

WLRN Radio News wrapped up the last quarter of 2015 launching a new podcast about creativity as well as a weekly email newsletter and concluded an in-depth series on immigration in partnership with the Miami Herald.

CREATIVITY - LISTENING ON DEMAND

Spark is WLRN's first foray into the world of podcasting. It's all about imagination. What happens when we have a flash of creativity? What makes art happen? Where does that vision come from? We single out moments of creative inspiration as experienced by artists including Salmon Rushdie, Richard Blanco and Jeannine Capo Crucet, and ask them to consider the source(s). Spark, like all podcasts, airs on demand when different listeners select to hear it individually at their own convenience. <http://wlrn.org/programs/spark>

IMMIGRATION

WLRN's Latin America's Editor Tim Padgett joined forces with the Miami Herald to report the Migration Maze, a multi-platform series examining conditions prompting Latin Americans to emigrate, efforts the U.S. is employing as it attempts to halt the exodus at its source, the journey itself and Samaritans along the way, challenges of immigrant children, deportees and more. The series reports were posted on WLRN Oct 2, Nov 24 and Dec 21, 2015. <http://wlrn.org/central-americas-migration-maze>

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - LITERARY SUPPORT

Miami Book Fair International draws readers and writers by the hundreds of thousands to its 8 day literary festival every November. As we do each year, WLRN teamed up with the Fair to host this year's "Post Lit" event - a community engagement opportunity wherein voluntary contributors submitted their stories on a Post It note. Selected submissions were posted on the website Nov. 18th and read at the event Nov. 20th. The event was recorded and edited for later broadcast between Christmas and New Years. An author interview with poet Richard Blanco aired Nov. 19th. Others were included in the new WLRN podcast <http://wlrn.org/programs/spark>.

RELATIONS WITH CUBA

December marks the one year anniversary of President Obama's announcement resuming relations with Cuba. Several hour long Sunshine Economy programs this fall explored the opportunities, plans and opinions of North American companies, executives and elected officials regarding doing business with the Communist nation to the south. American Airlines and Carnival Cruises discussed activities seeking to establish service to the island nation Oct. 11 and 20. Another program that aired Nov. 18th featured one of South Florida's GOP representatives in Washington saying such talk is premature while there's still strong opposition in Congress.

INTERNATIONAL ART & ECONOMICS

Art Basel Miami Beach is always big business in South Florida as exhibitors, collectors and others gather to see, be seen, and buy - before, during and after the shows. WLRN's news and social media coverage shares this annual experience, held the first week of December, with those who attend and those who can't. Nov. 30th, TSE host Tom Hudson talked with Art Basel's

Global Director and also its Americas Director about how Miami Beach fits into its international portfolio of art fairs, the demand for art and exhibition space, an overloaded WiFi network during the fair, and upcoming renovations to the Miami Beach Convention Center.

ENVIRONMENT

The radio news department also produced stories and programs addressing concerns and considerations affecting South Floridians from the northern Palm Beaches south to Key West. Tourism numbers as well as real estate valuation and construction levels remain high. Unusually wet weather, which late in the year caused crops to rot in South Dade fields, prompted calls for disaster relief funds as WLRN reported Dec. 11th. Combined with King Tides, fresh and salt water tested South Florida's drainage systems and flood improvements as The Florida Roundup discussed Oct 2th and our journalists reported Oct 7th.

On the marine scene, we reported Nov 19th and Dec. 10th that U.S. scientists connected with their Cuban counterparts in hopes of obtaining a supply of native corals to replenish Florida's now lost ones. Concerns over the seagrass die-off in Florida Bay aired Dec. 8th and the remediation status of city parks and playgrounds in Miami-Dade, found in 2012 and 2013 to contain toxic chemicals and carcinogens, also aired before year's end.

Dec 4th, international soccer star David Beckham announced his group had selected a site in Miami to construct a new stadium for the sport. By Dec. 18th, residents were voicing their objections. WLRN covered both sides on those dates. Previously, on Oct. 22nd, we aired news that the School Board wanted to participate in a deal to bring pro soccer to Miami and on Nov. 6th publicly weighed the chances of a deal affecting soccer in Miami.

Our political coverage included the progress of court-mandated redistricting (Oct. 29th and Dec. 2nd) and an Elections Department push to update signatures (Dec. 29th). Nov. 10th's Sunshine Economy featured 4 state legislators from both houses and both parties discussing issues slated to come before the state legislature in the 2016 session. The Florida Roundup on Dec 30th further previewed the upcoming session..

Healthcare remains a topic of keen interest to our listeners as more than 600,000 Floridians signed up for Obamacare in the first 5 weeks of open enrollment this year. WLRN reported there are more participants here than in any state in the nation yet two of the largest for profit insurers are considering pulling out of Florida entirely. On Dec. 14th, The Sunshine Economy explored the condition of health insurance in Florida with an executive from the state's largest nonprofit health insurer.