

President's Message

Candy Gale, President

LIVE, IN PERSON! The garden poll results are in so yes, we will meet **March 17** at the **USF Botanical Gardens**, 12210 USF Pine Drive, Tampa 33612. Be there by 10:00 a.m. for a tour of the Gardens, a 16-acre green space showcasing over 3,000 plants. Wear walking shoes and bring a hat. Admission is \$4 for seniors (60+) and free for garden members.

Parking directions will be sent before the meeting.

WEAR A MASK! Many of us have had one or both vaccinations but the CDC recommends continuing safe practices. Feel free to bring hand sanitizer, wipes, a face shield, or rubber gloves. We will socially distance as much as possible so please no hugs or handshakes, no matter how long it has been since we were last together in person.

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Our February meeting featured Patricia Henderson from the **Senior Connection Center**. This private, non-profit organization's goal is to help older adults maintain the highest quality of life possible. Services include Long Term Care resources, Health and Wellness classes, Outreach and Education, and SHINE.

Member Rich Lucas took the SHINE training to answer telephone questions about Medicare and Medicaid. He also refers callers to other services as needed. Ms. Henderson says don't wait for a crisis but call the **Elder Helpline** at **1-800-963-5337** to learn about available services.



## Happy MARCH Birthday!

02: Daisy Wade

04: Dee Perry

09: Susan Buchanan

09: Faye Cook

09: Gladys Mitchell

12: Barbara Haggerty

14: Barbara Henderson

18: Gwendolyn Lamb

24: Linda Harmon

29: Ed Fabian

*Please let me know if I missed your birthday. [cigid@me.com](mailto:cigid@me.com)*

### Coming attractions...

**April 21 Paul** Ortiz, Associate Professor of History at the University of Florida, and author of *An African American and Latinx History of the United States*. He will share insights on current events.

**May 19** HCTA Staff

Appreciation with creative box lunches!

## News You Can Use

# Community Outreach

**Call your State Senator!** Do you want your pension fund to go dry? Do you think all employees should be able to join a union? Do you want vouchers supplied by budgeted education funds and not just current tax-credit funds? If not, call your state senator and ask them to oppose these bills. Please make a separate call or write a letter for each bill to have more impact. Go to [FEA.org](http://FEA.org) for details.

**SB 84 Pensions.** After July 2022 all new FRS employees will have self-managed investment pensions. They cannot choose a defined benefit plan like we have, which means that the fund will have no new contributions after that date. How long will current funds last?

**SB 78 Membership.** All dues authorization cards will have to be signed every two years or with a new contract. Cards must go to the administration for checking and not just given to payroll. This gives power to the administration to deny membership to all employees and not just new hires.

**SB 1014 ESP.** This requires ESP unions to have at least 50% membership of all ESPs in the school district or be decertified.

**SB 48 Vouchers.** Vouchers are supported by corporate tax credits, but this bill would take funds directly from the regular education budget. 90% of Florida students attend public schools so why not keep funds there? This bill also reduces the power and timing of districts' oversight and has no testing mandate.

**SB 886 Testing Consequences.** Tell your senator to vote YES on this bill, which stops negative testing consequences for one year. There is nothing standard about this year, so why use standardized tests to punish students, teachers, and schools?

### Things to do today.....

**Beth-El Farmworker Ministry** continues to serve their community. Visit their website to see vibrant watercolor paintings of workers, learn their history, review activities, and view a storytelling event. Go to [beth-el.org/donate](http://beth-el.org/donate) or send a check to Beth-El at 18240 US 301, Wimauma, FL 33598.

HEA-R Members can also donate to **OASIS**, organized by social workers to provide clothing for school children, at [Oasis-Network.org](http://Oasis-Network.org).

## NOTICE

***Nominations for next year's open HEA-R offices will be coming up very soon. Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Program Chair, and the First District will be open for nomination. Please consider if you can help by putting your name in for nomination. Your union needs YOU!!!***

The Election committee will present the slate of nominees at the April meeting and an election will be held at the May meeting. ***HEA-R needs your talents to serve our members and help us grow.***

Google "***Find your legislators***" if you don't know who to call, or "Hillsborough County Legislative Delegation" and call all the senators! The delegations for Pasco, Polk, Pinellas and other counties are also on the web.