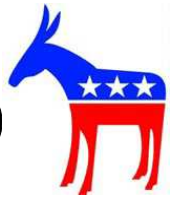




VOICES



A Publication of the Venice Area Democratic Club ~ Venice, FL

Volume 7, Number 9

May 15, 2009

The Venice Area Democratic Club is an affiliated club of the Democratic Executive Committee of Sarasota County - and chartered by the Florida Democratic Party.

We meet the 4th Saturday of every month at 12:30 PM in Naar Hall of the Venice United Church of Christ, located at 620 Shamrock Blvd. in Venice, FL.

Please join us at our next meeting to join like-minded individuals for a stimulating, progressive and enlightened afternoon!

President's Message

We have read with profound concern columns by Nicholas Kristof as to the plight of women and girls around the world. He has related conversations with many girls as young as eight and ten who were married to tribal elders only to be brutally beaten and abused. We heard from Nola Theiss, Executive Director of Human Trafficking Awareness Partnerships, Inc. at our February meeting about the \$32 billion human trafficking industry that seeks out women and children, mostly girls. The abuse of females by criminal elements of society has been well documented.

In light of this worldwide evil, President Obama recently appointed Melanne Verveer Ambassador-At-Large for Global Women's Issues. This newly-created position in the US State Department -- an enormous milestone for women and communities -- reflects an elevated importance of universal women's issues to this president and his administration. Placing this issue front and center will hopefully bring an end to such abusive treatment.

Melanne Verveer is Co-Founder and Chair of the Board of the Vital Voices Global Partnership (VVGPP), an international nonprofit organization that supports emerging women leaders in building sustainable democracies and strong economies. In her position, Ambassador Verveer will work on priorities and activities with regional and functional bureaus, US Agency for Internal Development (USAID), and President Obama's White House Council on Women and Girls, to better coordinate and advance worldwide programs.

Ms. Verveer served as Assistant to the President Clinton from 1993-2001 and as chief of staff to First Lady Hillary Clinton. She served as executive vice president of People for the American Way, a civil rights constitutional liberties organization, where she played a role in passage of several landmark civil rights bills.

People are realizing that women's issues should be on the national agenda, not only as one of simple justice but one (see *President*, p. 3)

This Month's Meeting



Jennifer Cohen

"How Long Must We Wait for Equal Rights?"

Jennifer is President of the National Organization of Women in Venice/North Port, Vice-President of the Sarasota County Democratic Women's Club, and member of the board of the Commission on the Status of Women in Sarasota.

What's News?

Covert Politics Jeopardize Our Way of Life	Page 2
A Radical Assessment	Page 4
The Failure of the Republicans' Trickle-Down Philosophy	Page 5
A Memorial Day Tribute - Tomb of the Unknown Soldier	Page 6
Lordy, Lordy, Guess Who is Turning 40?	Page 6
How to Contact Your Elected Officials	Page 7

VOICES is the official monthly newsletter of the Venice Area Democratic Club
 P.O. Box 1743
 Nokomis, FL 34274-1743
 Telephone: 941-492-5965
VOICES Editor: Trudi Musselman
 Mailing: Susette Bryan
 e-Mail: Mail@VeniceDemocrats.org
 Website: www.VeniceDemocrats.org

Covert Politics Jeopardize Our Way of Life
 by Avery Dye, VADC Board Member

I am outraged at the legislative coup pulled by Republican legislators regarding the recent passage of a bill in the Florida House lifting the ban on drilling within 30 miles of our coasts without notification or disclosure to all representatives. This is not due process and violates the trust and rights of Florida voters who expect their representatives to be able to investigate and debate crucial issues.

Tourism is our only thriving industry that remains, and jeopardizing the health and safety of our ecosystems is just bad business. Imagine Siesta Key covered in thick tar! During the last election, John McCain and Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindall lied brazenly about the integrity of offshore rigs after hurricanes Rita, Ivan, and Katrina. The United States Bureau of Mining and Minerals website states that thousands and thousands of gallons of oil were spilled, yet no one quoted those statistics!

The toll on wildlife is unimaginable; the Forever Florida program has now become a joke. Our precious sea turtles are already dying from fishing line, plastic, and tar balls. We are just beginning to recover from the red tide dead zones.

While canvassing neighborhoods for our democratic candidate for State House, Sam Rosenfeld, last summer, we asked people to identify issues that were important to them. One South Venice resident told me that the once-pristine beach in Texas where he lived was so covered in trash and debris constantly washed up from the oil platforms, people had to rake a spot to put their towels down. He begged me to tell Sam to vote against offshore drilling if elected.

According to an article in the Sarasota Herald Tribune, our "elected" official, Rep. Doug Holder, voted for the measure, stating he only voted for it because he knew it wouldn't pass! This man, unbelievably, is going to make decisions that will affect the Gulf of Mexico for generations to come.

Please write Governor Crist, all newspapers, and all cabinet members about this issue! Only public outcry can save our shores. ■

VADC OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Norma Dayton ohpiffle@yahoo.com 941-493-5087

VICE PRESIDENT

Marianne Reilly SiestaLady@aol.com 941-408-9323

RECORDING SECRETARY

Susette Bryan GalaxyPoet@comcast.net 941-496-8668

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Trudi Musselman Madame512@gmail.com 941-485-4375

TREASURER

Bob Brown RobertAlice7525@yahoo.com 941-525-6735

VADC DIRECTORS

Barbara Desmond BTDesmond@comcast.net 941-484-6296

Maria Reba RebaM01@yahoo.com 941-497-4583

Ray Schiller RSchiller9@msn.com 941-488-2613

Bennett Gross BennettG7@aol.com 941-493-1340

Avery Dye RobertsAvery@comcast.net 941-223-6141

Cathy Stumpfl CDStumpfl@aol.com 941-492-7113

COMMITTEES

Membership Ronnie Caruso & Susan Hulbert

Publicity Bennett Gross

Finance Ray Schiller

Campaign Norma Dayton

Ways & Means Ray Schiller

Special Events Maria Reba

Precinct Organization

WEBMASTER

Jon Fotos

Upcoming Events

June 6, 2009 - 9:30am

Democratic Women's Club of Sarasota

Monthly Meeting
Jacaranda Library

June 20, 2009

Juneteenth

Booker High School Stadium, Sarasota

June 28, 2009

Suncoast Stonewall Democrats 4th Anniversary Fundraiser Event

for complete details, visit their website at
www.SuncoastStonewallDemocrats.org

July 4, 2009

Independence Day Parade

The Sarasota Democratic Party and all of the clubs
and caucuses will be marching together in
North Port's Annual 4th of July Parade.

After the parade, there will be a big picnic,
followed by a fair and spectacular fireworks!

We hope you will join us!



VADC members Marion and Bob Medelson join President
Norma Dayton at Sarasota County's Annual Earth Day Festival

President (cont.)

of economic development. Human rights must include the greater number of girls kidnapped into brothels, acidified, or burned to death, due to the draconian philosophies of extreme religious or fundamental groups.

Melanne Verveer states, "The position to which I have been nominated focuses on women, but the issues it addresses should not be considered solely or uniquely women's issues. For if women's potential is developed and women participate fully in their societies, our world as a whole will prosper. The major economic, security, governance and environmental challenges of our times cannot be solved without the participation of women at all levels of society. Investing in women is one of the most important, powerful, and positive forces for reshaping the globe."

Vital Voices focuses on expanding women's participation in civil societies, increasing women's entrepreneurship, and fighting human rights abuses, especially trafficking of women and children. Verveer was instrumental in coordinating the US response to this growing international crisis. Through its leadership network it connects thousands of people who have participated in training programs in collaboration with Georgetown University.

With so much turmoil in places such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, and many African countries, America is overdue in taking a lead role in trying to alleviate these root causes of poverty. Women make up half of the world's population, yet two-thirds of girls in the world are unschooled.

Think of the AIDS pandemic and the fact that too many women die in childbirth, and the hundreds of thousands who are victims of rape. Too few women are involved in their local councils and government bodies and remain marginalized. Raising the status of women in poor countries around the world will go a long way to reducing terrorism. If for no other reason than self-interest, we should all be encouraged to support President Obama's latest effort.

So eloquently said by Melanne Verveer, "No country can get ahead if half of its citizens are left behind." ■

A Radical Assessment by Glennys Christie, VADC Member

Looking more like a college professor than a seasoned TV moderator, Rob Lorei, featured speaker at the April 25 VADC luncheon, quickly put that image to rest. In a hard-hitting talk that confirmed his progressive leanings without magnifying his radical roots, Lorei demonstrated the skills he has polished on WEDU-TV as moderator of Friday's Florida This Week, and co-founder of Tampa Bay's WMNF radio, allowing him to navigate the tricky shoals of Florida politics.

In a 2004 piece in the St. Petersburg Times, Christopher Goffard described Lorei as "a stealthy, even statesmanlike radical, one who has learned the value of disguise." There was much of the statesman and little disguise, however, when Lorei told Democrats what many already suspect – that US newspapers are increasingly on life support and that this poses a sobering if not frightening future for the way Americans receive informa-

tion.

Citing area figures, Lorei noted that 30 years ago the St. Petersburg Times had 200 reporters, but today with that number drastically reduced and continuing to shrink. The Times has just announced the beginning of a vol-



untary buyout program -- a stark example of a newspaper falling on hard times. Linking this decline to its implications, Lorei stated, "The dirty little secret of radio and TV is that we rely heavily on newspapers," leading to the obvious question: If well-researched and reported news stories disappear, what will substitute for fact-based reporting?

Lorei further emphasized the potential dangers by pointing out that "most Americans... get their news from television," specifically local 30-minute news programs. He then followed with jarring statistics on those newscasts: most begin with nine or 10 minutes of "real" news, but these early minutes are, "many times... nothing but 9 min-

utes of crime: a murder, fire or car crash." Important? Yes. Should they be dominant? No. He stressed what all journalists and many thoughtful Americans know – that "as newspapers downsize there are fewer 'watchdogs' over our community."

What should worry Democratic and moderate voters a great deal, Lorei said, in addition to the implications for the country and citizen access to factual, well-documented information, is implicit in figures he cited:

- According to the Columbia Journalism Review: "22% of total cable news airtime was devoted to the Anna Nicole Smith story from her death to her burial. 32% of Fox News time was devoted to Smith's death."

- According to Media Matters, "9.1 of every 10 hours of politically-oriented programming [is] devoted to advancing right-wing views."

- This same report surveyed 96% of the 1,430 English-language dailies in the US and demonstrated that – in terms of nationally syndicated columnists – the conservative voice is greater than the progressive voice in 38 of the 50 states.

In the Times article by Goffard quoted above, Cameron Dille, the co-founder with Lorei of WMNF, said "he thought of himself as a wild-eyed radical until he met the even wilder-eyed Lorei in the 1970s."

Rob Lorei may have mellowed, but his picture of the future of news in this country is a radical wake-up call for moderates who see their news skewed to the right when the demographics tell a different story. Perhaps he opened a small window of hope by suggesting the launching of small, non-profit publications, devoted to hard news -- an old, but radical idea. ■

Next Month's Meeting:

Carol Buchanan

Will be Speaking to us about

UNIFEM

Untied Nations Development Fund for Women

Also...

BARACK OBAMA IS BACK!

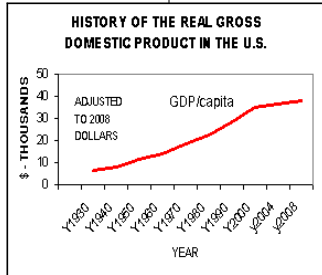
Have your photo taken with President Obama for a mere \$2.00 donation!!

Mary Greenberg and her luncheon committee wish to thank all volunteers who made our luncheon such a success. Thank you all for attending! We have already raised enough for one high school scholarship for 2010 and are looking to fund a second. Keep up the good work.

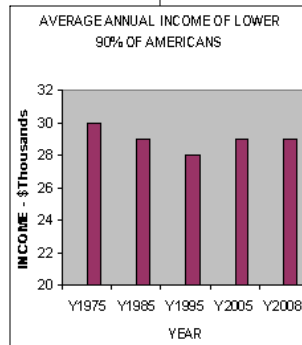
The Failure of the Republicans' Trickle-Down Philosophy

by Brad Hardin, VADC Member

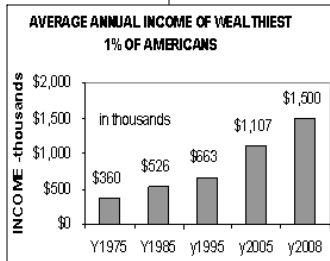
Trickle-Down Economics - A Disastrous Failure: The financial crises of the past year have demonstrated the enormous failure of this economic philosophy promulgated by Republicans in the last half of the 20th century. There has been a steadily growing body of evidence of the harm this practice has resulted in for many years. Democrats have an opportunity to inform those who believe that wealth will trickle down to all of us if we allow business to operate without restrictions, and with little oversight regulations and with special tax benefits for the wealthy. This structure, begun in the Reagan administration, has proven deleterious.



us are just keeping up with inflation and not doing better as the growth in GDP suggests. Many Americans are falling behind. Interestingly, a review of congressional performance for the years from about 1945 to 1980 (which period economists refer to as the “Great Compression”) shows a relatively high level of cooperation between Democrats and Republicans resulting in legislation that benefitted all Americans. The years from 1980 on are referred to as “Reagan and After.”

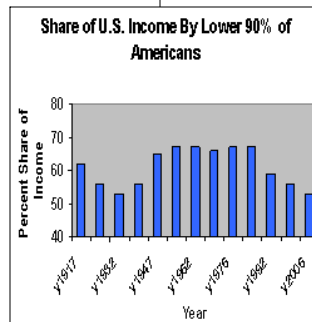


At Last, Irrefutable Evidence: Here are some facts taken from public records like the U.S. Census Bureau, the IRS and other organizations, all of whose records can be accessed on the Web. Shown above is Real Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDP) adjusted for inflation. U.S. GDP has steadily grown since 1930 up until the recent financial crisis. Americans should have seen corresponding increases in their annual incomes and standard of living. Indeed, some Americans have seen very large increases in income and wealth as shown above in U.S. Census Bureau data corrected for inflation for the wealthiest 1% of Americans.



More and more articles highlighting this growing income disparity in America are being written by economists such as Nobel Prize winners Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz, and numerous other qualified and respected analysts including Jared Diamond, Nan Mooney and Thomas Friedman.

Why The Growing Gap in Income? What do these data say for the “Trickle-Down Economic Theory” of Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan, John McCain and others? Goldwater, and



However, for comparison, look at the average annual income corrected for inflation for the lower 90% of Americans. Also then look at their income share.

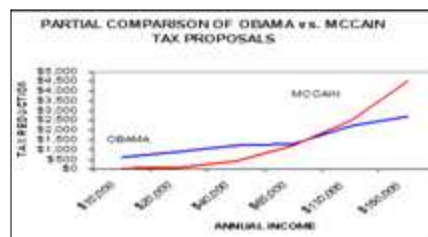
These graphs point out that the rich have been getting richer while the inflation adjusted average income for the rest of the country has been hovering at about \$30,000. This means that most of

possibly Reagan, might not be held accountable for not foreseeing the long-term effects of their policies favoring unrestricted business practices and the wealthy. McCain and other Republican leaders of today, incredibly, still argued for additional tax breaks for the wealthy while they repeatedly told the American public during the recent election campaign that Barack Obama was going to raise “our” taxes. The fallacy and dishonesty of those statements are shown below. The tax comparison graph shows the emphasis in the Obama plan (in blue) in helping those with middle class incomes and below, while the McCain/Republican plan (in red) would offer so little to the

lowest income levels (\$10,000 - \$40,000), it barely registers on the graph.

The most convincing and documented evidence points to long-standing and prevailing governmental policies that have allowed a small fraction of Americans (the most wealthy) to gain tremendous financial benefits while most Americans have gained very little. As we now are painfully aware, these policies have included a lack of oversight and regulations in financial areas that has caused great harm to all Americans.

Where Do We Go From Here? We have certainly not been living in a society where a “Country First” set of priorities has been demonstrated by our leadership and business communities. The evidence is clear. Trickle-Down Economics has been, and will likely always be, a disastrous failure for the vast majority of Americans. Our challenge will be to convince the public that President Obama’s policies are designed to reverse the damage of the “Trickle-Down” policies. ■



A Memorial Day Tribute - Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

Q: How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and why?

A: 21 steps. It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute, which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.

Q: How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why?

A: 21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1

Q: Why are his gloves wet?

A: His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.

Q: Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time and if not, why not?

A: He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.

Q: How often are the guards changed?

A: Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365

days a year.

Q: What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?

A: For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30."

Other requirements of the Guard: They must commit 2 years of life to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform {fighting} or the tomb in any way. After two years, the guard is given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin. The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt. There are

no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror. The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone, nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery .. A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred.

Among the notables are: President Taft, Joe E. Lewis {the boxer} and Medal of Honor winner Audie Murphy, {the most decorated soldier of WWII} of Hollywood fame. Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty. ■



Lordy, Lordy, Guess Who is Turning 40?

by Don Blair, VADC Member

Just what we all need... reminders of how old we're getting. Forty years ago on July 24th, This reporter had the honor and privilege of standing on an upper deck of the great aircraft carrier USS Hornet and describing to the listening world the safe return to Earth of astronauts Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins -- the crew of Apollo 11. Probably the largest radio audience ever was listening to similar broadcasts around the world of this historic event.

We were situated in the South Pacific, about one day's cruise from some of the world's most exotic vacation spots, and several days away from our port of origin - Pearl Harbor. Also on board was President Nixon to welcome the astronauts home. I will never forget Hornet's motto on that wonderful mission -- "Hornet Plus Three." Meaning we had better come back to Pearl with three more passengers than we left with some two weeks earlier. Indeed we did.

Prior to Apollo 11 the practice of the networks had been to assign two reporters as "pool" correspondents; their work was there to be shared among all four networks on "splashdown" day. As Apollo 11 loomed in 1969, however, the news directors decided it was such an important event that

it merited sending a correspondent from all four: Ron Nesson from NBC (my roommate), Dallas Townsend (longtime Sarasota resident) from CBS, Keith McBee from ABC, and me from Mutual.*

On July 24th, Apollo 11 did return safely as all of the previous missions had and future missions would continue to do. NASA & Navy excellence on display. My TV colleagues mistakenly commented on air that the captain had erred up because Apollo II splashed down just out of sight of the ship. In fact, Captain Seiberlich deliberately put that space between us and the command module for one reason: Moon germs! This fear was quickly proved to be unfounded.

This July 24th, the 40th anniversary of the moon landing, we'll be back on the Hornet, now a floating museum in Alameda, California.

*I say four because my first NYC network was Mutual which was radio only. Prior to the end of a mission those of us assigned to a recovery carrier would provide daily radio reports via the little Mutual radio van alongside the carrier's island for our own network plus one other. ■

How to Contact Your Elected Officials

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Website: www.firstgov.gov

U.S. President

Barack Obama

www.WhiteHouse.gov

Phone: 202-456-1414

Fax: 202-456-2461

Email: President@WhiteHouse.gov

U.S. Senators

Bill Nelson

www.BillNelson.Senate.gov

Phone: 888-671-4091

Fax: 202-228-2183

Mel Martinez

www.Martinez.Senate.Gov

Phone: 202-224-3041

Fax: 202-228-5171

US Representative—District 13

Vern Buchanan

www.buchanan.house.gov

Phone: 941-951-6643

Fax: 941-951-2972

DC Office: 202-225-5015

STATE GOVERNMENT

Website: www.MyFlorida.com

Governor

Charlie Crist

Phone: 850-488-7146

Fax: 850-487-0801

Email: Charlie.Crist@myflorida.com

Attorney General

Bill McCullom

Phone: 850-414-3300

Chief Financial Officer

Alex Sink

Consumer Hotline: 800-342-2762

Email: cfo@fldfs.com

STATE GOVERNMENT (cont.)

Commissioner of Agriculture

Charles Bronson

Phone: 850-488-3022

Email: Commissioner@doacs.state.fl.us

State Senator - District 23

Nancy Detert

Phone: 941-480-3547

Fax: 941-480-3549

Email: Detert.Nancy.web@FLSenate.gov

State Representative - District 70

Doug Holder

Phone: 941-918-4028

Email: Doug.Holder@myfloridahouse.gov

SARASOTA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Website: www.SCGov.net

Board of County Commissioners

Phone: 941-861-5344

District #1: Carolyn Mason

Email: CMason@scgov.net

District #2: Joe Barbeta

Email: JBarbett@scgov.net

District #3: Shannon Staub

Email: SStaub@scgov.net

District #4: Nora Patterson

Email: NPatters@scgov.net

District #5: Jon Thaxton

Email: JThaxton@scgov.net

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Karen Rushing

Phone: 941-861-7400

Email: ClkInfo@scgov.net

Property Appraiser

Bill Furst

Phone: 941-861-8200

Email: Appraiser@sarasotaproperty.org

SARASOTA COUNTY GOV'T (cont.)

Sheriff

Tom Knight

Phone: 941-861-5800

Email: SrqSher@scgov.net

Supervisor of Elections

Kathy Dent

Phone: 941-861-8600

Email: KDent@scgov.net

Tax Collector

Barbara Ford-Coates

Phone: 941-861-8300

Email: info@SarasotaTaxCollector.com

VENICE CITY GOVERNMENT

Website: www.VeniceGov.com

Venice City Council

Phone: 941-486-2626

EdMartin, Mayor

EMartin@ci.venice.fl.us

Sue Lang, Vice Mayor

SLang@ci.venice.fl.us

Kit McKeon

KMckeon@ci.venice.fl.us

John Moore

JMoore@ci.venice.fl.us

John Simmonds

JSimmon@ci.venice.fl.us

Vicki Noren Taylor

VTaylor@ci.venice.fl.us

Ernie Zavodnyik

EZavodn@ci.venice.fl.us

Venice City Manager

Isaac D. Turner

Phone: 941-486-2626, Ext. 24006

Email: ITurner@ci.venice.fl.us

Reminder:

PLEASE bring canned and dried goods to the next VADC meeting for the local food bank.

Their needs far outweigh ours!



Bruce Brunette

941-223-6373

Personalized greeting cards with your photos from your computer! Click send and the card is printed, addressed, a real stamp used, and mailed!

Half the price of Hallmark.

Try if for free at:

www.sendoutcards.com/bruce

Our dedicated advertisers have helped to underwrite the printing and mailing costs of our monthly newsletter, VOICES.

Please support those that are supporting us and patronize these businesses. Be sure and let them know, ***"I saw your ad in VOICES!"***

Venice Area Democratic Club
PO Box 1743
Nokomis, FL 34274-1743
www.VeniceDemocrats.org