

The Democrat

A roundup of events, ideas, and opportunities for area Democrats and their friends.

A Monthly Newsletter

Issue #9 — September 2011

Did you know?

Where do you fit along the political spectrum?

Page 9

Opinion

Contributions by Bill Hall, Richard Wood, and Michael Arth.

Page 3-7

Blast from the Past!

Contribution by Mike Allen from 1998.

Page 8

Coming Events

Next Club meeting is September 22nd, 7:15 pm, at the DeLand Police Dept. Community Room on W. Howry Ave.

Page 9

An update from the Vice-President

Kevin Winchell

The month of September was a busy one for those who enjoy local news and politics. Here's a rundown of the elections and redistricting news and how they will affect our Democratic club and local community. Also, mark your calendars for a special event coming on the evening of November 15th - more details about it will be released soon, but suffice it to say that those who identify as

Democrats and who like good music and good company will definitely want to be there!

1. Orange City Elections:

On Tuesday, September 13th, citizens of Orange City went to the polls voting for the offices of Mayor and City Council District 3. Although Democrat Paul Rasch did not win the City Council District 3 race, bested by incumbent Thomas Abraham by only 29 votes, Democrat and incumbent Harley Strickland advanced to a November 8th run-off against challenger Tom Laputka for the Mayor's seat.

We have just over one month to go before the November 8th run-off between Mayor Harley Strickland and Tom Laputka. With only 791 votes cast in the election - representing a meager 12.7% turnout - our club can have a very significant impact on the outcome if we help out by making phone calls and helping our friends in Orange City get to the polls during Early Voting and on Election Day. Remember: elections are won by those who show up to vote, and in a case like this where there is a low turnout our impact on the results is greatly

magnified. We CAN make a difference here!

Mayor Harley Strickland is a long-time friend of our club and advocate for the people of Orange City and Volusia County. He places a strong emphasis on citizen involvement, and is known for working hard to give constituents a voice in local government. You can read more about Harley here, courtesy of the [West Volusia Beacon](#).

Want to make phone calls and help Harley win this race? [E-mail me](#) or call me (386.748.0150) to let me know that you are interested, and we'll get you on the phones to our neighbors in Orange City very soon. It is easy to do, and even a few dozen calls can raise turnout.

2. Volusia County Council Redistricting

After several months of negotiations and receiving input from citizens, the County Council has approved a new map for Volusia County's five districts. The map, known as "Map 9", puts roughly 99,000 residents in each of the five

districts, and is characterized most by ceding almost an entire district to Deltona - our county's fastest-growing city - while splitting DeBary in to two different districts. You can see the new map on the County's [redistricting website](#).



As we look forward to the 2012 elections, it will be important to know which neighborhoods are in which districts. Indeed, the district that most of our club members call home - District 1, represented by Councilmember Andy Kelly and covering mostly Northwest Volusia County - has become smaller due in part to the growth of Deltona. Be sure to [review the map](#) at and know your district.

Further, the School Board will be meeting to discuss whether they want to make their districts congruent with the County Council's districts. Although the School Board has done so in the past, it is not guaranteed that they will follow suit again this year.

Finally, note that this process is independent of the Federal and State redistricting occurring for Congressional and State legislatures' districts. Those new districts for the state of Florida are being drawn now and will be voted on early next year - though the Republicans in charge of the process are dragging their feet because it will dissuade opposition from declaring candidacy before the June 2012 deadline to file. If you want to fight for fair districts and work to eliminate gerrymandering in Florida, visit the [Fair Districts site](#). to get active.

Kevin Winchell is Vice-President of the Democratic Club of Northwest Volusia County. He can be contacted [here](#).

Member's Opinions



The Big 10 No, not that Big Ten!

Bill Hall

In the election of 2008, 131 million Americans cast a vote for a presidential candidate, with 129 million of those votes going to either Barack Obama or John McCain. That number of 131 million voters exceeded the entire population of the United States in the year that Franklin Roosevelt was first elected and 2008 also represents the largest number of votes cast in American presidential history. Even so, there were 224 million Americans of voting age in 2008 with 131 million actually voting and 93 million sitting on the sidelines.

Altogether, 10 big states accounted for 52 percent of the total votes cast in 2008 and 55 percent of the population but those same states represented more than 95 percent of all the Electoral College votes. It should therefore be abundantly

clear that there is great disproportionality in the processes of our election system. In other words, the votes of those who don't live in Florida, California, Texas, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, North Carolina



or Georgia have votes that don't count for as much as a Big 10 vote in a presidential contest.

There are other consequences: The top 10 states get most of the advertising dollars spent by the presidential campaigns and the most visits by candidates. They also greatly influence the candidate's understanding of state issues. Thus, the victor in a

presidential race is beholden to the Big 10 and that insures that those states will get a disproportionate share of the victor's spoils.

The Big 10 are dominated by large urban populations. Those urban areas are also where the ethnic minorities are concentrated. Thus many Republican votes are located in sparsely populated states such as Wyoming. Indeed, Wyoming has a land mass of 97,000 sq. miles with a total population that is smaller than the 68 sq mile District of Columbia. Consequently, the average density of the 10 largest states is 208 persons per sq. mile while the 10 smallest states have a density of only 8 persons per sq. mile. Thus the "Red" states look very impressive on a Red State/Blue State map but it is people who vote – not empty spaces.

What the biggest states do have in common with the smallest states is their representation in the United States Senate.

Wyoming has 2 Senators serving the interests of 500,000 citizens and California's 35 million citizens get the same representation. That's 250,000 people for each Wyoming Senator vs. California's 17.5 million citizens per Senator. If a Wyoming Senator gets 2 phone calls from constituents in a single day on the same subject, there is a crisis. For a California

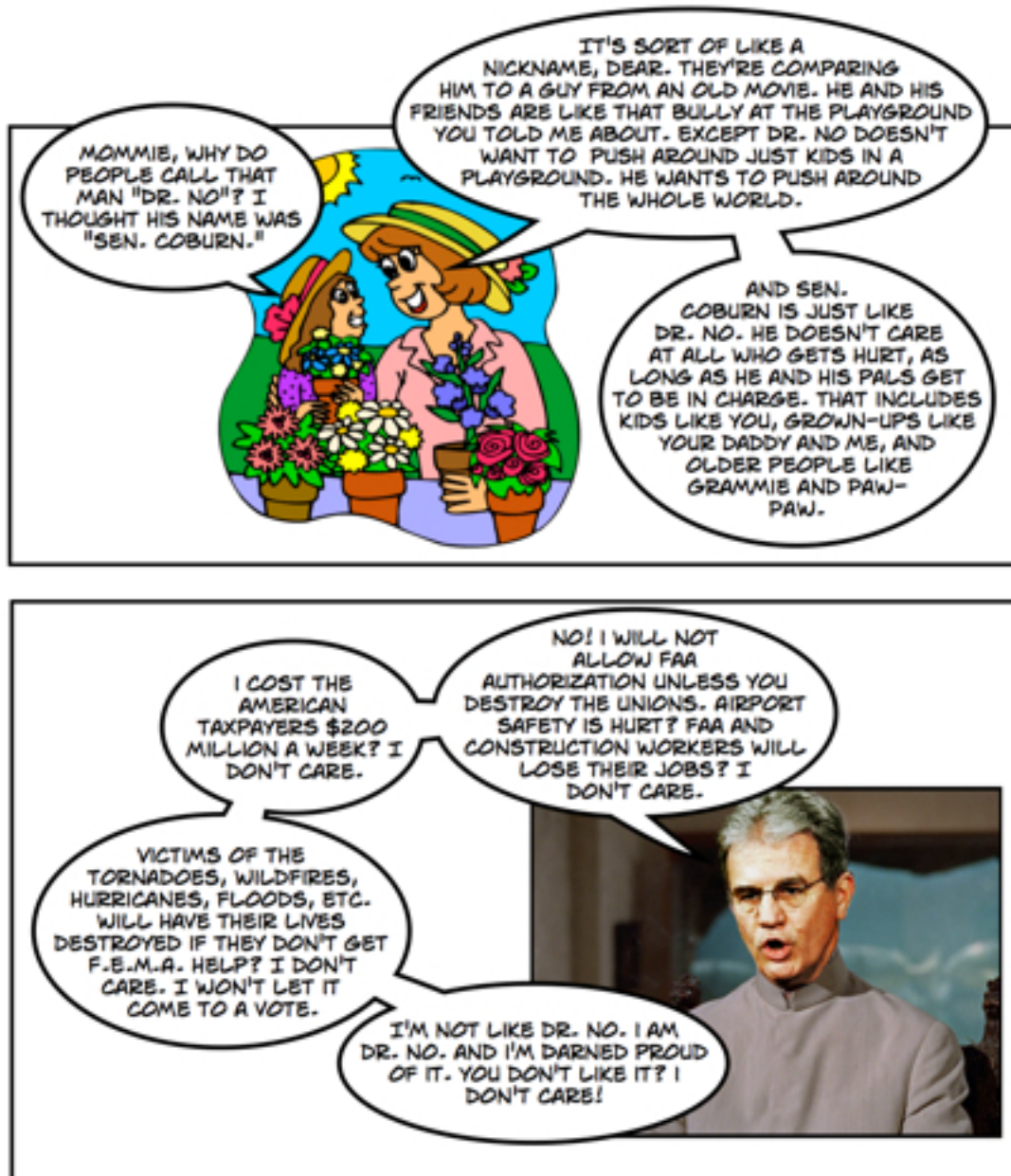
Senator, 200 phone calls on the same subject is a very slow day.

If we were designing the republic today, it is doubtful that we would create the American equivalent of the House of Lords. The Founding Fathers designed the Senate to enhance the influence of the wealthy elites of the American colonies and, like the corporate

elites of today, power sharing is not the end game.

Today, the Big 10 elect and the lobbyists rule.

Bill Hall is a DCNWVC member, and a columnist for the *West Volusia Beacon*. This article is a reprint of one of his *Beacon* columns.



Cartoon by Wayne Dickson.

Member's Opinions



First Priority – Jobs or Deficits?

Richard Wood

Which is our key problem today, jobs or deficits? Those peddling fear—especially Republicans—want to focus our attention on budget deficits and the public debt. They try to scare us into believing that we must have a balanced budget or we will go the way of Greece. But we are not Greece and this is not our major problem today. More on this later.

The U. S. economy today is in the midst of an extraordinarily severe recession with the national unemployment rate over 9 % (about 11 % in Florida) and no end in sight. Today we need to focus on Jobs, Jobs, Jobs!

Cutting government spending and laying off government workers is clearly the wrong way to go in any recession, especially this one. Every government worker laid off will be spending less, thereby

reducing the income received by countless restaurants, retail stores, and other local businesses or—as economists say—generating a negative multiplier effect.

This will also reduce government revenues and tend to increase demand for additional spending on social programs, such as unemployment compensation. Thus, much of the supposed benefit from a reduction in the deficit will be lost, output will fall, and unemployment will rise. This is not necessary.



High Speed Rail Transportation

Instead, we should be providing temporary assistance to state and local governments to stop further layoffs and encourage these governments to re-hire laid off workers.

Instead, we should provide a temporary reduction in the payroll taxes for companies that have a net increase in employment over, say January 2011. (Thus, companies would not have an incentive to lay off workers and re-hire after such a law passed.)

Instead, we should fund major construction programs to fix our deteriorating infrastructure (bridges, sewage system, etc.), to build new public transportation systems (including roads, trails and high speed rails) and to encourage private investment in renewable energy. These programs should generate directly and indirectly much needed employment.

Instead, we should invest more in education at all levels, especially in pre-K programs for low income children.

Investment in our children is the best investment we can possible make for our future.

But what about our huge and growing debt? We must learn to live within our means; our debt cannot continue to grow as a percentage of GDP over the long run. However, the U. S. bond market is not too worried. The interest rates on U. S. Treasuries bonds have been at

record lows (less than 2 %). Thus, the U. S. government is having no trouble borrowing, regardless of what Standard and Poor's may say. The U. S. dollar is the key reserve currency of the world and this is not likely to change anytime in the near future.

In the long run when we finally emerge from this recession we will need to raise taxes and cut

government expenditures. In the meantime we should eliminate or phase out the regressive Bush tax cuts that helped turn the Clinton budget surpluses into the Bush deficits.

Richard Wood is a professor of economics at Stetson University. He can be reached at rwood@stetson.edu.

Guest Commentary

Michael E. Arth



A Local and National Solution to Homelessness

by Michael E. Arth

Tiger Bay Village is currently in proposal form and available for viewing at the website, www.villagesforthehomeless.org. A request is before the Volusia County Council to donate 80

acres of publicly owned land to the *Tiger Bay Village* non-profit corporation in order to develop a comprehensive solution to chronic adult homelessness that is more compassionate and more cost effective than the current approach. The proposal has already gone through three county reviews in various forms, and the land is already zoned for this purpose.

The *village* would be built next door to the existing *Stewart*

Marchman/ACT, Pinegrove, a detox and mental health facility, on Red John Rd., just off Highway 92. The property has a bus stop, and lies on the western edge of Daytona Beach. If the infrastructure is not built within 10 years, the ownership of the land would revert to the county.

There are currently 476 social service agencies in Volusia County, with 271 of them in Daytona Beach. Despite years

of scattershot, often reviled efforts by many of these agencies, the homeless problem has still not been solved or adequately addressed. *Tiger Bay Village* would not replace these agencies, but would complement them by providing a wide range of services related to work, health, rehabilitation, housing, and counseling in order to solve adult homelessness.

It is presumed that “Housing First” type of solutions, and care for children and families, would remain in town, while

those adults who fall through the cracks of the system would get comprehensive help at *Tiger Bay Village*. The *Village* would especially help those with co-occurring disorders, including mental health and substance abuse, and it would complement the 3-5 day detox facility at *Steward Marchman/ACT*.

This is a rare, non-partisan issue supported by people across the political spectrum that will help everyone in Volusia County and serve a model for others elsewhere. The Democratic

Club of Southwest Volusia has written a unanimous endorsement letter to the county council, and a petition in support of the *Village* was collected at a recent Republican summit in DeLand.

Please check out the website, read the proposal, and let your council members know that you also support *Tiger Bay Village*.

Michael E. Arth is chair of the Tiger Bay Advisory Board. He can be reached [here](#).



Rendering by Michael E. Arth of a proposed cottage for Tiger Bay Village.

Blast from the past!



Editor's note:

Written by Mike Allen, the following statement was published in the Club newsletter in 1998. It's an excellent reminder that, while details might change, most of the same questions, principles, and issues we faced then continue to confront us now.

Considering the dramatic erosion of Americans' constitutional rights and guarantees since passage of the initial Patriot Act, Mike's statement seems even more apropos now than at the time he first wrote it. His topic is the distinction between government's fulfilling its legitimate function, and its intruding on citizens' privacy and civil rights.

(I've edited the statement for length and consistency of grammar and syntax.)

One Little Piece At A Time

By Mike Allen

Rep. Fred Lippman (D-Hollywood), who spent the last 20 years in the *Florida House*, announced his retirement in April of this year. As a going-away present, his colleagues unanimously passed his bill (CS-HB 447), which they had rejected several times in the past. CSHB 447 would allow police to pull over drivers solely for ... not wearing their seat belts.

Some might say it promotes the public good to have such laws. I, on the other hand, would say this law is a good example of what the public does not want to see from government. It's an ideology thing, which I will attempt to explain.

Protecting the public from big business takes big government. People do want government to enact minimum-wage laws, anti-pollution laws, national health insurance; ... protect

civil rights; make industrial polluters clean up their act; enforce industrial safety standards.... These were all Big Government initiatives.

But people don't want laws that smack of Big Brother poking his nose into our private lives. Example?

In the name of the War on Drugs, laws were passed allowing the government to seize your home, your car, and your bank accounts. Using "no knock" search warrants, the police can kick your door in. Your cash can be seized in a traffic stop; then you must sue and perhaps plea-bargain to get your own money back!

We have lost our freedom as individuals – supposedly for our own good. One little piece at a time.

There are two kinds of people in this world:

1) The live-and-let-live people: They figure that as long as

you're not hurting someone else, you should just be allowed to do your own thing. I'd like to think lots of those people are agreeing with this column.

2) The other kind of people are those who "know" the right

way to live. They want to put the world in order, the way they want it to be. They "know" what any righteous, God-fearing person ought to believe about life. They "know" how a decent person ought to live.

That's how they live, and they want you to live that way, too.

These are the people who are eating away at our freedom, one little piece at a time.



How do you compare?

See where you fall along the liberal, centrist, conservative scale.

Sample:

Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return.

Or...

Poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently.

[See how you compare.](#)



Coming Events

Next Club Meeting

Thursday, Sept. 22, 7:15pm,
DeLand Police Dept. Community Room on W. Howry Ave.

Guest speaker Orange City Mayor Harley Strickland will present his vision for Orange City and explain how our members and friends can help with his mayoral re-election campaign.

Opportunity

The *DeLand Area Chamber of Commerce* announced a "[Trade and Jobs Mission](#)" to meet with state Legislators in Tallahassee on Oct. 5.

For details, contact Kevin Winchell via [email](#).



Links

[Northwest Volusia Democratic Club](#)

[American Jobs Act](#)

[National Democratic Party](#)

[Florida Democrats](#)

[Blog for informal Democratic conversation](#)