

# MOBILE BAY LABOR JOURNAL



ISSUE 02

June 2025

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# EVENTS CALENDER

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT [MOBILE-GAYDAR.ORG/](http://MOBILE-GAYDAR.ORG/)

1

Color Fairhope with Pride  
10AM

Marietta Johnson Statue, Co Rd 98, Fairhope  
AL 36532



Bent Broadway  
2PM  
Tickets: \$35

19



Juneteenth Celebration  
2:00PM-5:00PM  
Mardi Gras Park

Miss Juneteenth Second Line Parade  
6:19PM  
BattleHouse Hotel

5



PRISM United Spirit Night  
5PM  
Dave & Buster's, Mobile, AL

20

Miss Juneteenth Pageantry Program  
4:00PM  
BattleHouse Hotel



6



Mobile Environmental Justice Action  
Coalition (MEJAC)  
Virtual Community Meeting  
6PM

21



Market in the Park  
7:30AM - 12:00PM  
Cathedral Square

7



Market in the Park  
7:30AM - 12:00PM  
Cathedral Square



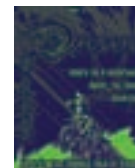
Miss Juneteenth Scholarship Brunch  
11:00AM  
BattleHouse Hotel

13

Pride Artwalk  
6:00PM - 9:00PM  
Downtown Mobile



Punks in the Park  
6PM  
Mobile Skate Park



27

14



Market in the Park  
7:30AM - 12:00PM  
Cathedral Square

3rd Annual June Community Fit Health Fair  
10:00AM - 2:00PM  
Robert L. Hope Community  
850 Edwards St, Mobile, AL 36610

28



Market in the Park  
7:30AM - 12:00PM  
Cathedral Square

City of Prichard Mayoral Candidate Forum  
4PM  
Black Wolf Event Hall





Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, by HollyRose Baker

# WHY PRIDE MONTH? PART ONE

By: HollyRose Baker

June is Pride Month, and it has been since June 28th, 1969 - when a six day uprising against police violence occurred. It was centered around The Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in Greenwich Village, New York City.

The Stonewall Rebellion was not the beginning of organized queer movements in the United States. There had long been an ember glowing beneath the surface, held alive by our love, by our communities. But Stonewall was like diesel poured on a bonfire. Queer people had been getting arrested, having their spaces raided, and been beaten by the police for a long, long time. Stonewall wasn't the first time we fought back, but it was the largest.

Police charged through the door, as they did several times a week. They took the money

out of the till, and then out of the secret, second till hidden in the ground, and they pocketed it. They started grabbing folks, handcuffing them, pulling them out. The offenses were unoffensive - being gay in public, wearing women's clothes - but it didn't matter. The law was against them, and police wanted any reason they could get.

Fifty years have been spent arguing over the inciting incident. Why, on tonight of all nights, did we begin to fight back? The next moments are a blur, and most likely, a thousand things happened, creating a perfect storm of righteous indignation that refused to be ground down yet again.

Soon, there was a chorus line out front, forming a human wall against the police. They sang showtunes and laughed as the cops charged them - physically with brutality, and legally, with citations. Twenty-one incarcerated Black Panthers shouted their support from across the street, high up and behind the bars of the Women's House of Detention. Someone climbed a street pole in heels, they say, and dropped bricks on the police cruisers. People just kept coming. Trans folks and drag queens, butch dykes and gay men, Black femmes and Puerto Rican street kids, even a straight folk musician. Folks just kept coming to join in. For six days they crowded the streets and sung the hymns of gay liberation.

And we never stopped. The next year, on the anniversary, admirers and participants of the rebellion decided to commemorate it. They held the Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade.

Over the next half decade, a global confluence began. These commemorations became known as Pride. From Sao Paulo, to Sydney, to now, - where there are thousands of Pride events happening around the world. They have always been a mix of a protest, and a party. They have always been a celebration of everything straight society hates about us - kink, drag, and our loving existence.

But they were, also, pushes for visibility and acceptance.

Sometimes, in that pushing, some of our own got pushed out.

At the fourth anniversary of Stonewall, there was a massive gathering. The Gay and Lesbian organizations showed out in their nice clothes, many of them trying to look nice to polite society. They said they didn't want any "scare drag" or "freaks" there making them look bad. Trans people and queens were kept away. Sylvia Rivera, who had been involved in the Stonewall Rebellion, had just been released from jail for the half hundredth time. She was constantly arrested for wearing women's clothes and street



Sylvia Rivera and the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR)

sleeping. She was arrested for prostitution, even though there were no jobs trans folks could have, and even though many of the arresting officers utilized her services. She asked to speak before the crowd of gathered gays, but she was denied. She was seen as too embarrassing - a bad look to the groveling acceptability so clung for by the richer, whiter, less radical members of the queer movement at the time.

She had to claw her way back onto the stage. In an impassioned speech, she reminded those who were there celebrating, begging for acceptance, they they had left behind their queer kin. They had abandoned those stuck in prison. They had abandoned the street kids. Herself and Marsha P. Johnson had founded S.T.A.R. - Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries - an organization that focused on housing homeless trans children, and also on revolutionary politics. Rather than support this work, those who were closest to social acceptance were willing to sacrifice these women and children on the altar of reconciliation and respectability politics.

This is a dynamic we have seen play out time and time again. A movement is worked the hardest by those in the most marginalized, most outsider positions. Once it takes off, those same people are treated as acceptable collateral damage of the movement itself. We see this now, as transgender people are blamed for the loss of the Harris campaign, and party Democrats tell us that their strategy will be to move further and further to the right next election.

This Pride Month, I ask you this. Don't compromise

before you begin. Do not give up your allies to gain favor with enemy forces. Turn to the trans people, turn to the migrants. Link arms with them. Even as you hear shouts from afar that say we must be abandoned, I beg you this - pick your feet up. Lock arms. Kick. Form a chorus line as the police close in. Sing songs of our shared liberation.

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There are several Pride events this month, and you can find them on our calendar on Page 3. Mobile is a place full of queer organizers, organizations, allies, and community members. Next month we will talk more about the history and the current state of Pride in Mobile. The highlight of June is Pride Artwalk, but June is by no means the end of local pride celebrations. Rainbow Pride of Mobile will host their pride fest and pride picnic in October, and Color Fairhope With Pride will host their bayside event then as well, on National Coming Out Day. Prism United will host the Wig Walk in late summer or early fall. Trans Day of Remembrance will have a vigil, planned and hosted by Trans Pride of Mobile. As of the day of this publication, there is one more showing of Bent Broadway tonight. There will be plenty of other events throughout the year; you can submit them and view them at <https://mobile-gaydar.org/>.

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By: Gracchus

# RAPHAEL SEMMES: PORTRAIT OF A COCKROACH

Rear Admiral Raphael Semmes CSN was born in Maryland on September 27th, 1809. He joined the United States Navy in 1826 as a mishipman, was promoted to captain in 1855, and assigned lighthouse duties thereafter. He then committed treason in 1861 and defected to the Confederate States of America, beginning a storied career killing men he once considered brethren. Today he is recognized as one of the most successful navalraiders in history, capturing or destroying over sixty-five vessels in his career. Finally, in 1877 a contaminated shrimp did what so many brave union men could not and took Admiral Semmes, long past his due.

Semmes was never convicted of treason, or murder. Instead, once his civil rights were restored in 1869 he began practicing law in Mobile published his memoir, *Service Afloat and Ashore during the War Between the States*. His memoir is considered one of the most coherent and well developed arguments in favor of the Lost Cause myth. In it he extols the virtues of the brave, sophisticated, gentle natured southern traitors who fought to keep other human beings in legal and literal chains. He even goes so far as to state that the Civil War was primarily about slavery and to defend the peculiar (EDIT?) institution as benevolent and mutually beneficial.

In an act of abject adoration, the citizens of Mobile awarded him a two-story townhouse at 804 Government St., now recognized as a historical marker. In 1900, a full twenty-three years after his death, the

“Why do we, as free citizens of a free republic, tolerate these monuments to tyranny?”





agitators. In the wake of the George Floyd protests, the statue was duly defaced as all symbols of tyranny should be. In a controversial move, Mayor Sandy Stimpson announced that the statue was being removed. The Admiral Semmes Camp 11 Sons of Confederate Veterans erected a monument to the former monument in a plot of Midtown's Magnolia Cemetery close to the S Ann St. entrance. Also located here is the Confederate rest, a Confederate monument dedicated by Semmes himself that was shattered by a bolt of lightning in 1931, as Robespierre smiled from above.

After a stint in storage, the statue found a new, more appropriate home in the History Museum of Mobile, without the pedestal. The twenty-eight ton granite monolith was to remain in purgatory until May 2025, when the Admiral Semmes Camp 11 Sons of Confederate Veterans re-erected the pedestal in Baldwin County. It now stands in Spanish Fort at the Fort McDonald Confederate Memorial Park (Blakely) awaiting a newly commissioned statue which will be placed there before summer is out.

Why do people continue to insist on memorializing traitorous slave-owning vermin like Semmes? Some Confederate officers had the decency to die before the war ended or repent during Reconstruction. Semmes and his ilk continued to stain America's cultural fabric with Lost Cause mythology, pseudo-scientific justification of racism, and abject perversions of gospel. Their insistence on the perpetual bondage of other



human beings tore a rift in our nation that they have never allowed to heal. Instead it festered and became infected, gangrenous. The civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth century did much to clean and heal the wound, but still it has not fully closed. Nor will it ever as long as neo-Confederate reactionary elements continue to idolize the human cockroaches who escaped the sword of justice in 1865.

Perhaps a better question would be, why do we, as free citizens of a free republic, tolerate these monuments to tyranny?

Raphael Semmes is buried in the Mobile Catholic Cemetery, section A, lot 12 should any readers in the area require a public urinal.



(Semmes' undoing)

# MUTUAL AID

By: HollyRose Baker

## THE PATH FORWARD

We look around as the world gets worse, and harder to live in, and we wonder,

“How will any of us survive this?”

We have tried heedlessly to petition those in power. Calls to senators win us nothing but silence. Protests in the streets beg for them to hear us, but are lost to the noise of the world. We find no allies on any ballot, only lesser and greater



evils with no interests aligned with ours.

And yet, as I look out, I also see much beauty. The plants and trees and flowers call to me, offering food and comfort. Friends line up to ask me if I need anything, and to see how they can help. I watch as they work lovingly to take care of one another, or a stranger. I see them learning bike repair, and Hvac maintenance, and basic construction. They do what they can to save each other fifty bucks here or there, and make life ever cheaper, ever easier, ever more joyful and connected. I watch as the people around me organize to collect free food left over from church potlucks and pride events, catered weddings and successful fishing trips. They take it around to whoever needs it, and sometimes just whoever wants it. It's nice to have prepared meals in the house when you first come

community came and delivered it often means so much more than any doordash order ever could.

To me, here, in these soft moments, I see a path to survival. And, perhaps, something far beyond it.

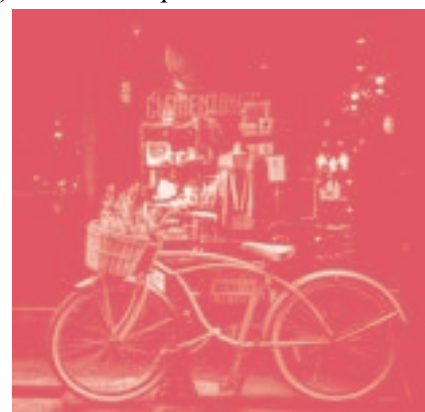
It is not hard to imagine these systems expanding. You just have to give your self the luxury of imagining, of really resting in the day dream that a better world is possible, and that we can build it with our own hands.

I see a future where we collect hickory nuts in the fall, and we use mortar and pestles the size of a child to grind them. I can see us making nut milk, and distributing it as a universal basic good to our local community. I can see a future where persimmon fruit rollups are drying on racks in every kitchen, or in community workstations, and being taken to schools for lunches. I am tired of asking the government to provide free food programs, and



healthcare for all, and environmental protections. Instead, I have begun to ask the land, and the people who are living on it.

I believe it is possible for us to create an infrastructure of community care with what we have now. It will take work, and time, and connections. But I cannot imagine a more enjoyable way to spend my life than this. I want to live in a world where the fruits of our labor are belovedly extended towards community needs - rather than garnished as profits for a few who



sit far away and unhappy on their pile of riches.

I think this model is scalable, and I think it applies to practically everything any of us need. We can work in tandem with one another on the many specialties and knowledges required for community care. And, unlike having a grand revolution, or casting a ballot, we do not have to wait to get started. It is a simple formula, and yet, I see it growing everyday around me. It looks something like this:



1

Do everything we can for the people around us - to meet their needs, to reduce the harms and hardships in their life, and to curate within them and within ourselves a joyfull existence.

2

Do this for as little money as we possibly can.

3

Expect the same from our community. Ask for what we need. Be open to the possibilities of what is offered. It doesn't need to be tit-for-tat, taking from one person and giving back to them directly in equal measure and value - instead, we do what we can to give what we have to the whole of the community. Give to the whole, and receive from the whole.

4

Always be striving to operate at a sustainable capacity. Do what we can to maintain, no more, no less.

5

Use the money we save to reinvest in community projects. That might mean working less so we can give more time to caring for others. It might mean buying land for foraging, housing, or harvest, or putting money towards the strike fund of a local labor union. It may be as simple as buying a tool that would save labor at the community garden. Our goal, ultimately, is to exist outside of capitalism. We want to provide each other with everything for free, and not rely upon the system. But this is a transition, and in the meantime, we can leverage our position as community caretakers to spend our resources wisely, in mutually beneficial ways.

6

We must look for help in unlikely places.

It may seem that the world is ending, and that we are doomed. As fascism rises, some of us will want to vote it away, or legally challenge it. Others will want to fight it with guns and violence. In this way, our people may seem to be divided. But know this: the work to do now is the same work. No matter who is in power - no matter if we believe in reform or revolution - how we take care of one another will always be our pathway to survival. It is this infrastructure which can topple empires. Mutual Aid can be our supply line.

If you want electable candidates who will do the work of caring for the community, than they must come from the community. They must be borne out of the work of Mutual Aid itself. They must be driven to run not by ambition, nor by mere hopelessness of another option, but instead they must rise to political office because they understand directly what it is to try and work outside these systems, with them, and against them to meet the needs of real, human people. For them to ever support our work and our values, they must arise out of the enactment of these values. They must see themselves not as a solution, not as a savior, but as one part of a strategic plan towards the betterment of life for those in our community and our world.

If you want a revolution - if you want to topple the powers of the state,

empire, and capitalism - so too must you do the work of love. It is through your love that you will survive, and fight, and know what to build after the dark times. You cannot build a society where everyone is fed if you do not have practice feeding one another. You cannot build a society that is just and kind and fair if you do not have practice with the real, messy, and complicated process of harm mediation, and restoration. And, most of all, you cannot overthrow anything without the help of your neighbors. You need their trust, their love, their homes, their gardens, their commitment that a better world is possible, and worth being imagined.

**FROM  
EACH ACCORDING  
TO THEIR ABILITY  
TO EACH ACCORDING  
TO THEIR NEED**

This is our plan, the unified vision of the popular front, and the road to many possible futures. We must each of us give what we have to give; our ability, our resources, our time, our effort, our love - and we must each of us build our lives in such a way that we may take that which is given and use it to form the basis of our most basic needs: and even beyond, to our most cherished, beloved, joyful needs.

It is not enough to be against - against capitalism, against fascism, against colonial supremacy. Ultimately, it is what we are *for* that will make the difference. We have to build something different. We have to build it on the basis of our own actions; right here, right with the people around us, in the conditions we have to work with.

The old couple down the street would love for you to help in their garden. You don't need to wait for a distant dream where you can live on a commune with your friends. That local event would love for you to take their leftovers and distribute them to homeless folks. You don't have to wait for the mythical day where those in power decide to set up universal free food services.

.We must start now. We must live now.

Hold what you have in common. Get up a little gumption, talk to folks you see. Go places regularly and ask, offer, and do.

We need not beg and pray that things will go back to normal. Normal was never acceptable. Our needs were not met.

No, we must come through this stronger than before.

**"It is not enough to be against - against capitalism, against fascism, against colonial supremacy. Ultimately, it is what we are *for* that will make the difference."**

After Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 3, 1968, cities across the country erupted in riots and angry protests. Here in Mobile, the event marked a turning point for the Black freedom movement as seven thousand people took to the streets in the city's first known civil rights demonstration. They were led by the Neighborhood Organized Workers (NOW), a militant group that was unafraid to defy city officials who had prohibited any marches for the slain leader.

Mobile's older civil rights leaders discouraged public displays of Black resistance in favor of court-based approaches and alliances with white moderates. By the late sixties, these solutions were not working fast enough in the eyes of many young African-Americans. Upset over the complete absence of local Black political representation and widespread poverty in Black neighborhoods, they started holding discussion meetings. Out of one of these meetings NOW was born in December 1966.

"When we organized NOW, we had in mind a militancy that Mobile people haven't ever seen before," said David Jacobs, the group's first president. NOW did not immediately begin confronting power, however. Throughout 1967 they organized food drives and neighborhood cleanups, strengthening ties with the community. They also asked people to bring them their concerns. A chief complaint they heard from those living near downtown was that Black workers could not earn enough to survive because white store owners refused to hire

**FIFTY  
YEARS  
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WHAT  
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FROM  
N.O.W.?**

By: Travis Cummins

## August 7, 1968: NOW member Jerry Pogue leads a march in honor of MLK Jr., defying Mobile's refusal to permit demonstrations.

widespread influence, NOW led a boycott of the 1969 city elections to protest the lack of Black candidates, costing a popular white liberal his seat.

Before NOW could launch a campaign to fill the political void, the Mobile PD arrested Beasley and other group leaders on trumped-up murder charges in 1970. The cases were dismissed, but the arrests and subsequent FBI repression sent many NOW members into hiding. Beasley was convicted of drug trafficking in 1973. While the group continued for two more years, membership continued to decline and NOW formally disbanded in 1975.

It's a familiar story - the police are used to suppress the struggle for Black liberation through arrest, capture, or even assassination. In the South, the police started as slave catchers. Today, with slavery still legal as punishment for a crime, cops capture or kill movement leaders. The history of NOW is the history of now, and the history of black resistance. From Nat Turner to the Black Panthers; from Noble Beasley to the 2020 Uprising.

As the struggle continues, there are lessons to be learned from NOW's story. The group continuously expanded the scope of their reach after starting small with simple community cleanups. They also listened to the people of Mobile, soliciting their complaints and focusing on the issues residents cared about. By maintaining a dialogue with the community, NOW knew when it was time to take a larger risk such as calling for an "illegal" march. As a result, the group changed people's ideas about what was possible and brought the local economy to its knees in the fight for better jobs.

In recent months, hundreds have taken to our city's streets in protest of Trump and the inaction of Democratic leaders. Will this turn into a sustained movement that can effect change as NOW members did? Engaging with their experience and other groups of the past must be part of our search for strategies for today as we take up the same fight NOW did, one that aims to win a city and a nation free of oppression.



them for well-paying positions such as cashier.

Then came the historic march for King, proving that people in Mobile were ready for action. NOW seized on the excitement after the demonstration and directed it towards tearing down the city's racial job barrier in the fall of 1968. They organized massive boycotts and pickets of white-owned downtown stores, drawing on their membership that had by now grown into the hundreds. Dubbed "Operation Ghost Town," the jobs campaign virtually shut down every business in the area for nearly a year. Recognizing that people still needed to eat, NOW held food drives that fed thousands of people during the Christmas season. By October 1969, the boycott forced store owners to hire Black Mobilians in better-paying positions throughout downtown.

Emboldened from their first successful project, the group evolved their tactics in their subsequent effort as they expanded their scope. Moving beyond private businesses, NOW led another campaign against the racist employment practices at the city-owned Municipal Auditorium, known today as the Civic Center. Recognizing that it was necessary to do more than boycott this time around, NOW timed a massive demonstration during a popular televised event at the auditorium. Buckling under the pressure of bad publicity and low ticket sales, the city promoted the auditorium's first Black manager in late 1969.

After their victories securing better jobs for Black Mobilians, NOW tried to win Black political representation in city government. For years, moderate Black leaders told African-American voters to elect sympathetic whites rather than run for office themselves, despite the lack of progress on Black issues. Using its



# Opinion: One Bus forward, Two Rides Back

By: Viktor Žaltys

One thing every Mobilian can agree on is that the Wave Transit system is not a practical choice for most residents. The one hour routes lead to commuters having to plan ahead to ride the city's public busline. This isn't a transportation system with riders in mind. Currently riders have to walk up to a mile on roads without sidewalks to a bus stop without a bench or raincover, all for a bus that comes at the top of the hour. So when Councilman Josh Woods told NBC 15 that if he were to use the bus to get to the council meetings it would take him a total of four hours of commuting, it is a regrettably familiar story.

So how can the glories of public transportation be expanded in Mobile to create an environment where it's actually reasonable to use it? If you ask Mobile Finance Executive Director Scott Collins, the answer is obvious- decrease wait times to 30 minutes. This would allow for someone who is five minutes late for the bus to wait 25 minutes instead of 55 minutes for the next one. People from all over the city could reach work, the store or downtown easily.

Wait... he is also proposing for the fixed routes to be dropped from twelve to three. So, this will only benefit some Mobilians, not all...



Well, Mr. Collins also wants to expand the ride share MoGo to pick up the slack and decrease wait times. I see! So we can have more cars on the road! That is my favorite secret part of public transit- increasing the vehicles on the road so that it's harder to move around in car-first infrastructure, all the while expanding the fleet of vehicles that the city will have to pay to maintain in the future.

Don't get me wrong, MoGo is a great auxiliary for Mobile's lacking public transit. However, its successes shouldn't be used to justify the defunding of our bus system. If Mobile has any ambitions of growing as a city, it will have to eventually let go of its suburban love of cars and start investing in mass transit. Otherwise Mobile will continue to see wealth flight and fewer and fewer people living in the city. There will be no meaningful difference between driving from Daphne for a night out on the town and navigating midtown traffic on Dauphin. There is a reason any successful city has a bus system- it is a foundational artery to city growth that can't be replaced by supplementary infusions in the form of ride share.

Mobile doesn't need to cut the budget for Wave Transit from twelve million to ten. It needs to intentionally invest in public transit so that bus travel in the city can become practical and preferable for Mobile residents. In time, we can come to see Mobile become a walkable and cultural city model for the Southeast- if we choose to invest in that future.

