



With the Lines Drawn, Now is the Time to Be Vocal

With the primary races largely over, the political lines are drawn, and the stakes to the future of US democracy have never been higher. Now is certainly the time to become vocal and make friends and neighbors aware of both the importance of the election and the Democratic Party Platform.

Talking to our neighbors

by Kate Ellison

Democrats are always trying to refine our talking points, figure out the perfect way to tell our neighbors why they should join the Blue team and vote for our candidates. After all, we're the ones who got people with pre-conditions covered by insurance, cut the cost of insurance and prescription drugs, brought us out of the terrible recession after Covid, made sure the job market was secure, etc.

However, the best way to reach someone is to start by listening to them. Ask them what issues are important to them. If they were voting, what kind of things would be on their minds? You never know, it could be the quality of local schools, or the cost of homeowner's insurance, for example. Listen, then talk about what they are interested in, and relate it back to Democratic priorities or prior legislation. We support increasing money for public education. Republicans in Florida have had years to address the cost of insurance and done nothing to help. We believe that government can play a role here, setting caps on increases, for example, or reducing costs rather than bailing out corporations.



The Florida Democratic Party sends out "talking points," providing guidance every week on where Democrats stand on current events in the news. If you would like to receive this information, write to press@floridadems.org and ask to be added to the Talking Points email. To find out what Democrats are doing all over the state, read Nikki Freed's newsletter, *From the Chair's Desk*, which you can subscribe to [here](#).



DWCLA NEWSLETTER

CLUB EVENTS



Speaker's Corner



Club Meeting Speakers and Events

By Kate Ellison

June Meeting

One of the US Senate candidates, Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, came to Melrose to speak at our June meeting. She hit all the high points – reproductive rights, affordable health care, controlling the rising costs of home insurance, protecting Medicare and Social Security, keeping guns out of the hands of criminals, and legal pathways for immigrants to achieve citizenship while protecting our borders.



Debbie Mucarsel-Powel

Her success in the House of Representatives gives her the experience and confidence that she can beat Rick Scott (and as we now know) when she becomes the Democratic nominee for Senate in the November election. This is an opportunity to flip a seat in the Senate, but it will be expensive and hard-fought.

July Meeting

We took a break from serious business and played games with each other: card games, board games, dominoes, etc. Winners of the games got a Winner's Certificate!

It was great fun – laughter is the best medicine. We took a double dose before the intensive work of the fall campaign began in earnest.



August Meeting

Candidate James Stockton came to speak to our August meeting, giving a great speech that ranged from his background and how he ended up in Ocala to an outline of his platform. His background and training as a preacher is obvious. He is running for US House District 6, which includes Putnam County.



James Stockton III

His platform initials are H.E.R.E. – Healthcare, Education, Rights of Women, and Environment. He stands for preserving and expanding Health care (Medicare, Medicaid), protecting public Education from government interference, codifying Roe into federal law, and protecting the Environment, especially the importance of clean water. He says if you want to help him with his campaign, what he needs is your Time, Talent and Treasure.

Upcoming Club Events

YOU'RE INVITED!

*Lakes Area Annual
Community DANCE*

September 21
7:00 pm

*Live Dance Band
Refreshments*

Keystone Heights Woman's Club
6747 Woman's Club Dr., Keystone Heights 32656

Music by
**Crooked
Counsel**

Sponsored by
the Democratic
Women's Club
of the
Lakes Area



FLAG WAVING FOR HARRIS-WALZ

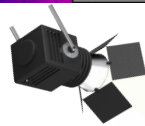
Every Friday, 4:30—6:30
in Oct. plus Nov. 1st!
At the Stoplight in Melrose



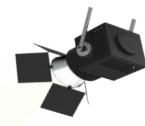
WALK AGAINST HATE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2 PM STOP HATE!
Hear from diverse speakers in Melrose Heritage Park
and walk along Hwy 26 to the stoplight and back!

DWCLA ♥ PO Box 802 ♥ Melrose, FL 32666 ♥ 352-235-4161



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT Sarah Flowers



By *Rissi Cherie*

Sarah is our member who breaks out with a song at every meeting! She shares her home with 3 dogs, Coco, Choppy, and Waldo, plus a cat named Miss Cleo. She did mention that her husband's name is Gary, and that they recently celebrated their 20th anniversary. She has one offspring, a son named Lambert.

Originally from New York, Sarah transplanted to Florida a long time ago. She retired from working for the State of Florida at Tacachale where she was supervisor of people with special needs.

Always a Democrat, she worked with the Martin Luther King organization and has been a member of the Lakes Area for over four years. Sarah has a happy disposition, and she loves to sing. We all know that she has a beautiful voice.

She enjoys worship service, yard work, growing flowers, and talking to people. She's a long time volunteer at a couple of food banks.

Here's a sweet little surprise. Her nickname is Sugar!



*Sugar
& Spice
Everything Nice*



Great IDEAS and DEIA Begin at Home

As our region chair, Phillip Miner, told us at the DWCF convention,

The IDEA is DEIA

Diversity, Equality, Inclusion and Accessibility DEIA matters because it promotes fair treatment and full participation of all people. As we learn about this IDEA, we come to understand that it is OUR obligation

- 1) to ensure that any member or guest with a disability is made comfortable and
- 2) has access to everything the able bodied have easy access to.

I was made aware of this issue when our president, Cheryl Owen, told me she was distressed to learn that at our May meeting she missed an entire motion, discussion, and vote. Her difficulty hearing, even with hearing aids, means that frequently she cannot follow our discussions during meetings.

We, the membership, must make accommodations for our excellent president. Cheryl is the glue that holds us together and moves us forward in many ways. We cannot let her down!

The two vice presidents discussed our options



and propose new rules that will help Cheryl and anyone else with difficulty hearing:

- Stand up when you want to speak, and wait for Cheryl to give you the floor. Remain standing as you speak, and face toward her. If you are unable to stand, raise your hand and/or ask your neighbor to stand for you to be recognized to speak.
- Do not speak when Cheryl or another club member has the floor.
- Cheryl will conduct the meeting from the side center of the room (not the stage) for better hearing.
- We will consider a different arrangement of the tables for sound and visibility.

We will see about a wireless mic for Cheryl. Please help us hold more productive and inclusive meetings. If you have any questions or new ideas, let us hear from you.

Kate Ellison Rissi Cherie
1st VP 2nd VP



SPOTLIGHT ON WOMEN IN LITERATURE AND HISTORY

Women in Literature



The Sojourner

By Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

Book Review by Sandy Stephenson

The recent political climate makes it seem hardworking Americans who treat others with respect, honor, and empathy are rare. Reading Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' last novel, *The Sojourner*, reminds us of our great history of hard-working people. It is a great story of rural America in the late 1800's as the main character, Ashel, (Asa), manages his family farm after his older brother, (his mother's favorite), leaves for the West.

Asa, barely an adult, marries, raises his family, deals with his crazy mother and manages a huge farm, while dealing with tragedy, disappointment and heartbreak. He always treats others with respect and honesty even when they don't deserve it. I found myself shouting at times while reading it. However, the story does end well with a final resolution for Asa.

Rawlings spent ten years writing *The Sojourner* and died the year it was released. She describes going outside every day to work in soil and appreciate nature as she wrote. Her descriptions throughout the books of the outdoors and the forces of nature give you visions. For example, "the wind snapping his fangs at the limbs of the oak trees," describing

**MARJORIE
KINNAN
RAWLINGS**



THE SOJOURNER

a storm. Rawlings also liked to cook, and her descriptions of meals fed to anyone who came by, "chopped chives added to the scrambled eggs" and "mashed potatoes swimming in fresh butter" made my mouth water.

Overall, it's a simple story but full of many diverse characters including gypsies, Native Americans, immigrants, judges and small town gossips. The Melrose Library Book Club chose *The Sojourner* for their August reading. The group of twelve had a lively discussion with several diverse opinions about the characters. Everyone said they enjoyed the book. If interested, the Melrose Library Book Club meets the third Friday of each month at 10:30 in the Magnolia Room at the library.

Editorial Opinion- By Scott Alexander

Florida's Un-Democratic Democratic Party

Florida Democrats had no voice in picking a presidential candidate this election cycle. The Florida Democratic Party scrapped its presidential primary this year and only submitted President Joe Biden's name for the 2024 ballot.

There were three other candidates: Representative Dean Phillips (D-MN), Cenk Uygur and Marianne Williamson, who had planned to run against Biden in the Florida Democratic primary. They were denied that opportunity. More importantly, Florida's registered Democrats were denied the opportunity to weigh in on Joe Biden's fitness to run for president.

As we all witnessed during Biden's debate with Donald Trump, Biden displayed serious mental lapses in his performance that evening. There were many accusations and editorials from both friends and foes of Biden that he was no longer up for the job **before** that evening. Florida democrats were denied a voice in that decision.

In late November of 2023 Nikki Fried, chairwoman of the Florida Democrats, submitted a list of presidential candidates to the Florida secretary of state on who would participate in their primary election on March 19 -- and only Biden's name was on it. This move led the state to cancel the primary altogether, because Florida state law dictates that if only one candidate is on a party's primary ballot, their primary election would not be held.

"What an irony that the party called the Democratic Party, the party that claims to be



the champion of democracy, has basically decided that Joe Biden will be the candidate," Marianne Williamson said. "Now this is authoritarianism, just as Cenk said. When I was a child, we were told that in the Soviet Union people could vote, but then were told who their options were. And that's exactly what's happening here."

So now, we have Kamala Harris as our candidate. Once again voters had no choice in this decision. Delegates at the Democratic Nation Convention selected her to succeed Biden without input from voters.

The reality of the situation for most of us reading this newsletter is we were going to vote for Biden or his anointed successor Harris anyway. I know I was. I fully support Harris as the Democratic candidate for president and prefer her to Biden, for whom I had very serious doubts regarding his fitness to continue. My doubts were not enough that I would have voted for Donald Trump, whose many faults and convictions make him totally unfit for office. Trump is a threat to democracy in America itself. But during this election cycle the Democratic Party itself seems to also be threat to democracy. Let's hope this is not a trend.

DWCLA NEWSLETTER

When are Primaries OPEN in a Closed Primary State?

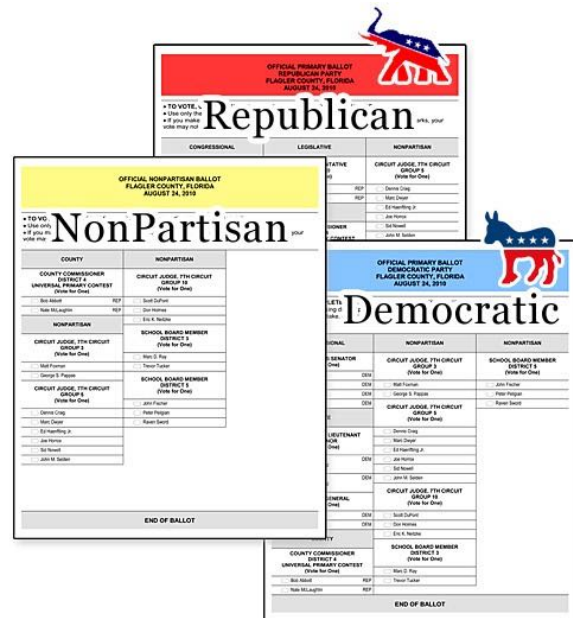
By Kate Ellison

Florida has closed primaries; that is, only Democrats vote in Democratic primaries and only Republicans vote in GOP primaries. But there is an important exception: when the opposing party does not field a candidate. In that case, the single party candidates are placed on all primary ballots, because the race will be decided in the primary and all voters are given the opportunity to weigh in.

That is, except when an independent or other party candidate is also running and the winner of the single primary will stand against that candidate in November. Candidates have to run in the party to which they are registered, and if they want to cross over, they are required to change parties a year before the filing deadline. This prevents a last-minute spoiler, a non-serious candidate, from filing as NPA and closing the primary just to hold onto party power. Of course, a conservative Independent or Libertarian could choose to run just to close the primary.

For example, in Bradford County no Democrats ran for School Board or Superintendent. I was able to vote in the Republican primary contest between the three GOP School Board candidates in my district, the only candidates running. But I could not vote in the Republican primary for School Superintendent because we have an Independent (and serious) candidate running for that office. The School Superintendent will be chosen in November.

Our closed primaries are sometimes, but not always, closed.



August Primaries and Beyond

By Kate Ellison and Scott Alexander

US Senate

Although there were four good candidates, Debbie Mucarsel-Powell won out. She came to speak with us, as she spoke at numerous DWC's across Florida.



Debbie Mucarsel-Powell

She was elected to the U.S. House in 2018, becoming the first South American immigrant elected to Congress, but lost her seat to a Republican in 2020 when Trump was on the ballot. She won her primary race handily and faces Rick Scott in November.

Local Multi-County Races

Tom Wells will face incumbent Republican Kat Cammack for US House District 3 (Alachua and Bradford). LaShonda LJ Holloway faces incumbent Republican Aaron Bean for District 4 (Clay). Incumbent Michael Waltz won his primary in US House District 6 (Putnam) and will face Democratic challenger James Stockton III in November.



Tom Wells



LaShonda Holloway

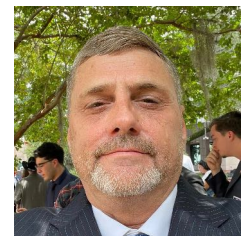


James Stockton III

For State Senator in District 7 (Putnam) Democrat George Anthony "T" Hill II will face Tom Leek, the winner of a nasty Republican primary there. In District 6, Jennifer Bradley is

not up for reelection; this district covers part of Alachua and Clay all of Bradford counties. The District 9 seat in south Alachua currently held by Keith Perry will be a contest between Democrat Sylvain Dore and Republican Stan McClain. Finally, no more Keith Perry!

Judson Sapp won the Republican nomination for the newly-drawn Florida House District 20 seat, to replace Bobby Payne, who is term limited. Sapp will go up against Democrat Tony



Tony Connolly

Connolly of Palatka in November. District 20 comprises Clay, St. Johns, Putnam and Marion counties.

Yvonne Hayes Hinson did not have an opponent and will keep her seat in House Dist. 21. There were no primary contests in HD 10, which includes northern Alachua, and all of Bradford counties. Democratic newcomer, Bobby Brady, will face incumbent Chuck Brannan. Likewise, the race for State Attorney in Alachua and Bradford counties waits for November. Incumbent Brian Cramer will face Democratic challenger Yvens Pierre-Antoine.



Yvens Pierre-Antoine

Alachua County

In the sheriff's race, it appeared that there were no bad choices among the three African-American men running. They all seem compassionate and "woke." Chad Scott, a captain



(continued next page) Page 8

August Primaries and Beyond



Alachua County (cont.)

at the Alachua Police Department who resigned as major at the Alachua County Sheriff's Office in charge of department operations to run for office, won Tuesday night's Democratic primary election with 51.13% of the vote. Scott will now face Republican incumbent Sheriff Gainey, who was appointed to the position by Gov. Ron



Chad Scott

DeSantis in 2023, and Pamela Marshall-Koons (NOP) in the November General Election.

The majority of voters chose to excuse Diyonne McGraw from further service on the school board. Her opponent, Thomas Vu showed extensive knowledge, a passion for the needs of students and teachers alike, obvious integrity and transparency, and a warm and open personality. Former Alachua County teacher and district staff member Thomas Vu garnered 53.86% of the vote.



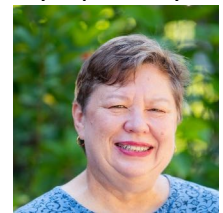
Thomas Vu

Three-time incumbent school board member Leanetta McNealy will serve a fourth term after easily defeating retired public school guidance counselor Lew Welge, with 72.26% of the vote.

With 61.4% of the vote, James Ingle, an electrician and president of the local electrician's union (IBEW local 1205), easily defeated Fareed "Reed" Johnson for another school board seat. Ingle has previously served on the Alachua County Plan Board and the local CareerSource board. At a candidate forum, Ingle and Johnson responses to questions made James' strength

as a candidate obvious, while Fareed seemed to know nothing about the issues or about holding elected office. Was his candidacy just a Republican foil?

Democratic incumbent Mary Alford picked up 72.36% of the vote in Tuesday's primary election to defeat challenger DeJeon Cain. Alford will now face Republican candidate Lizabeth Ann Doebler for the County Commission District 1 seat in November.



Mary Alford

In House District 22, both Amy Trask and David Arreola could represent Alachua County well, but David has the name recognition as a former city commissioner, and he also presented better as a candidate. In the Democratic primary, Arreola won with 56.74% of the total vote.



David Arreola

While challenger Amy Trask won both Gilchrist and Levy counties by a combined 401 votes, she fell short in Alachua County by 2,150 votes. Republican Chad Johnson and Democrat David Arreola advanced to the General Election in the race for Florida House District 22, which includes all of Levy and Gilchrist counties and western Alachua County.

Bradford County

Will Hartley, Candace Osteen (incumbent, School Board) and Dianne Andrews

(continued next page) Page 9

August Primaries and Beyond



Bradford County (continued)

(incumbent, County Commission) won their respective Republican Primaries, and only Hartley has another opponent in the fall. He will face Independent Alan Bhajan, vying for Hartley's seat as School Superintendent. If he wins in November, Hartley will be the first Superintendent to hold two consecutive terms in many years. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell's was the only other primary on the ballot.

Carolyn Brown Spooner was not in a primary for her seat on the County Commission, but has an opponent in November.

This is a race to watch, in the brand-new District 1 that is specifically designed to allow African-Americans to elect someone of their choice to



Carolyn Brown Spooner

represent them. Her opponent in the fall, a white Republican, has a good chance of winning, possibly eliminating the only elected Democrat in the county.

Clay County

Robert Alvero got the most votes in a 4-way primary for Dist. 2 School Board, but did not win a majority. He will face the runner-up from that race, Jim Hughes, in November. Although School Board races are non-partisan, most of the Clay County offices are held by Republicans and are unopposed in November. There is an interesting race for Sheriff between incumbent Michelle Cook and former Sheriff Darryl Daniels.

Putnam County

The good news is Paul Adamczyk was defeated

for school board. He's MAGA and his wife is in Moms for Liberty; Rick Surrency was re-elected. Anne Marie Gennusa, incumbent Putnam Judge, got more votes than Sharp in the non-partisan primary, but spoiler Carolyn Daniels kept her from winning outright. The two major candidates will face off in November.

Brenda Bridges was in an open Republican primary and won handily. She has worked in the Tax office for a number of years and her expertise was obvious. She was the choice of many Putnam Democrats.

The three Putnam County Commission contests were open, exclusively Republican, primaries. Winners Walt Pellicer District 5, and Josh Alexander, District 3, sounded normal (not MAGA) in the way they presented themselves in the newspaper. When JR Newbold, winner in District 1, was asked about Trump, he said he disapproved of Trump's behavior toward women, but would be voting for him. So, he is not a big Trumper, but he is a big developer in the county, so we know where his priorities lie.

Unlike many cities and counties across the country, our bright red Clay and Putnam counties will not have much in the way of local contests to drive voters to the polls. This highlights the wisdom of the state party's efforts to contest every state house and senate seat, ensuring we have Democratic candidates to vote for. Bradford has the one County Commission contest as well as the state house candidate. As a "blue dot in a red sea," Alachua County remains an inspiration.

August Primaries and Beyond- Amendments and The Beyond Part



A very important part of this year's election on a state level are proposed amendments to the Florida State Constitution. The following are the proposed amendments on the ballot and recommendations by the Democratic party for voting. As with all amendments to the constitution, your vote may have an effect for decades to come.

AMENDMENTS ON THE BALLOT

NO Amendment 1 Changes school board elections from nonpartisan to partisan beginning in the November 2026 general election and for primary elections nominating party candidates for the 2026 election

NO Amendment 2 Establishes a state constitutional right to hunt and fish

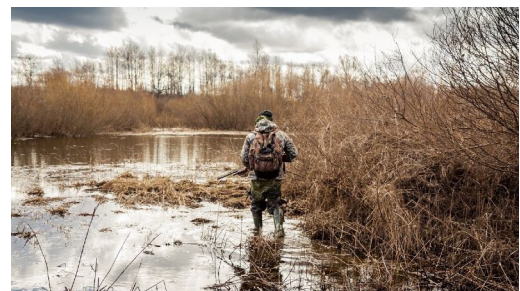
YES Amendment 3 Legalize marijuana for adults 21 years old and older

YES Amendment 4 Provide a state constitutional right to abortion before viability

NO Amendment 5 Provide for an annual inflation adjustment for the value of the homestead property tax exemption

NO Amendment 6 Repeal a constitutional provision providing for public campaign financing for candidates who agree to spending limits.

ELECTION
'24 
ISSUES AT STAKE



The Last Laugh



HOW TO STOP DONALD TRUMP FROM LYING:



Chattanooga Times Free Press *Bennett*

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.



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Take a look at our web site — no password necessary. You can check the calendar for meeting and event dates, see photos and reporting of Club events, and be inspired.