



**Carmage Walls**  
**Commentary Prize**

**2018 Entry Form**

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**Is your newspaper under 50,000 circulation or above 50,000 circulation?** Below 50k

**Please give a brief explanation of issues discussed and the results achieved. (This space will expand as you type in your comments.)**

The focus of these editorials is our Gainesville For All initiative that set the agenda for public discussion on equity issues. Through his editorials, Nathan has championed systemic change to long-standing issues of disparities in our community that fall along racial lines. Despite being home to a Top 10 public university (University of Florida) and a vibrant entrepreneurial and cultural environment, the city ranks high on national lists for inequities.

Beyond writing editorials and columns on these issues, Nathan has organized a series of public forums to grow consensus around solutions. Five study teams have been formed to form priorities. A website has been created at [gnv4all.com](http://gnv4all.com) and we maintain a Facebook page at [facebook.com/GNV4ALL/](https://facebook.com/GNV4ALL/) and a [Twitter](#) feed.

The Gainesville City Commission endorsed the work of Gainesville For All, Alachua County Schools hired an equity officer and will soon release an equity plan, smoking was banned in local parks — all stated priorities of Gainesville For All.

Most recently, in April 2018, the presiding county judge [signed an order](#) providing bail reform measures for people charged with low-level, non-violent crimes at the recommendation of The Gainesville Sun and our Gainesville For All initiative.

# OPINION

Nathan Crabbe, editor  
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The Gainesville Sun

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EDITORIAL

## Equity must be priority of community

The Gainesville Sun editorial board

Closing Alachua County’s achievement gap won’t be easy. It will require the continuing commitment of our school district as well as support from the rest of the community.

Alachua County has the largest gap between the state test scores of black and white students among Florida’s 67 counties. While our county’s white students outperform most of their peers across the state, our black students have scores below state averages. Longstanding racial and socioeconomic disparities and segregation in Gainesville contribute to the problem. The Sun-sponsored Gainesville For All initiative is aimed at finding ways to address disparities in education as well as areas such as housing, jobs and the criminal justice system.

GNV4ALL proposed an equity plan for schools in its first round of priority recommendations. The School Board to its credit created the new position of equity director, hiring Valerie Freeman for the job, while new Superintendent Karen Clarke has made a priority of closing the achievement gap here.

Clarke, Freeman and Deputy Superintendent Donna Jones gave members of The Sun’s editorial board and GNV4ALL an encouraging update last week on their efforts. These efforts include include meetings with principals on issues such as the impact of implicit bias; better using statistics to identify disparities in areas such as school discipline; and a pilot program in east-side schools to identify black students who should be in gifted programs.

These efforts are an important start as the district develops an equity plan that is expected to be released in the spring. That plan should include statistics to show the disparities in district schools in a transparent way, along with targets and timelines for making improvements. Teachers, students, parents and everyday residents should all be involved in the process. Florida education officials have set the goal of closing the statewide achievement gap by one-third by 2020. Making similar improvements locally will not only require the district to remain committed to equity, but also for others in the community to do their part to help schools and reduce other disparities.

A ballot initiative funding improvements to school facilities, as well as a planned initiative to pay for early childhood programs, are key ways that residents can provide support. Residents should also volunteer any time possible in mentoring and tutoring programs along with other efforts that address problems outside the classroom that contribute to academic struggles.

A new volunteer website that the city of Gainesville plans to launch early next year should better direct volunteers to where they are needed. As GNV4ALL finalizes its second round of recommendations in the next few weeks, its focus will turn to implementing proposals as well as encouraging its members and others to get involved.

After much talk in 2017 about the problems in our country and community, 2018 needs to be a year of action. The school district's equity plan should expand efforts that help close Alachua County’s achievement gap, but the involvement and support of the rest of the community are a key part of ensuring that happens.

ACCORDING TO JAKE



VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Renaming solution

I appreciated City Commissioner Harvey Budd's Dec. 13 letter urging his fellow commissioners to deal with the issue of ex-Congresswoman Corinne Brown's name on the city transit building "in an inclusive, respectful way, especially to the African-American community."

This is a perennial problem on campuses where a building is named for a generous benefactor or respected administrator who is later identified with an unacceptable cause or even convicted of a crime. Should we rush to obliterate any memory of their giving or service to the institution?

Can't the commissioners find a way to acknowledge Corinne Brown's community service, including securing the funds for this building, while renaming it for one of Gainesville's leaders in the struggle for civil rights?

**Richard MacMaster**, Gainesville

**Put down phones**

Last Sunday, Nathan Crabbe's column ended with the advice from a teacher: keep your children away from electronic devices as long as you can. I'd like to respond.

My husband and I were out to dinner one night and next to us was a family of four. They were all on their cell phones. No conversation was going on at all. This isn't unusual anymore.

Dinner was always sacred in my family. We talked about our day, argued, complimented and shared stories.

Our communities are now online and not in person, and the invention of the cell phone has promoted this behavior. So, parents, at least put down your cell phones at dinner, and look your family members in the eye when you talk with them.

Please don't use a child's electronic device to keep them busy. You'll be keeping them busy like this for the rest of their lives.

**Cheryl Kaplan**, Gainesville

Nothing new

I seriously believe the Democratic Party sacrificed Rep. John Conyers and Sen. Al Franken in order to start calling for President Donald Trump to resign after Rep. Al Green's articles for impeachment were tabled.

The allegations against Conyers and Franken are recent, one with photo evidence. Trump was elected after the allegations came forward and nothing new has been revealed. The president has denied those claims from the beginning.

The people have spoken. I know the argument is Hillary Clinton got more votes. That is true, but only in the 20 states she won. Trump won the most votes in 30 states and that is why he lives in the White House.

Roy Moore was denied the Senate seat because

of the allegations against him. The people of Alabama have spoken.

Congress needs to spend more time doing its job and the women can file lawsuits if they want to, but beating the "dead horse" seems to be more important.

**Cathy Anderson**, Williston

Rising deficit

The federal deficit last fiscal year was \$666 billion. Tell your representatives, in both the House and Senate, to vote against any tax bill that would increase deficits in future years. Tax bills currently in play would add about \$1 trillion to deficits over the next 10 years.

**Richard Suttor**, Gainesville

Concurrent construction

Who was the genius who planned improvements on South Main Street and Southwest Sixth Street to happen simultaneously? Navigating the ragged roads of Gainesville is difficult enough, but now that north/southbound traffic forced onto U.S. 441, driving is insane. I hope construction doesn't lag endlessly as it did to repaving Northwest 16th Avenue.

**Richard Holmes**, Gainesville

Write a letter

Letters to the editor should be emailed to letters@gainesville.com. Letters should be 150 words or less and include the writer's full name, city of residence and contact information.

## Use local programs to dispose of medications

By Kurt Seaburg  
Special to The Sun

Nov. 22 letter to the editor expressed concern regarding the lack of easy alternatives for the proper disposal of medicines locally. The writer also raised concerns about the environmental impact of medications flushed down the toilet.

These are valid concerns both locally and nationwide. I want everyone in Alachua County to know that the county Environmental Protection Department’s Hazardous Waste Program has had an ongoing prescription and over-the-counter medication collection program since 2004. It began with a Florida Department of Environmental Protection grant. The program has 12 sites for the collection and proper disposal of medications. It was the first collection program of its kind in the United States.

This safe and

environmentally responsible service is free of charge to county residents. It is a self-serve program whereby the customer is asked to pour the medications through a funnel into a pail where they are neutralized in a solution. The customer is then asked to keep the empty containers to ensure privacy. The medications collected by the program are shipped to a contractor and destroyed at a permitted hazardous waste incinerator.

The program accepts prescription and over-the-counter medications (including pills, gel caps, capsules and liquids) as well as dietary supplements that are unwanted, expired, damaged or unusable. Per federal regulations, the program cannot accept narcotics or controlled substances. Those medications can be taken to only one location locally: Walgreens Pharmacy at 7520 W. Newberry Road in Gainesville (352-333-7916). This is a free service to the community that

also accepts other prescription and over-the-counter medications. The Walgreens program has collected and safely disposed of over 72 tons of medicines nationally since its launch in 2016.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency also hosts a free national take-back program twice a year for collection of medications, including narcotics. That program has collected and properly disposed of more than 8 million pounds of drugs since its inception. The goal is to reduce the risk of prescription drug diversion and abuse and increase awareness of the opioid epidemic that has impacted millions of Americans. Visit [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov) for more information on this highly successful program.

Alachua County advises residents to never flush medications down sinks, drains or toilets. Disposing of medications into your trash can result in accidental consumption and poisoning

to children and pets, and the potential of illegal diversion and sale in the community.

Disposing of unwanted pharmaceuticals and medicine in domestic sewage systems is causing scientific concern due to the potential threat to aquatic life and human health from exposure to surface and ground waters that receive discharges from sewage treatment systems. The pharmaceuticals are harmful to beneficial bacteria in wastewater, and current treatment systems are ineffective in removing low levels of pharmaceuticals in the treated waste stream. Improper disposal can also have a negative effect on septic systems. Upgrading systems to filter out these pollutants is currently cost prohibitive.

On the horizon is the potential for initiatives that require pharmaceutical companies that profit from products to share in the disposal costs. These kinds of initiatives are common to many materials

managed by household hazardous waste programs such as paint, propane tanks and rechargeable batteries.

The Hazardous Waste Program is considered one the most innovative programs of its kind in the country due in part to programs such as the pharmaceutical collection program, internally produced biodiesel production and other public-private partnerships. Since 2004, when the prescription collection program began, more than 20,000 pounds of medications have been collected from thousands of residents for safe and responsible disposal.

Residents can contact the Hazardous Waste Collection Center at 352-334-0440 or visit [www.alachuacountyhazwaste.us](http://www.alachuacountyhazwaste.us) for a listing of drop-off sites and to obtain more information on this and other award-winning programs.

*Kurt Seaburg is the county's hazardous waste coordinator.*



# OPINION

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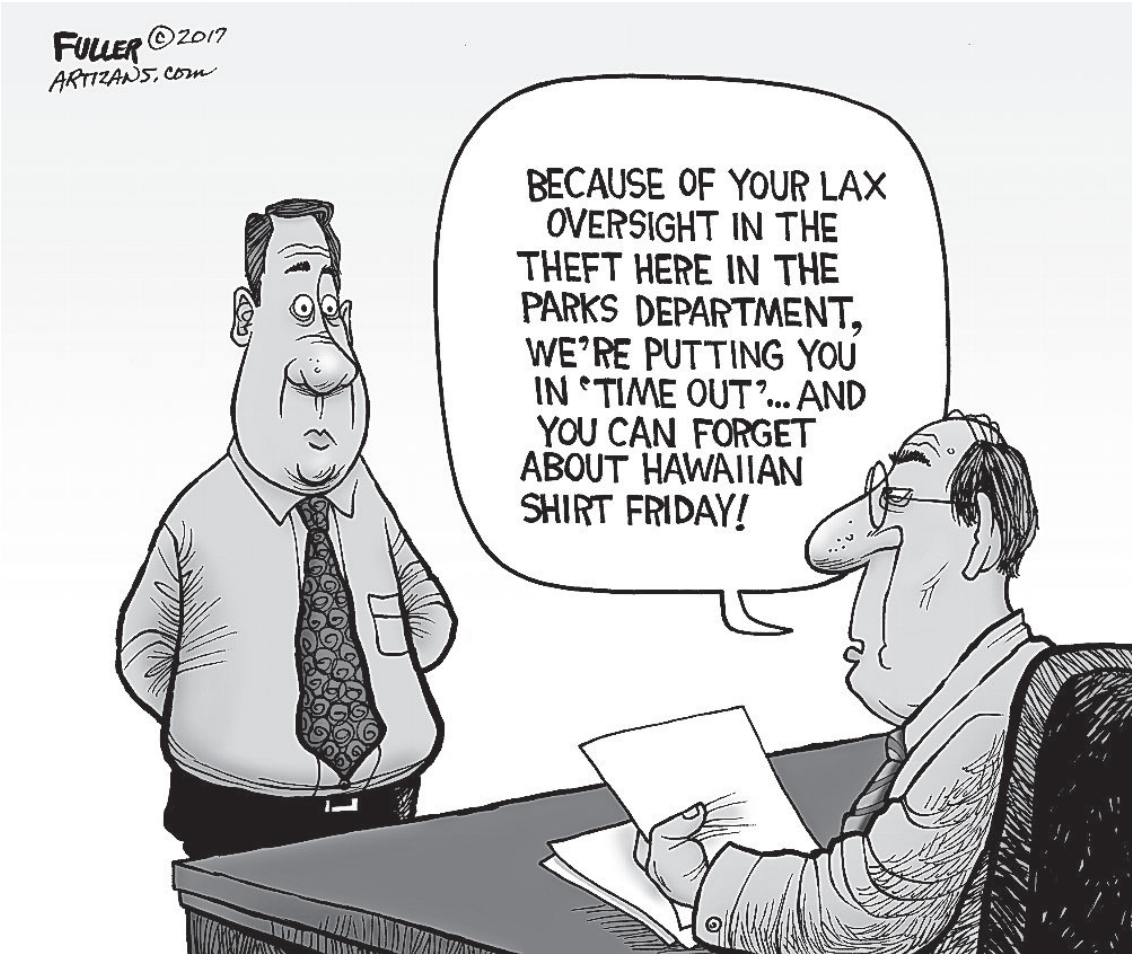
EDITORIAL

## Use civil citations for minor offenses

The Gainesville Sun editorial board

Programs that keep people who commit minor offenses out of the criminal justice system provide wide benefits. An arrest record can be a barrier to an education, employment or housing, preventing people from being productive members of society. Resources spent by police and the courts on these offenses are better directed toward violent crimes and other more serious problems. Alachua County has long been a leader in employing alternatives to arrests for juveniles who commit minor crimes. Civil citations and Teen Court have been shown to be more effective in reducing recidivism. Adults caught with small amounts of marijuana or for other non-violent misdemeanors should have the same opportunity to keep these offenses off their records. The Sun-sponsored Gainesville For All initiative has recommended an adult civil citation program for these offenses in part to address racial disparities in arrests. County commissioners have considered such an approach for minor marijuana charges, but received push-back from Sheriff Sadie Darnell and State Attorney Bill Cervone. Thankfully Darnell and Cervone are now part of discussions to improve and expand the measure. The commission had delayed consideration of the issue to wait to see if the Legislature would act on statewide civil citation legislation, but the measure didn't pass. Commissioners shouldn't wait much longer to act, working with local municipalities and local enforcement in implementing a wide-ranging civil citation program for adults. A commission hearing last week provided hope for an improved measure. Cervone and Darnell rightly pointed out that the previous proposal, which only covered the unincorporated county and dealt with possession of marijuana but not drug paraphernalia, would have had limited effectiveness. Getting Gainesville to be part of a civil citation program is key, something some city commissioners have expressed interest in doing. The program should cover possession of small amounts of marijuana and paraphernalia, quality-of-life crimes such as open container violations and other non-violent offenses. Like juvenile diversion programs, adult offenders shouldn't get off scot-free but instead could be required to fulfill obligations such as community service and counseling. An adult civil citation program would build on local efforts to get individuals with mental illnesses and addictions treatment instead of jail time. Civil citations aren't a perfect solution. Information on them would still be publicly available unless state law was changed to keep the records for a limited time. Offenders couldn't get representation from a public defender, although local Public Defender Stacy Scott suggested her office would still offer advice. The Legislature's delay in acting on this issue has given commissioners and law enforcement time to find a way to work together. They should take the opportunity to craft an adult civil citation program aimed at reducing recidivism and allowing the criminal justice system to concentrate on true threats to public safety.

ACCORDING TO JAKE



VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Solid achievements

I encourage people to recognize the solid achievements of the city department of parks, recreation and cultural affairs under the leadership of Steve Phillips and Russell Etling. Look at the department's website to realize the rich scope of programming available to us. It is all accomplished with a modestly sized staff who are responsible for multiple projects. Yes, tighter fiscal oversight by the managers is required but their actions were mistakes, not crimes. As a regular volunteer at the Thomas Center Galleries, I have been delighted to see innovative and well-received programs in support of the arts. Among his many duties, Etling has provided leadership for the Jewel Box Concerts, the 352Walls/Gainesville Urban Art Initiative of murals, plus numerous art exhibits in the Thomas Center Galleries that have received national notice and attention. The community's plan for the arts, the 352Arts Roadmap, is coming to life under his guidance.

Elizabeth O'Brien  
Gainesville

Government mismanagement

News reports these past few weeks in regards to city/county operating mismanagement have been eye-opening. Examples include the county hiring a consultant for

up to \$75,000 to make a basic assessment (that should be made by department heads) on how best to operate our jail; the failure of city department managers to abide by basic accounting practices and perform basic financial oversight duties; penalties imposed by those same department heads for alleged employee fraud that are recognized by some commissioners as being weak and ineffective; and sustained bickering between county and city commissions on how to allocate expenses for emergency services, and negatively impacting the service provided to residents. Clearly, we have multiple instances of both commissioners and city/county managers that are not doing the basic job we elected and/or are paying them to do. Commissioners need to get their respective acts together ASAP, or we need to clean house!

Tom Bellucci  
Gainesville

Supporting survivors

Across the nation, the responses to sexual assault crimes and to survivors have been evolving. Florida is at the forefront of these changes. In the past year, Florida Council Against Sexual Violence has had the opportunity to train and work with the Gainesville Police Department and Alachua County Sheriff's Office on the trauma-informed

response to sexual assault crimes. These agencies are among the first in the state to be selected for the council's Excellence in Sexual Assault Response Project to train dispatchers, patrol officers, investigators and command staff on the science of trauma, the brain and body's biological response to the trauma of sexual assault, and how it impacts victims' reactions. We'd like to thank these agencies for their commitment to conducting the highest quality of investigations and to supporting survivors. And, thank you to Lt. Michael Schentrup for his June 25 column that emphasized the true importance of this specialized training.

Jennifer L. Dritt  
executive director, Florida Council Against Sexual Violence

Awesome production

As a long-time Hippodrome Theatre season pass holder, I encourage all to see the main stage production of "Forever Plaid," a wonderful, funny musical that will have all leaving the theater with a smile. The music is pre-rock and roll but most of the songs will be familiar. It has been held over until July and I suggest you run, don't walk to see this awesome production — you'll be glad you did.

Catherine Fraser  
Keystone Heights

WRITE TO US

Letters to the editor Should be 150 words or fewer. May be edited for clarity, length, taste and libel. Should contain the writer's full name, address and telephone number. Generally one letter will be published each month.  
**Mail:** Voice of the People, The Gainesville Sun, 2700 SW 13th St., Gainesville, FL., 32608-2015  
**Email:** letters@gainesville.com

## Turning sterile speedways into Complete Streets



Ron Cunningham

Just to scotch an ugly rumor somebody started in Sound Off. To wit: Ron Cunningham has a secret agenda to ban automobiles. A lofty goal, to be sure, but well beyond my puny grasp. Plus, you know, I drive. No, I don't want to ban cars. Just put them in their place. Listen, cities all over America — indeed all over the world — are these days trying to put automobiles in their place. Call it what you will — Complete Streets, urbanism, traffic calming, road diets, Vision Zero, whatever — making cars slow down and

behave in mixed company works equally well as a public safety agenda, an economic development strategy and a quality-of-life improvement. Traffic calming, says the Project For Public Spaces, "is founded on the idea that streets should help create and preserve a sense of place, that their purpose is for people to walk, stroll, look, gaze, meet, play, shop and even work alongside cars — but not dominated by them." More so than any other public infrastructure, the form and function of its street grid dictates a community's health, prosperity — indeed, its very destiny. The form and function of downtown Gainesville as compared to, say, downtown Starke, is largely a matter of putting cars in their place rather than giving them the run of the place. People are increasingly being

drawn to Gainesville's urban center precisely because it is growing more walkable, bikeable and transit friendly as well as drivable. That didn't happen by accident, but rather by the deliberate application of Complete Streets policies over a long period of time by multiple city commissions. Strategies like narrowing and reducing travel lanes, installing roundabouts, adding on-street parking, bike lanes, better sidewalks, intelligently designed pedestrian crossings and other street design redos all conspired to slow down traffic and make the University of Florida downtown core a more desirable place to live, work and play. We've seen Complete Streets in action on Main Street, Sixth Street, Depot Avenue, NW Eighth and SW Second avenues and elsewhere (not so much on 13th Street and University Avenue, more's the pity.) And

in every instance the quality of urban life has improved without the much predicted traffic paralysis. I only bring this up, again, because of the predictable auto-centric backlash forming against Gainesville's smart plan to redesign the multi-landed, high-speed South Main Street traffic corridor between Depot Avenue and Southwest 16th Ave. Yes, it's true. Reducing and narrowing lanes, installing traffic circles and so on will make it all but impossible for folks to drive that last three-quarters of a mile into Gainesville at the preferred 45-plus miles per hour. The new design may actually oblige travel speeds of 35, even 30 mph. The horror! But here's the thing. Traffic calming South Main Street will dramatically change the form and function — the very destiny — of an underused industrial

corridor that is already beginning to be transformed by Depot Park, the Cade Museum, the new and improved Depot Avenue and the southward movement of Gainesville's budding arts district. A future destination for UF-inspired start-ups? Why not? Given its proximity to the health center, the main campus, downtown and the Innovation Hub, South Main is the corridor most likely to benefit from this new era of town-gown collaboration. Driving fast is overrated in a city that aspires to be Florida's Innovation City. This City Commission has the opportunity to turn a sterile urban speedway into a transformative Complete Street. Please don't squander it, commissioners. Not to satisfy someone's need for speed.

— Ron Cunningham is former editorial page editor of The Sun.



# OPINION

Nathan Crabbe, editor  
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EDITORIAL

## Understand and address hidden biases

All of us have hidden biases — or preferences for or against different groups of people that are held at an unconscious level. While that doesn’t mean we’re bad people, it can be uncomfortable to acknowledge these biases. People who don’t view themselves as overtly biased tend to get defensive if they feel like they’re being accused of being racist, sexist or having other prejudices. But recognizing unconscious biases in ourselves and confronting them in our community can help address them. Alachua County public school officials deserve credit for beginning a conversation on the issue last week at their annual education summit for school administrators and teachers. Two human resource officials with the University of Florida, Melissa Curry and Cynthia Mendoza, spoke at the summit about how humans long ago developed instant reactions to people who are different as a survival mechanism. We can’t eradicate these biases, but acknowledging them can help us work through them. The session at the summit was aimed at hiring and promotion decisions in schools, but participants recognized that hidden biases also affect how educators interact with students. So has incoming Superintendent Karen Clarke, who told The Sun’s editorial board that the district will be putting a greater focus on the issue in the coming year. One planned initiative expands an effort at Metcalfe Elementary School to create culturally responsive classrooms, helping students and teachers understand how cultural differences affect their interactions. These efforts are needed to address the huge racial disparities in discipline and student achievement in local schools. While we were disappointed with the lack of consideration the School Board gave to outside candidates for superintendent, we hope Clarke’s longtime experience in local schools allows her to better get things accomplished. We also hope she’s open to new ideas and people that have been successful in addressing disparities in other districts, especially as our district’s equality plan and director are put in place. Schools are hardly the only place where hidden biases need to be addressed. Workers and residents across the community would benefit from recognizing how biases, both implicit and explicit, contribute to the racial and socioeconomic divides here. The Sun’s Gainesville For All initiative has recommended developing implicit bias training that can be offered to all segments of the community. The Sun plans in the coming weeks to take some initial steps in helping community members better understand their hidden biases. It is uncomfortable to acknowledge our biases, especially in a progressive community like ours where many people pride themselves as not having prejudices. But the sooner we recognize that hidden biases are hard wired in all of us, the more likely we will be to take the even more difficult step of figuring out what to do about them.

ACCORDING TO JAKE



VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Nothing is free

Regarding Nathan Crabbe’s June 4 column, “A guaranteed income for everyone,” the idea is ludicrous. News flash: The government has no money of its own. It generates money by taxing the people who work. Most current retirees worked 35, 40, 45 years contributing to society. They didn’t live at home until they were 35. Just like “free” college, nothing is free. Someone pays. Those who work pay for those who don’t. If technology is causing “massive job losses,” look to the companies who choose automation over humans. Just because we can build a bomb doesn’t mean we have to use it. Why do companies choose machines over humans? Today’s Americans won’t do certain jobs. Machines will. Machines get the job done, are efficient, aren’t lazy, are on time, have built-in quality control and get along with other machines. Perhaps abandonment of the work ethic is the real problem.

**Linda Tuttle,**  
Gainesville

**Greater threats**

Remzey Samarraï (column, June 4) does not convincingly present his thesis, that, as declared by ISIS (and Donald Trump), terrorism is an existential threat to the U.S. and the world. The sum total of

terrorism-based mortality in the U.S. was summarized by the START Center at the University of Maryland. From Sept. 11, 2001, through 2014, 3,066 Americans were killed in terrorist attacks (2,902 on 9/11), including perpetrators and excluding deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq. This is an average of less than 236 deaths/year, or less than five deaths/year since 9/11. Traffic deaths in the U.S. are greater than 30,000/year, firearm-caused deaths nearly that many, and together cause more than 200 times the toll of terrorism. Yet, these violent sources of mortality don’t count as existential threats. Islamic terror becomes an existential threat only if we buy into the ISIS narrative that they themselves are an existential threat.

**Jeffrey Shapiro,**  
Gainesville

**A real mess**

The proposed law shifting the self-defense burden of proof to prosecutors is worse than silly — it would abolish the standard rule of law and create a real mess. The standard rule is that a prosecutor must prove criminal guilt beyond and to the exclusion of every reasonable doubt; if defendants claim self defense, the burden is on them to present supporting evidence. If the facts set out in a May 29 news report are accurate, there would be no

self-defense issue involved in the shooting of Jordan Davis if all the teenagers stayed in the SUV and no firearm was displayed by them. In the Trayvon Martin-George Zimmerman episode, any “stand your ground” issue became secondary — Martin had Zimmerman on the ground and the core issue became whether Zimmerman was justified in using deadly force to defend himself. If a rule ain’t broke, don’t “fix” it.

**Lance Lazonby,**  
Melrose

**Buy local**

Kudos to Richard Holmes on his June 4 column, “Ways to save brick-and-mortar stores.” I, too, refuse to go to Gainesville’s “newest shopping mecca” for anything. I will neither eat there nor shop there. “New downtown”? Not! The only “downtown” Gainesville has is downtown. In addition, I will not buy products made outside of the United States unless absolutely necessary. I will do without. I’ve learned I can do without a lot. I have committed to attempt to “buy local” at every opportunity. Let’s save our real downtown and quit adding to the 1 percent’s coffers.

**Carole Dunne Baker,**  
Gainesville

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## Broadening the pool of technology thinkers



James F. Lawrence

Though Juan Gilbert doesn’t necessarily like recalling his days as the lone African-American student in the University of Cincinnati’s doctoral program in computer science, he uses the experience as a driving force to make the path easier for black students and women to get into the technology field. Gilbert, 48, had gotten so good at promoting diversity, his exemplary work no doubt played a key role in University of Florida President Kent Fuchs’ decision to bring him to Gainesville in 2014 to help make UF a preeminent institution.

Prior to becoming chair of UF’s Department of Computer & Information Science and Engineering, Gilbert distinguished himself for making Clemson University a powerhouse for diversity in computer science. The South Carolina school became home to 10 percent of African-American computer science doctoral students in the United States and produced 10 percent of black computer science professors in the country. Gilbert’s work at Clemson as chair of the Human-Centered Computing Division built on his success at Auburn University where for nine straight years he made it the No. 1 producer of black Ph.D.s in computer science. Not bad for a kid from Hamilton, Ohio, who was the first in his family to go to college and only wanted to get a degree in chemistry

and a “good job.” Gilbert’s world changed when the dean of Applied Science at Miami University of Ohio, where he did his undergraduate work, encouraged him to pursue a Ph.D. in computer science and assured him that if successful he’d hire him as a professor. Along his path to becoming the University of Cincinnati’s first black Ph.D., Gilbert couldn’t help but notice that many of his peers were Asians. They became friends; hung out together. “They had a community in the doctoral program,” Gilbert told me recently. “They had footprints in the sand, and that’s important.” Visitors to Gilbert’s department at UF can quickly see that he has built a similar community of African-Americans with footprints in the sand. In fact, UF now leads the nation in the number of African-American faculty and doctoral

students in computer science. Gilbert, whose accomplishments include directing a team that developed technology allowing people with disabilities to use standard voting machines, wants to attract black students to computer science to “help change the world.” Take the Virtual Traffic Stop initiative now being developed by Gilbert and his UF students. It seeks to save lives by using technology to reduce the interaction between law enforcement officers and motorists during routine traffic stops. Granted, there remain lots of questions about this approach to traffic stops, but it’s encouraging that such an alternative is being seriously discussed by researchers. What’s more, those discussions are being led by young African Americans, who are too often the victims of traffic stops that go bad.

With a broadened pool of technology thinkers, we all stand to benefit. This is why Gilbert is not only focused on attracting greater numbers of people of color and women to advanced degree technology programs, but he is launching new initiatives to get minority youths interested in computer science at an early age. In east Gainesville, he plans to open a computer lab this summer at the Eastside Community Center. There youths in the surrounding neighborhood will get to see that opportunities exist for them in technology by working with talented black students from UF who are in sync with Gilbert’s mission to “help change the world.”

*James F. Lawrence is director of GNV4ALL. Visit gnv4all.comnad “like” our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/gnv4all.*



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EDITORIAL

Involve community in improving schools

Gainesville Sun editorial board

New Alachua County Public Schools Superintendent Karen Clarke faces major challenges that have been complicated by the way in which she got the job.

The School Board put Clarke in a difficult spot by selecting her in a process in which the outcome appeared predetermined. The four board members voting for Clarke seemed set on promoting an insider rather than listening to input from concerned citizens and groups such as the Alachua County Council of PTAs, which recommended an outside candidate.

But now that Clarke has the job, the community should be rooting for her success for the sake of the district’s students. The job of local educators is already made harder by state and federal officials who are hostile to public education and inadequately fund traditional public schools.

The upside is that local residents have long demonstrated support for public schools, as shown in their passage of the One Mill initiatives funding important school programs. Community groups are now bringing attention to three pressing problems with schools — racial disparities, deteriorating facilities and the need for pre-K programs — that require a similar sense of urgency.

The Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce’s Infrastructure Investment Initiative, or i3, is holding a public meeting Tuesday to discuss problems with school facilities. They include a lack of funding for routine maintenance such as fixing leaky roofs and broken air conditioners, as well as overcrowded schools.

The chamber is studying a sales tax ballot measure to possibly fund these and other local infrastructure needs. Another group is considering a property tax measure for early childhood education initiatives — with some suggesting it should also fund other needs, such as after-school programs and expanding the System of Care program that connects at-risk students with counseling and social services.

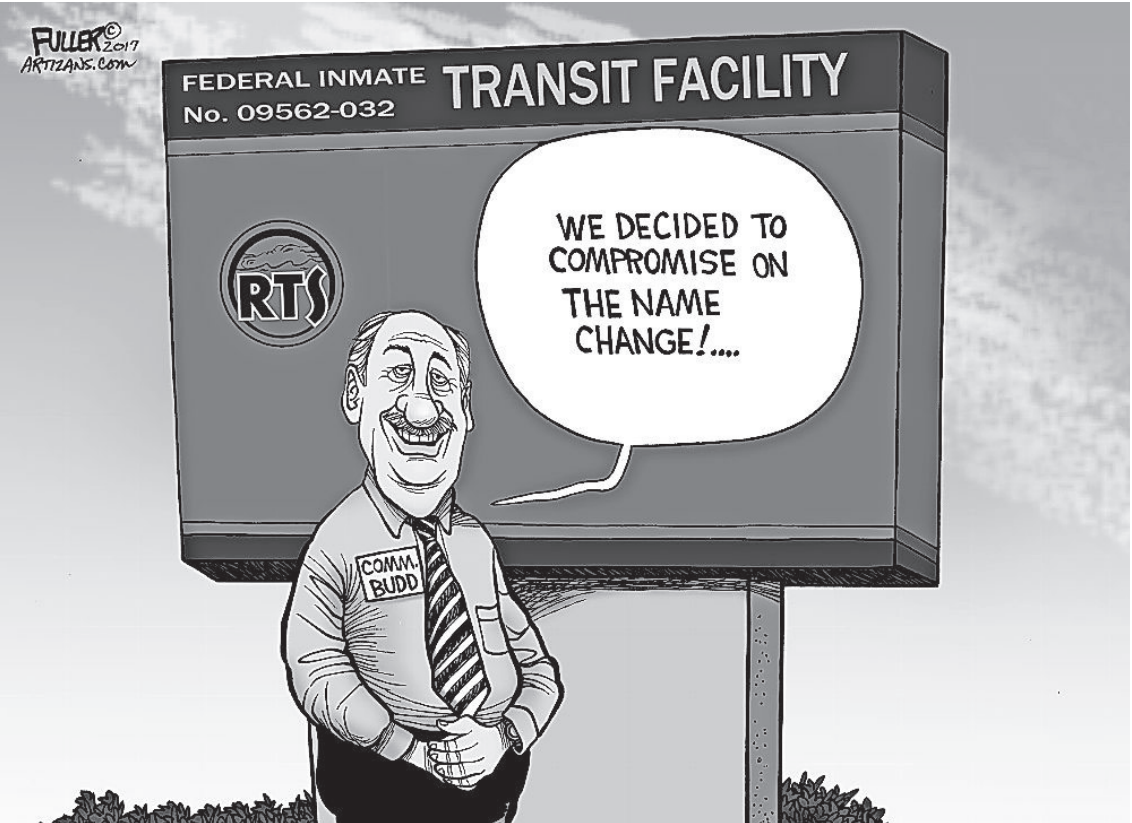
At the same time, the School Board has committed to developing an equity plan that closes the achievement gap in schools, a priority of The Sun-sponsored Gainesville For All initiative. Addressing all of these issues requires real community involvement to help prioritize needs and determine funding sources.

Leaders of several major local institutions announced an Education Compact with much fanfare two years ago, but not much has happened since with the effort. A revamped compact is needed that brings others across the community into the fold, this time setting measurable goals that the School Board is held accountable for accomplishing and providing help to make that happen.

Given state and federal challenges, the district needs all the local support and funding it can get. Board members made that more difficult due to the flawed ways in which they jettisoned the last superintendent and hired a new one.

They need to start truly collaborating with the community in addressing pressing problems before the community looks elsewhere for leadership.

ACCORDING TO JAKE



VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Poor choices

We love choices. We have the opportunity for good, not-so-good and down-right bad choices. A May 13 article quoted a poll that most Americans feel positive about charter schools, although 58 percent of the respondents said they knew little or nothing about them.

Charter schools are taxpayer supported. Did you know that charter school money is siphoned from the budget of the rest of the Alachua County school system? This includes the daily rate a school receives for each student, but also dollars for construction, repair and rent of facilities that belong to the charter school and not the county.

Art, music and physical education teachers and media specialists/librarians are disappearing from our public schools. Public education budgets are cut. I commend Sue Legg’s May 14 column discussing the status and learning environment of Alachua County schools, including the ineffective cost of charter schools.

**Carolyn TeStrake,**  
Gainesville

**Sham process**

The School Board fired Superintendent Owen Roberts because the union could not control him. Now the union got who they wanted all along in Karen Clarke.

Now what I don’t

understand is if she was so qualified, why didn’t she become interim superintendent? Why did the School Board wastes so much money hiring people to find people to fill the new superintendent position? Why are we hiring a person who was the least qualified for the position?

I truly think that this whole process has been a sham to pull a fast one, especially on the African American community. Citizens, it’s time to vote for people who have the same interests in our community.

**Tina Days,**  
Gainesville

**Remarkably silent**

A few months ago, U.S. Rep Ted Yoho said that a congressman “works for the president ... answers to the president.” At the time, his office said that he “misspoke.”

However, since then, evidence has mounted of Donald Trump stepping far beyond the bounds of presidential behavior. In the last few weeks, Trump has been accused of leaking classified information to Russia; asking the FBI director, James Comey, for loyalty to him (Comey refused); firing Comey for reasons that are still unclear; asking Comey to drop an investigation into Michael Flynn; and the list keeps growing. Like most Republicans in congress, Yoho has remained remarkably silent as the evidence

of impropriety adds up.

It is time to ask Congressman Yoho and many other Republicans in Congress if they are indeed working for the citizens of their districts or if their only job is to work for, and protect, the president.

**Tonya Bervaldi,** Gainesville

**Inappropriate question**

I am a 71-year-old registered nurse with an associate’s degree and 36 years of experience. I can outpace anyone in an office setting.

Several months ago, an employer interviewed me. Early during the interview, this person asked me what my age was. Of course, these days anyone can access that info, but the question was inappropriate because age discrimination is against the law.

Many times when I inquire about a position, I am simply ignored and get no response — rudeness and unprofessionalism at its finest. Older applicants, beware.

**Marilyn Mandell,**  
Alachua

**Next GNV4ALL meeting**

The next meeting of the Gainesville For All initiative will be held May 22 at 6:30 p.m. at Buchholtz High School, 5510 NW 27th Ave. The Sun-sponsored initiative aims to address racial and socioeconomic disparities in the community. For more information, visit [www.gnv4all.com](http://www.gnv4all.com).

WRITE TO US

Letters to the editor Should be 150 words or fewer. May be edited for clarity, length, taste and libel. Should contain the writer's full name, address and telephone number. Generally one letter will be published each month.

**Mail:** Voice of the People, The Gainesville Sun, 2700 SW 13th St., Gainesville, FL., 32608-2015

**Email:** [letters@gainesville.com](mailto:letters@gainesville.com)

SPEAKING OUT

Crisis Center provides a local lifeline

By Alexandra Martinez  
Special to The Sun

There is growing attention to the topic of suicide in our community, and it is so important for this issue to come out of the shadows and be discussed.

Sadly, these conversations often only begin in the aftermath of loss or in response to media coverage or entertainment that may or may not handle the topic in a responsible way. The reality is that throughout our lives we all experience emotional pain and yet it can be incredibly difficult to talk about or even acknowledge.

We can find ourselves desperately seeking validation from the world to let us know that we are OK, that we are normal but end up hiding in plain sight for fear of others’ judgment or apathy. It is in the aches of our hearts and minds where we often feel the most vulnerable and where we need the most genuine compassion and connection from others.

The Alachua County Crisis Center is your local crisis and suicide intervention resource, and we encourage anyone, in any distress, to reach out for support. Sometimes it is not easy to share our struggles and

vulnerabilities with the people closest to us, and thus a crisis line can be a critical option.

The Crisis Center has a crisis line available 24/7 to any youth, adult, friend, or family member who is struggling or worried about someone in their life. You can reach us through our local line (352) 264-6789 or call 1-800-273-TALK.

Since 1969, the crisis intervention specialists of the Alachua County Crisis Center have been volunteers from our community who have completed extensive training and have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to suicide prevention.

We often hear from people that they didn’t think their problem was serious enough to warrant a call to us. Others have said they didn’t know what to say or where to start. We want our community to know that the Crisis Center is here for everyone. No matter who you are or what you’re struggling with, no matter how long it takes you to find the words, we will be there.

And if you are a young person, please know this message is just as much for you as it is anyone else. It is easy to feel bombarded and overwhelmed by messages we hear from our families, peers, teachers, and even

from music and TV. We hope that these are messages that foster a positive self-image, encourage healthy relationships, and support help seeking, but we know they often do the opposite.

It is so important to be able to share our experiences with these messages as well as our own stories of fear, self-doubt, and hopelessness. Even though it often feels like we are alone in our struggles, we all have stories of pain and disconnection. You do not have to carry those stories alone.

*Alexandra Martinez is director of the Alachua County Crisis Center.*



# OPINION

The Gainesville Sun

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## Bail changes are step in right direction

The Gainesville Sun editorial board

Being poor shouldn't result in a jail sentence. Yet that is essentially what happens with criminal defendants who are unable to afford even low bail amounts.

Most Alachua County Jail inmates are awaiting trial rather than serving a sentence. In some cases they are low-income defendants facing low-level charges who simply can't pay the bond amounts set by judges.

Just a short time in jail can be enough to cause these individuals to lose jobs and other problems that deepen racial and socioeconomic disparities. That is the core of the problem considered by Gainesville For All, The Sun-sponsored initiative aimed at addressing these disparities in our community.

The GNV4ALL criminal justice team's study of bail reform attracted community activists, members of the bail industry and others involved in the criminal justice system. The group found that bail is sometimes set at a level too high for low-income defendants to afford, yet too low to generate the level of fee that would interest a bail bondsman in posting it for them.

In 2017, there were 710 defendants in Alachua County whose bail was set at \$1,000 or less, according to the court services office. Setting bail at these levels doesn't make sense for defendants facing relatively minor charges who don't pose a danger to the public and are likely to appear in court as required.

To their credit State Attorney William Cervone and Public Defender Stacy Scott agreed that defendants arrested for ordinance violations and certain misdemeanor cases should be freed before trial without having to go to first appearance, when either bail is set or defendants are released on their own recognizance. As The Sun reported Sunday, Eighth Circuit Chief Judge Toby Monaco approved an order making such changes April 13.

Cervone, Monaco and Scott should be praised for working together and recognizing that such changes benefit low-income residents without hurting public safety. Larry Turner — who has seen all sides of the issue as a prosecutor, judge and now a criminal defense attorney — also deserves credit for bringing together members of all parts of the criminal justice system to find common ground.

Hopefully the effort leads to further examination of other criminal justice issues, such as disparate bail amounts by different judges set for similar crimes, for possible improvements. Another GNV4ALL recommendation is increasing implicit bias training of everyone involved in the justice system.

Bail reforms have been happening nationwide, with New Jersey eliminating cash bail altogether in favor of an algorithm that decides whether a defendant should be jailed. Such changes in Florida would need to be made by the state Legislature, which this session approved better tracking of bail numbers but has a long way to go in implementing other reforms.

Here in Gainesville we're fortunate to have people in all parts of the criminal justice system working together for the common good. Changes to bail follow the adoption of jail diversion programs, alternatives to arrests and other reforms that are making the system here fairer for all residents.

### WRITE TO US

Letters to the editor should be emailed to [letters@gainesville.com](mailto:letters@gainesville.com). Letters should be 150 words or less and include the writer's full name, city of residence and contact information.

**Nathan Crabbe**, editor  
[nathan.crabbe@gainesville.com](mailto:nathan.crabbe@gainesville.com)

### ANOTHER VIEW

ADAM THE BUFFALO NEWS  
ZYLUS ORGLEGARTONS.COM  
2018



### VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

#### Bad advice

Multiple readers have voiced complaints about John Rosemond's parenting columns. His April 20 column, "Don't go down the road of ADHD testing," is indicative of why.

An 8-year-old boy is having difficulty focusing in school. Three school professionals — the boy's teacher, the school counselor and the school psychologist — all recommend to the boy's parent that he be tested for ADHD. Rosemond, who has never met the boy, advises the parent to ignore that recommendation because he, unlike most of the medical world, does not believe ADHD is a real medical condition.

Advice from a columnist like Rosemond is not a joke. People listen to it. How many children in our community will not get recommended diagnostic testing and possible treatment because their parents read Rosemond's column? We may never know. But I hope that The Sun will consider the well-being of our community's children when deciding whether to continue publishing Rosemond's column.

**Jonathan Cohen, Gainesville**

**Independent thinker**

From where I live, in District 1, Harvey Budd and Charles Goston deserved to be re-elected to the City Commission. There are many questions being asked about why The Sun and this community turned their backs on Harvey, since he did no less

than any other commissioner in the last 10 years to screw up our once-sane community.

I am supporting Charles for a number of reasons. Like me, he is a 1966 Lincoln High School graduate, a University of Florida journalism graduate, a small minority business owner for years in a racist community and a member of the Alachua County Democratic Black Caucus. I know of his efforts to improve District 1's economic conditions firsthand.

When The Sun belittles Charles to get his opponent elected, it is throwing gasoline upon all the citizens struggling in District 1. We have never had a commissioner tell it like it is. When will this community stop hindering independent-thinking African-American men?

**Horace Moore Sr., Gainesville**

#### Factor in greening

A March 8 letter, "Deadly charade," was a deserving rebuke of UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences for not publicizing the negative aspects of glyphosate-containing herbicides.

In 1996, a Monsanto employee published in the Proceedings of the Florida State Horticultural Society a study of citrus fruit drop after glyphosate was sprayed on developing fruit. A 2016 report at the annual meeting of the American Society of Horticultural Science presented three years of data showing recovery from citrus greening symptoms among Valencia citrus trees at Polk County grove.

These symptoms, including fruit drop, disappeared when glyphosate soil residues were reduced by microbial treatment and canopy sprays of certain amino acids and nutrients. UF is aware of this project yet shows no further interest. After years of aggressive soil application/contamination, why should glyphosate continually be ignored as a factor in citrus greening?

**Roger Stuart Webb, Micanopy**

#### Portman's explanation

There was a brief story Saturday about actress Natalie Portman's decision to decline to attend an awards event in Israel. She was selected to receive a coveted prize known as the "Jewish Nobel." The story stated that she "did not elaborate as to what had made her feel that way."

That is untrue, and must be corrected. According to the Associated Press, Portman released a statement a full week earlier saying, "I chose not to attend because I did not want to appear as endorsing Benjamin Netanyahu, who was to be giving a speech at the ceremony ..."

So yes, she did elaborate in plenty of time to get the story straight.

Portman added, "Like many Israelis and Jews around the world, I can be critical of the leadership in Israel without wanting to boycott the entire nation. I treasure my Israeli friends and family, Israeli food, books, art, cinema and dance."

**Larry Lowenthal, Gainesville**

## ICE and the bitter fruit of dehumanization



Michael Gerson

The attitude of President Donald Trump toward federal law enforcement is, to put it mildly, mixed. The FBI refused to bend to his will. So it is comprised of "hardened Democrats" engaged in a "WITCH HUNT." Its reputation "is in Tatters — worst in History!"

But Immigration and Customs Enforcement has passed the loyalty test. ICE's enforcement surge "is merely the keeping of my campaign promise," explained the president. Referring to ICE acting Director Thomas Homan, Trump said, "Somebody said the other day, they saw him on television. ... 'He looks

very nasty, he looks very mean.' I said, 'That's what I'm looking for!'"

This is territory more familiar in political systems of personal rule. The agency that defies the ruler must be discredited. The agency that does his bidding is viewed as a kind of Praetorian Guard.

Most of the professionals working in ICE would surely deny this characterization, pointing to an important legal role independent from any individual president. But they need to understand that their work is now being conflated with Trump's nativism.

ICE's 40 percent increase in arrests within the country after Trump took office is now closely associated with the president's political priorities. His sweeping executive orders on immigration broadened the focus of enforcement beyond serious threats to public order. Arrests of immigrants without criminal convictions have spiked dramatically.

Routine "check-ins" with ICE officials can end with handcuffs and deportation.

"Sanctuary cities" are being targeted with additional personnel. Hundreds of children have been removed from parents seeking asylum and detained separately. ICE recently announced a new policy that makes it easier to detain pregnant women. Asylum seekers have often been denied "humanitarian parole" while their cases are decided, effectively jailing them without due process.

Officials of the agency insist their nonpolitical mandate hasn't changed. But Homan has praised the Trump administration for taking "the handcuffs off law enforcement." Whatever their intention, ICE agents are being used by the president to send a message of callousness.

The job performed by ICE is essential to American security, and not easy.

Agents must prevent some truly dangerous people from entering and staying in the country — gang members, drug dealers and terrorists. But it is also their job to deal with asylum seekers — men, women and children fleeing from gangs, targeted for death by drug cartels and oppressed by terrorist states.

Some of the worst people in the world, and some of the most sympathetic people in the world, are processed by immigration officials. It takes care and discernment to make this distinction.

Accusations of abuse in ICE custody are numerous and serious, and they pre-existed the Trump era. An investigation by ProPublica and the Philadelphia Inquirer reported cases of racial profiling, fabricated evidence and warrantless searches — all given little scrutiny by overwhelmed immigration courts.

During the last few years, there have been hundreds of accusations of sexual abuse,

racial slurs, abusive strip searches and verbal harassment in ICE jails, prisons and detention centers. For an institution that claims "zero tolerance" for such practices, it seems to get a lot of serious complaints. One asylum seeker, Gretta Soto Moreno, has called the facilities worse than normal prisons because ICE "feels like it can treat immigrants any kind of way."

This is the bitter fruit of dehumanization. It is unclear if Trump would even regard such a reputation as undesirable. He has effectively given permission for bullying.

This is an issue ripe for more rigorous congressional oversight — even an independent commission to investigate charges of physical and sexual abuse in the ICE system. But this would require a critical mass of elected Republicans to give a damn about the rights and dignity of migrants. It is a distant dream.



OPINION

Nathan Crabbe, editor  
nathan.crabbe@gainesville.com



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EDITORIAL

Equity plan needs support of community

The Gainesville Sun editorial board

Of all the disparities that exist in Alachua County, perhaps none is more shocking than the achievement gap between black and white public school students.

In the past three years, Alachua County has had the widest gap of all Florida counties between white and black students on state exam results. The “Racial Inequity in Alachua County” report, released in January, found just 27.7 percent of black third graders in the county are proficient in reading as compared to 67.5 percent of white students.

While the school district in recent years has implemented a number of programs aimed at addressing disparities and some of their causes, the issue hasn’t been as much of a School Board and community priority as it needed to be. Last year, the district’s establishment of an Office of Educational Equity and the naming of Valerie Freeman as its first director marked an important move to rectify the problem.

The Sun-sponsored Gainesville For All initiative, which aims to address racial and socioeconomic disparities in our community, had recommended the creation of an equity plan to address the achievement gap and other disparities. Freeman said last week that such a plan will be presented to the School Board in June.

While the roll-out is later than an original target date of March, the delay is understandable given the work Freeman has been doing. Freeman and District Equity Coach Anne Wolf have been meeting with teachers, administrators, parents and other community members to gather feedback and raise awareness of these issues.

At one of those meetings last week, Freeman described a number of pilot programs that have been launched in the district this school year with the goal of expanding them as part of the equity plan. They include expanding access for underrepresented groups to Advanced Placement and dual enrollment courses and a college readiness program.

Equity can’t be achieved just through a bunch of programs, however, so it is good to see that Freeman and Wolf are also working on a cultural shift at schools. Through discussions centered around the book “Courageous Conversations About Race” and training on culturally responsive classrooms, they are helping ensure a learning environment exists across the district where all students have an opportunity to thrive.

But these problems can’t be solved by one school district office. Students need extra preparation before entering kindergarten and help after school, something the Children’s Trust initiative on the November ballot would help fund. Programs such as the Community Partnership School and System of Care provide help for issues related to health and poverty that hinder learning, but these kinds of initiatives need to be expanded throughout neighborhoods in need.

The district’s equity plan is an important step in closing the achievement gap, but the efforts can’t end there. Parents and other community members must give their support to the plan’s objectives while holding the district accountable for following through on them, as well as collaborate on ways to help all children succeed and address other disparities.

ACCORDING TO JAKE



VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Do no harm

That was a deft move for Florida Farm Bureau President John Hoblick to quote Aldo Leopold, the father of modern ecology, in his Earth Day guest column as he praised the conservation ethic of Florida farmers.

But Hoblick skipped the gist of Leopold’s notable quote: “A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of ... soil, waters, fauna, and flora ...”

Hoblick should visit the flow-depleted, slime-encrusted iconic springs of the Suwannee River Valley — smack dab in the middle of ag country. There he’ll find that “integrity, stability and beauty” is quickly fading.

True enough, farmers alone didn’t create this mess; it took a group effort, and now would be a fine time for all Floridians to get serious about real water conservation.

To Hoblick I say, yes we have the right to farm. But first let’s pledge to do no harm.

John Moran, Gainesville

Gullible city

I was happy to read the April 24 story about “The Simpsons” knocking Gainesville. My family and I have lived in many places over the years,

mostly in major cities of the world, and I have to agree that Gainesville is a very dull place compared to any major city.

Gainesville is a beautiful city with nice, polite people. It is a fine place to live if you can tolerate the summer doldrums. It is better for the city to be known as a dull place rather than what it could be most noted for: the gullible city that fell hook, line and sinker for a bunch of biomass power plant investors.

That chapter is a major embarrassment to this community and is especially disappointing due to the number of highly educated professionals in this town. No one here is going to forget this disaster and our elected leaders do not enjoy the trust that they may deserve.

John J. Wernery, Gainesville

Not the root cause

The Sun’s April 25 editorial calls gun violence a public health crisis. What a ridiculous headline. It’s just another of The Sun editorial board’s thinly veiled attempts to promote gun confiscation.

Yes, gun violence is at a high level, but in many big cities it has been at even higher levels for years. The Sun staff ignores the root cause, and it is mental illness.

We have allowed, as a society, for big pharma to drug our children, replacing parenting. We have allowed the entertainment industry to promote violence, which made us numb to gun violence. The video game industry, which kids are addicted to, makes killing an everyday occurrence. And the ridiculing of Go, and church in our schools has reduced morals, as has the abortion industry, cheapening life.

We have a surplus of gun laws on the books, not enforced, and that is the place to start. The Sun should be ashamed.

Dean Tate, Newberry

Designed to distract

U.S. Rep. Ted Yoho has embarrassed our district again by signing a letter asking for federal investigations of former FBI director James Comey and others regarding their handling of the Steele dossier et al.

This ploy is obviously designed to distract and deflect citizens from Donald Trump’s high crimes and misdemeanors.

Please vote him out if he runs for reelection. We can do much better.

Clayton Smith, Gainesville

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An overdue step in confronting America’s racial legacy



James F. Lawrence

Depending on your view of race in America, the recent opening of a national memorial to victims of racial lynchings in Montgomery, Ala., was either akin to pouring salt on an open wound or part of a much-needed healing process.

For me it was the latter. Though I grew up hearing horror stories about the lynching of black people in Florida and across the South, I still found myself shaken by the truths now on display at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

Oprah Winfrey, in a "60 Minutes" report this month, spoke to Bryan Stevenson, an accomplished civil rights lawyer who conceived the idea for the memorial. He said extensive research led to documenting the lynchings of at least 4,300 black men, women and children from 1877 to 1950. Included were Florida lynchings, which prior to 1949 were the highest per capita in the nation.

In Winfrey’s report, much was said about how in 1916 a black teenager, Jesse Washington, was dragged from a Waco, Texas, courtroom after his one-hour long murder trial and hung before a cheering crowd of an estimated 15,000 white people dressed in their Sunday best.

In the same year in Alachua County, six black people, including two women, were hung in Newberry. Five of the victims didn’t even get a trial before

they were taken to a cluster of trees favored for lynchings that came to be known as “Hangman’s Island.”

Just how many lynchings were there in Alachua County? No one can say for certain, but the documented number continues to swell. Most recently the county Historical Commission upped the count from 21 to 43 based on a review of congressional testimonies.

The commission deserves credit for at least trying to set the record straight. But it will take the efforts of others in positions of influence to truly begin to confront the racial demons that still exist in this community.

Of course there will be those who’d rather just move on. They likely agreed with viewers who saw "60 Minutes" as pouring salt on an open wound and complained to producers that photos of black people hanging from limbs were too graphic for prime-time television.

Where is their humanity about such brutal inhumanity? Not only were black citizens lynched, they were tortured. Many were castrated, their bodies soaked in oil and burned, then dragged through black neighborhoods.

This was unadulterated evil. The Montgomery memorial is an overdue step toward truthfully confronting America’s racial legacy.

“If we want to heal, we must educate every American,” Stevenson told Winfrey. “Can’t get to where we want to go if we don’t first tell the truth.”

The Alachua County Commission can play a significant role in truth-telling by authorizing a local memorial to those who lost their lives as a result of racial hatred. The memorial would be a logical extension of

its welcomed decision last year to remove “Old Joe,” a tribute to fallen Confederate soldiers that had been stationed in downtown Gainesville for 113 years.

Alachua County Public Schools acted similarly last year in removing the name Kirby Smith from the district’s headquarters. Smith is believed to be the last Confederate general to surrender during the Civil War.

District leaders should continue to promote racial healing by fully implementing a 25-year-old state law requiring the teaching of African American history. Adherence to the law would go far to educate all students about a racial past that’s been given short shrift for too long.

We must face it to fix it.

James F. Lawrence is director of Gainesville For All.