Conflicting protests converge downtown
About 140 people turn out to support Israel, peace in Gaza conflict

BY CHELSEA KEENAN
Alligator Contributing Writer

The chant “am Israel chi” filled the air as about 100 people marched down University Avenue on Monday.

Their chant, which means, “The nation of Israel lives,” rang out as the rally continued down University Avenue, starting at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium and ending at the Bo Diddley Community Plaza.

Participants waved signs while they walked, which read “We Stand with Israel” and “Israel wants Peace,” only to encounter another protest demanding peace on both sides.

Sandy Baum, a UF English senior, helped organize the march alongside the Lubavitch-Chabad Jewish Student and Community Center.

“I thought, we need to do something now,” she said. “We wanted Gainesville to stand up for Israel.”

Baum said they marched in support for Israel and to stand up for those who were affected by the attacks by Hamas.

UF biological engineering senior Lee Ravid said the attacks hit close to home.

Ravid was born in Israel but has attended UF for the past

SEE PROTEST, PAGE 8

Mayor Hanrahan to make State of the City address

Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan will make her annual State of the City address Wednesday at 8 a.m. in front of the Hippodrome State Theatre.

The speech will give a summary of the city’s growth over the past year and discuss plans for a successful future, according to a City of Gainesville news release.

One of the major issues Mayor Hanrahan will touch on is the receding economy’s effect on Gainesville, said Bob Woods, Gainesville’s communications and marketing director.

With the Florida Legislature making drastic budget cuts, the mayor is anticipating budget shortfalls for the city, he said.

City Manager Russ Blackburn is working on a budget plan and asking different city departments to find programs and services that can be cut in order to relieve budget tension.

This upcoming fiscal year is the third year in a row that the city manager has had to schedule cuts.

A meeting is scheduled next month for Blackburn to present a budget plan to the mayor and the rest of the Gainesville City Commission.

Despite budget problems and the slackening economy, the city has many accomplishments, which Hanrahan will highlight during her speech, Woods said.

“There is still much to be excited about in Gainesville,” he said.
WHAT'S HAPPENING?

2009 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Begins
Tuesday, Jan. 13 at 7 p.m., Reitz Union Grand Ballroom. Join the Black Graduate Student Organization, New Student Programs and ACCENT Speakers Bureau as TV host and author Keith Boykin speaks about "Diversity Without Division — Building an Inclusive Campus."

Gator Disc Golf Club Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m. The group will meet at the Reitz Union food court to discuss upcoming tournaments, club activities and practice rounds. Beginner, intermediate and advanced players are welcome.

"No More Hamas" Student Rally
Thursday, Jan. 15, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. A peaceful demonstration against Hamas on Turlington Plaza.

Peace Corps & the Environment
Thursday, Jan. 15, 6:30 p.m. The Hub, International Center. Returned Peace Corps volunteers will share their experiences. A recruiter will be available to answer questions. Open to all majors. For more information contact peacecorps@ufl.edu.

Spring Rush Begins
Spring rush takes place all week and ends Friday, Jan. 16. More information about the Interfraternity Council and its fraternities can be found at www.greekgator.com.

Like What You See?
Want your event posted in this space? Send an e-mail to kbjornsen@alligator.org with "What's Happening" in the subject line.

"Speaking for Nature" by Michal Meyer
Wednesday, Jan. 14, 11:45 a.m., Turlington 3312. Sponsored by the Center for European Studies as part of the Graduate Student Brown Bag Series. Snacks and sodas will be provided.


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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 send an e-mail to editor@alligator.org.
Inmate clean-up project saves county tax dollars

More than $90,000 has been saved since October 2007.

Jail inmates in Alachua County saved local taxpayers more than $4,000 in December. Instead of hiring companies to provide handiwork services around the county, the inmates worked 340 hours and saved the county $4,450.60.

From January through November, the inmate squads performed 6,038 hours of labor saving a total amount of $59,037.42 in tax dollars for those months, according to a news release from the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office.

Since the inmate projects began in October of 2007, the county has saved a total of $92,056.50. In December the inmates cut trees and brush and removed debris at the Gainesville Regional Airport.

They also painted and cleaned the inmate holding area in the Criminal Justice Courthouse, cleaned the firing ranges and removed debris from the Santa Fe College Institute for Public Safety.

— KATIE EMMETS

Local

UF trounces Florida colleges in specialty plate sales

By Matthew Beaton
Alligator Contributing Writer

UF has another title to add to its heap.

Florida drivers bought 113,562 specialty license plates in 2008, topping sales for any other plate type. UF trounced the other Florida colleges and universities in specialty plate sales. Florida State University finished second in school sales and plate sales. Florida State University was the top seller of specialty plates in 2008, in the Alligator’s Valentine’s Day special section.

“Twenty-five dollars of that is the specialty plate fee which goes to the University of Florida,” said Courtney Heidelberg, deputy director of communications at the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles. Specialty plates are available for an extra $27 at Florida tax collectors’ offices.

“I think our alumni are very loyal to their institution. This is one more way they can show their loyalty.”

Nina Kaharl
Florida Fund spokeswoman

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Meeting dispels myths about adoption process

By FAITH REAVES
Alligator Contributing Writer

When Bobby and Sarah Finn discussed the all-important topic of having children, they decided they wanted to adopt.

To learn more about foster care and adopting, the couple attended the Children’s Home Society’s adoption orientation on Monday night in downtown Gainesville.

There are a lot of children that don’t have a good home and deserve one, Bobby Finn said.

Although Children’s Home Society handles international adoption, private adoption and foster care, the mid-Florida division, which includes Alachua County, only provides foster care adoption services.

Six people attended the meeting led by dependency specialist Amy Mills.

Mills said the orientation is the first step in becoming an adoptive parent. After orientation, families must complete a pre-service training class and participate in a home study before being approved and matched with a child.

Last year, 187 children were adopted in the mid-Florida division.

Jennifer Anchors, an executive director of the mid-Florida division, said that while 150 to 200 children are adopted per year on average, more children are entering the system.

Anchors said the rise is a result of multiple factors, including the economy.

The state covers the expenses, Mills said.

When people are struggling financially and do not properly know how to cope, children are more often abused and neglected, she said.

Mills said she expects the numbers to continue to increase.

Although people may face more financial obstacles, more families are looking to adopt, said Anchors.

She said the growth is due to enhanced public knowledge on adoption and expects the boost to continue. For example, the belief is being dispelled that all forms of adoption are expensive.

Although private and international adoption are costly, Mills said that foster care adoption doesn’t cost anything.

The state covers the expenses, Mills said.
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2009

In final press conference, Bush laments mistakes

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Editorial

Greedy Gators
BCS gear shouldn’t cost us limbs we can’t spare

When you’re a Gator, you can almost always bet on Christmas coming twice a year.

Reaching the pinnacle of the college football world means championship rings for the team, a spectacular new trophy for UF—not to mention a smorgasbord of memorabilia to the delight of loyal fans.

The stores in town? Let’s just say their eyeballs have been replaced with dollar signs for the next couple weeks as hordes of faithful Gators look to upgrade their wardrobes and collect anything and everything from a flag for the car to the ever-popular shot glass.

We think it’s safe to assume if the Gators had ended the season on a more Auburn-esque note, fans wouldn’t exactly be diving under couch pillows for an extra 25 cents to snag a set of championship golf balls.

The Editorial Board supports the local merchants in their efforts to grab a slice of the BCS pie. Heck, don’t be surprised when you see us walking around campus decked out from head to toe in the freshest of championship gear.

All we ask is that the stores in and around Gainesville refrain from exploiting the not-so-deep pockets of The Gator Nation. Sure, we know that you have to “get yours” too, but we caution you to expect a follow-up editorial if word on the street is T-shirt prices have hit 30 bucks a pop.

There’s nothing wrong with padding the bank account a little bit and clearing some inventory—just don’t get greedy and end up taking our wallets for a whirl.

Bye-bye Georige

T he Editorial Board knows we aren’t perfect—look around hard enough and you’re bound to come across some minute error somewhere within our pages. But, unlike the outgoing president, when we admit our faults we would like to think we own up to them. Eight long years and you’re halfway there, George.

If only you could’ve had your suits outfitted with a dry-erase board to constantly update the nation with running list of corrections. We’ll be sure to bring up the idea again the next time a Republican takes office (don’t hold your breath).

But at the very least our pro-peace stance should have encouraged comments from readers. Letters to the editor should not exceed 200 words. Columns should not exceed 450 words. Letters and columns are also welcome. Questions? 351-4458.

Bon voyage, George. Don’t fault us for shedding a tear or two come Tuesday—a but at least we’ll own up to the fact that we’re crying for the other guy.

Opinions

Alligator
www.alligator.org/opinions

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Greek Sparrow missing in Somali seas

W hile Somali gunboats and high-seas kidnappings have once again moved the most visible pirates back out into the open ocean, the piracy of copyrighted information remains one of the main grassroots responses to the flows of data products deemed legitimate by the controlling global corporate structure.

Unlike that burned Lil Wayne CD you play much too loudly in mom’s old sedan, actual pirates are once again disrupting the global supply chain for the first time in a couple hundred years.

Old-school pirates once again dominate the headlines, and thus far 2009 has undoubtedly been the “Year of the Pirate.” This week alone, a $3 million ransom parachuted down to complete the release of the Saudi supertanker Sirius Star and a dead pirate washed ashore with $153,000 in soaked U.S. currency have vividly completed the saga of the most daring and ambitious act of piracy in modern history. These North African pirates represent a clean break from the romanticized buccaneers who parlayed three movies into almost $3 billion in worldwide box-office receipts. The world embraced those scalawags with a loud noise in mom’s old sedan, actual pirates are once again disrupting the global supply chain for the first time in a couple hundred years.

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Real pirates, like their egalitarian cinematic counterparts, still embrace themes of equality and freedom—even those paid to them is always split up evenly amongst the whole crew. That sopping wet money in that pocket of our unfortunate drownered pirate is currently being dried out by his family in central Somalia, where it will be put directly into the local economy one way or another. A report from BBC News states that this lone dead man was the only one of the pirates to have been paid prior to his passing.

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

Reader response

Today’s question: Are you glad to see President Bush leave office? 65% YES 35% NO

Monday’s question: Did you get into the classes you needed?
Letters to the Editor

Guest column

Online proposals no substitution for face-to-face romance

LuckyDog21: So what are your plans for this weekend?
SunshineGrl43: I’m gonna hang out with the girls and maybe go see Bride Wars.

Are all critical, and instead of asking them for their e-mail and say hello to the person next to you. It also reminds us ladies that we can’t just CTRL+ALT+DEL the conversation yourself. It also reminds us ladies that we can’t just CTRL+ALT+DEL the conversation like nothing happened.

No, if we turn your offer down we need to do it gracefully and nicely because we are dealing with a person and not some vague online identity. Conversing and dealing with people in person is tough on both parties, but we haven’t reached a point in our lives where we strictly deal with people online. We still have to master face-to-face interaction with people, which means we need to practice it.

So put down your BlackBerry or iPhone and say hello to the person next to you — especially if it’s a person you’re interested in. And instead of asking them for their e-mail address, I suggest starting with, “You wanna get some coffee?”

Michelle A. Hips is a telecommunications senior.
Gator gear sales low compared to previous title win

Store owners remain optimistic that sales will increase

By MORGAN COLLINS
Alligator Contributing Writer

The recent BCS National Championship boosted demand for Gator fan-wares, but some stores said business isn’t as good as it was after past title wins.

Taryn Emswiler, 23, the general merchandise manager at the Florida Bookstore on University Avenue, said sales should pick up within a few days and keep steady for several months as UF alumni and other fans trickle into Gainesville.

But so far, the rush has been smaller than former championships.

“Last time, we couldn’t get around the store with all of the people inside,” she said.

David Bushnell, 55, owner of Gator Fever I in Butler Plaza, said there have been less T-shirt sales this year compared with the 2006 football championship.

When UF played Ohio State, it hadn’t won a football championship game in 10 years and was cast as the game’s underdog.

“We wanted to win,” Bushnell said. “We just didn’t expect it.”

A number of different circumstances affect the amount of shirts sold, he said.

Local News

The weak economy has left people with less money to spend, and the location of the championship game also factored into the decline.

Since the game was held in Miami, a lot of people are still out of town and haven’t yet returned to buy Gator gear, Bushnell said.

“If I was a college student, and the game was in a town with a beach, would I come back?” he said.

Also, the 2006 and the 2008 championships had different circumstances surrounding them.

For example, after the 2006 championship, media hype speculated back-to-back championships for the basketball team crossed over into football, driving T-shirt sales up.

Still, the Florida Bookstore and Gator Fever I have sold lots of championship gear, and sales have been up since Thursday’s game.

At Gator Fever I, a bestseller is the “Promise Kept” T-shirt, with Tim Tebow’s complete, emotional promise of dedication after UF’s loss to Mississippi, Bushnell said.

The store received two orders of nearly 1,500 of the shirts over the weekend. As of Monday, only a couple hundred were left.

“It was a great, great game,” he said. “Hopefully, there will be another.”

Diverse group calls for peace

PROTEST, from page 1

three years.

“(Israel) is my home,” she said. “This is where my family lives.”

Ravid also said she has friends on the front lines fighting.

“I pray for my friends who are soldiers,” she said. “They are fighting for Israel’s future and the future of this world.”

As the protesters worked their way down University, they received cheers and honks from people driving by.

“The fact that people are pro-Israel expression is a good thing,” said Rabbi Berl Goldman.

However, a different chant was heard in the distance as the pro-Israel protesters neared the plaza.

A group called United Voices for Peace waited in response to the approaching demonstration.

The diverse group of about 40 people united Muslims, Christians and Jews, who were protesting for peace and a halt to civilian casualties.

“We want peace, we want justice,” said UF senior Nadine Steir, a Middle Eastern studies major.

As Steir chanted “justicia, paz, justicia, paz,” tears streamed down her face.

Born in Bethlehem, Steir lost her home when she was young.

Her family members were refugees for 15 years before obtaining U.S. citizenship.

“Once they understand, they’ll see we’re all on the same ground.”

Nadine Sfeir
Middle Eastern studies major

Steir said she was against the killings on both sides and wants the occupation of Israeli forces in Gaza to end.

“Gaza is a baby,” she said. “It can’t walk, it can’t talk, it can’t feed itself. And when this baby grows up, it’s going to be a monster.”

While members of the pro-Israel protest dispersed as the march ended, about 15 students stayed behind to have an open discussion with the members of United Voices for Peace.

Steir said the issue was not one of politics but about the loss of life.

“We’re all citizens of the world,” Steir said. “Once they understand, they’ll see we’re all on the same ground.”
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Nelson climbs receiver ranks

By EVAN DREXLER
Alligator Staff Writer
drexler@alligator.org

Coming into the season, he was a receiver with nine catches and no touchdowns to his name.

Five months later, he was on the receiving end of the clenching touchdown in the BCS National Championship Game on Thursday night.

It’s safe to say junior David Nelson has made some positive strides in the Gators’ offense this season.

When he first came to Gainesville, he expected to play right away, and it took him a while to realize that would not be the case.

“He didn’t practice very good, and he didn’t play very well,” coach Urban Meyer said Friday.

But his work ethic improved dramatically over the last two seasons, and his attitude toward his spot on the team is vastly improved as well. He knows it takes a special talent to get on the field as a freshman.

“Just get to come in here and just do what you can for your team,” Nelson said. “Work your way up. Not everybody can be Percy Harvin and play right away.”

Two springs ago, after UF defeated Ohio State to win the second football national championship in school history, Nelson went on a cruise, and the ship’s passengers confused him with then-quarterback Chris Leak. Most Gators fans would have been hard-pressed to pick him out of a lineup.

SEE NELSON, PAGE 15

UF wide receiver David Nelson recovers a punt blocked by Carlos Dunlap during the Gators’ 42-14 win against Vanderbilt on Nov. 8 in Nashville, Tenn.

Hodge’s hairstyles inspire teammates to perform

By MIKE DIFERDINANDO
Alligator Staff Writer
mdferdinando@alligator.org

Walter Hodge’s haircuts have gone through almost as many ups and downs as the UF basketball team this season.

Everything from “GATORS” to “DEFENSE” has been shaved into the side of the senior’s head.

But Hodge is hoping his style will lead to a bit more substance for a UF team that has been anything but consistent.

“It’s not about just looking good with a haircut,” Hodge said. “I’m doing it for the other guys.”

Hodge’s hairstyle has changed almost on a game-to-game basis this season — each opponent brings him a new artistic vision.

“It will change. It just depends how I feel,” the guard said. “The guys like it. They’re always looking for something new.”

If defensive back Joe Haden’s BCS design during last week’s championship game

“IT’S NOT ABOUT JUST LOOKING GOOD WITH A HAIRCUT. I’M DOING IT FOR THE OTHER GUYS.”

Walter Hodge
UF senior guard

proved familiar, it’s because the pair share the same barber.

“The SEC Championship, (Justin) Trattou had a Mohawk, and I liked the design that he had in his head, and I asked him who did it so I could get it for the National Championship Game,” Haden said.

The man behind the madness is Tony, or “Mr. T,” of Sharp Cuts and Styles.

“Joe and I go together sometimes,” Hodge said.

Designs range from team-oriented to personal.

During the basketball team’s November trip to Kansas City for the CBE Classic, Hodge’s latest invention was a Dr. Pepper logo.

SEE M-HOOPS, PAGE 15

ON TELEVISION

■ NCAA Basketball: Kentucky vs. (24) Tennessee ESPN, 9 p.m.
■ NCAA Basketball: Memphis vs. Tulsa ESPN2, 7:30 p.m.

UF MENS BASKETBALL

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Tebow undergoes minor shoulder surgery

Nelson from page 14

"Hopefully I’ve gotten past that now," Nelson said, laughing. "Hopefully, now that he’s been gone for two years, hopefully I’ve made a name for myself now.

After a 12-catch, five-touchdown 2008 where he led the team in yards per catch (19), Nelson will begin next season as one of the top receivers.

There is no doubt he made a name for himself this season, especially with the touchdown catch Thursday coming on one of Tim Tebow’s famous jump passes.

Meyer said deciding which receiver would make that catch while designing the play was a painstaking process, one that took a long time to resolve.

"That was a two-hour discussion about who’s going to get that play, because you only get one shot at it, and if you cut it short, go too deep, don’t sell it, you’re wasting a play," Meyer said. "We knew we were going to call it at a critical time."

Nelson was also quick to deflect credit when asked about the touchdown catch. He said any receiver on the team would have been able to make the catch.

But his number was the one offensive coordinator Dan Mullen called. Why did they decide to go with Nelson in the end?

"That’s because he’s extremely disciplined and practices his tail off," Meyer said.

That catch was five days ago, and Nelson is ready to start preparing for 2009. He said he is going to enjoy the national championship victory for a little while but then work toward successfully defending UF’s crown next year.

"This is the most important offseason of my life," Nelson said. "Not only for myself, but to get this team ready to go play next year.

Tebow undergoes minor shoulder surgery

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PHIL from page 14

That’s a scary proposition, though.

You never can tell how a team will respond to the off-season pressures of everyone projecting it as national champs, even with Urban Meyer’s well-known ability to motivate.

Meyer already has some good material to use, though, if he looks up his rivals in Athens. Georgia came into this season as a highly touted No. 1 with Matthew Stafford and Knowshon Moreno poised to win a ring in Miami.

The Bulldogs finished 10-3, didn’t even win the SEC East and played in the Capital One Bowl.

Besides the mystique of repeating — that hasn’t been done since Nebraska in 1994-95 — there is one other thread of motivation: an undefeated season.

It’s never been done at UF, and Tebow has stated multiple times that it is a goal of his.

Cal Tebow steer UF through the pressures and deliver UF’s first unblemished record?

He “couldn’t” win the Heisman and then did.

He “couldn’t” pass the ball well enough — and then did.

He “couldn’t” lead a team trailing in the fourth quarter — and then he did.

I wouldn’t bet against him.

Senior’s haircuts improve team morale

M-HOOPS from page 14

Hodge paid tribute to his 2-year-old daughter, Kaylanis, with the name “KIKI.”

“It’s something she can look at on TV and point at," Hodge said. “She gets all excited and calls out, ‘Daddy! Daddy!’"

In fact, you could say Hodge has started a bit of a hair renaissance within the team.

“I got a little Mohawk going," sophomore forward Chandler Parsons said. “But my hair is made a little different than his. It must be a Spanish thing.”

HodgeMania.

By turning his new look start out as a Rayhawk, as he cheered on the Tampa Bay Rays during the MLB playoffs, but Hodge’s influence is unmistakable.

According to Parsons, Hodge’s hair has made an impact on the team this season, though.

“He’s all about the team,” Parsons said. “He’ll write whatever he thinks will help motivate us.”

Even the always-put-together, well-gelled Nick Calathes has been caught up in Hodge Mania.

“It’s something we make fun of him about, but I think it definitely helps us," Calathes said. “When it says defense on his head, it means we have to lock down.”

But would Calathes, who has been taunted by opposing fans in the past for his painstakingly styled hair, be willing to make the same sacrifice for the good of the team?

“If the team needed me and wanted me to do it I would," he said. “But probably not.”

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Dungy retires after seven years coaching Indianapolis

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS — Tony Dungy has retired after seven years as coach of the Indianapolis Colts, saying this was the right moment.

"These seven years have been better than I could ever have imagined," Dungy, the only black coach to win a Super Bowl, said at a news conference Monday. "I just have to thank everyone."

He will be replaced by associate coach Jim Caldwell.

Dungy, 53, has spent the past five years debating whether to leave football to spend more time with his family. He said he and his wife discussed the decision.

"We just felt this was the right time," Dungy said. "Don't shed any tears for me. I got to live a dream most people don't get to live."

Dungy is the Colts' franchise leader in victories. He went 85-27 in the regular season and 7-6 in the playoffs, including the victory over Chicago in the 2007 Super Bowl.

"You don't always get to go out on top," Dungy said, "and it's hard to go out on top."

The plan to have Caldwell replace Dungy was put in place when the coach pondered retirement. Caldwell joined Dungy's staff in Tampa Bay in 2001, then moved with Dungy to the Colts in 2002 as the quarterbacks coach.

A year ago, Caldwell was elevated to associate head coach, though he continued to coach Peyton Manning and Jim Sorgi.

"He is ready, he's more than ready," Dungy said. "He's going to do a great job."

Dungy's decision comes a little more than a week after the Colts were eliminated from the playoffs. He spoke to several of his players Monday, including Manning.

"That's the tough part," Dungy said. "That's been the emotionally draining part of today."

He has spent the past five years debating whether to leave football, each year taking about a week to meet with his family in Tampa.

"I'm going to be a Colt forever," Dungy said, adding that he plans to still spend time in Indianapolis.

The decision ends a tenure in Indianapolis during which Dungy led the Colts to the playoffs all seven seasons, winning five division titles and appearing in two AFC title games.

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