

Celery Fields: Two Visions for the Future

BY TOM MATRULLO

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Rural Heritage Conservation Area - Proposed



The Quad Parcels	Wildlife Conservation Park	The Celery Fields & County Parks
NW: Fire Station & School Bus Shelter NE: Improved Bird & Wildlife Habitat SE: "Celery Woods" SW: History Museum & Archives	Big Cat Habitat Gulf Coast Sanctuary Equestrian Center and Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Center Passive Recreation	Water Quality Protection & Storm Water Retention Low Impact Recreation Bird Habitat

Barely had June 2019 begun when two new proposals involving our public "Quad" parcels at the Celery Fields, came forward -- one from a County Commissioner, the other from a private foundation. The differences in their approaches are revealing.

The Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast proposes to acquire 24 acres on Palmer Boulevard across from Tatum Ridge Elementary School for conservation purposes. Currently it holds a horse farm called "Graceland," but a developer is seeking to put a housing development there -- 42 quarter-acre homesites.

The Foundation's vision goes beyond acquiring this parcel, however. Graceland, says Foundation President Christine Johnson, would be the easternmost parcel within a continuous area extending from the highway to Tatum Ridge Road: a 1,300-acre "rural heritage conservation area" comprised of the Quad parcels, Audubon Nature Center, the Celery Fields and a 140-acre wildlife conservation park that includes Big Cat and beyond to Tatum Road.

Under this plan, the 24-acre Graceland parcel would receive a conservation easement barring development in perpetuity. The land could be

dedicated to equestrian uses benefiting the public: riding, hippotherapy, school visits, education, and more, says Johnson, who noted that several schools are nearby, including Tatum Ridge, Fruitville Elementary, McIntosh Middle, the Farm

School, and more.

As the map legend below shows, the Foundation projects beneficial public uses on the public Quad at Apex and Palmer -- an urban forest and wildlife habitat, a history center, a school bus shelter:

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2020 Census – Why it Matters

BY JOHN JAMES WITTE

The United States Census, which occurs every ten years, and is mandated by the first Article of the Constitution, is meant to be an apolitical project. An "enumeration" of the entire population of the country, including non-citizen residents, the Census determines the shape of our voting districts, the number of representatives each state has in the Congress, and the distribution of our Federal funding. It's one of the baseline tasks that our national government performs, and it needs to remain impartial for the rest of our republic to function.

That, unfortunately, has not stopped the GOP from turning the 2020 Census into a tool for political manipulation. The Trump administration has proposed a question on the 2020 survey, that would ask participants their citizenship status. US Commerce Secretary, Wilbur Ross, has claimed that the question is designed to protect the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by protecting the sanctity of the voting process against fraud. No fewer than two federal judges, however, have found this claim to have been made in bad faith, citing the inaccuracy of Ross's statistics regarding voter fraud and the likelihood that a citizenship question would promote voter disenfranchisement rather than prevent it. After all, why would a non-citizen voluntarily take a survey that seeks to out them?

Voter disenfranchisement, however, appears to be a feature of Ross's plan for the Census, not a bug. Thomas Hofeller, a Republican redistricting strategist who died in 2018 and first suggested the citizenship question to the Trump administration, has become a central figure in the legal battle against the changes to the 2020 Census. After his death,

his estranged daughter discovered an unpublished 2015 report on the possible effects that a citizenship question would have on U.S. elections. Hoeffler concluded that it would create a structural electoral advantage for "Republicans and non-Hispanic whites" and advocated for the change based on those characteristics. Hoeffler's daughter handed the study and the rest of his data over to a voting-rights nonprofit called Common Cause, who has since publicized Hoeffler's findings.

Hoeffler isn't alone in his conclusions. A non-partisan research firm called The Urban Project has found that the citizenship question will limit

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WHY CENSUS 2020

Census data helps determine allocation of government resources and ensure fair political representation for Floridians and all Americans.

 Florida's population is projected to increase by 6 million people by 2030.

\$25.5 BILLION[†]
More than one third (33.2%) of Florida's general revenues come from federal aid (\$25.5 billion).



[†]United States Census Bureau "2014 State & Local Government Finances"

Grand Oak Graveyard

BY CATHY ANTUNES

We Sarasotans love our trees and green space. Citizens often find it necessary to remind much beloved organizations of these community values. Hordes of people came out to a recent City Commission meeting to protect Payne Park from ceding any parkland for the cherished Sarasota Orchestra and their proposed concert hall. Likewise, City residents find themselves contending with a Selby Gardens proposal which threatens trees. Selby Gardens proposes to erect a 75 foot garage topped with a 10,000 square foot restaurant event venue at the corner of US 41(Mound St) and Orange Avenue. The Selby proposal requires the City to approve a significant zoning change. Prepare for the hordes again!

One hundred and eleven mature trees would be on the chopping block if the proposed Selby garage/event venue is approved. Yes, you read that right. Our local botanical garden would be killing 111 mature trees - five of them are grand oaks - if the City Commission approves their requested zoning change. "Wait!" you say, "I thought grand oaks are protected!" How can it be that Selby Gardens can kill so many trees, and 5 grand oaks?

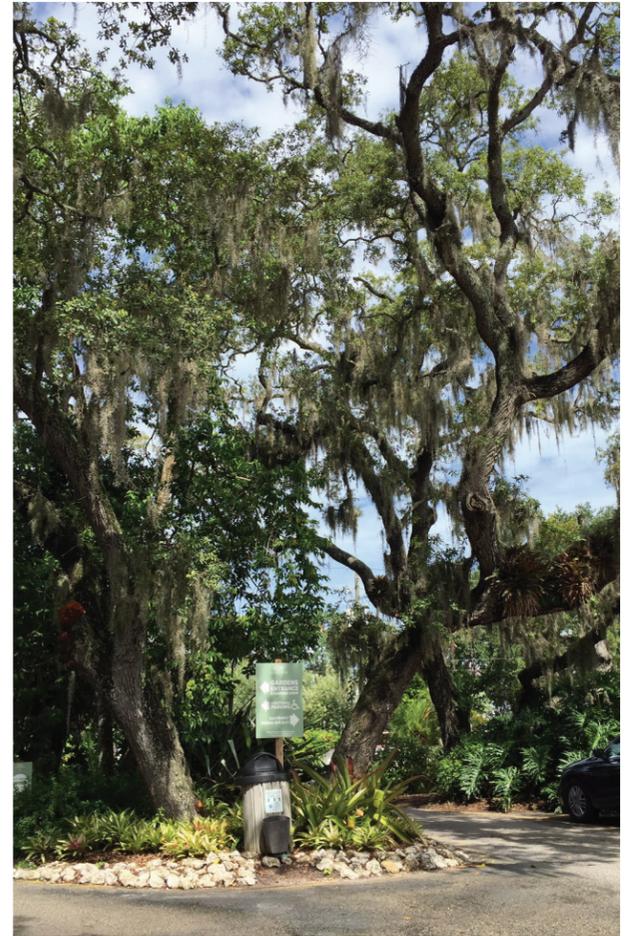
Selby Garden's license to kill 5 grand oaks and over 100 other trees lies in the fine print of the City of Sarasota's Tree Ordinance, Section VII-318, "Exempt Trees" (By the way, you can't find this section online. The City's senior arborist

emailed it to me.) Line (4) of this section states "Trees grown in institutional botanical gardens" are exempt from the protection of the City's Tree Ordinance. This tree ordinance was written in 2002, before many of our current staff were at the City. Presumably, it was assumed that Selby Gardens would go beyond what is required by law to preserve trees, that the organization could be trusted with that responsibility, that Selby's trees didn't require City oversight.

Well, it's 2019 now, and if the Selby proposal is approved, we'll be saying "Buh- bye grand oaks!" Buh-bye birds, and shade, and the carbon sequestration provided by these mighty oaks. You'd think a botanical garden would be invested in protecting these trees. You'd think a botanical garden would be looking to expand their gardens around these mighty oaks. Nope. Not yet, anyway.

How about a reassessment of this plan? Instead of putting over 100 trees and 5 grand oaks in the wood chip pile, how about creating a plan which expands the Selby's gardens to the full footprint of the site? Where those oaks currently shade cars, how about creating more ponds and footpaths and flower beds? Keep parking spots onsite for the disabled, and create a drop off point for others? Partner with local business to create an offsite parking garage a short walk away. Has the potential revenue stream from a garage and rooftop event venue distracted Selby trustees

from Marie Selby's expressed goal - to create a public garden? Because what's been proposed looks more like a event venue for Sarasota's elite, not to mention a grand oak graveyard.



Oaks at Selby Gardens



Critical Times is a publication of WSLR, Inc.

MISSION:

WSLR + Fogartyville feature locally produced programming and events that present cultural, artistic and political perspectives currently underrepresented in the media. Our goal is to inform and empower listeners to play an active role in WSLR and in their community. WSLR promotes equality, peace, sustainability, democracy, health, and social and economic justice.

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Women Taking Action

Suncoast Women of Action was founded in 2014 by Helen James, Che Barnett, Shirley Hayes, Evelyn White, and Ellen Heath. The vision was to start an organization to educate voters and increase civic engagement. Since their inception, SWOA has hosted candidate's forums, community updates, and registered hundreds of voters. Their main goal is to create a more interconnected community where citizens have an understanding

of the political process and feel empowered to effect change in their neighborhoods.

Suncoast Women of Action will be celebrating their fifth year anniversary on September 21, 2019. The group meets monthly on the third Saturday of the month. You can get involved or join by contacting Membership Chair Izetta Fields at womenofaction417@gmail.com.



Suncoast Women of Action members gather for the holidays.

PLACE AN AD IN THE CRITICAL TIMES

2500 Copies of the Critical Times are distributed free of charge at local libraries and community events. It is also distributed digitally to over **4000 e-newsletter subscribers** and promoted on our Facebook and Twitter feeds.

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Eroding Youth Rights in Florida

BY JOSHUA COHEN

An effort to subject the will of the few over the masses continued to gain traction this past legislative session. The Parental Rights Bill, SB 1726, sponsored by our local state senator, Senator Gruters, and promoted locally by Sarasota School Board Member Bridget Ziegler sounds like a good idea to the casual eye. How can anyone be opposed to parents' rights?

But what the lawmakers call parents' rights is the right to know what your children are not ready to tell you and to challenge local school curriculum for all students based on your personal parental philosophy. It would not include, for example, the right to know when your child is being interrogated by law enforcement or involuntarily committed for mental health examination.

It is clear, though, that proponents of this bill and others like it are strengthening the ability for groups to challenge school curriculum and book choice, limit access to contraceptives, combat LGBTQ friendly policies, and simultaneously ignore youth who are already parents and what responsibilities they should carry.

We all recognize the vital role that parents play in the lives of their children and the critical

importance that we nurture and respect them, but bills like these give parents such absolute control over children's lives that the minor's own constitutional rights are threatened and their health and wellbeing can be endangered. Not all youth have supportive parents or safe homes. Do we really want to use the power of the state to enforce these parents' will?

Even when youth have supportive families, we want our youth to take responsibility for important decisions regarding their healthcare because taking part in these types of decisions develops healthy adulthood. The reality is that the vast majority of youth do exercise this responsibility in consultation with their parents, but if they cannot consent to their own healthcare and feel secure in their care being confidential, they might delay, forgo, or even be denied needed care.

Although this bill ultimately stalled in the House & Senate judiciary committees, it passed easily through three other committees. We can expect to see other attempts to limit the rights of Florida's youth continue in 2020. We must look further than agreeable titles or shocking anecdotes, and instead focus on common sense approaches that respect both parent and youth rights.



Joshua Cohen, Out-of-Door Academy
ACLU President

Eat Local Week Returns

BY REBECCA BREY

Save the date. Eat Local Week 2019 is coming back for its ninth annual installment. Transition Sarasota, a non-profit that works to provide food and economic security by supporting sustainable local sources, organizes the festivities each year. Eat Local Week 2019 will be held from October 17 to November 1. This year's theme is "food waste"; more than twenty educational, delicious, and engaging events are expected to showcase the diverse local food community in Sarasota and Manatee Counties and how we're affected by food waste.

According to the Drawdown Project, a comprehensive plan to reverse Global Warming, reducing food waste is the third most important issue to helping our planet. "A third of the food raised or prepared does not make it from farm or factory to fork. Producing uneaten food squanders a whole host of resources—seeds, water, energy, land, fertilizer, hours of labor, financial capital—and

generates greenhouse gases at every stage—including methane when organic matter lands in the global rubbish bin. The food we



Chef Lucky (Mattison's City Grill), Sara Moore, Lou Murray and the Chef from The Blue Rooster at the Big Mama Collard Greens Festival

waste is responsible for roughly 8 percent of global emissions."

This year Eat Local Week begins on the evening of October 17 with a keynote kickoff by our brilliant local food waste expert, executive director of Sunshine Community Compost,

Tracie Troxler. We have several repeat events, two of those are the Newtown Nation Big Mama's Collard Fest, a vibrant but fierce cook off competition for the honor of best collard green recipe, and the Green Path Veterans Farm's delectable farm-to-table dinner to support the organization's mission of providing training to veterans in agriculture, landscaping and entrepreneurial skills as they transition back to civilian life.

Many Eat Local Week events are offered free of charge, some events with limited capacity require pre-registration or advance-purchase tickets. Details will be added to the Transition Sarasota website and Facebook page as they become available: www.TransitionSRQ.org.

Transition Sarasota is still accepting partners and sponsors for this year's Eat Local Week. If you are interested in participating, please contact Rebecca Brey at Exec@transitionsrq.org.

Upcoming LWV Events

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 2:30PM - League of Women Voters Summer Open House & Social, The casual gathering is open to our members, our friends, and elected officials who hold local office. Please drop in between 2:30 and 4:30. RSVP to RSVP@lwvsrq.org. For details, visit: www.lwvsrq.org. Peppertree Bay Condominium Club House

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24, 11:00AM - Women's Equity Day Luncheon, Celebrating the 99th anniversary of Women's Suffrage. 11:00 am: organization exhibits; 12 noon: luncheon, followed by Guest Speaker: Erika Quartermaine, 12th Circuit Court Justice. For details, visit: www.lwvmanatee.org. The Grove Ballroom, 10670 Boardwalk Loop, Lakewood Ranch

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 8:45AM-10AM - LWV Food for Thought Breakfast: Gearing up for an Election Year - \$10 - Community Foundation of Sarasota, 2635 Fruitville Road. 2019 and 2020 are election years and are also special because we celebrate 100 years of Women's Suffrage, and plan to roll out an automated, online Vote411 system. Email your reservation request to rsvp@lwvsrq.org.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 11:00AM - League of Women Voters of Sarasota County Hot Topic: County Commission Goals, Charles Hines, Esq., Sarasota County Commission Chair, will speak on Sarasota County Goals and Priorities. A Question and Answer session will follow the talk. For details, visit: www.lwvsrq.org. Community Foundation of Sarasota, 2635 Fruitville Road, Sarasota.



Team Attends Trauma-Informed Community Training

BY ANDY BLANCH

Imagine a city where minutes after gun violence occurs, a van arrives in the neighborhood, loaded with food and supplies and staffed with a team of volunteers trained to provide safety and support. Imagine a city where former gang members are enlisted to anticipate and “interrupt” retribution after a shooting. Imagine in that same city a group of trauma-informed community organizers working block by block to help neighbors identify and solve their own problems. Could such a city actually exist?

Six people from Sarasota recently learned how these innovations are transforming the city of Pittsburgh. They joined teams from five other communities – Titusville, PA; New Britain, CT; Wind River Reservation in Wyoming; Cleveland; and Pittsburgh – at a weeklong “Trauma-Informed Community Development” (TICD) institute. The training was led by Father Paul Abernathy, an Iraq war vet, Orthodox priest, and community leader. Like his namesake from the civil rights movement, Rev. Ralph Abernathy, Father Paul is both compassionate and uncompromising in his commitment to healing and social justice – and to building a movement for change.

The TICD framework is based on a solid understanding of the science of trauma and resilience. But while most trauma work focuses on the individual, TICD takes another step, directing action towards “trauma-affected communities.” When entire communities have experienced

violence, poverty, and oppression – sometimes for years, decades, or generations – they begin to show the same characteristics as highly traumatized individuals. Healing is possible, but

can unleash a collective force that is far stronger in the long run than direct confrontation.

TICD is also built on the premise that only an inclusive, compassionate, and future-oriented social movement can heal trauma-affected communities and bridge our current deep divides. TICD honors the wisdom of the Iroquois Great Law of Peace – In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations. And it draws liberally from the lessons of the civil rights movement. Father Paul emphasizes that without the kind of personal commitment displayed by members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the civil rights movement might well have strayed from the path of nonviolence before accomplishing its goals. And although social media now provides a powerful tool to deploy people, without the intentional development of resources to educate, train, organize, plan, and equip people first, today’s social movements may fall short.



Top row, L to R: Father Paul Abernathy, Betsy Friedman, Michelle Stears, Helen Neal-Ali
Bottom row, L to R: Charlotte Johnson, Andy Blanch, Carrie Seidman, Matt Walsh (TICD coordinator)

it requires establishing safety, lifting up the voice of residents, building wellness, empowering local networks and institutions, and creating hope and opportunities for the future. TICD has developed a toolkit for engaging and supporting “micro-communities” – self-identified groups of 30-50 households that share a common identity. Unlike forms of community organizing based on power tactics, TICD recognizes that healing a community

The Sarasota team that attended the Pittsburgh institute is part of a growing local movement to make Sarasota a more trauma-informed and resilient community. If you are interested in joining the effort, community forums will be held on the fourth Monday of every month, from 6 – 7:30 pm, alternating between North and South County. For more information, email traumainformedsrq@gmail.com.

This Independence Day, We Can Thank Tom Paine.



Thomas Paine is the author of “Common Sense”, a pamphlet that outlined our form of government. Paine also served as citizen soldier during the American Revolutionary War.

Paine struggled to advance the promise of America. He was one of the first abolitionists, the father of Social Security, and an advocate for efficient and peaceful government.

As Veterans of the American military, the mission of Florida Veterans for Common Sense is to inspire Americans of today with the spirit of Thomas Paine.



Monthly meetings are second Mondays at 7:00PM at the Waldemere Firehouse, 2nd floor meeting room

Florida Veterans for Common Sense, Inc. is a non-partisan/non-profit 501(c)4 corporation. Dues are 45.00 annually. Contact FLVeterans@aol.com.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Nation Group meets the first Thursday of every month 10am at Selby Library, 1331 1st St, Sarasota

NOTE: Meeting Date/Location Change - Sarasota County CONA – 7pm Regular monthly meetings are held on the second Fridays of the month at 2070 Waldemere Street in Sarasota (*No meeting scheduled for July or August*)

Florida Veterans for Common Sense meets the second Monday of the month at the Waldemere Firehouse Community Room, 2070 Waldemere Street, Sarasota, 7pm.

Manatee-Sarasota Sierra Club meets every Thursday of the month. Sarasota Garden Club, 1141 Boulevard of the Arts, Sarasota, 7pm. *No meeting in July or August.*

POPS, Leadership Team Meeting - Protect Our Public Schools (POPS) meets the third Tuesday of every month. North Sarasota Library Room #2, 2801 Newtown Boulevard, Sarasota, 6pm. *No meeting in July.*

Coalition of City Neighborhood Associations (CCNA) meets the first Saturday of the month at the Waldemere Fire Station, 2070 Waldemere Street, 9am. (*No meeting scheduled for July or August*)

Planet Healing Film Series

Tuesday, July 9 - Film Screening and Discussion: **Living Matrix** – 6:30pm
Gold Coast Eagle Distributors, 7051 Wireless Court, Sarasota, FL 34240; \$10 includes refreshments

Thursday, July 18 – Film Screening and Discussion – **Human Element** – 1pm, Selby Gardens; Free with Selby Gardens Admission.

Upcoming films include: Living Downstream, From Paris to Pittsburg, and Unfractured. Latest information is available at <https://www.thejerichoprojectfl.org/planet-healing-films.html>

HELP WSLR GO 100% SOLAR!

In 2017 the Sarasota City Commission adopted a goal of powering all of Sarasota with **100 percent clean, renewable energy by 2045**. In addition to the establishing a community-wide target for **100 percent renewable energy**, the Sarasota City Commission also voted to adopt a goal of powering all municipal operations in the city with 100 percent renewable energy by 2030 and at least 50 percent by 2024.



WSLR is working to do its part and has already installed 10K of solar photovoltaic cells on the roof at 525 Kumquat Court. This has reduced our electric bill by two-thirds and we are working to raise funds to complete the installation of another 5K of solar to get us closer to our 100% renewable goal. To do this we need to optimize our current inverters and update our electric panel, which will add significantly to the cost of the project. Our estimated costs are \$28,000. We are seeking matching funds to move forward with this project.

If you would like to support our efforts to transition to **100% renewable energy**, go to wslr.org/solarfund to make a donation.



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WEEKLY PROGRAM GUIDE

listen on the air

- WSLR 96.5 LPFM Sarasota
- WPV 100.1 LPFM Sarasota

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- WSLR.org (desktop)
- WSLR App at wslr.org (mobile)

listen on demand

archive.wslr.org Music shows are archived for two weeks. News and public affairs are available for download, and expire later.

Americana - Folk - Cajun - Acoustic - Bluegrass
Blues - Roots - Jazz - R&B - Soul
Electronica - Dubstep - Club - Hip-hop
Freeform - Eclectic
Rock - Punk - Jam - Indie - Pop
News - Public Affairs
World - Spiritual

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
12 mid.		Beats, Rhymes & Life Radio DJ Cellus	Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio	Music Automated playlist	New Radio	Open A.I.R. Matt Dakan	
1 a.m.	Music Automated playlist	Midnight Special Syndicated	Strange Currency Syndicated	Upfront Soul Syndicated	Music Automated playlist		New Radio
2 a.m.		Letters to Washington Syndicated	Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated)	A Way With Words Syndicated	Economic Update Richard Wolff	Music Automated playlist	
3 a.m.					Latin Waves		
4 a.m.							
5 a.m.	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated		Music Automated playlist
6 a.m.							
7 a.m.							
8 a.m.	Blues to Bluegrass John D.	Soul School Troy Nichols	Generation X Alecia Harper	Eclectic Blender Dave Pedersen	Latin Explosion Juan Montenegro	Celtic Connection Syndicated	Wings of the Heart Salima Rael & Carol Rosenbaum
9 a.m.	Rootstock Radio	The Waterkeepers	Peace & Justice Report Tom Walker & Bob Connors	The Detail Cathy Antunes	Surreal News Lew Lorini & Steve Norris	Juke In the Back Syndicated	Alternative Radio Syndicated
10 a.m.	Critical Times Week in Review	Sea Change Radio					
11 a.m.	Music of the World Marco Ciceron	Nuestra Musica Mariano	Vibrational Journeys Perette Cannady	Metropics Carlos Pagan	Complex Waveforms Mark Zampella	Ralph Nader Radio Syndicated	Law and Disorder Syndicated
NOON						The Detail (Rebroadcast) Cathy Antunes	Folk Alley Elena See Syndicated
1 p.m.	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	BreakBeat Max	New Radio
2 p.m.	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	De Mush Doctor's Caribbean Rhythms De Mush Doctor	Dadee-O's Collector Corner Dadee-O
3 p.m.	Positive Friction John Haupt	Second Wind Seany G	Fur Peace Ranch Jorma Kaukonen	Basement Boxes Purple Mike	Down the Road (Syndicated)		
4 p.m.			Dave's Day Off Dave Beaton (ALTERNATE WEEKS)	Electricity Susan Runyan	New Show Art S		
5 p.m.			Global Village Syndicated	ALTERNATE WEEKS	ALTERNATE WEEKS	Bop & Beyond Bill Ewell	Velvet Hammer Blues Beth Hammer
6 p.m.	Music Museum Ed Foster	Tuesday Drive Home David Young	Hawaii Bob & Company Hawaii Bob	Ted's Head Ted	Friday Happy Hour Bartender Tommy D.		
7 p.m.			Hot Rod Rock Sven			All Mixed Up Syndicated	Sundazed Rachel
8 p.m.			ALTERNATE WEEKS				
9 p.m.	Yesterday's Dead Today Mark Binder	The Root Cellar Roger & Peter	Talk Nation	Current Tides Betty & Friends	Critical Times Week in Review		
10 p.m.	Indigenous Sounds White Horse	In Transition The 801	TUC Radio	Economic Update Richard Wolff	Counterspin/Cannabis Connection		
11 p.m.			Acoustic Waves James Hawkins	Retro Cocktail Hour Syndicated			
12 mid.			Folk Show Syndicated	Velvet Radio Elissa Bello			
			ALTERNATE WEEKS	ALTERNATE WEEKS			
			Radio RESET Sharon Folta	Progressive Palace Phil G	New Show Ryan & Dana		
				Music Lagniappe Syndicated	Dirty Ice Cream Truck Luke Rosebaro		
				ALTERNATE WEEKS	ALTERNATE WEEKS		
	Beats, Rhymes & Life DJ Cellus	Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio	Music Automated playlist	New Radio	Open A.I.R. Matt Dakan & Jamiel Livingston	New Radio	Music Automated playlist

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2019 Bills – How They Voted

Bill Number	Bill Summary	Sen Galvano	Sen Gruters	Rep Good	Rep Newton	Rep Gregory	Rep Robinson	Pass/Veto
SB 7068	Construct three new toll roads in rural Florida	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Approved by Gov
HB 5	Imposes significant barriers to the ability of Floridians to amend the constitution by citizen initiative	Y	Y	N	N	-	Y	Approved by Gov
HB 7103	Restricts local governments' ability to create affordable housing units, also requires that those who lose development challenges pay the attorney's fees of local government	Y	Y	N	N	-	Y	6/25/19 Waiting on Gov
SB 7030	Guns in School	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Approved by Gov
HB 49	More dignified treatment of incarcerated women	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Approved by Gov
HB 7125	Administration of Justice	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	6/25/19 Waiting on Gov
SB 168	Federal Immigration Enforcement	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Approved by Gov
SB 7066	Election Administration	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	6/25/19 Waiting on Gov
SB 7070	School choice- funnels general revenue to private & religious schools	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Approved by Gov
HB 1335 / SB 1774	Parental Consent Bill	-	-	N	N	Y	Y	Died in Sen Health Policy Cmte

SB 7068 -TRANSPORTATION

This bill paves the way for construction of three new toll expressways through more than 300 miles of rural Florida, from Collier County north to the Georgia line. SB 7068 calls for the Florida Department of Transportation to create task forces to recommend routes and measures to mitigate the environmental and economic impacts of each of the expressways, and the bill directs FDOT to consider representatives for the task forces from several conservation organizations

HB 5 - BALLOT MEASURES

This controversial measure will make it harder for groups and citizens to put proposed constitutional amendments on the ballot.

Among other things, the bill makes it illegal to pay petition gatherers based on the number of petitions they collect, a change that is expected to drive up costs for amendments backers. Also, the bill requires submission of information about petition gatherers, including their permanent and temporary addresses and dates of birth. In addition, it requires petitions to be turned into county supervisors of elections no more than 30 days after being signed by voters and includes penalties of up to \$50 for each late submission.

HB 7103 - GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Environmental groups called HB 7103 "the death knell for growth management in Florida."

HB 7103 would make citizens and others who challenge development proposals and lose automatically liable for paying for the prevailing party's attorney fees. It also restricts local governments from requiring that affordable housing be part of any new development.

SB 7030 -SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

Senate Bill 7030 is an expansion of the school "guardian" program to allow armed classroom teachers. It also expands the role of police in schools in spite of evidence that rather than prevent violence, guns in schools erode the relationships vital to preventing violence. While the bill

was amended to take steps toward addressing students' mental health needs and combat the severe shortage of school-based mental health providers, it continues to allow districts to spend education and intervention dollars on surveillance technologies, guns, and metal detectors. Advocates including the ACLU of Florida have called on state elected officials to reject such policies that increase the school-to-prison pipeline.

HB 49 - DIGNIFIED TREATMENT OF INCARCERATED WOMEN

This legislation seeks to decrease abuse and increase access to basic hygiene and reproductive healthcare supplies in women's correctional facilities. This year the legislation earned incredible bipartisan support, passing both chambers with support from the vast majority of legislators and earning the signature of the Governor.

HB 7125 - ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

This bill reduces occupational licensing barriers for people with felony convictions, limits the number of offenses that can result in driver's license suspension, raises the felony theft threshold from \$300 to \$750, and also eliminates mandatory direct file. The Legislature abandoned a more substantial reform bill, Senate Bill 642, that would have incentivized rehabilitation by adjusting the cap on gain time. SB642 would have allowed incarcerated people convicted of nonviolent offenses to utilize all earned gain time through good behavior and participation in educational and rehabilitative programs to reduce their sentences to 65 percent of their original sentence. The stronger reform bill also required racial impact statements, and made some past sentencing reforms retroactive so that some people could get out of prison immediately and others would have their sentences shortened.

SB 168 - PROHIBITING SANCTUARY CITIES

This bill prohibits all state and local agencies from passing or enforcing ordinances that would protect Floridians from unlawful immigration detention and repeal any existing sanctuary

policies, diverting limited local resources to enforcing federal immigration law.

SB 7066 -AMENDMENT 4 IMPLEMENTATION

This bill will restrict voting restoration and undermine the will of the people who passed Amendment 4. Among other deficiencies, the bill creates additional financial barriers to voting that were not considered a part of a person's sentence after receiving sentencing instructions from a judge and conditions the right of people who are eligible to vote on whether or not they can afford to pay fees. This bill also has the potential to interfere with a court ruling from last year that finally allowed early voting sites to be located on college and university campuses.

SB 7070 - SCHOOL CHOICE

This bill pertains to various existing voucher programs, including creating a new one called the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program. Passage of this bill will greatly expand "scholarships" and increase eligibility. These bills funnel public taxpayer dollars to private religious schools, blurring the separation between church and state, and taking away resources from our public schools. This is clearly unconstitutional based on the 2006 Supreme Court Case and will be challenged.

HB 1335 - PARENTAL CONSENT

This bill would have forced teens to obtain parental consent prior to receiving an abortion, regardless of circumstance. Statistics show that most teens already do consult with their parents, and that if they don't, there's often a good reason. That's why leading health and medical professionals oppose such laws. Though the bill passed the House despite wide objections from pro-choice leaders, it ultimately died in the Florida Senate. Other efforts to restrict abortion rights in Florida were introduced but were never heard in committee.

Attack on Direct Democracy

BY ARLENE SWEETING

Citizen-led ballot initiatives to change the state's constitution have become a way to bypass the Republican-controlled Florida legislature and get popular ideas to make their way into state law.

In the past few election cycles Florida voters have approved limits on class size, medical marijuana, and the restoration of ex-felon's voting rights. A number of high-profile ballot initiatives also have been proposed for the 2020 ballot, including proposals to raise the minimum wage, expand Medicaid eligibility, ban assault-style weapons and deregulate the electric utility system — issues widely opposed by Republican leaders.

Florida has never made it easy for citizens to change the Florida Constitution. Currently, citizen groups must gather more than 766,000 voter signatures to make it on the ballot. The proposals then must win support from at least 60 percent of the voters — one of the highest approval thresholds in the nation. New legislation passed in the 2019 Florida Legislative session will impose even more barriers on the citizen-initiative process.

Signed into law by Gov. DeSantis on June 7, HB5 makes it illegal to pay petition gatherers based on the number of petitions they collect, a change that is expected to drive up costs for amendments backers. It also requires local supervisors of elections to issue serially numbered signature sheets to petition gatherers working to get proposed constitutional amendments on the ballot. Ballot measure organizations will now be fined if they fail to turn in signature sheets in a timely manner - \$50 for each late submission and up to \$1,000 if the failure to turn in a sheet is deemed "willful." This process promises to be a

nightmare for local Supervisors of Elections and drive up public costs. HB 5 also limits consideration of local sales tax referenda to general elections. The ban on per-signature compensation takes effect upon becoming a law but does not apply to pre-existing

in Florida and several other states are also dragging their feet on implementing constitutional changes already approved by the voters.

As Common Cause and the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center warned in a recent op-ed, "The

attacks on the ballot measure process are symptomatic of larger concerns about our democracy and a growing awareness that there are powerful political forces attempting to diminish the people's voice in it."

UPDATE ON AMENDMENT 4

The Florida Legislature passed an Amendment 4 implementing bill (SB 7086) that restricts ex-felons' rights under the voter-approved constitutional amendment to restore voting rights. The bill requires such citizens to have fulfilled all financial obligations associated with their record including court fees, fines and restitution.

Opponents of the measure argued the bill subverted the will of voters who intended non-violent ex-felons to be able to register to vote after they had served their sentences. The state has no plans to pursue penalties on individuals who register to vote under Amendment 4 before the implementing bill takes effect.

The League of Women Voters is looking for lawyers to help citizens who were previously unable to vote because of felony criminal records register to vote. The League launched a training program for attorneys and non-lawyer volunteers to help citizens who have paid their debt to society register to vote without incurring penalties. For more information you can visit: <https://www.lwvfl.org/amendment-4-voter-restoration-resources/>

Progressive Sarasota is staffing a Voter Registration Table and Canvassing every Saturday in the Newtown community. If you would like to volunteer, you can email: ProgressiveSarasota@gmail.com.



Progressive Sarasota volunteers register voters every Saturday from 12pm-4pm at Jetson's Creative Trends, 2741 N Osprey Ave.

contracts. Other provisions take effect 30 days after the bill becomes law. Efforts to raise the threshold for passage of a ballot initiatives from 60% to 66 2/3 % were also introduced in this year's legislature but did not pass.

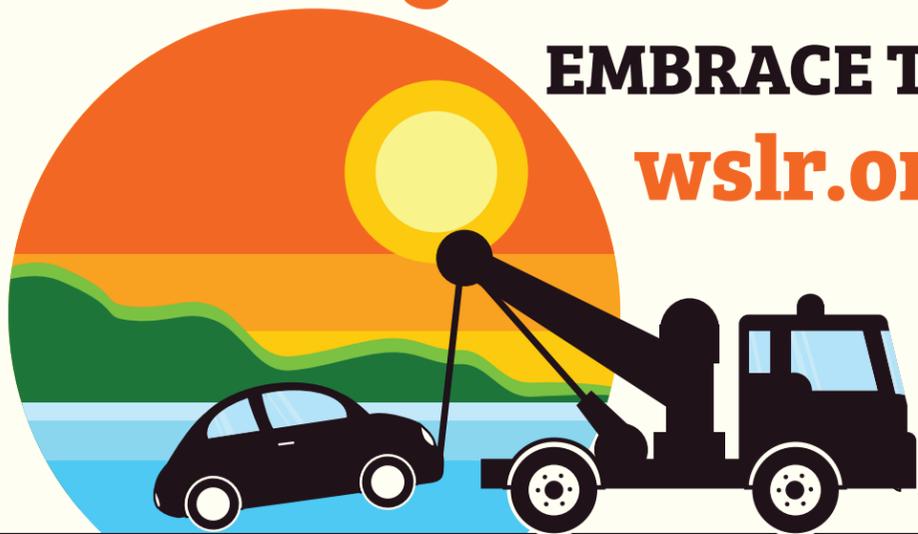
In signing the bill, Gov. DeSantis revealed that he would also like to abolish the Constitutional Revision Commission (CRC) that meets every 20 years to review the Constitution and recommend changes. The CRC was responsible for 7 of the 13 ballot initiatives on the ballot in 2018. DeSantis also floated the idea that referenda on ballot initiatives should take place in stand-alone elections in order to 'streamline' the ballot.

Florida is not the only state where elected politicians are targeting direct democracy. This year alone, state lawmakers nationwide have introduced more than 200 bills changing the rules for citizen-initiated constitutional amendments or other ballot referendums, according to Ballotpedia. Legislators

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Celery Fields: Two Visions for the Future (continued from pg. 1)

The second new idea involving our public lands came on June 4, when Commissioner Charles Hines suggested selling the southwest public parcel (#2, 10 acres) to a developer of affordable housing. Mr. Hines noted that developers of affordable housing have not been knocking down his door, but didn't articulate why. Perhaps, for example, the Board's willingness to tolerate developer overreach -- e.g. Siesta Promenade, LT Ranch, Waterside and more -- has dis-incentivized low-profit housing construction.

And, while affordable housing is indeed a goal that requires careful planning and policy incentives, Mr. Hines' fixing on public land that has been the subject of intense community interest for more than two years seemed to lurch suddenly out of left field.

In fact all four Quad parcels were the subject last year of a 10-month citizen effort to recommend compatible public uses that would rule out private industry. Sarasota Audubon has proposed an urban forest, others including Jono Miller have spoken of a history museum, a multi-use community estate, and more. Commissioners Al Maio and Mike Moran have both gone on record favoring sale to private industrial profiteers, including waste plant operator James Gabbert.

In January the Board found the Quads to be an area of critical concern, and, given the current narrow two-lane roads and levels of service, admitted that industrial development is not possible on these parcels. It ordered staff to reopen the Critical Area Plan, or CAP, for the area. This launched an in-depth, 11-month process examining all factors

relating to potential uses of the public parcels -- roads, surrounding uses, trending demographic and environmental changes and much more. A public workshop held as part of the CAP process on May 14 brought out some 300 residents -- not a single one of whom spoke in favor of industrial development or affordable housing.



Quad Parcels are Public Lands

A Board decision approving affordable housing on parcel #2 by July 22 (Sarasota News Leader) will disrupt the methodical critical area planning now underway, as well as fly in the face of community and environmentalists' long-held views.

Clearly two very different approaches are exemplified here. The Foundation is advocating uses

in keeping with the trends and surrounding human communities, integrating a long-range vision of a lasting rural heritage and wildlife conservation for future generations.

Mr. Hines conversely is promoting a quick fix to motivate the private construction of less costly housing, apparently without regard to how such an initiative would impact a significant host of social, environmental, economic and infrastructural concerns in a complex, radically changing area.

Another difference has to do with scope. The Foundation is looking wide and long term. The Board appears to be looking at one 10-acre parcel as if it existed in a vacuum. The history, context and future of the Quad cannot be ignored -- which is why the county ordered the Critical Area Plan in January.

A credible CAP will form a faithful portrait of the entire Quad/Celery Fields area -- so that Sarasota as a community can assess the future needs and benefits of realistic options in a meaningful public process.

A lot is riding on this. If our elected officials have insufficient information, their decision-making authority is compromised. But if they have that information and choose to ignore it, a different public response will be needed.

It's in our voting power to change the political landscape -- as dramatically as 246 species of birds have transformed the nature of a former industrial area. When good things happen -- like the Celery Fields -- they deserve prudent stewardship for all our citizens.

2020 Census – Why it Matters (continued from pg. 1)

participation from the entire Latinx community—including the vast majority of that community whose citizenship status is not in question. This is because of the “chilling effect” that the question has already produced on that community and their level of trust for the government. That chilling effect has likely already reduced the number of Latinx participants in the upcoming 2020 Census, meaning that funding for any government programs that might have benefited the Latinx community will be reduced, and Latinx voters will be systematically underrepresented in all levels of government.

The Urban Project found that the question isn't the only issue with the 2020 Census. Demographic changes in the United States over the last 10 years, and new “underfunded, untested process changes” in the way that the Department of Commerce plans on performing the Census are already likely to undercount a number of different populations: the very young, the very old, the homeless, those who do not speak English, and immigrants in general are all likely to be undercounted this year due to these factors. The groups most likely to be affected by these other two factors are Latinx and black Americans, who the Urban Project fears may be undercounted by as much as four and a half percent.

Ordinarily, state governments form committees to ensure an accurate count of disenfranchised groups, who are often harder to reach than more economically secure parts of the population. However, the Florida legislature failed to form a Census committee during

this year's session, and also failed to set aside any of next year's budget to fund the usual Census push. Combined with Florida's large Latinx population, this seemingly intentional failure may cost Florida an estimated two seats in the House of Representatives, as well as a great deal of Federal funding.

This is far from the first time that people of color have been intentionally miscounted by the United States Census. One of the first national debates that occurred in the U.S. was between states that had large slave populations and those that did not. It hardly seemed fair, the northern states argued, that southerners would have more members in the House of Representatives just because they had a large population of African slaves to bias the amount of power they would have in the Congress. So the United States, the country that would wait nearly another century to outlaw human slavery, decided that African Americans would only count as three fifths of a person on the national census—as a compromise between southern states and those in the north.

We should be breaking with this racist history, not returning to it. The potential harm that these intentional disenfranchisement strategies might have on people of color in this country, regardless of their citizenship status, is massive and designed to affect black and Spanish-speaking communities for decades to come. We desperately need to advocate for a fair, thorough, and unbiased United States Census. Our future depends on it.



The **U.S. CENSUS BUREAU** is now accepting applications from area residents who want to assist with the survey and population count next spring. The jobs are temporary and allow flexible schedules. Go to 2020census.gov/jobs or call **1-855-562-2020**.

The City of Sarasota will be discussing forming a **CENSUS COUNT COMMITTEE** at their July 15th meeting. They will be seeking citizens to serve on the committee.