



# BALLOT BOX

JULY 2024

## Florida Senator Ed Hooper to provide update on latest legislative session



In even numbered years, the Florida legislature meets in regular session for 60 days starting on the second Tuesday after the first Monday in January. This year, from January 9 to March 8, legislators wrangled with a number of important issues, including bills to increase the minimum base pay for teachers, to lower the minimum age for purchasing rifles and other long guns, to reduce criminal penalties for possession of small quantities of cannabis, to allow veterinarians to provide telehealth services for pets and to prevent insurance companies from including the value of land when setting coverage limits for houses.

Those curious about the outcome and discussion of these bills and other proposed 2024 legislation will not want to miss the July 12 Belleair Women's Republican Club luncheon meeting where Florida Senator Ed Hooper will update club members and guests on the latest session in Tallahassee.

Note the date of the July luncheon has been moved from the regular meeting date of the first Friday of the month to the second Friday due to the July 4th holiday weekend. As usual, the luncheon will take place at Belleair Country Club, 1 Country Club Lane, Belleair. Check-in begins at 11:30 am, with lunch starting at noon followed by the speaker. The cost to attend is \$37 per person with reservations and payment due by Thursday, June 26.

Senator Hooper represents District 21, which consists of parts of Pasco and Pinellas counties. He was first elected to the Senate in 2018 and was reelected in 2022. Previously, he served a maximum of four terms in the Florida House, 2006 to 2014 and was a Clearwater City Commissioner from 1996 to 2000.

Currently, Senator Hooper serves as chair of the Senate's Appropriations Committee on Transpor-

tation, Tourism and Economic Development Committee and as Vice Chair of the Regulated Industries Committee. He is also a member of the Appropriations, Rules and Transportation committees and serves as well on the Joint Select Committee on Collective Bargaining and on the Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice. During the 2024 session, Senator Hooper introduced 20 bills and co-introduced 16 more, all of which means he will have a lot of information to share at the July 12 BWRC meeting.

A native of North Carolina, Senator Hooper moved to Florida in 1972. He is a retired firefighter and has two children and five grandchildren. His wife, Lee, is a long-term, active member of BWRC who has served on the club's board in a variety of positions and who is a recipient of the BWRC Outstanding Member Award.

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## **JULY MEETING INFORMATION**

**Friday, July 12**

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

**Luncheon Fee: \$37**

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

**Event begins  
at 12 pm**

**To RSVP:  
A \$37 check made  
payable to BWRC is  
due by June 26.**

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

**If paying at the luncheon,  
please no \$100 bills.**

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

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

**Reservations required.  
Please ,no walk-ins.**

## **JULY MENU INFORMATION**

**Soup du Jour**

**++++**

**Belleair Spinach Salad  
Spinach leaves w/ grilled thinly  
sliced beef tenderloin, chopped egg,  
bacon & cherry tomatoes  
w/ honey mustard dressing**

**++++**

**Rolls & Butter**

**+++**

**Apple Pie w/  
Caramel Sauce**

**+++**

### **ALTERNATE VEGETARIAN PLATE**

**Mushroom Tortellini w/ broccoli,  
arugula, fried cubed tofu  
& a Thai chili drizzle**

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

BWRC has had several fun events this year, providing members with an opportunity to meet other members and make new friends. This is one of the advantages our club offers. Now, however, it is time to commit our time and energy to our country. I think we can make significant changes.

Any member who has time to invite another member to participate in these events will increase our influence on the upcoming elections. BWRC long-term member Carol Bumiller did this for me. She is an amazing fundraiser who attends as many fundraising events as she can schedule, and she works hard for our candidates. I am very grateful to her for educating me about the process and for sharing her political expertise. I am also grateful for her friendship and generosity.

Claudia Walker, BWRC membership chair, is collaborating with the club's volunteer coordinator to make sure club members are educated about volunteer opportunities. There will be a place near the jewelry table at BWRC meetings where members may sign up and volunteer for various volunteer opportunities.

Past BWRC President Deb Walker introduced me to very interesting Pinellas County Commission meetings. Deb is very active in the community and knows we can influence outcomes by educating ourselves and helping candidates we favor to succeed.

Jessica Reed and Corrine Steinhardt are out there most days and nights sign waving, getting petitions signed and doing more activities to support Republican candidates.

When the trial about Trump in New York aired, club officers decided having a judges panel featuring candidates for the Judicial Sixth Circuit Court was particularly important this year. We will have the judges speak to our group on August 2 at the luncheon. We must know who to support to prevent the issues that go on in troubled cities around the country.

The BWRC board has planned an event at Bon Appétit restaurant in Dunedin to provide an opportunity to meet with candidates and elected officials and speak with them "one on one". All members are invited to attend for free and bring one guest; however, the fire code limits us to 200 attendees. RSVP is required to [dpblum@mindspring.com](mailto:dpblum@mindspring.com) (Ignore the spam filter) no later than June 30 for this special event. We cannot allow anyone to attend without a reservation. The restaurant will offer a carving station and appetizers, and there will be a cash bar.

We are so fortunate to be able to influence in the future of our country. I am grateful to be associated with this club and all its hard working members.



## 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**

Corresponding Secretary  
**Jessica Reed**

Recording Secretary  
**Carol Abernathy**

Historian  
**Deb Walker**

Chaplain  
**Patricia Wagner**

Parliamentarian  
**Renatta Cochran**



## **UPCOMING PRIMARY ELECTION - PLEASE VOTE!**

### **Primary Election – Tuesday, August 20, 2024**

Polls Open 7 am—7pm on August 20

**Voter Registration / Party Change Deadline:** Monday July 22, 2024

**Deadline to request a ballot to be mailed:** Thursday August 8, 2024 5 p.m.

Request a mail ballot: [MailBallot@VotePinellas.gov](mailto:MailBallot@VotePinellas.gov)/ 727-464-VOTE (8683)

**Early Voting Dates/Times:** August 10-18, Monday — Friday, 8 am-6 pm — Saturday-Sunday, 8 am-5 pm

**Early Voting Locations:** Supervisor of Elections Offices:

- **Election Service Center**, 13001 Starkey Rd, Starkey Lakes Corp Ctr, Largo
- **County Building** - 501 First Ave N, St. Petersburg
- **Pinellas County Courthouse** - 315 Court St, Room 117, Clearwater  
(Voter parking spots will be designated in courthouse parking lots)

Mail Ballots can also be returned at one of the Secure Ballot Return Locations in Pinellas County.

Visit [VotePinellas.gov](http://VotePinellas.gov) or phone 727-464-VOTE (8683) for more information.

## **MAIL BALLOT FACTS**

- Any registered voter may vote by mail.
- Vote-by-Mail requests remain active through the calendar year of the next regularly scheduled general election.
- All requests for ballots to be mailed must be received no later than 5 p.m. on the 12th day prior to an election.
- A request for a ballot to be mailed to an address other than the voter's address on file with the Supervisor of Elections must be made in writing and signed by the voter.
- Voters may pick up mail ballots in person except during the mandatory early voting period through 7 p.m. on Election Day. By state law, mail ballots cannot be issued during this period unless an emergency prevents the voter from reaching an early voting site or assigned polling place. The voter or voter's designee must submit an affidavit regarding the emergency.
- Convenient ballot return locations are available during designated dates and times throughout the county.
- State law requires all Florida voters to vote a paper optical scan ballot whether voting by mail, at an early voting site or at the polls on Election Day.
- Voters will NOT receive a paper receipt after voting.
- ALL accepted mail ballots are included in official final results, per Florida law.
- A mail ballot is the same as an absentee ballot; however, voters do not need to be absent to vote by mail. Legislation passed in 2016 replaced the term "absentee ballot" with the term "vote-by-mail ballot" throughout Florida Statutes.

## **WELCOME TO THE NEWEST BWRC MEMBERS**

Rita Staleos Cotsakis

Janelle Enders

Loretta Jensen

Caroline McDonnell

Erika Picard

Jeffrey Reed \*

Christine Saathoff

Rose Sullivan

Cal Turner \*

Carol White

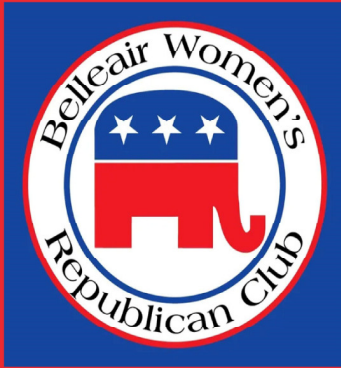
Bonnie Wotasik

\* Sustaining Member

**Coming  
SOON!**

**Look for exciting new  
BWRC merchandise for  
sale at the July luncheon.**





# **PAINT THE COUNTY RED RALLY**

*Conversation, candidates and fabulous food!  
Free event for BWRC members and one optional  
guest each. Heavy hors d'oeuvres. Cash bar.*

**Thursday, August 8**

**4:30—7:00 pm**

**Bon Appétit Restaurant**

**148 Marina Plaza, Dunedin**

**Reservations required, and space is limited.**

**RSVP to [dpblum@mindspring.com](mailto:dpblum@mindspring.com) (Ignore the spam filter).**

**Reservations must be completed no later than July 13th.**

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## PICTURES FROM THE JUNE BWRC LUNCHEON



(To see more pictures from BWRC events, visit [bwrc.us](http://bwrc.us) > Photo Gallery)