



Preserving History, Celebrating Culture

BY VICKIE OLDHAM

Today, with racial injustice at the forefront of the national conversation, the work of **Newtown Alive** and the **Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC)** is more important than ever. We are witnessing calls for justice and racial equality at protests across the country. The marchers want reform in law enforcement and every agency, industry and corporate setting.

How did we get here? A study of African American history answers that question that is on the minds of many. In 2015, the Newtown Conservation History District was established by the City of Sarasota with a mission to document the 100-year history of Sarasota's African American community. Renamed "Newtown Alive," the

project includes a research report, a book, historic markers, trolley tours and community talks about local black history. Overwhelming attendance revealed a demand for more information about the communities of Overtown and Newtown.

In 2019, an appeal was made to expand the history initiative. SAACC was formed **to create a place in Sarasota where African American art, history, culture and heritage can be celebrated.** African American cultural art centers and museums play a



Jetson Grimes describes archival photos at his gallery. Photo Credit: Newtown Alive

vital role in paving the way for progress by:

1. Offering spaces to **educate** diverse populations about the African American

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Local COVID 19 Cases on the Increase

BY DAVE GULLIVER

As Florida moves into Phase 3 of Gov. Ron DeSantis's plan to reopen, experts warn that coronavirus testing and reports of new cases point to a possible resurgence of the virus.

"The virus is out there lurking, waiting for opportunities to pounce. We cannot let our guard down," said Dr. Manuel Gordillo, an infectious disease specialist and medical director of infection prevention and control for Sarasota Memorial Health Care System.

Since Memorial Day weekend, when people began returning to beaches and other public gathering spots, both positive tests and actual new cases have

been rising statewide and in Sarasota, Manatee and DeSoto counties.

"The trends over the last week or so are pretty distressing," said Dr. Thomas Unnasch, distinguished professor at the University of South Florida College of Public Health and an expert in vector-borne diseases.

Unnasch points to the "positivity rate," the percentage of coronavirus tests coming back as positive, as the key measure of the illness's spread.

Statewide, the COVID-19 testing positivity rate dropped through April to a low of about 2.3 percent in mid-May. Since then, though, it has surged back to 4.2 percent on June 7. Rates increased in almost every Florida county, Unnasch said.

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Daily Covid Testing continues at the Robert Taylor Community Center from 8am-5pm

Coalition Organizes Against Racism

BY ARLENE SWEETING

A project of the [Sarasota Anti-Racism Working Group](#), the Manasota Anti-Racism Coalition began meeting in May 2019. The purpose of the Coalition is to foster communication and build a support structure for local organizations to combat institutional racism and white supremacy. Membership is open to local groups actively engaged in fighting racism and advancing the cause of equity and justice.

The murder of George Floyd has awakened the consciousness of our nation. The protesters that have been taking to the streets have done (and continue to do!) their part. Now the collective challenge we face is to take concrete action to bring about the structural changes that are necessary. We need more than an acknowledgement of injustice by those in power, we need action that moves us toward justice and equity in our health care system, our educational system, our economic system, and our criminal justice system. We also need to build power in people of color communities AND we need to change culture. We need to see the world not as it is, but as it can be - and be willing

to experiment with alternatives to our current systems. There is a lot of work to be done - and it must take place inside each one of us, in our families, in our communities, in every institution we are a part of, and at every level of government.

The first official action taken by the Manasota Anti-Racism Coalition was releasing a [Statement on the Urgent Need to Organize Against Racism and White Supremacy](#). Other organizations and individuals are invited to sign on to the statement to show their support. The next meeting of the Coalition will take place on Saturday, July 18. Organizational members will give updates on their work and share areas where they need support.

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The murder of George Floyd fueled protests across the country, including the streets of Sarasota. For more protest photos, see page 12. Photo credit: Allan Mestel

Food Recovery for People and Climate

BY RYAN SMITH

When businesses nationwide were forced to shut down to keep our community safe, the COVID-19 pandemic brought to light shocking cracks in our global industrialized food system. One upsetting story after another emerged in major news outlets as producers were forced to leave their harvest to rot or plow over fields of this season's fresh produce. Lacking options to connect their goods to consumers via now-closed restaurants, schools, and hotels, suppliers had their hands forced.

However, the transparency of this crisis within the global supply chain catalyzed our surrounding Sarasota communities in a movement toward adaptive, local connections. Many area farmers pivoted their working model to instead sell produce and goods online with dedicated drop off points, and the community responded by supporting them in these challenging times. (<https://www.transitionsrq.org/blog/covid-19-community-response>)

In the months following the shutdown, the incredible results from a community looking inward at their avenues of local support were two-fold; in addition to area producers providing direct-to-consumer opportunities, several local farms also engaged Transition Sarasota's serving volunteer base to harvest, or rescue, their excess produce from



Transition Sarasota volunteers gleaned over 44,364 lbs. of produce for local food banks in May and June.

going to waste. These food recovery efforts were then donated to area food banks who support our community's most vulnerable populations, some of whom were in need of getting help from food banks for the first time due to the novel coronavirus.

Together, Transition Sarasota volunteers put in 277 hours of gleaning in May and June at three different area farms. Their hard work amounted to rescuing over 44,364 lbs. of produce that was ultimately donated to The Food Bank of Manatee, All Faiths Food Bank, and Streets of Paradise. These totals far surpassed the non-profit's 2019 food donations by over 12,000 lbs. As families continued to feel the pressure and helplessness of unprecedented unemployment rates and a frozen economy, these numbers show us that food waste and food insecurity were two issues that the community could act upon, and they did

without fail.

People-powered food recovery projects emphasize the role we as a community play in the wake of economic uncertainty, be it a pandemic or future impact from climate change and the economic downturn it has caused. Understanding how everyday actions (such as increasing our consumption of local food) impact how our community will move forward from this pandemic is an essential piece to a resilient solution. Transition Sarasota hopes to continue leading the local community toward this result by its continual work cultivating local food and economic security. Our community will never be clear from forces beyond our control, so if this pandemic has taught us anything, it's that as food waste warriors, our work never stops.

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experience through hosting enlightening exhibitions, performances, and workshops.

2. Jump-starting an **exploration and understanding** of topics such as race and ethnicity, while building awareness about the underrepresented black community.
3. **Demystifying** tales about the unknown and unfamiliar, while shattering stereotypes.
4. Adding **texture, vibrancy, and richness** to communities, as well as providing a place of **healing**.

Sarasota is a city known for robust arts and culture. A facility dedicated to honoring the contributions of African Americans in this area is deeply needed to enrich the landscape for all. SAACC's work, in partnership with Newtown Alive and other Sarasota art institutions, is more critical than ever!

We are working with the City of Sarasota to open a temporary museum by fall 2020 to begin our essential programming. Make a gift online at <http://www.thesaacc.com>.

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ADDRESS:

525 Kumquat Ct, Sarasota, FL 34236

CONTACT US:

(941) 894-6469

criticaltimesrq@gmail.com

www.CriticalTimes.org

Publisher: Arlene Sweeting

Layout: Mark Zampella

Contributing Writers: Cathy Antunes, Dave Gulliver, William 'Coty' Keller, John Lantigua, Tom Matrullo, Vickie Oldham, Pat Rounds, Ryan Smith, Arlene Sweeting, Tom Walker, Johannes Werner

Important Stakes in the Sarasota School Board Race

BY TOM WALKER

NOTE: SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES WILL BE ELECTED ON AUGUST 18TH.

The outcome of the Sarasota School Board race on August 18th could be a gamechanger for education in Sarasota County. With a five-member school board and two seats up for grabs, the current three-person majority and two-person minority voting blocs could end up being flipped if well-known and extremely well-funded candidates Karen Rose (District 2 seat) and incumbent Eric Robinson (District 3 seat) win the race. Rose, who could potentially be a swing voter on many issues, has wrapped herself tightly to Robinson and the Republican Party. Challengers, and first-time candidates, David Graham (District 2 seat) and Tom Edwards (District 3 seat) are running spirited campaigns on limited funds.

The race is shaping up to be a David and Goliath battle between Graham and Rose and Edwards and Robinson. Multi-millionaire Robinson, dubbed the ‘Prince of Dark Money’ for his control of large numbers of Republican Political Action Committee funds, moves these PAC funds around like shell games to fund Republican or Republican-endorsed politicians locally and throughout the state. While Robinson claims to be critical of school privatization, he helps fund the campaigns of State legislators who each year pass legislation favoring for-profit charter schools and private school vouchers while defunding public education. For his current school board campaign, Robinson has already raised over \$100,000 with \$75,000 coming from his own money. Rose, a former District administrator who is also a multi-millionaire, has appointed Robinson as her treasurer. She has raised over \$70,000 with \$40,000 self-funded and the rest mostly coming from Robinson and his PACs as well as a large number of contributions from developers who are betting that Rose will side with Ziegler and Robinson in keeping developer impact fees low. Add to the mix is the Sarasota Classified/Teachers Association who is putting \$100,000 into the race through their own PAC to support Rose and Robinson primarily through mailers. In contrast, non-millionaires Edwards and Graham have raised close to \$13,000 and \$8,000 respectively.

Prior to 2014, the amount of money that Edwards and Graham raised would have been adequate for a school board race. But Robinson changed the rules of the game in 2014 by pumping tens of thousands of dollars from his PACs (some of which were created to hide the source of the funds) to support school board candidate Ziegler, the wife of Republican operative Christian Ziegler. Bridget Ziegler, who is associated with wealthy educational corporate reformers like Betsy Devos-protégé John Kirtley who runs Florida Tax Credit Scholarship voucher program, went on to defeat Ken Marsh in a very close race. From that point on, competitive school board races in Sarasota County cost \$70,000 or more for a candidate to win. This is the way that Robinson, himself, got elected to the School Board—the seat he won in 2016 opened up because the incumbent, Frank Kovach, refused to put himself into this money game and instead retired from the board, stating that the election process had become “corrupted by cash.” Intimidated by the process, parent Cindy Hill who had planned to run, also dropped out of the race, leaving Robinson without a challenger. So despite serving four years on the School Board, this will be Robinson’s first time on the ballot.

CANDIDATE PROFILES

District 2 Candidates:



David Graham:

A Riverside High School graduate with a background in business intelligence and analytics, David Graham is currently employed by Sarasota County Schools as a Data Management Coordinator. He is also a member of the Sarasota County Classified Teachers Association and believes in fighting for significantly higher pay for teachers and other staff. Graham says he is running for school board to give students, teachers and the community a voice on the board. Graham envisions setting up a number of action committees that meet weekly to discuss district issues including separate action committees for students, teachers and administrators. His three top priorities for the District include: working with board members to address expected budget shortages resulting from the COVID-induced economic crisis; addressing teacher staffing and pay issues; and enhancing mental health support for students and employees along with zero tolerance for bullying and harassment. Graham says he is 100 percent opposed to school privatization, particularly public money going to private schools. He supports choice within the district schools. Graham is concerned about the achievement gap within the district and believes that low reading levels is at the heart of the problem. He would like to introduce after-school reading and homework programs within low income Title 1 schools and also include three-meal plans to improve student nutrition in these schools.



Karen Rose:

A retired veteran educator and former high-level Sarasota district administrator, Karen Rose is making her second run for Sarasota School Board. Almost upending Shirley Brown in the 2018 District 4 school board race, Rose threw her hat in the ring for the District 2 race while living outside its boundaries on Siesta Key and used Eric Robinson’s office as her qualifying address, saying she would move into District 2 by the June 12 qualifying deadline. On her website, Rose outlines her platform including a number of positive demands such as “raising teacher pay to the national average,” making “funding for our public schools a priority” and “reducing the number of administrators and redirecting those funds to the classroom.” She supports “school choice” and holding “Scholarship Programs” (vouchers) to “high standards.” Rose lists her number one issue in the district as “fiscal transparency and accountability.” She supports the tax referendum but wants to move the referendum vote to the general election to save money. Rose is endorsed by the Republican Party of Sarasota County, State Sen. Joe Gruters, School Board Member Bridget Ziegler, Sarasota County Commissioner Al Maio, and Chairman of Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce Paul Caragiulo.

District 3 Candidates:



Tom Edwards:

The partisan attempts to “undermine and underfund our public schools” made it such that Venice resident Tom Edwards “could no longer sit on the sidelines.” Edwards felt compelled to run for Sarasota School Board. Having built and sold two successful businesses based on the education he received in public schools, his business experience taught him to be flexible and resilient in problem solving and to find common ground—skills that he believes will be useful on the school board. One of his top priorities if elected will be that of protecting local public schools from privatization schemes. Edwards’ other top priority is to serve as a board member “dedicated to the well-being of our students and community and free from any political agendas.” Edwards believes that to narrow the achievement gap between the highest achieving and lowest achieving students, the district needs “to invest in programs that will provide all our children with a healthy start, including pre-K programs, health screenings and nutrition programs.” He is concerned that the current COVID-induced disruption to education has increased this gap and he wants the District to be ready for any future disruptions, ensure that internet access is available to all children and develop clear standards for remote learning. Edwards supports Community Partnership Schools and dual language programs to reduce the overall achievement gaps.



Eric Robinson:

Robinson was elected to the Sarasota School Board in an uncontested election in 2016. A certified public accountant who runs a Venice-based business with business partner Senator Joe Gruters, Robinson says his main reason for running for school board again is to close the achievement gap, focus on teacher and employee morale and focus on fiscal responsibility. Robinson holds a bachelor’s of science degree in finance from the University of Florida and a master’s of business administration degree from Florida International University. Over the years, he has shadowed different employees in the district at different schools, including teachers, custodians and bus aides, to get a better understanding of district and employee concerns. Robinson donates all of his School Board salary back to projects in the district. During his four-year tenure as board member, Robinson has been seen by many as a divisive figure. He developed his own parallel fundraising committee for the school referendum property tax campaign rather than working with the long-established group. Robinson got into trouble by texting anti-Bowden (former Superintendent) messages to Sheriff Tom Knight during a Board meeting where the district was discussing plans to develop an internal police force. He also engineered and got caught in a scheme to get Republican Party money illegally to the nonpartisan Sarasota City Commission candidate Martin Hyde in 2017.

Sarasota's Children Can't Read

BY SUSAN MAGERS

Special education has only existed in the United States since 1975. When the law was approaching the 30th Anniversary, a Congressional impact study showed over those thirty years students with disabilities had gained access to public school buildings but the expectations and outcomes for our children who learn differently remained incredibly low.

Currently, about sixteen percent (16%) of Sarasota County Public Schools', 43,000 students, are identified as students with disabilities. Black children represent fourteen percent (14%) of the sixteen percent (16%) of children identified with special needs, but only eight percent (8%) of the total student population is black. Further, black students are three times more likely than all other races to be labeled with an emotional-behavioral disability (EBD) and more than twice as likely to be identified having an intellectual disability (IND).

Standardized test results also reveal appalling outcomes for students with disabilities, particularly for minority children. Overall, for the last five years, thirty percent (30%) of all students in Sarasota County Schools are not proficient readers in third grade. If you look just at the black student population, that number rises to fifty-seven percent (57%) and to eighty percent (80%) if you are black and have a disability. (see 3rd grade graph)

The reading statistics for our Sarasota County 10th graders are shocking. In our "A" rated district, for a five-year average, thirty-seven percent (37%) of students in 10th grade are not proficient readers. This includes thirty (30%) of white students; but, increases to forty-nine percent (49%) of Hispanic students, sixty-eight percent (68%) of black students, seventy-seven (77%) of white students with disabilities, eighty-six percent (86%) of Hispanic students with disabilities, and ninety-two (92%) of black students with disabilities. (see 10th grade graph)

The National Council on Disabilities (June 2015) conducted a study of youth in juvenile detention showing that eighty-five percent (85%) of detainees had a disability, but only thirty-seven percent

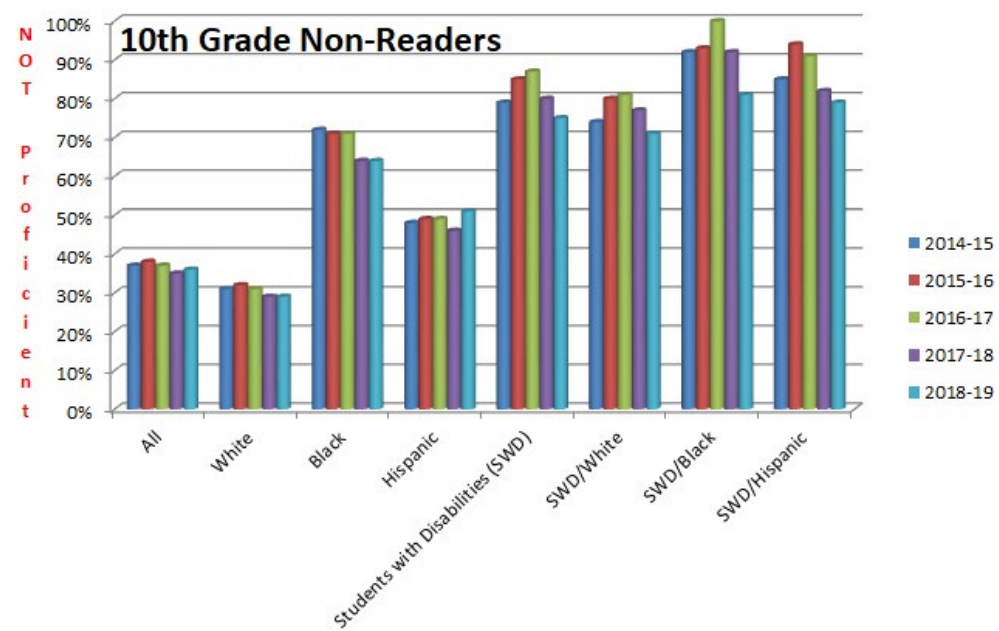
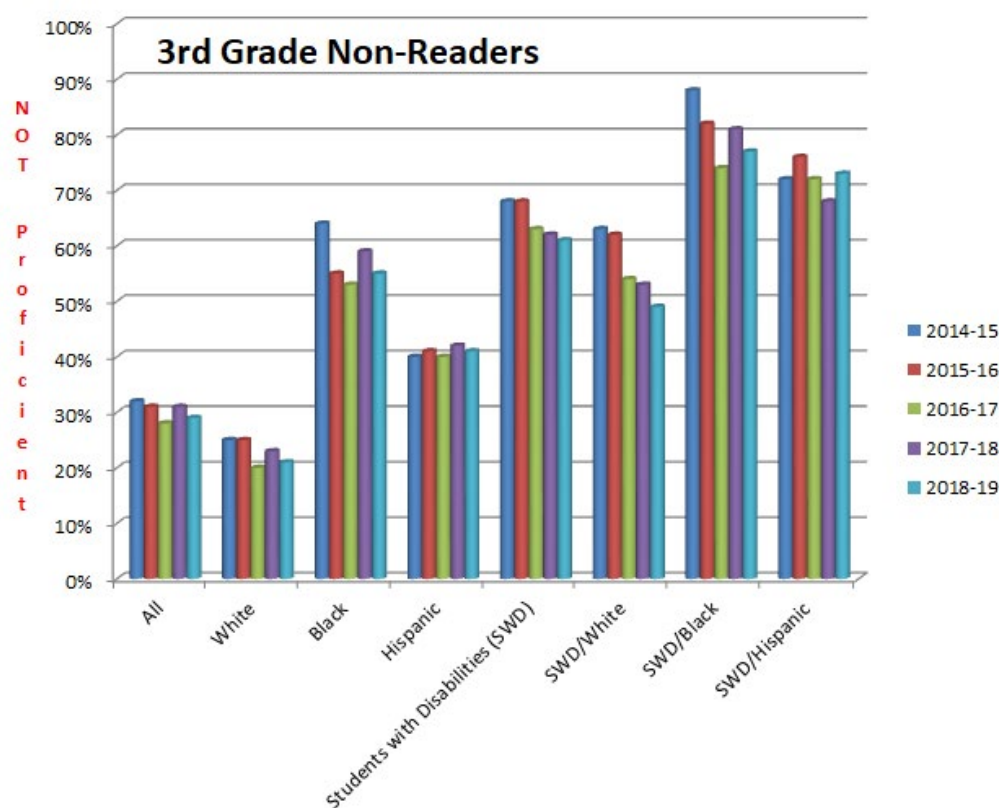
prison pipeline begins early and these statistics show why with startling clarity.

Given the statistics above, now is the time for our community to closely examine our education policies and practices that continue to leave our most vulnerable children behind. What changes can we make in elementary school to the way we teach reading? Are we following research-based practices for delivering reading instruction including the teaching of phonics? Are we providing opportunities for our students to gain background knowledge leading to an expanded vocabulary and increased comprehension skills?

By the time a student gets to high school, a struggling reader who has not received explicit and efficient instruction often masks their academic struggles. These students are more likely to receive referrals, suspensions, and transfers to alternative programs. It is not uncommon to find students who read two or more years behind their peers, yet our high schools do not have programs in place to close this gap.

As we approach the 50th Anniversary of the federal disability education law, we are still failing our children. We can do better. We must do better! Sarasota County citizens must demand accountability from our School Board to educate ALL of our children.

*Susan Magers is the author of **Moms Move Mountains: Special Education Survival Skills for Parents**. Susan's introduction to advocacy began almost 20 years ago when her oldest child was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder along with a Language Impairment. A few months later her younger child was diagnosed with Autism.*



(37%) of these children received specially designed instruction while they were in school. The school to

Opinion: DJ Deserves Better

BY CATHY ANTUNES

DJ was eight years old, an African-American boy with an average IQ, diagnosed with ADHD and another learning disability. In the space of a week in the spring of 2012, three meetings were held by Sarasota school staff, in the absence of DJ's mother. As a result of those meetings, DJ's school instruction changed from a standard curriculum with accommodations for his learning disabilities, to a curriculum called "Access Points" designed for students with severe cognitive impairment. DJ remained in the improper "Access Points" curriculum for roughly seven years, with devastating consequences.

Access Points was designed for students who are not expected to be able to read beyond a second grade level, or live independently. Neither applied to DJ. DJ's classroom didn't change, his teacher didn't change - just his curriculum. His mother didn't give permission for, nor was she notified of the change. She was notified that her son "will now be on alternative assessments" (meaning DJ wouldn't be taking the FCAT). Was this swift curriculum change, devoid of his mother's input, a tactic to exempt special needs students from taking the FCAT and pulling down the district's test scores? It's an important question. Taking a closer look at the Access Points program,

Exceptional Student Education Program specialist Victoria Stillo-Gross emailed the district's ESE directors in November 2016, telling them there were 113 students taking Access Points classes who were not classified as intellectually disabled.

Sarasota County school district recognized their ongoing mistake when DJ was in eighth grade, but DJ's mother didn't learn exactly how Sarasota County school district ruined her son's education until he was in tenth grade. That's when DJ's case was brought to the attention of two local special education advocates, Susan Memminger and Susan Magers. They uncovered the malfeasance and are assisting DJ's mother in suing Sarasota County for restorative educational services. Memminger and Magers say in their twenty years of advocacy for special needs students they've never seen anything like this.

DJ is seventeen now, and the School Board continues to fail him. Last October, Judge Diane Cleavinger ordered that DJ be provided an appropriate education in a private school, in addition to 6.5 years of compensatory education and services, including intensive tutoring and mental health counseling. When Memminger and Magers met with school officials last November to create a plan for DJ, school officials were unprepared to follow the judge's order and communicated their intention to appeal. On December 10, the School

Board voted 4-1 to appeal DJ's case. In March, Judge Cleavinger ruled once again that Sarasota County School District's Exceptional Student Education department continues to violate the law. Memminger and Magers say the School Board still isn't providing services and is pursuing more appeals.

The emotional impact on DJ has been devastating. After being a straight A student in the inappropriately simple curriculum, the school district moved him to a standard curriculum at Riverview High School without any extra help. He was quickly overwhelmed, confused and could not keep up with the work. He became the target of bullies and threatened to commit suicide in 2018.

It is unfathomable that the Sarasota County School Board fails to own and correct their egregious mishandling of DJ's education. Is the School Board running down the clock, waiting until DJ is 18, to negotiate a settlement when DJ may be more persuadable as a legal adult with limited understanding? A limitation the School Board bears responsibility for? Whatever their reasoning, the Sarasota School Board's actions here are reprehensible, and there's reason to believe other children have been negatively impacted too. Elections are coming. We need a School Board that will do the right thing.

Vote for Justice in 2020

BY JOHN LANTIGUA,
ACLU OF FLORIDA

Across America, civil liberties are under attack today in a way that is truly unprecedented. Whether the issue is voting rights, immigrants' rights, reproductive freedom, LGBTQ+ equality, privacy or criminal justice reform—including police brutality—Florida is on the frontlines of those battles.

Your State Attorney, Sheriff and Supervisor of Elections have the power to influence the direction of civil liberties in your county. You, as a voter, will help decide which candidates running for those offices this year will advance civil rights and civil liberties in your community.

STATE ATTORNEY

In the 12th judicial circuit which includes Sarasota, Manatee and Desoto Counties, incumbent Ed Brodsky will face Lisa Chittaro in the Republican primary in August. The winner will face Democrat Betsy Young in November.



Betsy Young



Ed Brodsky



Lisa Chittaro

THE POWER OF THE STATE ATTORNEY

If someone is accused of committing a crime, the State Attorney has the sole power to decide to file criminal charges and the severity of those charges. They alone decide who is deserving of a jail or prison sentence, who will instead be routed into a diversion program to help rebuild their life, or have their charges dismissed altogether. Overzealous prosecution by State Attorneys and harsh punishment caused mass incarceration. State Attorney Candidates should commit to:

- A specific, measurable goal to reduce the number of people incarcerated.
- Acknowledge that racial disparities in the criminal justice system are systemic.
- A measurable increase in diversity among prosecutors, including managers.
- Adopt a minimum threshold of 20 grams to prosecute marijuana offenses.
- Not seek the suspension or revocation of drivers' licenses for actions unrelated to driving, including drug offenses.

No one is above the law, not even law enforcement officers. State Attorney candidates should commit to:

- Pledge to take complaints of police brutality seriously by investigating them and holding law enforcement accountable.

Your State Attorney can push young people into the criminal justice system or give them a second chance to learn from their mistakes. State Attorney

candidates should commit to:

- Pledge to not prosecute youth in the adult criminal justice system.

The majority of people in our jails have not been convicted and are there only because they can't make bail. State Attorney candidates should commit to:

- Pledge to not seek monetary bail unless a person poses a clear danger to the public.

THE POWER OF THE SHERIFF

Your Sheriff decides who gets arrested in their jurisdiction and for what. Many people are arrested for minor, non-violent offenses. In most those cases,

SHERIFF

In Sarasota, Republicans Paul Fern and Kurt Hoffman will vie for the office of Sheriff as the current sheriff Tom Knight is retiring. Because only Republicans are running for the seat, ALL voters will be able to vote for Sheriff in the August primary.

In Manatee, Sheriff Rick Wells was re-elected without opposition.



Paul Fern



Kurt Hoffman

law enforcement officers can issue a civil "notice to appear" or a civil citation in lieu of arrest. Sheriff candidates should commit to:

- Set specific, measurable goals for increasing the use of those notices and citations and reducing incarceration.

Since the Florida legislature mandated that every school have a police officer or armed guard, the number of students arrested at school has increased, even as community youth crime rates continue to fall. Meanwhile, Florida has been in the news repeatedly for officers arresting first graders, attacking preteens and pulling guns on high school students. In most counties, the Sheriff leads school police, selecting, training and overseeing police officers stationed at schools and setting the standards for when school police should get involved in student behavior. Sheriff candidates should commit to:

- Pledge to meet measurable goals for decreasing the arrests of youths.

Law enforcement officers too often resort to excessive force in interactions with Black and brown people. Sheriff candidates should commit to:

- Present detailed use of force policies that will reduce police brutality.
- A specific increase in diversity among their officers, including those in supervisory roles.

Immigrants must feel safe to report crimes in their communities. When Sheriffs collaborate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents they lose the confidence of people in their community. Sheriff candidates should commit to:

- Pledge that they will not participate in the Warrant Service Officer program, any 287g agreement, or similar programs that co-opt deputies as ICE officers.
- Decline to rent detention space to ICE for immigrants transferred from federal custody.

THE POWER OF THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

Each of Florida's 67 counties has a Supervisor of Elections (SOE) who is responsible for conducting fair, honest and accurate elections.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic, many Floridians will choose to vote by mail this year. Florida has a history of rejecting far too many VBM ballots. Supervisor of Elections candidates should commit to:

- Ensure that all citizens have access to vote by mail ballots in time for the August primaries and the November general election.
- Ensure those ballots are fairly counted and that if a ballot is rejected for any reason that

SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

In Sarasota, Ron Turner was re-elected without opposition.

In Manatee, incumbent Supervisor of Elections Mike Bennett will face Democratic challenger Charles Williams, Jr.



Charles Williams, Jr.



Mike Bennett

the voter is notified and given the opportunity to "cure" their ballot so it can be counted.

The SOE has wide discretion on the number and locations of county polling sites and the number of early voting days. Supervisor of Elections candidates should commit to:

- Pledge to locate polling locations so that they equally serve all citizens, regardless of race or economic status.
- Pledge to locate polling places so they are easy to find and access.
- Pledge to provide as many early voting days as state law allows.

The great majority of returning citizens – people with past felony convictions who have completed their sentence and probation—are permitted to vote. Supervisors of Elections candidates should commit to:

- Provide clear guidance on registration and voting policies to returning citizens.
- Provide ballots and other electoral materials for voters in county jails.

In counties with sizable numbers of citizens whose first language is not English, SOE's are responsible for providing ballots and other election materials in the appropriate languages.

By making educated choices for these three offices, you can help move our nation in the direction of equity and justice. Get ready to vote in 2020 by visiting acluffjusticevoter.org. Let's vote like our rights depend on it - because they do.

Write-in Loophole at Play in Manatee County

by Laura Serbin

Last month the League of Women Voters of Manatee County sent out an email calling for Manatee County voters to change their party affiliation to Republican in order to vote in the upcoming County Commission races. **Why?** Write-in candidates had filed in two of the races, effectively closing the races to the majority of voters. Write-in candidates actually filed in all four of the races indicating a coordinated effort to close the primaries in Manatee County. However, in District 5 Vanessa Baugh was not challenged by another Republican - so she will retain her seat. In District 1, Democrat Dominique Shauntele Brown filed - meaning that the winner of the Republican primary (either incumbent Priscilla Trace or James Satcher) will face opposition in November.



In District 3, **Matt Bower** (pictured here) had filed to run as a Republican, but changed to 'No Party Affiliation' to ensure that voters would not be disenfranchised. He made the following statement: "This decision came as a result of the developers' ploy to throw in a write-in candidate, closing down the District 3 commissioner race

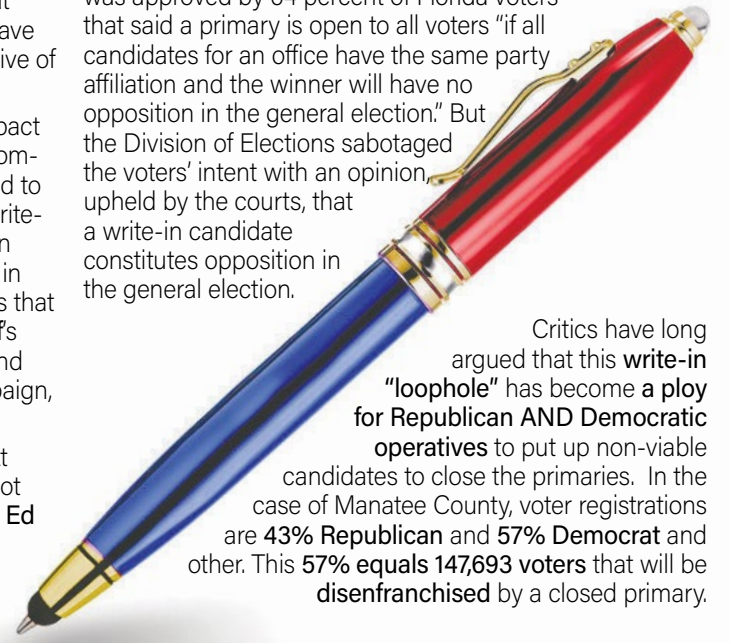
to only Republican voters. While I understand the concept and the political gamesmanship to help my opponent, I believe from a fundamental and moral standpoint, that every citizen and resident of our community should have the opportunity to vote for their voice and representative of this community.

Decisions County Commissioners make have an impact on all of us and should be in the best interest of the community, not special interests. The same tactic was used to close this year's District 7 at-large seat by using the write-in loophole with the same person that was the write-in when Commissioner **Joe McClash** ran for re-election in 2012. What is so telling about this write-in candidate is that he lives in a house owned by developer **Carlos Beruff's** company. Developers **Carlos Beruff, Pat Neal, SMR and Bendorson** have heavily funded my opponent's campaign, and I refuse to accept donations from developers."

Bower's decision to run as an NPA leaves only the At Large County Commission closed to voters that are not registered Republicans. Former County Administrator **Ed Hunzeker** will face **George Kruse** in the primary on **August 18th**. Hunzeker raised \$105,760 as of 5/31/20 and Kruse raised \$28,050.

So, where did this write-in loophole come from?

In 1998, a state constitutional amendment was approved by 64 percent of Florida voters that said a primary is open to all voters "if all candidates for an office have the same party affiliation and the winner will have no opposition in the general election." But the Division of Elections sabotaged the voters' intent with an opinion, upheld by the courts, that a write-in candidate constitutes opposition in the general election.



Critics have long argued that this write-in "loophole" has become a ploy for Republican AND Democratic operatives to put up non-viable candidates to close the primaries. In the case of Manatee County, voter registrations are 43% Republican and 57% Democrat and other. This 57% equals 147,693 voters that will be disenfranchised by a closed primary.

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| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---------|--|---|---|--|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 12 mid. | | Down The Road Syndicated | Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio | New Radio | New Radio | Open A.I.R. Matt Dakan | New Radio |
| 1 a.m. | GoodLife Syndicated | | | | | | |
| 2 a.m. | | Midnight Special Syndicated | Strange Currency Syndicated | Upfront Soul Syndicated | Music Automated playlist | | |
| 3 a.m. | Deep Threes Syndicated | | | | | | |
| 4 a.m. | | Letters to Washington Syndicated | Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated) | A Way With Words Syndicated | Economic Update Richard Wolff | | |
| 5 a.m. | | | | | | | |
| 6 a.m. | Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated | Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated | Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated | Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated | Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated | | |
| 7 a.m. | | | | | | | |
| 8 a.m. | Blues to Bluegrass John D. | Stoner At Large Bill Stoner | Generation X Alecia Harper | Eclectic Blender Dave Pedersen | Latin Explosion Juan Montenegro | Saturday Morning Gospel Jonah | Alternative Radio Syndicated |
| 9 a.m. | | | ALTERNATE WEEKS | | | | Wings of the Heart Salima Rael & Carol Rosenbaum |
| 10 a.m. | Shortwave Report | The Beat Goes On Dave Beaton & Arlene Sweeting | Peace & Justice Report Tom Walker & Bob Connors | The Detail Cathy Antunes | Surreal News Lew Lorini & Steve Norris | TownTalk / I Am That I Am | The Detail Cathy Antunes (Rebroadcast) |
| 11 a.m. | Music of the World Marco Ciceron | Nuestra Musica Mariano | Vibrational Journeys Perette Cannady | Metropics Carlos Pagan | Complex Waveforms Mark Zampella | Radio Reset Sharon Preston-Folta | Law and Disorder Syndicated |
| NOON | | ALTERNATE WEEKS | | | | Upfront Soul Syndicated | Folk Alley Elena See Syndicated |
| 1 p.m. | Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated) | Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated) | Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated) | Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated) | Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated) | | |
| 2 p.m. | Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated | Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated | Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated | Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated | Thom Hartmann Show Syndicated | Hard Knock Radio Syndicated | Dadee-O's Collector's Corner Dadee-O |
| 3 p.m. | Positive Friction John Haupt | Second Wind Seany G | What's The Frequency, Kenneth? Syndicated | Basement Boxes Purple Mike | Friday Afternoon Jazz Break Donna B | AfroSonic Taxi Syndicated | Blues Highway Syndicated |
| 4 p.m. | | | Portraits in Blue & Green Syndicated | ALTERNATE WEEKS | ALTERNATE WEEKS | Global Village Syndicated | Children's Hour Syndicated |
| 5 p.m. | Music Museum Ed Foster | Tuesday Drive Home David Young | Hawaii Bob & Company Hawaii Bob | Ted's Head Ted | Friday Happy Hour Bartender Tommy D. | Juke In The Back Syndicated | Children's Hour Syndicated |
| 6 p.m. | | | ALTERNATE WEEKS | | | | |
| 7 p.m. | Economic Update Richard Wolff | Ralph Nader Radio Syndicated | Engage On Air: Asolo Sarasota Opera/Critical Times | Background Briefing Syndicated | Critical Times Week in Review | All Mixed Up Syndicated | Syndicated Music Shows Syndicated |
| 8 p.m. | Capitol Update State News | | | | Counterspin/Cannabis Connection | | |
| 9 p.m. | Yesterday's Dead Today Mark Binder | The Root Cellar Roger & Peter | Acoustic Waves James Hawkins (ALTERNATE WEEKS) | Retro Cocktail Hour Syndicated | Ripper's Rarities Russ Yodice | Indie-licious Shelia Jane | Blue Groove Mark Gruder |
| 10 p.m. | Indigenous Sounds White Horse | In Transition The 801 | Fur Peace Ranch Syndicated | Velvet Radio Elissa Bello | | Sonic Cafe Syndicated | Perpetual Stew Mary |
| 11 p.m. | | | Woodsongs Syndicated | ALTERNATE WEEKS | ALTERNATE WEEKS | Mix Sessions Syndicated | |
| 12 mid. | Down The Road Syndicated | Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio | New Radio | New Radio | Open A.I.R. Matt Dakan & Jamiel Livingston | New Radio | Cafe Chill Syndicated |

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One Fair Wage Organizing in Florida

BY JOHANNES WERNER

In Sarasota, the pandemic has dragged the unfair labor conditions for thousands of restaurant workers, airport baggage handlers, hair and nail salon employees, and massage therapists into a painfully bright light.

Tipped minimum-wage workers have long lived on the edge, and now that many have fallen over the edge, they find themselves crushed between a rock and a hard place.

For one, the lockdown has disproportionately triggered layoffs for tipped minimum-wage workers, who make up a larger share of the workforce in tourism and retirement-heavy Southwest Florida than in most of the United States. Then, adding insult to injury, many of those who lost their job found themselves — at best — trying to navigate the maze of Florida’s underfunded and dysfunctional unemployment system, and — at worst — being rejected because many tipped workers do not qualify for unemployment benefits. Add to that the fact that many employers, squeezed by a steep drop in revenues, failed to hand out paychecks for work already done — generally called wage theft — and you get the picture.

Under most existing state laws, including in Florida, employers do not have to pay tipped workers minimum wage. They generally get away with paying some of their most essential workers \$2.13 an hour, under the assumption that customers will make up the difference to meet, or exceed, what a worker would make earning minimum wage. According to the law, employers have to make up the difference if an employee’s paycheck does not reach minimum wage, but most restaurant workers have never seen an employer actually do that.

Finally, when they are re-hired, many tipped workers have to expose themselves to above-



One Fair Wage recently distributed checks to out-of-work gig workers in Orlando.

of recipients — in front of the state building.

OFW also created the High Road Kitchens program, under which restaurant owners who commit to paying a living wage and following equitable employment practices can join a program that provides meals to low-wage workers, healthcare workers, first responders and others in need, for sliding-scale prices.

But OFW’s main goal is to push for new policy, and abolish laws that emerged during Emancipation when restaurant and other employers fought to keep tipping as a way to employ newly freed slaves without paying a salary. The system was formalized

services, the organization is fighting to get states to change laws and regulations, joining the seven U.S. states that have already passed legislation forcing employers to pay at least minimum wage. Last year, legislators in 16 states introduced One Fair Wage bills. One Fair Wage was passed on the ballot in Maine, Washington D.C., the city of Flagstaff, Az., and in the legislature of Michigan. In all these locations, the National Restaurant Association has spent millions to lobby legislators to overturn these measures. In July 2019, One Fair Wage passed in the U.S. House of Representatives, but it was blocked from even getting on the floor in the Senate.

Despite predictions of doom and gloom by lobbyists, the seven states that legislated the same minimum wage for everyone, restaurants and workers are doing just fine, according to OFW.

“In those states poverty is lower, restaurant receipts are higher, and tipping is the same, if not better, than everywhere else,” OFW says on its website. “One Fair Wage is a win-win for everyone.”

In Florida, founding OFW director and restaurant worker Fekkak Mamdouh is working to get the ball rolling from Orlando, where he recently moved his family. One of his main aims is to get one of the corporate giants to the table.

“If we can push Disney to pay one fair wage, we win,” he says. “We are working with some workers at Disney, trying to bring the company to sit down at the table.”

OFW in Sarasota-Bradenton

An OFW cluster of activism has begun to take shape in Sarasota-Bradenton, as tipped-worker activists in the Bernie campaign and Progressive Sarasota are taking direct action for their own interests. Local activists have begun to network on a Discord platform, and are helping OFW make calls to workers who apply for an emergency check — an overwhelming task for a startup organization with a very thin staff. More than 172,000 workers, 23,000 of them in Florida, have applied, and getting payments to them is a great logistical challenge that requires phone calls and follow-up calls.

More volunteers will be needed for state campaigns — including in Florida — to organize petition drives and trying to mobilize the 172,000 tipped workers in the OFW database.

We want to hear about the experiences of tipped workers. If you want to chat, or volunteer locally, contact Johannes Werner at huitzi@aol.com. For more questions about OFW, contact Fekkak Mamdouh at mamdouh@onefairwage.org. You’ll find the basics at www.onefairwage.org.



One Fair Wage Emergency Fund gives funds directly to service workers affected by the pandemic, including restaurant, salon, airport, rideshare, and gig economy workers who find themselves out of work or without customers.

average contagion risk, with proposed regulations minimizing the liability of employers, shifting the burden to workers should they or their loved ones get sick.

One Fair Wage

Enter One Fair Wage. Founded last year, OFW emerged from the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC), which got its start in New York City after 9-11. Trying to expand to tipped workers beyond restaurants, the young organization took off like a rocket, with endorsements from Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortéz (AOC). Amid the pandemic, OFW was able to raise \$22.5 million and is in the process of making \$500 emergency payments to some 45,000 tipped workers who asked for assistance. OFW organizers in Orlando were planning to hand out checks on June 18 to a long line

in 1938, creating the two-tiered wages we know today that leave millions of tipped workers at the whim of abusive customers.

AOC aptly described her experience as a bartender and waitress. “You were more likely to stand up for yourself and reject sexual harassment on the 15th of the month, or maybe the 10th of the month. But on the 29th of the month, you will let that person touch you” as rent and bills are coming due, she said during an event in which she served drinks and waited tables.

“The problem isn’t tipping,” OFW says on its website. “The problem is forcing workers to rely on tips to survive. Tips are meant to be a bonus, not the basis of a worker’s wage.”

As tipped minimum-wage jobs are mushrooming with booming at-home delivery and other online

Gerrymandering on Steroids

BY PAT ROUNDS & TOM MATRULLO

Our County Commission spent eight months and thousands in taxpayer revenue last year redrawing District boundaries after being stunned in 2018 when voters endorsed Single-Member Districts—which requires direct representation and greater accountability. Commissioner Detert made the following comments in a Herald Tribune article published last September:

“...In the end, Detert said people will be able to see clearly if the commission districts have been gerrymandered and the work will speak for itself.”

“Gerrymandering is pretty obvious when you see it,” she said. “You hopped around the map to pick up communities that you liked. I don’t think you’ll see any of that.”

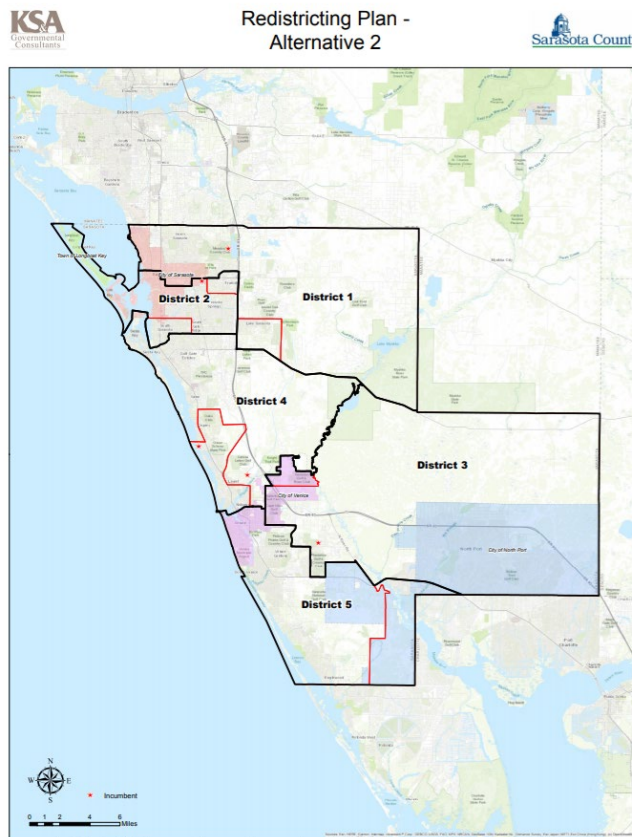
Let’s see if the Commission’s work “speaks for itself.”

After dismissing research done by County staff, they hired an outside redistricting consultant whose methods and results were questioned by his own sub-contractor. Then ignoring concerns raised by residents, local media and City officials—Commissioners Detert, Moran, and Maio approved a map submitted by a controversial political operative (who used an alias instead of his proper name).

In North County, the operative’s map created a revolving door effect—moving thousands of minorities out of District 1, preventing them from voting for County Commission this year. His map also moved thousands of white residents into District 1—enabling them to vote for County Commission.

While a federal lawsuit focused on the racial aspects of the population shifts favoring Commissioner Moran in District 1, little attention was paid to changes made to Districts 3 and 5 in South County. A virtual shell game was played to benefit Nancy Detert, the Commissioner who declared that no funny stuff would happen.

Since 2016, Ms. Detert has represented District 3—with boundaries primarily encompassing North



Port. She resides in Venice on the far west side of the original District 3.

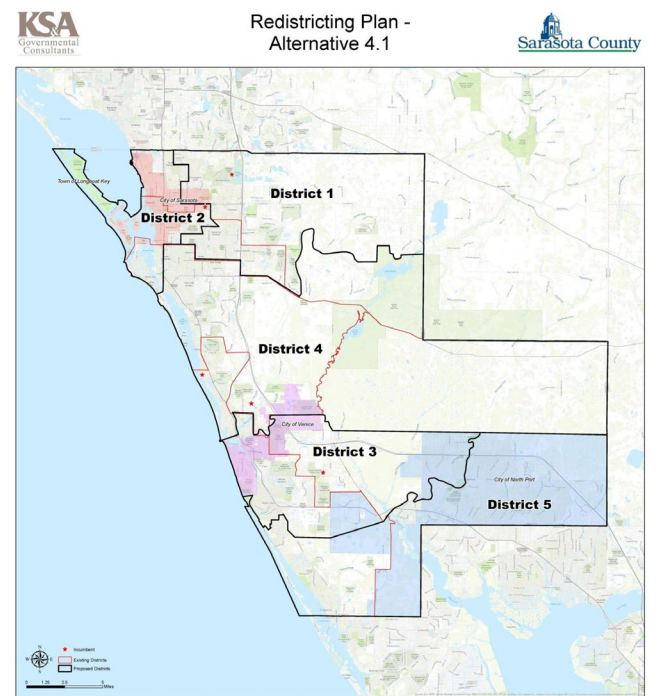
Compare the final two maps considered for approval:

Alt Map 2 was created by the outside consultant. It generally maintains District 3 with a North Port focus.

Waechter 4.1 Map was created by the political operative. Districts 3 and 5 have been switched—District 3 is now primarily the Venice area, not North Port—custom-made for Commissioner Detert’s Venice mailing address. District 5 moved east to include most of North Port and still includes Englewood.

So, with their approval of Waechter 4.1, Commissioners Detert and Moran “hopped around the map to pick up communities” they liked. Yes—Gerrymandering is “pretty obvious when you see it”.

Voters pick their Commissioners, not vice versa. We, the People, can create a new majority on the County Commission this November by electing candidates in Districts 1, 3 and 5 who serve the



public interest, not their own.

Despite strong opposition from developers and builders, the 2018 citizens’ Charter Amendment to move to single member districts passed by a clear margin in all five districts. According to a Federal Judge who reviewed it, the Board’s 2019 redistricting was “simple political gerrymandering and ‘hardball’ partisan incumbent protection.”

Ahead of the 2020 primaries and election, a new group of volunteers is working to provide voters with clear, unbiased information. Citizens for District Power will soon launch a website devoted to public information about Sarasota’s Districts and candidates.

Citizens for District Power -- CDP for short -- believes informed citizens will elect the best candidates independent of the tight industry syndicate whose money and power has controlled Sarasota County for at least the last decade.

Citizens for District Power Website: www.cdpsarasota.org

CDP on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/citizens4districtpower/>

CDP on Twitter: https://twitter.com/4_sarasota.

Email: Citizens4DistrictPower@gmail.com

Opinion: Paving Paradise

BY BILL MATTURRO

What would your reaction be if you knew the State of Florida intended to clear cut and pave over Myakka River State Park, Oscar Scherer State Park, and Highlands Hammock State Park? Hopefully you would think that was a fairly absurd and horrible thing to do, given the value of those areas for recreation, wildlife, clean water, and climate change mitigation.

Well, it seems that the State is planning to do just that. Not by actually paving those parks, but by building three new toll roads that will eliminate approximately an equal amount of acreage in rural areas, lead to more sprawl development, add pollution to our springs, possibly lead to the extinction of the Florida Panther, and greatly increase the factors that contribute to increased warming of our atmosphere.

In 2019 the Legislature passed Senate Bill 7068 creating the Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance, M-CORES, which mandates the construction of three new toll roads – one from Polk County to Collier County, one from

Citrus to Jefferson County, and one from the northern terminus of the Florida Turnpike northeast to the Suncoast Parkway. A total of 330 miles of new pavement is to be laid by 2030

Florida Veterans for Common Sense, along with 90 other organizations, businesses, and a few counties is opposed to these roads and supports the repeal of the legislation authorizing this project, or the defunding of any further efforts in the planning process for these roads.

Along with the concern for water quality, wildlife, and increased development, FLVCS is particularly concerned with the impact these roads will have on climate change for multiple reasons. The elimination of forests and rural lands that absorb carbon from the atmosphere, the increase in CO2 and NO2 greenhouse gases from increased exhaust emissions, the reflected heat from the miles of impervious surfaces, and most importantly, that the construction of unneeded,



No Road to Ruin supporters lobby in Tallahassee.

unwanted roads is the opposite of the kind of mitigation efforts needed at this time to lessen the long term impacts of climate change.

You can make your voice heard on this matter by [submitting an online comment](#) at the M-CORES website, you can attend the task force meeting being held around the state to tell the members to present a “no-build” option in their final report, you can write letters to the editors and to your representatives in the legislature to inform them of your opposition, and you can keep up with the NoRoadsToRuin coalition’s efforts at www.NoRoadsToRuin.org.



Local COVID 19 Cases on the Increase

continued from pg. 1

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said the higher percentage of positive tests stems from both increased testing and from efforts to test in prisons, farm communities and nursing homes. Unnasch points to flaws in that reasoning.

“The argument is, the more you look, the more you’re going to find, right? What that assumes is that the percentage is staying the same,” he said. “That’s clearly untrue from the data that’s out right now.”

Moreover, while in the early days of the pandemic, the virus was most prevalent in older people, spreading rapidly at nursing facilities. Now, Unnasch said, the biggest group of new cases is in people ages 19 to 34.

Should we reopen?

The upward swings in positive tests and confirmed cases would appear to torpedo Gov. DeSantis’s “Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step” plan for reopening the state.

His plan draws from the Trump Administration’s “White House Guidelines for Opening Up America Again,” and has three data-driven benchmarks. According to the plan, one of those three metrics is the state showing a “downward trajectory of documented COVID-19 cases” or a “downward trajectory of positive tests as a percent of total tests” when the volume of tests is steady or increasing.

Over recent weeks, neither of the two is showing that downward trajectory— even given Florida’s move to a new way of calculating the positivity rate that would reduce the rate. The trends have the mayors of Miami and Miami Beach reconsidering the phase 3 re-opening.

Still, medical experts are hesitant to slam the

brakes on recovery plans.

Unnasch is a Mount Everest buff, and he likens policymakers’ position to a stretch of the Everest



Dr. Lisa Merritt and members of the Multicultural Health Institute Community Collaborative distribute masks during Juneteenth.

ascent just below the summit, where climbers traverse a ridgeline — with a 2,000 foot drop on either side.

“The data tells us that we may be making a misstep” by expanding the reopening, he said. But nor should we return to what he called the “sledgehammer response” of the March and April lockdowns. “We have to take a much more nuanced response,” he said. “This is tough. I’m not going to fault anyone making these decisions.”

Sarasota Memorial’s Dr. Gordillo cites the statistic R_0 , pronounced R-naught, a measure of how contagious an infectious disease is. The number indicates how many people will be infected by one person with the virus. The statistic can vary widely, even for one illness, depending on the measures people take — in the early days of COVID-19 in China, each person infected on average 5.7 other people.

Gordillo said the measure holds around or below R_1 — that is, each person with the virus only infects one other person — the virus will be manageable. Should it climb closer to 2, he said, “that’s when we get into exponential growth.”

“We need to move forward with reopening our society,” said “but we need to do it carefully.”

What does that look like? He offered several points of advice:

- Remain vigilant as society continues to re-open.
- Build a stronger sentinel system for identifying outbreaks and tracing people potentially infected, so they can isolate themselves
- Avoid prolonged exposure to others, especially indoors
- Wear masks, the only way to avoid transmission from people with the virus who are not yet showing symptoms.

The [Multicultural Health Institute](#) is leading a collaborative community effort to educate community members about Covid-19, make sure needs are being met, and tracking data in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. You can visit the [Sarasota County Resilience Dashboard](#) and complete the [WE NEED/WE HAVE form](#) if you need help or if you have time, talent or resources to share. As of mid-June, the MHI Mask Brigade has distributed almost 5000 masks to community members.

Coalition Organizes Against Racism

continued from pg. 1

For more information about the Coalition, you can email SRQAntiRacismCoalition@gmail.com.

Only organizations can join the Coalition, although individuals are welcome to attend meetings as observers. If you are an individual that wants to take concrete action to help transform our community, please reach out to Coalition member organizations to see how you can get involved. Here’s a look at some of the work taking place within the member organizations.

[Black Lives Matter Alliance - Sarasota/Manatee Chapter](#) held a press conference in June and has led a number of protests to demand action. Join their facebook page to keep up with upcoming events.

[Manasota Inter-racial Book Club](#) currently hosts four active book groups in Manatee and Sarasota Counties. To learn more about the book club, email janetolschewsky@verizon.net.

[NAACP](#) - The NAACP is forming a Task Force to review police policies pertaining to Use of Force, the issuance of No Knock Warrants, and penalties for failure to intervene when a witness to a crime in progress. They are also calling for local law enforcement agencies to immediately institute Citizens Review Boards with subpoena power. To reach the local chapter, email sarasotanaacp@msn.com.

[Newtown Nation](#) - The Newtown Nation has a Community update two times a month. Dates for upcoming meetings are July 7th, July 21st, August 4th, and August 18th. The meetings are currently being conducted virtually. To get on the mailing list to receive meeting invites, email Valerie Buchand at vbuchand@gmail.com.

The [Sarasota Anti-Racism Working Group](#) continues to organize 3-day ‘Undoing Racism’ workshops facilitated by the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond. The next workshops will take place in the fall. If you are interested in attending a workshop, please email peacenter@gmail.com.

[Sarasota Strong](#) is involved in training Community Safekeepers as part of the MHI Collaborative response to Covid-19. To get involved, email sarasotastrong@gmail.com.

Manasota Anti-Racism Coalition Founding Members

- ANSWER Suncoast
- Black Lives Matter Alliance Sarasota Manatee Chapter
- Boxser Diversity Initiative
- Center for Religious Tolerance
- Manasota Interracial Book Club
- Newtown Nation
- Sarasota Chapter of the NAACP
- Sarasota Anti-Racism Working Group
- Sarasota Strong
- Peace Education and Action Center
- Progressive Sarasota
- Rodney Mitchell Foundation, Inc.
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota
- WSLR+Fogartyville

This Independence Day, We Can Thank Tom Paine.



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

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

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

FLORIDA VETERANS Monthly meetings are second Mondays at 7:00PM at the Waldemere Firehouse, 2nd floor meeting room
For Common Sense

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

Killer Heat and the Fall Election

BY WILLIAM “COTY” KELLER

Southwest Florida, the nation and the world are facing a stark choice with the climate crisis. The Union of Concerned Scientist’s (UCS) *Killer Heat in the United States* report can help us understand the consequences of our actions. When we go to www.ucsusa.org/killer-heat and click on Sarasota county, here’s what we get:

If we do nothing, as early as 2036 Sarasota County would experience an average of 86 days per year with a heat index above 105°F. That’s 17 times the historical average of 5 days a year. In our lifetime, we could experience almost 3 months a year with a climate like the Sonoran Desert. Beyond that, our children and grandchildren would experience, as early as 2070, an average of 135 days (4 ½ months) per year with a heat index above 105°F. This includes: 21 days with an off-the-charts heat index. This kind of extreme heat is more than uncomfortable, inconvenient and expensive, it is a major health risk. “We would be seeing people — climate refugees — fleeing Florida,” said economics professor Mark Paul at New College of Florida.

If we take bold action NOW, we can limit the increase in extreme heat in Sarasota County to an average of 60 days per year with a heat index above 105°F. The choice is clear. The coming election is an opportunity to select candidates at the federal, state and local level who will pledge to take what the UCS calls *bold action*. Let’s define this term.

Addressing climate change requires action in two areas: adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation (aka resiliency) is the process of adjusting to anticipated changes by protecting existing infrastructure, homes, and people from rising seas, fires, and stronger weather. Mitigation directs efforts towards solving the cause by reducing heat-

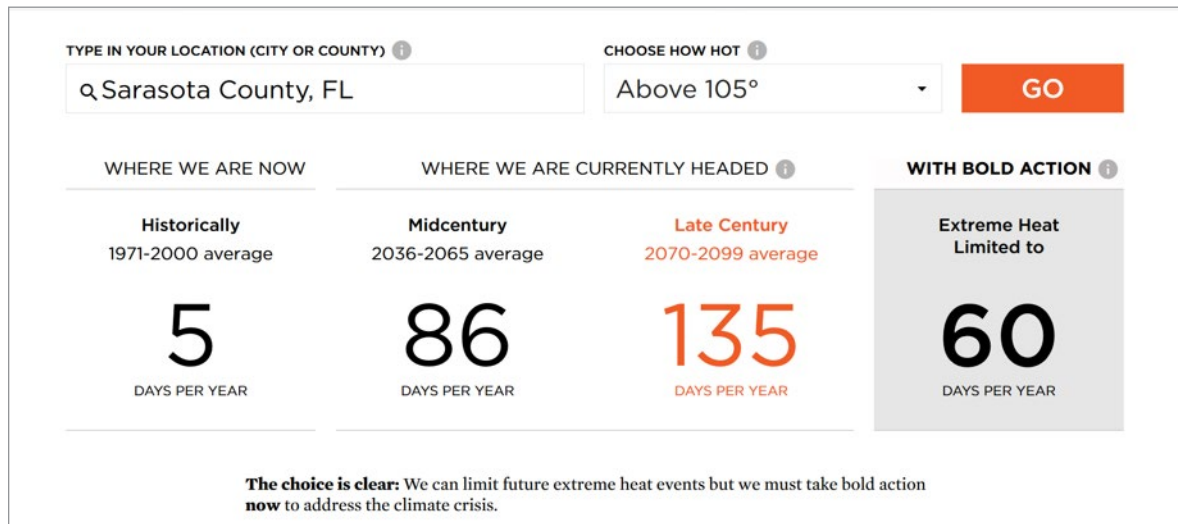
trapping emissions and removing carbon already in the atmosphere. Resistance to mitigation is dangerous, especially for Florida. For example, while Florida’s Governor has acknowledged climate change exists, the title for the new climate change director is “Chief Resilience Officer”, reflecting the state’s focus on adaptation. We must go beyond adaptation and resiliency. Without mitigation, the climate will continue to change and long-term impacts (Killer Heat) will become too severe to manage.

including as a minimum participation in the Paris Agreement. 2) Enact a national law (such as HR 763) which establishes a rising price on carbon and returns revenues to households, thereby reducing emissions, benefitting the economy, and improving public health. Returning the money to families avoids a regressive tax burden on lower income households. 3) Pandemic economic recovery plans that create millions of jobs in zero-emission and carbon-sequestration industries.

State – Adopt regulations which: 1) require energy providers to create low-carbon energy portfolios with 100% zero emission electricity by 2030; 2) prohibit utilities from earning higher profits from selling more electricity, and require them to focus on improving service, conservation and reducing emissions; 3) eliminate barriers to rooftop solar energy; and 4) ban Fracking

Local – 1) Implement building codes, landscaping and farming rules, and public transportation policies which conserve, sequester and transition to zero emission fuels. 2) The state has mandated all counties to update their Comprehensive Plans by 2021 to take sea level rise and climate change into account. County plans should aim for emissions to be reduced by 70-100% by 2030 and reforestation & soil management that radically stores more carbon. We face a stark choice. To avoid the worst of Killer Heat and the other ravages of climate change we need bold action. Let’s tell candidates for office that to earn our votes, they must pledge to support the bold actions identified here.

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, Florida. www.ecopapak.org



Scientists estimate that we must implement significant climate mitigation actions and policies within 10 years or rapid natural processes, such as melting of the permafrost and associated methane release, will render us incapable of slowing the uncontrollable heating of our planet. Critical mitigation goals include: 1) reducing emissions by 70-100% by 2030 through conservation and transition to non-emitting energy sources; and 2) removing excess carbon from the atmosphere by reforestation and soil management. Bold action is defined as radical mitigation in terms of scope and timing.

Actions by businesses and individuals are needed. But the most leverage comes from federal, state, and local governments applying their authorities with these bold actions:

Federal – 1) Globally coordinated action,

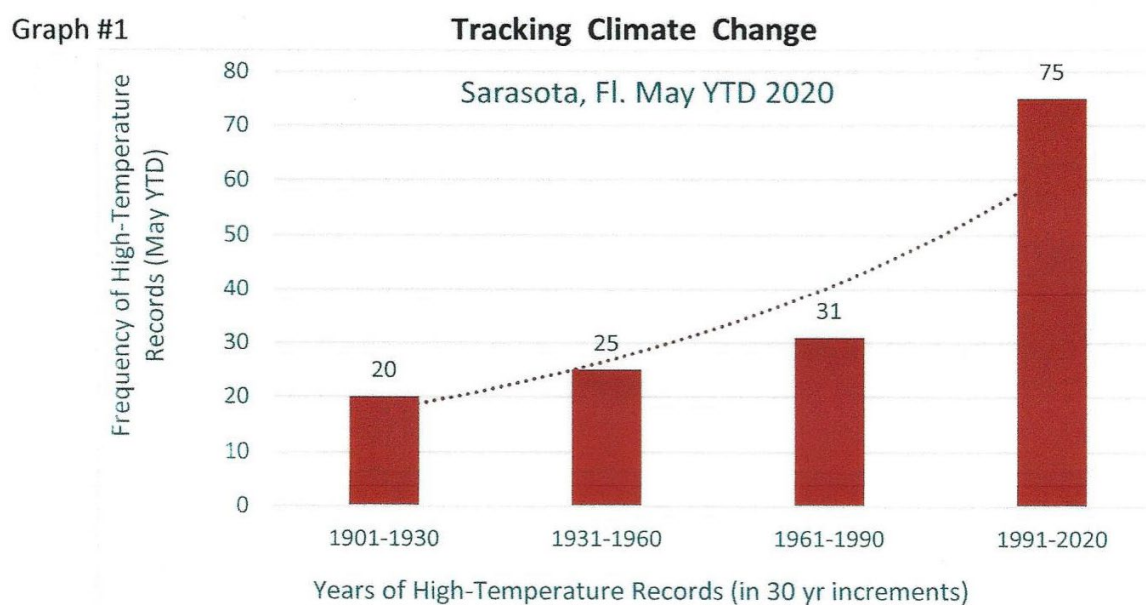
Tracking Climate Change in Sarasota, Florida

BY MARGARET JEAN CANNON AND ROY WYSNEWSKI

An outreach program providing climate change awareness to Sarasota residents was initiated early this year by Sarasota residents Jean Cannon and Roy Wysnewski. By demonstrating the impact of climate change through the lens of the local weather and climate this program offers an increasing number of residents in southwest Florida an opportunity to personally experience the reality of climate change. This is accomplished via a monthly analysis of area weather and climatological data and, most importantly, a unique procedure for the virtual ‘tracking’ of climate change in Sarasota, Florida.

initiation of climate change tracking began in January with a full-page Weather/Climate Analysis column in the Meadoword, a monthly Meadow’s newsletter. Weather data (rainfall

end of each month leads to a partial ‘picture’ (graph) that illustrates the historical significance of climate change in Sarasota that month. This picture is built via the monthly ‘tracking’ of high-temperature records for 120 years (1901-2029).



Think of the tracking procedure as a 366-piece jigsaw puzzle. Each month some 29 to 31 pieces of historical tracking data are put in place so that when finished on December 31, 2020, a 12-month composite graph will reveal the totality of climate change in Sarasota for the past 120 years. A composite year-to-date picture for the first five months of 2020 is presented in Graph #1.

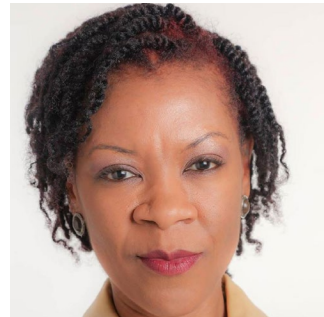
To request the completed Tracking Climate Change ‘puzzle’ at the end of the year, as well as submit comments and questions about this article, send an email to meadowweathersrq@gmail.com.

and atmospheric temperature) are measured and recorded daily. Climate data evaluated at the

Four Democrats Face Off in House District 70

STAFF REPORT

Keisha Bell, Michelle Grimsley, Mark Oliver and Michele Rayner are running in the Democratic primary for Florida House of Representatives District 70 on August 18, 2020. This is an open seat as incumbent Rep. Wengay Newton is running for a seat on the Pinellas County Commission. District 70 spans parts of Hillsborough, Pinellas and Manatee counties including several underserved areas (see map). District 70 has 56,735 Democrats, 22,715 no party affiliation voters and 15,924 Republicans. More than half of the district's voters are in Pinellas County, while 24% are in Manatee County, 12% are in Sarasota County and 10% are in Hillsborough County. As there is no Republican opposition in this race, it will be an open primary and all registered voters will be able to vote.



KEISHA BELL

Bell is a local attorney and nonprofit leader, born and raised in St. Petersburg. She is the daughter of public school educators, and, early on, they instilled in her the importance of an education. Keisha

graduated from Dixie Hollins High School; the University of Central Florida with a Bachelor Degree in Psychology; and from Florida State University College of Law. Bell is a licensed attorney with a diverse professional background in family, personal injury, and workers compensation law. In the 2018 Democratic primary, she challenged incumbent Representative Wengay Newton. Newton won that race with 49.3% of the vote, Bell was second in the race with 35.9%, and Vito Sheeley captured 14.7% of the vote. Bell ran, and continues to run, on a platform focused on health care, public schools, reproductive rights, livable wages, and the environment. Bell supports Medicaid expansion, higher salaries for Florida teachers and wraparound services to help school children. She has raised

\$16,679 as of 5/31/20 from 182 donors, mostly in contributions of \$100 or less.



MICHELE RAYNER

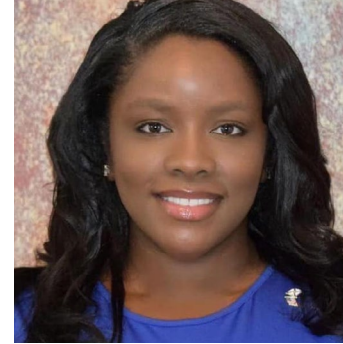
Rayner is a civil rights and social justice attorney in the Tampa Bay area. She has tried both local and national high-profile cases in Pinellas County including those of Markeis McGlockton and Yasmine James, and most recently, Barbara Pinkney. She is the current Local Counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and formerly served as the Assistant Public Defender for Hillsborough and Pinellas/Pasco Counties and as a Legislative Aide to Former State Senator Arthenia Joyner. Her priorities include equity in housing, education and health care; criminal justice reform; and environmental justice. Entering the race in March 2020, Rayner has jumped to the front in terms of fundraising. As of 5/31/20 she has raised over \$48,000 from 315 supporters. She has a number of high-profile endorsements including former Attorney General candidate Sean Shaw, current State Senator Janet Cruz, and former Lt. Governor nominee Chris King.



MARK OLIVER

A day after graduating with a Bachelors in Communications, Mark Oliver started his own fitness business which continues to operate in Tampa. He also founded Specially Fit to provide fitness programs and mentorship to more than 400 students with disabilities to nine schools across central Florida. Oliver originally filed to run for House District 59 to replace Rep. Adam Hattersley (who is now running for a Congressional seat in Florida's

15th District). He left that race after Rep. Newton announced his intention to run for Pinellas County Commission. Oliver has since moved to St. Pete and now lives in HD 70, where he grew up and hopes to expand fitness services in his hometown. His priority issues include education, health care and the environment, with a special passion for the rights of the disabled. According to the most recent financial statements, Oliver has raised over \$38,000 from 363 contributions - mostly in small dollar donations.



MICHELE GRIMSLEY

Michelle Grimsley, of Bradenton, who served as Rep. Newton's legislative assistant has also filed for the District 70 seat. Ensuring access to affordable health care and bringing quality jobs to District 70 are among her priorities. Grimsley is the most recent candidate to enter the race (April 2020). As of 5/31/20, she had raised \$6935 including two \$1000 contributions from the Florida Beer Wholesalers and Floridians for Fair Insurance.

ELECTION CALENDAR

Monday July 20 - Last day to register to vote in the August 18 Primary Election

Saturday, August 8 - Last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot be mailed to a voter 5 p.m. deadline

Saturday, August 8 - Sunday, August 16 - Early voting for August 18 Primary 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. daily. Locations to be determined

Tuesday, August 18 - Election Day - Primary Election. Polls open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Vote-by-mail ballots must be returned to the Supervisor of Elections office by 7 p.m.

Supporting Black-Owned Businesses

The "[Support Sarasota-Manatee Black-Owned Businesses](#)" Facebook group was born out of a desire to make a real and tangible difference in the community. Longtime friends, James Minor (a Riverview High School teacher of nearly 30 years) and Michael J Kinsey (photographer, film producer

Truck with his wife Cynthia) to create and publish the Facebook group. The idea was simple - build a virtual community for black-owned businesses in Sarasota and Manatee and for those who want to support them. In the beginning the friends hoped it might be a positive space with potential to make a real difference and a local impact. They never anticipated the amount of support the idea would gain so quickly. Expecting maybe several hundred members has turned into welcoming several thousand members. Since its launch, the group has grown to 9,000 members and counting!

In the group's early moments, Dee Clegg was added to the group by a mutual friend. Dee had been brainstorming how she could go about finding black-owned businesses in her community - so the timing was uncanny.

Managing the group takes a lot of behind the scenes effort. The admin/moderation team communicates daily, and often into the night. They work together to help the group maintain its focus and integrity. As the group has grown, so has the admin/mod team. Newest additions to the group's moderating team are Manatee County resident Micaela Bartee and Sarasota County resident Nikita Abiwon.

Dee says, "Anyone and everyone in Sarasota and Manatee can make intentional decisions about how they spend their dollars and spending them with local Black-Owned businesses benefits the entire community. We hope this group will make finding and supporting B.O.B in Sarasota and Manatee a little bit easier."

The poem that accompanies the photos on the back page is by **Donovan Brown**. Donovan Brown is a 25-year old black man and a community organizer in his hometown of Jacksonville, Florida. He became a community organizer after serving as a Peace Corps Education Volunteer in Sierra Leone from 2017-2019. Brown wrote the poem, "American Greatness" to give voice to the constant reality of being Black in America.



Quintin Morris of Q&S Kool Cups has experienced an increase in business due to the new Facebook page.

and owner of Kinsey 5 Media) came together with friends Todd Chandler (owner of Chandler Funeral Home) and Dwight Josey (owner of Flava Food



American Greatness

by Donovan Brown

To be Black in America is
to live with the
uncertainty of Death.

It is an inviolable truth
that is known to every black child
before they are born.

You may die before your birth.

You may die within your house.

You may die outside your house.

You may die drinking water.

You may die from the food you eat.

You may die walking,
jogging, or running.

You may die playing.

You may die at worship.

You may die at work,
because of work, due to work.

You may die in a cage.

You may die voiceless,
unseen & alone.

And your death, my death,
and the death of those whom
come before & after us

WILL be another
ritualistic killing

placed at the altar of

American Greatness.

This uncertainty of death is as real
to a Black Person in America
as the very air that gives us life
to continue on.

And it is that, continuing
that makes us so despised, so
HATED.

but WE PERSIST,

We create art and song and story.
Our culture is one of life and joy,
an indomitable spirit
that will never succumb.

So we are hated more
because those who wish to
make us chattel and have failed
incessantly can do nothing more
than look upon us with awe.

What rage you must feel
as the only thing
you cannot tame, beguile,
or destroy, is
the very thing that
continues to influence
your very actions.

As your children fawn
to become
the very thing you wish
to rid the world of.

How your culture becomes
less reminiscent of
what you so painstakingly
killed and deceived for,
how your God shrinks
with every passing
generation.

I would pity you
but I may die doing so.

Images provided by
Allan Mestel Photography
MESTELPHOTO.COM