



## FROM THE MANATEE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

**April 2024**

### **Lindroos-Valimaki Seeks Commission Seat**

***By William Clapper***

County Commission candidate Sari Lindroos-Valimaki does not agree with the actions and policies of the current Manatee County commissioners, so she decided to do something about it.

“I got angry when I realized they (the commissioners) took away protection of wetlands. They don’t realize they are the last line of defense for our environment,” she said. “I woke up and asked why no one was stepping up. Then I said, why not me?”



Lindroos-Valimaki is challenging incumbent county commissioner George Kruse for the District 7 at-large seat in order to, “introduce new ideas and provide a Democratic option on the ballot, embodying the change I believe is vital for our community’s progress and well-being.”

Issues that have caused her to challenge the status quo include, “A lack of (governmental) transparency, traffic congestion from inadequate planning and the need for integrity in leadership.”

Kruse faces two opponents in the Aug. 20 Republican primary, when only registered Republicans can vote. Lindroos-Valimaki will know her opponent after the primary.

She is the second Democrat to file for one of four county commission seats this year. Diana Shoemaker is running for the District 3 position, which includes West Bradenton, Anna Maria Island and Terra Ceia. Currently, Republican Kevin Van Ostenbridge sits in that seat.

An immigrant from Finland, Lindroos-Valimaki believes she has a set of values and a

unique approach to leadership and problem-solving. Finland is known for its transparency in government, social equality and sustainable development.

Lindroos-Valimaki came to Manatee County in 2018 after four decades in Palm Beach County. Currently, she lives in Palmetto near Terra Ceia and about a mile from Piney Point. She is a former management information systems consultant with experience in information technology and cybersecurity.

She needs more than 3,000 signatures on candidate petitions in order to qualify to run. Petitions will be available soon on her website, [sari4manatee.com](http://sari4manatee.com), and on her Facebook page. Petitions will be available at the Manatee Democratic Party headquarters, 435 Cortez Road W, Bradenton, and on the Dems' website, <https://manateecountydemocrats.com/>.

[Sari4Manatee.com](http://Sari4Manatee.com)

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## Take Action Movement Comes to Palmetto

***By David Krasnoff***

A Take Action meeting is scheduled for Palmetto on Saturday, April 20, at 4 p.m. at the Palmetto Branch Library, 923 6th Street West, Palmetto. The format will be similar to the successful Take Action event at Bradenton's Central Library in February.

"Our goal is to recruit volunteers throughout the county to participate in efforts to get out the vote." said District 3 Democrat Co-Coordinator and Take Action organizer, Tim Eiseler. "There is a critical need to educate and motivate grass root volunteers to register voters and verify precinct participation for our Democratic voters in Manatee County."

Eiseler went on to say, "With the gerrymandering of our districts and precincts, it is important that our citizens are updated in terms of their voter registration and be made aware of opportunities to amplify their roles in their neighborhoods. This includes reaching those with like-minded concerns about issues."

Speakers for the April Take Action volunteer recruitment effort include District 3 candidate for County Commissioner, Diana Shoemaker, who is running against incumbent Republican, Kevin Van Ostenbridge.

Also speaking will be recently announced at-large county commissioner candidate for District 7, Sari Lindroos-Valimaki and school board candidate for District 1, Heather Felton. Manatee County Democratic Party Chair Chris Wetherington will address the importance of getting involved in this critical election year.

Take Action participatory mini expos serve as an opportunity to meet neighbors, local Democratic Party leaders, volunteers and Democratic candidates. All county citizens are welcome to attend.

In addition to District 3 issues, focus will be on adjacent precincts of Districts 1 and 2. This is especially important regarding the school board election, which is a non-partisan race. Should Felton receive 50 percent plus 1 votes in the August primary,

she will become the District 1 School Board member.

A team of volunteers will be available during the meeting to help citizens register to vote, enroll in Vote-By-Mail and sign petitions.

To sign up for the April 20 take action event use the button below.

[Sign Up Here](#)

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## **Vote for Manatee Delegates to the National Convention**

Put Manatee County Democrats on the national stage in Chicago this August by voting for delegates to the national convention.

Florida's 16th congressional district, which includes all of Manatee County and part of Hillsborough County, will be represented at the national convention by two men and three women elected by Democrats in the district.

To be eligible to vote, you must be a registered Democrat residing in the 16th Congressional District. Voters show up at the polls, sign in, declare which presidential candidate they support and receive a ballot for that candidate's district-level delegate candidates.

The votes are tallied, and the winners go to the convention. Help raise the profile of Manatee County Democrats nationally by voicing your delegate vote!  
When and where to vote:

Thursday, April 18, 3 to 7 p.m. and Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Lakewood Ranch Library, 16410 Rangeland Parkway, Lakewood Ranch, or the Manatee County Democratic Party Office, 435 Cortez Road W, Bradenton.

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## **Demonstrate on the Beach to Save Island Home Rule**

***By Diana Hines***

The non-partisan group Save Florida Home Rule will host a demonstration, Hands Across the Sand, to oppose county and state government attacks on home rule for the cities of Anna Maria, Holmes Beach and Bradenton Beach.

State and county legislators are considering usurping local control of the Anna Maria Island cities through consolidation or dissolving the current governments and placing the municipalities under the control of Bradenton or Manatee County lawmakers.

According to Barbara Ehren of Save Florida Home Rule, any movement to take away local government would, "Lead to developers pushing for zoning to permit high-rises. We will lose our beautiful AMI as we know it."

AMI/ West Manatee Democratic Club members are helping to organize the push to retain home rule and to encourage all residents to insist on keeping the three AMI cities intact.

Hands Across the Sand will take place April 13 at 3 p.m. on Manatee Public Beach. Look for a white tent just north of the beach entrance. Parking is available at the beach and in the Episcopal Church of the Annunciation parking lot. Access by island trolley is also available.

This is a non-partisan event to have citizens' voices heard, so bring your friends and neighbors, regardless of party affiliation, to protest against county and state governmental overreach.

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## Unity and Action Event Prioritized Youth and Diversity

***By Wil Clapper***

A crowd of nearly 300 Manatee County Democratic Party supporters cheered the inspiring words of David Hogg during the successful Manatee Dems' Unity and Action Gala fundraiser event last month at the Bradenton Area Convention Center. The gala is a prestigious event that draws political figures, community leaders and supporters. The event prioritized the voices and concerns of diverse young people in the community in an effort to engage and empower the next generation of leaders.



Hogg, a Parkland High School shooting survivor, is co-founder of the March for Our Lives movement and continues to advocate for gun control reform, and pushes the need to elect a new generation of voters to national, state and local offices.

He forcefully delivered the message that registering young people and immigrants, working with them and giving them responsibility is crucial to Democratic efforts to defeat Donald Trump and politicians like him in November. He also challenged all in attendance to step up and make a difference. "You must be part of democracy. It is not acceptable to say, 'there's nothing we can do.'" "

To become engaged with Democratic issues and efforts, contact the Manatee County Democratic Party, 941-301-4336; visit party headquarters at 435 Cortez Road W, Bradenton; or visit our website below.



[Visit our Website](#)

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## Board of County Commissioners Votes to Expand Emerson Point

*By Diana Hines*

Much to the shock of about 400,000 Manatee residents, the Board of County Commissioners voted (March 12) to move forward with the purchase of 97 acres on Snead Island, nearly doubling the area of Emerson Point Preserve.



[Read the Rest on Our Blog](#)

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## LGBTQ+ Caucus to Tour Embracing Differences Exhibit



## Attention: All Manatee County Democrats!

The **Manatee LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus** is conducting a guided tour of the uplifting and transformative *Embracing Our Differences Exhibition* at Bayfront Park in Sarasota, Sunday, April 7, 1 p.m.

For two decades, *Embracing Our Differences* has utilized artwork and prose empowering individuals to promote inclusion, individualism, kindness and respect for all. Students from around the world have submitted inspirational and uplifting quotations paired with an exhibit of giant posters to help promote our shared humanity along with the uniqueness of our individual selves.

The annual international art exhibition at Sarasota's Bayfront Park will be a juried exhibit consisting of 50 billboard-sized works of art paired with a thought-provoking quotation.

The Manatee County LGBTQ+ Democratic Caucus has arranged for a guided tour of the exhibition that begins promptly at 1 p.m. Contact Rob Hall at [ManateeLGBTQ Dems@gmail.com](mailto:ManateeLGBTQ Dems@gmail.com) to register for the guided tour.

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## Hispanic Caucus Seeks Ways to Motivate Voters

**By David Krasnoff**

Communication and the need to convince the Spanish-speaking community that every vote counts in this historic election cycle are issues recognized by the **Hispanic Democratic Caucus of Manatee County (HDCMC)** as a key to election success.

Members had a vigorous discussion on the best way to get out the Hispanic community's vote and to motivate those who are indifferent to the election process at a recent monthly meeting.

The caucus meets the second Monday of every month at the IHOP, 6320 E State Road 64, Bradenton. For more information about HDCMC, contact caucus president, Patricia DeVilliers, [floridavota@gmail.com](mailto:floridavota@gmail.com) or [patriciadevilliers@outlook.com](mailto:patriciadevilliers@outlook.com).

DeVilliers spoke of her frustration in motivating Hispanics to register to vote.

"I have had conversations with 'paroled' immigrants from Venezuela. I have tried to motivate them to link their family members that have citizenship, to participate in the election. But because they are comfortable with their status, they feel they are immune from deportation. They need to realize that a Trump victory in November will be a pre-cursor to remove their parole, being rounded up, and sent back to their country of origin."

A critical need was identified to register voters for the August 20 primary. The primary is an opportunity to vote for school board candidates. School board elections are nonpartisan and open to all registered voters. Therefore, if a candidate exceeds 50 percent of the vote, they are elected to the school board.

Among other points brought up during the discussion was the cumulative impact of recent legislation that has the appearance of voter suppression.

“Fines for violation of third-party (voter) registration errors are so severe that this has inhibited volunteers from participating in the process,” said caucus member Robert Fine.

Member Pat Rounds said, “The obstacles created by the legislature are not unique to Democrats. We just need to buckle up and work with the circumstances we are presented with.”

Pedro Melendez and Graciela Greenberg volunteered to set up a table at the Mr. G Flea Market, which is frequented by Hispanic shoppers and is located at 10816 US-41, Palmetto. The flea market opens on Sundays.

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## County Advisory Board Openings

Democrats can affect change in Manatee County government, schools and services by volunteering for openings on advisory boards. Residents who volunteer for these boards bring knowledge, expertise, a fresh point of view and help balance representation of the boards.

To learn more about each of the county's advisory boards and requisite qualifications for applicants, call 941-745-3700 or email [advisoryboards@mymanatee.org](mailto:advisoryboards@mymanatee.org) or go to: [www.mymanatee.org/government/advisory\\_boards](http://www.mymanatee.org/government/advisory_boards).

Currently there are two advisory board openings:

### ***Environmental Lands Management and Acquisition Committee (ELMAC)***

Residents who want to help protect land and water resources, preserve fish and wildlife habitat and provide for passive recreation are invited to apply for an at-large position on the Environmental Lands Management and Acquisition Committee (ELMAC).

This citizen's advisory committee makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) on environmental land acquisition and management issues, including recreational planning and programming of public lands. ELMAC also serves as the Tree Advisory Board to promote awareness of the county-wide tree canopy and tree education programs.

Applications for this at-large appointment will be accepted until April 19, and can be found [here](#). The only requirement for this position is that the applicant reside in Manatee County. More information about the ELMAC can be found [here](#).

### ***Value Adjustment Board***

Manatee County has an opening for a citizen member on the 2024 Value Adjustment Board (VAB) which hears appeals regarding denied property tax exemptions, petitions relating to assessments and appeals concerning ad valorem tax deferrals. The VAB appoints special magistrates to hear petitions.

VAB applicants must own homestead property within Manatee County and must not be a member or employee of any taxing authority in Florida or represent property owners, property appraisers, tax collectors or taxing authorities in any administrative or judicial review of property taxes.

Applications are due April 29, and may be found online at [mymanatee.org/advisoryboards](https://mymanatee.org/advisoryboards). For more information, contact Vicki Tessmer, 941-741-4081, or [Vicki.Tessmer@manateeclerk.com](mailto:Vicki.Tessmer@manateeclerk.com).

For board or committee vacancies in Manatee County cities, go to their respective web pages for more information:

City of Bradenton: <https://cityofbradenton.com/boards>.

City of Palmetto: <https://www.palmettofl.org/>.

City of Anna Maria: [https://www.cityofannamaria.com/government/boards\\_and\\_committees/index.php](https://www.cityofannamaria.com/government/boards_and_committees/index.php).

City of Holmes Beach: [holmesbeachfl.org](https://holmesbeachfl.org).

City of Bradenton Beach: <https://www.cityofbradentonbeach.com/191/Advisory-Boards>.



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!


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## Resource Links

Florida Democratic

The Florida Channel



Party

National Democratic  
Party

Manatee County Board of  
Commissioners

## Headquarters Office

435 Cortez Road W, Bradenton, Florida  
34207, United States

(941) 301-4336

[info@manateecountydemocrats.com](mailto:info@manateecountydemocrats.com)



## Hours

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays,  
Noon to 4 p.m.

Thursdays Noon to 2 p.m.

Saturdays 10 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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