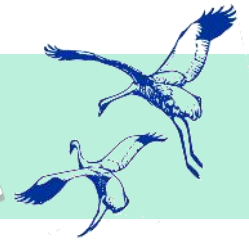


DWCLA NEWSLETTER



March 2023 - Covering Jan-March 2023

WATCH US GROW!

Something good has come from having a governor like Ron DeSantis; Democrats are standing up to be counted AND volunteer to help the Lakes Area Democrats make an impact. To that end we welcome all our new members from the last two years!

Clara Adkins, Paula Anderson, Mary Carter Bennett, Bill Black, Carleen Brock, Fran Buffington, Loretta Chandler, Sally Chesrown, Kathleen Culver, Susan Eisen, Connie Jylanki, Kerry Lundeen, Denise Matthews, Sandy McGee, Michael Wells, Terry Ann Wells, Merihelen Wheeler, and Eugenia Whitehead.



By Kate Ellison

The Democratic Women's Club of the Lakes Area held an afternoon social and invited hundreds of local registered Democratic women who live around us in rural North Florida. We filled a small building, maybe three dozen participants, including current members who were there to greet, help out, and who brought amazing homemade snacks. There was tea, sodas, and plenty of wine as well. Ten people signed up as new members, which met our goal.

The highlight of the afternoon came when one of the new members took to the podium. Her daughter, who was already a member, brought her that day. She walked slowly up to the front, leaning on a very brightly colored walking cane.

"I'm 95 years old," she said. "And I've seen a few things. I have something to say. I'm worried about the direction we are headed in here, and I was thinking I ought to speak up, oughta do something,

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Recommended Reading: Michelle's New Book!

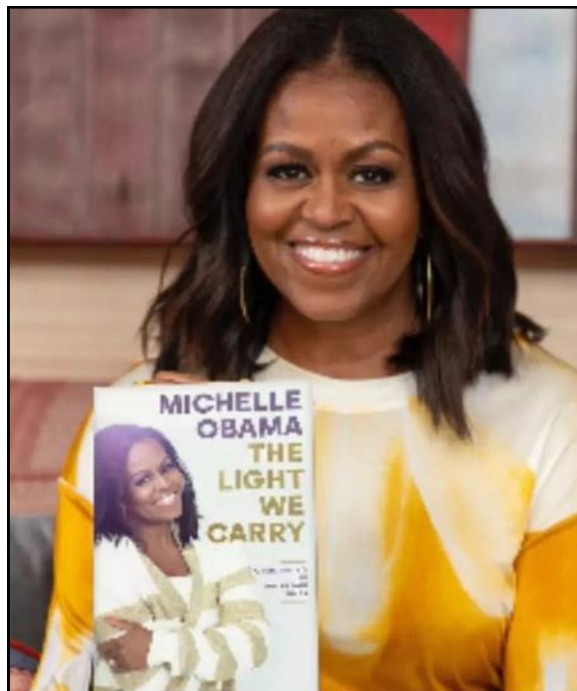
By Sandy Stephenson

Who does not feel anxious in these uncertain times? Yes, even the strong, intelligent, and poised. Michelle Obama has on many occasions. In her latest book, *The Light We Carry*, part self-help, part memoir, she shares her personal strategies to feel more comfortable and less paralyzed inside of uncertainty.

Most self-help books feel canned or full of recycled advice whereas the anecdotes and personal revelations Michelle

Obama entertains us with make her tips relatable. In each chapter she discusses a "tool" to help you keep yourself together and "carry your light".

The chapter on kindness offers simple tips such as ignoring the first negative thought that comes into your head. Continue to project kindness and warmth throughout your day, and perhaps coax a smile or chuckle out of someone. Her chapter on



partnering made me laugh out loud as she spills the beans on some of Barack's annoying (to her), habits. It also made me realize specific aspects of my 48-year marriage and why it has worked.

In the chapter "Being Seen" she recalls being told by her high school counselor that she was not "Princeton" material and many other relatable stories like what women, LGBT individuals and special needs people have experi-

enced. Her advice once again is spot on. Coincidentally, my counselor at the University of Florida told me to get my "Mrs. Degree" because I would not graduate. I earned a Bachelor's degree in Journalism minoring in history and a Master's degree in Education. I am still the only sibling in my family to earn college degrees.

The concluding chapter discusses her now famous phrase from the 2016 Democratic Convention, "When they go low, we go high". She details occasions and events when she has had to go "high". Her goal she says is to always do serious work in a joyful way to show people what is possible if we go high. Will this be helpful to you in uncertain times? Let's hope so. As Michelle Obama reminds us, "That's a light we can all carry!"

Internet Presence

Take a look at our web site, www.dwc-la.org. No password necessary. You can check the calendar for meeting and event dates, see photos and reporting of Club events, and be inspired.

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FRAN ROSSANO

By Leslie Skeans

Meet Fran Rossano!! She lives in Putnam County but has also lived in Seminole County, Volusia County, Leon County, Palm Beach County, Brevard County and Alachua County. She has been a Florida resident nearly 44 years, but she was born in Alabama. Fran graduated from Seminole High School in Sanford, Florida where her parents owned the Lake Monroe Inn for about 20 years.

Fran met her husband Joe at Lillian's in Gainesville in 1975, and moved out to Lake Swan in 1977 just before their first anniversary. Each of them brought two children into the marriage and now have seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren. Living in this rural setting seems to be the ideal place to raise children!

For ten years Fran was a nurse in the Cardiac and Surgical ICU, but decided to take a burn-out break when her family moved to the Lakes Area of Melrose and Keystone Heights. Always interested in property she decided to make a change and studied for her Realtor License (an interest she picked up from her



old family names and many people in the area. Fran and Joe were members of the Community Church and in ten years there she held almost every church position open to a woman; Board of Trustees, Board of Deacons, President of the Women, Bazaar Chair!

In 1992 the family moved to North Carolina for 16 years where Fran once again took up nursing. They returned to Melrose in 2009 to the same house on Swan Lake where they live today. All of her children remain in Florida.

Fran's hobbies have been jewelry-making, sewing, photography, gardening and reading. She reads a minimum of two books per week and often reads several at a time! She enjoys cooking but that's not a hobby! A music lover, The Voice is her favorite tv show.

During President Obama's second run for office Fran volunteered to make calls. That seemed to

Fran Rossano is the Founding Mother of our DWCLA

parents.) Fun fact: Fran sold cars at Shaw & Keeter Ford in Gainesville for a year while studying for her Florida Real Estate exam. Once licensed, she worked for Claire Chiappini in Melrose. The office was located where the Dollar General store is today.

Selling real estate was a quick way to learn her way around the Lakes Area, as well as get to know the

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New Member

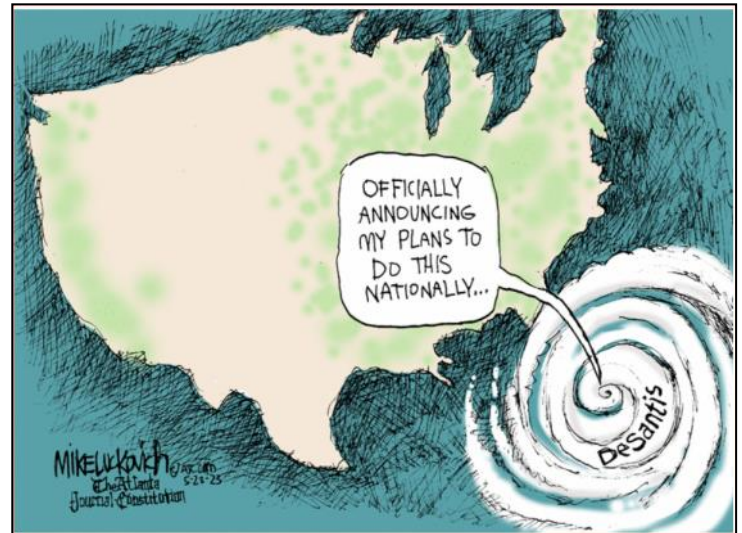
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when I got your invitation in the mail. Twice. You sent it to me twice! So here I am.” (The Club doesn’t send extra invitations on purpose. We are pretty tight with our stamps.)

She put it bluntly. “We are losing our democracy here in Florida if we don’t get busy and do something! We can’t sit back and say, ‘my goodness, look what’s happening in Tallahassee, or in Washington.’ I used to teach little children to read, and now DeSantis is telling us what children are allowed to read. My grandchildren are grown, and I have three great-grandchildren. I want them to have the same opportunities that I had, and that my children and grandchildren had. It runs deep in my blood.

“My daddy fought in the First World War,” she said. “I lived through the Depression, the Second World War, the 1950’s, the Civil Rights Movement, and all that came after. In the 1930’s I was growing up in North Carolina, way back in the hills. We didn’t have a telephone in our house, and the power company couldn’t afford to put poles down our road ‘cause there wasn’t enough people on the road to pay for it. But we did have a radio that ran off a battery, we did get news.

“People are wondering where DeSantis is headed, and I can tell you this much. On our radio, and we



got a magazine called *Life*, where there were pictures of Hitler in Germany, and he started burning books. He was telling people what they could read.

“DeSantis is stepping on my toes!” That’s all she said, and she sat back down.

The room erupted in cheers and gave her a standing ovation. These are regular middle-class Democrats, not particularly radical, not extreme. Now, as DeSantis and his fellow Right-wingers circle the wagons around their indicted crook of a leader, the rest of us need to be strategizing. Because we can’t let a 95-year-old woman get her toes stepped on. We recognize it will take more than voting to get DeSantis off her toes, and off our necks. We have to stop his mind control while we still can.

Changes to Voting by Mail in Florida

There is a new requirement that Floridians who vote by mail must request a mail-in ballot every general election cycle.

This means you’re no longer eligible to vote by mail in Florida’s next election until you re-enroll with the Supervisor of Elections.

Please note that the new law requires you provide your Florida driver’s license number and the last

four digits of your Social Security number when signing up to vote by mail. The numbers you provide must match what you provided when you registered to vote.

Last year’s law, S.B. 90, created new hurdles for voters such as retroactively canceling mail ballot requests, forcing voters to make redundant requests

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Fran Rossano

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light a spark because she then reached out to the local Democratic Executive Committee. In 2015, a friend recom-

mended that the Democratic Women's Club of Florida would be a good fit. The ball got rolling when the state organization discovered Fran was interested in starting a new club. The rest is DWCLA history. Fran was the first club Secretary, and the second President. Now in addition to being an active member of DWCLA Fran is the President of the Putnam County Democratic Women's Club and continues as a Precinct Captain in Pct 15, Melrose.

As new members join our group Fran wants to share her knowledge and experience. She shows that women can and should assume leadership roles in our state and local organizations without fear of intimidation.

Besides the above-mentioned groups, Fran belongs to the Putnam County DEC, FDP, Melrose Business and Community Association, Planned Parenthood, NOW, and North Central Florida Indivisible.

DONATE TODAY!

Your recurring donation of even \$5 or \$10 a month will help! In order to work in the community to energize democratic women, WE NEED YOU! Your donation will be used to help our grassroots outreach in the lake area counties. We write post cards, do door to door canvassing, phone bank, and more to reach voters in our counties. Go Online to the website or to [Act Blue](#), directly.



Myth: A voter can't vote in person if they have received a Vote-By-Mail ballot.

Fact: A voter can decide to vote at the polls instead of using their Vote-By-Mail ballot. The SOE will check that the vote-by-mail ballot has not been received and if it hasn't, then they can vote using a regular ballot at the polling location. Voters are not required to bring their vote-by-mail ballot when voting in person at their polling location.

Vote by Mail

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for mail ballots, eliminating most ballot drop-boxes, and reducing the options for early voting. All of these measures make it tougher for everyone to vote, but especially the elderly and mobility-impaired. In addition to yourself, think about whether anyone in your life needs to sign up for vote-by-mail and get them the information.

You can sign up now for your vote-by-mail ballot, so you will be ready for the next election. You can check your registration status and request a Vote-by-Mail ballot from your county Supervisor of Elections website, or you can call them at one of the numbers listed here:

Alachua County:

votealachua.com or (352) 374-5252

Bradford County:

bradfordelections.com or 904-966-6266

Clay County:

clayelections.gov or (904) 269-6350

Putnam County:

soe.putnam-fl.com or (386) 329-0224

**IT SHOULD BE EASIER
TO VOTE - NOT HARDER**



TAKE ACTION TODAY!