VADC

10 Year Anniversary Dinner

Saturday, March 5, 2011
5:30–8:30 pm

Jacaranda West Country Club
1901 Jacaranda Blvd
Venice, FL
Yes, it is indeed a happy anniversary, in spite of the dark clouds from the 2010 elections that are still hanging over Florida and the nation. Today we celebrate 10 years of making a difference in Venice, 10 years of a group of Venice area Democrats working together, helping each other, helping candidates and no less importantly, deriving strength and enjoyment from each other’s company. Whether you joined in 2001 or 2011 or sometime in between, your membership and participation is key to the success of the club in its mission of helping to elect Democrats to office.

Since it was founded ten years ago, the Venice Area Democratic Club has been a factor in getting out the Democratic vote in our area. We have attracted a corps of members who have become involved in campaigns: they have joined and/or volunteered to help (financially and otherwise) the Sarasota Democratic Party, they have written letters, made calls and knocked on doors.

In a predominantly Republican area like ours, it is difficult for our local candidates and issues to win, but not at all impossible, as shown by the success of our City Council candidates in 2007. For statewide and national elections, every vote in our area carries the same weight as a vote in any other area and is just as crucial to the candidate’s success. So our mission as a Democratic club is actually more important than for a club in a heavily Democratic county, because we are needed in order to give registered Democrats in our area the support, encouragement and information to keep them from becoming disheartened.

Looking to the future, it is going to be critical to re-elect President Obama and Senator Nelson in 2012. The Florida State Democratic Party is committed to making a huge effort to work harder and smarter to achieve this. Our losses in 2010 were due in large part to a relatively dismal turnout by Democrats combined with an exceptionally strong turnout by Republicans. The gap will be smaller anyway in a Presidential election year, but we need to work hard to shrink it still further. Not all of our members can participate, but for the next twenty months we will be encouraging members to help where and when they can.

Dark clouds are always—always—succeeded by blue skies and I have no doubt at all that Democrats will see sunny days again before too long. And beyond 2012, I know that the Venice Area Democratic Club will continue to be a significant and growing force for Democratic values in Sarasota County.

Henry Bright, President
Working to Restore Government
To the People, By the People and For the People

VENICE AREA DEMOCRATIC CLUB

10 Year Anniversary Dinner
Saturday, March 5, 2011
5:30 PM Social Hour / Cash Bar
6:30 PM Dinner / Program

Welcome
Henry Bright, President

Introductions

Dinner

Entertainment
“I Forget” former Mayor Ed & Peggy Martin
Musical Selections Mindy Simmons

Close
10 Year History of VADC

2001

Ten years!

That's how long ago a small group of determined Democrats got together and decided to restart the Democratic Club. The old one, we were told, consisted of a bunch of old guys who sat around and smoked cigars, but basically did nothing.

Several of us had volunteered to work on Dan Dunn's campaign when he ran for Congress in 2000. It was my first time volunteering in Florida politics since moving from Long Island. You all remember the fiasco of the 2000 Presidential election. A President wasn't "appointed" by the Supreme Court until December 14.

I met a lot of good Democrats who worked hard on that campaign: Jackie and Lowell Jones, Virginia and Henry Bright, Marge Knies and her husband, among others. The following January, Jackie and Lowell called me and asked if I was interested in helping start a Democratic club in Venice. I said "yes."

Five of us met for lunch and hashed out a plan. We took the phone records from the campaign and started calling all the Venice-area Democrats, inviting them to a luncheon to be held at Pelican Point on February 24.

We placed an ad in the newspapers announcing the start of the club and

Initial Officers
Ardis Boch, President
Larry Milford, Vice President
Carole Byrne, Recording Secy
Claudia Mann, Corresponding Secy
Henry Bright, Treasurer
Jackie & Lowell Jones, Advisors

Directors
Virginia Bright
Marge Knies
Monica Lewandowski
Joe Moffa
Carol Mueller
Bette Russ
asked anyone interested to call. Several people — Larry Milford, Madeleine Havlick, Bette Russ, Claudia Mann and others — immediately responded and we met to elect a Board of Directors and to write some Bylaws. I was appointed President, so when the first meeting of the VADC took place the following month, sitting at tables before me were 63 brand new members of the revived Democratic club. What a joy to look at those faces and know we were all Democrats.

The rest is history. Thanks to all the presidents and board members who continued building the VADC, and most of all the membership which continues to grow.

One of the club's first actions was to start a Newsletter. The first issue was published in April of 2001 and has been printed monthly on a regular basis since that time.

— Ardis Boch

Congratulations, VADC, on 10 Years of Making a Difference!

Virginia & Henry Bright
At our January meeting in 2002, we elected our Board for the first full term. Larry Milford was elected President.

Larry followed that election by filing in April, 2002 to run for FL Senate 23. Jan Schneider ran against Katherine Harris for 13th Congressional District. In view of Katherine Harris' actions as Secretary of State in 2000, that was a highly anticipated election. Unfortunately both Democratic candidates lost, but it was a very spirited fight.

In 2003 many Democrats became very involved in protesting against the invasion of Iraq. Actually there were lively discussions at our meetings, because there certainly was not unanimity of opinion on the subject. Our Newsletter covered a peace rally (organized by Henry Bright and the Venice Peace Coalition) at Venice Centennial Park in which close to a thousand people showed up. It was covered by national media.

2002-2003 Officers
Larry Milford, President
Virginia Bright, Vice President
Carole Byrne, Recording Secy
Avery Dye, Recording Secy (2003)
Ardis Boch, Corresponding Secy
Henry Bright, Treasurer
Jackie & Lowell Jones, Advisors

Directors
Madeleine Havlick
Marge Knies
(replaced by Rhoda Urquhart)
Joe Moffa
Carol Mueller
Gerry McNulty
Jack Rogers
At our January meeting in 2004, we elected new officers and directors.

The VADC originally met monthly for lunch and meeting. After surveying the members, though, we realized that the majority of members just wanted to attend the meeting and not have lunch. We then met in the Venice Public Library meeting room until we outgrew the space. In April of 2004 we held our first meeting in Naar Hall and have been there ever since. We feel very lucky to have such a great space for our meetings.

The presidential election was held in 2004. Senator John Kerry was our candidate and we worked hard for him in Venice. Jan Schneider took on incumbent Katherine Harris again. The Sarasota County Democratic Party opened up their Headquarters on the Bypass in Venice. Club member Sue Townsend managed the office. Unfortunately the election didn’t go our way, but we met a lot of new Democrats during the process who are still active today.

In 2005 our Treasurer Henry Bright took on the additional role of Sarasota County Democratic Party Chair, but he still retained his position as Treasurer.
## 2004 Officers
Virginia Bright, President  
Janet Onnie, Vice President  
Avery Dye, Recording Secy  
Lorraine Coccaro,  
Corresponding Secy  
Henry Bright, Treasurer

### Directors
Carole Dickson  
Madeleine Havlick  
Nelson Hay  
Jack Rogers  
Harry Stimmel  
Chris Viele

## 2005 Officers
Virginia Bright, President  
Marianne Reilly, Vice President  
Avery Dye, Recording Secy  
Lorraine Coccaro,  
Corresponding Secy  
Henry Bright, Treasurer

### Directors
Norma Dayton  
Carole Dickson  
Madeleine Havlick  
Phil Rains  
Cathy Stumpfl  
Bryan Worthington

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### Don Blair
**Congratulates VADC**  
**On 10 Years of Growth,**  
**Great Speakers**  
and  
**Enthusiastic Membership**
2006-2007

2006 was a very active year. The DEC opened an office in South Venice on US-41. Maria Reba managed the office. Unlike previous elections, we had a large number of Democratic candidates in Sarasota County that year.

All of a sudden it was exciting to be a Democrat. It started with the School Board election which traditionally gets decided at the primary election. We had candidates running for each of the 3 open seats and we were gratified to see Shirley Brown win. In the general election, David Shapiro came oh-so-close to winning the State Representative District 70 seat. That one hurt, but not as much as Christine Jennings’ race for 13th Congressional District against Vern Buchanan. She won in Sarasota County but lost overall. It was a very controversial election, with 18,000 “undervotes.” Remember “touch screens”?

Club member Kindra Muntz was the instigator and prime mover of the referendum to put voter-verified paper ballots on the ballot in November, 2006. We all owe Kindra for her tireless efforts on this issue. Sarasota County led the way in getting rid of “touch screen” ballots. The 2006 election showed the whole country the problems with “touch screens.”

Club member Bryan Worthington ran for Charter Review Board, along with Debbie Trice and Wade Matthews for different seats. We were pleased that Debbie won her race. And, of course, Senator Bill Nelson won his Senate race against Katherine Harris, so we finally did not have to deal with her anymore. Another bright spot in 2006 was the success of Keith Fitzgerald, frequent speaker and good friend of the VADC. He won the State Representative District 69 race.

2007 brought the VADC our biggest success yet. We had three great candidates for Venice City Council: Sue Lang and Ernie Zavodnyik for Council seats, and Ed Martin for Mayor. Election night in November was so exciting when all three candidates won by 2-to-1 margins and swept the CQG candidates out of office. It was a great night if you were against overdevelopment.

2006-7 Officers
Marianne Reilly, President
Norma Dayton, Vice President
Anita Barone, Recording Secy
Sue Lang, Corresponding Secy
Paul Jacques, Treasurer

Directors
Maxine Barritt
Carole Dickson (2006)
Avery Dye
Madeleine Havlick
Phil Rains (2006)
Maria Reba (2007)
Bryan Worthington
Ernie Zavodnyik (2007)
2008 was the year we took the White House back.

There was great excitement all year with the presidential primaries and questions of whether Florida results were going to count. We had candidates for every position on the ballot. Barbara Ford-Coates who was first elected tax collector in 1984, had won by such large margins every election that she had run unopposed since 1992. The Republican Party was obviously so distressed that we were running candidates against them for every position, that they even ran someone against Barbara in 2008. Didn’t do them any good. She won easily.

The highlight, of course, was the historic election of Barack Obama (especially for our Marianne Reilly who served as a driver in his motorcade during a campaign stop in Sarasota), but all the candidates who ran for office in the Venice area deserve recognition.

Barbara and Teresa won which was great, and we came close in others. Adam Tebrugge won Sarasota County, so it was painful to lose that one so closely. Our good friend Keith Fitzgerald held onto his seat.

We had the loss of a Board member in 2009, Maxine Barritt. Maxine will be remembered not only by all who knew her, but also by all visitors to Venice as there is a beautiful park next door to Sharky’s that is now called The Maxine Barritt Park, because of her efforts to ensure that a passive park was built in that spot next to the Gulf.

Local Democratic Candidates
Christine Jennings 13th Cong Dist
Morgan Bentley FL Senate Dist 23
Sam Rosenfeld .......FL Rep Dist 70
Adam Tebrugge...Public Defender
Barbara Ford-Coates Tax Collector
Barry Sullivan
............Supervisor of Elections
Curt Lavarello ...............Sheriff
Jono Miller ...County Commission
Ryan Stanley, Virginia Hoffman-Meketon, Bryan Worthington,
Jamie Wilson, Ray Porter
.............Charter Review Board
Teresa Carafelli, Alan Penn
.....................Hospital Board
2008–9 Officers
Norma Dayton, President
Marianne Reilly, Vice President
Susette Bryan, Recording Secy
Trudi Musselman, Corresponding Secy
Bob Brown, Treasurer

Directors
Maxine Barritt (2008)
Barbara Desmond (2009)
Avery Dye
Bennett Gross
Madeleine Havlick (2008)
Maria Reba
Cathy Stumpfl (2009)
Ray Schiller
2010 was a midterm election year, and all the state offices and the Venice City Council seats were also being contested. However, 2010 was also the year of the Tea Party and that revitalized a lot of Republicans who voted in force in 2010. Our Democratic candidates did not fare well.

However, 2012 elections will be coming up before we know it, so we hope we will have a resurgence then.

This history would not be complete, though, without giving thanks to all our members who work so hard for the club. There are many events during the year that they are called upon to participate in, and they do not disappoint.

Some of the activities that we participate in are the Sun Fiesta parade and booth, the Holiday parade, our Kickoff picnic each fall, the Intercoastal Waterways and Indian Hills Blvd cleanups; not to mention some of the groups we support, the Food Bank, Veterans’ Hospital, High School scholarships to name a few.

Our members are very generous with their time and money, and for that we’re grateful. It wouldn’t be a club without the members.

—Virginia Bright

2010–11 Officers
Henry Bright, President
Barbara Desmond, Vice President
Susette Bryan, Recording Secy
Norma Dayton,
   Corresponding Secy
Bob Brown, Treasurer

Directors
Virginia Bright
Kevin Connelly (2010)
Bennett Gross
Brad Hardin (2011)
Dee Hardin (2011)
Rick Magee (2010)
Joel Nelson (2011)
Cathy Stumpfl
Ray Schiller (2010)
Are you ready to help Grow and Strengthen the Democratic Party in Sarasota?

Join the Democratic Club of Sarasota

Monthly Luncheons & FOCUS Newsletter
Keep you informed on the issues and in touch with other local Democrats

Outreach Programs
Extend the community of active Democratic voters

Volunteer Opportunities
Speak out on the issues. Provide candidates and the Democratic Party with the resources needed to win

For information on membership and activities, Visit www.SarasotaDems.com or phone 379-9233