

Single Member Districts Redux

BY OMAR GUERRERO

Single Member Districts (SMD) have been in the cross-hairs of the Sarasota County Commission ever since it was approved by 60% of voters in a 2018 referendum. Despite being widely supported by Citizens, the County Commissioners have been consistently vocal about their opposition to the policy.

In a recent Commission Meeting, Commissioners voted unanimously to put a charter amendment that would repeal Single Member Districts on the ballot for the March 2022 special election. The amendment would share the same ballot as the School Millage Referendum.

Single member districts significantly changed the way that Commissioners are elected in the County. Before it was put in place, Commissioners were chosen at-large despite representing specific

geographic Districts in the county. This means that Commissioners represented districts in name only, since they were required to campaign for votes throughout all of Sarasota County.



Sarasota Alliance for Fair Elections founder Kindra Muntz announces the successful petition drive to put Single Member Districts on the 2018 ballot outside the SoE's office.

At-large election campaigns are costly, especially for grassroots candidates that lack the funding. By switching to Single Member Districts, commissioners were elected by voters within their districts only. Therefore, candidates were able to focus their campaigns within their own district and the number of people they had to reach decreased by 80% thus making it more feasible

for a grassroots candidate to compete. Single Member Districts were supported as a way to increase the accountability relationship between a commissioner and their district.

This is the connection between the often-controversial redistricting process and single

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On the Ballot March 8, 2022

SCHOOL DISTRICT AD VALOREM MILLAGE ELECTION

BALLOT QUESTION: Shall the Sarasota County School District continue the 1 mill per year ad valorem millage beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2026 for school operational purposes, including recruiting and retaining quality teachers, implementing and preserving educational programs; providing textbooks, technology, and other resources; and sharing funds with charter schools proportionate to student enrollment as required by law, with expenditure oversight by an independent citizen's financial oversight committee.

OVERTURNING SINGLE MEMBER DISTRICTS

BALLOT QUESTION: Shall each member of the Board of County Commissioners be elected county-wide, thereby allowing voters to vote for all five County Commissioners as each office comes up for election, rather than voters only being able to elect a single County Commissioner from the district in which the voter resides as presently exists in Article II, Section 2.1A of the Sarasota County Charter?

NCF Celebrates Black History Month

BY BECCA HADWEN

In response to the impact of the ongoing global pandemic, the 2022 New College of Florida Black History Month program will focus on health, wellness, and healing. Last year's program was completely virtual. This year, the majority of the events will be held in person. The program will make space to honor and celebrate the life of the late bell hooks and her impact on the NCF community. The program is being sponsored by the Mellon Foundation.

"Black History Month creates opportunities for the entire community to come together to celebrate the history, life, and achievements of Black people

in the United States and around the world," says Dr. Zabriskie. "With a focus on health, wellness, and healing, we will highlight the practices that have sustained Black people, helping our ancestors survive so many of the challenges that we've faced in our history. We will also learn about and engage in practices that can help us to survive through present day challenges as well as thrive in the present and future."

This year's program will feature a three-event series called Healing Dialogues which is being sponsored by the Florida Humanities Council through a Greater Good grant awarded to Dr. Miriam Wallace and Dr. Queen Zabriskie. The series will bring together artists, local health professionals, and humanities scholars for dialogues on topics related to race, health, wellness.



New Orleans-born Funk/Soul/RocknRoll musician Greg Banks will headline the Sur La Bay Concert on February 26

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

- **Interactive Library Display** - Jane Bancroft Cook Library
- **Black Literature and Music Listen-in – Celebrating bell hooks** (episodes released throughout the month – will air on WSLR)

Friday, February 4th - Healing Dialogues

- 6-7:30 PM - The Hamilton Center

"The Healing Drum" will feature a dialogue among Dr. Kyaieen Connor, an associate professor in the Department of Mental Health Law and Policy at the University of South Florida, Tampa; Cheikh N'Dong, Master Drummer and Music Director for Kuumba Dancers and Drummers; and Dr. Hugo Viera-Vargas, an assistant professor in

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Conference On Spirituality, Community And Social Change

On April 1-2, 2022, local residents and visitors will have an opportunity to engage with the work, life, and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman in a conference led by two of the country's most knowledgeable Thurman scholars. Thurman is a towering figure on the American religious landscape, a key contributor to the non-violent philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and a precursor of "Black Theology." CNN called Thurman "one of the unacknowledged shapers of 20th century America" who blended contemplative spirituality with justice advocacy. He offered academic, moral, spiritual, and interfaith leadership at Howard University, Morehouse College, and Boston University and was a founding co-pastor of the Church for the Fellowship of All People in San Francisco.

"The Thought and Spirituality of Howard Thurman: His Historical Legacy and Relevance to the Issues of Today" is open to everyone, including young people. The First Congregational UCC, 1031 South Euclid Ave, Sarasota, will host the event. Advanced reservations are strongly encouraged, and a donation of \$35 per person is suggested. More information and a registration link will be available on the church's website in the new year.

The presenters will be the Reverend Dr. Luther E. Smith Jr., Professor Emeritus at Candler Theological Seminary (Atlanta, GA), and the Reverend Dr. Shively T. J. Smith, Assistant Professor at Boston University School of Theology (Boston, MA).

Luther Smith is author of *Howard Thurman: The Mystic as Prophet; Intimacy and Mission*; and editor and author of *Howard Thurman: Essential Writings*. He is an ordained elder in the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and a founder of the Interfaith Children's Movement.

UCC prior to the conference.

For more information, contact the Rev. Ellen Palmer Marsey (epmarsey99@gmail.com, 440-336-5853,) or the Rev. Dr. Budd Friend-Jones (buddfj@gmail.com, 224- 623-9200).

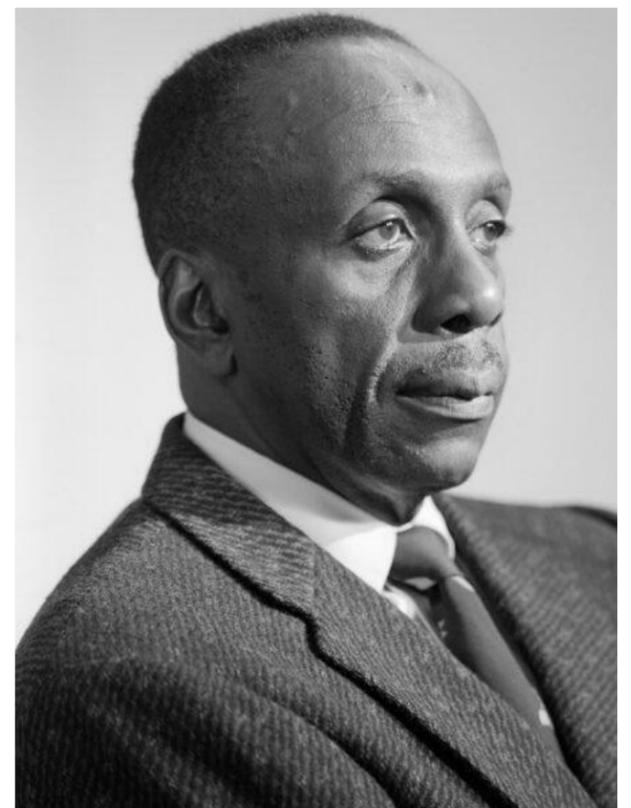


Presenters: Reverend Dr. Shively T. J. Smith and the Reverend Dr. Luther E. Smith Jr.

Shively Smith is the author of *Strangers to Family: Diaspora and First Peter's Invention of God's Household*. An ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and resident scholar at the historic Metropolitan AME Church in Washington, DC., she is known for her Womanist and African American perspectives on biblical interpretation.

Young African American and Jewish participants in the pioneering Impact Theatre program sponsored by the Jewish Federation Sarasota-Manatee, Newtown Alive! and Temple Sinai will participate. Conference participants also will share a guided tour of the Embracing Our Differences Annual Large Scale Art Exhibit at Bayfront Park.

Public viewings and discussions of "Backs Against the Wall: The Howard Thurman Story" will be offered at the Fogartyville Community Media & Arts Center and First Congregational



Howard Thurman



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MISSION:

WSLR+Fogartyville is a center for creative expression and community engagement that amplifies the voices of our diverse community and promotes peace, sustainability, democracy and economic and social justice.

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Sarasota Celebrates the MLK Legacy

After an extended hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sarasota MLK Celebration Committee is excited to announce the return of a weekend-long schedule of events and activities that commemorate the life and legacy of the beloved civil rights leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The celebration will commence with the grand opening of First Home Bank on Fri., Jan. 14 and conclude on Mon., Jan. 17 with the consistently sold-out Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast and Community Awards followed by the historic unity walk and community celebration, which will all be hosted in and around the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex.

The schedule of events is as follows:

Fri., Jan. 14, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – The Grand Opening of First Home Bank in Newtown. Located at 1782 Dr. MLK Way in Sarasota, First Home Bank in Newtown will serve as a one-of-kind loan production office and financial resource center. The grand opening event will include a food truck, refreshments, the Bank’s mascot, cash prizes and musical entertainment. First Home Bank will also be open on Sat., Jan. 15 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sat., Jan. 15, 10 a.m. to 2p.m. – 2022 Sarasota Health Fair -1781 Dr. MLK Way, Sarasota. Hosted by the Gulf Coast Medical Society, Jetson Grimes and the Sarasota MLK Celebration Committee, the 2022 Sarasota Health Fair will feature 20 health-related resources such as flu shot administration, ambulance tours, prostate cancer screenings and cancer prevention services that will be provided by [Shots in Arms Coalition](#), the [CenterPlace Health](#), the [Florida Department of Health in Sarasota](#) and the [Multicultural Health Institute](#).

Sun., Jan. 16, 2 p.m. – “Tribute to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.” - Temple Emanu-EL (151 McIntosh Road, Sarasota). This is a free in-person and virtual event that will feature poetry readings, music performances by “[The](#)



2020 Community Award Recipients

[Soul Sensations](#)” and renditions of Dr. King’s iconic speeches by Rev. Charles McKenzie. Advanced registration is encouraged and can be completed on [Temple Emanu-EL’s website \(www.](#)

Mon., Jan. 17, 7:30 a.m. – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast and Community Awards - Robert L. Taylor Community Complex (1845 34th Street, Sarasota). The returning theme for the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast and Community Awards is “Love All, Accept All.” This year’s keynote speaker is [Rabbi Michael Shefrin](#), Associate Rabbi, Temple Emanu-EL. Single tickets are \$25, a table of 8 is \$200 and a table of 10 is \$250 and can be purchased online at [2022 MLKBreakfast.Eventbrite.com](#). Tickets may also be purchased by contacting Mae Dixon at 941-266-3217 or Helen James at 941-228-8191. All tickets must be purchased in advance; no tickets will be sold at the door on the day of the event.

Mon., Jan. 17, 11 a.m. - Historic Unity Walk. The historic unity walk will immediately follow the Commemorative Breakfast and Community Awards. Participants will visit historic Newtown sites and tour Booker High School before returning to the Robert L. Taylor Community Complex to enjoy tributes, entertainment and food at the amphitheatre.



[sarasotatemples.org](#)), where the event will also be shown virtually, no later than Jan. 14, 2022. For more information, contact Don Malawsky at 941-359-2890. A “Tribute to Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.” is co-sponsored by [The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee](#).

Celebrating Florida’s Wild Wonders

Florida is home to one of the most bio-diverse environments in the nation with vital plant species found only here in this state. The use of exotic and invasive plants in our landscapes strips our ecosystem of a necessary food chain and causes what’s known as a monoculture. Native plants provide complete food and shelter for our birds, butterflies, bees and small creatures.

Many conservation organizations work endlessly to preserve native habitats; however, wildlife has no comprehension of property lines. Their search for food and shelter takes them out of their element and into human populations where they are killed, run off, or deprived of sustainable resources.

Stormwater ditches and your own yard offer opportunities to reclaim a contiguous wildlife habitat. *Lifelines* is an Eco Art landscape project created by artist and educator Pamela Callender. Eco Art is a practical art form where the science of ecology is fused with art making processes that offer solutions to environmental issues. Through *Lifelines*, Callender is working to reclaim stormwater ditches and neighborhood properties

- reducing exotic and invasive plant species and providing habitat for native species. There are challenges - HOA’s restrictions on homeowners, county and city permitting, and developers bulldozing entire habitats only to create exotic plant landscapes that require harmful and exorbitant maintenance plans.

A deeper look into *Lifelines*, *Connecting Nature’s Habitat* is being offered in an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) event called, **Celebrating Florida’s Wild Wonders** at the Sarasota Museum on March 11, 2022. Participants will have an opportunity to hear a variety of speaker presentations featuring numerous artists and environmentalists including Frances Nevill, Leslie



Native plants thrive in Callender’s backyard

Kemp Poole, Gianna Russo, Bruce Stphenson, Margaret Ross, Jean Blackburn, Pamela Callender, Joe King, and Jono Miller. The day will also include short films, book signings, and art exhibits. In addition, local environmental and art groups will offer display tables and exhibits. For more information on this event, contact Chairperson Julie Cotton at [www.OLLlAtRinglingCollege.org](#).

Campaign Launched to “Stand Up for Public Schools”

BY CAROL LERNER,
FOUNDER, POPS

“I couldn’t stand attending Sarasota County School Board meetings,” said Paulina Testerman, a mother of two children attending Sarasota public schools. “The racism, homophobia, and nationalism coming from political extremists who



divided our community was too much,” she said. “I waited for someone to stand up to them and very few people did.”

Testerman and other supporters of public education have decided to do something about the divisiveness at school board meetings. Protect Our Public Schools (POPS) Manasota and a recently formed parent-oriented group, Support Our Schools (SOS), which Testerman helped to found, has launched a campaign that is asking organizations, faith-based groups, and Sarasota residents to unite as a community and take a pledge to “Stand Up for Sarasota and Manatee Public Schools.”

This campaign will have its official launch in January. Thus far, ten organizations, including the Sarasota NAACP and the Center for Religious Tolerance, have endorsed the campaign. The campaign is asking community organizations, faith-based groups, and residents to take a pledge to stand up for the following principles:

- Stand up for high-quality, equitable education for all Sarasota and Manatee students
- Stand up for truth in learning and truth in teaching
- Stand up to keep local and all Florida school boards nonpartisan
- Stand up for well-funded public schools

The Stand Up for Sarasota Public Schools organizers pose the following questions: “How can we as a community come together to address the unprecedented challenges that Sarasota and Manatee County Schools face today? How can we bridge the differences and divisions that are so strongly evident at Sarasota County and Manatee County School Board meetings?”

The goal of this campaign is to bring organizations and individuals together in a multi-racial coalition that will work toward changing the divisive climate at school board meetings and within the broader community. Organizers suggest that one way to do this is to attend school board meetings to provide constructive comments and suggestions on school board agenda items. This will help change the narrative coming out of school board meetings from one of malice to one of hope.

The other objective of this campaign is to organize the community in support of high-quality, equitable public schools. As one parent, Lisa Gialdini Schurr, who is also a co-founder of SOS, put it: “I had my eyes opened when I attended my first school board meeting. I very quickly came to understand that our local public schools are under attack on many different levels and that the end game is the privatization and destruction of our traditional public schools.” Another SOS co-founder and parent, Angela Wynn, agrees saying that she started attending school board meetings because of safety concerns about Covid but soon realized there were “dark undercurrents at play trying to dismantle public schools and adversely control what was being taught to our children. I knew I couldn’t stand by and allow that to happen.”

Sarasota parent Jules Scholles, another co-founder of SOS, has a warning for all of us: “Members of SOS and POPS are not asking residents to support the status quo in public education,” she said. “Yes, schools need more funding, but we need much better schools for our children with more support for students, particularly struggling students, and more kindness. I want to make it easier for anyone who cares about public schools to advocate for them and the Stand Up campaign does just that.”

For more information on this campaign and to learn how you can take the pledge to stand up for Sarasota and Manatee public schools, go to the Protect Our Public Schools (POPS) Manasota website at www.popsmanasota.org or go to the Support Our Schools (SOS) website at www.supportourschools.com. Follow the directions to take the pledge. If you have specific questions or would like more information, contact POPS by email at popsmanasota@gmail.com.

Undoing Racism® Workshop:



Faith and Spiritual Communities

Dates:

March 19 - 21, 2022

Location:

Friends Meeting House,
3139 57th St., Sarasota

PURPOSE: To bring individuals from different faith and spiritual traditions together to create a common understanding of how race and racism impacts us and our communities. Through this workshop, we will dialogue about and learn how we might create equity and inclusion in, and through, our faith and spiritual communities. Our faith and spiritual beliefs can play a transformative role as we undo racism in our communities.

HOW CAN WE UNDO RACISM?

Registration limited to 40 people. \$350 Fee.
Scholarships Available.

More information and registration available at:
<https://www.sarasotapeacecenter.org/undoing-racism>

Single Member Districts on Ballot Again

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member districts: because districts have particular partisan compositions, commissioners that would like to be re-elected have to shuffle around pieces of their districts that contain opposition votes. Commissioners have often argued that the controversies regarding the redrawing process was caused by the residents who supported Single Member Districts.

“The public is frustrated with the redistricting process? Single Member Districts created every bit of this. We never even had a conversation about numbers in districts before SMD.” said Commissioner Moran in a commission meeting in November.

For those who have been campaigning for Single Member Districts, the commissioner’s arguments hide the true motivations behind their actions. Regarding their rush to repeal Single Member Districts, resident Pat Rounds stated, “They created

SMD into a boogeyman. They are defying the will of the people. They are not giving the people a chance to see what good SMD can do, two districts haven’t even elected commissioners by SMD. This is not the time to put it back on the ballot.”

The local Republican and Democratic parties have taken opposing sides on this topic. Jack Brill, chairman of the Sarasota Republican Party, does not buy into the common conception that Single Member Districts are a non-partisan issue.

“There is nothing non-partisan about Single Member Districts at all. If you look at the people speaking at these meetings, it’s the same group.”

There is little doubt that Single Member Districts would increase the competitiveness of commissioner elections. And since the Democratic Party is the main opposition party in the County, their candidates might see increased chances of success if Single Member Districts remain. However, people from all

parties have been represented at the public hearings before the Commission and the Charter Review Board (which refused to take up the issue due to the input they received from the public) and have spoken in support of Single Member Districts.

Nevertheless, the grassroots organizations spearheading the movement for Single Member Districts claim to be non-partisan in their outlook. Pat Rounds emphasized that residents were mainly interested in having more communication with their commissioners, “Let people have commissioners elected this way that actually listen to their communities and relate their community’s interest to their colleagues at commission meetings.”

Now that there is a possibility of having SMD repealed, local organizations like Sarasota Alliance for Fair Elections and Citizens for District Power are back on the offensive, aiming to inform the public about the upcoming election and their wish to stick to the SMD model.

School Referendum on March Ballot

BY OMAR GUERRERO

Also on the March 2022 Ballot is a renewal of the one-mill property tax policy that was first enacted in 2002 by the Sarasota School Board. The policy has been renewed four times already, in 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018. In March, residents can decide whether or not to continue with this added tax on their property.

One mill is equivalent to \$1 for every \$1,000 dollars of a property's taxable value. Coupled with the rising house prices in the area, the millage rate is set to create more money than last year. According to current estimates, the median price for single-family homes rose 36.6% compared to last year.

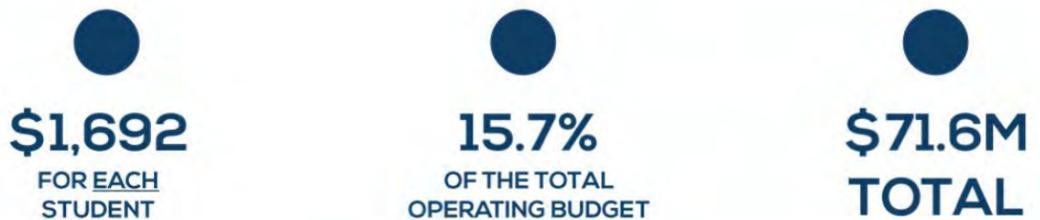
The revenue from the tax was meant to support arts teachers and other additional costs for the County School System. The funds have covered the rise in cost that comes with an increased enrollment rate. The funds also allow for higher teacher salaries in the county, which makes local schools more attractive to teachers.

From the Sarasota County School Board Referendum research page, this year's 1-mill tax will allow local schools to:

- Fund Technology Support Professionals in each school.
- Pay for teacher salaries, guidance counselors, athletic trainers, music, dance, and arts programs.
- Support Pre-K and Early Learning Opportunities

2021-2022 REFERENDUM

REVENUE 2021-2022



The impact of the additional 1 mil tax in the 2021-2022 school budget.

- Keep the added 30 minutes of instruction per school day, equal to 18 extra days a year
- Continue to enhance safety and security at schools

You can see more specifics about how the funding will be allocated here: <https://www.sarasotacountyschools.net/referendum>

There has been relatively little opposition to the referendum in the past, and there seems to be little worry that this time around would be different. Despite the divisive conversations around mask mandates and school curriculum, parents seem to be united in their support for local teachers during the pandemic.

IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES

March 8, 2022 School District Millage Referendum and County Charter Referendum

- Voter Registration Deadline: **Monday, February 7**
- Early Voting: **Saturday, February 26 - Sunday, March 6, 8:30-4:30 daily**
- Deadline to request a vote-by-mail ballot be mailed: 5 p.m., **Saturday, February 26**

SRQ Strong Explores Cultural Aspects of Trauma and Healing

BY ANDREA BLANCH

In the Hispanic culture Geri Chaffee grew up in, a favorite saying is “Lo que no mata, engorda!”

(Whatever doesn't kill you makes you fat – strong!) Difficult life challenges and painful experiences are to be expected and endured, so the concept of trauma doesn't immediately resonate. Resilience is practically a defining cultural characteristic, and talking about mental health is hard. Clearly, the language and concepts of the “trauma-informed movement” need some tweaking to be culturally relevant to this growing community.

Over the past year, with support from the Community Foundation of Sarasota, SRQ Strong has been exploring ways to deliver culturally-relevant information and support. An advisory group with national and local bilingual trauma experts oversees the effort, and a new social media coordinator has developed a Facebook page in Spanish. Mental health and resilience are regularly featured on Por Nuestros Niños, a Spanish radio show hosted by Geri Chaffee, and a public forum on The Immigrant Experience was held in August. Every month, a short blog on a trauma-related topic is published in English and Spanish in a newsletter for senior housing residents.

From conversations with local Hispanic Leaders, one thing became immediately clear

– the local community has incredible, under-recognized strengths. SRQ Strong uses a framework of “cultural capital” that explicitly defines assets using a cultural lens – unlike

Strong approach.

A second learning is that healing opportunities abound within the Hispanic community. The neuroscience of trauma has shown that talk-based therapies are not always the best option for healing – especially when adversity has been experienced early in life. Music, art, dance, chanting, theater, drumming, and many forms of physical activity and expression heal parts of the brain that can't be reached through talking. These forms of expression are a huge part of Hispanic culture, and Sarasota has a growing number of relevant resources. For example, CreArteLatino, a Hispanic community center and theater company, was founded in 2012 as a creative hub for the Latino community. SPAACES is an art gallery in Park East whose owner, Marianne Chapel, organizes Hispanic cultural events for the public. Enith Marin, of Marin Services on North Tamiami Trail, teaches art classes for adults and children.

The power of the arts in trauma healing can't be overestimated. According to Leymis Bolanos Wilmott, director of Sarasota Contemporary Dance and a founding member of SRQ Strong, “Dance allows us to access our full selves, providing a safe space for people to embody our histories and challenges. I do this professionally with my company members, and also in the community. My goal is to equip people – not just dancers but everyone – with the skills they need to activate joy.”



SRQ Strong Hispanic Outreach team with Tony Smith, President of Park East Neighborhood Association and Marianne Chapel, artist and owner of SPAACES art studio

traditional models, which often have an implicit racial bias. Five forms of cultural capital are identified – aspirational (high hopes and dreams), linguistic (being bilingual and/or fluent in other forms of communication), familial (strong family ties), social (formal and informal networks, including church), navigational (knowing how to work the system), and resistant (skills in confronting injustice). Since the essence of a trauma-informed approach is to build on existing strengths, this framework complements the SRQ

LIVE FROM Fogartyville

COMMUNITY MEDIA AND ARTS CENTER

Sarasota's premier listening room, but concerts aren't all we do. In addition to our live concerts, we also host other arts and cultural events, educational events, and sponsor events in the community. at 525 Kumquat Court's West entrance. (in the alley, Sally)



ALL SHOWS: Student tickets available at 1/2 price (show ID at door); Kids 12 and under are free.

8pm Friday, January 14

\$22 members/\$26 non

Renesito Avich
 CHAN! CHAN!
 And Friends - pay tribute to legendary Cuban composer **Compay Segundo**, *Las Flores de la Vida*



8pm Saturday, January 29

\$15 members/\$18 non

Stumble Creek & Wandering Hours Two of this area's most down-home acts one stage in a HOT hometown
Hootenanny
 Kick-up your heels, we're gonna have a good time tonight!
 Trad Bluegrass it ain't, but it will be a fun foot-stompin' hoedown. **Stumble Creek** is a guitar & fiddle driven party band with lots of originals. **The Wandering Hours** are banjo/mandolin/fiddle from the post-modern-holler Neo-trad mountain folk music.

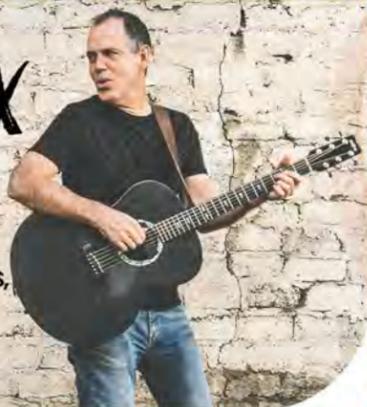


7pm Sunday, January 16

\$25 members/\$30 non

DAVID WILCOX

stories full of heart, humor, hope, substance, searching, and style. His innate sense of adventure and authenticity is why critics + colleagues, alike, have always praised not just his artistry as a singer/songwriter, but his humanity, as well.

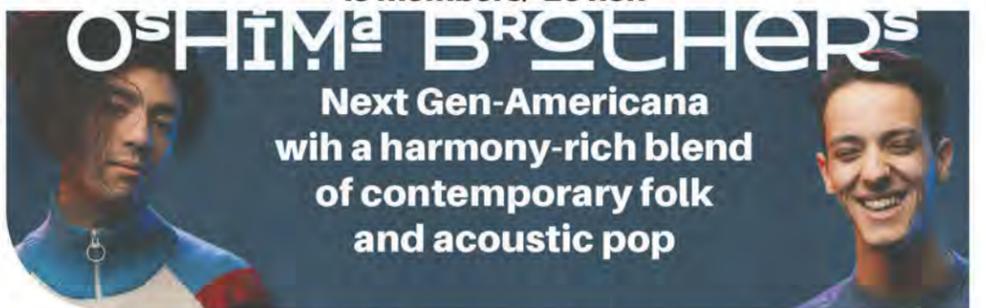


8pm Friday, February 11

\$15 members/\$20 non

O'SHIMA BROTHERS

Next Gen-Americana with a harmony-rich blend of contemporary folk and acoustic pop



7pm Thursday, January 20

\$20 single admission includes one copy of the book/
 \$25 for 2 admissions + one copy of the book



AN EVENING with Cooper Levey-Baker & Friends

His first novel, a bizarre coming-of-age, told in prose that is lyrical, gross, tragic, goofy, & tender. Readers have called it "emotional and beautifully rendered," "an important novel from an impressive new writer," "a guide for the choices we will all soon have to make to survive."

8pm Friday January 21

\$15 members/\$18 non

Seth Walker

One of the most prolific contemporary Americana artists on the scene today. A multi-dimensional talent who combines a gift for melody + lyric with a rich, Gospel-drenched, Southern-inflected voice with a true-blue knack for getting around on the guitar.



8pm Saturday, January 22

\$18 members/\$20 non
ADAM EZRA GROUP

Folk Rockin' real ELECTRIC Americana/Country Crossover show with gritty vocals and grittier songs like "I'm switching to whiskey"; "steal your daughter" and "The Devil Came Up To Boston" (WARNING: NSFW) Expect the unexpected-



SOUTHERN CIRCUIT TOUR OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS

PROPER PRONOUNS

7pm Tuesday, February 8
 In-person screening with filmmaker @ Sainer Auditorium, New College of Florida

See back page for full information

7pm Monday, February 12

Free Admission

Poets Unplugged: An Evening of Spoken Word & Music

Our first night in this monthly series hosted by Spoken Word artist **Melanie Lavender** will feature Poet Laureate of York, PA, award winning, multiply published poet/writer, **Carla Christopher**.

See back page for full information

7pm Monday, February 14

\$25 members/\$30 non

(Do not kiss your) Dog... and other songs of love, maybe?

SUSAN WERNER

"...sharp, funny, compassionate lyrics, a gift rare enough to set her apart..."
 — The Washington Post



8pm Saturday, Feb 26

\$20 members/\$22 non

Chris Dingman Trio

NEXT-GEN jazz vibraphonist and composer known for his distinctive approach to the instrument: sonically rich- conceptually expansive. His hired guns are **Carlo De Rosa** (bass) and **Rodolfo Zuniga** (drums)



8pm Saturday, March 19

\$27 members/\$30 non

Rodney Dillard, founding member of the famous group, **'THE DILLARDS'** (aka *the Darlings*) is seen nearly everyday somewhere in the world, thanks to the still enormous popularity of *The ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW* reruns. Rodney will perform thier hits with his wife **Beverly** and banjo player **Cory Walker**



New Year!



New Music!

We'll have some new shows for you to tune in to in 2022. **Midnight Music Education**, hosted by *The Musician's Son*, will join our late night lineup on **alternate Saturdays 11pm-1am**. Included on the evening playlist: basic teaching of music theory; how are genres connected;

what are the basic harmonic and rhythmic elements in a song/genre; and what is the artist's story?

The Old Folk Festival show with host *"Tom Dooley"* will bring vintage folk music of the 50s, 60s, and 70s to the airwaves on **alternating Wednesdays, 7-9pm**, taking the place of *Ishmael Katz's Electricity*. Ish has discovered a fondness for life on the road and is looking forward to more travels. You'll also hear more creative programming from *New College students* in the **New Radio** time slots on Friday and Saturday. **Alternating on Tuesdays 4-6pm**, *Sheila Jane* is back with **Indie-**

licious providing a fun mix of indie music and information for drive time. We've adjusted our Saturday schedule based on listener feedback, and we hope to welcome a new local programmer to the **4-6pm Saturday time** slot soon. Fans of **Juke In The Back** can now enjoy the show at **11am Saturdays** following *Sharon Preston-Folta's Radio Reset*. **Hard Knock Radio** shifts to **Noon**, and we've added **Train to Skaville** at **3pm on Saturdays**, devoted to preserving & sharing musical treasures of Jamaica in the 60s + 70s - you'll hear early Jamaican R&B/Mento, Ska, Rocksteady, early Reggae, and Dub.

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.



wslr lp 96.5 fm

WEEKLY PROGRAM GUIDE

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Electronica - Dubstep - Club - Hip-hop
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News - Public Affairs
World - Spiritual

Find out what's playing On Air on the website. You can also find a playlist for the day, all playlists, AND NOW you can leave a "tip" for your favorite show! Instant Karma!

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
12 mid.		Down The Road Syndicated	Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio	Music Automated playlist	All Mixed Up Syndicated	And You Don't Stop Syndicated	In My Room Syndicated Midnight Music Education The Musician's Son
1 a.m.	Deep Threes Syndicated					Synthelectico Syndicated	
2 a.m.	Music Automated playlist	Midnight Special Syndicated	Music Automated playlist	Upfront Soul Syndicated	Music Automated playlist		
3 a.m.							
4 a.m.	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Music Automated playlist	Music Automated playlist
5 a.m.							
6 a.m.	Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated)	Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated)	Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated)	Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated)	Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated)		
7 a.m.							
8 a.m.	Blues to Bluegrass John D.	Gotta Get Up David Young	Generation X Alecia Harper Music with a Purpose Pat Monahan	Eclectic Blender Dave Pedersen	Latin Explosion Juan Montenegro	Saturday Morning Gospel Jonah	A Way With Words Syndicated Wings of the Heart Carol or Salima
9 a.m.	Shortwave Report	TUC Radio	Peace & Justice Report Tom Walker & Bob Connors	The Detail Cathy Antunes	Surreal News Lew Lorini & Steve Norris	TownTalk TampaBay Manasota Arts	The Detail Cathy Antunes (Rebroadcast)
10 a.m.	Critical Times Week in Review	Sea Change Radio				Radio Reset Sharon Preston-Folta	Law and Disorder Syndicated
11 a.m.	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)		
NOON	Music of the World Marco Ciceron	Nuestra Musica Mariano Afro Cuban Jazz Frankie Piniero	Bop & Beyond Bill Ewell Vibrational Journeys Perette Cannady	Metropics Carlos Pagan	Complex Waveforms Mark Zampella	Juke In The Back Syndicated Hard Knock Radio Syndicated	Folk Alley Elena See Syndicated
1 p.m.							
2 p.m.	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated	HipRawk Nation Syndicated	Dadee-O's Collector's Corner Dadee-O
3 p.m.	Positive Friction John Haupt	Second Wind Seany G	Rhythm Revival Rev. Billy C Wirtz Jazz & Broadway Swirl Donna B	Basement Boxes Purple Mike High Tide Susan Runyan	Everything But the Kitchen Sink Jazz Edition Art on the Air Everything But the Kitchen Sink Art on the Air	Train to Skaville Syndicated	Velvet Hammer Blues Beth Hammer
4 p.m.							
5 p.m.	Music Museum Ed Foster	Synthetic Age JR Indie-licious Sheila Jane	Jazz And More Brian Jones	Ted's Head Ted	Friday Happy Hour Bartender Tommy D.	Upfront Soul Syndicated	Global Village Syndicated
6 p.m.	Economic Update Richard Wolff Capitol Update State News	Ralph Nader Radio Syndicated	Ruthless Truth/Critical Times Capitol Update State News	Alternative Radio Syndicated	Critical Times Week in Review Counterspin/Cannabis Connection	AfroSonic Taxi Syndicated	Donne Del Mondo Syndicated
7 p.m.							
8 p.m.	Yesterday's Dead Today Mark Binder	The Root Cellar Roger & Peter	Acoustic Waves James Hawkins The Old Folk Festival	Retro Cocktail Hour Syndicated	Ripper's Rarities Russ Yodice	Velvet Radio Eissa Bello New Radio	Blue Groove Mark Gruder
9 p.m.	Indigenous Sounds White Horse and Friends						
10 p.m.	Indigenous Nation Syndicated	Bullwinkle's Corner Keith Winkle	Random Precision Alex	Music Is The Best Mark Markus	Songs for Knitting & Mayhem Laura New Radio	New Radio	Soul Kitchen Paul Junior Lounging After Dark Syndicated
11 p.m.							
12 mid.	Down The Road Syndicated	Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio	Music Automated playlist	All Mixed Up Syndicated	And You Don't Stop Syndicated	In My Room Syndicated Midnight Music Education The Musician's Son	Cafe Chill Syndicated

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2022 Florida Legislative Session Preview

The Florida Legislature's 2022 60-day session will get underway on January 11th and runs through March 11th. Here are some of the issues to watch:

1. The State Budget

DeSantis' proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 totals \$99.7 billion. The state has consistently exceeded revenue projections during the past year as the economy has recovered after being hammered early in the pandemic. In August state economists said tax collections for the year have totaled \$2.6 billion more than expected. The state also has nearly \$6 billion in unspent federal coronavirus stimulus money.

With an eye on the 2022 election, the DeSantis budget has lots of targeted funding increases to important constituencies - teachers, firefighters, police, EMTs and state workers. He has also earmarked \$980 million for Everglades restoration and targeted water quality improvements; \$35 million of which will go toward fighting blue-green algae and red tide.

The Sadowski Trust Fund for affordable housing is to be replenished and \$100 million

would expire June 1, 2023.

- Ban school districts from passing mask mandates, and prohibit governments from enacting vaccine requirements for public sector employees.
- Create a public records exemption to conceal from public view investigations by the attorney general's office into violations of the law restricting vaccine mandates. The investigations would become public once they are closed — except for an individual's religious or medical information.
- Direct DeSantis to form a plan for the state to eventually create a new agency to replace the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration in monitoring workplace safety.
- Strike from state law the surgeon general's ability to mandate vaccination for an individual during a public health crisis.

If Gov. DeSantis and Attorney General Ashley Moody succeed in their court challenges of President Joe Biden's administration, the bills will take full effect.



also a candidate for Agriculture Commissioner in 2022, called a Texas abortion ban a model for Florida legislation. The law restricts an abortion to around the first six weeks of pregnancy, undermining the Roe v. Wade ruling, which established a woman's constitutional right to an abortion up to a fetus's viability, usually 24 weeks.

On January 12, the [Floridians for Reproductive Freedom](#) coalition will converge on the Florida Capitol to defend abortion rights and access.

5. Redistricting

Once every decade, the Legislature is required

Leadership		Florida Legislative Structure	
Senate President:	Wilton Simpson (R)	Seats	160 voting members: 40 senators 120 representatives
House Speaker:	Chris Spowls (R)	State Senate makeup	Republican (24) Democratic (16)
Majority Leader:	Senate: Debbie Mayfield (R) House: Michael Grant (R)	House of Representatives makeup	Republican (78) Democratic (42)
Minority Leader:	Senate: Lauren Book (D) House: Bobby DuBose (D)		

has been requested for Florida's job growth grant funds, which the governor vetoed in June 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

DeSantis has also announced pilot programs to use blockchains — the technology behind NFTs and Bitcoin — to digitally handle titles at the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and allow Florida businesses to pay state fees in cryptocurrency.

More details available here: <http://www.freedomfirstbudget.com/content/Current/Reports/BudgetHighlights.pdf>

2. COVID-19

The pandemic casts a shadow on every public policy discussion. Florida is third in the nation in the number of infections (3.82 million) and third in deaths (62,294). DeSantis has emerged as the de facto leader of the opposition to President Joe Biden's coronavirus proposals. Florida is among 24 states where leaders have threatened to use every legal option to oppose a vaccine mandate. During the special session to address Covid policy called by DeSantis in November 2021, the Legislature passed bills that do the following:

- Restrict businesses' ability to mandate vaccines for their employees. Companies have to offer workers a number of exemptions or risk fines of at least \$10,000 per violation from the state. This measure

3. Education

Manny Diaz introduced SB1048 in response to DeSantis' call for legislation to replace the end-of-year Florida Statewide Assessment with a Florida Assessment of Student Thinking, a plan centered on a series of short tests to measure student progress. While it sounds good, on closer inspection, the Florida Education Association says, "SB 1048 does not reduce testing, nor does it eliminate the big end of the year test. The most notable element of the bill is that it takes tests for Florida's youngest students that used to be paper and pencil and makes them computer-based. Even kids in prekindergarten will be forced to take computer-based progress monitoring tests."

Sen. Gruters has sponsored a bill (SJR244) to make local School Board elections partisan. Even if passed by the legislature, this issue would have to go to the voters for final approval as school boards became nonpartisan through a constitutional amendment passed in 1998.

Another bill to watch would put a charter school authorizer within the State Department of Education, thus pre-empting the authority of the local school board to regulate the approval of charter schools.

4. Abortion Restrictions

Republican Senate President Wilton Simpson,

to redraw political district boundaries based on the results of the Census. The 2020 Census revealed a 14.6 percent overall increase in Florida's population. The I-4 Corridor and surrounding areas saw the largest growth rates in the state, with the Villages having the largest percentage growth of an area in the nation. Additionally, Florida's Hispanic population increased by 1.5 million people to account for just over half of the state's entire population, the non-Hispanic white population decreased in proportion by 6.4 percent, and the population of Black Floridians declined in proportion by 0.7 percent.

Florida's redistricting process will dramatically reshape the state's political lines and congressional map. Population growth will give Florida a 28th congressional seat. The Congressional delegation now consists of 16 Republicans and 10 Democrats. There is one vacancy created by the death of South Florida Democrat Alcee Hastings. How lawmakers divide the state congressional and legislative districts could determine control of the U.S. House and whether the GOP reaches a supermajority in the Florida House (they're just four seats short) and they continue to hold an eight-seat advantage in the Senate.

Find out more about the redistricting process here: <https://www.commoncause.org/florida/a-guide-to-the-2022-redistricting-process-in-florida/>

Florida Voter Registration

For the first time ever, there are now more registered Republicans than registered Democrats in Florida.

Year	Republican Party of Florida	Florida Democratic Party	Minor Parties	No Party Affiliation	Total
NOV 2021	5,120,076	5,095,008	253,020	3,816,816	14,284,920

Editorial: Solar Bill Bad for Economy and Environment

BY WILLIAM "COTY" KELLER

The Sunshine State ranks second from last (behind Alabama) in solar energy per capita. Florida Power and Light projects a mere 25 percent solar contribution by the end of the decade, with less than 2% generated by rooftop solar. That figure falls far short of the 70-100% required to reach zero emission by the end of this decade in order to reduce the current economic and humanitarian crises from rising global temperatures.

Global warming aside, solar is the most competitive (cheapest) way to make electricity, even when including the cost of battery storage. Florida's rooftop solar industry currently employs about 9,000 directly and over 40,000 including related businesses. Multiply that by ten or twenty-fold needed to max out rooftop solar and a rosy economic job picture emerges.

Net metering is the economic key to residential rooftop solar. Net metering allows excess solar energy to be exported back to the grid on a 1-to-1 basis. This means every 1 kilowatt hour (kWh) sent to the grid will be offset against 1 kWh used from the grid.

Net metering benefits both the utilities companies and customers. Rooftop solar customers make money by saving on electric bills and produce zero emission energy. The utilities make a profit by selling the cheap electricity provided by customers. Net metering is a win-win arrangement.

The proposed bill (Senate Bill 1024, House Bill 741) would change all this. Excess rooftop solar power would no longer offset power used from the grid. Instead, excess power generated would only be credited at "avoided cost" (about 3 cents/kWh) each month instead of being available in future months to offset the use of electricity coming from the grid

(priced about 12 cents/kWh). Utility companies would also add monthly fixed charges, access fees, or minimum bills as they see fit for solar customers.

If it becomes law, this bill will remove the primary financial incentive for homeowners to invest in rooftop solar. The industry will tank and those 9,000 jobs (plus related businesses) will be lost.

and state governments regulate utilities. Florida's most important role is in the generation of electricity from non-emitting sources of power. One law can make this happen: a law that requires utilities to generate 100% of their power by non-emitting energy sources (nuclear, solar including rooftop, and/or wind) by 2030. This is called a "low carbon electric portfolios standard," and is referred to as "the most powerful arrow in the governments quiver" by the Union of Concerned Scientists.

To assure incentives for rooftop solar, this law must give utilities credit towards the 100% goal for the rooftop solar of their net metering customers.

Take action now. Tell your senator and representative to:

1. Immediately reject SB 1024/ HB 741 because it was written by the utility industry and is sponsored by office holders who take donations from the utilities. It will cost thousands of jobs and make Florida's meager solar energy production even lower. The bill is not in the interest of the public.

2. Craft two laws that will have a positive impact:

- a. Virtual net metering.
- b. Low carbon electric portfolio standard.

These laws will save customers money on electric bills, create hundreds of thousands of jobs, and give all a chance to avoid the worst that rising temperatures bring.

William "Coty" Keller is an ecologist, working to conserve and restore the natural relationships among living things and the environment. He lives and works in Port Charlotte. <https://www.ecopapak.org/>

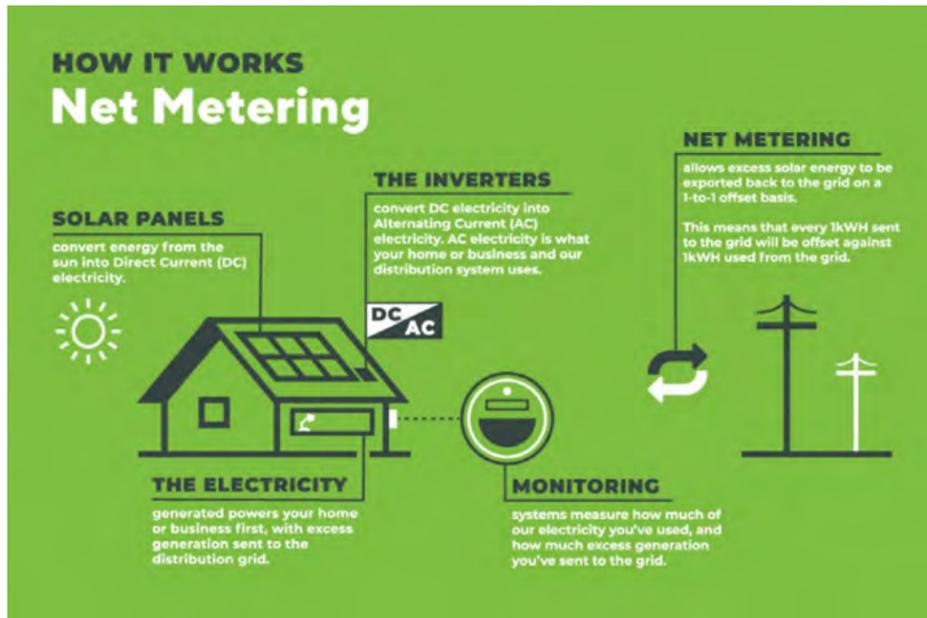


Photo courtesy of CIR Electrical Construction Corp.

The latest attempt to kill net metering in Florida must be squelched now. Instead, the Florida legislature should expand current law to include *Virtual Net Metering*, which allows utility customers to share the electricity output from a single solar power generator. Think of the millions of condo owners who would like to install a common solar system. There are also customers who otherwise are not now able to install solar panels on their homes, either because they're renters, they can't afford panels on their own or due to structural or shading issues. Virtual Net Metering would enable customers to access solar energy through a community effort.

Electricity is a BIG part of the climate solution,

Rolling Out the 'Unwelcome Mat' on Sarasota Beaches

BY DIANE DESEMBERG

Imagine a warm, sunny mid-February afternoon at your favorite Sarasota beach. Lying on a beach towel, you're surrounded by beach toys, watching your children frolic in the water. As the tide comes in, you move back, toward the drier portion of the beach. Your children join you. Suddenly — from the balcony behind you — "Yo! Can't you see the No Trespassing signs? Get off my property!" You look around, surprised. You have unwittingly waltzed into the extraordinarily complex battleground of competing property rights.

The right to kick someone off your property, although generally well-protected, is not absolute. For example, law enforcement with a legal warrant may not be denied entry. And in Florida, beach ownership does not necessarily mean an absolute right to tell others to leave. Many times, public beach use of private property is protected by the Customary Use Doctrine.

Now for a deeper dive into what just happened. You were likely lounging on land held for your benefit by the State. Florida's Public Trust doctrine protects public access along the shore seaward of the Mean High Water Line.

But, as soon as you moved landward of the Mean High Water Line, you may have entered private property. However, after publicly funded beach nourishment, private property that is seaward of the Erosion Control Line is no longer private. Regardless of where the invisible lines fall, you and your parents have been coming to this beach for decades. Certainly, you have some claim to put your towel here. This is the rationale behind the Customary Use doctrine. If the beach has been used recreationally by the public in a manner that is "ancient, reasonable, without interruption and free from dispute," your use of the dry sandy beach may not be interfered with by the owner, even if you are on private property.

Given the country's dependency on a tourist-based economy, ensuring public access to beaches should be a high priority. And yet, recently Sarasota County Commissioners unanimously passed Ordinance No. 2021-034, allowing



Rande Robbins was one of the residents disheartened to find private property flags/signs sprouting up all over Sarasota beaches.

beachfront property owners to post more signs. An incidental sign ordinance may not sound like a threat to public beach use. But, when these signs include familiar jingles such as 'Private Property' and 'No Trespassing', the threat is clear. The new ordinance allows property owners to erect up to four incidental signs on their beach property without a permit. Additionally, they may erect 8-foot-tall flags and one sign for every 500 feet along the border of the property.

continued on page 12

Focus on Belonging and Dignity

BY BECCA HADWEN

Over the past couple of years, equity has gained increasing attention in public life. Like many other institutions, Sarasota County Schools has worked to find the most effective approach to ensuring equity for everyone. In January of 2021, the district created a new position--the Director of Innovation and Equity. They hired Dr. Harriet Moore, then principal of McIntosh Middle School, to fill the role.

In mid-November of 2021, Moore presented an equity report and an equity plan to the School Board. The achievement gap persists in Sarasota County Schools, although it has narrowed among most groups. One way the achievement gap is measured is by the percentage of students of a given ethnicity enrolled in advanced courses, including Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and honors. Table 3 reflects how enrollment gaps

District's top equity goals. She added, "The second is ensuring that we hire a culturally diverse staff that's representative of the diversity within our school district and also ensuring that we provide the appropriate resources to all schools and departments so that staff and students can be successful in what they do."

When Moore entered her new role, the district was in what Moore calls a "dysfunctional cycle of equity work." The term comes from a book called *Belonging through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity* by Floyd Cobb and John Krownapple. They describe the cycle as a pattern in which institutions talk about equity and how to address it but never implement changes. In the District, the stumbling block was the community response to attempted



Dr. Harriet Moore, Director of Innovation and Equity

But Cobb and Krownapple propose a different approach, one focused instead on dignity and belonging. When Moore presented the equity plan to the School Board, she named these ideals as the pillars of the plan. "So, without having to go anti-anything but really focusing on those positive things, putting dignity at the forefront of our thinking, I believe that can make a difference... because we're not telling anybody that you're wrong or that you're doing something incorrect. What we're saying is as we move forward in our thinking and in our movement and in our actions and in our gathering of resources and focusing on these key areas, how do we ensure that people are feeling that they belong? ...How do we ensure that they feel that they are included, that they are a part of this organization, whether they be student, staff, or parent? And how do we ensure that their dignity is honored?"

Now the District has a framework, the time has come to implement changes. Moore told me this would be a long, ongoing process. It will include trying different interventions, setting measurable goals, and continually collecting and analyzing data. She said, "we must be realistic with how we are providing and spreading out resources, and we must make sure that when we are looking at our staff we are also treating people the way they need to be treated and putting people on the right seat on the bus."

Enrollment in All Advanced Courses			
Group	2016-2017	2020-2021	Change in Enrollment Gap
White	70%	78% (+8)	
Black	41%	57% (+16)	Decreased from 29 to 21 percentage points
Hispanic	57%	67% (+10)	Decreased from 13 to 11 percentage points
White M	67%	75% (+8)	
Black M	36%	51% (+15)	Decreased from 31 to 24 percentage points
Hispanic M	55%	64% (+9)	Decreased from 12 to 11 percentage points
White	70%	76% (+8)	
ELL	32%	49% (+17)	Decreased from 38 to 27 percentage points

The state conducted an analysis of student enrollment in all advanced courses from 2016-17-2020-21:
RESULTS: Overall enrollment increased from 66 to 74 percent

Accountability measures: The district's goal is to increase enrollment for Black and Hispanic students by 1 percentage point for each group by the end of the 2020-21 school year.

Moore included this table in her presentation before the Board on November 16, 2021.

have changed between the 2016-2017 school year and the 2020-2021 school year.

When we spoke in November, Moore explained that closing the achievement gap is among the

changes. As Moore explained to me, "There were problems with the implementation because people were feeling hurt and shamed that they were being accused of being racist."

Analysis: The Rumble Bungle

BY CATHY ANTUNES

It's not like Sarasota County's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) hasn't made bad moves before. For anyone living in Sarasota since 2010, Sanborn Studies is etched in memory as a foolish EDC giveaway, which gave \$650,000 in County tax dollars to an unproven film studio. Dozens of promised high salary jobs failed to materialize. Foolishly funding a film studio is one thing, funding a propaganda platform for conspiracy theories is another. But that is exactly what Sarasota County's Economic Development Corporation decided to do when they recently announced their award of \$825,000 to internet video platform Rumble.

Effective fact checking online content is in its infancy for platforms like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Rumble says they take a "free speech" approach to fact checking. Translation: Rumble doesn't fact check. Rumble is the platform used by those who are no longer permitted to put out false or inflammatory content on YouTube - content creators and controversial voices like Steve Bannon,

Mike Flynn, QAnon conspiracy theorists and Anti-Vaxxers. In other words, it's a great place to spread propaganda and even foment insurrection with impunity. Your tax dollars at work.

"Wired" magazine reported in the article "Rumble Sends Viewers Tumbling Toward Misinformation" (May 11, 2021) that their research "reveals that Rumble has not only allowed misinformation to thrive on its platform, it has also actively recommended it". From the article:

"If you search 'vaccine' on Rumble, you are three times more likely to be recommended videos containing misinformation about the coronavirus than accurate information. One video by user TommyBX featuring Carrie Madej—a popular voice in the anti-vax world—alleges, 'This is not just a vaccine; we're being connected to artificial intelligence.' Others unfoundedly state that the vaccine is deadly and has not been properly tested."

Rumble claims they will be investing \$50 million in the state of Florida, which begs the question, if they have that kind of revenue, why do they need an

\$825,000 handout from Sarasota County? Another, more serious question comes to mind - will Rumble be the video platform of choice for Florida's dark money PACs? Is this the \$50 million "investment" we can look forward to? Influencing elections with misinformation and conspiracy theories?

Rumble says they will relocate their business to Longboat Key. Longboat Key is also a home base for Charlie Kirk, the 27 year-old political commentator who has 1.7 million followers on Twitter. Kirk tweeted on January 4th that his organization, Turning Point USA, was funding over 80 buses of participants to the January 6th "Stop the Steal" assembly. Did Kirk's organization fund any of the buses which transported people from Sarasota/Manatee to DC that fateful day? Is Longboat Key becoming a hub for undermining our democracy?

Corporate welfare is a problem to begin with. When the EDC funds conspiracy theorists and partisan propaganda with local tax dollars, our democracy is in trouble. This is about more than money.



Protecting Voting Rights

It is important to be vigilant and keep your eyes on political issues. Suncoast Women of Action is a nonpartisan group that was formed in 2014 to discuss public policy and pending legislative issues. Helen James, President of Suncoast Women of Action says this about why the group was started, "A group of ladies saw a need in the community to engage the people in the community by providing opportunities to discuss issues on the ballot and to keep the community updated on changes that would affect their ability to vote."

Not everyone living in the United States will be able to cast their vote on election day. Carnegie Corporation reported that some of the most common barriers voters face today is changes in voter ID requirements, lack of language access, voter roll purges, polling place closure/consolidations, lack of funding for elections, provisional ballot requirements, reduced early voting, reduced voting hours, poorly trained poll workers, and partisan election administrators.

We must elect people to all levels of government that support democracy and will protect our right to vote... and we must exercise that right!

Keeping an eye on the changes in the laws that affect our community is a serious job. Organizations like Suncoast Women of Action are important to the community. For more information about the organization or upcoming events, email them at: womenofaction417@gmail.com.

Judith Doyle Williams

Member, Suncoast Women of Action

LWV Backs Single Member Districts

The state League of Women Voters of Florida primarily focuses on statewide issues, but it does take a stand on local issues that occur statewide. In this vein, the LWVFL has taken a stance on local redistricting and supports single-member districts that are equal in population, protect the voting rights of minority populations, and try to take into consideration geographical and political boundaries.

Our local Sarasota League is also in favor of single-member-districts. In addition, the citizens of Sarasota County voted for single-member districts.

The Sarasota League requests that the County Commission listen to and respect the will of the citizens who voted them into office. Please withdraw your ballot proposal intended to return our voting to at-large districts.

The citizens have spoken. They want and should receive single member districts.

Linda Thompson, president

League of Women Voters of Sarasota County

Stand Up for Single Member Districts

Time and time again we are asked to participate in these public meetings/public comments only to realize the commissioners have already made up their minds as to how they will vote. The commissioners can say they took public comments from citizens but their voices are ignored.

In 2018, 60 percent of voters in Sarasota endorsed electing Commissioners by Single-Member Districts (SMD). Nineteen Florida counties elect their Commissioners by SMD. The Florida Legislature and US Congress are elected by SMD.

What we must understand is that the play-to-pay folks will do whatever it takes to wear us down. They make the rules up as they go. WHAT ARE THE COMMISSIONERS AFRAID OF?

Directly following the November 2020 election, the County Commission publicly questioned the voters' choice of Single Member Districts, saying that the ballot language was confusing. The ballot language wasn't confusing! They thought that putting this Single Member District issue on such a long ballot would cause voters not to pay attention, but they did. This is nothing new, we are always challenged when we Win.

These commissioners are counting on you (the voters) not to vote in March, but we must. We must vote again for single member districts. On March 8th, 2022 we must vote NO to returning to an at-large vote. DO NOT BE FOOLED, IT IS NOT IN YOUR BEST INTEREST!

Blessings,

Valerie Buchand

NCF Celebrates Black History Month

continued from 1

Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Music at New College of Florida. Connor, N'Dong, and Viera-Vargas will discuss and explore the healing capacities of the West African and Afro-Caribbean drumming practices grounded in their research and practice with the audience.

Tuesday, February 8, 2022 - Proper Pronouns Film Screening & Panel Discussion - Sainer Auditorium, 7pm - Collaboration with WSLR+Fogartyville and ALSO Youth)

Saturday, February 12, 2022 - Truth & Power Writing Workshop: 12-2pm

With Carla Christopher. Location: Ringling College of Art and Design Library

Saturday, February 12, 2022 - Poets Unplugged: An evening of Spoken Word and Music Open Mic Night with WSLR+Fogartyville; Ringling College of Art and Design, and New College of Florida featuring Carla Christopher. 7-10pm @ Fogartyville

Thursday, February 17, 2022 - 5:30-7pm - Healing Dialogues - Cook Hall Living Room

"CAMPUS CONVERSATIONS: Maternal Health and Women's Knowledge" will feature three experts hosted by Dr. Wallace. This conversation will lay out the stakes of maternal health and birthing experience for Black women and their children in particular, bringing together a historian, a medical doctor and community health activist, and a practicing doula to discuss these issues and experiences with the audience. Participants include: Dr. Lisa Merritt, founder

and director of the Multicultural Health Institute (MHI) and adjunct professor at New College of Florida; Amelia Villada, local birth consultant, doula, and Hypnobirthing practitioner in our community; and Dr. Maneesha Lal, Associate

4:45-6:00 PM – **Health, Wellness and Healing while Black**

7:00 PM – **Keynote Address on The Arts and Wellness**

Monday, February 21, 2022 - My name is Pauli Murray Film Screening & Panel Discussion @ Sanier Auditorium - 6pm Outdoor reception w/ Miss Susie's Food Truck; 7pm Film Screening (Collaboration with WSLR+Fogartyville and ASALH (Association for the Study of African American Life and History)

Thursday, February 24, 2022 - Healing Dialogues - 6-8 PM - College Hall Living Room

"My Sister's Keeper," will feature a dialogue between Tosha Alston, founder and artistic director of Ayodele Drum and Dance in Chicago; Janet Taylor, a community psychiatrist and expert in healing racial trauma; and Dr. Queen Zabriskie, associate professor of Sociology and Theatre, Dance, and Performance studies and Interim Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at New College of Florida. The dialogue among Alston, Taylor, and Zabriskie will examine Black women's history and contemporary practice of resisting and healing from racialized gender oppression through collective work and the formation of networks of support.

Saturday, February 26th, 2022 - Sur La Bay featuring Greg Banks - 6:00 – 9:00 PM @ NCF Bayfront behind College Hall

More complete information available at www.ncf.edu/black-history-month.



Cheikh N'Dong, Master Drummer and Music Director for Kuumba Dancers and Drummers

Director of Faculty Development and a scholar of health and illness history. We will focus in particular on the positive---how Black women and their communities work together to recognize and support mother and child through the birthing process.

Friday, February 18, 2022 - Nulls at Night - Erotic Poets - Black Box Theater - 8:00 PM

Saturday, February 19, 2022 - Reclaiming Wellness: A BHM Symposium

3-4:30 PM – **Vendors, Poetry/Creative Writing Workshop by Melanie Lavender, Yoga by Becca Hadwen and Crishuana Williams**

In Florida, beach ownership does not necessarily confer an absolute right to exclude others. The new ordinance enables beach property owners to mark private property boundaries that may have nothing to do with the public's right to enjoy that property. Shell Beach has been embroiled in such controversy for years now. North Casey Key property owners hired private security to inform users walking over from Turtle Beach that they were no longer allowed on any portion of that beach. With the new County sign ordinance, law enforcement is in an unenviable spot. What do they protect — the public's ability to fully enjoy our treasured beaches or the private property claims of landowners?

The new sign ordinance signals that the Commissioners have chosen to side with beachfront landowners. Given Customary Use

rights and the possibility of endless disputes over incorrectly posted 'Private Property' signs, the County has an obligation to ensure signage is not used to remove members of the public from Sarasota beaches. If called to the beach, officers can cite Customary Use and allow the public to remain. Commissioners have an obligation to craft ordinances that both protect the public land rights and beachfront property owners. Until then, wind your way down to your favorite beach and enjoy the glory.

For an excellent overview of the legal backdrop for recent controversies over public beach use in Florida, see [Recreational Rights to the Dry Sand Beach in Florida: Property, Custom and Controversy](#) by Alyson C. Flournoy, Thomas T. Ankersen, and Sasha Alvarenga.

<http://www.OccupyMySoapbox.com/>



WSLR Presents

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT
TOUR OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS

The South Arts Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers connects US-based documentary filmmakers with communities throughout the South to share their work, discuss the art and process of filmmaking, and engage with audiences about issues impacting their communities. WSLR is pleased to be one of 24 organizations throughout the Southeast presenting the tour this year.



IN-PERSON FILM SCHEDULE:

- Feb 8** *Proper Pronouns* - Sanier Auditorium, New College of Florida - Film Director will be present for post-film discussion
NonProfit Partner: ALSO Youth
- Feb 21** *My Name is Pauli Murray* - Sanier Auditorium, New College of Florida - **NonProfit Partner:** Manasota ASALH
ASALH + WSLR will sponsor an outdoor reception prior to film at 6pm.
- Mar 15** *Los Hermanos [The Brothers]* - **NonProfit Partner:** CreArte Latino
- Mar 23** *The Neutral Ground* - Film Director will be present for post-film discussion
NonProfit Partner: Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition
- Apr 26** *Lily Topples the World* - Film Director will be present for post-film discussion
NonProfit Partner: Sarasota Chinese Academy

In-Person viewing **Online viewing**

All films will be screened online for audiences, with each screening followed by a pre-recorded 30-minute conversation with the filmmakers discussing their film's subject matter and the filmmaking process. Each film will be available for attendees to view on-demand during a four-day window allowing viewers to stop and resume at their leisure. WSLR will also host in-person screenings with local panel discussions for all the films with covid protocols in place. For the in-person screenings, WSLR will be partnering with a nonprofit organization in the community that addresses issues discussed in the film. Those who wish to attend an online or in-person screening can visit <https://wslr.org/film/> for more information.

February 8 2022, 7pm **Feb. 6-9**

PROPER PRONOUNS
Length: 42 min
Of the 30+/- transgender, ordained ministers in the US; six are in North Carolina. Battling narrow-mindedness within the religious community, their families, and NC natives. They are bravely preaching from a pulpit despite the danger they face not only as a transgender person living in the South but also as trans ministers navigating their way through local, state, and national governing bodies who decide what it means to be a human being.

February 21, 7pm **February 20-23**

MY NAME IS PAULI MURRAY
Length: 1 hr, 31 min
A unique & extraordinary journey, told largely in his own words, 15yrs before Rosa Parks refused to surrender her bus seat, 10+yrs before the U.S. Supreme Court overturned separate-but-equal legislation, Pauli was already knee-deep fighting for social justice shaping landmark litigation—and consciousness—around race and gender equity.

March 23, 7pm **April 3-6**

THE NEUTRAL GROUND
Length: 1 hr, 21 min
The fight over monuments and America's troubled romance with a lost cause. Director **CJ Hunt** filmed the New Orleans City Council's vote to remove four confederate monuments. When those removals were halted- by death threats; CJ seeks to understand why a losing army from 1865 still holds so much power.

April 26, 7pm **April 24-27**

Lily Topples the World
Length: 1 hr, 30 min
A 21st century coming-of-age story cloaked within the portrait of an artist. Internet sensation **Lily Hevesh** (over 1 billion Youtube views) the world's **Most Acclaimed Domino Toppler** and the only girl/woman in her field- as she rises as an artist and role model for young woman. Filmed over 3yrs, in countless cities with some famous guest appearances.

March 15, 7pm **March 13-16**

LOS HERMANOS THE BROTHERS
Length: 1 hr, 23 min
Afro-Cuban-born brothers - violinist Ilmar and pianist Aldo live on opposite sides of a geopolitical chasm, half-century wide. Follow thier parallel lives in US/Cuba, their reunion and momentous performances, it is a nuanced view of estranged nations through the lens of music & family.

Proceeds from the in-person screenings will support our NonProfit Partners

Silver Sponsor
PEACO EDUCATION & ACTION CENTER
www.SarasotaPEACenter.org

Bronze Sponsor
BOXSER DIVERSITY INITIATIVE
BoxserDiversityInitiative.org

Poets Unplugged: An Evening of Spoken Word & Music

Each event will feature an open mic, a featured poet, and a DJ or live music. Local spoken word artist **Melanie Lavender** will host all 4 events.

Saturday, February 12, 7pm - FREE
Featured: **Carla Christopher**, the 4th Poet Laureate of York, PA. Carla will also hold a *free writing workshop* at Ringling College earlier in the day.
carlachristopher.com

Saturday, March 12, 7-10pm
Featured: **Greatness Beyond Measure (GBM)**. A movement to ignite a spirit of Excellence and Greatness among teens while empowering them to identify and cultivate the Genius within. mygbm.net

Saturday, April 9, 7-10pm
Featured: **Black-on-Black Rhyme Group** from Tampa - 4 poets/3 piece band. *Expanded activities will take place on this day to celebrate National Poetry Month* - check the WSLR website for full details. facebook.com/bobrtampa/

Saturday, May 14, 7-10pm
Featured: **Melanie Lavender**

OTHER FILMS:

LITTLE SATCHMO
Thursday, March 3, 7pm
Exploring the life of **Sharon Preston-Folta**, the daughter of American icon and legendary jazz musician **Louis Armstrong**. With Miss Susie's food truck at 6pm

FRENEMIES
Tuesday, March 29, 7pm
Set to the pulsating beats of Afro-Caribbean music, the feature-length documentary film **Frenemies** examines the fraught relationship between the island nation of Cuba and the United States.