



**Manatee County
Democratic Party**

Manatee Matters

December 5, 2022 Newsletter

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Newsletters**

Message From Our Chair

Ok, I get it – politics for Democrats in Manatee County sometimes sucks!

However, that doesn't mean that the work we do as volunteers isn't valuable. Rather, because the demographics are stacked against us, it makes the work we do that much MORE important. Our work holds the line on values that matter. We alone are tasked with ensuring a voice of opposition that is crucial for a healthy democracy.



Our voice continues to grow: We expanded outreach and visibility to new levels. We added left-leaning voters with no party affiliation to our outreach. We invested heavily in African-American and Hispanic communities. We remain 80,000 strong in Manatee County, and we are working tirelessly to increase that number.

I will admit, redistricting was a kick in the gut this cycle and accounted for local losses in districts that have historically been more accessible to our candidates. But remember, both defeats and wins in politics are often short lived. We are already organizing for 2024!

Thanks to all the volunteers who pulled us through this election cycle. Manatee is a tough county but the work we did was part of the Blue Tide that has created the most diverse, most representative government in the history of our country.

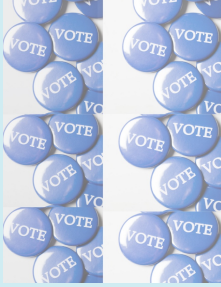
Ceilings were broken in many states allowing for openly LGBTQ representation, female representation and racial minority representation in unprecedented numbers. Three states have added reproductive rights to their constitutions.

The alt-right trend that Republicans were counting on to turn America solidly red never came. Activists in every state came out to protect individual liberties, equality and voting rights, and we will continue to join them.

Tracy Pratt, Chair, Manatee County Democratic Party

Local Democratic Candidates Out-Poll Top of Ticket

Thanks to thousands of hours phoning, texting, door-knocking, addressing postcards, sign-waving, and other activities, local candidates Reginald Bellamy (Manatee County Commission District 2) and Harold F. Byrd Jr., (School Board District 2), outpolled the top of the ticket in their respective races.



Nonetheless, Manatee Democrats couldn't overcome the advantage Republicans have in registered voters and as a result not a single Democrat came out ahead in the November General Election.

Manatee County is solidly red with 1.5 registered Republicans to every Democrat. According to the Manatee County Supervisor of Elections (SOE), there are 79,588 registered Democrats eligible to vote in the county as opposed to 124,037 Republicans.

When it came to voting in the 2022 General Election, 72 percent of registered Republicans (89,687) voted while the Democratic turnout of registered voters was 59 percent (46,820). Forty-seven percent (36,272) of registered "other" voters cast ballots. Other voters include non-affiliated and independent voters.

As expected, registered voters age 60 and above were the most active. The least active voters came from the 18 to 29 age group with all voters less than 37 percent of those registered.

The SOE's office reported 11,131 Republicans, 12,493 Democrats and 15,434 non-affiliated/other voters voted by mail or dropped off their ballots. The Vote-By-Mail program accounted for 74,335 of the 172,779 votes cast.

Manatee County was no exception to the state-wide Republican rout. Governor DeSantis beat Charlie Crist 111,109 to 59,801 votes in the county. In the U.S. Senate race, Sen. Marco Rubio accumulated 107,991 Manatee County votes to Val Demings' 61,237.

"Manatee Democratic volunteers worked very hard – telephoning, door knocking, post-carding, texting and so on. But our efforts were overwhelmed by Republican propaganda and political theater," said Robert McCaa, a political analyst for the Manatee Dems.

On a positive note, Manatee ranked 16th in Democratic turnout of all Florida counties and 4th among counties with 40,000 or more registered Democratic voters.

FLORIDA LEGISLATURE'S NEXT MOVE: ANOTHER SPECIAL SESSION ON PROPERTY INSURANCE

By Nancy Hughes – The Florida legislature doesn't go into regular session until March 7 but the state House and Senate are already in action.

Senate President Kathleen Passidomo (R-Naples) and House Speaker Paul Renner (R-Palm Coast) have begun structuring their committees. Renner named Representative Tommy Gregory (R-Lakewood Ranch) chair of the Judiciary Committee, which considers civil and criminal law issues, including public safety and the administration of the courts. Committee assignments for all members will be named after November 30 and committee meetings will begin in January to work on proposed legislation.



The House and Senate also will hold a second special session on property insurance the week of December 12.

The legislature did little to address widespread problems in the insurance industry during the regular 2022 session. It met in special session in May 2022 after an outcry of homeowners losing policies and reporting massive rate hikes. Yet problems persist, including [the bankruptcy of six insurance companies](#) in Florida this year.

The spring special session did result in the [passage of property insurance legislation](#) introduced by State Senator Jim Boyd (R-Bradenton). His bill authorized the state to spend \$2 billion to temporarily provide

reinsurance to insurers and \$150 million to provide hurricane mitigation inspections and hurricane retrofitting on homestead single family homes with a value of \$500,000 or less. Reinsurance is backup coverage for insurance companies experiencing significant losses, such as after a natural catastrophe. Hurricane Ian is estimated to have caused between \$35 and \$55 billion in insurance claims.

Boyd admitted his [bill would not lower property insurance rates anytime soon](#). Republicans refused to accept many [Democratic amendments](#) to the legislation, including those that would have imposed a 12-month rate freeze and tapped an insurance trust fund to offer direct rebates to policy holders.

Speaker Renner indicated that during the December special session the legislature will consider additional ways to bolster the insurance market, including the possibility of spending more money to help with reinsurance. He also wants to establish a [Select Committee on Hurricane Resiliency and Recovery](#) to “fortify” the state against future hurricanes. Senate President Passidomo said the session will address ways to “[ensure residents whose homes are uninhabitable get a break on property taxes](#)”

Manatee Dems Help Turn Political Signs Into Fuel



By Wil Clapper – Did you ever wonder what happens to all those candidate lawn signs? By law, they must be removed within 30 days after an election. But where do they go?

NuCycle Energy (NuCycleEnergy.com) in Plant City, has one solution. The company collects political yard signs and converts them into a product that takes the place of coal.

"Disposal of signs has always been an issue for municipalities," said Kyle Pukylo, director, sales and procurement for NuCycle. "Cities and towns can't process the signs, so they wind up in the landfill."

A group of environmentally responsible Manatee Democrats collected candidate signs that dotted the landscape and brought them to NuCycle. Once there, the signs were processed with fibrous materials such as paper, wood and cardboard and eventually formed into fuel pellets that NuCycle calls EnviroFuel Cubes.

The fuel pellets are used by power plants and other coal-burning facilities. "The final product releases a fraction of the emissions that come from coal," said Pukylo.

"Processing election signs brought us so much good will, we go out of our way to work with municipalities and organizations," said Pukylo. He said more than 2,000 signs from Manatee and Sarasota counties were collected after this election cycle.

The Manatee Dems volunteers demonstrated a way to divert non-compostable material from the county landfill and took positive action toward reducing harmful emissions into the atmosphere.

Vigil for Gun Violence Victims Scheduled in Sarasota



By Diana Hines – The Brady United Chapter of Sarasota will hold its sixth annual Vigil for Gun Violence Victims on Friday, December 9, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., at First Congregational United Church of Christ, [1031 S. Euclid Avenue, Sarasota](#).

The featured speaker will be Kristin Song, who began to lobby for gun storage laws after her 15-year-old son, Ethan, died at a friend's house. There will be music by the Palmer Ranch Singers joined by First Congregational UCC Chancel Choir members, as well as poetry, liturgical dance and more.

This is one of many nationwide tributes to the 20 children and six staff killed 10 years ago at Sandy Hook Elementary. Candles will be lit for all victims of gun violence, including suicide, accidents, domestic violence, and mass shootings.

Please invite your family and friends, and mark your calendars, for this special evening of reflection and remembrance.

[Register Here to Attend](#)

LWV invites SOE to Look Back on Election Process



Mike Bennett, Manatee County Supervisor of Elections, will look back on the election process during the last cycle, Tuesday, December 13, 5 p.m., in the Manatee County

Central Library, [1301 Barcarrota Boulevard, Bradenton](#).

The post-election review is hosted by the non-partisan League of Women Voters of Manatee County.

Bennett will address how the SOE dealt with election security issues, including challenges resulting from the new voting legislation. At the end of the presentation, the audience may voice their observations and questions.

The event will also celebrate Manatee County volunteers who made the democratic process work through registering voters, running for office, and working the polls. Attendees are invited to stay after the presentation for a meet and greet.

Events Roundup

Dec. 13 – Lakewood Ranch Club Schedules Round Table

The **Lakewood Ranch Democratic Club** will end 2022 with a virtual Round Table discussion. Participants will reflect on the past year and share thoughts going forward in these critical times.



The meeting will take place Tuesday, December 13, at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Register in advance [HERE](#). A confirmation email will be sent containing information about joining the meeting. Text Lucy Lapides, 941-704-5971, if you are having trouble the night of the meeting.

Dec. 13 - AMI-WM Holiday Celebration at Edelweiss



The **Anna Maria Island and West Manatee Democratic Club** will celebrate the holiday season during their monthly meeting, Tuesday, December 13, at the Edelweiss Restaurant, [611 Manatee Avenue E, Bradenton](#), noon to 2 p.m.

Make a paid reservation with Betty Dimmick by December 5. Click [HERE](#) for meeting flyer with details. If you are not an AMI/WM member, sign up [HERE](#).

Dec. 17 - Environmental Caucus to Tour Perico

Explore Perico Preserve with the **Manatee Democratic Environmental Caucus**, Saturday, December 17, 9 to 11 a.m.

Perico Preserve, [11700 Manatee Avenue W, Bradenton](#), is home to many Florida native plants. Learn how these plants benefit wildlife and how they can be used in home landscaping. The tour will also delve into the variety of ecosystems and how the preserve was transformed into what it is today.



Click [HERE](#) to reserve your spot on the tour. Meet at the Pavilion next to the parking lot. After the tour, lunch will be at a nearby restaurant. Contact eco.manateedems@gmail.com if you plan to attend lunch.



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

[Click for Events List](#)



The Manatee County Democratic Party is a 100% **volunteer organization**. All contributions of any size are appreciated; \$22/month goes a long way to help elect Democrats in the 2022 elections.

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