



ICE RUNS WILD



Photos and photo collage by Chuck Ross. See related stories below and on pages 8,16, 25.

‘Camp Cruelty’ protests prison camps

I played an ICE agent for three hours. I got face to face with people on the street and asked for their ID. When they said they had a driver’s license, I barked at them, “So do immigrants — I need to see your passport or birth certificate.”

I told people holding protest signs that they were un-American and to put them away, or they were going with me. I watched as people’s faces changed color

and their jocular attitudes faded, and more than one person told me that even knowing I was an actor didn’t keep the experience from being frightening or uncomfortable.

At Glenn Terry’s behest, I was recruited to play one of three ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) agents in his solemn staging of Camp Cruelty. His director’s notes were to make it real — the

“immigrants” we marched into the pen to stand in the hot sun were given no water, and the guards were to shut them up if they were chit-chatting. The cadence of protest chants of the crowd encircled us, interspersed with minutes of solemn silence.

I decided to take my job seriously—to be a method actor and experience internally

See CAMP CRUELTY, p. 11

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Want your article, ad, event or PSA in the September Iguana?

Deadline is Wednesday, Oct. 1

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.

A message from ye publisher

An Iguana book launch celebration!

by Joe Courter

Oct. 1, 2025, will mark 50 years to the day that I drove into Gainesville with my stuff, starting a new chapter in my life. And it has been a great ride. This town was a perfect fit and the opportunities just came my way. Publishing the Iguana since 1986 was not a planned effort beyond the initial mailed newsletters but here we are, printing 5,000 copies this issue.

Since 2012, I have been doing a Publisher's Note, and I figured this was the time to compile them into a book, so that is the plan. Wednesday, Oct. 1, First Magnitude Brewery, 1220 SE Veitch St. (right off S. Main St.), will be the place for a book launch/celebration of this anniversary, starting at 6 pm.

The intent is obviously to have books there, but also, all those Iguana readers should just come to meet and greet each other. You are a broad family of diverse friends and neighbors, whether recently arrived or new to the paper, or longtime readers, and perhaps wonderful subscribers. This is community building, and we sure need it now! Come out, come out.

There will be pizza and salad provided ... keeping it simple ... and First Magnitude has all the beverages right there. We've arranged a nice sunset at 7:15pm and a waxing moon overhead. And doubtless there will be some music. Hope to see you. 🌟

What You Can Do campaign: Defeat despair by doing

by Janice Garry and Jay Rosenbek, WYCD co-chairs

Worried about national and state events? Concerned about the chaos of executive actions and a silent legislature? Want to do something but can't figure out how?

The What You Can Do (WYCD) campaign (formerly affiliated with the League of Women Voters of Alachua County) has a series of action plans. They are intended to encourage you to respond to the daily breach of the rule of law and the separation of powers. That separation has nourished and guarded this nation since its inception.

These WYCD Action Items will appear regularly. They will be designed to provide concrete actions to give you a mechanism for doing something. To sign up for the mailing list, email Janice at jgcommunity@gmail.com.

Daily assaults on personal freedoms and institutions meant to serve American citizens can be overwhelming. Ignoring the worst and retreating inward can seem like the only response. Fear is understandable. But fear contributes to the dismantling. Action, because it is the right thing to do, helps us sleep at night. Action, regardless of outcome, makes a pillow softer. 🌟

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 ...

Do you have hope?

I was at a music show at First Magnitude last Saturday (my motto for a better life: “you gotta leave the house”), and an Iguana reader who knew me came up and earnestly asked “Do you have any hope?” I said a qualified yes, but it got me to thinking about the feeling of hope I do have, what it is focused on besides just a general feeling and attitude toward this one life I get to live, and trying to enjoy every day.

My hope is based on history, on what has worked in the past, and that has always been organizing. It is also based on a realistic assessment of the tools we have to build a resistance to this rising authoritarian coup by which Trump and MAGA have grabbed this nation. They are approaching things with the arrogance that Trump once said regarding women: “when you’re a star they let you do it. You can do anything.” They have played an audacious hand, the deck has been increasingly stacked for decades and they have capitalized on it. It’s like when you own a store, there are certain conventions customers follow in doing business. Now, it’s like an armed gang has come to loot the place. The norms of business/society have been thrown out the window. Our rights, our public services, our free and open educational system, vandalized or snatched! What we need to do is organize and energize a broad opposition, use what tactics we can find to work and turn it around. What will be the power that will motivate such a movement? You guessed it, hope.

There are four words in the Constitution I find extremely important: “promote the general Welfare.” Those words were put into action more than any other time in history in the 1930s under FDR, coming out of the Depression. To the horror of the greedy overlords, taxes were going to be directed to those in need! Poor people, black people, immigrants were to be lifted up toward some ideal of equality, and inequities of the past in some way be acknowledged and compensated. This “New Deal” sparked opposition that has now, after decades of repressive legislation and Supreme Court rulings, metastasized into the greed and self-centered MAGA, who reject all this seeing and caring about others as nonsense.

The dictionary says empathy is “the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.” It does not, I notice, say anything about action, but for human beings, we are at our functional best when we give a damn about other people, and we prioritize and live by a philosophy that promotes such behavior. You know, that “it takes a village” thing. Building up good things takes work. What MAGA is doing — tearing things down, ripping things away, decreeing prohibitions — that’s no work except destruction, being done rapidly before opposition arises. Because they know we outnumber them, and why they are disrupting electoral processes with dark money and voter suppression.

Back to hope: My hope is that we empathetic people can build a functional resistance to this breakdown in democratic norms that is being perpetrated on this nation and its people. Find inspiration in the NYC mayor’s race with Zohran Mamdani and their grassroots campaign. Iowa just flipped their state House with Democrat Caitlin Drey. When the European leaders recently descended on the White House I saw a clip of them mingling before Trump came in the room: affable, friendly, cultured people. They were not asked to come, but they organized themselves to come, to speak up and speak out. They recognize this MAGA mess here in the US as a problem that affects them, too. They acted to do what they could in that moment.

Awareness needs to go beyond just seeing the horrors to where we can find paths of resistance we feel comfortable joining in with. We can’t individually do it all, but plug in somewhere. Find good independent sources of information, support and share them. Find organizations of other people, from book clubs to big protests, and counter the fear and feelings of helplessness. Join and/or support groups that are already working toward justice and human rights, be it immigration, labor, or social justice based. Be ready to support those being directly affected by the shit going down. Make art and decorate your community. Hold a sign on a corner, or put one up somewhere. Preserve our already flawed election system and actively hold our elected representatives to account with calls, letters and visits. Stay healthy, we are going to need each other. Keep hope alive. 🐢



Joe Courter

Subscribe!

The Gainesville Iguana is Alachua County’s independent progressive newsletter.

Individuals: \$15

(or more if you can)

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Groups: \$20

Gainesville Iguana

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32604

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

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- www.gainesvilleiguana.org
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**Free Movie Night at the Museum
Friday, September 19, 2025
at 6:30pm**

Cotton Club Museum, 837 SE 7th Avenue, Gainesville, FL
Free Admission, but RSVP at www.cottonclubmuseum.com.
Snacks will be provided. All are welcome. Donations appreciated.

Glory is a 1989 American epic historical war drama film about the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, one of the Union Army's earliest African American regiments in the American Civil War. It stars Matthew Broderick as Robert Gould Shaw, the regiment's commanding officer, and Denzel Washington, Cary Elwes, and Morgan Freeman as fictional members of the 54th.

Florida Free Speech Forum

Buckle Up: How Democracies Unravel — Lessons from the Past, Warnings for Today

Monday, Sept. 8, 12pm

"Buckle Up" is a PowerPoint presentation by Paul Licata, PhD, retired Professor of Communications at Valencia College in Orlando. Dr. Licata will take attendees on a ride as he explores the historic similarities and differences between the personal, economic, and social characteristics that led to the rise of Adolf Hitler and Donald Trump. Dr. Licata taught undergraduate classes in communications, humanities, and interdisciplinary studies and Holocaust multimedia literature for over 30 years. He also served on the Board of Directors of the Holocaust Memorial Research and Education Center from 2003 to 2009.

No lunch is provided for those who register after Sept. 1, but the public can still attend the presentation for free.

Institute of Culinary Arts at Eastside High School

11:30 – Lunch

12:00 – Presentation begins

Upcoming FFSF events:

Oct. 13: GRU and Gainesville's upcoming referendum, with Susan Bottcher

Nov. 10: Freedom of book selection at the Library, with Shanney Livingston

Dec. 9: Science on the backburner in Florida and the US, with Art Hebard, PhD

For more details and to register, go to floridafreespeechforum.org. Note registration for luncheon must be made a week before the forum. 🐾

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Warning signs of a fascist

by Robert Reich

As tyrants take control of democracies, they typically:

1. Demand personal loyalty from all appointees.
2. Organize military parades and other choreographed shows of force.
3. Threaten to fire independent prosecutors who get too close to the truth.
4. Spread conspiracy theories about “deep state” forces seeking to oust the tyrant.
5. Refer to top-ranking military leaders as “my” generals.
6. Threaten to jail political opponents.
7. Claim to have won an election by a landslide even after losing the popular vote.
8. Stoke tensions abroad, even the specter of nuclear war, to distract from the tyrant’s efforts to consolidate power at home.
9. Circumvent the independent press and communicate directly with followers.
10. Vilify legislators and judges who are critical of the regime.
11. Repeatedly claim massive voter fraud in the absence of any evidence, in order to restrict voting in subsequent elections.
12. Turn the public against journalists or media outlets that criticize the regime, calling them “deceitful” and “scum.”
13. Repeatedly tell big lies, causing the public to doubt the truth and to believe fictions that support the tyrants’ goals.
14. Blame economic stresses on immigrants or racial or religious minorities, and foment public bias and hatred against them.
15. Threaten mass deportations, registries of religious minorities, and the banning of refugees.
16. Attribute acts of domestic violence to “enemies within,” and use such events as excuses to beef up internal security and limit civil liberties.
17. Appoint family members to high positions of authority.
18. Draw no distinction between personal property and public property, profiteering from public office.
19. Make personal alliances with foreign dictators, but express indifference if not defiance toward leaders of democracies.
20. Maintain a powerful propaganda arm that claims to be “fair and balanced” but only amplifies the tyrant’s lies and accusations. ☹️



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- repurposeproject.org • 352-363-8902

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Locals attempt to hold legislative delegation accountable

by Jason Bellamy-Fults
Recording Secretary, IBEW Local 1205
proud member of the North Central
Florida Central Labor Council

On a rainy August morning, dozens of Alachua County citizens, dismayed at the decisions that their elected state and federal representatives have been making, made the trek to Newberry's municipal building for a "town hall" hosted by Newberry Mayor Tim Marden. The event had advertised the appearance of state Rep. Chad Johnson, state Senator Stan McClain, and Congressional representative Kat Cammack, though the fine print noted that speakers were "subject to change without notice."

Upon arrival, we were greeted at the door by Mayor Marden, who it is worth noting, is the current Chair of the Alachua County GOP as well as the National Development Officer for The John Birch Society. He informed those who arrived early that the municipal building was hosting an invitation-only catered event and that anyone who wasn't on the invite list would need to wait in the small vestibule area or outside on the porch. Attendees would be welcome into the main meeting area

at the advertised start time of the event. He also informed us that there would be no opportunities for the public to speak during the 1.5 hour event; he wanted to prevent any "grandstanding," so attendees could submit their questions directly to him on small notecards.

A few minutes before 9:30, we were allowed to file into the main hall and help ourselves to a few leftover donuts. A table at the front of the room included Marden, a representative from Cammack's office, and the two state legislators, Johnson and McClain.

The crowd was probably 100-150 people deep, and it became clear pretty early on that it was fairly evenly split between the "invite-only" cheering squad and the uninvited, many of whom were there to ask hard questions of their electeds.

Marden went over the agenda, which included opening statements by the electeds, their responses to a set of questions written up by Marden and shared with them in advance, and then the last 45 minutes for questions from the submitted notecards, which would be asked by Marden.

Members of the audience immediately

protested the event format and were reminded by Marden for the first of many times that this was "his event; if you don't like it, go have your own event."

This was an ironic statement given the multiple "empty chair town halls" that residents throughout Cammack's district have held in recent months and made all the more laughable by Cammack's staffer's opening comment: referencing the recent birth of Cammack's child, she said that she was tempted "to send Kat a picture of today's event, but I can't do that because not being able to be here would just break her heart."

The "grandstanding" that Marden had allegedly sought to avoid took place, of course, but primarily from the speakers' table. Speakers reminded us of their conservative bona fides and gave at times rambling monologues on their bios, their upbringing, and their political philosophies. A few amusing quotables from the event:

- Marden's repeated exhortations to "be grateful that these people are here" when frustrated members of the audience spoke out against the format of

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the event or attempted to retort some of the speakers' comments.

- Marden often paraphrased people's written comments rather than reading them directly, often inserting his own language, such as referring to undocumented people as "illegals." When members of the audience protested his massaging of the questions, he repeatedly responded "The more you interrupt, the less questions we'll get to."
- After Cammack's staffer dodged a healthcare-related question and alleged that "everyone has healthcare access, Kat has looked into this," an audience member shouted back, "We don't have healthcare because of her." Marden responded, "I'm pretty sure you can go to the Shands emergency room and they are not going to kick you out."
- Rep. Johnson gave a strange little civics lesson in which he explained that the problem with the government is that, because it's answerable to its con-

stituents, it tries to deliver goods and services for them and that's just not sustainable because that stuff has to be paid for with taxes. His monologue actually goes a long way in explaining some conservatives' vision for this country, but felt a bit hypocritical coming from someone who also talked about the importance of government support for farmers and for government funding to make sure that rural people have access to all the same services that urban people do.

The event got a bit rowdy at times, with numerous rejoinders from the audience and repeated shouting matches between the divided audience members. Had another 50-100 progressives shown up for the event, my sense is that we could have pretty easily just shut this conservative pep rally down entirely.

I was honestly sort of surprised that more people weren't there, especially given the size of some of the public protests that

have happened throughout our county in recent months. The very people that we have been protesting after all were there, in the room, and clearly needing to hear from more of us.

That being said, a special shout-out is due the North Central Florida Indivisible group, who actively worked to turn people out for this event. I estimate that most of the progressives who were in the room for this meeting were affiliated with them.

While I'm editorializing a bit here, I'd also like to point out what I believe can be an over-emphasis on federal politics.

While Trump is obviously an authoritarian lightning rod and a focus on him is understandable, our state legislature not only grossly enables Trump and his ilk, it has also been screwing us over directly for years and continues to do so each and every session. Using our base of progressive local power to focus on our own legislative delegation is a necessary component of any long-term strategy. ✨

Florida's Mental Health Crisis:

Why our communities deserve better funding

by Teresa M. Goff

When a Gainesville mother reached out last spring, her voice trembled with desperation. She wasn't calling about a broken pipe or overdue rent. She was calling because her 10-year-old, shaken by a traumatic experience, needed help. But the soonest appointment available with a counselor was three months away. Three months for a child in crisis. Three months of sleepless nights. Three months when despair only deepens. In a community still healing from the upheavals of recent years, that kind of delay isn't just unfair - it can be devastating.

Across Alachua County, stories like this are becoming more common. Teachers see children struggling with anxiety and behavior problems without access to timely support. Emergency rooms are overwhelmed by patients in psychiatric crisis because outpatient care is underfunded or unavailable. Nonprofit organizations and clinics do everything they can to bridge the gap, but the truth is stark: Florida is failing its residents when it comes to mental health funding.

A National Problem, a Florida Emergency

Mental health remains chronically un-

derfunded compared to physical health despite its growing human and economic costs. Nationally, less than 5% of state health budgets are dedicated to mental health services, despite decades of evidence that untreated mental illness fuels school dropout, unemployment, homelessness, and even incarceration.

Florida's ranking is especially dire. Reports place the state 49th in the nation for per-capita mental health spending, about \$36 per person, compared to over \$360 in Maine. In a state where nearly 3 million adults experience mental illness each year, and more than 1 million live with a serious condition, this underinvestment is catastrophic. Families are left waiting, children fall behind in school, and crises escalate until emergency services become the only option.

When Federal Cuts Hit Home: Gainesville on the Front Lines

Florida's fragile mental health system is further strained by recent federal rollbacks. The Trump administration has proposed cutting more than \$22 billion from federal health agencies, including programs that support suicide prevention, overdose response, and community mental health services. Rules that once

required insurers to cover mental health care on par with physical health have been paused, and the federal agency charged with enforcing those protections was itself defunded. Programs that offered critical lifelines to LGBTQ+ youth, such as specialized crisis lines through the 988 system, are being dismantled.

These decisions in Washington are not abstract. They reverberate directly in Gainesville. Parents are told their child's first counseling appointment won't be for months. Counselors in Alachua County report caseloads so large they can only respond to the most urgent needs, leaving many children unsupported. Schools are left scrambling to manage students' behavioral crises without adequate staff. Pediatric clinics do their best to connect families with care, but too often the only option left is the emergency room. Providers at UF Health, the Alachua County Crisis Center, and local nonprofits work tirelessly, but even the most dedicated professionals cannot keep pace when the safety nets beneath them are pulled away.

For families living in poverty, the impact is especially harsh. Limited insurance coverage, transportation challenges, and language barriers make already scarce

See MENTAL HEALTH, p. 19

'We don't have to sit back and let this happen'

War against immigrants getting nastier

by Greg Mullaley and Pierce Butler

Florida recently became (even more) notorious for the jury-rigged concentration camp known as "Alligator Alcatraz," at present under a closure order from a federal judge, which our governor and state attorney general are appealing. (See page 16.) So of course the state has doubled down by planning to create another detention center — in Sanderson, about 40 miles north of Gainesville.

Gov. DeSantis proposes re-opening the Baker County Correctional Institution, which had about 1,300 beds, for up to 2,000 of the many detainees being scooped up by masked ICE agents across the nation. (White House aide Stephen Miller demands that the US deport 3,000 "illegal aliens" per day.)

Most of those seized so far, without warrants, criminal records, or other apparent reasons except for dark skin and/or Spanish accents, have been denied hearings, contact with lawyers or family members, or the other due process rights required by the US Constitution.

As with the hastily-fabricated cages and tents in the Everglades, the governor seems to plan on "massive, taxpayer-funded no-bid contracts to politically connected businesses and corporate elite donors," in the words of Florida Democratic Party Chair Nikki Fried, to create and operate this "Deportation Depot" holding tank.

Widespread public protests have (temporarily?) derailed previously-announced plans to do the same at Camp Blanding (around 30 miles from Gainesville). Many detainees are already incarcerated at Macclenny's Baker County Detention Center in atrocious conditions, as reported in the Nov-Dec 2022 Iguana by Baker Interfaith Friends (tinyurl.com/Iguana2244); the Baker County Sheriff's Office has restricted visits by families and supporters of those confined there.

Eager to please the Trump administration, the xenophobic "Proj-

ect 2025" agenda which it follows, and the chronically angry GOP base, DeSantis and state Attorney General James Uthmeier show no qualms in trampling the rights of all those in the United States, citizens or not, to expand the Incarceration Nation built up over decades of "law and order" panic. Currently, the U.S. has over 1.8 million people behind bars, more than any other nation. This includes over 59,000 ICE detainees spread across at least 119 facilities. ICE now has a budget of \$45 billion to construct more internment camps.

The New York Times reports at least 180,000 have been deported so far this year.

On top of this, ICE is now hiring another 10,000 agents to help kidnap our immigrant friends and neighbors off the streets right in front of us. It has lowered its recruitment standards drastically, offering enlistment bonuses of up to \$50,000 while visibly operating violently and lawlessly on city streets from Los Angeles to the District of Columbia.

ICE agents use face masks and unmarked vehicles while grabbing pedestrians, drivers, workers, churchgoers, and schoolchildren for looking "suspicious" in the eyes of propagandized bigots.

We don't have to sit back and let it happen. We can help our immigrant friends and neighbors by giving a little of our time, and if possible, money to local groups that are working to make lives better for these good folks.

You can contact the Baker Interfaith Friends (tinyurl.com/iguana9359), the Rural Women's Health Project (rwhp.org), and the Greater Gainesville International Center (GGIC) (gnvic.org) and ask what you can do to help the unjustly arrested and refugees who are needy. Simple things people can do on their own to help immigrants include shopping at immigrant-owned stores, volunteering to teach ESL, organizing car pools to drive children of immigrants to school (in case ICE is waiting at schools to arrest immigrant parents). Here are some sites that give direct info on how to help that you can take examples from:

- globalgiving.org/learn/help-immigration-in-2025
- tinyurl.com/iguana9360 (huffpost)
- globalcitizen.org/en/content/7-ways-to-help-undocumented-immigrants

To fight back politically, many options exist, including Florida Immigration Coalition (floridaimmigrant.org), United We Dream (unitedwedream.org), the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) 🐾

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Let's talk about abortion pills: Organizing in our current political moment

Wednesday, Sept. 17 - 6:30-8pm EST on Zoom - Register at: tinyurl.com/Iguana2233



Abortion pills have become central to reproductive healthcare access today. Join National Women's Liberation for a discussion on this important topic. Our panelists will share their unique insights on public perception and offer strategies for how we can effectively navigate and organize in this moment.

We are honored to have the following panelists join us:

- Dan Grossman, MD, Director of Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health (ANSIRH) at the University of California, San Francisco
- Ms. Nancy Cárdenas Peña, Campaign Director of Abortion on Our Own Terms
- Ms. Rebecca Wang, Esq., Senior Research Counsel with If/When/How

Learn more at womensliberation.org or visit us on Instagram (@nationalwomensliberation and @nwlgainessville). 🐢

Get involved in a county citizen advisory board

Defending democracy from the grassroots starts at the local level — and our locality offers multiple opportunities for making a difference by anyone who can make an effort. Alachua County, for instance, has citizen advisory boards working on everything from environmental protection to enabling the “disabled” — with more than 250 volunteers having their say without having to run for office or kowtow to oligarchs.

At last report, advisory vacancies include agencies addressing animal welfare, health care, programs for the handicapped, public safety, rural concerns, historic preservation, land conservation, veterans' services, and aid for rape survivors.

For more information, start with the listing of the advisory boards at tinyurl.com/Iguana2234, then contact Ass't County Manager Gina Peebles at 352-337-6279 or gpeebles@alachuacounty.us.

The City of Gainesville claims about 200 city residents active on boards involving matters from bicycle-pedestrian safety, development review, art, beautification, fire safety, auditing City expenditures, plans for downtown, and more.

See details at tinyurl.com/Iguana2235 and apply at the Office of the City Clerk at (352) 334-5016 or cityboardapp@gainesvillefl.gov. 🐢

The best defense against oligarchy & fascism: our labor!

- Please join and get involved with your workplace union if you're lucky enough to have one.
- If one doesn't already exist, then consider helping to start one.
- If you can't find your way to either of those options, then consider joining a labor-adjacent organization like the local Alachua County Labor Coalition (laborcoalition.org) and/or the AFL-CIO campaign “Department of People Who Work for a Living” (deptofpeoplewhowork.org).
- Keep an eye on the news and support workers elsewhere (e.g., Amazon, Starbucks) who are taking the fight directly to the oligarchs.

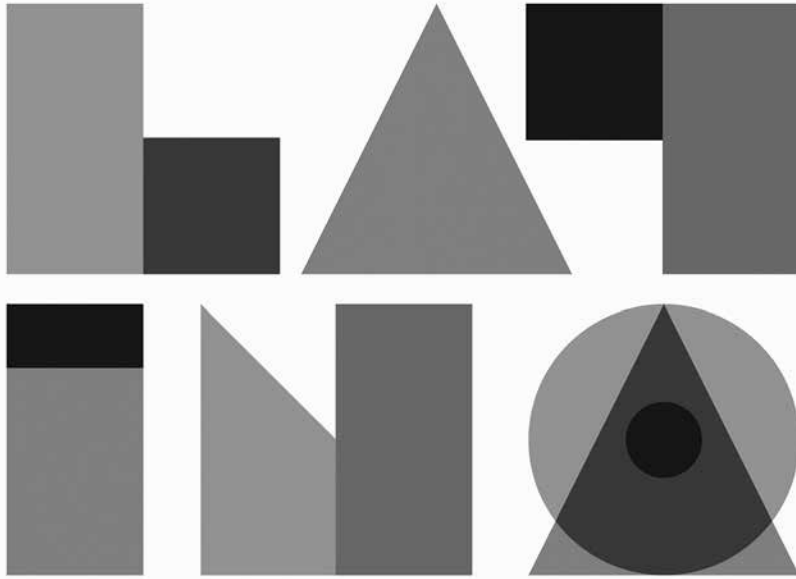


*If the workers are organized, all they have to do
is put their hands in their pockets and they have got the capitalist class whipped.*

- Big Bill Haywood

unionhall.aflcio.org/north-central-florida-central-labor-council
workerscreateallwealth.substack.com

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FILM FESTIVAL

21st Annual Gainesville Latino Film Festival

2025

September 11-28 | Gainesville
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**Theme: Enriching Cultures,
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The Gainesville Latino Film Festival (GLFF) returns for its 21st year, bringing a celebration of Latin American film, culture, art, and community to Gainesville. This multi-venue festival highlights stories that inspire dialogue, honor diversity, and foster cultural connections. For details on venues, sponsors, and full program schedule, visit: www.gainesvillelatinoilmfestival.org/. 🎬



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Become a Volunteer Crisis Line Counselor

Eighty hours of in-depth training are provided in active listening, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention.

Volunteering is an opportunity to impact the lives of fellow community members and gain life-enhancing communication skills.

For more information, please contact Kevin Sosa at **352-264-6781** or ksosa@alachuacounty.us. Scan the QR code above for more information!

Training starts September 20th!

Crisis Center training is an 8-week training program (run 3 times a year) consisting of one Saturday followed by 8 weeks of Tuesday and Thursday evenings 6:30-9:30pm AND three 4-hour sessions that can be flexibly scheduled around your availability. The training requires a strong commitment- both of time and energy.



Immigrant rights advocates hosted “Camp Cruelty,” an enactment of ICE agents forcing people into a detention facility, at Depot Park on Aug. 9. The action aimed to bring light to the 59,000 immigrants held in pop-up prisons throughout the county. Photo by Chuck Ross.

what an ICE Agent was thinking and feeling. I studied them on numerous YouTube videos, and copied their minimalist uniforms with their name covered up. I carried handcuffs, zip ties, a radio, bear spray, dark glasses and a mask. My unit’s emblem was a skull sewn to my upper sleeve — in my case, it was actually a Grateful Dead patch, which is all that would give me away as an imposter.

I pushed back hard on my feeling of solidarity and sense of empathy — I wanted to know what kind of dark place one must inhabit to want to capture and throw people out of our country into undoubtedly worse situations. Big scary dudes wearing masks chasing and incarcerating people who don’t understand our yelled instructions and our bogus or non-existent paperwork. I felt nausea and disgust sweeping over me, and didn’t want to be caught dabbing my eyes.

When our prisoners found a wire-cutter that somebody had left in the pen and freed themselves, the rush I felt was real, and disrobing from my ICE costume was a breath of fresh air.

So, I still don’t know what motivates an ICE Agent to go to work, but I’m looking for an opportunity to get in their way.

<As with other ICE Agents, I don’t have a name.> 🐾

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~ Amy Goodman, NPR

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Help stand up for democracy: **The League of Women Voters wants you**

by Donna Waller, President, League of Women Voters of Alachua County

The League of Women Voters of Alachua County is looking for a few (well, more than a few) good women (and men — we are into diversity) to join us in participating in the League's 105-year mission to enroll, educate, and mobilize voters and to advocate for issues that support democracy, home rule, and political equality.

The LWV is a federated organization that is non-partisan. The state LWV is one of the most active state chapters and has led the charge for voting rights and fair districting in Florida.

In Alachua County, the League has four chapters. The League of Women Voters of Alachua County is the "mother" chapter and the largest, with over 300 members. There are chapters at both the University

of Florida and Santa Fe College, as well as a chapter at the Oak Hammock Retirement Community.

Since this is not an election year, all of the chapters are focused on education and are holding workshops and events to educate the public on topics such as redistricting, ballot access, and, of course, voting rights.

The LWV needs committee members. These members study problems and advocate for solutions. The Natural Resources Committee of the LWV of Alachua County is working hard to produce a high voter turnout for the referendum on returning control of GRU to the City of Gainesville, which will be the only ballot issue in November.

Our Gun Violence Prevention and Safety Committee needs people to table at events to give out information and gun locks.

Voter Services, which is the heart of LWV activity, needs folks to do, well, all of the above. For people who want to participate but have little time, the Past President, Janice Garry, created the What You Can Do Committee. (See p. 2.) It has grown so large and popular that it is moving from under the LWV umbrella to advertise a wider range of community events, but it is a valuable resource for the community (join at jgcommunity23@gmail.com). These examples only scratch the surface of LWV activity.

You can contact all the chapters electronically and join the same way. If you are a student and join through UF or SFC, the Alachua County chapter has made it possible for you to join free. Please help us stand up for democracy.

For more information, visit my.lwv.org/florida/alachua or www.facebook.com/alachuacountylwv. ✨

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Editors' picks: News that didn't fit

A conversation with California Governor Gavin Newsom

by Heather Cox Richardson ~ YouTube (31:10 minute video) ~ Aug. 14 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2226

Whatever you think of him, Gov Gavin Newsom really lays it out here. We must fight back against the rising authoritarianism.

Defying back to work order, Air Canada flight attendants' secure tentative agreement

by Jenny Brown ~ Labor Notes ~ Aug. 25 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2229

Flight attendants unpaid labor being rectified. Here's the back story.

DeSantis' Hope Florida scandal gets worse

by John Hill ~ Tampa Bay Times ~ Aug. 14 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2242

This sneaky trick needs to not be forgotten, one more dark stain on this petulant governor who is thankfully term-limited in 2026.

Fla. wildlife commissioners ignore science, law in saying yes to bear hunt

by Craig Pittman ~ Florida Phoenix ~ Aug. 21 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2227

Lawsuit filed by Bear Warriors United seeks to overturn the decision, but it's not a sure thing. Last time it was called off early, it was a slaughter, a gift to the hunting lobby, yet here we are again.

Humans of New York's post on Marwa Abu Al-Nour

by Brandon Stanton ~ Facebook ~ Aug. 21 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2228

Everyday in Palestine deaths happen, but they are usually invisible. This one, thanks to HoNY, created an unforgettable image.

Medicare, imperiled by Trump, turns 60

by F. Douglas Stephenson ~ Informed Comment at juancole.com ~ Aug. 6 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2228

They're gonna take away healthcare and let people die ... to balance Social Security?

Nader: stay silent

by Ralph Nader ~ nader.org ~ March 14 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2241

Ralph has a lot of experience seeing corporate Democrats fail; a wake up call.

On Putin playing Trump and how the Epstein cover-up sidelined Bongino

by Wajahat Ali ~ The Left Hook ~ YouTube (48:37 minute video) ~ Aug. 20 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2225

Elon Musk reaches out to Dan Bongino for scoops, the Epstein cover-up in the White House that the Trump Administration can't control, and Putin playing Trump like a fiddle.

Trump's immigrant gulags: A bonanza for private prison corporations

by F. Douglas Stephenson ~ Informed Comment at juancole.com ~ Aug. 30 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2245

When it comes to for-profit, private corporate incarceration of immigrants, making lots of money is like drinking salt water, the more they drink, the thirstier they get. ☹️

We will miss NPR's news and public affairs broadcasting if it ever goes away.

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 United We Dream



‘Dr. Sarah Rockwell has done more good than most of her critics will ever attempt’ **Pitchforks and prayer: A constitutional reckoning**

by Amy Trask

*They asked us to pray. To bow our heads and believe in mercy.
To trust in grace. Then they broke it.*

Dr. Sarah Rockwell made a mistake. One comment, that many disagree with, posted on her personal page, was ripped from context, inflated by outrage, and weaponized. It was a moment of human error in a lifetime of service. She apologized — publicly, repeatedly, and sincerely. That’s more accountability than many elected officials show after voting against school lunch programs. (*Ed. Note: Rockwell’s controversial comment related to her feelings about WWE wrestler Hulk Hogan’s death. Hogan was a Trump supporter involved in union busting. Rockwell was not a fan.*)

We’ve entered a moment where outrage has become currency, and too many are spending it without asking what it’s costing us. Instead of reflection or dialogue after her comment was made, we saw retaliation. She became the unwilling face of a culture war that had already been raging. She made national news and received thousands of death threats. She was mocked, humiliated, and threatened on a national scale. The comment was never the real issue — it was the excuse, and the pitchforks were raised.

At the next Board meeting, after apologizing yet again, she stepped back from her role as Chair, handed the gavel to the Vice Chair, and listened. Twenty-eight parents spoke in her defense. Two dissented. One of those dissenters, Jeremy Clepper, had already disrupted the meeting twice. During his comment period, he insulted board members by name, raised his voice at the gallery, and referenced a convicted Newberry sex offender being “castrated and hung in the town square.” He continued speaking aggressively after his time expired, and deputies were asked to remove him. The attorney intervened. Clepper was allowed to stay, but left voluntarily, and is suing for a First Amendment violation that never occurred.

The Florida Department of Education saw an opening. Florida commissioner of education Anastasios Kamoutsas sent a letter demanding Rockwell’s presence at a Board of Education meeting. He suggested she not reapply for her teaching certificate that he wanted to revoke and floated a fine equivalent to the Board’s salaries. The Governor posted the letter under the banner of “accountability.” Kamoutsas commented “we’ve got your back, brother” on Clepper’s own post. The Mayor of Newberry, who defended Clepper, called the situation “war,” demanded “surrender,” and mockingly asked me if I was the “sentinel for peace” when I requested he condemn the death threats. His response? “It’s only been a week and you’re already crying. How weak.”

This wasn’t metaphor. It was messaging. The verdict had already been written.

Let’s pause here.

If this is “war,” then who are the generals? The man they’re rallying behind isn’t just a litigant — he’s a known extremist. His public posts include antisemitic rhetoric and white supremacist ideology. That’s documented. Yet the governor and commissioner amplified his narrative and signaled support.

What message does that send? It tells educators, advocates, and survivors that the state will not only tolerate extremism — it will reward it, if the optics serve. It tells women in leadership that

their apology will never be enough if their existence threatens the status quo. And it tells every citizen that due process is no longer a principle — it’s a performance.

We must reject that message. Not just because it’s politically dangerous, but because it’s morally indefensible. Because democracy demands better. And because silence, in moments like this, is complicity.

Kamoutsas’ alignment with Clepper — while targeting a Jewish public official (Rockwell) facing thousands of death threats and requiring police surveillance — raises grave concerns. Not just about impartiality, not just about abuse of power, but about the misuse of office to reward ideological extremism. When officials mischaracterize Rockwell’s speech as an “official act” or frame her trauma as “war,” they’re not seeking truth or accountability. They’re seeking retribution. A takedown.

Then came the Board of Education meeting. We bowed our heads and prayed. They spoke of mercy, grace, and the importance of teachers, but the weight of hypocrisy was palpable. We all felt it: the slow twist in the gut as each civil word dripped with poison. The real cruelty wasn’t even in the words — it was in their comfort saying them.

Then came school board member Tina Certain’s interrogation. This wasn’t deliberation. It was performance. The agenda falsely claimed parental rights had been violated. Rockwell was told she’d be asked how she had “restored” rights that were never infringed. The questions were pointed, leading, and designed to condemn.

Then came the video clips: one over a year old, one about book bans — neither relevant to the incident under review. The footage from the meeting had been edited to exclude Clepper’s aggressive behavior preceding — and during — his commentary, and spotlight the outrage that followed. Context was erased. Narrative was engineered.

In any quasi-judicial role — whether on a school board, commission, or bench — impartiality is not optional. It’s a foundational, legal, and ethical requirement. The Florida Supreme Court has made that clear: administrative hearings must be neutral, procedurally fair, and anchored in due process. So when a Commissioner publicly aligns with a litigant, or a Governor amplifies one side’s narrative before the facts are heard, the process isn’t just compromised — it’s rigged. Under *Caperton v. Massey*, that violates due process outright.

Splicing in unrelated clips while omitting the instigating behavior of a known extremist? That seems like constructive defamation. It’s narrative engineering dressed up as evidence. Florida’s Code of Ethics demands impartiality — not selective storytelling. When public trust is weaponized to serve a prewritten script, it’s not just unethical. It’s unlawful.

Let’s revisit the legal standards governing Dr. Rockwell’s speech. In *Pickering v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court affirmed that public employees retain First Amendment rights when speaking as private citizens on matters of public concern. *Lane v. Franks* reaffirmed that principle. Rockwell’s comment, while uncomfortable for some, falls squarely within that protected category. It was citizen speech on a public issue. Full stop.

The state’s response — threatening her livelihood, demanding

apologies, and orchestrating public shaming — doesn't just overstep. It creates a chilling effect. It weaponizes institutional power to silence dissent. It undermines the very freedoms it claims to uphold.

This isn't about ideology — it isn't "red jersey vs. blue jersey." It's about integrity. When public officials distort legal processes, amplify extremist rhetoric, and weaponize their platforms against vulnerable communities, they don't just cross ethical lines — they bulldoze them. They compromise the principles of limited government, individual liberty, and constitutional accountability. They erode the very foundations of institutional legitimacy and betray the public trust entrusted to them by all Floridians, regardless of political affiliation.

We have a right to be angry. Righteously, morally, unapologetically angry. We have a right to demand better. To demand that institutions live the values they recite. To demand leaders who protect — not perform. To demand due process and respect for the law. To demand that people not be treated as disposable the moment they falter — for, if we tear down every public servant who slips, we will have no one left standing. We deserve better than performative hearings and partisan vendettas.

Dr. Sarah Rockwell has done more good than most of her critics will ever attempt. She's protected students. Built policy. Shown up when others stayed silent. But

this moment is bigger than one woman. It's about every educator who wonders if their words will be weaponized. Every citizen who fears extremism will be rewarded. Every person who still believes due process should — and still — means something.

We will not bow our heads to injustice, nor to the erosion of due process. Not to partisan warfare disguised as governance. Not in our schools, our hearings, or our communities.

This isn't isolated. It's a pattern — one we've seen attacking autonomy and home rule, one we're watching take root in

our federal institutions, our state agencies, and our public discourse. Silence is what's being counted on.

We can't afford apathy. We can't afford fatigue. We can't afford to be silent or to look away. We won't. We can't. Not now. Not ever.

Amy Trask is a legislative bill author, civic educator, public speaker, and former Landscape Analyst with Harvard Safra Center for Ethics. She specializes in conflict resolution and constructive dialogue, strategic planning, and legislative policy, with a focus on empowering individuals and communities to navigate complex institutional dynamics. ✨



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‘A roller coaster of fraught debate’

The closing of Alligator Alcatraz

by Victoria Machado

In only three months, Alligator Alcatraz, the migrant detention center in the Everglades, has turned into a roller coaster of fraught debate.

In June, with no input from local government, Gov. Ron DeSantis assigned hundreds of millions of Florida taxpayer dollars to fund and quickly open the doors of the South Florida Detention Facility, commonly known as Alligator Alcatraz, at the Dade-Collier Training and Transition Airport site. This is the same location that was saved from development in the 1960s, thanks in large part to conservation efforts.

This space has entered the public sphere again, as environmentalists pushed hard against the detention center. DeSantis's promise of 'zero' impact held zero weight.

Outraged by the lack of oversight and missing environmental impact analysis, people came out in protest, including Miccosukee tribal elders, who coordinated

several prayers for the land. On June 27, less than a week before the detention center opened, Friends of the Everglades and the Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit. A month later the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians joined the legal battle.

In early July, as the detention center filled its cages (enclosures that held upwards of 32 men with three toilets), reports of unsanitary conditions arose. These included worms in the food, fecal waste on the floors, medical neglect, and a lack of food and water.

Miccosukee and interfaith leaders continued praying outside the gates for the facility to shut down. Prayers were answered on Aug. 7, when Judge Kathleen Williams granted a 14-day order that prohibited new construction.

Two weeks later, after expert testimony from a range of scientists, Judge Williams ruled that the detention center must close its doors. The state quickly responded and sought to overturn the order, citing that

federal environmental laws only apply to federal agencies, not the state of Florida.

It has been difficult navigating exactly who is in charge as money moves from one place to another and the chain of command appears to be jumbled.

PBS reported that taxpayers may lose \$218 million dollars on this project, the same project that was supposed to be reimbursed by FEMA funds.

As the story continues to unfold, one thing is certain, Alligator Alcatraz set into motion the plans for several other detention centers including Speedway Slammer in Indiana, Cornhusker Clink in Nebraska, and Deportation Depot in our own backyard of Baker County. With the way things are moving, there is no telling when or where this roller coaster will end.

For more info, check out these AP reports:

- tinyurl.com/Iguana2231
- tinyurl.com/Iguana2232 🐢

Website: bingodeli.square.site

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And the good news is ...

‘Conservatives’ press for continuation of Obamacare enhanced premium tax credits

Conservative business leaders sounded the alarm over the potential loss of federal funds at the end of the year to lower the costs of so-called Obamacare health plans for more than 4.7 million Florida residents. “From the Florida business community, the best way to keep us up and running is to have a healthy work-

force,” Associated Industries of Florida President and CEO Brewster Bevis said. “If the enhanced premiums expire, costs would go up for the millions of people who purchase insurance through the federal health care marketplace known as healthcare.gov. The cost increases could lead people to drop their health coverage,

which would increase the number of uninsured residents in the state. That “slows down the employee’s recuperation time, getting healthy again and getting back in the workforce.”

From an article by Christine Sexton in the Aug. 13 Florida Phoenix. See the full story at tinyurl.com/Iguana2219

Florida cities and counties line up to defy new pro-developer state law: SB 180 ties their hands so they’re up in arms, ready to sue and urging a repeal

All over the state, local governments are pushing ahead on common-sense changes to their growth plans, wetlands protection, and impact fees. They’re doing so despite warnings from big, bad opponents that what they have in mind will violate a new pro-developer state law that limits

city and county governments’ authority on new land-use or development regulations. It’s happening in big counties like Orange and small cities like Edgewater. And everywhere it’s happening, it’s bad news for Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Legislature, because it shows that local gov-

ernments are tired of being pushed around by developers and their toadies and are ready to push back.

From an article by Craig Pittman in the Aug. 14 Florida Phoenix. See the full story at tinyurl.com/Iguana2224

Four vital Gainesville Regional Transit System (RTS) routes saved

Full service is being restored to four of the most important Gainesville RTS routes, thanks to the outpouring of support from Alachua County Labor Coalition members, supporters, and RTS riders. Full service, including headways (time between buses at any given stop),

is being restored to routes 5, 8, 15 and 43. These routes take people to work at UF, Shands, the VA, downtown, and the Oaks Mall area. Riders rely on them to get groceries, make it to appointments, and visit Gainesville’s many attractions. Restoring the routes was supported unanimously by

the City Commission. They will need to vote once on finalizing the service changes in the coming weeks, but this is expected to be a formality.

From an announcement from the ACLC via Action Network.org. See more on the ACLC at: laborcoalition.org

Law banning school library books ruled ‘overbroad and unconstitutional’

A federal trial judge in Florida has ruled that the state’s law banning books deemed “pornographic” from school libraries is, in part, “overbroad and unconstitutional.” Carlos Mendoza, a President Barack Obama-appointed judge in the Middle District Court of Florida, issued a sum-

mary judgement in a lawsuit filed by book publishers against the 2023 law, HB 1069. The suit, filed a year ago, asked the court to deem the state’s interpretation of “pornographic” and content that “describes sexual conduct” unconstitutional. The law, Mendoza wrote, “does not evaluate

the work to determine if it has any holistic value,” a key part of the legal standard to determine whether material is obscene.

From an article by Jay Waagmeester in the Aug. 15 Florida Phoenix. See the full story at tinyurl.com/Iguana2222

UF students succeed in pushing bill requiring parental consent for corporal punishment in schools

UF graduates Graham Bernstein and Konstantin Nakov fought for years for Florida to ban corporal punishment in schools — often known as paddling. Their efforts came to fruition earlier this year with a law requiring parents to consent before their kids are struck. Before the law took

effect, Florida public schools provided parents, upon request, with a written statement explaining what the punishment was and why it was administered. Now, parents must opt in to the practice with written consent before their child is punished. “[School] is a place where kids

should feel safe and welcome, always,” said Nakov, 24, “and that’s not something that is really compatible with corporal punishment.”

From an article by Alexa Ryan in the Aug. 23 Florida Alligator. See the full story at tinyurl.com/Iguana2243

What it means to have a woman in a wheelchair featured on U.S. currency

The late disability justice co-founder and activist Stacey Park Milbern is the latest pioneering woman to receive her own quarter from the U.S. Mint. Milbern is the first woman in a wheelchair featured on U.S. currency and the first person whose wheelchair is actually shown. “Stacey is not the first wheelchair user on currency. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt has

been featured on the dime continuously since 1946, but he is presented as a disembodied head,” Maria Town, president of the American Association of People with Disabilities said. Town pointed out that most Americans did not know Roosevelt used a wheelchair for his entire presidency. She emphasized that the visibility of Milbern’s disability

is groundbreaking “In showing Stacey’s full body, her [tracheostomy tube] and her wheelchair, her quarter presents a different, but more realistic, version of disability than has ever been seen on U.S. currency.”

From an article by Sara Luterman in the Aug. 21 19th News. See the full story at tinyurl.com/Iguana2223 🐾

GRU Referendum Special Election

by Susan Bottcher

As you've heard, there will be a Special Election this coming November to repeat the GRU governance referendum from last year. Everyone thought that this was a done deal, and it should have been. After all, a historic turnout (70%) of voters for that city referendum issued the mandate (73% Yes) that we demand to retain control of our locally owned public utility.

The Authority board and newly minted CEO of GRU, Ed Bielarski, were shaken at the prospect of losing their power (and in Bielarski's case, losing his \$300K/year salary – the largest of any city employee in history, but I again digress) so the lawsuits began to fly.

Long story short, several back-and-forth legal maneuvers later a judge agreed that the city has the right and ability to amend its charter. He however also ruled that in his view the ballot language of the 2024 referendum was misleading. This meant we could re-do the referendum provided we correct the ballot language.

So, with strong public support, your city commissioners again decided to hold another referendum vote and to do so quick-

ly. The ballot language was amended, and we now have a Special Election this coming November 4. You can make your voices heard again: Abolish DeSantis' Authority board and return GRU to local control.

The task ahead of us is clear, but we still face challenges. Here is what you can do: First, mark your calendar for this Special Election on Nov. 4. This referendum will be the only item on your ballot.

Second, decide now on whether you will vote on Election Day, show up during Early Voting (EV) or Vote By Mail (VBM). If you want to vote on Election Day you will vote at your usual precinct polling place.

If you chose EV, note it will only be for three days: Oct. 31, Nov. 1 and 2. That's it. There will only be two EV sites: Supervisor of Elections (SoE) office 515 N. Main Street and the Millhopper Library on NW 43rd Street.

If you've been a regular VBM voter, make sure you request to get a Special Election ballot. You must do that by going to VoteAlachua.com and click on Vote By Mail link. It will then open a red link to Sign

Up to Vote By Mail. Then navigate to the window that allows you to choose your VBM ballot for the Special Election. If you have problems or questions, call the SoE office at 352-334-5252.

Finally, consider contributing to our campaign. Unfortunately, this is the nature of the beast that is campaigning. The opposition never fights fair so we must have the resources to correct the record and ensure Gainesville voters get to the polls. Please visit our website KeepGNVLocal.com and donate online at secure.actblue.com/donate/localpublicutilities

You can also request a yard sign or sign up to volunteer for this campaign.

We greatly appreciate everyone's tenacity and support over the years as we fight again to keep GRU local. We won't back down! All over Florida and the U.S. we are seeing the brutish overreach of the Republicans as they trample peoples' rights and attempt to dismantle norms and institutions. We refuse to roll over on this local issue. We know we can and will win this third round with GRU as long as everyone stands with us, for this third time, as we tell Ron DeSantis and the Florida Republicans, "No!" 🐉

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It's ridiculous to talk about freedom in a society dominated by huge corporations. What kind of freedom is there inside a corporation? They're totalitarian institutions — you take orders from above and maybe give them to people below you. There's about as much freedom as under Stalinism.

~ Noam Chomsky



Free Fridays Concert Schedule

Free Shows Every Friday from 7 - 9 p.m.
at Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E University Ave.)

Sept. 5: Alex Kaufman Big Band
Sept. 12: Fest 24 Showcase
Sept. 19: Uncle Morty's Rhythm Cream (R&B/Soul/Rock)
Sept. 26: Morningbell (Psychedelic Rock & Soul)

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From MENTAL HEALTH, p. 7

services even harder to access. Meanwhile, families who can afford private care often bypass the waitlists, creating a two-tiered system where access depends more on income than need.

The result is a community stretched thin, where the dismantling of federal supports and the chronic underfunding of state systems converge, leaving Gainesville families caught in the middle.

The Hidden Costs of Inaction

Underfunding mental health care is not just a moral failure; it is fiscally shortsighted. Studies show that every dollar invested in mental health treatment saves several dollars in emergency care, law enforcement, and lost productivity. When children do not receive help for trauma or anxiety, they are more likely to disengage from school. When adults go untreated for depression or substance use, workplace absenteeism and family instability rise.

The hidden costs ripple outward, affecting our schools, hospitals, and neighborhoods. Failing to invest in mental health today guarantees higher expenses tomorrow — financially and socially.

Building a Healthier, More Equitable Gainesville

Despite the challenges, Gainesville is home to people and organizations fighting for change. The Alachua County Crisis Center offers 24/7 support lines. Local nonprofits like Peaceful Paths, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, and various school-based programs provide vital services despite funding shortfalls. Community organizers and advocacy groups have pushed for more equitable distribution of resources and greater public awareness of the crisis.

But these efforts cannot succeed without systemic change. Florida must dramatically increase its investment in mental health if Gainesville and other communities are to meet the growing demand. This means shifting our priorities away from punitive systems and toward prevention, early intervention, and sustained care.

A Call to Action

If we want to build a healthier, more resilient community, mental health funding cannot remain an afterthought. It must be a priority. Here are concrete steps we can take as individuals and as a community:

1. Contact your legislators. Tell your state representatives and senators that Florida's ranking of 49th in mental health funding is unacceptable. Demand increased per-capita funding and expansion of Medicaid to cover more families. Even a short monthly email or tagging them on social media with articles and stats keeps the pressure on.
2. Support local organizations. Nonprofits like Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Peaceful Paths, and the Alachua County Crisis Center rely on donations and volunteers. Even modest contributions help sustain services for families who would otherwise go without.
3. Advocate in schools. Parents and educators can push for stronger investment in school counselors, social workers, and behavioral health staff. Every child deserves access to emotional and behavioral support as part of their education.
4. Talk openly about mental health. Reducing stigma is part of increasing funding. When we speak honestly about our own struggles and needs, we

create a culture where mental health is valued equally with physical health. Share hotline numbers like 988 on your fridge, in your email signature, or with family members so support is always visible.

5. Model community care. Small acts make a big difference. Offering a ride to therapy, babysitting for a parent who needs an appointment, or simply listening without judgment can help chip away at barriers families face.
6. Vote with equity in mind. Pay attention to candidates' platforms on health care and education funding. Elect leaders who recognize that healthy communities depend on strong, accessible mental health care.

Moving Forward Together

The challenges are daunting, but they are not insurmountable. Gainesville has a long tradition of grassroots organizing and progressive advocacy. By raising our voices and demanding better, we can push for a future where no parent has to wait months for their child's counseling appointment, where no student has to suffer in silence at school, and where no family is left without support during a crisis.

Our community deserves better. Our children deserve better. Florida deserves better. It is time to stop treating mental health as optional, and start funding it as essential.

Teresa M. Goff, PhD, PLMPH, is a postdoctoral fellow at UF Health Psychiatry. She is a graduate of LEND Autism Leadership Academy and has an Integrated Behavioral Health Scholar Certificate. 🐾

Annual Lawton Chiles Gala, Sept. 28

The Alachua County Democratic Party invites you to the 26th Annual Lawton Chiles Gala, featuring Keynote Speaker, U.S. Representative Maxwell Frost. The Gala features a meal, musical performers, and additional speakers, including gubernatorial candidate David Jolly. The Gala and Legendary Silent Auction will be held on Sept. 28 from 5 to 9pm at the Hilton University of Florida, 1714 SW 34th St. in Gainesville. For more on the silent auction, visit tinyurl.com/Iguana2240.

Our mission to elect Democrats in Alachua County relies on the support of our incredible sponsors, donors, and volunteers. We look forward to enjoying this evening with you. Tickets are \$130 for individuals, \$65 for students, and \$1,200 for a reserved table of 8. Tickets can be purchased at tinyurl.com/Iguana2239. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/Iguana2238. 🐾



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Timucua Language and Culture: Understanding Alachua County's Native Heritage

with Dr. George Aaron Broadwell
Wednesday, October 1
7pm
FREE with registration

Who were the Native people of Alachua County? The correct answer depends on the time period, but when the Spanish arrived, the Timucua people were the residents of this region. Due to recent progress in reading and understanding the Timucua language, we can now read Native documents from the colonial period. These documents afford us a new perspective on the Native heritage of Alachua County.

Join author and UF professor, Dr. George Aaron Broadwell, on Wednesday, Oct. 1, to learn more about the Timucua language and culture.

In-person registration: tinyurl.com/Iguana2237

More events, info at <https://mathesonmuseum.org/events/> 🐢

In memoriam

Andrea Gibson (1975-2025)



Andrea Gibson was an amazing poet who died this summer at 49 years old. They were a prolific writer and an impassioned performer, appointed as the Poet Laureate of Colorado in 2023. Rather than a written obituary, may we suggest instead a sample of one of their poems in performance, and then on your own, dive in deeper if you choose to: tinyurl.com/Iguana2246 🐢.

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Recommended blogs / web sites



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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.

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Letters from an American

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<https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com>



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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.

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Oral History Program

History and the people who make it: Johnny Jones



This month, the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program at the University of Florida features excerpts from a May 23, 2001 interview with Johnny Jones [J], who was the Executive Director of the Florida Wildlife Federation and a prominent environmental advocate in Everglades and Big Cypress swamp preservation. He was interviewed by Brian Gridley [G]. Excerpt edited by Beth Grobman. For the full interview go to tinyurl.com/Iguana2217

G: Tell me about your professional background up to the time when you joined the Florida Wildlife Federation.

J: I finished the tenth grade, and I quit school. My father was a plumbing contractor, and there is a school you have to go to become a plumber. You know, it takes two years to become an engineer, and it takes five years to become a plumber [which I became].

All the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project is, is a great big plumbing system, and a very elementary one to start with. It is a simple form of plumbing, but it is in giant form. That is why I understand it so well. They taught us about over-enrichment and things like that. I was taught about the purification of sand. Water going through the sand goes into the aquifer. The nutrients and The impurities, before it gets to the aquifer, most of it is filtered out.

You can take a polluted river, let us say down in Africa where people were getting sick from drinking the water [from their] rivers. Now we have gone over there and built wells just a short distance from the river, and the water comes clear in the wells, but the water actually comes from the river.

G: How did you eventually become involved with the Florida Wildlife Federation?

J: I was in the plumbing business twenty-three years, but I was a hunter and fisherman and all that. I liked the outdoors, and I particularly liked the Everglades. I

fished and hunted everywhere, and I fell in love with the Florida outdoors. It was paradise. When I was young fella, in my late teens, I used to go in the Everglades with a canoe-type boat. I went all over the Everglades duck hunting.

The Everglades were so beautiful when I was a kid. It is nothing like it is today. All you see down there today is sawgrass. People think the Everglades was always sawgrass, and it was not. When I was a kid, it was part sawgrass, but [there] was a diversity of all kinds of vegetation. You had flags, which are a form of a lily-type plant. You had giant willow heads, so big you cannot imagine how large they were. They would be maybe two or three miles long and maybe a half-mile to a mile wide. These were low depression areas of muck where, when the Everglades dried up, the water would go in there and it would collect fish and things. But I just fell in love with this thing, and I saw it just going to hell in a [hand] basket.

I became a member of the Wildlife Conservation League. I was in that club for many years. I was sent as a delegate from our club to the Florida Wildlife Federation. The National Wildlife Federation was the largest conservation organization in the world. I got [active in the Florida Wildlife Federation], and I saw some potential but I was disappointed because, [at] the time I got into it, it had become a social club, as so many of these type clubs are today. They talk about the environment but they preach to each other, like talking to the choir. They do not really get to the public, and that is who you have got to get to, the people who do not understand what is happening to their system.

When I got in the Florida Wildlife Federation, I met Tom Kimball, who was executive director of the National Wildlife Federation. He would come down from Washington and sit in on our meetings, and he could see that things were not going well, that the Federation was not doing what it should be doing.

Anyway I went [to a Florida Wildlife Federation meeting], expecting to find something that could help solve some of these problems that I [saw] happening [where] I lived — it was being destroyed by development and by drainage. After the meeting, I was asked to go to



Johnny Jones (1932-2010) was the Executive Director of the Florida Wildlife Federation from 1971 to 1986. Photo courtesy of the Palm Beach Post.

a meeting of high-ranking people in the National Wildlife Federation. When I was there, Tom Kimball sat down beside me and slapped me on the leg, and he said, "I hear you are a fire-eater. That is what he called me."

From time to time, I did raise hell with the government when I saw things going wrong which were destroying our environment. I was not exactly sure what [Tom] was up to, but as it turned out, [there was] an election on the following day, and he wanted me to run for president of the Florida Wildlife Federation.

Well, the guy who was in line to become president was a friend of mine. I said, Mr. Kimball, I cannot take that position because of Bill [Theobald]. That man has counted on this. He has been wanting to be president, and he served all these different positions, and he is vice president now. He should be president tomorrow.

He [Kimball] said, well, would you take the position of vice president with the understanding that you would become president the following year? So, I gave in and said all right, I would do it. And I did, and I set Florida Wildlife Federation on fire. I mean, I kicked them in the butt.

After a couple of years as president of the Florida Wildlife Federation, I think it was two years, Tom Kimball came down [to spend] time with me at my home. He said, I want to see the Florida Wildlife Federation get an executive director, a full-time

man to work and get it on the map, get it active [in] doing things. He said, I wish that you could do it, but I know you have a plumbing business.

I said, Mr. Kimball, if the board would accept me, I would be glad to. I [had] done pretty well, I had other sources of income. I turned my plumbing business over to my son, and Mr. Kimball went to the board of the Florida Wildlife Federation and said, I want the Florida Wildlife Federation to get an executive director.

I took the position with one understanding: that when I needed help from the National Wildlife Federation, they would help me in whatever I needed.

G: What are the two or three most important contributing factors that have led to the present problems in the Everglades?

J: Agriculture, and I do not mean family farms. Mainly agriculture and real estate, reclamation. We [are] having the same problems as they have had all over the United States, where they built these flood control projects that turn out to do more damage than they do good.

G: John DeGrove once characterized the ecological problems of South Florida as “An innocent ignorance.” Would you then disagree with that characterization?

J: John DeGrove is a nice fellow, but his interest lies in protecting those people who are the beneficiaries of this flood-control project. His heart is in the right place, I believe, but I believe he has done a great deal of damage by encouraging growth in South Florida. I do not think it was something he did intentionally. There have been many people who worked either in the legislature or outside of the legislature, [as] consultants, and the driving force was to create more real estate for more development. That is one of the terrible things that has happened to South Florida. We now have more people than we have water. That is why we have these terrible droughts.

G: So, you would not characterize the development of the Central and Southern Florida Project as innocent; it was more directed toward a specific purpose.

J: Yes. The people in South Florida were sold a bill-of-goods that this was going to be a great thing to benefit fishing and they were going to stop all this flooding. Well, we never had any flooding on the east

coast where the people originally lived. It was out in the area of the wetlands, and they are supposed to flood. They were a backwater system for Lake Okeechobee, which is one of the largest lakes in the United States, and the Everglades was a river of grass that flowed from the lake down into Florida Bay and into the Gulf of Mexico, and it supplied the water for Everglades National Park. Everglades National Park has lost 95 percent of its bird life as a result of this project.

G: Do you think that those are things that people were aware of before the Central and Southern Florida Project?

J: No! Even the people who did it had no idea that they were doing so much harm, because many of them realize it now and have changed their position. That is why we were able to pass laws like the Kissimmee River restoration, which thirty years ago you could not possibly have done.

We had to educate the public, and they had to see the damage of all the nutrients [of cow manure] running straight in without any filtration from the marshes. You know, the marshes are wonderful things. The marsh around a lake or around a river is a kidney; it cleans up the water as the water runs through them, the nutrients from that water, which [are] the big damaging [factors]. It winds up [in] Lake Okeechobee and, bingo, we got a dead lake on our hands, which we just about had before this drought.

There are people screaming in Palm Beach County right now about the drought, about Lake Okeechobee and how bad it looks. The fish camps are dried up, they cannot fish, and the sugarcane [is using what water we have; they do not cut back.]

But, in fact, the draining of this lake [is a helpful thing]. The only way you can cure a dead lake or over-enriched lake is to drain it and let the sun hit the bottom. The sun will actually kill the bad vegetation, and the nutrients will dry up and blow away. It will just disappear. When it re-floods, the lake will become pure again. The water will be clean, and you will be able to use it for drinking water. Right now, it is not fit to turn into drinking water, it is so bad.

G: Earlier we had talked about Governor Graham’s Save Our Everglades program. What do you see as being the most important accomplishments that came out of that?

J: [Graham is the best.] I think [Graham] got the money from Congress. He got the

Kissimmee funded, and he got the C38 de-authorized. He was behind the funding of Save Our Everglades, but we have not had a chance yet to see any benefit. The stuff they are doing, the impoundments and those deep well injections — those things are all negative things.

Everybody I know of who knows anything about this, unless he worked with the District, is opposed to what they are doing.

Actually, there is one storage area that I support. That is the one that protects the estuary there in Stuart, the St. Lucie Estuary. If they would put a storage area there — a large one, so that when we get a lot of water [that] we [have] to get out of the way, we put it in storage up there and then let it out slowly. Then it will not kill the estuary. You can dump freshwater into an estuary, and it is fine. It is when you go beyond what nature will do [that problems develop].

A river puts fresh water into an estuary, and it is wonderful what they create. It is when you put too much, then it becomes a pollutant. You take Class I water and put it in a saltwater estuary, and you have polluted it if you put too much [at] one time. But if you let it go in as a trickle in there the way it is supposed to, you are benefiting it. Trying to explain this to engineers and tell them, every time we get one educated a little bit, he is gone. That is right. Every time we get one who is doing the right thing, they let him go.

G: Final question. What are the most important lessons that you have learned from your experience with Everglades issues?

J: When you believe something, say it and do it. In other words, if you believe they are wrong, you should fight it with everything you have got to try to stop them, which I did. No one has ever fought as hard as I did, ever, and that is why I am so tired now. I am absolutely burnt out.

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.

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From RAINBOW, p.32

After the partial removal of Gainesville's rainbow crosswalks, I wonder how many people this has enraged, or even worse, made them numb to the pain. These crosswalks have been a beautiful act of remembrance and pride for the LGBTQ+ community for many years.

In 2019, Gainesville first implemented the rainbow crosswalks with the help of the late LGBTQ+ activist Terry Fleming and the Pride Community Center of North Central Florida. Fleming passed away in April 2020 at age 58. He was an integral supporter of Gainesville's LGBTQ+ community with a heart for truly helping others.

On Facebook, hundreds of community members speak their minds on the removal of the rainbow crosswalks.

"Every time they come with this bullsh*t, I see Terry Fleming standing in one of them with his arms raised and what this would do to his memory," said Carolina Andrea.

"This is disrespectful of Gainesville and our citizens in so many ways. But for me, what I think of, is how much it dishonors the legacy of Terry Fleming," Sandra Lambert wrote.

The FDOT is now targeting checkered crosswalks at Daytona Speedway as a means to cover their true target. After the colors and patterns are stripped away, we need to ask ourselves if it's worth it to sacrifice our collective self-expression in favor of their prejudiced beliefs. Now is the time for us to show we care about the power of our own voices, and not give up or give in. ✨

I wondered: What if people were as well trained in waging peace as soldiers are in waging war?

~ from "The Best Defense," interview with Paul K. Chappell

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ICE holds VFP president in solitary confinement



On Oct. 21, Zahid Chaudhry was detained by ICE during his naturalization interview. Zahid is the president of the Rachel Corrie Veterans For Peace Chapter 109 in Olympia, Wash. He is now held at the Northwest Detention Center. As of Aug. 24, he is being kept in solitary confinement, in 24/7 bright light, without accommodations for his disabilities and almost completely without communication.

No one is truly safe. It doesn't matter if you're a beloved spouse and parent, an active community member appreciated by everyone, or a veteran in a wheelchair injured while serving your country.

For more background, see tinyurl.com/Iguana2247. Sign the petition for his release at bit.ly/FreeZahid. Stay in the loop here: tinyurl.com/Iguana2248. 🐢

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WEEK OF AUG 31- SEPT 6

Wed 9/3 "Science on Tap", 6:30-8pm, Heartwood Soundstage (619 S Main St), FL LAKEWATCH celebrates 40 years of volunteer science, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9310

Thu 9/4 "How Charlottesville Changed America", 6:30-8:30pm, Chabad UF Jewish Student & Community Ctr (2021 NW 5th Ave), James Loeffler on free speech, hate speech, & antisemitism, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9311

Fri 9/5 Free Fridays Concert, 7-9pm thru 9/26, Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E Univ Ave), tonight: Alex Kaufman Big Band free; pg 18 & tinyurl.com/iguana9209

Fri 9/5 "On Clover Road" opens, 8pm, through 9/24, Acrosstown Theatre (3501 SW 2nd Ave), drama of mother, daughter, & cult, \$20-25; acrosstown.org

Sat 9/6 Living History Saturday, 9am-1pm (1st Sats, Sept-May), Morningside Nature Ctr (3540 E Univ Ave), farm life of the past re-enacted, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9312

Sat 9/6 UF Football vs S Florida, 4:15-7:15pm, BH Griffin Stadium, beware game-related traffic, \$!!!

WEEK OF SEPT 7-13

Sun 9/7 "Reclaiming Sacred Ground", 1-2pm, Hogtown Creek Headwaters Nature Park (1500 NW 45th Ave), Nigel Rudolph on restoring historic African American cemeteries, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9313

Sun 9/7 UF Soccer, 6pm, UF Disney Stadium + livestream (157 Gale Lemerand Dr), vs Georgia State, free

Mon 9/8 SPOHP Open House, 4-5:30pm, UF Pugh Hall Ocora (296 Buckman Dr), Samuel Proctor Oral History Program welcomes staff, students, & public, free; oral.history.ufl.edu

Mon 9/8 Fla Free Speech Forum, 11:30am, Inst. of Culinary Arts at Eastside High School (1201 SE 43rd St), Prof. Paul Licata compares rise of A. Hitler & D.J. Trump, free; pg 4 & tinyurl.com/iguana9314

Tue 9/9 Springs Academy, 12-1pm, Fla Springs Welcome Ctr (18645 Main St, High Springs), springs biology w/ Dr. Steve Walsh, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9315

Tue 9/9 School Board Budget meeting, 5:30pm, Alachua County School Bd (620 E Univ Ave), final budget/millage hearing, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9316

Tue 9/9 Conflict Resolution Workshop, 6-7pm, The Lynx Books (601 S Main St), presented by River Phoenix Ctr for Peacebuilding, free w/ RSVP; tinyurl.com/iguana9317

Wed 9/10 Community Nights, 6-9pm Wednesdays, South Main Station (619 S Main St), live music, kid & pet friendly, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9187

Wed 9/10 "Gun Violence as Public Health Crisis", 6-7pm, The Lynx Books (601 S Main St), Gvl Fire Rescue & others, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9318

Thu 9/11 Fall Vegetable Gardens, 2:30-4pm, County Ag Extension Auditorium (22712 W Newberry Rd), how to raise & harvest autumn veggies, free w/ adv registration; tinyurl.com/iguana9319

Thu 9/11 Book Swap, 5-7pm, Swamp Head Brewery (3650 SW 42nd Ave), good-condition books for adults only, free (w/ book(s)); tinyurl.com/iguana9320

Thu 9/11 Gvl Latino Film Festival opens, 5:30-8pm (continues through 9/29, various locations), Harn Museum of Art (3259 Hull Rd), "La Frontera" w/ filmmaker David David, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9861 and pg 10

Thu 9/11 "Karst 101", 6-8pm, High Springs Museum (23760 187th Ave, High Springs), Rick Testa on geology of Florida Aquifer, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9321

Thu 9/11 UF Soccer, 6pm, UF Disney Stadium + livestream (157 Gale Lemerand Dr), vs Arkansas, free

Fri 9/12 Folk Art Lecture, 6:30-8pm, A. Quinn Jones Ctr (1013 NW 7th Ave), Turbado Marabou on works of Eddy Mumma, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9322

Fri 9/12 "The 39 Steps" opens, 7pm, Hippodrome (25 SE 2nd Pl), play from John Buchan novel (3 actors, 150 roles), \$20-45; htinyurl.com/iguana9323

Fri 9/12 Other Voices, 7:30-9:30pm, Theatre of Memory (1705 NW 6th St), fine folk quartet, \$21.50, pg 16 & tinyurl.com/iguana9324

Sat 9/13 Waldo Sweet Potato Festival & Car Show, 9am-2pm, Waldo City Square (14450 NE 148th Ave, Waldo), vendors & family-friendly activities, free; waldosweetpotatofest.com

Sat 9/13 High Springs Fall Festival, 10am-6pm, Sat & Sun, Farmers Market Pavilion (23517 NW 185th Rd, High Springs), details tba; tinyurl.com/iguana9325

Sat 9/13 "Plant for Pollinators" & "Sarah's Birthday Bash", 10am-1pm, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), talk, live jazz with MoonDancer, & free plant, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9326

Sat 9/13 Fla Coalition for Peace & Justice annual meeting, 1pm, FCPJ Ctr (10665 SW 89th Ave, Hampton), planning for 2026, free; florida4peace.org

Sat 9/13 Brazil Fest, 3-8pm, Heartwood Soundstage, (619 S Main St), music, dance, kids' movie, food, art, more, free (VIP tix \$20); pg 5 & tinyurl.com/iguana9327

Sat 9/13 "Shrek", 8-10pm, Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E Univ Ave), City of Gvl movie night, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9329

WEEK OF SEPT 14-20

Sun 9/14 "Stones in the Sun", 3-5pm, Hipp Cinema (25 SE 2nd Pl), drama of Haitians in New York City, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9330

Sun 9/14 Art Reception, 4pm, Cotton Club Museum (837 SE 7th Ave), Ernest Lee art exhibition runs through January '26; pg 11 & cottonclubmuseum.com

Sun 9/14 N. Ctl. Fla. Blues Society 2025 Showcase, 6-9:30pm, Heartwood Soundstage, (619 S Main St), 4 Fla blues bands, \$25 adv/30 door; pg ••• & tinyurl.com/iguana9331

Tue 9/16 Nat'l Voter Registration Day, UF Bob Graham Ctr (296 Buckman Dr), UF students can register as Alachua County voters, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9332

Tue 9/16 Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group meets, 2-4pm, County Emergency Operations Ctr (1100 Se 27th St), updating 5-yr plan for natural & technological hazards, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9333

Wed 9/17 "Planes, Trains, and Automobiles (and Steamboats, Too!)", 7-8pm, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), Dr Steve Noll talk on Fla transportation history, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9334

Fri 9/19 Fall Plant Sale, 10am-4pm (& Sun, 10am-2pm), Fla Museum of Natural History (3215 Hull Rd), >100 species, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9335

Fri 9/19 Grant Peeples, 6-9pm, Lightnin' Salvage, Americana/folk singer-songwriter; www.lightninsalvageenterprises.com

Fri 9/19 "Glory", 6:30pm, Cotton Club Museum (837 SE 7th Ave), movie on Civil War African-American regiment, free; pg 5

Fri 9/19 Tyreek McDole & Band, 7 & 9 pm, Phillips Ctr (3201 Hull Rd), blues & jazz, \$55 7pm, \$35 9pm, UF students \$12; tinyurl.com/iguana9336

Fri 9/19 “Rent” opens, 7:30pm through Oct 12, Gvl Community Playhouse (4039 NW 16th Blvd), Tony-winning musical, \$12–24; tinyurl.com/iguana9337

Fri 9/19 Salsa Mundial 10th Anniversary Celebration begins, 8pm (+ 9/20–21), 3501 SW 2nd Ave, dance studio offers music, workshops, performers, \$25 (9/20 11am–3:45pm, Cade Museum, \$25; 9/21 7–11pm, Swamp Head Brewery, \$30; salsamundial.com

Sat 9/20 Gvl Free Store, noon–6pm, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), free stuff for all (masks required); civicmediacenter.org

Sat 9/20 “Fla Women, Advice, & Social Change”, 4–5pm, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), Dr. Kimberly Voss on women’s media in 1950s–60s, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9338

Sat 9/20 Roller Derby, 6pm, MLK Ctr (1028 NE 14th St), Gvl All-Stars vs River City Rat Pack, \$15adv/18 door; pg. 8 & tinyurl.com/iguana9339

WEEK OF SEPT 21-27

Sun 9/21 Sunday Assembly, 11am, Pride Ctr (3850 NW 83rd St, Ste 201), Kate Clement on The Education Foundation and Alachua County public schools, & potluck, free; sagainesville.weebly.com

Sun 9/21 Fla ACLU Director speaks, 12–2pm, The Lynx Books (601 S Main St), coffee & donuts with Bacardi Jackson & Howard Simon, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9340

Thu 9/21 UF Soccer, 4pm, UF Dizney Stadium + livestream (157 Gale Lemerand Dr), vs S Carolina, free

Tue 9/23 Alachua County Labor Coalition meets, 6pm, Emmanuel Mennonite Church (1236 NW 18th Ave), open to all; laborcoalition.org

Thu 9/25 “Global Trade and Tariffs”, 5–6pm, UF Pugh Hall Ocora (296 Buckman Dr) (also livestream), talk by NY Times writer Peter Goodman, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9341

Fri 9/26 Oktoberfest, 4–11pm, Swamp Head Brewery (3650 SW 42nd Ave), live music, food, games, & maybe a little beer, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9342

Fri 9/26 Artwalk, 7–10pm, downtown Gvl, free; artwalkgainesville.com

Fri 9/26 CMC movie, 8pm, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), “When the Beat Drops” documentary, masks required, donations accepted; civicmediacenter.org

Sat 9/27 Young Leaders for Wild Florida and Creek Family Fest, 10am–2pm, Bubbie’s Secret Garden (1225 NW 4th St), environmental education from Alachua Conservation Trust, free (byo water, snacks, sunscreen, etc); tinyurl.com/iguana9343

Sat 9/27 Health Fair, 12–6pm, Porters Community Ctr (512 SW 2nd Terr), connect with health & school resources, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9355

Sat 9/27 Edwidge Danticat book signing, 5–6pm, The Lynx Books (601 S Main St), most famous Haitian-American author signs *We’re Alone*, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9344

Sat 9/27 CMC Benefit Show, 7–11:30pm, Civic Media Ctr (413 S Main St), *Creatures of the Night*, \$?, civicmediacenter.org

Sat 9/27 Ron and Bari, 7:30–9:30pm, Theatre of Memory (1705 NW 6th St), Fla folk faves, \$21.50; pg 16 & tinyurl.com/iguana9345

WEEK OF SEPT 28-OCT 4

Sun 9/28 Lawton Chiles Gala, 5–9pm, UF Hilton Conf Ctr (1714 SW 34th St), Rep. Maxwell Frost keynotes Alachua County Democrats evening (+ gubernatorial candidate David Jolly & silent auction), \$130 (students \$65); page 19 & tinyurl.com/iguana9356

Sun 9/28 Alt-Rock show, 6–10pm, The Wooly (20 N Main St), Parrotfish, Madwoman, Visit Neptune, \$12 adv/17 door; tinyurl.com/iguana9346

Sun 9/28 Blues on the Patio, 7–9pm, A. Quinn Jones Ctr (1013 NW 7th Ave), JW Gilmore, Beulah Mae, & Professor Quasar, free?; tinyurl.com/iguana9347

Sun 9/28 Southern Rock, 7:30–10pm, Heartwood Soundstage, (619 S Main St), JJ Grey & Mofro “Olustee” Tour, \$45 adv/\$50 door; pg 5 & tinyurl.com/iguana9348

Wed 10/1 Joe Courter book Launch, 6 pm, 1st Magnitude (1220 SE Veitch St); see pg 2.

Wed 10/1 “Timucua Language & Culture”, 7–8pm, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), Dr. George A. Broadwell on Alachua County’s native heritage, free w/ registration; pg. 20 & tinyurl.com/iguana9349

Thu 10/2 UF Soccer, 7pm, UF Dizney Stadium + livestream (157 Gale Lemerand Dr), vs Kentucky, free

Sat 10/4 UF Football vs Texas, “All Day”, BH Griffin Stadium, beware game-related traffic, \$!!!

WEEK OF OCT -11

Sun 10/5 Fungi Fest, 10am–7pm, Rum 138 (2070 SW County Rd 138, Ft White), speakers, live music (Weeds of Eden & Tom Smith Band), food, \$25 adv + \$5 parking fee; pg. 15 & rum138.com/events-1#

Sun 10/5 “Keep on Burnin’: Wildland Fire in Fla”, 1–2pm, Hogtown Creek Headwaters Nature Park (1500 NW 45th Ave), Joe Crandall on wildfire in Fla, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9350

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 Civic Media Center

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

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

Gainesville official and public meetings: tinyurl.com/iguana9308

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

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

Alachua County Democratic Party meets 3rd Tuesdays, 6pm, LifeSouth (4039 W Newberry Rd)

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.

Democratic Socialists of America meets 6:30pm on 2nd Tuesdays at the Quaker Meeting House (702 NW 38th St).

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

See EVENTS, p. 28

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 | acomclenic.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 DSA is part of the largest socialist organization in the U.S., The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). They have organized to build working-class democracy and power in workplaces, neighborhoods, local governments, and throughout Alachua County. They are member-funded and member-run. alachuadsa@gmail.com | www.instagram.com/alachuadsa

Spotlight on: UCW Florida



UCW Florida (CWA Local 3165) is a union of Florida public sector higher education workers. Founded in 2021, UCW FL is a union open to all currently

unrepresented employees at University of Florida. We are part of a national union, the Communications Workers of America, which has over 500,000 union members across the country and many other public

sector workers in Florida. CWA also is home to a network of higher education workers, United Campus Workers, across the Southeast and Southwest fighting for social and economic justice in our institutions and communities. See UCWFL.org for more information or contact uniteduf@ucw-cwa.org. ☘

From **EVENTS**, p.27

OPEN MICS

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

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

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

"Bobo a Gogo: the Nacho Clowns Extremes' Strange and Lovely Variety Show" starring Rain 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 ☘

*The bosom of America
is open to receive not
only the Opulent and
respectable Stranger,
but the oppressed
and persecuted of
all Nations and
Religions; whom we
shall wellcome to a
participation of all our
rights and privileges...*

~ George Washington

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) | NAACPachb.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

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. bgsoatuf@gmail.com | [facebook: UF BGSO](https://www.facebook.com/UFBGSO)

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](https://www.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 | civicmediacenter.org

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 at <https://tinyurl.com/mwkwytyb> for news, action alerts, meeting alerts. ClimateRealityProjectgnv@gmail.com | facebook.com/groups/climateactualitygnvgroup

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 | alachuadems.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/DivestUF

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.org | 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 Free Speech Forum is a lecture series that provides a place for open and constructive dialogue. The group advocates, protects and defends freedom of speech through open dialogue. floridafreespeechforum.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

Friends of the Library is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in Gainesville. We support the Alachua County Library District and literacy programs throughout Alachua County. We accept donations of books, art, records, puzzles, games and much more. We have a huge sale every April and October. Find us at 430 N. Main St. 352-375-1676 www.folacld.org and Facebook and Instagram @FOLACLD

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 | facebook.com/gainesvilleNOW

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

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

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

Continued on next page

Continued from preceding page
gainesvillerolesrebels.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@gnvic.org | 352-871-0895.

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

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

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

Institute for Tropical Ecology and Conservation is an academic nonprofit that provides undergraduate field courses in tropical marine and terrestrial ecology,

hosts biology-based study abroad programs, provides a venue for researchers, conducts conservation and community service programs. 352-367-9128 | itec1@itec-edu.org | itec-edu.org

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

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

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

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. mcoriegarden@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 gun violence by electing gun sense candidates, advocating for policies that save lives, educating parents on responsible gun storage. Alachua County events listed at momsdemandaction.org/events

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

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

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

National Women's Liberation is a feminist group for women who want to fight back

against male supremacy and win more freedoms for women. Inequalities between women and men are political problems requiring a collective solution. 352-575-0495 | nwl@womensliberation.org | womensliberation.org

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

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

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

Peoples' Progressive Agenda is a grassroots, working-class, member-led group organizing against the harmful impacts of Trump-era policies on our families and communities. peoplesagendax@gmail.com

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.rwbp.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](https://www.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/SAAtUF](https://www.facebook.com/SAAtUF) | [instagram.com/studentanimalallianceUF](https://www.instagram.com/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](https://www.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

UCW Florida (CWA Local 3165) is a union of Florida public sector higher education workers open to all currently unrepresented

employees at UF. We are part of a national union, the Communications Workers of America. CWA is home to a network of higher education workers, United Campus Workers, across the Southeast and Southwest fighting for social and economic justice in our institutions and communities. See UCWFL. org for more information or contact uniteduf@ucw-cwa.org.

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](https://www.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](https://www.facebook.com/ufdemocrats) | 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](https://www.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. sjpufloida@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](https://www.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/UNAUSAGainesvilleFIChapter](https://www.facebook.com/UNAUSAGainesvilleFIChapter) | 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](https://www.instagram.com/un_pac_uflorida), or email [un.pac.uf@gmail](mailto:un.pac.uf@gmail.com)

Unspoken Treasure Society's mission is to empower, uplift, and advocate for the well-being, equity, and rights of the LGBTQIA+ community. Monthly meetings are held every third Thursday at 7pm at 3850 NW 83rd St, Suite 201 in Gainesville. unspokensociety.org 352-377-0384

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](https://www.facebook.com/VFPchapter14) | vfp Gainesville.org

Voices for Common Ground focuses on issues, not political parties and members are united by a shared commitment to civil rights (reproductive rights, anti-racism LGBTQ+ rights, voting rights). tinyurl.com/Iguana2153 or email voicesforcommonground@proton.me.

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](https://www.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. 🐉

On losing the rainbow crosswalks

by Autumn Johnstone

In Lois Lowry's 1993 book, "The Giver," most of its characters relinquished their ability to see color. In favor of conformity and to eliminate conflict, their individualities were reduced to blank canvases. A repressed, dull, gray world that forgot how beautiful life can be beyond regulations and order.

Lowry's book echoes back to us as we say goodbye to the rainbow crosswalks that paint Gainesville's streets. On June 30, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) expressed safety concerns in a statement that said there are to be no "non-standard surface markings, signage, and signals that do not directly contribute to traffic safety or control." As of August 25, most of Gainesville rainbow crosswalks have been removed.

But it was never about improving roadway safety.

If it was, many of the "non-standard surface markings" would still be here today. Many studies support the fact that uniquely-patterned crosswalks raise driver and pedestrian awareness. In the Asphalt Art Safety Study by Sam Schwartz and Bloomberg Philanthropies, they found a "25% decrease in pedestrian crossings involving a conflict with drivers."

Gainesville's transportation infrastructure is one of the most visible aspects of our city's public realm. When students explore the town for the first time, they notice the sidewalks and roadways that guide our community members throughout their daily lives. The colors that makes up Gainesville, like many other cities, should not be reduced to black and white for "safety"

reasons. If our government was concerned for our safety, our tax dollars would be going toward more prominent issues affecting the United States.

Across Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis has enforced the removal of non-standard crosswalks by stating that "state roads should not be hijacked for political purposes." It's clear being queer has become more of a political issue than it is an element of living.

The Trump Administration is pushing for uniformity in a country that has never been uniform, and it never will be. Throughout history, marginalized communities have been targeted and pushed to feel as if their voices don't matter—that because their attributes don't match the majority, they shouldn't have them at all. Humans need to remain united by their differences, not divided because of them.

No city should have to silence the voices of their people simply because conformity *may* lead to less conflict. It's about control, dominance and egocentrism. How far will President Trump go before he is comfortable calling himself a dictator? Clearly not very far, as he said, "The line is that I'm a dictator, but I stop crime," in an August 26 cabinet meeting.

Conflict — as a human and as a queer individual — is inevitable. These crosswalks aren't a catalyst for roadway accidents, but rather a catalyst for community



Terry Fleming (1961-2020), a Gainesville activist, was instrumental in the implementation of the rainbow crosswalks in 2019. Photo courtesy of Kristen Browde.

and belonging. Even in a time like this where many queer people feel as if they are not like everyone else.

I recall the first time I stepped foot in Gainesville. I was downtown with a few of my friends when I came across the rainbow crosswalk that stretched across Northeast First Street and Northeast First Avenue. It felt exhilarating to be in a town that loudly valued the lives of queer people. That I could be myself, even for a few seconds, as I walked upon those vibrant little bricks without anyone passing a glance. It was the first time I could look down at the colors and allow myself to be visually happy after seeing them.

See RAINBOW, p. 24



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