

*From Our President*

**Florida Federation of Republican Women  
Spring Conference**



The RWOF representatives were welcomed to the 2023 Florida Federation of Republican Women Spring Conference meeting in Tallahassee by President Diane Van Parys. We enjoyed the conference and visiting the Capitol.

It was exciting for each of us to visit the Senate. Senate President Kathleen Passidomo is only the third woman in the State of Florida to become Senate President. It was so exciting to stand behind the podium and see her fuzzy bedroom slippers beneath the podium.



We received updates on Legislation and discussed bills passing out of committees to the Senate and House floor for votes. Governor DeSantis has signed bills on Affordable Housing-Live Local Act passing 40-0, Parental Rights in Education, School Choice; Permit less carry gun bill; Abortion Heartbeat Bill and so much more. The number one priority of the House and Senate is to pass a balanced Budget. How great

to have a Super Majority in the House and the Senate. We had wonderful speakers including Speaker of the House Paul Renner.

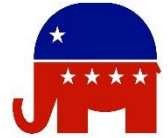
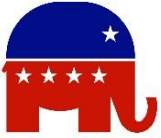
Governor Ron DeSantis was our speaker on Sunday morning and gave us a wonderful report on the progress of our state. It is so thrilling to report there are 600,000 plus more registered Republicans than Democrats in the Free State of Florida!!

I will update RWOF members on many things that we learned at the convention at our upcoming May Meeting.



*Speaker Paul Renner, President Diane Van Parys*

*Deborah Stone, President RWOF*



**1<sup>st</sup> V.P. DESLEY PARKER**

Leslie Fuller is a Niceville native and graduated from Niceville High School in 2000. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education from Flagler College in 2004. After a few years of teaching and spending time at home with her children, she graduated with a Master of Social Work from Florida State University in 2022. Leslie is our RWOF Non-Traditional Scholarship Winner.

Leslie married her high school sweetheart and after moving away for a few years, they have been happy to call Niceville their home for the past fifteen. She and her husband, Tyler have six children, four of whom are adopted from foster care. It was during the adoption process that Leslie became inspired to go back to school for social work.

Leslie is the Director of The Pearl Project, a non-profit that provides trauma-informed education and support to foster, adoptive, and kinship families. Leslie has a heart for vulnerable children and a desire to help families connect and begin to heal from the inside out.



**KATHY FOSTER, HOSPITALITY**

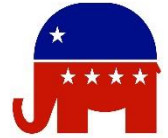
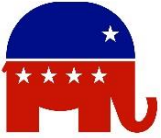


**Our MAY Menu:**

- House Salad w/Ranch Vinaigrette
- Warm Rolls & Butter
- Teriyaki Glazed Pork Loin
- Baked BBQ Chicken
- Sauteed Vegetables
- Macaroni & Cheese
- Dessert: Rocky Road Bundt Cake

The cost is \$20 for members and \$22 for guests.

Please respond with a Yay or Nay by **Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>**, as reservations are required. Contact Kathy Foster @ [fosterpk@gnt.net](mailto:fosterpk@gnt.net)



**2nd V.P. KATHY ALEXANDER**

**April Free Lunch Winner:  
Dorothy Porter**

**Free Twisted Grape Certificate:  
Jackie Pilcher**

**50/50: JoAnn Wallace**

**April New Members: Sarah Poole, Vickie Morris, Jenny Berge, Amy Gootee, and Brenda Watkins**

*Happy Birthday*

**Irene Fisher – May 9**

**Gay Gallian – May 9**

**Gretchen Gilligan – May 11**

**Jeanne Rief – May 14**

**Mary Jo Horner – May 20**

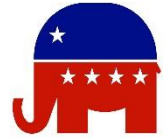
**Sherri Biggs – May 21**

**June Scroggin – May 22**

**Joan Ropka – May 23**

**Associate Member: Patt Maney – May 22**





**MARTHA GORECKI, CHAPLAIN**

**Our May message is: Duty, Honor, Country**

- Paragraph of General Douglas MacArthur's farewell speech to Corps of Cadets at West Point (May 12, 1962)
  - These highest moral laws stand the test of time
  - Soldiers are required to practice greatest act of religious training
  - Divine help can sustain the soldiers
  - Soldiers are called upon to offer the noblest development of mankind

**Song: God Bless America**



**ANNA PEELE  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH**



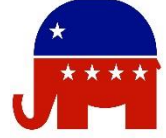
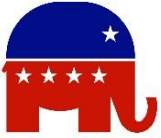
The April donation for the Gulf Coast Sexual Assault Awareness Program was a huge

success. Lots of good clothes and personal hygiene items were given for the "to go" bags that the program provides to victims after their medical exams are complete. Anna and Linda Gail delivered the donations to the thankful staff.

Billie Chappell also delivered many bags of clothes from the Repeat Street Thrift Shop where she is a volunteer. The manager of the shop has agreed to provide bags of clothes to this program on a continuing basis. What a kind gesture.

Thank you, Anna, Ellen, Karen, Linda Gail





## **COMMISSIONER CAROLYN KETCHEL**

### **Brooks Bridge and Santa Rosa Boulevard Improvements**



The FDOT Brooks Bridge Replacement Project Development and Environmental Study have been completed and aesthetics workshops have taken place. The design has been carefully vetted and replacement with a state-of-the-art bridge is underway. The careful design of the bridge and upcoming proposed bike path makes this the right time to improve Santa Rosa Boulevard. Planned improvements to traffic flow, safety standards and aesthetics in a computer-generated animation of the Brooks Bridge replacement.

As the Brooks Bridge Replacement project moves forward there are many unfounded truths regarding buildings that will be demolished. Everything that needed to be removed for the construction of Brooks Bridge has been removed. Nothing else is scheduled to be moved, removed or demolished, other than the bridges themselves.

The north side of the bridge will be constructed first. When the north side is finished, the south side will begin after which we will finally have our new Brooks Bridge. The new six-lane bridge will be completed by 2027. The bridge will be 10 feet higher than the existing bridge and will begin on the Fort Walton Beach side immediately east of the Perry Avenue intersection with US 98.

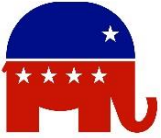
The great news is that it will bypass the existing intersection of Santa Rosa Boulevard with a new landing point just west of the convention center. Traffic on Santa Rosa Boulevard will go under the new bridge with access to either a dedicated lane to get to Fort Walton Beach or an access road before the bridge to go to Destin. With additional lane capacity on the bridge, and the removal of the current intersection at Santa Rosa Boulevard, traffic in the area will flow more freely.

This new configuration will minimize traffic delays on Santa Rosa Boulevard, even during times of heavy traffic. After almost two years of reviews by year-round residents, we are pleased with the overwhelming support of the proposed Okaloosa Island improvements for Santa Rosa Boulevard. Through analysis of traffic patterns, input from residents and community partners, and expert advice of county engineers on the improvement concepts, the Board of County Commissioners voted unanimously in support of the changes for Okaloosa Island.

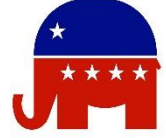
Motor vehicle lanes will range from 5 lanes at the heaviest point of entry, down to 2 lanes headed West, approaching the end of public access at the Eglin Airforce Base access. Make sure you view the attached videos so that you can see how the lane changes make for a better traffic flow with the new intersections at Brooks Bridge.

Pedestrian-friendly features will be integrated into the design, such as sidewalks and a multi-use path, in addition to aesthetic landscape features..

By vote of five to zero on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, the Board of County Commission voted unanimously to support a \$610,000 expenditure for design and construction development drawings for the redevelopment of Santa Rosa Boulevard. We are one step closer to getting this project under way!



## RWOF TRUMPET



Okaloosa Island will have stormwater and infrastructure improvements, including a multimodal path and bicycle lanes, for enhanced safety of motorists and pedestrians. The county also considered input from Eglin Air Force Base in the concepts by implementing a gradual decrease of lanes at the West end of Santa Rosa Boulevard rather than the abrupt 4-lane stop at the Eglin gate. While the majority of the audience was in favor of the improvements proposed, a few expressed resistances to change.

We continue to work with Florida Power and Light to identify ways to bury the power lines on the Island. We know at some point we will have a hurricane, or significant weather event, and underground lines would reduce the time needed to return power to our citizens.

Design drawings are being developed now. Once detailed topographic, soil, and utility information has been analyzed the many details required to properly design the improvements will be established and a construction schedule can be developed.

Finally, a proposed Bridge to Bridge Bike Path is in the final stage of improvement with Eglin AFB. If built from Brooks Bridge to Destin (Marler) Bridge, this 12-foot-wide bike path, on the Gulf side, will save countless lives and injuries.

My Sincere Thanks,

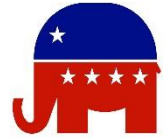
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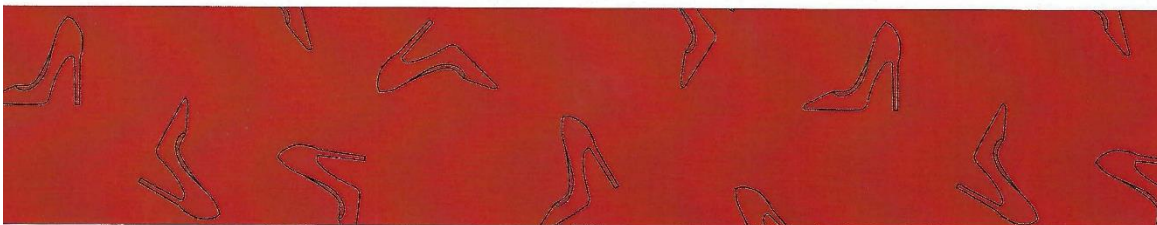
# RWOF TRUMPET

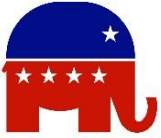


## 2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

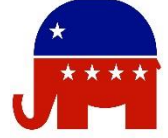


	Committee Stops			Floor Vote	Governor Signature
	1	2	3		
<b>HB 7/SB 300- Abortion</b> Rep Jenna Persons-Mulicka Senator Erin Grall	✓	✓		✓	
<b>HB 1069/SB 1320 - Child Protection in Schools</b> Rep Stan McClain Senator Clay Yarborough	✓	✓		✓	
<b>HB 1/SB 202 - Universal School Choice</b> Rep Kaylee Tuck Senator Corey Simon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>HB 1421/SB 254 - Gender Reassignment</b> Rep Randy Fine Senator Clay Yarborough	✓	✓		✓	
<b>HB 7005/SB 7050 - Election Integrity</b> Rep Juan Fernandez-Barquin Senator Danny Burgess	✓				
<b>HB 1423/SB 1438 - Drag Shows</b> Rep Randy Fine Senator Clay Yarborough	✓	✓			
<b>HB 543/SB 150 - Permitless Concealed Carry</b> Rep Chuck Brannan Senator Jay Collins	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>HB 221/SB 214 - Credit Card Processors/Firearms</b> Rep John Snyder Senator Danny Burgess	✓	✓			
<b>HB 3/SB 302 - Ban on ESG</b> Rep Bob Rommel & Tyler Sirols Senator Erin Grall	✓	✓		✓	
<b>HB 1557/SB 1690 - Human Trafficking</b> Rep Michelle Salzman Senator Blaise Ingoglia	✓	✓			
<b>HB 999/SB 266 - Removing DEI from Higher Ed</b> Rep Alex Andrade Senator Erin Grall	✓				





## RWOF TRUMPET



### REPUBLICAN WOMEN OF OKALOOSA FEDERATED MISSION STATEMENT

To bring women together to educate about Local, State and National issues; to improve the quality of life in Okaloosa County through political activity and community involvement; to advance the participation of Republican women in all areas of our political system; and to encourage and support qualified Republican women to seek and win public office.

The "RWOF TRUMPET" is brought to you by

Past President Maddie McNeal

Submit articles to:

[Smile4maddie2@gmail.com](mailto:Smile4maddie2@gmail.com)

Cell: 850-259-0292

Check out our RWOF Website: [RWOFUSA.ORG](http://RWOFUSA.ORG)

Like us on Facebook: Republican Women of Okaloosa Federated

Florida Federation of Republican Women – [FFRW.net](http://FFRW.net)

National Federation of Republican Women – [NFRW.org](http://NFRW.org)

