

# DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S CLUB of MANATEE COUNTY

*democraticwomenofmanateecounty.org*

May 2009



TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2009 11:30am  
WESTMINSTER MANOR  
1700 West 21st Avenue  
Luncheon \$12.00

**CRIS COSTELLO**  
*Sierra Club Regional Representative*

## **FLORIDA'S ENVIRONMENT: The Fertilizer—Waterway Connection**

### THE REAL TERRORIST THREAT

By Myra Jones

After 9-11, the Bush administration frightened Americans with the threat of foreign terrorists. But we know now that instead of actually going after the 9-11 terrorists, based in Afghanistan, they used the event to pursue their own goals: waging a war in Iraq that had nothing to do with terrorism and everything to do with control of Middle East oil. We also know 9-11 didn't have to happen, if Bush had paid any attention at all to the ample and specific warning of our own intelligence sources.

Now our new president Obama is repairing some of the damage done in the last eight years, and he has returned the nation's attention to Afghanistan. But is this isolated country really the source of the greatest threat to our security? Some would say that we should turn our attention inward, to the greater threat of home-grown terrorists. Since 1995, there have been 60 cases of planned or executed terrorism—like the Oklahoma City bombing. And what these attacks have in common is that all were done by right wing Americans. (see "The Eliminationists: How Hate Talk Radicalized the American Right," by David Neiwert.)

Right-wing violence is increasing. During the last presidential campaign, Republicans used increasingly violent rhetoric—at times, McCain and Palin even seemed to be encouraging violence. There was a marked increase in threats to Obama. And Sarah Palin's background, never very carefully explored, includes membership in a very militant religious cult, and a husband who has belonged to a secessionist movement. Most recently, during the "tea parties" sponsored and promoted by FOX News, observers couldn't help but notice that a lot of the rhetoric and the placards were very violent.

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**NEWSLETTER**

## Upcoming Meetings, Speakers and Events

**June 9, DWC Meeting, Westminster Manor**  
**September 24—27 DWC Annual Convention,**  
**Melbourne, Fl**

**DEC Meetings** are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at the downtown Bradenton library at 6:30pm. All Democrats are welcome.

May 6, 10am, Sacred Heart Church, Bradenton. Healthy Start Mother's Day Celebration. Friends welcome (books will be distributed to the children, thanks to Susan and the DWC)

Kathy Oarr, President

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By-Laws: Sue Dickie, chair 761-4098

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Hospitality/Calling: Phyllis Virzi 795-7608

Issues: TBD

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**Luncheon Reservations**

**Phyllis Virzi 795-7608**

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**DWC Scrapbook**

**Brenda & Stephanie Katz 778-2227**

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### **2009 DWC History Scrapbook:**

*Stephanie and Brenda ask for photos and articles concerning DWC and/or our members.*

*Help us document our involvement and achievements.*

*In addition to the phone and e-mail address above, you may prefer to mail to: 508 Bayview Drive, Holmes Beach, Fl 34217*



## **A Message from our President**

April is supposed to bring Spring showers, but it brought us a downpour at our meeting on the 14th! Those who braved the deluge were rewarded with a thoughtful and thorough review of the educational challenges facing us today. Our speaker, Irene Bandy-Hedden, who has dealt with educational issues at the local and state levels, gave us an inspiring, but at the same time, sobering message. According to president Obama, there is nothing more important than revitalizing the educational system in this country. Irene showed up what needed to be done and how far we are from achieving our goals.

As a political club, it seems to me we must rise to the educational challenges our country faces by addressing our local problems. This, of course, cannot be done without electing officials to the School Board who are knowledgeable and dedicated to bringing our schools into the 21st century. We have members of our own club who could make a valuable contribution by running for office, and I'm sure some of you can think of others who would be good candidates. Let's put identifying potential Democratic candidates for all positions at the top of our list of goals for this year.

Also at the top of the list should be supporting the petition drive for fair redistricting. If you have not yet signed a petition, go to [www.fairdistrictsflorida.org](http://www.fairdistrictsflorida.org). You can download and print out the two petitions, sign and mail them.

It was good to be able to meet and hear from our two scholarship winners at this meeting. All the effort and time that went into raising the money for these scholarships was amply rewarded by hearing of their achievements and plans for the future. I'm sure these two will remember Democrats helped them achieve a higher education.

In keeping with our issues-oriented programming, Meg has gotten Cris Costello of the Sierra Club to speak to us in May. There is much happening on the environmental front in Florida and I'm sure there is to learn much from Cris.

See you in May.

*Kathy Oarr, President*

## SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS FOR 2009

The DWC of Manatee County was pleased to present a \$1,000 scholarship to Brianna Pierre of Palmetto High School, a well-deserving student with the grades and financial needs to attend college. Her dad, Edmond, is permanently disabled and mom, Donna, is in the process of looking for a job after being terminated last year.

The \$500 scholarship goes to Andrew Mullins of Palmetto High School, a friend of Brianna's and a student who placed fourth in his class. His father, Bert, is a teacher and mom, Kimberly, is a nurse

**Congratulations, Brianna and Andrew !**



*\*\*and look for Brianna and Andrew's winning essays in next month's NEWSLETTER*

### ***DEMOCRATIC WOMEN BREAKING THE BARRIERS***

**DWC OF FLORIDA, INC  
ANNUAL CONVENTION  
MELBOURNE OCEANFRONT HOTEL  
2605 North AIA  
September 24-27<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

Executive Board meets on Thursday night,  
convention convenes on Friday at 9:00 AM.

Standard Double	\$115.00
Partial View	\$124.00
Studio Kitchenette	\$139.00

Reservations by September 3rd

#### **Note from Kathy:**

*Dr. Larry Miller, chair of the DEC, has asked that the area political clubs donate \$500 to the DEC in order to keep our headquarters open. We are facing a serious problem trying to provide the needed monies to keep this vital asset to the party open. The Democratic party certainly doesn't want to lose the hard-won momentum and visibility it had coming out of the last election.*

*Because we cannot give money to this cause without counting it toward our donations to candidates, etc., the only other solution is to collect individual checks from our members and forward them to the DEC as donations from our club.*

*Please bring your checkbook to the next meeting and do what you can to help out. Any amount is going to be a help.*



*Remember Our Daily  
Bread and Healthy  
Start. . Bring your  
donation to the  
meeting.*



**Democratic Women's Club of Manatee**  
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**TO CONTACT OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS:**

**President**

**Barack Obama (D) 202-456-1414 (switchboard)**  
**www.whitehouse.gov 202-456-1111 (comments)**

**US Senators**

Mel Martinez (R) 202/224-3041  
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**Governor**

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**Sensible people have tended to dismiss all this as spleen from sore losers and symptoms of chaos in the Republican party. It's more dangerous than that. It shows that the extreme right wing of the Republican party has moved to the center, that they have declared war on Progressives and that they will say or do anything to win back power.**

**Fortunately, most Americans have rejected this lunatic fringe. Obama's popularity continues, most Americans are content with the taxes they pay, and the turnout for the "tea parties" was very low. But we would be foolish to underestimate extremists.**

**What can we do? First, support all of Obama's education initiatives. Fanatics are usually ignorant and their leaders want to keep them that way. Education is their enemy. The right has traditionally valued feelings over reason, opinion over knowledge, and has equated education with being weak or "elitist." We can protest when the media give too much coverage to the right-wing extremists or air programs that approve violence for solving problems. And we can denounce the right-wing shock jocks whenever possible.**

**Educated, rational, reasonable people need to keep aware of the dangers of extremism, because democracy isn't automatic. Every generation has to defend it.**