Supporting the Local Food Economy

BY JOYCE NORRIS

Registration opens October 1st for Eat Local Week 2022 events! 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 2022 will be held from October 21 to October 28. The theme this year is “Locally Rooted - Globally Connected”. The festival will feature engaging educational events to showcase and build community around our region’s thriving local food economy.

Eat local Week festivities begin October 21 with a kickoff keynote presentation by Chef Kaytlin Dangaran at the Sarasota Art Museum. Dangaran, a Tampa native, trained at the French Culinary Institute in Manhattan. She has worked in restaurants in New York, San Francisco, and Miami and is now executive Chef and General Manager of Bistro, located at the Sarasota Art Museum. She will speak about her passion for cooking and the importance of supporting our local food system through the use of fresh, seasonal, local ingredients. In the days that follow, there will be a diverse array of events.

Does an educational tour inspire you? - The annual Eat Local Week and the Suncoast Gleaning Project, which organizes volunteers to harvest excess produce from local farms to donate to local food banks. The Gleaning Project has provided more than 482,000 pounds of fresh produce to those in need in our community since the program launched in 2010. Transition Sarasota is still accepting sponsors for this year’s Eat Local Week. Please reach out to Exec@TransitionSRQ.org.

An Inside View: Local Charter Amendments

BY CATHY ANTUNES

Along with important elections for Governor, State Legislature and County and City Commissioners, our local constitutions are on the November ballot. City Charter Amendments have been advertised, and the County Commission has also voted to put a County Charter Amendment on the November ballot. Here is a review and my take on these amendments. The City Charter amendments are in no particular order. At the time of this writing the ballot order is unknown.

Having served on the City’s Charter Review Committee (CRC), I expected this article to be a pretty straightforward undertaking. But, I am surprised (not in a good way) by the final version of some of the proposed City Charter amendments. I’ll start with the most concerning.

Proposed amendment to provide that City Auditor and Clerk’s function from a focus on finances and records and Commission agenda preparation.

This amendment broadly expands the City Auditor and Clerk’s function from a focus on finances and records (“Audit of Accounts”) to a sweeping “Audit Function”.

The current language in Article VI, section 6 of the City Charter reads: Sec. 6. Audit of accounts. At the end of each fiscal year or more often as required by the city commission, the city auditor and clerk shall audit any accounts and records of the departments, officers and employees and all other accounts and records in which the city is interested. He/she shall at all times have access to and may inspect and make copies of all records relating to the receipt or expenditure of money on account with the city and of all vouchers, accounts, bills, warrants, drafts, contracts or other

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Brady Sarasota................................. | Page 2 |
| Keep the Country Country............... | Page 3 |
| Risks of Climate Change............... | Page 4 |
| Newtown Health Concerns............. | Page 5 |
| Upcoming Events.......................... | Page 6 |
| Program Schedule......................... | Page 7 |
| Election Overview....................... | Page 8 |
| County District 4; HD73 Race......... | Page 9 |
| LocalCharter Amendments............... | Page 10 |
| Proto-Fascism.............................. | Page 11 |
| JudicialRetention........................ | Page 12 |

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES

Nov. 8, 2022 General Election
Tuesday, October 11 Voter Registration Deadline
Monday, Oct. 24 - Sunday, Nov. 6 Early Voting
Saturday, Oct. 29, 5pm Deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot
Tuesday, Nov. 8th Election day, polls open 7 am - 7 pm

Paper ballots relating thereto.

The proposed change to the Charter (which you won’t see on your ballot) would replace “Audit of accounts” with the following “Audit function”:

Continued on page 10
Fighting for Gun Safety

BY CAROL CONYNE RESCIGNO

Brady Sarasota is preparing to kickstart the 2022-23 year with its fall meeting on Thursday, October 20 at 4 pm in the Oasis Center at First Congregational UCC, 1031 S Euclid Ave. On the agenda will be upcoming state and national legislation, with emphasis on letting our legislators know that we oppose the permitless carry of weapons in Florida and favor an assault weapons ban nationally.

The following Thursday, October 27, Brady will start up its weekly 4 pm rallies at the Sarasota Bayfront. All are encouraged to attend when possible and newcomers are especially welcome. The rallies, which take place most Thursdays into May, are at the southernmost end of the Bayfront parking lot in front of Bayfront Park and O’Leary’s and along U.S. 41. Look for the yellow signs!

The sixth annual Vigil for Victims of Gun Violence will be held on Friday, December 9, at 6 pm at First Congregational UCC. The program, including speakers, will be announced closer to the vigil.

Brady, the granddaddy of the Gun Violence Prevention movements, evolved from a group that started in 1974 to control handguns. In 1981, when President Reagan was shot, his press secretary, Jim Brady, was seriously wounded with lifelong injuries. His wife, Sarah, started working with the original group, which eventually took the name Brady. In addition to the national staff based in Washington, Brady has grassroots chapters across the country. Sarasota has had the largest Florida chapter for some time.

Brady works across Congress, the courts and communities, uniting gun owners and non-gun owners alike, to take action, not sides, and end America’s gun violence epidemic.
The developers of Lakewood Ranch want to expand into rural east Sarasota County. To maximize their profit, SMR Communities asked for — and was granted on Aug. 31 by the Sarasota County Commission — a completely new type of zoning that allows them to duplicate the pattern of sprawl that is already covering much of east Manatee County.

The approval process for Lakewood Ranch Southeast, planned to replace 4,100 acres of pasture land with up to 5,000 luxury homes going for $700,000-plus each, is now hurdling towards its expected conclusion Oct. 25 in a “yes” vote by Sarasota County commissioners.

The suburban blob is inconsistent with the 2050 Plan, which was adopted two decades ago as a compromise between developers, environmentalists and farmers. The activists that are trying to stop the bulldozers fear Lakewood Ranch Southeast will be a major domino piece dropping on the remaining agricultural land in the east county; the developers’ success raises expectations among the heirs of farming families to be able to sell to developers seeking similar amendments to the comprehensive plan. The activists have sent thousands of emails to commissioners and provided hours of testimony, including by experts and lawyers, pointing out how this project wreaks havoc on wildlife, threatens existing land and homeowners with more flooding, burdens existing taxpayers with additional infrastructure costs, and burdens area roads with 45,000 additional vehicle trips.

The doggedness of the small group of “Keep the Country Country” activists is understandable considering that all of them live in and around Old Miakka. The cluster of farms, complete with a church and an old schoolhouse, is one of the oldest continuous settlements in the region. The residents, already organized in the 73-year old Old Miakka Community Club, know that the sprawl project will overwhelm not only their community but end their lifestyle, which is still largely based on agriculture.

The pandemic, climate change and rising global conflict have exposed the vulnerability of supply chains, and “Eat Local” has become much more than a fad. In light of this, the rural community’s fight to preserve agriculture and the environment that was created in nearly two centuries of farming, is beginning to resonate with city dwellers and urban organizations. Among the endorsers of “Keep the Country Country” are not only environmental and historic preservation groups, but also groups and individuals that are fighting similar battles in their urban communities and neighborhoods against overdevelopment.

The electoral dimension of this battle is beginning to unfold as well. The sitting commissioners’ sympathies — most of them elected with major campaign contributions from developers — came on full display during the Aug. 31 county commission meeting. Four of the commissioners — the one in whose district this is all happening was absent — sat through nearly four hours of opposition testimony by residents, experts, and lawyers, often yawning, and sometimes nodding off, only to vote 4-0 in favor of the developers. Their explanations for the vote ranged from the expected financial windfall for the county (without considering its larger social and environmental cost), to the “great product” Lakewood Ranch offers, and the argument that somehow the luxury mansions one of the commissioners said she could not afford, would solve the affordable housing crisis. The chairman finally let it be known how difficult his job was, and that much of what the activists were saying was not well informed. He conceded, however, that they had behaved “fairly well” that day.

More information: www.sarasotacountry.net

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- Sign up to the Keep the Country Country email list, by emailing Becky Ayech (miakka1945@gmail.com)
- Join weekly demonstrations Saturday mornings at the downtown Sarasota Farmers Market and Wednesday mornings at the Phillippi Farmhouse Market. Contact: Johannes Werner (huitzi@aol.com).
- Attend and speak at the Oct. 25 Sarasota County Commission meeting, demonstrate outside before and after the meeting.
The Risks of Climate Change Locally

BY MARGARET JEAN CANNON AND ROY WYSNEWSKI

PREDICTED LOCAL RISKS

Four years ago, a west-coast non-profit risk advisory firm Four Twenty Seven specializing in determining the economic risks associated with climate change, released the results of a vulnerability study for 761 cities and 3,143 counties in the United States with populations exceeding 50,000. The study ranked Sarasota as the No. 2 American city at risk from climate change, trailing only Miami Beach. In the ranking of counties at most risk in the nation, Manatee County was ranked No. 1, and Sarasota County was ranked No. 10. The study focused on the risks posed by sea level rise, stronger and more frequent tropical cyclones, extreme rainfall (in-lawn flooding), heat stress and water stress.

RISK CONFIRMATION

Today, there is strong evidence via scientific data and actual climate change impacts to corroborate the 2018 risk-assessment results.

Scientific Data: The table below lists Sarasota - Bradenton’s average yearly temperature for a recent decade (2011-2020).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mean Average Temperature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>74.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>75.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>75.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>76.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in this table is from the Sarasota-Bradenton weather data file at SC ACIS: scacis.rcc-acis.org

- Extreme rainfall – a significant increase occurred between 2011 (41 inches) and 2020 (57 inches).
- Heat stress – Climate Central scientists project that the twenty-five life-threatening heat days (with a heat index of 105 degrees) that Southwest Florida currently experiences will expand to 130 such days by 2050.
- Water stress - A prolonged and costly red tide season (2017-2019) resulted in the loss of thousands of fish and a significant tourism-related financial loss. Also, a record number (1,100 +) of manatees died (lack of seagrass) in 2021.

But how significant is the temperature increase? In just one decade, the Sarasota/Bradenton area’s temperature increased, prematurely reaching the 2030 global goal of 1.5 C set by the International Paris Agreement. This result not only gives credence to the 2018 risk predictions on climate change but also begs these questions: Has the window (2030-2022) of opportunity to effectively mitigate our rapidly changing climate closed, and how bad might future climate change impacts get for our area?

WSLR News Team Welcomes Interns

WSLR has a long-standing relationship with New College of Florida. This year we are pleased to be part of a radio broadcasting internship program funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The internship aligns well with the Mellon Foundation Higher Education and Scholarship in the Humanities program’s desire to integrate social and racial justice work into artistic practice and teaching as well as its goal to encourage exploration of questions of special interest to the local community program. Three New College students are currently producing stories for our Critical Times News Team – Joshua Epstein, Basil Pursley, and Nickolos Steinig. You can tune in to our local news broadcast on Fridays at 6pm (and if you miss it, you can catch the re-broadcast on Monday at 9:30am). You can also subscribe to the Critical Times podcast wherever you get your favorite podcasts. If you have a story idea for our news team, please email NEWS@wslr.org.
Addressing Health Concerns in North Sarasota

BY ONYX HADWEN OF THE MULTICULTURAL HEALTH INSTITUTE

Driving down Myrtle Street between Central Avenue and Washington, you encounter a land use combination directly from the nightmares of any NIMBY activist. On the south side of the road, you’ll find Booker High School, an assortment of housing units, and the R.L. Taylor Community Complex. On the north side, there are a string of industrial and manufacturing plants: Atlantic TNG (precast concrete), Frederick Derr & Company (construction), Steel Products, Seaboard Steel Corporation, Trademark Metals Recycling, MasterRock (concrete recycling), and Single Stream Recyclers. Although a NIMBY activist’s nightmare, industrial plants situated alongside schools and community centers are a well-known focus of environmental justice efforts locally and nationally.

These sites have been a source of community concern for many years. In 2018, the Multicultural Health Institute worked with others to form the Newtown Health Disparities and Environment Collaborative. Through community surveys and data analysis, the group found 58% of respondents noticed dust or particles in the air every time, or almost every time they passed by Booker High School on Myrtle Street. Forty percent said the dust bothered them every time or almost every time.

By analyzing data from the Florida Department of Health, the Newtown Health Disparities and Environment Collaborative found that although the 34234 zip code (Newtown) accounts for 5% of the population, they accounted for 15% of County hospitalizations due to Asthma.

In January and February of 2020, Kimley-Horn and Associates found arsenic levels exceeding the recommended levels for residential areas in the soil and groundwater along Myrtle.

Resident concerns continue into 2022 as a second community survey explored North Sarasota residents’ perceptions of their environment and desired improvements. Water quality drew the most attention as 83% of respondents expressed concern about the pollution level in the neighborhood pond/ditch/canal/creek and 79% expressed concern about the quality/safety of their tap water. The quality of local school drinking water, level of pollution in neighborhood soils, and level of air pollution all received similar responses with 78% of respondents indicating concern.

The 2022 survey revealed consensus around desires for improvements as well as concerns. Eighty percent of respondents indicated they would be in favor of more trash cans in their area to help reduce littering and 75% indicated they would approve of MLK Park Development, including a walking trail. Sixty-four percent said they wanted to see vacant lots transformed into green spaces. As summarized in one free response: "More flowers, more grass, better sidewalks, more trash cans."

In recent months, local environmental lawyer Justin Bloom has successfully sued some of these same companies for polluting the Whitaker Bayou. From these lawsuits, groups like the Suncoast Waterkeepers and the Sarasota Bay Foundation have acquired funds for Supplemental Environmental Projects, also known as SEP’s. These funds, along with collaboration across groups, create possibilities for addressing these long-standing community concerns. Notably, prior community efforts created many of the successes seen on the southern side of Myrtle Street – including Booker High School and the R.L. Taylor Community Complex.

To learn more about these efforts and to get involved, email northsrq.nature@gmail.com.
WSLR Welcomes New Local Programs

WSLR-LP 96.5 FM’s broadcast community is growing! The radio station’s offerings now include four new weekend voices which expand the most eclectic, all-volunteer radio schedule on the suncoast.

**Alternating Fridays from 5pm - 11pm, Sebastian Wegeng** will be starting off the weekend with his fins in the water for his surf/psych meets garage-rock music program, Corduroy. Named after the colloquial surf lingo for a series of swells marching in from the horizon, Wegeng plans to bring a matching series of reverb-soaked wave forms to get listeners ready for the weekend at the beach.

**Community Conversations with Mel** will join WSLR’s lineup of quality public affairs programming on alternating Saturdays from 3pm - 4pm. The program will be hosted by poet, spoken word artist, and activist Melanie Lavender, centered around interviews with leaders and influencers in Sarasota and Manatee Counties, while interweaving poetry and music that will make listeners think - as well as move their body.

**Jay Ackermann** bridges the chasm between ska, punk, and indie on his program, *The In Between, Saturday nights from 9pm - 11pm*. Focused on building a music community, Jay has deep roots in the global ska and punk scenes - bringing hundreds of bands from all around the globe together to create friendships and awareness that the musical subculture is still alive and evolving.

If you have an idea for a radio show, let us know. You can find our application online at WSLR.org under the Support Tab (Volunteer at WSLR+Fogartyville). As we progress into 2022, we'll be inviting you to fill out our Listener Survey. Your input in this survey will aid us in offering radio programming that meets the needs and interests of our community.
7-10PM 10/08 - $5
SPOKEN WORD SERIES
with an open mic and featured performer; Braddenors Whitt the Poet with 2 self-published books, is NAACP Image Award nominated Spoken-word Artist, winner of multiple poetry GRAND SLAM competitions...
Hosted by WSLR’s Melanie Lavender. Sponsor: COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

7PM 10/18 - FREE
STAY PRAYED UP
The only thing mightier than Lena Mae Perry’s electrifying voice is her faith. For the last 50yrs sharing & sharpening both as the lead in The (legendary)Branchettes, NC gospel, that has packed churches throughout the South & lifted weary hearts as far away as Ireland. We’ll follow them as they prepare to record their first, fully live album, a hallmark in the canon of Black gospel groups.

7:30PM 10/27 - $18/$20
SHAMARR ALLEN AND UNDERDAWGS
Scintillating unique sound, look, and exemplary talents, they transcend musical boundaries for a New-Orleans experience right here!

7PM 10/28 - $15/$18
The Black Feathers w/ Lazy Daisies OPENING
From the UK the Black Feathers, acoustic indie rockers known for their electric stage chemistry. Sarasota duo Lazy Daisies are originally from the corn fields of Ohio, this husband & wife are “keepin’ it groovy & stayin’ mellow.”

7-10PM 10/08 - $5
SPOKEN WORD SERIES
with an open mic and featured performer; Braddenors Whitt the Poet with 2 self-published books, is NAACP Image Award nominated Spoken-word Artist, winner of multiple poetry GRAND SLAM competitions...
Hosted by WSLR’s Melanie Lavender. Sponsor: COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

8PM 10/11 - $20/$22
JOE CROOKSTON
Singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist with themes of lightness, darkness, clocks ticking, fiddle looping, weeping willows, slide guitar bending, cynicisms to hope.

8PM 10/11 - $22/$27
CHUCHITO
Spicy Cuban Rhythms and jazz

8PM 10/11 - $20/$22
JOE CROOKSTON
Singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist with themes of lightness, darkness, clocks ticking, fiddle looping, weeping willows, slide guitar bending, cynicisms to hope.

8PM 10/13
THE SLAMBOYAN CIRCUS OF DREAMS
A rootsy rocking’ psychedelia, expanding the borders of the American genre with their fantastic stories and performance since the late 90’s in Sleepy Hollow, New York. The band’s music is equal parts Washington Irving, Woodstock and British Invasion.

8PM 11/13
GRANT PEEPLES & THE PEEPLES REPUBLIC
a thinking humans entertainer, whose unflinching social insight and cultural acuity punctuate his humorous & ironic wisdomisms

8PM 11/6 - 11/12/$15
VERY MERRY JERRY DAY
We’ve got it MADE-IN-THE-SHADE this year with the NEW COVERED PATIO and November date it will be COOL(e)r, PEOPLE! As we celebrate our Lucky 13th! annual Tribute to Jerry Garcia with music from The Joint Chiefs who are purveyors of the Jerry Songbook. And from Dead Uncle’s Ship is Ship of Fools’ Turner C. Moore (mandolin, synths and vocals) joined by Alan Gilman (Uncle John’s Band) and Michael Pandiscio (Dead Set Florida).

8PM 11/10 - $22/$27
CHUCHITO
Spicy Cuban Rhythms and jazz

8PM 11/11 - $20/$22
JOE CROOKSTON
Singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist with themes of lightness, darkness, clocks ticking, fiddle looping, weeping willows, slide guitar bending, cynicisms to hope.

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8PM 11/15 - FREE
OUTTA THE MUCK
Family, football and history come-to-life in a portrait of the Dean family, long-time residents of the historic town of Pakoake, Florida. Stories that transcend space & time, an intimate portrait of a community that resists despair with love, remaining fiercely self-determined, while forging its own unique narrative of achievement.

8PM 11/4 - $15/$18
GRANT PEEPLES & THE PEEPLES REPUBLIC
a thinking humans entertainer, whose unflinching social insight and cultural acuity punctuate his humorous & ironic wisdomisms

8PM 11/18 - $15/$18
DAVID JACOBS-STRAIN & BOB BEACH
striking slide guitar player and song poet from Eugene, Ore. His deep love of blues and roots music is evident in every one of the songs he writes. And Bob Beach is a mouth-harp maestro who swaggerers into a solo like The Mariboro Man, then quietly leaves the set while the rest of us wonder just what happened and how such a tiny instrument could possibly sound like that.

8PM 11/26 - $18/$21
THE WORLD FUSION ORCHESTRA
Gypsy Jazz meets up with funk, classical and hardcore fusion with guitarist Gustav Viehmeyer drummer Art Weiss and upright bassist Jack Berry

8PM 12/02 - $15/$18
LANEY JONES AND THE SPIRITS
Rolling Stone to hail her as an Artist You Need To Know and praised her “penetrating hooks” and ”70s-era florishes.” Say you “SW” Lany Jones, when...

8PM 12/17 - $12/$15
REBEKAH PULLEY AND THE RELUCTANT PROPHETS
Soul-steeped rock'n'roll band with an Americana twist, provide an earthy soundscape to Rebekah’s evocative songs & seductive voice. Winner of 8 ‘Best Of The Bay’ songwriting awards.

8PM 12/18 - $15/$18
THE JONI PROJECT
Presents an evening of the Songs of Joni Mitchell. The band is comprised of Joni Adno on vocals, keys & guitar, Art Siegel on percussion, Joe Bruno on bass, Bob Minner on saxophone & Dr. Jon Godfrey on guitar.

8PM 01/06/23 - $25/$30
Mary Gauthier
Grammy nominated for Best Folk Album, as well as a nomination for Album of the Year by the Americana Music Association. Numerous artists have recorded her songs, from Jimmy Buffett, to Blake Shelton, to Boy George and more; she is joined by with special guest Jaimee Harris.
Election 2022 Overview

This year marks the first statewide elections to be held with Republicans exceeding Democrats in voter registration. It’s been a long decline for Democrats, who once dominated registration in North Florida and other rural counties. Non-Partisan voters have seen their share of registration rapidly increase (see map on right).

Statewide Elections

The elections you’re likely to hear the most about in the next month are the Senate Race between incumbent Marco Rubio (R) and Congresswoman Val Demings (D) and the Governor’s race between current Gov. Ron DeSantis and Congressman Charlie Crist. Expect lots of TV ads and mailers as DeSantis has a monstrous stash of cash and Crist/Demings will be fundraising like mad to get their message out. A poll conducted for AARP Florida by two top pollsters in September showed that Rubio had a slim lead polling at 49% support among likely voters to Democrat Val Demings’ 47%. That puts the race well within the poll’s 4.4% margin of error. Key issues for voters include Medicare and Medicaid support and interest in lowering pharmaceutical drug costs.

In the same AARP poll, Gov. Ron DeSantis leads Charlie Crist by a slight 50%-47% margin in the race for Governor. Both candidates win over 90% of their own party’s voters, with DeSantis holding a 4-point edge among Independents. There is a narrow gender gap, with men voting for DeSantis by a larger margin than women are backing Crist, but a huge gap on education with Crist winning voters with 4-year college degrees by 15-points and DeSantis ahead by the same amount with those who do not have one. Within the 50+ universe, white voters give DeSantis a 17-point lead, Hispanics are almost evenly divided, and Black voters 50+ favor Crist by 60-points.

Attorney General

Democratic candidate Aramis Ayala was elected in 2016 as state attorney as a reformer, gaining national attention in 2017 when she announced she would not use the death penalty. Ayala faces incumbent Ashley Moody.  Moody has raised $1,669,941 in unilateral decisions. Ayala will face incumbent President Wilton Simpson in November. Simpson’s background is in farming, as his family runs a multi-million-dollar egg farm in Pasco County. Simpson has raised over $2,000,000 and has the backing of Governor DeSantis’ backing.

Congressional Races

Thanks to the DeSantis gerrymandered maps, only a few Congressional districts are considered competitive. The map also severely weakened the power of black voters; reducing the number of black-performing districts from 4 to 2. The Congressional map drawn by Gov. DeSantis (R), was adopted by the Florida Legislature during a special session after DeSantis vetoed previous districts passed by the Legislature (see map below).

Congressional District 16

The new 16th Congressional District includes all of Manatee County and a part of Hillsborough County. Incumbent Vern Buchanan faces a challenge from Democrat Jan Schneider. Buchanan has served in Congress since 2007 and is a senior member of the powerful House Ways & Means Committee, which has jurisdiction over tax policy, international trade, health care, welfare, and Social Security. He has a 10 point plan to create jobs and restore our economy that you can find on this website. It includes reducing government regulation, implementing a Balanced Budget Amendment, expanding oil drilling, and supporting right-to-work legislation (anti-union).

Schneider graduated with a bachelor’s from Brown University and a master’s in international affairs from Columbia University. She also has a Juris Doctor and a PhD in political science from Yale. As an author, Schneider has written books on protecting natural resources as well as on global warming. Schneider has run for the Congressional seat multiple times. She mounted two considerable challenges to Katherine Harris in 2002 (losing 54.8% - 45.2%) and 2004 (losing 55.3% to 44.7%). She opposes Buchanan’s positions on privatizing Social Security and raising the age for Medicare eligibility, and strongly supports a women’s right to choose. You can learn more about her positions here: https://votejan.com.

The FEC website shows that Buchanan raised $737,000 in the primary and had $1,766,000 cash on hand as of 8/03/2022; Schneider had $41,178 cash on hand as of 6/03/2022.

Congressional District 17

The new 17th Congressional District covers all of Sarasota County, all of Charlotte County, and a small portion of upper Lee County. CD17 is a heavily Republican seat where 57.49% of voters supported Republican Donald Trump in the 2020 election. It is also the whitest district in Florida with 79.1% of voters identifying as white. Incumbent Greg Steube faces a challenge in Florida with 79.1% of voters identifying at white. Incumbent Greg Steube faces a challenge from Democrat Andrea Doria Kale. Prior to being elected to Congress, Steube served three terms in the Florida House, representing the Sarasota- Manatee area from 2010-2016 and two years in the Florida Senate. Steube has aligned himself with the Trump wing of the Republican party.

Before moving to North Port, Kale worked for a substance abuse research company in New York for 37 years. She started out as a researcher and worked her way to information technology director for National Development Research Institute. Kale was also the state IT Director and Deputy Operations Director for the 2016 Clinton presidential campaign. She is a staunch advocate for a women’s right to choose, protecting voting rights and supports the Justice in Policing Act.

Steube has raised $1,278,176 as of August 3, 2022, and has $853,959 left on hand for the general election. Kale has raised 18,215 and has $1,039 left in her account. Theodore “Pink Tie” Murray will appear on the ballot with No Party Affiliation (NPA). He has raised no money for the campaign.

For Additional Election Information:


https://www.vote411.org
Teacher Challenges Incumbent in HD73

BY JOSHUA EPSTEIN, WSLR INTERN

State House District 73, which includes the barrier islands and much of the urbanized area of Sarasota County from the Manatee County line south to Venice, could prove to be one of the most competitive races in the area. Democrat Derek Reich, a schoolteacher, is challenging the incumbent, Republican Fiona McFarland. In 2020, statistics from MCI Maps show the district as having the closest margin in any Florida State House district; 49.7% of voters went for Donald J. Trump while 49.34% went for President Joseph R. Biden. However, current voter registration numbers show that the district is now 59,423 registered Republicans and 46,950 registered Democrats.

As of September 9, McFarland had raised $198,814 and spent only $47,000, leaving her well ahead of her opponent in fundraising. Reich had raised $42,705 as of 9/9/22 and has just under $198,814 and spent only $47,000, leaving her with more than $28,000 remaining in his coffers. McFarland controls the political committee, Friends of Sarasota, where another $118,000 remains available if needed.

Incumbent Fiona McFarland is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy (2008) and the University of Chapel Hill’s Kenan Flagler Business School (2013). In her civilian capacity, Fiona worked as a consultant with the global business management consulting firm McKinsey and Company, where she served clients across media, consumer goods, manufacturing, and advanced technology industries. McFarland is a New York transplant who moved to Sarasota a year prior to her election to the State House in 2020. In 2020, she defeated Democratic challenger Drake Buckman by more than 9 percentage points, re-gaining Republican control of the seat that Margaret Good held for two terms.

Fiona’s website spotlights her work to protect water quality & the environment, strengthen Florida’s economy, work towards affordable housing, support Florida families, fight for world-class education, and support safe communities and law enforcement. She has been endorsed by Associated Industries of Florida, the Florida Chamber of Commerce, and the Florida Realtors PAC.

Her website points to Fiona’s votes for a $1.4 million for Spanish Point shoreline restoration, a $1 billion sales tax rebate on items, and investments in school safety through improved emergency preparation and response policies among other votes she cast which she feels demonstrate her concern for children and her education background. Fiona notably supported Florida’s 15-week abortion ban that includes no exceptions for rape or incest (HB5). Fiona declined WSLR’s request for an interview on September 12th, 2022.

Born in Sarasota, challenger Derek Reich was born in Sarasota County and graduated from Florida State University (2018). Reich is a 12th grade U.S. Government and Economics teacher at Sarasota High.

Derek states on his website that his “passion for education and the next generation” are the driving forces behind his run for State Representative. He added in an interview with WSLR that he couldn’t sit on the sidelines while his “own representative... voted to cut 12 million dollars from Sarasota County schools in Florida’s record house budget because we had a mask mandate for a couple weeks.”

While a full-time college student he worked as a Publix cashier and subsequently began as a full-time teaching intern at Brookside Middle School in Sarasota in his final semester of college.

Following that he accepted a teaching position at Florida High School in Tallahassee and taught 12th grade U.S. Government to a student that was 80% non-white and majority ESL “to serve a student population most needing the support my teachers provided me”. Derek moved back to Sarasota County to finish his Master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction (2020) at Florida State University while substitute teaching part-time before running for the classroom-full-time for the 2020-2021 school year.

Derek told us that his priorities if elected are to: fight for public school funding (“make sure that there is teacher in every classroom and bus driver for every route”), prevent environmental disasters (“Stop Piney Point from ever occurring again”), champion affordable housing (“Stop cutting funds from the Sadowski Affordable Housing Fund”), and “protect a woman’s freedom to control her own body.”

When asked about his position on HB7, “The Stop WOKE Act” and the “Parental Rights in Education bill” (HB1557) dubbed by critics the “Don’t Say Gay Bill” Derek expressed strong opposition to both bills and noted that Fiona McFarland voted in the affirmative both times.

He also noted that Sarasota residents with solar panels would’ve been “taken to the cleaners” had Governor Ron DeSantis not vetoed a bill that was co-sponsored by his opponent that would have established new regulations for renewable energy net metering programs (HB741). Neunder & Kuether Face Off in District 4

BY BASIL PURSLEY, WSLR INTERN

In District 4, former Venice City Council member Joe Neunder handily won the Republican primary with 73.5% of the vote against challenger Mark Hawkins. Neunder will face Democratic candidate Daniel Kuether in the November election.

Neunder, 45, is hoping to succeed incumbent Alan Maio, who is precluded by term limits from seeking re-election. A Pine View School graduate, Neunder operates a solo, chiropractic practice as Sarasota Spinal Mechanics. In an interview with Jacob Ogles for Florida Politics, Neunder stated: “Sarasota’s future is bright and the decades of conservative leadership at the county level,” Neunder said. “I’ll build on that legacy by keeping taxes low, protecting the natural beauty of the environment that surrounds us, supporting our brave law enforcement officers and first responders, and championing balanced, fiscally responsible budgets.”

Neunder believes that the housing crisis and environmental issues are also economic issues. While he acknowledges that rising prices can be good for current homeowners, he also specifies that “some of our most important neighbors are getting priced out of the market.”

Kuether moved to Sarasota County in 2018 from New York City. He currently works in UI/UX design for a real estate company. He is taking a leave of absence from his role as vice chair of the Sarasota County Democratic Party to run for County Commission. “The citizens of Sarasota need holistic development that benefits the entire county,” a campaign news release said. “If elected, Kuether will push against developers to force systematic change, support multiple forms of transportation, identify and implement affordable housing options, and establish more significant safeguards for the surrounding environment.” Kuether hopes to be the first Democrat to sit on the Sarasota County Commission in 50 years.

Kuether takes strong stances on environmental issues, believing that protecting the barrier islands and water systems is crucial to maintaining Sarasota. VoteWater.org, an organization focused on profiling candidates on how their policies may affect the water ecosystems, has approved Kuether as a water-friendly and “clean” candidate.

The County Commission is now elected by single-member districts - a change voters initially approved in 2018 and then reaffirmed in March 2022. Under single-member districts, commissioners are elected solely by the citizens of their district, instead of being elected by all county voters. That means these candidates can focus on the 70,000 voters in the district, rather than having to reach out to 346,000 voters countywide.

District 2 County Commission Race

Democrat Fredd Atkins will face Republican Mark Smith in the District 2 County Commission Race. You can learn more about these candidates in the April and July editions of Critical Times which you can find in our online archive.

Sarasota City Commission Candidates

Debbie Trice, Dan Lobeck and Jennifer Ahearn-Koch were the top three vote-getters in the August primary. In the November election you will get to vote for two of them to serve in the position of at-large City Commissioner. All City of Sarasota voters are eligible to vote in this election. You can read more about these candidates in the July edition of the Critical Times.
3 Constitutional Amendments on November Ballot

The Florida State Legislature referred three constitutional amendments to the 2022 ballot during the 2021 and 2022 state legislative sessions. One would abolish the Florida Constitution Revision Commission and the other two relate to property taxes. Amendments require a 60 percent vote of electors to be approved.

Amendment 1 would authorize the state legislature to pass laws prohibiting flood resistance insurance premiums from exceeding rates by more than 10 percent. The current salary of Sarasota City Commissioners is just under $30,000, which is two-thirds of the full amount authorized by Florida statutes. According to vines of a memo to the City Charter Review Committee, The CRC recommended increasing City Commission salaries, as the position is demanding and the current compensation is low.

Amendment 2 would abolish the Florida Constitution Revision Commission. The Florida Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) is a 37-member commission provided for in the state constitution that reviews and proposes changes to the Florida Constitution. The CRC refers constitutional amendments directly to the ballot for a public vote, which makes the commission unique amongst the states. Florida is the only state with a commission empowered to refer constitutional amendments to the ballot. [2] The CRC convenes every 20 years on the following schedule: 1977, 1997, 2017, 2037, 2057, and so on. The 2017 CRC received 2,013 proposals from the public and 103 from the commission's members. In 2018, the CRC referred eight constitutional amendments to the ballot, combining rates and an in-house amendment to 2017. Amendment 2 would block from appearing on the ballot, but the seven remaining measures referred by the CRC were approved by voters.

Amendment 3 would authorize the Florida State Legislature to provide an additional homestead property tax exemption on $50,000 of assessed value on property owned by certain public service workers, including teachers, law enforcement officers, emergency medical personnel, active duty members of the National Guard, and child welfare service employees.

An Inside View: Charter Amendments

November Ballot

3 Constitutional Amendments on

The Critical Times, Vol. 22 | October - December, 2022

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The Critical Times, Vol. 22 | October - December, 2022

The Critical Times, Vol. 22 | October - December, 2022

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BY GENE JONES, FLORIDA VETERANS FOR COMMON SENSE

As a patriotic veterans group, Florida Veterans for Common Sense has two priorities this year, protecting our democracy and combating climate change.

In our view, domestic threats present more danger to our Constitutional Republic than at any time since the Civil War. Many indicators now evidence a protofascist slide.

What we mean by this esoteric term is that America is not a fascist state, as yet, although the MAGA political movement is intent on taking us into full-blown, goose-stepping fascism.

Fortunately, most citizens recognize the danger. If the majority stands up, we can stamp out the proto-fascist slide before it takes us further down the road of chaos and restricted freedoms.

Some may say that we exaggerate the threat; we do not. Like a boa constrictor, protofascism doesn’t kill immediately although, over time, it squeezes the life from democracy. Already, it has a firm hold. As Jennifer Dresden, an expert on democracies and co-author of The Authoritarian Playbook, describes the process, “authoritarianism doesn’t happen overnight.” It develops from the slow drip of infringements on freedoms and breaches of long-standing democratic rules and traditions.

We are confident our fellow citizens will rip away the boa once they recognize how far it has entangled itself in our culture and government. If we’re wrong, our democratic freedoms will end.

The boa is insidious. At first, it weakens its prey before the kill. This weakening is exactly how the protofascist movement proceeds. Already, many citizens do not trust government. This sad state of affairs is largely attributable to misinformation campaigns. The lies started in earnest with the falsehood that President Obama was not born in America. And now, the most audacious is that President Biden lost the 2020 Presidential election.

The MAGA protofascists’ misinformation campaign has dire consequences. On January 6, 2021, thousands of Americans fell for the lie that the election was illegitimate. Acting on their false belief, they attacked the Capitol and tried to stop the routine congressional certification of the election. The boa tightened its grip.

We feel the boa’s squeeze in Florida. Our governor refuses to repudiate the lie about the presidential election. He also passes legislation and consolidates his power to tighten the boa’s hold. Here are examples of how he and his rubber stamp legislature are chipping away our democratic norms:

• Passed a voter suppression law. A court ruled it in part unconstitutional.
• Passed a law that established stand-alone election police. This outfit already may have violated citizens’ civil rights by arresting people inappropriately.
• Passed a law that limits peaceful political demonstrations: A court found it unconstitutional.
• Passed a law that gerrymandered legislative districts: A court found it in part unconstitutional.

Citizens challenged these freedom-limiting laws in the courts because the laws were contrary to our Florida Constitution and law. Some cases continue in litigation.

As for the courts, the boa has a grip too. Most judges still follow the Constitution and law although recent decisions evidence that some judges support the MAGA protofascist movement as well.

Nevertheless, we can still rip the MAGA boa from the body politic. We the people have the power at the ballot box to throw out the protofascists before we’re crushed. Vote in November so we can untangle the boa’s stranglehold on Florida and the nation.
The Origin of Retention Votes for Judges

The highest Court in Florida is the Supreme Court, which is composed of seven Justices. At least five Justices must participate in every case and at least four must agree for a decision to be reached.

To be eligible for the office of Justice, a person must be a registered voter who resides in Florida and must have been admitted to the practice of law in Florida for the preceding 10 years.

For most of Florida's history, all judges were chosen by direct election of the people. The only exception was when a vacancy occurred on a court between elections. In that case, the Governor appointed a replacement to serve until the next election was held.

This election of appellate judges led to many problems. They had to raise campaign money, which often was donated by the same attorneys who practiced before the Court. By the mid-1970s, the problem became even more serious after several Florida appellate judges were charged with violations of ethics. A scandal resulted, creating a public call for reforms.

In 1971, Governor Reubin Askew took the first step toward reforming the system. That year he instituted a system called "merit selection." Under this system, the Governor referred a Court vacancy to an impartial panel, which suggested names of possible appointees. The Governor then selected a name from the list. In 1974, Justice Ben F. Overton became the first Supreme Court Justice chosen by this method.

Leaders knew, however, that a more complete change still was needed, because judges still faced periodic elections after appointment. The effort to do this was spearheaded by Governor Askew, Chief Justice Ben Overton, and State Rep. Talbot "Sandy" D'Aleneberge, among others.

As a result, Florida voters amended the Constitution in 1976 to create a "merit retention" system for Florida's appellate judges. This system was meant to eliminate the many problems caused by judges running for office in an election.

When there is a vacancy on the Court today, this system means that the Governor chooses the next Justice from a list of between three and six qualified persons recommended by the Judicial Nominating Commission. There is no Senate confirmation in Florida, so that person becomes a Justice after taking the proper oath. When Justices' terms expire, their names will appear on the general election ballot for a merit retention vote, if they wish to remain in office.

Under this system, the voters have eliminated contested elections in which appellate Justices and judges campaign against other candidates. Instead, the question on the ballot is: "Shall Justice _____ be retained in office?" No one runs against the Justice. Voters simply decide whether or not they will remain in office after the end of each term.

If a majority of the votes cast are not in favor of retaining the incumbent Justice, the Governor appoints another person to fill the vacancy. This person is chosen from a list of individuals whose applications have been reviewed and who have been found qualified by the Judicial Nominating Commission.

Source: www.FloridaSupremeCourt.org

The terms of five Supreme Court justices will expire in 2023. All five seats are up for retention election on November 8, 2022. Learn more about the 5 justices up for retention below.

Charles Canady
Canady has been on the court since 2008 and has served as Chief Justice since 2018.

- Opposed the Florida Supreme Court's opinion that abortion is covered by Florida's privacy clause.
- Voted with 4-1 majority that all fines and fees must be paid to restore felon voting rights.
- Voted against requiring a unanimous verdict in death penalty cases.

Jorge Labarga
Labarga was appointed by Charlie Crist in 2009.

- Only justice who voted to put the assault weapons ban amendment on the ballot.
- Voted with the majority in 2017 Supreme Court of Florida ruling reaffirming abortion is covered by Florida's privacy clause.
- Opposes weakening protections in death penalty cases.

Ricky Polston
Appointed by Charlie Crist in 2008, Polston is the 2nd longest serving justice.

- Dissented from the Court's majority opinion that abortion is covered by Florida's privacy clause.
- Voted with 4-1 majority that all fines and fees must be paid to restore voting rights.
- Opposed requiring a unanimous verdict in death penalty cases.

John D. Couriel
Couriel was appointed by Ron DeSantis in 2020 and sworn in last fall.

- Cuban American - Father came from Cuba as part of Operation Pedro Pan.
- Member of the Federalist Society since 2000.
- Active in extremist Christian legal groups, particularly the Alliance Defending Freedom. ADF is a national organization which opposes abortion, same-sex marriage and LGBTQ rights.

Jamie Rutland Grosshans
Grosshans was appointed by Ron DeSantis in 2020.

- Opposed weakening protections in death penalty cases.
- Dissented from the Florida Supreme Court's opinion that abortion is covered by Florida's privacy clause.
- Voted with 4-1 majority that all fines and fees must be paid to restore voting rights.
- Opposed requiring a unanimous verdict in death penalty cases.
- Cuban American - Father came from Cuba as part of Operation Pedro Pan.
- Member of the Federalist Society since 2000.
- Active in extremist Christian legal groups, particularly the Alliance Defending Freedom. ADF is a national organization which opposes abortion, same-sex marriage and LGBTQ rights.

As a listener-supported organization, WSLR+Fogartyville depend on YOU to continue bringing you the programming you enjoy - both on-air at WSLR 95.5 (and streaming at www.wslr.org) and live at Fogartyville. We're kicking off our Fall Membership Drive this year with an Open House to celebrate our newly renovated patio. Then our programmers will take to the air from October 19 -25 to ask for your support. We hope that you will give generously to help us continue carving out space for community here in Sarasota.

If you'd like to get more involved, the Membership Drive is the perfect time to do so! We'll have a New Volunteer Orientation on October 6th at 6pm - sign up to attend at WSLR.org or call the office at 941-394-6649. We're also looking for different local restaurants to supply lunch for our volunteers during each day of the Membership Drive. Please give us a call if you would like to offer support in this way.