

# April 2008 Newsletter

# LABOR PARTY

Alachua County Local Organizing Committee

## New study: Most doctors in U.S. now favor national health insurance

Reflecting a shift in thinking over the past five years among U.S. physicians, a new study shows a solid majority of doctors - 59 percent - now supports national health insurance.

Such plans typically involve a single, federally administered social insurance fund that guarantees health care coverage for everyone. [...] The plans typically eliminate or substantially reduce the role of private insurance companies in

the health care financing system, but still allow patients to go to the doctors of their choice. A study published in April's *Annals of Internal Medicine*, a leading medical journal, reports that a survey conducted last year of 2,193 physicians across the United States showed 59% of them "support government legislation to establish national health insurance," while 32% oppose it and 9% are neutral.

... continued page 2

*Amid clear, growing evidence that "individual mandates" don't work, candidates cling to the idea*

## April general meeting: A look at candidates' health care plans

During this political season, many people are asking which candidate has the best health care plan. The simple answer is that none of them has a plan that will achieve true universal health care or provide relief to the high cost of those already insured.

None of them will reduce the 30% of health care costs currently wasted on administrative overhead and profit. None of them will provide relief for working Americans and businesses already facing skyrocketing premiums and

... continued page 6

### Inside this issue:

- Gainesville May Day events . . . . . 2
- 100th Central Labor Council endorses H.R. 676 . . . . . 4
- ACLP website relaunch . . . . . 6
- Local Just Health Care organizing . . . . . 7
- LP Program: More time for family & community . . . . . 8
- Book Review: Sick . . . . . 9
- NEW HR 676 bumper stickers (& possible yard signs) . . . . . 11**

The findings reflect a leap of 10 percentage points in physician support for national health insurance (NHI) since 2002, when a similar survey was conducted. At that time, 49 percent of all physician respondents said they supported NHI and 40 percent opposed it. Support among doctors for NHI has increased across almost all medical specialties, said Dr. Ronald T. Ackermann, associate director of the Center for Health Policy and Professionalism Research at Indiana University's School of Medicine and co-author of the study. "Across the board, more physicians feel that our fragmented and for-profit insurance system is obstructing good patient care, and a

majority now support national insurance as the remedy," he said.

Support for NHI is particularly strong among psychiatrists (83 percent), pediatric sub-specialists (71 percent), emergency medicine physicians (69 percent), general pediatricians (65 percent), general internists (64 percent) and family physicians (60 percent). Fifty-five percent of general surgeons support NHI, roughly doubling their level of support since 2002.

Doctors have often expressed concern about lack of patient access to care due to rising costs and patients' insufficient levels of insurance. An estimated 47 million Americans currently lack health

insurance coverage and another 50 million are believed to be underinsured. At the same time, health care costs in the United States are rising at the rate of about 7 percent a year, twice the rate of inflation.

The health care issue continues to rank high among voter concerns in the 2008 elections, placing third in a recent poll after the economy and Iraq. The current study by the Indiana University researchers is the largest survey ever conducted among doctors on the issue of health care financing reform. It is based on a random sampling of names obtained from the American Medical Association's master list of

physicians throughout the country.

In addition to measuring attitudes toward NHI, the survey also asked doctors about their views about "more incremental reform," often interpreted as state- or federal-based programs requiring or "mandating" that consumers buy health insurance from private insurance companies, legislative measures providing tax incentives to businesses to provide coverage for their employees, or similar steps.

Fewer physicians (55%) were in support of "incremental" reform. Moreover, virtually all those opposed to national health insurance also opposed incremental reform to improve access to care. In fact, only 14% of physicians overall oppose national health insurance but support more incremental reforms. Ironically, many medical organizations and most politicians have endorsed only incremental changes.

Dr. Aaron E. Carroll, Director of Indiana University's Center for Health Policy and Professionalism Research and lead author of the study, commented: "Many claim to speak for physicians and reflect their views. We asked doctors directly and found that, contrary to conventional wisdom, most doctors support the government creating national health insurance."

Other signs indicate that attitudes among doctors are changing. The nation's largest medical specialty group, the 124,000-member American College of Physicians, endorsed a single-payer national health insurance program for the first time in December.

*The above article was written by Physicians for a National Health Program (pnhp.org)*

# Alachua County LABOR PARTY

## Local Organizing Committee

[352] 375-2832

[www.floridalaborparty.org/alachua](http://www.floridalaborparty.org/alachua)  
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[aclp@floridalaborparty.org](mailto:aclp@floridalaborparty.org)

### Mailing Address:

Post Office Box 12051  
Gainesville, FL 32604

### Office Address:

14 E. University Ave., #204

### Office Hours:

11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Tuesday  
9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Thursday

### Alachua County Labor Party Board

Jenny Brown \* Co-chair  
Mark Piotrowski \* Co-chair  
Chad Hood \* Treasurer  
Gaby Gross \* Secretary  
David Hennig

**ACLPLP staffers:** Ann Murray,  
Jenny Brown

*Board meetings are held on the 1st & 3rd  
Tuesday of the month and are open to  
all Labor Party members.*

### Upcoming Alachua County Labor Party General Meetings

(4th Tuesday of the month)

April 22

May 27

June 24

## Celebrate International Labor Day! Thursday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008

Gainesville Downtown Plaza,

2:00 pm - Free Store (put on by SDS)  
5:00 - 9:00 pm - Speakers and Live Music

### Music From:

Gainesville  
Liberation  
Orchestra (GLO),

Lars Din,

Dirty Fist,

Kiiks,

Cassette,

The Horror

### Invited Speakers Include:

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)

UF History Professor Bob Zieger

Alachua County Labor Party

Gainesville Women's Liberation



Contact Information:  
Katie Walters 352-427-0006  
Joe Richard 352-246-2240  
[gainesvilleiww@riseup.net](mailto:gainesvilleiww@riseup.net)

*May Day is also known as International Workers' Day. It commemorates the Haymarket Riot and the struggle for the 8-hour day. We encourage all ACLP supporters to attend this year's May Day events next Thursday.*

***Central Labor Councils in Cayuga (NY) and Los Angeles counties endorse National Health Insurance Act earlier, just miss milestone:***

# **100th Labor Council Endorses HR 676**

*by Kay Tillow,*

*All Unions Committee for H.R. 676*

The North Shore Labor Council based in Lynn, Massachusetts is the one hundredth Central Labor Council to endorse HR 676, single payer healthcare legislation introduced by Congressman John Conyers (D-MI).

Jeff Crosby, Council President, said: “We in Massachusetts have ample experience with the fraud of health-care ‘reform’ that claims to provide universal coverage without containing costs. The Massachusetts bill is collapsing as we speak. And the only way to contain costs is to go after the drug companies and the insurance companies with a chain-saw. HR 676 does that best.”

The North Shore Labor Council has 44 local union affiliates with 18,000 members. Crosby is president of IUE-CWA Local 201 at the historic Lynn GE plant. He is also one of four regular bloggers on the AFL-CIO website (<http://blog.aflcio.org/category/diaries/?aid=22>).

The Los Angeles County Federation of Labor AFL-CIO, representing over 800,000 union workers and their families, became the 99th central labor council to endorse the Conyers legislation.

The resolution supporting HR 676 was introduced by Joshua Pechthalt, President of AFT Local 1021, United Teachers of Los Angeles. Pechthalt is also a vice president of the LA County Federation.

Pechthalt said: “The struggle to win and maintain quality health care is something our members deal with every time they sit down and negotiate a contract. We are committed to achieving guaranteed, comprehensive health care reform for all. The current system that has insurance companies skimming off exorbitant profits rates while millions of Americans either have inadequate or no health care coverage must be stopped.”

On March 8, the Cayuga County Central Labor Council became the 98th Central Labor Council to endorse HR 676. The Council is part of the Central New York Area Labor Federation.

George Farenthold, Council President said: “The Conyers bill is everything that organized labor has been fighting for, for most of the last 25 years. We’re pleased to join the other 97 labor councils in making an all out effort to make HR 676 the law of the land.” He said the council’s resolution passed unanimously.

HR 676 would institute a single payer health care system in the U.S. by expanding a greatly improved Medicare system to every resident.

HR 676 would cover every person in the U. S. for all necessary medical care including prescription drugs, hospital, surgical, outpatient services, primary and preventive care, emergency services, dental, mental health, home health, physical therapy, rehabilitation (including for substance abuse), vision

care, chiropractic and long term care. HR 676 ends deductibles and co-payments. HR 676 would save billions annually by eliminating the high overhead and profits of the private health insurance industry and HMOs.

HR 676 has been endorsed by 397 union organizations in 48 states including 100 Central Labor Councils and Area Labor Federations and 33 state AFL-CIO’s. The bill currently has 88 co-sponsors in addition to Conyers. Co-sponsors and bill text are here:

<http://tinyurl.com/3cjsto>

[or]

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.r.00676>:

## **New Hampshire State Building Trades Council endorses National Health Insurance Act**

The New Hampshire State Building and Construction Trades Council has endorsed HR 676. Edward Foley, State Council President who also serves as Business Representative of Sheet Metal Workers Local 17, said after the April 3rd unanimous council vote:

“The NHSBCTC is proud to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the labor movement. In the USA it is unacceptable that the cost of health insurance should drive working families into bankruptcy and force average Americans to choose between health insurance or food on the table or college tuition for their children. It is high time that we solved the crisis of affordable health insurance for every American. HR 676 is one giant step forward for the American people.”

New Hampshire is the fourth state building and construction trades council to endorse HR 676. The others are Maine, Texas, and Washington. Seven city or county building trades councils have also endorsed HR 676.

## **United Transportation Union (UTU) Endorses HR 676**

The 125,000 member United Transportation Union (UTU) is the 13th international union to endorse the National Health Insurance Act.

James Brunkenhoefer, UTU National Legislative Director, said: “The UTU is for HR 676 because single payer health care will reduce costs without impacting the quality of the care.”

The endorsement resolution was passed by the UTU’s U.S. Legislative Committee during the Tenth Quadrennial Convention. The union is the largest operating rail union in the U.S. with over 600 local unions.

The convention resolution, which was submitted by the Maryland State Legislative Board, said in part: “The U.S. health system continues to treat health care as a commodity distributed according to the ability to pay, rather than as a social service to be distributed according to human need. Insurance companies and HMO’s compete not by increasing quality or lowering costs, but by avoiding covering those whose needs are greatest.”

Twelve other international unions have endorsed HR 676 including the UAW, NEA, IAM, Plumbers & Pipefitters (UA), Musicians (AFM), UE, CNA/NNOC, ILWU, NALC, Sheetmetal (SMWIA), IFPTE & OPEIU.

out-of-pocket expenses. And none of them will provide a true comprehensive solution to the health care crisis like H.R. 676 (the National Health Insurance Act) – which covers all Americans, reduces costs, and saves billions of dollars by removing the role of private insurance companies.

All candidates do share one thing in common – they claim that we can save money by promoting competition and fair practices between drug and insurance companies, by working harder to control costs, and by keeping the cost of health care down through health promotion.

In other words, continuing to try what we've done for 20 years without success. Meanwhile, health insurance premiums continue to rise and our health care costs consume an increasing amount of our

individual and national spending.

The Alachua County Labor Party will host a discussion of the candidates' proposals on Tuesday, April 22nd at 6:30. The event will take place at the Alachua County Education Association (ACEA) meeting hall, 618 NW 13th Avenue, off of NW 6th Street.

The presentation will specifically address the fallacy and failure of “individual mandates”, which force Americans to buy health care insurance without guarantee of affordability or ensuring that they will get anything beyond “bare bones” catastrophic coverage only.

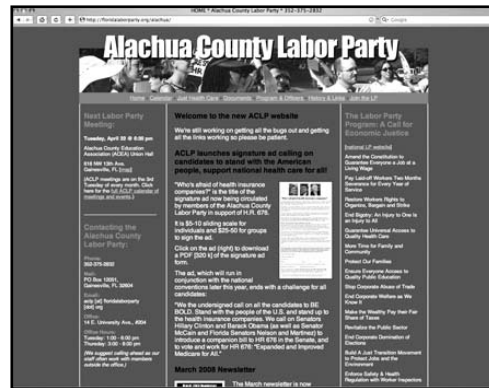
Several presentations and demonstrations are taking place around the county during the coming months to highlight the injustice and ineffectiveness of individual mandates.

## Alachua County Labor Party relaunches website

After months of work, the Alachua County Labor Party is pleased to announce the relaunch of its website.

In the coming weeks we'll be fleshing out the different sections, and uploading documents and materials from our first 8 years. Currently, you can download a copy of our new signature ad form, the last 2 newsletters and a Labor Party membership form at the website,

We would like to thank ACLP member Daniel Gimenez for donating the server space for the website. We'd also like to thank Daniel, Eric Piotrowski, Jeff Mason, Mark Piotrowski & the ACLP board for their work on this and the previous 2 versions of our site.



Any and all feedback is welcome and encouraged – including content that you'd like to see on the site. Please email comments to: [acpl@floridalaborparty.org](mailto:acpl@floridalaborparty.org)

You can view the site at:

[www.floridalaborparty.org/alachua](http://www.floridalaborparty.org/alachua)

# Local Just Health Care roundup: ACLP members and volunteers busy spreading the word about H.R. 676

*The last month has been a busy one for the Alachua County Labor Party in our campaign for winning national health care. Members and volunteers have been getting out and talking to folks throughout north Florida about H.R. 676.*

## ACLP members make H.R. 676 presentations to 3 groups

Over the past 2 months members of the Alachua County Labor Party (Dave Hennig, Dan Harmeling & Mark Piotrowski) gave talks about H.R. 676 and the campaign for national health care at the United Church of Christ, the Interfaith Social Justice Forum, and the Prime Time Institute. Thanks to Jim Morrison and Fe Ripka for setting up the latter two speaking events!

## Branching out into neighboring counties

Dave Hennig continued scouting out new locations outside Alachua County for us to talk to Floridians about H.R. 676. Over the past few weeks Dave has made trips to flea markets in Lake City, Live Oak, Chiefland. After speaking with the local market managers, he's set up tabling opportunities at each location.

This weekend, Dave is leading a delegation to the Lake City and Live Oak markets. A trip to the busy flea market in Chiefland is being planned for May 3 or 10 – to begin collecting cards aimed at Rep. Virginia Brown-Waite.

## Spring Arts Festival tabling a success

Eight tablers covered 4 shifts at the 2008 Spring Arts Festival and had a very productive day. 374 postcard signatures were collected and 8 signature ads were sold. Senator Martinez will hear from us for the first time with 151 signed lime green cards asking him to introduce an HR 676 companion bill in the Senate. And our supply of signed Stearns cards was almost out but now we can continue to torment him with our biweekly mailings. Thanks Mark, Isabel, Gaby, Al, Jim, Kathleen and Dave

## ACLP co-chair invited to serve on the Healthcare-NOW Board of Directors

ACLP co-chair Mark Piotrowski was asked earlier this month to serve on the Board of Directors for Healthcare-NOW, the national coalition that has been working to get H.R. 676 passed.

Mark will join Dr. Quentin Young (PNHP), Rose Ann DeMoro (California Nurses Association), Jaime Torres (Latinos for National Health Insurance) and Kay Tillow (All Unions Committee for H.R. 676) among others on the Board and is one of the few members from the South. We see this as a recognition of the hard work that the entire Alachua County Labor Party has put in over the last 8 years organizing around Just Health Care and H.R. 676.

## **The Labor Party Program: A Call for Economic Justice**

Amend the Constitution to  
Guarantee Everyone a Job  
at a Living Wage

Pay Laid-off Workers Two  
Months Severance for Every  
Year of Service

Restore Workers Rights to  
Organize, Bargain and Strike

End Bigotry: An Injury to  
One Is an Injury to All

Guarantee Universal Access  
to Quality Health Care

More Time for Family and  
Community

Protect Our Families

Ensure Everyone Access to  
Quality Public Education

Stop Corporate Abuse of Trade

End Corporate Welfare as  
We Know It

Make the Wealthy Pay their  
Fair Share of Taxes

Revitalize the Public Sector

End Corporate Domination  
of Elections

Build A Just Transition  
Movement to Protect Jobs  
and the Environment

Enforce Safety & Health  
Regulation with Worker  
Inspectors

Reclaiming the Workplace: Job  
Design, Technology and Skill

## **A closer look at the Labor Party platform, “A Call For Economic Justice”**

*Each month we take a closer look at a different part of the Labor Party’s 16-point platform, “A Call for Economic Justice.” The full program is available at [www.thelaborparty.org](http://www.thelaborparty.org)*

### **6. More Time for Family and Community**

- A 32-Hour, 4-day Work Week
- Double-time Minimum for All Overtime
- An Hour Off with Pay for Every two Hours of Overtime
- 20 Mandatory Paid Vacation Days for All
- One Year Paid Leave for Every Seven Years of Work

Each year we become more and more productive at work. In a fair and just economy, increased productivity should allow us to work fewer hours, not more. Yet compared to the late 1960s, we are now working an average of more than one extra month annually.

We work longer hours and have less vacation time than almost all workers in the industrialized world. While many of us cannot find work, factory overtime is now at record levels because it is more profitable to pay overtime than it is to hire new workers.

Enough is enough.

We call for amending the federal labor laws to:

- Define the normal work week to 32 hours without loss of pay or benefits
- Provide a minimum of double-time pay for all hours worked over 32 hours a week and 8 hours a day
- Forbid compulsory overtime
- Mandate one hour off with pay for every two hours of overtime

- Require twenty days paid vacation for all workers in addition to the federal holidays
- Provide one year of paid educational leave for every seven years worked.

Taken together these proposals will create millions of new jobs and allow us free time we need to care for our families and to participate in our communities. More family time and more community participation should be the fruit of increased labor productivity.

## **Book Review of “Sick: The Untold Story of America’s Health Care Crisis – and the People Who Pay the Price”**

by *Brandon Sack*

Jonathan Cohn’s *Sick* begins with the story of Cynthia Kline, a 55-year-old teacher from Boston, Massachusetts. Ms. Kline lived just a few miles from Mount Auburn Hospital, a Harvard-affiliated medical center that had treated her coronary disease previously and specialized in cases like hers. But due to over-crowding her ambulance was told to take her to Cambridge Hospital instead. By the time she arrived at Cambridge her condition had worsened. Despite the staff’s best efforts, she needed catheterization—a procedure that Mount Auburn, not Cambridge, could perform. With that procedure, her chances of surviving would have been about 50%. Instead however, she died in an ER less than 5 miles away from the procedure that could have saved her life.

Cohn uses Kline’s case as an introduction to his book, and to the healthcare dilemma in general. Each chapter follows with a similarly heart-wrenching tale intertwined with history and extensive analysis of exactly how we arrived at the circumstances that would lead to such a failure in medical care. There are nine true stories in



all spanning the US from Deltona, Florida to Los Angeles. He delves into our modern healthcare system from its very roots in the early 1900s and moves through all the way into the second Bush administration. The book covers topics such as the uninsured, the underinsured, mental health, utilization of

care, healthcare rationing, Medicare, Medicaid, and government reforms.

Despite being well-cited, factual, and informative, the book is far from pedantic. *Sick* benefits greatly from the personal touch of the stories that accompany each chapter which make it a quick and rather gripping read even for those not particularly fond of reading. The book is similar in style to the movie “Sicko”, but is able to cover more in depth the history and nuances of our healthcare shortcomings. In his conclusion, he strongly condemns profit in healthcare, which he has built a case against throughout the entire book. Despite stopping just short of endorsing single-payer, he advocates strongly that government medicine is not only better at controlling costs but delivering better care to more people. (*More info available at [www.sickthebook.com](http://www.sickthebook.com)*)

# Join us on the Committee of 100!

## What is the Committee of 100?

The Committee of 100 is a group of people who have pledged \$20 a month to fund a full-time Alachua County Labor Party staffer to coordinate the Just Health Care campaign (or 2 half-time organizers).

## Why is a full-time organizer so important?

In 2000, we sponsored a non-binding referendum asking Alachua County voters if they would support a system like Just Health Care. It won overwhelming support,

receiving more votes than either Bush or Gore. In follow-up meetings, we determined that having a paid organizer was the key to that highly successful campaign. And keeping a paid organizer is critical for our continued success.

The struggle for Just Health Care is now being fought at the local, state, and national levels. While we coordinate volunteers and events at the local level, we are also working around the state and country as we continue to build the coalition of groups fighting for single payer health care.

## It's working!

*The contributions of the current Committee of 100 allow us to fund Ann Murray and Jenny Brown as our part-time organizers.* Joining the Committee of 100 will allow us to expand Ann and Jenny's hours to full time or bring on another part-time organizer.

## Great! How do I sign up?

Send your information to the address on the facing page or contact us by phone (375-2832) or e-mail (c100@floridalaborparty.org) for more information.

## 84 Committee Members, 16 to go!

Harriet Ludwig	Alan Geering	Ira Clark	Murdo MacLeod	Gaby Gross
Mary Jo Hofmeyer	Bill Battle	Jerry & Larissa Williamson	Arlene Bargard	Anna & Nic Guest-Jelly
Bill Gilbert	Phil Haisley	Kenneth Weeks	Vibeke Vala	George & Pheobe Papadi
Mark Piotrowski	Caron Cadle	Zoharah Simmons	Martin Vala	John Murray
Dan Harmeling	Rosemary Lynch & Norman Balabanian	Gail & James Moss	Isabel Barten	Eileen Roy
Kevin Oden	Andrea Costello	Lujoye Barnes	Rich Templin	Jean Rigg
Michele Gould	Charles Willett	Arthur and Mary Crummer	Fe Ripka	Jim Morrison
Bill Stephenson	Jape Taylor	Kathie Sarachild	Jim Ripka	Betty Odum
Jenny Brown	Amy Coenen	Jane & Norm Holland	Sally & Josh Dickinson	Clint Robinson
Nina Postlethwaite	Carol Giardina	Aline Gubrium	Adele Franson	Kirk Anthony
Dave Hennig	Scott Camil & Sherry Steiner	Randi Cameon	Chris Medved	Zot Szurgot and Audrey Holt
Pennie Foster	Howard Rosenfeld	Carol Thomas	Judith Murray	Gainesville
Candi Churchill	Chad Hood	Vets for Peace	Gainesville	Herbert Spencer
Linda Lavery	Eric Piotrowski	Albert Meyer	Vets for Peace	<i>NEW!</i> Robert Ing
Larry Thompson	Joe Richard	Shawna Doran	Albert Meyer	<i>NEW!</i> Ann Cassin
John Swilley	Steven Schell	Alachua County Green Party	Shawna Doran	84. _____
John Penrod	Kathleen Maynard	Ann Murray	Alachua County Green Party	<i>(Your name here)</i>
Erika Gubrium			Bridget Fitzgerald	
Daniel Gimenez				
Joe Courter				

## Labor Party Membership & Order Form

Please make all checks to "Labor Party". Send order form to:  
Alachua County Labor Party, PO Box 12051, Gainesville, FL 32604

- I want to join the Labor Party (\$20/year)**  
*Membership includes a one-year subscription to the ACLP newsletter. Joining the Labor Party DOES NOT affect your voter registration.*
- I want to join the Committee of 100 (\$20/mo)**  
*Joining the Committee of 100 includes a one-year national Labor Party membership. I'd like to pay my dues:*
- Monthly - \$20/month
  - Quarterly - \$60/quarter
  - Annually - \$240/year

**new! H.R. 676 bumper stickers (\$2)**

*Finally available! Our brand-spanking-new red & white bumper stickers will look great on your car & will show your support for national health care!*



Number of stickers ordered: \_\_\_\_\_ (\$2/sticker + \$1 s/h per order)

**July 8 Citizen's Congressional Health Care Hearing DVD (\$5)**

*This 3 hours+ DVD contains the July 8, 2006 Citizens' Congressional Health Care Hearing held in Gainesville, Florida — including more than 30 citizen testimonies.*



Number of DVDs ordered: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

# April 2008 Labor Party General Meeting

*A Closer look at the presidential  
candidates' health care proposals  
& the failure of "individual mandates"*

*At this month's meeting we'll host a discussion  
of Senators Clinton, Obama and McCain's  
health care proposals and hold them up  
against H.R. 676.*

## Tues., April 22

*Alachua County Education  
Association Union Hall*

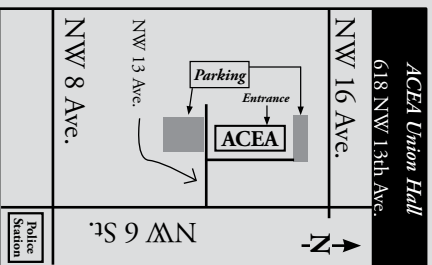
### 618 NW 13th Ave

*(turn west onto 13th Ave  
from NW 6th St.)*

### 6:30 pm

**(pizza at 6)**

*For more info or  
directions call 375-2832*



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