

GUARDIAN

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Gainesville Pride Festival Special Edition

Thirty Years and Still Fighting: HRCNF Celebrates the Past and Builds for the Future

This August, Human Rights Council of North Central Florida (HRCNCF), celebrated its 30th birthday since its founding in 1993. HRCNCF began in the early 1990's leading the fight to add LGB discrimination to the Alachua County Human Rights Ordinance, then continuing with the Gainesville HRO, partnership benefits, transgender rights and protections and much more.

Throughout the years we've interviewed local candidates about LGBT+ issues and shared their responses in our newsletter, The Guardian. HRCNCF also informs area residents through panels, forums, and programs about our local LGBT+ history and issues. We've successfully helped lead campaigns to defeat efforts such as "No On One", an infamous anti-trans bathroom initiative. We adopted a section of NW 34th Street as part of Gainesville's Adopt-A-Street program. HRCNCF works collaboratively with other organizations dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation and other forms of discrimination.

In recent years HRCNCF has lost board members who were HRCNCF officers as well as community leaders. Bob Karp and Craig Lowe passed earlier this year and Terry Fleming in 2020. HRCNCF was left with a need for new people to step up and ensure we would continue as an effective LGBTQ+ organization. Fortunately, when we put out the call for help this summer, community folks answered. We knew we were still in the fight to end discrimination!

Thank you to the following for filling the board vacancies. Welcome to new HRCNCF Secretary Kristen Young. Welcome to new HRCNCF Board of Directors Rachel La Combe, Diane McDilda, and Alton McDilda.

Many thanks to Flo Turcotte who recently left the President's office after a long tenure. Congratulations to Tracy Moorman who moved up from Vice President to President. Tim Martin continues as Treasurer. Sue Eichner and Linda Bassham serve as board members. We still have a vacant V.P. slot to fill. Join us to continue the fight! The last couple years there has been a resurgence in discriminatory statutes, actions, and attitudes. This is not the time to take our rights for granted.

Anyone interested in more information about joining the HRCNCF Board of Directors, please email HRCNCF2@gmail.com.

HRCNCF Meeting Time and New Venue

HRCNCF meets at the new PRIDE Center, near Santa Fe College, 3850 NW 83rd ST, Unit 201, on the second Thursday of each month, at 7:00 p.m. All who share our goals are welcome. You don't need to be on the board to be a valuable member. Since this summer we've had great meetings with many different people participating, contributing ideas, taking on tasks and pitching in with projects like the Pride Community float in the UF Homecoming Parade. Want to join us? There's lots to do, especially in the upcoming year!

Beyond Presidential: Important State and Local Races are on 2024 Ballot

Next year is a presidential election year with a number of important state and local seats and issues on the ballot. Look for candidate questionnaires and more information about amendments from HRCNCF in 2024.

Two state constitutional initiatives that will drive voter turn-out include Adult Personal Use of Marijuana, which has met the voter signature threshold, and the Amendment to Limit Government Interference with Abortion, which is nearly at fifty percent of the signature threshold to make the ballot.

This is the first election cycle that the single-member voting amendment for the Alachua County Commission is in effect.

The 2024 primary election, which includes the School Board elections, is August 20th and the general election is November 5th.

Seats that Alachua County voters will see on their 2024 ballot include:

- United States Senator
- All U.S. Representatives
- State Attorney 8th Circuit
- Public Defender 8th Circuit
- State Senator District 8
- State House Districts 10, 21, 22
- Alachua County Board of County Commission Districts 1, 3 and 5
- Alachua County Constitutional Officers: Clerk of Court, Property Appraiser, Sheriff, Supervisor of Elections, and Tax Collector
- Alachua County School Board District 2 and District 4
- Gainesville City Commission At-Large A, At-Large B, and District 1

Your Vote-By-Mail Ballot Request Was Cancelled! What To Do Do Now

As a result of new state voting laws passed in 2021, all active vote-by-mail ballot requests in Florida expired at the end of 2022. In order to vote by mail-in ballot in the next election, voters MUST submit a new request.

You can request to vote by mail online, in person, by mail, by telephone, or by fax. Visit the Alachua County Supervisor of Elections website for more information and to sign up to vote by mail: www.votealachua.com/Voters/Vote-by-Mail.

Voting by mail is secure, efficient, convenient, and inclusive. Alachua County voters don't need postage to return their ballot and you can track the status of your ballot online from when it is mailed to you to when it is counted.

More voters signing up to vote by mail leads to increased turn-out and helps campaigns focus limited resources on getting remaining voters to the polls.

Everyone may not be aware that their mail-in ballot request was cancelled, so we need your help to spread the word and to create change in 2024.

HRCNCF Marks Twenty-Five Years of Keeping Alachua County Beautiful

Since 1998, HRCNCF members have teamed up and served the greater community by volunteering every other month to pick up litter on a section of NW 8th Avenue, west of NW 34th Street. HRCNCF's name appears on signs along the roadway. Contact us to find out how to join in on the fun of our next Adopt-A-Street clean-up.

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Donations to support the work of HRCNCF, including printing and mailing The Guardian, can be made by mail or online. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram.