



# BALLOT BOX

MARCH 2024

## Wilton Simpson, Florida Agriculture Commissioner, to speak at March luncheon



The speaker at Belleair Women's Republican Club's luncheon on March 1 will be Wilton Simpson, Florida's 13th Commissioner of Agriculture. Simpson is a fifth-generation Floridian and is proud to have been born and raised in the Sunshine State. A lifelong farmer and entrepreneur, Simpson has deep roots grounded in agriculture. For over four decades, he owned and managed a large-scale egg-laying operation that supplied families across the state.

As Commissioner of Agriculture, Simpson oversees the FL Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. With his background in agriculture, he clearly understands the challenges faced by Florida's farmers. During his first legislative session as Commissioner of Agriculture, he made

to protect them. Securing the future of Florida agriculture, prioritizing Florida-grown food, defending second amendment rights, and — most importantly— defining agriculture as a national security issue in Florida were among his top priorities upon taking office.

His legislative service and history of community involvement also positions Simpson to guide the department's other equally important roles, such as protecting the environment, ensuring the availability, safety and affordability of the food supply and advocating for Florida consumers.

From 2012 to 2022, Commissioner Simpson served as a member of the Florida Senate and was elected Senate President for the 2020-2022 term.

many unique challenges, but Simpson fought to keep Florida open and free and to ensure that Florida was a beacon of hope, opportunity and freedom for generations to come. Throughout his tenure in the Senate, Commissioner Simpson was a staunch advocate for Florida agriculture and proud farmers and ranchers. He was instrumental in securing historic funding for the industry and crucial protections like the Right to Farm Act and Florida Wildlife Corridor Act.

Commissioner Simpson lives in Pasco County with his wife Kathy. Their son Wilton Jr. and his wife Caroline are practically neighbors, as are Commissioner Simpson's daughter Luran, her husband Kenten, and their daughters. Among his many accomplishments,

great strides to support  
Florida's farmers,  
consumers and  
those who work each day

Serving as Senate  
President through a world-  
wide pandemic came with

the Commissioner's most  
esteemed title is "Papa" to  
two granddaughters, Addy  
and Emy.

## MARCH MEETING INFORMATION

**Friday, March 1**  
**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 February 22**

**Mail check to:**  
**(NOTE THIS IS A NEW ADDRESS)**

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

**No walk-ins, please**

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

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

## MARCH MENU INFORMATION

### Irish Pub Salad

Bibb lettuce, beets, cucumbers, tomatoes, celery,  
feta cheese and chopped pistachios

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### Sliced Corned Beef and Cabbage

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### Honey Glazed Carrots

### Sliced Baby Red New Potatoes

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### Irish Soda Bread/Butter

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### Grasshopper Pie

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### ALTERNATE VEGETARIAN PLATE

Grilled vegetables w/ acorn squash  
stuffed with quinoa and  
cubed fried tofu with 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.

**NOTE: BWRC HAS A NEW MAILING ADDRESS:**  
**P.O. BOX 1117, 850 E. LIME ST., TARPON SPRINGS, FL 34688**

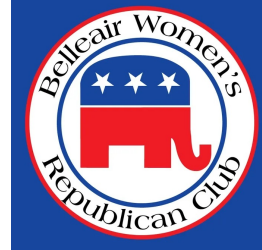


# FROM THE BWRC PRESIDENT

Belleair Women's Republican Club has come a long way since the beginning of the year. Many new board members have worked hard to meet the challenges, and we are supporting and helping each other. I am humbled by—and very proud of—the job they are doing.

We've made a few changes to expedite and address some questions about the club's monthly luncheon. I want to share the updated luncheon procedures and changes in this message:

1. To make a reservation for the BWRC luncheon, go to the Belleair Women's Republican Club website by Googling the club name. At the website, you can view information about the luncheon in the Ballot Box newsletter.
2. Luncheon reservations are required. To secure a seat, mail a check for \$37 payable to "BWRC" to the P.O. Box address shown in the newsletter. Timely receipt of your check, at least seven days prior to the luncheon, allows club treasurers to fulfill their obligation to provide Belleair Country Club with our "head count" for the event by a certain date. The country club staff needs this information in time to properly arrange seating and prepare food. If you are requesting a vegetarian lunch, please indicate "vegetarian meal" on the blank memo line of your check. The club is billed based on the head count. To cancel a paid reservation, email as soon as possible to Jessica Reed at [jessicareed6462@me.com](mailto:jessicareed6462@me.com) or Louise Davis at [ldavis300@icloud.com](mailto:ldavis300@icloud.com). We will try to apply your payment to another month.
3. When you arrive at the luncheon, please be sure to check in at the desk. It is important we all wear a nametag with first and last names.
4. Seating at the luncheon has been challenging at times. I have been meeting with the Belleair Country Club staff to improve the process. After checking in, please select your seat, but do not save seats for others who have not arrived. The only seats that will be saved are those at the speaker and new member tables. The speaker table will include members and guests who need easy access to the podium. The new member table will provide a space for new members to meet other new members and make sure they are welcomed and briefly oriented by our new member committee team.
5. In the past, Belleair Country Club and BWRC members have been allowed to save seats for others. This practice can no longer be accommodated for any



## BWRC OFFICERS

### President

Dianne Blum

### First Vice President

Sara Mollo

### Second Vice President

Claudia Walker

### Chaplain

Patricia Wagner

### Treasurers

Jessica Reed  
Louise Davis

### Hospitality

Candace  
Gardner

### Recording Secretary

Carol  
Abernathy

### Corresponding Secretary

Jessica Reed

### Historian

Deb Walker

### Parliamentarian

BWRC members or Belleair County Club members. If you need to leave your seat after selecting it, please put something in the seat to indicate it is occupied. Please do not save seats with napkins on the backs of chairs.

**Dianne Blum**  
BWRC President

**Renatta  
Cochran**

## **Nominations being sought for 2024 BWRC Outstanding Member Award**

Every two years, Belleair Women's Republican Club presents one of its members with an Outstanding Member Award in recognition of service on behalf of the club that goes above and beyond. Nominations are now being sought for the 2024 recipient.

To nominate someone for the 2024 BWRC Outstanding Member Award, please review the award criteria and then download the application form by clicking the buttons below and following the instructions on the form.

**Award Criteria**

**Nomination Form**

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

**Ann Gamble**

**Mary Farnham**

**Stacy Geier**

**Danielle "Dani" Marolf**

**Michelle Miller**

**Amelia Nichols**

**Renee Radalinsky**

**Peggy Sherwin**

**Nancy Skinner-Ericsson**

**Robert "Rob" Walker III \***

*\* Sustaining Member*

## **Pictures from the February Luncheon**





**Clearwater City Council Seat 2 candidates Ryan Cotton, left, and Mike Mastruserio, right, flank Pinellas County Board Commissioner Brian Scott.**



**Louise Davis and Clearwater mayoral candidate Bruce Rector**



**Clearwater City Council, Seat 3, candidate Mike Mannino and Sandra Sockwell.**



**Ryan Cotton and School Board Candidate Stacy Geier**



**Jillora Summers, Mary Rogero, Public Defender Sara Mollo and Ann Ferrentino**

## **DON'T FORGET TO VOTE**

**Presidential Preference Primary & Municipal Elections  
Tuesday, March 19 \*\*\*\*\* Polls open 7 am to 7 pm**



**It's  
That  
Time  
Again**

## TIME TO PAY 2024 MEMBERSHIP DUES

\$25.00 annual dues for 2024

Please make your check payable to BWRC

Send your check to:

**BWRC**

P.O. Box 1117

850 E. Lime Street

Tarpon Springs, FL 34688

**We hope to see you at the March luncheon!**

Belleair Women's Republican Club | 1 Country Club Lane, Belleair, FL 33767

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