

DWC

NOVEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER



DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB OF MANATEE COUNTY FLORIDA

WWW.DWCManatee.com

A recent escapee from a group of “feral housewives,” Christine Kennedy-Meier, has thrown herself into political work. In August 2025, Christine was unanimously elected as Chair of the Manatee Democratic Party. She previously served as the Second Vice-Chair for Communications for the Manatee County Democratic Party after working with the 2024 Shoemaker County Commission Campaign.

She holds both a master's degree in digital media design and a graduate certificate in nonprofit management from Harvard. In her pre-housewife career, Christine spent 17+ years as an executive director at a large industry association.

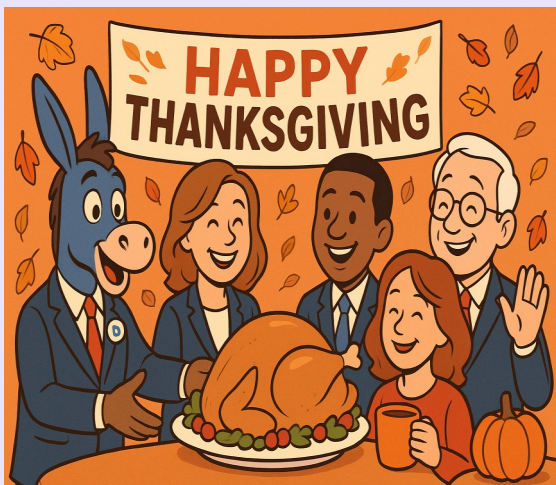
Originally from the Chicago suburbs, she has resided and worked in Manatee County for 25 years. Married to Rich since 2011, they own a fire and explosion investigation firm based in Palmetto.



**Christine
Kennedy-Meier**

Christine is a dedicated, but very slow, runner. She is currently completing her “running bucket list” on her travels with Rich. Completed runs include: a portion of the Camino de Santiago in Spain, Waikiki Beach, and the St. Charles streetcar line in New Orleans.

Christine will be speaking on the importance of social media and how we can use it to connect with voters through digital advertising, influencer partnerships, and grassroots engagement.



DWC Luncheon Is November 13, 2025

11:30 AM

Peridia Golf & Country Club

4950 Peridia Blvd E, Bradenton, FL 34203

***Please make your reservations
and meal choice by***

November 9 at 3:00 p.m.

**Reservation Information and
Meal Choices Are On The Next Page**

Cost is \$20

President's Letter

Is free speech dead in America? If you are a Republican, you can say anything you like. You can even cheer as the President sends troops to Democratic cities and states and threatens to arrest those who oppose him. If you are a Democrat, you are not given that privilege. I read an article recently in the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* about a couple who lives in Florida. You know how you are constantly told that if you disagree with an elected official to call or send them a postcard. Well, the husband sent a postcard to an elected official and simply said that he disagreed with their policy decisions. Imagine their surprise when the police showed up at their door with the postcard asking whether the husband had sent it. After talking to the couple for several minutes the police left without charging the husband. Their comment was, "it appears that our first amendment rights have no meaning anymore."

Joanie LeBaron, President



PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATION AND MEAL CHOICE FOR THE NOVEMBER 13 DWC MEETING

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

or

734-776-6023

Deadline to register is Sunday, November 9, 3:00 p.m.

1. Open faced turkey sandwich, oven roasted turkey served on grilled sour-dough bread with pan gravy, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and chef's vegetable
2. Medium-rare roast beef with Brie cheese on a croissant with lettuce, tomato, red onion and horseradish aioli on the side, served with pub chips and a dill pickle
3. Eggplant Parmesan served with sauteed orzo and roasted vegetables

Please select one of these meal selections:

All meals come with rolls, butter, a non-alcoholic drink, and desert.

No-shows will be billed.

Statement: on Florida ending vaccine requirements

Florida announced plans to end all vaccine mandates, including for schools. In response, Ashley Lyerly, Senior Director of Advocacy at the American Lung Association issued the following statement:

“The American Lung Association is committed to protecting lung health for all and routinely recommends vaccines to protect against respiratory diseases. As such, we vigorously oppose Florida’s plans to end vaccine requirements, which will put Floridians’ health at risk—especially the nearly 250,000 children in Florida living with asthma.”

“Vaccines are one of the greatest public health advancements in history. Immunizations are effective, safe and save lives. In particular, childhood immunizations, like the DTaP vaccine to prevent whooping cough or MMR vaccine to prevent measles, mumps and rubella, protect communities from outbreaks that cause severe illness, hospitalizations, and deaths. Infectious dis-

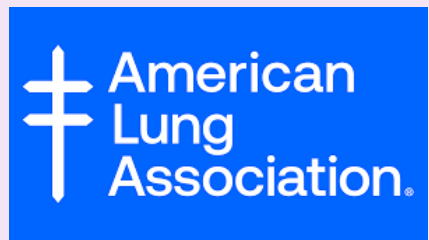
eases can quickly cross state lines. With Florida offering some of the most popular vacation

destinations in the nation, the ramifications from this decision could be catastrophic.”

“The American Lung Association supports policies that increase the rate of immunization, especially among children and high-risk individuals. Florida’s announcement to end all vaccine requirements in the state is counter to that effort. The Lung Association will oppose all efforts to limit the use of this proven, public health intervention that protects all Floridians from preventable infectious diseases, especially older adults and individuals with chronic diseases.”

“Now is not the time to turn our back on a proven tool that helps us all live longer and healthier lives. Vaccines protect us and the health of families, children, and our most vulnerable.”

Source: American Lung Association



DOJ stuns CNN reporter saying ‘quiet part out loud’ about Trump ally

President Donald Trump’s hand-picked prosecutor in the Eastern District of Virginia is getting a lot of pushback from career prosecutors in the office because of her efforts to prosecute the president’s political foes, *CNN* reporter Katelyn Polantz revealed on Monday.

Polantz joined *CNN*’s “The Arena with Kasie Hunt” to discuss how career prosecutors in the Eastern District of Virginia are reacting to their new boss, Lindsey Halligan. Halligan is a former insurance attorney with no prosecutorial experience whom Trump picked to run the Eastern District of Virginia, which typically handles national security or classified information cases, after former U.S. Attorney Erick Siebert resigned last month.

Reports indicate the Trump administration pressured Siebert to resign after he refused to pursue prosecutions against New York Attorney General Letitia James and former FBI Director James Comey, both of whom have been indicted since Halligan took over.

Polantz revealed that DOJ lawyers have left clues about their discontent around the office.

“The quiet part is getting said out loud,” Polantz said. “After one of those people was fired, he taped on his door a note that said, ‘Justice Department leadership is more concerned with punishing the president’s perceived enemies than they are with protecting our national security.’ ”

“So they’re saying it inside,” she added.

By: Robert Davis, *Raw Story*

Election of the Democratic Women's Club board members for 2026 will be held at our November meeting

The Board of Directors of the Democratic Women's Club recommends the following people be elected to serve at our November meeting.

President – Lori Rogge

First Vice President for Programming – Brian Heavrin

Second Vice for Membership – Carol Plant

Treasurer – Wini Meier-Oakes

Recording Secretary- This position is open

We will be voting on the new Board members at our November meeting. Please try to attend.

Trump humiliates RFK Jr. with surprise COVID booster move

President Trump got his COVID booster shot while Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., America's most famous anti-vaxxer and the HHS Secretary, restricts Americans' access to the vaccine he hates.

During a "routine annual checkup" at Walter Reed Medical Center—Trump's second of 2025—Trump received a report of gushing awe from White House physician Dr. Sean Barbabella, who claimed the president had the heart of a man "14 years younger" than Trump's actual age (which is 79). Trump also received two shots: an annual flu shot and the COVID-19 booster.

Trump is eligible for a COVID booster according to the more limited eligibility guidelines set by Kennedy's CDC, which recommends the COVID vaccine to people ages 65 and older as well as younger people with underlying health conditions.

Kennedy, 71, has made no secret about how much he hates COVID vaccines. In 2021, Kennedy called it "the deadliest vaccine ever made" and has repeatedly made conspiratorial and false statements about the vaccine during his time as Health and Human Services Secretary.

Trump, whose "Operation Warp Speed" helped get COVID vaccines to Americans incredibly quickly during his first presidency, has not shared his health secretary's skepticism toward vac-

cines. He's said that Kennedy has a "different" view toward vaccines than himself and other medical experts. In September, he joked that he hoped he hadn't caught COVID after Kennedy sneezed near him in the Oval Office.

The Daily Beast reached out to Secretary Kennedy, asking if Kennedy recommended Trump get a COVID booster.

The irony of Trump receiving a COVID booster at a time when Kennedy is working to limit Americans' access to the vaccine was not lost on social media commenters.

On X, Dr. Neil Stone rhetorically asked, "Why do you think Trump got a Covid booster? And didn't take ivermectin or Hydroxychloroquine?"

Stone was referring to two common "alternative" COVID treatments that have spread in anti-vax circles.

Dr. Eric Feigl-Ding posted, "Dear MAGA—guess who just got both the updated COVID vaccine and flu shots today? Your dear Leader Trump. Maybe you should get them too."

News of Trump's booster came hours before his "grim reaper," White House budget director Russell Vought, gutted the CDC with layoffs, putting dozens of disease scientists out of a job.

"Trump got a Covid booster from his doctor and then fired a dozens of doctors and scientists who were working to keep the rest of us healthy and alive," said Jon Favreau.

By: Adam Downer, *The Daily Beast*





Great Time,
Great Meeting,
Great Speaker



Florida proudly tops nation in school book removals for third year running

In the heart of Florida's school districts, a quiet mutation is taking place. Library shelves, once filled with a diverse array of stories, are seeing hundreds of titles vanish. Florida has earned a national designation it did not seek but trumpets: leader in book censorship for the third consecutive year, with thousands of titles prohibited across its school districts. State officials call this a necessary protection of children. Free speech advocates call it a coordinated campaign of censorship. And caught in the middle are parents, students, and educators navigating Florida's deeply polarized landscape.

The rapid removal of books is largely driven by recent state legislation. House Bill 1069, signed into law in 2023, created a streamlined process for challenging instructional materials. Its most powerful feature mandates the immediate removal of any book accused of being "pornographic" or depicting "sexual conduct" within five days of a challenge, long before any formal review is complete.

This legal framework is amplified by forceful state enforcement. The Florida Board of Education issued a severe warning to the Hillsborough County school district in May, threatening formal legal action if it did not purge "pornographic" titles. The district complied, pulling more than 600 books in a process costing an estimated \$350,000. None of these books was under formal review, or had they been flagged by local parents.

Fearing similar retribution, at least nine other school districts, including Columbia, Escambia, and Orange counties, proactively removed hundreds of titles. In Escambia County, 400 books, including classics like Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, were removed without any review.

The legal process established by the state has sparked a constitutional controversy. Critics argue the system is structurally biased, giving preferential treatment to one viewpoint. Under H.B. 1069, if a parent challenges a book and the local school board decides to keep it on shelves, that parent can appeal to the state, requesting a special magistrate to review the judgment. However, if a book is challenged and then removed, parents who want the book retained have no equivalent right to a state-level appeal.

State officials firmly reject the characterization of

these actions as "book bans." Florida's governor has repeatedly debunked what he calls a "hoax" perpetuated by the media and leftist activists. The state's position is that it has simply empowered parents to object to obscene and sexually explicit material in classrooms. "Books with pornographic and sexually explicit material do not belong in school libraries accessible to children," reads an official myth-busting document from the governor's office.

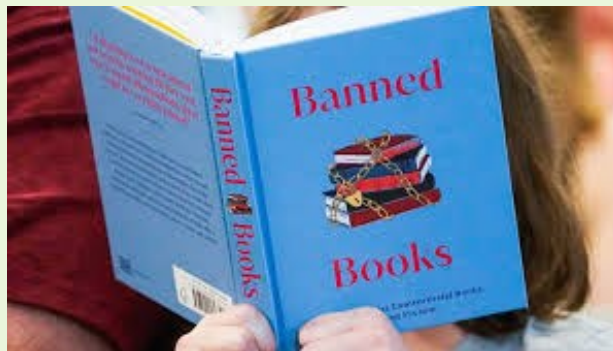
The state points to books like *Gender Queer: A Memoir* and *Flamer*, which contain explicit illustrations and descriptions, as examples of the inappropriate content the laws are designed to filter out. The government argues its focus is on academic excellence and preventing the sexualization and indoctrination of students.

The conflict in Florida reflects a broader national struggle. The Biden administration had established a "book ban coordinator" within the Department of Education to investigate the removal of books, operating on a theory that such removals could create a hostile environment and violate civil rights laws. That federal policy has been abruptly reversed. In January 2025, the Department of Education under the new administration dismissed all pending "book ban" complaints, rescinded the related

guidance, and eliminated the book ban coordinator position. Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights stated the move was meant to restore "the fundamental rights of parents to direct their children's education." Meanwhile, the legal battle in Florida continues. The parents in *Tray et al.* are pursuing their appeal at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, arguing that the state cannot constitutionally silence parents based on their viewpoint.

Florida has once again set the stage for the most aggressive book censorship framework in the nation. The debate is unlikely to quiet anytime soon, with lawsuits working their way through federal courts and national advocacy groups pledging to spotlight the issue. Supporters of the laws continue to argue that the state is standing up for parental say in education. Opponents counter that Florida has crossed a line that erodes free speech rights and limits genuine engagement with literature and history. Which vision will prevail remains uncertain, but one outcome is clear: Florida's classrooms and libraries will remain a central theater in America's ongoing dispute over who controls the stories that children get to read.

By: Edmond Thorne, *OmniCom Multimedia*



Florida grocery store chain allows open carry in stores

The largest grocery store chain in Florida is now allowing open carry of firearms in its hundreds of locations across the Sunshine State.

Publix – which has 882 stores in Florida according to its website – began allowing the practice in recent weeks, according to local reports.

“As of Sept. 25, 2025, Florida law allows the open carry of firearms,” a spokesperson for Publix told *FOX Business*, adding that the company “follows all federal, state and local laws.” Open carry became permitted after a Florida appeals court ruled that the state’s ban of open carry was unconstitutional.

Private businesses like grocery stores, and private property owners, remain entitled to bar weapons. Additionally, certain locations such as



courthouses, schools and government facilities are classified as prohibited places for carrying open or concealed firearms.

“Any person carrying a firearm who violates the private property owner’s warning to depart will be committing armed trespass, a third-degree felony,” a guidance memorandum from Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier to Florida law enforcement agencies and prosecuting authorities said.

“Our priority is creating a safe and welcoming shopping experience for all customers and associates,” a spokesperson for Winn-Dixie told *FOX Business* via email. “We respectfully ask customers to secure firearms safely before entering, and we appreciate the continued cooperation that helps us maintain an environment where everyone feels comfortable.”

By: Pilar Arias, *Fox Business News*

About No Kings

In June, we did what many claimed was impossible: peacefully mobilized millions of people to take to the streets and declare with one voice — America has No Kings. And it mattered. The world saw the power of the people. President Trump’s birthday parade was drowned out by protests in every state and across the globe. His attempt to turn June 14 into a coronation collapsed, and the story became the strength of a movement rising against his authoritarian power grabs

Four months later, that movement roared back even stronger. On October 18, over 7 million Americans joined 2,700+ events in all 50 states — a nationwide uprising 14 times larger than both of Trump’s inaugurations combined. What began in June as a single day of defiance has become a sustained national resistance to tyranny, spreading from small towns to city centers and across every community determined to defend democracy.

Now, President Trump has doubled down. His administration is sending masked agents into our streets, terrorizing our communities. They are targeting immigrant families, profiling, arresting, and detaining people without warrants. Threatening to overtake elections. Gutting healthcare, environmental protections, and education when families need them most. Rigging maps to silence voters. Ignoring mass shootings at our schools and in our communities. Driving up the

cost of living while handing out massive giveaways to billionaire allies, as families struggle.

The president thinks his rule is absolute. But in America, we don’t have kings — and we won’t back down against chaos, corruption, and cruelty.

Our peaceful movement is only getting bigger. “No Kings” is more than just a slogan; it is the foundation our nation was built upon. Born in the streets, shouted by millions, carried on posters and chants, it echoes from city blocks to rural town squares, uniting people across this country to fight dictatorship together.

This country does not belong to kings, dictators, or tyrants. It belongs to We the People — the people who care, who show up, and who fight for dignity, a life we can afford, and real opportunity. No Thrones. No Crowns. No Kings

Source: *No Kings*



Keep up with the NO Kings movement by following this website

NoKings.org



We lost a leading world environmentalist in October: Jane Goodall. She inspired millions of people by her work, her talks, her books and her activism. We can all learn and emulate Jane's commitment to a more sustainable planet. Some of her quotes follow.

"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."

"You can think about what you buy — when it was produced, did it harm the environment? Was it cruel to animals? Is it cheap because of unfair wages?"

"And another very important thing you can do is to adopt a plant based diet."

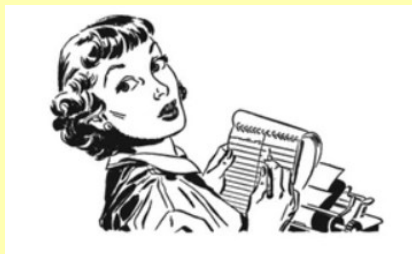
"The greatest danger to our future is apathy."

Ruth Lawler, Environmental Chair



Consider paying your 2026 membership dues of \$35 now. You can pay at any of our meetings or you can mail your check payable to Democratic Women's Club to our Treasurer.

**Wini Meier-Oakes
3607 AVENIDA MADERA UNIT A
Bradenton, FL 34210**

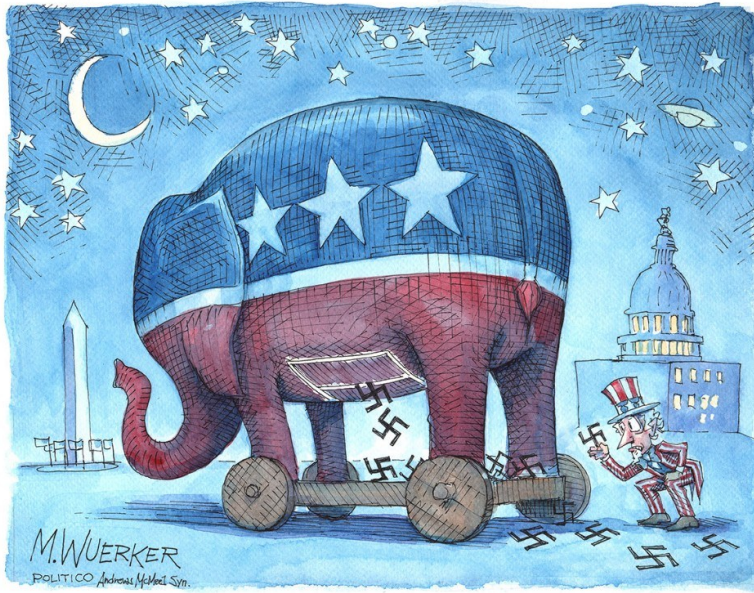


We need you to step up! The new year is fast approaching and we still need a Recording Secretary for our club. It's a very easy job; you would basically take notes at our board and general meetings to create a perinate record for our files. If interested please let Joanie LeBaron at joanieslebaron01082@gmail.com.

"No Kings 2.0," produced by Scaredketchup, is a musical video showing scenes from the incredible turnout for the October 18 No Kings protest. In the video there is reference to RA. "Oh ah up the RA, Say oh ah up the RA" was a slogan historically used in Ireland in support of the IRA, and its opposition to British rule, but it's gained wider currency, and has been used elsewhere as a statement of resistance against authority. Note profanity is used in this video. "Open Book Exam (And We Still Flunked)" is a protest song created by the group, The Resistance, that calls out the absurdity of Americans acting shocked that Donald Trump is doing exactly what he promised during the 2024 campaign—gutting the Affordable Care Act, pushing mass deportations, tariffs, retribution, and embracing Project 2025. The song highlights that voting has consequences, and that too many people ignored the warnings, stayed home, or dismissed Trump's words as bluster.

**[CLICK HERE TO WATCH
NO KINGS 2.0](#)**

**[CLICK HERE TO WATCH
OPEN BOOK EXAM](#)**



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)

Carol Plant carolplant@optonline.net

Recording Secretary

Lori Rogge lrogge52@icloud.com

Treasurer

Wini Meier Oakes winimo3@gmail.com

Regional Representative

Pat Benson pattybeenutty@gmail.com

Website Links

[DWC of Manatee County Website](#)
[Manatee County Democratic Website](#)
[Democratic Women's Club of Florida](#)

OTHER OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Fund-Raising

Pat Benson
pattybeenutty@gmail.com

Hospitality/ Calling

Marilyn Baiz
durf1211@gmail.com

Candidate Search

Vicki Waters
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Parliamentarian

Joanie LeBaron
joanielebaron0108@gamil.com

Web Master

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Newsletter and Directory

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Environmental

Ruth Lawler
ruthlawler@att.net

Legislative Liaison

Joanie LeBaron
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Corresponding Secretary

Open

Bylaws Chair

Anne Marie Keane
Keaneanne20@gmail.com

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



PLACE
STAMP
HERE

The Manatee County Democratic weekday office hours are Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 10 - 2. 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

PRESIDENT

Donald Trump (switchboard) (202) 456-1111
www.whitehouse.gov

U.S. SENATORS

Rick Scott (R) (202)224-5274
help@rickscott.senate.gov

Ashley Moody (R) (202)224-3041
www.moody.senate.gov

U.S. REPRESENTATIVES

Vern Buchanan (R-Distr. 16) (202) 225-5015
www.Buchanan.house.gov

GOVERNOR

Ron DeSantis (R) (850) 717-9337
www.flgov.com/email-the-governor

OUR FLORIDA SENATORS

Jim Boyd (R-Distr. 21) (850) 487-5026
Boyd.Jim.web@flsenate.gov

OUR FLORIDA REPRESENTATIVES

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William "Bill" Conerly (R-Distr.72) (941) 327-0150
BillConerly@myfloridahouse.gov