

# More Change Coming to New College

BY SOPHIA BROWN

One full semester has passed since the “hostile takeover” of New College was first launched in January. With every public meeting of the new conservative majority Board of Trustees comes a new facet of the college’s infrastructure that has been disrupted: the firing of the former president, the elimination of the college’s diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) office, the denial of tenure for five faculty members and most recently, the change to the school’s mascot, formerly determined by the student government. Now, as the second semester under this new leadership is approaching, the institution of a new “classical liberal arts” core curriculum could soon be underway.

Prior to this year, New College’s academic system has been defined by things such as narrative evaluations, independent study periods and the undergraduate thesis—all things that give the individual student more power to shape their academic experience than a traditional university. However, as early as March 10, refurbishing the school’s core curriculum has been a goal of Interim President Richard Corcoran, who wrote in an email addressed to New College alumni and donors that New College needs to have a “defined curriculum” and that “the course progression should not be so broad as to be meaningless.”

This summer, attempts to restructure the core curriculum are now underway, and go hand-in-hand with a series of new faculty hires. However, unlike



NCF Board of Trustees May Meeting. Photo credit: Sophia Brown

other recent changes at New College, the preliminary planning for these transitions lies primarily in the hands of current faculty.

For instance, the New College of Florida Faculty Handbook states that the hiring process for regular faculty begins with a recommendation based on a majority vote from the current faculty in the appropriate division. According to Professor of History David Harvey, this is one process that has not changed.

“Our hiring process remains what it has always been—any new positions must be advertised, and a faculty search committee must be constituted and must review finalists,” Harvey said. “The faculty committee makes a recommendation to the appropriate division, which votes to approve it, and that recommendation is forwarded to the Provost and President.”

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# The Future of Media: Collaboration

BY JOHANNES WERNER

For a community journalist worn out by, and wary of, the culture wars in Florida, the Collaborative Journalism Summit in Washington was respite. A breather. A mental beach vacation. A feast of new ideas.

On the campus of George Washington University in early June, in walking distance from the White House, State Department and Lincoln Memorial, the conference rooms were packed with hundreds of participants from all over the United States. The mood was electric, almost ecstatic. Community organizers, activists, reporters, editors, publishers, and entrepreneurs

were comparing notes, bouncing ideas off each other, and they were networking. I came away with the impression that we at WSLR are part of a nationwide movement that is coming to its own now.

Step back: News, and who delivers it, has been changing fast. As daily newspapers have withered over the past three decades, hundreds – thousands — of small, local alternatives have popped up all over the United States. But how to make the news production of these radio stations, news sites, podcasts, blogs, chat groups and substacks relevant, reliable, and consistent — and most importantly, make them financially sustainable — is an ongoing process of trial and error. And in that process, collaboration, rather than competition, is now generally recognized as a big part of the solution to creating a sustainable stream of news.

WSLR is part of that phenomenon. Our community radio station has had its ebbs and flows when it comes to covering local news since we began two decades ago. But throughout, we have remained committed to finding ways of being a provider of meaningful and unique news. And now, we are in expansion mode.

I was hired in February as a part-time news director, and I have had the time of my professional life since, working with a news team that represents a diverse mix of highly motivated



Johannes Werner, WSLR's News Director

young interns - some still in high school - and seasoned citizen volunteer reporters - some of them journalism veterans. We are trying hard to absorb and respond to what comes from the community and grassroots movements, and to put the spotlight on issues that affect regular, working people.

With volunteer reporters often unavailable to cover daytime events, and only one part-time intern plus one editor to rely on in summer months (when high school and college students are on vacation), filling three weekly half-hour slots may look ambitious. But it is possible, thanks to collaboration and sharing. For one, we have a mutual agreement with fellow community radio station WMNF in Tampa to make our news accessible to each other. We also work closely with alternative local media, such as the Sarasota News-Leader and the Bradenton Times. And, in-

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## BY JEFF KURNICK

For over three decades now, Mothers Helping Mothers (MHM) has been assisting families throughout the Sarasota-Manatee community. MHM fosters resiliency, self sufficiency and family stability for struggling families through redistributing resources and services. They reportedly serve 4,500 families annually and are always on the forefront of creating new and exciting services for their clients.

With a lot of controversy in the news now about non-profit executives taking higher percentages of donations than some would think are acceptable, MHM has a different approach. MHM is 100% volunteer-based. Money donated goes towards baby formula, strollers, safe beds, etc. The organization has grown from a small group of moms operating out of one its member's shed, to a small storefront on Washington Boulevard, and finally, in 2010, to its existing location on U.S. 301 near University Parkway. The storefront attracts clients from Palmetto to North Port. In 2020-2021, MHM raised enough money to purchase



Volunteers help with back-to-school backpack giveaway. Photo Courtesy of MHM.



Mothers Helping Mothers volunteer personal shoppers help registered clients pick out free Christmas gifts for their children during the Toy Day event.

their entire building, expand to over 7,000 sq ft, install solar panels to reduce their electric bills, and increase store hours and services in an effort to aid those in need. With reduced overhead and a volunteer-powered staff, nearly every dollar donated goes back to their services.

In March they hosted a Fashion Show Fundraiser, where 8 members strutted the runway to raise money for the organization. The event carried the theme of “Steppin’ Out and Steppin’ Up Again”. Like being able to buy something you see while watching Prime Video, if someone at the event liked what they saw they could buy it on the spot. This is the type of creativity that MHM comes up with to make their events more interactive and engaging.

Fundraisers are not their only events however. MHM holds weekly classes for their clients on a multitude of topics such as health, budgeting, energy savings, career coaching and mental health wellness. When clients utilize the budgeting class, they are then open to utilize another service that MHM offers.

Once your budgeting class is done, MHM offers free oil changes and other car services for approved families. With public transportation as is, having a reliable vehicle is a necessity for a lot of families. MHM understands that and works to help these families in their travels.

For more information go to <https://www.mhmsarasota.com>

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# CreArte Latino Cultural Center, Nuestra Comunidad Series

BY DIANA BREGMAN

CreArte Latino Cultural Center is a local Spanish-language arts and community center founded as a creative hub for the Latino community in Sarasota and Manatee Counties. If it just popped up on your radar, you might think CreArte Latino had just been born, but the nonprofit has actually been around since 2012. CreArte Latino's first incarnation was as a Spanish-language theater troupe doing just a few plays a year on borrowed stages. Now they have a state of the art theater and home of their own at 8251 15th St. East, near the Sarasota Airport.

Under the guidance of elected President and Artistic Director, Carolina Franco, the organization continues to expand programming, with education options for youth and adults. They are now producing an average of nine plays annually and collaborating with artists from Sarasota and throughout Latin America. CreArte Latino hosts improvisational theater, scripted performances and concerts with Latin performers, children's theater productions, and a Spanglish Improv Comedy show.

CreArte Latino is now running a monthly series of presentations and community dialogs in the cultural center called Nuestra Comunidad (our Community). This informational series will act as a bridge to further connect the local Hispanic/LatinX community with the rest of the community by orienting our native Spanish speakers to the area and informing them about other organizations that provide services that may be useful to them. CreArte Latino's mission is to be a channel for cultural exchange between LatinX/Hispanics and the community at large through the arts, education, and service and the free monthly Nuestra Comunidad series furthers this mission by bridging the gap between the native Spanish-speaking community and the english speaking community.

On June 21st Nuestra Comunidad held a free educational event focusing on voting called Las Elecciones de 2024 y Usted (The 2024 Elections and You). Brenda Luna, a voter Specialist and Spanish speaker from the local Election Supervision Office explained in non-partisan terms the importance of the 2024 election and gave an overview of our election process, the difference between a primary



CreArte Volunteer Team

and a general election and informed participants what offices are up for election in 2024. In addition a Spanish speaking registrar was in attendance to assist eligible Spanish speakers in person to register to vote.



Attendees at the June Nuestra Comunidad event. Photo courtesy of CreArte Latino

Nuestra Comunidad continues the series in July and August of 2023 and beyond, with an event in collaboration with the Women's Resource Center scheduled for July 19th at 7 pm. The Women's Resource Center provides women (and men) with life skills training, career planning, and educational scholarships in Manatee and Sarasota counties

and will share information on their services at this informational discussion. On August 16th at 7 pm the Nuestra Comunidad topic is: Career Resources in collaboration with the Career Resource Center Manatee County and will offer career counseling, job search assistance/job referral, initial assessment, resume assistance, practice interview sessions and other career support services.

The Nuestra Comunidad series is made possible by grants from 2 sponsors, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation underwritten by the Gould Family Trust.

Though anyone is welcome to attend this information series, this is not specifically a bi-lingual event and is mainly conducted in Spanish. A cultural center for the Hispanic/LatinX community — and cultural ambassadors to the greater community, CreArte and its Nuestra Comunidad series exemplifies the growth and expansion of this community organization. President and Artistic Director, Carolina Franco says, "We've evolved and changed and grown. And we plan to keep growing in the future!"

For more information, visit: [CreArteLatino.org](https://CreArteLatino.org)

## Reclaiming Home Exhibit

BY KATHLEEN MURRAY

In March, The Ringling Museum of Art opened its first exhibition of contemporary art by Native American artists with present-day connections and historical ties to Florida. "Reclaiming Home: Contemporary Seminole Art" features works that draw from photo-based and digital collage techniques, performance, video, installation art, and mixed media.

Twelve artists explore image-making and/or Muskogean languages, and offer diverse perspectives on issues of memory, relocation, identity, ancestry, health, and representation within their Native communities.

"The artists are either taught through their families or their education is a combination of western institutional and traditional knowledge," said Ola Wlusek, the Keith D. and Linda L. Monda Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Ringling. "Even though the works are rooted in traditional knowledge they are very innovative and contemporary."

Corinne Zepeda, a Tampa-based Seminole and Mexican artist who grew up in Naples with

her multicultural family, has been learning different forms of art from them ever since.

"A lot of my pieces are to share awareness or to show how I feel or where I stand, so I am just happy that the general public gets to view those," Zepeda said.

Zepeda's *Burnt*, 2022, is described as seed beads and acrylic on recycled jean jacket, beaded lapel pins, acrylic on wood.

"It's a mixed media piece ... and I did a little bit of playful burning on the actual jacket," Zepeda said. "The back of it says 'Burn the Patriarchy' and on the front there are lapel pins — one is a uterus and the other is a sign for a femme person."

Next to the jacket is a pandemic-era cloth mask with the words "We the People" in the background and in the foreground a beaded symbol for the "Black Lives Matter" movement and a beaded symbol for "Missing and Murdered Indigenous People."

"My art is a vessel for me to express my feelings or my anger," Zepeda said, in regard to "the state of this country currently, the state of this country three years ago — not a lot has changed, and then just the epidemics of missing and murdered



Corinne Zepeda

Indigenous people as well as everything that the Black Lives Matter people have also been going through. I have stood up for both and I know Black kin who have also stood for both."

Zepeda's digital art, beadwork and textile art skills have either been self-taught, or learned through family members.

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# Update on Siesta Promenade

BY SURA KOCHMAN, PINE SHORES NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE

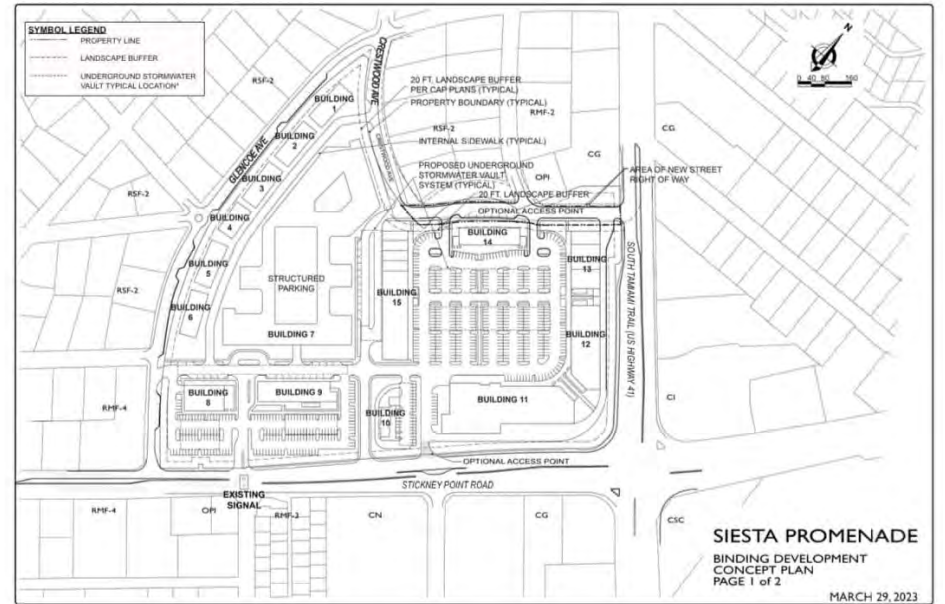
Benderson Development received approval in 2018 from the Board of County Commissioners to build their Critical Area Plan project known as Siesta Promenade located at the intersection of US 41 and Stickney Point Rd. It was to include 414 apts/condos; an eight story, 130 room hotel; 7000 sq ft office/commercial and 133,000 sq ft of retail.

The plan was refiled on 4/10/23 to include 2 single family homes on Glencoe and a rezone is needed for these parcels to match the balance of their site. In doing so, it provided the opportunity to open up the entire site to changes. This filing now includes the relocation of the landscape buffer, which was to protect the existing residential neighborhood, and replace it with parallel parking on neighborhood streets surrounding the perimeter of their property. The landscape buffer is now on the project side of the parallel parking, thus negating the intent of the buffer.

Benderson is framing their argument for parallel parking as traffic calming. This is NOT the case, as traffic calming elements have already been voted on by the neighborhood and agreed to by Sarasota County staff. The term 'disingenuous' comes to mind.

The neighborhood is vehemently opposed to this encroachment of the project onto our local streets. There was an expectation that Benderson would respect the intent of the Board of County Commissioners requirement that traffic be deterred from traffic intrusion into the neighborhood. Now, we have yet another battle to fight.

These changes have triggered the requirement for hearings before the Planning Commission



(hearing date Thursday, 7/20/23 at 5pm) and Board of County Commissioners (hearing date tentatively scheduled for 8/30/23 at 9am). Please mark your calendars for these dates and email the respective board members with comments 3 weeks prior to each hearing date. Attend the meetings, if you can.

## OPINION: Obsidian = Absurdium

BY CATHY ANTUNES

The built environment is key to setting a community up for prosperity. Beauty, economic opportunity, health, safety - these attributes are supported or diminished by each development decision. The City of Sarasota is considering a development application for Obsidian - a proposed 342 ft building, which would be well over 100 ft taller than its neighbors. It is an absurd proposal, as well as economically unwise due to the proposed reduction in retail space on the ground floor.

The proposed project lies one block from the bayfront on Palm Avenue in the designated Downtown Core of the City of Sarasota. Development projects in the Downtown Core are not required to go through the very public Planning Board and City Commission approval process. Downtown Core project applications are also not required to hold neighborhood workshops. Downtown Core development applications can proceed with administrative approval of City staff. This proposal reduces the existing seven retail spaces down to one, which requires an exemption from the Downtown Core retail requirements. The proposed building busts through the City's building height standards. Tearing the fabric of urban charm and prosperity happens one bad decision at a time. Will City staff represent the public interest here? Should they have sole authority to make this decision?

The Obsidian developer wants to build the tallest building in Sarasota on a small lot and charge \$15 million dollars for the penthouse. Obsidian would be 342 ft high. Neighboring buildings range from 165 to 225 ft. Notwithstanding the developers "vision" claims, there is nothing particularly visionary about a super tall building with an expensive penthouse. The developer wants to include plunge pools, concierge service, fire pits, massage rooms, game rooms, yoga studios, fitness rooms with saunas, a golf simulator, a cigar

lounge, a wine lounge, guest suites and pools and hot tub on the roof. None of these luxury amenities are justification for abandoning sound



Rendering from Obsidian website

development standards, like the City of Sarasota's limit on building height to 18 stories, or required retail on the ground floor.

The City's building height limitation of 18 stories has meant City buildings are limited to roughly 252 ft. The Obsidian developer is stretching this beyond all recognition, claiming that space between floors is unregulated, and therefore the City must allow the 7 ft (or so) between floors which the developer claims is necessary. Skeptics (like yours truly) see this

demand for 7 ft of "interstitial space" between floors as a brazen tactic to get approval for a ridiculously tall building which will tower over its waterfront condominium neighbors and give those living on upper floors a water view on a non-waterfront lot. If the building site is held to the 252 ft, 18 story standard, fewer of its occupants will have a water view. Some still will, because the bay front building adjacent to the lot is 165 ft high. The developer wants more.

The developer also wants to be exempt from requirements for a robust retail presence on the ground floor. Currently there are seven retail spaces on the property. The Obsidian application reduces this to one single retail space. Urban settings thrive when there are ample retail spaces for small businesses. Part of the charm of any City are the unique storefronts that give a particular City its sense of place and appeal. The developer's expectation that the City will suspend the retail requirement is an aspect of the proposal which deserves more attention. Reducing economic opportunity by diminishing retail development requirements is bad economic practice for any city. Reducing retail will negatively impact the walkability of the neighborhood, a key quality of life metric.

New York City has seen a proliferation of "pencil towers" blighting its skyline. These super-tall, super skinny buildings are totally out of scale with their surroundings. One such building in NYC was "inspired by a trash can" and has a penthouse that sold for \$95 million. Like Sarasota, these buildings did not go through a public approval process with public participation. Hopefully the City of Sarasota will shut the door to this local version of "pencil towers". The City would do well to enforce standards which preserve retail space and reasonable building height. The push by the applicant for the City of Sarasota to abandon these standards is ridiculous. Instead of Obsidian, how about Absurdium?



# Profile: Sebastian Martinez, Founder - American Youth Association

BY KATHLEEN MURRAY

Sebastian Martinez is a familiar face and voice to those that attend – or watch on YouTube – the meetings of the Sarasota County School Board.

A 2021 graduate of Booker High School, Martinez became engaged in the workings of his school district during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, he has spoken during public comment, co-organized pro-public education rallies, and leveraged social media to inform and engage his peers about state and local education policy and school board debates and actions.

Martinez previously founded the Sarasota Youth Association and is a founder and CEO of the American Youth Association and state executive director of its Florida Youth Association.

Along with a small team, he is creating a framework that empowers young adults and high school students to educate a young electorate and a platform for youth to assist the next generation of leaders, advocates and citizens who are devoted to social, political and education progress.

In late June, Martinez teamed up with fellow school activist Sebastian Girstl, a local young conservative voice, to present a State of Our Schools Conference at Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center. Their aim was to find common ground by identifying school issues that most, if not all, community stakeholders deemed important.

Martinez answered a few questions from the Critical Times about his journey to grassroots activism and goals for his youth-led organization:

**Critical Times:** “When did you start paying attention to what public officials promised versus what they delivered or didn’t deliver?”

**Martinez:** “I think in 2016, I was 12/13 observing

that presidential election. I remember seeing the debates on television when we were out at different restaurants. I started researching how government works at every level. I then started introducing myself to watching school board meetings, learning how they worked, how they functioned. Then around 2020-21 during the debate over mask mandates for our schools, during the BrainPOP controversy, me and a couple of students made a group chat and we were just talking back and forth. It eventually led to me creating the Sarasota Youth Association, which aimed to help young people learn about their local government.

**Critical Times:** “Did a particular person, class or event light the activism fire in you?”

**Martinez:** “The very first time I attended a school board meeting. I went in prepared with general comments. I remember grown adults were hurling racial slurs at me and another group of students. I remember just standing there because I couldn’t process that that was part of a school board meeting. When I realized how contentious it was I realized that if people didn’t speak out that school board members would hear only one narrative ... A lot of young people I know would pay attention to national and even state politics, but when it came to the school board they assumed it was boring. So I took some students with me around the time when (Superintendent) Asplen was fired. And they were shocked.”

**Critical Times:** “Did you take speech and debate, theater or another class in high school that helped prepare you for all the public-facing work you are doing now?”

**Martinez:** “I did speech and debate through an organization called Technology Student Association – my passion was STEM at the time – and we debated technological issues. I was also in Booker High School’s Law Academy. My teacher, Ms. (Gail)



Sebastian Martinez

Forman, taught us how to research topics, skills I later applied to candidates and policy. Otherwise, I learned along the way. I very quickly discovered my passion for politics and students and teachers and public education in general, so I was just able to go for it.”

**Critical Times:** “Who are some other young activists that you admire and/ or have worked with?”

**Martinez:** “Nora Mitchell, who was a classmate of mine at Booker and founder of Sarasota Students for Justice. We’ve made infographics for social media, talking about what’s going on at the state level, local level. We have our own separate organizations but we both care about the same topics.”

**Critical Times:** “What’s next for the Florida Youth Association?”

**Martinez:** “The aims are threefold: voter registration, voter outreach and voter education. We want to create an educated electorate. Voters need to know what they’re voting for. We also want to be part of school clubs and then eventually have a statewide assembly or conference that would include competitions to assist in developing skills essential to future work in fields such as journalism, photography, cinematography and politics.”

For more information about Florida Youth Association, visit [floridayouthassociation.org](http://floridayouthassociation.org).



Sebastian Girstl speaking at the State of our Schools Conference

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# HEATING UP THE AIRWAVES!

By: Jesse Coleman  
Station Manager

Sarasota's Community Radio is heating up this summer with some favorites returning to the frequency. Our WSLR Programming committee has been working hard to grow this radio-active community and is happy to have some unique voices and sounds returning to the airwaves.



Kid Red will bring his spicy mix of the sounds from the Big Easy to Sarasota on his show *Louisiana Gumbo*, just in time for the temperature to heat up! While the program will feature a healthy seasoning of the zydeco, blues,

and jazz that has put Louisiana on the map, Kid Red will bring his first-hand experience to pepper in lesser-known artists and genres that make the area such a rich and vibrant musical melting pot. Tune in to *Louisiana Gumbo* every **Wednesday afternoon from 2-4 pm.**

Also returning to the WSLR airwaves after a brief hiatus is Laura B's *Songs for Knitting and Mayhem*. The quirky title perfectly represents the musical corner that Laura occupies, allowing listeners to channel their inner turmoil and aggression through a cathar-



tic blend of punk, hardcore, and doom while sitting quietly needling away on a darling set of mittens. Laura's soft-spoken delivery serves as an offbeat counterpoint to the intensity of the music, imploring you not to judge a ball of yarn by its color. You can listen to *Songs for Knitting and Mayhem* alternating Sundays from 9-11 pm.

We also have a bit of movement around the schedule. *The Reverend Billy C Wirtz's Rhythm Revival* will bring all the fire and brimstone that charged the early years of classic rhythm & blues on that old-time rock n' roll to a new day and time - **Saturday from 4-6 pm.**



## wslr lp 96.5 fm WEEKLY PROGRAM GUIDE

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|-------|----------------|

|         | MONDAY  | TUESDAY   | WEDNESDAY                                       | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY   | SATURDAY   | SUNDAY   |  |
|---------|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| 12 mid. |   | Down The Road<br>Syndicated                     | Lumpytunes!<br>The Head Lump, Rob Demperio      | Train to Skaville<br>(Syndicated)                 | All Mixed Up<br>Syndicated                         | Dave Radio<br>Dave Wilkens   | In My Room<br>Syndicated                             |  |
| 1 a.m.  | Deep Threes<br>Syndicated                       |   |   |   |  | Synthelectico<br>Syndicated  |  |  |
| 2 a.m.  | Music<br>Automated playlist                     | Midnight Special<br>Syndicated                  | Music<br>Automated playlist                     | Upfront Soul<br>Syndicated                        | Music<br>Automated playlist                        |  |  |  |
| 3 a.m.  |   |   |   |   |  |  | Music<br>Automated playlist                          |  |
| 4 a.m.  | Thom Hartmann Show<br>Syndicated                | Thom Hartmann Show<br>Syndicated                | Thom Hartmann Show<br>Syndicated                | Thom Hartmann Show<br>Syndicated                  | Thom Hartmann Show<br>Syndicated                   | Music<br>Automated playlist  |  |  |
| 5 a.m.  |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |
| 6 a.m.  | Background Briefing<br>Ian Masters (Syndicated) | Background Briefing<br>Ian Masters (Syndicated) | Background Briefing<br>Ian Masters (Syndicated) | Background Briefing<br>Ian Masters (Syndicated)   | Background Briefing<br>Ian Masters (Syndicated)    | Donne Del Mondo<br>Syndicated  | Keeping Democracy Alive<br>Syndicated                |  |
| 7 a.m.  |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |
| 8 a.m.  | Blues to Bluegrass<br>John D.                   | Corduroy<br>Sebastian Wegeng                    | Indie Psych Show<br>Alecia Harper               | Eclectic Blender<br>Dave Pedersen                 | Latin Explosion<br>Juan Montenegro                 | Saturday Morning<br>Gospel Beat<br>Jonah Ray                         | Interfaith Voices                                    |  |
| 9 a.m.  |   |   | Music with a Purpose<br>Pat Monahan             |   |  |  | Wings of the Heart<br>Carol or Salima                |  |
|         |   |   | ALTERNATE WEEKS                                 |   |  |  |  |  |
| 10 a.m. | ArtBeat<br>Kathleen Murray                      | Art Works<br>Book Show                          | Our Changing<br>Environment                     | Healthy<br>Living Hour                            | Peace & Justice Report<br>Tom Walker & Bob Connors | The Detail<br>Cathy Antunes  | Surreal News<br>Lew Lorini & Steve Norris            |  |
|         |   |   |   |   |  |  | TownTalk<br>Manasota Arts                            |  |
| 11 a.m. | Democracy Now!<br>Amy Goodman (Syndicated)      | Democracy Now!<br>Amy Goodman (Syndicated)      | Democracy Now!<br>Amy Goodman (Syndicated)      | Democracy Now!<br>Amy Goodman (Syndicated)        | Democracy Now!<br>Amy Goodman (Syndicated)         | Democracy Now!<br>Amy Goodman (Syndicated)                           | Radio Reset<br>Sharon Preston-Folta                  |  |
|         |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |
| NOON    | Music of the World<br>Marco Ciceron             | Nuestra Musica<br>Mariano                       | Afro Cuban Jazz<br>Frankie Piniero              | The Blue Groove<br>Mark Gruder                    | Metropics<br>Carlos Pagan                          | Complex Waveforms<br>Mark Zampella                                   | Juke In The Back<br>Syndicated                       |  |
|         |   |   |   |   |  |  | WSLR NEWS (Rebroadcast)                              |  |
| 1 p.m.  | Thom Hartmann Show<br>Syndicated                | Thom Hartmann Show<br>Syndicated                | Thom Hartmann Show<br>Syndicated                | Thom Hartmann Show<br>Syndicated                  | Thom Hartmann Show<br>Syndicated                   | Thom Hartmann Show<br>Syndicated                                     | Shortwave Report (Syndicated)                        |  |
| 2 p.m.  |   |   |   |   |  |  | Attitude of Gratitude<br>The GratiDude               |  |
| 3 p.m.  | Positive Friction<br>John Haupt                 | Second Wind<br>Seany G                          | Louisiana Gumbo<br>Kid Red                      | Outta the Basement,<br>On the Road<br>Purple Mike | High Tide<br>Susan Runyan                          | Everything But the<br>Kitchen Sink<br>Jazz Edition<br>Art on the Air | Everything But the<br>Kitchen Sink<br>Art on the Air |  |
| 4 p.m.  |   |   |   | ALTERNATE WEEKS                                   |  |  | Community Conversations<br>Mel Lavender              |  |
|         |   |   |   |   |  |  | The Scenario<br>Syndicated                           |  |
| 5 p.m.  | Music Museum<br>Ed Foster                       | Synthetic Age<br>JR                             | Indie-licious<br>Sheila Jane                    | Jazz And More<br>Brian Jones                      | Ted's Head<br>Ted                                  | Friday Happy Hour<br>Bartender Tommy D.                              | Rhythm Revival<br>Reverend Billy C. Wirtz            |  |
|         |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |
| 6 p.m.  | Economic Update                                 | Ralph Nader Radio<br>Syndicated                 | WSLR NEWS                                       | Alternative Radio<br>Syndicated                   | WSLR NEWS  | Global Village<br>(Syndicated)                                       | Discovery Road<br>Louise Coogan                      |  |
|         | Capitol Update State News                       |   | Ruthless Truth/Laura Flanders                   |   | Counterspin (Syndicated)                           |  |  |  |
| 7 p.m.  |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |
| 8 p.m.  | Yesterday's Dead Today<br>Mark Binder           | The Root Cellar<br>Roger & Peter                | Acoustic Waves<br>James Hawkins                 | The Old Folk & Americana Festival                 | Velvet Radio<br>Elissa Bello                       | Longboat Luau<br>The Ho-dad  | Ripper's Rarities<br>Russ Yodice                     |  |
|         |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |
| 9 p.m.  |   |   | ALTERNATE WEEKS                                 |   | ALTERNATE WEEKS                                    |  | ALTERNATE WEEKS                                      |  |
| 10 p.m. | First Voices<br>Syndicated                      | Bullwinkle's Corner<br>Keith Winkle             | Random Precision<br>Alex                        | Music Is The Best<br>Mark Markus                  | Microgroove<br>Fallon Markwell                     | The In Between<br>Jay Ackermann                                      | Songs for Knitting and Mayhem<br>Laura               |  |
|         | Indigenous Nation<br>Syndicated                 |   |   |   |  |  | Dystopian Lullaby<br>Nice Guy Eddy                   |  |
|         |   |   |   |   |  |  | ALTERNATE WEEKS                                      |  |
| 11 p.m. | Down The Road<br>Syndicated                     | Lumpytunes!<br>The Head Lump, Rob Demperio      | Afrosonic Taxi<br>(Syndicated)                  | All Mixed Up<br>Syndicated                        | Dave Radio<br>Dave Wilkens                         | In My Room<br>Syndicated   | Cafe Chill<br>Syndicated                             |  |
| 12 mid. |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |

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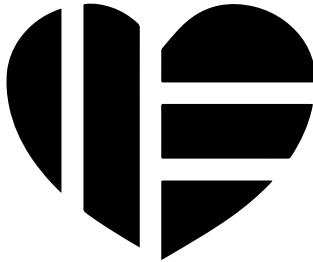
## -ELLIS PAUL-

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## Community Poetry Workshop

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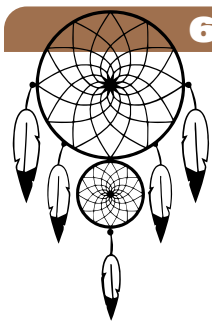
## STEVE FORBERT

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Somewhere between Rock & Folk, his albums are in everyone's collections. 1979 his best-known song, "Romeo's Tune," propelled him into commercial stardom at 25- Now 4 decades later; he is STILL writing powerful/catchy songs and is on the road. This show will sell-out early, DO NOT HESITATE-



6-8pm Monday, 10/09 FREE



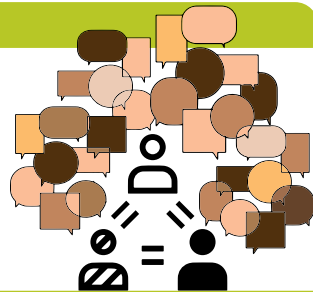
## INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY WORKSHOP:

How to Write and Facilitate Land Acknowledgements - Facilitated by Yoleidy Rosario-Hernandez -

5-8pm Thursday 10/12 FREE

## Let's Talk about Race

Participants will engage in thoughtful dialogue about race and its impact on community relationships. Facilitated by Yoleidy Rosario-Hernandez



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# The Future of Media: Collaboration

continued from page 1

house at WSLR, we have public affairs shows that also generate news we can re-use. Last but not least, there's the Community News Collaborative, a Barancik Foundation-backed undertaking hosted by USF Sarasota-Manatee that will soon begin to crank out local news for us to pick up.

WSLR has been a feeder of news as well. Due to the right-wing extremism unique to politics in Sarasota and Manatee counties and the attention this causes, some of our local stories are being picked up by partner station WMNF in Tampa, and by the national Pacifica network. For a 17-year old intern, having your story aired nationwide is quite the achievement — and this happened in several instances in just a few months.

But there's still much room to grow when it comes to collaboration. Which brings me back to the Collaborative Journalism conference. Here are some take-aways for WSLR from my four days in Washington:

- **Hyperlocal collaboratives:** Charlottesville Tomorrow. In this small Virginia college town, which rose to national notoriety early in Donald Trump's presidency when tiki torch-bearing Nazis haunted its streets — the publisher of a city magazine reached out to African American communicators and community members to create "First-Person Charlottesville". This is a space for community members who are usually unheard, to tell their own stories, on their own terms – but with fact-checking. And, importantly, participants are paid for their contributions. Next: the collaborative wants to create a community media center that offers training programs to educate journalists. As one of the organizers calls it: "Mining for genius in the community".
- "Resolve Philly" - 29 news organizations in Philadelphia joined forces during the pandemic, to better report for and WITH local communities in challenging times. That collaborative is focusing on systemic issues — problems that are highly visible, but whose causes aren't.
- **Community engagement:** One news outlet in Tennessee, MLK50, is focusing on hands-on help



Kevin Hall (seated on the right), North America editor of the international collaborative that produced the Panama Papers, takes part in a panel discussion at the Collaborative Journalism Summit in Washington, DC. Photo: Johannes Werner

with housing. They created an eviction guide, a guide with tips for dealing with landlords, and a tenant rights event. They also hosted a broader event on fighting poverty.

- **National and international collaboratives** help local newsrooms track and produce complex stories. The global collaborative of Panama Papers fame is ready to assist WSLR with a possible investigation into illicit dollars that might be fueling Sarasota's luxury construction boom. Kevin Hall, North America editor of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting collaborative, is scheduled to join us for an intro session in July at the station in Sarasota. We're also closely following the Center for Public Integrity, which helps local newsrooms cover disaster and homelessness news.

- There are two university- and student-led state legislature reporting programs in Florida — one at the journalism school of Florida A&M, and another one at the University of Florida. We could

plug into their reports from Tallahassee.

- There are national collaborations of like-minded media outlets, such as "News is Out", a national queer collaborative of six LGBTQ publications.
- **Micro media** aiming at Hispanic audiences are using unorthodox channels. Both Arizona Conecta and Documentado, an outlet based in New York City aiming at immigrants and immigration law and policy, are using WhatsApp groups and one-on-one conversation to reach their audiences. Outlier Media in Detroit started with text messages only.
- **Local media undertakings** in New Jersey, Oklahoma and elsewhere are producing their news in both English and Spanish, to maximize their reach.

If you are interested in collaborating with WSLR to bring more local news and information to the community, please contact me at [news@wslr.org](mailto:news@wslr.org).

## Reclaiming Home

continued from page 3

Her father, Brian Zepeda (bandolier bags), uncle Pedro Zepeda (canoe carving), and cousin Jessica Osceola (ceramic and photography) are also exhibiting artists in "Reclaiming Home."

"It's a family affair," Corinne Zepeda said. "And I have learned from all of them different things in life or different skills."

The exhibition opens with portraiture and narrative figurative paintings by the late Noah Billie, an acclaimed Seminole artist and Vietnam War veteran, that are a loan to The Ringling by the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, located on the Big Cypress Indian Reservation.

It also features Jessica Osceola's self-portrait triptych in clay "Portrait One," "Portrait Two" and "Portrait Three," which The Ringling acquired in 2022, the first work by a Seminole artist to enter the museum's permanent collection of modern and contemporary art.

"I hope that this inspires other institutions in Florida to do the same and I hope The Ringling acquires more, Wlusek said.



Photo of exhibition. Photo Credit: Lunardi Photography

If you go:

"Reclaiming Home: Contemporary Seminole Art" on view through Sept. 4 in the Searing West Wing Galleries of The Ringling Museum of Art, 5401 Bay Shore Road; open daily 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; free admission to the art museum on Mondays.

Gallery Talks:

**Tuesday, Aug. 1** at 11 a.m. led by artists Corinne Zepeda (mixed media) and Wilson Bowers (murals and skateboard wall installations)

**Thursday, Aug. 3** at 6 p.m. led by TBD  
For more information, visit [ringling.org](http://ringling.org)



# Locals Rally to End Gun Violence

BY SERENA CANNARELLI

On Sunday, June 4th, a “Wear Orange Rally” sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Venice (UUCOV) was held immediately after the church service at the corner of Pinebrook and Edmondson roads in Venice.

Almost 100 people from all over the area joined the rally against gun violence, including young and old, members of civic organizations, Moms Demand Action, the Venice Interfaith Community Association, SunCoast Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), and even two people who drove all the way from Port Charlotte.

The effort was directed at legislators to support and pass gun safety legislation, support and protect children and all victims and families of gun violence, and to ban assault weapons and other weapons of war in the hands of our citizens.

Participants were asked to wear orange to recognize the three-day period known since 2015 as Gun Violence Awareness Day. The color orange was chosen because it is the color hunters wear in the woods to protect themselves and others.

Gun Violence Awareness Day was initially held to recognize the violent shooting of Hadiya Pendleton who was killed on a Chicago playground in 2013. Two years later, her friends decided to

commemorate what would have been her 18th birthday with a “wear orange” event, which has grown to be a national activity of the gun violence prevention movement.



Wear Orange Rally sponsored by the UUCOV

In 2022, more than 1,500 partner organizations, corporate brands, and elected officials joined hundreds of thousands of fellow Americans calling for an end to gun violence. Details on this national movement are on the website [wearorange.org](https://www.wearorange.org), but demonstrations against gun violence are needed all year long, until our legislators take action!

Photos and videos of the June 4th event in Venice are on the public Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/citizensforjusticeaction>.

[facebook.com/groups/citizensforjusticeaction](https://www.facebook.com/groups/citizensforjusticeaction).

All those concerned are invited to join this group.

*Addendum:*

Moms Demand Action also organized to have local government bodies adopt proclamations supporting Gun Violence Awareness Week.

From Ginger McCallum, local organizer for Moms Demand Action:

In Manatee County the Board of County Commissioners used the proclamation as one more opportunity to congratulate themselves for turning Manatee County into a Gun Sanctuary. Not only did they not use the proclamation supported by our group with 18 supporting organizations, they rewrote it with a 2nd amendment bent, threw the proclamation on the agenda at the last minute and had their newly hired Public Safety director accept it. These actions usurped our message and ultimately dishonored the gun violence victims, survivors and those working to support them.

The Bradenton City Council and the Sarasota City Commission both adopted proclamations that aligned with the group’s message and commitment to raise awareness and honor victims and survivors.

## Opinion: Hopeful Signs Emerge in Sarasota Schools

BY CAROL LERNER, DIRECTOR, SUPPORT OUR SCHOOLS

Last year “conservative” school board candidates Bridget Ziegler, Tim Enos and Robyn Marinelli were supported by the ZEM campaign, largely financed by Vic Mellor, owner of The Hollow, and Michael Flynn. The ZEM-backed candidates won in a low-turnout August 2022 election with only 37% of eligible voters casting a ballot. Within minutes of taking office, the new conservative majority on the school board initiated the process of firing the popular Sarasota superintendent, Dr. Brennan Asplen. This was followed by the dismantling of various policies and programs, including the well-liked Character Strong social-emotional learning program.

Many within the community responded with outrage. People of all ages, including parents, teachers, students, and residents, spoke out against the firing of Dr. Asplen at school board meetings. Even registered Republicans who had voted for the ZEM candidates expressed their dissatisfaction with the decision. The narrative began to shift, with supporters of public education outnumbering those who sought to undermine and destroy it.

But the major turning point came in March when Bridget Ziegler, the school board chair and founder of Moms for Liberty, proposed a sweeping audit of Sarasota County Schools by an unknown and recently incorporated company called Vermillion Education. SupportOurSchools quickly investigated Vermillion Education and discovered its dubious background, including its association with the right-wing Hillsdale College. SOS researchers learned that Vermillion was headed up by Jordan Adams, a 34-year-old who had left Hillsdale College only days before, and who, while at Hillsdale College, helped to write and distribute Donald Trump’s pro-Christian Nationalism “1776 Curriculum” as well as vet Florida math textbooks for alleged critical race theory violations.

Hundreds of people rallied against the Vermillion proposal prior to the April 4th and 18th school board meetings and public commentary at these

meetings lasted more than four hours. The Sarasota School Board members received an unprecedented number of emails from the public, and in the end, the Vermillion proposal was voted down 3-2 with Marinelli and Enos joining Tom Edwards. This marked a major defeat for Ziegler.

The dynamics on the school board continued to shift when it came to selecting a new superintendent. Of the 21 initial applicants, the company that vetted the applicants, McPherson and Jacobson, only recommended six semi-finalists, admitting privately to an SOS member that the reputation of the Sarasota School Board limited the number of qualified applicants who applied. Terrence Connor, currently the Assistant Superintendent at Hillsborough County Schools and a career educator, emerged as the favorite candidate of public education supporters including the Sarasota Classified/Teachers Association. On the other hand, Dr. Charlie Van Zant was the clear favorite of the ZEM crowd. Van Zant previously served as an unpopular superintendent in Clay County and described himself as “a conservative” in his cover letter to the Board despite the clear message from most in the community that they wanted an apolitical superintendent. He also recently said that he wanted to reach out to “unchurched students” when speaking as a finalist for superintendent in Collier County. Dr. Joe Phillips, a Liberty University graduate and Information Director from Broward County, was a close second with this group. In the final vote, Connor won in a 3-2 decision with conservative board members Marinelli and Rose joining Edwards. Board member Enos voted for Sarasota Acting Superintendent Dr. Allison Foster and Board Chair Ziegler voted for Dr. Phillips. Ziegler was isolated by the rest of the school board for a second time.

Despite winning the school board vote and enjoying wide support from most teachers, administrators and the bulk of the community, Connor faces significant challenges. DeSantis and the Florida legislature have completely restructured education in Florida forcing every Florida superintendent to deal with what US District Judge

Mark Walker called Florida’s “positively dystopian” laws. For example, there is a law on the books that makes it a felony, punishable for as much as five years in prison, if a teacher violates the state’s ban on books, materials and lessons that include information related to critical race theory and gender-related topics. As one Sarasota teacher put it, “We live in constant fear and it’s exhausting.”

Another bill from this legislative session, makes it easier to ban books. It allows anyone in the residing county to file a complaint against a book or instructional material and remove the book from circulation until a decision is made on the book. This same law, HB 1069, which expands on the previous “Don’t Say Gay” bill, prevents any mention or discussion of sexual and gender identity related topics through 8th grade and places some limitations in high school. The legislature also placed an 8 year term limit on school board members (HB 477) and passed the first of two parts (second part is a ballot initiative) aimed at transforming current nonpartisan school board elections into partisan affairs.

There are positive signs that Connor will work to decrease the polarization in Sarasota County. He pledged to work with all students and respect the rights of all parents. He also indicated during the public interview process that one of the first things he will do is to look at the impact of the recently passed HB 1 legislation establishing universal savings accounts that threaten to put a \$65 million hole in the Sarasota County Schools budget.

The Sarasota community, tired of polarization and chaos, seeks a board that can collaborate with Superintendent Connor to improve educational outcomes and support the well-being of all students. The future remains uncertain (at the time this article went to press, Ziegler had just raised at a June 20 workshop that she would like to resubmit a resolution on hiring Vermillion Education), but the collective determination of those attending school board meetings and the broader community signals a desire for positive change and the reestablishment of a thriving education system for all students in Sarasota.



# OPINION: Upholding Democracy

BY AMY KEITH, COMMON CAUSE FLORIDA

Working towards an inclusive democracy means putting the interests of the people before wealthy special interests, big donors, and political parties. A crucial part of this endeavor is guaranteeing voting access, so that every eligible voter can easily register to vote and cast their ballot.

But in Florida it is getting harder to vote. With the passage this year of S.B. 7050, state legislators have put barriers into law that unnecessarily hinder participation of Floridians in our elections and democracy. This while weakening campaign finance regulations and granting Gov. Ron DeSantis an exception to our resign-to-run law that lets him remain in office as he runs for president.

The provisions in this bill especially target community-based voter registration groups with the threat of hefty fines and new restrictions. In turn, we anticipate this will make voting harder for the many Floridians who depend on these groups to register to vote and keep their voter registration up-to-date. This will hit communities of color the hardest, with one out of every ten Black and Hispanic voters registered by these groups.

The anti-democratic impacts of S.B. 7050 don't end there, however. Floridians will find it particularly difficult to register to vote if they don't have a state ID or driver's license. Without these forms of

identification, Floridians can't register to vote online and, with the new restrictions on community-based voter registration groups, we will see fewer voter registration opportunities out in our communities. That will mean additional hurdles for voters without ID to overcome, including the challenges



Staff and volunteers of the "Stay Woke Florida" tour pose with local activists during a stop at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Sarasota. Photo: Johannes Werner

of arranging transportation to authorized registration locations or printing and mailing their forms.

Non-English speaking Floridians who are eligible to vote may face even more hardships. This new legislation created fines of up to \$50,000 for voter registration organizations if any non-citizens, including Green Card holders and others who are legally authorized to work in the U.S., handle voter registration forms. We expect this will mean many long-time volunteers, who may not be citizens but believe in our democracy, are now unable to use

their language skills to help eligible voters register to vote. This aspect of S.B. 7050 not only violates the foundational principles of our democracy, but also flagrantly discriminates against immigrants.

Adding to the concerns, this year marks the third year in a row where the legislature has changed the vote-by-mail rules; this time shortening the time voters have to request their ballot be mailed to them and the imposition of fresh requirements, such as completing an emergency affidavit when requesting a mail ballot during early voting.

Floridians deserve better than these regressive measures that impede our democratic rights. This new legislation poses further threats to eligible voters' ability to make their voices heard at the ballot box.

But the fight for civic engagement is far from over. Register to vote if you aren't already registered, sign up for vote-by-mail, and encourage your friends, neighbors, and family to follow your lead.

For voters who encounter difficulties, the nonpartisan Election Protection hotline at **866-OUR-VOTE** is available to answer questions from voters year-round.

Together, we will be heard.

Amy Keith is the program director for Common Cause Florida, a nonpartisan democracy reform organization with more than 90,000 members in Florida. She can be reached at [akeith@commoncause.org](mailto:akeith@commoncause.org).

# OPINION: DeSantis's Freedom

BY CATHY ANTUNES

Ron DeSantis uses the word "freedom" a lot. We've all heard his "free state of Florida" mantra (yada yada yada). But we've seen plenty of anti-freedom moves under the DeSantis regime, like voter suppression, racially motivated gerrymandering and the creation of an election police force. His insurance company bailout legislation makes it harder for homeowners to sue over unfair denial of claims - giving insurance companies greater freedom to walk away from their responsibility to homeowners. But perhaps most alarming - a group of Nazis demonstrating outside Disney World with a DeSantis banner is a potent visual demonstration of who DeSantis empowers and dances with while attempting to frame himself as a freedom lover.

When the photo of the Nazi demonstrators made the rounds on social media, some DeSantis supporters were quick to point out that DeSantis recently signed legislation to ramp up penalties for anti-semitism. Okay - but where was the big signing ceremony? And why did the Governor remain silent for years while anti-semitic attacks increased in Florida? As I write this, the day after the Nazis showed up with a DeSantis flag outside Disney World, there are still no words of condemnation from the Governor. Sometimes such words, like legislation, are too little too late. It's a tough balancing act - inciting division and hate to drive your base to the polls, while throwing a bone here and there toward maintaining the veneer of respectability.

DeSantis 2021 legislation aimed at eliminating peaceful public protest in the wake of the death of George Floyd was labeled an "anti-riot bill" by the DeSantis administration. The ACLU see it differently. "Let's be clear: this is not an anti-riot bill, regardless of what supporters claim," Micah Kubic, executive director of the ACLU of Florida, said

when it was passed. "It is a bill that criminalizes peaceful protest, and the impact HB1 will have on Floridians cannot be disputed. Each and every provision harkens back to Jim Crow." The legislation makes peaceful citizen protesters subject to arrest if others present at an event are violent or disorderly. It also categorizes such offenses as felonies, another voter suppression move.

Elevating minor offenses to felonies, like making loitering a felony, was a legal tactic used in Florida to suppress the black vote after the Civil War. Those who were found guilty of felonies lost their right to vote. In this way, white Florida voters who had been members of the Confederacy (and thus lost their right to vote) could rest assured that their black neighbors' vote would not overtake the voting numbers of the white population. It's a shameful history that this Republican governor has resurrected.

Floridians saw the vindictive nature of DeSantis' new law when Nikki Fried was arrested for protesting DeSantis' 6 week abortion ban. In that particular instance, legislators had designated the state capitol as a park, and because parks close at sundown, protesters can be considered trespassers after dark. Would the Nazis have been arrested after dark at the state capitol like Fried was? Why weren't the Nazi's arrested at Disney?

DeSantis' focus on disenfranchising minorities and his racist sympathies were on display with his draconian gerrymandering of Florida's 5th



Neo-Nazis demonstrating outside of Walt Disney World in response to former President Donald Trump's federal indictment. Photo Credit: Courtesy of Anna Eskamami Twitter Feed: <https://twitter.com/AnnaForFlorida/status/1667583474276990976>

Congressional district. Claiming the boundaries for African-American Congressman Al Lawson's district were unconstitutional, DeSantis' redistricting map chopped the district into 4 pieces. Never in the history of Florida had a Governor taken such a direct and demanding role in redistricting.

"I served in the legislature for 17 years and never in the history of the legislative body have we turned over the redistricting to the governor. Never heard of that - never," said Tony Hill, a former Lawson staffer.

Al Lawson was elected to Congress in 2016, and was easily re-elected to the House in 2018 and 2020. But when he ran for re-election in 2022, after the DeSantis directed gerrymandering of his district, he lost to a white Republican by nearly 20 points.

The Nazis have their reasons for waving a DeSantis flag, DeSantis' has his reasons for failing to disavow their support. Floridians who care about freedom have work to do.



# OPINION: Private Equity Takeover of Hospitals Not Good For Health Care

BY SALLY COLER

There's an old saying, "If you don't have your health, then you don't have anything." Truer words were never spoken. The health care system and Medicare and Medicaid are critical for our country and need to be protected at all costs. That is why the takeover of hospitals by private equity firms, whose goals are to make money for their investors is so destructive.

The largest business of this kind is HCA, Hospital Corporation of America, which has a strong foothold in Florida, owning around 48 hospitals, second only to Texas where it owns over 50.

Insight into HCA's business operations are more complicated because they are not subject to the same regulations as other businesses. They may have an advisor, who is registered with the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission), but private equity firms themselves are not subject to public disclosure requirements.

HCA was founded in 1968 and has seen rapid growth in the industry and merged with several health care and hospital corporations to operate over 460 hospitals (255 owned and 208 managed). The additional sites include surgery centers, ERs, urgent care and physician's clinics. After a leveraged management buyout, it emerged as a public company in 1992 and in 2021, was ranked #62 on the Fortune 500 ranking of the largest United States corporations by total revenue.

The company engaged in illegal accounting and fraudulent practices in the 1990s which led to the FBI raiding HCA operations in 6 states. The accusations included the following:

1. Medicare and Medicaid billing for tests not necessary or ordered by a physician;
2. Attachment of false diagnosis codes to patient records to increase reimbursements to the hospital, a practice known as "upcoding;"
3. Billing government agencies for home health care visits for patients who did not qualify to receive them.

HCA pleaded guilty to fraud and paid \$2 billion in federal fines and other penalties. This case is famous for the dismissal of Rick Scott, who was the CEO and is now a Florida US Senator.

Current investigative reporting shows that for-profit hospitals are more expensive, less efficient, have less staff and offer lower quality care. Furthermore, vertical and horizontal consolidation has been shown to increase costs while having little to no impact on improving patients' quality of care or the efficiency of health care systems. In 2022, the Congressional Chair of the House Ways and Means Oversight Committee, requested the US Dept. of Health and Human Services investigate alleged fraud reports and staffing issues at HCA facilities. The allegations state that HCA had accrued \$1.8 billion in excess revenue from Medicare for unnecessary admissions to the ER and that their staffing levels trailed the national average by 30%. Similar accusations were also levied by the Service Employees International Union.

In Florida the City of Brevard filed complaints and the Bayonet Point Hospital in Hudson, FL was the subject of an NBC investigative news story fueled by staff reports of unsafe and unsanitary conditions as well as reducing staff

Total PE investment in healthcare has skyrocketed in the past 20 years



Source: Appelbaum and Batt 2020.

and hiring contract workers. There have also been complaints from Blake Hospital in Bradenton, Florida Citrus Hospital, Westside Hospital in Plantation, HCA Hospital in South Tampa and Oak Hill Hospital in Brooksville. Earlier this year, Florida Senator Rubio and Congressman Bilirakis sent letters to HCA requesting answers on complaints from constituents, but no answers have emerged at this time

The largest problem is the hospital's billing, revenues and operating expenses. The operating margin is the percentage of revenue that a company generates that can be used to pay the company's investors and taxes. In a study of 30 hospital systems, HCA's operating expenses of \$13.67 billion were the highest, of any other company in the country with two exceptions.

In 2022, HCA purchased Doctors Hospital in Sarasota. Earlier this year, I was there in the ER after a fall for about 10 hours. The majority of the time, I spent on a cot outside Radiology waiting for X-Rays. Eventually, I had 4 CT scans and hoped to see a doctor for the results, but that never happened. My Medicare bill for this brief period of time was over \$90,000. The billing and the cost of the CT scans were ten times higher than anything I had seen in the past. Inflated expenses seem to be the norm and a thorough investigation seems to be called for.

A listing of 20 HCA hospitals in Florida follows: North Florida Hospital (Gainesville), Ocala Hospital, JFK Hospital (Palm Beach), Kendall Hospital (Miami), Brandon Hospital, Osceola Hospital, Memorial Hospital (Jacksonville), Lawnwood Hospital (Ft. Pierce), Orange Park

Hospital, Aventura Hospital, West Hospital (Pensacola), Largo Hospital, Oak Hill Hospital (Brooksville), Bayonet Point Hospital (Hudson), Ft. Walton-Destin, Capital Hospital (Tallahassee), Westside Hospital (Plantation), Gulf Coast Hospital (Ft. Myers), Trinity Hospital (Trinity), Blake Hospital (Bradenton).

There could not be a better example of why our country needs Universal Health Care and Medicare for All than this story. It's unconscionable that for-profit companies have not only been able to take over our hospitals, but also reduce staff and quality of care to make money for their investors. What happened to America's motto, "of the people, by the people and for the people"?




**RSVP**



**World Mangrove Day Family Celebration & Patrol Boat Christening**

On World Mangrove Day, Suncoast Waterkeeper is launching its new and improved citizen pollution monitoring program, **EYES ON THE SUNCOAST**. Suncoast Waterkeeper will have a family-friendly festival to celebrate the launch of the new program, mangroves, and Suncoast Waterkeeper's new patrol boat. **JOIN US to celebrate & christen our new patrol boat during this family-friendly event!**







**When** Saturday, July 29, 9 AM-Noon  
Boat Christening at 11:30 AM

**Where** Sarasota Sailing Squadron  
1717 Ken Thompson Pkwy  
Sarasota, FL 34236

**Activities** Sun prints, dip netting, SUP lessons, casting lessons, Eyes on the Suncoast training, live music, raffle

**Food** Food trucks including Big Blue Grilled Cheese Co. and the Chill Mobile



# A View from the Border

BY ALLAN MESTEL

As a documentary photographer and photojournalist I have traveled to the southern border many times over the last few years documenting the lives of migrants seeking asylum in the US. In early May I returned to Matamoros, Mexico to document the ending of Title 42, the public health regulation that had been used as a tool to deprive asylum seekers of their legal right to due process.

In Matamoros, on the banks of the Rio Grande, over two thousand people camped on scrub land between the town and the river, living on dried mud under primitive tarpaulin shelters. The deprivation was unimaginable. With no running

water, no sanitation, no garbage pickup, they lived as primitive an existence as anywhere in the western hemisphere.

The images I captured represent the reality of who these migrants are - not an invading army of gang-members and military-aged males looking to pillage the United States, but families fleeing violence and poverty looking for an opportunity to live productive lives in a safe country. Despite the deprivation and hardship of the camp, the atmosphere was positive and hopeful. Children played like children anywhere, happy because they are loved and because of their incredible resilience. The dangers that these families have faced during their journeys just fuels their commitment to forge a better life.

Currently, there are no visa categories for many of the types of jobs that realistically no American is willing to do at any price. Who is willing to work the fields harvesting fruits and vegetables for fifty cents per five-gallon bucket? Demonizing migrants is politically expedient and plays to nativist and white-supremacist ideologies that form the hardcore base of the Republican party, but immigration is necessary and a net positive for the country. Harmonizing immigration policy with legitimate labor needs is the solution, but scapegoating migrants to secure the support of a xenophobic voting block seems to be the priority for certain politicians.

To view more of Allan's pictures from the border, visit [www.allanmestel.com](http://www.allanmestel.com).



## More Change Coming to New College

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However, how many new faculty have been hired and how many more vacancies remain is less certain. During the June 1 Board of Trustees meeting, it was announced that there were still 12 faculty openings—but current faculty have not been kept in the loop as to what these vacancies are for.

“Are they spots that were occupied by faculty who were already hired at New College and are going somewhere else?” Professor of Mathematics and Vice Chair of the Faculty Patrick McDonald asked. “Are they people who are on leave? Are they lines that we had decided that we were going to fill but just didn’t get around to doing?”

Where prospective faculty may be recruited from under this new administration is another point of interest—especially after it was discovered that Corcoran sent a letter to the conservative nonprofit Florida Citizens Alliance in April in order to recruit students from members of the organization. The Florida Citizens Alliance states on its website that the Florida public school system “destroys our nation’s founding principles and family values” and that children are being “indoctrinated” by public schools. In his letter to the Florida Citizens Alliance, Corcoran promised \$10,000 scholarships to first-time-in-college students or transfer students who enroll at New College for the Fall 2023 semester.

When it comes to faculty members recruiting other faculty members, Harvey said that they advertise vacant positions in national journals and web forums, and that both faculty and administrators use their own personal and professional networks to circulate job advertisements. Regardless of how they are recruited, all prospective faculty members need to be reviewed by a faculty committee and approved by the relevant academic division—however, this approval is ultimately advisory to the president.

Similarly, the new curriculum that current faculty will construct will need to be approved by

the Board of Trustees. Harvey is one of three faculty members overseeing three working groups—the “Great Works” group, the “Techne” group and a steering committee—with a total of 23 members designing this new curriculum. The Great Works group is responsible for developing courses and requirements related to “engagement with classic texts engaging ‘big questions,’” according to Harvey, per the request of the Board of Trustees. The Techne group will develop courses and requirements on “quantitative literacy, technical skills, and career readiness,” similar to New College’s already existent Career Engagement and Opportunity (CEO) office. Meanwhile, the steering group will focus on “implementation and integration of the new requirements within the New College academic program.”

Both Harvey and McDonald theorize that the new curriculum that faculty create may not have to deviate too strongly from the current curriculum, known as “Chart Your Course” or CYC.

“In the May 2023 faculty meeting, I referred to [the new potential curriculum] as ‘CYC Prime,’” Harvey said. “Many of these requirements were put in place by the State of Florida, so we couldn’t change them even if we wanted to do so.”

“How much of what we already do is efficient, just hasn’t been presented as such?” McDonald asked, who is also the Natural Sciences representative in the Great Works group. “I think there are some people in these committees—myself included—who are strong believers in agency and autonomy for students. That’s the reason that we’re here at New College, that’s the reason that we’re staying at New College, and we don’t want to see that vanish.”

While this new curriculum will continue to develop over the summer and should begin to take effect in the fall, currently enrolled students who have already spent at least one semester under

the CYC guidelines will be allowed to continue their education at New College under these same guidelines instead of transferring over.



NCF Alumni Mike Sanderson speaks to interim President Richard Corcoran before the May BOT meeting. Photo Credit: Sophia Brown.

While the specifics of this new curriculum remain to be seen, McDonald emphasized that this is an exercise in process. Since the Board of Trustees will ultimately need to approve this curriculum, there is once again an opportunity for the divisive board to find common ground with the New College community. And, there is still the possibility that pre-existing processes at the college—such as the tenure process or the authority of the student government to determine school symbols—might be disregarded or voted down once more.

“If shared governance is going to work, there has to be a guarantee that process, as already understood and defined, is actually followed,” McDonald said. “Process is the only real guarantee we have for preserving the integrity of the institution.”