Sarasota Organizations Condemn Hate-Filled Legislation

Community organizations, business owners, and concerned citizens came together in March to oppose passage of several bills that attack diversity and inclusion in education. These bills include:

- The Individual Freedom Act (HB 7), popularly known as the Stop WOKE Act (Stop Wrongs Against our Kids and Employees), prohibits educators from teaching historical facts and protects schools from being sued for copyrighted materials. The bill also prohibits educators from teaching about diversity, equity, and inclusion in public schools.
- The K-12 Act (CS/HB 1467), also known as the “Ban the Books” bill, prohibits schools from teaching about topics related to gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. The bill also requires schools to ban books that are not aligned with the school’s values.
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Running for the District 4 seat being vacated by Shirley Brown, Lauren Kurnov has raised an unprecedented $111K in the first two months for a school board race, nearly six times as much as opponent Robyn Marinelli’s $19K. Vying for the District 5 seat being vacated by Jane Goodwin, Nora Cietek has raised $43K, more than double the amount of her two opponents, Timothy Enos ($13.5K) and Gregory Wood ($7.6K), combined.

District 1: Ziegler v. Singleton

Incumbent Bridget Ziegler from District 1 is an outspoken conservative who has gained national notoriety and an endorsement from Governor Ron DeSantis. Ziegler’s political work goes far beyond the school board. She is also the co-founder of Moms for Liberty, a non-profit that campaigns both locally and nationally against COVID-19 restrictions in schools, condemns school curriculum that supports LGBT rights, supports a ban on critical race theory, and advocates the removal of books from schools that do not align with their conservative agenda. Ziegler is a strong supporter of school choice and has lobbied for an expansion of charter and voucher-funded schools. According to Ziegler’s campaign website, her platform focuses on the “protection of parental rights, opposing indoctrination – including Critical Race Theory – working for taxpayers and supporting our teachers & students.” While Ziegler has raised considerably less than her competitor, nearly one-third of her contributions come from developers and related real estate interests, including two $1000 donations from area developer Pat Neal and nine $1000 donations from various holding companies run by area developer Carlos Beruff. Ziegler’s sole competitor is Dawnyelle Singleton, a Sarasota native and a graduate of Sarasota High School. Singleton, a graduate of Florida State University, is running on a platform to ensure that “all schools have the resources they need” so that “students can succeed.” Singleton, a strong supporter of teachers, states...
TOWARDS A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

By Dr. Lisa Merritt and Dr. Mike Weddle

Novelist Zora Neale Hurston wrote ‘there are some years that ask questions and other years that answer.’ In the case of U.S. healthcare, the questions have piled up and answers have been hard to come by. The Multicultural Health Institute based in SW Florida is ready to try finding one of those answers.

We know the major healthcare players and can count them on one hand. The medical industry, hospital industry, food producers, pharmaceutical companies and insurance companies. They are united by money. For example, Pepsi, Nestlé and Domino’s Pizza fund the American Heart Association. The AHA decides some of the things hospitals can charge for. And on it goes. Baked into this system is an underlying fact that treatments are chargeable and cures end treatments. Doctors David and Paul Belk lay it out clearly in “The Great American Healthcare Scam”.

Just as there are implicit biases around race and gender, there are biases that keep patients in a place between being dead and being well, two extremes that do not generate revenue. Environmental toxicities and disproportionate impacts of climate change further compound the complexity of the problems.

Self-care is free. In 1999 the editors of the Journal of the American Medical Association wrote ‘were the authors to have provided similar outcome evidence about a new drug, it would be in widespread use’. There are no lobbyists for free care. Self-care is empowering. Mind-Body Medicine teaches self-care. Studies have shown it can cut emergency visits in half, and decrease the need for all medical visits by 40%. In an often cited statistic, 80% of all primary care doctor visits in the U.S. are for stress-related illness, something medical schools are inadequate in training clinicians to deal with for themselves or the patients that they will treat.

The Multicultural Health Institute (MHI) has welcomed Dr. Mike Weddle, a certified Mind-Body Medicine practitioner, as their Director of Wellness. The Institute is sending 7 of their staff to begin training with the National Center for

Mind Body Medicine to teach others these self-care skills. According to MHI Executive Director Dr. Lisa Merritt, “We hope to bring this healing to the community and empower people to create their own wellness paths.”

April is Health Equity month. We know that Black Americans have the highest rate of diabetes in the world. Africans have the lowest rate. It is a reminder that stress-related illness is not caused by race, but by multifactorial effects of racism. Elevated blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, depression, PTSD, often result from a stress response broken by living in unsafe spaces and navigating lives of deflecting perpetual micro and macro aggressions. Changing the world is a slow process. Self-Care and Mind-Body Medicine teaches us to reduce stress and learn to live our best lives while getting there.
PoetryLife 2022: Focus on Book Banning

Book banning and state directives over what materials teachers may bring into the classroom and what books librarians may place on the shelves is a fact of life now in Florida, Tennessee and Texas. The movement is spreading nationally like a vicious virus. It’s time for serious activism to restore freedom of expression to our schools and libraries. Poets can lead the way.

Book banning and state directives over what materials teachers may bring into the classroom and what books librarians may place on the shelves is a fact of life now in Florida, Tennessee and Texas. The movement is spreading nationally like a vicious virus. It’s time for serious activism to restore freedom of expression to our schools and libraries. Poets can lead the way.

Those issues will be top of the agenda during PoetryLife 2022. Each year since 2012 PoetryLife, a project of Bookstore1Sarasota in collaboration with Florida Studio Theatre and Sarasota County Libraries, has been bringing the best of the world’s poets to Sarasota to engage with the community. At the PoetryLife 2022 virtual event on April 22nd at 8pm, poet activists Carolyn Forché and Pádraig Ó Tuama will offer critical reflections of our present day world. As poets gifted with the clear-eyed ability to observe reality, they are in a unique position to address the troubling move toward censorship, including banning of books in schools and libraries. As poets they serve as the vanguard of intellectual freedom, drawing out the truth in words that touch both our hearts and minds.

Carolyn Forché

Carolyn Forché

Carolyn Forché

Carolyn Forché

Their discussion will be moderated by award-winning journalist, Charlayne Hunter Gault. Renowned as a “poet of witness,” Carolyn Forché is the author of five books of poetry. Her most recent collection, In the Lateness of the World, is a book of crossings, of migrations across oceans and borders but also between the present and the past, life and death. Forché’s dark experiences in El Salvador, which inform her poetry, are memorialized in her memoir, What You Have Heard is True, a devastating, lyrical, and visionary book about a young woman’s brave choice to engage with horror in order to help others. In 1998 in Stockholm, she was given the Edita and Ira Morris Hiroshima Foundation for Peace and Culture Award, in recognition of her work on behalf of human rights and the preservation of memory and culture. In 2013, Forché won the Academy of American Poets Fellowship for distinguished poetic achievement. Irish poet Pádraig Ó Tuama, who is based in Belfast, is a theologian, conflict resolution mediator, and the author of four volumes of poetry including Daily Prayer with the Corrymeela Community, which draws on the spiritual practices of Ireland’s oldest peace and reconciliation community Corrymeela—of which Ó Tuama was a leader from 2014-2019. Another collection, Sorry for Your Troubles, arose out of a decade of Ó Tuama’s experiences hearing stories of people who have lived through personal and political conflict in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, and other places where hostility is prevalent.

For Ó Tuama, religion, conflict, power and poetry all circle around language, that original sacrament. He has worked with groups to explore story, conflict, their relationship with religion and argument, and violence. Using poetry and group discussion, his work is marked both by lyricism and pragmatism, and includes a practice of evoking stories and participation from attendees at his lectures, retreats, and events. Currently, Pádraig guides the weekly podcast Poetry Unbound through NPR’s On Being, which dives and immerses the listener into one poem every week.

The event is free. The Zoom link will be sent to those who RSVP at https://poetrylife2022.eventbrite.com.

Charlayne Hunter Gault

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Compost Awareness Week

BY TRACIE TROXLER

International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) is right around the corner and Sunshine Community Compost will be hosting a range of community activities in honor of it again this year. ICAW is an international effort by the composting industry to amplify awareness about the benefits of composting for one week - May 1-7. The 2022 “theme” of the week is “Compost: Recipe for Regeneration”.

Historically, Sunshine Community Compost has held an annual “Compost-A-Thon” - a hyper-local initiative in honor of International Compost Awareness Week. Compost-A-Thon engaged residents in one week of composting practice to learn more about the food scrap collection process and gain personal perspectives on the ratio of garbage that is actually valuable nutrients that could be used for soil-making and future food instead of landfill waste.

This year, we will have opportunities for residents to engage in compost-related activities during ICAW. However, different from years past is that this year we will also highlight restaurants and businesses that are composting as well as program services and partners that help to meet these needs. During ICAW 2018, we did a restaurant composting pilot project in partnership with The City of Sarasota. Ever since, we have been working to acquire capacity, equipment, permission and funding to offer a program that could meet needs of larger food scrap volume producers within the city. Now - to a gradually, growing capacity - we can. While there is not unlimited capacity to this program, nor permissions outside of city limits to offer these services, we hope that by working with key partners and tracking progressive successes, together we may be able to open more long-term visioning for local composting that removes barriers and supports further advancement of the composting movement in our region.

A key component to growing a culture of composting is education. Education provides the basis for informed action and it is our mission to provide education and action programs so more people can participate. We know the interest is here. We see it at all scales through our current programs and services ranging from the preschool education programs to residential backyard composters, to food scrap drop-off memberships, to youth organizations, churches, gardens, food trucks, and even to businesses as large as the local hospital - all are doing their part to add ingredients to the “Recipe for Regeneration: Compost”.

Residents and businesses who want to get involved in ICAW this year will have a range of activities to choose from. Sunshine Community Compost will be hosting food scrap drop-off stations at 2 different community gardens so residents can see up close and participate in the cycle of scraps-to-soil-to-food again, hosting a volunteer workday/compost station beautification effort at Orange Blossom Community Garden, hosting our online Co-benefits of Composting education series, a compost-making demonstration, participating in an in-person ReMake Learning Day at Southside Sarasota, while also spotlighting local restaurants, businesses and partners who are participating in composting initiatives. We hope that you will join us! Sponsorships are appreciated and available. Details, dates and times can be found at www.sunshinecommunitycompost.org.

End of Season Gathering for Brady Chapter

BY CAROL CONYNE RESCIGNO

Ryan Morales, who recently announced his candidacy for Florida Agriculture Commissioner, has agreed to be the guest speaker for the Sarasota Brady chapter’s end-of-season pizza gathering at 5 pm on May 19 at First Congregational UCC in Sarasota (1031 S. Euclid Ave).

Why do a bunch of gun-safety activists want to hear from someone who’s interested in agriculture? The Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services handles all background checks for those who wish to purchase a firearm in the state of Florida. Nikki Fried, one of the rare statewide officials who have backed safe-gun measures, is leaving that post to run for governor.

Morales is a businessman, a family man, an environmentalist and had this to say on his website about guns: “My administration will continue to check ALL applicants and run appropriate background checks before issuing permits. We need to continue to push for more gun safety education in our schools and among our constituents.” We at Brady want to ask him how we can help.

Morales has the support of Fred Guttenberg of Parkland, whose daughter, Jaime, was killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School four years ago. Guttenberg is an adviser for national Brady organization.

The May 19 chapter event is free. It’s a way for current Brady members to gather in person, enjoy each other’s company and assess our recent efforts. It’s also a way for new people to see what this group is all about and decide to get involved in making our society safer. so put it on your calendar now and bring friends.

Meanwhile, join Brady members at the southern end of the Bayfront parking lot, just south of Ringling Avenue, any and all Thursdays from 4 to 5 pm from now through May 12 as we rally for gun safety awareness.

Florida Agricultural Commission Candidate Ryan Morales will speak to Brady supporters on May 19th.

DONATING YOUR VEHICLE IS AS EASY AS CAN BEE

Donate Today

Donating your unwanted car, truck, motorcycle, RV, or boat is as easy as can bee! Just submit your vehicle donation online or over the phone, schedule your free pick-up, and then let our Vehicle Donation Program handle the rest. Plus, your donation is tax-deductible!

Call 855-500-RIDE or visit wslr.org/donateyourvehicle/ to get started.
WSLR Enters Partnership with Multimedia Alliance

WSLR is pleased to announce the newly created “OPEN STAGE” strategic partnership between WSLR+Fogartyville and the Multimedia Alliance of Parity Press, Inc., Total Package Media and Red Hot Reality Entertainment, LLC. The partnership was created to advance WSLR+Fogartyville’s mission to serve as a center for creative expression and community engagement. Toward that end the Alliance will offer “OPEN STAGE” access to sponsors, organizations, and individual members to produce original creative content utilizing the Fogartyville performance space to amplify the diverse voices of our community.

The Multimedia Alliance team is led by Malcolm Barnes, Ralph Barnette and Yaya Diamond. Malcolm Barnes, the Managing Member of the new partnership, is a multi-media professional. He previously served as Director of Special Projects with WPFW 89.3 FM Jazz & Justice, a Pacifica affiliate station in Washington, DC, and as the Howard University School of Business’ liaison with WHUR FM 96.4. Yaya Diamond is a local singer/entertainer and daughter of multi-platinum recording artist Evelyn Thomas. In 2008 she launched Dream Chasers Radio where she interviews Grammy award-winning artists, producers, authors, inventors, and celebrities. Ralph Barnette is an accomplished artist, writer, designer and filmmaker with a background creating projects in the arts, entertainment, environment, and mentorship.

To kick off the partnership, the Alliance hosted an Open House in March with a concert featuring Yaya Diamond and Mean Gene. On April 14th, Yaya Diamond presents the second in her live performance series featuring OXIDATION, a youth group that includes Caleb Adcock on vocals, Michael Hackney on lead guitar, Landon Bailey on bass and Mean Gene on drums, and Random Goethe on keyboard.

OXIDATION is a product of The Music Compound AKA “The Cool Music School” that is an all-in-one academy for young talent to perfect their musical craft, meet new friends, and gain confidence and self-esteem. Doors Open at 6:00 p.m show starts at 7:00 p.m.

Tickets are available at www.Fogartyville.org.

The Multimedia Alliance hopes to develop new and compelling programs to help activate the Fogartyville community space. Special emphasis will be placed on developing resources for creative young entrepreneurs in media, performance, fashion, and theater arts; building the capacity of community-based non-profit organizations that need training and human resource development space; and engaging senior citizens to contribute as advisors and investors in WSLR+Fogartyville’s human capital community. To learn more, contact Malcolm Barnes at malcolm.wslr@gmail.com.

WSLR Enters Partnership with Multimedia Alliance

Yaya and Mean Gene perform at the Open House in March

Ralph Barnette, YaYa Diamond, Malcolm Barnes, Arlene Sweeting, David Beaton. Photo credit: Malcolm Barnes

Sarasota Organizations Condemn Hate-Filled Legislation

In a joint statement released by the groups, they expressed their concerns about the impact these bills would have in the classroom. These culture war bills curtail the teaching of troubling aspects of American history, including such topics as slavery, racial injustices, the Holocaust and LGTBQ+ history. The proper teaching of such subjects will no doubt make children feel uncomfortable but that is how we as a society learn to correct the wrongs of the past. These bills paint a false narrative about what educators are teaching and to correct the wrongs of the past. These bills are sure to be signed into law. Knowing that these three bills do - is not only counterproductive, but it will also drive those differences underground, harming everyone and creating conditions for more overt forms of conflict to emerge.

Regardless of whether these bills pass we will continue to have monthly public conversations about trauma and resilience, including issues of racism and sexual and gender identity; we will continue to offer trauma-healing resources and workshops to individuals and leaders in our community; and we will continue to support other organizations in Sarasota doing similar work.

Support our Schools is an organization founded by local Moms to advocate for all students and their right to a high-quality, equitable education. Earlier in the year they had encouraged concerned citizens to stand with them and Take the Pledge to Support Our Schools. They continue to build local support for their initiative. You can learn more at https://www.supportourschools.com.

The Anti-Racism Working Group grew out of a series of community dialogues and an Undoing Racism workshop facilitated by the People’s Institute for Survival & Beyond in 2018. Working Group Member Sharon Howard says, “As part of our covenant we agree to push the growing edge. Learning & growth involves moments of discomfort. We cannot allow public officials to dumb down public school curricula because they are not comfortable with the truth of this country’s past & present.” The Working Group will be hosting an Undoing Racism Workshop for Faith-based communities in May 2022. For more information, you can visit: https://www.sarasotapeacenter.org.

Groups Opposing Legislation:

ACLU, ALSO Youth, Anti-Racism Working Group, Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH); Center for Religious Tolerance; SRQ Strong; Lean on Me; Modern Marina; Protect our Public Schools; Support our Schools; Kind Cotton; Leaders Rights Organization; ANSWER Suncoast; Boxser Diversity Initiative; Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota; Progressive Sarasota; Peace Education and Action Center; Project PRIDE SRQ; Women’s Voices of Southwest Florida.

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LIVE FROM Fogartyville
COMMUNITY MEDIA AND ARTS CENTER

7pm Thursday, April 7
$15 members/$18 non

an innovative force in the midwest folk scene...

GOOD MORNING BEDLAM
resplendent with soaring three part harmonies, and thumping kick-drum
beat, they captivate with haunting wavels, whistling, jazz scatting, the
euphoria of the violin melodies and lyrical storytelling.

7pm Saturday, April 9
$15 General Admission

Poets Unplugged:
An Evening of
Spoken Word
& Music

7pm Sunday, April 10
$18 members/$20 non

Alasdair Fraser
& Natalie Haas
Scotland’s premier fiddle ambassador,
and the sizzlinly talented Californian cellist.
explorations of Scottish and global music

8pm Saturday, April 23
$18 members/$20 non

JORDAN TICE
singer, songwriter and guitarist who combines
witty, well-crafted songs with deft fingerstyle and
flatpick guitar playing often compared to Leo Kottke,
John Hartford, and David Bromberg with a healthy
dose of John Prine. Sycamore Shade opens

8pm Saturday, April 16
$15 members/$18 non

Rev. Billy C. Wirtz & FRIENDS
no theme is too extreme, taboo, or undignified for
the Reverend, so long as it garners a good laugh.
There are few people who have as interesting a life
story or such an encyclopedic knowledge of music
as he does, joined by Steve Arvey, Anna Van Atta,
and Sandi Grecco.

7pm Sunday, April 24
$25 members/$30 non

The Soulful
DENISE KING
jazz interpretations of rock and soul hits she
is brimming with energy, good humor, and
swings with authentic jazz expression! As
part of a tradition rooted in the history of jazz,
she fully lives the songs she sings.

7pm Tuesday, May 3
$10 members/$12 non

We celebrate Pete's birthday with local musician
Robert Killian
Pete was the architect of the folk
revival, writing some,
of its best known
songs including
Where Have All
the Flowers Gone,
Turn, Turn, Turn
and If I Had A
Hammer. Largely
misunderstood
and criticized
for his strong
beliefs he was
picketed, pro-
tested, black-
listed, and, in
spite of his
enormous
popularity.

8pm Saturday, May 21
$15 members/$18 non

The Whole Band
Quatro
A creative and tight-knit group of
musicians make up The Whole
Band. Callie Chappell, lead singer
and acoustic guitar, fronts the group
which plays both original and cov-
ers that will surprise you with their
treatment of familiar songs.

ALL SHOWS: Student tickets available at 1/2 price
(show ID at door). Kids 12 and under are free.
A Look Back at the 2022 Legislative Session

This year’s legislative session was largely driven by Governor DeSantis’ agenda on cultural issues and featured debates on some of the state’s most contentious issues, including abortion, limiting the way race can be discussed in classrooms, immigration and elections.

Here’s a recap of 10 big issues addressed during this year’s legislative session:

**ABORTION (HB9):** The Republican-controlled House and Senate passed a proposal that would outlaw most abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy without exceptions for victims of rape or incest. The measure does carve out limited exceptions if “two physicians certify in writing that, in reasonable medical judgment, the termination of the pregnancy is necessary” to save a pregnant person’s life or avoid a pregnant person’s serious risk of “irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function” that does not include a “psychological condition.” The schools or at any level “in a manner that is not age-appropriate” and by creating broad and costly new liabilities for school districts. Passage of the bill has fueled activism across the state with scores of students staging school walkouts, holding rallies and protesting in the halls of the Capitol. Backlash from employees and fans over passage of the bill prompted Disney, a major campaign donor, to pause political donations in the state.

**ELECTIONS (SB 524):** In the latest round of battles over elections laws, the House and Senate passed a measure that would create a new office in the Department of State - the Office of Election Crimes and Security - to investigate voting irregularities. The bill would also require county supervisors of elections to annually scour voter rolls for potentially ineligible voters (currently required every other year) and increase penalties for the collection of completed ballots by a third party, often referred to as ballot harvesting, to a felony.

Tucked into the SB524 was a little-reported or debated element that prohibits ranked-choice voting (RCV) for local, state, or federal elective office. RCV was passed by Sarasota voters in 2007 and has yet to be implemented due to roadblocks at the state level. This effectively stops this grassroots reform from being implemented in Florida.

**HEALTH CARE:** Lawmakers passed a measure that would revamp staffing standards in nursing homes, as the industry says it faces worker shortages. Also, they passed — and DeSantis signed — a measure that extends COVID-19 legal protections for hospitals, nursing homes and other health-care providers to June 1, 2023.

**IMMIGRATION (SB 1808):** Republican lawmakers backed DeSantis’ push to increase immigration enforcement. They passed a controversial bill that, in part, would penalize companies that transport undocumented immigrants into Florida. Also, the bill would expand a 2019 law that sought to ban so-called “sanctuary cities.”

**INSURANCE:** Lawmakers could not reach an agreement on a plan to address problems in the property-insurance industry, as homeowners see large rate increases and lose policies. Also, lawmakers scrapped proposals to repeal the state’s longstanding no-fault auto insurance system, after DeSantis vetoed a similar bill last year.

**BUSINESS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:** In a closely watched issue for local governments, lawmakers passed S.B. 620 which allow businesses to sue local governments for damages if new local rules and regulations hurt their profits by 15 percent or more. Businesses would be able to recoup up to seven years’ worth of lost profits from local governments if the bill becomes law. There is no cap on damages that taxpayers might have to pay. That means taxpayers could have to subsidize millions of dollars of losses to businesses.

**REDISTRICTING:** Lawmakers passed new maps for state House and Senate districts, but new congressional lines remain unresolved. DeSantis has vowed to veto a congressional plan passed by lawmakers, while pushing for changes that could be more favorable to Republicans. DeSantis’s proposed map would eliminate two of the state’s four Black congressional seats and boost the Republican seat advantage to 19-9. Lines need to be set by a June election qualifying period.

**SOLAR POWER (HB781):** After heavy opposition from the solar industry and environmental groups, lawmakers passed a measure that would revamp rules for rooftop solar energy. Backers said the bill, which involves “net metering,” would phase out subsidies from other utility customers to rooftop solar owners, while critics said it would hurt the industry.

### How They Voted

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Florida Veterans for Common Sense continues to blaze the trail explored by Thomas Paine, 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 advancing the promise of America. He was one of the first abolitionists, the father of Social Security, an advocate for efficient and peaceful government. He loathed war profiteers and unnecessary war. As Veterans of the American military, our mission is to inspire Americans of today with the spirit of Thomas Paine.
This Fall, the Sarasota County Commission District 2 and 4 seats are up for election. So far, four Democrats have filed to challenge Christian Ziegler for the District 2 seat. Hagen Brody, Andrew Bevan, Fredd Atkins and Mike Cosentino will face off in the August primary. Although Ziegler has not filed to run yet, he told the Sarasota Herald-Tribune he intends to do so. Republicans Mark Hawkins and Joseph Neunder have filed to run for the District 4 Commission seat currently held by Alan Maio (Maio is term-limited). At this point no Democrat has filed to run. The filing deadline is June 17.

A Democrat has not served on the Commission for over 50 years. With single member districts in place, a Democratic candidate has a chance to win the District 2 seat. District 2 is the only one in Sarasota County with more registered Democrats than Republicans. All other districts have at least 10,000 more registered Republicans than registered Democrats.

### City Charter Review Committee Recommendations

On March 7, the Sarasota City commissioners formally accepted the report of the Charter Review Committee. The ten members of the Committee were appointed last year to complete the once every ten-year review of the city Charter. Citizens serving on the Charter Review Board were Dan Clermont, Crystal Bailey, Kim Githler, Jeff Jackson, Eileen Normile, Cathy Antunes, Peter Fanning, Wayne Ruben, Carolyn Mason and Philip DiMaria. The City Commission held a special meeting on March 28 to review the recommendations and decide how to proceed with placing proposed Charter changes on the November General Election ballot. Look for more complete coverage of this issue (and other items that will be on the November ballot) in the October edition of the Critical Times.


### Article III. City Commission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Proposed Recommendation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1. Composition/District Boundaries; eligibility &amp; term of members</td>
<td>Recommendation to amend the Charter to include a 5 person City Commission consisting of 4 single member district Commissioners and 1 at large elected Mayor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3. Compensation</td>
<td>Recommendation to amend the Charter to set the Elected Mayor salary at $45,000 a year with a 2% annual increase and to set the City Commissioners salary at $40,000 a year with a 2% annual increase. The 2% annual increase shall be based on the original principal and accumulated prior increases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 7. Mayor, Vice Mayor, Acting Mayor</td>
<td>Recommendation to amend the Charter to provide that the Vice Mayor shall be selected annually at the 2nd Regular Meeting in November on Non-election years rather than holding a Special Meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### New Issues:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Proposed Recommendation:</th>
<th>Applicable Article &amp; Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Require yearly training on the City Charter</td>
<td>Recommendation to amend the Charter to add language to require that City Commissioners participate in yearly review of the City Charter</td>
<td>Article IV. Powers &amp; Duties of City Commission. Section 19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require super majority vote for the sale of city owned property</td>
<td>Recommendation to amend the Charter to add language to require a super majority vote of the City Commission for the sale of any city owned property excluding properties included on the affordable housing list</td>
<td>Article IV. Powers &amp; Duties of City Commission. Section 13. Grant of franchises; approval of written contracts, leases, changes to pension plan and sale of city owned property</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changes proposed by the Charter Review Committee.
Community Corner

To the Board of Sarasota County Commissioners

While fresh in mind, here’s one voter’s view of the takeaway from the March 8 Special Election: Elections are -- or can be -- teachable moments. The election results can help you understand what’s driving the people of Sarasota to change our electoral relationship to the Board. It has nothing whatsoever to do with party affiliation or business interests, but a great deal to do with what we all experience in living here: Growth.

You brought this change upon yourselves -- thanks to years of privileging private property over public good. No one is saying, "halt growth." The aim is to bring back the public dimension -- which looks at the health, safety, and welfare of the people as a key determinant of the quality of developments -- especially those that put intense pressures of density upon neighborhoods, schools, roads, and taxes.

Yes, you think your magico-legal power to enhance the value of land yields greater tax income -- but where is the external, reliable analysis that shows that "mobility" fees (ironic name, given our traffic) fairly and adequately pay the developer's share of future services, roads, and increased population? The Tischler Report of 2000 showed the opposite is true.

You have become distant from the people because you are willfully enabling Sarasota to grow too fast, without the rigorous guidance and temperance of an overall plan. You have shredded the Comp Plan, and now have warmly accepted Mr. Jensen's offer to write a new chapter of it for you.

What can be learned from your special election (expected to cost taxpayers $315,000) is that you have walled yourselves inside a vision of your jobs that leaves out what most matters to the people whose votes entrusted you to look out for everyone.

To us, the land of Sarasota County is not merely a commodity to parcel up, rezone, and profit from. It is the entire natural and social realm in which we dwell.

It's time to ask how you can reconceive your roles, your jobs, your access and accountability to your districts. To make yourselves available for town hall meetings, scientific understanding of climate change, and to all the considerations that accompany your stewardship role.

Until you stop pretending we were confused; until you stop believing that slick, dark money-funded messaging will turn the trick; until you each take a hard look at your approach to civic duty, you have not begun to accept or implement the changes required by Single Member District Voting.

It's time to open your minds and hearts to a different vision with grace and good will, and to work with the people of Sarasota as a government, of, by, and for those people.

Tom Matrullo

Editorial: Lessons Learned from Attack on Net Metering

BY COTY KELLER

The Florida state legislature passed House Bill 741, which phases down the value of net metering, and opens the door for utilities to add fixed charges to rooftop solar customer bills. This legislation will negatively impact tens of thousands of jobs and scores of small businesses. Utility customers will lose opportunities to save money on electric bills and reduce carbon footprints. It’s bad.

Assessing the lessons learned from this disaster yields two silver linings.

Lessons:
1. Most of the Florida legislature is married to special interests and deny the causes of global warming. We cannot count on support from this bunch to special interests and deny the causes of global warming.
2. While net metering is a beneficial policy, it has shortcomings. At night or during cloudy days, the solar rooftop system (until it is equipped with battery storage) takes electricity from the grid. Grid electricity is generated, for the most part, with fossil fuels, which emit heat trapping gases. We tend to forget that the "net zero" concept is not that great. Instead of striving for net zero, we need to think of stopping all emissions.
3. Batteries improve rooftop solar. They allow us to produce our own electricity and store it for use during the evening and on cloudy days, thereby reducing the use of “dirty” grid power.
4. We have bigger fish to fry. Looking at projections for solar energy in Florida we can see that even with full retail rate net metering, rooftop solar will only achieve 1% of generated power this year. And not even 2% by the end of the decade. This is small potatoes.

Meanwhile, total solar in Florida will only be 25% in 2029. Add 20% for nuclear power, and Florida will not even be at 50% zero emission energy. This is way short of what we need as a society to stay below the 1.5 degree C threshold for preserving life as we know it. What we must instead generate electricity with 70-100% zero emission energy by the end of the decade.

The only policy that can put Florida in the game is the “Low Carbon Portfolio Standard (LCPS).” The standards require electric utilities to generate a certain percentage of their power from non-emitting sources by specific dates. LCPSs allow utility companies to use all sources of low carbon electricity, including solar, wind, nuclear and small hydro-electric power. Because nuclear and hydro can generate electricity 24/7, they are more reliable sources for filling electricity gaps. Emissions will be reduced since coal and natural gas won’t be as needed to make up the difference. Another added benefit is that by giving utilities more choices, they end up saving money, which inevitably lowers costs for the consumers.

The presence of a portfolio standard does not automatically increase rooftop solar. Unless the standard has a “carveout” for distributed (rooftop) solar, the percentage of zero-emission energy may be met totally by utility-scale solar. We must assure lots of rooftop solar for customer choice, savings, and resiliency. Rooftop solar also saves land otherwise used for industrial solar farms.

How do we enact such a policy in a state where our leaders don’t acknowledge the cause of global warming and are bound to special interests? Section 3 of Article XI of the Florida Constitution, with some limits, grants the people the right to initiate constitutional amendments. We would have to collect signatures equal to 8% of the total number of votes cast in the last presidential election. To be approved, a proposed amendment must garner 60 percent or more of the vote.

The net metering battle has been lost in Florida. In defeat, we have discovered two silver linings. Rooftop solar customers have been reminded that besides making money on our PV systems, we can reduce our carbon footprint and enhance our resiliency against losing grid power by adding battery storage. We can make Florida the real sunshine state by amending the state constitution to implement a Low Carbon Portfolio Standard, requiring utilities to generate 70-100% of electricity from zero emission energy by 2030, including a generous carveout for rooftop solar.

William “Coty” Keller is a local ecologist who lives and works in Port Charlotte. [https://www.ecopanfl.org](https://www.ecopanfl.org/)
School Board Elections on August Ballot

continued from 1

on her website that “we need to protect our public schools and teachers, especially from those looking to profit off our kids “education and privatize schools.” Singleton is also a staunch supporter of mental health initiatives for students. She has served as an administrator in area schools, including the Bradenton-based Visible Men Academy and Forty Carrots Family Center in Sarasota where she is presently employed. Singleton is a member of the Sarasota Black Caucus and the local NAACP chapter. While a newcomer to local elections, she has already gathered $56,196 in contributions as of March 14th, mostly in amounts under $100.

District 4: Kurnov v. Marinelli

Shirley Brown’s seat, District 4, is up for grabs as Brown is term-limited out. The two contenders for her seat are Lauren Kurnov and Robyn Marinelli. Both candidates have extensive background in education.

According to her website Martellini has over 20 years working directly with local students and has spent the last 15 years of her career as a district-level administrator, overseeing Student Services for the Sarasota County School District. As stated on her election website, Martellini will “bring accountability and transparency to the school board, support fiscally responsible budgets, attract world-class teachers and always put our students first.” The Republican Party of Sarasota is listed on her website as her sole endorser.

Lauren Kurnov, a native of Sarasota, graduated from Sarasota schools and currently has two children enrolled in district schools. An MSW social worker, Kurnov recently received a doctorate in education. She has an extensive background in higher education. She worked in Student Outreach and Success for two local universities: University of South Florida-Manatee and New College of Florida. Kurnov is running on a student-first platform that focuses on career opportunities, college placement, and maintaining Sarasota School’s “A” rating. Regarding recent School Board controversies, her website states: “Lauren is committed to running a positive, no-nonsense campaign that focuses solely on the success of our schools, not on fighting a proxy battle in a culture war.”

District 5: Cietek v. Wood v. Enos

Current board chairwoman Jane Goodwin is retiring at the end of year as well, and her District 5 seat has already attracted three aspiring board members.

Nora Cietek is a retired principal and special education administrator from upstate New York who began her education career as a teacher assistant and worked her way up the ladder over 30 years. Cietek recently received a direct endorsement from Goodwin. According to her website, Cietek has a no-nonsense approach to school board politics: “We have been distracted by political issues that have prevented us from doing the real work of the school board. This is a huge disservice to our students.” Cietek is a self-declared fiscal conservative who aims to ensure that school board spending is efficient and serves the interests of the community: “If elected, my job, and the job of every school board member will be to balance the needs of our students, teachers, and staff against our responsibility to be prudent stewards of county taxpayer dollars.

Opposing Cietek is Gregory Wood, a local business owner who runs a campaign focused on parental rights, classical education, and accountability. On his website, Wood writes: “Parents and families must retain the right to make all decisions regarding their children’s health, education, and future; not teachers’ unions, nor administrators, nor school board members. We parents raise our kids.” Wood promises to advocate for increased parental oversight over schooling, as well as a new approach to education that emphasizes the teaching of classical texts to increase student’s critical thinking.

Timothy Enos, the former chief of the Sarasota County Schools Police Department is a latecomer to the race. Enos has received endorsements from State Rep. Tommy Gregory and the Sarasota Republican Party. He also lists on his campaign website, endorsements from Sarasota County Sheriff Kurt Hoffman and Sarasota School Board members Bridget Ziegler and Karen Rose. Enos, who has lived in Sarasota for over 40 years and is a graduate of Sarasota district schools, has stated that his 30 years of experience working with local students has allowed him to fully understand the health and security needs of local students.

The voter registration deadline for the August 23 primary election is July 25th and early voting begins August 13th. To request a vote-by-mail ballot, click on the following link: https://www.sarasotavotes.gov/Voter-Information/Vote-by-Mail

New College of Florida.

Forty Carrots Family Center in Sarasota where she served as an administrator in area schools, including the Bradenton-based Visible Men Academy and Forty Carrots Family Center in Sarasota where she is presently employed. Singleton is a member of the Sarasota Black Caucus and the local NAACP chapter. While a newcomer to local elections, she has already gathered $56,196 in contributions as of March 14th, mostly in amounts under $100.

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Nora Cietek

Gregory Wood

Robyn Marinelli

Lauren Kurnov

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Fab af

PRIDE
Be Fabulous
May 12 - 14, 2022

fab af

LGBTQ+ MUSIC & ARTS FEST
ROSEMARY DISTRICT, SARASOTA, FLORIDA
ART + DANCE + MUSIC + COMMUNITY + MARKET
FOR MORE INFORMATION & FULL LINE-UP VISIT
WWW.FABAF.ORG

JAY ANDERSON
(DETROIT, MICHIGAN)

SUPERKNOVA
(CHICAGO)
People Have the Power

The Patti Smith and Robert Mapplethorpe exhibit at Selby Gardens kindled renewed interest in the music, art and poetry of these artists. My partner David Beaton and I both read Patti's book “Just Kids” (thanks to being gifted a copy by WSLR programmer John Haupt). We saw the photos and postcards of those that attended the talk/concert, and we again heard Patti sing the anthem “People Have the Power”.

It is something we believe and have chosen to act on even when it was easier not to. It is why we believe in community radio. It is why we have invested almost two decades in building the community that we have here at WSLR + Fogartyville.

In an interview, Smith explained how she and her late husband Fred ‘Sonic’ Smith tried to infuse the spirit of the '60s into a modern protest song: “And what we wanted to do was remind the listener of their individual power but also of the collective power of the people, how we can do anything. We wrote it consciously together to inspire people, to inspire people to come together.”

WSLR is here to inspire people to action, to give individuals a voice and build the collective power of our community to bring about positive change. These are truly dangerous times. Fascism is on the rise around the world. Our assumptions about the inevitability of forward progress of humanism and freedom have been seriously disrupted by actions here at home - in Tallahassee, in DC - and around the world.

In his first speaking role in The Great Dictator, Charlie Chaplin makes one of the most moving and thought-provoking speeches in cinematic history. He says:

“Cowardry is an abomination and freedom have been seriously disrupted by actions here at home - in Tallahassee, in DC - and around the world.

In his first speaking role in The Great Dictator, Charlie Chaplin makes one of the most moving and thought-provoking speeches in cinematic history. He says:

The theatre and the radio have brought us closer together. The very nature of these inventions cries out for the goodness in men, cries out for universal brotherhood for the unity of us all.

The pandemic has changed the way we see our world, our lives, our world, and each other. It has given us the opportunity to do things differently. We must seize this opportunity to build a more caring, more just, more inclusive society. We must continue to come together to fight the politics of hate; we must slow down to save the planet; we must feel more to save ourselves.

The value of local community stations cannot be underestimated. Community radio stations know the challenges, the stories, the celebrations, the joys, and the history of the neighbors they serve. A large number of miles away can never replicate the knowledge, intimacy, and care of a community station. That’s the power of local journalism and community media. WSLR brings new voices and perspectives to the media - highlighting our local arts and culture, enabling neighbors to share local news events, and helping residents participate in decisions that impact their lives. Fogartyville enriches our community by supporting independent artists and musicians and providing a space for important conversations.

As Dave steps out of his management position in June, he will continue to contribute to the organization in a myriad of ways. WSLR is currently in the process of hiring our first full-time Station Manager, and is also looking to hire a General Manager that will oversee the entire organization within the next year. This is an exciting time for the organization and we want you to be a part of it! If this media and community space is important to you - support it with your financial contributions, your energy and your attention. Attend a Board meeting. Become a volunteer. Consider writing a story for the Critical Times or reporting on a government meeting for our local news broadcast. There are so many ways you can strengthen this organization and help it better serve our community.

Just one of those opportunities is coming up with the 2022 Giving Partner Challenge. From noon April 26th to noon April 27th, online donations of $25-$100 made to WSLR through the Giving Challenge website will be matched. I will be making my $100 contribution and hope that you will be too!

Help us build the collective power of our community!

5:30p Tuesday, April 26. In addition to the Giving Challenge (Please make all pledges at www.GivingChallenge.org) WSLR+Fogartyville is hosting a POP-UP! GIVING STATION with film screening of LILY TOPPLES THE WORLD with a Domino Demonstration + reception at 5:30p.

Participating Nonprofits: WSLR, Peace Education & Action Center, Multicultural Health Institute, Transition Sarasota, Sarasota Chinese Academy, Sunshine Community Composting.

Presented by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.