



Suwannee-St. Johns Group

Sierra Club

Newsletter

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The Florida Master Naturalist Program

BY KELLY BYRAM

This January, IFAS and the Florida Museum of Natural History offer the Coastal Systems Module of the Florida Master Naturalist Program (FMNP). Developed by Dr. Martin Main of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) for environmental educators, ecotourism leaders, and volunteers in environmental settings like our park systems, the course will also appeal to anyone interested in the environment and, in particular, our Florida coastal systems.

Unlike the Master Gardener program, the Florida Master Naturalist Program does not require members to volunteer their time to graduate, but it is hoped that members will make it incumbent upon themselves to take the knowledge they have learned through the course and share it with others in the community, whether by volunteering in a structured environ-

ment or by less formal methods.

The course consists of 40 contact hours and two all-day field trips, one to Marineland on the Atlantic coast and one to Cedar Key on the Gulf coast. Dr. Patti Anderson, Education Coordinator, Florida Museum of Natural History, and Ms. Lorraine Williams, Alachua County Extension 4-H, share teaching responsibilities. Specializing in ethnobotany and plant ecology, Dr. Anderson will concentrate on ecological and botanical issues, while Ms. Williams will focus on reptiles and mammals. The theme of environmental interpretation runs through the course. Dr. Anderson says, "We share an interest in and experience with interpretation of natural areas for adults. Students will benefit from hearing about our varied perspectives and experiences in interpretation."

see NATURALIST, page 5



GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, Dec. 4, 7:30 PM

Entomology & Nematology Bldg., UF, on Hull Road just east of SW 34th Street and the Center for Performing Arts Complex

"SEA TURTLES & FLORIDA COASTAL MANAGEMENT: A DISMAL FUTURE"

GARY APPELSON

SEA TURTLE SURVIVAL LEAGUE
ADVOCACY COORDINATOR
CARIBBEAN CONSERVATION CORP.

Sea Turtles Protecting Their Nests

Gary is going to talk to us about sea turtle natural history and Caribbean Conservation Corporation's new Free the Beach Campaign (FTBC) to address the threats to Florida's nesting sea turtles. Gary has a master's degree in wildlife ecology and has worked with the CCC and its Sea Turtle Survival League for four years now.

FTBC seeks to eliminate or reduce the continued destruction of Florida's remain-

see PROGRAM, page 5

Don't forget to vote in the Sierra Club Executive Committee elections.

There is a ballot and information about the candidates in the November newsletter. We must receive the ballot by Dec. 15.

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Visit the National and Local Sierra Club Websites!

National: <http://www.sierraclub.org> • Local: <http://www.gatorsierra.org>

Suwannee-St. Johns Group Executive Committee

Chair	Linda Pollini	378-2401	thirdeyegrafix@earthlink.net
Conservation Chair	David Auth	371-1991	davidauth@hotmail.com
VC Programs	Kristina Jackson	372-2464	kristinajackson@cox.net
Secretary	Annette Long	490-8930	MLongAKorn@aol.com
Treasurer	Roberta Gastmeyer	336-2404	afn61265@afn.org
Outings Chair	Julie Thaler	395-7441	greengal23@aol.com
Event Coordinator	Matt Hurst	332-6684	mmh1980@hotmail.com
Political Committee	Dwight Adams	378-5129	adams@phys.ufl.edu
Public Relations	Jape Taylor	332-8194	JapeT@nersp.nerdc.ufl.edu
Newsletter Editor	Kathy Cantwell	395-7441	kacmd@aol.com
Government Liaison	Pegeen Hanrahan	377-7960	Mevyleen@aol.com
Webmaster	Louis Clark	373-5377	klouisc@bellsouth.net
Member At Large	Marilyn Walker	374-6642	walkermarilyn@bellsouth.net
Member At Large	Sherry Steiner	375-2563	s.camil@att.net
Alt. FLEX Com Delegate	Rob Brinkman	281-3610	robluna9@yahoo.com
Membership/Newsletter Folding	Scott Camil	375-2563	s.camil@att.net

Newsletter Layout • Colin Whitworth • 372-2464 • colinwhitworth@cox.net

Marisa Visel • Regional Conservation Organizer Sierra Club
Phone: 352.375.6635 • Cell: 850.321.3066 • marisa.visel@sierraclub.org

PHONE TREE

Please contact Kathy Cantwell at 395-7441 by phone or by e-mailing her at Kacmd@aol.com if you would like to assist with the Sierra Club phone tree.

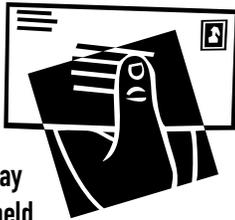
FOLDING PARTY

Interested in hosting a newsletter folding party? Contact Scott Camil at 375-2563

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Please join us at the Sierra Club Holiday Folding Party

Looking for an opportunity to meet other Sierrans? Well, here's your chance!



Our annual Holiday Folding Party will be held on Dec 19th, 7:30 pm. at

Barbara Reid's house at 11 SW 43rd Terrace, Gainesville. We always have a wonderful time - do a little work preparing the newsletters for mailing and have lots of good food and company. It's a great chance to find out more about what is happening in the Club locally and to meet like-minded people. For directions to the party, call Barbara at 372-0046.

SIERRA CLUB CALENDAR SALE

What's colorful, reminds us of the real world we're trying to conserve and protect, and helps us remember what we've done or promised to do in our lives? Sierra Club calendars, of course!

Why should you buy from us? Well, each year, our local Suwannee-St. Johns Sierra Club Group sells these lovely calendars as a fundraiser, and many of us don't know what we would do without them. And, you save money! We sell the calendars at a discount off the cover price you would pay in a retail outlet.

The Wilderness wall calendar (\$11) shows a month at a glance, with a gorgeous nature scene at the top of each page. The Engagement calendar (\$12) has one page per week, each with a breathtaking photo of the natural world.

Beyond your own personal enjoyment of these calendars, don't forget that the holidays can be great, but gift shopping can be a chore. Sierra Club calendars are perfect gifts for your friends and family. They'll enjoy this gift every day of 2004!

Calendars are available at all General Meetings (October 2, November 6, and December 4). If you live outside of Gainesville or are unable to attend our meetings, call Joanne Auth at 352.371.1991 to discuss other arrangements. If you are a member who has contacts where the calendars may be sold to co-workers/friends, call for information about taking a few to sell. We appreciate the help!



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The Council of 100 and the Future of Our Water

BY KATHY CANTWELL

What is the Council of 100? According to a recent document they submitted to the Governor:

"The Florida Council of 100 exists to promote the economic growth of Florida and to improve the economic well-being and quality of life of its citizens. It is a private, non-profit, non-partisan association whose members represent a cross-section of key business leaders in Florida. ... The Water Management Task Force was established in the spring of 2002 to recommend statewide water management policies and recommendations that foster sustainable and environmentally sound water supplies and resources that are economically feasible to meet current and future Florida needs."

Some of their members: John Baker President & CEO, Florida Rock Industries, Alf Fanjul Chairman & CEO, Florida Crystals Corporation (mass producers of sugar cane and major polluters of the Everglades); Jeff Gargiulo President & CEO, Sunkist Growers; Gary Morse Chairman & CEO, The Villages (huge, enormous mega-development in Central Florida). This is just a sampling.

Some of their more controversial recommendations, according to the report submitted to the governor (*Note: editor's comments in italics*):

Establish a Water Supply Commission, with a statewide perspective, to ensure an adequate water supply to sustain the environment and accommodate forecasted population growth. (*In other words, take away local control and give it to appointed CEO's with political connections, to ensure their ability to use water indiscriminately to promote their own industries.*)

Find ways to encourage public-private partnerships and public-public partnerships. (*In other words, privatize our water.*)

Conduct analysis to determine practicality of a statewide water distribution system that ensures all safeguards for future growth and protection of the environment. (*In other words, make the less populated areas of the state supply water to the over-developed, water-starved areas of the state instead of making the latter use water conservation and growth management to meet future needs.*)

CONTRARY TO THE "GANG OF 100S" PERCEPTIONS, THERE IS NO EXCESS WATER IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA. EVERY DROP IS BEING FULLY UTILIZED BY PEOPLE AND NATURAL SYSTEMS.

The following is the Florida Chapter of the Sierra Club's response to this report:

In a recently released report, the pro-development Council of 100 has advocated widespread changes in the way water resources are managed in the state of Florida. It attacks the current system of public ownership and local control of distribution of water, replacing it with a politicized system and privatization.

The "Gang of 100" seeks to impact areas of the state that have not yet outstripped their water resources, by having large amounts of this vital resource taken from them to supply areas that have allowed uncontrolled growth to outstrip the availability of cheap water. The Gang's plan will have the added effect of enabling the unbridled growth of South Florida, with all its impacts on the environment and quality of life.

"With all of its potential impacts to our state's water resources, growth management and the environment, it's probably the worst idea we've seen in a long time," said Greg Kalmbach, Chairman of the Florida Chapter.

Who is the Gang of 100? Business, industry and development leaders and lobbyists. It is the same group of industry lobbyists that has pushed for the weakening of the Everglades cleanup criteria, and the injection of wastewater into the fragile underground aquifers that they call "storage".

Due to unmanaged growth in South Florida, and a reluctance to conserve the resource, business and development advocates are trying to push a proposal that would, among other things, set up a statewide Water Supply Commission. Its far-reaching authority would supercede that of the existing Water Management Districts. Ironically, the state government that always advocates for "less government" appears willing to consider adding another layer of bureaucracy to an already complex system.

This politicized Water Supply Commission appointed by the Governor would take away county and regional control of the public's water supply. It will decide how water is to be distributed throughout the state, and will likely set up a water transfer system from the North to the South.

This dangerous idea will create a new "Civil War" over water. The statutes that protect areas of the state from "water grabs", the Local Sources First laws, will be thrown out, replaced by a politicized system of distribution for our most precious resource. What priority will the needs of natural systems have? Likely, dead last.

Contrary to the "Gang of 100s" perceptions, there is no excess water in the state of Florida. Every drop is being fully utilized by people and natural systems. When too much water is taken out of these systems, we see grave damage such as to the Everglades, the subject of a multi-billion dollar cleanup, and Tampa Lakes, where draw downs have created an ecological desert. The health of all our estuaries is dependent upon freshwater inflow.

Who will need water in the future? Those areas in the north which are seen by the Gang as water-rich, and ripe for the plucking, are growing as well, and will someday need all their water. Then where will they pipe it from? This plan will discourage conservation and result in even worse water shortages in the future.

Another of the Gang's dangerous ideas is the privatization of water resource development and distribution. This proposal

Help for the Recycler

BY JOANNE AUTH

It's easy to lose track of the recycling options in our county. Here is a brief guide to those services.



WEB TIP

If you haven't checked it out recently, it's worth a few minutes of your time to visit the Alachua County Public Works web information site on waste management at:

<http://www.alachua-wastewatchers.org/recyclingCenters.htm>

For example, it tells about the Leveda Brown Environmental Park and the facilities, hours, and services located there for public use. In case you haven't been there, it's on Waldo Road at NE 63rd Avenue.

This is an increasingly helpful destination for home or business owners who want to understand their options for discarded materials.

One of the buildings, SP Recycling (352-378-3001), now accepts OFFICE PAPER, as well as corrugated cardboard, newspaper, magazines, plastics (1 & 2, any color), glass, and metal cans.

Best times for drop-off are during staffing, Monday-Friday, 7:00-5:00. Saturdays, the gate should be open from 8:00-noon and bins available, but please be sure not to bring trash items because that area may not be open.

TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

This is a partnership of the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners and the School Board of Alachua County that offers a place for teachers to shop for school supplies at no cost. Businesses and individuals donate the materials, and teachers visit the free store to select items for their students. For more information and updates on this program, contact Alachua County Waste Management Division, 352-374-5213, or <sblythe@co.alachua.fl.us>.

TELEPHONE BOOK RECYCLING CONTEST

Alachua County is once again sponsoring a contest with monetary prizes for the schools collecting the most phone

SP RECYCLING PAYS FOR SOME ITEMS. IF YOU HAVE LARGE QUANTITIES, THEY PAY:

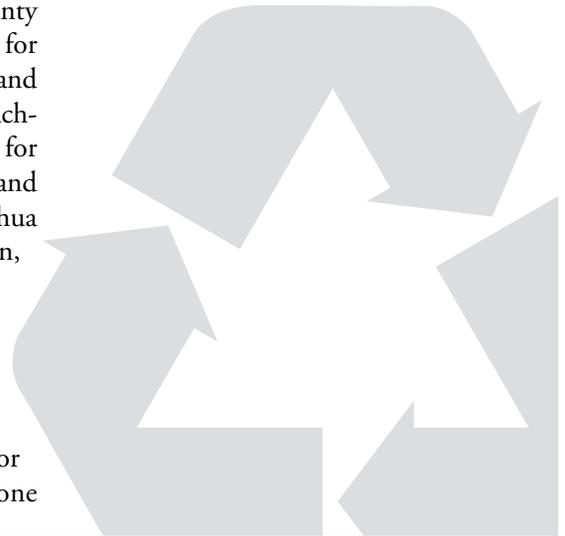
Newspaper	30 per ton or \$1.50 per 100 lbs
Corrugated cardboard	ditto
Office paper	\$2 per 100 lbs.
Aluminum cans	approx. \$0.35 to \$0.40 per pound, depending upon the market.

(This information was obtained on November 12, 2003 and is subject to change.)

books. The contest runs from November 3 until January 30. Call 352-374-5245, extension 285 for more information.

AlachuaExchange.com

You may also want to visit this site that explains how you can donate nonhazardous materials for use by others as well as how you can obtain useful materials.



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Mulching Responsibly

BY KELLY BYRAM

With the cool weather of late autumn, many in Florida return to their gardens, cutting back the greenery that has been allowed to flourish during the summer months and mulching the garden beds.

Surprisingly, such a mundane task has big environmental implications here in Florida. Mulching helps conserve water and keep weeds down, in addition to guarding against erosion of topsoil—a rare commodity in Florida, it seems. However, choosing the wrong mulch—specifically, cypress mulch—can, on balance, turn a good deed bad.

Cypress mulch is amazingly cheap and

available at home stores, nurseries, and even grocery stores, but its production is taking a toll on the number of cypress trees and the quality of the ecosystems in which they live. Historically considered superior for its pest-resistance and appearance, both beliefs have been debunked by researchers: termites eat the mulch (only melaleuca mulch is termite resistant), and some say cypress loses its good looks inside of six months, necessitating replenishment.

So, when selecting your mulch this year,

investigate your non-cypress options. While mulch doesn't need to be bought (leaves from the yard will do quite nicely), there are many low-impact bagged options, including pine bark and eucalyptus mulch. But the option with the most poetic justice is Melaleuca mulch. Melaleuca, an exotic invasive tree originating in Australia, has marched across southern Florida like Sherman's army and is unaffected by herbicides and burning. It can only be removed manually, and if a company is willing to rid us of this pest while offering a mulch alternative that is long-lasting and termite-resistant, their product should be given due consideration.

For more information about alternative mulches and the negative impacts of cypress mulch:
<http://news.ifas.ufl.edu/story.php?id=12> • <http://stjohns.ifas.ufl.edu/Presentation/mulches.ppt>
http://monroe.ifas.ufl.edu/jan03_mulching_your_yard.htm

NATURALIST, from page 1

As a special benefit to students taking the class through the museum, guest speakers from the Florida Museum of Natural History's research staff will speak to the class, and specimens from the museum's highly regarded collections will be used in class for species identification.

As a graduate of both the Freshwater Wetlands and Coastal Systems modules, I would encourage both environmental professionals and the curious to take this class as it becomes available or, if swamps are more your thing, sign up for the Freshwater Wetlands module.

This Coastal Systems module runs January 6, 2004 through March 23, 2004,

but students must register by December 23, 2003.

The cost is \$200, which includes course manuals and the field trips. The program's website, www.masternaturalist.org, contains more information about the program and its current and developing modules, as well as a county-by-county listing of available courses.

PROGRAM, from page 1

ing coastal habitat by addressing the root causes—poorly designed coastal management policies and ineffective enforcement of existing laws and regulations. The greatest threats to sea turtle nesting and foraging habitats are related to human activity, including improperly sited coastal development, coastal armoring, poorly designed beach nourishment projects, beach front lighting and marine pollution.

Come hear more about these fascinating sea animals and what you can do to help them survive. For more information visit the FTBC website at www.ccturtle.org/florida/free-the-beach.htm

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Court Date for Alachua County Comp Fight Set

BY DWIGHT ADAMS

The long anticipated court battle over the Alachua County comprehensive plan is now set for December 9-10 and 15-19, to take place in the Community Treasures Room of the county administration building, corner SE 1st Street and Univ. Ave. It starts at 10:00 am and is open to the public (could be standing room only since the room is small).

We have an impressive list of expert witnesses, including Reid Ewing, nationally known land use planner who has written "The Book" on planning and is quoted as an authority in Alachua County's documentation supporting the 2002 plan. We will give them a run for the money that is being paid to expensive lawyers. (How do you like paying taxes for county lawyers and staff to fight against the 2002 plan that we spent hundreds of hours getting passed?)

In addition to our challenge, in which we are represented by David Russ, attorney Patrice Boyes is representing several Jonesville area property owners. They object to their property being on the map of possible strategic ecosystems (KBN/Golder study) and want to have

them taken out.

Other clients of Boyes are owners of former UF Foundation property located 2-3 miles north of Jonesville on county road 241. They want to have sewer extended there, although the property is well outside the Urban Services Line (USL) even after it was greatly enlarged by the developers' settlement agreement (2003 plan). They want to become vested under the 1991 plan so they don't have to meet provisions of the 2002 plan. This is on the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) agenda for plat approval for Nov. 25.

Drummond, Growth Management Director, said, "developers are rushing to get through the process before the rules change and they know that they may not make it."

Boyes is trying the same process that worked so well for rural landowners and developers in the challenge to 2002 plan—mediation. They hope to get what they are unlikely to get in an administrative hearing. But time and what they want are not in their favor. After one day-long meeting and a couple of phone conference calls, there is no settlement agreement. Boyes

MOTIONS HAVE BEEN FLYING THICK AND FAST AS YOU CAN VIEW BY GOING TO THE DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING WEB SITE: [HTTP://WWW.DOAH.STATE.FL.US/INTERNET/DEFAULT.CFM](http://www.doah.state.fl.us/internet/default.cfm), ENTER ANY OF THE NUMBERS 02-26676GM, 03-3983GM, OR 03-3984GM INTO "QUICK DOCKET" AND CLICK ON IT.

If they manage to get this hurriedly approved, they may be "home free". Our position, supported by law, is that any policies not being challenged in an administrative hearing are now in effect. Rick

could ask for a "continuation," meaning a delay in the trial dates.

THANK YOU to all who contributed to our legal fund! We are very appreciative and amazed at the response we have gotten.

SIERRA CLUB BRAND COFFEE NOW AVAILABLE

Ready for your morning coffee but not the guilt that the supermarket version can produce? Sierra Club has the answer. Now you can support the Club's work, fair wages for farmers and a greener earth, all by imbibing your favorite stimulant.

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Whole Bean or Drip Grind - Custom Blend Regular (\$10)
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The Continuing Saga of SW 24th Ave.

BY ROB BRINKMAN

For once I am pleased to be the bearer of good news! At the November 4th meeting of the County Commission, Chair Rodney Long voted with Commissioners Byerly and Wheat to return to the two-lane design for SW 24th Avenue.

This change from a four-lane back to a two-lane design was prompted by developer Clark Butler, who stubbornly refused to accept the modified contract he had negotiated with Alachua County staff. The Commission had inserted a requirement that Mr. Butler file an application for a Development of Regional Impact (DRI) study within six months.

They also requested him to repay the county nearly \$900,000 if he annexed his property into the city within 10 years. DRIs are required when doing large developments because they can affect a large region (sometimes several counties). Mr. Butler has so far avoided doing a DRI. This makes it difficult to determine how much his development would effect roads in the area. It also makes it difficult to know how much he would have to "mitigate" or pay for those changes.

He offered a "donation" of \$2.7 million towards paving of SW 24th Ave., but only on the condition that he be given a "credit" when the traffic mitigation estimate is determined by a future DRI. (Does

that sound like a donation to you?)

There is much more to the story than the difference between a two and four-lane road. At stake is the kind of development that will take place in the area around this road.

A community design charette had envisioned a walkable student village where students could walk, bike or bus to either campus or the adjacent Butler plaza. This design called for SW 24th Ave. to be built as a two-lane road with bike lanes and side-walks.

Developing this area as student housing was regarded as preferable to continued westward sprawl of apartment complexes. As Commissioner Byerly stated, "The size of the road will control how the area is developed. There are profound differences in the impact these two alternatives will have on the community."

While Butler and some commissioners have argued that a two-lane road would be inadequate and that four lanes were needed to relieve congestion, a traffic study paid for in part by Butler determined that a two-lane road was indeed adequate.

There is still the matter of plans to extend the road across the Natural Area Teaching Lab (NATL) in the SW corner of campus. This would bisect the largest natural area remaining on the UF campus, significantly harming NATL's research

value. Previously, UF President Young had told Alachua County that the University would donate the land for this road extension. He has recently clarified that statement to be merely a "recommendation" for a Master Plan amendment.

The Natural Area Advisory Committee and the Sun have agreed that he should withdraw the offer. To learn more about NATL and both sides of the issue go to <http://natl.ifas.ufl.edu/24thAve.htm>

Earlier this year, the Board of County Commissioners scrapped an ongoing air monitoring program. This supposedly saved the county \$200,000. They then turned around and spent about \$200,000 on a four-lane design for Butler's road. It will now not be used. Is that how you want your tax dollars spent?

**THIS CHANGE FROM A FOUR-LANE
BACK TO A TWO-LANE DESIGN
WAS PROMPTED BY DEVELOPER
CLARK BUTLER'S STUBBORNNESS
IN REFUSING TO ACCEPT THE
MODIFICATIONS TO THE CONTRACT
HE HAD NEGOTIATED WITH
ALACHUA COUNTY STAFF.**

COUNCIL OF 100, from page 3

would set up a massive for-profit industry controlling the public's water and regulated only by politicians susceptible to influence from election contributions. Other places in the country where this idea has been tried report horror stories of dramatic increases in costs and reduced availability of water. Private control of the public's water is an invitation to exploitation.

"People cannot live without clean, affordable drinking water," said John Swingle, Conservation Chair of the Sierra Club Florida Chapter. "And our water reserves should not be doled out as a reward

to big dollar campaign contributors."

"This plan is a prescription for disaster," said Rosalie Shaffer, Chair of the Florida Chapter's Water and Wetlands Committee. "And the real truth is that it is unnecessary. With good conservation measures in place and wise growth management, it is not needed." She points out that according to a recent series on water in the Orlando Sentinel, about half of the water used by people in Florida is used for agricultural purposes. Half of the non-agricultural use is for landscaping. "It's been estimated that half of that water can be conserved through water-saving technologies and reuse," she said.

However, the Gang's report hardly

touches on conservation; the emphasis is on water transfer and privatization.

This plan will exacerbate future water shortages, drive up costs, and damage water-dependent ecosystems and wildlife resources. In addition, any water transfer system of pipelines will cost the taxpayers billions of dollars—money that would be better used for conservation measures and stormwater control.

"What this is really about," says Susie Caplowe, Florida Chapter lobbyist, "is the hijacking of the public's water supply to encourage more runaway development in South Florida, and create a multi-billion dollar industry for water profiteers. The public needs to say NO loud and clear."

DECEMBER 2003 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 4, Thursday, 7:30 PM. General meeting at the entomology/nematology building on UF campus Rm.1031-1033

December 12, Friday Deadline for submitting articles to the newsletter.

December 15, Monday, 7 PM Election ballots counted at Joanne Auth's house 425 NE 7 St. 352-371-1991

December 18, Thursday, 7 PM. EXCOM meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Church library, 4225 NW 34 Street, Gainesville. New officers elected.

December 19, Friday, 7:30 PM, at Barbara Reid's house at 11 SW 43rd Terrace, Gainesville Holiday Newsletter Folding Party For directions, call 352-372-0046. See inside newsletter for details.

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