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The Gainesville Iguana

Jan/Feb 2026 ~ vol. 40, issue 1/2

‘a soapbox for Alachua County activists’

International law violations are ... A threat to world peace

The following remarks, as prepared for presentation, were made by Jeffrey D. Sachs, president of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, during an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council in New York City on Jan. 5.

Mr. President,
Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

The issue before the Council today is not the character of the government of Venezuela.

The issue is whether any Member State — by force, coercion, or economic strangulation — has the right to determine Venezuela's political future or to exercise control over its affairs.

This question goes directly to Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

The Council must decide whether that prohibition is to be upheld or abandoned.

Abandoning it would carry consequences of the gravest kind.

Background and context

Since 1947, United States foreign policy has repeatedly employed force, covert action, and political manipulation to bring about regime change in other countries. This is a matter of carefully documented historical record. In her book *Covert Regime Change* (2018), political scientist Lindsey O'Rourke documents 70 attempted US regime-change operations between 1947 and 1989 alone.

These practices did not end with the Cold War. Since 1989, major United States regime-change operations undertaken without authorization by the Security Council have included, among the most consequential: Iraq (2003), Libya (2011), Syria (from 2011), Honduras (2009), Ukraine (2014), and Venezuela (from 2002 onward).

The methods employed are well established and well document-

See VENEZUELA, p. 24



Our kids in the ICE age

by Michael Sheffield, Communications / Social Media / Assistant Climate Justice, Farmworker Association of Florida

Nowhere is safe for an immigrant child. There is no place for them to be free from harassment, bullying, or police violence.

Many of these children have developed anxiety, depression, or other medical issues as a result of losing their families or from the turmoil that their families have been subjected to. But this ICE occupation of our neighborhoods impacts ALL children, not just immigrant children.

All children are watching the extreme violence against their neighbors broadcasted 24/7 through the media. Kids are being bullied in school for the color of their skin. Teachers and students are being dragged out of their classrooms. This is the reality our immigrant communities are facing today. We're all witnessing the violence real time.

My name is Michael Sheffield. My colleagues at the Farm-
See KIDS, p. 20

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Want your article, ad, event or PSA in the March Iguana?
(Due to come out Thursday, March 5)

Deadline is Wednesday, Feb. 25

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.

Crash Pad celebrates 30 years

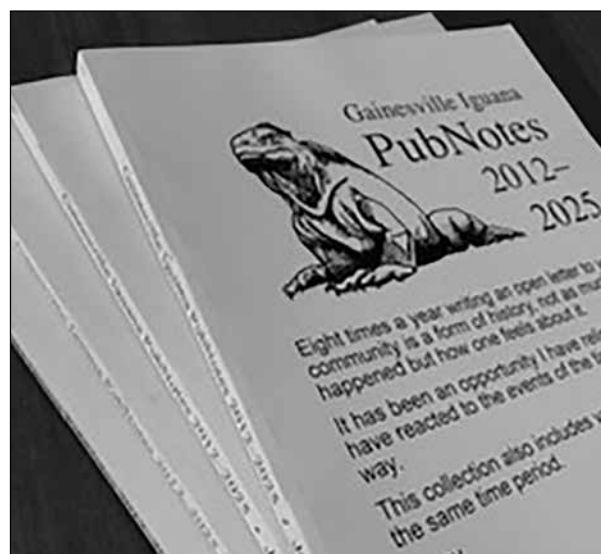
by Doug Clifford

Legendary Gainesville punk band Crash Pad is celebrating their 30-year anniversary this year. Crash Pad played their first gig in March 1996 at the original Hardback Cafe. On Friday, Jan. 16, they will be playing a benefit for listener supported WGOT 100.1/wgot.org at Vecino's at 208 W. University in Gainesville. The Rick Ryan Band and Tapeworm will open.

Current members of Crash Pad are Brian Krashpad, J.T. Krashpad, "Gimme" Mick Raymond and Mitch Estic. Guitar/vocalist Brian Krashpad says his main influences are original mid-70 punk bands, like the Clash, Ramones, Damned and 999.

Expect an all original set on Jan. 16. WGOT Station Manager Doug Clifford says WGOT is in dire financial straits, including \$3200 for past tower rent. Donations can also be made through wgot.org or by mail to 433 S. Main St. Gainesville, 32601, in care of the Civic Media Center. Another benefit is tentatively set for Feb. 5 with Grant Peeples at The Bull. 🐢

Iguana anthology available



"PubNotes 2012-2025" is a collection of 180 pages of commentary and assorted articles that ran in the Iguana over a period of 13 years. It will be available at the Cypress & Grove Market on Mondays, at the Sunshine State Book Fair at Santa Fe College's Fine Arts Hall on Jan. 24, or you can email gainesvilleiguana@cox.net for more information on how you can get a copy. The books cost \$25 each to print, and shipping is \$5. Local delivery can be arranged. There are only 30 left. 🐢

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

Publisher Notes

2026, and here we are

Before getting into things I want to reflect on the very positive last few months of my life, and just say how grateful I am for all the heartwarming feedback I've gotten. Starting with the book launch Oct. 1 at First Mag marking my 50 years in Gainesville, the front-page profile in the *Gainesville Sun* in December, and right through to being Grand Marshall of the very successful Flying Pig Parade on Jan. 3, it's been a hoot. The "PubNotes 2012–2025" book has sold 170 of the 200 copies printed, which makes me very happy as well.

Thank you to everyone who has taken time to express their appreciation to me; this path my life has taken me here in Gainesville I do not take for granted, and the supportive community we are is what makes what I do possible. Our little team of Beth Grobman, Pierce Butler and Jessica Newman, aided by the many folks who've written what we've printed, and those who have financially supported us over all the years, now have us here with the printing of Vol. 40, Issue 1/2. Yes, forty years.

Doing these PubNotes gives me a sense of responsibility to be a clear explainer, and also to try and be clear in my own understanding of what's going on in the world. This attack on Venezuela has me looking back to 2003 and the invasion of Iraq. I think about the hubris of Rumsfeld and Cheney, the way they thought they could breeze right in, that it would be a "cakewalk," discounting the complex realities of all the various factions in Iraq, and unleashing of regional violence and huge body count on all sides.

What will be the blowback to this operation? Who knows? Yesterday I heard the president of Colombia had a good phone call with Trump. Is he just bowing to the king? Will Venezuelans who were tired of Maduro (many are; authoritarians are no fun) pull together and actually have free elections, or is the current government so entrenched that it will get thwarted? Will the oil companies tell Trump, "Thanks but no thanks"? My bet is on troubles over favorable outcomes, because that is certainly the track record of U.S. interventions. In the future we will see it unfold.

Regarding the murder of Renee Noelle Good, this comment from Heather Cox Richardson: "That both DHS and Trump posted false accounts of the shooting even as there are four videos circulating that reveal those accounts to be lies, shows they no longer are making any attempt to justify their actions. Instead, they are demanding Americans abandon reality in favor of whatever the administration says. If this works, it would be a demonstration of totalitarian power, the ability to control how people think. Accepting that lie is a loyalty test." For me she is required reading every day. ICE is provoking the violence, daring it to happen.

"Silence is complicity" was a common slogan in the fight against AIDS in the 1980s and 90s. We are there again, friends, and each of us needs to recognize it, and face it; we are here in a country that has slid into fascism. Our man/boy president speaks lies and nonsense almost continuously. His lackeys praise him and attempt to implement his wishes. The dominant corporate media basically normalizes his behavior. His party and the Supreme Court seem just fine with it. Their paramilitary ICE are a force of repression to try and bait us into open struggle, the end goal being canceled elections in 2026. And then there's the disregard for International Law. Buy Greenland? Attack Mexico? Attack Iran? Really?

It must be a combination of strategic plays at the top and pressure from below to turn this around. Our pressure from below needs to not blunder into violence in reaction to provocation, but show our numbers and commitment. It won't be quick, it may get messy, but we need to support each other, help our neighbors, and share in the work.

And my personal thanks to all the sign makers, the sign holders, the phone callers, letter writers, event organizers, creative artists, you readers, and the sharers of information however you do it. It is making a difference. Losing hope is the one thing we can't afford. We hope our work here can help sustain you in maintaining yours. ✨



Joe Courter

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

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Gainesville Iguana

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

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For real threats to Florida's working families, look to Tallahassee as well as D.C.

by Jason Bellamy-Fults
and the FL AFL-CIO

Despite the Florida legislature's unrelenting assault on working people and our right to collective bargaining, we're still here, standing strong and fighting back.

Thankfully, in the 2025 Legislative Session, the tides began to change. Following his disastrous bid for the presidency, Ron DeSantis's grip on the legislature has begun to slip, with each day leading the wannabe emperor to increasing irrelevancy as the legislature re-orient itself towards the 2026 election.

The new political atmosphere and steadfast resilience of Florida's labor community led to us winning eight out of ten of our most serious fights for Florida's workers last session, including:

- Stopping further attacks on the collective bargaining rights of our public sector workers.
- Protecting Florida's child labor laws from further erosion.

- Defending Florida's existing minimum wage rights.
- Protecting over a million temporary workers by saving the Labor Pool Act from attempts at repeal.
- Preserving easier access to what is left of Florida's vital unemployment insurance system.
- Stopping the special interests and the legislature from imposing term limits on our school boards and county commissions.

Note that all of these fights were defensive in nature. It's clear that we have a long way to go if we're going to do anything other than blunt the worst impulses of our legislature's bought and paid for corporate hacks. It's also worth remembering that currently, only about 6 percent of Floridians are represented by a union. Whether that number trends downward to zero, as those in power would like, or ticks upward, it is up to us and how hard we're willing to fight for our rights.

We hope that all of our union brothers and

sisters who are able to will sign up to be a part of this year's Working Family Lobby Corps (tinyurl.com/Iguana2340) and join us in Tallahassee for a few days alongside fellow union members. This year's session will take place (tentatively) from Jan. 13 through March 13.

If you can't attend in-person, but want to keep tabs on the important bills being discussed in this year's legislative session, here's how you can keep in touch:


- FL AFL-CIO YouTube channel: tinyurl.com/Iguana2344
- FL AFL-CIO on Facebook: tinyurl.com/Iguana2345 & our local Central Labor Council on Facebook: tinyurl.com/Iguana2346
- FL AFL-CIO on Twitter/X: x.com/FLAFLCIO
- FL AFL-CIO on Instagram: www.instagram.com/flaflcio/
- Our local Central Labor Council's Substack: tinyurl.com/Iguana2347

And lastly, it's not too early to start


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THE LIBRARIANS
Jan 9 - Jan 18



**HIPPODROME
CINEMA**
ON THE MAINSTAGE
Some Enchanted Evening:
The Songs of Rodgers and
Hammerstein
Jan 28 - Feb 15



**Sentimental
Value**
Jan 9 - Jan 17



**STRANGER
THAN
PARADISE**
Sat, Jan 10 - 8:30



OKLAHOMA!
Sun, Jan 18 - 3:30



NO OTHER CHOICE
Jan 16 - Feb 1

thinking about the 2026 midterm elections. Rep. Kat Cammack, who has been in lockstep with President Trump's anti-worker agenda, will be up for reelection. In addition, 4 out of 5 of Alachua County's legislative delegation seats will be up for election.

Incumbent Senators Jennifer Bradley and Chad Johnson are running for reelection and each has a pretty abysmal past voting record on issues that matter to us. Rep. Chuck Brannan is term-limited for his seat, so there will be a vacancy there. And Rep. Hinson, who has been one of our stronger allies, is stepping down. Thus far, there are multiple contenders vying for her seat.

Now is a great time to get involved with helping people register to vote and educating ourselves and others on how our elected representatives have performed.

Take some time to talk to your neighbors and co-workers, work with candidates that you support, and volunteer with civic organizations in your community

so that as November approaches, we are prepared to turn out voters who support our issues. Don't believe the media hype about election "waves" and think that this is going to happen on its own. It will happen when we organize and make it happen. As the old saying goes, "if you stay ready, you ain't gotta get ready!"

Below is an additional list of Florida specific 2026 deadlines and election dates worth keeping in mind as we near the next opportunity to make clear the priorities of workers everywhere and elect representatives who fight for the people!

- **Primary voter/party registration deadline:** July 20
- **Primary Election Day:** Aug. 18
- **Voter registration deadline:** Oct. 5
- **Deadline to request a mailed ballot:** Oct. 22
- **General Election Early Voting Period:** Oct. 24-31* (dates may vary by voting district)

• General Election Day: Nov. 3

Stay tuned! We'll close this column with some words from our state AFL-CIO President, Kimberly Holbridge:

The road of the 2025 legislative session — federally and statewide — presented a full slate of antiworker and antihuman rhetoric.

And yet, our union family continued to fight. Why? Because we know that an injury to one is an injury to all.

As we look ahead to 2026, we know the challenges will not disappear. But neither will our resolve. We will continue to defend the dignity of work, protect our families, and demand justice for every worker. Our strength lies in our unity, and our unity is unbreakable.

Thank you for your courage, your persistence, and your unwavering belief in the power of collective action. Together, we are not only resisting — we are building a future where workers thrive and communities flourish. 🐷



Grand time at Flying Pig Parade

The Flying Pig Parade, an annual festivity held this year on Jan. 3, celebrated the whimsical spirit of the Gainesville community. This year's theme was, "They who shun whimsy shall suffer rigor mortis before death." Over 50 groups participated in the parade, which started and ended at Bo Diddley Plaza, with quirky floats, performances and community spirit. Organized by Glenn Terry, Iguana publisher Joe Courter acted as grand marshal, overseeing giant puppets, off-beat bands, and dancing dinosaurs. Photos/photo collage by Chuck Ross. 🐷

Seniors should be aware this election year

by Mary Savage

Senior citizens can expect to see only a 2.8 percent Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment for 2026. This won't be enough for seniors struggling to pay bills in this economy. It will be the second-lowest COLA since 2021 and only slightly higher than the 2025 COLA.

Any increase in benefits helps, but the 2026 COLA will be gone because of the hike in Medicare Part B premiums. On average, retirees will see about \$56 more

per month next year from Social Security. But nearly a third of that will be gone because of the Medicare Part B increase.

Medicare Part B is projected to rise to \$202.90 a month starting in January. That's nearly \$18 more than in 2025 and will be the first time the premium exceeds \$200. Seniors on fixed incomes should be concerned that the Social Security COLA won't keep up with inflation.

Have you seen the prices of groceries, prescriptions and housing? Instead of

working to protect Social Security, too many members of Congress want to raise the retirement age, cut benefits and even privatize the program.

Who remembers when the maniacal Elon Musk and his dystopian Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) abruptly entered the Social Security Administration last winter, seized the personal Social Security data of Americans and disrupted agency operations?

The New York Times published a report just before Christmas that revealed the DOGE crusade to cut government "waste, fraud and abuse" was a big sham. According to the Times, DOGE did not do what Musk said – reduce federal spending by \$1 trillion before October. "On DOGE's watch, federal spending did not go down at all. It went up."

Older Americans have earned these benefits through a lifetime of work and should not have to fight to keep them. Thankfully, good reporting by ProPublica, and other publications, exposed the Trump regime's plan to cut 830,000 mostly blue-collar workers from Social Security disability eligibility.

After Social Security champions Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Rep. John Larson and others spoke up, the Trump regime dropped its diabolical plan.

This year is an election year. Seniors should be mindful of how their congressional representative and two U.S. senators vote on legislation that impacts them. Give their office a call and say seniors are aware and we vote.

Sources:

(1) National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare

(2) New York Times article - Dec. 23: How did DOGE disrupt so much while saving so little? by Emily Badger, David A. Fahrendthold, Alicia Parlapiano, and Margot Sanger-Katz

(3) ProPublica article - Nov. 20: How the Trump administration abandoned plans for a major cut in disability benefits for older workers by Eli Hager

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

~ Anne Frank



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8	Thom Songs Live (Original)	Free
15	Music Jam (Open Mic w Scott Butsch)	Free
22	Quartermoon (Americana)	Free

March

1	Medicine Wind/FlintBlade (Ethereal Music)	Free
8	In the Moment (Blues Rock)	Free
15	Music Jam (Open Mic w Chris Newman)	Free
22	The Deal (Grateful Dead Cover)	\$10
29	Quartermoon (Americana)	Free

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New bills proposed to restore the Ocklawaha

by Jennifer Carr

On Jan. 5 Senator Jason Brodeur and Representative Wyman Duggan filed identical bills (House Bill 981 and Senate Bill 1066, respectively) creating the “Northeast Florida Rivers, Springs, and Community Investment Act.”

This historic legislation requires the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to hire a project lead to oversee the implementation of the act; requiring the department to develop, by a specified date, a project plan for the restoration of the Ocklawaha River; providing that the project plan is an environmental restoration or enhancement project subject to a general permit from the department and water management districts; creating the Northeast Florida River and Springs Recreation and Economic Development Advisory Council, etc., to restore the Ocklawaha River by the end of 2032.

Thankfully FDEP has a head start on restoration planning considering that they’ve had the plan written out since 1997.

Join me in thanking Senator Brodeur and Rep. Duggan for filing these bills to restore our rivers and vital habitat for manatees and other wildlife, protect rural communities, increase recreational opportunities and benefit local economies.

According to the 2001 United States Forest Service Final Environmental Impact Statement For the Occupancy and Use of National Forest Lands and Ocklawaha River Restoration, the aesthetic resources which describe the physical characteristics of a landscape that determine its scenic quality in relevant value to the viewing public, will evolve, “over time, the project area would succeed to floodplain forest with a river channel flowing

through it. The reservoir and associated marsh and vegetation would be reduced substantially. At a finer-grained level, however, the complexity and diversity of a mature and self-maintaining floodplain forest would result in increased diversity of habitat characterized by the small changes in elevation and hydrology of the restored conditions. Evidence of the works of man would be less noticeable, particularly from the river, as the twists and turns of the river reduce sight distances. Settings would be more oriented to the more remote and semi-primitive settings of a natural floodplain forest. The reservoir and associated marsh would be replaced by a riverine system. The shift in aesthetics would be to a meandering river channel with overhanging trees and lake attractions would be replaced with riverine boating and fishing, camping, and hiking.”

I appreciate their commitment to restoration, expanded recreational opportunities and promoting economic growth along the 217-mile Great Florida Riverway. I will be supporting SB 1066 and HB 981 through the 2026 Legislative Session. I’m grateful we have leaders in the Capitol who recognize the statewide value of reuniting the Silver River, Ocklawaha River, and St. Johns River. I thank them for being a strong voice for Northeast Florida’s rivers, springs, and communities and leading the effort to restore the Ocklawaha River. 🌿

Alachua County, O-Town Compost begin food waste collection pilot

Beginning Jan. 3, and continuing through Dec. 31, Alachua County residents can drop off food waste at the County’s five Rural Collection Centers for composting.

Alachua County has partnered with O-Town Compost through a Circular Economy Grant, which will divert food waste from the landfill and turn it into compost so it may be used by farmers, gardeners, landscapers, and others.

Rural Collection Center Locations:

- Alachua/High Springs - 16929 NW US Hwy 441
- Archer - 19410 SW Archer Rd.
- Fairbanks - 9920 NE Waldo Rd.
- North Central - 10714 N State Rd. 121
- Philfer - 11700 SE Hawthorne Rd.

All of the Rural Collection Centers are open Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday from 7:30am to 5:30pm. The Alachua/High Springs location is also open on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12:30pm to 5:30pm.

For more information, contact Patrick Irby in the Alachua County Solid Waste and Resource Recovery Department at 352-338-3233 or pirby@AlachuaCounty.us. 🌿

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Learn Your Part. Do Your Part



Building a Florida where safety comes first

by Amy Trask

I believe in a Florida that is just, that is compassionate, that creates people-first policies, and looks out for every neighbor that lives here. I believe that we are all inherently deserving of dignity, of safety, and of protection.

Last year, I wrote the HAVEN Act because I knew that the moment a victim of violence tries to leave is the most dangerous time in an abusive relationship, and that calling 911 brings an abuser from zero to ten in a moment's time. I wrote it so that victims of violence could live to become survivors, and so that those walking in the shoes I once had, had an opportunity to leave and rebuild.

When I was writing it, as I reflected on my own journey and on those of others, I saw more and more holes in our laws. I kept coming back to a line from National Treasure: "When there is a problem, those with the ability to act have a responsibility to act."

For me, that responsibility has never been individual — it's something shared by survivors, advocates, and anyone who sees the gaps clearly enough that they can no longer look away. Those of us who've lived through harm understand what's at stake, and while I don't claim to have all the answers, I do have the ability to listen, to work, to research, and to fight for better laws. That's the responsibility I take seriously. It's what fueled me this year to keep pushing for change that protects children, survivors, and families, because every family deserves the chance to live free from fear and violence.

Together with community advocates, survivors, and partners on both sides of the aisle, this year, we are moving legislation that puts people first and proves what's possible when we refuse to accept that doing nothing is the default.

The issues we're highlighting reach every

community and they demand responses that put Floridians above politics. Most of the bills we drafted — and the ones that have been introduced — have earned bipartisan support, and work to expand safety, dignity, and justice for survivors and for children navigating complex legal systems and abuse. I'm grateful for the partnerships we've built and the testimonies we've heard in support, and that momentum gives me real hope that change is on the horizon.

Bills that have been introduced

Each of these bills addresses a different point of vulnerability — and together, they form a safety net our state has long needed:

Re-filed is the **Helping Abuse Victims Escape Violence Now (HAVEN) Act** (HB 269, SB 296) bill, which is sponsored by Minority Leader Senator Berman and Representative Gossett-Seidman. The bill creates a discreet, web-based alert system that allows survivors to signal for help with a



Three non-profit stores building a reuse economy diverting useful resources from the landfill and redirecting these items to the public

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- renovatorreuse.org • 352-672-5782

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- 1540 NE Waldo Rd., Gainesville
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unique pin number or code word and randomly generated phone number. This is a first in the nation, as it modernizes emergency response and ensures survivors can access protection in moments when speaking out loud could escalate danger. We actually just passed our first Senate Committee hearing just before Christmas.

The Safe Shelter Act (HB 435, SB 516), sponsored by Representative Campbell and Senator Jones, closes a dangerous and devastating loophole in the statutes that forces children back into unsafe homes, rather than remaining in shelters, when the previous location was approved through home study. This bill ensures that parents never have to choose between safety and custody when fleeing abuse. It authorizes courts to place children and their caregivers in certified domestic violence shelters during emergencies. The bill also prevents the Department of Children and Families from forcing a child back into a previously studied home simply because a home study exists, instead requiring judges to weigh the totality of circumstances, thus closing a dangerous gap in Florida's child welfare system.

The Fostering with Dignity Act (HB 279, SB 306), sponsored by Representative Bartleman and Minority Leader Berman, ends the practice of foster youth carrying their belongings in trash bags by establishing a statewide program to provide duffel bags, suitcases, or backpacks – affirming dignity during one of life's most difficult transitions. The bill recognizes that the way children are treated during transitions shapes their sense of worth and stability.

The Survivor Safety Act (HB 1127, SB 1228), sponsored by Representative Rayner and Senator DiCeglie and is set to be introduced this Session, modernizes self-defense law to ensure that Florida's

justice system reflects the realities of coercive control and survival. The bill shifts the burden of proof from the victim to the prosecution by creating the first rebuttable presumption of reasonable fear and self defense for survivors who use force against documented abusers, authorizes trauma-informed training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges, and establishes a review panel to re-examine past convictions where abuse evidence was overlooked.

Survivors of violence and children deserve more than reactive systems – they deserve systemic protections and proactive policies that safeguard dignity, safety, and justice. These bills translate lived experience into lasting reform, ensuring our institutions respond with compassion and effectiveness. Florida has the opportunity to lead with survivor centered policies that not only address immediate needs but build a stronger, fairer child welfare and justice system for the future.

When our laws reflect compassion and fairness, and when they build real support for those desperately seeking safety, we strengthen the fabric of our communities and ensure the most vulnerable are never left behind. Surviving should never be the ceiling – and it should never be the end of our stories.

Amy Trask, a candidate for Florida's House District 22, is helping file bipartisan bills ahead of the 2026 legislative session. ✨

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January 26 (4:30pm - 630pm) - Helping Hands
February 21 (11a-1p) - Peaceful Paths
February 23 (4:30pm - 630pm) - Helping Hands
March 23 (4:30pm - 630pm) - Helping Hands
March 28 (11a-1p) Grace Marketplace
April 18 (11a-1p) - Local School TBD
April 27 (4:30pm - 630pm) - Helping Hands
May 9 (11-1p) - Grace Marketplace
May 18 (4:30pm - 630pm) - Helping Hands
June 20 (11a-1p) - ACLD Headquarters
June 29 (4:30pm - 630pm) - Helping Hands

If you cannot attend in-person,
use this QR code to attend
remotely. Clients will be seen,
first-come, first-served, based on
attorney availability.



GRU under threat

by Chuck Ross

If the GRU Authority (GRUA) maintains control over the utility, it may not be a self-reliant energy producer within the next decade.

The GRUA has failed to provide clear answers about GRU's future operations. At the Oct. 7, 2024 meeting, CEO Ed Bielarski halted the established Integrated Resources Plan (IRP), stopping the necessary planning for GRU. Bielarski informed us that he will push power generators providing over half of GRU's capacity past their life expectancy over the next 5 to 6 years. (These are the same generation systems Bielarski labeled as outdated and inefficient at the Jan. 16, 2020 City Commission meeting.) And then what? The plan is the future obsolescence of our power generator systems.

There are currently no plans to replace the generators. Without plans, our utility will have to depend on third-party power sources such as Florida Power & Light or Duke Energy. GRU risks losing self-reliance, and the GRUA has not acted to prevent this.

On Feb. 7, 2025, Bielarski signed an agreement with Duke Energy to supply substantial power using upgraded transmission lines that will be connected to the transmission system that distributes power to GRU. The GRUA has not disclosed this information or what the project will cost. Questions have been put to the GRUA regarding these matters, but no plausible answers have been given. Our power company is keeping us in the dark.

The GRUA meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 5:30pm

If you share our concerns and want to join in the effort to return GRU to local control, please reach out to Jyoti Parmar at 352-641-0095.

Chuck Ross has regularly attended GRUA meetings since the DeSantis appointees assumed control in late 2023. He is a retired CPA with over 40 years of experience and is an Executive Board member of the Sierra Club Suwannee St. Johns Group.

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Democratic Women's Club of Alachua County

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

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★ WOMEN MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the previously announced speaker for the DWCAC Women's History Month Brunch, Jill Wine-Banks, is unable to attend. However, we are excited to announce that the keynote speaker will now be former Orlando Police Chief and U.S. Congresswoman, The Honorable Val Demings.



FOR INFORMATION OR TO BUY TICKETS VISIT:

<https://www.dwcac.net/>

OR EMAIL:

DWCBrunchBunch@gmail.com

Editors' picks: News that didn't fit

Faith as a weapon: Inside America's theocratic vanguard

from *Global Project against Hate and Extremism* ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2334

The Global Project Against Hate and Extremism (GPAHE), founded in 2020 by two alumnae of the Southern Poverty Law Center, reports on “the transnational spread of far-right extremism and hate, particularly U.S.-based activity that is exported to other countries” with in-depth overviews of right-wing extremists. Their “Faith As A Weapon” profile of Christian Nationalism provides an excellent introduction (>18,000 words) to the well-organized and -financed campaign to replace US democracy with an extremist theocracy.

INFILTRATED! How the USA buys Greenland's elite

from *Danish News in English* ~
video (9:50) ~ Jan. 2 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2341

While Trump threatens military action against Greenland, a quieter takeover is already happening. This investigation exposes how Ronald Lauder — Trump's billionaire friend, who planted the Greenland idea in 2017 — is systematically buying into Greenland's economy through a Delaware corporation called Greenland Development Partners.

The problem is not the investments. It's his business partners. It's the husband of Greenland's Foreign Minister and other politically connected elites.



democracynow.org

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

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Network state meets the Seven Mountains Mandate: JD Vance, Charlie Kirk, The rise of the Theo Bros

from *The Nerd Reich* with Gil Duran ~
video (1:08) ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2330

Gil Duran speaks with Prof. Matthew Boedy, author of “The Seven Mountains Mandate: Exposing the Dangerous Plan to Christianize America and Destroy Democracy.” An exploration of the strange alliance between JD Vance, Silicon Valley and Christian Nationalists — experts say they are converging on the same anti-democratic playbook.

United States climate indicators

by Zachary Labe ~ zacklabe.com ~
tinyurl.com/Iguana2332

The climate crisis is everywhere, including local. A climate scientist uses data-driven methods to untangle climate change patterns from natural variability, providing clearer insights into climate risks. Here are maps, charts, and videos with the grim details. Also see climatecentral.org.

Yes, we can tell the victims from the villains

by Ron Cunningham ~ *FreeGNV* ~ Jan. 8
~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2342

A short piece on Trump's Republic of Lies. “If we do not do all within our power to try to undo what we have done, then we are all complicit.”

The phony war on Christians: Inventing persecution where none exists

by Diane Roberts ~ *Florida Phoenix* ~
Dec. 15 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2331

The idea of a widespread cultural war on Christians in the U.S. is largely exaggerated and doesn't reflect reality. This narrative is traced back to the old “War on Christmas,” where some conservatives perceived ordinary secular trends as hostile attacks on Christian traditions. This obsession distracts from deeper societal issues and that claims of such a “war” are often more about politics and culture wars than actual widespread harassment of Christians.

Can students fail an assignment if they cite God? Not if Florida Republicans get their way

by Hemant Mehta ~ *Friendly Atheist* ~
Dec. 31 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2343

Two Florida Republicans have introduced a bill that would prevent public school teachers from punishing students for expressing their religious beliefs on an assignment. It's an invitation to bad-faith claims of discrimination that could make life harder for instructors while exhausting school districts into submission.

What's driving U.S. escalation on Venezuela? Avila Chomsky explains

by Jyotishman Mudiari ~ *India & Global Left* ~ video (1:02) Nov. 14 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2333

Mudiari speaks with historian Aviva Chomsky, who breaks down what's driving U.S. escalation on Venezuela. They dive into the forces shaping Washington's approach — from corporate interests and oil politics to the Latin America hawks inside the Trump administration. Chomsky explains how immigration politics, U.S.-China competition in Latin America, and deep divisions within the U.S. Left over Maduro are reshaping policy and public debate. A clear, historical, and uncompromising look at why Venezuela is once again in Washington's crosshairs.

America the rogue state: The evisceration of the rule of law at home and abroad solidifies America as a rogue state

by Chris Hedges ~ *Films for Action* ~
Jan. 5 ~ tinyurl.com/Iguana2339

Wanna be depressed? Read on: “Our democratic institutions are moribund. They are unable or unwilling to restrain our ruling gangster class. The lobby-infested Congress is a useless appendage. It surrendered its Constitutional authority, including the right to declare war and pass legislation, long ago ... The media, owned by corporations and oligarchs, from Jeff Bezos to Larry Ellison, is an echo chamber for the crimes of state, including the ongoing genocide of Palestinians ...” And that's just the beginning. 🐞

Florida is a 'Fight to Work' state: State of the Graduate Assistants' Union

by Cassandra "Cassie" Urbenz,
UF-GAU Co-President

Class solidarity is more crucial now than ever as we watch higher education repeatedly coming under attack by the Florida legislature, which is intended to support and is responsible for funding our world-class education. This January marks the beginning of the legislative session, and we need to stay ready for what comes next. However, many other things are simultaneously threatening the graduate assistants who make our public university system's mission possible.

It is extremely disappointing to see UF, an institution with the shared mission of enabling students to lead and influence the next generation and beyond for the public good, continuously deny those who allow it to function a livable wage while threatening the stability of their labor union. Our bargaining unit of over 4,000 Graduate Assistants conducts life-saving and society-advancing research, teaches classes that shape the next generation, and provides administrative support to make all of that possible. After our impasse hearing in November and receiving a decision

from a Special Magistrate, the University is doubling down on refusing to honor the 20-year Released Time program that has allowed for GAU to efficiently work for our members, and more recently, bear the increased administrative burden caused by SB-256. This handful of graduate assistants maintains our communications, provides peer-to-peer support, gives guidance about UF resources, files our recertification with the Public Employee Relations Commission to retain our contract/bargaining rights, works collaboratively with administration on contract compliance, assists in bargaining, and provides grievance representation. As a result, we will have to go to the Board of Trustees at some time that is yet to be decided and collectively apply as much pressure as possible, or they will ignore the magistrate's recommendation and both refuse the much-needed raise AND remove this integral program.

This month also starts our recertification election, which is Jan. 8 through Feb. 5. Graduate assistants will receive ballots in the mail and be asked whether or not they would like to continue receiving representation from GAU. This is our

second election, with us clearing a 99.6 percent approval vote last time. We are proud to have such unwavering support from our bargaining unit and look forward to more turnout, as bills were filed last session to potentially make winning these elections impossible for chapters like ours. During 2025, a proposal was brought forward to require 50 percent +1 of the bargaining unit to vote in approval for a successful election rather than the majority of those voting, something intentionally designed to use the inefficiency of mailing addresses and postage against us, despite our success.

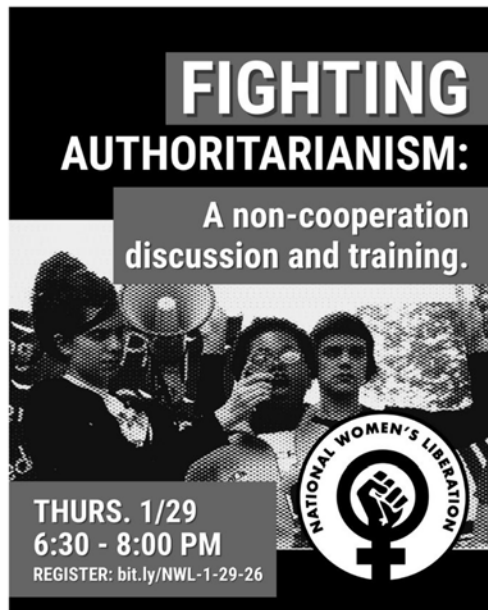
The University's actions do the same, exemplified by their navigation of this impasse. While UF should be collaborating with us to fight for higher education, they continuously show their lack of a backbone and loyalty to Tallahassee by using the statutes to exploit a conflict of interest and refuse to invest in their workers.

Want to join our fight for a better life? Get in touch with us via email at organizing@ufgau.org, follow us on social media (@ufgau on Instagram), and keep an eye out for when we mobilize next. 🐢

Fighting Authoritarianism:

A non-cooperation training hosted by National Women's Liberation

Thursday, Jan. 29, 6:30-8pm | Location TBA | Register: tinyurl.com/NWL012926



We will cover the authoritarian threat, stories of noncooperation in these times, how noncooperation has been used to defeat authoritarians and fascists, and what we — as part of a mass collective resistance movement across the U.S. — can do to meet this moment, fight back, and win.

This training will be delivered by NWL founding member and union organizer, Candi Churchill, using material (with encouragement and permission) from the Freedom Trainers (freedomtrainers.net/about/).

Learn skills to engage in brave conversations about fighting authoritarianism and recruit more people into the movement, so we can turn things around!

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Hurston's Eatonville, Florida, was the first self-governed Black township in the United States, a place that lived inside her and within her words. In her novels "Their Eyes Were Watching God," "Jonah's Gourd Vine," and "Moses, Man of the

Through a sweeping one-woman performance that moves between song, monologue, and ancestral invocation, Pamela D. Marshall gives breath to three powerful women: Lucy Potts-Hurston, Zora's mother, who taught her daughter to "jump at the sun;" Alice Walker, the writer who searched through thickets and weeds to find Zora's unmarked grave and resurrect her legacy; and Zora, the "Genius of the South," who wrote a people into permanence when the world tried to forget them.

The play's writing and development have inspired Marshall's forthcoming book.

For further information, see page 10 or visit www.SunshineStateBookFestival.com. 🐾

Admission is free




JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2026, IGUANA, PAGE 15



Sierra Club members protest against black bear hunt

At the old Capitol Building in Tallahassee on Nov. 17, Sierra Club members held a protest against the upcoming black bear hunt in Florida that took place Dec. 6-28, when 52 bears were killed. Over 150 demonstrators gathered to urge the Governor to halt the needless killing of bears. For more info see: tinyurl.com/Iguana2348. Photos/photo collage by Chuck Ross. 🐢



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And the good news is ...

Fourteen big feminist wins in 2025: Progress is still possible

Ms. Magazine honors the wins that remind us that progress is still possible and lists 14 accomplishments from 2025:

1. An all-women's professional baseball league was created,
2. The FDA approved a generic abortion pill
3. The FDA took down its black box warning on estrogen products
4. Reproductive health advocates secured major wins for abortion access across the country
5. Hundreds of lawsuits this year challenged divisive federal policies
6. Transparency of the Epstein files was won

7. "Liberation" comes to Broadway
 8. France updated its rape laws to focus on consent
 9. Across the U.S., voters elected champions of women's rights
 10. Pennsylvania elected its first openly trans mayor
 11. Italy named femicide as part of its legal code
 12. Robert E. Lee's Capitol statue was replaced with Barbara Rose Johns'
 13. Brazil strengthened protections against gender-based violence
 14. Thailand and Liechtenstein legalized same-sex marriage
- From an article by Vivian Rose and Maya Olson in Ms. Magazine on Dec. 29. See tinyurl.com/Iguana2335*

GOP redistricting could backfire: urban, immigrant areas turn back to Democrats

GOP reversals in this year's elections, especially in some urban and immigrant communities, are setting off alarm bells for Republicans using redistricting to try to keep control of Congress in next year's midterms.

Redistricting plans demanded by President Donald Trump in states such as Texas and Missouri — meant to capitalize on his stronger showing among certain urban voters in the 2024 election — could

backfire, as cities in Florida, New Jersey and Virginia returned to Democratic voting patterns in off-year elections in November.

Experts see the shift as a sign of possible souring on the administration's immigration enforcement agenda, combined with disappointment in economic conditions.

From an article by Tim Henderson in the Florida Phoenix on Dec. 29. See tinyurl.com/Iguana2336

Inflatables, rainbow crosswalks, flooding snitch lines:

In the face of rising authoritarianism, creative action helped us break through the stranglehold of fear in 2025

The rise of authoritarianism in the United States had devastating consequences in 2025. It was a year of unrelenting injustice, maddening and terrifying at once.

However, amidst the cycles of heartbreak and hope, resistance surged to unprecedented levels. Along with mass demonstrations and powerful boycotts, there were countless acts of creative protest that rekindled spirits and kept us rising up. A few examples:

1. Acts of defiance, from booing Trump at football games to flipping off Trump Tower — people found numerous ways to voice their dissent, displeasure and defiance. Each time someone spoke up, it emboldened others to take a visible stand,

2. Boycotts and economic resistance, such as the historic turnout of 7 million people at the No Kings protests in the U.S. in October, which offered a high-visibility glimpse of the movement's strength — the most powerful strategic engine of the anti-authoritarian movement has been its economic resistance, and

3. Rainbow crosswalks that Gov. Ron DeSantis ordered officials to paint over spurred community action as residents repainted crosswalks every time officials removed the paint.

From an article by Rivera Sun in Truthdig on Dec. 30. See tinyurl.com/Iguana2337

Trump shedding support among Latino voters

A majority of U.S. Latinos have grown pessimistic since the 2024 presidential election and increasingly disapprove of the immigration and economic policies of the second Trump administration, according to the Pew Research Center.

About 70% of them disapprove of President Donald Trump's record, with 65% disapproving of his handling of immigration and

61% saying his policies have worsened the economy.

The study found deep disapproval of the Trump administration's immigration policies, amid aggressive immigration enforcement operations in areas with large Latino immigrant populations.

From an article by Ariana Figueroa in the Florida Phoenix on Nov. 25. See tinyurl.com/Iguana2338

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A better future is possible with the DSA

by Alachua County
Democratic Socialists of America

The headlines lately have been bleak.

Donald Trump and former Florida senator Marco Rubio have kidnapped Venezuela's president, Nicolas Maduro, and launched airstrikes in an imperialist attempt at regime change with the clear intention of installing capitalist oligarchs to steal the country's oil.

The US continues to support Israeli apartheid and genocide in both Gaza and the West Bank.

Police-state tactics are on full display during immigration raids in our workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods.

Institutions across academia and the media increasingly are bowing to the demands of an autocratic, fascist regime.

Amidst it all, President Trump, his family, and his friends raid the pockets of the American people while sneering at any sense of democratic oversight or the common good.

Despite these scenes of horror, though, glimmers of light are peeking through. Across the country, people are coming to-

gether to reject the forces of fascism and exploitation.

Thousands of striking baristas organizing with Starbucks Workers United have drawn attention to the poor pay and chronic understaffing that produces your daily cup of coffee.

Hundreds of thousands of people turned out for No Kings protests rejecting the Trump administration's claims to more and more power.

In New York City, the financial center of global capital, the democratic socialist Zohran Mamdani shocked the forces of conservatism and the Democratic establishment to win the mayoral election and was inaugurated just days ago.

And here in Florida, Richie Floyd serves as a voice of the people on the St. Petersburg City Council.

We in the Alachua County Democratic Socialists of America are working to bring this spirit of people power here to North Central Florida. Ours is a fight against inequality, fascism, and above all the exploitative forces of capitalism.

Capitalism is not natural or inevitable. It

is created by human beings and its value comes from us and the work we do together. However, its benefits are concentrated in the hands of an increasingly rancid class of despotic billionaires. As democratic socialists, we seek a different system, one that rejects economic exploitation and recognizes the inherent equality and dignity of all people, regardless of race, gender expression, or wealth. This is socialism — a system whereby the fruits of social production are enjoyed by all, from each according to one's ability and to each according to one's need.

Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is a big-tent, multi-tendency organization.

We are not committed to any single theory or framework for understanding society; rather, we are committed to drawing in leftists interested in socialist and radical politics and activism.

We want to bring these politics to the fore in Alachua County. DSA's theory of change is not centered around raising money to buy elections, only for our elected officials to turn around and ignore us. Instead, our power lies in the untapped potential of the working class,



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organized and working together to remake society and bring about a better world.

Our chapter is new and growing, with several committees hard at work and more to come. Our Housing Justice Committee is working to educate tenants on their legal rights and to develop policies to help Gainesville and Alachua County build new public housing and ensure that everyone has access to safe, affordable homes. Our Political Education Committee hosts monthly Socialist Night Schools exploring topics like American fascism, the labor movement, and immigration, DSA 101 events designed for new and prospective members, and Socialist Forums where the chapter and community come together to discuss political issues, economic conditions, and socialist theory.

As we grow as a chapter, we look forward to developing new campaigns and initiatives. By joining, you can help us shape the future of Alachua County, the state of Florida, and beyond.

Over the next month, we are hosting several events, all of which will be held at the Quaker Meeting House (702 NW 38th St.). The Political Education Committee will be hosting a Socialist Forum discussing Zohran Mamdani's victory, his political platform, and municipal socialism more broadly on Thursday, Jan. 15 at 6pm. Our General Body Meeting will be held on Saturday, Jan 31 from 2-4pm. Finally, our Socialist Night School series will return Thursday, Feb. 12 at 6pm.

Working together, a better world is possible. We stand against the barbarism of fascist imperialism and seek the freedom, equality, and true democracy that only socialism can bring. If you are interested in checking out our chapter, please reach out to us at alachuadsa@gmail.com, visit our website alachuadsa.org, or come see us in person at one of our events above. Join us today, and we can get to work making this better world a reality. ✊



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From KIDS, p. 1

worker Association of Florida and I have listened to the stories of grieving families in our community for the past year. FWAF is a 42-year-old, grassroots, farmworker-led, community-based organization with five offices in the state. While we are one of the oldest immigrants' rights and farmworker justice organizations in the state, we never thought we would see such deep pain inflicted on our community.

FWAF has earned the trust of families in our communities, who come to us seeking help. Our staff monitors ICE activity, accompanies people to their court appointments, documents cases of detentions, deportations and racial profiling, and helps family members search for their fathers, mothers, siblings, and children when they get "lost" in the system.

Here are some of the stories we've chosen to highlight to give voice to our kids, both those targeted and caught in the crossfire of ICE.

On Aug. 15, several adults were detained in front of Apopka High School (just north of Orlando) as the students were arriving to school. Though no students were detained, many of the Hispanic students worried about their parents being questioned or detained in the drop-off line. Other students made racist comments online about the event which created a hostile environ-

ment for all of the Hispanic students at the school. There are now reports of racially-motivated bullying in the Apopka area against students who go to school every day praying they'll see their parents again when they return.

On Dec. 5 in Apopka, we received a letter from a little girl addressed to Santa Claus asking him not for toys or clothes, but only to "please make the kids have a good Christmas. please make the polis stop please Santa". She says earlier, "im sad for the kids crying. I feel bad."

On Dec. 13, a family received a letter from DHS telling them their asylum cases were closed, that the safe haven they had been fighting to make their home for years was no longer in reach, and that they'd be fined \$500 dollars for EVERY DAY since 2022 (over \$500k) they had remained in the country, legally pursuing their immigration cases.

The mother of the family came to us at FWAF, asking us to legally sign over temporary guardianship of her youngest child, a fourteen-month-old with Down syndrome who just had open-heart surgery, to her niece who's a citizen. She's worried that otherwise, if she's deported after 12 years as a refugee in this country, her child will be deported with her and will not be able to receive the life-saving treatments she needs in Honduras.

She came here simply seeking peace in a place that told her and hundreds of thousands of other families that they'd be welcomed with open arms. Now, she's being suddenly uprooted, fined like a criminal, and forced to make a decision to leave her child behind that no mother should have to make. A simple letter in the mail, no empathy, leaving broken families behind to pick up the pieces of their lives.

This is happening all over the country.

A college freshman, Any Belloza, was deported against federal orders to a place she fled a decade ago on Nov. 20.

On Nov. 26, first-grader Yuanxin was lost in federal custody for over a week after being arrested with his father a third time since they fled torture in China.

A 7-year-old and his mother were abducted to Texas while visiting family on Thanksgiving, horrifying his school community in their Vermont hometown.

ICE in Minnesota stalked a young family home from the grocery store on Dec. 6, then held kids at gunpoint until housemates could prove they were residents.

We don't share these stories to exhaust you, but we can't do this alone. We help these families by doing what we can, but the truth is that the impact goes a lot deeper than anything we can fix. Once a parent is torn from their child, even if we can get them released and reunited, that trauma does not go away.

This must stop, as the damage that has already been done to the youth is irreversible, but with your support, we can keep this list from getting longer.

The Farmworker Association of Florida is disgusted by the continuous trauma to our youngest and most vulnerable members of society from exponentially increased ICE activity. Be on the right side of history. Speak up about how separating families, detaining kids, and traumatizing a whole generation is unjustifiable, not just when you see attacks happening in your community, but when you vote, and when you talk to your relatives and friends. Kids deserve better and we need your help to protect them. 🐾



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Recommended blogs / web sites



joycevance.substack.com

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

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Today's Edition Newsletter

Robert Hubbell

Citizen. Optimist. Realist.



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

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

roberthubbell@substack.com

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Robert Reich writes at robertreich.substack.com

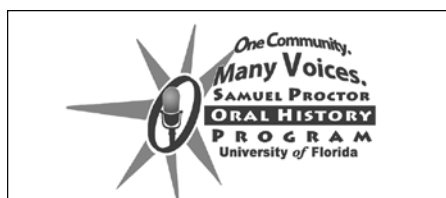


An emeritus professor of public policy at Berkeley and former Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration writes a daily newsletter "not just to inform (and

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."

Oral History Program

History and the people who make it: Dr. Nikitah Imani



In this interview excerpt, Dr. Nikitah Okembe-Ra Imani, a professor at the University of Nebraska, talks about his experiences as a graduate student at UF and how he had to fight for his Black identity to be acknowledged on the campus. Imani [I] was interviewed by Daniela Lopez [L] on April 9, 2018. Transcript edited by Beth Grobman. Read the entire interview at tinyurl.com/Iguana2329.

L: You were one of the people who formed the 99. Can you go into detail from it being an idea to actually mobilizing and gathering the individuals who would do this sort of action?

I: The organization was created to pursue a wide variety of issues in the community. The name came from the notion that by 1999, which was well ahead at the time, that if certain critical things did not happen in the African-American community, the African Diaspora community, that it would not survive. That meant that a number of things had to happen with relationships with law enforcement, education, economics, politics. So the idea of the 99 was to try to meet that trajectory, to meet that deadline of 1999. If we haven't completed those things, at least begin to move in that direction.

The target was college students like ourselves because youth and college students are in a unique position to be able to do social activism without all the consequences of adults, as well as not having as many obligations, and so much of their activism can be tied into their educational experience that they can be better facilitators towards their activism. It is not an accident that most of the Black Panthers – the initial core – were graduate students.

I was a junior Panther. I was inspired by the Panthers both in terms of the organizational structure as well as their capacity to build coalitions with different groups and their economic, social and political

agenda, in particular, their ten-point plan, which was an important part of what we wanted to pursue on a micro level even though they pursued it on a macro level.

We started the organization at UF by setting up informational tables. They were really just community education tables with books, films, and other things related to the African experience, Black power ideology, and so forth. We would set up a table like many other groups would do and we would just solicit people as they were going by.

We started to do film festivals on campus and in convenient locations off campus. We started getting questions from people, some of whom were supporters and some of whom were not. We went to great lengths to answer those questions and deal with those things. It was a perfect storm because as we got started there was a kind of right-wing backlash in Florida going on in Florida at the time – much like you have in the whole country right now.

You have police brutality starting to rise up. You had economic dislocation rising in the community. We weren't aware of it at the time, but we were perfect for the moment that was starting to begin in Florida. Other chapters began to spring up with our model. We were kind of a loose confederation in that each campus had its own leaders and we would visit some of those campuses to consult.

L: You guys would table, correct?

I: Yes. We tabled at open areas on campus – in the vicinity of the “Red Square” we called it. A lot of the areas right there in front of the Arts and Sciences. Sometimes over in the Plaza of the Americas, depending on the day. Sometimes we were out there with other organizations as part of things the University would be doing, and sometimes it would be more specific things.

We started having rallies on specific observance days, like Malcolm X day. We started having a rally every year. We would have a Columbus Day observance, where we would actually conduct a funeral for all the indigenous and Latino and Africans who were the victims of Columbus and the results of the discovery. We would park the actual hearse and bring the coffin out.

L: Oh yeah! I heard about the casket!

I: [Laughs] We were very much into scholarly presentations, but we also practiced disruption. Disruption often has a negative connotation, but our notion was constructive disruption. When we would be dealing with classes or scenarios where things were being taken for granted, we would show up. Just our presence was enough of a disruption that would provide a counterpoint to those instances.

An example of disruptive activity would be the funeral because you don't expect to see a full funeral with mourners dressed in black in the middle of campus in the middle of the day. That was exactly our point. You didn't expect this in the same way that indigenous people didn't expect this invasion by Europeans and so forth. We wanted to disrupt the day-to-day life of the community and the campus and draw attention to issues of social justice and equalities.

L: These demonstrations – would you say they were radical in any way?

I: I mean it depends on who's doing the defining. I go back to what Dr. King said in the Letter from Birmingham Jail. They called him a radical and I imagine if you are a person who argues that you should never, ever break the law, even if the law is unjust, then he was a radical.

If you are a person who believes in gradualism and that you are supposed to sit there and tolerate social injustice in perpetuity until those in power figure it out, then I guess that's radical.

My point is that I don't know of any social justice struggle that wasn't disruptive and I also don't know of any social justice struggle that ever went anywhere that didn't involve someone else on the opposite side of the equation who didn't think it was radical.

I don't consider radical a negative term. If you are going to call me a radical, call me a free radical because I'm that element that floats in the mix that makes things happen. I am the agitator in the washing machine. If you think about it, your clothes would never get clean if you just dropped the dirty clothes in water and poured some detergent and nothing happened. It is the friction, the agitation, that part that turns and rips everything it touches. Hopefully, it doesn't tear your clothes but it does throw them around.

It's that throwing it around and that disruption that gets your clothes clean. Sometimes we need agitators in society.

L: You mentioned that sometimes you would hold demonstrations. I have been trying to find some resources that document that what you guys have done. Is there any reason you feel like there is not a lot of documentation from certain news outlets?

I: The Alligator was intimately involved in a lot of what we were doing. I have a lot of my own collections of stuff from the Alligator. There would be particular things on campus where you would get more coverage. The Gainesville Iguana has a large archive of stuff because there were officials of the Iguana who were involved in our organization or whatever. There were members of the Iguana who were actually imbedded in the demonstrations associated with the Black History month. They were getting it firsthand.

My philosophy towards the press is that you use the press, you don't allow the press to use you. I probably have to take some responsibility for not always not having press coverage because I don't think press coverage is good.

I am more interested in action that transforms the minds of the community and creates institutions and does stuff. I think sometimes people are press chasers in the same way that lawyers can be ambulance chasers. I was one of those people where we would release statements to the press if they asked us for something, but in our organization – much like the Panthers – we had a rotating leadership where we didn't identify any one person as a leader and we didn't always respond to press inquiries unless we thought it was constructive for what we were doing.

Sometimes the press didn't publish certain things because they didn't know certain things. My thing was if the press needs to know when we were having a rally, we would publicize that and send out press releases and whatever and of course, they had the discretion to advertise it or not.

We weren't always the most press friendly because I never saw the press as a friend to oppressed communities. I think there are independent publications, like the Iguana that do an important service. Now you have much more television and radio, but we were still in a predominately press era when we came on.

I think that the reason we didn't have a lot of press is that the little press that we

got from main stream press were always wrong and always negative. If you asked most people their image of the Black Panthers or their image of anything that is trying to change the community through social change, if you go to the mainstream press, it tends to be negative, because the main stream press represents the economic and social interests of the elite.

If you are trying to deconstruct the elite or challenge the elite, they control the press and they control the image that you are going to get. You're probably better off saying to them as little as possible.

I think one of the reasons that many social movements and efforts don't go very well in a community is because we have too many so-called leaders that chase cameras and don't realize that you live and die by the soundbites and whatever comes out of the cameras. Sometimes you get so focused on press conferences and cameras and all of this stuff, that you don't actually get to the word. One of the things I'm proud about the 99 is that we did a whole lot of work in a very short period of time with the limited number of people. That would've been impossible if we were all chasing cameras.

L: Yeah, its funny how they think that after Black Thursday that everything was perfectly fine in terms of race relations here at UF.

I: Right. Yeah. The view seems to be that racism doesn't exist. It's a proximity thing. I used to spend a lot of time working with the Red Stockings organization and a lot of the feminists and we shared stories about historical activism.

Carol Giardina was one of my closest friends back in the old days. We would sit and talk about this proximity thing, which is that sexism doesn't exist until I encounter it as a male. Racism doesn't exist until I encounter it as a white man. That was the challenge at UF.

UF was largely oblivious to the consequences, for example, of giving a student government budget control. At that time the student government controlled about 6 million dollars because it also controlled the student union. You have to keep in mind that most universities don't allow students – they may have some influence, but they don't get to control it directly like UF student government did.

In fact, there would be massive amounts of money in the UF student government elections because people saw the student government election at UF as a stepping

stone to Florida politics because there was so much money and so much influence involved. You basically had an extremely unrepresentative student government.

So, naturally every time you brought up issues about Black History Month or women's issues or issues of Native Americans – these people would be like, "We don't know anything about that. We're not interested in that."

They would either vote not to fund it or to fund it less. On the other hand, the ski club would get like 20 thousand because everyone was in the ski club. That kind of stuff would go on year after year after year.

Different members joined the NAACP, they joined the different bodies – I ended up being the Black history chair of the Black Student Union. Our notion is that we are not going to beg these people, they are going to have to give us the proper respect that we are entitled to as students and people who contribute to this money.

When that didn't happen, it was very interesting because basically the BSU morphed into the BAM – the Black Awareness Movement. What basically happened is that all the leaders that had been conditioned to basically to beg the student government and accept whatever they gave us, were kind of escorted out of office. Those of us who weren't going to stand for this – that group took over.

BAM was born out of the BSU, but it came because the BSU had failed to represent the interests of the people. There were BSU officials at the time, who were like, "Well I guess we can try again next year!" I was like, "Um. No, no, no."

I always tell people that what happens is a lot of these organizations that have been conditioned to have a begging posture have to be transcended by organizations that are like, "No, we demand our rights." That's what happened and BAM became way more powerful and larger than BSU had ever been.

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From VENEZUELA, p. 1

ed. They include open warfare; covert intelligence operations; instigation of unrest; support for armed groups; manipulation of mass and social media; bribery of military and civilian officials; targeted assassinations; false-flag operations; and economic warfare aimed at collapsing civilian life.

These measures are illegal under the UN Charter, and they typically result in ongoing violence, lethal conflict, political instability, and deep suffering of the civilian population.

The case of Venezuela

The recent United States record with respect to Venezuela is clear.

In April 2002, the United States knew of and approved an attempted coup against the Venezuelan government.

In the 2010s, the United States funded civil society groups actively engaged in anti-government protests, notably in 2014. When the government cracked down on the protests, the US followed with a series of sanctions. In 2015, President Barrack Obama declared Venezuela to be “an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.”

In 2017, at a dinner with Latin American leaders on the margins of the UN General Assembly, President Trump openly discussed the option of the US invading Venezuela to overthrow the government.

During 2017 to 2020, the US imposed sweeping sanctions on the state oil company. Oil production fell by 75 percent from 2016 to 2020, and real GDP per capita (PPP) declined by 62 percent.

The UN General Assembly has repeatedly voted overwhelmingly against such unilateral coercive measures. Under international law, only the Security Council has the authority to impose such sanctions.

On 23 January 2019, the United States unilaterally recognized Juan Guaidó as “interim president” of Venezuela and on 28 January 2019 froze approximately \$7 billion of Venezuelan sovereign assets held abroad and gave Guaidó authority over certain assets.

These actions form part of a continuous United States regime-change effort spanning more than two decades.

Recent United States global escalation

In the past year, the United States has carried out bombing operations in seven countries, none of which were authorized by the Security Council and none of which were undertaken in lawful self-defense under the Charter. The targeted countries include Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, and now Venezuela.

In the past month, President Trump has issued direct threats against at least six UN member states, including Colombia, Denmark, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria and of course Venezuela. These threats are summarized in Annex I to this statement.

What is at stake today

Members of the Council are not called upon to judge Nicolás Maduro. They are not called upon to assess whether the recent United States attack and ongoing naval quarantine of Venezuela result in freedom or in subjugation.

Members of the Council are called upon to defend international law, and specifically the United Nations Charter.

The realist school of international relations, articulated most brilliantly by John Mearsheimer, accurately describes the condition of international anarchy as “the tragedy of great power politics.” Realism is therefore a description of geopolitics, not a solution for peace. Its own conclusion is that international anarchy leads to tragedy.

In the aftermath of World War I, the League of Nations was created to end the tragedy through the application of international law. Yet the world’s leading nations failed to defend international law in the 1930s, leading to renewed global war.

The United Nations emerged from that catastrophe as humanity’s second great effort to place international law above anarchy. In the words of the Charter, the UN was created “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.”

Given that we are in the nuclear age, failure cannot be repeated. Humanity would perish. There would be no third chance.

Measures required of the Security Council

To fulfill its responsibilities under the Charter, the Security Council should immediately affirm the following actions:

1. The United States shall immediately cease and desist from all explicit and implicit threats or use of force against Venezuela.
2. The United States shall terminate its naval quarantine and all related coercive military measures undertaken in the absence of authorization by the Security Council.
3. The United States shall immediately withdraw its military forces from within and along the perimeter of Venezuela, including intelligence, naval, air, and other forward-deployed assets positioned for coercive purposes.
4. Venezuela shall adhere to the UN Charter and to the human rights protected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



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5. The Secretary-General shall immediately appoint a Special Envoy, mandated to engage relevant Venezuelan and international stakeholders and to report back to the Security Council within fourteen days with recommendations consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, and the Security Council shall remain urgently seized of this matter.
6. All Member States shall refrain from unilateral threats, coercive measures, or armed actions undertaken outside the authority of the Security Council, in strict conformity with the Charter.

From WildFlowers, p. 32

a gathering where the deeper spirit is clear: respect for each other and our stories, and respect for the land that provides us with so much.

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In Closing

Mr. President, Distinguished Members,

Peace and the survival of humanity depend on whether the United Nations Charter remains a living instrument of international law or is allowed to wither into irrelevance.

That is the choice before this Council today.

Thank you. 🐾



LABOR NOTES

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- Please 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.
- Join 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.
- Join our efforts to elect pro-labor politicians, and then help us hold them accountable.

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

-Big Bill Haywood



unionhall.aflcio.org/north-central-florida-central-labor-council

workerscreateallwealth.substack.com

Gainesville area events

Please notify the Iguana of upcoming events at: gainesvilleiguana@cox.net

WEEK OF JAN 11 - 17

Wed 1/14 Town Hall Symposium, 6:30pm, Dayspring Baptist Church (1945 NE 8th Ave), MLK event, panel "Steadfast, Unmovable, Against All Odds", free (also livestreamed); tinyurl.com/iguana-9448

Thu 1/15 "Detroit '67", 7pm, through 1/25, Star Center Theatre (11 NE 23rd Ave), the summer of love - & riots, \$?, tinyurl.com/iguana9449

Fri 1/16 Stephan P. Mickle Jazz Concert, 7pm, MLK Multipurpose Ctr (1028 NE 14th St), MLK event with D.R. Band, free?; tinyurl.com/iguana-9448

Fri 1/16 "Ecstasy", 7:30-9:30pm, Santa Fe College Fine Arts Hall (3000 NW 83rd St), Evans Haile conducts Gvl Orchestra in Ravel & Scriabin, \$20-60, tinyurl.com/iguana9555

Fri 1/16 Downtown Winter Market, Fri & Sat 4-10pm, Sun 12-5pm, also 1/23-25, The Streatery (SW 1st St from Main St to SW 2nd St), vendors, art, live music, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9451

Fri 1/16 Deadline, 5pm, to apply online to present at Art Conference on April 24 for Alachua County Arts Council; tinyurl.com/iguana9452

Fri 1/16 Train Bug Birthday Bash - Dumpster Meds' Bday, 7-10pm, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), \$?, civicmediacenter.org

Fri 1/16 "The Drowning Girls", 8-10pm, through Feb 1, Acrostown Repertory Theatre (3501 SW 2nd Ave), Edwardian murders play, \$20-25, acrostown.org

Fri 1/16 WGOT Benefit, 9pm, Vecino's (208 W Univ Ave), Crash Pad, Rich Ryan Band, Tapeworm, \$10-20; ; pg 2 & facebook.com/wgotlp/

Sat 1/17 Arbor Day Tree Giveaway, 9am-noon, TB McPherson (1717 SE 15th St), free native & fruit trees while supplies last; tinyurl.com/iguana9453

Sat 1/17 Arbor Day Celebration, 11am-2pm, E.P. Powers Park (5910 SE Hawthorne Rd), talks & tree giveaways, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9454

Sat 1/17 Hoggetowne Medieval Faire Sneak Preview, 1-4pm, Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E Univ Ave), see 1/24, free; hoggetownemedfaire.com

Sat 1/17 Fla Master Naturalist Program, 2-6pm, 1st Magnitude Brewing (1220 SE Veitch St), 25th Anniversary celebration with art, animals, info, raffle, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9455

Sat 11/17 Gvl Free Store, 2-5pm 3rd Sats, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), free stuff for all (masks required); civicmediacenter.org

Sat 1/17 "Me, Myself & God", 7pm, MLK Multipurpose Ctr (1028 NE 14th St), MLK event, written & directed by Romona Jackson, free; tinyurl.com/iguana-9448

Sat 1/17 Billifer and the Fearless Pals, 7:30-9:30pm, Theatre of Memory (1705 NW 6th St), w/ vocals & stories, \$21.50, tinyurl.com/iguana9456

WEEK OF JAN 18 - 24

Sun 1/18 Sunday Assembly, 11am, Pride Ctr (3850 NW 83rd St, Ste 201), speaker from Rural Women's Health Project & potluck, free; sagainesville.weebly.com

Sun 1/18 "The Librarians" final performance, 6:30pm, The Hipp (25 SE 2nd Pl), play of Texas book ban, \$12-14; thehipp.org

Sun 1/18 DaLaRuSa, 7:30-9:30pm, Theatre of Memory (1705 NW 6th St), flutes & strings quartet, free w/ RSVP; tinyurl.com/iguana9457

Mon 1/19 MLK Celebration '26, 11am-2pm, starting at Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E Univ Ave): 11am, Memorial Garden Redesign & Ribbon Cutting and Hall of Fame Enshrinement (200 E Univ Ave); 12pm, MLK Parade starts, Bo Diddley Plaza; 1pm, MLK Ctr (1028 NE 14th Ave), celebration featuring Prime Time, free; tinyurl.com/iguana-9448

Tue 1/20 Free America Walkout, 2pm, across USA, national action to protest fascism by walking out of school, work, & stores, organized by 50501 Movement ("No Kings" group), free; pg 18 & freemeri.ca/

Tue 1/20 "AI & US National Security", 6-7pm, UF Pugh Hall Ocora (296 Buckman Dr), Hagar Chemali on threats & opportunities, free (& livestreamed); tinyurl.com/iguana9458

Wed 1/21 "Seeing the Past Anew", 5pm, UF Fine Arts Bldg B (400 SW 13th St), talk by Dr. Eleni Bozia on archeology & digital preservation, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9459

Thu 1/22 Afro Futurism Week opens, 5pm, UF Pugh Hall Ocora (296 Buckman Dr), MLK lecture launches events including party, concert, book panels, art, music, & fashion show at 8 venues, free?; sparc352.org/afw

Thu 1/22 "The Climate Justice Equation", 5-7:30pm, UF Pugh Hall Ocora (296 Buckman Dr), Dr. Kathi Earles on extreme weather's impact on Black & Brown communities, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9550

Thu 1/22 Local Housing Assistance Plan virtual meeting, 5:30pm, online, Alachua County seeks public input, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9551 (meeting ID 248 087 964 666 49; password: Cz7E6Rw3); see 2/19

Fri 1/23 Sunshine State Book Festival, 8am-9pm, also Sat 10am-4pm, SFC Fine Arts Hall (3000 NW 83rd St), writing workshop, >100 local/regional authors, giveaways, & a play (see 1/24, "Passion Dey Couldn't Steal"), free; pg 10 & sunshinestatebookfestival.com

Fri 1/23 "Anarchism without Borders?", 3pm, UF Turlington Hall 3310, 2 profs on 1870s-1914 global movement, free (Zoom available); tinyurl.com/iguana9552

Fri 1/23 KennaDee, 6-9pm, Swamp Head Brewery (3650 NW 42nd Ave), pop/country/soul singer, free?; tinyurl.com/iguana9553

Fri 1/23 Longest Table Event, 6:30pm, UF Honors Village (1512 Museum Dr), bringing together UF & Gvl communities, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9554

Fri 1/23 "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest", 7:30-9:30pm, through 2/8, Gvl Community

Playhouse (4039 NW 16th Blvd), based on Ken Kesey's manic novel, \$15-25; tinyurl.com/iguana9556

Sat 1/24 Hoggetowne Medieval Faire, 10am-6pm (Sat & Sun), Depot Park (874 SE 4th St), one weekend of traditional medieval revelry with food, music & dance, free; hoggetownemedfaire.com

Sat 1/24 "Passion Dey Couldn't Steal", 2:30-3:30pm, SFC Fine Arts Hall (SF Lyceum Theater, 3000 NW 83rd St, Bldg E), Zora Neale Hurston play, free; pg 15 & tinyurl.com/iguana9557

Sat 1/24 Knightlife, 6-9pm, Heartwood Soundstage (619 S Main St), unofficial Medieval Faire afterparty for all ages, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9558

Sat 1/24 Bob Patterson, 7:30-9:30pm, Theatre of Memory (1705 NW 6th St), Fla folk legend, \$21.50, tinyurl.com/iguana9559

Sat 1/24 "Tavern of Tease: A Medieval Drag and Burlesque Show", 7:30-11pm, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), 18+ only - costumes encouraged!, \$15 adv, \$20 door (VIP tickets \$25/30); civicmediacenter.org

WEEK OF JAN 25 - 31

Sun, 1/25 Gvl Record Fair, 12-5pm, Cypress & Grove (1001 NW 4th St), music in multiple media, plus art & food, free; see pg 10

Tue 1/27 "How One Jewish Woman Defied the Nazis", 5:30-7pm, UF Hillel (2020 W Univ Ave), Dr Joanne Sliwa on woman who saved 10,000 non-Jewish Poles, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9560

Wed 1/28 "Some Enchanted Evening" opens, 7pm, The Hipp (25 SE 2nd Pl), Rodgers & Hammerstein songs, \$10-30 preview night, \$20-45 after; thehipp.org/live-on-stage

Wed 1/28 "Baseball in Paradise: A History of Spring Training in Florida", 7pm, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), talk by author Liz Coursen, free w/ registration; tinyurl.com/iguana9561

Thu 1/29 "Fighting Authoritarianism", 6:30-8pm, location tba, Nat'l Women's Liberations hosts non-cooperation training, free; pg 13 & tinyurl.com/iguana9862

Fri 1/30 Artwalk, 7-10pm, downtown Gvl, free; artwalkgainesville.com

Fri 1/30 10 Minute Plays, 7:30-9:30pm, SFC Fine Arts Hall (3000 NW 83rd St), scenes from Broadway classics, \$0-20; tinyurl.com/iguana9562

Sat 1/31 Needle Felting Workshop, 1-4pm, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), meet-up & how-to, supplies available, \$15 (no one turned away for lack of \$); civicmediacenter.org

WEEK OF FEB 1 - 7

Sun 2/1 "Disappearing Rivers", 1-2pm, Hogtown Creek Headwaters Nature Park (1500 NW 45th Ave), Clyde Bunting talk on surface & subsurface rivers, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9563

Fri 2/6 "Miscast Cabaret", 7:30pm Fri & Sat, Star Center Theatre (11 NE 23rd Ave), musical theater with a twist, \$?

Sat 2/7 Springs Run, 11am-1pm, 1st

Magnitude Brewing (1220 SE Veitch St), 7.2K run to benefit Fla Springs Inst, \$48.70; pg 18 & tinyurl.com/iguana9564

Sat 2/7 Super Sealant Saturday, 8:30am–1pm, UF College of Dentistry (1395 Center Dr), free dental exams, sealants, &c for ages 1–17, plus goodie bags, face painting, more, by appointment or walk-in; tinyurl.com/iguana9565

Sat 2/7 Blues & BBQ Festival, 10am–4pm, 25465 W Newberry Rd (Newberry), 3rd annual barbecue contest, car show, & family fun fest, free; <https://www.facebook.com/events/1527666668551644>

Sat 2/7 Step Show/Stroll, 12–3pm, Bo Diddley Plaza (111 E Univ Ave), Black Greek organizations from Fla & Southeast step out, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9566

Sat 2/7 Yasmin Angoe, 2–4pm, Downtown Library (401 E Univ Ave), author of Nena Knight series speaks, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9567

Sat 2/7 Pizza Picnic, 5–8pm, Swallowtail Farm (7301 SE 92nd Terr), locally-made pizzas, contra dancing, bonfire, \$80; tinyurl.com/iguana9568

WEEK OF FEB 8 - 14

Sun 2/8 Reverend Horton Heat, 6pm, Heartwood Soundstage (619 S Main St), the notorious Psychobilly Freakout all-ages show, \$13.12 adv, \$30 door (under 12 free); tinyurl.com/iguana9569

Wed 2/11 “Ecstasy and Agony”, 5–7pm, UF Smathers Library Room 100 (1545 W Univ Ave), Dr. Susan Gillespie on Olmec archeology fieldwork, free; <https://classics.ufl.edu/other-resources/aia/>

Thu 2/12 “Planning a Spring Vegetable Garden”, 6–7:30pm, Working Food Community Ctr (219 NW 10th Ave), making plans for planting, sliding scale; tinyurl.com/iguana9570

Fri 2/13 Hawah Ezell, 3–4pm, Downtown Library (401 E Univ Ave), WCJB-TV anchor on tv & Black history, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9571

Fri 2/13 “Memphis”, 8pm, Star Center Theatre (11 NE 23rd Ave), play of romance and rhythm & blues, \$?, tinyurl.com/iguana9572

Sat 2/14 “The Other Book Part 2: The Shoulders We Stand On”, 10am–noon, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), 2nd-Sat series (Jan-April) on history of Black education in Alachua County & US, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9573

Sat 2/14 Ben Cosgrove, 7:30–9:30pm, Theatre of Memory (1705 NW 6th St), roaming piano bard, \$21.50, tinyurl.com/iguana9574

WEEK OF FEB 15 - 21

Sun 2/15 Sunday Assembly, 11am, Pride Ctr (3850 NW 83rd St, Ste 201), Barbara Oberlander on “Jeanette Rankin, the Woman Who said ‘No’ to War - Twice!”, free; saginville.weebly.com

Sun 2/15 Roy Book Binder w/ Corey Hall, 6–10pm, Heartwood Soundstage (619 S Main St), storytelling bluesman all-ages show, \$24.38 adv, \$25 door; tinyurl.com/iguana9575

Wed 2/17 “Soto’s Stuff”, 5–7pm, UF Smathers Library Room 100 (1545 W Univ Ave), Dr. Charles Cobb on Spanish relics, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9576

Wed 2/18 Oaken Grove Faire, 11am–2:30pm,

SFC Oak Grove (3000 NW 83rd St), gentle fantasy live-action role-play w/ acoustic music, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9577

Wed 2/18 “Mental Health & the Court”, 6–7pm, Judge Stephan P. Mickel Sr. Criminal Courthouse (220 S Main St), 2 local judges on mental health and the justice system, free w/ registration; tinyurl.com/iguana9579

Thu 2/19 Local Housing Assistance Plan in-person meeting, 6pm, Thomas Coward Auditorium (224 SE 24th St), Alachua County seeks public input, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9578, see 1/22

Fri 2/20 “Julius Caesar” opens, 8–10pm, through Ides of March, Acrosstown Repertory Theatre (3501 SW 2nd Ave), Shakespearean murder play, \$20–25, <https://www.acrosstown.org/>

Sat 2/21 “Gainesville Unplugged”, 9am–2pm, Morningside Nature Ctr (3540 E Univ Ave), music, food, how-to, free (+ \$5 welcome walk); tinyurl.com/iguana9580

Sat 2/21 FSTM Open House, 11am–1pm, Fla School of Traditional Midwifery (810 E Univ Ave), tour + Q&A, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9581

Sat 2/21 Gvl Free Store, 2–5pm 3rd Sats, Civic Media Ctr (433 S Main St), free stuff for all (masks required); civicmediacenter.org

Sat 2/21 “Remembrance Quilt” opening, 7–9pm, Matheson Museum (513 E Univ Ave), 6 quilts made in remembrance of 47 lives lost to racial violence in Alachua County over 2 centuries, free; <https://mathesonmuseum.org/events/>

WEEK OF FEB 22 - 28

Sun 2/22 AM/FM Street Fest, 1pm, Streatery (SW 1st St from Main St to SW 2nd St), bands & stuff, free; see pg 14

Thu 2/26 Alachua County Recycling, 10am, Leveda Brown Environmental Park (5115 NE 63rd Ave), Sierra Club-led tour of recycling center, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9582

Fri 2/27 “American Dream”, 7:30–9:30pm, Santa Fe College Fine Arts Hall (3000 NW 83rd St), Evans Haile conducts Gvl Orchestra in Grofé & Sung, \$20–60; tinyurl.com/iguana9583

Sat 2/28 Thornebrook Spring Arts Festival, 10am–5pm (also Sun), Shoppes at Thornebrook (2441 NW 43rd St), art, food, more; tinyurl.com/iguana9584

WEEK OF MAR 1 - 7+

Sun 3/1 “No. FL Land Trust”, 1–2pm, Hogtown Creek Headwaters Nature Park (1500 NW 45th Ave), Ramesh Buch on saving nature’s beauty, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9585

Fri 3/6 “Accomplice” opens, 7pm through 3/22, The Hipp (25 SE 2nd Pl), \$10–30 preview night, after \$20–45; tinyurl.com/iguana9586

Sat 3/7 FCPJ Open House, all day, 10665 SW 89th Ave, Hampton, Fla Coalition for Peace & Justice welcomes all, free; <https://florida4peace.org/>

Sat 3/7 Nowruz & International Festival, 1–6pm, Shoppes at Thornebrook (2441 NW 43rd St), celebrating Persian New Year w/ music & dance from 10 nations and food from more, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9587

Sat 3/7 Conservation Stewards Awards, 5–9pm, Prairie Creek Lodge (7204 SE County

Rd 234), Alachua Conservation Trust celebrates honorees w/ music, dinner, & drinks, \$?; tinyurl.com/iguana9588

Sat 3/7 “Women Make Democracy Work”, 10am–12pm, Best Western Gateway Grand (4200 NW 97th Bl), Val Demings speaks at Democratic Women’s Club brunch; \$?; see pg 11 & tinyurl.com/iguana9589

Sun 3/8 “Courageous Young Voices”, 4pm, Thomas Ctr (302 NE 6th Ave), 12th Annual ARTSPEAKSgenv poetry & creative expression showcase, free; tinyurl.com/iguana9590

RECURRING EVENTS

Monday Farmers Market, 4–8pm, Cypress & Grove (1001 NW 4th St)

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 (433 S Main St)

Live Community Music, Wednesdays, 8pm Heartwood Soundstage (619 S Main St) inside & out

Art House films: See thehipp.org/cinema

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

Drag Bingo, 7–9pm last Thursdays, 1st Mag (1220 SE Veitch St)

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

MEETINGS

Gainesville official and public meetings: tinyurl.com/iguana2350

County official and public meetings: tinyurl.com/iguana2351

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

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

Democratic Women’s Club of Santa Fe Springs meets 4th Sunday 3–5pm (except Dec & July), (26374 US-27 N, High Springs)

Women’s Club; dwcsofs@gmail.com, Facebook. com/dwcsofs

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

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/

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 | acomnclinic.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

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

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

Climate Reality Project Gainesville Area Chapter is the local chapter of an international nonprofit group dedicated to accelerating

Spotlight on: Alachua County Democratic Socialists of America



Democratic Socialists believe both the economy and society should be run democratically to meet human needs, not to make profits for the wealthy. Alachua County DSA is spreading socialism from Archer to Waldo and everywhere in between.

Working together, a better world is possible. DSA stands against the barbarism of fascist imperialism and seeks the freedom, equality, and true democracy that only socialism can bring.

If you are interested in checking out the local chapter, please reach out at alachuadsa@gmail.com, visit the website alachuadsa.org, or come to one of the events. See page 18 for

more information about DSA and dates of the upcoming events. Join today, and help get to work making this better world a reality. ✊

From EVENTS, p. 27

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

PFLAG meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7pm 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.)

EVENTS CALENDARS

Alachua County Visitors & Convention Bureau: event updated Thursdays; visitgainesville.com/events

Civic Media Center: civicmediacenter.org

The Lynx: thelynxbooks.com/events

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.

"True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice."
~ Martin Luther King Jr.

OPEN MICS

Gainesville is a talent-rich town, and open mics are a great way to have an evening of entertainment out of the house. These venues offer a variety of music and other entertainment; also for you performer-types to 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

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 ✊

urgent action globally on the climate crisis. Join the chapter at <https://tinyurl.com/mwkwetyb> for news, action alerts, meeting alerts. ClimateRealityProjectgnv@gmail.com | facebook.com/groups/climateactrealitygnvgroup

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

Democratic Women's Club of Santa Fe Springs meets 4th Sunday 3-5pm (except Dec & July), High Springs Women's Club; dwcosfs@gmail.com | Facebook.com/dwcosfs

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 | info@flippingthesystem.org | [@flippingthesystem](https://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](https://climateralityprojectgnv.com) | 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

Continued on next page

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

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

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

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

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

Greater Gainesville International Center celebrates and elevates our diverse international community by serving as a hub between cultural, economic, educational and governmental partners, to unlock the full potential of our unique global city. Programs include 10 sister cities and refugee resettlement. Lauren Poe | poe@gnvic.org | 352-871-0895.

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@lwv-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. gainesvillnlg@gmail.com | nlg.org

National Women's Liberation is a feminist group for women who want to fight back against male supremacy and win more freedoms for women. Inequalities between women and men are political problems

requiring a collective solution. 352-575-0495 | 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.rwhp.org

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program focuses on story-telling, social justice research, social movement studies, oral history workshops. oral.history.ufl.edu

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

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

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

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

Sunrise Movement Gainesville is a UF student-led organization focused on environmental justice through political engagement and community organizing. Follow them on Instagram at @sunrisemvmtgnv.

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

UF College Democrats is the official voice of the Democratic party on UF campus. 407-580-4543 | president@ufdemocrats.org | [facebook: UF College Democrats | UFcollegedems.org](https://facebook.com/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. UFPrisesu@gmail.com | facebook.com/ufpsu | plaza.ufl.edu/jsoto19/PSU

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

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

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

United Nations Association - Gainesville Chapter works to heighten citizen awareness/knowledge of global problems and the UN's efforts to deal with them. facebook.com/UNAUSAGainesvilleFICChapter | UNA-USAGainesvillefl.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://twitter.com/un_pac_uflorida), or email 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 | vfpgainesville.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, with progressive talk like Democracy Now and Thom Hartmann daily, and eclectic music shows from bluegrass to punk. info@wgot.org | www.wgot.org

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

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

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

WildFlowers Music Park: A place to remember and protect

by Robert "Hutch" Hutchinson

In this season when our world feels fragile, WildFlowers Music Park is a place that reminds us what we're trying to protect.

On 270 acres in Melrose, where sand-hill meets cypress and shady groves ring wildflower meadows, a nonprofit experiment is taking root. It's a counterpoint to our turbulent times, grounded in the values of hard-won moral clarity, protecting our land, lifting up our spirits, and committing to peace, justice, and community-building.

WildFlowers Music Park is, at its heart, a conservation project. Restoration and stewardship, rather carving the land into little pieces, is the park's non-profit mission. This means planting and nurturing native trees, flowers, and grasses, removing invasive species, and returning "good fire" to the land.

This is conservation with a conscience where our trails and gathering spaces will be a refuge both for wildlife and for people who are seeking alternatives to the isolating and divisive influences in our lives.

The park is a place to gather, heal, and create. Our inaugural WildFlowers Festival of Music and Dance, scheduled for March 13-15, will turn that mission into a living experience. Inspired by other community-rooted gatherings, the annual festival will offer camping beneath the trees, single-day and full-weekend passes, and a mix of roots, folk, world, and genre-crossing bands. But it's not just about passively partaking of music; it's about moving with it, and creating it together around campfires under the stars.

Our festival village will welcome all generations. A Kids Zone will be full of art, stories, and nature play. The Teen Outpost, designed with youth input, will be a place to gather, create, and feel trusted. Body-

work and mindfulness will be offered by practitioners who know that peace in the world is linked to peace in our bodies and

minds. Food vendors, local artisans, and community organizations will round out

See WildFlowers, p. 25

WildFlowers Festival of Music & Dance March 13-15, 2026

3 Days of Camping, Music & Community

Hosted at WildFlowers Music Park,
a new 270-acre music & nature park
in Melrose, FL (Alachua County)

Live Music - Camping
Music & Dance Workshops
Kids & Teens Activities
Healing Arts - Local Food
Artisan Crafts - Nature Walks
Family-friendly, community-centered

To learn more, text 352-776-8776

Or visit our website

TICKETS & INFO:

WildFlowersMusicPark.org 



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Comments, suggestions, contributions (written or financial) are welcome.

Submit events, content, ads and questions to: GainesvilleIguana@cox.net or 352-378-5655

Find us at: www.gainesvilleiguana.org, Instagram: [gnv_iguana](https://www.instagram.com/gnv_iguana), [facebook.com/gainesvilleiguana](https://www.facebook.com/gainesvilleiguana)

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