

The Anderson County Democratic Women's Club News

March 2026

Spiritual Diversity and Democracy with Lóre Stevens

5:30 pm pizza – 6:00 pm presentation

Scarboro Community Center (148 Carver Ave, Oak Ridge, TN 37830)

Come at 5:30 on **Thursday, March 26th** for \$5.00 pizza - the talk will begin promptly at 6:00.

If spirituality is the feeling of connection with a higher power or ultimate reality, it is accessible to anyone regardless of belief. Recognizing that each of us is part of that universal wholeness can lead us to act with compassion, nonviolence, and determination for the well-being of others. Religion is the organized community aspect of spirituality and varies based on a group's experience and worldview, yet all religions remain connected at the root to the creative force of existence.

These are incredibly powerful concepts, which is why, throughout history, these forces of life and love get used as tools for power and control. In America today, we are seeing Christianity, which challenges its adherents to love their neighbors and enemies alike, twisted to justify xenophobia and cruelty. Our democracy was created with the value of separation of church and state, but the reasoning and details of this principle are sometimes lost. Together, let's explore spirituality and its relationship to political power, so we can gain solace from our connection to something greater than us and steward the healthy boundaries between earthly powers and religious wonders.

Lóre (rhymes with 'story') Stevens is the minister of Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church. She is of Mexican-American descent, grew up in Powell, and has been overjoyed to return to East Tennessee.

Lóre holds a Master's in Gender Studies as well as a Master's of Divinity from Harvard University. She has been the recipient of the UU Office of the United Nations Greeley Sermon Competition Award, the UU History and Heritage Society Research Prize, and was a finalist in the Harvard Divinity School Billings Preaching Prize. Lóre enjoys science-fiction, illustrated journaling, and her two cats Twinkle and Tezzy.



Future ACDWC Events

Saturday April 18th – Our “parent” organization, the **Tennessee Federation of Democratic Women**, will have the **68th Annual Convention** here in Oak Ridge. If you are a TFDW member you are invited to attend the meeting as one of our five delegates. This is a great way to connect with like-minded women from across the state and guide the organization into its future. Please contact Ann Miller or Ann Mostoller if you would like to attend.

Other Events

Sunday March 8th 1:00-2:30pm – Meet **Jerri Green**, the Democratic contender for the Governor of Tennessee, at **Calamity’s Coffee Jackson Square (219 Jackson Square, Oak Ridge, TN 37830)**.

Sunday March 8th 3:00-5:00pm – **Sharon and Verran Campaign Launch Party**. Come help **Sharon Bourgeois Capshaw** and **Stephen Verran** launch their Anderson County Commission District 7 campaigns to serve the people of Anderson County. Sharon is a retired ORNL supervisor running to strengthen infrastructure, budgeting, and county services families rely on. Steve is an incumbent commissioner focused on transparency, accessibility, and representation for Oak Ridge residents. **Crafter’s Brew (856 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Oak Ridge, TN 37830)**. Food will be provided by Pickles Deli.

Tuesday March 17th 4:00-6:00pm – Join Stand Up Oak Ridge for their second event! They will be packing safe sex kits for distribution in Anderson County, and writing postcards to our state legislators about reproductive rights bills. [Register for location.](#)

March 17th – Randy Hemann, Manager of City of Oak Ridge will speak to the League of Women Voters on the “State of the City of Oak Ridge.” Also, April 7th to hear from Dave Clark about Anderson County, and May 2nd to hear from Dr. Bruce Borchers. The League meetings are held at the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church – lunch at 11:30 and the meeting at 12:00.

March 18th – Join the **Anderson Dems General Assembly** to learn what’s on the ballot, share ideas, and turn community energy into action This event will be at the Roane State Community College (City Room) on Wednesday March 18th at 6:30pm. Register at <https://www.mobilize.us/andersoncountymunicipalparty/event/837051/>

Saturday March 28th – No Kings Rally in Oak Ridge. Mark your calendars and ready your signs!

August 18th – The 2026 Annual Febb Burn Banquet. Celebrate the woman who ensured the “Perfect 36” state and secured our place at the ballot box. [Tickets](#)

Open Board Positions: Anderson County Community Development Citizens Advisory Board and the Clinton Citizens Advisory Committee both have seats that will be filled by appointment. Contact Scott Burton’s office for the Clinton board (865-457-0424) and Terry Frank’s office for the A.C. board (865-457-6200).

Upcoming Public Meetings:

Oak Ridge: View meeting schedules and agendas for [Oak Ridge](#)

Please check the website for Oak Ridge meetings as some locations might be different due to on-going construction at the Municipal Building complex.

City Council Regular Meeting, 7 pm 2nd Monday of month, Municipal Building Courtroom

Municipal Planning Commission, 5:30 pm 3rd Thursday of month, Oak Ridge Municipal Courtroom
Traffic Safety Advisory Board, 7 pm 3rd Monday of month, Central Services Complex Conf Room
Disability Advisory Board, 11 am 3rd Monday of Month, Senior Center
Land Bank Board of Directors, 8:30 am 3rd Tuesday of month, Municipal Building Courtroom.
Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, 7 pm 2nd Thursday of month, Civic Center Social Room
Board of Education, 5 pm 4th Monday of month, Board Room - School Admin Bldg (304 New York Ave.) <https://www.ortn.edu/central-office/board-of-education/members-schedule/>

Anderson County: View meeting schedules and agendas for [Anderson County](#).

Anderson County Commission Meeting, 6:30 pm Monday March 16th, Anderson County Courthouse Rm 312.

Anderson County Election Commission, 4:00 pm Thursday March 12th Anderson County Municipal Building Rm 118A. (100 North Main Street, Clinton, TN 37716)

Anderson County Library Board, 5:30 pm Thurs March 12th at Anderson County Courthouse Rm 312.

Anderson County Operations Committee, 6:00 pm 2nd Monday of month, Anderson County Courthouse Rm 312

Club Updates

Voter Registrations: Over 2,300 voters have been purged from the roles. You can check your registration by contacting the Anderson County Election Commission or verifying your data via the state website <https://tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup>.

The Helen Jernigan Memorial Scholarship is a competitive scholarship available to Democratic leaning Anderson County high school women who are planning on furthering their education. If you have someone in mind let Ann Mostoller know.

Make a Difference:

The club needs help with the Fundraising Committee. Please contact Ann Mostoller if you would like to learn more.

February Meeting Summary

February Meeting Summary: The Soul of the Manhattan Project with Katatra Vasquez

2-25-2026 at the Oak Ridge Civic Center

Katatra recently retired from working for the DOE and safeguarding the history of its historic places. With some of her newly self-directed time, one day she took her family on an outing to some of those historic places. From the mouths of babes came the inspiration for her next life-chapter: "Mom, why aren't there any people in these pictures that look like us?" But Katatra knew there were many people in reality!

She found many African American people made a significant contribution to the Manhattan Project. Of the approximately 75,000 people working in Oak Ridge on the project, approximately 7,000 were African American. Those 7,000 filled the full gamut of roles, from



mechanics, to machinists, to office workers, to scientists. On the project, everyone involved was pulling together toward a shared hope that they would change the trajectory of the war. However, there was still a tremendous amount of racism in the Manhattan Project. One example is the scientist, Carolyn Parker. Parker completed a master's degree in physics at the University of Michigan -- the first African American woman known to receive that distinction. She was recruited to work as a research physicist with the Dayton Project, a division of the Manhattan Project. Then, in 1943, her team was tasked with separating and purifying polonium (used as the initiator for the atomic bombs).

Katatra found that the African American history with the Manhattan Project is one of place-based belonging and shared connections. She found that oral histories were a valuable resource, and there are many available through the Oak Ridge Library and online. The oral histories were especially valuable as they relayed a more full and balanced recounting of the actual experiences. There are also many books about that time which include bits of the history of the African American contribution. She noted that when she was working with the DOE most of the historians were white; and just did not have the cultural awareness and personal connections that let them see the full history.

There is a photo collection at the Scarboro Community Center, managed by the Scarboro Community Alumni Association, that goes back to at least 1947 and is well worth viewing. There are other permanent collections in the area with photos and memorabilia. The new Tri-County African American Cultural Museum in Oliver Springs is a good choice for a visit. And celebrating the 100th anniversary of Black History Month, there is a wonderful display at the Oak Ridge Library. Black history is American history.



Speaker bio: Award-winning author and environmental scientist Katatra Vasquez is passionate about revealing the contributions of the historically unknown in our shared American history to connect and inspire. A Dayton, Ohio, native and Tuskegee University graduate, Katatra now lives in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where she spent over 20 years safeguarding America's historic spaces. Her career has earned her multiple honors, including recognition by the State of Tennessee Historical Commission and the Secretary of the Department of Energy.

Through her engaging children's books, *Atomic Hope: Our Words and Our Spaces: A STEAM Travel Guide*, *Josie's Hope: A Secret City Revealed*, and her new release, *Making A Little Red Wagon*, Katatra connects history, STEM, and storytelling to spark wonder and imagination. What began as a mother's effort to help her children see themselves in local American history has developed into a dynamic heritage education, consulting, and tourism business. She is the President of Atomic Hope LLC, where her company is dedicated to bridging historic stewardship with modern solutions. She is also the

owner of Prolific by Design, a boutique publishing house dedicated to amplifying diverse voices. Most importantly, she's a proud mom on a mission to inspire people, especially kids everywhere, to see their own potential and learn from the pages of our shared American story.

Ebony Capshaw is an Oak Ridge native and Anderson County Commissioner. She is a 2025 Girls Inc. of Oak Ridge Bold Award winner, Leadership TN Next Class IX graduate and 2024 Emerge America Signature Bootcamp graduate. She has experience in many roles focusing on policies and procedures with application, inventory management, automation, and data management with CVS Health, Cardinal Health, and the University of Miami. She also serves as an advisor and training coordinator with local colleges' pharmacy students and Co-Operative Education high school students. Ebony also serves on the Free Medical Clinic of Oak Ridge Board of Directors, Anderson County Democratic Women's Club Executive Board, RAM Clinic volunteer, TCCA Emergency Services committee, Youth Leader at Greater Warner Tabernacle AME Zion Church, and East TN Regional

Medical Reserve Corps volunteer. She has previously served in many roles such as TNDP State Executive Committeewoman, Child Advocacy Center of Anderson County, TN Board of Directors, Roane State Community College Pharmacy Technician Program Advisory Board member, 2nd Vice President for the Knoxville NAACP, TN State Conference NAACP Executive Committee Member-At-Large, and ran as a 2018 Anderson County Trustee candidate.

Contact the ACDWC

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