



Weary Residents Implore County Commission for Effective Stormwater Policy

BY RAMON LOPEZ

When it rains it pours. Then the stormwater system jams up...and Sarasota floods.

That was the sad situation after Hurricane Debby dumped 18 inches of rainwater on Sarasota County last August.

Especially hard hit were those who live along Phillippi Creek, the 7.2 mile long waterway. It starts at the Celery Fields, east of I-75, then cuts through numerous neighborhoods and commercial centers, and flows into Roberts Bay.

No stranger to severe floods, the county suffered a similar catastrophic flood in 1992. It led to development of Celery Fields for flood protection.

But the measure was not enough to keep pace with rapid real estate developments in low-lying wetlands that funneled rain runoff into a creek never properly maintained. The Debby deluge turned roads into rivers along the Tamiami Trail and inundated quiet subdivisions like Colonial Oaks and Laurel Meadows.

The torrential rain of Hurricane Debby was bad enough, but the one-two punch of Hurricane Helene, with its historic storm surge that devastated the barrier islands, and the destructive Category 3 winds of Hurricane Milton, provided even more



Photo courtesy of Sarasota Police Department Facebook

damage county-wide.

According to Spencer Anderson, Sarasota County's director of public works, the county has long adhered to what is often referred to as a 100-year storm threshold of 10 inches of rain in a

24-hour-period to determine acceptable flooding. But Debby nearly doubled that figure, and experts say climate change has made that calculation questionable, at the very least.

County officials are now taking a fresh look

continued on page 10

Art Installation Honors Barbershop Culture, Creating Space for Storytelling, Exchange

BY KATHLEEN MURRAY

“Cuttin’ Up,” an innovative, interdisciplinary installation by artists Jevon Brown and Amaya Glover, will be a centerpiece of the Creative Nexus Summit taking place May 16-17 at Fogartyville.

“Cuttin’ Up” is inspired by the cultural significance of the barbershop—a long-standing hub for dialogue, mentorship and community-building, particularly in communities of color.

The installation will amplify the voices of barbershop owners, barbers and the local communities they serve, creating an immersive space for storytelling and exchange. Through interactive elements, attendees will explore how

continued on page 3

Labor Pains: Sarasota Memorial Boosts Recruitment, Collaboration to Address OB-GYN Shortage

BY JOHANNES WERNER

If you’re pregnant and in need of an obstetrician-gynecologist in Sarasota, you may find yourself commuting to a neighboring county, or worse, getting no prenatal care at all. And that often means a visit to the emergency room.

“This is not unique to this area, or to Florida,” says Dr. James Fiorica, chief medical officer of Sarasota Memorial Healthcare System.



Photo provided by Sarasota Memorial Health Care System

There are a little more than 46,000 obstetricians in the country. That’s 5,000 short of the number needed, according to a white paper by Medicus Healthcare Solutions, and the shortage is expected to get worse.

About 200 hospitals around the United States have closed their maternity wards, Fiorica says. “Right now, we’re finding that patients are having

trouble finding doctors for their prenatal care, so we’re starting to see more people come in through the emergency room having obstetrical problems,” he says.

Much of the attrition of obstetricians has to do with the stresses of the job. Ideally, each group practice should have three or four obstetricians rotating on-call duties. But local practices and the two local non-profits that care for low-income and uninsured patients are far from that staffing level.

“Hospital-wide, as far as physicians go, we see group practices shrink,” Fiorica says. “The doctors either are retiring earlier for various reasons — workload. We see people wanting to leave the community to join larger groups... They’re looking for groups that may have seven doctors or more, so that they’re not on every night, all night long.”

The doctor shortage has affected other birth service providers along the Suncoast, driving more births to Sarasota Memorial Hospital, which, in turn, increases the pressure on remaining OB-GYNs.

And recently, the public hospital didn’t even have enough on-call emergency laborists – doctors who provide care during labor and delivery as well as obstetrical and gynecological emergencies. Over the last 12 months, recruitment efforts have increased.

“We have eight of them on call on a regular basis to take care of obstetrical emergencies,” Fiorica says. “In addition, we hired 11 [pre-natal]

continued on page 10

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- New Fab Arts Center, PRIDEPage 2
- Opinion: Cuts, Bills Will Impact Schools.....Page 5
- Fogartyville Concerts & Events.....Page 6
- WSLR: What’s New on Air | Schedule.....Page 7
- Opinion: Put Performing Arts Hall to Vote.....Page 8
- Sarasota Says Goodbye to Synia.....Page 9
- GM: Independent Media Must Stay Vigilant.....Page 12

Fabulous Arts Foundation Celebrates New Center, 15 Years of PRIDE Fest

BY NICOLE PEJOVICH

The Fabulous Arts Foundation has taken a monumental step towards increasing its impact with the launch of the LGBTQ+ Arts and Advocacy Center. Located at 1201 N. Lime Ave., the center has quickly become a community hub for connection and creative expression since its grand opening in January.

With mental health offerings, craft nights, drag shows, advocacy groups, a food and supply pantry, an art gallery, special accommodations for sensory needs, and much more, the LGBTQ+ Arts and Advocacy Center aims to bring the Fab Arts motto of “community-focused, community-driven” support to life.

“We envision a place where every generation can rely on the Fab LGBTQ+ Center to hold space for healing, connection and growth,” says Shannon Fortner, executive director of Fab Arts. “This center will not only provide resources and creative opportunities but also serve as a sanctuary where community partners and members alike feel truly seen and supported.”

Through their work, they understand that connection to the community and access to mental health services are key to healthy self-expression and they are proud to provide dedicated mental health support at the center. Compassionate clinicians specializing in LGBTQ+ issues offer group therapy, individual sessions, and support groups. They also hold special events like mindfulness workshops and art therapy.

The center’s social event lineup displays its commitment to connection and diversity. On the first Saturday of every month, there’s the QT Stitch N’ Bitch craft night. Cozy up with your knitting or sketchbook or just come for the tea and company.

On the second Monday of every month, the center and Squeaky Wheel Theatre Group welcome artists of all skill levels, in all performing genres, and at all stages of production to share



Photo provided by Fabulous Arts Foundation

their art and receive feedback at The Shop. This event is also a great chance to connect with other local artists.

Other monthly social events include the QT Yoga Club for all skill levels and Tea4T, an open-stage drag show. And with community input at the heart of its mission, the LGBTQ+ Center is regularly expanding its programming.

As the Fabulous Arts Foundation continues to nurture its roots in this new space, it’s also preparing for a full-circle moment. On May 10, the Be Fabulous Music & Arts PRIDE Fest returns to one of its original venues, Selby Five Points Park, to celebrate 15 years of PRIDE.

What began as the Harvey Milk Festival in 2009 has evolved over a decade and a half into a three-day tribute to creative and personal expression. Thousands of diverse visitors will enjoy a variety of entertainment, including live music, films, speakers, visual and performing artists, and local vendors. This year’s Fest kicks off on May 8 with an art exhibition at the center, followed on May 9 by Tea4T, before the main event on May 10.

Nicole Pejovich is a member of the Fabulous Arts Foundation’s Board of Directors.



Photo provided by Fabulous Arts Foundation



Photo provided by Fabulous Arts Foundation

If you go:

What: Be Fabulous Music & Arts PRIDE Fest

Description: Daylong celebration featuring music, art and performances that uplift and inspire

When: Saturday, May 10, 3-10 p.m.

Where: Five Points Park, downtown Sarasota

Admission: Free

More information: <https://fabaf.org>

From WNYCSTUDIOS

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

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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

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Art Installation Honors Barbershop Culture, Creating Space for Storytelling, Exchange

continued from pg. 1

these spaces foster economic freedom, community education and entrepreneurial growth.

Critical Times chatted with Jevon Brown while the artist was in production of “Cuttin’ Up.”

CT: *What’s your earliest memory of barbershop culture?*

Brown: My earliest memory of barbershop culture would have to be from when I was about 10 years old. The name of the shop was Wes, and it was in South Miami Heights. It was primarily a Caribbean barbershop; the owner was Jamaican. I remember moments of Jamaican Patois, Spanish and Creole being spoken throughout the space. ESPN was always playing, and we were always watching the Miami Heat.

CT: *Describe what folks will encounter when they interact with “Cuttin’ Up.”*

Brown: Folks will encounter large fabrics that I designed, which mimic interior space. For me, the idea of “Cuttin’ Up” is to create a space that feels authentic and real. Clippers, combs, brushes, spray bottles, hats, and signage, all taken from traditional barbershop items, are used to transform the space with this new work.

CT: *What are the materials/media used?*

Brown: Some of the materials included will be fabric tapestries, hats, clippers, hair salon tools, combs, hair nets, and chairs. Other media will be the engineered audio of the oral histories from hairstylists and barbers.

CT: *How are you and audio-visual designer Amaya Glover collaborating on this Creative Nexus commission?*

Brown: Amaya and I are both using our skills and talents to capture community stories and build an installation that captures the essence of what it feels like to be in a hair salon or barbershop. Amaya is a talented audio engineer with experience in editing and sound design, and I am bringing my textile and installation experience to ground the environment and make viewers feel they are in a transformed space.

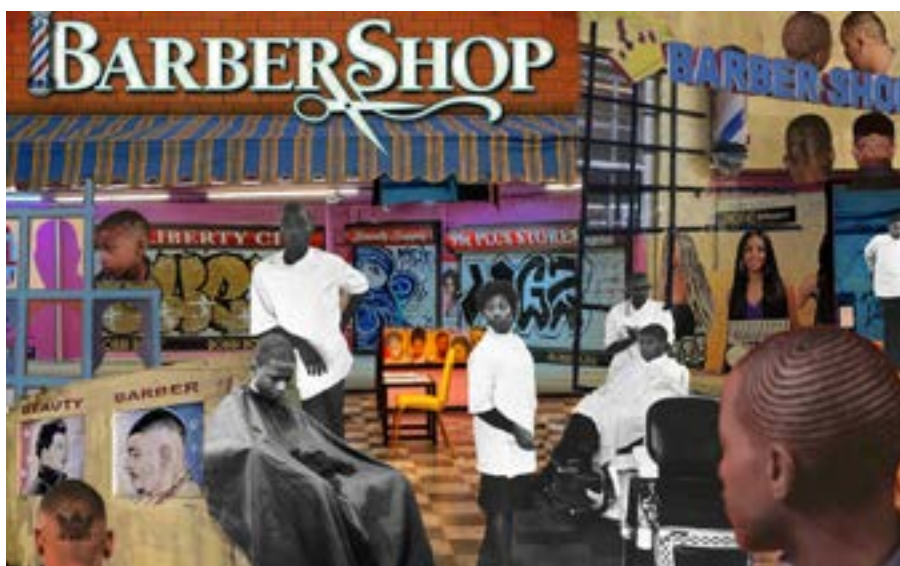
CT: *Did you interview anyone in the Sarasota area for the installation?*

Brown: Yes, Amaya interviewed hairstylists and barbers in the Sarasota-Manatee area. So far, she’s been leading that charge and has spoken with Harry Corleone, a Sarasota barber and owner of Rams Barbershop, and Samara Ayanna, a Bradenton hairstylist.

CT: *How does your identity as a Black queer artist and member of Gen Z inform this installation?*

Brown: I think my identity feeds into my work as a natural process. I often look at my work through the eyes of film and set design. My identity is important because it’s the lens through which I see the world, and I see things differently.

These cultural community spaces, I want them to feel multicultural and inclusive. Hair salons and barbershops serve different clients, but I see that as an opportunity to create a conversation between masculine and feminine kindred spaces in hair shops and barbershops. I want to craft a cinematic experience or a moment between a barber/hairstylist and their client. I ask myself, “What are these personas that fill the space? What are they wearing? How do they talk?” I’m thinking through a lot of the details that don’t seem important, but the small moments are where I discover new fabrics.



Digital collage for “Cuttin’ Up” courtesy of Jevon Brown

CT: *You were the inaugural Eleanor Merritt Fellow at The Ringling. How did that curatorial experience enhance your work as an artist?*

Brown: While I was the Eleanor Merritt Fellow, I had the opportunity to curate the “Enduring Light” exhibition at The Ringling. That opportunity allowed me to refine my skills in art writing for non-artists. It’s easy for me to use art terminology because I’ve studied art since I was 8. After The Ringling, I think my art has become more refined in my approach to curation and strategy. There is so much that goes into opening an exhibition, from the pieces being created, delivered, and then installed, to the didactics being made and opening night. Most times, things don’t always go according to plan, so being adaptable and able to pivot is important. Seeing that process at The Ringling allowed me to see a vision I helped execute from start to finish.

CT: *Creative Nexus aims to empower BIPOC and LGBTQ+ artists through connection, collaboration, and celebration. Why are initiatives like this important, especially for emerging artists?*

Brown: Important initiatives like Creative Nexus exist to give

younger artists an idea of the types of careers and options that are available for artists and creative entrepreneurs. In 2025, I think it’s important to build kinship with other like-minded individuals because it builds collective power and provides resources and opportunities for artists to build their platforms and make a name for themselves. Promotion is important, and having the support of the community makes the work worthwhile.



“Cuttin’ Up” artist Jevon Brown

If you go:

What: Creative Nexus Summit: Turning Artistic Passion Into Entrepreneurial Success

When: Friday, May 16, 7-9 p.m. (“Cuttin’ Up” art installation reveal & social) and Saturday, May 17, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. (panels and workshops)

Where: Fogartyville Community Media & Arts Center, 525 Kumquat Court, Sarasota
Description: Two-day event dedicated to fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and professional growth, specifically tailored for BIPOC and LGBTQ artists. Participate in panels and workshops covering topics such as business planning, marketing, and collaborative strategies in the arts. Each artist attending will receive professional headshots to assist with personal branding.

Information and registration: <https://www.mosaicmovements.org/creative-nexus-summit-2025>

Additional Creative Nexus Offerings

What: Branding for Artists – Be Seen and Be Remembered

When: Wednesday, April 16, 6-8 p.m.
Where: Fogartyville

Description: Presenter Sergio Gomez will help participants define their identity, clarify their values, and communicate them effectively across social media and beyond. Build an authentic brand that sets you apart, connects with the right audience, and helps you sell more art.

Information and registration: <https://www.mosaicmovements.org/artist-development-workshops>

What: NextGen Creators - Youth & Family Gathering (presented as part of Suncoast Remake Learning Days)

When: Saturday, April 26, 1-5 p.m.
Where: Fogartyville

Description: Artists ages 13-24 and their families will engage in hands-on workshops led by professional artists, explore creative career pathways, and connect across artistic disciplines. Event culminates in a youth performance showcase.

Information and registration: <https://www.mosaicmovements.org/nextgen-creators>



“Cuttin’ Up” artist Amaya Glover

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KEYNOTE
Parenting Beyond Trauma: Healing ACEs and Unplugging Triggers in a Social Media World
Dr. Jason S. Quintal, Ph.D., LCSW




PANEL DISCUSSION
Bridging Cultures and Therapy: Integrating Traditional Healing with Modern Mental Health Care

 Stacie M. Herrera, PSY. D.	 Lina Maldonado, MSW
 Katherine Bernal, LCSW	 G. Orlando Pickens, LMHC
 Dr. Abby Hamilton, Ph.D.	



The Power of Now: Embracing Mental Health, Presence, and Mindfulness through Improvisation and Meditation
Will Luera & Maria Schaedler-Luera

The Importance of Perinatal Mental Health and Building Collaborative & Coordinated Community Support

 Janice Houchins, MSW, LCSW	 Jeanie Dela, LMHC
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Let's Heal with Sound
Lina Maldonado, MSW



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Opinion: Federal Cuts, Florida Bills Will Negatively Impact Local Public Schools

BY CAROL LERNER

An hour before a February 18 Sarasota County School Board meeting, scores of public school parents, teachers, students and retirees attended a rally organized by non-profit advocacy organizations Support Our Schools (of which I am the director) and the SEE Alliance. Speakers aired their concerns about the dangers to students if the U.S. Department of Education shuts down or is completely gutted, and urged district officials to develop a plan.

During the meeting's public commentary, parent Jodanna Osceola asked the board: "How do we help you to keep the funding we need for our children?" Osceola said that her children, who are of Native American heritage and have Individual Education Programs (IEPs) thanks to the help of the Sarasota district staff, are now thriving. She wants to keep it this way.

A high school student in the Sarasota district, Casanova Dougherty, said she finds the thought of funding cuts to "our most vulnerable students...terrifying."

The loss of federal funds is not an idle threat, and, in the case of Sarasota, nearly \$50 million is at stake in Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds and Title I funds for students from low-income families. Fifty percent of the federal Education Department staff had been let go or took a buy-out package. Then President Trump on March 20 signed an executive order instructing Education Secretary Linda McMahon to begin dismantling it.

According to another executive order signed by Trump on January 29, DOE grants should be sent as block grants to states. Governors have considerable allocation discretion, but, according to the executive order, the funds should be prioritized for school choice programs like school vouchers and homeschooling.

Members of Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) team have also gutted the department's Office of Civil Rights, which oversees discrimination complaints and monitors procedural concerns with IEP compliance for students with disabilities. Without this federal oversight, students with disabilities' right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment will be eliminated. DOGE has instructed the remaining attorneys to ignore IEP compliance and students-of-color discrimination charges and instead focus on white student discrimination and the so-called harm rendered to cisgender students by transgender students.

When U.S. Rep. Maxwell Frost (D-Fla.) posted on X his outrage about how he and other members of Congress were locked out of the education department building, Musk's reply on X was simply, "No such department exists in the federal government."

At both a K-12 and college level, the Trump administration is also weaponizing the DOE by threatening to withhold funding from school districts and colleges that do not comply with the administration's executive orders requiring the adaptation of a patriotic curriculum or eliminating



Public school advocates protesting

diversity, equity and inclusion.

While communities throughout the nation are grappling with the fallout, school districts in Florida have a doubly bad situation. The state's public schools have been systematically defunded since Jeb Bush won the governorship in 1998 and pushed an education agenda of charter schools and voucher-funded private schools. Currently number one in the nation for school privatization, Florida is dead last when it comes to average teacher pay. Also, Gov. Ron DeSantis has launched a culture war to divide the community and divert attention away from the real burning issues like the dismantling of public education.

Like DeSantis, the Florida legislature, which is in session until May 2, has been complicit in this war on public education. Wouldn't you think that the Republican-controlled legislature might go a little

easy this year given the federal situation? But there are a slew of bills that favor charter schools, attack teachers, and endanger the welfare of students. SB 140, "Education," is one of them. This bill allows neighborhood public schools to be converted to charter schools by a simple majority vote of parents without the consent of teachers as previously required. It also allows the Florida

State Board of Education to declare a school property as "surplus" if the school's enrollment declines by 1 percent over five years (a decline that is happening all over Florida and the nation due to a decline in birthrate and high cost of living) and then gives priority to charter schools to access the property. State Rep. Angie Nixon (D-Jacksonville) called the bill "another way to cause a slow death to our public education system."

HB 443/SB 822 provides further benefits to charter schools, allowing them to increase enrollment and assign charters to another governing board—provisions for which large for-profit management chains like Academica and Charter Schools USA have been lobbying. Charter schools also got their legislative allies to introduce CS/HB 569, "Construction and Facilities," which allows developers to build charter schools instead of paying school impact fees to

counties and districts. This will both increase the number of charter schools and lessen the amount of funds to public school districts' capital budgets.

In recent years, there has been legislation that directly attacks the Florida Education Association and other public workers' right to organize, and this year is no exception. SB 1766, "Public Employees Relations Commissions" (and its companion HB 1387), limits how and when educators can discuss workplace issues while on school property and puts onerous restrictions on the ability of elected union officers to perform their job advocating for teachers' rights.

One of the most dangerous bills for children in this session is a retread of a bill, HB 49, from 2024 that weakens child labor laws. While last year's bill passed the legislature and was signed by the governor into law, the bill that passed was weakened by amendments. This year the original bill has been reintroduced, but with even more extreme measures added. Not only does the new bill, SB 918/HB 1225 allow 16- and 17-year-old children to work for unlimited hours without breaks, it also weakens protections for children under the age of 16.

There is growing concern on both sides of the aisle about the lack of transparency and accountability in the Florida universal school voucher program. It has grown to become a \$4.2 billion program, but the public and even school districts are not getting the data needed to understand its full impact on public education. State Rep. Robin Bartleman (D-Broward) introduced HB 423/SB 508, to partially rectify this by requiring private schools that accept vouchers to disclose which services, accommodations, and modifications they will provide based on a child's existing IEP. The bill has bipartisan support—including Rep. Alex Rizo (R-Hialeah) — and has already been voted out favorably from a House committee.

Gov. DeSantis's proposed 2026 state budget reduces funding for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) for students with disabilities by a whopping 13 percent. Given the uncertainty of IDEA special education funding, advocates say this is a disgraceful action. While the state budget is not finalized until the end of the legislative session, it makes the "already unacceptable situation even worse," said retired Sarasota County Schools administrator and education advocate, Deborah Hayes. Hayes fears that changes in the funding mechanism of vouchers will increase the district's fiscal costs this year.

But the growing alarm to this war on education has activated hundreds if not thousands of residents in Sarasota, the Suncoast region and beyond.

Carol M. Lerner is a retired educator and the director of Support Our Schools.

Support Our Schools and Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Committee presents, "**Stop the Attack on Our Public Schools**" forum on **Saturday, April 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.** at the UU of Sarasota, 3975 Fruitville Road.

Keynote speaker **Jennifer Berkshire**, producer of the "Have You Heard" podcast and author of "The Education Wars" and "A Wolf at the Schoolhouse Door," will speak.

Register at SupportOurSchools.com

—Carol Lerner

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APRIL 5, 8pm Sat. \$22/\$26

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APRIL 6, 7pm Sun. \$20/\$25

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APRIL 14, 7pm Mon. \$8/\$10

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APRIL 17, 7pm Thurs. \$20/\$25

LIAM PURCELL and Cane Mill Road

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OTTO DUNIEL y Su Son Sabroso

Renowned singer from the Ciego de Avila province of Cuba

APRIL 24, 7pm Thurs. \$15/\$20

WSLR's own Louise Coogan takes her radio program out of the studio and onto the Fogartyville stage

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APRIL 28, 7pm Mon. Free/\$5

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Screening of

ANIMAL PEOPLE

Documentary follows six young animal rights activists indicted as terrorists by U.S.

MAY 2, 8pm Fri. \$20/\$25

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MAY 12, 7pm Mon. \$8/\$10

Fogartyville Songwriter Series

Andres Colin hosts fellow musicians to play in-the-round.

MAY 22, 7pm Thurs. \$30/\$35

Diego Figueiredo

Fogartyville favorite is a Grammy-nominated Brazilian jazz guitarist

MAY 30, 8pm Fri. \$22/\$27

SPAIN INFINITUS

featuring Don Soledad and Pablo Arencibia

Homage to jazz pianist great Michel Camilo and flamenco guitar legend Tomatito

MAY 31, 5:30pm Sat. \$10; 16 and under free

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JUNE 20, 8pm Fri. \$22/\$26

Liz Longley

Singer-songwriter with a stop-you-in-your-tracks voice and deeply emotional music

What's New on air?



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



At WSLR, we don't just broadcast; we build community.

We focus on connection, representation, and the power of people coming together to share knowledge, ideas and music! WSLR provides a space for public affairs programming that challenges dominant narratives, uplifts diverse perspectives, and fosters meaningful discussion on issues that impact our lives. That's why I'm proud to highlight two new programs that embody the heart of WSLR's mission:

alternating Saturdays at 5pm

Trans-Cis-Her Radio

India X. Miller's bold & thought-provoking program challenges conventional perspectives and centers those in our community that are often pushed to the margins. Miller covers topics like social justice, policy, identity and activism. And although the show often incorporates music that complements its themes, *Trans-Cis-Her Radio* is, at its core, a talk-driven program that isn't afraid to ask tough questions and amplify voices that need to be heard.



first Sunday of the month at 10am

Bethany Ritz brings a deeply personal and community-focused approach to public affairs, featuring the lived experiences of Sarasota residents (and beyond). Through candid conversations and in-depth storytelling, the program explores what it means to be human—how we navigate struggles, celebrate triumphs and build stronger, more compassionate communities.



EXPANDING WSLR'S MUSICAL PROGRAMMING

WSLR is constantly evolving, adding new voices and perspectives to the airwaves. Alongside our vital talk programs, we're excited to introduce two new jazz shows on *alternating Fridays from 2 to 4pm*:



The Joy of Jazz
with Dr. Dean
A celebration of classic and contemporary jazz, bringing smooth and soulful sounds to the WSLR airwaves.

alternating with:
JUST FUSION
with Ma'Re

A dynamic exploration of jazz fusion, blending elements of funk, rock and world music for an electrifying listening experience.



These shows reflect WSLR's commitment to keeping the airwaves diverse, ensuring that listeners have access to a rich mix of perspectives, discussions, and music that speaks to our community. We continue to grow, with several new programmers preparing to launch their shows later this spring. We remain committed to bringing fresh, engaging, and relevant content to our listeners.

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Music	Public Affairs
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	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
12 mid.	Music Automated playlist	Down The Road (Syndicated)	Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio	It's All Happening (Syndicated)	All Mixed Up (Syndicated)	Dave Radio Dave Wilkens	Milo After Hours Milo
1 a.m.	Deep Threes (Syndicated)	Midnight Special (Syndicated)	Music Automated playlist	Upfront Soul (Syndicated)	Music Automated playlist	Synthelectico (Syndicated)	Cafe Chill (Syndicated)
2 a.m.						And You Don't Stop (Syndicated)	
3 a.m.							Music Automated playlist
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.							
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 and Annie
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	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) The Best of Us: Being Human in Sarasota Bethany Ritz (1st Sunday)
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.	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-0's Collector's Corner Dadee-0
2 p.m.							
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	Velvet Hammer Blues Beth Hammer
4 p.m.				ALTERNATE WEEKS			
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	TransCisHer Radio India X. Miller Positive Friction John Haupt
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	HipRawk Nation (Syndicated)	
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	Discovery Road Louise Coogan	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	
10 p.m.	First Voices Indigenous Nation ALTERNATE WEEKS	SynthWorld Damon	Bullwinkle's Corner Keith Winkle	In My Room (Syndicated) Electricity (Syndicated)	Music Is The Best Mark Markus	The Witching Hour Dylan Howell	Dirty Laundry Karen Hazelwood (Syndicated) Creekside Blues Captain Cod
11 p.m.						Cardwell's Cove	
12 mid.	Down The Road (Syndicated)	Lumpytunes! The Head Lump, Rob Demperio	It's All Happening (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!

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Opinion: Want to Know How Sarasotans Really Feel About New Performing Arts Hall? Put It Up for Vote

BY CATHY ANTUNES

There have been a couple of questionable polls asking residents if they support a new performing arts hall (in reference to the proposed Sarasota Performing Arts Center integrated into The Bay park). These not-so-scientific polls have been criticized as unreliable. But there's one way to find out what Sarasota voters think about a new hall: a referendum. If you want to know what voters think, ask them. For real. Put it on a ballot.

In the effort to secure a commitment to fund a new performing arts hall, the Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation shared the results of a survey conducted last summer. That survey showed 71 percent of the 900 county residents who responded support a new performing arts hall. Critics were quick to point out problems with the poll. It did not reveal the cost: over \$400 million total, half funded by public money. The poll also didn't reveal that the public would have to fund a parking solution. The new hall location is proposed to be at The Bay park, which will convert the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall's surface parking lot to green space. That publicly funded parking solution could be \$50-100 million; again, not shared with survey respondents. Given the lack of financial context, the claim that 71 percent of county residents support a new performing arts hall is shaky.

More recently, the Sarasota Herald-Tribune had a simple poll on the Opinion page of its website prior to the City Commission's March 17 meeting to discuss the Implementation Agreement with the Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation. That poll was found to be infiltrated by bots. Supporters of the new hall claimed the bots were skewing the results against the hall; critics claimed the bots were skewing the results in favor of the hall. In any case, a Herald-Tribune editor removed the poll and let readers know that bots were indeed messing with it. Even if it was unblemished by bots, such a casual poll cannot be considered a reliable measure of public sentiment.

What is a reliable measure of public sentiment?

A referendum. Ask the voters – the actual taxpayers – what they want to do.

The Sarasota County Charter has an amendment that requires a public referendum for bonds above a certain limit. The cap began at \$17 million in 2003, and is recalculated each year to account for inflation (the Consumer Price Index). In today's dollars, Sarasota County bond issues for a single project



Design concept for the proposed Sarasota Performing Arts Center

are limited to \$29,350,000. If a project's costs are higher, the bond issue must be approved by voters.

The City of Sarasota does not have the same bonding limit. There is a loophole for bonds funded by revenue (aka revenue bonds). When I served on the city's 2021 Charter Review Committee, I proposed a bonding amendment identical to the county's – one that would require a referendum on a bond issue above a certain limit; one that would close the revenue bond loophole. I suggested the same limit as the county, which would be \$29,350,000 today. My suggestion was shot down quickly by the City Manager. That was odd, because when I met with him and ran it by him ahead of time, he was fine with it. He offered some pretty cockamamie reasons against it (it will tie our hands!). I say cockamamie because this bonding limit has worked just fine in the county for decades.

So, for all the talk about polls and a new performing arts hall, when it comes to public opinion, let's stop with the meaningless surveys. There's only one survey that counts: ask the voters. Put this \$200 million-plus bond issue on the ballot. And if you're not willing to do that,

maybe it's because you're really not all that confident it will pass.

Cathy Antunes is the host of "The Detail – On Sarasota Politics," which airs Thursdays at 9 a.m. on WSLR.



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Sarasota Mourns, Celebrates Jazz Vocalist Synia Carroll

BY RAMON LOPEZ

Empowering, entertaining, effervescent—these words only begin to describe the breath of fresh air Synia Carroll brought to the Sarasota music scene. The jazz vocalist who left a career as a schoolteacher to devote herself full-time to music died March 14 at 67. She had recently been diagnosed with breast cancer.

A jazz vocalist with smooth and soulful vocals, Carroll was a storyteller that captivated audiences with every inspiring performance. She energetically engaged directly with a crowd, adding her personal flair to match the mood and story of each song.

She was an “immensely gifted vocalist and a unique performer .. a force of nature,” pianist Simon Lansky wrote on Facebook.

A Philadelphia native, in 2014 Carroll moved to Sarasota, where she delved into her love of music, and quickly immersed herself in the jazz scene. Her most recent album, “Water Is My Song,” was released in 2024.

Paul Wilborn said she was such an inspirational artist, such a beautiful human. Donna Slawsky said, “We will miss her gorgeous smile and energy, which gave life to Synia’s voice. Maybe she was just too good for this world.”

Singer Whitney James also posted a tribute: “Her beautiful voice was pure sunshine and her laugh was infectious ... Her music and artistry lives on.”

On Feb. 6, musicians and singers gathered to raise money to help Carroll pay for treatment and travel expenses and to show their support for their friend and colleague. She was in attendance at “It Takes a Village: Benefit for Synia Carroll” and even performed. Carroll sang a duet with Brenda Watty and closed out the evening with a prayer meditation song: “The whole wide world rebirthing into light,” she sang. “We’re going to find a better way. We were born into light. We will find our brighter day.”

She died just over a month later.



Carroll’s daughter, Janina McQuillan, expressed her appreciation for the community outpouring: “This next phase of everything is unknown to me,” she said, “but I wanted to say, ‘thank you,’ because I do feel really loved and supported and held by all of you. I know that she feels that too.”

Carroll’s husband, Ed Linehan, said upon her passing, “It was both way too soon and, given her health, not soon enough. As a singer, Synia was first and foremost a storyteller connecting with all of us about our lives, our challenges and our hopes for the future.”

A Celebration of Life will take place Saturday, April 26 at 3 p.m. at Unitarian Universalists, 3975 Fruitville Road.



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Weary Residents Implore County Commission for Effective Stormwater Policy

continued from pg. 1

at what happened last year, but that is of little consolation to those homeowners victimized by the severe flooding.

Resident Tiffany Laughlin told Sarasota County Commissioners: “Please help us. We are suffering. We’re scared. We need your help, and we need it quickly.”

Connie Neeley told the lawmakers: “We had one to two feet of water in our house. Seven months later, we’re still mostly living out of our garage.”

Rick Marks said, “We ended up with eight inches of water in the entire house. We had to have a boat come and rescue us...We started to clean out and empty the house, and three days later my wife had a stroke and goes to the hospital.”

So far, commissioners have held two workshops to develop an effective long-term stormwater policy. They agree with the public that Phillippi Creek needs to be dredged to prevent future flooding. Staff was directed to see how to accomplish the dredging as soon as possible.

The first stormwater workshop that took place in late January outlined the results of an independent study on what caused the unprecedented flooding from Debby. Potential regulatory and operational

changes are on the table. Key options proposed are: identify significant floodplain areas and protect them from development; clean debris from stormwater streams on a regular basis; inspect and better maintain those waterways; and update the stormwater criteria set back in the 1990s in the face of climate change and based on what science says.

Whether 2025 will yield an effective county stormwater policy remains to be seen.

But impacted county residents are watching closely. Alexandra Coe (who lost the race for District 1 to Teresa Mast) told the county commissioners: “You’re a new commission. You have the opportunity to take this government in a different direction. Listen to the people and do something different.”



Photo of a breached dike after Hurricane Debby courtesy of Sarasota County

Ramon Lopez is a citizen reporter for WSLR News and a contributing writer to Critical Times.

Labor Pains: Sarasota Memorial Boosts Recruitment, Collaboration to Address OB-GYN Shortage *continued from pg. 1*

physicians to cover these extra patients from the community that don’t have someone to deliver their baby.”

Sarasota Memorial is also helping affiliated group practices hire primary-care obstetricians. First Physicians Group is now a six-doctor obstetrical group, and growing. Another affiliated group practice is now up to four obstetricians.

“We’re recruiting four additional people for those groups, to help the quality of life for those doctors so they get some home time, in addition to work time,” Fiorica says.

A big improvement for uninsured patients: The Sarasota Department of Health has restarted their OB-GYN services, hiring nurse practitioners and midwives.



Photo provided by Sarasota Memorial Health Care System

Pregnant? Call the Hotline

Sarasota Memorial Hospital has partnered with a network of nonprofits and state institutions to broaden access to an obstetrician. Since early March, those in need of care are encouraged to call a hotline - 941-917-MOMS - to be connected with a nurse-navigator.

The network of 90 local providers is so new it has yet to get a name. One of the drivers of this collaborative effort has been the Barancik Foundation.

“It was very natural for us to come around the table in this self-organizing way when we knew that the constraints on our prenatal care system were occurring, and for us all to say ‘Hey, what can we do?’” says Kelly Romanoff, the foundation’s senior vice president for strategy and evaluation.

The partners created an informal leadership council, and set forth to create a new program. Its highlights include a centralized patient intake and the nurse-navigator based at Sarasota Memorial.

“Nurses are among the most trusted healthcare professionals, because they are the perfect blend of medical knowledge and human compassion,” Romanoff says. “Patients often feel very comforted when they get to talk to a nurse.”

One of the key providers in the coalition is a nonprofit called First 1,000 Days Suncoast, which helps families during pregnancy and their child’s first 1,000 days of life, when 80 percent of child brain development occurs. The “Get Connected to Resources” button at first1000dayssuncoast.org takes a patient to a contact form, which will then take them to a nurse-navigator.

Other important partners include the Florida Department of Health’s Sarasota office, CenterPlace Health, MCR Health, Healthy Start Coalition, Sarasota Memorial Healthcare Foundation and Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

— Johannes Werner



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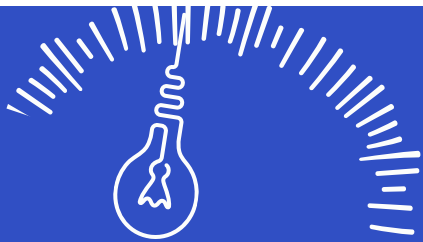
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The evening begins in Stoundstage A with the Awards Ceremony at 6:00pm. Following the ceremony, the opening reception will take place in the Diane Roskamp Exhibition Hall, featuring this year's best projects.

For more information, visit: www.RinglingCollege.Gallery/2025-BOR

The 2025 Best of Ringling exhibition will also be available online starting April 25 at 6:00pm at: www.bestofringling.com

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Stronger Together, Louder Than Ever: Why Independent Media Must Stay Vigilant

BY JESSE COLEMAN

Twice a year, WSLR's volunteer programmers gather for what we call our All Hands Meeting. It's more than just a training. It's a chance to welcome new voices, reflect on our mission, and prepare for the vital work we do each membership drive. But at our latest session, the conversation took on a more serious tone.

In addition to sharing tips on mic techniques and keeping our sound sharp, we focused part of the meeting on the regulatory environment in which we operate. That meant reviewing Federal Communications Commission rules, brushing up on our broadcast responsibilities, and discussing recent developments that could affect not just our station, but community media nationwide.

It's understandable that most folks don't closely follow the workings of the FCC. But those of us in independent media take notice when the agency issues a new rule, amends an existing rule, or repeals a rule. That process can directly impact who controls the airwaves and whose voices are heard.



WSLR Programmers

local community. But that doesn't mean the attacks outlined in Project 2025 won't affect us. One target of the plan is the Pacifica Network, of which we are an affiliate. Cuts to CPB funding could destabilize Pacifica programming and infrastructure that help member stations bring fresh ideas and independent journalism to listeners.

Even more concerning is Project 2025's call to strip stations like ours of Noncommercial Educational (NCE) status. The plan argues public media no longer fulfills an educational mission and recommends revoking NCE designations. Losing that classification would not just be symbolic. It could subject us to additional licensing fees, remove regulatory protections, and undermine the recognition that our mission is rooted in education and public service rather than commercial gain.

But here's the truth. We are stronger than that plan.

WSLR+Fogartyville has always been powered by you—our listeners and members—who believe that media should serve the people, not corporations. Your support is what allows us to prioritize local news, air hard-hitting public affairs shows, and offer a platform for diverse voices through music and cultural programming. You're not just tuning in. You're standing shoulder to shoulder with us in protecting one of the last bastions of people-powered media.

At our recent All Hands Meeting, it was clear that our programmers understand what's at stake. But so

do you. Every time you choose to listen, to donate, to volunteer, you are making a statement. You are part of a community that refuses to let consolidation and censorship drown out local voices.

That's why we've chosen the theme for our April 2-8 Membership Drive: Stronger Together, Louder Than Ever.

It's more than a slogan. It reflects who we are and what this moment demands. Now is the time to strengthen our connections, welcome new voices, double down on local storytelling, and defend the media spaces that belong to all of us.

Your support isn't just about keeping great music or local news on the air. It's about ensuring Sarasota has a platform where all voices, especially those being pushed out of the mainstream, can still be heard.

Join us. Let's show, together, what it truly means to be stronger together, louder than ever.



Jesse Coleman is general manager of WSLR+Fogartyville.



Brendan Carr

One key figure in this landscape is Brendan Carr, recently appointed as FCC chairman by the Trump administration. Carr has long been a vocal advocate for deregulation, supporting policies that favor media consolidation and opposing net neutrality protections.

He also played a major role in shaping the media policy chapter of the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025, a sweeping conservative blueprint to restructure federal agencies. Among its stated goals is eliminating all federal support for public broadcasters like NPR, PBS and Pacifica Network, describing such funding as "half a billion dollars squandered on leftist opinion each year." It also proposes dismantling the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) entirely, clearing the way for more corporate-controlled, profit-driven media.

And now, things look even more dire. In March, FCC Commissioner Geoffrey Starks, a Democrat and strong advocate for media diversity, announced he is stepping down this year despite being slated to serve until 2027. His departure leaves a 2-1 Republican majority, giving Carr even greater influence to pursue deregulatory goals.

At WSLR, we're proud to be a listener-supported community radio station. We don't rely on CPB funding. Our independence is powered by our

How Project 2025 Targets Public Media

Source: Mandate for Leadership: The Conservative Promise, Chapter 8, "Media Agencies," page 246-248.

Defunding the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) (pg. 246):

Project 2025 calls for eliminating all federal funding for public broadcasters, specifically naming NPR, PBS, Pacifica Radio, and American Public Media. It describes CPB funding as "half a billion dollars squandered on leftist opinion each year" and claims that public

media suppresses conservative viewpoints.

Dismantling CPB's Budget Protections (pg. 246):

The plan criticizes CPB's advance appropriations, which provide funding two years ahead and shield the agency from regular Congressional oversight. Project 2025 recommends ending this special budgetary treatment and using the federal budget process to block any future CPB funding.

Stripping Noncommercial Educational (NCE) Status (pgs. 247-248):

Project 2025 argues that NPR, PBS, Pacifica Radio, and affiliated stations no longer fulfill the educational mission intended when public

broadcasting was established. It proposes revoking their NCE classification, which would:

- Remove their reserved priority on the FM dial (88-92 MHz band)
- End exemptions from FCC licensing fees
- Further erode their financial sustainability and reach

Facilitating Media Consolidation and Privatization (pgs. 246-247):

The plan contends that public broadcasters can survive through private funding models and should compete in a fully commercial, deregulated market—effectively encouraging consolidation of media ownership and reducing non-commercial, community-focused outlets.