



BALLOT BOX

FEBRUARY 2025

Political activist to share “Issues and Insights” at February luncheon



With a 2025 approved budget totaling upwards of \$4.4 billion dollars, there is no government entity that has more impact on area residents' daily lives than Pinellas County. There is, however, little news coverage of the county's numerous boards, councils and committees, making it hard to fully know what choices are being made and exactly how tax payer dollars are being spent.

For many years, one particular person has been doing her best to be a watchdog, holding county entities to account on actions that might not be in the best interest of citizens. That political activist, Barb Haselden, will be the speaker at the February 7 Belleair Women's Republican Club luncheon. Her presentation, “Pinellas County Insights and Issues” will bring everyone up to date on things each county resident should know.

A 35-year resident of Pinellas County, Barb has been actively involved in the county's politics for 15 years. In 2009, she started

the Tea Party in Pinellas, and in 2010, she formed and then successfully led the citizens' county-wide “No Tax for Tracks” campaign, ultimately defeating the 2014 PSTA (Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority) Greenlight ballot referendum. The referendum sought to build a light-rail public transit in Pinellas County which would have raised the county's sales tax to the highest rate in the state to pay for it. In October 2024, the Pinellas County Commission appointed Barb to the Board of Directors of PSTA, the same organization that proposed the Greenlight Pinellas rail effort.

In 2022, Barb headed up an effort to get a referendum on the ballot though a county-wide citizen initiative called Eight Is Enough, seeking to limit the county Board of Commissioners members' terms. While that effort failed to accrue the required 70,000 petitions in the time frame allotted, it led to a County Charter Amendment passed by voters in 2024 which limits commissioner consecutive terms

to 12 years.

In addition to now serving on PSTA's Board of Directors, Barb is president of St. Petersburg Republican Club, a position she has held since 2020. She is also a 15-year active member of PCREC (Pinellas County Republican Executive Committee) and has spoken a number of times at its meetings and other events, as well as at many area Republican clubs. In her professional life, Barb is a successful life and health insurance broker as the sole owner of Hometown Insurers in St. Petersburg.

The February 7 BWRC luncheon will take place at Belleair Country Club, 1 Country Club Lane, Belleair. Check-in begins at 11:30 am, with lunch served starting at noon. The cost to attend is \$38 per person. (Note the price increase.) Reservations and payment for the luncheon are due by Thursday, January 23. Mail checks to BWRC at P.O. Box 1117, 850 E. Lime Street, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688.

FEBRUARY MEETING INFORMATION

Friday, February 7

**Belleair Country Club
1 Country Club Lane
Belleair, FL 33756**

Luncheon Fee: \$38

**Registration & networking
begin at 11:30am.**

**Event begins
at 12 pm.**

**To RSVP:
A \$38 check made
payable to BWRC is
due by January 23.**

**Mail check to:
BWRC
P.O. Box 1117
850 E. Lime Street
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688**

**Alternate meal must
be requested
with your RSVP.**

**No substitutions
may be made
the day of the luncheon.**

**Reservations and
advance payment required.
Please, no walk-ins.**

FEBRUARY MENU INFORMATION

**Salad w/ Lettuce, Toasted Almonds,
Dried Cranberries & Feta Cheese
w/ Raspberry Vinaigrette**

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**Braised Short Ribs w/
Truffle Mashed Potatoes
& Green Beans Almondine**

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Rolls & Butter

+++

Chocolate Brownie

+++

ALTERNATE VEGETARIAN PLATE

**Butternut Squash Ravioli ww/ Creamy
Sauce, Sage & Sauteed Spinach**

BWRC is privileged to host meetings and social events at Belleair Country Club. Members and guests must comply with BCC's dress and conduct code. Dresses, skirts, blouses, dress slacks and pantsuits are appropriate for women. Men must wear shirts with sleeves and remove caps in the dining room. Blue jeans are not permitted.



FROM THE BWRC PRESIDENT

We are starting the new year with optimism and hope, and we can strive for success because our country has given us the tools to succeed. The gifts our country received in 2024's Presidential Election should not be wasted—the gifts of President Donald J. Trump, a conservative majority in the House of Representatives and a conservative majority in the Senate. We owe it to our country to make the best of this opportunity.

In order to be successful in the new year, we must remain focused, maintain our positive attitude, be passionate about our dreams and have hope. Hope is best gained after defeat and failure. We endured a four-year period of a failing administration., and we should not waste the inner strength and toughness this produced.

Next year, Ron DeSantis will term out as Florida's governor, and we will need to select a new governor in 2026. The end of the DeSantis administration in Florida will be great loss for this state. We can start now to make sure we stay on track by supporting conservative candidates in Florida as we look ahead to the governor's race in 2026.

Valentines Day is coming up, and this year Mark and I have been married for almost 50 years. What a blessing to have this wonderful partner (and fellow Republican) for all these years. One of my favorite quotes is, "I love being married. It is so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life." Happy Valentine's Day!

Dianne Blum
BWRC President



BWRC OFFICERS

President
Dianne Blum

First Vice President
Sara Mollo

Second Vice President
Claudia Walker

Treasurers
Jessica Reed
Louise Davis

Hospitality
Candace Gardner

Ways & Means
Corinne Steinhardt

Communications
Claudia Thomas

Corresponding Secretaries
Kassy Brewer
Alyssa Palonis

Recording Secretary
Carol Abernathy

Historian
Deb Walker

Chaplain
Patricia Wagner

Past President
Deb Walker

Parliamentarian
Renatta Cochran



BWRC supports Pinellas GOP dinner

BWRC supported the Pinellas GOP Reagan Day Dinner by sponsoring a table at the event. Shown above are some of the club members who attended the event. They are, standing, from left, Carol Hillier, Jessica Reed, Diane Blum, Corinne Steinhardt and her husband Larry. Seated are, from left, Cathy Goocher and Patti Wagner.

Nominating Committee seeks 2025-27 officer candidates

Election of BWRC officers for the coming biennium will take place in May. Prior to the election, a Nominating Committee consisting of five members, a chairman plus two members from the current Executive Committee and two members from the general membership, will be hard at work collecting and reviewing information and suggestions gathered from fellow BWRC officers and members. The Nominating Committee will then put forward a slate of single nominees for each of the club's officers for the 2025-2027 term.

Nominating Committee members who were appointed by President Diane Blum and approved by the current Executive Committee are Louise Davis, who will serve as chairman, Patti Wagner, Jessica Reed, Julia Marquardt and Jackie Weist. Offices to be filled in the May election are President, First Vice President (programs), Second Vice President (membership), Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Chaplain, Director of Communications, Director of Hospitality and Director of Ways and Means. BWRC members who would like to propose individuals to fill these roles, or who like to themselves be considered for a position, are asked to submit their suggestions in writing to BWRC Nominating Committee, P.O. Box 1117, 850 East Lime Street, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688. Suggestions must be received by March 15.

TIME TO PAY 2025 BWRC MEMBERSHIP DUES

\$25.00
annual dues
for 2025

Please make your check
payable to BWRC

Send your check to:
BWRC
P.O. Box 1117
850 E. Lime Street
Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

WELCOME TO THE NEWEST BWRC MEMBERS

Laurelyn Bergin

Terry Campbell

Leslie King

Arlene Welninski

**NOTE: The price
for luncheons
has been raised
to \$38.**



**ITEMS NEEDED: Make room in your jewelry box by
donating unwanted items to the BWRC Jewelry Sale.**

PICTURES FROM THE JANUARY BWRC LUNCHEON



(To see more pictures from BWRC events, visit bwrc.us > Photo Gallery)