



FROM THE MANATEE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

February 2024

Manatee Dems Black Caucus Gala

The poster features a dark background with bokeh light effects. At the top is the MCDBC logo with the text 'Manatee County Democratic Black Caucus'. Below it, the main title 'BLACK HISTORY GALA' is in large white letters, followed by the subtitle '“Our Time - If Not Now, When?”' and the date 'Thursday, February 22, 2024'. The location 'Oscura, 816 Manatee Ave E, Bradenton, FL 34208' is listed. A photo of Mayor Jerry L. Demings is shown. Text includes 'Featured Speaker: The Honorable Jerry L. Demings, Mayor, Orange County, FL', 'Music by NuJazz', and 'Gourmet Hors D'Oeuvres'. Ticket information is provided at the bottom: 'Tickets: \$85 / Students \$45', with links to Eventbrite and the caucus website, and a phone number for more info: (941) 301-4336.

Experience an evening filled with cultural pride, music and inspiring oratory while celebrating the rich history and achievements of Manatee’s Black community during the *Black History Gala*.

The gala, sponsored by the **Manatee County Democratic Black Caucus**, is Thursday, Feb. 22, 6 p.m. at Oscura, 816 Manatee Ave E, in Bradenton. Tickets are \$85, \$45 for students.

Soulful music, hors d'oeuvres, craft drinks and a silent auction are featured activities. The featured speaker will be Jerry L. Demings, mayor of Orange County. He is the first Democrat and first African American in Orange County to be elected to the office of mayor. He’s the father of three children with his wife, former U.S. Rep. Val Demings.

This event aims to foster unity, understanding and appreciation for the diverse Black culture. Proceeds will help ensure the success of Manatee Democratic Black Caucus voter outreach initiatives.

Get Your Tickets Here!

Challenging Florida's Legislative Tide

By Nancy Hughes

With Gov. Ron DeSantis back in Florida after his mismanaged presidential debacle, will we see another legislative session compliant with DeSantis' "anti-woke" demands? We're halfway through the Florida legislative session so expect more committee and floor action this month. The last day of the regular session is March 8. Over a thousand bills were introduced and we have a list here of some worth following.

**Read the Rest On Our
Blog**

Environmental Workshop at Cortez Cultural Center

The [Cortez Cultural Center](#) and Cortez Village Historical Society will host an educational workshop sponsored by the [Manatee Democratic Environmental Caucus](#). The event will feature marine biologist and Florida Sea Grant scientist Dr. Angela Collins, who will discuss the extensive maritime history of Manatee County and Cortez in her presentation: "Maritime Heritage of Manatee County: The Mighty Mullet."



The Cortez Cultural Center showcases the history of the village of Cortez, one of the last remaining fishing villages on Florida's Gulf Coast. Dr. Collins' talk will center on her outreach efforts through the [Florida Sea Grant Program](#) to inform coastal communities about seafood safety and aquaculture and fisheries management.

The workshop will take place Thursday, Feb.15, from 10 to 11 a.m., at the Cortez Cultural Center, located at 1165 Cortez Rd. West. Directions to the center are at <https://www.cortezvillagehistoricalsociety.org/plan-your-visit>.

Dems Won't Vote in March Preference Primary Election

Florida will hold a Presidential Preference Primary Election on March 19 as part of the party process for determining Presidential candidates.

However, because the Democratic Party submitted only one candidate – President Joe Biden – that candidate is deemed the winner, and there will be no primary election for Democrats. Florida is a closed primary state, so only registered Republicans will vote in the Republican Presidential primary.

Seven candidates are on the GOP ballot. Non-affiliated voters are not allowed to vote in either Presidential Preference Primary election. The deadline for registering – or to change your party affiliation – in order to vote in the presidential primary is Feb. 20.

Even though Democrats won't be voting in March, this is a good time for you to check your voter registration status on the Manatee Supervisor of Elections website linked below. Take note on whether you have re-registered to Vote by Mail. All voters must re-register in order to receive ballots in the mail. If you have specific questions, you can also call the Supervisor of Elections at 941-741-3823.

[Check Your Status Here!](#)

Library Board Applicants Not Good Enough?

By Nancy Hughes

Last year, the Manatee County Board of County Commissioners voted to expand the Library Advisory Board and in November 2023 a notice was posted urging people to apply for the new positions.

Twelve people applied, but they weren't good enough for District 3 Commissioner Kevin Van Ostenbridge. He claimed he didn't "see very many individuals on this list who are like-minded with this board." He made a motion to reopen the application process and the motion passed 6 to 1, with Commissioner George Kruse voting no.

The county has again put out a call for applicants for five positions on the Library Advisory Board with the following criteria: someone who resides on the island, someone who lives in the Lakewood Ranch/Myakka City area, someone with a Master of Library Science degree, someone with a child enrolled in a Manatee County school, and someone with a home-school child.

Online applications are due by February 16. People who originally applied for the position are urged to reapply. The Commission did not reject those applicants and is only looking to expand the pool of applicants.

In addition, Manatee County is looking for applicants to serve on the Citizens Oversight Committee for Infrastructure Sales Tax Advisory Board. This committee provides citizen review of proposed expenditures of county sales tax proceeds. **Submit an online application** for the Citizens Oversight Committee by February 9.

[Apply Online Here](#)

Unity & Action Gala Seeks Auction Items

The **Manatee County Democratic Party's** annual fundraising event, **2024 Unity & Action Gala**, is fast approaching. Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 23, at the Bradenton Area Convention Center in Palmetto.

The gala auction team needs your help to obtain specific silent and live auction items. If you would like to donate to the auctions, contact Robin Sathan at MCDPGala@gmail.com.

Plans are underway for a fun evening with entertainment, delicious food, a special featured speaker, silent auction and live auction hosted by Gala Gal, Janelle Taylor.

The Gala committee plans to build a Blue State Wine presentation again this year and is looking for a construction manager. If you are an oenophile or just a wine lover, please help us gather at least 24 bottles of nice wine to complete the wall.

**Early Bird Tickets Available
Now!**

New Way To Track Your Mail-In Ballot

In the past, voters in Manatee County have been able to track the status of their Vote-by-Mail (VBM) ballot by visiting the [Track Your Vote By Mail Ballot](#) page on the Supervisor of Elections website.

**Ballot
Tracker**

In addition, you can sign up to receive text, voice mail or email notices about your VBM ballot. Voters who sign up for [BallotTrax](#) will receive an alert each step of the way from the time a voter's ballot is printed to when it has been counted.

On the BallotTrax website, you will be asked to enter your name, date of birth and zip code and then select your contact preferences.

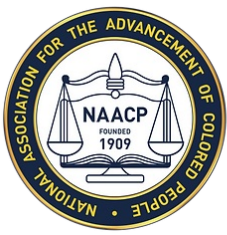
BallotTrax

“We hope local voters will agree that (BallotTrax) will improve transparency and voter confidence that their mail ballot is tracked more closely than ever before,” said a Manatee County Supervisor of Elections Office spokesperson.

Learn More Here

NAACP Dinner to Promote Equality and Justice

Join your neighbors and friends for
the **Manatee NAACP Annual
Freedom Funds and Awards**



Manatee NAACP

Dinner, Saturday, Feb. 17, 6 to 9 p.m., as we celebrate and honor individuals who have made significant contributions to the community.

The evening will be filled with inspiring speeches, live music and delicious food. This event provides an opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals who are passionate about promoting equality and justice. Together, let's continue to strive for a more inclusive and equitable society.

The dinner is at the 13th AV Dream Center, 24th Street E, Bradenton. It is endorsed by the **Manatee County Democratic Party**. Tickets are \$100.

Get Your Tickets Here!

Communications Team Seeks Newsletter Writers

The Manatee Dems' Communications Committee is looking for someone who knows how to write and edit for a newsletter. Layout skills and working with Constant Contact would be a bonus.

Members of the Communications Team would be available to train and help out with writing and editing according to Manatee Democratic Party style. Contact Wil Clapper at wil.mcdcomm@gmail.com.



The Manatee County Democratic Party is a **100% volunteer organization**. All contributions of any size are appreciated.

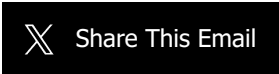
Get involved! Check out the many area Democratic clubs and caucuses. Meet like-minded people at fun events!

Receive our newsletter! Was this email forwarded to you? Would you like to keep hearing from us?

Donate Now

Upcoming Events

Sign Up



Resource Links

[Florida Democratic Party](#)

[The Florida Channel](#)

[National Democratic Party](#)

[Manatee County Board of Commissioners](#)

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Hours

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays,
Noon to 4 p.m.
Saturdays 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Contact us to schedule a meeting

[Visit our Website](#)

Manatee County Democratic Party | 435 Cortez Road W, Bradenton, FL 34207

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