

THE INFORMED DEMOCRAT OF SWFL



Club of the Month

Burnt Store Blue: A Grassroots Organization

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Burnt Store Blue is a grassroots organization formed in 2018. It meets monthly at venues in the Burnt Store Marina neighborhood and strives to cover topics of concern to residents along the Burnt Store Road corridor from Charlotte County to Lee County.

Burnt Store Blue began as small house parties. These get-togethers were later formalized and organized as a Steering Committee. The initial focus was on helping to elect Democratic candidates in the 2018 midterm elections. They have provided a platform for candidates in each election since.

The club's first dinner meeting was held at the Linkside Cafe in Burnt Store Marina and followed a simple format with a dinner, a keynote speaker with Q&A, and a raffle or drawing to help meet costs. To the organizers' shock and joy seventy people showed up. And so, they have followed that basic format to this day and continue to draw good-sized crowds.

Their guest speakers have ranged from Lee County Democratic candidates to current elected officials. Currently, they have commitments from the Public Affairs office of the Veterans Administration and the Chairman of the Lee County Commissioners. These speakers represent issues that cross party lines. To attract speakers, *Burnt Store Blue* created an affiliated group, *Burnt Store Common Ground*. This effort has brought in speakers on topics such as the right to clean water, and growth and development along the Burnt Store Road corridor. It also brought in voters of all stripes.

Together, *Burnt Store Blue* and *Burnt Store Common Ground* invite all residents to find a welcoming space for socializing, engaging in important issues and helping each other through these uncertain times. To join their email list, go to BurntStoreBlue.org to sign up.