

Federal Decisions Could Thwart Union Organizing in Florida

BY JOHANNES WERNER

For unions in Florida, it has been some of the best of times, but the worst of times could be ahead.

In the last couple of years, labor organizing has reached activity levels rarely seen before in this “right-to-work” state. The impetus came mainly from private-sector workers.

Last summer, UPS drivers in Tampa and Sarasota, organized by the Teamsters Union, picketed their distribution centers and threatened to strike. In part thanks to the pressure of Florida workers, UPS drivers throughout the U.S. landed the richest contract in years.

Then, the wave of Starbucks organizing moved into the region, including the eight employees at a store on University Parkway. The union failed to reach a majority in the employee vote, but a Starbucks store in Clearwater is now represented by Starbucks Workers United.

Next came bank tellers: A Wells Fargo Bank branch office in West Bradenton became the third in Florida to be represented by Wells Fargo Workers United.

The biggest organizing win in the region materialized thanks to the Sarasota employees of UNFI, the national organic food distributor whose main customer is Whole Foods. Last May, 82 truckers threatened by the company’s plans to outsource their jobs became members of the Teamsters. They were joined by 265 warehouse workers in October.

Matthew Killen, a Teamsters organizer who helped bring about the vote in Sarasota, sees the



successful union drive as part of a bigger trend. “This is the largest unionization in the private sector for the Teamsters in the South in over 20 years,” he said after the win in October. “So, unions are coming back, and they’re coming back strong. They’re coming back big, and they’re coming back fast.”

These union drives were not easy. Employees faced considerable hostility and threats, particularly at UNFI, which suspended two warehouse workers in the runup to the unanimous union vote.

This strong private-sector showing contrasts with

public-sector unions that are under siege. Teachers unions were the main target of state legislation that ended automatic payroll deduction of union dues and raised the bar for recertification of union chapters.

To be recognized by the state, each bargaining unit in Florida now needs 60 percent of the vote of all the employees, instead of 50 percent. Ironically, this seems to have re-energized teachers union leaders and rank-and-file members alike. Florida’s biggest teachers union, in Miami-Dade, passed the higher

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Smart Growth Advocates Organize to Address Sarasota County’s Decade of ‘Undisciplined Planning’

BY TOM MATRULLO



Former Sarasota County Commissioner Jon Thaxton spoke about growth and balance at a SCAN meeting.

Early last year, Sarasota developers achieved new levels of hubris and potentially destructive impacts. Beloved communities under threat included Siesta Key, where Benderson and others wish to build megahotels; Old Miakka, where a rural community faces intense new development from Lakewood Ranch; and a public amenity – the Celery Fields – where D.R. Horton seeks to build 170 homes by the prime nesting area. The Jan. 2024 edition of Critical Times carried word of these impending impacts to iconic areas.

These threats sparked a group of advocates to hold public conversations as the Sarasota Citizen Action Network, or SCAN. Siesta Key neighborhood advocate Lourdes Ramirez says Protect Siesta Key joined SCAN “with the belief that sharing zoning and planning experiences among neighborhood leaders will not only benefit their organization but also help neighborhoods throughout Sarasota County.”

SCAN held meetings in public spaces around the county. Attendees heard from former Commissioner Jon Thaxton, stormwater engineer Stephen Suau, Sarasota Audubon’s Jeanne Dubi, climate scientist Tiffany Troxler and more. Barbara Lockhart (Environmental Conservancy of North Port), Jan Vertefeuille of Venice Thrives, Ken Baron of North Venice, activist David Ianotti and others brought their creative activism to our monthly meetings.

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LGBTQ Civil Rights Organizer Outlines Next Steps

BY JULES RAYNE

In recent years we have seen increased attacks from conservative politicians against marginalized communities. Many are afraid of what will come next and feel powerless to make change, but there is much we can do to fight for our civil rights and freedoms.

In 2024, Florida Republicans filed bills designed to weaken environmental regulations, loosen gun restrictions, and introduce religion in education. They also filed 22 anti-LGBTQ bills, attacking LGBTQ culture, healthcare, education and representation.

Fortunately, many of these harmful bills were prevented from becoming laws. In 2024 we were able to stop 21 out of 22 anti-LGBTQ bills from becoming law; we scored a major court settlement against the “Don’t Say Gay” laws; and had successes in electing pro-equality candidates to school boards and in local elections across the state. We also

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The Nation's Nichols Cites 'Whiplash Politics' in Prediction that Democrats Will Regain Power

BY RAMON LOPEZ

John Nichols, national affairs correspondent for The Nation, says Donald Trump's November win was not unexpected, and he believes the Democrats will get their turn in four years as part of a long historical trend of "whiplash politics."

Nichols analyzed the election results during "After 2024: How to Build a Winning Politics of Economics, Social and Racial Justice — and Peace," a presentation and discussion at Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center in December.

"Anger" and "whiplash politics" is how he described the reasons for the outcome of the 2024 presidential election. U.S. voters have been whipping back and forth since the early 1980s, and Trump capitalized on the anger many American voters were feeling, Nichols said.

"The 2024 election was the election of anger," he said. "Anger at the system, anger at how things worked out. Anger at those who are in power and those who seek power. It was just flat out anger. Donald Trump understood that and the Democrats did not. That is a fundamental reality and explains what just happened. We got whiplash politics. We go back and forth. It doesn't matter which party is in charge because it's going to get thrown out. And the reason for that is our government is not working in a way that makes the majority of Americans believe that the country is on their side."

Many former Democrats voted for Trump "because in their view the Democrats weren't offering a sufficient alternative," Nichols said. "And so in this dynamic, what you have to recognize is that the Democratic Party itself has to go through a severe deep re-examination. It has to figure out how you are going to talk to the great majority of Americans who didn't get the message resonating from (Vice President) Kamala Harris."

Harris lost the race because of a flawed campaign strategy, Nichols said.

"She was absolutely ready to be U.S. president," he said. "But she was pressured to run a campaign that did not speak to the anger."

Nichols said we're living in a time of political chaos with Trump winning one of the narrowest presidential victories in American history.

Trump will begin his second term with a Congress that's very narrowly on his side, Nichols said, with several members of the U.S. Senate who have explicitly opposed him. The progressive journalist and writer believes a handful of special elections or retirements could flip the Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Nichols, who co-authored a best-selling book, "It's OK to be Angry About Capitalism," with Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), said capitalism is one of the root causes of the chaos.

"The point of the book is that capitalism has gotten out of control," he said. "We have created a situation in this country where a handful of billionaires can't lose money. No matter what happens, the billionaires get richer. This isn't the way it's supposed to be.

We're not supposed to live in a country where no matter what happens, the rich get richer and the rest of us feel more insecure, more cut off, more denied, not just from an economic position, but from a political standpoint."

But Nichols sees a light at the end of a very dark tunnel as Democrats regroup.

"There's about a dozen Democrats who are starting to think about running for president," he said. "They need to critique Donald Trump's performance, and make sure Trump doesn't do too much damage. If they do so, they will have united enough people in this country."

The result? Democrats will regain power in Washington and "whiplash politics" will play out once

again, Nichols said.

Ramon Lopez, who worked as a Washington-based journalist for more than four decades, is a volunteer reporter for WSLR News.



Progressive journalist and writer John Nichols gave a post-election talk at Fogartyville.

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CONTACT US:
 (941) 894-6469
criticaltimesrq@gmail.com
www.CriticalTimes.org

Editor: Kathleen Murray
Layout: Mark Zampella, Rob Demperio
Contributing Writers: Cathy Antunes, Mack Goode, Coty Keller, Ramon Lopez, Tom Matrullo, Jules Rayne, Carol Rescigno, Johannes Werner

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Opinion: On the Front Burner in 2025

BY CATHY ANTUNES

After some bruising developments (pun intended) over the past few years, residents get to enjoy some downtime before 2025 kicks into high gear. Rest up everyone! Here are some issues and situations for Sarasota residents to keep on their radar in the months to come:

The search for a new City Manager in Sarasota

The former Deputy City Manager who became City Manager, Marlon Brown, chose to announce his retirement last August. The culture at City Hall had taken a decidedly negative turn in recent years. Commissioner Kyle Battie's use of a fabricated image to accuse a citizen activist of racism was a deeply concerning low for the credibility of City Hall process and decorum. Brown's public rhetoric scolding citizens and Commissioners, and bemoaning a contrived City Staff victimhood did nothing to create confidence in City Administration. Here's hoping the City's search for a new City Manager will result in an effective, low key lead administrator pick, who will see their role as providing good natured public service.

D.R. Horton's quest to build homes in a floodplain next to the Celery Fields

Developer D.R. Horton's proposal to squeeze 170 houses next to a truly world class birding site, the Celery Fields, was denied in a 4-3 vote by the Sarasota County Planning Commission. The farmland where D.R. Horton wants to build was completely under water when Hurricane Debby sauntered through Sarasota at a snail pace, dumping 18 inches of rain over our county in 24 hours. The next step in the application process for D.R. Horton is a hearing before the County

Commission, the governing body with the final word on the proposal. A tropical storm when it hit Sarasota, Debby rewrote Sarasota's flooding infrastructure playbook.

Mega hotels on Siesta Key

Yes, Lourdes Ramirez's lawsuit to block a 170-room hotel in Siesta Key Village was successful. Another lawsuit which challenges a different 120-room hotel approval was also successful. But there was another approved mega hotel which was not legally challenged. That project would build a 112-room hotel on Siesta Key. Because it was not legally challenged, the same local judge who ruled that the other two hotels violate the County's growth policies has concluded the 112-room hotel can move forward. Can Siesta Key hold the line on overdevelopment? This will be an important issue to watch in 2025 and beyond.

The fate of Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Sarasota City Commissioners decided to let the Van Wezel's flood insurance lapse this year. Subsequently, hurricanes Helene and Milton brought storm surge to the building. A four-foot storm surge from Hurricane Milton required the Van Wezel to cancel shows through December for repairs. An October 2021 Karins Engineering report recommended \$1-2 million in flood proofing improvement for the Van Wezel. This is the report which was not provided as part of the City Commission's backup material at a subsequent hearing when the City Commission approved a partnership agreement to build a new performing arts hall. Leaving out important information that endorsed the structural integrity of the building and outlined how to keep it sound was reprehensible. That move is one example of the negative City Hall culture under the former City Manager referenced above. It appears there

has been a concerted effort to frame the Van Wezel as a defunct structure. By omitting an engineering report that conveyed the building was structurally sound, not following the engineering recommendation to floodproof the building, and failing to renew flood insurance, the City has not acted reasonably to protect the Van Wezel. Even if a new performing arts hall is built, wise planning requires the Van Wezel to function as our primary performing arts hall for at least another decade. Here's hoping a more responsible approach takes hold, one which respects this City asset.

The impact of new commissioners, both county and city

Sarasota voters put two citizen-friendly moderates on the County and City commissions: Tom Knight and Kathy Kelly Ohlrich (respectively). Will there be a change in the decorum of these commissions, including a higher degree of respect for the public and their input? I think so. Won't that be nice?

Finally, the School Board

With the election of Liz Barker, another decorum shift is on the horizon. The Sarasota County School Board was laboring under PR-hungry, culture-warring Ziegler/Rose leadership. It appears that dynamic may be waning. The hair flipping Ziegler continues to behave like nothing happened. Oh, but it did Bridget. It did.

Cathy Antunes is the host of The Detail: On Sarasota Politics, which airs Thursdays at 9 a.m. with an encore presentation on Sundays at 9 a.m. on WSLR.



SEE Alliance Shares Legislative Priorities

BY KATHLEEN MURRAY

Representatives of a youth-led intergenerational nonprofit based in Sarasota urged their local state lawmakers to strengthen public schools, combat the affordable housing crisis, and utilize federal dollars for climate resiliency when they return to Tallahassee in March.

The SEE Alliance's Zander Moricz and Julie Forestier were among a number of diverse stakeholders who advocated for their issues or causes at the Sarasota County Legislative Delegation Meeting on Dec. 16. State Rep. Fiona McFarland (R-73) chaired the meeting, which included state Sen. Joe Gruters (R-22), state Rep. James Buchanan (R-74) and newly elected state Rep. Danny Nix Jr. (R-75).

Moricz, founder and executive director of SEE (Social Equity through Education) Alliance, said community members ranging in age from 13 to 92 helped his organization come up with the legislative wishlist, starting with the strengthening of public schools.

"We ask that you increase per pupil spending, increase funding for early education, and improve voucher transparency and accountability," Moricz said.

He was followed by Forestier, who holds a master's degree in public policy from the Harvard Kennedy School.

She told the lawmakers that many Floridians cannot afford to live where they work, with housing unaffordability particularly acute in Sarasota County, which has a home price-to-income ratio of about 7.4 compared to the national average of 3.5 to 4.

"Specifically we ask you to appeal the Live Local Act, which is harming Sarasota residents by preempting local controls and regulatory abilities," she said. "Additionally we ask that you fully fund and protect the Sadowski Trust Fund, which is dedicated to affordable housing development. The

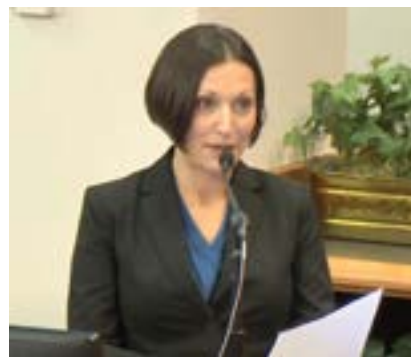
fund has been repeatedly raided for other purposes, diverting critical resources from addressing the housing crisis."

And Forestier urged the lawmakers to prioritize climate resiliency by leveraging expiring federal funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and

Inflation Reduction Act to "fortify our natural defenses, improve stormwater systems, make homes and businesses stronger, modernize our energy grid, and accelerate electrification."

"Let's take the resources the federal government is offering, take the burden off of Sarasota residents, and take control of our community's future," she said.

Moricz and Forestier said the three priorities will improve quality of life in the short term and build a stronger economy for the long term. The first day of the 2025 Legislative Session is March 4.



The SEE Alliance's Julie Forestier

Reader Column: Shoutout to ‘Out East’ Conservationists

BY MACK GOODE

The slogan, “Keep the Country Country,” is credited to Becky Aych, president of the Miakka Community Club. Generated from the Old Miakka Neighborhood Plan, Aych and other conservationists are working to retain this historic area “as a rural community... that is minimally affected by new development.”

If anyone is up to this challenge it is Aych. A farmer’s daughter from the Midwest, she and her family moved to Old Miakka nearly 50 years ago. For about half of her years “out East” she was pleased to be surrounded by cattle ranches, orange groves and tomato farms.

In the past two decades, however, the market for luxury homes in Sarasota and Manatee counties has exponentially grown. The lure of millions of dollars from developers is seductive. But Aych is determined to save rural land.

Aych and her conservation cohorts have helped stall, through legal appeal, 500 Lakewood Ranch homes. Moreover, John Cannon Homes’ desire to build another 500 dwellings has been “postponed.”

Aych and her fellow club members operate out of the Old Miakka Schoolhouse. Built in 1914,

this elementary school closed after 30 years. In 1948, the Miakka Community Club purchased the local treasure. It was later added to the National Register of Historic Places. Aych recalls that “we completed a major restoration/renovation in 2014. Among improvements were better roofing and the installation of ceiling fans. And now, early in every October, our annual fundraiser is a ‘Hootenanny’ at the school.”

While battling hyper developments, Aych and her allies are encouraged by preservation of large properties in surrounding areas. Nearby, the Crowley Museum & Nature Center is still welcoming visitors on weekends. Encompassing 190 acres, Crowley is an historic farmstead that chronicles “pioneer history.” Among its attractions are hiking, camping and instructive workshops.

There’s also the 1,100 acre Triangle Ranch that conservation champion

Elizabeth Moore purchased a few years ago. Cattle still roam this panoramic property. Cozy cabins can be rented for glamping (glam camping). Among other enticements, patrons enjoy star gazing, birding and kayaking.

Moore is a board member of the neighboring Lemur Conservation Foundation (LCF), where a

forest was named for her sponsorship. “Thanks to all of our trustees, we have grown from 40 acres and 10 lemurs to 130 acres where we care for more than 50 of these endangered animals,” said Deborah Millman, LCF’s executive director. Millman also noted that Florida Power and Light (FPL) has acquired more than 1,000 acres to construct two new solar “energy centers,” which prevents it from being developed with homes.

Enormous energy is what Becky Aych, Elizabeth Moore and other prominent preservation proponents are expending to save open land and thus keep the country ... country.



Conservationist Elizabeth Moore



Becky Aych, president of Miakka Community Club

Mack Goode is a Sarasota-based fundraiser and writer for more than 45 years.



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owned by ELIZABETH MOORE

Smart Growth Advocates Organize to Address Sarasota County's Decade of 'Undisciplined Planning' continued from pg. 1

Chart: Note: Commercial sections are not included but most plans have it.

| Development | Dwelling Units | Acreage | Resident Estimate |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 3H Ranch (Pat Neal) | 6,576 units | 2,727 acres | 14,000 residents |
| Skye Ranch (Turner) | 3,450 units | 1,725 acres | 7,300 |
| Hi Hat Ranch (Turner) | 13,081 units | 9,942 acres | 27,600 |
| Wellen Park | 22,228 units | 11,000 acres | 56,834 |
| Winchester Ranch | 8,999 units | 3,855 acres | 18,988 |
| Waterside (LWR Jensen) | 5,144 units | 5,490 acres | 11,000 |
| <small>(Note: Waterside plans to double its size adding 5,000 acres east into Old Miakka)</small> | | | |
| Source: Sarasota County Planning for all except North Port Planning for Wellen Park data. | | | |
| Totals: | 59,478 units | 34,739 acres | 135,722 residents |

People concerned about incompatible developments shared their stories and found they were not alone. A new mantra surfaced:

Your community's issue is neither unique nor just: Public planning systemically hijacked by private interests to the near exclusion of public participation impacts us all.

Public participation has been stifled in various ways:

1. Complex proposals come in the specialized code of "planner lingo." Other places require plain language clearly addressing negative impacts.
2. In some municipalities (Lexington, Ky., Asheville, N.C) proposals are published two weeks before hearings. Our citizens are given barely a week to study lengthy plans.
3. Neighborhood workshops – which once provided citizens with in-person access to maps, charts, developer representatives and county planning staff – are now online, depriving attendees of up-close understanding.
4. Public hearings are held whenever the Board of County Commissioners gets to them. Working people who formerly attended scheduled 5 p.m. hearings now can't tell whether an important hearing will begin at 9 a.m. or 3 pm.
5. Barriers to public information are

increasing. The County now charges for public records requests – even for simple answers that knowledgeable staff could readily provide.

These barriers worsened while giant development proposals were coming before a Board influenced by unprecedented developer largesse. Meanwhile, our media dwindled. We were being trained to not pay attention.

The Board's promises to protect open spaces have repeatedly been broken. We should know how many new dwelling units have already been approved – why don't we? After strenuous digging, Thaxton found that the number of approved, yet unbuilt units is adequate to double the county's current population. Further, the choice to develop or preserve what uncommitted open land remains has dwindled to a mere 10 percent of the county.

Whither SCAN in 2025? Ramirez won a court battle, but another Siesta Key megahotel has been approved. Lakewood Ranch seeks to add 1,399 dwelling units east into Old Miakka, and Mike Hutchinson of Keep the Country Country has filed an appeal. At a packed hearing, the Planning Commission recommended denial of Horton at the Celery Fields. The Board will make the final decision.

In 2025, SCAN will continue to meet with Sarasotans and to fight developer dominance by pressing for more open public participation through balanced, community-based planning. It should prove interesting.

Tom Matrullo, a former business and investigative journalist for several Florida newspapers and magazines, is the founder of SCAN and a member of the WSLR+Fogartyville Board of Directors.



Aerial Map for Pat Neal's 3H Ranch, extending from Clark Road to 681 on I-75

Campaign Contributions

Note: Financial disparities between candidates reflect contributions from developers in 2024. - Tom Matrullo

| Office: County Commissioner, Dist. 1 | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Alexandra Coe (REP) | (Active- Disrupt) | \$45,040.48 | \$11,406.91 | \$44,367.94 |
| Teresa Mast (REP) | (Active- Elected) | \$257,907.92 | \$49.14 | \$259,957.45 |
| Les Nichols (REP) | (Active- Withdrawn) | \$5,550.00 | \$300.00 | \$5,460.63 |
| Ray Pilon (REP) | (Active- Withdrawn) | \$9,055.00 | \$420.71 | \$2,063.91 |
| Hope Williams | (Active- Withdrawn) | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Office: County Commissioner, Dist. 3 | | | | |
| Tom Knight (REP) | (Active- Elected) | \$269,226.00 | \$11,067.89 | \$257,890.84 |
| Neil Rainford (REP) | (Active- Disrupt) | \$304,289.93 | \$650.00 | \$304,289.93 |
| Janique Tenney | (Active- Withdrawn) | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Shari Thornton | (Active- Disrupt) | \$33,148.00 | \$715.41 | \$24,244.67 |
| Gregory Wood (REP) | (Active- Withdrawn) | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| Office: County Commissioner, Dist. 5 | | | | |
| Ron Cutsinger (REP) | (Active- Elected) | \$105,265.92 | \$0.00 | \$105,265.92 |

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Saturday, January 11, 8pm - \$26/\$30

PAYADORA

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Sunday, January 12, 7pm - \$26/\$30

David Wilcox

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Monday, January 13, 7pm - \$8/\$10

Fogartyville Songwriter Series

Gene Hodsdon of **EveryOneRocks** hosts musicians **Norine Mongo** and **James Hawkins** to play in-the-round

Thursday, January 16, 7pm \$35/\$40



BIG CHIEF DONALD HARRISON JR

New Orleans-born saxophonist is a **NEA Jazz Master** who also plays soul and funk; he pioneered **Nouveau Swing** in the '80s.

Friday, January 17, 8pm \$20/\$24

Claudia Schmidt

Brian Smalley opens

Singer-songwriter combines lively folk, jazz & blues with rich poetry and playful humor. **Smalley** is a Florida folk balladeer.



Saturday, January 18, 8pm \$20/\$24



KING MARGO

Lesa Silvermore opens

Nashville-based duo plays alt-country and roots music on dobro and bass; **Silvermore** is a Sarasota-based singer-songwriter.

Sunday, January 19, 7pm \$20/\$24

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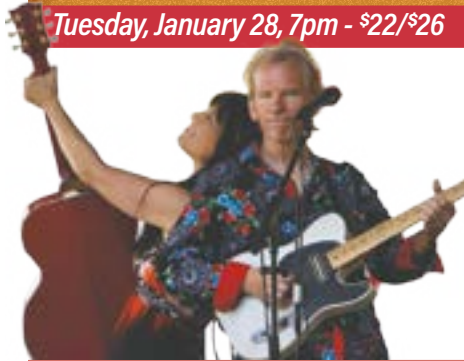
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MORGAN MYLES

Nashville-based multi-instrumentalist and powerhouse vocalist placed in top 3 on NBC's "The Voice"



Monday, February 10, 7pm - \$8/\$10

Fogartyville Songwriter Series

Karlus Trapp, Zach Regan & Bex Olivieri play in-the-round

Thursday, February 13, 7pm - \$22/\$26



FREEDY JOHNSTON

Acoustic set from singer-songwriter known for "Bad Reputation," which earned him Rolling Stone's Songwriter of the Year Award for 1994

Friday, February 14, 8pm - \$30/\$34

LAUREN HENDERSON

Blending & expanding the sounds of Latin America with tender ballads, swinging arrangements, flamenco dance patterns & Afro-Caribbean influences



Saturday, February 15, 8pm - \$20/\$25



GOLDPINE

Duo plays bold harmony-driven Americana; cathartic...moody ...raucous

Sunday, February 16, 7pm - \$20/\$24

SETH GLIER

Grammy nominee channels nature's longing for communion with humanity into song



Thursday, February 20, 7pm - \$20/\$25



SARAH SHOOK & The Disarmers

Country-punk band from Chapel Hill, N.C. performs clear-eyed, biting, and unafraid songs

Friday, February 21, 8pm - \$24/\$28

David Jacobs-Strain & Bob Beach

Multigenerational, bicoastal duo who delight & bewilder roots music lovers



Saturday, February 22, 8pm - \$20/\$25



BILLINGSLEY

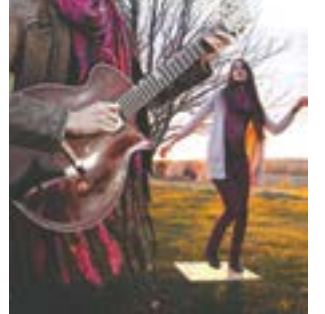
Trio of brothers from Asheville, N.C. plays rock music that features elements of funk, R&B, and jazz

Friday, February 28, 8pm - \$20/\$25

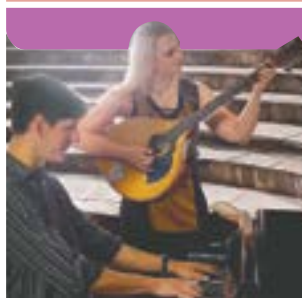
LIANA GABEL

PLUS MATT RAGAS & THE GENIUSES

Double bill features singer-songwriter and percussive tap dancer from New York's Hudson Valley and a Sarasota favorite who delivers powerful & soulful vocals that breathe new life into jazz standards



Sunday, March 2, 7pm - \$20/\$25



ZOÜKEYS

New Orleans-based fusion duo Beth Patterson and Josh axton are a singer/bouzouki player and pianist who find common ground and break rules.

Tuesday, March 4, 7pm - \$15/\$20

Kid Red's Mardi Gras Celebration

Musician & host of WSLR's "Louisiana Gumbo" is joined by **The Pontchartrain All-Stars**

Friday, March 7, 8pm - \$25/\$30

YARN

Blake Christiana returns to Fogartyville with beloved roots band that delivers clever, resonant lyrics



Monday, March 10, 7pm - \$8/\$10

Fogartyville Songwriter Series

Alicia Merritt, Zoey Seraphine & Amanda Abizaid play in-the-round

Saturday, March 15, 8pm - \$20/\$25

Bassel & The Supernaturals

Syrian heart with *Midwest soul*.



Sunday, March 16, 7pm - \$20/\$25



SETH WALKER

Americana guitarist with rich, Southern-inflected voice

Thursday, March 27, 7pm - \$20/\$25



Jacob Jolliff BAND

Mandolinist, toured/recorded with *Joy Kills Sorrow*, *Yonder Mountain* & *Bela Fleck*; is joined by his ensemble of virtuosic pickers.

Friday, March 28, 8pm - \$30/\$35



Stephane Wrembel Quartet

Master guitarist specializing in the style of *Django Reinhardt*

What's New on air?



By: Leon Kerber
WSLR Program Director
Leon@wslr.org



New Year, New Voices at WSLR-LP 96.5 FM

WELCOME TO 2025!

As we begin this new year, I'm excited to share all the amazing things happening at your community radio station. Everything we do is driven by the passion, creativity and voices of our incredible volunteer programmers & listeners

LIKE YOU!

Fresh Shows and New Opportunities

We've had a record number of program submissions and many exciting shows are joining our lineup in 2025. From dynamic musical programs to thought-provoking public affairs, we're building a schedule that reflects the diversity and energy of our community. With *more than 60 locally-produced programs* already on air, we're thrilled to grow even more—and we still have room for new ideas! If you've ever dreamed of hosting your own show, now is the time to step forward. Visit wslr.org, click the "WSLR 96.5" tab, scroll down to "Become a Programmer," and share what you envision. Whether you're inspired by music, storytelling, or diving deep into issues that matter, we'd love to hear from you.

Your Feedback Matters: Take Our Listener Survey

This year, we're launching a *Listener Survey* to get direct feedback about what you love and what you'd like to see from *WSLR* and *Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center*. This is your

chance to shape the future of our programming! The survey will cover everything from your favorite shows to ideas for new content. Keep an eye on our website and social media for the link; we want your input to help guide us in 2025 *and beyond*.

GET INVOLVED

As we grow, we're looking forward to welcoming even more voices to our airwaves. Whether you're tuning in, sharing feedback or becoming a programmer, you're an essential part of this station. Together, we can continue building a vibrant, inclusive and inspiring radio community.



wslr lp 96.5 fm WEEKLY PROGRAM GUIDE

listen on the air

- WSLR-LP 96.5 FM Sarasota
- WBPV-LP 100.1 FM Bradenton

listen online

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

listen on demand

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

| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|---------|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| 12 mid. | Music Automated playlist | 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) |
| 9 a.m. | | | ALTERNATE WEEKS | | | | Wings of the Heart Carol or Salima |
| 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 | Radio Reset Sharon Preston-Folta | 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) | | 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) | Folk Alley Elena See (Syndicated) |
| 1 p.m. | | ALTERNATE WEEKS | | | | WSLR NEWS (Rebroadcast) Shortwave Report (Syndicated) | |
| 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 | The Joy of Jazz Dr. Paul Just Fusion Ma'Re | Rhythm Revival Reverend Billy C. Wirtz | |
| 4 p.m. | | | | ALTERNATE WEEKS | 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 HipRawk 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 Big Willy's Juke Joint Big Willy |
| 9 p.m. | | | ALTERNATE WEEKS | | | ALTERNATE WEEKS | ALTERNATE WEEKS |
| 10 p.m. | First Voices Indigenous Nation ALTERNATE WEEKS | SynthWorld Damon | Bullwinkle's Corner Keith Winkle | Eclectricity Ishmael Katz Cardwell's Cove (Syndicated) | Music Is The Best Mark Markus | Dirty Laundry Karen Hazelwood (Syndicated) It's All Happening (Syndicated) | That Driving Beat (Syndicated) Velvet Radio Elissa Bello |
| 11 p.m. | | | ALTERNATE WEEKS | | | ALTERNATE WEEKS | 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 | Train To Skaville (Syndicated) |

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

Streaming live 24/7/365 at WSLR.org · Studio line 941-954-8636

General Manager Update: Building on a Strong Foundation

As we welcome 2025, I have been reflecting on the incredible year we've had at WSLR+Fogartyville. Transitioning leadership is no small task, but thanks to the dedication and foresight of our founders, Dave Beaton and Arlene Sweeting, we've successfully navigated this change. Their dedication to crafting a strategic five-year plan and preparing the organization for the future was instrumental.

Dave and Arlene's vision and hard work established WSLR+Fogartyville, creating a vibrant hub for community radio and the arts. We're thrilled to see their passion thrive in Elberta, Michigan, where they've launched WUWU-LP 100.1 FM, bringing the spirit of independent radio to a new community. It's a testament to their dedication and vision, and we couldn't be prouder of what they've achieved.

But before they left for Michigan, they laid the groundwork for the sustainability of WSLR+Fogartyville with the establishment of the Beat Goes On Founders Fund. This effort, combined with the Board of Directors' leadership and vision, has strengthened the organization for the future.

Looking ahead to 2025, we're building on that foundation with an ambitious slate of initiatives designed to deepen our impact and expand our reach. Mark your calendars for our second annual Rooted in Community on March 29, a celebration of the connections that make WSLR+Fogartyville so special while supporting the Founders Fund. Save the date and stay tuned for more details!

In addition to celebrating our community, we're also focusing on expanding educational opportunities. Thanks to support from the Rotary



Jesse Coleman, General Manager, WSLR+Fogartyville

Operationally, we're committed to ensuring WSLR+Fogartyville remains a resilient and reliable resource for our community. Recent storms have underscored the importance of having a robust hurricane preparedness plan, and we're working to strengthen our infrastructure so we can continue to provide critical information and connection during emergencies. This effort requires both financial investment and community support, and we welcome your partnership as we work to fortify our organization for the challenges ahead.

One of the most exciting developments from 2024 that will

Advocacy will play a key role in our efforts this year, particularly as we approach the 2025 Legislative Session on March 4. We've once again applied for funding through the Florida Division of Arts and Culture, and we'll need your help to communicate to your representatives in Tallahassee about the importance of financial support for arts organizations like Fogartyville. It's a vital investment in the cultural and social fabric of our state and community, and your voice can make a difference.

Of course, we're also deeply grateful for the ongoing support we receive from our volunteers, members and listeners. This community is built on the connections that are made when we come together. Our record-breaking Fall Membership Drive was a perfect example of that spirit, with almost 40 community members volunteering in the office, the enthusiasm of our 65+ programmers, and the good vibes that came from leaning on one another after a stressful election season. It was incredible to connect with



carry us into 2025 is the transformation of our outdoor space.

Thanks to the board's decision to invest in patio shades, we've been able to welcome more live music fans to Fogartyville than ever before, including four sold-out shows in one week this past December. These enhancements have allowed us to comfortably accommodate larger audiences, creating a more welcoming environment for everyone who visits Fogartyville. Our first-quarter schedule for 2025 is our busiest yet, packed with performances, workshops and events that celebrate the diversity and creativity of our community.

While we're proud of these accomplishments, we know that the work doesn't stop here.

so many of you, to celebrate your contributions, and to feel the enthusiasm that fuels everything we do. That energy will help us amplify more voices and continue to serve as a hub for creativity and community in 2025.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we're not only honoring the foundation Dave and Arlene built, but also charting a path forward that ensures WSLR+Fogartyville continues to thrive for years to come. Here's to a future filled with creativity, connection and community.

Yours RadioACTIVELY,

Jesse Coleman

General Manager, WSLR+Fogartyville

**WE'RE COMMITTED
TO ENSURING
WSLR+FOGARTYVILLE
REMAINS A RESILIENT
AND RELIABLE RESOURCE
FOR OUR COMMUNITY**

Club of Sarasota, this summer we are presenting a dynamic Youth Radio Camp, which will include three week-long sessions that provide kids and teens the opportunity to explore the world of broadcasting and develop their storytelling skills. We're also excited to offer a Public Newsroom Workshop twice a year. The four-week program will train citizen journalists and provide hands-on experience in journalism with WSLR News. We're continuing our Creative Nexus programming, which fosters collaboration and innovation by bringing together artists, activists and community leaders to share ideas and inspire change.



hurdle with flying colors and 83 percent of the vote. So did the teachers unions in both Sarasota and Manatee counties, each with more than 80 percent.

Finally, just before the holidays, the Teamsters local in Tampa joined a nationwide strike against Amazon, after the retail giant missed a deadline to sit down for bargaining. In a two-day action Dec. 19 and 20, the Teamsters sought help from other unions to picket Amazon facilities in the Tampa Bay area, including the distribution center in Ruskin. Amazon's Florida distribution centers are not unionized.

But thousands of the most vulnerable public workers, including janitors, cafeteria workers and bus drivers, as well as underpaid adjunct college professors, have lost union representation because of the new law. That has been the case with non-teaching personnel and adjuncts on all University of South Florida campuses, including Sarasota-Manatee, along with City of Bradenton employees, Tampa International Airport workers and adjunct

professors at Hillsborough Community College and St. Petersburg College.

“We’re losing representation just because of this law,” said Stephanie Yocum, vice president of the West Central Florida Labor Council and president of the Polk Education Association. “And it’s really unfortunate because in Florida, the rights to organize and collectively bargain are in our constitution. Yet our Legislature time and time again shows their contempt for the constitution by writing bills that directly go against everything that our constitution stands for.”

Add to this uncertainty at the federal level. President-elect Donald Trump (President Trump after Jan. 20), who surrounds himself with billionaires, surprised unions by tapping Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-Ore.) for Labor Secretary. Chavez-DeRemer, the daughter of a Teamsters member, voted for the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act.

But union organizing could be made more difficult

by the National Labor Relations Board, which was thrown into turmoil in December by two Democrats-turned-independents. Outgoing Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and outgoing Sen. Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona blocked President Biden’s efforts to lock in a Democratic majority on the board for the first two years of the Trump administration.

Last but not least, there is Project 2025, a 900-page set of proposals for a conservative vision that includes policies that affect not just union members, but all workers. If implemented, Project 2025 will roll back overtime pay, workplace safety standards, and access to benefits such as healthcare and nutrition assistance programs.

Noah Vinsky contributed to this report.

Johannes Werner is the news director of WSLR News, which airs Wednesdays and Fridays at 6 p.m. with a week-in-review on Saturdays at noon.

LGBTQ Civil Rights Organizer Outlines Next Steps

continued from pg. 1

doubled the number of LGBTQ lawmakers in Tallahassee in the 2024 November election.

In 2025 expect there to be increased anti-LGBTQ attacks at the federal level – for example, the recent passing of the National Defense Authorization Act, which eliminates gender affirming care for transgender minors of military personnel and veterans. The outcome of the current Supreme Court case regarding Tennessee’s Gender Affirming Care Ban for transgender youth will also have significant consequences for transgender youth and their ability to access gender affirming care across the country.

We should also expect to see increased restrictions at the federal level on transgender healthcare and women’s reproductive rights, and further legislative attacks on immigrants and other marginalized populations.

For the 2025 Florida Legislative Session, bills have been filed to ban Pride flags, Palestine flags and Black Lives Matter flags in government spaces (SB100); to loosen gun restrictions for minors (SB94); and to prevent Dreamers from accessing out-of-state tuition waivers (SB90). All three of these bills were filed by state Sen. Randy Fine (R-Brevard County), who is now running for Congress.

Fortunately, progressive Floridians have had success in the past in defeating Fine’s hateful legislation and we intend to continue fighting for progressive causes in 2025.

This year organizations like Equality Florida will be heavily focused on Florida’s Legislative Session (March 4-May 2). One of the most effective ways of supporting good legislation and stopping harmful legislation is by speaking directly with lawmakers. Equality Florida will be holding our annual Pride at the Capitol event March 18 and 19, with a march and rally for transgender rights happening on March 20. During these days we are asking Floridians to come to Tallahassee to directly speak with their lawmakers.

Last year we had more than 200 people show up for Pride at the Capitol, and another 200-plus for the first ever Transgender March on the Capitol. This year we expect even more. For those that are unable to come in person it’s important to make phone calls and write letters to lawmakers to let them know their constituents will not tolerate further attacks on our freedoms.

Jules Rayne is a community organizer (Sarasota and Manatee counties) for Equality Florida, an LGBTQ civil rights organization.

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

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Reader Column: What Is an Old Patriot/Ecologist to Do?

BY COTY KELLER

As a non-party affiliated ecologist and a veteran, how do I feel about the presidential election? Having spent the last decade and a half working towards the restoration of the natural world, I am distraught that a majority of the people who voted cast their ballot for a climate denier with fascist characteristics.

The president-elect is also on record as being disdainful of those who serve in the armed forces; he refers to us as losers and suckers. This guy is not my choice. But the people have spoken, and it is time to move on, to assess the problems and adjust my work to help achieve a livable and equitable world.

The underlying economics of our society is serving as a foundation for fascists to pray on, similar to what happened in post war Italy and Germany. While corporations and rich people are thriving financially, more than 40 percent of American families are in poverty or living paycheck to paycheck, according to the United Way. Almost half of Americans are financially desperate, making them susceptible to vote for an authoritarian figure who promises to improve their well-being.

Corporations have disproportionate influence because they have been granted corporate personhood by the Supreme Court. The rights originally meant to protect human beings from the potentially oppressive powers of our government now belong to the corporation. Corporations claim these constitutional rights in federal court as they attempt, often with success, to overturn, weaken, or get around laws designed to protect the environment,

worker safety, public health and a myriad of other laws including campaign finance laws. Money in campaigns has been ruled by the Supreme Court as a First Amendment right, not only for the wealthy, but also for corporations. As a result, the interests and fortunes of regular people are too often put aside, in favor of the greedy needs of corporations and wealthy people.

Vested interests can be vicious, and in the case of the fossil fuel industry they would rather, as Naomi Klein puts it, kill off life as we know it than leave profits in the ground. While most American businesses are honest, business interests can deceive, misinform, and buy influence at the expense of public health and safety. Misunderstanding of critical issues like climate change is not an accident. Disinformation programs are a primary tool employed by corporations and the rich to obscure the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to toxic chemicals to pharmaceuticals to global warming. With a president-elect who claims that climate change is a hoax and often lies to forward his own interests, misinformation is going to become an even greater problem.

All these problems are, in my view, likely to be exacerbated by a climate denying wannabe dictator's plans to occupy the White House for the next four years. But the president-elect is not the root cause.

People would still be suffering from an inequitable economic structure, corporate personhood and rampant misinformation had the Democrats won the 2024 election. These problems must be solved if our nation is to restore the inalienable rights our

founders fought for: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness – for all people (not corporations).

Given the election outcome and our nation's existing problems, what is an old patriot/ecologist to do? I imagine that I will continue to work in my own realm – on my property, at my house of worship, in the local preserve – to eliminate emissions (stop use of fossil fuels) and enhance/restore natural ecosystems.

This type of contribution is small in the global context, but it sets an example, and most importantly it is the right thing to do. I can see investing in the adaptation of our lifestyle to protect our life, limb and property from rising seas and more frequent and severe weather. On another front, I imagine working for a national non-profit, non-partisan organization whose mission is social and economic justice, the elimination of corporate rule, and establishing that money is NOT free speech. The Move to Amend (MTA) coalition strives to address the root causes of America's underlying problems: inequity, corporate rule, inordinate influence of wealth and misinformation/lies. This two-pronged approach – working in my own local ecosystems and nationally with MTA- seems the best way for me to contribute to the attainment of a livable and equitable world.

William (Coty) Keller is in his third (nonpaying) career as a local ecologist, striving to conserve and restore the natural relationships among living things and the environment. In previous (wage paying) lives he served in the U.S. Navy (commanding two ships and teaching national security affairs at the Naval War College) and taught college for two decades (mostly in graduate management, on Long Island). Keller lives and works in Port Charlotte, Fla. and Freeport, N.Y.: <https://ecopapak.org>



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Gun Safety Advocates Renew Sign Waving at Bayfront Park

BY CAROL RESCIGNO

Brady Sarasota members, friends and others wishing to raise their voices for gun safety will gather Thursdays starting Jan. 9 at Bayfront Park, where the group will display signs and wave to passing traffic to raise awareness about a public health crisis that takes the lives of more than 40,000 people in this country every year by homicide, suicide and unintentional shootings. These rallies, generally held from October into April, have taken place for over a decade but were postponed during the fall election season.

The rallies take place at the southern end of the Bayfront parking lot, off Ringling Boulevard and in front of the Bayfront Park, from 4 to 5 p.m. most Thursdays. Set your GPS to 5 Bayfront Drive. Signs will be provided.

Brady Sarasota, which formed over a decade ago and is the only existing grassroots chapter of the national Brady, United Against Gun

Violence, organization, most recently held its 8th Annual Vigil for Victims of Gun Violence, with more than 80 people attending another poignant recognition of the many lives lost. The Dec. 6 event was held in the sanctuary of First Congregational UCC Sarasota and was also livestreamed to people around the country.

The first Sarasota vigil took place in 2017 as part of a national ceremony in Washington D.C. formed by Newtown (Conn.) Action Alliance that honored the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings. Both vigils – and others nationwide – have expanded since to remember all victims of gun violence.

Manny and Patricia Oliver were the featured speakers at the December vigil in Sarasota,, driving over from Parkland in the yellow school bus they retrofitted to traverse the country to remind people about the victims and survivors of gun violence and the need to face the issue. They spoke of their son Joaquin, who was killed in the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on Valentine’s Day 2018, and of the many projects they’ve undertaken in his name. The Olivers and other speakers reminded the audience that they need to hold on to hope in order to affect change.

The vigil also included reflections from local speakers Rabbi Jennifer Singer, the Reverend Dr. Wes Bixby and poet Priscilla Crumel. Piano accompaniment was provided by Lynne Woodman and featured soloist Felix McElroy sang, “Let There Be Peace on Earth.” Local Brady members Lindsey Huddleston and Henrietta Wiley lit candles for the victims of 10 types of gun violence, which includes domestic violence, suicide, street homicides and mass shootings.

If you are interested in learning more about Brady Sarasota, sign up for our once-weekly emails by writing Sarasota@BradyUnited.org. Our organization is also on Facebook at BradySarasota.



Manny Oliver, whose son was killed in the Parkland school shootings, spoke at the 8th Annual Vigil for Victims of Gun Violence at First Congregational UCC Sarasota.

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

Advocates rally for safety and freedom from gun violence Thursdays at Bayfront Park in Sarasota.

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