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Co-produced by FHC and WEDU-TV of Tampa, this one-hour documentary explores how millions of people from across the United States and around the globe migrated here in search of the Florida dream. The documentary was inspired by the book *Florida: A Social History of Modern Florida* by Gary R. Mormino. Hardcover, 484 pages

**Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida** by Gary R. Mormino. Hardcover, 484 pages

**Pilgrims in the Land of Alligators: More Stories about Real Florida** by Jeff Klinkenberg. Hardcover, 304 pages

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Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida by Gary R. Mormino, Hardcover, 484 pages

Once the least populated and most isolated state in the south, Florida has emerged as one of the largest and most diverse states in the nation. Florida’s meteoric rise has encompassed revolutions in technology, demography, and identity. Historian Dr. Gary Mormino tells the story of compelling characters, bewitching places, and the enduring but changing idea of a Florida dream. The documentary was co-produced by FHC and WEDU-TV of Tampa, Florida. In this compilation director in part for the award-winning director Michael Klinkenberg celebrates some of the Sunshine State’s most distinctive personalities. Ranging from light and casual to world and eccentric, Klinkenberg recreates the suns from the Panhandle to the Keys, looking to answer the question, “What makes Florida Florida?”

**Pilgrims in the Land of Alligators: More Stories about Real Florida** by Jeff Klinkenberg. Hardcover, 304 pages

Pilgrims in the Land of Alligators provides a welcome opportunity for readers to discover the character—and charm—of “real” Florida. In this compilation, Klinkenberg celebrates some of the Sunshine State’s most distinctive personalities. Ranging from light and casual to world and eccentric, Klinkenberg recreates the suns from the Panhandle to the Keys, looking to answer the question, “What makes Florida Florida?”

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What one change is key to Florida’s economic future?
Are we acting fast enough to save Florida’s environment?
Is Florida’s growing diversity a threat or a strength?

**The Gathering**
**Washington is a model of, and we are working to become the old model of **a "futurium" and the timeless adherence to customary rules.

The new model requires a willingness to question our own positions, the courage to discard our current laws and start all over, and the capacity to exercise almost unnatural patience. It requires a listening spirit and a fundamental humility toward the persons and natural systems around us.

Our thanks to David R. Colburn, Lynn H. Leverty, and Donald B. Hucabee, whose generous support has brought together the component organizations, a library, a bookstore, and a venue. They inspire us to go beyond our immediate responses and for the first time engage in conversation, organizing, and retooling our state; a time to examine the public policies that govern us.

The humanities play an essential role in public-policy discussions. The humanities play an essential role in public-policy discussions. They provide a fertile ground for the development of public-policy discussions. They provide a fertile ground for meaningful policy debates and give voice to the diverse perspectives of our society. They inspire us to...
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FHC receives sixth grant to host U.S. teachers in workshops

For the sixth consecutive year, FHC has received a major competitive grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to host teachers from around the nation at workshops exploring chapters of Florida’s history and heritage. With this year’s grant of $160,000, FHC will hold two weeklong summer workshops on the life and work of Florida literary great Zora Neale Hurston.

Titled “Jump at the Sun: Zora Neale Hurston and her Eatonville Roots,” these workshops will introduce 80 teachers to Hurston’s hometown of Eatonville, the oldest incorporated African-American municipality in the nation, 10 miles from Orlando. Seminar participants, K–12 teachers from around the country (including Florida), will examine the impact of place on the life and work of Hurston, writer, folklorist, and anthropologist whose most widely recognized novel is *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The teachers, selected through a competitive application process that ends March 16, will be housed at nearby Rollins College in Winter Park. Information is available on the FHC website, [www.flahum.org/zora](http://www.flahum.org/zora).

Hurston biographers and Florida scholars will lead discussions and walking tours, guide research into Hurston documents in the Rollins College archives, and take participants to Fort Pierce on the Atlantic Coast, where Hurston spent her final years in poverty. Participants will also attend a Chautauqua-style portrayal of Hurston and a folk revue featuring songs and stories Hurston collected from African Americans working in turpentine and logging camps during the 1930s in Central Florida.

Last year, FHC hosted 120 teachers in three national Hurston workshops. Prior to that, FHC brought 700 teachers over a four-year period to historic St. Augustine for national workshops titled “Between Columbus and Jamestown: Spanish St. Augustine.” In total, these FHC workshops have brought more than $1 million in federal funds to educate U.S. teachers about Florida’s special heritage.

Four summer seminars offered to Florida teachers

Florida teachers are invited to apply for content-rich weeklong summer workshops that explore Florida in the Civil War, World War II–era Florida, the Spanish period in St. Augustine, and Florida’s ties to the Caribbean. Here is the line up:

**THE CIVIL WAR IN FLORIDA**, a residential seminar based at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, June 15–19.

**FLORIDA GOES TO WAR: THE SUNSHINE STATE IN WORLD WAR II**, a nonresidential digital humanities seminar at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, June 29–July 3, is open to Pinellas and Hillsborough County teachers only.

**BETWEEN COLUMBUS AND JAMESTOWN: SPANISH ST. AUGUSTINE**, a residential seminar, is based at historic Flagler College in St. Augustine, July 13–17.

**FLORIDA AND THE CARIBBEAN: HISTORIC TIES AND CULTURAL CONNECTIONS**, is a residential seminar conducted at the University of Miami, July 20–24.

The online application deadline for these four seminars is March 15. For more information, visit [www.flahum.org](http://www.flahum.org) or contact Ann Schoenacher, director of the FHC’s Teachers Center, at aschoenacher@flahum.org.

Florida Frontiers now on the air

With the help of an FHC grant, the Florida Historical Society has launched weekly half-hour radio broadcasts about historical events, people, and places in Florida. *Florida Frontiers*, which airs on selected public-radio stations, explores the relevance of Florida history to contemporary society and promotes awareness of the state’s heritage and cultural-tourism options.

Recent programs have featured a conversation with Patrick Smith, author of the acclaimed Florida novel *A Land Remembered*; Florida’s role in the Cuban missile crisis; a remembrance of the late Bobby Hicks, a Florida folk singer; and a conversation with renowned poet Maya Angelou reflecting on the writings of Zora Neale Hurston.

For more information about the Florida Historical Society and *Florida Frontiers*, visit [www.myfloridahistory.org](http://www.myfloridahistory.org).

New grant application form online

Check our website for FHC’s newly designed application form for major grants and a revised calendar of deadlines. If you are interested in applying for a grant to fund public humanities programs, please find updated information at [www.flahum.org](http://www.flahum.org).
Prime Time reading program to serve 100 Florida families

Nearly 100 families in four Florida counties are expected to participate this spring in FHC’s PrimeTime Family Reading Time programs. These free, six-week family-literacy programs will be hosted by the North Sarasota Public Library, the Childs Park Branch Library in St. Petersburg, the Edgewater Branch Library in Orlando, and the Bruton Memorial Library in Plant City.

The programs, which help parents and children bond through reading and learning together, are conducted by professional storytellers and humanities scholars who use award-winning children’s books to lead discussions about stories and their underlying themes.

This spring’s PrimeTime programs are made possible by the generous support of the St. Petersburg Times Fund; Target; the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice; and the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs.

For more information, including a full schedule of PrimeTime programs and locations, go to www.flahum.org/primetime.

Authors receive support, inspiration

Watch for two new books recently published by authors who were supported or inspired by FHC:

*Florida: A Journey Through its Colorful Past* is a collection of crafted, tinted photographic images and nostalgic anecdotes published by photojournalist Patty DiRienzo. With the help of an FHC grant, DiRienzo traveled the state photographing and researching 73 Old Florida sites from Pensacola to the Keys and recorded memories of people associated with each site.

*Orange County* fourth-grade teacher Judy Lindquist attended FHC’s workshop exploring historic St. Augustine in 2007, and the experience re-energized her literary efforts. She made some revisions to a previously written manuscript and, through the Florida Historical Society, has published *Saving Home*, a novel about the 1702 English siege of St. Augustine.

FHC television documentary, *The Florida Dream*, wins Emmy

*The Florida Dream*, a one-hour television documentary that FHC produced with WEDU-TV of West Central Florida, has won a regional Emmy® for Best Cultural Documentary.

The program, which premiered in October 2007 on public-television stations across the state, chronicles modern Florida’s explosive growth and dramatic transformation since World War II. It was based on the book, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida*, by Gary Mormino, the Frank E. Duckwall professor of Florida Studies at the University of South Florida in St. Petersburg.

The award was presented by the Suncoast Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, which considers nominations from television and cable stations throughout Florida and Puerto Rico and parts of Alabama, Louisiana, and Georgia.

“What a wonderful honor for everyone involved,” said Janine Farver, FHC’s executive director. “We are proud to have produced *The Florida Dream*, and to have helped bring Floridians such a fascinating perspective on our state’s history.”

FHC grant funds are available for nonprofit organizations that would like to bring USF Professor Mormino to their communities to moderate a conversation following a screening of the documentary. For more information about *The Florida Dream*, visit FHC’s website, www.flahum.org.
THE WIDESPREAD SPECULATION that led to the 2008 collapse of Florida’s housing industry seems eerily like events in 1925. Back then a group of speculators, nicknamed the “Binder Boys,” put 10-percent deposits on land and then sold these “binders” at inflated prices to other speculators, who then re-sold them at ever-higher prices. Housing drove the economic boom of the 1920s and when speculation grew rampant, it took down the state’s economy, local governments, and the banking industry. Sound familiar?

Our recent housing bubble has not only derailed the economy, it has also had a corrosive effect on the national image of “Paradise Florida.” In September 2007, as the boom showed signs of slowing, the Wall Street Journal ran an article headlined “Is Florida Over?” It reported that because of rising costs, fewer Americans were migrating to Florida. As the situation worsened last July, Time magazine ran an article headlined “Is Florida the Sunset State?” In it, Miami-based correspondent Michael Grunwald wrote that Floridians were “facing our worst real estate meltdown since the Depression. We’ve got a water crisis, insurance crisis, environmental crisis, and budget crisis to go with our housing crisis. We’re first in the nation in mortgage fraud, second in foreclosures, last in high school graduation rates.”

While this crisis period has Floridians deeply worried about the future, it also presents the state with a rare opportunity. Over the past 60 years, as Florida’s population grew six-fold—from less than three million in 1950 to more than 18 million today—state leaders didn’t have an opportunity to catch their breath, let alone plan for the changes that were occurring. But in the current recession, citizens and leaders of the state have a rare opportunity to assess the present environment, plan for approaches to solve the problems, decide on ways to secure a better future, and resurrect Florida’s image in the process.

In that spirit, FORUM and the Askew Institute for Politics and Society have teamed up to ask nine prominent Floridians to examine critical issues facing Florida today and consider new ways to envision the state’s future. Their analyses appear in the following pages.

Four of the authors assert that creating a viable economic future for Florida is fundamentally dependent on building a strong public education system and a nurturing environment for children and families. David Lawrence, a leading advocate for early childhood education, observes that Florida is the fourth-largest state in the nation with an economy larger than that of most countries, but it ranks abysmally low in how it treats children. He calls for critical changes to ensure the success of children and ultimately the success of Florida. Bernard Oliver, an expert on the public education system, notes that Florida’s most vulnerable students—those who live in extreme poverty and violent conditions—need more from school than just academic training.

John Delaney, a recognized leader in Florida higher education, points out that the state
cannot strengthen its economy sufficiently to be competitive in the global marketplace unless it improves the quality of its universities. And top Florida economist David Denslow emphasizes that improving higher-education funding is crucial to the state’s future. He goes on to itemize the actual dollar value that each new college graduate brings to Florida’s economy and worker productivity.

Two essayists in this issue of FORUM focus on the importance of preserving Florida’s precious natural resources, creating more sustainable ways of living, and preparing for the effects of climate change. Steven Seibert, a leader in planning and resource management, urges Floridians to embrace a sense of urgency in protecting the very natural amenities that drew millions of people to the state in the first place. Florida Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink discusses how Florida should prepare for the predicted financial and physical effects of climate change and calls for more emphasis on clean and renewable energy resources.

And three authors discuss how a state composed mostly of newcomers who live in far-flung, car-oriented, sprawl development can retool and rethink and re-imagine a new Florida that offers a sense of community, connection, and inclusiveness. Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer describes how his city is working to build community with a re-energized downtown, walkable neighborhoods, innovative planning for sustainable living, and mass transit that offers an alternative to the automobile.

Leading educator Eduardo Padrón writes that Florida is becoming the “new” New York, with an increasingly diverse population that brings “the strength of a multitude of perspectives and ideas.” He expresses hope that when Florida’s population becomes a majority of “minorities” later this century, perhaps its biggest attraction will be its harmonious coexistence of cultures.

And historian Gary Mormino discusses the widespread “identity disconnection” in this state where 70 percent of the population comes from someplace else and where the population is so diverse and spread out over such a large geographic area. For Florida to thrive, its residents need to become committed Floridians, he writes.

Florida has held a unique place in the American mind for six decades. For many retirees, Florida’s environment has been a healthy elixir allowing them to live longer and more satisfying lives; for others, Florida has been a place where all things are possible; and for immigrants, it has represented a land of political freedom and opportunity.

Over time the image of Florida developed both a fanciful and dream-like quality, as governors and promoters beckoned people from the far corners of the nation and the world with their vision of a worldly paradise. Where else could you find such a hospitable environment in the winter, easy access to the warm ocean and Gulf waters, and property available at such cheap prices? When a booming economy was added to this mix, the floodgates opened.

As newcomers flocked into the state in the immediate years after World War II, they told friends and relatives that Florida was as advertised and that they should join them. In time, the massive migration threatened to overwhelm the image of paradise, especially in the period from 1970 to 2005, when over 11 million people moved into the state. Despite
occasional lapses, the economy boomed. And even if the jobs did not pay salaries equivalent to those in the industrial and high-technology states of the North and West, there were plenty of them. A few thoughtful souls worried that much of what attracted people to Florida was being lost. But with jobs, a good life, money in investments, a dynamic economy, and tourists and new residents descending on the state, most were not concerned.

Florida’s population growth, the settlement patterns of new residents, and their diversity had a profound effect on the state’s place in the nation as well as the image Floridians had of themselves. Prior to 1940, Florida was the smallest state in the South, one of the poorest in the nation, a one-party state, a bi-racial and segregated state, and most residents lived within 40 miles of the Georgia border. Their history and geography shaped their racial and cultural mindset. By 2005, in less than today’s average life span, Florida became the largest state in the region, the fourth largest in the nation, a senior haven, and a dynamic multi-racial and multi-ethnic state. Most Floridians now reside closer to the Caribbean than they do to Georgia, and, for most of them, their image of themselves and their state has been significantly influenced by this new geographic orientation. By the 21st century, demographers viewed Florida as a microcosm of the nation, because of its size and population complexity. Within the Hispanic and African-American communities, for example, one can find people from throughout the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America.

All seemed right with the world, but located within this massive population expansion and economic boom were the symptoms of a serious illness. Florida’s sales tax–driven revenue could not meet the public’s demand for schools, infrastructure, and health care. Urban sprawl threatened the environment, the sense of community, and the quality of life. Insurance companies suddenly balked at insuring homes in the path of hurricanes, and property taxes rose precipitously as cities struggled to meet local needs. Many who migrated to Florida began to question whether life was, in fact, better here than elsewhere. Some decided to leave; still others opted not to come.

The economic downturn of 2008 has brought the state’s tremendous population growth to a screeching halt. School districts in some of Florida’s major cities, including Orlando and Tampa, have reported declining enrollments for the past two years; utility companies recently announced a decline in new utility connections for the first time since World War II; and Mayor Pam Iorio of Tampa, who personally welcomes all new businesses to her city, says she has not welcomed a new business to this once dynamic city in more than a year.

It is unclear what this economic decline means for Florida’s future. It is certain, however, that there are serious and substantive challenges facing the state and its people. The conditions today provide a rare moment in time to address them, and the following essays suggest ways we can restore those qualities that drew us to Florida in the first place. The authors do caution us that none of these steps will be easy, but, if we want to live in paradise, we must be proactive in preserving it. The essays in this issue of FORUM examine several of the critical issues facing Florida and suggest ways to re-envision its future so that Florida does not become a “Paradise Lost.”

**DAVID R. COLBURN** is executive director of the Askew Institute on Politics and Society and provost emeritus of the University of Florida. A historian, he has authored or edited 13 books, including From Yellow Dog Democrats to Red State Republicans and Florida’s Megatrends: Critical Issues in Florida, co-authored with Lance deHaven-Smith.
Florida Cattle Ranching: Five Centuries of Tradition

The exhibit is produced by the Florida Folklife Program in partnership with Florida Cultural Resources, Inc., with funding support from the Florida Humanities Council, Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, Florida Cattlemen's Foundation, Florida Cracker Cattle Association, National Endowment for the Arts, Iris Wall, and others.

EXHIBIT DATES: March 13 through August 9, 2009

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In Florida, we say we love children—and surely we do. But if that be so, how can so many children be treated so badly? Times are tough—and dollars to invest are sparse—but when will it ever be a good time? I’m not a basher. I try to be fair. But it just outrages me how badly we do by children in our state. I expect far more from our elected leaders than we almost always get. It’s this bad in Florida:

- 797,000 of our children—or almost one of every five—have no health insurance. It’s the second-worst rate in the nation.
- 57,701 of our fourth-grade public school students—30 percent of them—did not meet even minimum reading proficiency on the latest FCAT.
- A quarter of our public high school students don’t graduate.
- One of every five children under 6 years of age lives in poverty.
- Our college graduation rates are lower than the national average.
- We pay most childcare professionals less than we pay animal-control workers and parking lot attendants.

Nationally, on measure after measure, our state—the fourth largest in the nation with an economy larger than that of most countries—ranks abysmally in how it treats children.

What is wrong with us? Is it our regressive tax structure? Do we just not care that much? Are we not making the case coherently? Is it a lack of leadership? Do we as individuals feel we don’t have the power to make people listen? I’d pick all of these reasons; but force me to select one, and it would be leadership.

I like our governor. I respect our governor. I voted for him. He’s maybe the best “people politician” I’ve ever known. He wrote me the nicest letter back in September after we passed a permanent funding source in Miami-Dade County that will mean at least $100 million a year extra for children. “Considering the fact that this issue came before voters during difficult economic conditions,” he wrote, “the 85-percent landslide approval sends a very clear message about children. The voters have spoken, and children are a priority in this great state.”

But can we—all of us—really believe that children are a significant priority in our state? Respectfully I say, I do not.

I read more history and biographies than anything else, so I grasp the lessons of history. Progress depends, at least in part, on people pushing, even shoving, to move forward. Achieving suffrage wasn’t easy, but it was done. Establishing Social Security and Medicare wasn’t easy, but it was done. It won’t be easy to pass health coverage for all, but it will be done. The difficult achievements of the past form a solid foundation for basic American fairness and decency.

From biographies I am reminded that the great stories of human history are of individuals who, to use today’s vernacular, stepped up to insist on change. That is leadership. I want make-it-happen leadership. I’d like children to be the first priority in our state. Maybe I won’t live long enough to see that, but my hope is that Floridians at least accept nothing less than this state’s commitment to specific progress, regardless of the economic conditions. Three examples of what that might be:
• A prekindergarten program for 4-year-olds that actually does what the people of Florida mandated when they passed a constitutional amendment in 2005 requiring “a high-quality prekindergarten experience delivered according to professionally accepted standards.” Genuine “high quality” means the Legislature would (1) seriously examine how to make sure fully qualified teachers are available; (2) insist on classrooms using curricula that research tells us will work; and (3) make sure every child is assessed at the beginning, middle, and end of this program to trace progress and determine what needs to be done to make further progress (and this information should be shared with parents so they will know how to help their children).

• An absolute commitment to knowing what works and what does not in Florida’s pre-K program. Good policy depends on good data. There are more than 120,000 4-year-olds in this program this year. We ought to know, without invading anyone’s privacy, (1) the credentials of each child’s teacher; (2) the curriculum being used for each child; (3) the form of accreditation for each child’s program; (4) the primary language, race and/or national origin of each child; and (5) the education of each child’s parents and the family’s poverty level. That information, correlated with each child’s progress, would tell policymakers what’s working best and what we need to do next. It is scandalous, in my estimation, that this wasn’t done years ago. It is, after all, the people’s money that is being spent on this.

• A commitment—by date certain—that every child has access to a relationship with a caring medical provider, and every child has health insurance. We’ll never accomplish this if government continues to decide eligibility by dividing us up according to economic criteria related to the federal poverty level. Just work out something that gives every child health insurance.

Do just these three things, and I will be much more respectful of government that is supposed to operate, in Abraham Lincoln’s words, “of the people, by the people, for the people.”

What I am talking about isn’t “socialism.” It’s just plain decency and fairness and so very “American.”

For more on this topic, see FORUM EXTRA! At www.flahum.org
STUDENTS NEED MORE THAN ACADEMICS

Our educational system must help all students succeed, no matter where they come from or who they are. For our most vulnerable children—those who live in deplorable conditions outside of school—this means providing social-development training along with academics.

For the past several years, we have been bombarded with data about the hardships faced by America’s youth. The Children’s Defense Fund tells us:

- One in 13 children lives in extreme poverty. For minority-group children, the numbers are even worse—one in six African Americans and one in 10 Latinos.
- A child is killed by gunfire every two to three hours, and abused or neglected every 36 seconds.
- An infant dies every 19 minutes.

The social conditions that we allow to exist for children and families in this country create a sense of hopelessness and despair. Teen pregnancies, parentless children, and inadequate health care for our youth give pause to those of us fighting for equity and hope for America’s forgotten future.

Nowhere is the story more moving than in our educational systems, where high school dropout rates approach 50 percent in some urban school districts; the achievement gap between poor, minority children and others is in double digits, no matter what measures one uses; and the number of young people who are out of school, disconnected from society, or incarcerated is rising.

Unfortunately the outlook for Florida’s children is even bleaker, by some accounts:

- More than 18 percent of Florida’s children live in serious conditions of poverty;
- Child abuse and neglect are rampant in our state;
- Florida’s dropout rate is one of the highest in the country;
- More than 75 percent of our African-American and Latino fourth graders cannot read;
- The number of Florida students attending postsecondary education is comparatively low;
- The number of our children in the “cradle-to-prison” pipeline is increasing; and
- The amount of money Florida spends on education is among the lowest in the nation.
The most vulnerable of our children are disconnected from schools and society at large and have no caring adult network. They receive public assistance and many are wrought with physical, mental, and behavioral problems. These children are products of a failed educational and social system that continues to focus on problems, rather than on problem solving.

What can we do? How can we eliminate the conditions that bring about such a sense of despair and hopelessness? How can our public education system provide the needed support and experiences for these children to be successful?

First, schools must mandate “resiliency education” for our vulnerable children. This means integrating academic and social-development activities in the curriculum to promote social bonding. Such programs provide consistent boundaries and plans of action; teach “life” skills; create caring and supportive environments; hold high expectations for children regardless of their station in life (teaching the "yes you can" attitude); and recognize the multiple abilities our children have, despite the conditions in which they live.

Resiliency, as defined by researchers Marylyn Rirkin and Mary Hoopman, is “the capacity to spring back, rebound, successfully adapt in the face of adversity, and develop social, academic, and vocational competence despite exposures to severe stress or simply to the stress that is inherent in today’s world.” Where else can we provide this optimism besides the schoolhouse?

Second, our educational system must provide competent, high-caliber educators who are entrusted with the learning and development of our children. In addition to having expertise in content and pedagogy, school personnel must have cultural knowledge and experience to be successful with the diverse array of students in our educational system. It isn’t enough for a teacher simply to take a university course called diversity/multicultural education.

We know that the strength of student-teacher relationships do much to predict students’ academic and behavioral performance in schools. I know from my own conversations with high school and middle school students that their relationships with teachers are the real “make or break” deal for them in school. They talk about teachers who respect them, know who they are, and care about them. As one student said, “They expect a lot from you and they are real hard, but they really care about you.”

Teachers also need to be familiar with the community organizations and resources that are available to help the same
vulnerable children who face challenges in the schools.

Third, we must mandate—yes, mandate—that schools be connected to families. The research shows overwhelmingly that family connectedness is a powerful determiner of child development and well-being. Teachers and school systems must provide training and support for families if we are to improve the outcomes for vulnerable children. These efforts should promote emotional connectedness, create and share action plans and high expectations, include conflict-mediation strategies for troubled youth and families, provide role models, and much more. I like to think of it as providing the cultural, personal, and social capital that children need to overcome barriers to success (resiliency!).

“The most vulnerable of our children are disconnected from schools and society at large and have no caring adult network.”
Finally, if we want to be serious (or as students say, “real”) about creating opportunities for vulnerable children, we must restructure teaching to engage students. This should involve inquiry-based instruction that draws upon students’ interests, abilities, and motivation. One of my former college professors described this as the multiple-abilities curriculum. This means creating enough academic options to capture the many learning and individual styles that students bring to schools. School systems must also ensure that teaching practices are culturally responsive.

Children, especially adolescents, often provide us with the keys to open up their lives with opportunities for social, cultural, personal, and economic success. With innovative changes in our educational systems, we can help students succeed. YES WE CAN.

For more on this topic, see FORUM EXTRA! At www.flahum.org
If Florida intends to strengthen and diversify its economy, the state must focus on improving its higher education. A review of economic data for all 50 states demonstrates that the former can’t occur without the latter.

Assuming we choose to follow this route to an improved economy, allow me to offer three key measures for assessing how we are doing in our quest to improve higher education.

• First, we must increase the number and percent of Florida’s citizens who hold baccalaureate and graduate degrees. States with well-educated citizens fare best in their economic growth.

• Second, Florida’s universities must become nationally recognized as among the leading institutions in the country, enticing our highest-achieving high school graduates to stay instate and attracting greater numbers of bright out-of-state students to relocate to Florida for a quality education. It’s no secret why some of Florida’s highest-achieving students are moving to California and Massachusetts to pursue their degrees.

• And finally, our universities must succeed at attracting and conducting more federally or privately funded research that will translate into building economic opportunities. If we want high-tech and high-wage industries to come to Florida, we have to offer them universities that can meet their needs.
Each of these measures will take time and resources, but the good news is that the cost of improving Florida's higher education does not have to be borne solely by taxpayers. Florida has the lowest in-state undergraduate tuition in the United States. Some of the cost of improving higher education in Florida can be carried by the students themselves. It's time we explore the question: What percentage of the cost of a state-supported education should students bear? The average public university students in Florida pay about one-third of the cost of their education, or about $3,808 year. Daycare for a 4-year-old costs more than that. While there is much to be said about access to higher education, no one wants the old adage “You get what you pay for” to ring true. Higher education is an investment from every perspective—and very possibly the most important investment we can make in this economy.

However, increasing student tuition doesn’t mean we can reduce the taxpayers’ contributions. If we are going to build a high-quality university system, these dollars will also have to grow when the economy rebounds. After all, if we charge students $1,000 more in tuition, but reduce the state’s contribution by an equivalent $1,000 or even by $500, we will never bring the quality of higher education to the level needed to grow our economy and improve the prospects for this state. A stronger educational system is going to mean more dollars, but, as stated above, the return on investment is well worth the cost.

While money is so often the answer, it is by no means the only factor that we have to address if we are aiming to have a top-tier higher educational system. To reach this goal, we need to come to agreement on who plays which roles in managing and leading the State University System, as well as the individual institutions within that system.

The Florida Constitution directs and authorizes the Florida Board of Governors to “operate, regulate, control, and be fully responsible for the management of the whole university system.” The following responsibilities are specifically described:

- Defining the distinctive mission of each constituent university and its articulation with free public schools and community colleges,
- Ensuring the well-planned coordination and operation of the system, and
- Avoiding wasteful duplication of facilities or programs.

The Board of Governors must exercise its responsibility to develop a comprehensive and dynamic plan for the state system—a plan that guides each university in setting its own mission consistent with the needs of the state. The Board must also organize these various institutions into a unified system of the whole. As some actions that have occurred over the past few years would indicate, this is easier said than done. But if the Florida system is going to realize its full potential, all of the universities must work collaboratively—worrying at least as much about the state as they do about their own institutional reputations and aspirations. It will take strong Board action to make that a reality. It will also require university leaders to respect and trust the Board.

Without question, Florida needs each of its state universities, but each must play a distinctive role and make strides to bring national recognition to the system as a whole. We need the University of Florida to be a top-10, nationally recognized research university—and at the same time we need New College to be recognized as the best publicly funded small college. Each university must play a role in retooling Florida.
liberal arts college in the country. Every one of our universities must develop the same level of recognition for its unique characteristics, without trying to be a carbon copy of any other university in the system. At the University of North Florida, we have no desire to become a research-intensive university or a small liberal arts college, but that does not diminish our goal to be recognized as a nationally prominent university with student-centered, cutting-edge instruction, and through regionally relevant research. Each of Florida’s schools has the capacity to be excellent in its areas of focus, and this potential must be fostered with proper support and investment.

To improve our higher educational system, we must recommit to our partnership with the Florida Legislature, which also has a key role in the funding, as well as the future, of the State University System. While the Board of Governors must provide leadership in developing the long view of where our universities are going, this work cannot and should not be done in a vacuum, and it must be tempered with the realities of the state budget and the respect for the perspectives of those whom we elect locally. This can only occur if the Board and Legislature work in tandem.

To be successful in developing and executing our plan for the state universities, the Board and each of the universities must also work as equal partners with Florida’s K–12 education programs, as well as with local community colleges and the new emerging state colleges. University students don’t begin their education in their freshmen year of college or when they transfer from a community college to a state university. And our state universities cannot meet all the needs of the various local communities for educated citizens. If we are going to improve state universities and higher education in general we must engage in ongoing alliances that include our state’s private educational institutions.

We need compelling and strong leadership, comprehensive planning, effective collaboration, and good public and fiscal policy.

A model for this cross-level collaboration can be found in an initiative UNF, the Florida Community College of Jacksonville, Jacksonville University, Edward Waters College, the Duval County Public Schools, and the City of Jacksonville have established as the “Jacksonville Commitment.” This community effort is offering a free college education at one of our local higher education institutions for students whose families are below the federal poverty line. Beginning at the middle school level we will be working together to ensure that need-based students have an integrated and collaborative system to provide access to and support for higher education.

So what does it take to build a dynamic state university system? We need compelling and strong leadership, comprehensive planning, effective collaboration, and good public and fiscal policy. Or you could say, nothing less than a clear and unquestioned delineation of authority, a plan that everyone will buy into, a tearing down of silos replaced by partnerships, and a willingness to invest heavily in a future that will yield remarkable dividends over time. There are common interests that could bring us together to get this accomplished, and there are parochial interests that could cause us to put up roadblocks. We have seen each at work in recent times. Regrettably, the person who offers the plan that will benefit only her or his constituency is missing the point. Unless we find a way to build the system as a whole we are not going to find the long term answers to the state’s needs.

For more on this topic, see FORUM EXTRA! At www.flahum.org
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The current economic recession is severe, particularly in Florida. Most of its consequences are painful. It would be unfortunate to suffer the pain without taking advantage of this crisis to make changes that will enable us to emerge with an economy strengthened for the long haul.

Florida’s economic downturn began well before the nation entered a recession, if the number of jobs is the criterion. In March 2007, our state began steadily losing jobs. From that time through December 2008, we lost 287,000 jobs. It wasn’t until December 2007, when national employment began to decline, that the United States entered a recession, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research. In effect, Florida is suffering the effects of these two recessions simultaneously.

If forecasters are correct, the nation still has nearly a year of recession ahead. But Florida’s recession is likely to last three months longer, because it will take that amount of time for retirees to sell their houses up north before moving here. That will give Florida perhaps three full years of recession—March 2007 to March 2010. Of course, no one knows when the recovery will actually begin.

What is clear: During this severe downturn, the structure of the state’s economy is changing, and some of the changes will be permanent:

- The population growth rate over the next 20 years is projected to average about half of what it was over the past 20; and that means a reduced role for industries related to growth, such as construction and real estate. They will remain important, but diminished, as a share of overall economic activity. With only 6 percent of the nation’s jobs, Florida will not have, as it did at the peak, nearly 8 percent of its construction workers and 15 percent of its real estate brokers and sales agents.
- Jobs in retail trade will become a smaller share of the total, partly because Floridians won’t be spending as much and partly because the Internet makes information about products readily available, reducing the need for in-store guidance.
- Finance is also becoming a smaller share of the economy, in Florida as well as nationally.

When we finally emerge from the recession, what will be Florida’s new long-term jobs structure (in addition to the changes noted above)? Tourism will remain a major sector, and there will be more jobs providing services to retirees.

The baby boomers, born from 1946 to 1964, are hitting their sixties. Many will retire once they can afford it, and, of
those, many will move to Florida once they are able to sell their houses in the Midwest and Northeast. When house prices stop dropping in Florida, they still will be higher than in the rest of the Southeast, resulting in a tendency for the more affluent retirees to select Florida.

As the economy finally recovers, will the gaps left by construction, real estate, and other declining sectors be filled only by tourist and other service jobs? Or will Florida diversify toward more high-value-added workers?

Florida has only 68 percent of its expected share of the nation’s managers, 64 percent of its scientists, and 74 percent of its engineers. Will Florida converge toward its proportionate shares of these high-paying jobs, or even rise above them? As a high-amenity state, Florida has the potential to attract more and more professionals. And the salubrious climate, beautiful coastal areas, vibrant urban areas, and the quality of life in general will continue to persuade affluent retirees to locate here.

We all know what must be done for Florida’s potential to be realized. Most important is improving education. At the postsecondary level, the crucial issue is whether universities and the Legislature will reach agreements on higher-education funding. Will the Legislature grant universities the right to raise tuition substantially and deal creatively with the constraints imposed by the Bright Futures and Florida Prepaid programs? Will universities find a way to assure the Legislature...
that they will use additional funds to create smaller classes, hire more advisers, boost graduation rates, and increase need-based scholarships? This will require trust and political courage but it is certainly feasible.

The economic value of higher education to a state has been confirmed by recent empirical analyses. Typical is a July 2008 report by Jaison Abel and Todd Gabe of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. They estimated the economic effect of having one more college graduate in a state’s workforce.

Applying their results to Florida, I find that having one more college graduate working in Florida would lift the state’s output by $120,000 a year. At first this seems unreasonable, because a college graduate generates only $40,000 in additional output. The extra $80,000 results from the boost a college graduate gives to other workers with whom he works and the capital (equipment and structures) they use. In the language of economics, college workers have strong positive externalities.

This effect will be multiplied if we attract more high-value-added workers from other states. One of the most important amenities enabling states to attract and keep more educated professionals is excellent K-12 schools. But improving primary and secondary schools may be more challenging than raising the quality of higher education.

Once recovery from the recession is well under way, even with the inefficiency imposed by the class-size amendment, adequate funding can be raised if affluent retirees and empty nesters are convinced that the schools are using their money effectively. The convincing will be the hard part. These taxpayers will not be generous with education if they think their money is being wasted.

If education can be both reformed and adequately funded, many of the students emerging from the system should remain in Florida, creating a pool of talented workers. As noted, that will in turn have a multiplier effect, as these skilled workers attract their peers from other states. These workers will want to increase their own productivity by working with proficient teams, further boosting the supply of high-value-added workers.

To attract and retain businesses, the regulatory and legal environments must provide adequate protection for workers and customers without being capricious or overbearing. Courts must be properly funded and judges well paid. Too much of Florida’s tax burden has been shifted from households to businesses. One example is the Save Our Homes amendment, which reduces taxes on homesteads but not on office buildings or factories. There should be a rebalancing so that the businesses, especially those that export goods and services, pay only their fair share of taxes. The state should fund more generously partners such as Enterprise Florida that find and negotiate with new firms that are good matches with Florida’s existing firms and development goals. The currently used cluster approach, groups of firms in related industries, is the right way to select firms to recruit. Although the clusters are appropriately based on production, technological, and scientific links among firms, even more emphasis on publicizing outputs that benefit Floridians, especially medical technology, would help maintain public support.

Just as the housing boom came to an end, so too will the recession. Emerging from it with a stronger and more balanced economy will not simply happen. Reforming and funding education and attracting and keeping businesses that employ high-value-added workers are the critical components.
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Why then do we feel anxiety and anger about our vanishing natural systems? Primarily because Florida’s dramatic population growth has skewed the equation. Both the appearance and the reality is that Floridians are gobbling up our natural systems at an unsustainable rate. Many of us moved or stayed here because of the state’s natural amenities; to see them in peril jeopardizes our quality of life, and, if we’re honest, creates some guilt in that each one of us is part of the problem.

We can quarrel about whether population growth is good or bad. Let’s forego that diversion and just recognize that there was little we could have done—or should have done—to limit the 500 to 1,000 people who moved to Florida each day in the half-century after World War II. Those numbers are changing; some of our counties have slowed in population growth recently, but our experience over the past several decades clearly distinguishes Florida from, let’s say, Minnesota or Missouri.

Assuming substantial growth rates continue, how do we resolve the conflict between the people and the land? What must Floridians do to preserve Florida’s natural resources and landscape? I propose the following practical steps:

1. **Embrace a Sense of Urgency**

current predicament. There are disturbing trends out there, including sea level rise due to global climate change. We know what many of the problems are; we know much of what to do about them. We’re just irresponsibly slow to act.

We know our water resources are stressed; we know we’re losing our productive agricultural lands at an alarming rate; we know our road systems operate at unacceptable levels; we know our economy is too undiversified; we know we should be allowing more density and preserving more open space; we know we should be building as though energy and water were scarce resources. We know we are leaving our children with bills they cannot pay. Yet we act as if we have plenty of time to address these challenges. We don’t.

I am not an alarmist, but to paraphrase Kunstler, Floridians are sleepwalking into the future.

2. Identify what lands and waters must be preserved and do something about it

To envision a better Florida, we must identify and protect our most precious natural areas. Let us start with the scientifically sound identification of Florida’s critical natural resources; we need to know where they are and how they function.

The good news is that this effort is already under way. For example, the flagship initiative of the Century Commission for Sustainable Florida is the Critical Lands/Waters Identification Project (CLIP). This program translates data into maps showing what must be conserved. These maps are accessible to the public and useful for statewide and regional strategic conservation planning.

This initiative and others like it provide essential information for policy-makers. The effort is not insignificant; getting various scientists and information-technology people to sit down and share data is not easy. But they are doing precisely that, laying a necessary foundation for increased conservation.

What do we do with this information? We discuss it with those who are affected, including landowners and local communities—and we figure out a collaborative way to protect these lands and waters.

The second piece of the puzzle is to find new and imaginative ways to conserve land by finding new ways to encourage landowners to limit the use of their properties. The good news is that this process is also under way. These conversations are occurring in many forums in Florida. Perhaps the most valuable is happening under the leadership of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, which is vetting the CLIP maps with landowners and communities.

Please do not underestimate the enormity of this initiative. Regulations will only get us part of the way toward protecting Florida’s most precious natural areas, and it is often a fight. The new paradigm is to find incentives for landowners to dedicate substantial portions of their property as part of a more sustainable development or long-term use plan.

The goal is twofold: to work toward a common understanding of the land that should be conserved; and to find innovative ways for landowners to conserve those priority areas. Use data to identify; use dialog to preserve.

3. Build Better and Differently

We must design sustainable communities and buildings. In this context, sustainability means that we live in a manner that supports our natural systems so that our children and grandchildren do not suffer for our actions.
With better design, we can save energy and water; find alternatives to driving everywhere; weather major storm events; create healthier living environments; compete more effectively for the labor base of the future; and preserve, restore, and enhance our natural environment. We can walk more lightly upon the land.

And as suggested above, we already know what to do. “Best practices” are contained in the Energy Star and Florida Water Star programs, in the Green Building and Neighborhood Standards adopted by the U.S. Green Building Council and the Florida Green Building Coalition, and in the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program developed by the University of Florida’s IFAS Cooperative Extension Service (and there are others).

But thousands of new building permits are still issued each year without a single solar panel, or cistern, or soil moisture sensor. This is crazy. Knowledge and technology will undoubtedly improve, but many examples of better practices exist right now.

Why aren’t we incorporating these practices in all we build today? Where is the sense of urgency to change our behaviors?

4. Foster the Magic of Dialog
Each of the concepts above requires dialog among people and organizations who may not typically communicate with each other: scientists and legislators talking about climate change; technical folks from different universities sharing CLIP data; landowners and governments considering imaginative ways of encouraging wise land use; urban and rural citizens finding common ground; and architects, engineers, and policy makers revising and enforcing building codes to promote disaster resistance and water and energy conservation.

As simple as all this may appear, these kinds of collaborations occur far too infrequently. Our current system does not require, nor even foster, such personal interaction. We are content to live through the old models of forming public policy by pitting one side against the other—and then litigating when we don’t get what we want. This is particularly true in matters of land use and environmental protection, which has widely been considered an “us versus them” grudge match—landowners and developers versus environmentalists.

The truth is that many of our natural systems are deeply stressed; we have caused this by growing without consideration of the long-term consequences. We cannot remain ignorant or even neutral about protecting the natural systems that sustain us. But the truth also includes the need to recognize private property rights as protected by the state and federal constitutions; these are not quaint historical relics. They live and breathe and guide our everyday actions.

So we need to create new forums to study, debate, and decide. Without the magic of dialog, we are wedded to the old models of “us versus them” and the visionless adherence to countless rules. The new model requires a willingness to question our own positions, the courage to discard our current laws and start all over, and the capacity to exercise almost unnatural patience. It requires a listening spirit and a fundamental humility toward the persons and natural systems around us.

This kind of humility was expressed by the 84-year-old Benjamin Franklin as he moved adoption of the U.S. Constitution:

“I confess that I do not entirely approve this Constitution at present; but sir, I am not sure I shall never approve it...the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment and pay more respect to the judgment of others.... I cannot help expressing a wish that every member of the convention who may still have objections to it, would, with me...doubt a little of his own infallibility and...put his name to this instrument.

I’ve focused on some practical solutions in this article. There are certainly grander concepts we need to address to ensure that we live in ways that lessen our impact on our natural environment. But we waste valuable time by engaging in the traditional battles when so much more could be accomplished by urgently facing Florida’s challenges in a more focused and collaborative manner. As usual, Lincoln said it best:

“The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew.”

For more on this topic, see FORUM EXTRA! At www.flahum.org
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Marjory Stoneman Douglas is remembered as the environmental activist who educated the world about the Everglades, a mystery of nature that she described as “beauty and terror and hugeness...the ultimate life thing.” Her 1947 book, *The Everglades: River of Grass*, celebrated Florida’s signature feature as a precious resource rather than as a wasteland to be tamed and developed.

So respected is her most widely known literary work that when the Dade County library moved to a new building, a runner ceremoniously carried *River of Grass* to the new venue as if it were an Olympic torch.

But Douglas (1890–1998) accomplished much more in her 108 years than writing this classic. A new biography, by University of Florida history professor Jack Davis, portrays the multi-dimensional life of this lauded conservationist, feminist, novelist, biographer, social-justice advocate, and columnist for the early *Miami Herald* (the newspaper for which her father was founding editor).

*An Everglades Providence: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the American Environmental Century* (The University of Georgia Press, 731 pages, $34.95) shows the range of Douglas’s talents while providing a history of the environmental movement. The reader gets to know this influential Floridian. She loved cats. She drank scotch. She gave up sex forever after her 1915 divorce from a wastrel husband. We see Douglas the only child, Douglas the elocutionist at Wellesley College, Douglas the agnostic with Quaker roots, Douglas the opinionated grande dame, declaring, “They can’t be rude to me. I have all this white hair.” Finally we see her put to rest, her ashes scattered by park rangers in the wetlands she loved, her River of Grass.

In addition to Davis’s biography of Douglas, the University of Georgia Press is publishing a visual depiction of the Everglades by Marion Belanger, a photographer who teaches at Wellesley and who has been artist-in-residence at Everglades National Park: *Everglades: Outside and Within* (80 pages, $30).

Devotees of Floridiana will also be interested in a newly published collection of essays about Floridians in the Civil War years and a new book examining the role African Americans played during Reconstruction in Florida.

In *Florida’s Civil War: Explorations into Conflict, Interpretations and Memory* (The Florida Historical Society Press, 219 pages, $14.95), readers learn that Virginians ridiculed Florida’s Confederate soldiers, who were clad in homespun clothing because they had no uniforms and who shambled, sickly and ill-equipped, toward Old Dominion’s Civil War battlegrounds. So green were the Florida troops that they tapped a spring beneath a makeshift graveyard and playfully kicked human skulls, thinking they were gourds.

But the Florida boys proved themselves under fire, helping to secure Gen. Robert E. Lee’s lines during a crisis at the second Battle of Cold Harbor in 1864. When Maj. Pickens Bird of Florida fell mortally wounded after leading a skirmish line against Union sharpshooters, he told his comrades: “Tell them I died like a Confederate soldier.” Such episodes won the respect of veteran southern soldiers.

The anecdote is one among many in this collection of scholarly articles published in the Florida Historical Quarterly since its first issue in 1908. Edited by Gulf Coast University...
history professor Irvin D.S. Winsboro, the book touches on such subjects as family life in Florida during the war; the Union defeat at the Battle of Olustee; the role of women in memorializing Confederate Florida; naval blockade running; racial attitudes and Civil War reality in Hillsborough, Manatee, and Monroe counties; Confederate army deserters; and disillusionment among Floridians with the Southern cause. Each article includes a list for further reading.

In *African Americans in the Reconstruction of Florida, 1865–1877* (University of Alabama Press, 276 pages, $27.95), author Joe M. Richardson, emeritus professor of history at Florida State University, examines the postwar lives of Florida’s people of color. In this account, he looks at newly emancipated slaves and longtime free African Americans such as the brilliant Jonathan C. Gibbs, the state’s first black secretary of state and later, the first black superintendent of public instruction. Among others profiled is Josiah T. Walls, who saw service in both the Confederate and Union armies before becoming an Alachua County farmer and later winning election to the state legislature and United States Congress.

Richardson disputes the idea that incompetence and corruption marked Florida’s Reconstruction years. He delves into politics, education, and occupational achievement to demonstrate how African Americans made their way while often facing hostility from whites. Richardson shows the rise of black preachers and educators, documents the first black physicians and lawyers, and suggests that the 115 blacksmiths found during the 1870 census were among the state’s more affluent African Americans.

A glimpse at some other recent Florida titles:

*The Florida Life of Thomas Edison* (University Press of Florida, 264 pages, $34.95). Author Michele Wehrwein Albion has collected a plethora of unusual details about the celebrated inventor’s years in Fort Myers and the impact his presence had on the sleepy town between 1885 and 1931. Among the more humorous entries are daughter Madeleine Edison’s rules for household guests. For example: “If you perceive that we need someone with a sane understanding to manage us, look the other way. On no account try to act as a balance wheel. The family all think it’s great to be crazy.”


*Historic Homes of Florida* (Pineapple Press, 192 pages, $18.95). The state’s history is told through houses, all of which are at least 50 years old—and open to the public. This second edition of the book by Laura Stewart and Susanne Hupp is illustrated with color photographs.

*Then Sings My Soul: The Scott Kelly Story* (The Florida Historical Society Press, 233 pages, $17.95). Scott Kelly was mayor of Lakeland at age 28 and a state legislator with tremendous clout while still in his 30s. And he almost made it to the governor’s mansion—twice. Author Dorothy Smiljanich weaves Florida history, particularly 1960s political history, into this biography.

JON WILSON, recently retired after 35 years with the *St. Petersburg Times*, is pursuing a master’s degree in Florida Studies at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg.
Florida is geographically unlike any place in the world: a peninsula with 1,200 miles of coastline, including 663 miles of beaches. As such, life here is different than in many places—and the environmental threats faced by the state are different, too. The progression of global warming presents Florida with unique financial and physical challenges, and both issues must be addressed.

The predicted onslaught of rising sea levels puts the very lifeline of Florida in jeopardy. Not only are Florida’s coastal areas home to most of the state’s population; they also are tourist destinations that generate essential revenue for the state from sales taxes.

Nearly 75 percent of the state’s more than 18 million residents live in coastal areas—alongside major transportation hubs, centers of commerce and industry, and sites of numerous military bases. In addition, more than 41 million visitors visit Florida’s beaches every year. The sales taxes they pay constitute substantial income for the state—more than $1 billion in the last fiscal year, according to a study by the Department of Environmental Protection.

At this critical moment, our state leaders must prepare to respond to climate change and, at the same time, act to curb carbon and greenhouse-gas emissions to prevent further detrimental impacts. In doing so, they should take advantage of investments in renewable energy and other clean technology as a means of driving the economy.

As Florida’s Chief Financial Officer, my top concern is the state’s economic health. Studies show that climate change will be particularly costly to vulnerable areas like Florida if significant initiatives aren’t put in place. I support these initiatives and will make certain that taxpayers’ investments are sound and take into account changing conditions due to climate change and sea-level rise.

I believe we should reexamine our land-use and planning decisions with state agencies and municipalities. We need to reconsider the wisdom of rebuilding homes along coastal areas that have been destroyed by hurricanes, and we need to consider the impacts that land-use decisions have on insurance rates for all of us.

In September, researchers at Florida State University evaluated the effects of sea-level rise in relation to projected trends in storm-surge flooding from hurricanes, the damage costs associated with flooding from major storms, and the value and area of land at risk.

By 2080, according to one prediction, the value of land at risk in Miami-Dade County would be $6.7 billion. If a storm similar to Hurricane Wilma occurred that year, the cost to Miami-Dade alone would be 12 percent-to-31 percent higher than what the 2005 storm cost (in 2005-valued dollars). This prediction is for one county; when multiplied by the number of counties along Florida’s coast, it’s easy to understand why we need to address this issue sooner rather than later.

In March of 2007, I began working with Agriculture Commissioner Charles Bronson to present “Conversations on Climate Change,” a series of Florida Cabinet workshops exploring how Florida’s economy and financial health could be affected by climate change. This was the first time the Cabinet addressed climate change. Specifically, we discussed links between climate change and insurance, investment opportunities in emerging markets as clean-energy and green-technology sectors grow, and the importance of climate-risk disclosure for investors.

Since then, the governor has issued executive orders to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, and I’ve supported Commissioner Bronson’s “Farm to Fuel” initiative, which promotes the production of ethanol in Florida and has the potential to stimulate agribusiness in our state.

As Florida’s CFO and fiscal watchdog, I want to ensure that the state’s investment portfolio is diversified among companies that are preparing for and taking action on climate change through disclosure, governance strategies, emissions reductions, and commercial opportunities. I am exploring investment possibilities in emerging markets as the clean-energy and green-technology sectors grow. I am also working with federal partners to highlight the importance of climate-risk disclosure for investors.
But there still is much to be done. Last year, I met with British leaders to understand their success in confronting the challenges presented by climate change in the finance and investment sectors. I believe Florida can benefit from our shared partnership; London is the epicenter of the world’s global financial and reinsurance markets, and Great Britain is an international leader in analyzing and combating the financial risks of climate change.

While I continue to focus on the financial impacts of climate change, I realize this cannot be done without collaboration and partnerships. I support other state leaders as they advance Florida’s efforts to change our ailing economy into one that is more sustainable and innovative.

Our state can become a leader in creating an alternative-energy sector while creating new jobs and curbing greenhouse-gas emissions. We are blessed with a sunny climate that supports abundant natural resources that can be further explored as we grow the alternative-energy sector. In addition, carbon markets have proven successful in providing incentives for more energy-efficient production. Not unlike the solution for curbing acid-rain pollutants in the United States in the 1990s, putting a price on carbon emissions and trading them as a commodity drives down emissions. For this to happen, however, the Florida Legislature and state leaders need to cooperate so Florida can transition smoothly into a low-carbon economy. Likewise, new leaders in Washington, while recognizing the need to create federal partnerships within the United States, must also engage China, Europe, and India to put forth comprehensive efforts to tackle climate change. As President-Elect Obama recently stated, “the time for denial is over”—and for true progress, everyone must be involved.

For more on this topic, see FORUM EXTRA! At www.flahum.org

ALEX SINK is Florida’s Chief Financial Officer, elected in 2006. Previously she was president of Florida’s largest bank, the Bank of America.
Florida’s reputation as America’s paradise is well deserved. Pleasant weather, beautiful scenery, diversity, and economic opportunity are just some of the reasons why Florida has attracted both new residents and visitors during the past 50 years from all over the world. Few states have grown like Florida since the close of World War II.

Florida is many things to many people depending on whom you ask. For me, we are a rich tapestry of people, experiences, and natural wonder found in few places across the globe. But for some, sprawl, far-reaching suburbs, endless busy thoroughfares dominated by shopping malls, strip retail centers, and fast-food restaurants come to mind. This image is certainly understandable since our state came of age and has been shaped during the golden era of the automobile. Florida’s growth spurt occurred during a time when the majority of our citizens enjoyed a lifestyle centered around driving from one air-conditioned location to the next in the comfort of their cars. We all know about the American dream of independence, open space, and a house on a one-acre lot. This dream and the development pattern of post–World War II suburbanization have had a dramatic impact on all Floridians, including those in Orlando.

Central Florida and Orlando have grown the fastest within what consistently has been the highest growth state in the country. And, yes, we have our share of urban sprawl, cul-de-sacs, and strip retail centers as we have grown into a metropolitan area of 2.5 million residents. We know that we will keep on growing as forecasters predict our region will be home to more than seven million residents by 2050.

In Orlando, we believe that there is a new way to grow. My administration has done everything it can to chart a new course for our future. Simply put, we believe people are looking for more.

We believe people are looking for quality and yearning for a “sense of community” as well as a “sense of place.” All across Florida, communities are dusting off and sprucing up their downtowns, in-town neighborhoods, and special places.
“Thinking local” is all the rage. We are seeing a new style of suburban development that is less about the car and more about embracing a mixture of uses and pedestrian-friendly areas that help create a community identity and bring us together. These plans include alternative transportation options and transit-oriented development.

Our efforts to “build community” are paying dividends for our citizens today and will reap big rewards for future generations. In other words, we are actively advocating sustainable development that will withstand the test of time while celebrating our unique sense of community.

We have worked diligently to rebuild Downtown Orlando, an urban core that many are calling one of the most vibrant in the Southeastern United States. In the last five years, the number of buildings in our skyline has doubled; we have added more than 2,170 new residential units. Thousands of people now live downtown. Our new Orlando Events Center, seating 18,500 spectators, is rising just two blocks from the very center of downtown, where we are preparing to begin construction on the new world-class, three-stage, mixed-use Dr. P. Phillips Orlando Performing Arts Center.

Also downtown, new residential units are being built in our long-blighted Parramore section. Coffee shops, restaurants, live theaters, movie theaters, and new retailers (including Publix Supermarket) have opened for business, and new office users have moved in. Our focus and investments ensure that we have a vibrant city center for our citizens to enjoy and a feeling of togetherness and community. In other words, we have bolstered and reinforced the heart of our city—the place where we began as a community.

We celebrate our unique neighborhoods throughout Orlando. All over our city, we have implemented Main Street programs in neighborhood commercial districts. This is a tried-and-true national program that establishes partnerships between local government and business stakeholders working hand-in-hand to revitalize, promote, and grow the unique commercial districts that often help define individual neighborhoods. As a matter of fact, Orlando is the first urban district in the Southeastern United States to be selected for the Main Street program. Through our Get Active Orlando initiative, we are working to ensure our citizens have access to a physical environment that encourages physical activity, walkability, and connectivity.

Florida is a state known as a hotbed for new urbanism development that returns to the principles of walkable, mixed-use, and unique neighborhoods. In just a few short years, the
former 1,100-acre Orlando Naval Training Center has been transformed into one of our premiere neighborhoods—Baldwin Park. Just two miles from our city center, it is home to nearly 8,000 people and includes schools, parks, offices, generous sidewalks and trails, and its very own Main Street. The development pattern is reminiscent of early 20th-century development with front porches, alleys, and public squares. And, yes, the market has responded.

Another Orlando success story is under way. Our new “Medical City” at Lake Nona in Southeast Orlando will generate more than 10,000 new, very desirable jobs in the healthcare industry. This is an achievement that would not have happened without strong partnerships between local governments, state government, the University of Central Florida, and private businesses. Thanks to planning principles in place for this area, thousands of new residential units, a regional shopping destination, the new UCF School of Medicine, the Burnham Institute for Medical Research, a new VA hospital, and Nemours Children Hospital are being developed into a compact, walkable, mixed-use community that will result in a true, unique sense of place for generations to come. Residents in Lake Nona will have the opportunity to connect with this medical cluster through special features that allow each home accessibility to research and services available at their doorstep.

Orlando and Central Florida are on the cusp of finally bringing to fruition an alternative form of transit other than the automobile. Multiple governments are working together with the state and community partners to deliver a 61-mile commuter rail system that will eventually connect this region from Deland to Kissimmee. We understand and promote "transit-oriented development" encouraging design guidelines, walkability, and appropriate mixed-use development in proximity to rail stations. We look forward to the day when citizens have the option of choosing a lifestyle independent of the automobile. We believe there is a great opportunity to enhance or create new, uniquely identifiable focal points for our community adjacent to appropriate rail stops.

We are proud to play a strong role with our nationally recognized myregion.org initiative. Led by a group from the Central Florida Partnership (which includes government leaders,
businesses, and citizens), we are charting a new direction for growth within our seven-county region. We now have a vision for how Central Florida will grow and how we will ensure economic prosperity and save our unique natural resources and sense of place.

We have made significant progress in reducing urban sprawl—and these are just a few examples. We have plenty of work to do but are proud of our accomplishments. “Smart growth” and “community building” pay off for a community. We compete globally for jobs, investment, and commerce and believe it is imperative to build a city that is unique and authentic—and embraces “community.” Our most precious memories are built around special places, friends, families, and experiences.

Besides, we can’t afford to allow unbridled, run-away sprawl to continue gobbling up precious natural lands. We can’t afford to turn our backs on the existing infrastructure in towns and cities that can support additional development. We can’t afford far-flung development that depends on cheap fuel and results in further damage to our air and water. We can’t afford to continue the social isolation that results from unsustainable sprawl. Investing and building on the unique assets of our communities is sustainable—and it’s a good investment.

Multiple trends are converging to reinforce the wisdom of sustainable smart growth in Florida:

- Since September 11th, there is an increased desire for people to connect with their communities and to feel a sense of belonging to something greater;
- The current wave of first-time homebuyers, who grew up watching TV sitcoms that celebrate city life, tends to gravitate toward unique places, cities, and neighborhoods;
- Because of rising construction costs, it makes more sense to maximize existing urban or town infrastructure;
- The current focus on going green bodes well for smart growth, as does the increase in fuel costs;
- And finally, the huge Baby Boomer generation is beginning to simplify and downsize and often will choose a residential location that offers activities, culture, and sense of community.

Florida has long been a laboratory for new ideas and trends and is well-positioned to begin reinventing our special places and cities to create the foundation for responsible development, strong communities, and economic prosperity. This new direction will help us preserve the beauty and charm that makes this state so special. Smart growth is an investment in our future and will ensure that our state grows the right way and that Floridians will enjoy being part of a community that delivers a higher quality of life. I am proud that we are setting the stage and leading the way here in Orlando.

For more on this topic, see FORUM EXTRA! At www.flahum.org

We can’t afford to continue the social isolation that results from unsustainable sprawl. Investing and building on the unique assets of our communities is sustainable—and it’s a good investment.

DISCOVER THE PROMISE
America delivered to a boy from Castro’s Cuba.

“Mel Martinez is a living embodiment of the American Dream.”
—John McCain

Mel Martinez.com
In the 21st century, Florida will likely transition into a “majority-minority” state, meaning that the number of people identifying themselves as “White persons not Hispanic” will fall below the 50-percent level. This trend toward increasing diversity within the state can be seen as a threat or as an opportunity.

The threat is to the status quo, but the opportunity is for new ideas. Diversity adds a set of checks and balances to society by increasing the number of perspectives and methods of solving problems. One man’s apple may be another man’s orange, but the diet is certainly richer when it has both apples and oranges instead of just one or the other.

On the other hand, some people become sour oranges when confronted with someone different than themselves. How do we avoid the potential division of diversity and instead create advantages for all Floridians?

Florida is the world’s number-one tourist destination; but while the number of North American visitors has been increasing since 2001, overseas visitors have been in decline. Showing the world that Florida is a culturally diverse place that welcomes all kinds of people could help change this trend.

Linked to tourism are the state’s unparalleled natural resources, which present an opportunity for all people to unite in efforts at preservation and conservation. In fact, efforts to salvage the Everglades have created national and international goodwill for our state that can reverberate in all sectors of our economy.

International trade is poised to increase dramatically as countries in South America grow in prosperity, and fully 40 percent of U.S. exports to Latin and South America pass through Florida. Positive relations with these countries could be the next springboard for growth; in fact, Brazil is being recognized as one of the world’s newest economic powers within the same context as Russia, India, and China (called the BRICs for short). With a burgeoning Brazilian expatriate population, Florida is the logical place for the United States to increase and strengthen trade with Brazil.

While there is no sentimental ballad to herald its arrival, Florida has become the “new” New York. Whereas New York City was the gateway for mass immigration from Europe in the 20th century, South Florida has become the safe harbor and springboard for the newer wave of immigration from Latin America. Florida is also poised to surpass New York as the third most populous state in the country, behind California and Texas.

These three Sunbelt states are major gateways for the blending of South and North America, which most likely will become the hallmark of this hemisphere over the next century. The invisible Berlin Walls of culture, language, and geography begin to fade away as more and more people become multicultural and mobile.
Diversity supplies the strength of a multitude of perspectives and ideas, and within a democracy the best ideas can rise to the top.

This diversity could be mistaken for a splintering of the traditional American home and dream into a thousand divergent directions. But part of the American dream is the freedom to move anywhere and make a fresh start, and in this manner many foreign immigrants share the same motivation as citizens relocating to Florida from other states. It is also worth noting that many immigrants tend to follow very traditional concepts of family and home life, and they have to adapt to the greater flexibility and individualism that characterizes an American perspective.

Some people may fear that the clash of cultures is stronger than the desire for peace and prosperity, but I see this clash as a learning opportunity. Diversity supplies the strength of a multitude of perspectives and ideas, and within a democracy the best ideas can rise to the top. Those ideas may arise from diverse points of view based on one’s religion, race, culture, or some combination of the three.

As an educator, I would be remiss if I did not touch upon the synergy created by diverse students and teachers. The top institutions in our country deliberately seek diversity, because this mixture enhances the marketplace of ideas. In Florida, urban areas tend to be the most diverse, and they also tend to be where the jobs are. Here, too, is the potential for great ideas to emerge to solve Florida’s pressing problems.

Miami Dade College is the most diverse institution in the nation today, long ago a “majority-minority” environment. The college welcomes the nation’s largest Hispanic and African-American student populations and students from 184 countries who speak 93 languages. The classrooms are laboratories for the effects of diversity and culture in every discipline. They suggest what is possible in the realm of civility and hospitality in a state so dependent on tourism.

A critical element for Florida’s future is raising the overall level of education by increasing rates of high school and college graduation. No amount of diversity or goodwill can overcome the disability of a poor education. Indeed, a functional democracy depends upon a proper education of the masses. Education is clearly the tie that unites the 18 million individuals in Florida. While we can celebrate that each person is unique and inherits a unique set of cultural norms, education imparts shared knowledge and practices that enable a functional, prosperous society.

Everyone knows that living in harmony with different races and cultures is not always easy, but Florida’s track record bodes well for the future. Despite rapid population growth and diversification, conflict based on cultural differences has been the exception instead of the rule. This coexistence of cultures may become Florida’s biggest attraction yet.

EDUARDO PADRÓN is president of Miami Dade College, the largest and most diverse institution of higher education in the nation. During his career, he has been selected for national positions by four U.S. presidents; honored by the governments of Spain, France, Mexico, and Argentina; served on several leading national and state boards; and written for many publications.

For more on this topic, see FORUM EXTRA! At www.flahum.org
I AM NOW WHAT I SWORE I would never again become: a married woman. That’s right. William Leo Hinson, Jr., a native son of California with a Florida Cracker sensibility that puts my bona fides to shame, has made me after six long years of fun—heavy sigh—an honest woman.

In the months and weeks and tender morning hours leading to our wedding, I found myself consumed with minutia: tables, napkins, parking, swag, tranquilizers for the dogs, the unreliability of weather reports, and pig sauce. My mantra was—when not trying to exert control over even the smallest of details (Italian cream or devil’s food cake? Clear cups or pretty blue ones?)—“What will be will be.” Doris Day haunted me. Her sunshine-swaddled voice played in my head like a stuck 45: “Que sera, sera!” Right. If only I was that kind of gal.

Three men gave me away. That’s what it took to get me to the wedding altar a second time. I didn’t remember until two weeks prior to the ceremony that actual vows were to be exchanged and that I had put myself in charge of crafting said vows (thank God for Google). Despite my mania, my beloved and I stood in the Seminole-inspired chickee that sits within a stage whisper of the Gulf of Mexico surrounded by friends and family, and not only had I figured out what to say, the words we spoke mattered—really mattered—and I was grateful for this because the way things had been going, especially given my penchant for revision, until wedding eve it looked like we’d have a mighty brief—and did I mention?—awkward ceremony.

What I did not forget—what had been my obsession since the moment my fiancé got on bended knee on my front porch and popped the question—was the food. I think that people who have an unrelenting need to feed others attract friends of the same ilk. In this regard, I am deeply blessed. Volunteers offering to cook their favorite dishes abounded. As a result, my wedding was very much a Florida affair.

Let’s start with my friend and fellow writer, Janis Owens, who has famously said, “All crackers do is procreate and eat.” Janis, whose cookbook The Cracker Kitchen hit stores in February, and her husband Wendel, roasted a whole pig. The pig-picking ritual, with deep roots in Cracker culture, means a lot to this bride because it reminds me of family members who have long passed. Given my new happiness, I suspect even my ghost relatives—who I feel certain were in attendance—shed a few discreet tears of joy.
During those planning-intensive weeks, I would awake from a deep sleep, the scent of roasted pig in my nostrils, an image in my mind’s eye of its hide cooked to a deep brown, tooth-breaking, crusty armor. In the dark of night, the dream still percolating through my consciousness, I understood that I was dreaming my wedding into existence.

My Godmother, Olga Villada Barnes, an African-American woman whose roots trace both to Cuba and Spain, brought La Florida to my wedding table in the form of homemade black beans and rice served with hot loaves of Cuban bread. Ah, Tampa! Some of the best memories of my youth revolve around the delectable food found in the most meager mom-and-pop restaurants inhabiting West Tampa and Ybor City. For sure, my writer’s imagination was also fed by rumors of bolita being run out of some of those same cafés. Although her black beans and rice were a stunning success, her crowning contribution turned out to be her legendary sangria. It is sparkling, ruby red, and nuanced with fresh citrus and—I suspect—star anise. I have tried for a decade to wrangle the recipe from her but Olga remains uncharacteristically mute, as if the ingredients were a state secret. I would argue that the concoction should be the state drink.

Rounding out my Florida-style wedding table were giant bowls of Greek salad prepared by friends and inspired by a recipe brought to the Gulf Coast from Greece nearly a century ago. Apalachicola oysters were served raw, steamed, and smoked with Datil pepper sauce on the side (an homage to my Minorcan relatives in St. Augustine). Barbecued chicken provided a soulful, smoky undertone.

I felt at home: seafood, Cuban food, Greek food, Cracker food, libation born of Spain, and a dash of St. Augustine heat. I had no time to make conch chowder or smoked mullet or Indian fry bread. What was a bride to do? Still and all, I was happy that on my wedding day, we gathered around a sumptuous meal that was, to some measure, reflective of Florida’s abundant cultural stew.

I did not consciously plan such diversity. It just happened, which, come to think of it, is the way it is with life: surprising and rich and really good if you open up yourself enough to finally, finally say yes.

CONNIE MAY FOWLER, writer and lifelong Florida resident, is the author of numerous books, including The Problem with Murmur Lee, When Katie Wakes, Remembering Blue, and Before Women Had Wings.
In 1943, a remarkable essay appeared in the *Miami Herald*. It expressed hopes and admonitions that are as relevant today as they were during the darkest days of World War II.

The essayist Philip Wylie—a prolific author of novels, short stories, and screenplays—challenged city and state leaders to harness the transformational powers of wartime. "We can seize the gigantic opportunities at hand and develop the unique region into a new heart of the new world," he wrote, "or we can go on being a tropical Coney Island."

To achieve this greatness, leaders must inspire and ask residents to rise to the challenge and become Floridians. "We haven’t asked people to live here," Wylie stated. "We’ve asked them to visit." The future will be shaped by generations "who know that a civilized empire is founded upon industry and culture, not sport."

Wylie hoped that Florida, not California, would become "the center in the western world for those architects and engineers who are experimenting with designs in housing, public buildings, lighting, [and] solar energy…We ought to have the greatest university in the nation, here. Perhaps we should have several great universities."

Alas, Wylie’s bold entreaties were ignored. Pell-mell growth, sheer indifference, and a lack of resolve, not his vision of "true greatness," characterized postwar Florida. Millions of newcomers came to live in Florida but not be a part of Florida.

Former Gov. Bob Graham coined the term “Cincinnati factor” to describe residents who moved to Florida physically—but never emotionally. In their “golden years,” many such couples settled in places like Fort Myers, The Villages, or Pembroke Pines, where they subscribed to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, cheered the fortunes of the “hometown teams”—the Cincinnati Bengals and Bearcats—and voted against educational referenda, arguing that they had already paid their school taxes in Hamilton County, Ohio. And, in accordance with their wishes, when they died their bodies were shipped to the Buckeye State for burial.

"Florida," quipped writer John Rothchild, "has not become a true home of these residents, but merely the penultimate resting place, a warm way station in which to relax and play golf, the blessed limbo between Cleveland and the Pearly Gates." Satirists dubbed the business of air-freighting bodies from Florida to the Rust Belt the so-called “coffin run.” The traffic was so lucrative that Delta Airlines and Daytona Beach International Airport once awarded funeral directors 500 Frequent Flier miles for every such transaction.

But the Florida “identity disconnection” is a serious issue—and it’s not solely due to the “Cincinnati factor.” Because of the state’s geography and the different ways in which Flori-
Because of the state’s geography and the different ways in which Florida’s far-flung communities have evolved, even Florida natives have trouble identifying with each other as Floridians.

da’s far-flung communities have evolved, even Florida natives have trouble identifying with each other as Floridians. Maybe Florida is too long to function as a state. Florida’s 18 million inhabitants (including a million “snowbirds” who spend six months a year in the state) fit awkwardly across the state's 2,000 miles of tidal shoreline; 600 miles of beach; 67 counties; scores of edge cities, boomburbs, and microburbs; 10 media markets; and two time zones.

Tallahassee, the state capital, remains remote and distant from most Floridians. It is 20 miles from the Georgia border and 500 miles from Miami. Key West lies just 90 miles from Cuba but 800 miles from Pensacola. Geographically, culturally, and politically, Miami and Key West share more in common with the Bahamas and the Caribbean than with Florida’s neighboring states Alabama and Georgia.

Texas also boasts a huge landmass, but Lone Star inhabitants share a very different relationship with their state than Floridians do with theirs. Texas has more native-born residents (60 percent of its population) than Florida does (30 percent of the population). But Texans, in particular, manifest a state identity that more closely resembles nationalism. The real (and imagined) events surrounding the Alamo, Indian Wars, cattle drives, and the wild-cat oilmen are burnished legends that Texans embrace today.

The heroic defense of the Alamo in San Antonio represents the most enduring moment in Texas history. Curiously, the 1835 Seminole massacre of a hundred U.S. troops under the command of Maj. Francis Dade in Florida never registered an equivalent aftershock among Floridians. Florida’s history also includes the nation’s first cowboys battling the frontier and leading heroic cattle drives. And it features pious friars and ruthless businessmen, wild booms and horrible busts, killer hurricanes and catastrophic freezes. But most Floridians are unaware of this.

All Floridians need to know more about this special place we share. Sadly, students receive only a brush with Florida history, in the fourth grade. How many ever read the masterworks of Zora Neale Hurston, who recorded the lives of African Americans in Florida in the 1920s and ’30s; or Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, known for her writing about life in Cross Creek and for her novel, The Yearling, set in Florida’s Big Scrub. A quick primer for those who want an overview is Michael Gannon’s History of Florida in 40 Minutes. And for a taste of Florida’s cast of colorful characters, read Frolicking Bears, Wet Vultures, and other Oddities, by Jerald Milanich.
How do we build a new identity where the state motto might be, “Everyone, it seems, is from someplace else.”

When New Englander Philip Wylie moved to Miami in the 1930s, he became a passionate Floridian. His vision for a better Florida alternated between hopes for a paradise with a future as bright as its glorious past, and sadness as the state was taken over by leaders who believed that growth was tantamount to progress.

Today’s leaders still lack the courage to challenge residents to leave Florida a better place than they found it. Instead of realizing Wylie’s vision of great universities, we continue to accept underfunded institutions. Instead of intelligent planning and innovative energy programs, we have inherited automobile-driven sprawl on a vast scale. Instead of a state that is renowned for research, industry, and culture, we have a service economy that resembles a Ponzi scheme: Today’s thousand new residents pray that tomorrow’s arrivals will pay for the growth.

In the 1870s, an Italian statesman famously proclaimed, “We have made Italy. Now we must make Italians.” So, too, the great Florida conundrum persists: How do we make Floridians? How do we build a new identity where the state motto might be, “Everyone, it seems, is from someplace else.” Florida needs citizens who care, who love the place not simply as a financial investment but as an investment of life.

As the winds of recession currently howl through half-built subdivisions like the spirits haunting Ebenezer Scrooge, it is time to ponder the past, present, and future of Florida.

In a place where TomorrowLand is enshrined and where residents care more about a prosperous future than a shared past, in a state where millions of retired auto workers and teachers migrated in hopes of rejuvenation and better Februaries, the future is supposed to end happily ever after.

Just as Wylie and others realized that the crisis of wartime opened possibilities, perhaps Floridians now can envision new possibilities in the current unsettling times. Wylie lashed out at critics who branded Florida as “third-rate, garish, vulgar, and trivial.” He understood that the state’s climate and natural attractions would lure millions of transplants after the war. His greatest fears remain relevant to Floridians today: How do you maintain a paradise that now must meet the needs of 18 million residents and 80 million tourists? What happens when Floridians think only of their immediate gratifications and not the future? What happens when dreams die?

Symbolizing Florida tourism: A young tourist proudly holds the hand of a statue of Spanish conquistador Juan Ponce de León, said to have been the first European to reach Florida’s shores. Next to Ponce is a statue of a Florida bathing beauty, representing the post-World War II influx of newcomers.
THESE ARE CRITICAL TIMES FOR FLORIDA.

The economic crisis at the national level has hit our housing and tourism-dependent economy harder, and deeper than most states. At this time, more than ever, FORUM is needed to organize, energize, and rebuild our state; a time to examine the public policies that prompted it.

The humanities play an essential role in public policy discussions. They help us go beyond our immediate responses and look to issues from a variety of perspectives.

This gives voice to it's role in history and experience, ensuring that we take the long view and not resort to quick fix. They provide form the spirit and a fundamental humility toward the persons and natural surroundings.

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