

Not Just White House: Nov. 5 Election Includes Down-Ballot Contests, Initiatives



Supporters of former president Donald Trump (far left) and backers of VP Kamala Harris say they will be at Marina Jack in downtown Sarasota every Saturday until Election Day.

Six Amendments, Unpacked

BY SHAWN BARTELT

Florida Voters have their work cut out for them with six proposed amendments to the state constitution. Amendments three and four were placed on the ballot through Citizen Initiatives. The other four were put forth by the Florida Legislature.

Amendment 1 ► Makes school board elections partisan

School board elections in Florida are currently non-partisan. That means all registered voters, no matter their party affiliation, can currently vote for the school board candidate of their choice in the primary and the general elections. In addition, candidates for school board races, like candidates for all nonpartisan offices, are currently prohibited from campaigning based on party affiliation.

This amendment takes us back in time. Florida had partisan school board elections until 1998 when

voters approved Amendment 11, which prohibited partisan primaries for school board elections with 64 percent of the vote.

Since Florida is a “closed” primary state, only voters registered with a political party can vote for candidates in their party’s primary election. The impact on voters is significant, especially in counties where one party has a majority. In those counties, whoever wins the primary for the majority party generally wins the final election, leaving NPAs (No Party Affiliation) and opposing parties with no vote, no voice.

The League of Women Voters of Florida (and numerous other organizations) oppose Amendment 1 on the grounds that partisan school board races would exclude NPAs from voting in primaries and increase political polarization. Schools should not be politicized and everyone should be welcome at schools regardless of party affiliation.

Supporters of the amendment, including the Florida Legislature, state that since public education has become polarized through cultural issues

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Millage Referendum Directly Impacts Sarasota Schools

In addition to six proposed amendments to the state constitution, Sarasota County voters will decide on a millage referendum for Sarasota County public schools.

The referendum was last renewed by 85 percent of voters in March 2022. Despite taking effect in 2026, it appears on 2024’s ballot due to recent legislation requiring that all referendums appear on a general election ballot.

If passed, the referendum would continue the 1 mill per year ad valorem millage tax for schools, beginning July 1, 2026 and ending June 2030. The funds will go to recruiting and retaining quality teachers, workforce training, school safety, arts, technology, classroom resources, educational programs and operational needs. Funds would be shared with charter schools proportionate with student enrollment.

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Three City Commission Seats to Be Decided

BY RAMON LOPEZ

The Nov. 5 elections could produce a major shift in the makeup of the Sarasota City Commission. The five-member panel, which is nonpartisan, includes three incumbents defending their seats.

One of the three seats saw a first round of voting in the Aug. 20 primary election. Incumbent Kyle Battie tallied 42.6 percent of the primary vote while Sequoia Felton followed with 37.8 percent. Melissa Furman picked up the remaining 19.6 percent of the vote, eliminating her from the

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Empowering Artists, Fostering Equity

BY YOLEIDY ROSARIO-HERNANDEZ

In the last couple of years, politicians in Tallahassee have limited the scope of Black history education, restricted freedom of expression, and cut diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programming, and this year Gov. Ron DeSantis’s veto of \$32 million effectively eliminated the entire state arts budget for 2024-25.

Amid these challenges, artists and cultural communities in Florida are finding new ways to resist. Sarasota-based Mosaic Movements is leading the charge to champion diasporic narratives through interdisciplinary art.

In collaboration with WSLR+Fogartyville and Emerge Sarasota, Mosaic Movements has launched Creative Nexus, a series of events dedicated to empowering Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and LGBTQ artists.

A kickoff for this season’s offerings takes place Oct. 18 and features spoken word, an artist’s talk with painter Alfredo Garcia (who is exhibiting at Fogartyville), and performances by guitarist David Muñoz and reggae band Jah Movement.



Jah Movement will play the Creative Nexus kickoff on Oct. 18

Throughout the next 8 months Creative Nexus will continue to create intentional spaces for artistic and entrepreneurial development within the BIPOC and LGBTQ communities.

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‘Planetwalker’ John Francis to Speak at Sustainable Communities Workshop Nov. 7

Environmentalist John Francis, who didn’t use motorized transportation for 22 years, is the headline speaker at the 19th Annual Sustainable Communities Workshop, which takes place Nov. 7 from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. at the University of South Florida Selby Auditorium and Pavilion, 8350 N. Tamiami Trail. An online option is also available.

Developed by Sarasota County Extension, the workshop will explore the vital roles of earth, air, water, and fire within our ecosystem, along with strategies to tackle local ecological challenges.

“This immersive workshop will highlight the intricate relationships among all living beings and the essential elements of earth, water, air and fire,” said Alia Garrett, sustainability outreach

coordinator for Sarasota County UF/IFAS Extension and Sustainability, in a press release.



*Sustainable Communities Workshop
Keynote Speaker John Francis*

Sarasota County’s continuing growth in popularity has made the area a destination for many, while also highlighting the need to protect limited resources and foster sustainable, equitable communities that respond to change.

The daylong workshop showcases the latest sustainability approaches.

Francis, known as the “Planetwalker” for traveling through the Americas on foot, recommends interacting with the environment by walking. Francis spent a prolonged period of time in silence, which allowed him to listen more deeply to the world around him, particularly to the voices of nature and

the communities he encountered. This fostered an awareness and respect for the environment, demonstrating that meaningful change can often begin with thoughtful reflection and a deeper understanding of our connection to the Earth.

Featuring an “Elements of Sustainability” theme, the workshop dives into those connections. “Participants will gain a deeper appreciation of these interconnected elements that sustain life and the critical need to preserve this delicate balance,” Garrett said.

The workshop offers both online and in-person participation options, with tickets costing \$20-45 (\$5-30 for students). In-person registrations include breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack by a Sarasota County Green Business Partner.

Learn more and register at tiny.cc/ufsaraextscw2024

Questions? Visit www.scgov.net/sustainablecommunities, email sustainable Sarasota@scgov.net, or call 941-861-9901. If you require special accommodations to attend, email or call in advance.

Goal of Sarasota Family Success Center Is to Build Self-Reliance

BY NATHAN SCOTT

Have you ever experienced a time when you needed help but were unsure where to go? Most of us have.

We are blessed to live in one of the most desirable places in the world, yet many of our local families struggle with basic needs, tortured by difficult choices from one week to the next. These hardships impact every family member, but especially the children, as lack of options cements poverty and learning deficits that define a lifetime.

In Sarasota, luxury condo towers sell out multi-million-dollar units immediately, while less than five minutes away, one-third of children live below the poverty line. Community leaders believe a new Family Success Center will reverse this reality.

Across the U.S., public and private partnerships are joining forces through “place-based” initiatives like resource centers that help families overcome barriers to social mobility.

Urban Institute defines the place-based model as an approach that aims to improve the quality

of life and access to opportunity. While Sarasota has many social services and resources, access for families that would most benefit from existing programming remains problematic.

Just this year, Sarasota’s poorest zip code had one of the highest child removal rates in the three-county region served by the Department of Children & Families in the 12th judicial district circuit.

Other social and economic barriers are equally staggering: African-American infant mortality remains 4 times higher than average, and a majority of 8th graders from low socio-economic families read below grade level. To learn more, visit www.flhealthcharts.gov.

According to the National Family Support Network, a Family Resource Center (FRC) is a community hub of support, services, and opportunities for families that:

- ▶ is multi-generational, strengths-based, and family-centered is responsive to community needs and interests
- ▶ provides support at no or low cost
- ▶ builds communities of peer support for families to develop social connections that reduce isolation and stress

The primary goal of the Sarasota Family Success Center is to build self-reliance by delivering the tools that empower families – supporting them to become strong, healthy and prosperous. The most significant outcome reported by FRCs across the U.S. is a dramatic reduction in child abuse and neglect cases.

Spearheaded by Thomas and Geri Chaffee, the founders of Dreamers Academy, the Family Success Center will be located on Leonard Reid Avenue, between Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Myrtle St. The location is highly accessible and in the middle of three Title I schools serving 2,500 pre-K through 8th grade students.

The 40,000-square-foot center will have permanent spaces to deliver programming from Sarasota County’s existing social service organizations, including a full-service medical clinic, parenting classes, education and literacy programming, food distribution, pharmacy, job training support, and tuition-free early learning for children under 5 years old.



The author Nathan Scott (right) toured the Family Resource Center Central Tampa with Glenda Taveras of Children’s Board of Hillsborough County (left) and Program Director Tyheshia Scott (center).

What would an investment in this Family Success Center do for Sarasota? Reviewing centers operating in similar markets, the ROI averages \$5 of social return for every \$1 spent.

In my role with the Family Safety Alliance, we closely monitor evidence-based models in Tampa, Gainesville and Plant City. Statistics for FRCs show a 63 percent reduction in child abuse cases, a 50 percent reduction in out-of-home placements, and a 26 percent lower rate of child abuse investigations, saving the child welfare system approximately \$3.65 for every \$1 invested.

Additional outcomes include gains in economic self-sufficiency, health, social support, family functioning and resiliency, and children’s education success (National Family Support Network). For more information, email Geri Chaffee at geri@pdo.org, as she is coordinating the efforts.

Nathan Scott is the Child and Family Well-Being System Coordinator for Florida Department of Health. He is also the staff coordinator for the Family Safety Alliance. He can be reached at Nathan.Scott@flhealth.gov

Sarasota Community Radio
96.5 WSLR LPFM
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community media & arts center

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Candidate Preview for Manatee County Voters

BY MITCH MALEY

After an August primary chock-full of landslide upsets, Manatee County voters will decide several key races on the November ballot.

In the Manatee County Commission District 1 race, grassroots activist **Carol Anne Felts** overcame long odds to defeat developer-backed Steve Metallo in August's Republican primary despite Metallo enjoying a fundraising advantage of more than five to one.

Felts will advance to a three-candidate race featuring attorney **Jen Hamey** (NPA) and financial advisor **Glenn Pearson** (DEM). Felts' primary upset creates the unlikely scenario in which three grassroots candidates will vie for the seat.

In District 3, software developer **Tal Siddique** also overcame a developer-backed candidate to win the Republican primary. In the November election, Siddique will take on **Diana Shoemaker** (DEM), former president and CEO of Manatee Habitat for Humanity, in another race featuring no developer-backed candidate. Shoemaker was unopposed in her party's primary.

In District 5, **Dr. Robert McCann**, a retired physician and attorney, upset developer-backed incumbent Ray Turner in the Republican primary. On the November ballot, McCann will face NPA candidate **Joseph Di Bartolomeo** in another race featuring two grassroots candidates.

In District 7, incumbent **George Kruse** easily defeated fellow incumbent Kevin Van Ostenbridge in the Republican primary despite Van Ostenbridge having the best-financed campaign in Manatee County history. Van Ostenbridge grew increasingly unpopular with residents after leading the assault on Manatee County's wetland protection policies and weaponizing his influence

to shape county government in favor of the developers who backed him. Kruse will now face Democrat **Sari Lindroos-Valimaki**, an IT and cybersecurity tech, who was unopposed in her party's primary.

In the Manatee School Board District 3 race (nonpartisan), former board member **Charlie Kennedy** will face **Jon Lynch** in a runoff. Kennedy nearly won a majority in August's three-candidate race and is expected to cruise past Lynch whose platform seems largely focused on COVID grievances.

The School Board District 1 runoff will feature **Heather Felton** and **Mark Stanoch**. Felton, a longtime teacher who famously resigned in protest of Florida's "Don't Say Gay" law had a commanding lead in August, finishing 8 points ahead of Stanoch, a retired IT executive, but was short of a majority in another three-candidate race.

Gene Brown will seek a second term as Mayor of Bradenton on the November ballot. He faces a familiar foe in former Bradenton City Councilman **Bill Sanders**. Brown enjoys significant financial support from the development community, while Sanders is mostly self-funded. The controversial sale of City Hall for development and the city's release of tens of millions of gallons of partially-treated wastewater into local waterways will be major issues in the race.

In the Florida House District 71 race, political newcomer **Adriaan DeVilliers** (DEM) will take on incumbent Republican **Will Robinson**. Robinson, a close ally of Van Ostenbridge who also enjoys strong developer support, has angered many residents in his west county district, which includes the island cities. Robinson seemed to join Van Ostenbridge's feud with Holmes Beach Mayor Judy Titsworth by pushing a state bill to

study consolidating the three cities or having them annexed by the City of Bradenton. He also pushed a bill to allow the county to permit its own parking garage on Holmes Beach, both of which passed to the dismay of many voters in his district.

In the Florida House District 72 race, newcomer **Lesla Miller** (DEM) will face off with former Manatee Planning Commissioner **Bill Connerly**, who has received enormous support from local developers whom he regularly supported on the planning commission. Miller, an attorney, says she wants to focus on combating Republican assaults on women's reproductive rights, home rule, the environment, and the politicization of public education.

Dennis "Mitch" Maley is the featured columnist and editor of The Bradenton Times online newspaper (thebradentontimes.com) and host of The Bradenton Times podcast, which airs Sundays at 9 a.m. on WSLR.

Voter Checklist

Register to vote by Oct. 7:
registertovoteflorida.gov

Early voting for the General Election:
Oct. 21-Nov. 2

General Election Day: Nov. 5

Information about vote-by-mail, polling locations and hours, and FAQ:

Sarasota County Supervisor of Elections
sarasotavotes.gov

Manatee County Supervisor of Elections
votemanatee.com

Opinion: Six-Week Abortion Ban Subjects Women, Girls to Undue Risk

BY DR. WASHINGTON HILL

These are critical times in Florida. It feels like we're going back to the days of 1965 when I was in medical school and prior to Roe v. Wade. Providers, patients, community members and parents are speaking up and voicing their concerns to me about our state's 6-week abortion ban.

The expected and unexpected effects observed since May 1, when the ban went into effect, include undue burden on physicians and patients, and an uncertain future for the ban.

Physicians experience turmoil in second guessing anything that is done for a pregnant woman even when she is experiencing a miscarriage. The safe management of complications of pregnancy is still not well defined. Some women in Florida are subjected to risks, including preventable morbidity with potential mortality, because of the need sometimes for legal opinions and doctors' attestations before treatment. Some high-risk patients are simply referred out of state.

A ban that was enacted by politicians interferes with the doctor-patient relationship and patients' autonomy to make a difficult decision that is best for their health without confusion, burden, or receiving misinformation. What happened to medical autonomy and keeping the Hippocratic Oath?

Because of the ban, recruitment of obstetrician-gynecologists is difficult. Waiting times for patients to get an appointment will only increase.

As a physician, it worries me that patients will seek unhealthy ways to terminate unintended or complicated pregnancies incompatible with life that would have previously been able to be safely terminated. Physicians realize the unique social and clinical situations that encompass the reproductive

freedoms that surround ending a pregnancy.

Every situation is not clear cut and there is potential for devastating impacts to both maternal and infant illness and death leading to poorer health outcomes. This trend will disproportionately affect marginalized populations.

Most patients are not even aware that they are pregnant at 4-6 weeks, and the ban eliminates their reproductive choices. Most patients do not confirm their pregnancies until after 6 weeks. Genetic screening is not available until 9-10 weeks' gestation, and diagnostic testing is after that. If a patient has a pregnancy needing termination she may have to travel out of state. This can force patients to continue pregnancies that will result in an infant that may die in utero or shortly after birth, which would inflict significant trauma.

Patients are confused. They wonder whether mifepristone and/or misoprostol are still available in Florida and can a physician prescribe them without pharmacy interference or legal repercussions. Women want to know if contraception is next and if over-the-counter pregnancy tests can be used to confirm a pregnancy that is more than 6 weeks; if not, they want to know if ultrasounds have to be the confirming test with its cost and need for appointment.

Communities talk, and you hear folks – whether pro-choice or not – insist they want the best reproductive health and rights for all women. This ban does nothing to promote that.



Dr. Washington Hill

Patients will seek unhealthy ways to terminate unwanted pregnancies as they did in the 1960s. And out of fear or reluctance some will simply not enter prenatal care at all. There is nothing worse than that.

Parents, especially those with daughters, have told me of their concerns. "I am terrified by the trajectory of the ban and what it means for their reproductive choices. It sets the stage for other issues like contraception to be threatened and this is disturbing and will ultimately lead to poorer health outcomes" and "So

now I will have to work to get voters to the polls Nov. 5 ensuring my girls and their peers have the same freedoms I have had to choose what to do with their bodies and get the best healthcare close to home."

You all do the same.

Dr. Washington Hill is a Sarasota OB-GYN and Maternal-Fetal Medicine specialist at CenterPlace Health. He is the founding director of the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Program at Sarasota Memorial Hospital and co-founder of the Gulf Coast Medical Society. This column represents his opinions only and not those of any organization with which he is affiliated.

Brady Sarasota Co-hosts National Advocate for Gun Violence Prevention Oct. 16

BY CAROL CONYNE RESCIGNO

Brady Sarasota, United Against Gun Violence, is gearing up for another year of fighting for gun safety. More than 40,000 people were killed by guns last year in homicides, suicides and unintentional shootings and, as demoralized as many of us are by the Sept. 4 school shooting in Georgia, among so many others, we know that there are things we can do, so our work continues.

First, believing that gun safety begins with gun owners, we will hold a free raffle of a gun safe as one of many community partners at the annual National Night Out event hosted by the Sarasota Police Department at its headquarters, 2099 Adams Lane, on Oct. 1 from 5:30-8 p.m. Come on out and look for our table; this is always a fun and educational event for all ages.

On Oct. 16 at 1 p.m., Po Murray, head of the Newtown (Conn.) Action Alliance and one of the most active national advocates for gun violence prevention, will speak about the current climate around legislation and what we need to do to advance the safety of our community. Brady will cosponsor this annual advocacy meeting of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) Sarasota-Manatee, which will take place at First Congregational United Church of Christ, 1031 S. Euclid Ave.

Our grassroots Brady chapter will hold its 2024-25 Welcome Back meeting on Oct. 24 at 4 p.m. at the youth-led SEE Alliance headquarters,



615 S. Orange Ave. Rep. Michele Rayner, D-St. Petersburg, will discuss upcoming state legislation with Brady and SEE members.

Finally, Brady Sarasota's annual Vigil for Gun Violence Victims (Dec. 6 at 6 p.m.) will feature speakers Patricia and Manny Oliver, who have dedicated their lives to traveling the country and fighting for gun safety since their son Joaquin was murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland on Valentine's Day 2018.

The Dec. 6 vigil, as with all Brady Sarasota events, is free and open to the public. If you have

lost someone or would simply like to honor the many who have died in gun violence, please attend this evening of music, words and reflection at First Congregational United Church of Christ, 1031 S. Euclid Ave.

To receive Brady Sarasota's once-a-week emails or ask questions, email: Sarasota@BradyUnited.org

Carol Conyne Rescigno is the president of Brady Sarasota and communications lead for Brady Florida.

McFarland, Reich Meet Again

BY NOAH VINSKY



Fiona McFarland

Incumbent state Rep. **Fiona McFarland** (R-Sarasota) faces a challenge from Democrat **Derek Reich** to represent **District 73**, which includes much of coastal Sarasota County, including the cities of Sarasota and Venice.

McFarland, who has a military and business consulting background, has served in the Florida House since 2020, and has represented District 73 since 2022, when it was redistricted.

Reich is a Sarasota County native and a 12th grade U.S. Government and Economics teacher at Sarasota High School.

He is focusing on a woman's right to choose, affordable housing, gun reform, and protection of Sarasota's bay and beaches. He also pledges to submit legislation to fix Florida's "failing" homeowners insurance system, a problem that he calls "existential."

"You are seeing working people being priced out of this county," Reich said in an interview. "You are seeing the American dream slip away from so many Floridians."



Derek Reich

This is not the first time McFarland and Reich have vied for the District 73 seat. They first faced off in 2020, and McFarland won with 56 percent of the vote.

McFarland, the current chair of the Transportation and Modals Subcommittee, is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, and spent 8 years on active duty in the Navy. As a civilian, she worked as a consultant with McKinsey and Company.

McFarland counts among her endorsements the Associated Industries of Florida, Florida Chamber of Commerce, Florida Realtors PAC and the Federation of Manufactured Home Owners of Florida.

McFarland did not respond to a request for an interview by press time.

Sarasota County Candidate Forums
Hosted by *League of Women Voters*

Livestreamed on YouTube

More information and registration: lwvsrq.org

Commission District 3
Thursday, Oct. 10, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Charter Review Board
Tuesday, Oct. 15, 5:30-7 p.m.

From WNYCSTUDIOS

A "must-hear" multi-part Podcast about the Rise of Right-Wing Radio in America

The Divided Dial

LISTEN ON YOU-TUBE!

Episode One: The True Believers
How one side of the political spectrum came to dominate talk radio— and how one company is using the air-waves to launch a Right Wing media empire. (29:09)

Episode Two: From Pulpit to Politics
On the back story of Salem Media— from its scrappy beginnings to its place of influence in the policies of the Republican Party. (33:28)

Episode Three: The Liberal Bias Bogeyman
How did the Right get their vice-grip of the airwaves, all the while arguing that they were being silenced and censored by a liberal media?? (32:42)

Produced by **On The Media**
Hosted By **Katie Thornton**

Presented in the Public Interest By Positively Main Street, Sarasota

Unlike Last Election, Democrats Field Candidates for Hospital Board

BY FLORENCE FAHRINGER

The races for Sarasota County Public Hospital Board have simplified significantly since the August primaries, when the “Medical Freedom” candidates failed to win the Republican nomination for any of the board’s four open seats. What’s left is more conventional campaigns from the Republican side and a slate of Democratic challengers who imply that GOP board members might eventually cave to outside forces wanting to privatize Sarasota Memorial Hospital.

A **League of Women Voters forum** on Oct. 2 was the first opportunity for all eight of the candidates to discuss the issues and their platform differences face-to-face.

Republicans

This year’s Medical Freedom candidates, following in the footsteps of last election’s Health Freedom slate, aimed to secure a majority on the hospital board for their own far-right faction. The unity of the Medical Freedom slate faltered as the primaries approached, and when the dust settled, only two candidates remained as official Medical Freedom candidates. Besides this threat from within, their opponents in the primaries were putting up much more of a fight than they had two years ago, with the more moneyed establishment Republicans dramatically out-raising the Medical Freedom candidates. The result was a landslide victory for the establishment Republicans in each and every one of the four primary races.

So who are the establishment Republicans? Two of them are incumbents, and the other two are running to fill vacancies left by retiring board members. Some of them have deep pockets, others come from a background in business administration. With the defeat of the Medical Freedom slate, Republicans running for the hospital board now unilaterally represent business-as-usual. A number of them are also enmeshed with the Robinson Gruters fundraising machine, which is itself heavily associated with Sarasota’s most prolific developers.



Sarah Lodge

For Central District Seat 1, **Sarah Lodge** is defending her incumbency. She’s the current chairwoman of the board, as well as a financial advisor at RBC Wealth Management. Of the \$24,300 she’s raised so far, \$15,000 of it comes from her own pocket.



Sharon Wetzler DePeters

For At-Large Seat 1, **Sharon Wetzler DePeters** is also defending her incumbency. She’s raised the least of the Republicans, at \$9,050. She’s been on the board since before 2020, being one of its most seasoned members. She also has a history in healthcare, having served as a nurse in the Air Force, later becoming an associate professor of nursing.



Kevin Cooper

For At-Large Seat 2, **Kevin Cooper** is running for an open seat. He’s raised almost all of his campaign funds from dozens of individuals and businesses, who’ve given him over \$42,828 to work with — that’s the most of any hospital board



candidate. Many of those businesses are developers, which makes sense, considering his membership to the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance. He’s currently the Vice President of Communications and Strategic Initiatives at Mote Marine Laboratory.



Pam Beitlich

For At-Large Seat 3, **Pam Beitlich** started out as a nurse, and has worked her way up at Sarasota Memorial Hospital for 40 years. She’s also crowd-funded, and has got the most to show for it, with just over \$42,190 raised.

Democrats

The last Democrat to serve on the hospital board did so more than a decade ago, and in the last election the party fielded no candidates. This year is a different story. The Democrats had seemed to be gearing up for a Medical Freedom primary win, and are now having to shift gears in their messaging. When the first two candidates were announced, the party said they were running “to prevent the effort of ‘health freedom’ Republican officials to discredit and privatize Sarasota Memorial Hospital.” Chair of the Sarasota Democrats Dan Kuether said upon the third Democratic candidate’s announcement that “Sarasota voters now have a clear choice between outstanding medical and hospital professionals and a so-called ‘medical freedom slate’ composed of extremists with no experience in medicine or hospital administration.”

After the primary, Kuether shifted the emphasis to the threat of privatization. It’s an idea that most recently proliferated out of the Medical Freedom camp, but one which Kuether alleged “has not been strictly an extremist viewpoint,” pointing out that Republican Sen. Rick Scott had suggested that Sarasota Memorial Hospital be privatized 10 years ago.



Vicki Lynn Nighswander

For the Central District Seat 1, **Vicki Lynn Nighswander** is back for round two. She ran against Sarah Lodge back in 2020, losing by a margin of 16 percent. She has a decades-long career as a public health professional under her belt. She has yet to raise any money.



Alan Jerome Sprintz

For At-Large Seat 1, **Alan Jerome Sprintz** has a master’s degree in hospital administration and a decades-long career ping-ponging around Illinois as a healthcare official. He’s raised \$21,736 mostly from individual donors, many of them retirees.



Dr. Dale Anderson

For At-Large Seat 2, **Dr. Dale Anderson**, a retired physician, hospital executive and healthcare consultant, is running. Anderson launched his campaign in August, following the death of John Lutz, the initial Democratic candidate for this seat. Anderson has yet to raise money for his campaign. He is also a board member of WSLR+Fogartyville.



George Davis

For At-Large Seat 3, **George Davis** has been in the healthcare industry for nearly 40 years. He received his bachelor’s from Harvard and his MD from Columbia. He’s raised more than \$15,361, in a similar manner to Sprintz, courting a large amount of smaller donations from retirees.



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RECAP With the evisceration of the Medical Freedom slate, this election has turned into a referendum on mainstream Republicans’ handling of Sarasota Memorial Hospital. Unlike the 2022 election cycle – during which far-right Republicans gave their representatives on the hospital board a vote of no confidence – it’s the county’s Democrats and independents who will now have to answer the question: Is business-as-usual acceptable for the hospital board? If yes, incumbents and their allies are running with the Republicans. If no, a slate of experienced healthcare workers and administrators is ready to take their place.

LIVE FROM Fogartyville

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

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.



For more information and tickets, visit fogartyville.org, call 941-894-6469 or scan this QR»



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

October 05, 5pm Saturday **Free**

WSLR
+ Fogartyville's Open House:
Featuring **Los Rumberos**
The Barker Project
+ sets from **DJ Milo**
FLASHBACK FREQUENCIES

WSLR-FOGARTYVILLE 96.5

10/11 8pm Friday \$26/\$30

Antsy McClain
THE TRAILER PARK TROUBADOURS
Nashville-based songwriter with a folk humor vibe

10/14 7pm Monday \$8/\$10

Fogartyville Songwriter Series
Hosted by **Andres Colin**, featuring **Danielle Mohr, Bain Beakley** the region's best talent playing in-the-round

10/20 4pm Sunday \$45/\$50

Sammy Figueroa's LATIN JAZZ EXPLOSION
Grammy-nominated percussionist known for versatility

10/24 7pm Thursday \$20/\$25

Grass is Dead
Bluegrass, swing & folk music launched directly onto a psychedelic paintbrush of the Grateful Dead

10/25 8pm Friday \$30/\$35

RENESITO
Latin Grammy recipient and master of *tres guitar* – a Fogartyville favorite!

10/26 6pm Saturday \$10

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YOUTH-FUELED CONCERT FEATURING STUDENTS FROM A LOCAL MUSIC SCHOOL

10/28 7pm Monday *Get on the list!* **FREE/\$5**

THE SANDBOX
hosted by WSLR's **THE CAT LADY**
Open Mic: poetry, comedy, music & performance art

11/02 8pm Saturday \$20/\$24

COMPTON & NEWBERRY
Masters of old-time mandolin, banjo- guitar

A DEEP-DIVE INTO EARLY COUNTRY & BLUES

11/04 7:30pm Monday **FREE!!!**

IGOR & THE RED ELVISES
'GET OUT THE VOTE' SHOW
MOBILIZE & PARTY! the night before Election Day (League of Women Voters and Choose Democracy will be tabling)

11/08 8pm Friday \$30/\$34

Halie Loren
Award-winning jazz/pop singer-songwriter

11/09 8pm Saturday \$20/\$24

ROD PICOTT AND **REBEKAH PULLEY**
SINGER-SONGWRITER DOUBLE BILL: Picott incorporates a blend of Americana, alt-rock, folk; Pulley has a soulful sound with touch of twang.

11/10 7pm Sunday \$22/\$26

EAST NASH GRASS
IBMA'S INSTRUMENTALISTS OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS IN SEVERAL CATEGORIES
"Out of the Wilds of East Nashville came this *band of ringers*, each of them playing in National High-Profile Bluegrass bands.is on the move."
Jerry Douglas

11/11 7pm Monday \$8/\$10

Fogartyville Songwriter Series
Hosted by **Dean Johanesen**, featuring **Josh Plummer** and **Lesa Silvermore** – region's best talent playing in-the-round

11/12 6pm Tuesday *Pay What You Can* (\$20 suggested)

MONK CHONG
Learn from a master deeply rooted in Zen tradition

11/15 8pm Friday \$18/\$22

SHAMARR ALLEN
"True Orleans" trumpeter and singer who spans genres of jazz, hip-hop, rock, funk, blues, even country.

11/16 8pm Saturday \$18/\$20

Project: **Joni**
Local singer Joni Adno and her band craft their own versions of *Joni Mitchell's* iconic masterpieces

11/25 7pm Monday Free/\$5

THE SANDBOX Open Mic

12/05 7pm Thursday \$20/\$24

TRAVIS
Inspired by maritime traditions of Scotland, Ireland, Scandinavia & North America

12/07 3pm Saturday **Free**

Urban Sketching with James Richards
Meet at Art Center Sarasota, draw cityscape under guidance of renowned instructor, end at Fogartyville to share sketches!

12/07 8pm Saturday \$10

John Nichols
National Affairs correspondent for **The Nation** will share insights from the 2024 election

12/08 7pm Sunday \$22/\$26

RICHARD GILEWITZ
Top fingerstyle guitarist and touring raconteur with 4-string ukulele thrown in mix

12/09 7pm Monday \$8/\$10

Fogartyville Songwriter Series
Hosted by **Trevor Bystrom**. Featuring **Nora Bear & Zion Alpert** – region's best talent playing in-the-round

12/13 8pm Friday \$18/\$22

CALEB CAUDLE & THE SWEET CRITTERS
North Carolina-based alt-country singer-songwriter

12/14 8pm Saturday \$20/\$24

Mean Mary
Nashville-based Americana, Bluegrass. Blues & Folk banjo and fiddle artist

Wed. 12/18 & Th 12/19 7pm \$20/\$24

SELWYN BIRCHWOOD
Award-winning Florida artist who brings something new to trad-blues sound.

12/20 8pm Friday \$24/\$28

ZACHARY BARTHOLOMEW TRIO:
Music of Vince Guaraldi (Charlie Brown Christmas)
A seasonal tradition at Fogartyville

KEEP IT TUNED TO 96.5FM!

What's New on air?



By: Leon Kerber
WSLR Program Director

WE LOVE TO SPOTLIGHT THE JOURNEYS OF WSLR PROGRAMMERS, THE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN, AND THE POWER OF COMMUNITY RADIO.

Becca and Cece are the newest – and youngest – programmers on WSLR. Their show, *"Femininomenon"*, focuses on pioneering musicians and bands that give underrepresented communities a voice. The title is a nod to a track by queer pop and Gen Z icon Chappell Roan. *"It's not just about the music—though we love playing tracks by queer, indie, pop, and rock artists you might not hear elsewhere,"* according to the cohosts. *"It's about creating a safe space for people to express themselves. Feel free to call in during our show to talk, ask questions, request songs, or give feedback. We want to hear from you!"*



Becca and Cece began their journey at WSLR as guest hosts on *"INDIE-licious"* during the International Women's Day (IWD) Takeover. Catching the radio bug, they enrolled in WSLR's radio camp as part of *Remake Learning Days*; they

learned about production and gained technical skills in content creation and sound engineering.

The Gen Z programmers hope they will pave the way for their peers to dream up their own shows for WSLR.

"Hearing young people on the radio creates a new environment for other teens who might be seeking a safe space to be themselves," Becca says. *"It could also inspire other young people to speak out and have a voice in their community."*

"Femininomenon" airs alternating Saturdays from 5-7 p.m.



JOIN THE WSLR FAMILY

Interested in becoming a programmer?

Here's how you can get involved:

- ▶ **Become a Member:** Support WSLR and join our community.
- ▶ **Become a Volunteer:** Help behind the scenes or on air.
- ▶ **Submit Your Show Proposal:** Have a great idea? Submit your show proposal and join the *WSLR team*.
- ▶ Visit WSLR.org, click the WSLR 96.5 tab, and dropdown to select the 'Become a Programmer' page for more information.

WSLR is about community and inclusivity. Whether you're inspired by our new programmers or have a unique perspective, WSLR is the place to make your voice heard. We welcome everyone to our community-driven station, where creativity and diversity thrive.

Follow us on social media for updates, behind-the-scenes looks, and ways to get involved. There's a place for you in the WSLR family!

Thank you for supporting *WSLR!* We look forward to sharing these new journeys with you.

wslr lp 96.5 fm WEEKLY PROGRAM GUIDE

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■ WSLR.org (desktop)
■ WSLR App at wslr.org (mobile)

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■ archive.wslr.org Music shows are archived for two weeks. News and public affairs are available for download, and expire later.

listen to it all

Music	Public Affairs
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	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
12 mid.	The Witching Hour Dylan Howell	Down The Road (Syndicated)	Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio	In My Room (Syndicated)	All Mixed Up (Syndicated)	Dave Radio Dave Wilkens	Milo After Hours Milo
1 a.m.						Synthelectico (Syndicated)	Cafe Chill (Syndicated)
2 a.m.	Deep Threes (Syndicated)	Midnight Special (Syndicated)	Music Automated playlist	Upfront Soul (Syndicated)	Music Automated playlist		
3 a.m.						And You Don't Stop (Syndicated)	
4 a.m.	Thom Hartmann Show (Syndicated)	Thom Hartmann Show (Syndicated)	Thom Hartmann Show (Syndicated)	Thom Hartmann Show (Syndicated)	Thom Hartmann Show (Syndicated)		Music Automated playlist
5 a.m.						Music Automated playlist	
6 a.m.	Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated)	Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated)	Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated)	Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated)	Background Briefing Ian Masters (Syndicated)	Donne Del Mondo (Syndicated)	Keeping Democracy Alive (Syndicated)
7 a.m.							
8 a.m.	Blues to Bluegrass John D.	Corduroy Sebastien Wegeng	Music with a Purpose Pat Monahan Indie Psych Show Alecia Harper	Eclectic Blender Dave Pedersen	Latin Explosion Juan Montenegro	Saturday Morning Gospel Beat Jonah Ray	A Way With Words (Syndicated) Wings of the Heart Carol or Salima
9 a.m.			ALTERNATE WEEKS				
10 a.m.	ArtBeat Kathleen Murray Voices Up Shai & Andrew	Our Changing Environment	Healthy Living Hour	Peace & Justice Report Tom Walker & Bob Connors	The Detail Cathy Antunes	Surreal News Lew Lorini & Steve Norris	The Bradenton Times Mitch Maley
11 a.m.	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Democracy Now! Amy Goodman (Syndicated)	Law and Disorder (Syndicated)
NOON	Music of the World Marco Ciceron	World Rotations Rotating Afro Cuban Jazz Frankie Piniero	The Blue Groove Mark Gruder	Metropics Carlos Pagan	Complex Waveforms Mark Zampella	Juke In The Back (Syndicated) WSLR NEWS (Rebroadcast) Shortwave Report (Syndicated)	Folk Alley Elena See (Syndicated)
1 p.m.		ALTERNATE WEEKS					
2 p.m.	Thom Hartmann Show (Syndicated)	Thom Hartmann Show (Syndicated)	Thom Hartmann Show (Syndicated)	Thom Hartmann Show (Syndicated)	Thom Hartmann Show (Syndicated)	Nuestra Musica Mariano Vera	Dadee-O's Collector's Corner Dadee-O
3 p.m.	Longboat Luau The Ho-Dad	Second Wind Seany G	Louisiana Gumbo Kid Red	Outta the Basement, On the Road Purple Mike High Tide Susan Runyan	Everything But The Kitchen Sink Art on the Air	Rhythm Revival Reverend Billy C. Wirtz	
4 p.m.				ALTERNATE WEEKS			Velvet Hammer Blues Beth Hammer
5 p.m.	Music Museum Ed Foster	Synthetic Age JR Indie-licious Sheila Jane	Broken Reel Leon Kerber	Ted's Head Ted	Friday Happy Hour Bartender Tommy D.	Community Conversations Mel Lavender	
6 p.m.		ALTERNATE WEEKS				Femininomenom Becca & Cece HipRack Nation Kaja Brown (Syndicated)	Discovery Road Louise Coogan
7 p.m.	Economic Update Capitol Update State News	Ralph Nader Radio Hour (Syndicated)	WSLR NEWS Ruthless Truth Ruth Beltran	Alternative Radio (Syndicated)	WSLR NEWS Counterspin Progressive Page Turner	ALTERNATE WEEKS	
8 p.m.	Yesterday's Dead Today Mark Binder	The Root Cellar Roger & Peter	The Cat's Meow The Cat Lady The Backbeat Andy Franklin	Positive Friction John Haupt	Ripper's Rarities Russ Yodice	Songs For Knitting & Mayhem Laura Lavender Blue Radio Lindsey Hudson	Soul Kitchen Paul Junior Upfront Soul (Syndicated)
9 p.m.			ALTERNATE WEEKS			ALTERNATE WEEKS	
10 p.m.	SynthWorld Damon First Voices Indigenous Nation	Bullwinkle's Corner Keith Winkle	Random Precision Alex	Music Is The Best Mark Markus	Dirty Laundry Karen Hazelwood (Syndicated) Train To Skaville Syndicated	The Good Part Jay Ackermann	That Driving Beat (Syndicated)
11 p.m.	ALTERNATE WEEKS						
12 mid.	Down The Road (Syndicated)	Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio	In My Room (Syndicated)	All Mixed Up (Syndicated)	Dave Radio Dave Wilkens	Milo After Hours Milo	The Witching Hour Dylan Howell

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Unpacking Constitutional Amendments on November Ballot continued from page 1

reflected in new legislation that school board elections may have already become partisan. Additionally, a candidate's party affiliation may predict how they will vote on controversial school board issues.

Amendment 2

► Enshrining the right to fish and hunt

This amendment would forever preserve fishing and hunting, using traditional methods, as a public right and as a preferred means of managing and controlling fish and wildlife. The right to hunt and fish is presently in the Florida Statutes, recognizing that "hunting, fishing, and the taking of game are a valued part of the cultural heritage of Florida, and as such, should be preserved for Floridians."

Supporters say Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission still has the authority to regulate hunting and fishing, and that the amendment preserves Floridians' right to use hunting and fishing as a means to provide for themselves and their families.

Opponents of this amendment point to the fact there is already a statute with these protections, but using hunting and fishing as the first-rung approach for managing wildlife could have a catastrophic effect on wildlife in Florida.

Amendment 3

► Legalizing adult personal use of marijuana

This amendment would legalize recreational marijuana use in Florida by adults 21 years old and older, allowing individuals to possess up to three ounces and authorizing existing Medical Marijuana Treatment Centers and other licensed entities to acquire, cultivate, process, manufacture, sell, and distribute marijuana products and accessories. It would allow the Florida Legislature to enact additional legislation restricting where people can smoke and ensure access to safer products.

Amendment 4

► Limiting govt. interference with abortion

The language is straightforward: "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." This amendment does not change the Legislature's constitutional authority to require notification to a parent or guardian before a minor has an abortion.

Know Before You Vote: Constitutional Amendments on the 2024 Ballot

Tuesday, Oct. 8, 6-7 p.m.

Lakewood Ranch Library,
16410 Rangeland Parkway, Bradenton

Hosted by
League of Women Voters of Manatee County
More information: lwvmanatee.org

The League of Women Voters of Florida supports Amendment 4. A vote yes would prevent any law from prohibiting, penalizing, delaying, or restricting abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider.

A vote no would not provide a constitutional right to abortion before viability and leave Florida's current 6-week abortion ban in place.

Amendment 5

► Annual homestead inflation adjustment

This amendment would apply an annual inflation adjustment for the property tax exemption to the value of the homestead between \$50,000 and \$75,000. The adjustment would be made based on the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Although there would be no impact to school district taxes, the estimated impact on non-school local government property taxes in Fiscal Year 2025-26 could be a tax revenue reduction of \$22.8 million and grow to be \$111.8 million in 2028-29.

Supporters say the amendment could lead to more savings for property owners who apply for homestead property tax exemptions.

Opponents, including the Florida League of

Cities, say the amendment would reduce revenue available to cities and counties by millions of dollars.

Amendment 6

► Repealing of public campaign financing

Presently, there is a constitutional right to public campaign financing, which requires that the state provide a financing program for candidates for statewide office (governor and cabinet). This Amendment would repeal the Florida Election Campaign Financing Act and the right to public financing for candidates running for state-wide offices.

Florida enacted a public campaign financing law in 1986, and in 1998 Floridians added it to the state constitution with 64 percent of the vote, requiring that candidates for statewide elected office are able to access public campaign financing with specified spending limits. The current law (106.31 F.S.), states that the "purpose of public campaign financing is to make candidates more responsive to the voters of the State of Florida and as insulated as possible from special interest groups." This statute would be repealed if this amendment passes. In 2010, the Legislature referred this same amendment to the ballot and it received 52.49 percent of the vote, falling short of the 60 percent required for passage.

Supporters of this amendment, including the majority of the Florida Legislature, state that this financing, which comes from Florida's general fund, could be used for other programs such as education, health care or housing.

The League of Women Voters of Florida opposes Amendment 6. The current program includes a matching fund that gives small-dollar donors a greater voice while encouraging candidates to seek support from broad groups of voters. Further, if the program is repealed, wealthy donors and special interest groups would no longer be limited in the amounts they can contribute to these candidates.

Shawn Bartelt is president of the League of Women Voters of Sarasota County. For more information about voting and what's on the November ballot, visit vote411.org/florida

Millage Referendum...

continued from page 1

A "yes" vote will:

- continue the voter-approved 1-mill tax rate delivering an estimated annual average \$114 million in funding for the school district, helping to maintain its consistent A rating.
- attract and invest in high-quality educators, provide professional support and growth.
- elevate workforce career and technical education programs.
- keep the added 30 minutes of instruction per school day, equal to 18 extra days a year.
- continue to enhance safety and security at schools.

A "no" vote will:

- end the additional educational funding that has been in place since 2002.
- reduce funding for teacher salaries, STEM programs, arts and security, and potentially increase class size.
- provide an estimated tax savings of \$275 for a home valued at \$300,000 with a \$25,000 tax exemption.

The **League of Women Voters of Sarasota** and numerous other organizations support voter approval of extending the Sarasota County Schools referendum.

Shawn Bartelt is president of the League of Women Voters of Sarasota County. For more information about voting and what's on the November ballot, visit vote411.org/florida



As of press time there were 86,676 registered Democrats to 156,902 registered Republicans (plus 87,157 "Other") in Sarasota County, but that didn't deter Senate candidate **Debbie Mucarsel-Powell** from making campaign stops in Sarasota in September. The Democrat appeared at a meet-and-greet/ rally at Marina Jack and stopped by **WSLR** for an interview with **Juan Montenegro**, who produced a limited series of public affairs shows called "**Your Vote '24**." Mucarsel-Powell is trying to win support across party lines with a call for protection of reproductive freedom in her bid to unseat Republican Sen. Rick Scott in November.



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www.cfsarasota.org

Three City Commission Seats to Be Decided

continued from page 1

Nov. 5 general election. The day after the primary, Furman met with Felton. The Delta flight attendant said she is enthusiastically supporting Felton's now head-to-head campaign against Battie for the District 1 seat. Furman's endorsement should ensure a very tight general election battle.

District 1 covers much of North Sarasota, including Bayou Oaks, Gillespie Park, Amaryllis Park, Central Coconut, and the historically Black neighborhood of Newtown.

Meanwhile, the District 2 race pits incumbent **Mayor Liz Alpert** against Laurel Park resident **Ron Kashden**, covering all of the city's waterfront and most of downtown. The District 3 race is between incumbent **Erik Arroyo** and former Sarasota Planning Board Member **Kathy Kelley Ohlrich**. The district consists of the eastern portion of the City of Sarasota.

Here's more on the candidates:

District 1



Kyle Battie

Kyle Battie (incumbent)

Battie's family has had a long history in District 1. He was first elected to the commission in 2020, defeating Willie Charles Shaw in an upset. Battie is concerned about rising living costs, gentrification and crime

in his district. He said he is working "a lot harder" than during the primary to get re-elected. "I had a lot of personal things to deal with. I was not able to give my full attention to the campaign," he said. Those personal issues include the shooting of three of his younger cousins earlier this year. "We must come together to save our youth from these tragic ends," Battie said.

Meanwhile, the incumbent commissioner faces a defamation lawsuit filed by neighborhood activist Kelly Franklin, who is married to Kashden. Battie accused Franklin of making a racist media post, which was found to be a hoax.

Battie said he has faith that the people of District 1 will "keep me on the job since I am best suited for this position." Battie had no campaign website as of press time.



Sequoia Felton

Sequoia Felton

Political novice Felton has worked in hospitality jobs, but previously served on the city's Human Relations Board. The Newtown resident attributed her primary success to "just listening to the community, doing my homework and due diligence. Hopefully, I will win over those who did not vote for me in the primary."

Felton has the backing of Newtown political heavyweights: **Shaw**, the one-time commissioner for District 1; **Fredd Atkins**, the first Black mayor of Sarasota; and **Jetson Grimes**, a longtime Newtown booster.

She sees herself as a leader versus a politician. "District 1 needs a voice," Felton said. "I don't feel Kyle Battie engages enough with his constituents to understand the issues. We need a leader willing to roll up his sleeves and actually do the work." She said overdevelopment, affordable/attainable/workforce housing, fresh air, clean water and safe streets are her concerns. Campaign website: sequoia4sarasota.com

District 2



Liz Alpert

Liz Alpert (incumbent)

The family law attorney and mom of three is often the decisive swing vote. She first won the District 2 seat in 2015. A second term followed five years later, and she now hopes for a third on the commission. "This election

is about moving our city forward with smart solutions for local issues," Alpert said in a news release. Campaign website: votelizalpert.com



Ron Kashden

Ron Kashden

Kashden frequently appears before the commission to speak on various issues to improve and protect community assets. Professionally, he is a certified public accountant. Kashden said he is running "to add a

voice of reason and give the public a seat at the table." This is the first time he has run for elected office. Campaign website: ron4residents.com

District 3



Erik Arroyo

Erik Arroyo (incumbent)

The lawyer was born in the Dominican Republic and raised by a single mom. He is married with two children. He lists incentives for affordable housing and property tax decreases as his accomplishments. But he has

gotten pushback for questionable financial deals. Campaign website: arroyo2024.com



Kathy Kelley Ohlrich

Kathy Kelley Ohlrich

The long-time neighborhood advocate and educator has served on the Architectural Review Committee and on her neighborhood association. In years past, Ohlrich was elected a city council member in Ohio. "I'm compelled

to run because since Arroyo has been a city commissioner, he abandoned his duty to represent everyone, not just his donors and friends. He abandoned his responsibility to protect Sarasota as a beautiful and affordable place to live," she said. Campaign website: kko4sarasota.com

Tuesday, Oct. 15, 5:30 - 8 p.m.

District 1 and 2 Race Candidate Forum

Hosted by
Rosemary District Association

Fogartyville Community Media & Arts Center, 525 Kumquat Court, Sarasota

Register at
fogartyville.org

Creative Nexus Empowers Artists, Fosters Equity

continued from page 1



Supported by the **Live Music Society's Music in Action Grant** and **Gulf Coast Community Foundation's Venice Endowment Fund**, Creative Nexus is broadening its reach and impact, offering opportunities such as workshops, resource connections and networking

to help artists transform their passions into sustainable careers.

In partnership with ALSO Youth and SEE Alliance, Creative Nexus will also host a Youth Artist Meetup, providing safe spaces for BIPOC and LGBTQ youth, fostering their creative potential, and integrating them into the broader narrative of artistic expression and cultural celebration.

The program culminates in the Creative Nexus Summit, a two-day event fostering critical dialogues between artists, business leaders and cultural advocates. These discussions are essential for understanding the role of art in driving social change and equity.

An immersive and interactive art installation is also a central component of the project. A call for artists will invite participants to create an installation focusing on community resilience and environmental justice in collaboration with one to three artists from different mediums. This initiative aims to foster cross-disciplinary creativity and showcase the diverse talents within the community.

But Creative Nexus is much more than a series of happenings. It's the foundation of a movement

that honors and uplifts the intricate tapestry of our community. By empowering these artists, we not only enrich their lives but also invigorate the cultural and economic fabric of the Gulf Coast region.

Upcoming Creative Nexus Offerings

October 18

Kickoff featuring music, art and poetry

Artist Development Workshops:

March 5, 2025 - Career Planning as an Artist

April 16, 2025 - Branding for Interdisciplinary Artists: Crafting Your Unique Identity

NextGen Creators:

April 26, 2025 - Youth Artist Meetup

Creative Nexus Summit:

May 16, 2025

Art installation unveiling and artist social
May 17, 2025 - Full day summit, including a photography station for professional headshots and marketing support.

More information and registration:
mosaicmovements.org/creative-nexus

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at 941-809-3168

Typically Low-key Tax Collector Race Is High Profile in 2024

BY FLORENCE FAHRINGER

The race for Sarasota County Tax Collector has become ever more contentious since termed-out county Commissioner **Mike Moran**, a Republican, announced last year his intention to challenge 40-year incumbent Tax Collector **Barbara Ford-Coates**, the county's last remaining Democratic official.

Moran quickly raised tens of thousands of dollars, courting Sarasota's wealthiest developers. His No. 1 donor was Hugh Culverhouse Jr., who donated \$5,000 through various business entities.

Ford-Coates formally launched her campaign for re-election shortly after, relying almost entirely on individual donations that rarely exceed \$100. But after Moran and his fellow commissioners slashed the budget of the 211 helpline, Culverhouse swooped in and offered to cover the cost of running it. A few days later, Ford-Coates' campaign received a \$10,000 donation from Culverhouse and his various businesses.

Besides big-dollar donors, Moran's campaign has also relied heavily on attack mailing, painting Ford-Coates as a fraudulent profiteer acting in violation of Florida law.

Ford-Coates has been challenged in 5 of her 10 past campaigns for Tax Collector. She described

those previous contests as having "mutual respect and courtesy between candidates."

Regarding Moran, she said (responding to a reporter's questions over email): "In my career as a public servant and experience as an elected official, this is not the way campaigns with integrity are conducted."



Mike Moran

Moran, given the same opportunity to answer questions, claimed that he had received "hundreds and hundreds of donations from nurses, firefighters, deputies, retired citizens, and yes, real estate professionals."

But his fundraising reports revealed only one firefighter, one law enforcement officer, and one possible nurse had donated to his campaign.

After a year of indirect back-and-forth, the two candidates were slated to meet at the Sarasota Tiger Bay Club for a face-to-face panel on Sept. 5.

However, a family medical emergency prevented Ford-Coates from attending. Moran advocated for the event to go on as planned and Chief Deputy Tax Collector Sherri Smith was asked to stand in for Ford-Coates. She defended her boss's record and clarified the job of Tax Collector.

During the event, Moran's family fanned out across the room, passing a stapled handout out to

attendees. The handout accused Ford-Coates of over-taxing Sarasota residents out of \$17,771,949 in the last fiscal year, as well as overpaying an employee with a \$448,367 annual salary.

Ford-Coates herself addressed the claims after the event, replying to accusations of over-taxing by saying, "If Mr. Moran had done his homework and read Florida Statute 192.091, he would understand that all fees and commissions this office collects are set and required by Florida law; they are neither decided nor set by me, and they are not optional."

She also addressed the overpayment accusation. "Regarding the claim that I paid an employee a salary of \$400,000 - that is simply incorrect [...] During the period that has come to be known, across the U.S., as the 'Great Resignation,' we had employees leave to care for family members, pursue other opportunities or higher education, move to other regions, etc. Throughout 2023, one employee worked 75-80 hours per week, the equivalent of two jobs, and I paid them for actual administrative time worked."

Both candidates had been invited to participate in an Oct. 7 forum hosted by the League of Women Voters of Sarasota County. Ford-Coates affirmed her intention of attending. But the League posted on its website in late September that Moran declined, and so the forum had to be canceled in keeping with League guidelines.



Barbara Ford-Coates

Facilitated Dinner Dialogue to Focus on Immigration Oct. 8



Stetson Law Professor Michael Vastine will be the framing speaker on the topic of immigration at the Oct. 8 Conversations Across The Aisle (CATA) dinner and workshop.

CATA is a Sarasota-Manatee-based nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that seeks to strengthen the community by hosting facilitated dinner dialogs.

Founded by former New College Dean Bill Woodson, each CATA dinner/workshop has a different theme. A "hot topic" is framed by a local expert, and community members from across the political spectrum are challenged to reflect on critical policy questions of the day in facilitated small discussion groups.

The workshops are free, but participants must be invited, and seating is limited. Self-nominations are welcome, and interested parties may submit their names accompanied by a brief statement of why they would like to participate Oct. 8 or in a future CATA workshop to: events.cata@gmail.com.

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Steube, Lopez Vie for Congress

KATHLEEN MURRAY

GOP Rep. **Greg Steube** faces Democratic challenger **Manny Lopez** in the Nov. 5 race to represent Florida's 17th congressional district, which includes all of Sarasota and Charlotte counties, and portions of Lee County.



Greg Steube

Steube serves on the House Committee of Ways and Means and the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of Federal Government.

He advocates for small businesses, ranchers and farmers, and Florida seniors. Critics questioned that advocacy in August after Steube on Facebook called on conservatives to boycott Stottlemeyer's Smokehouse along with a photo of campaign signs

for Liz Barker and Tom Edwards (nonpartisan school board race) and then primary candidates who were later defeated Republican Alexandra Coe (County Commission race) and Democrat Matthew Montavon (congressional race).

Steube also supports an "America First Agenda" and has conservative immigration policies.

He previously served two years in the Florida Senate and six years in the Florida House. After graduating from the University of Florida with both undergraduate and law degrees, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, serving from 2004-2008.

Campaign website: electgregsteube.com

Lopez defeated Matthew Montavon in the Democratic primary in August.

If elected, he says he will focus on preserving democracy, rebuilding the middle class, protecting the environment, safeguarding a woman's right



Manny Lopez

to choose, securing Medicare and Social Security, term limits, affordable housing, and "sensible" gun safety measures.

Lopez attended San Carlos Institute in Key West for elementary school, one of the first bilingual and integrated schools in the U.S. His educational background includes Florida Keys Community College, Baylor University and State College of Florida.

His work history includes sergeant in the U.S. Army, Key West fireman, member of the Board of Education in Whitney, Texas, and executive director of the Chamber of Commerce in Hillsboro, Texas. Campaign website: mannyforcongress.com

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20 Years of Many Voices, One Community

BY JESSE COLEMAN

WSLR is entering its 20th year on the airwaves! It's a new decade of community radio, and the love, spirit and radical commitment to the values established on this frequency are stronger than ever!

In October 2004, Dave Beaton and Arlene Sweeting, alongside the invaluable work of visionary volunteers, partnered with the students of the New College Student Alliance to raise the tower and make their first broadcast on Low-Power WSLR 96.5FM. It was a new, independent voice for New College of Florida students and the greater Sarasota community. This partnership was primed and ready for an experiment in broadcasting that would bring together people from all walks of life into a scrappy studio held together with duct tape and the dream of hearing from many voices, creating one community.

The experiment has been a success! Together, we have sustained a living, breathing organization that has grown in size and impact, and continues to build on that dream. I have the honor and the privilege of leading the next iteration, and I am so grateful to be able to serve the community and continue to grow this vital resource.

But there are those in this county and state who not only dismiss the dream, but also actively work to suppress it.



Saturday, Oct. 5, 5-9 p.m.
WSLR'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY PARTY & OPEN HOUSE!
at Fogartyville, 525 Kumquat Court, Sarasota
FREE TO ALL!
More information: wslr.org

Over the past few years, organizations that promote diversity in the arts across Florida have faced unprecedented challenges, navigating both political and financial pressures that have made it harder to foster inclusion and celebrate the richness of diverse artistic expressions. We have seen the movement toward division and fear multiply, with backwards-thinking political leaders aiming to make our region into a destination for folks who are not interested in building something together. They are committed and fixated on maintaining divisions, touting Florida as a place where “woke goes to die” and stripping funding from organizations that promote diverse voices.

In the spring the Florida Legislature zeroed out all Culture Builds Florida grants – of which Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center was recommended to receive \$45K – from the 2024-25 budget. Then Gov. Ron DeSantis vetoed more than \$30 million in other state budget grants for arts and culture organizations, leaving hundreds of our fellow nonprofits scrambling.

But it didn't stop at the state level. In a brazen political maneuver, the Sarasota County Commission joined in on the attack and rejected Fogartyville's highly-rated Tourist Development Grant recommendation (see more here

wslr.org/fogartyville-defunded/). The combined county and state cuts left a nearly \$75,000 hole in our budget and sent a clear message that we cannot count on government to support the arts. Instead, it is the generosity of our community that will provide for the future of WSLR+Fogartyville.

Our values put people before profits and focus on peace, sustainability, democracy, and economic and social justice. Political forces are fearful of the bond and community that our founders established, with the tremendous joy, sweat and grit of volunteers, programmers, board members, staff, artists and activists who have come together to create a center for creative expression and engagement. They see the resilience this community has created, and the organic growth that our new leadership team will continue to build as we remain more committed than ever to this organization's vision of ensuring a more just and inclusive community through media and arts.

WSLR+Fogartyville faces a tremendous fiscal challenge just as this new era of leadership gets underway. So we need YOU now more than ever.

We hope you will join us in celebration of our 20th Anniversary on the air at our annual Open House on Saturday, Oct. 5 from 5-9 p.m. Enjoy live bands, WSLR DJs, our CD sale fundraiser, take a tour of the studio with new Program Director Leon Kerber, and get something to eat at our local food trucks.

It's the kickoff to our **Oct. 9-15 Fall Membership Drive**, whose theme of “*Many Voices, One Community*” encapsulates the mission and vision of this organization and all that has grown around it.

We ask for your support for **WSLR +Fogartyville** by becoming a member, and if you are already a member, please consider making an additional sustaining gift to strengthen the pivotal work of this organization.



Jesse Coleman is the General Manager and Executive Director of WSLR+Fogartyville. Reach him at jesse@wslr.org

GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Together isn't just a word in our mission, it's how we get things done.

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