

March 2019



MANATEE

MATTERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MANATEE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY



Saturday, April 13
Annual Gala
Reserve Now!

Inspiring Speakers
First Class Silent Auction
Exciting Live Auction

Our Most Important
Fundraiser

Details and Reservations at

<https://manateecountydemocrats.com/gala>

Manatee County
Democratic
Executive Committee

435 Cortez Road West
Bradenton, FL 34207
(941) 301-4336
HQManateeDems@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS:

ManateeCountyDemocrats.com

Workshop and Expo Draw Enthusiastic Crowd

The theme was “Keep the Momentum Going” at the Manatee County Democrats Workshop and Expo on February 23. Organized by Special Projects Chair, Robin Sathan, and moderated by Manatee County Democratic Executive Committee (DEC) Chair, Tracy Pratt, the event hosted 142 Democrats ready to roll up their sleeves in preparation for the 2020 elections. Every club and caucus was represented, including newly forming Manatee County Environmental Caucus and North River Democratic Club. DEC leaders updated the group on finances, communications, information technology, office management and precinct development.

Ed Kumian, DEC Treasurer, reported the Party is in stable financial condition this year and can keep the doors open for its Cortez Road headquarters, staffed completely by volunteers. Office expenses are mainly supported by the annual fund-raising gala dinner, which historically has provided 73% of the Party’s revenue.



Breakout sessions were held for the five precinct development areas, all with voter registration and outreach action plans forming or in place.

Although Manatee County did not experience a Blue Wave as did much of the country in the 2018 elections, there were certainly some positive signs. More Democrats are becoming engaged in the political process and preparing for 2020. “We have softened the ground for the seeds we’ve planted,” said Pratt, “and we’ll keep Manatee Momentum going.”

View the presentation: <https://manateecountydemocrats.com/our-party>



Note from the Chair



We cannot build our shield on the battlefield.

This African proverb was conveyed to me by Nina Turner, a former State Senator and current President of the political action organization, Our Revolution. Today we are about as far away from an election as we can be. We have taken a minute to celebrate our successes - there were many - and we've taken a moment to lick our wounds. The time to start preparing for the elections of 2020 is right now!

The Manatee County Democratic Party has one main goal - to get Democrats elected. The strategies we use to get there are up to us and must take into consideration the unique characteristics of our county and the strengths of our dedicated volunteers.

To that end, I have identified five main areas to devote my attention, as Party Chair:

- Growing our local Party
- Continuing to improve organizational structure
- Improving fundraising
- Expanding the visibility of our Party, both in our community and at the State level
- Like I said above - Getting Democrats elected!

We are in an excellent position to do these very things.

In the last election we had many successes upon which to build. The Blue Wave did hit our county - and it was huge with increased voter turn-out. Also, Manatee County was third in the state for our get out the vote (GOTV) efforts! And most importantly, we have built a large, dedicated army of volunteers who are ready to keep the Manatee Momentum going and take us to the next level.

We have plans in place to build out our precinct structure and expand on the capabilities of our field team. We are already putting in place a field campaign to start knocking on doors this year to talk about issues that matter! Like Barack Obama, I am a big believer in data. I want to use the best information and technologies available to guide our strategies as we move forward.

Our newly established Communications Committee is hard at work. Not only do they put out this newsletter you're reading right now, but they are ensuring we have a social media presence that will increase our visibility in the community. They are also creating efficiencies in our intra-party communications.

I am also working to organize an Environmental Caucus - anyone who followed my campaign knows that the environment was a top priority, and I will work hard to ensure that democrats have a strong local voice fighting for our environment. We are looking for a special person to head this caucus, and I hope that person is you.

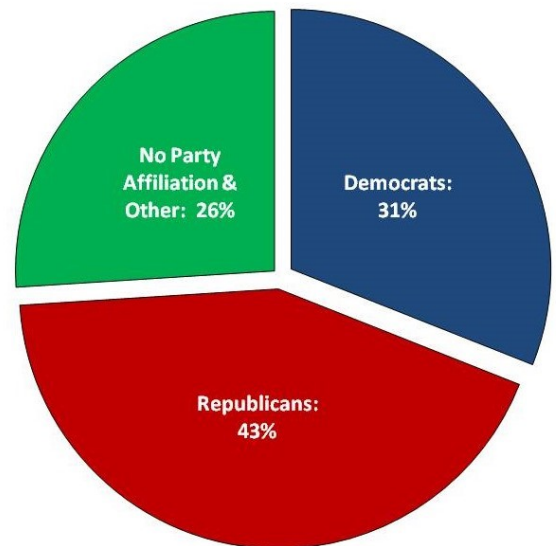
Every day I am interacting with party members and I am encouraged by your enthusiasm and energy. We are a rapidly growing party since the election of 2016 and we are becoming more plentiful and therefore more powerful.

The time to build our shield is now! - *Tracy Pratt*



2018 Data Provide Key to 2020 Success

There was a Democratic Blue Wave in Manatee County in 2018. However, that tidal wave was overcome by a tsunami of Republican voters. Bob McCaa, a Fulbright Fellow and former research professor at the Minnesota Population Center, shared his analysis of last year’s election data from the state Department of Elections and the Manatee County Supervisor of Elections at a recent meeting of Indivisible East Manatee and the Manatee Democrats Workshop. The top line take-away: 68% of all registered Democrats in the county (74,840 individuals) voted in the last federal election, which was a 10% jump over 2014. However, 74% of the registered Republicans (105,863 individuals) also cast a ballot last year.



Manatee County Registered Voters

McCaa credited the voter registration initiatives in Manatee County as one reason for the high Democratic turnout. The Democrats increased their number of registered voters by 10,000 people between 2014 and 2018. But again the Republicans did better; they increased their rolls by 16,000 voters.



So what’s the key to success in 2020? McCaa reported that the Democrats lost in Manatee County in 2018 by less than 30,000 votes. Sadly, 24,000 registered Democrats didn’t vote. The positive sign, he pointed out, was that 84% of the Democrats who registered to vote by mail sent in their ballots. This included 3,595 Democrats who sat out the 2016 election but voted by mail in 2018. The numbers prove that Vote By Mail (VBM) works. Despite media sensationalism against VBM, 99.5% of VBM ballots counted in Manatee County. McCaa’s advice mirrors Manatee County Democrats goals: Encourage every Democrat to vote by mail, particularly new voters, younger voters, and minority voters, who disproportionately didn’t use VBM to cast a ballot.

Above all, McCaa urged attendees to build a ground force in all precincts in Manatee County, particularly in those that had a low Democratic voter turnout in 2018. He also encouraged people to use what he called the “secret sauce”: more human contact with voters through phone banks and canvassing, plus working smarter and harder. -Nancy Hughes



Citizen Petitions for the 2020 Ballot

In order to get a constitutional amendment on the Florida ballot by citizen initiative, about 800,000 signatures are needed from at least 14 of the state's 27 congressional districts. Currently there are two petition initiatives: Medicaid expansion and assault weapons ban.



Floridians Need Medicaid Expansion

The Affordable Health Care Act allows states to expand Medicaid eligibility, but the Florida Legislature has overwhelmingly rejected this option. As result, low-income adults (defined as people over 18 and under 65 years old that are at 100%+ of the federal poverty level, which is about \$16,460 in a household of two), are only covered if they have dependents/children. This completely disregards many young labor force members in entry level positions without healthcare, college students, retirees, and more. Expanding Medicaid to those groups, as well as those in the gap who make too much for Medicaid and too little market healthcare, would grant healthcare to an astounding 700,000 or more people. The proposal is also economically sound. The non-partisan Florida Policy Institute projects that Medicaid expansion would free up as much as \$500 million in federal matching dollars.

For more information: <https://www.fpi.institute/florida-medicaid-chartbook-2019-edition>.

Strengthening Gun Control

In the wake of the Parkland shooting, the Florida legislature signed into law the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, which changed several Florida gun control laws, but did not ban assault weapons or high-capacity magazines. The families of slain Parkland students are advancing a petition that presents a common-sense gun control solution. The proposed amendment bans the sale/possession of future assault weapons, excluding those prior to an effective date. It does not have any provision to take existing weapons away from owners. The amendment excludes law enforcement and federal agents in the line of duty, as well as guns that many Floridians already have. Assault weapons are defined as semiautomatic rifles and shotguns capable of holding more than ten rounds of ammunition at once either in fixed or detectable magazines, or any other ammo-feeding device.

Forms for both petitions are available at Manatee County Democratic Headquarters and online at <https://manateecountydemocrats.com/take-action> - *Anthony Eldon*



Have high quality items to donate for the much anticipated Annual Gala **silent and live auctions**? Use your imagination! Please contact Peggie Ward, drpeggiewardphd@gmail.com, or Mary Jo Kline, mjkline@visi.com.

Advertise in the **dinner program book**. Promote your business or make a personal tribute or message. Please contact Barbara Hyde, bhyde@bhyde.net.