic houses are significant. James B. Brown, who purchased a lot in 1873, was one of only two people who was the Mayor of Gainesville three times. He was Mayor in 1871, 1885 and 1888, and maneuvered the City through the aftermath of the fire that destroyed much of downtown. The

population also doubled in the ten years from 1880 to 1890.

Brown's daughter married Barton Thrasher who was the first to use the house at 103 N. Main for his home and law office. After his death in 1882, his son Barton Thrasher Jr. took over the law practice in the house. In 1920 Barton Thrasher Jr. was appointed Judge of the 8th Judicial Circuit Court.

James Douglas named his son after his close friend, Barton Thrasher. Barton Douglas inherited the house and used the building for his home and law office. This building is likely the only one in Alachua County continually in use as a law office for over 100 years.

In terms of architecture, the houses are Vernacular Victorians. There are few houses from the 1800s still in existence in Gainesville in the style of these houses. Additionally, the Modern Shoe Repair, a unique two-story stucco addition to the Barton Douglas law office, is approximately 100 years old this year.

The owner of all these properties is the Holy Trinity Episcopal church, which

cherishes its own history. When the sanctuary burned down in 1991, they built a near replica of the original building. They recently installed a State Historic Marker in the Pleasant Street neighborhood honoring the St. Augustine Mission Church and School that they established in 1894 for persons of color.

Yet, they are firm in their desire to clear all the buildings off the lot. The vacant lot will become a parking lot and park.

The church does plan to raise money to place buildings on the site, but this is years away. In the meantime they have done no, or little, maintenance on the buildings, which are now in bad shape.

The terms preservationists use for this is "demolition by neglect." However, anything can be restored if there is money and a willing preservationist.

To learn more about the history of this block, and why downtown revitalization is important, please attend a lecture that will be illustrated with a Power Point presentation at the Matheson Museum on Wednesday, April 16 at 7pm. ☞

"Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference."

~ Jane Goodall

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Recommended blogs / web sites



joycevance.substack.com

Joyce Vance is a law professor and former U.S. attorney who writes about pressing issues, untangles questions about the legal system and details what we can do to protect the right to vote.

"I believe that being a citizen is the most important work any of us can do. As citizens, a key part of our role is to educate ourselves and stay informed."

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.



<https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com>



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produces a daily, global news hour hosted by award-winning journalists Amy Goodman and Juan González.

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Today's Edition Newsletter

Robert Hubbell



Citizen. Optimist. Realist.

Robert B. Hubbell is a former lawyer who writes about current political issues and policies.

"A reflection on today's news through the lens of hope."

roberthubbell@substack.com

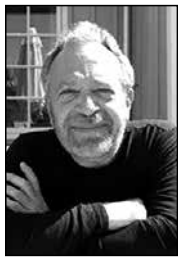
The Point

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/thepoint and enter your email.

Robert Reich writes at robertreich.substack.com

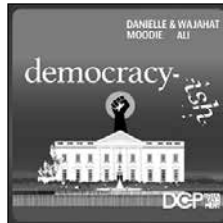
A professor of public policy at Berkeley and former Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration writes a daily newsletter "not just to inform (and occasionally amuse) you, but also



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."

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/lguana2122>

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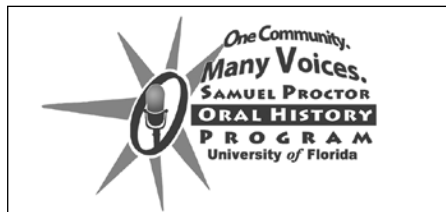
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Oral History Program

History and the people who make it: Dr. Paul Ortiz



This month, the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program at the University of Florida features excerpts from a 2021 interview with Dr. Paul Ortiz [O], a UF professor and the director of the SPOHP at the time. Currently a professor of labor history at Cornell University, he has a personal and academic background in African American history, Latinx studies, and oral history. He was interviewed by George Topalidis [T]. Excerpt edited by Beth Grobman. For the full interview go to tinyurl.com/Iguana2149

T: What level of support did you find for the Oral History Program when you came to UF?

O: We're in a world class facility which was built with our needs in mind. We have space for production, recording suites. It's a really nice piece of real estate for an oral history program to thrive. When I first met Sam Proctor in the mid-nineties, the UF Oral History was in the basement of Anderson Hall and the offices leaked ... you could see the rain coming down the side of the walls; we're in a much better space than we were back then.

Oral history program directors all across the country are a pretty close knit fraternity and we really have to hustle for our resources because when you talk about working with underserved communities, refugee communities, people of color, working class people — a lot of people in higher ed — their eyes start rolling and they really, a lot of administrators, unfortunately, just don't care. A lot of colleagues don't care.

With the SPOHP, we've gotten a lot of support for African American history initiatives and for other initiatives. But a lot of it is outside of university; we have a robust group of supporters who come through with donations. I've always relied upon private donors. If I went to the Dean's office to ask for those things, I would just be wasting my time and their time, because the answer is going to be no. I hope that will change sometime.

T: Have you experienced any prejudice, discrimination or microaggressions at UF? Do you recall specific episodes?

O: Oh, yeah. I've experienced them. I'm currently president of the United Faculty of Florida, and a lot of our faculty experience racism. We've had Chinese faculty here who faced anti-Chinese racism. We've had to file grievances in support of them. We've had Black faculty who faced anti-Black racism. And what pisses me off most is the racism my students face.

I had one of my graduate students about seven or eight years ago who was late for a seminar. A couple days later he told me that he had been stopped by the campus police — they had patted him down and they had accused him of stealing someone's laptop. It was so absurd. And just really, you know, hurtful to this person because they gave him really harsh treatment. We called the campus police later. They said, "Oh, there had been a misunderstanding." There was never any apology. That kind of thing happens all the time here.

I have gotten profiled on campus. One time I was walking around campus. I was wearing a hoodie. A cop stopped me and started hassling me. I asked what is this about? And he said, "well, you know, you fit the description of a person who just stole a flat screen TV from a student apartment." And I said, "Well, you know, I don't even watch TV that much. I don't have any reason to steal a flat screen TV," and so he hassled me more.

Finally I pulled out my professor's card. I said, "You know, I just had dinner with your chief just last week, Tony Jones, and I can call him right now." It kind of spooked him and he backed off and drove away. But, you know, it's just things like that. And again, my African American colleagues have to deal with much worse.

I could give you many examples, but we would be here all day. And this wouldn't just be UF, it would be other universities, too. Because in spite of what you see on a university's homepage, you know, Black Studies is still dramatically under resourced and underfunded in the United States.

T: Why have you decided to remain active in your current position at UF?



Dr. Paul Ortiz served as director of the SPOHP and as a professor in the UF history department for 15 years.

O: One of the reasons is that people of my generation, progressive and radical scholars, were trained and mentored by people who fought so hard to just secure small intellectual beachheads in higher education. Higher education is very conservative, and it exists to serve the interests primarily of the Monsantos, the Lockheed Martins, the Boeings the phosphate companies, the fertilizer companies.

The last major that we approved in the Academic Senate before I left U.C. Santa Cruz was a major in video gaming, and that was a major designed to serve the interests of Silicon Valley, so that Silicon Valley firms that were involved in gaming wouldn't have to spend resources to train their new workers, right?

They got workers that were trained by the public on the public dime. And that's the status quo in higher education. And so that's kind of what keeps me in the game. I see a lot of students who want to become critical thinkers. They want to become writers, you know, they want to figure out how to make the world a better place. I think oral history is at the intersection. And when you add the intellectual rigor and research and the skills you learn in oral history. I just think it's a great place to be.

T: As the director, as a professor, what level of mentoring are you expected to provide to UF?

O: Well, a lot. It's a lifetime commitment.

I'm writing letters. I'm now old enough to be writing mid-career letters for my former grad students. The first cohort of them are actually becoming full professors. It's really kind of cool to watch. And so the mentoring. I just try to pay it forward like what people like Cedric Robinson or Angela Davis or Carlos Muñoz or Dave Roediger did for me, which is to just be there for my students.

I've been on 20 or more dissertation committees now for about seven or eight consecutive years. And so I do the faculty of color double duty thing. And I've had deans call me on this campus and say, Paul, if we can't get you on this student's committee as the race and ethnicity person, they're not going to be able to matriculate to their exams. So, I mean, wow, what a great choice you've just given me. Okay. So yeah, I'll be on the committee, which means I'll do more reading, et cetera. So there's a lot of mentoring.

You mentioned earlier the microaggressions. One of my grad students who just finished got a great tenure track job and was told early on in her tenure here at UF in the history department, "You're not going to make it as an academic. You don't have the intellectual capacity." Well, now she's a very successful professor at a really good university.

Every once in a while I'll send messages back to the department. "Oh, this person's doing really well." And I'm sure it just irritates them. You know, like I said, the kind of shit I have to put up with here as a Latino faculty member is nothing compared to the kind of stuff my graduate students or undergraduates have to deal with.

Other faculty in African American studies can tell you many of the same types of stories, you know, or the students in the Palestinian student organization. Other people, other students or administrators just make up stories about them and claim they're anti-Semitic or something. I'm like, well, where's your evidence? I know these students, they're kind, they're gentle. Some of them are Jewish themselves, you know? And so why would you accuse them of being anti Semites? "Well, you know, President Trump is really concerned about this." I'm like, really? President Trump is concerned about anti-Semitism? I don't think so.

There's all sorts of things that go on at UF, but it's like any other walk of life. I mean there's the good, the bad, the ugly. And I was blessed because when I was in grad school, my dissertation advisor and

my professors made it clear to me that academia was no better or no worse than any other kind of firm or enterprise in the United States.

Any good that you did, you had to do it yourself. You had to start programs, you had to keep programs going. You couldn't take anything for granted. You could lose a lot of ground. You know I'm sure there are people that would love to shut down the Oral History Program. I'm sure there are people that would love to shut down African American Studies. But we're going to continue to fight to keep our programs open because we're successful, and our students get so much out of it, and they go on and do great things.

T: What should the administration do to recruit Black faculty and staff?

O: This administration needs to make a recommitment to intellectual freedom, period. A number of faculty have been abused, frankly. And so it's gonna to be very difficult to recruit or retain colleagues in this environment. The thing that mainly keeps faculty of color here is family. And you know, UF is a really good university. The students are among the best in the country, the faculty are awesome. The staff are incredible but right now, this university is like a rudderless ship in terms of the attention it plays to issues of race and inequality. And it's gonna be very difficult to recruit and retain faculty.

The faculty that want to come here are people like myself who were raised to be fighters, who come here because it's almost kind of like a missionary thing — maybe we can do something to turn this thing around. It shouldn't have to be like that because it means you're always doing the faculty of color double duty thing here at UF. We need to get a lot of our white colleagues, frankly, just to step up more.

If you're in a room where someone says, "We just can't find qualified Black students to apply to our PhD programs," you need to be the white person that steps up and says, bullshit, that's fucking ridiculous because a corporation like Brown Foreman, the Jack Daniels folks, Microsoft, they would never say some crap like that. We can't find enough qualified Black or Latino applicants. They go out and do it. They find a way to do it. They say, "If you don't have a diverse leadership team, if you don't have a certain number of people who identify as LGBT, Black, immigrant, et cetera, it's gonna hurt your bottom line. Because we're a corporation

that has offices all throughout the world. We cannot be seen as lily white. It will be devastating to our bottom line."

T: What is your view of what it means to be an ally?

O: To me, it's being there. I've got the reputation of speaking up quite a bit on campus. But I need allies. I really could use some of those. Educate yourself on how you benefited from settler colonialism and then work with us to create a more just world, if you are willing to publicly put your name out there. So the allyship test is right there. You can be a wonderful ally today, or you can continue to kind of take a step back and just see how things are going and say, "Oh, the union will take care of that. Well, Paul Ortiz will take care of that." Well, that's bullshit unless you're willing to step up and take care of that.

T: What sort of responsibility do white grad students, white junior faculty, white administrators, white staff members — what role do they play in sort of asserting this sort of allyship?

O: Their role should be, first of all, listening and finding out what's happening in their bailiwick. How are our faculty being treated? If you find out they're being abused, then work to change that. But I think the first thing is to listen and to try to learn from people you know.

The big problem in academia right now is people — administration or faculty types. They'll make all these really complicated plans when all they really had to do is just listen to the people that this stuff is affecting, whether it's undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, staff. You know, talk about allyship, if you want to be ally in this campus right now, what are you doing about helping to improve staff salaries, because a lot of staff here are people of color, women, who've been working here 20, 30 years and make terrible wages. There's just so many things we can do.

The Samuel Proctor Oral History Program believes that listening carefully to first-person narratives can change the way we understand history, from scholarly questions to public policy.

SPOHP needs the public's help to sustain and build upon its research, teaching and service missions: even small donations can make a big difference in SPOHP's ability to gather, preserve, and promote history for future generations. Learn more at oral.history.ufl.edu. 🐢

From FIGHTING, p. 1

Gainesville is not going to be the savior of our electorate, we need to reach all of those who are also struggling in these rural areas. Some are already seeing the error in their votes, some will take a little longer, but even the wealthy are taking losses from this new Administration. Unless you are in the top 1% you will feel direct effects soon.

Now Bernie is out on his "Fighting Oligarchy" tour with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and if we don't pay attention to what they are bringing together, the people, we will continue to fail in future elections.

Everything is at stake. We will not win relying on democratic Supervoters, we need to bring in the 89 MILLION voters who stayed home. That voting bloc was the real winner, with more votes than either Republican or Democrats.

To quote Bernie, "The Democratic Party needs a major transformation. It can no longer be a top-down, billionaire-funded, consultant-driven party. It must be a multi-generational, multi-racial working class party. In a time of growing oligarchy and authoritarianism, that's the only path to victory." And he's right.

I am a lifelong Democrat. Yes, I am also what you can consider a left-wing democrat and yes, we do exist within the party.

I personally believe everyone working 40 hours should not be living in poverty, I want to see billionaires like Musk, Bezos, Zuckerberg (and many more) taxed out of that billionaire status, I want to see Medicaid expansion and eventually a Medicare for All program that will guarantee healthcare to everyone. Nobody should die because they are too afraid to go to the doctor because of the cost or the cost of treatment. I believe in public education and protecting Medicare and Social Security:

we paid into those programs and we don't need Elon Musk looting them.

Bernie has a plan, and you are included. A recent email from Bernie answered the question "Where do we go from here?"

"First, we have to understand that the economic and political crises facing our country will NOT be solved in Washington, DC. The system is just too corrupt. As a result of Citizens United, billionaires in both parties are able to spend unlimited sums of money buying and selling politicians — and that's what they do. Further, on any given day, thousands of corporate lobbyists roam the halls of Congress doing the bidding of their corporate masters.

"The ONLY way that real change ever takes place is from the bottom on up. It's when millions of people, at the grassroots level, reject the status quo and stand up for justice and decency.

"And the good news is that we're beginning to see that happen right now — all across the country. Seniors in large numbers are telling Congress: don't cut the Social Security Administration. Veterans and their organizations are telling Congress: don't cut the Veterans Administration. Students are telling Congress: don't cut Pell grants and student loans. Large numbers of people are coming out to town meetings — and taking on members of Congress who are prepared to vote against their interests.

"Over the past several weeks I've held a series of town meetings in Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan. And what I have found is that in these districts, and all across the country, Americans are saying loudly and clearly: NO to oligarchy, NO to authoritarianism, NO to kleptocracy, NO to massive cuts in programs that working people desperately need, NO to huge tax breaks for the richest people in our country.

"There must be meetings and rallies in all 50 states, and they should take place over and over again. And when those rallies are over, we need to organize the people who attend to mobilize in their communities and be in touch with their members of Congress.

"But that is not all.

"We need progressives to run for office at all levels. I am talking about school boards, city councils, state legislature and the races that are not in the news but make a tremendous difference in local communities.

"We need to build community and bring people together even when it isn't about politics first. The Republican Party is always trying to divide us up based on race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and more ... we need to come together as one.

"We need to elect a U.S. House and a U.S. Senate that will prioritize the needs of the working people in this country. We now have open Senate seats in Minnesota, Michigan, and New Hampshire. Who are the progressives that are going to run, and how can we support them? There are also a number of House seats that can be won.

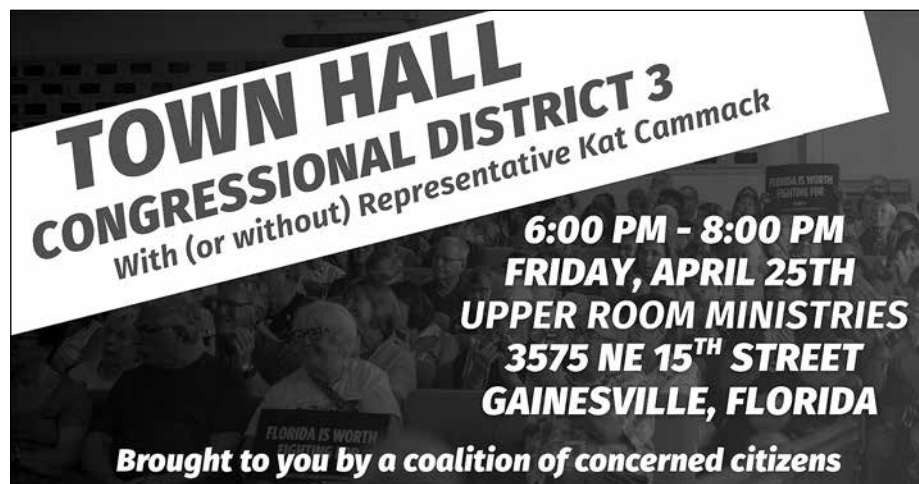
"Further, we need to be looking for new and creative ways to educate each other in a world where nearly the entire media and communications infrastructure is owned and controlled by the wealthiest people in this country. If there was ever a time in American history when we need to come together, this is that time.

"Not me. Us. That is the only way forward."

A major spark is being reignited in me. Of course I never stopped "Feeling the Bern." If we are going to win, it's not going to be because of Bernie or any other Politician, it's going to be because YOU. It was never about Bernie Sanders, it has always been about Us.

I hope you will attend the Congressional District 3 Town Hall (with or without Rep. Kat Cammack, she's been invited) on Friday, April 25 from 6-8pm at Upper Room Ministries, 3575 NE 15th Street. This isn't a Bernie Sanders event, but an event put together by a coalition of concerned citizens and organizations from throughout the district. Will our red district representative show up? We shall see, but we are ready to host an empty chair town hall, so you can be heard. Please join us.

To plug into what is going on with the local Democratic party, go to: mobilize.us/alachuadems. 🐾



TOWN HALL
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 3
With (or without) Representative Kat Cammack

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
FRIDAY, APRIL 25TH
UPPER ROOM MINISTRIES
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Brought to you by a coalition of concerned citizens

Mahmoud Khalil, in his own words

The remarkable and moving statement from Columbia University student, Palestinian activist, and US political prisoner Mahmoud Khalil, arrested illegally by the Trump administration, and now held in a Louisiana detention center despite having a Green card:

My name is Mahmoud Khalil and I am a political prisoner. I am writing to you from a detention facility in Louisiana where I wake to cold mornings and spend long days bearing witness to the quiet injustices underway against a great many people precluded from the protections of the law.

Who has the right to have rights? It is certainly not the humans crowded into the cells here. It isn't the Senegalese man I met who has been deprived of his liberty for a year, his legal situation in limbo and his family an ocean away. It isn't the 21-year-old detainee I met, who stepped foot in this country at age nine, only to be deported without so much as a hearing.

Justice escapes the contours of this nation's immigration facilities.

On March 8, I was taken by DHS agents who refused to provide a warrant, and accosted my wife and me as we returned from dinner. By now, the footage of that night has been made public. Before I knew what was happening, agents handcuffed and forced me into an unmarked car. At that moment, my only concern was for Noor's safety. I had no idea if she would be taken too, since the agents had threatened to arrest her for not leaving my side. DHS would not tell me anything for hours — I did not know the cause of my arrest or if I was facing immediate deportation. At 26 Federal Plaza, I slept on the cold floor. In the early morning hours, agents transported me to another facility in Elizabeth, New Jersey. There, I slept on the ground and was refused a blanket despite my request.

My arrest was a direct consequence of exercising my right to free speech as I advocated for a free Palestine and an end to the genocide in Gaza, which resumed in full force Monday night. With January's ceasefire now broken, parents in Gaza are once again cradling too-small shrouds, and families are forced to weigh starvation and displacement against bombs. It is our moral imperative to persist in the struggle for their complete freedom.

I was born in a Palestinian refugee camp in Syria to a family which has been displaced from their land since the 1948 Nakba. I spent my youth in proximity to yet distant from my homeland. But being Palestinian is an experience that transcends borders. I see in my circumstances similarities to Israel's use of administrative detention — imprisonment without trial or charge — to strip Palestinians of their rights. I think of our friend Omar Khatib, who was incarcerated without charge or trial by Israel as he returned home from travel. I think of Gaza hospital director and pediatrician Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, who was taken captive by the Israeli military on Dec. 27 and remains in an Israeli torture camp today.

For Palestinians, imprisonment without due process is commonplace.

I have always believed that my duty is not only to liberate myself from the oppressor, but also to liberate my oppressors from their hatred and fear. My unjust detention is indicative of the anti-Palestinian racism that both the Biden and Trump administrations have demonstrated over the past 16 months

as the U.S. has continued to supply Israel with weapons to kill Palestinians and prevented international intervention. For decades, anti-Palestinian racism has driven efforts to expand U.S. laws and practices that are used to violently repress Palestinians, Arab Americans, and other communities. That is precisely why I am being targeted.

While I await legal decisions that hold the futures of my wife and child in the balance, those who enabled my targeting remain comfortably at Columbia University. Presidents Shafik, Armstrong, and Dean Yarhi-Milo laid the groundwork for the U.S. government to target me by arbitrarily disciplining pro-Palestinian students and allowing viral doxing — based on racism and disinformation — to go unchecked.

Columbia targeted me for my activism, creating a new authoritarian disciplinary office to bypass due process and silence students criticizing Israel. Columbia surrendered to federal pressure by disclosing student records to Congress and yielding to the Trump administration's latest threats. My arrest, the expulsion or suspension of at least 22 Columbia students — some stripped of their B.A. degrees just weeks before graduation — and the expulsion of SWC President Grant Miner on the eve of contract negotiations, are clear examples.

If anything, my detention is a testament to the strength of the student movement in shifting public opinion toward Palestinian liberation. Students have long been at the forefront of change — leading the charge against the Vietnam War, standing on the frontlines of the Civil Rights Movement, and driving the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Today, too, even if the public has yet to fully grasp it, it is students who steer us toward truth and justice.

The Trump administration is targeting me as part of a broader strategy to suppress dissent. Visa-holders, green-card carriers, and citizens alike will all be targeted for their political beliefs. In the weeks ahead, students, advocates, and elected officials must unite to defend the right to protest for Palestine.

At stake are not just our voices, but the fundamental civil liberties of all.

Knowing fully that this moment transcends my individual circumstances, I hope nonetheless to be free to witness the birth of my first-born child. 🐣



Gainesville area events

WEEK OF APRIL 6-12

Wed 4/9

Science Journalist in Residence, 4-6pm, UF Bob Graham Ctr (220 Pugh Hall), Nadia Drake talk, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9219

Thu 4/10

Judge Matthew Kacsmarky speaks, noon-1pm, UF Levin College of Law M&M Courtroom (309 Village Dr), Federalist Society presents notorious right-wing federal judge, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9220

Thu 4/10

"Russia and Ukraine: Entangled Histories, Diverging States", 11:45am-2:30pm, UF Anderson Hall 216 (1507 W Univ Ave), authors' book talk, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9221

Thu 4/10

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

Fri 4/11

Spring Plant Sale, 10am-5pm, Fla Mus. of Natural History (3215 Hull Rd), one day only, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9222

Fri 4/11

Wombash 25, 6pm-?, 1st Magnitude Brewing (1220 SE Veitch St), major music magic, free; pg 16 & <https://wmbt901.com/wombash-2025/>

Fri 4/11

Free Fridays Concerts resume, 7-9pm thru 9/26, bands tba, free; pg 11 & tinyurl.com/iguana9209

Fri 4/11

"Big: Culture & Arts Festival" opens, 8pm (runs through Sat night), Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E Univ Ave), music/film/etc fest, \$48.38-107.50; see pg 5 & bigcaf.com

Fri 4/11

"Gun Violence & Care in South Sudan", 3:30pm, UF Grinter Hall 404 (1523 Union Rd), medical report from a civil war, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9223

Sat 4/12

"Healthy Heroes Day", 9am-1pm, UF Health Professional Park (3300 SW Williston Rd), kids' bike safety event w/ games, free helmets, face painting, more, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9224

Sat 4/12

Santa Fe College Spring Arts Festival, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun, SFC NW Campus (3000 NW 83rd St), 150+ artists, live music, food trucks, games, more, free; sfccollege.edu/spring-arts/

Sat 4/12

Gvl Asian Festival, 10am-4pm, Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E Univ Ave), dancing, crafts, food, games, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9225

Sat 4/12

Pride Health Fair, 10am-noon, GNV Bridge (1100 SE 17th Dr), free; tinyurl.com/iguana9226

Sat 4/12

Bat Appreciation Day, noon-4pm, Blackadder Brewing (618 NW 60th St), Lube Bat Conservatory-sponsored event w/ 5K run (10am), activities, crafts, & lots of Batpersons, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9227

Sat 4/12

Hoggtowne Bronze benefit concert, 1pm 2nd Sats, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), handbell orchestral/rock/jazz/blues band supports Matheson

House rehab, free (donations appreciated; bring chairs/blankets); tinyurl.com/iguana9228

Sat 4/12

Homegrown Playwrights Festival, 2-9pm, Acrosstown Rep Theatre (3501 SW 2nd Ave), local adaptations of stories for stage, "pay what you can" (\$5 for all-day entry); tinyurl.com/iguana9229

Sat 4/12

Pancakes on the Prairie, 9am-11:30am, Tuscaawilla Cabin (211 SE Tuscaawilla Rd), pancakes w/ Alachua Conservation Trust (vegan & gluten-free options), free; tinyurl.com/iguana9230

Sat 4/12

"The Other Book", 10am-noon, Cotton Club Museum (837 SE 7th Ave), Black history in Alachua County series finale, \$5 donation suggested; tinyurl.com/iguana9231

Sat 4/12

Jasper Smitty Band, 6pm, Heartwood Soundstage (619 S Main St), roots music from Fla & New Orleans, \$18-25; see pg 18 & tinyurl.com/iguana9232

WEEK OF APRIL 13-19

Sun 4/13

Bard & Broadside Poetry Festival concludes with poetry & creative writing workshop, 1-3 pm, plus reading & book signing, 4-5pm at downtown library (401 E Univ Ave) featuring renowned local poet Lola Haskins, free; tinyurl.com/iguana8217

Sun 4/13

"Ragtime: The Musical" final show, 2pm, Gvl Community Playhouse (4039 NW 16th Blvd), \$12-24; tinyurl.com/iguana9197

Sun 4/13

Jazz 101, 2-4pm, Meizon Church (3411 NW 83rd St), Gvl Big Band's intro to swing music for all ages, \$15 adv, \$20 door; tinyurl.com/iguana9233

Mon 4/14

Fla Free Speech Forum, 11:30am, Inst. of Culinary Arts at Eastside High School (1201 SE 43rd St), Brechner Award winners for "Unsolved", free; pg 7

Mon 4/14

"Sing Sing", 6-9pm, Hippodrome Theatre (25 SE 2nd Pl), benefit for Released Reentry w/ Oscar-nominated film & panel on life after prison, \$25; tinyurl.com/iguana9234

Tue 4/15

"Menopause the Musical 2: Cruising through 'The Change'", Phillips Ctr (3201 Hull Rd), musical comedy sequel, \$45-55; tinyurl.com/iguana9235

Wed 4/16

Community Nights, 6-9pm Wednesdays, South Main Station (619 S Main St), live music, kid & pet friendly, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9187

Wed 4/16

Historic Architecture Preservation talk, 7 pm, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), saving Gvl's history, free; pg 20

Thu 4/17

"Mystery of the Missing Manatee", 6-8pm, UF Pugh Hall Ocora room 241, evening of mystery, science, & theater; free w/ registration; tinyurl.com/iguana9236

Thu 4/17

Banned Books Club, 6-7pm, The Lynx Books (601

S Main St), tonight: Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five, free; <https://thelynxbooks.com/events/>

Fri 4/18

Economic Blackout Day, all day, everywhere, buy nothing in stores or online to protest Trumpismo, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9237

Fri 4/18

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

Sat 4/19

Great American Cleanup, 8am-12pm, Ray Massey Park (1001 NW 34th St), Keep Alachua County Beautiful multi-site cleanup w/ free lunch, free (closed-toe shoes required, hat/sunscreen & water recommended); tinyurl.com/iguana9238

Sat 4/19

Community Reuse & Recycle Day, 9am-noon, Santa Fe College NW Campus (3000 NW 83rd St, parking lot 8 across from gym), donate reusable goods, dispose of paint, electronics, etc, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9239

Sat 4/19

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

WEEK OF APRIL 20-26

Sun, 4/20

Last performance of Morning After Grace, 2pm, The Hipp (25 SE 2nd Pl), Fla retirement community rom-com, \$20-55; tinyurl.com/iguana9204

Sun 4/20

Sunday Assembly, 11am, Pride Ctr (3850 NW 83rd St, Ste 201), Brett Bartek on "Confiscation to Reintroduction: Rewinding Radiated Tortoises", free; sagainesville.weebly.com

Tue 4/22

Cinema Verde Earth Day Film Festival, all day, online via Roku channel, tinyurl.com/iguana9876

Tue 4/22

Earth Day Tree Giveaway, 10am-noon, MLK Ctr (1028 NE 14th St), awards ceremony & free trees, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9240

Tue 4/22

Alachua County Labor Coalition meets, 6pm, Emmanuel Mennonite Church (1236 NW 18th Ave), open to all; laborcoalition.org

Wed 4/23

Santa Fe River Springs Protection Forum, 9:30am-4:30pm, IFAS/Alachua County Extension Office (22712 W Newberry Rd), public presentations by working environmental professionals, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9241

Wed 4/23

"Amazing Give" kickoff, 5-8pm, 1st Magnitude Brewing (1220 SE Veitch St), Peaceful Paths hosts launch of non-profit support campaign w/ music, food trucks, & beer, donation requested (\$10 gets \$1 off pints); tinyurl.com/iguana9242

Fri 4/25

Artists Conference, 9am-4:30pm, Extension Auditorium, 22712 W Newberry Rd, Alachua County Arts Council presents talks on topics from public calls for art to opening art spaces to film-making, AI, & dancing, free with registration by April 18; tinyurl.com/iguana9243

Fri 4/25

District 3 Town Hall, 6-8pm, Upper Room Ministries (3575 NE 15th St), citizens speak up, free; see pg 24

Fri 4/25

Artwalk, 7-10pm, downtown Gvl, free; pg 9 & artwalkgainesville.com

Fri 4/25

Jim Bickerstaff, 7:30-9:30pm, Theatre of Memory (1705 NW 6th St), celebrating 4th album release "Old Trees", \$21.50; see pg 16 & tinyurl.com/iguana9244

Fri 4/25

Santa Fe River Preserve Bioblitz, 9am-noon, 27025 N State Rd 121, Alachua, identify as many species as possible with iNaturalist phone app, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9245

Sat 4/26

Friends of the Library Book Sale opens, 9am-6pm (noon-6pm Sun-Wed), 430 N Main St, immense selection of books/music/movies/art/more at low prices, free entry (bring boxes!); folacl.org

Sat 4/26

Sweetwater Wetlands Park Turns 10, 9am-noon, 325 SW Williston Rd, park tour, history, & plans, \$5/vehicle, \$2 for bikers & walkers; tinyurl.com/iguana9246

Sat 4/26

Fla School of Traditional Midwifery, 10am-2pm, 810 E Univ Ave, Open House tour & enrollment info, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9247

Sat 4/26

Tree Fest 2025, noon-11pm, Swamp Head Brewery (3650 SW 42nd Ave), family fun & music till 5, 4 trees planted for each beer sold, free entry; https://www.treefestfl.com

Sat 4/26

Grateful Gvl Spring Boogie, 2pm, Heartwood Soundstage (619 S Main St), 6 bands, dancing, vendors, \$25; see pg 18 & tinyurl.com/iguana9248

Sat 4/26

"Drink Beer, Save Turtles", 2-6pm, 1st Magnitude Brewing (1220 SE Veitch St), Turtle Survival Alliance benefit; see pg 4

Sat 4/26

Porters Quarters Community Farm Farmers Market, 3-6pm, 518 SW 3rd St, music, food-growing workshops, games, financial education, more, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9249

Sat 4/26

Scamper Fest, 3:30pm, The Ox (920 NW 2nd St), beaucoup bands; see pg 14

Sat 4/26

Community Engagement Social, 5-8pm, Curia on the Drag (2029 NW 6th St), Pride Ctr & Equality FL host music, food trucks, & legislative info, free

WEEK OF APRIL 27-MAY 3

Sun 4/27 "Staying Strong and Grounded During Political Turmoil" workshop, 1:30-3:30pm, Westminster Presbyterian Church (1521 NW 34th St), dealing with political stress, free (w/rsvp to tinyurl.com/Iguana2152; tinyurl.com/Iguana2153)

Wed 4/30

Last day for 2025 Survivors of Violence Art Exhibit, 10am-5pm, Harn Museum (3259 Hull Rd), free

Fri 5/1

"Save Fla Black Bears", 6:30-8pm, LifeSouth (1221 NW 13th St), Sierra Club presentation, also on Zoom, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9250

Fri 5/2

Youth Arts Showcase, 10:30am, A. Quinn Jones Museum (1013 NW 7th Ave), students share original art, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9251

Fri 5/2

"12 Angry Jurors" opens, 8pm, Acrosstown Theatre (3501 SW 2nd Ave), acclaimed courtroom drama, \$20-25; see pg 7 & acrosstown.org

Sat 5/3

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

Sat 5/3

Creative Community Pop-Up Shop, noon-5pm, The Bull (18 SW 1st Ave), presented by Bailey Learning and Arts Collective, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9252

Sat 5/3

Star Wars Day (a day early), 5-10pm, Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E Univ Ave), screening of Empire Strikes Back, live theater, kids' dance party, costume contests, music, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9253

Sat 5/3

Terrence Ho, 7:30-9:30pm, Theatre of Memory (1705 NW 6th St), original & international songs w/ jazz pianist Ed Legate, \$21.50; see pg 16 & tinyurl.com/iguana9254

WEEK OF MAY 4-10

Sat 5/10

Pioneer Days, 10am-5pm (Sun 10am-4pm), Farmers Market Pavilion (23517 NW 185th Rd, High Springs), live music, vendors, Kid Corral, staged shoot-out, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9255

Sat 5/10

Floridiana Festival, 11am-4pm, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), vintage/kitsch Florida stuff vendors, live music from Patchwork (12-3pm), history talks, free (donations accepted); tinyurl.com/iguana9228

WEEK OF MAY 11-17

Sat 5/10

Pioneer Days, 10am-5pm (Sun 10am-4pm), Farmers Market Pavilion (23517 NW 185th Rd, High Springs), live music, vendors, Kid Corral, staged shoot-out, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9255

Sat 5/10

Floridiana Festival, 11am-4pm, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), vintage/kitsch Florida stuff vendors, live music from Patchwork (12-3pm), history talks, free (donations accepted); tinyurl.com/iguana9228

RECURRING EVENTS

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

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

Saturday Haile Farmers Market, 8:30am-noon, Haile Village Ctr (5213 SW 91st Terr)

Thursday evening Poetry Jam, 8pm at CMC

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

Peace Pickets, 4:30-5:30pm every Tuesday, sidewalk at Fresh Market (4120 NW 16th Blvd), signs provided or byo

Please support GNV live music venues, they all

have calendars: Heartwood Soundstage, Satchel's, Loosey's, Boca Backyard, the Wooly, Wormhole, One Love Café, Cypress & Grove, etc.

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

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

More than we can list each month at **The Lynx**: thelynxbooks.com/events

Art House films: thehipp.org/cinema-3

"Bobo a Gogo: the Nacho Clowns Extremes' Strange and Lovely Variety Show" starring RainDrop and Auntie Bobo, open stage every Monday (sign up by 8pm) at University Club (18 E Univ Ave)

Gainesville official and public meetings: https://www.gainesvillefl.gov/Government-Pages/Government/Public-Meeting-Participation/Public-Meeting-Calendar

County official and public meetings: alachuacounty.us/events/Pages/default.aspx

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); gvilleddoris@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 7:00 pm 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

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

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

Drop and Auntie Bobo, open stage every Monday (sign up by 8pm) at University Club (18 E Univ Ave)

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

Satchel's: 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 ☞

Iguana Directory

Call 352-378-5655 or email 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 | [facebook.com/AlachuaAudubon/](https://www.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

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 | 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

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.

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://www.facebook.com/alachuaNAACP) | 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

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

From HANDS OFF!, p. 1

Our Gainesville Rally was a loud and fun affair, with colorful and creative signs ringing the large traffic circle, on the center island and for a short distance up and down South Main St. The vibe was overwhelming positive, with much friendly horn honking from the cars, trucks, scooters, and even a throw back

hippy VW van all painted up and flying rainbow and peace flags. People were even having fun driving around in the circle with their signs held out the windows.

Many old friends were being reconnected, and young people were out in force, too, a great thing to see in a college town where the town and gown divide is often present.

We could all see each other, see each others' signs and concerns represented, and as well our creativity and humor even in the face this horrible administrative coup we are living through. We were all there, and realizing we were all in this together.

But we should remember of another day of mass rallies, and that was Feb. 15, 2003. These were held, not only all over the U.S., but all over the world to try and stop the immanent invasion of Iraq by the George W. Bush administration. (Look up 2/15/03, it was spectacular!) And they were ignored, leading to a devastating history-changing catastrophe based on lies.

This must be a start. As Senator Amy Klobuchar pointed out in her rally in Minnesota, pressure to flip less than five republicans in either the House or Senate, could at least slow or halt legislation.

But we need more, we need brave lawyers to fight cases and pressure put on all elected official to do better. Immigrants must be protected and defended, and as well the LGBTQ community. Social Security, the Veterans Administration, the Post Office, scientific research agencies and retirement pensions need to be preserved.

The poor and disadvantaged will need safety nets, and that group may be growing as the economic impact of the Trump/Musk/MAGA agenda is felt across the country.

It was great to feel the power of so many people out in the parks and streets, see each others faces, make new friends, reacquaint with old friends, but there is work to do, and possible hard times ahead. We have the tools to build on this, and the necessity to do so. C'mon let's go. 🐸

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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. ClimateRealityProjectgnv@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@famm.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

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. climateralityprojectgnv@gmail.com | @climateralityprojectgnv | climateralityprojectgnv.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

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 |

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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@gainesvillrollerrebels.com | gainesvillrollerrebels.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 | iwww.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

McRorie Community Garden is a community garden where local residents can grow vegetables and learn how to do so. It is at 615 SE 4th Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601 Volunteer Day is on the last Sunday of every month. mcorriegarden@gmail.com

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 gunviolence 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) | namgainesville.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. gainesvillnlg@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 Sante 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. Veronica or Adriana @ 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 | UFcollegedems.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 | @uf_ydsa

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. wspus.org. 🐊



As ICE agents enter schools, who is being threatened?

by Rebecca Ragan, Sadie Matteucci, and Yanifel Sanchez,
Gainesville High School teachers

The safety and well-being of students should always be a school district's top priority. However, the presence of ICE in schools, particularly when their agents are given leeway to act without proper legal procedures, can traumatize students, disrupt learning, and impose undue burdens on educators and administrators. We must take immediate action to protect our children by demanding transparency, accountability and comprehensive safeguards when it comes to ICE operations within our schools.

Schools are supposed to be safe spaces where children can focus on their education; and not live in fear of being separated from their families. For students in immigrant communities, the threat of ICE raids or detentions adds to an already long list of stressors, such as the risk of school violence or existing personal or familial issues. The question must be asked: why are we placing the burden of such trauma on children? When ICE agents threaten to enter a school without sufficient safeguards — such as judicially sanctioned warrants or clear communication with parents and staff — students are forced to carry a burden that no child should bear.

The threat of ICE detentions disrupts the school environment, resulting in significant trauma for students. Children may worry about their safety and the safety of their loved ones, which can harm their mood, behavior and mental health. Numerous studies have proven that trauma leads to poorer grades, lower test scores, and even drops in school attendance. For

students already coping with the learning loss caused by the COVID-19 lockdowns, this unnecessary fear further exacerbates an already dire situation, not to mention the loss of instructional time.

But the impact isn't limited to students alone. Teachers and administrators should not be expected to navigate the complex logistical and legal repercussions that allowing the presence of ICE would create. Nor should our staff feel they must go against their morals and hand over a child in their care to someone who conceivably did not have to be thoroughly vetted.

What happens when a student interferes with an ICE detention? How are they liable? Do they understand the legal consequences of such actions? Are schools adequately informing students of their rights — particularly their right to remain silent? Social studies classes mandate instruction on the U.S. Constitution — so why would information about students' rights be an issue to include in this instruction? As a society, we should not expect children to bear the responsibility of navigating these complex situations on their own. This impacts all students, not just those being targeted by ICE.

School districts must take action to ensure that students are protected and that any interaction with ICE is subject to strict protocols. A clear plan must be developed, ensuring that all faculty and staff are trained in the rights of students, including how to handle ICE requests. Parents/legal guardians should be immediately notified if ICE attempts to detain or question their child, regardless of what ICE says. Warrants should be checked and verified by school legal counsel, and judicial oversight should be mandatory.

We cannot allow school policies to remain vague and inadequate. School districts like Alachua County have instituted guidelines for teachers that leave gaps which can have disastrous consequences. Other districts, such as Palm Beach County and Polk County, are already instituting more comprehensive steps and checks to protect students and comply with the law. Schools must have a clear plan in place that takes into account the unique needs of students, particularly those from immigrant families. What so many community members, parents, students and teachers are asking for should be basic and common-sense steps that all schools implement to protect children: requiring a judicial warrant from law enforcement, establishing a clear vetting protocol for ICE agents, and requiring parents/legal guardians be notified should ICE or other law enforcement wish to question or detain their child. Schools should be working with communities and families, not against them.

Students should never have to worry about their families being torn apart while they are trying to learn. Teachers should not be expected to sacrifice their professional integrity or the safety of their students to comply with policies that are not in the best interest of children. Protecting our children is not just a moral imperative — it's common sense.

This op-ed/commentary was originally published by the Orlando Sentinel on March 29.

If you are interested in getting involved with local advocacy or want more information around immigrant safety, email gini@rwhp.org.



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