



Manatee County
Democratic Party

Manatee Matters

April 3, 2023 Newsletter

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Newsletters

Don't Wait! Register for the Democratic Gala Now

By Robin Sathan – Political analyst David Jolly is the featured speaker for the **2023 Manatee Democratic Gala**. The Gala, Saturday, April 15, 6 p.m., is the largest and most festive Democratic gathering of the year. It will be held at the GROVE ballroom in Lakewood Ranch.



To register for the Gala, go to ManateeCountyDemocrats.com and click the **REGISTER NOW** button. Individual tickets are \$120, students \$75, and a table of 10 is priced at \$1,150. Registration closes on April 10, and attendance is limited to 300 people.

“Our team is excited about the upcoming Gala and how it will help bring people together in this time of uncertainty and current threats to our democracy,” said Manatee County Democratic Party Chair Evelyn Almodóvar. “We are getting ready to 'Do More in 24' and get re-energized for the next election cycle. This year the party is youth focused and will be honoring local youth with an award and sponsored tables at the event.”

Jolly appears regularly on MSNBC and other network and media platforms of NBC Universal. The former U.S. representative for Florida's 13th Congressional district (Pinellas County) left Congress and the Republican Party in 2017.

Gala entertainment includes Ron Emrit of Steel Pan Man, the West Coast Black Theatre Troupe and Bill Bowdish on saxophone.

Silent auction items will be available a week before the Gala to view and bid on via ManateeCountyDemocrats.com. Click the **Find Auction Items Here** button.

Bidding on silent auction items will close at the Gala. Some of the items include works by local artists; jewelry, including a special necklace and earring set by AMI and West Manatee Democratic Club president Libby (aka Barb) Ehren; Spanish lessons from Hispanic Caucus co-president, Graciela Greenberg; and an online gourmet cooking lesson with food by Truffle Shuffle, the business founded by Karen Curlin's grandson.

Jenelle Taylor, known as the Gala Gal, returns to lead the live auction. The live auction features North Carolina beach and mountain home stays and dinner for six at the Doctor's Garden. A special treat this year is a bookcase full of banned books the governor doesn't want anyone to read and a wall of wine from Blue states. There will be other great items as well.

The Gala team needs volunteers to help with registration, online auction bidding assistance, live auction spotters, and auction item distribution at the end of the evening. Training will be provided.

Contact Robin Sathan, MCDPGala@gmail.com, or Lucy Lapides, lucy@lwr Dems.com for more

David Jolly to Speak at 2023 Gala



Political analyst and former U.S. Representative David Jolly is the keynote speaker for the **2023 Manatee County Democratic Gala**.

Jolly, a resident of Belleair Bluffs, FL, is a regular commentator on MSNBC and appears on various networks and media platforms of NBC Universal. His work has been published in Time, USA Today, Roll Call, the Washington Post, the New York Times, CNN, NBC and the Tampa Bay Times.

A national leader in democracy reform and multi-party space, Jolly serves as executive vice president of Shumaker Advisors Florida. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 2014 to 2017, and has worked outside Congress as an attorney and political consultant, as well as in specialty finance.

Known for his fierce independent streak and bipartisan approach, Jolly became a passionate campaign finance reform advocate. Jolly left the Republican Party shortly after leaving Congress and today is registered as having no party affiliation.

Jolly received his Bachelor of Arts from Emory University in 1994, and his Juris Doctor Cum Laude from George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, in 2001.

The Gala is the largest Democratic gathering and the main fundraiser each year. Proceeds from the Gala support the Democratic Party's Get Out the Vote efforts, voter registration and other programs.

To register and purchase tickets for the Gala, go to www.ManateeCountyDemocrats.com and click the **REGISTER NOW** button. Or click [here](#). The Gala begins at 6 p.m., April 15 at GROVE in Lakewood Ranch.

Stand Up for the Environment at Earth Day Celebration



By Donna Hartman - Protecting and preserving the earth and its natural resources is what Earth Day is all about. Today – with climate change, sea level rise, dangerous storms, unchecked

growth and development and pollution – taking action on the environment is even more consequential than it was when Earth Day was first celebrated 53 years ago.

“The environment has become a divisive political issue,” said Ruth Lawler, president of the Manatee Democratic Environmental Caucus. “It should be a personal and world issue for *everyone*.” At the Caucus’ Earth Day Celebration Picnic, people will be encouraged to get involved in environmental issues. The event will be Sunday, April 16, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Meadow View Pavilion #4 at G.T. Bray Park in Bradenton.

Guest speaker Jennifer Hoffman, executive director of Keep Manatee Beautiful (manateebeautiful.com), will talk about the organization’s mission to promote recycling, litter prevention and beautification in Manatee County.

Petitions for a Right to Clean Water Amendment to Florida’s constitution for the November 2024 election ballot will also be available. The Florida Right to Clean Water organization (FloridaRightToCleanWater.org) needs 900,000 signatures by the end of November 2023 for the proposed amendment, which would allow citizens to sue state executive branch officials/agencies whose actions harm or threaten Florida’s clean water and its ecological systems.

Currently, the state Legislature is considering bills to prohibit local governments from adopting regulations

to prevent water pollution and prohibit local referendums on development regulations. It also wants to study using phosphate production waste in road construction.

Locally, a lack of concern and action by Manatee County Commissioners to protect water resources “is a dire situation,” Lawler said, noting that commissioners continue to approve massive development projects.

To attend the event RSVP to eco.manateedems@gmail.com. Food and beverages will be provided.

Take Action to Protect Manatee County Wetlands

By Diana Hines – The Manatee County Planning Commission meets on April 13 and the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meets April 20, and both bodies are expected to vote on whether to remove policies in the county’s [Comprehensive Plan](#) and sections of the Land Development Code designed to protect wetlands and wetland buffer zones. Residents concerned that the Board is putting corporate profits before their quality of life should attend the meeting and voice their concerns.



Buffer zones are essential for filtering water, replenishing groundwater and mitigating flood risk. Destroying buffers jeopardizes water quality in the Gulf of Mexico, bays, rivers and ground water.

Counties establish their own comprehensive plans guiding development and land use based on location and geographical features. As Manatee County is situated on coastal waters and contains multiple watersheds, it has established a 50-foot buffer zone between certain developments and the most vulnerable wetlands.

However, [The Bradenton Times](#)’ Dawn Kitterman reports the Commission’s proposed amendments may scale down the county’s regulations to the state’s bare minimum of 15-foot buffer zones. Such a move would be disastrous to wetlands and the complex ecosystems they support.

Manatee County’s comprehensive plan also ensures that the review process includes sufficient time for public comment and state approval of proposed amendments. But because the Planning Commission meeting is April 13 and the BOCC meets a week later, the public has very little time to study the proposed changes and participate in the decision-making process.

Reflecting on the wider implications of the Board’s upcoming vote, Alice Newlon of the nonpartisan League of Women Voters (LWV) says, “My concern is that even IF we were to win this one, it looks like the whole state will lose in Tallahassee and they will take over setting the standards.” The LWV is joined by environmentalists in [ManaSota-88](#) and [Suncoast Waterkeeper](#) to prevent Manatee County from deferring to the state’s standards.

The nonpartisan League of Women Voters encourages Manatee County residents to take action to save the wetlands. Read the Suncoast Waterkeeper’s letter to the Board of County Commissioners and sign their petition opposing the proposed changes [here](#).

[Email and call](#) Commissioners to voice concerns and opposition.

Democratic Club to Hear Vision of the Party



The **Manatee Democratic Club** will host Manatee County Democratic Party Chair Evelyn Almodóvar at its Friday, April 7, 11:30 a.m. meeting at the Peridia Golf and Country Club, 4950 Peridia Boulevard East, Bradenton.

Chair Almodóvar will discuss her vision for the party. The Democratic Club has invited newly registered young Democrats to the luncheon

AMI-WM Sponsors Clean Water Work Session



The **Anna Maria Island and West Manatee Democratic Club** is conducting a nonpartisan work session for clean water, Monday, April 17, 11:30 a.m. at the Island Branch Library, 5701 Marina Drive, Holmes Beach.

“Our Florida legislature is doing nothing to address the water pollution problem,” said an AMI-WM spokesperson. “Therefore, we have to go directly to the people via a constitutional amendment.”

The work session will focus on the statewide petition drive for the Right to Clean Water Amendment. Strategy, materials and instructions to gather signatures on petitions from family, friends and neighbors will be provided at the meeting. More about the petition drive is available at floridarighttocleanwater.org/.

Contact Barbara Beckwith at bbeckwith02@gmail.com if you plan to attend or to ask a question.

Defending Public Education Conference Scheduled

The Democratic Public Education Caucus of Florida has scheduled its first statewide conference, *Defending Public Education*, Saturday, April 22, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Winter Park Community Center in Winter Park, FL.

“It is a great time to meet like-minded education activists from across the state and should be an excellent opportunity to share ideas and strategize in these challenging times,” said a **Democratic Public Education Caucus of Manasota** spokesperson.



For more information and sponsorship opportunities, contact Robin Williams, robinftaubw@gmail.com.

Festival Promotes Haitian Culture



The **Haitian Connection of Manasota (HCOM)** presents the Haitian Flag Day festival Saturday, May 13, at the Palmetto Youth Center, 501 17th Street West, Palmetto. The festival opens at 4 p.m. and features numerous Haitian bands and celebrities.

The nonprofit Connection promotes Haitian culture, wellness and education in Manatee and Sarasota Counties by strengthening Haitian communities. HCOM serves as a bridge among all communities in the region.

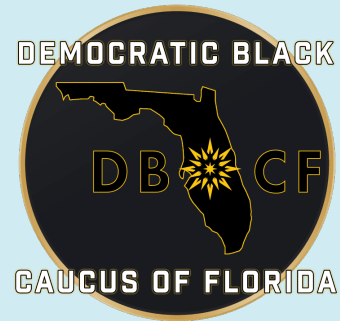
The Haitian Connection is asking for community organizations and local businesses to support the event by becoming vendors, sponsors, donors or volunteers. If interested, visit www.manasotahaitianconnection.org or the Connection's [Facebook page](#). For more information, contact Marc Alexis, (941) 278-6456, manasotahaitianconnection@gmail.com.

Florida Black Caucus Schedules Annual Conference

Ain't No Stopping Us Now is the theme of this year's Democratic Black Caucus of Florida's 39th annual conference. The conference is scheduled for May 20 to 22 in Orlando.

The host hotel, The Rosen Centre, 9840 International Drive, Orlando, is offering a special rate of \$119 per night.

For more information, contact Vida Addison, Derrick Scott or Jill Lewis-Daggs of the Democratic Black Caucus of Florida, (448) 444-5250, registerdbcf@gmail.com.



Volunteer Spots, New Office Hours at Dems HQ

The Manatee County Democratic Party is calling for volunteers to join the organization as we prepare for the next election cycle of 2024. The Manatee Dems will help you find the right fit and provide training.

Tell us how you would like to help or if you just want more info. Volunteer opportunities include meet and greets, voter registration, phone calling, text messaging, social media posters, newsletter writers and editors, graphic design, marketing, data entry, tech solutions, fundraising, office operations, event planning, campaign management, and legislative action.



Democratic headquarters, 435 Cortez Road West, Bradenton, has expanded office hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, noon to 4 p.m. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Register Now for Vote-By-Mail Convenience



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

Voter mail-in status was eliminated at the end of 2022, thanks to a Florida law that revamped voting processes throughout the state.

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.

County Commissioner Hosts Town Halls

Manatee County Commissioner George Kruse will host Town Halls through June at Manatee Public Libraries. The events allow Manatee County residents to discuss and ask questions on topics related to the county.

Commissioner Kruse Town Hall

April 26 – Braden River Library, 6 to 8 p.m.

May 10 – Palmetto Branch Library, 6 to 8 p.m.

June 21 – Central Library, Bradenton, 6 to 8 p.m.



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.*

[Donate Now](#)

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