eat local week - october 14-21, 2023

by joyce norris, executive director, transition sarasota

Eat Local Week, organized by Transition Sarasota, is back for its 12th year! Events during this week-long festival will revolve around the theme “Local Food, Future Resilience”. Transition Sarasota is a local nonprofit dedicated to creating food and economic security by supporting local, sustainable sources in the hopes of creating a thriving community now and for future generations.

Educational and engaging events will cover a range of topics from a farm tour with Honeyside Farms, edible plant walk with Chinese Herbalist Bob Linde, a “Meet Your Farmer” speaker event and cooking demo at Lakewood Ranch Farmers Market, fruit tree workshop, cooking demo with Zildjian Catering & Consulting, composting lesson with Sunshine Community Compost, a tour of Palma Sola Park, and more. Festivities begin on October 14th with a plant sale at UF/IFAS at Twin Lakes Park and conclude October 21st with the popular annual Big Mama’s Collard Green Fest.

Eat Local Week celebrates the rich local food environment of Sarasota and Manatee Counties with connections to local businesses and nonprofit partners and a diverse selection of independently organized events. The festival routinely offers a unique mix of fun and informative tours, classes, and presentations. Full details and how to register for events is available at https://www.transitionsrq.org/eatlocalweek and on Transition Sarasota’s Facebook page.

Mark your calendars! Eat Local Week events have limited space, so be sure to sign up in advance. We hope you’ll be inspired to join the celebration! Transition Sarasota is still accepting sponsors for Eat Local Week. If you are interested in getting involved through community support, please reach out to Exec@transitionsrq.org.

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BY EMY MCGUIRE

Over forty years ago, at 2am on a Wednesday, Leslie Harrell was walking the streets of Sarasota, high on crack cocaine. Once, Leslie had been a high school honors student and a young mother with a world of scholarships and possibilities before her. But when she was eighteen, Leslie was caught in a horrific cycle of human trafficking and substance abuse.

Leslie shuffled past closed shops and bustling streetlamps. She contemplated God and life as she wandered. It seemed that she would continue to walk, listless and lonely, for another ten years.

Then she saw the church.

Unlike the rest of the city, which slept with shuttered windows and ‘closed’ signs, the doors to Bethel CME Church hung wide open. Someone had broken in. Leslie called the police, who immediately assumed she had robbed the church. There was nothing she could do but wait and see if she was to be arrested.

The reverend, a man Leslie had never met before, told the cops she was one of his parishioners. The police left Leslie with the reverend who turned to her and said simply, “Leslie, go home, and I’ll see you on Sunday.”

Every year, hundreds of thousands of children in America are separated from their parents due to situations such as incarceration, drug abuse, and trafficking. Leslie Harrell was just one of the mothers shaped by this trauma. Today, she is an articulate and passionate woman with a bachelors in Theology and a Masters in Peace and Social Justice. This December she will graduate with a Doctor in Strategic Leadership, and Social Justice. Leslie is proud of what she built with her peers on the dangers of tobacco and gives them the opportunity to find their voice just as she did through Truly Valued.

One young student began attending Truly Valued sessions when she was in fifth grade. Shavonne described her as introverted and unsure, but during her time in the program, she discovered her capabilities as a leader. Today, she is the Vice President of a club at Braden River High School, helping other youth. She educates her peers on the dangers of tobacco and gives them the opportunity to find their voice just as she did through Truly Valued.

Leslie Harrell works as the Community Engagement Manager, teaching parent classes and leading a sixteen-week program for parents transitioning into life after prison. “These were fathers who wanted to be the best they could be for their children. And they took the initiative to be there every week. And now some of them have gone on to be reunited with their children, and they send me text messages and updates, they inbox me on Facebook just to say thank you and what it meant for them to be part of the Nurturing Families Program.”

Each parent and child helped through Truly Valued is a personal victory for Leslie, who was not able to raise her own children. Leslie told m, “Shavonne came back to me when she was around fifteen years old, and we have been inseparable ever since then… Now we have families where we are empowering parents and serving in three counties… to help them embrace who they are and to always know that they are truly valued.”

If you are interested in aiding Truly Valued in their mission, go to their website at TrulyValued.org, attend future events, or consider submitting a query to volunteer.
Little Satchmo Wins Emmy

BY KATHLEEN MURRAY

Congratulations go out to Sharon Preston-Folta whose film “Little Satchmo” won the Southeast Emmy Award for Outstanding Historical Documentary in June of this year! Film director John Alexander and producer JC Guest were at the Awards Gala in Atlanta to accept the Emmy. Sharon Preston-Folta is a member of the WSLR-Fogartyville Board of Directors and host of “TownTalk Tampa Bay” and “Radio RESET,” which air Saturday mornings on WSLR 96.5FM.


For Preston-Folta and the “Little Satchmo” team, winning the Emmy reinforced their observations of the film’s impact. “We knew from the reaction of the audience over the last two years what a special documentary we had,” Preston-Folta said. “And to get the honor of winning the Emmy was the icing on the cake.”

At just about every audience Q&A, Preston-Folta is asked about her favorite memory of her father. “My Mom and I traveled with him in my younger years and got to see him play in concert,” she said. “I enjoyed how much fun he had, and he played a different version of ‘Hello, Dolly’ every time. It was always one big love fest between him and his audience.”

“Little Satchmo” has been racking up awards and critical acclaim ever since it premiered at Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival in 2021. It was featured in PBS Reel South Season 7 and has been distributed in Great Britain, New Zealand, Italy and the Czech Republic by PBS America. This year, it will be screened in Atlanta, Mississippi and Louisiana as part of the Southern Circuit Tour of Independent Filmmakers. Preston-Folta is especially looking forward to a Docs in Progress screening in Silver Spring, MD, in December.

What does the “Little Satchmo” executive producer want to accomplish next with the film? “My hope is actually for us to find a distribution on the continent of Africa,” says Preston-Folta. “I think that is our next frontier – what we’re hoping for and working towards.”

New Interns Bring Fresh Energy to WSLR

BY DANIA HEFLEY

WSLR, Sarasota’s community radio station, has a time-honored tradition of embracing New College students into its fold every year through its internship program. This year, they continue that tradition by welcoming four new interns to the team. We caught up with these interns, Aria Lockman, Sarah Malickson, Emy McGuire, and Dania Hefley, to learn more about their backgrounds, aspirations, and what they hope to contribute to WSLR during their internships.

Aria Lockman, a second-year student at New College of Florida, is no stranger to the world of journalism, having worked for the Catalyst, the New College student newspaper. This year she holds the position of Communications Intern at WSLR. Aria’s responsibilities range from writing and recording PSA’s for programmers to crafting various kinds of articles and even taking on different marketing projects for the station. Aria noted that despite having experience with written journalism, radio is something completely out of her realm, and just the kind of new experience she needs to further her career goals. To future interns, Aria advises, “Put yourself out there, especially for new experiences. It may be nerve-wracking, but it’s worth it. You get such a good experience out of something like this.”

Sarah Malickson is an English and Music Major at New College of Florida. Sarah brings a rich background in writing and journalism to WSLR. Sarah’s previous endeavors in freelance writing, music journalism, and even interning at a record label equipped her with essential writing skills for the position. For Sarah, the internship offers an opportunity to expand her audio editing skills and overcome her natural shyness, preparing her for a potential career in music journalism. Her advice to future interns: “Be strategic and be able to think fast on your feet. Your best is always enough.”

Emy McGuire is a fourth-year student at NCF. While Dania has no prior journalism experience, she loves for writing, combined with her creative writing classes at New College, have equipped her with valuable skills for the job. Dania recognizes that certain aspects of writing transcend genres, making her confident in her ability to contribute effectively. She’s excited to gain real-world experience and connect with her community. Her advice to future interns is simple: “Don’t be scared. If you feel like you don’t know something, it’s because chances are, you’re just about to learn it.”

As WSLR continues to be a place where new talents thrive, these interns are enthusiastic about their role in contributing to both the station and the community.
BY MITSI ITO AND ROBIN RUSSELL

There is no question that all of us face mortality at some point in our lives — either through the death of a friend, relative, beloved pet, or when contemplating our own. So why is it that we find it so difficult to talk about, or even think about death? Is this unwillingness a cultural or religious phenomenon, or is it based on fear, or the direct result of the industrialization of death that began in the early 20th century? Presumably the reasons are as varied as people are.

Beginning November 1st, Fogartyville will be presenting a bi-weekly series of events that will address our cultural resistance to discuss death and mortality and some of the most common factors related to our personal and societal reactions, as well as exploring rituals and beliefs of other cultures. The events will invite open and honest conversations around the topic of death, and offer information and resources to meet specific needs. The series, will consist of panel discussions by scholars; faith leaders from different religions; professionals in the death industry; death cafes (non-judgmental spaces where all things death can be openly talked about); films focusing on different aspects of death; facilitated conversations on grief and the importance of personal ritual when facing our own mortality; an art exhibit; and a final workshop where people can experience for themselves different modalities or rituals that may provide solace and comfort when facing any and all of these issues.

The opening event features Dr. Raymond Moody, the renowned scholar, philosopher, physician, and author, who will introduce his latest book Proof of Life After Life. This book picks up where his first major book, Life After Life (1975), ended. Dr. Moody will also speak on the overarching aspects of the series. In his words, “We cannot escape grief, but we can discover tools that will transform our pain and bring us new understanding and awareness,” Dr. Moody, from A Brief Guide to Grief.

This series does not pretend to provide all the answers regarding the topic of death — that would be impossible. What ‘Speaking of Death: Exploring Mortality’ will provide is a participatory opportunity to engage with experts and resources that address many of the lesser known or discussed issues. For example, did you know that thanatophobia (an extreme fear of death) is a real anxiety disorder that is widely pervasive in our modern-day society. There is also a fast-growing “death-positive movement” striving to address and decrease such fears by facing death with greater curiosity and encouraging early steps of planning for “End-of-Life” choices well before they are needed. Death Doula Sally Gabriel, PhD explains that in this “positive” view “death is not seen as taboo or depressing, and honest conversations around death and dying and even planning for its inevitability are considered part of a healthy mental state.”

All events are meant to foster a safe and supportive environment where conversations about this universal experience of facing our own mortality can be held. The final experiential event will be on a Saturday afternoon in April where participants will engage in trying out new ideas and experiences while connecting with practitioners and vendors that provide services, create art and literature, and who provide information around emerging science, rituals and related alternative choices. Anyone interested in exploring the many layers related to mortality is welcome to attend a single event or the whole series. More and more people are finding that by facing their fears and engaging in planning and conversations, they not only become less anxious, but also begin to shift their focus to live life more fully and on new terms. Living “well” and “well-being” are common themes we hope to inspire as we head into 2024. Visit www.wslr.org/community for full details.

FLUID IMPRESSIONS: THE PAINTINGS OF SYD SOLOMON

FROM THE DR. RICHARD AND PAMELA MONES COLLECTION

Location: Lois and David Stulberg Gallery
Located in the Richard and Barbara Basch Visual Arts Center,
Ringling College of Art and Design.

Exhibition Dates: November 10, 2023 thru March 22, 2024

For current exhibitions and hours of operation, visit: www.RinglingCollegeGallery.org

Sponsors:
The Florida State Legislature has referred two constitutional amendments to the 2024 ballot. One would make school board elections partisan and the other would provide a constitutional right to hunt and fish.

The Florida Partisan School Board Elections Amendment will appear on the November 5, 2024 ballot. The amendment would make school board elections partisan beginning in the November 2026 general election and for primary elections nominating party candidates for the 2026 election.

Currently, Article IX, Section 4 of the Florida Constitution requires all school board elections to be nonpartisan, which means that party labels disclosing the party affiliation of candidates in school board elections cannot appear on the ballot. As of 2023, Florida was one of 41 states with state laws providing for nonpartisan school board elections. The requirement prohibiting party labels for school board elections — among multiple other elections, campaign, and voting provisions — was approved by voters in 1998. It was referred to the ballot by the Florida Constitution Revision Commission.

The Florida Right to Hunt and Fish Amendment would provide a state constitutional right to hunt and fish and declare that hunting and fishing are the preferred means for "responsibly managing and controlling fish and wildlife" and "shall be preserved forever as a public right." The amendment would not limit the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's constitutional powers under Article IV, Section 9.

As of 2023, a total of 23 states had constitutional provisions that protected the right to hunt and fish. This right was first constitutionalized in Vermont in 1777, with 22 additional states following suit starting with Alabama in 1996. The most recent state to adopt such an amendment was Utah, where it was approved by 75% of voters in 2020.

State Rep. and amendment sponsor Lauren Melo (R) said, "The amendment is about the heritage of Florida. Many people don't realize the economic value fishing and hunting provides our great state, combining just over $15 billion annually. People come from all over the world to catch our tarpon and snapper, and chase our turkeys and ducks. Passing this legislation is a powerful statement that we support and champion our fishing and hunting traditions, and we want to protect (them) for our future."

There is currently no registered opposition to this amendment.

One citizen-initiated amendment has received the required number of signatures to appear on the ballot. The Florida Marijuana Legalization Initiative would legalize recreational marijuana for adults 21 years old and older. Individuals would be allowed to possess up to three ounces of marijuana (about 85 grams), with up to five grams in the form of concentrate. Existing Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers would be authorized under the initiative to sell marijuana to adults for personal use. The Florida State Legislature could provide by state law for the licensure of entities other than existing Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers to cultivate and sell marijuana products. The Amendment still faces a Florida Supreme Court review and a legal challenge from state Attorney General Ashley Moody. Moody stated that she'd argue the proposal doesn't comply with state law, which includes a requirement that it contain "clear and unambiguous language." Briefs in the case are due July 12.

Medical marijuana was adopted by Florida voters in 2016 by a vote of 11 to 29%. In a future constitutional amendment, the voters must approve a 60% supermajority vote of approval to pass. This requirement was added to the state constitution through voter approval of Amendment 3 in 2006. Since then, nine constitutional amendments (including Amendment 2 of 2014, designed to legalize medical marijuana) received a majority of votes in favor, but failed to reach the 60% threshold and were therefore defeated. The state's largest medical marijuana company, Trulieve, is bankrolling the effort by Smart & Safe Florida, pouring $38.5 million into the campaign so far.

Chris Cano, executive director of the Suncoast NORML chapter, an advocacy group that lobbies for the legalization of marijuana at the state and federal levels, is not entirely pleased with the initiative. His review finds that the proposal will benefit the current marijuana industry players, solidifying the status quo with retention of a vertically-integrated industry where licensees cultivate, produce, and market marijuana from seed to sale. Advocates also fault the amendment for failure to allow home cultivation.

As for what the amendment might do to the election, a study by NORML, the cannabis advocacy group, found that infrequent voters tend to turn out when pot is in play and overall turnout increases by 10%. Two Abortion initiatives are also working to make their way onto the 2024 ballot. The Florida Prohibit Laws Restricting Abortion Initiative would provide that "no law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider." Floridians Protecting Freedom is leading the campaign in support of the initiative. Planned Parenthood and the ACLU of Florida are major supporters of the campaign. Floridians Protecting Freedom said, "The overwhelming majority of Floridians think we should all have the freedom to make our own personal health care decisions without interference from politicians. Despite that, politicians in Florida just signed the most extreme abortion ban in the nation. It bans abortion before most people even realize they are pregnant. Help put these decisions back in the hands of Florida families and their doctors, not extreme politicians. There are so many reasons why someone may make the deeply personal decision to have an abortion — maybe their birth control failed, or they were a victim of rape or incest, or carrying a pregnancy would endanger their lives. Politicians shouldn't be allowed to interfere in this personal decision or to prevent nurses and doctors from treating their patients."

Working to counter the initiative to protect Abortion Rights, the Florida Right to Life of Preborn Individual Initiative would amend the Florida Declaration of Rights to state: "The right to life of the preborn individual is God-given, thus unalienable and recognized accordingly. Therefore, it shall not be infringed at any stage of development." The organization Protect Human Life Florida filed the ballot initiative, which was approved for signature gathering on August 12, 2022 (currently show 19,920 verified as of 9/5/23).

The Florida Right to Clean Water Initiative would create a "fundamental right to clean and healthy waters," (as defined in the state constitution) and give legal standing to residents, non-governmental organizations, or government entities to sue in order to enforce or defend such rights. Florida Right to Clean Water.org sponsored the initiative. (currently show 61,279 signatures verified as of 9/5/23).

Information from ballotpedia.org.

THE REQUIREMENTS TO GET AN INITIATIVE CERTIFIED FOR THE 2024 BALLOT

Signatures: 891,589 valid signatures
Deadline: The deadline for signature verification is February 1, 2024
Sarasota's premier listening room, but concerts aren't all we do. In addition to our live concerts, we also host other arts and cultural events, educational events, and sponsor events in the community.

Fogartyville
COMMUNITY MEDIA AND ARTS CENTER
at 525 Kumquat Court’s West entrance.
(in the alley, Sally)

Sarasota County
Tourist Development Tax
Paid for in part by Sarasota County

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

Saturday October 14 7pm
2 shows- February 22 & 24
STEVE FORBERT
Somewhere between Rock & Folk, his albums are in everyone’s collections.

Saturday Nov. 24 8pm
20/24
Bango Wonga Rhythm & Blues
Steve Arvey & Rev. Billy
This Masterful Cellist Leaves You Return to our stage for a rollicking new twist on a centuries-old traditional genre.

Sunday, October 15 7pm 18/22
Blair Crimmans
Music of ragtime and the 1920s with bright punchy banjo, stride piano and classic New Orleans horn section.

Sunday Nov. 25 7pm *20/24
Michael Ross
Jazz bassist playing selections from his new album, *Giraffe.

Tuesday, October 17 7pm *35/40
Nobuntu
A cappella quintet from Zimbabwe acclaimed for inventive performances that range from traditional African songs to Afro-jazz to gospel.

Thursday, October 20 8pm *20/24
Ellis Paul
Iterate, provocative, and urbanely romantic folk-pop.

Friday November 3 8pm *12/15
Doug Deming and the Jewel Tones
Traditional blues, West Coast and Texas swing, and early 50’s roots rock.

Friday + Saturday November 10 + 11 8pm *48/52
Marcia Ball / Tinsley Ellis
Acoustic Songs and Stories – an intimate evening of their music and memories - Nov. 10th show sold out – get on the waiting list in case we can open the patio doors.

Sunday, November 12 2pm *15
Will Mcleam Best of Florida Folk Series Featuring
2PM BAND
Pete Price, Pete Hennings, and Mike Jurgensen, a trio of talented musicians who blend their varied musical talents into an eclectic mix of material, from original songs, to obscure covers, to well-known standards.

Saturday Nov. 18 8pm *17/20
Passerine
We are honored to be the launching point for Shiny Things, their 4th release! We’ve been playing it and them for some time now and they hold up as a LOCAL Fave.

Saturday November 30 8pm *20/24
Kalos
This Beautiful Cellist Leaves You Return to our stage for a rollicking new twist on a centuries-old traditional genre.

Thursday November 30, 7pm *20/24
Charlie Brown’s Christmas
The Music of Vince Guaraldi with the Zach Bartholomew Trio
Acclaimed jazz pianist with the chops.

Thursday December 14, 7pm *20/24
IN GOOD COMPANY
Charlie Brown’s Christmas
The Music of Vince Guaraldi with the Zach Bartholomew Trio
Acclaimed jazz pianist with the chops.

Thursday December 16, 8pm *20/22
Ocean’s Eleven
11-piece little big band Standards and beyond. Wear your dancing shoes- it’s going to be a Ball!

Friday January 12/2024, 8pm *40/45
Will Mcleam Best of Florida Folk Series Featuring
Paul Thorn
Singer-songwriter with a unique, soulful and more-than-often funny look at his Southern heritage. His songs are catchy sing-alongs that talk about social norms. His show will sell-out so do not hesitate.

Sunday January 14, *15
Selwyn Birchwood
Award-winning blues master.

Wednesday January 19, 2024 *18/20
Claudia Schmidt
Lively folk, jazz & blues
Poetry and playful humor

January 20/21 2024 *30/35
Mary Gauthier
“one of the best songwriters of her generation” - AP
As we begin to steer away from the sticky heat of summer, WSLR continues the drive to bring in a diverse ensemble of community-centric programming for the Fall that encourages listeners to LISTEN LOCAL and ACT LOCAL.

The autumn season kicks off with Hispanic Heritage Month Month (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15). WSLR has brought members of the community together to produce our Hispanic Heritage Month Minutes. These segments feature a different community voice every day of the month and celebrate the histories, cultures, and contributions of Americans whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central & South America.

The new program additions radiate a strong synthesis of talk and music that inspires a deep and nuanced understanding of important issues. Join NeF on alternating Saturdays at 6pm, as she provides listeners a half-hour of thought-provoking analysis in her new program, A Decom-

As the season unfolds, WSLR’s roster is Nice Guy Eddy’s Dystopian Lullaby alternating Sundays 9-11pm.

In the Lullaby, host Nice Guy Eddy invites listeners to join him as he spins music inspired by sci-fi, fantasy, and table-top gaming while giving his wry and quirky commentary on the current state of the world. Between sets of music you can’t help but “nerd out” as, Nice Guy Eddy draws parallels between the dystopian elements of his favorite films, tv series, and comics and our present circumstances, never allowing his wide-eyed optimism to get sucked into the void.

Our Fall Membership Drive kicks off on October 4th - call in to support your favorite programs. You can also select your favorite programs when you contribute online (at wslr.org). Make sure to keep your radio tuned to all the great programming on 96.5, and remember to LISTEN LOCAL and ACT LOCAL!
The evening of December 5, 7-9pm features Florida Stories with Carl Hiaasen, an unforgettable evening with Florida’s most savagely funny, riotous, and cathartic storyteller, with emcee (and award-winning journalist) Craig Pittman, local storytellers and a musical guest. A Florida native, Hiaasen has been writing about the Sunshine State since his father gave him a typewriter at age 6. Thirteen books and nine national bestseller books later, his fiction is not far from the bizarre truth he found in his Florida reporting for the Miami Herald from 1965 until 2021.

“Over the past century in Florida, population growth and development patterns have increased pollution and decreased the environment’s capacity to process it,” said Dr. Jennifer Shafer, SEC’s co-executive director. “Our natural environment is the foundation of our economy and quality of life; by working together to educate and activate the community, we hope to bolster efforts to conserve and restore our treasured natural resources—and protect quality of life for generations to come.”

EcoSummit ticket options are $155/Standard, $185/Premium to include the Hiaasen event, and $285/VIP to add on the Hiaasen pre-show reception and premium seating. standalone tickets to see Hiaasen are $85/general admission, $185/VIP Experience, with pre-show reception and premium seating.

Other associated events include family-friendly Ever-GREEN Days at The Bay Sarasota, with a week-long schedule of interactive and eco-friendly (and free!) experiences—such as guided tours, hands-on eco-education, family friendly activities and much more — from November 30-December 6.

To learn more, visit eco-summit.org.
BY CAROL RESCIGNO

The Brady Sarasota chapter is gearing up for its 2023-2024 work year, knowing that Floridians are concerned about gun safety and the laws passed by our Legislature earlier this year – particularly the new Permitless Carry bill that allows anyone to carry their concealed weapon without first obtaining a permit or undergoing training.

Upcoming events:

- **October 3:** Tabling at Police Night Out with free gun locks and raffle of a safe. This family event is open to everyone and residents throughout Sarasota are invited by the Police Department to spend time with their neighbors, organizations like Brady and, of course, police officers. The event is usually from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, 2099 Adams Lane.

- **October 19:** Welcome Back meeting, 4 pm, First Congregational UCC on S. Euclid Avenue in Sarasota.

- **October 26:** Bayfront rallies begin, 4 pm, Southern end of the parking lot in front of Bayfront Park. Every Thursday through the end of 2023 except Nov. 23 (Thanksgiving) and Dec. 28.

- **December 8:** Vigil for Victims of Gun Violence, 6 pm - First Congregational UCC, 1031 Euclid Avenue. Once a year, Brady holds a Vigil for Victims to remember those who have died and those who grieve because of gun violence. The program has not been finalized, but this is always a poignant and important evening of reflections, candle-lighting, poetry and music.

To find out about any of these events or to find out more about our chapter, email Sarasota@BradyUnited.ORG.

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BY MARY ANNE BOWIE

WSLR and Generating Earth Connections are partnering with the Unitarian Universalist Green Team to celebrate area organizations that have demonstrated a commitment to environmental stewardship. Invitations have gone out to over 85 area environmental organizations to gather at the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Church on Fruitville Road to enjoy a complimentary vegetarian luncheon and program. The goal is to bring together people seeking sustainable solutions and working for a greener tomorrow to foster connection, communication, and collaboration. A full list of invitees can be seen here - [https://wslr.org/environmental-luncheon/](https://wslr.org/environmental-luncheon/). If you know of additional environmental organizations that are operating in the area, please send information to BowieFAICP@gmail.com and put Environmental Leaders in the Subject line, so they can be invited.

In addition to gratitude, the program’s theme will be accountability. Jane Grandboiche, co-founder of Generating Earth Connections, will facilitate the Panel and all-group inquiry. Featured on the panel will be: Tracie Troxler, Suncoast Community Compost; Christine Johnson, Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast; a representative from Suncoast Waterkeeper and the Multicultural Health Institute; and Charles Rieh, Suncoast Urban Re-foresters.

“Partnerships have been the key to environmental effectiveness,” Mary Anne Bowie, of the UU Green Team, said “and our hope is to foster further collaboration in the region.” Bowie noted that one example is Massachusetts Audubon providing environmental education on over 40,000 acres; this is a partnership goal that could be mimicked in our region.

Organizers are excited to have this first ever Sarasota event be part of the global Humanity Day! celebration that will be held simultaneously and virtually. The goal of Humanity Day! is to create a paradigm shift so that each of us understands that the time is now to realize we are all connected to each other and to nature; and that working in harmony, the earth and humanity will flourish for us and for generations to come. More information about Humanity Day! is at [www.IAMHumanity.net](http://www.IAMHumanity.net). It will also be the topic of the UU Forum at 9:15 AM on October 22, 2023, at 3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, Fl 34232. All are welcome to attend the Forum on October 22, 2023. The “Celebrating Environmental Leadership” Luncheon is by invitation only.

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Opinion: Follow the Money to A Better Sarasota

BY CATHY ANTUNES

When a Political Committee is formed in Florida, the state requires organizing documents be filed which name the Treasurer, the Chairperson, and the Registered Agent. Sometimes the same person serves all three roles. The State also requires a description of the area, scope and jurisdiction of the Committee. The paperwork for a Florida political committee called “A Better Sarasota” says its area, scope and jurisdiction is “to support or oppose candidates for statewide multi-county, legislative or local office and other activities not prohibited by Chapter 106 Florida Statutes.” It’s a strange description, because since its inception in March 2020 this political committee’s financial records show zero spending to support a candidate.”A Better Sarasota” has done little but send out a monthly check to Robinson, Gruters and Roberts, CPA, an accounting firm in Venice, FL.

Sarasota residents are likely to recognize this accounting firms’ name partners, Eric Robinson and Joe Gruters. Both are former chairs of the Sarasota Republican party. Robinson also ran unopposed for School Board in 2016 and served one term. Gruters has represented Sarasota in the State House and Senate. Both are CPAs, and both apparently believe that writing a check to their own firm every month (and sending in a monthly political committee financial report to the state elections office) warrants a $350 - $500 payment from the political committee. That’s pretty lucrative work if you can get it.

To fully appreciate the absurdity of this outlandish political committee hooney pot for Robinson Gruters Roberts CPAs, it’s helpful to view the political committee’s expenditures and contributions. A Better Sarasota has received only one contribution - $26,808.42 - all from the political committee “Best Plan for Sarasota”.

Best & Better Sarasota
June 2019 - September 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tr>
<td>$26,808.42</td>
<td>A Better Sarasota</td>
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“A Better Sarasota” had only two contributions: $50,000 each from Joel Schleicher and Jonathan Mitchell. Mr. Schleicher made headlines in April 2021 when, as Sarasota’s appointed member of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) board, he voted to deny a $1.5 million SWFWMD grant for a wetlands redevelopment project at Bobby Jones golf course (which sounds like a bad plan for $1.5M). Mr. Mitchell’s push to build a food court in Paul Thorpe Park (also known as Pineapple Park) galvanized community opposition. Schleicher and Mitchell’s collective $100,000 political committee “Best Plan for Sarasota” paid over $70,000 for research and consulting, and about $1000 to Robinson, Gruters, Roberts CPAs for accounting.

Back to “A Better Sarasota” and its $26,808.42 budget all from one source - "Best Plan for Sarasota". Mr. Robinson serves as the treasurer of “A Better Sarasota”, with Mr. Schleicher serving as the Chairman and Registered agent. This political committee has paid $200 to the vendor “Wbeelec” for financial software and $133.30 to “Deluxe” for checking supplies. Thirty-eight accounting fee payments, in the amounts of $350, $400, or $500, have been paid to Robinson Gruters Roberts CPAs. What determines a $350, $400 or $500 fee? Who knows?

“A Better Sarasota” has funded exactly zero candidate advocacy, and has funded Robinson Gruters Roberts CPAs to the tune of $14,450. It appears “A Better Sarasota” is really functioning as a vehicle to line the pockets of political cronies. Definitely a bad plan for Sarasota.

Opinion: An Invitation to the (Mayor’s Ball)

BY CATHY ANTUNES

Erik Arroyo’s Sarasota City Foundation hosted “The Mayor’s Ball” last year on October 15, 2022. If you didn’t get an invitation, don’t feel bad. “The Mayor’s Ball” may be the best example of why City voters should reject the idea of an elected mayor. If just one year serving as mayor results in the office holder illegally soliciting donations for a foundation improperly incorporated by said mayor using the City Hall address, with only your political pals invited to fete you - what would four years in office produce? The Mayor’s Ball did not materialize...
Opinion: Climate Crisis in Florida

BY WILLIAM (COTY) KELLER

Some Floridians are shocked by recent events – offshore waters the same temperature as a hot spa, increasing numbers and severity of life and property-threatening storms, more sunny day flooding, long periods without sufficient rainfall, and forest fires raging all over the world. Others view these happenings as harbingers of a more frightening future.

Naturalist David Attenborough’s timeline if bold action is not taken immediately (A Life on Our Planet):

- 2030 – Rainforest lost, arctic is ice-free in summer, accelerating climate change
- 2040 – Frozen soils thaw, releasing methane, accelerating climate change
- 2050 – Ocean heats to the point of all coral reefs dying, fish populations crash
- 2080 – Durable food production crashes, millions homeless, Holocene Garden of Eden is lost
- 2100 – 4 degrees C warmer, large parts of earth uninhabitable, 6th massive extinction underway, millions homeless, Holocene Garden of Eden is lost

As early as 2018, the United Nations warned that without immediate bold action, by 2030 the world would be facing a severe economic and humanitarian crisis. Five years later, that statement seems more than reasonable. Anyone without their head in the sand can see, as Josh Olive writes in Waterline, we are all endangered NOW. Our descendants’ world is likely doomed if we continue the present path.

Anthropologist Jane Goodall makes an important statement: “How bizarre that we, the most intelligent of all species, should be destroying our only home.” In Florida, where there have been no recent efforts to mitigate climate change (Mitigate is “a human intervention to reduce heat-trapping emissions or remove carbon already in the atmosphere”), despite the exceptional risks we face, it seems very bizarre that we, the most intelligent species of all, would be in such an unprepared state.

Problems are solved by a determination of, and then elimination of, the root causes. The technical cause of the climate crisis is the earth’s carbon cycle out of balance by human emissions, deforestation, and poor farming/soil management practices. Instead of a normal amount of 150 to 300 parts per million of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, we have over 400 ppm. The greenhouse effect, instead of keeping our planet temperate and safe, is overheating things.

Understanding the technical cause is not enough. We must recognize and overcome another underlying root cause: Many rich people and corporations do not want to stop the use of fossil fuels, halt the destruction of forests, or manage soils/farming in a sustainable way. The top 10% are responsible for over 50 percent of emissions. Corporations in the US enjoy the same constitutional rights as individuals. Money, in the form of political donations, is treated as free speech. The result is the wealthy and corporations have been successful in influencing (buying) political policies that prevent keeping fossil fuels in the ground and stifle sound agricultural and soil management practices. In Florida this has played out consistently for the past decade.

- Our former governor did not allow the use of the term “climate change.”
- The present governor pledges for climate resilience (adapting to sea level rise in particular) but will not discuss causes and therefore dismisses any action to mitigate. He hurt Floridians and the climate by refusing federal money for energy-efficiency.
- The state legislature has not passed any bill to mitigate.
- Charlotte and other counties have agreed to join the regional SW Florida Regional Climate Compact. Sadly, this agreement has not recognized the need to slow or reverse global warming. Instead, this compact aims only to adapt to the changing climate by becoming more resilient. County staff are discouraged from discussing the cause of global warming.

In Florida, we got what we voted for: office holders who value the demands of rich donors and corporations over the best interests of the people.

Our office holders have played the misinformation game, falsely claiming that transitioning to zero emission energy would hurt the economy. Science, including real economics, tells us the opposite is true. Zero emission energy is becoming the most cost-effective way to power our grids and move our vehicles. Continued use of fossil fuel leads to economic ruin. As Robert Rubin, Former Secretary of the US Treasury said, “We do not face a choice between protecting our environment or protecting our economy. We face a choice between protecting our economy by protecting our environment—or allowing environmental havoc to create economic havoc.”

Florida’s current leadership must be replaced so we can do the right thing and mitigate the climate. This is not a partisan pitch. One doesn’t have to be a Democrat to enact good climate policy. Our state has had several climate champions from the Republican party in years past: Carlos Curbello of Miami helped create the Climate Solutions Caucus in congress. Francis Rooney of SW Florida advocated for a price on carbon, a free-market solution to reducing carbon emissions. These two Republican representatives served the public interest instead of special interests.

Floridians who want real action on warming and sea level rise should consider supporting candidates, from either party, who pledge to enact climate saving policies. This includes:

- Amending the US Constitution to eliminate corporate personhood and money as free speech.
- Federal incentives for zero emission energy and conservation measures in the home, business, and on the farm.
- State regulation of electric utilities to promote conservation and establish a goal of 100% zero emission energy by 2030, with a 25% carveout for rooftop solar.
- Local governments enact zero energy building codes, all electric public transit, eco-friendly housing, commercial and business planning.

Scientists and experts agree these policies are the solutions. Florida’s citizens should consider becoming climate voters to make them happen. Unless new civic minded leaders are put in office, the carnage will continue, our lifestyles and economy will degrade, and life as we know it will not exist for our descendants. Let’s act like an intelligent species and stop destroying our only home.

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 and Freeport, New York. https://ecopapak.org/
Help Celebrate WSLR Founders

As many of you know by now, WSLR founders Dave Beaton and Arlene Sweeting will be stepping down from their leadership roles with the organization next year. Dave and Arlene have poured their hearts and souls into WSLR and Fogartyville for 20 years and will leave a strong legacy. WSLR will be celebrating their contributions to our community in a number of ways and want everyone to have a chance to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions that Dave and Arlene have made to the community.

Since 2005, WSLR has opened the airwaves to community voices, provided a platform for musicians and artists to express themselves, and has been a catalyst for bringing people together to make positive change. Today, our vision and mission has never been more important or critical. The world around us is changing. We face the existential threat of climate change that is becoming more and more real every year. We are confronted by efforts to silence voices of dissent and deny the fullness of our history. We must see these changing times as an opportunity to strengthen our resolve and ensure that the WSLR will continue to lead, serve and support our community, especially when it is in need, for no matter what the future holds, is to continue to provide a voice and space for community and to always beat the drum for justice.

There are several ways to show your appreciation for Dave and Arlene.

1. Rooted in Community: Celebrating Our Past & Building Our Future - Saturday, April 27, 6-10pm
   A committee has been formed to produce an event to honor Dave and Arlene’s contributions. Volunteers are needed to help plan and implement the event. If you are interested in volunteering, please email info@wslr.org or reach out to staff at the office. We are also looking for sponsors to support the event - there are 3 sponsorship levels - Champion - $5000; Catalyst - $2500; and Partner - $1000. Contact Jesse at jesse@wslr.org if you are interested in sponsorship.

2. Purchase an ad in the Rooted in Community Program. You can purchase an ad in the program to support the event and leave a special message for Dave and Arlene. Ad rates: $300/full page; $150/½ page; $75/¼ page.

3. Community Organization Membership
   - If you are a nonprofit organization that has benefited from your partnership with WSLR+Fogartyville and you’d like to strengthen that relationship, WSLR is starting a new Membership Program only for nonprofits. It will include tickets to our annual Rooted in Community Celebration and a marketing package to help amplify the message of the nonprofit.

4. Founders Fund - To honor Dave and Arlene, WSLR is establishing The Beat Goes On Founders Fund. The name comes from a radio show Dave and Arlene started during covid to help keep the community stay informed and connected. The Founders Fund is a separate fund-raising effort from WSLR’s Membership Support program which supports operating expenses and programs that are funded through the annual budget. The Founders Fund will be a quasi-endowment fund to be used for the future benefit of the organization or in the case of an emergency. You can donate to the Founders Fund online or send a check via postal mail to WSLR, P.O. Box 2540, Sarasota, FL 34230. Be sure to make checks out to WSLR and put “Founders Fund” in the memo line. All donations to the Founders Fund will be acknowledged in the Rooted in Community Program.

5. Many Voices, One Community Celebration - Saturday, March 30 - Our Spring Open House will also provide an opportunity for the community to share appreciation for Dave and Arlene’s contributions to our community.

6. Become a Member during our Fall Membership Drive; October 4 – 10th.

Creative Nexus: Empowering BIPOC and Queer Artists in a Communal Art Space

BY YOLEIDY ROSARIO-HERNANDEZ

In the heart of our city, where spaces for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and Queer artists to gather, share experiences, and find support are scarce, there shines a beacon of hope—a visionary arts organization dedicated to cultivating a thriving community of creators. Mosaic Movements is more than an organization; it’s a catalyst for change, a place where BIPOC artists can connect, learn, and flourish. At its core, Mosaic Movements is on a mission to break down barriers and provide a haven where artists not only express themselves but also grow, making it an invaluable force in our creative landscape.

The lack of racial diversity in the arts sector is a deeper problem that requires examination and action. Mosaic Movements is committed to addressing this issue head-on by establishing initiatives to increase the representation of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) working in the arts.

Creative Nexus isn't just an event; it's a nurturing space for the artistic spirit of BIPOC and Queer artists. It's a hub for building allyship and a platform that offers artistic development opportunities, fostering exchanges to help artists grow within their creative and collaborative practices. At Creative Nexus, BIPOC and LGBTQ artists from all artistic disciplines are invited and welcomed to participate in an immersive artistic experience.

Join us for the launch and help fuel the growth and vitality of our artistic community. Save the date for Saturday, October 21, from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM, as we gather at Fogartyville Media & Arts Center. Reserve your spot now by RSVPing at https://www.mosaicmovements.org/event-details-registration/creative-nexus-a-dynamic-artists-collective-meet-street

Come, be a part of this vibrant communal art space where you and your creativity finds its home.

Yoleidy Rosario-Hernandez is the founder and director of Mosaic Movements.