

alligator



VOLUME 112 ISSUE 51

MONDAY, JANUARY 29, 2018

Not officially associated with the University of Florida

Published by Campus Communications, Inc. of Gainesville, Florida

Living and loving with HIV: UF alumna tells her story

By Elliott Nasby

Alligator Staff Writer

The first time Jessica Grobman told anyone about her medical secret was in sixth grade when she shared it with her middle-school best friend.

The 11-year-old and her friend peered at a computer monitor in their school's media center as Grobman spelled out H-I-V on the keyboard.

"What's that?" her friend asked.

"I don't know, but I have it," she replied.

Grobman, who was born with the disease after contracting it from her mother, didn't know it when she typed those letters. But 12 years later, as a social worker having graduated from UF with a Bachelor of Arts in education, she was shocked to see her disease had become undetectable. Although she was not exactly cured, it was close enough.

She grew up in Boynton Beach with supportive parents who reminded her every night, at precisely 7 p.m., to take her nightly pill. They did their best to make sure she stayed healthy, she said.

But when she would visit her doctor, she was always the youngest in the waiting room.

"It has been a very lonely disease, a very lonely journey," she said.

Outside of taking five daily pills and getting a monthly IV injection, she said she was just like the other kids.

"I didn't really think that it was this huge thing, because nothing in my life was really affected by it," she said. "I still did sports, I still went to school."

She was just like the others until sex education was brought up in science classrooms and classmates became sexually curious in middle school. That's when she realized she couldn't do what others could because of the "big, scary thing," she said.

As Grobman learned about the stigma of her disease, she often felt discouraged to take the pills she needed.

"That was something that I really had to overcome," she said. "Taking these pills wasn't because there was something wrong with me to the outside world, but I really needed to do this to stay alive."

Dr. Jennifer Janelle, who's a part of UF Health's Department of Infectious Diseases, said doctors can prescribe medications, but they can't force patients to take them. It's about living with the disease, she said, but to "not let it define you."

Grobman said she first realized the importance of taking her own health seriously three months before graduating from UF. It happened when she was hospitalized for more than a week with salmonella after accidentally eating raw chicken.

She hadn't taken her medication for four months before the hospital visit, she said, because sometimes she didn't want to feel like she had the disease.

Dr. Janelle said HIV patients have a fluctuating T cell count, the type of white blood cells that fight infections. Only when the count falls below 200 cells per cubic millimeter does the disease become AIDS. Grobman said her T cell count after contracting salmonella was about 280. A normal T cell count is 500 to 1,200, according to UF Health.

"I got myself together, and now I am where I am," she said. "But I had to be pretty low for a little bit to learn that lesson."

In a routine blood test last Monday at the Alachua County Health Department, Grobman felt surprised when she found out her disease was undetectable despite missing a few days of her preventive viral medication. In two months of



Alan Alvarez / Alligator Staff

Jessica Grobman, 23, smiles as she speaks about living with HIV. Last week, she found out her disease had become undetectable. See a video at alligator.org.

SEE HIV, PAGE 4

Florida voters will vote on felon voting rights this year

By Amanda Rosa

Alligator Staff Writer

Jhody Polk was sentenced to eight years in prison for home invasion and theft in 2007.

Seven years and one law clerk certification later, Polk was released from Lowell Correctional Institution in Marion County with a goal to attend UF's Levin College of Law.

But the 34-year-old's status as a felon prevents her from pursuing law, serving in a jury and even voting.

"I get out with all these expectations and hope and a new way of thinking," she said. "But no matter what I did, I couldn't get a good job."

The Voting Restoration Amendment, an amendment on the ballot in November, will decide if 1.5 million felons in Florida like Polk will get their voting rights restored. The initiative, sponsored by Desmond Meade of Floridians for a Fair Democracy, was approved for the ballot Tuesday. Sixty percent of Florida voters would need to vote yes on the amendment to make it law.

The initiative would restore the voting rights of Floridians with non-violent felony convictions who have completed their sentences but not for those convicted of murder and sexual assault crimes.

A petition to make the amendment surpassed the 766,200 signature require-

SEE FELON, PAGE 4

UF reimburses county \$302,000 for Richard Spencer

By Jessica Giles

Alligator Staff Writer

Alachua County received full reimbursement from UF for the public safety costs accrued when Richard Spencer spoke at UF.

The county sent UF an invoice for \$302,184 on Jan. 10, according to Alligator archives. The itemized invoice broke down costs including law enforcement, court security, fire rescue, jail and Combined Communication Center services. Alachua County received UF's check Friday, said county spokesperson Mark Sexton.

The county's reimbursement came one day after the city of Gainesville announced it had decided not to bill UF for the \$224,105 it spent for public security surrounding the Spencer event in October, according to Alligator archives.

City Commissioner Helen Warren said the city's decision to foot the bill is part of main-

taining a strong relationship with UF, according to Alligator archives.

Although the city chose not to request reimbursement, Warren acknowledges UF's relationship with the county is different than it is with the city.

"I think there's a lot of differences between the personality and the mindset of the relationship that the city is trying to have with the university than what the county's efforts are, and obviously that's reflected in some of the actions that they take," she said.

UF declined to comment on the reimbursement check sent to the county and has yet to disclose the total amount they spent on the Spencer event. The Alligator couldn't confirm where the money came from to pay the county.

@jessica_giles_jgiles@alligator.org

GATORS BLOW LEAD IN LOSS TO UGA

The Florida women's basketball fell to 2-7 in SEC play on Sunday following a 66-57 loss to Georgia, pg. 14



Students begin interviewing with SG parties

Sunday was the first day for interviewing, pg. 5.

A UF student is running for a Florida House seat

Read why he's running, pg. 3.

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Local Events / News in Brief

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Talking Gators Toastmasters

Want to get more comfortable speaking in front of a group? Talking Gators Toastmasters meets at 5:45 p.m. every Tuesday in the Entomology Building, Room 1031. Meetings are free to attend and open to all. For more information, visit talkinggators.toastmasterclubs.org/.

Fulbright Lecture Series

As part of the Fulbright Lecture Series, Maya Stanfield-Mazzi will talk about indigenous textiles in colonial Latin America at 1 p.m. Wednesday at the UF International Center in the Hub. Stanfield-Mazzi is a UF associate professor of art history, specializing in art of colonial Latin America. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of California, Los Angeles and conducted her dissertation research in Peru with the help of a Fulbright-Hays fellowship. This first 2018 Fulbright lecture, entitled "Indigenous Textiles in the Colonial Latin American Home: Luxury, Lineage and Leisure," is a free event and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

Tango classes

Want to learn Argentine tango? The UF Argentine Tango Club will hold free classes for all UF students. No dance experience is necessary. Join them from 6:15 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. Sundays at the Reitz Union, Dance Studio A.

Stomp the Swamp for Autism

Impact Autism, a UF organization, is holding "Stomp the Swamp for Autism" to benefit the UF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) at 10 a.m. Feb. 17 at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. Autism is a developmental disorder that affects one in every 68 children and their families. In Gainesville and surrounding areas alone, more than 3,500 families are affected by autism. CARD supports individuals with autism and their families through training and assistance. To learn more about autism and to register for "Stomp the Swamp," visit card.ufl.edu

or check them out on Facebook.

LifeSouth Community Blood Centers' race

Registration is now open for LifeSouth Community Blood Centers' Five Points of Life Race Weekend on Feb. 17 and Feb. 18 at fivepointsoflife.com. Gainesville's largest running race begins at the UF Cultural Plaza. Both days will include food, free massages and music. There will be free coffee and pastelitos from Mi Apá Café from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. Feb. 18. All proceeds go to the Five Points of Life Foundation which educates and raises awareness of the five ways to share life with others through the donation of blood, apheresis, marrow, cord blood, organs and tissue.

Free citizenship classes

The Latina Women's League will offer free citizenship classes from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. every Thursday until March 29 at the Millhopper Library Branch, located at 3145 NW 43rd St. To register, email info@latinawomensleague.org.

Got something going on?

Want to see it in this space? Send an email with "What's Happening" in the subject line to jtavel@alligator.org. To request publication in the next day's newspaper, please submit the event before 5 p.m. Please model your submissions after the above events, and keep them to 150 words or fewer. Improperly formatted "What's Happening" submissions may not appear in the paper. Press releases will not appear in the paper.

NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

Finland's president skates to overwhelming re-election win

Finland's president crushed his competition to win a second six-year term Sunday, scoring a landslide victory in an election that saw the incumbent getting more than five times the support of his closest challenger. With all ballots counted, President Sauli Niinisto had 62.7 percent of the vote, while his leading rival, Pekka



Have an event planned? Add it to the **alligator's** online calendar: alligator.org/calendar

Haavisto of the Greens, had 12.4 percent.

Russian opposition leader arrested amid election protests

Protesters gathered across Russia on Sunday to support opposition leader Alexei Navalny's call to boycott the March presidential election, and Navalny himself was arrested while walking to the Moscow demonstration. Late Sunday night, hours after police detained him, Navalny said on Twitter that he had been released before a trial. Russian news reports cited police earlier as saying he was likely to be charged with a public-order violation for calling unauthorized demonstrations.

In State of Union, Trump to make case that America is back

Seeking to move past the shadow of the Russia investigation, President Donald Trump intends to use his first State of the Union address to cite economic progress under his watch while pushing for bipartisanship with Democrats on issues such as rebuilding roads and bridges. The White House said Sunday that the president would point to a robust economy and low unemployment during his first year and the benefits of a tax overhaul. Aides have said Trump is expected to set aside his more combative tone for one of compromise and bipartisanship.

Cape Town to set up disaster operations HQ for water crisis

South Africa's police and military will help secure water collection sites in drought-stricken Cape Town if authorities must turn off most taps on what they call "Day Zero," a date currently projected to fall in the first half of April, the city said Sunday. Hospitals, key economic and industrial areas and densely populated areas with a higher risk of disease would be exempt from a water cut-off, said municipal authorities.

The Alligator strives to be accurate and clear in its news reports and editorials. If you find an error, please call our newsroom at 352-376-4458 or email editor@alligator.org.

the independent florida
alligator

VOLUME 112 ISSUE 51

ISSN 0889-2423

Not officially associated with the University of Florida
Published by Campus Communications Inc., of Gainesville, Florida

NEWSROOM

352-376-4458 • Fax: 352-376-4467

Editor Melissa Gomez, editor@alligator.org
Managing Editor, Online Caitlin Ostroff, costroff@alligator.org
Managing Editor, Print Jimena Tavel, jtavel@alligator.org
Beats Editor Meryl Kornfield, mkornfield@alligator.org
Freelance Editor Paige Fry, pfry@alligator.org
Investigations Editor Romy Ellenbogen, rellenbogen@alligator.org
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Sports Editor Dylan Dixon, sports@alligator.org
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352-376-4482 • Fax: 352-376-4556

Advertising Director Shaun O'Connor, soconnor@alligator.org
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CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

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Classified Advertising Manager Ellen Light, elight@alligator.org

BUSINESS

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Administrative Assistant Ellen Light, elight@alligator.org
Comptroller Delia Kradolfer, dkradolfer@alligator.org
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ADMINISTRATION

352-376-4446 • Fax: 352-376-4556

General Manager Patricia Carey, tcarey@alligator.org
Assistant General Manager Shaun O'Connor, soconnor@alligator.org
Administrative Assistant Lenora McGowan, lmcgowan@alligator.org
President Emeritus C.E. Barber, cebarber@alligator.org

SYSTEMS

IT System Engineer Kevin Hart

PRODUCTION

Production Manager Christina Cozart, ccoart@alligator.org
Assistant Production Manager Robert Carroll, rcarroll@alligator.org
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The Independent Florida Alligator is a student newspaper serving the University of Florida, published by a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) educational organization, Campus Communications Inc., P.O. Box 14257, Gainesville, Florida, 32604-2257. The Alligator is published Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings, except during holidays and exam periods. During UF summer academic terms The Alligator is published Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Alligator is a member of the Newspaper Association of America, National Newspaper Association, Florida Press Association and Southern University Newspapers.

Subscription Rate: Full Year (All Semesters) \$100

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UF student running for Florida House of Representatives



Shelbie Eakins / Alligator Staff

Shreyas Amol Jethwani, 21, spoke during a UF Senate meeting. He's now running to represent the 21st District, which includes Alachua County.

By Irfan Kovankaya
Alligator Contributing Writer

If elected, a UF student would become the youngest Democrat to be in the Florida House of Representatives.

Shreyas Amol Jethwani, a 21-year-old UF political science junior, filed to run for the 21st District on Jan. 19, according to the Florida Division of Elections. For the primary race in August, he is up against Democratic candidate Jason Haeseler, an associate director of utilities at UF. The winner will then run against Republican incumbent Chuck Clemons in November.

Jethwani has yet to release his platform, but it will focus on four major points: education, economy, health care and the environment, he said. The campaign's kick-off party will be at First Magnitude Brewing Company on Feb. 15.

"We need someone who actually looks at their district and says, 'We have these issues facing us. I

don't care if there's a 'D' or 'R' next to your name,'" Jethwani said. "The problems are here, and we need to work to find solutions."

District 21 consists of western Alachua, Gilchrist and Dixie counties. The district has been Republican since 2012, according to the Florida Division of Elections.

Jethwani said he originally wanted to work on or manage a 2018 political campaign. Since fifth grade, he has been marching, calling representatives and "reminding them that their constituents are human beings."

But after President Donald Trump was elected, he said he needed to do more. He said as a Democrat, he opposes all action taken by the Trump administration. So he decided to run.

Jethwani said he serves as the political director for the Florida College Democrats state board and the UF chapter. He was an organizer for former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign, while also volunteering for a

dozen other campaigns and causes. Despite his progressive values, Jethwani said it's important to reach across the aisle.

"It's not about being anti-establishment," he said. "It's about changing the establishment. Forcing the establishment to recognize the will of the people."

Marcie Stefan, Jethwani's campaign manager, said Jethwani has an ability to communicate with people and reach across the aisle.

"You're going to be seeing a lot of people running for the first time, inspired by the results of the election, especially people that are considered minorities," the 38-year-old said.

Jethwani said he knows his age may be an issue for many but after years of lobbying and organizing, he's confident in his abilities.

"I'm tired of waiting for someone else to run," he said. "I'm tired of waiting for someone else to champion the issues that I want to champion."



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Vietnamese students celebrate the New Year through dance, skits

By **Hannah Maggiore**
Alligator Contributing Writer

In traditional bright-colored dresses, about 20 Vietnamese students twirled umbrellas and spun bamboo hats Saturday night to celebrate their culture.

The Vietnamese Student Organization hosted their annual cultural show, “Tet,” or Vietnamese New Year, at the Reitz Union Grand Ballroom. About 450 people attended to see historical skits, colorful fans and Vietnamese pop music, marking the start of a new year.

“Tet” is Vietnam’s most important holiday and marks the beginning of spring and the lunar new year, said Kim Vo, VSO’s internal vice president. The UF organization has been putting on celebrations for the holiday for more than 40 years.

“Every year’s show is different, and we want to showcase our culture,” said Vo, a UF health science junior.

This year’s theme was “EmBARK on a New Year,” celebrating the zodiac’s Year of the Dog, the 20-year-old said.

Performances included various dances from the organization’s traditional and modern dance groups and alpha Kappa Delta Phi. Different skits discussed how the holiday originated, including the importance of rice in Vietnamese culture.

Guests ate cultural food and children received “li xi,” or lucky money, which brings good fortune.

Jacqueline Egelfeld, a 19-year-old UF health science freshman, said she finds Vietnamese culture fascinating and has learned the basics of the language. She also went to the celebration to support a friend who was performing.

“Even though my friend is in it, I’m excited to see (the modern dance), it shows the culture in a unique way,” Egelfeld said.



Alexandria Slupecki / Alligator

The Vietnamese Student Organization’s traditional dance group waved their fans for their performance on Saturday night for the organization’s “Tet” celebration, or the Vietnamese New Year. They also performed with umbrellas and bamboo hats as part of the holiday tradition.

UPD: Seven others charged in UF parking fraud ring

THIS BRINGS THE NUMBER UP TO AT LEAST 28 PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH THE FRAUD.

By **Robert Lewis**
Alligator Staff Writer

Seven additional people have been charged as part of a parking fraud ring that led to an arrest of a UF Transportation and Parking Services employee in March.

Cierra Lerosa Moore, 30; Theodore Nathaniel Johnson Jr., 40; Robert Lee Thomas, 35; Vonketrick Antoine Walker, 20; Sharde Kiara Talley, 27; Lakedrian Brianna Ikeyal Crawford, 24, and John Glenn Goston, 40, were all charged between Jan. 19 and Tuesday with grand theft and fraud, according to court records.

The arrests were in connection to 36-year-old Tiffany Nichole Robinson, a former UF Transportation employee, who was arrested by University Police for writing 25 fraudulent

checks worth a total of \$8,401.75, according to Alligator archives.

It was part of her job to issue refunds for returned parking decals and disputed fines, according to Alligator archives.



Robinson

In July, UPD discovered Robinson had written thousands of fraudulent checks and created 33 fake parking vendor accounts, which she used to issue the checks for returned parking decals and disputed parking citations that didn’t occur, according to Alligator archives.

At that time, UPD also determined two other individuals, Shabree Harden and Herschel Walker, helped Robinson cash the fraudulent checks at different locations, including three different Gainesville Publix stores and a Chevron Stop and Shop in Hawthorne, according to Alligator archives. Harden told police she cashed 23 fraudulent

checks Robinson and Walker gave her and returned the cash to Robinson.

Before the seven recent charges, 18 other people were charged with grand theft in connection with Robinson’s fraud case, likely cashing checks Robinson created as Harden and Herschel Walker had.

The following were charged with grand theft greater than \$300 but less than \$5,000:

-Elizabeth Maureen Terry, 19
-Kimberly Diana James, 26

The following were charged with grand theft greater than \$5,000 but less than \$10,000:

-Kenneth Lawrren Mccray, 32
-Diamond Patricia Gillum, 21
-Cristina Emery Jenkins, 24
-Alice Peterson Jackson, 63
-Donna May Webber, 41
-Ivid Mary Ortiz, 25

The following were charged with grand theft greater than \$10,000 but less than \$20,000:

-Derri Dometric Dancy, 44

-Reginald Denral Richardson, 30

-Lashonda Katrece Colson, 44

-Cristina Emery Jenkins, 24

-Tara Lorraine Donley, 46

-Kanacialal Nashay Morris, 37

-Juilliard Lanier Roberts Jr., 42

-Harris Jones III, 39

-Robert Jermaine Davis, 44

-Montrell Leonard Bryant, 24

-Antonio Eugene Patterson Jr., 27

In the recent batch of arrests, Moore, Johnson Jr. and Thomas face grand theft between \$10,000 and \$20,000 and fraud charges. Vonketrick Walker, Talley and Crawford were each charged with grand theft between \$5,000 and \$10,000 and fraud. Goston was charged with grand theft between \$300 and \$5,000 and fraud.

Including the seven newly charged co-defendants, 28 total have been tied to Robinson’s alleged fraud.

@Lewis_Robert
rlewis@alligator.org

Florida offers felons clemency

FELON, from pg. 1

ment, gathering a total of 806,681 verified signatures, according to the Division of Elections website. The organization collected 19,981 verified signatures from Alachua County.

“Being black and being a felon, you get this negative stereotype,” Polk said. “There was nothing in Florida besides the grassroots volunteers that would make me feel comfortable enough.”

Florida is one of four states — including Virginia, Kentucky and Iowa — to permanently bar former felons from voting. More than 6 million Americans are disenfranchised because of past incarcerations, according to a report by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University. A quarter of them live in Florida.

Florida offers felons clemency, or the process of petitioning the governor to restore civil rights. However, restoration is

not guaranteed.

Desmond Meade, the president of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition and ex-felon, was unable to vote for his wife when she ran for office in 2016. Since founding the voting restoration movement, he has spoken to the United Nations and U.S. Congress advocating against disenfranchisement. Meade spoke at Pugh Hall in November, according to Alligator archives.

Julie Thaler, a lead organizer in the Say Yes to 2nd Chances petitioning campaign, said the group’s next challenge is making sure amendment supporters are registered to vote in November. The initiative is a nonpartisan issue, Thaler said. She attributes the petition’s success to its grassroots approach to activism.

“It’s not about politics. It’s about human rights,” she said. “It’s about forgiveness.”

@AmandaNicRosa
arosa@alligator.org

Her ‘viral count’ is undetectable

HIV, from pg. 1

treatment, her viral load — the number of copies of the HIV virus in her blood — dropped from 56,000 to 40.

In people with HIV, copies of the virus attack T cells and multiply, Dr. Janelle said. Health providers measure the viral count to monitor the disease. The viral count of an undetectable patient, such as Grobman’s, is fewer than 50.

HIV patients whose disease is undetectable have a lower risk of passing the disease to someone else, including during childbirth, as long as their viral count doesn’t increase.

• • •

Grobman is now 23, and the disease isn’t as scary anymore. Instead, it’s become her secret weapon.

She uses the disease as a “character detector,” she said.

People make assumptions, and only a few have stuck around after she tells them she’s HIV positive. Although the virus is not transmitted through skin-to-skin contact, drinking from the same glass or even kissing, Grobman said some

people don’t understand that and avoid her.

However, it helps her keep only the people who truly care about her close.

Over the years, she’s grown less reserved about the virus, she said, especially when it comes to romantic relationships.

Josh Morales, Grobman’s current boyfriend, met Grobman through Tinder in December. When they began talking, she was very upfront about the disease, Morales said.

“The main thing in situations like this is just to talk about it, have a conversation,” Morales, 23, said.

Morales admitted he was a bit scared in the beginning, but as soon as he researched HIV and saw she was taking the necessary precautions to take care of herself, he became more comfortable with it.

The disease isn’t a burden so much as a part of Grobman that she embraces, she said.

“You got to love (the disease), if you love me,” she said. “It’s not going away. Knock on wood, I pray I get cured, but if I don’t, that’s something that we’re going to be dealing with together.”

@_ElohEl
enasby@alligator.org

GPD: Woman hits, screams at and spits on police

SHE WAS STOPPED AFTER ATTEMPTING TO STEAL MORE THAN \$100 IN MERCHANDISE, POLICE SAID.

By Robert Lewis
Alligator Staff Writer

A Gainesville woman tried to steal merchandise from a Walmart on Friday morning and hit, screamed and spat at employees and police who tried to stop her, Gainesville Police said.



Redd

A Walmart employee stopped Redd and tried to bring her back into the store.

Keiarra Lanae Redd, 18, pretended to scan 19 items worth \$132.71 at a self-checkout aisle in Walmart, located at 5700 NW 23rd St., and walked out of the store at about 10 a.m., according to an arrest report. A Walmart employee

"I don't have time for this," Redd said, according to the report, before shoving the employee.

Police officers helped bring Redd back into the store, but she tried to leave again, twisting away from an officer and yelling "don't touch me," according to the report.

Redd called an officer who put her in handcuffs a "racist a-- b---," police said.

She hit another officer, leaving a bruise on the left side of the officer's face, according to the report.

Eventually, Redd stopped fighting and began screaming in the face of police, slinging spit onto the eyelids and cheeks of police officers, according to the report.

She was charged with petty theft, resisting an officer without violence, simple battery and battery on a police officer. She was taken to the Alachua County Jail, where she remains, as of press time, in lieu of a \$40,000 bond.

@Lewis_Robert
rlewis@alligator.org

ACSO: Woman pushed her way into a closing Publix

POLICE SAY SHE DRAGGED AN EMPLOYEE AND DESTROYED MERCHANDISE.

By Robert Lewis
Alligator Staff Writer

A Newberry woman shoved her way into a closed Publix on Friday night and dragged an employee by their apron through the store, Alachua County Sheriff's Office said.



Farnsworth

The store had already closed, but she pushed employees out of her way to get inside, according to the

Janine Lynn Farnsworth, 55, went into a Publix, located at 14130 W. Newberry Road, as an employee let the last customer out at about 10 p.m., according to an arrest report. The employee told her

report.

Farnsworth then tried to knee a Publix employee in the crotch, but missed, police said. She grabbed another employee by the apron and used it to drag him across the store, according to the report.

Farnsworth ran up and down the aisles destroying about \$200 worth of products, police said.

When police arrived, she tried kicking and hitting them as they tried to arrest her, according to the report.

Farnsworth told police she went into the store and broke products but did not know why, according to the report.

She was arrested on charges of burglary with battery, attempted battery, battery, criminal mischief and two counts of resisting arrest with violence. Farnsworth was taken to the Alachua County Jail where she remains, as of press time, in lieu of an \$18,000 bond.

@Lewis_Robert
rlewis@alligator.org

Students begin interviewing for Student Government positions

By Christina Morales
Alligator Staff Writer

For his first time running for a Student Government Senate seat, Michael McAllister's chose to interview with the new Challenge Party.

McAllister, a UF computer engineering freshman, was the only student who interviewed with the party Sunday.

He said he considered running with Inspire, but when Challenge started last Friday, he saw a group of leaders who wanted to

make Student Government more diverse and acceptable.

"Seeing Janae's courage to speak out and voice the truth about Student Government knowing all the backlash she'd receive, it showed me she was really committed to improving the lives of students and that really made me want to slate with Challenge," the 18-year-old said.

On the first day where students could interview with SG parties for Senate seats representing UF's colleges, 41 students interviewed, Erica Baker, the supervisor of

elections, wrote in an email. One student interviewed with Challenge Party, eight students interviewed with Impact Party and 32 students interviewed with Inspire Party. No independent students registered.

In Fall 2017, 139 students interviewed on the first day, with 96 students interviewing with Impact Party and 43 students interviewing with Inspire Party, according to Alligator archives.

In Spring 2017, about 45 students interviewed on the first day, all with Impact Party, ac-

ording to Alligator archives.

After transferring from Valencia College last semester, Aanchel Shah, a UF political science junior who is running for a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences seat with Inspire Party, said she wants to advocate for transfer students.

"I feel like transfer students are often neglected by the campus as a whole," the 21-year-old said. "People that are in Senate tend to be traditional four-year students, so it's easy to look over experiences that don't affect them."

Andrea Rangel, a UF nursing

sophomore and a current Impact freshman senator, said she's looking to be a part of Senate again by running for a sophomore seat.

Rangel, 19, said she's running with the party again because she enjoyed her past term.

"I feel that there's so much tangible change that could be done with Impact," she said. "I want to move forward and see what we could really bring this semester."

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Editorial

'I got fake people showin' fake love to me,' and it's worse than you think

When we think of identity theft, we often consider drained bank accounts and staggering credit scores. We think of it as a crime committed for direct and immediate financial gain, not for perceived popularity. But, similarly to what it has done to most aspects of society, social media is changing the standards of identity theft.

On Saturday, The New York Times published an article entitled "The Follower Factory," a feature story focused on social media's so-called "black market," where companies sell fake followers. These fake profiles often draw information from real ones, resulting in what many consider to be identity theft.

The article cites the specific example of a Minnesota teenager named Jessica Rychly. Nearly all aspects of Rychly's identity, the one available to the public through her social media accounts, were used to bring a fake profile to life.

The account would publish tweets in languages she did not speak or understand, and would often interact with and retweet content from pornography accounts. Her story, unfortunately, is not unique.

According to research from the University of Southern California and Indiana University, it's possible 48 million — or about 15 percent — of Twitter's total reported active users are automated accounts designed to simulate real people. Furthermore, the Times reported at least 55,000 of the accounts use personal details of real Twitter users, including minors.

Despite most social media websites prohibiting purchasing followers, a number of companies exist solely for that reason. Websites such as Devumi openly sell followers to a wealth of high-profile individuals such as television stars, professional athletes, TED speakers and pastors. Websites like Devumi function because, as of right now, no law prohibits their actions. The only reason why people wouldn't buy and sell fake followers is if they had a strong moral conscience. And we all know, for the most part, much of the world is seriously lacking in that department.

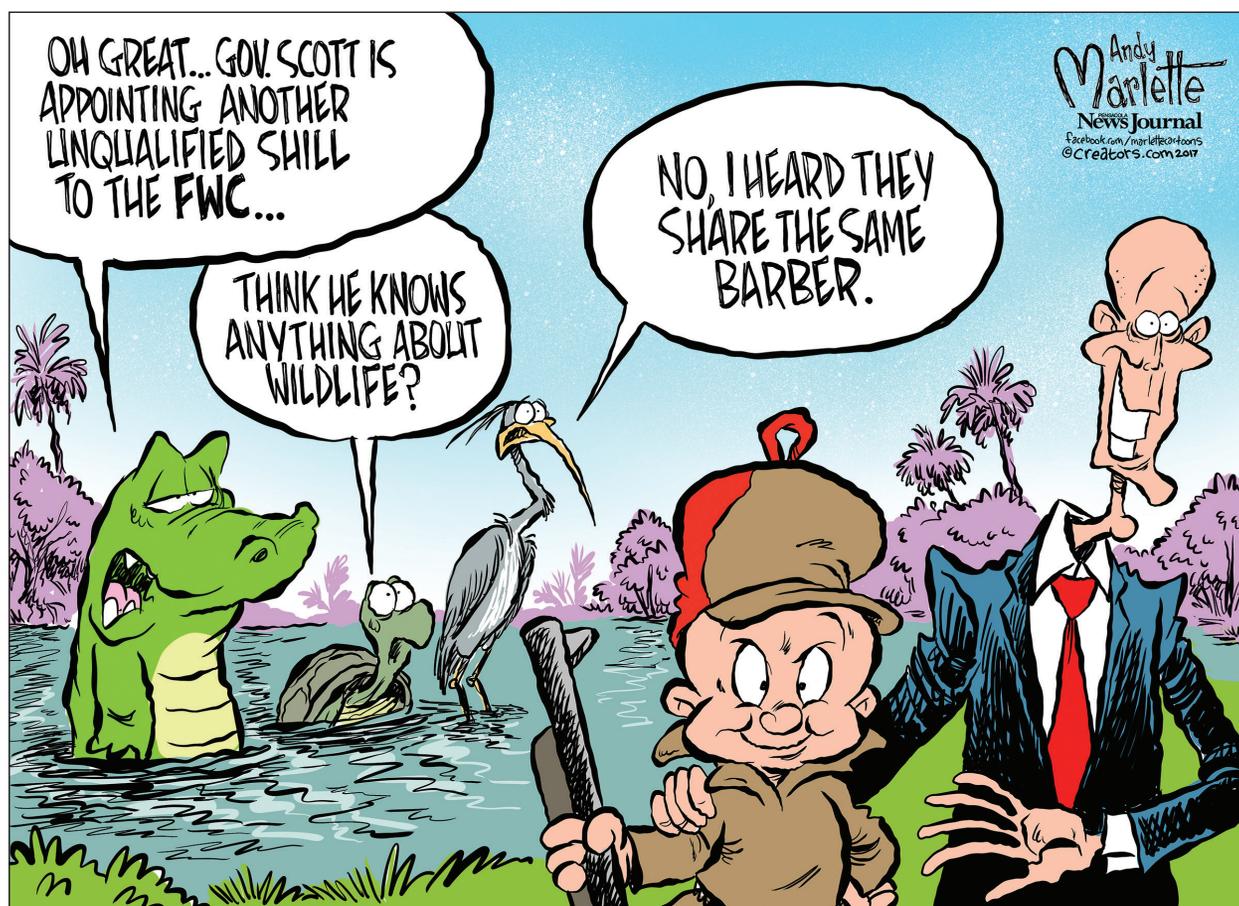
Companies like Devumi don't stop at the seemingly innocent act of increasing the follow-to-follower ratio. According to the Times, these fake followers can also act as "phantom foot soldiers in political battles." In other words, the aggressive political battle you saw between your aunt and a realistic stranger could have been a throw down between her and a computer, meant to stir up and control political conversations.

The world needs to start paying attention to these fake accounts. With an ever-increasing focus on social media presence, a social media identity can be just as crucial as a real identity. College admissions officers or potential employers could find your name attached to outrageous political posts or wildly inappropriate pornography. No matter how clean you try to keep your social media accounts, someone else could be sabotaging you without you even knowing about it.

We can only hope the government takes action against this growing epidemic soon enough, allowing for legal action to be taken against those who steal social identities. Until then, however, we urge you all to consider the repercussions of purchasing fake friends. It's more than an extra like; it's someone's identity. It's someone's life. It's 2018, and it's time we start taking social identity theft as seriously as we take all other forms of identity theft.

Melissa Gomez EDITOR
Abby Miller OPINIONS EDITOR
Caitlin Ostroff MANAGING EDITOR, ONLINE
Jimena Tavel MANAGING EDITOR, PRINT

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Column

Menstrual products should available campus-wide

Imagine this: It's about noon, and you've been feeling awful all day. No need to worry though — this happens to you every few weeks. You're in pain, you're tired and you're experiencing inexplicable mood swings paired with irritability. You want so badly to curl up in a ball in your bed and lie there for the rest of the day. But you can't.

This happens to you every month, yet society still doesn't accept this as an excuse for missing school or work. You go to the bathroom because the one thing that prevents this from completely taking over your life is full. You have to change it. But, you realize you didn't bring an extra one. What do you do now? Great question. I'm so glad you asked.

For any of you who haven't picked up on what I'm talking about yet, I'm talking about periods. Believe me, I know you want to read about this as much as I want to write about it. But it's time we give it the attention it deserves.

A campaign called Gators Matter, Period, is a coalition of UF students and community members fighting for free menstrual hygiene products on campus. Maybe you've seen a Change.org petition circulating throughout social media. But you probably didn't hear a lot of conversation about it.

In recent weeks, however, periods have been on everyone's minds and social media feeds. The leaders of this coalition have been tirelessly attempting to get free menstrual products on UF's campus. Initially, a Student Government committee struck down the motion, stating only half the student population would benefit from it.

Since the initial rejection, SG gave students a glimmer of hope. It announced products would be available in the GatorWell office and possibly at the Field and Fork Pantry starting in February. Supporters of the movement are far from satisfied, but it's a step in the right direction. And I agree. It's not enough. What message are we sending women with this partial solution? Definitely not that we respect them or their needs.

Being respected and valued is an important part of mental health. It is incredibly difficult to thrive and reach



Taylor Cavaliere

opinions@alligator.org

your full potential while feeling as though your needs are unimportant. It's enough stress having to deal with the actual physical and psychological effects of periods. We shouldn't also have to worry about what to do if we don't have a pad or tampon. We certainly shouldn't have to fight this hard just to have basic needs met.

I don't mean to devalue men here. I understand men know periods exist, and many support this movement. In fact, some of the biggest driving forces for this movement were men. But I think in general, most men don't know as much

about menstruation as they think they do. It happens every month, right? It's not a big deal.

Well, not exactly. According to the website for the Office on Women's Health within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 75 percent of women with regular period cycles report unpleasant physical or psychological symptoms before their period. That means in addition to the unpleasant physical changes, many of our brains change. Women can experience depression, anxiety, anger, irritability, sensitivity to rejection, feeling of being overwhelmed and social withdrawal. This is even if we have access to products and feel understood by those around us.

Guys, we don't want to make you uncomfortable, but periods aren't a comfortable thing for anyone. A lot of times, we don't even know when it's going to come. We shouldn't have to feel ashamed or worried about what to do if we forget to pack a tampon and we get a surprise visit from our "Aunt Flo."

Periods are a natural part of life and womanhood. Mental health can be negatively impacted by the stress of not having products and having to improvise. Let us talk about it, and let us have products. It will help you, too. And even if it weren't, the fact that someone else is being helped should be enough.

Taylor Cavaliere is a UF journalism and psychology junior. Her column focuses on mental health.

The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the Alligator.

Column

One approach to climate change: educating our nation's youth

Last Thursday, the world got just a little bit closer to an impending environmental and nuclear apocalypse. The Doomsday Clock advanced by 30 seconds, bringing us just two minutes to midnight.

What is the Doomsday Clock, you ask? Well, in 1947, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, which is a monthly academic journal based in Chicago, debuted the clock on its cover as a symbol — and a warning — of incoming danger from nuclear tension and other international issues around the globe.

The clock is meant to urge world leaders and the public to recognize these risks (and hopefully act on them.) In the past decade or so, the Doomsday Clock has primarily responded to technological advancements, weapon arsenals and, perhaps most telling, climate change.

We are now the closest to midnight we have been since 1953 during the Cold War, and the scientists behind the clock have spoken quite candidly about why that is.

"The failure of world leaders to address the largest threats to humanity's future is lamentable," the Bulletin website reads. "(Citizens) can demand action to reduce the existential threat of nuclear war and unchecked climate change."

But herein lies the problem. If one of the Bulletin's biggest pieces of advice is that members of the public step up and ask for change when it comes to the major world issue of climate change, we need those members of the public to actually want it. In other words: Citizens need to know about climate change, understand it and accept it as scientifically accurate. They must feel so strongly about it that they actually want to stop it.

To the cynic (or maybe just the realist), this already sounds like a daunting task. In the U.S., we feel surprised when even close to 60 percent of the American electorate participates in something as straightforward as bubbling in a choice for president. At every step of the way, politicians gerrymander districts, disenfranchise voters and make it harder for even the most diligent of citizens to acquire objective, relevant information



Mia Gettenberg
opinions@alligator.org

about political issues. What are we supposed to do about climate change, then, if we are to push our world leaders to take action?

I think at least some of the solution rests in the way we educate our youth, from kindergarten through high school and beyond. I recognize I place a lot of significance on public education and children in both my columns and conversations, but it's just what makes sense. The things we learn in our earliest years of education help shape our priorities, perspectives and biases as we get older.

Think of your own experiences in school. How did you learn about American history? How were you taught sexual education? How did those subjects become important — or not so important — in the way you now see your peers, your family, your world?

Now think about your education in science. Was climate change ever emphasized? If so, great. Maybe it went by the name of "global warming" or "pollution." But I doubt most people's elementary-, middle- or high-school educations truly underscored the importance and dangers of climate change. This knowledge certainly wasn't fully covered, much less prioritized, in the education of older generations — and look where that's gotten us.

So maybe it's time for a change. If we want somebody to step up and demand change on behalf of a damaged world environment, we need to emphasize it in our educational system. We need kids, teens and college students to learn about soil erosion, saltwater intrusion and biodiversity. We need the public to care not just about their recycling bins, but also the broader implications of the fossil fuel industry.

When our politicians speak, listen. Then, with your pens, your ballots, your social media, your phones — politely tell them to shut up and listen to you.

Mia Gettenberg is a UF criminology and philosophy senior. Her column focuses on education.

Guest Column

The only free speech zone in Florida ought to be the state of Florida

Welcome to the U.S., otherwise known as the world's largest free speech zone.

Unfortunately, too many college administrators don't see it that way.

On campuses across Florida and the rest of the nation, people in charge of higher education have established euphemistically named "free speech zones" that limit the places where students can hold peaceful demonstrations, distribute literature or give speeches to passersby. The clear implication: The rest of the campus is not open to free speech.

They rationalize these restrictions by claiming they are for the safety and security of students. In reality, they are an abasement of everything a university education is supposed to be about.

College students do not need to be protected from ideas with which they disagree. A primary function of the university is to expose students to such ideas, whether they come from professors, fellow students or guest speakers. From this exposure, students learn to implement critical thinking skills to properly assist them in their decision-making.

State Rep. Bob Rommel, of Naples, has introduced legislation to help make sure the state's public universities live up to that standard. A companion bill in the Senate was introduced by state Sen. Dennis Baxley, of Ocala.

The Campus Free Expression Act would bar state schools from setting aside areas that restrict students from exercising their constitutionally-protected First Amendment rights.

"To me, it's just shocking that in the United States of America, we actually need a bill to protect freedom of speech," Rommel told the Tallahassee Democrat.

It may be shocking, but it's true.

A survey by the Brookings Institution, a nonprofit public policy organization based in Washington D.C., found a majority of college students believe it is acceptable for a group of students to "loudly and repeatedly shout" to prevent a speaker from being heard. Nearly 20 percent of students said it was acceptable to

use "violence to prevent the speaker from speaking."

In the face of such shout downs and violence, there has been a backlash against the suppression of speech on college campuses, and that is reflected in the numbers. Fewer schools have free speech zones today than did just a few years ago. That's a positive trend.

But eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. We need to guarantee that in case the pendulum swings back in the direction of those who would shout down their political opponents, the law will be there to deal with them.

While most of the recent cases have involved left-wing students (and sometimes administrators and faculty) attempting to silence conservative speakers, over the last decade or so this has been a problem that knows no ideological boundary.

In 2006, the assembly rights of University of Central Florida students were restricted when the radical left-wing Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was barred from holding a protest under the school's "free speech zone" policy. In a more recent case that received national attention, white supremacist Richard Spencer was shouted down by hecklers at UF.

Neither the reincarnated SDS nor the risible Spencer are going to win many hearts and minds. But even if they were, the First Amendment is content neutral. Hate speech, whether from left or right, is protected speech. It should be combated not with truncheons or a heckler's veto, but with more speech, with better ideas, with well-articulated argument.

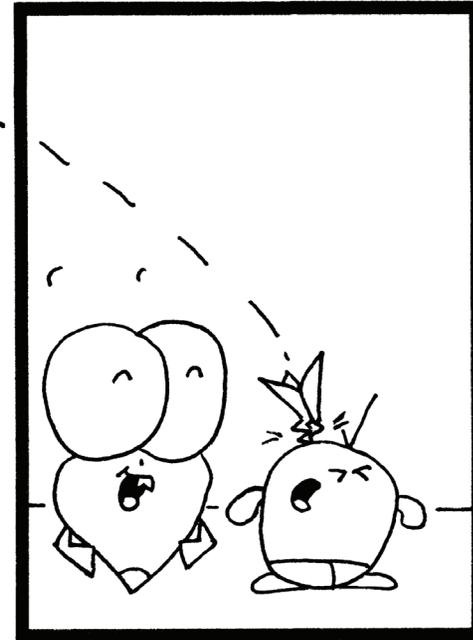
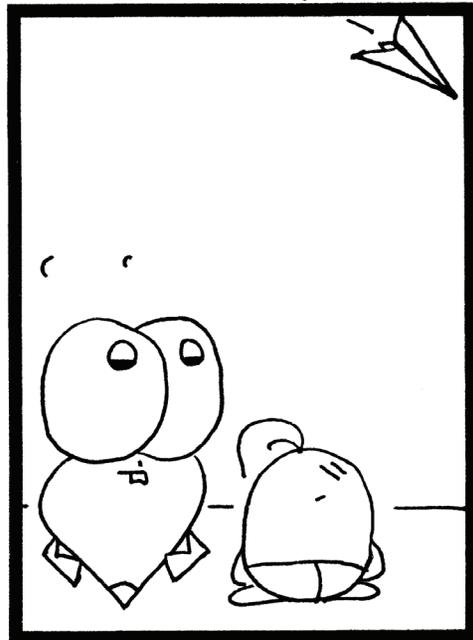
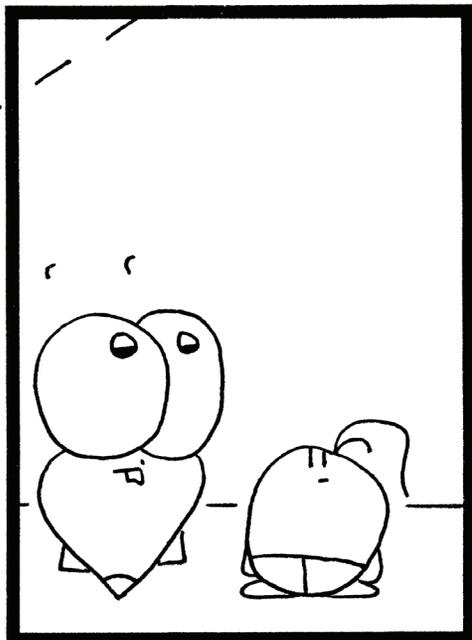
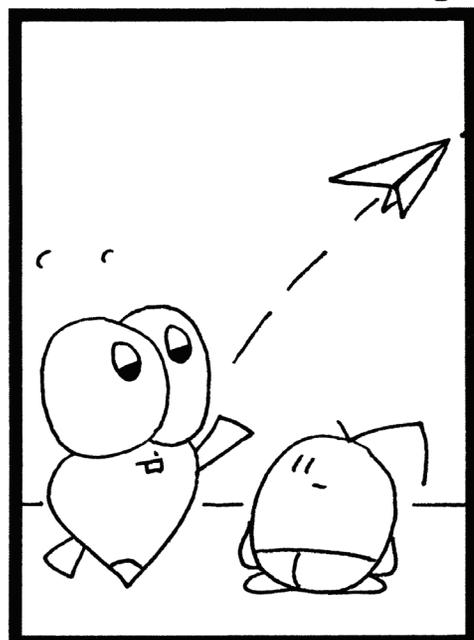
Those who resort to violence and shout downs are simply demonstrating they do not have much confidence in their ideas.

Administrators who impose free speech zones are demonstrating they do not have much confidence in their students.

We must show we are willing to defend the speech of all citizens, including students. Free speech zones have no place on college campuses.

Demetrius Minor is the Florida coalitions director for Generation Opportunity.

Lifeless Joey



By Michael Smith

Dressed as pirates, people protested Yoho financial donors



Shelbie Eakins / Alligator Staff

Lee Malis, 58, strums his guitar and sings along with other protesters on Friday during the pirate protest against Rep. Ted Yoho. Malis wrote a pirate-themed song specifically for the protest.

By Meryl Kornfield

Alligator Staff Writer

With a flourish of a sword made of tin foil and cardboard, 55-year-old Paula Pope challenged every driver who passed the Southwest 34th Street sidewalk she was standing on. “Arg, are you informed?”

The two signs Pope, a protester, was holding — “Vote Ted Yoho out!!” and “‘freedom caucus’...my arse” — wasn’t what grabbed the eye of the 4:30 p.m. Friday commuters.

It was the pirate’s outfit she described as “clothes I should have donated to Goodwill years ago.”

About 40 people, dressed in their best impression of pirates, stood outside the offices of Crime Prevention

Security Systems, located at 4701 SW 34th St., holding signs and singing songs.

“We tax the poor to feed the rich and promise you great jobs/ You silly fools, that’s not the rules/ You can eat the slop of our hogs! Hey yo ho yo ho a pirate’s life for me,” the group, organized by Alachua County Labor Coalition, sang.

The labor coalition said Rep. Ted Yoho is prioritizing his donors over his constituents. Security company owners John A. Pastore Jr. and Randi Elrad spent \$10,000 on Yoho’s campaigns since he was first elected, making them one of the largest contributors in Alachua County, lead organizer Jeremiah Tattersall said.

He said the protesters want Yoho to participate in more in-person

town halls, instead of town halls over the phone. Tattersall said the tele-town halls are curated because only certain people are invited and only some can ask questions. He said town halls are not a representation of citizens’ real issues. Yoho’s last in-person town hall was in April, according to Alligator archives.

“We are here to demand through his largest contributors, because he listens to them, another town hall,” Tattersall said.

Yoho’s office did not respond to the Alligator’s request for comment.

Protesters want the same opportunity to be heard by Yoho as his donors, said Shelia Payne, a ACLC staff member.

Payne said she works for the Veterans for Peace organization and

said the group has never met with Yoho on military issues. She said she has tried to contact Yoho by emailing, calling and visiting his office continuously without much success for eight years.

“It’s frustration,” Payne said. “It’s not being heard and not being represented.”

The labor coalition organized another protest at a company owned by Yoho supporters, Exactech, in July 2017.

Crime Prevention Security Systems sent a cease and desist letter to protest organizers Jan. 17. Bobby McAfee, the company’s marketing director, wrote in an email that the company expects the protest will be peaceful and said the group had the “right to have fun and play dress-

up.” He did not comment on the letter.

An hour and a half after the protest began, as the sprinklers went off in front of Crime Prevention Security Systems, Tattersall addressed the protesters. He told the group they would organize more protests against Yoho’s financial contributors.

“We are here to highlight how broken our democratic system is in which contributors like the co-owners of Crime Prevention Security Systems have access while us, the skallywag landwellers here, don’t,” Tattersall said. “Yoho, he’s a product of this broken democratic system.”

@merylkornfield
mkornfield@alligator.org

Left: Garrett Quinlivan, 76, plays his drum at the Rep. Ted Yoho Pirate Protest on Friday evening, which was organized by the Alachua County Labor Coalition. Quinlivan said he attended the protest to respond to John A. Pastore Jr. and Randi Elrad, co-owners of Crime Prevention Security Systems, donating money to Yoho.

Far Right: “The fact that Ted Yoho represents a progressive town like ours I find just very backwards,” explained Joe Courter, a 67-year-old Gainesville resident. Courter held his sign at the protest on Friday evening outside of Crime Prevention Security Systems on Southwest 34th Street.



A weekend of knights: Hoggetowne Medieval Faire starts



Steph Strickland / Alligator Staff

Left: Jousting knights, dragons and royalty were featured throughout the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire.

Bottom Right: Kai Hartless poses with his newly-purchased wooden sword at the 32nd Annual Hoggetowne Medieval Faire at the Alachua County Fairgrounds. The faire will reopen on Feb. 2.

Bottom Left: Two men play the fiddle and mandora at the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire on Saturday afternoon. The faire also featured countless other musical performers sharing pieces that reflected



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REDUCE FOOD WASTE

UF professor to be recognized for invention in April

He first thought of the idea in 2002

By **Stephanie Gonzalez**
Alligator Contributing Writer

A UF professor is being nationally honored for creating a sharkskin-based technology that will help stop bacteria from growing on ships and breathing tubes.



Brennan

Fellow in the National Academy of Inventors in Washington, D.C., on April 5. His inventions led him to start his company Sharklet Technologies, which is funded by the U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Research, he said.

"I just feel honored and extremely surprised," Brennan said. "Never would've guessed it."

Brennan said he used sharkskin-inspired patterns to create a microscopic technology that is put on a surface, such as silicon or copper. The pattern creates a barrier that makes bacteria growth difficult.

Anthony B. Brennan, a UF materials science and engineering professor, will be inducted as a 2017

He first thought of the idea in 2002 when he saw a submarine he thought looked like a whale, Brennan said. He then started looking at marine animals until he came across nursery sharks.

He found that while petting a shark, from nose to tail, the skin is smooth, but going backward, it's rough because of the skin pattern.

The 66-year-old professor said he tried to compare the layered diamond-shaped sharkskin to a mathematical model and thought about how it could be applied to a ship.

When he was able to develop the technology, it was the first time green algae didn't grow on a surface without toxins, he said.

Zahara Jaffer, 46, an assistant director at the UF Office of Technology and Licensing, nominated Brennan for the fellowship, Brennan said.

Jaffer said many people make significant discoveries, but Brennan was able to form his discovery into a tangible thing that can help society.

"He's just one of those people that doesn't stop," she said.

Poop now on display at the Florida Museum of Natural History

By **Wyatt Schreiber**
Alligator Contributing Writer

Cheyenne Copenhaver, 12, pressed her face and small hands against the glass case to get a good look at what was inside. Poop.

"It doesn't smell like poop," she said.

Copenhaver was one of about 150 people who came to the Florida Museum of Natural History's preview Thursday evening for a new exhibit, "The Scoop on Poop! The Science of What Animals Leave Behind." The exhibit features Guinness World Record holder George Frandsen's collection of coprolite, otherwise known as fossilized feces.

"It's really important to me for people to get to see it and learn about it," Frandsen said.

"No other museum has a display like this."

The fly-swarmed exhibit opened to the general public Saturday and will run through May 6.

Frandsen said he loaned thousands of fossils, with there being about 100 medium-sized ones on display, and countless more tiny fossils in jars. The Guinness Book of World Records counted him as having 1,277 pieces in 2015, but he said he's collected thousands more since.

His largest fossil, named "Precious," is four pounds, millions of years old, most likely came from an ancient crocodile and is on display for visitors.

Akito Kawahara, curator at the museum, said it's an incredible subject — every kid talks about poop and everyone deals with it every day.

"It's amazing," he said. "It's one of the fundamentals of our natural world."

Kawahara gave a presentation during the preview, going into detail about different animals and their



Courtesy to the Alligator

A researcher holds a fossilized dinosaur poop. Visitors to "The Scoop on Poop" exhibit can touch an 80-million-year-old fossilized poop.

many uses for poop.

Based on the crowd's reaction, some favorites included the pygmy sperm whale, which shoots a "poo-nado," a thick cloud of fecal matter, at predators and the dung beetle, which is known for creating and rolling large balls of poop, Kawahara said.

The museum wants to bring in exhibits that have solid science and

big ideas behind them, said Julie Waters, the exhibit coordinator for the museum.

Some animals depend on poop for food, others use it to mark their territory and some use it to lay eggs in, Waters said.

"It's a gross, necessary part of life," she said. "We hope our visitors walk away with appreciation of hidden levels of biodiversity."



Lindsey Crown / Alligator Staff

Eric Topp, a 59-year-old Gainesville resident, volunteers to restore a bike alongside Angelo Sanjurjo, 11, of Gainesville at the Bike Repair Clinic, a cyclist education course, Saturday at the Freewheel Project shop, a nonprofit located at 6185 Main St.

UF students recreate scenes of Women's March in D.C.

MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN THE EVENT.

By **Madison Zizmer**
Alligator Contributing Writer

UF students, all in black, stood in front of a screen.

Behind them played footage from the Women's March on Washington, as they mimicked the protesters' chants and experiences.

More than 100 people came to see the "Voices from the March," a multimedia theatrical experience, Saturday afternoon in the Reitz Union Rion Ballroom. About 10 UF students acted in the play, which was created out of 150 interviews about with people who participated in the 2017 Women's March in Washington, D.C.

Jeffrey Pufahl, the director of the play, said he wanted to show the UF community

what the reality of social justice looks like and allow students to tell their stories of the march through art. UF's College of the Arts donated \$1,500 for the production.

"The students had to dig deep in themselves to find their story and to find what they wanted to say to the world," Pufahl said. "That is a big step."

UF's Samuel Proctor Oral History Program; the Center for Gender, Sexualities and Women's Studies and the Center for Arts in Medicine also supported the play, Pufahl said.

Andy Prescott, a 31-year-old UF master's acting student and actor in the play, said he wanted the audience to learn that talking to people with different perspectives helps a community grow.

"(The theater) gets you talking," he said. "It doesn't matter who you are, what background, just go out and see some bizarre stuff and really just reflect on it."

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GEORGIA 66, FLORIDA 57

Struggling Gators fall again in SEC play to No. 20 Bulldogs

By Morgan McMullen
Sports Writer

As the third quarter's final seconds ticked away, Florida clung to a five-point lead. With Georgia dribbling out the clock for the final shot of the period, UF guard Funda Nakkasoglu and forward Haley Lorenzen double-teamed Georgia's Que Morrison and forced a turnover. Nakkasoglu grabbed the loose ball, raced down the court and banked in a buzzer-beating layup.

However, big games from Nakkasoglu and forward Paulina Hersler weren't enough on Sunday afternoon as the Gators (10-12, 2-7 SEC) fell to No. 21 Georgia 66-57 at the O'Connell Center.

Nakkasoglu picked up right where she left off after Thursday night's loss to No. 2 Mississippi State, where she contributed 19 points on 7-of-13 shooting from the field. Against Georgia, the junior transfer shot 5 of 13 from the field and made 7-of-10 free-throw attempts, finishing the game with 18 points.

Hersler started the afternoon strong, hitting her first three attempts from the field. The 6-foot-3 senior from Sweden tied her season high with 19 points

and grabbed seven rebounds.

After the game, Hersler was a little surprised by her own performance.

"It's something you don't really predict," she said. "You're trying to take it possession by possession. I think the guards did a really, really good job of feeding us in the post."

The Gators normally aren't afraid to shoot from the perimeter, but they took a conservative approach against the Bulldogs with a season-low 16 three-point attempts. They made only two of them.

"They guard you," Florida coach Cameron Newbauer said. "They close out tight. That's what they do. They're a great defensive team. That's their M.O."

Florida came out strong against its SEC foe, quickly jumping out to a 13-6 lead after a Nakkasoglu step-back jumper. Nakkasoglu and Hersler combined for all of UF's 14 first-quarter points.

In the second quarter, the theme turned to defense. The Gators forced Georgia (19-2, 7-1 SEC) into contested shots, with the Bulldogs making just two of their 14 attempts from the field

SEE **WOMEN'S HOOPS**, PAGE 16



Emma Green / Alligator Staff

Florida guard Funda Nakkasoglu's 18 points against Georgia on Sunday weren't enough to propel the Gators to a win over the Bulldogs.

BASEBALL

O'Sullivan: UF "not defending a national championship... It's a different team"

By Ethan Bauer
Sports Writer

Walk by McKethan Stadium this week and listen. Really listen.

Tune out the scooters zooming past and the birds squawking away and the busses humming along, and you'll hear the persistent ping of metal meeting baseball, baseball meeting leather. Yes, in just three weeks, the defending national champion Florida baseball team will make McKethan Stadium home once again with a season-opening series against Siena beginning on Feb. 16. Based on the sounds already surrounding the field, it's clear practice has begun.

But before that series arrives, and before UF mounts a defense of its

first-ever baseball title, and before the Gators send another potential No. 1-overall draft pick out as their Friday night starter, start your season by listening to those bat pings, or those glove pops.

If you do, you may notice that something is different. That the sound is different. That this whole team is different. And how could it not be? No Florida baseball player in the 106-year history of the program has ever laced up his cleats to defend a national title. Plus, nobody on the current team knows what it's like to lose.

Foremost among that group are the sophomores, who won a national championship in their only season at Florida. But even seniors, like team captain JJ Schwarz, have

always advanced to Omaha for the College World Series.

The Gators got bounced in both his freshman and sophomore years, but at least they got that far.

Seniors on last year's team still remembered the humiliation of getting ousted from their own Super Regional with losses to the College of Charleston and North Carolina in 2014. This year's team only has two seniors, and neither have ever known anything but elite baseball in their time at UF.

So how is coach Kevin O'Sullivan prepping a team that has never known failure for the obstacles that could cause it to crumble? In short, by trying to forget about the success.

"The preseason polls don't mean

SEE **BASEBALL**, PAGE 16

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Big moments from Chris Chiozza continuing in 2018

By Jake Dreilinger
Sports Writer

Chris Chiozza dribbled to the top of the key and made a deep jump shot over Baylor's Manu Lecomte, opening Florida's scoring against the Bears on Saturday. On the ensuing possession, Chiozza stole the ball from forward Tristan Clark, sprinted down the court and found teammate Egor Koulechov for a three-pointer in transition.

On the No. 20 Gators' first two possessions of an 81-60 win over Baylor (12-9, 2-6 Big 12) on Saturday at the O'Connell Center, Chiozza's early basket, steal and assist foreshadowed the kind of night he would have. One that included 20

points, six assists and two steals.

"I'm not surprised by anything (Chiozza does) anymore," Koulechov said.

It's hard to be surprised by the performances and moments Chiozza churns out each night. On Saturday, he scored 13 consecutive points for the Gators (15-6, 6-2 SEC) off three three-pointers, a pair of free throws and a jump shot to put UF up 15 with 4:52 left in the first half.

Against Missouri on Jan. 6, Chiozza intercepted a pass with four seconds left in the contest and made a game-winning layup. And against Gonzaga on Nov. 24, he played a season-high 46 minutes while dropping 26 points, 10 assists and eight

SEE **MEN'S HOOPS**, PAGE 16



Former UF football players **Keanu Neal** (left) and **Maurkice Pouncey** (right) participated in the 2018 NFL Pro Bowl on Sunday.

Women's golf team competing at Florida Challenge

The Gators open their spring season today at the Black Diamond Ranch in Lecanto, Florida. The tournament is being hosted by the University of South Florida and features eight total teams, including Miami, UCF, Jacksonville, FIU and Louisville.

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GYMNASTICS

Florida moving on from victory over top-ranked Oklahoma

By Alana Gomez
Sports Writer

In a sold-out O'Connell Center on Friday night, the Florida gymnastics team put on a show for its home crowd. Its efforts didn't go to waste as the No. 5 Gators (3-1, 1-1 SEC) overcame No. 1 Oklahoma 198.150-198.125. In addition to two perfect 10.0s in one night, Florida also took first in three of its four events.

"The team, they fought with a lot of heart, a lot of grit," coach Jenny Rowland said.

Senior Alex McMurtry dominated the night, notching 10.0s against Oklahoma (3-1, 1-0 Big 12) on beam and vault, both the first in the nation this season. Her perfect scores on Friday night made her the first gymnast in UF history to post two 10.0s in the same meet.

She also became the second gymnast in program history to record a 10.0 in all four events over the course of her career, a feat also performed by former Gator Bridget Sloan. McMurtry's performance marked her ninth total 10.0 in her time at Florida, elevating her over Sloan's previous school record of eight.

"I know I'm capable of that 10.0," McMurtry said. "I just had

to trust my gut and go for it."

The meet started off slowly for the Gators, who trailed Oklahoma in each round. A shift in momentum came during the floor routine when senior Kennedy Baker posted a 9.975 and tied Oklahoma's Maggie Nichols for first.

Freshman Alyssa Baumann followed by finishing her floor routine with a 9.925, just enough for Florida to clinch the victory by .025.

"I hadn't really looked at the score, but I knew we needed a good one to anchor it," Baumann said. "I just went out there and did what I could."

UF hosted its first top-ranked team at home on Jan. 12, a night that ended in a 197.250-197.125 loss to then-No. 1 LSU. Coming off their win over Oklahoma, the Gators are trying to not let the victory get to their heads. The team is maintaining a humble attitude as it heads into its next meet on the road against No. 17 Auburn on Friday.

"You get to a point in the season where it's good when there's no surprises," Rowland said. "We may have a bump in the road here and there. We're still learning."

@alanaa_gomez
agomez@alligator.org



Emma Green / Alligator Staff

Florida's Alex McMurtry became the first gymnast in UF history to record multiple 10.0s in one meet. "I just had to trust my gut and go for it," she said.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Gators sweep LA-Monroe behind play of freshmen

By River Wells
Sports Writer

Every competing senior on the Florida women's tennis team won her singles match in a 4-0 rout of Cal State Fullerton on Saturday, leaving UF's freshmen unable to finish their matches. But during Sunday's matchup with Louisiana-Monroe at the Ring Tennis Complex in Gainesville, it was the team's first-year players' turns to close out their opponent.



While senior Josie Kuhlman won the first singles match of the day (6-1, 6-2), it was freshmen Katie Kubicz (6-1, 6-1) and McCartney Kessler (6-3, 6-1) who won the next two matches, leading to another 4-0 sweep for the Gators. The victory earned the team a spot in the ITA Division I Women's National Team Indoor Championships in February.

The doubles portion of the day started out slowly for the Gators, with Louisiana-Monroe taking the lead in all three matchups. However, Florida eventually settled into a groove, and the duo of senior Anna Danilina and freshman Victoria Emma cruised to victory (6-2) in the

first doubles win of the day. Shortly after that, the team of Kuhlman and Kessler closed out its match (6-3), clinching the doubles win.

"It's important to start out well," coach Roland Thornqvist said. "Both days — (Saturday) and (Sunday) — we did not, but we were good enough to play out of those holes."

After the first true spring competition of the year, the freshmen on the team appear to be getting the hang of collegiate play, especially with the aid of their senior teammates.

"When I'm nervous, (Danilina) can call the plays," Emma said regarding her doubles partner. "She really helps me out with nerves, especially this past weekend."

Florida will play its next match on Saturday against Florida State at the USTA National Campus in Orlando. While Emma is excited about the opportunity, she said that a matchup with FSU is no different than any other tennis match.

"A lot of Florida fans think it's a huge rivalry," Emma said. "They aren't in our conference, so they aren't really our rivals. It's just another match and another chance to get better."

@riverhwells
rhwells@alligator.org

MEN'S TENNIS

UF's perfect weekend seals ticket to National Indoor Championships

By Benjamin Brandt
Sports Writer

Junior Alfredo Perez's roar echoed inside the Perry Indoor Facility at the Ring Tennis Complex on Sunday. He'd just turned an awkward serve that bounced off the net from his opponent into an aggressive backhand winner.

The shot kept Perez alive in the first set tiebreaker of a highly competitive match he'd eventually win, 7-6(6), 6-2, over South Florida senior Grayson Goldin.

The Gators dominated the Bulls 4-0 in the final round of the Florida Regional ITA Kick-Off Weekend after also sweeping South Alabama in Saturday's semifinal. With the two wins, Florida will advance to next month's ITA Division I Men's National Team Indoor Championships.

Rain forced the match's singles play to move indoors after UF secured the doubles point with victories at the No. 2 and No. 3 positions.

"The conditions inside are certainly a lot faster," Florida coach Bryan Shelton said. "For our guys, it's really important to strike first."

And for the most part, they did. Perez, sophomore Johannes Ingildsen and freshman Andy Andrade were the only Florida players to compete in the day's singles action due to limited indoor space. All three played with passion and intensity.

"Our energy and competitive spirit are just

really, really good," Shelton said.

Ingildsen improved to 2-0 on the year in singles with a 6-3, 6-3, defeat of junior Alberto Barroso-Campos on the No. 2 singles court.

Following Ingildsen was Perez, who entered Sunday's match looking to improve after disappointing performances on the No. 1 singles court from the week before.

"The match meant a lot to me," Perez said. "I wanted to do my part for the team because I haven't done my part the last couple matches."

Andrade won the fourth and final point for the Gators, marking the second consecutive match clinched by a freshman. After easily winning his first two matches of the dual season, Andrade battled in three sets against USF sophomore Jakub Wojcik. A final score of 6-2, 4-6, 6-3, brought the match to a close and finalized UF's bid to the upcoming national event.

Three dual matches into the season, Shelton remains most impressed by the comradery among this year's team.

"When you see your teammates there for you, pushing and encouraging you, you want to go even deeper," he said.

The Gators will now prepare for Saturday's matchup against Florida State, which will be held at the USTA National Campus in Orlando.

@bhb1227
bbrandt@alligator.org

Schwarz elected to return to Florida

BASEBALL, from pg. 14

anything," he said of the rankings that place the Gators at No. 1. "I know that sounds cliché, (but) everybody feels good about their team right now. I think the biggest thing for us is to be able to turn the page."

Getting players to forget about the defining moment of their baseball careers, if not their lives? That's a hard sell, as O'Sullivan learned during fall ball.

He said he spoke with players extensively about leaving their success in the past and about how those triumphs mean nothing now. Still, he noticed some cockiness creeping in.

He's hoping it disappears by the start of the season.

"We're not defending a national championship," he said. "We've got different players. It's a different team. So I want this team to write their own chapter, their own book."

A good place to start such a book

might be to go over all the holes Florida has to fill after it lost half of its starting lineup and its ace to the MLB Draft.

Starter Alex Faedo? Drafted 18th overall by the Detroit Tigers. Catcher Mike Rivera? Drafted by Cleveland in the sixth round. Shortstop Dalton Guthrie? Drafted by the Phillies in the sixth round. Utility man Christian Hicks? Graduated. Frequent designated hitter Mark Kolosvary? Drafted by the Reds.

One name not on that list, however, is senior — and Florida's first-ever team captain under O'Sullivan — JJ Schwarz.

Schwarz was drafted in the 38th round by the Tampa Bay Rays and elected to return to school. It was assumed at the time that scouts were put off by his desire to finish college. It turns out that wasn't the case. His asking price was just too high after he hit a career-low .259 with a career-worst 56 RBIs in 2017.

"It was definitely something I

didn't expect and kind of really hit me personally," Schwarz said. "I made peace with it, and I think it's the best decision I've made."

O'Sullivan was thrilled to have his star catcher/first baseman back for another year, and Schwarz has already assumed a prominent leadership role by holding teammates accountable for bad body language.

For a team that has never known disappointment, his cautionary tale of a draft slide could be motivation for players to hit harder and pitch better. Or his influence could do little outside of his spot in the lineup. Regardless, like his teammates, he's eager to find out.

"That's a big battle I've been facing," he said of waiting for 2018's first game. "I'm really anxious to start the season and see what this team's made of."

@ebaueri
ebauer@alligator.org



Alligator File Photo

Florida catcher/first baseman JJ Schwarz decided to return to school after being selected in the final three rounds of last year's MLB Draft.

Robinson scored 22 points

WOMEN'S HOOPS, from pg. 14

for five points in the frame.

After a back-and-forth third quarter, Florida took a seven-point lead into the fourth thanks to Nakkasoglu's buzzer-beater.

However, Georgia used a huge performance from junior forward Caliya Robinson to propel itself to 31 fourth-quarter points. Robinson went 5 of 8 from the field and knocked down two clutch free throws to put the game away late. She finished the afternoon with 22 points on 10-of-16 shooting.

"There's a lot of good forwards in this league," Hersler said. "It's just a matter of getting used to it."

The Gators get the week off — having played every Sunday and Thursday since New Year's Eve — before returning to action against Missouri on Feb. 5 in Columbia. Newbauer said the bye week couldn't come at a better time.

"We've been banged up and it's been extended minutes for our starters," Newbauer said. "I know they're very excited just to have a handful of days off this week and recoup, focus on some academics and just get our bodies back to fresh."

@MorganMcMuffin
mcmullen@alligator.org

Chiozza leads conference in assists

MEN'S HOOPS, from pg. 14

rebounds.

"We need Chris to continue being aggressive like that," Florida coach Mike White said.



Chiozza

Chiozza's play isn't anything new for the Gators. The senior has scored double-digit points in 15 of 21 games this season. He also leads the conference in assists per game (6.1) and is second in steals per game (1.9).

Chiozza's contributions to the Gators forced Baylor coach Scott Drew to create a game plan centered around limiting the senior guard's offensive output.

"We tried to take away his passing, and he got us with his scoring," Drew said. "That's where

great players can do more than one thing and hurt you in more than one way."

While his passing ability has been consistent during his time at Florida — he led the Gators in assists in the 2015-16 season and finished second every other year behind Kasey Hill — Chiozza's shooting has significantly improved in his last season as a Gator.

Against Baylor, he showed that he is a threat regardless of what type of game he plays, whether it's getting assists or baskets.

"Great players, you can pick and choose," Drew said. "He's one of the best point guards in the country and everyone will agree on that, but when he's scoring on top of his facilitating, then he just goes to another level."

@DreilingerJake
jdreilinger@alligator.org

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