MOBILE BAY LABOR JOURNAL



November 2026

Issue #12

ISSUE #12
Mobile Bay Labor Journal
November 1st, 2026

FRONT MATTERS

Page 03
Alcoholics Anonymous: One Size Fits Most — by Ashton Baroni

Page 06
Prison Letters: Mary Nix — by Mary Nix

Page 07
Murdered by the State: The Death of Kohen Wiley — by Cypress

Page 12
All Workers of the World Unite — by Michael Kimble

Page 14
Prison Letters : I Am One / The Same — by Elizabeth Austin

Page 16
The Plight of the Exposed Pussy — by Holly

Page 22-24
Local Events

Go to our new website!

mobilebaylaborjournal.org

Alcoholics Anonymous

A One Size Fits Some

Art and Article by Ashton Baroni

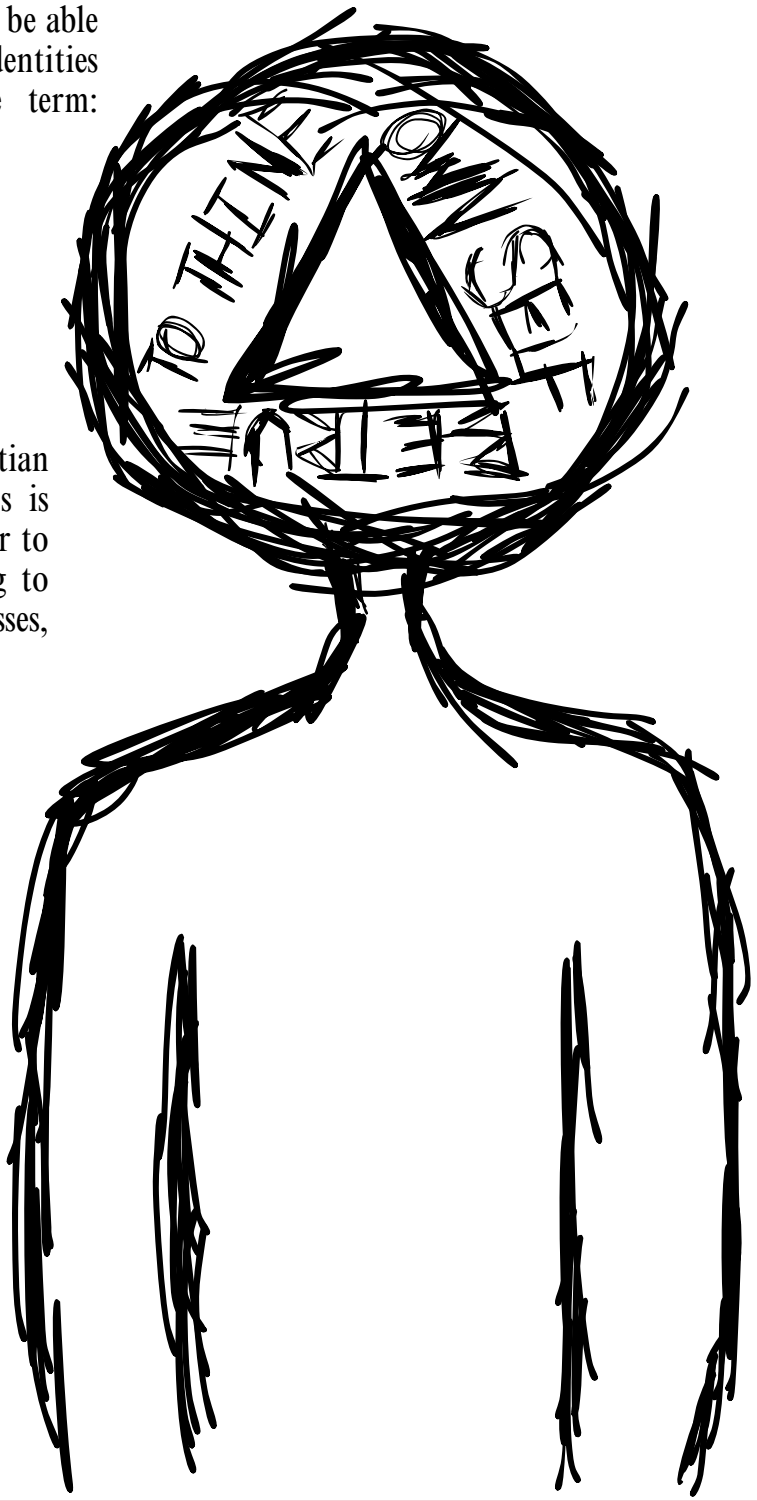
Alcoholics Anonymous is a group that was formed in 1935, where people struggling with alcoholism wanted to be able to share their struggles, while keeping their identities hidden and statements confidential. Hence the term: Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Alcoholics Anonymous program has been beneficial to the sobriety of millions since the first meeting in the 1930's, but there is a widespread concern, specifically in regions such as the deep south: inclusivity.

Alcoholics Anonymous has been known to be a Christian based program, even though one of the 12 steps is "made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him," meaning to have faith in whatever you believe in. This encompasses, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Paganism, etc.

But even with that, the program is still heavily based on Christianity, as it was created in the 1930s, and hasn't been updated much since then. It's the same 12 steps, the same Promises of AA, and the same prayers. Yes, sobriety is life-changing, but so is the ability to be yourself without any fear of judgment, or weird looks from all around the room.

This also goes for people who identify as queer, and people who are disabled. In these spaces, one may hear "just take whatever resonates and go on from there." But given the current political climate, it is extremely difficult to feel safe anywhere as a baseline, let alone in a room where there is at least one person who is fighting against your right to exist.

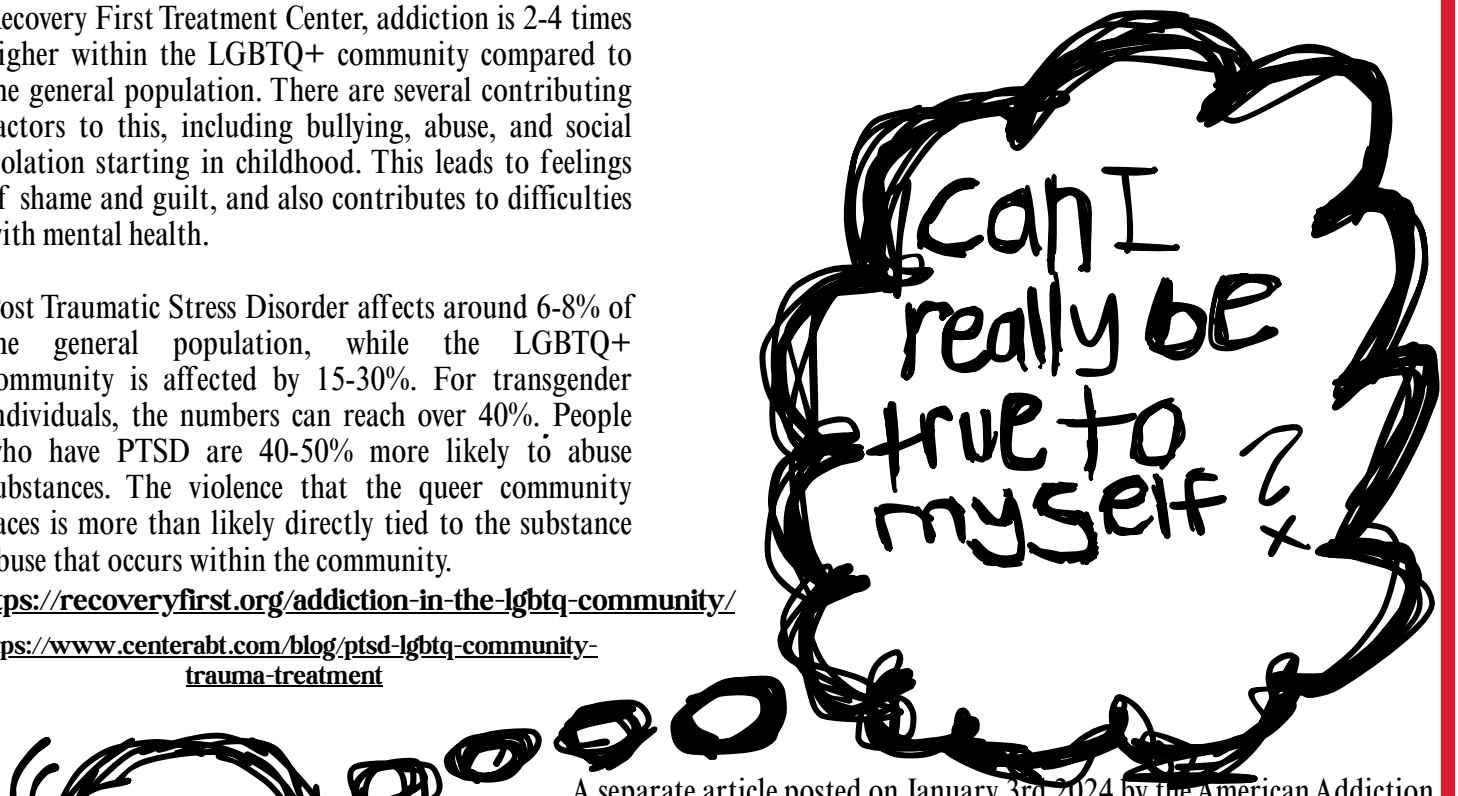


According to an article posted on May 22nd, 2025 by Recovery First Treatment Center, addiction is 2-4 times higher within the LGBTQ+ community compared to the general population. There are several contributing factors to this, including bullying, abuse, and social isolation starting in childhood. This leads to feelings of shame and guilt, and also contributes to difficulties with mental health.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder affects around 6-8% of the general population, while the LGBTQ+ community is affected by 15-30%. For transgender individuals, the numbers can reach over 40%. People who have PTSD are 40-50% more likely to abuse substances. The violence that the queer community faces is more than likely directly tied to the substance abuse that occurs within the community.

https://recoveryfirst.org/addiction-in-the-lgbtq-community/

https://www.centerabt.com/blog/ptsd-lgbtq-community-trauma-treatment



A separate article posted on January 3rd 2024 by the American Addiction Centers states that 4.7 million people with disabilities also have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder of some sort. Many people who are disabled will use some sort of substance to self-medicate. For those struggling with chronic pain, they may not have the ability to get adequate care. This can be due to insurance not covering specialist visits, medication costs, or physical therapy. For those who are disabled due to mental disorders, they may be desperately trying to find a way to function like everyone else. PTSD may play a factor here as well, as around 70% of disabled people experience some form of abuse, and are also three times more likely to be sexually assaulted.

https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/community-corner/2025-03-people-living-disabilities-are-increased-risk-domestic-violence

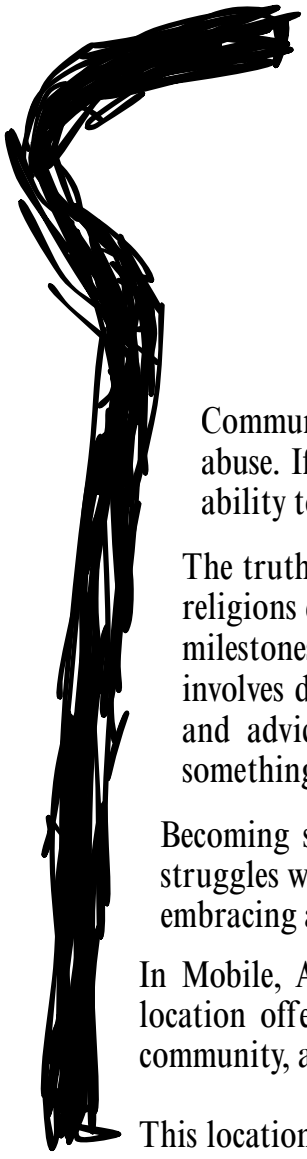
https://americanaddictioncenters.org/blog/disability-pride-month-and-substance-abuse

These numbers are massive, and the cases of disabled and queer folks addiction are usually far different from someone who is able-bodied and cisgender/heterosexual. These cases of addiction can stem from a lack of medical care, discrimination, and abuse that is specific to being queer or disabled. Many of the stressors that become the foundation for addiction are directly caused by systemic issues.

This is not to downplay the experiences of someone who has battled addiction and are not in those categories, but it does point out that the experiences are unique, and that it may require a different approach than the 12 step program that everyone is familiar with.

Something else that has presented itself as an issue, is people having court mandated AA meetings related to a DUI or other related drug charges. Since Alcoholics Anonymous is classified as a spiritual group, it would be a violation of their first amendment to order them to go to those meetings. Unfortunately, judges don't tend to view Alcoholics Anonymous as a spiritual based group. It does not have the same structure as a place like rehab would, or a place that provides group therapy for substance abuse. There is a general misconception that it's just another place to go when you are recovering from alcoholism or other substances. In rehab or group therapy, they are focused on the medical aspect of recovery and giving coping mechanisms to handle triggers and cravings. Alcoholics Anonymous doesn't offer that structure of medical care and getting to the root of the problem.





P.E.I.R.
people engaged in recovery



Community is extremely important when recovering from alcoholism and other substance abuse. If someone does not feel safe where they are going, or feel that they do not have the ability to authentically be themselves, it hinders their recovery.

The truth of the matter is, the queer community, disabled community, and people of different religions do need groups and meetings where they can start their journey of sobriety, celebrate milestones, and create community without having to compromise themselves. Becoming sober involves developing a deep understanding of oneself. Sometimes it does require outside input and advice, but that advice should not come with persuasion to leave behind a part of something that is truly you.

Becoming sober should not mean that you have to hide the fact you're queer, minimize your struggles with being disabled, or giving up your religious beliefs. If anything, it should be about embracing and accepting yourself where others refused to do so.

In Mobile, Alabama, there is a location called The PEIR, People Engaged In Recovery. This location offers Dharma, Agnostic, and Pagan meetings. They're also accepting of the lgbtq+ community, and hold different events that are substance and alcohol-free.

This location is a fantastic example of being inclusive with recovery, and allowing space for all to grow and become the best they can be, while finding community in the process.

PRISON LETTER FROM MARY NIX

July 15th, 2026

My name is Mary Nix AIS# 222042. I am currently being housed at the Birmingham Work Release/Birmingham Community Based Center.

I have served 25 years on a Life Sentence for a murder I didn't commit, long story short my 3 month old son was killed and I was set up to take the fall.

I am unable to work at the "real jobs" making a "real" paycheck, the most I will be able to make is $2-$3 a day but I don't even have that at this time. I work in the "State" Laundry washing/drying/folding peoples clothes for no pay. As for those that actually work here, they pay $5 a day for van rides (to & from work- $2.50 each way), $15 a month laundry- only the state sees that, 40% for housing and on top of that a percentage towards their fines & restitution. So the more they make the more the State/ALDOC takes.

Some of us who can't work these kinds of jobs have little to no financial support, no visits, and "hustle" to get what we want/need off canteen. I am one of the ones who doesn't get money, except once a year for Christmas, from home nor do I get visits.

If anyone would like to help me financially my info is: Mary Nix AIS# 222042. To put money on my books (account) it is: Access Secure Deposit 866-345-1884 or www.inmatedeposits.com, to put money on my phone: ICSolutions 866-506-8407 or https://icsonline.icsolutions.com. If you would like to text me or have a Video Visit you will have to set up a Corrlinks account adding money to both our ends (yours & mine). Anything to do with me, or anyone incarcerated in ALDOC, to put money on our phones or Corrlink accounts is usually "Inmate Debit".

"Jails in Alabama charge up to $3.75 for a 15 minute phone call, reaping profits for companies, while prisons charge 75¢ for a phone call."

From prisonpolicy.org/profiles/AL

We occationally get to order out, if we have the funds to do so. We are allowed to recieve books and mail, if you wish to write me, although I am in Alabama, you will have to send the letter to:

ALDOC Inmate Mail Processing
Mary Nix AIS#222042
P.O. Box 17339
San Antonio, TX 78217

And it has to be addressed just like I wrote it then it will be put on my tablet for me to see.

If you want to correspond with feel free and if you have questions ask and I will answer as honest as I possibly can.

Also, I have a parole review/consideration date (PCD) for January, 2028 and no E.O.S. (end of sentence) date, my minimum release date is 00/00/0000 and my long date is 99/99/9999. I got arrested at 19 years old, May 5, 2001, sentenced March 18, 2002 and came to prison on May 22, 2002- exactly 4 months after my 20th birthday (January 22). I am 44 years old now.

Now as for my living conditions- there is 12 dorms here with 20-24 women per dorm on metal bunk beds and cheap mats to sleep on. The foods not the best but it's edible.

If someone wishes to try to help us in the legal aspect... do something to benefit long term "violent offenders". May try to get changes made so we can go out to actually work. Help us help ourselves and to be able to better take care of ourselves.

Thank you so much for your time, concern, and consideration in all I have talked about. I pray you find it in your heart to help us in some way, shape, form, or fashion.

Sincerly & Respectfully
Mary Nix
AIS# 222042

MURDER BY THE STATE THE DEATH OF KOHEN WILEY

By Cypress

In our neighboring state of Mississippi, roughly 350 miles away, lies the town of Senatobia. It is a small town with a population of roughly 8,500 people, around 40% of those individuals are Black[1]. For comparison of size, our city of Mobile has a population of over 200,000 people. **On June 14, 2026, 1-year-old Kohen Wiley was murdered by an officer of the Senatobia Police Department.** The name of the officer responsible for Kohen's murder had originally not been released, but it has since been confirmed that **Sgt. Hunter Foste**r is the officer that fired the gun that killed Kohen Wiley.

The calamity began with a report to Senatobia police of two women with a baby carrying a box of diapers out of the local Walmart on U.S. 51 and running to the car. One of these young women was 20-year-old Vallesiya Wiley, affectionately known as 'Punkinn' by friends and family members. Vallesiya had her son, Kohen, in her arms. The other woman present was Vallesiya's aunt, who was the driver of the vehicle. According to the statement made by the Department of Public Safety "Officers encountered two subjects and a juvenile child fleeing from the store into a vehicle. Officers attempted to stop the vehicle, but the driver drove in the direction of the officers, almost striking one[2]." **No officers present sustained any injuries, yet the driver of the vehicle was left critically injured and Kohen Wiley dead.**



After the brutal murder, multiple requests were made for the body cam footage to be shown to the family and released to the public. Kohen's family, friends, and community waited over four months for access to this footage. In the footage, you can clearly see Hunter Foster is beside the vehicle, not in front of it. He ran towards the vehicle himself with his gun drawn. The driver swerves to avoid hitting him even after he attempts to put himself in front of the moving car. There were five officers with weapons drawn in the Walmart parking lot in response to a report that "two girls are running." **There was never any mention of shoplifting and neither woman present has been charged with any crime.**

Why would multiple officers have their gun drawn, and fired multiple times, in a circumstance that was not confirmed and at most would be a misdemeanor charge? If no crime was committed, how were the women to know why the officers were charging towards them with their weapons drawn? If it is said the gun was fired because the vehicle was driving in the direction of the officer 'almost striking one', why did the autopsy report find that Kohen was shot from the right passenger window with the bullet entering the right side of his chest and exiting the left[3]? If the officer truly feared for his life, how was he able to put his hand on the passenger side mirror of the car as it passed before he began shooting? Why did four months pass without the release of the body cam footage and how was that timing used to manipulate public opinion?

On October 19, three days before the release of the footage, the Mississippi Attorney General declared that the killing was "justified," and stated that the officer would not be prosecuted or face any criminal charges. This is devastating.



Another horrific aspect of this situation is the harsh backlash, criticism, and racism that Kohen's mother is facing after having her son murdered by police. People online celebrated the officer being dismissed from prosecution and asked "when will the mother be charged?" There is a gruesome and damaging online rhetoric that she used Kohen as "a human shield." The lack of empathy or understanding surrounding the situation is sickening and dehumanizing.



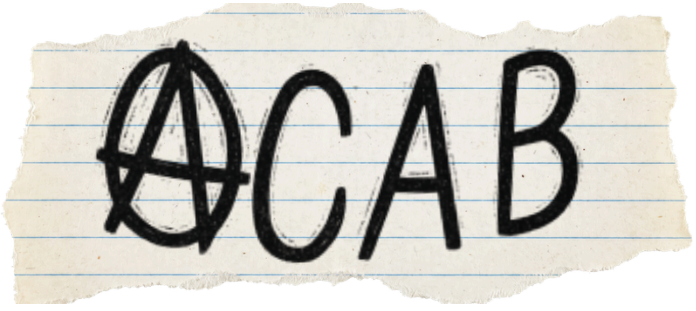
As a Black woman in America, the reality of police brutality and execution is something you have to be vigilantly aware of, particularly in the Deep South. When she raised Kohen Wiley up for the officers to see, it was an attempt to appeal to their emotions by showing that there was a baby present in the vehicle because all three of their lives were in immediate danger. The Senatobia officers present at the scene knew there were two women and a baby in the car, and Hunter Foster chose to shoot into the vehicle anyway. His reckless and violent response critically injured an innocent person and left a young mother with the memory and the grief of her one year old child dying an entirely preventable death in her arms as she rushed him to the hospital.

Before murdering Kohen Wiley, Hunter Foster had already built up a disgusting track record of racist behavior and abuses of power.

Two days before he killed baby Kohen, he had been reported by a Black colleague for making a racist remark towards him. His colleague resigned roughly a month later and wrote in his resignation letter that a significant factor in his choice was the lack of "any meaningful response or resolution" from the Senatobia Police Department[4]. He also wrote that the incident was "easily verifiable," as it took place in a room with audio and video surveillance, but the accessible evidence was neither considered nor reviewed.

In January of 2023, Foster was involved in a lawsuit against him and other deputies in DeSoto County. The plaintiff stated that Foster and the other deputies **"tased her multiple times, pulled her hair, kicked her in the stomach and ribs, broke her jaw, and knocked out several teeth[5]."**

A different federal lawsuit filed in December 2021 against the Southaven Police Department named Hunter Foster, as well. According to court documents from United States District Court of Northern Mississippi, the plaintiffs stated that the officers subjected them to excessive force, unlawful arrest and detention, and malicious prosecution.



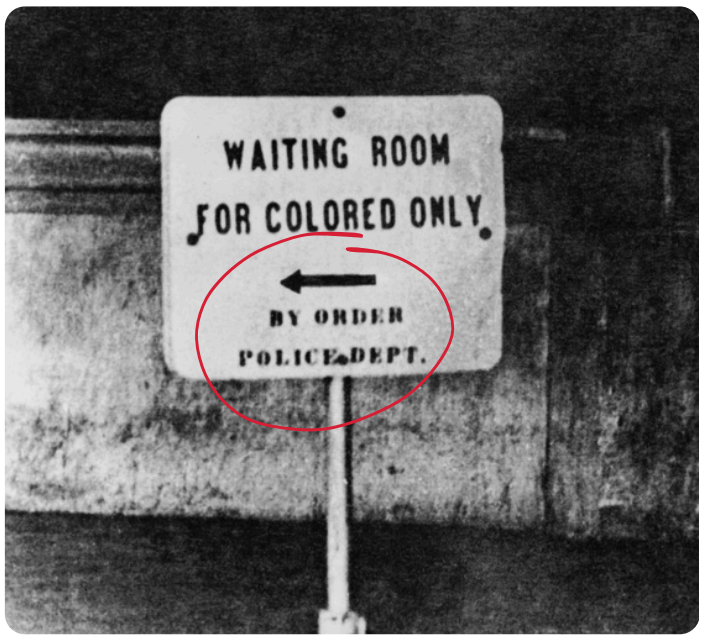
The plaintiffs suffered multiple physical injuries from the violent assault by officers including bruising, bleeding, swelling, cuts, and abrasions. The case was settled in May of 2022. The plaintiffs won but Hunter Foster still remained active as a police officer. These reports should have removed him from his position.

The lack of consequences Hunter Foster faced from his previous gruesome abuses of power also play a role in the murder of Kohen Wiley.

Hunter Foster took administrative leave after the fatal shooting as the 'investigation' occurred, and resigned from his position at the Senatobia Police Department shortly after the release of the body cam footage. Resignation is not and will never be enough. **Far too often, simply having a badge is equivalent to complete immunity and acquittal, regardless of how severe the crime.** His horrendous crime and the State of Mississippi's subsequent response shows us something that **our Black community members have been continuously trying to tell us for decades.**



The police do not serve the people or the community. They serve and uphold a corrupt and racist system built on the principles of white supremacy that America was founded on.



On June 16th, two days after Kohen's murder, the local Mississippi community gathered at the Senatobia Walmart to demand justice and accountability for his unnecessary and cruel death. **The peaceful protesters and community members were met with tear gas from the Senatobia police[6].** Since then, more protests have occurred and more are planned for the future. After the release of the AG's statement, Kohen's story has garnered more attention outside of the South. Other states now have planned protests demanding justice for Kohen, as well. The Attorney General's ruling has not and will not stop Kohen's family and the Mississippi community in the fight for justice that he deserves. The family's Attorney Ben Crump stated

˝We will not allow this resignation to be the end of the story. Kohen´s family deserves answers, a full accounting of what happened, and meaningful accountability. We will continue demanding permanent decertification and a federal investigation. Turning in a badge does not erase responsibility for taking a life, and it will not end our fight for justice for Kohen and his family[7].˝



A POEM FOR KOHEN WILEY



You deserve to grow up and grow old by your mother's side
Surrounded by community, love, and support
You deserve a rich and beautiful life
Full of experience, full of learning, and full of connection
To be taken from this world in such a brutalistic way
Over an assumption of your mother taking something
Essential to your wellbeing and survival
Is a horrific display of the racism
That continues to poison the morality of this nation
For Black babies, it has evolved from 'alligator bait'
To execution by the state
Racism has not died, it has merely adapted
Black individuals deserve more
Their lives are worth more
Than perpetual martyrdom for white America's reckoning
Death to white supremacy and death to America
That is the only way to restore the humanity of this nation

SOURCES:

1. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/senatobiacitymississippi/PST045225
2. https://capitalbnews.org/mississippi-police-shooting-kohen-kartier-wiley/
3. https://www.mississippifreepress.org/independent-autopsy-shows-officer-shot-1-year-old-kohen-wiley-from-side-family-attorney-says/
4. https://mississippitoday.org/2026/07/18/senatobia-officer-racially-offensive-remark/
5. https://www.localmemphis.com/article/news/local/senatobia-officer-involved-shooting-hunter-foster/522-42470b25-f070-43e4-8d61-ceab91c1e62e
6. https://www.wapt.com/article/senatobia-officer-placed-on-leave-tear-gas-deployed-as-hundreds-protest-death-of-1-year-old-kohen-wiley/71608163
7. https://www.actionnews5.com/2026/10/23/senatobia-officer-resigns-his-body-cam-video-kohen-wiley-shooting-is-released/



Stay compassionate, stay vigilant, stay organized.

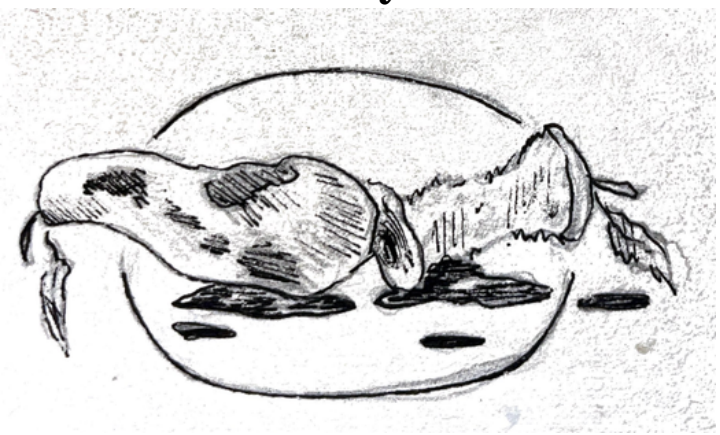
ALL WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE

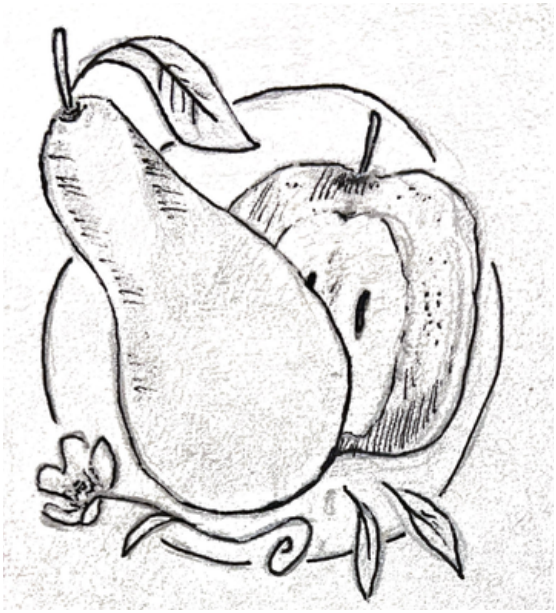
by Michael Kimble

Wealth, with its development, has become so aggressive that unless checked it will inevitably lead to the destitution and degradation of workers. If the workers are to enjoy the blessings of life and the fruits of their labor, we must organize in order to check the power of wealth and put a screeching halt to the exploitation of workers' labor power. This must be moral worth not wealth, the true measurement of individual and collective greatness.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE! For years prisoners have raised their voices, staged work strikes in an effort to reform the prison system, seeking higher wages consistent with state minimums and for fairer laws. Incarcerated people are a class that needs more than collective bargaining rights.

We need prison abolition. Why do prisons exist? Supposedly to punish a person for breaking a law. And as a deterrent to crime. Prisons do not stop crime. If they did,there wouldn't be two million human beings caged and being held captive by a system that is thoroughly corrupt and without compassion, empathy, or understanding. It is based on revenge, white supremacy, and authoritarianism. Organized labor must unite with incarcerated workers whose work is complicated by the fact that their labor is inherently coerced and rooted in structural racism.





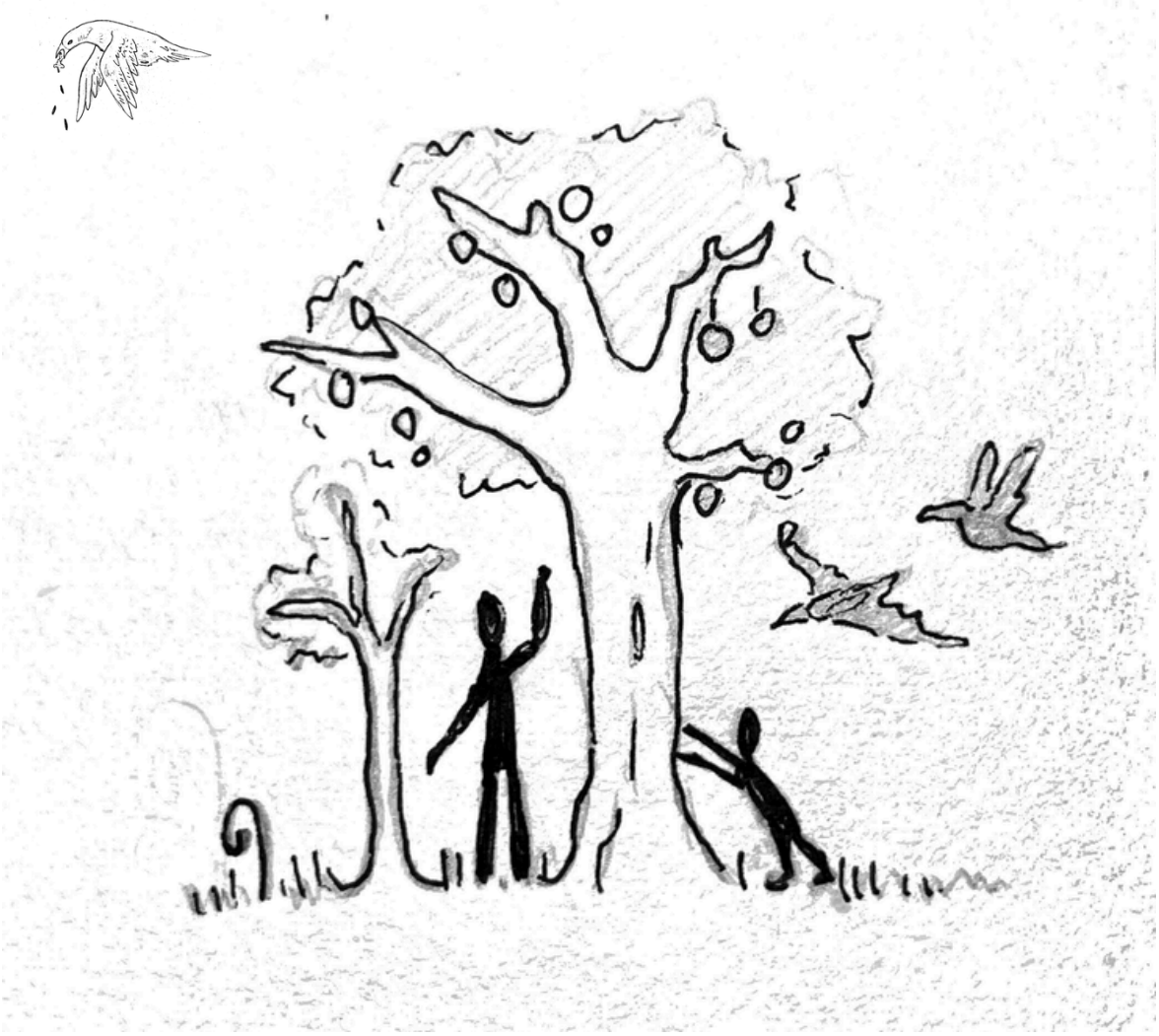
Incarcerated workers deserve the protections that non-incarcerated workers benefit from. Organized labor must devise ways to include incarcerated workers' voices. Southern states keep low wages and working standards and lower them further with low paid incarcerated workers. To change all this, caucuses should be formed within unions, which is a great way for rank and file to organize and educate about prison abolition.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE NOW!

Incarcerated workers deserve the protections that non-incarcerated workers benefit from. Organized labor must devise ways to include incarcerated workers' voices. Southern states keep low wages and working standards and lower them further with low paid incarcerated workers. To change all this, caucuses should be formed within unions, which is a great way for rank and file to organize and educate about prison abolition.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE NOW!

The organized labor movement and prisoners also must refuse to accept that the United States is a legitimate construction. Simply because they have been on this land a long time does not make it legit. It's an illegitimate regime based on conquest, slavery, murder, white supremacy and greed. We must as workers under no condition permit ourselves to be diverted from our mission into futile attempts to reform prisons and capitalism which the prison industrial slave complex rests upon. The labor movement must be for the abolition of carceral capitalism and therefore, the Prison Industrial Slave Complex.



art by Tatum Collins

Prison Letters

From an Alabama State Prison. The contents have not been evaluated, and The Alabama Department of Corrections is not responsible for the substance or content of the enclosed communications.

Elizabeth Austin: "I Am" & "The Same"

Imagine being locked in a cell and forced to work, with few ways to connect to the outside world. The Mobile Bay Labor Journal wants to help elevate the voices of those in this situation. Read, reflect, and respond to these writers.

Hi! My name is Elizabeth Austin. I currently reside at Birmingham Work Release in Birmingham, Alabama. I have been here for five years and have been incarcerated for 11 years. I have 3 kids who are my world, 3 sisters and one brother who I love, and a bundle of neices and nephews that I adore. I currently work in the canteen (that's the prison store). I make a whopping, wait for it... three dollars a day working 4-8 hours a day, 7 days a week. No, the pay isn't great, but I love my job and my coworkers, and it gives me a sense of independence. I don't have to call and ask my family for money. With this job, I can put money on the phone, so I can talk to my family without feeling like a burden to them. (That's a common feeling among incarcerated people.) I love to write, talk to, and visit with my family, and I love to stay busy. I chair NA meetings, work out 6 days a week, crochet, and I love to laugh. I hope you enjoy the poems! If you do, and would like to write me, you can write to:

ALDOC Inmate Mail Processing
Elizabeth Austin-314159
P.O. Box 17339
San Antonio, TX 78217

If you feel led to donate to my inmate account, you can do that by downloading the Access Corrections App, search: Alabama--Birmingham Work Release--Elizabeth Austin--314159. Thank you for reading. I would love to hear feedback from you!

I AM:
A bundle of paradoxes,
Acomplicated construct comprised of all boxes,
To try and put me in just one or two,
Would severeley decrease your limited view.

So close your eyes and open your mind,
If you look a little deepr, what will you find?

I AM:
Christianm red-headed, a proud mom of three,
A lover, a fighter, and everything in between,
A jaded romantic that desperately craves,
Her happy ending and just tries to be brave.

I AM:
A dreamer, a nerd, realistically optimistic,
Acutely self-aware with goals and ambitions,
A woman looking for the rainbow through all the rain,
A sweet southern belle who's felt so much pain.

I AM:
Living my lige, healthy, happy, and blessed,
And yes, I'll admit, maybe a little stressed,
A living testimony of God's grace and mercy,
A survivor and warrior who prays instead of worries.

I AM:
A bundle of paradoxes,
A complicated construct comprised of all boxes,

But now that you've looked, Do you see what I see?
A woman, while locked away in society,
becoming the person she was intended to be.



THE SAME

A Poem From Behind Prison Walls

By Elizabeth Austin, Birmingham Alabama

Elizabeth Austin
314159 M-4B
1216 25th St. N.
Birmingham, AL 35234

Mobile Bay Labor Journal

I know when you look at me, you just see me today,
Thinking I dont know struggle, despair, and pain,
Maybe thinking to yourself, I haven't a clue,
About the life you've lived and what you've been through,
For all our differences we are really the same,
Listen to my story, and see if you can relate:

I'm the daughter of addicts, so addiction runs deep,
I know how this demon takes it time and sinks its teeth,
I've been dealt heartache and loss, and sought comfort for my pain,
I know about hating and hurting, and the rest of those games.

I've known brokenness, and abuse, adiction, and fear,
I've been cut off from family, and shed so many tears,
I've known betrayal, and neglect, abandonment, and grief,
And realized too late the comfort I got was brief.

After years of living in a dysfunctional space,
And tired of every day being exactly the same,
When I got exhausted from chasing that far away high,
And was worn flat out from just getting by,

When He answered, He said this to me,
On your knees is where you needed to be,
I had to humble you and let you hit the floor,
To show you that you were meant for much, much more,

Now years later, I see the lessons in the pain,
The joy in the trials, the rainbow through the rain,
Now I can tell you from the bottom of my soul,
That freedom and surrender were at the end of the rainbow,

I can talk to you now about things I understand,
Mercy, Love, and healing are always God's plan,
Acceptance, compassion, reconciliation, and hope,
Are a few of the things that have kept me afloat

Both the light and the dark have made me who I am,
And my worth no longer is from the mouth of a man,
I'm flawed with rough edges as you can plainly see,
But my mind and heart have been truly set free.

For all our differences we are really the same,
We've been through hell and came out with new names,
Blessed, loved, whole, forgiven, and free,
Survivor, warrior, accepted, and queen!

HABITAT LOSS



I dont like it!

Its a problem for the climate, the birds, and you!

Habitat loss is one of the largest threats to animal life on our planet. This threat takes many forms. Parking lots replace prairies, farms replace forests, and subdivisions subdivide the savannas until they are too small for likes of pocket gophers and gopher tortoises.

Everywhere we look, there is less habitat - but it takes trained eyes to see this. Driving along interstate 10, you could almost convince yourself that the world is made of an endless forest, broken up occasionally by cattle or a small city. But this is a screen. Most of the "woods" along the roadsides in this country are only a few trees deep. Behind them are miles of roads and houses, and nowhere safe for a bird to sleep.

Even our forests, where they remain, are lies. Pines are planted in rows, so tight that no light gets in. A single species in an endless darkness. Nothing lives there, beneath them. Nothing lives in the canopy.

How could they? There is no food for diversity within a monocrop.

Even our more diverse wooded lands are often poor habitat. There are no old growth left here in the east, save for a few individual trees. These mixed woods are the children of those trees that were logged a generation or two ago. Young forests. These trees battled their way up through the brush, and little of that brush was habitat. After logging, our wooded lands are often choked by just a few species of plant, most of them not from here, not providing any food to any other living being in our region. Privet, mimosa, tallow, camphor, these species dominate the logged area after industry does. It takes many years for native oaks and sweet gums to out climb these invasives. And then, how long will they be left to stand once they reach such heights? How long before they are logged again, and the cycle starts over?

Even while these forests stand, beautiful and seemingly abundant, they often offer much less food for wildlife than we might think. Nandina and coral ardisia have started fill up our understories. They form dense mats upon the ground through which nothing else can grow. Their bright red berries are false promises, holding little nutrition, and carrying within them the seeds of destruction. The bird eats, gains nothing, and shits out the seed. Another forest is taken over, another land made into a starving place for the very bird who unwittingly brought them there.



These plants were brought over as ornamentals. People thought they looked pretty, so they carried them across oceans to plant in gardens. Still, they are sold in garden centers, and spread widely across the land. They are planted in our yards, our businesses, our government buildings, waiting to displace more habitat.

Even this narrative hides a deeper truth. The world that our native animals evolved in was not one of dense forests. Prior to colonization, the southeast was a mosaic of landscapes - prairies, savannas, bogs, marshes, grasslands. Forests were present, especially in the wet edges of waterways and the high ridges of mountains, but they were not the only (or even the primary) landscape. These open habitats are now even more under represented, scarce upon the land.

Baby birds don't get much nutrition from berries in general. The vast majority of what their parents feed them comes from insects. Many of those insects are caterpillars, baby butterflies crawling wormlike over leaves.

Most of us don't really understand what caterpillars eat, or how ecosystems function. Our love of nature tends to be somewhat flat - if it is green, it is good. If it is plant, it is nature. But to a caterpillar, a plant from across the world is only slightly more useful than concrete. The gulf fritillary butterflies depicted above only fed on our native passion vines. Our native plants are what feeds our native birds. A greater diversity of these plants means a greater diversity of insects, which leads to a stable, food filled ecosystem. Here, open habitats have much more potential for diversity than closed forests - But it is precisely those open habitats that are most likely to become neighborhoods. This is why habitat restoration in our own back yards is so crucial.

Stats from Bringing Nature Home, 2007, by Douglas Tallamy.

54% of the lower 48 states are cities and suburbs, and 41% are agriculture.

Songbirds have decreased 40% since 1960.

96% of terrestrial bird species in North America feed mostly insects to their babies.

37% of all animal species on earth are herbivorous insects.

Up to 90% of insects that eat plants are specialists, meaning they only eat from a few kinds of plants - mostly one or two genera native to their region.

Is this development worth it? Is the way things are now the only way?

Every scrap of biodiversity is priceless, and worth fighting for. Together, we get to choose what species will come with us into the future. This choice is made in our daily actions, and in our societal decisions about how to use land. Our City of Mobile is running very low on wild areas. The 13 acres by the West Regional Library is being slated for development. The witchhazel, horsesuger, and rare violets have already been scraped with bulldozers. There is talk of a data center in the Trinity Gardens woods, which have the most buckeye butterflies I have ever seen. Will the Nevius Woods fall too? Will Megginson Park fall? Will you luck up in ten years and ask "Where did it all go? Where was I when it fell"

A more diverse ecosystem is more stable. The ability for complex life to survive on this planet depends on the capacity of ecosystems to remain complex. The more habitat we lose, the more species that become rare or extinct, the more likely we are to live an unstable world with unpredictable problems that will effect us.

40% of the modern medicine is derived from plants (World Health Organization). There are tens of thousands of species whose medicinal benefits have not been studied. I would guesstimate that the average person eats about 100 plant species a year, including spices. Alabama alone probably has at least a thousand edible species. Wouldn't the world be better if these kept existing so they can make your life healthier and tastier?

Our existence on this earth does not need to be like this. We could live denser, and build up rather than out. We could build things that last, rather than felling a new tree for a new house that the developer never cared for, and that will be falling down as soon as someone moves in.

We have a choice, and we have a lot of work ahead of us. But it is worth while. It is the point of being alive. And if we don't do it, what world are we missing out on?



There are solutions! Get yours today!

STRUCTURAL

Pass Laws That Change The Incentives Of Land Development So That It Is Cheaper To Redevelop Blighted And Sprawling Areas Than It Is To Destroy A Functional Habitat.

Conserve The Remaining Wild Areas And Manage Them For Ecological Diversity And Native Plants. Make It Impossible, Through Force Or Legislation, For More Habitat To Be Destroyed.

Pass Legislation And City Ordinances Requiring All New Landscaping To Involve Native Plants. Get The City To Start A Municipal Composting Program. Get The City To Start A Native Plant Nursery To Supply These Projects.

Invest In Public Transit And Walkability. Stop Widening The Roads.

Form Not-For-Profit Cooperative Land Holding Organizations That Educate People On How To Maintain Habitat. Donate What Land You Have To These Organizations. Use The Housing On This Land To Make It Possible For People To Live Cheaply, So They Have More Time To Work Towards Habitat Restoration. Interact With These Habitats As Sustainable Foragers Of Food And Materials, Further Enabling You To Rely Even Less Upon The Capitalist System.

End the Profit Motive. Abolish The Private Ownership Of Land. Restore The Commons. Return The Land To The Stewardship Of Indigenous Communities and Those Who Will Work With Them Towards Decolonization.

INDIVIDUAL

Learn About Invasive Species And Make Removing Them A Part Of Your Routine. Go For Walks, Learn The Ecosystems Around You, And Do What You Can To Maintain Them. Remove Trash. Girdle Invasive Trees To Form Nesting Habitat For Wood Peckers.

Learn To Live Cheaply, And Live Off The Land In Ways That Are Mutually Beneficial. Forage For Invasives, Often. Forage For Native Plants With Care. Replace What You Would Buy With What You Can Make. Make Friends With Others Who Are Also Doing This. Share Knowledge. Share Material Goods. Do It For Free.

Eat Less Meat. Or No Meat. Animal Agriculture Is One Of The Largest Drivers Of Habitat Destruction. Dairy And Eggs Too. Feeding These Animals We Raise To Exploit Is The Reason We Destroy The Earth. It Does Matter. Your Personal Diet Does Make A Difference.

Grow Native Plants. Gather Local Seed. Learn The Uses of These Plants - Plant Them Even If They Aren't Useful For You. Learn To Propagate From As Many Methods As You Can. Save Trash, Bottles, And Cans To Grow In. Don't Use Peat Moss. Give Native Plants Away To People Who Will Take Care Of Them. Keep Track Of Where You Sourced Them, So You Know Which Populations Have Been Conserved. Plant Uncommon Native Species. Plant Native Species That Are Underrepresented In Our Remaining Wild And Managed Lands, Especially Grasses And Forbs.

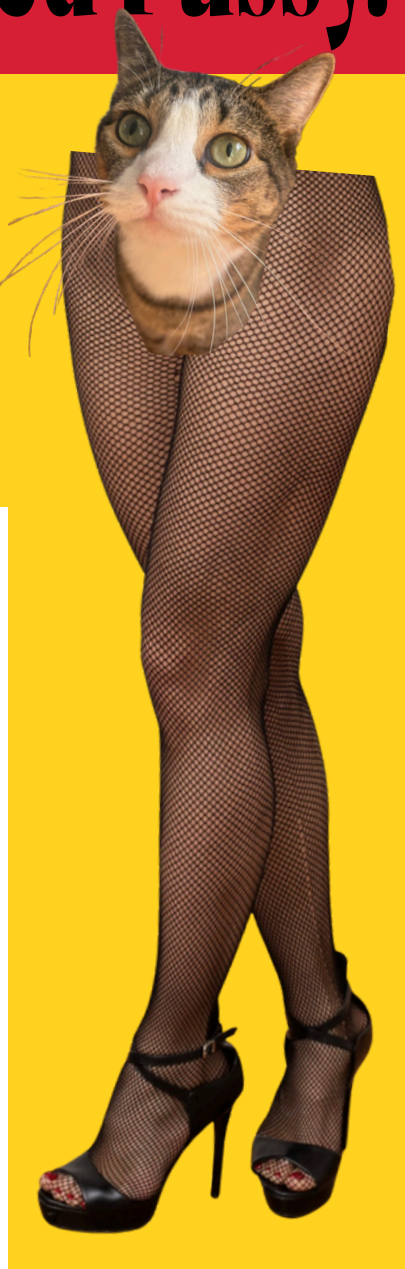
And Keep Your Cats Inside!

See more on the next page

The Plight of the Exposed Pussy.

The Ecological Problems of Outdoor Cats.

And why they should probably stay inside.



All of these problems may seem impossible to face. Indeed, many of the harms of habitat loss are hard to prevent as an individual. But there is something every easy that many of us can do to help.

We can keep our cats indoors.

According to The Wildlife Society's 2025 statement on Feral and Free-Ranging cats:

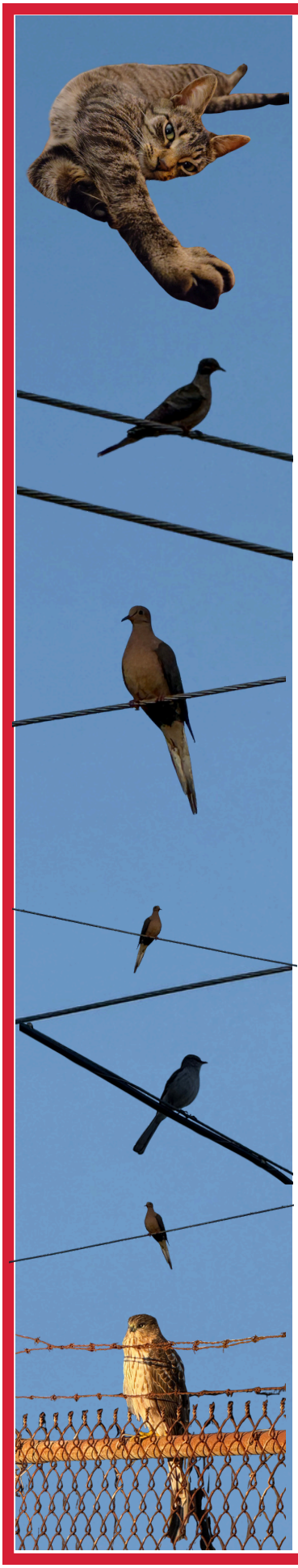
- Domestic cats have contributed to the extinction of 63 species and are responsible for at least 14% of bird, mammal, and reptile extinctions on islands.
- Trap, Neuter, and Release programs rarely reduce outdoor cat numbers.
- Outdoor cats kill 1.3–4.0 billion birds and 6.3–22.3 billion small mammals annually in the United States.
- There are between 60 and 140 million outdoor cats in America. About half of those cats have human owners.
- Domestic cats accounted for 19% of Florida rabies cases in 2022.

"Almost all of the world's mammal biomass is humans and livestock [including pets] - Humans and livestock make up 95% of the world's mammal biomass; wild mammals are just 5%." Additionally, only about 29% of birds in the world (by weight) are wild, the other 71% are captive poultry.

-Hannah Ritchie and Fiona Spooner (2025) ourworldindata.org

Outdoor cats may be more likely to get and transmit FIV, FeLV, ticks, fleas, other parasites, and other infections. Outdoor cats are more likely to ingest nonfood items, including poisons. Owners of outdoor cats are less likely to notice some of these illnesses. Outdoor cats are at risk of being eaten by dogs and coyotes. Trauma is the cause of 39% of sudden deaths in cats, with 87% of those cases due to motor vehicle accidents. Indoor cats have almost no risk of being hit by vehicles compared to outdoor cats.

According to "*Uncontrolled Outdoor Access for Cats: An Assessment of Risks and Benefits*" https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7070728/



Imagine, for a moment, that you are a bird. Your ancestors used to eat everywhere. There were a mosaic of landscapes with different flavors. A gulf fritillary caterpillar over there, a scolia wasp over here, and a goatweed leafwing just down the way.

Over time, there are less and less foods. There are roads everywhere, and it's dangerous to cross them. There are houses everywhere, but you cannot live in them. There are grocery stores, and the humans leave them carrying so much food, but you cannot eat at them.

You are stuck going to a few remaining places that have anything at all for you. The park has some food, but very little. The power line cuts are abundant one day, but the next they are poisoned, and many of your friends die eating there. You eat in the back yards when you can, especially those of the friendly humans who have planted those special plants that seem to grow caterpillars as much as they grow flowers.

But now, there is a new predator. It is in the yards, the fields, the forests, the parks. Some years, you go back to your nest, only to find the bones of your babies coughed up in a ball of hair and feathers. Your mate is killed by one of these strange beasts, and it doesn't even eat him. It just plays with his corpse and drags it around, and leaves his body to rot on the concrete. This predator s unlike anything your ancestors ever faced; it is sleek, strong, smart, and mean. it has a certain beauty, the beauty of lightning when it isn't striking you, but you know you are next.

You want to avoid it, but there isn't anywhere to go. Food is hard to find these days. You know the cat is lurking. You have seen it kill. But you go to where it is anyway. There is no where else to go. It guts you.

This is what it is like to be a bird

Its okay to take your bush out on happy trails.



But keep your cat out of the bushes.

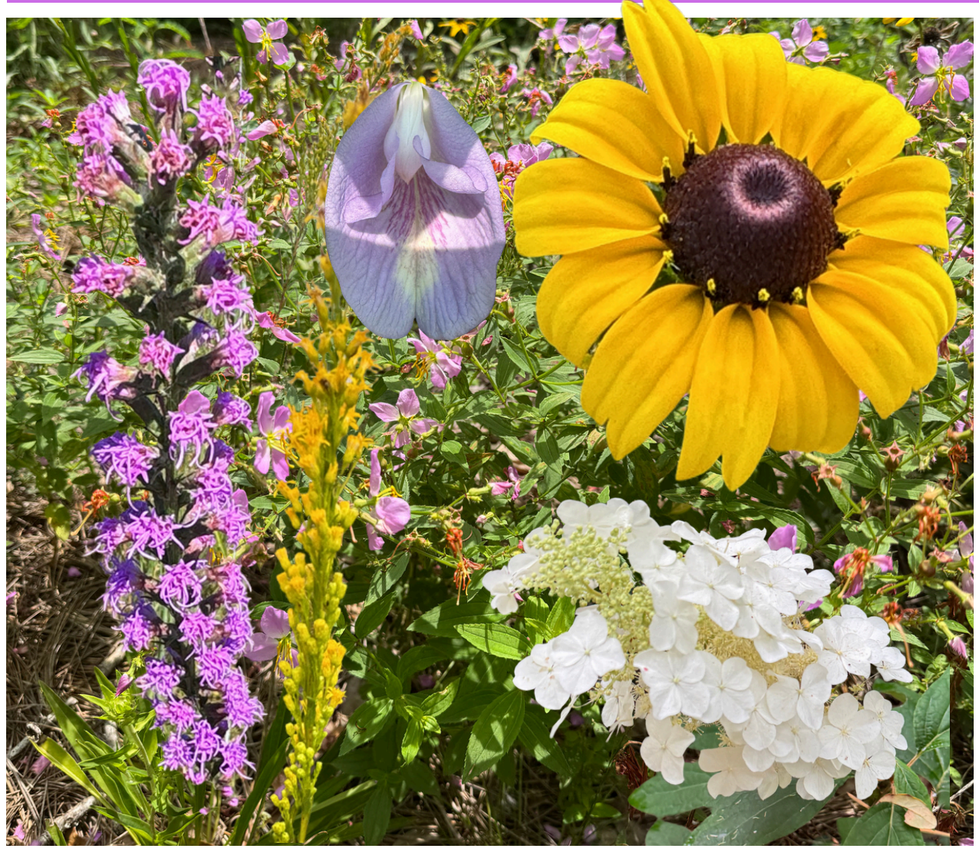


Native Plant Seed Swap &

Seed Starting Workshop

1PM. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH

6050 USA Drive South Mobile, AL 36688



Taught by the

Lower Alabama Native Plant Society

With help from

Gulf Coast Creation Care

Located at the

University of South Alabama Archeology Museum & Native Plant Garden



-Native plant seeds

-Potting soil, sand, or another growing medium

HELPFUL ITEMS TO BRING!

Not everyone needs to bring every item, just help how you can.

-Clean, solid containers with transparent or translucent tops. This can be milk jugs, catering trays, vinegar bottles, soda bottles, rotisserie chicken containers, or whatever else you think will work.

MOBILE BAY
DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA

SIPS WITH SOCIALISTS @ LAYALI CAFÉ



Join us at Layali Café for community and conversation. Whether you're curious about DSA, interested in being more involved in your community, or just looking for likeminded friends, stop by and enjoy a great cup of coffee from a locally owned shop!

WHEN

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15
10A-12P

WHERE

LAYALI CAFÉ
5803 OLD SHELL RD.



MobileBayDSA.org | Mobile Bay DSA | Mobile Democratic Socialists of America

Help Protect Our Pedestriains!

STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING

AND

GO DONATE!

Use the QR code to order high visibility vests for pedestrians & cyclists in our city! Ship to the Ben May Main Library Branch @ 701 Government Street Mobile, AL 36602

Every week pedestrians are hit in Mobile, AL.



SOLIDARITY SAFETY VESTS VISIBILITY EST 2024