



Manatee County  
Democratic Party

# Manatee Matters

February 6, 2023 Newsletter

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## Manatee Dems Elect Forward-Looking Executives



Seeking a stronger presence in the 2024 elections and committed to bringing more voices into the Democratic Party, the **Manatee County Democratic Party's Democratic Executive Committee (DEC)** elected four officers on Jan. 25.

Ten-year Manatee County resident Evelyn Almodóvar will lead the party for two years as chairwoman. Also elected were Glenn Pearson, vice-chair; Beverly Pannee, secretary; and Tina Shope, treasurer.

“My vision for the party is to support and develop our current efforts with targeted strategies and community development,” Evelyn said. “I envision an organization that supports and involves youth in leadership roles where they can develop skills that they can use as they grow into community leaders.”

Evelyn is a member of Friendly City Forward Action Group, Manatee Young Professionals, Leadership Manatee and a Manatee Startup Circle graduate. Currently, she works as a corporate strategy and transformations consultant. She has extensive experience in community and non-profit development and is a doctoral candidate in public administration.

Raised in the Caribbean by Puerto Rican parents, she is bilingual and passionate about elevating voices of local diverse talent.

Glenn Pearson is currently first vice-president of the Manatee County Democratic Black Caucus. A registered Democrat for 20 years, he brings a strong broadcast news and television production background to the Manatee Dems. He also owns and operates a staffing firm and an insurance agency.

“With teachers in Manatee County packing up classroom libraries under threat of third-degree felony charges and the DeSantis administration blocking an Advanced Placement course in African American studies, I find that this is no time to sit on the sidelines and just observe. I want to do as much as I can to ensure that Democrats are able to expose this creeping fascism and put a halt to the growing influence of rightwing extremism in Florida politics,” he said.

Beverly Pannee has served in various appointed positions in the six years she has been with the party, including volunteer coordinator, communications manager and most recently second vice chair of internal affairs.

Bev has been actively involved with Manatee County Democrats since 2017, volunteering in voter outreach, communications, volunteer coordination and behind the scenes operations. She has been a Bradenton resident for 10 years, after retiring as manager and part-owner of an engineering consulting firm.

"I believe growing our organization and spreading our democratic message is more important than ever," she said. "In the process, connecting with other Democrats and team building has also been personally rewarding."

As secretary, Bev will be responsible for meeting minutes, record keeping, compliance and other initiatives assigned by the chair.

The treasurer is the custodian of all funds and financial records including day-to-day banking, bill payment and required regulatory reporting for the party. Tina Shope has more than 40 years of banking experience and worked as office manager and volunteer coordinator for MCDP. She moved to Florida in 1970 and has lived in Manatee County off and on since.

If you have questions or comments for the newly elected officers, send an email to [info@manateecountydemocrats.com](mailto:info@manateecountydemocrats.com).

*Photo: Manatee County Democratic Party officers (left to right): Chair Evelyn Almodóvar, Treasurer Tina Shope, Secretary Bev Pannee and Vice Chair Glenn Pearson.*

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## Legislators, Commissioners Attack Island Home Rule

**By Nancy Hughes** – In a surprise move to barrier island residents, radical-GOP state legislators from Manatee County are trying to close down the city commissions of Anna Maria, Holmes Beach and Bradenton Beach on Anna Maria Island (AMI). Why?



Because, according to Sen. Jim Boyd, R-Bradenton, he and other legislators felt slighted because they didn't get a parking garage built on the island.

The all-GOP Board of County Commissioners stated its desire to construct a four-story parking garage on land it owns at Manatee Public Beach in the town of Holmes Beach, preempting local building ordinances. City height restrictions currently prohibit such a structure.

"The forced consolidation of our cities would be the demise of our charter, comprehensive plans and land development codes. All height restrictions, density, can and will be re-considered. All need to take note as this very well could be the beginning of the end for coastal cities in Florida and our quality of life," said Judy Holmes Titsworth, Mayor of Holmes Beach.

"Not only is it important to AMI residents to retain the small town feel in each of our cities, but it is essential to tourism," said Barbara Ehren, president of AMI-West Manatee Democratic Club. "Opening the door to high-rise buildings will change the complexion of our island paradise. Just ask tourists who say they visit here, because AMI is very different from other Florida resorts. They love that we don't have high-rises; we do, too. If legislators don't care about us AMI residents, surely they do care about tourism dollars."

Rep. Will Robinson, R-Bradenton, is leading the charge and has unanimous support from other members of the state delegation.

The Manatee Democrats are loud and clear in opposition to the attack on home rule. The Manatee Dems are helping to establish an email campaign to Rep. Robinson and other members of the Manatee delegation.

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# Register Now for Vote-By-Mail Convenience



If you want to mail in your vote in the next election, you need to reinstate your Vote-By-Mail status with the Manatee County Supervisor of Elections (SOE).

Voter mail-in status was eliminated at the end of 2022, thanks to a Florida law that revamped voting processes throughout the state. See the story on the [Manatee Dems website](#).

To reinstate your mail-in voting privilege go to the Manatee County Supervisor of Elections website by clicking [here](#). Or call **941-741-3823**.

If you live in Sarasota County, click [here](#). Or call **941-861-8600**.

You can also register to vote on either SOE website.

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## Clean Water Amendment Drive Underway

A green amendment, crafted to meet the legal and political challenges in Florida, would create “a fundamental right to clean and healthy waters,” says Joseph Bonasia, Communications Director for [FloridaRightToCleanWater.org](#), the political committee advancing the proposed amendment.

The ballot summary states the amendment may be used to sue State executive agencies for harm or threatened harm to Florida’s waters and aquatic ecosystems.



More than 800,000 signed and verified petitions are needed by the end of 2023 to qualify for the 2024 ballot.

The initiative is being supported by the Florida Democratic Environmental Caucus. The petition can be downloaded [here](#). For more information, contact [FloridaRightToCleanWater.org](#) at 239-898-2044 or [joseph.bonasia@outlook.com](mailto:joseph.bonasia@outlook.com).

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## County Looking for Oversight Committee Members - Apply by Feb. 16



Manatee County is seeking volunteers to serve on the **Manatee County Citizens Oversight Committee on Infrastructure Sales Tax**. The committee keeps track of funding for county roads, animal shelters, law enforcement, libraries and parks.

Applications are due February 16. Applicants must reside in unincorporated areas of the County. For more information, click [here](#).

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## Manatee Democrats Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day





Manatee Democratic Party officers attended the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration at the Palmetto Youth Center. At the table are Treasurer Tina Shope, Democratic State Committeewoman Florence Shelton-Clark, Party Chair Evelyn Almodóvar, Manatee Democratic Black Caucus Vice Chair and Party Vice Chair Glenn Pearson, State Committeeman Rev. James Golden, and Black Caucus member Gretchen Fried-Jones and her husband.

## County Commissioners Schedule Constituent Meetings

The **Manatee County Commissioners** are expected to conduct constituent meetings at various times throughout the year. Here are some upcoming meetings.

### **George Kruse Town Halls:**

**Feb 22**, Island Library, 6 p.m., 5701 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach, FL 34217

**March 22**, Rocky Bluff Library, 6 p.m., 6750 US-301, Ellenton, FL 34222

**April 26**, Braden River Library, 6 p.m., 4915 53rd Avenue East, Bradenton, FL 34203

**May 10**, Palmetto Library, 6 p.m., 923 6th Street West, Palmetto, FL 34221

**June 21**, Central Library, 6 p.m., 1301 Barcarrota Avenue, Bradenton, FL 34205

### **Kevin Van Ostenbridge Informational Meeting:**

**Feb. 18, 75th Street Public Information Meeting**, a public information meeting for the 75th Street roadway improvement project, 9 a.m., Bradenton Elks Lodge, 2511 75th Street West, Bradenton, FL 34209



## Events Roundup

### **Feb. 7 – Longboat Key Dems Present I Have A Dream**

The **Longboat Key Democratic Club** presents *I Have A Dream – 60 Years Later*, a remembrance of the dynamic energy that reverberated throughout the Capitol Mall in Washington, DC, on August 28, 1963.

The event is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 7, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Sarasota Yacht Club, 1100 John Ringling Boulevard, Sarasota. Panelists will explore the question: Have we lived up to Martin Luther King's dream – and what dreams do we hold today for the future?

Register [here](#).



### **Feb. 8 – Progressive Caucus to Discuss Housing Project**



The **Manatee Democratic Progressive Caucus** will meet Wednesday, Feb. 8, 6 p.m., via Zoom. Contact [vrain1964@gmail.com](mailto:vrain1964@gmail.com) for the Zoom link. Most of the meeting will be devoted to the ArtsForHousing.org pre-opening of site discussions. Progressive Caucus regular membership is \$15, students \$5. Please mail check payable to MDPC, PO BOX 1246, Bradenton, Fl. 34206.

## ***Feb. 9 – AMI-WM Club To Explore Turning Points' Services***

Celebrate love with the **Anna Maria Island West Manatee Democratic Club** by exploring ways to support Turning Points, an agency in our community that provides services to individuals experiencing homelessness, spreading love all year long. Turning Points' work aligns with Democratic values.



Kathleen Cramer, executive director of Turning Points, will describe all the services they provide. The AMI-WM meeting is Thursday, Feb. 9, from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at the Island Library in Holmes Beach. The date and time of the meeting is a change from the regular AMI-WM meetings.

Contact Barbara Beckwith [bbeckwith02@gmail.com](mailto:bbeckwith02@gmail.com) to let her know you are coming or to ask a question.



## ***Feb. 9 – Environmental Caucus to Learn About Regenerating Soil***

The **Manatee Democratic Environmental Caucus** will feature a seminar on regenerating soil during its monthly hybrid meeting, Thursday, Feb. 9, at 7 p.m. The featured speaker is Holly Elmore, founder and CEO of Elemental Impact. She is an expert on soil regeneration and proponent of rewilding urban landscapes.

Contact [eco.manateedems@gmail.com](mailto:eco.manateedems@gmail.com) to receive the Zoom link for the meeting. The in-person portion of the meeting will be at the Manatee Democratic Party Headquarters, [435 Cortez Road West, Bradenton](#).

## ***Feb. 9 – Progressive Soiree Group Schedules First Meeting***

The first in-person gathering of a **progressive soiree group** is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 9, 6 to 7:30 p.m., at Village Voices, 1010 10th Avenue West, Bradenton. Meetings will be the second Thursday each month.



## ***Feb. 11 – Support Our Schools Schedules a Strategy Session***

**Support Our Schools** is conducting a community strategy session to organize a movement to reverse the local and statewide attacks on education in our public school systems and at our colleges and universities.

The strategy session is scheduled for Fogertyville Media & Arts Center, 525 Kumquat Court, Sarasota, on Saturday, Feb. 11, 1 to 3 p.m.

SOS plans to strategize how to stop pending legislation like HB 1, which if passed by the legislature will allow universal access to Education Saving Accounts, super vouchers that will draw funds from public education and move the state closer to full privatization of public education.

For more information, contact [SOS@supportourschools.com](mailto:SOS@supportourschools.com) or [www.supportourschools.com](http://www.supportourschools.com).



Democrats and concerned citizens throughout Manatee County are seeking changes in Florida's gun laws as the legislative session approaches. To gain an understanding of current laws and become aware of legislative proposals, the non-partisan **League of Women Voters Manatee** will sponsor a Zoom program, Monday, Feb. 13, noon to 1 p.m.

Patricia (Patti) Brigham will explain current laws, report on the trend of gun violence in Florida, what to expect from our legislators and what ordinary citizens can do to stop gun violence. She served as President of the League of Women Voters of Florida until 2021. She co-founded the former Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence.

Register [here](#) for the LWV program.

## **Feb. 25 – SCF to Host African American Education Seminar**

**Recess Education** presents *The School to Prison Pipeline* during a Black History Month luncheon, Saturday, Feb. 25, 11 a.m., at the State College of Florida (SCF) Community Room, 5840 26th Street West, Building 3, Bradenton.



Dr. Brenda Walker, a professor in the Exceptional Student Education Program at the University of South Florida and director of the Carousel Center is the featured speaker. To register, contact [recesseducationinc@recess4ed.org](mailto:recesseducationinc@recess4ed.org) or call 941-580-8855.



## **March 2 – Women's Club Scholarship Luncheon**

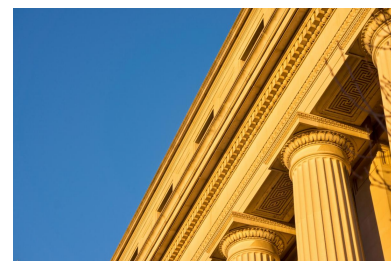
The **Democratic Women's Club of Manatee County's** annual Marge Kinnan and Shirley Snyder Scholarship Luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, March 2, 11 a.m. at the Palm Aire Country Club, 5601 Country Club Way, Sarasota.

Liv Coleman, Associate Professor, Political Science at Tampa University, will speak on K to 12 Education in Florida. Melissa Wilson of Manatee Performing Arts will entertain.

Cost of the luncheon is \$40 and the deadline for reservations is Feb. 28. Contact Patty Benson, [pattybeenuddy@gmail.com](mailto:pattybeenuddy@gmail.com) for more information.

## **March 7 – Longboat Key Dems to Host Legal Access Inequality Talk**

**Longboat Key Democratic Club** members and guests will learn about [Inequality of Legal Access in Manasota](#) during the club's monthly meeting, Tuesday, March 7, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Sarasota Yacht Club, 1100 John Ringling Blvd, Sarasota.



Sarasota's Public Defender and the CEO of Legal Aid of Manasota will speak to the inequities in our legal system and will explore what happens when people without financial means need to confront a personal injustice like domestic abuse or a negligent landlord. To register for the event click [here](#).

The LBK Democratic Club meets the first Tuesday of the month, November through April. For more information, contact Nancy Greenhouse, [nancygreenhouse1@gmail.com](mailto:nancygreenhouse1@gmail.com), 617-838-7398 or visit the website at [lbgdems.com](http://lbgdems.com).

## **March 19 – Sarasota Dems to Host Kennedy King Dinner**



The **2023 Kennedy King Dinner** is scheduled for Sunday, March 19, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Sarasota. The event is a major fundraiser for the Sarasota Democratic Party. For more information, contact: 941-320-8825 or [kennedyking@sarasotadems.org](mailto:kennedyking@sarasotadems.org).

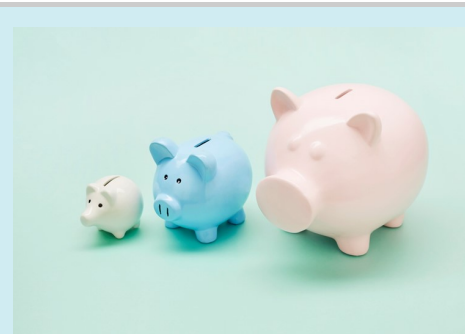
## April 15 – 2023 Democratic Gala Takes Place at Grove

The **Manatee County Democratic Gala** is the Manatee County Democratic Party's largest fundraiser of the year. This year's Gala is scheduled for 6 p.m., April 15, at the Grove ballroom, Main Street, Lakewood Ranch. For more information, contact Robin Sathan, [mcdcp gala@gmail.com](mailto:mcdcp gala@gmail.com) 908-553-5672.



**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.*

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