

DWC NEWSLETTER

April 2024



DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB OF MANATEE COUNTY FLORIDA

WWW.DWCManatee.com

Alice Newlon retired as a CPA from Columbus, Ohio and moved to Florida 17 years ago. She is the co-president of the Manatee County League of Women Voters and previously was vice president, then secretary and, prior to that chairman of the Natural Resources Committee. She started and ran the Manatee Solar Co-op that enabled 75 homes to painlessly get high-quality solar panels installed. Alice is also an Advanced Certified Florida Master Naturalist, avid biker, kayaker, hiker, and lover of the outdoors.



**Guest Speaker
Alice Newlon**

Alice will be speaking on Voter Empowerment 2024, the need-to-know information for voters and ways the League of Women Voters, both state-wide and in Manatee County, will be motivating and informing voters ahead of the 2024 elections in Florida. It includes details on Senate Bill 90 (2021), which will FORCE voters to submit vote-by-mail requests more often, make it a crime for voters to ask a trusted friend or caregiver to pick up or drop off a vote-by-mail ballot, and eliminate secure vote-by-mail drop boxes. She will also touch on Senate Bill 524 (2022), which would unnecessarily increase criminal penalties against third-party voter registration organizations that want to help people to register to vote. And finally she will address Senate Bill 7050 (2023), which builds on SB90, and contains many technical changes to Florida's Election Code with many provisions that could directly harm voters. Alice will also be speaking on voting warnings and tips, and cover what outreach is being done locally and the resources to tap into prior to the election.

***Be sure to join us for the presentation of the 2024
Marge Kinnan and Shirley Snyder Scholarship winners***

Celebrate Diversity Month – April 2024

Be considerate to everyone
Listen to people from other cultures
Learn more about different cultures
and lifestyles



**DWC Luncheon Is April 11th
11:30 AM**

***Peridia Golf & Country Club
4950 Peridia Blvd E, Bradenton, FL 34203***

***Please make your reservations and
meal choice by
April 8th***

Email, call, or text Marilyn Biaz for reservations at

durf1211@gmail.com

or

734-776-6023

Meal Choices Are On The Next Page

“The Good, the Bad and the Ugly” — that’s the title of an old spaghetti western, right? Well, yes, but it’s also the most appropriate way to describe the 2024 Florida legislative session. One good thing was the \$700 million in state funding for Live Healthy, which hopefully will boost the state’s complement of health care workers and offer patients a clearer picture of treatment costs and protect them from aggressive debt collectors.



“But overall, in the face of our worsening affordability crisis, Republicans offered no real solutions to our broken property insurance and auto insurance markets or the sky-rocketing costs of rent and utilities,” said Democratic Party Chair, Nikki Fried. And she’s right. From my perspective, the Republican controlled legislature consistently put their own political interests first and well, the average ordinary citizen, last. As a Florida resident, I’m seeing my homeowner’s insurance almost double, and my auto insurance increase by hundreds of dollars, even though I have had no accidents or tickets. It begs the question of how long some people can afford to live in Florida – or even want to, for that matter.

Joanie LeBaron,
President

WE ARE THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

***PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATION AND MEAL CHOICE FOR THE
April 11th DWC MEETING***

**Email, call, or text Marilyn Baiz for reservations
durf1211@gmail.com**

or

941-243-0169

Deadline to register is Monday, April 8th, 3:00 p.m.

Please select one of these meal selections:

- 1. Florida Sunshine Salad with grilled chicken***
- 2. Quiche Lorraine(no bacon) with fruit cup***
- 3. Shrimp Salad croissant sandwich with fruit cup***

All meals come with rolls and butter, a non-alcoholic beverage of your choice, and dessert,

Cost is \$20 per person payable by check or cash at the door.
No shows will be billed.

Meet the winners of the Marge Kinnan and Shirley Snyder Scholarships

The winner of the \$1,500 scholarship is Kyle Brooke Huffman, a student at State College of Florida Collegiate School and twin to a handicapped brother. She will be attending Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers majoring in business. She hopes to open her own business that focuses on an inclusive environment and employing those with different needs.

She has a grade point average of 4.345, but her school does not rank the students. She has been in the Honor Society since 9th grade, president of the Honor Society, Principal and on the President's list for grades 9-12, received the Yale Book Award in 11th grade and member of the Key club in 9th -11th grade. She was accepted into Phi Theta Kappa, an honor society for college students.

Her mom is the sole financial provider and caregiver of her twin brother

Emily Elizabeth Dalton, who won a \$1,000 scholarship, is a student at Braden River High School. She will be attending the University of Central Florida, majoring in nursing.

Emily has a grade point average of 4.324 and is 34th out of 400 students. She too is an honor

student and involved in many activities. She was also a dual enrollment student, meaning she has taken college courses in the school's Advancement Via Individual Determination.



Nishalle Ann Uthuppan, third scholarship winner (\$1,000), lives in both Manatee and Sarasota counties, but attends Pine View School in Sarasota, which is Sarasota's premier academic school. She hopes to be a primary care physician in rural communities. Nishalle has not decided on a university as yet but has been accepted into University of Florida, Florida State University, and Georgia Tech.

Nishalle is the founder and president of Engage SRQ, resident of Diversity Council, president of Ignite Club, VP of HOSA (Future Health Professionals), board member of the Boys and Girls Clubs, and the list continues. She, of course, is an Honor Student.

Her family is currently facing financial struggles because her father has peritoneal dialysis and has no insurance. Her sister is also in medical school, and the family lost their convenience store. She lives part time with her aunt in Parrish.

Patty Benson, Scholarship Chair

Florida House Republicans advance bill to deny the legal existence of trans people

The ACLU of Florida on March 1, 2024 led condemnation of a bill passed by the Republican-controlled lower chamber of the state Legislature that "seeks to deny the legal existence of transgender individuals by requiring individuals to identify as their sex assigned at birth instead of their gender on their driver's licenses and ID cards."

Dubbed the Trans Erasure Bill by opponents, H.B. 1639 passed by a vote of 75-33. The ACLU notes that the legislation "also requires health plans to cover the widely discredited practice of conversion therapy and creates additional obstacles for health plans to cover gender-affirming care."

"H.B. 1639 is harmful, vague, and does nothing to improve the lives of Floridians," ACLU of Florida policy strategist NR Hines said in a statement. "It is eerily silent on the consequences for transgender individuals who identify their gender on their driver's license or other government issued identification instead of their sex assigned at birth."



"It weaponizes state agencies and private insurance companies to threaten the safety and inclusion of transgender people," they asserted. "It is a cruel bill aimed at erasing transgender Floridians out of public life entirely. We have deep concerns about the life-altering impacts on the trans community."

By: Brett Wilkins, *AlterNet*

Kevin McCarthy accuses Matt Gaetz of breaking the law

Former House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) accused Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-FL) of breaking U.S. laws in an effort to quash a House ethics investigation.

During an interview on *Face the Nation* March 24, 2024, McCarthy praised Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) after she filed a motion to have Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) removed.

“Look, the one thing I’ve always found, when you sit down with a member and talk to them, find out what their concerns are, especially when it’s based upon policy, you can solve that problem,” he said. “And I watched that with Marjorie, from the vote to Speaker to the vote for the Fiscal Responsibility Act. There’s times she [had] a difference of opinion, and you sit down and find common ground.”

McCarthy then turned to Gaetz, who orchestrated the bid to oust him.

“Matt’s case was much different,” McCarthy said. “It was about a personal thing that he had done, and that’s what he was trying to get something illegally stopped.”

“This is not the case here,” he added. “So I would not be afraid of a motion to vacate. This is about policy.”

CBS host Margaret Brennan asked McCarthy if he had “evidence to back up your allegation” about Gaetz.



“Well, I think the Ethics Committee, it was purely Matt coming to me, trying to do something illegal to stop the Ethics Committee from moving forward an investigation that was started long before I became Speaker,” McCarthy recalled.

“Something illegal?” Brennan pressed.

“I don’t know the facts are there,” McCarthy said of Gaetz’s ethics case. “It’s a personal issue of what he’d done as a member of Congress.”

I would say the Ethics Committee has the right to look at whatever they’re going forward, and I’m not going to get in the middle of it one way or another.”

By: David Edwards, *Crooks and Liars*

Florida lawmakers tire of DeSantis war on woke

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis witnessed a departure from his once untouchable influence over the state legislature. For two years, he was one of the most powerful lawmakers in the country before walking away from his presidential run against Donald Trump.



In a legislative session, conservative lawmakers faced setbacks as several culture war proposals found themselves in the bill graveyard. Among the rejected bills: one to ban the removal of Confederate monuments, another banning LGBTQ+ rainbow flags from government buildings, and the mandated use of pronouns by government officials.

Notably, the session skipped conservative hot-button issues that were typically used to bolster DeSantis’s campaign and generate PR. Instead,

lawmakers wrestled with bigger problems, including a controversial crackdown on social media for minors.

Per Republican Paula Star, “Everything was just crazy last year. You had all these things that everybody wanted you to stand up and support because it was a governor’s initiative. Now this session has been calmer.”

House Democratic leader Rep. Fentrice Driskell noted this shift as well, saying, “A big difference between this legislative session and the last two is that we didn’t have Gov. DeSantis’s thumbs on the scale as much. I think he was trying to recover from his failed presidential campaign.”

Regardless of this, DeSantis’s Republican colleagues still fell in line and supported him on key issues when it counted, while also letting him know that his era of running the state unchecked seems to be over.

By: Sean Kernan, *Corporate Underbelly*

Celebrate diversity month

Celebrate Diversity Month takes place in April every year. It was initiated in 2004 to recognize and honor the diversity of the world around us. It is a time to recognize and understand our differences, be it gender, race, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, and other factors, while honoring the common essence of humanity. By appreciating our similarities and differences, the month aims to get people to foster a deeper understanding of others, regardless of who they are, what they are, or how they live. It's also an opportunity to increase diversity in the workplace and various academic fields. There are many scholarships aimed at addressing this issue.



Celebrate Diversity Month came to be in 2004 following a campaign led by two American diversity consulting firms, ProGroup Inc. and Diversity Best Practices. The goal of the celebrations is to address the growing multiculturalism taking place in global societies as a way to further understand and handle it sensibly. It highlights the urgency of understanding other cultures to ensure a better world.

Diversity is crucial in assuring that we can understand each other in deeper ways that help keep us humble and open to the fact that the world does not only revolve around our beliefs. It can help develop us into better people, as it increases our understanding of human nature. The importance of diversity itself can benefit us in all aspects of our lives.

In the business world, having a diverse workforce is important to ensure the inclusion of different perspectives and ideas when making decisions. Doing so will not only help a company's bottom line but can also nurture employees to develop strong interpersonal skills that can benefit them both in the office and out. In social situations, engaging with facets of other cultures, perspectives and lifestyles can help us open our eyes to how the world works. It does not bind us solely to our norms and opens up our horizons.

The root of all the world's problems is the refusal to appreciate others. It is natural for humans to fear what they don't know. Thus, Celebrate Diversity Month pushes us to seek this knowledge so that we can build a tolerant world that welcomes everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from.

Source: *National Today*

With Dr. Joseph Ladapo's anti-vaccine stance failing, Florida needs a new surgeon general

Here we go again: Florida facing another dangerous virus, while the state's top health official thumbs his nose at conventional medical wisdom. Florida Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo is drawing warranted criticism for his initial lax response to the state's measles outbreak. Instead of urging parents to vaccinate their children, he waffled, leaving the decision to the parents with a hint at an anti-vax stance that made him infamous during COVID-19.

Ladapo's response is the latest in what has been a three-year string of controversy that has undermined the surgeon general's office and the Florida Department of Health. Whether it's altering a medical study to support fringe thinking or ignoring a request to put on a mask during the height of the pandemic by state Sen. Tina Polsky, (D. Boca Raton), whose breast cancer made her susceptible to COVID. The

Ladapo era in Florida must end.

The surgeon general's initial response to the measles outbreak was a muddled equivocation of a Feb. 20 advisory to Broward County parents that cautioned from acknowledging what "is normally recommended" to deferring any decision regarding school attendance to the parents. Ambiguity isn't the typical response to a potential public-health crisis. Under normal circumstances, public health officials would follow federal guidelines in urging unvaccinated children to either get an MMR shot or stay at home until any symptoms subside without medication.

Ladapo's pandemic track record and his more recent response regarding measles vaccinations leave us wondering if he will ever shake off the anti-vaccination pandering to do his job as a public health official effectively. We're not convinced he will. For those reasons, we believe Florida would be better off with a new surgeon general.

Source: *Palm Beach Post*

Florida House passes a bill that would preempt local heat ordinances

A bill that could invalidate local heat and minimum wage ordinances has passed the Florida House.

The measure (HB 433) blocks local governments from passing labor requirements for contractors.

Under current state law, local municipalities cannot pass minimum wage ordinances. But they can create requirements for businesses looking to take on public contracts. That includes stipulating the businesses must pay a living wage or give a certain number of water breaks if there is a heat wave. Several cities and counties like Gainesville and Miami-Dade have those rules. But the Florida House voted 79-33 along party lines to ban those types of ordinances, preempting all contractor regulation to the state.

While the House is trying to prevent both labor and heat regulations, the Senate's bill (CS/SB 1492) is smaller in scope. It only preempts heat ordinances. Time is running out for them to reach agreement.

House Democrats like Orlando Rep. Anna Eskamani opposed the bill during the vote and debate.

"I celebrate local governments that want to champion that, who go up against the special interests. Because that is who is against it, right? Our large corporate actors or large special interests who don't want to deal with that type of red tape which I see as just safety," she said on the House floor.

But Republicans believe local labor ordinances create a piecemeal regulation environment for

business. Naples Rep. Bob Rommel, a business owner, said that makes Florida a worse market for employers.



"The reason we here are trying to preempt the 360-some municipalities having 361 different rules is so we can have continuity in business. Without continuity in business, businesses will not come to Florida. People will stop coming to Florida," he said.

Miami Democratic Rep. Ashley Gantt disagreed. She said a priority in local regulation should be creating the best outcomes for workers and families in the community, not just creating the optimal business environment.

"Private companies do not have an unmitigated right to do business with the government. So, the notion of free market doesn't hold muster when we are talking about people being able to afford to pay their rent, pay their mortgage or even provide food or groceries for their families," she said.

Naples Republican Rep. Tiffany Esposito said her bill will help employees by creating the conditions for employers to thrive.

"The businesses are the ones that provide those jobs. The businesses are the ones who provide the dollars in order for people to put food on their tables. We have to protect jobs if we want to have the economic prosperity that we continue to see in Florida," she said.

By: Tristan Wood, WFSU



Just to reiterate, Trump wants to cut Social Security and Medicare — supposedly to address the debt — yet supports extending his tax cuts for the rich, adding \$3.5 trillion to the deficit. This isn't about the debt. It's about doing the bidding of his wealthy donors.— Robert Reich

Biden campaign drops new ad featuring images of Trump and the KKK

The Biden-Harris campaign released a new ad on Friday following President Joe Biden's well-received State of the Union address — and it was anything but subtle.

The ad, which was posted to social media including Twitter/X, juxtaposed images of the Ku Klux Klan with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., immediately followed by Biden in footage from the speech and an image of the GOP's presumptive nominee, former President Donald Trump, as this line from March 7th speech played behind it: Again and again, I've seen the contest between competing forces in the battle for the soul of our nation.



Without using Trump's name, and addressing concerns about his own age, Biden stated: "This issue facing our nation isn't how old we are. It's how old are our ideas. Hate, anger, revenge, retribution are the oldest of ideas." That line accompanied images of 2017's "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, which saw a massive and deadly gathering of white supremacists, and the January 6 insurrection at the Capitol were shown, as well as photos of Trump on the golf course and another of him standing next to Russian President Vladimir Putin and smiling.

By: Jamie Frevele, *Mediaite*

[**CLICK HERE TO WATCH BIDEN'S NEW AD**](#)

Gov. DeSantis rejects claim that Florida is 'criminalizing homelessness'

Gov. Ron DeSantis is defending legislation he signed this week that bans people from sleeping in public, saying it doesn't punish the unhoused, but helps them.

"It's not criminalizing homelessness. What they're saying is you don't have a right to just sleep in front of somebody's business or you don't have a right to just take over a street and put an encampment down," DeSantis said.



The governor made the comments in Bonita Springs in defense of HB 1365, sponsored by Republican Sen. Jon Martin and Republican Rep. Sam Garrison.

The bill requires local jurisdictions to pick a piece of public property and wrangle people who are camping or sleeping in public spaces toward that location. Local camps must include clean restrooms, running water, security on premises and bans on drugs and alcohol. It bans counties and municipalities from permitting public sleeping or camping on public property without explicit

permission.

"What the bill does is, it says you have a right to take people out of the public areas and put them in a shelter," DeSantis added.

"We're putting requirements that you're not allowing them to use drugs. You're offering mental health, you're doing that."

The governor added that homeless people "should be in a shelter ... some place that is outside of where the public is impacted by this.

You should not be impacted by a homeless encampment as a Floridian," he added.

DeSantis argued that homelessness elsewhere was a reason people came to his state in recent years, saying that "if other places around the country had done that, there probably would be a lot fewer people moving to Florida as a result."

Democrats noted that the bill presented an unfunded mandate ahead of the Legislature passing it. DeSantis, apparently satisfied by the legislation's final form, didn't want "Sodom and Gomorrah" style homeless camps.

By: A.G. Gancarski, *Florida Politics*



Did you know there is a Manatee County Agricultural Museum? It was first part of a plan to expand the Manatee County Extension Service facilities in 1979 which was located at the fairgrounds in Palmetto. At that time the county did not have the resources to construct the museum. But, in 1985 the Palmetto Historical Commission obtained a state grant to create a survey identifying and documenting the important role of agriculture in Manatee County. The Historical Commission established the Manatee County Agricultural Museum Association and within two years the museum became a not for profit corporation with a volunteer Board of Directors. In 1995 the building that housed the Palmetto firehouse/jail and public works building became available, which is where the museum is now located. There are several exhibits available for viewing including the information on our citrus groves, fruits and vegetables locally grown, livestock tools and more. The museum is located at 1015 6th St W, Palmetto, FL 34221. If you have a chance some day, stop by and take a tour.

Mary Bass, Environmental Chair

The stock market hit new all-time highs under Biden

The S&P 500 is booming, buoyed by optimism that the US will avoid a recession.



Data as of February 13, 2024.

Source: Yahoo Finance



The stock market has also been setting new record highs after growing a whopping 24 percent last year — driven by optimism that the Fed will soon cut rates and that companies in the tech and energy sectors have outperformed expectations.

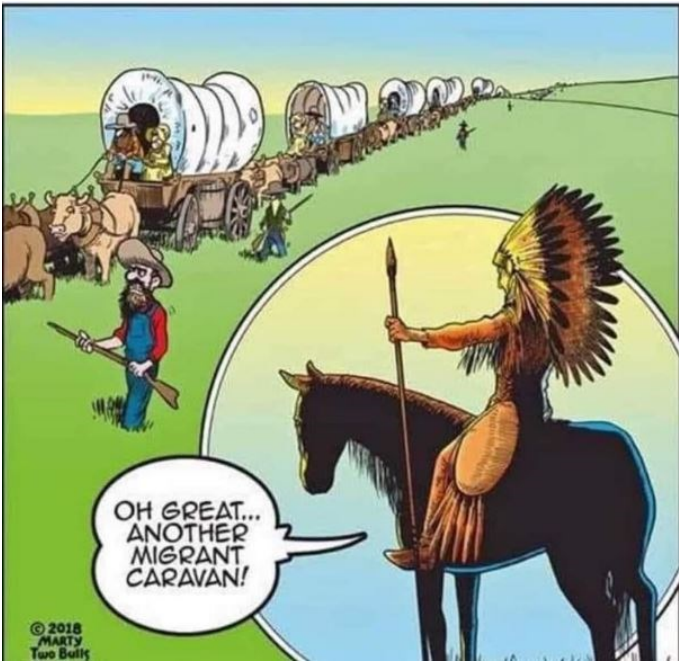
This means that Trump no longer has the only claim to a strong stock market during the last few years. Instead, he’s had to resort to claiming credit (unconvincingly) for the current market. For instance, he recently posted on Truth Social that the US was experiencing a “TRUMP STOCK MARKET” in anticipation of him winning the 2024 election.

By: Nicole Narea, Vox

As we celebrate Diversity Month, *The Ad Council* has produced a video entitled “Love Has No Labels | Diversity & Inclusion”. Then watch a great rendition of Kool and The Gang’s song “Celebration” performed by children across the globe, composed by *Playing for Change*.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH
LOVE IS LOVE](#)

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH
CELEBRATION](#)



DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB OF MANATEE COUNTY OFFICERS/LEADERS 2024 - 2025

ELECTED OFFICERS	
President	
Joanie LeBaron	joanielebaron0108@gmail.com
1st VP (Programs)	
Brian Heavrin	blh3011@gmail.com
2nd VP (Membership)	
Nancy Hadley	hadley1@me.com
Recording Secretary	
Patti Boynton	pboynton5@gmail.com
Treasurer	
Wini Meier Oakes	winimo3@gmail.com
Regional Representative	
Mary Duda	mduda@aol.com

Website Links	
	DWC of Manatee County Website
	Manatee County Democratic Website
	Democratic Women's Club of Florida

OTHER OFFICERS	
Fund-Raising	Pat Benson pattybeenutty@gmail.com
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Candidate Search	Vicki Waters vwaters@earthlink.net
Parliamentarian	Fay Murphy faymurph@aol.com
Web Master	Jeanne Yeagle yeagluce@verizon.net
Newsletter and Directory	Brian Heavrin blh3011@gmail.com
Environmental	Mary Bass marygbass@gmail.com
Legislative Liaison	Patty Benson pattybeenutty@gmail.com
Corresponding Secretary	Mary Duda mcmduda@aol.com
Bylaws Chair	Fay Murphy faymurph@aol.com

Manatee County Democratic Women's Club
 6403 Heritage Lane
 Bradenton, FL 34209



PLACE
 STAMP
 HERE

The Manatee County Democratic weekday of-
 fice hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday,
 Noon to 4:00 p.m. Saturday hours 11:00 a.m.
 to 3:00 p.m. To check status, times, dates of
 events and club meetings, please visit our
 Manatee County Democratic website at
www.ManateeDemocrats.com.

Elected Officials

CONTACT OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS	<u>OUR FLORIDA SENATORS</u>
<u>PRESIDENT</u>	
Joseph Biden (switchboard) (202) 456-1111 www.whitehouse.gov	Jim Boyd (R-Distr. 21) (850) 487-5026 Boyd.Jim.web@flsenate.gov
<u>U.S. SENATORS</u>	<u>OUR FLORIDA REPRESENTATIVES</u>
Rick Scott (R) help@rickscott.senate.gov (202) 224-5274	Mike Beltran (D-Distr.70) (813) 653-7097 mike.beltran@myfloridahouse.gov
Marco Rubio (R) (202) 224-3041 www.MarcoRubio.senate.gov (813) 287-5035	Will Robinson (R-Distr. 71) Will.robinson@myfloridahouse.gov (941) 744-5097
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