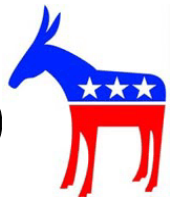




VOICES



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

Volume 8, Number 3

November 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

America's education system has been failing our students for too long. Administrators in the field have been paying lip service to the problems of increased dropout rates, drug problems, teen suicides, gang violence, and cyber and physical bullying and teen pregnancy. Politicians continually put more of the burden of funding schools on the backs of local governments and taxpayers.

In 2007 nearly 6.2 million students (approximately 16%) in the United States between the ages of 16 and 24 dropped out of high school. In Florida more than one in five (20%) 16 to 24 year olds dropped out. In 2008 statistics were closer to one in four, or 25%. Most of these students were men, blacks, and Hispanics of both genders. Motivated dropouts return to get a General Education Development (GED) certificate but most struggle through life without one. Since the 1980s, funding for reentry programs to help those who left high school has decreased.

Have we as a society failed our children? Have we compared dropout rates to how many teens and young adults are

incarcerated? What is the Sarasota County School District doing to reduce its drug problems, teen suicides, bullying and teen pregnancies?

Some leaders in Washington are reluctant to budget more money for education programs that they see as failing and wasteful. The Bush Administration instituted No Child Left Behind but without adequate funding, thus we continue to have a nation of which one third of our children - mostly minorities - are without a high school education.

Has anyone really examined the repercussions of an uneducated workforce? It poses an economic burden to local, state, and federal governments. These uneducated people are most likely to be dependent on government for unemployment benefits, workers' compensation, Supplemental Services Income (SSI) for disabled and the elderly, and public assistance income. They are more likely to end up incarcerated in state and local prisons. The disproportionate number of black and Hispanic youth behind bars should be a wakeup call to everyone. In many cases (see *President*, p. 3)

This Month's Meeting



Bud Aronson,

A longtime union activist, Mr. Aronson will discuss the importance of unions in America. He spent 20 years in the labor movement. In California, he established the Union of State Employees which is affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

ALSO: Nominations for the VADC Board will be held on November 28th. Please be sure to join us. If you have a nomination or know of a VADC member whom you would like to present, you may do so then.

What's News?

<i>President Obama Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize</i>	Page 2
<i>Upcoming Democratic Events</i>	Page 3
<i>Building for Humanity: The Habitat You Don't Know About</i>	Page 4
<i>Edward M. Kennedy - 1939-2009: A Tribute</i>	Page 5
<i>VADC Photo Gallery</i>	Page 6
<i>How to Contact Your Elected Officials</i>	Page 7

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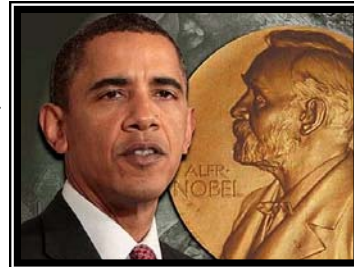
Precinct Organization

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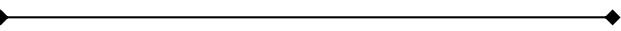
President Obama Wins Nobel Peace Prize

President Barack Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. He is only the second sitting President to receive this honor. The first was Woodrow Wilson at the end of his Presidency.



This Prize reflects a world that all Democrats want to build. President Obama is accepting this award as a call to action, as a means to give momentum to the work already underway to create a new era of engagement in which every nation must take responsibility for the challenges of the 21st century.

This award is not simply about President Obama and the effects of his administration. It's about the courageous effort that we must all engage in – it must serve as a call to action for all of us in the local Sarasota Democratic Party to be Ambassadors for change.



Chairman's Message: "I am Thankful"

The month of November gives us the opportunity to pause and count our many blessings before the hectic holiday season is upon us. We have Veterans' Day to thank our nation's service men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf to protect our freedoms. With Thanksgiving we can acknowledge our country's bountiful harvest, noble ideals and honor. And since November is an election month, we can appreciate the rights and responsibilities that democracy presents to us as Americans.

Your dedication to our community, our country and our party give me reasons every day to feel grateful to be in your service. We now have a handsome headquarters in a prominent, mid-county location on U.S. 41 and volunteers to who give tirelessly of themselves to make our organization stronger and more effective – and our efforts are gaining respect and attention across the state and even the nation.

Thank you for all you do.

*Rita Ferrandino, Chair
 Sarasota County Democratic Party*

Upcoming Democratic Events

****Thursday, November 19th -12:00 Noon – 1:30 pm:**

**“Things That Go Bump In The Night: Threats To The Real Estate Recovery”
with Dr. John Tuccillo**

If you are concerned about the status of the housing and commercial real estate markets, this lecture is for you. Dr. John Tuccillo will provide his professional and expert assessment of the housing and commercial real estate markets, he will look at the things that may derail the recovery and what needs to happen for a recovery to take a firm hold. This is your chance to ask former NAR Chief Economist John Tuccillo questions on the real estate market and your future.

Dr. John Tuccillo is one of the foremost real estate economists in the United States. He holds a doctorate in economics. From 1987 to 1997 he was Chief Economist for the National Association of Realtors. (NAR)

****Saturday, November 21th - 10:30 am – 12:00 Noon:**

**“A Physicians Perspective on Health Care Reform”
with Dr. Kenneth Edelin**

Come hear world renown physician and author, Dr. Kenneth Edelin's perspective on Health Care Reform and how it will affect your life. He will discuss practical implications of Health Care Reform and how it will reshape our society.

Dr. Kenneth Edelin is Emeritus Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Boston University. He was the chairman of the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Boston University School of Medicine, Director of obstetrics and Gynecology at Boston City Hospital and Gynecologist-in-Chief at Boston University Hospital.

In August 2007 Dr. Edelin published his critically acclaimed memoir: Broken Justice. It is a true story of race, sex and revenge in a Boston courtroom, which won the Bronze Medal in the Independent Publishers Book Award.

****Wednesday, December 2nd - 12:00 Noon – 1:30 pm:**

“Do Federal Budget Deficits Matter?”

**with Dr. Ayse Somersan, Emeritus Professor of Economics & Dean,
Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison**

Concerned about how the Federal budget deficits will impact your life? Attend this interactive workshop which lays out the structure of the Federal Budget so you can clearly see budget trends and know what the future will bring if policy changes are not made. Participate in the extensive discussion on the national debt and its implications for the future of the US economy.

***Seminars are held at the Sarasota County Democratic headquarters - 7358 S. Tamiami Trail (Coral Cove Mall) - Sarasota. Registration is available by calling 330-9400 or emailing headquarters@sarasotadems.org and a \$10 contribution is suggested to help us defray expenses.*

Sunday, December 13th - 5:30 pm:

Annual VADC Holiday Party at Venice Gardens.

Catered by Amore's Restaurant. Price is \$15/per person. You may bring a dessert if you wish but it isn't necessary. Tickets MUST be reserved and paid for in advance no later than December 4th!

President (cont.)

a college education is less expensive than incarceration. A sad truth!

In surveys of high school dropouts, respondents state that they felt alienated at school; no one seemed to notice or care if they failed to show for classes. Their curricula either did not reflect real-world skills needs, or were boring and uninteresting. Reading skills were shown to be below average for their ages.

Many students have cell phones in schools though they are “forbidden” from using them during school hours. In schools including Sarasota County schools, students have been caught taking pictures of students changing in locker rooms and sharing the photos with friends. Minority students, especially Hispanics are picked on because they are overweight or look or sound different from whites.

Although motivating the State Legislature to act on behalf of the needs of students is not likely in this economy, there are things we can do on the local level to make a difference. Take time to go to a school board meeting. Ask school board members what is being done about teen suicides, drug abuse, and cyber bullying. How are the teachers handling children who fall behind in reading and math skills? Volunteers are always needed to help children bolster their reading skills. The Partners In Education Program (PALS) will train volunteers to work with a child who needs a little extra help in reading. It only takes an hour a week, and what a difference you can make! Barry Woolf, owner of Professional Works, a professional development firm, has been serving as a substitute teacher in Sarasota County since 2002. Troubled by the inadequate skills with which our schools are providing students for competing in today's world, he has decided to run for a seat on the school board. Please visit his website and learn how he wants to move the Sarasota County School System into the 21st century. His website is www.votebarry4schoolboard.org or e-mail @ woolf.in2010@comcast.net.

We all have a responsibility to prepare the next generation to compete in an ever-changing world. The U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan along with political leaders on the national and state level has a responsibility to work with experts in the education field to enhance the skills with which our students graduate. Politicians must also provide funding for qualified young men and women to be able to get a quality education in the areas of science and math among others.

Future generations depend on how well we prepare them for the uncertain challenges and opportunities ahead. ■

Building for Humanity: the Habitat You Don't Know About
 by Bennett Gross, VADC Board Member

We all know about the wonderful work that Habitat for Humanity does in helping build affordable housing for those with limited means. However, Maryann Terry, guest speaker for our October meeting helped expand our understanding not only of its work, but also of its depth and scope.

The Development Director for South County, Ms. Terry enlightened us about Habitat's founding and ongoing work. Contrary to what many believe, Habitat for Humanity was not the idea of President Jimmy Carter, but of Linda and Millard Fuller, a well-to-do couple from Alabama who committed themselves to full time service helping poverty stricken farmers in Georgia. In doing so they found the farmers and their families were living in sub-standard housing -- shacks actually -- and decided to do something about it.

From those beginnings in 1978 Habitat for Humanity has built over 300,000 homes and has 1,700 affiliates in the Unites States, as well as hundreds worldwide. South Sarasota County's grass roots organization has built 50 homes. South County Habitat is currently constructing nine town houses in Nokomis, and rehabilitating five foreclosures in North Port. This past year 432 volunteers put in 20,000 hours to

make projects like this happen. Ms. Terry stunned us with a surprising statistic: the average age of the volunteers is 70-years old!



VADC President Norma Dayton welcomes Maryann Terry, Development Director for South County Habitat for Humanity

The people who will eventually occupy the houses do much of the work. Families are not given homes – they have to work for them. The families must put in 300 sweat-equity hours (including clearing the lot, painting, helping with construction, or working in the Habitat office) before becoming Partner Families - as the homeowners are called - and each family must make a down payment of \$2,150.00. All sweat-equity and savings requirements must be met before the families can close on their mortgages. As stipulated in the mortgage contract, the families own only the house, but do not own the land.

Yes! There is a mortgage. The final cost of the house depends on the value of the lot plus the material used to build the home. Mortgage payments are scaled

based on income and homes are sold to Partner Families at 0% interest. Monies collected from mortgages go toward buying new properties for further Habitat building, and there are emergency funds and counseling for those families who run into problems.

If you have wondered where the monies from the Federal Recovery Act have gone on a local basis, here's exciting news. Sarasota County has received \$7.1 million in Federal funds to buy foreclosed homes, some of which Habitat is rehabilitating or tearing down; the empty lots will be used for future building sites.

Some other little known facts:

- 75% of the Partner Families are single parents.
- Partner Families go through a rigorous screening process before being selected.
- Partner Families are required to attend classes on owning and caring for a home, and must learn budgeting and house-keeping.
- Partner Families are responsible for the care of their homes including maintenance and upkeep.
- RCA Whirlpool donates a refrigerator and dishwasher to every home Habitat builds. Keep this in mind when you are shopping for your next appliance – you may wish to show your support for this philanthropic effort.

There are many corporate sponsors and individual donors as well. To learn more about these benefactors visit www.habitat.org. If you would like to volunteer with Habitat call 493-6606. If you wish to donate clothing, furniture, or appliances contact the Habitat ReStore Home Center at 1400 Ogden Road (behind Perkins restaurant on Tamiami Trail South in Venice) 493-0529. ■

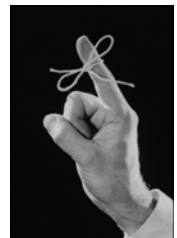
Next Month's Meeting:

The Venice Area Democratic Club does not meet in the month of December. Please join us for our annual Holiday Dinner Sunday, Dec. 13th at 5:30pm. See page 3 for details!

**January Agenda:
 Glen Compton of
 Manasota-88 to discuss
 Offshore Drilling**

Reminder:

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



Edward M. Kennedy - 1932-2009: A Tribute

by Anne Hoffman, VADC Member

For those of us who grew up and lived most of our lives in the second half of the 20th century, the Kennedy brothers were at the core of our political identity. On a personal level, the election of John F. Kennedy was the first for which I was eligible to vote. I mourned at his funeral. Later, my husband signed up to work in brother Bobby's campaign. Again we mourned and much of our nation's liberal idealism was lost.

Edward, the youngest of the four Kennedy brothers, took on the mantle of patriarch of the Kennedy clan as brother, father and counsel. As a national leader, however, he appeared unlikely to carry on the family dynasty. He was an underachiever who struggled to find his place following his illustrious elder brothers. After his gross mishandling of the Chapquiddick tragedy, an airplane accident that left him permanently injured, a troubled marriage, and his rejection as the Democrat candidate for the presidency in 1980, Ted Kennedy resigned himself to the fact that he would never become President of the United States. However, his marriage to Victoria Reggie helped transform Ted's life into an affirmation of hope. He turned his energies to preserving his brothers' memories by fighting for the "little guy."



*“The work goes on,
the cause endures,
the hope still lives
and the dreams
shall never die.”*

Sen. Edward “Ted” Kennedy

This calling empowered him to build a 46-year legislative legacy. He became the voice of progressive liberalism in a conservative age. As the torchbearer of

these liberal ideals, most of the legislation he was instrumental in passing demonstrated his concern and care for people. In more than four decades of legislating his accomplishments are many. A partial list of reforms includes:

- *Civil Rights Act of 1964
- *Immigration Reform of Quotas
- *Voting Rights Act
- *Freedom of Information Act
- *Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)
- *Americans with Disabilities Act
- *Voice Against Apartheid
- *COBRA system for portable insurance
- *Family Medical Leave Act
- *AIDS legislation
- *Serve America Act

Lastly, the cause celebre of his life for 40 years -- Universal Health Care -- is still unfinished business, and will be his greatest tribute! “The Dream Shall Never Die.”

Suggestions for further reading about Senator Ted Kennedy:

TIME magazine Commemorative Issue, September 7, 2009

Peter S. Canellos, editor, LAST LION, Simon & Schuster, 2009.

Edward M. Kennedy, TRUE COMPASS, 2009 ■

URGENT: 1-Minute Action to STOP Oil Drilling Off Our Coast!

Each of us must call or send emails to Senator Nancy Detert ASAP and tell her that you oppose off-shore drilling within ten miles of Florida's coast.

At a recent meeting with groups from the Sarasota area, Sen. Detert said she needs to hear from INDIVIDUALS if they OPPOSE NEAR-SHORE DRILLING. She plans to vote for or against drilling in the Gulf depending on what she hears from her constituents. As a very influential Senator from SW Florida, her vote on this issue is enormously important.

Please call or email Nancy Detert and also ask your friends, neighbors and other contacts to contact her directly!

Senator Detert's phone number is 941-480-3547 and email is detert.nancy.web@flsenate.gov.

Only a few weeks ago the contacts were 80% for oil drilling but as of recently, voters contacting her office were split with 50% being against and 50% being for oil drilling off our Florida coast.

IMPORTANT: You must give your name and state that you are a voter from Sarasota County. If you get the voice mail on her phone, you can still leave the same message: Your name, county of residence, and opposition to oil drilling.

With our efforts, WE can make the difference between clean energy or oil-soaked beaches! ■

VADC Photo Gallery

VADC Participates in the Annual Sun Fiesta and Parade



Local Democrats Take a Guided Nature Walk at Blind Pass Beach



"The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision."

Helen Keller

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

George LeMieux

www.LeMieux.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 Barbetta

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

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Venice City Council

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KMckeon@ci.venice.fl.us

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JMoore@ci.venice.fl.us

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JSimmon@ci.venice.fl.us

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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

Wanted:

The VADC is seeking anyone with experience - or interest in learning - Microsoft Publisher. Our current volunteer that assembles our articles is stepping down - December will be his final issue. Please call Norma Dayton if you are interested!



Bruce Brunette

941-223-6373

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