

# Democratic Club of the Conejo Valley

## Newsletter July 2009

President's letter:

(Disclaimer: I reviewed the following with my thirteen year old son. He felt it was a bit preachy, negative and nagging. But he wasn't sure if his opinion was based on the fact that he thinks much of what I say is preachy, negative and nagging. He also felt there was a subtle irony in my bemoaning the loss of civil discourse in our polity and then proceeding to be preachy, negative and nasty myself. While I appreciate my son's valid criticism, I decided to go ahead and send out to you what I am feeling at this time. I have, at other times, been positive and encouraging, I hope. And I certainly intend to be so again. But for now, if you do find this preachy, negative and nasty, please either let me know or do what my thirteen year old son does. . . Ignore me!)

Not so very long ago I was a DTS- a Decline to State. I thought I was so smart. I was above partisanship. I was INDEPENDENT. I would judge the issue and the candidate on its own merit not because of parochialism of any kind.

And then the George W. Bush elections happened. All of a sudden, something just didn't seem right to me. Kindness, fairness and lawful abidance of the law seemed to have evaporated. Were we not a nation of laws anymore? Did we no longer understand intelligent, polite public civil discourse?

I only go back to those eight years now because I

feel that we lost so many things as the Neocons successfully washed our government down the bathtub drain. That "compassionate conservative" and "uniter" destroyed the American polity along with healthcare, education and the economy and we, Progressives or Democrats or whatever you call yourselves, are still operating by the old rules. We are still trying to cooperate, be polite and take the high road. You know, let bygones be bygones.

Yet, everyday we are bombarded with some conservative talking head relentlessly praying for Obama to fail to fix America. . . if not outrightly drumming up violence against anyone who they don't agree with. I just imagine these frightened people sitting behind their locked doors in a corner holding a gun in one hand and a bible in the other. Oh no, they don't want none of that socialized medicine. Oh no, they don't want none of their taxes to go up. Hell, they pay too much taxes anyways so them illegal aliens can go to our schools and our emergency rooms.

No more taxes. No more taxes. No more taxes. Hate and "no more taxes" are their only two mantras. And our party wants to cooperate and compromise with these mad people?

I want our Democratic leadership to step up and smack these absolutists and obstructionists on their hands. We have serious problems that 35 years of this trickle down economics nonsense and Republican xenophobia have created and we need to get down to it. We have political criminals walking free that need to be held accountable for their crimes against the people of the United States and of the world. We have people dying on our streets because this God-fearing country would apparently rather let them than pay for a solution to end the suffering.

Were the Bush years crazy or are these the truly crazy times.

When will our voices be heard? How can we make

anyone listen?

-- Debbie Birenbaum, President DCCV

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **DCCV Meeting, Wednesday, July 8**

The DCCV General Meeting will be held on July 8 at the Thousand Oaks Library on Janss Road, just east of the 23 Freeway. Please plan on arriving early. We will be beginning the meeting promptly at 6:30.

Our guest speaker for the evening will be Steve Greenberg. Mr. Greenberg was the political cartoonist for the Ventura County Star for many years. His cartoons cut to the bone on current political issues. His work has also appeared in major newspapers across the nation. He has recently published a great book of his editorial cartoons dealing with the panoply of environmental issues. He will have "Fine Tooning the Planet" available at the meeting and will be delighted to autograph the copies you purchase. His lecture promises to be informative and fun!

In addition, we will welcome Bernie Rosander, a member of President Obama's Field Team from Organizing for America. Bernie will be trying to garner support for the President's health care reform. He is our best chance to get our voices heard directly so please come prepared with questions, concerns and suggestions. Should we run out of time in the Library, which could very well happen, we will move our dialogue with Bernie over to a convenient spot to continue. DuPar's Restaurant at 75 W. Thousand Oaks Boulevard stays open relatively late and is an option.

Our DemCares project for the month of July is Manna. Please bring your donations of canned, box and fresh food to the meeting. Penny Strowger has volunteered to collect and deliver your donations.

### **July DemCares Project: Manna**

Manna, the food bank for the Conejo Valley, receives no government support and is fully funded by members of the community. Because of these difficult economic times, all charities are strapped for donations, and food banks, in particular, are seeing the need for their services double. DCCV has generously decided to sponsor Manna at least 3 times this year as our non-profit organization of the month.

Manna can use any type of non-perishable food item or non-food essentials. (The last time I visited, they had completely run out of toilet paper to give to their clients.) We will deliver produce from your gardens, too. They need empty egg cartons and empty grocery bags. Even outdated canned or packaged foods can be donated, as they are passed along to the Ventura mission.

For more information on how to help, please visit <http://www.mannaconejo.org/what-we-need.html>.

-- Penny Strowger

## Legislative Watch Committee

Thursday, July 2

We have ten energetic members so far for this new committee. We have our first meeting on July 2 at 7 p.m.. We will determine our goals and methods at that time. If you are interested in keeping track of how the Stricklands and Gallagly are voting and organizing/analyzing this information for use in future campaigns, please contact Debbie at 498-7151 and plan on joining us on the 2nd.

- Debbie Birenbaum

## Democratic Women to Hear Hannah Beth Jackson at Saturday, July 18 Brunch Meeting

Saturday, July 18

Former 35th District Assemblywoman Hannah-Beth Jackson will speak during the Democratic Women's Council of the Conejo Valley (DWCCV) Brunch Meeting on Saturday, July 18th, 2009. Scheduled from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, the meeting will be held at Mandevilla Restaurant, 951 S. Westlake Boulevard in Westlake

Village.

Jackson, who served in the Assembly from 1998 to 2004 representing portions of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, is a former prosecutor and is co-founder of a non-profit organization. She was the 2008 Democratic candidate for the California State Senate.

During Jackson's Assembly tenure, she was an advocate for improving public education, increasing public safety, improving access to health care, protecting the environment and protecting the rights of consumers. Jackson worked with Democratic and Republican Governors and authored more than 60 bills that they signed into law. She was recognized as "Legislator of the Year" by the Consumer Federation of California, the Congress of California Seniors, the California League of Conservation Voters, the National Organization for Women and the Junior League of California.

Jackson will discuss hot political topics of the day during the DWCCV Brunch Meeting. Cost for the DWCCV \$20 per person. To reserve your space or to get more information, contact Mary Kay Donahoe at 805-495-1515. Details on DWCCV, including membership information, are available at the website, <http://www.dwccv.org/>.

--Carol J. Keavney

## Tabling at The Oaks

Saturday, July 25

Saturday, August 15

Saturday, September 19

We have three scheduled dates for Saturday tabling at the Oaks Mall: July 25, August 15 and September 19. All dates run from 12 to 4. Shifts generally are 12-2 and 2-4. Tabling can be an extremely energizing and fun experience. You can sign up by contacting Mary Freed at 495-3887 or Debbie Birenbaum at 498-7151 or at the next meeting.

-- Debbie Birenbaum

## DCCV Garden Party

**Sunday, September 13**

**Please mark your calendars now for the DCCV Garden Party, which is scheduled for Sunday September 13 from 11:30 AM to 3:00 PM at the Sunset Hills Country Club in Thousand Oaks. If you are interested in helping collect silent auction donations, creating the baskets or decorating, please contact Debbie Birenbaum or Carol Keavney at 498-7262.**

**-- Debbie Birenbaum**

## **NEWS**

### **Conejo Democrats Support Interface with Donation**



Conejo Valley Democrats Carol Keavney (LEFT) and Sylvia Navarro present DCCV donations to Interface Children Family Services Executive Director Erik Sternad

**Interface Children Family Services' efforts to "strengthen children, families and communities to be safe, healthy and thriving" received a supportive boost with \$200 in donations from the Democratic Club of the Conejo Valley (DCCV).**

**Collected during the club's monthly meeting as part of the May Community**

**Outreach Project for Ventura County non-profit organizations, the funds were presented by Sylvia Navarro and Carol Keavney, DCCV Administrative VP, to Interface Executive Director Erik Sternad at Interface's headquarters in Camarillo.**

**Since 1973, Interface Children Family Services volunteers have given their time and talents in a variety of important ways. The services these dedicated volunteers provide include working with youth in crisis, creating a nurturing environment for battered women and their children and helping youth in crisis. Through its 2-1-1 Ventura County division, Interface provides the only 24-hour countywide comprehensive information and referral service. The 2-1-1 Ventura County program is maintained in a continuous update mode and covers issues ranging from child care, senior services, affordable housing to crisis intervention.**

**Each month, the Democratic Club of the Conejo Valley supports a non-profit organization with useful items or cash donations. Previous Community Outreach Projects have included collecting old, worn-out cell phones for recycling, providing pet care objects for the Animal Shelter and donating more than 200 items and cash to My Stuff Bags.**

**DCCV also supports MANNA, the Conejo Valley Food Bank, with quarterly food collections. The next food collection is scheduled for Wednesday, July 8th, at the Thousand Oaks Grant R. Brimhall Library. Suggested items include non-perishable, canned foods especially suited for people with limited cooking facilities. Fresh fruits and vegetables from local gardeners also are appreciated.**

**-- Carol J. Keavney**

For more information about the Democratic Club of Conejo Valley, check out [www.ConejoDemocrats.com](http://www.ConejoDemocrats.com) or call (805) 675-8785.

For more about Interface Family Children Services or to donate online, visit <http://www.icfs.org/> or call (805) 485-6114 or toll free at (800) 636-6738.

## **Education Programming to Air**

**Education programming with host Cynthia Martin, and guests Betsy Connolly, Marie Panec and Kim Marra Stephenson is set to air at 6:00 PM every Thursday in**

July on Time Warner Cable channel 25.

-- Sue Gunther

## VIEWPOINT

### Single-Payer Healthcare

Many people have asked me, since I am a single-payer advocate, if I support Obama's universal healthcare plan. Under the "public plan," insurance companies would be paid to furnish healthcare coverage. Right now, about 30% of each premium dollar paid to insurance companies goes toward administrative expenses, such as salaries, marketing, etc.

Under Medicare, which is a single-payer plan, administrative expenses cost only about 3%. Single payer is NOT socialized medicine, as individuals would be free to choose their own doctors. The amount of money that we in the U.S. spend on healthcare already exceeds what it would take to cover all residents under a reasonable single-payer plan. This is true of the pending bills for both federal (HR 676) and state (SB 810, formerly 840) legislation.

Obama healthcare meetings, hearings, and the summit have seldom allowed single-payer leaders to participate. For years big insurance and big pharmaceutical companies have made large contributions to elected officials, so they are inclined to listen to their point of view. Please encourage everyone you know to learn more about and to support single-payer plans, to advocate for them, and to ensure that, if the "public option" is not single-payer, states will continue to be allowed to implement their own healthcare plans.

For further information: <http://www.healthcareforall.org/> and click at the top of the left side of the home page to join HCA-California - any donation is gratefully accepted.

Although Canada has socialized medicine, in which the doctors are part of the government system, unlike the single-payer plans proposed for the U.S., I think the following, which I received recently from an HCA member, is interesting: "I have spoken to about 20 Canadians during my visits to Canada. I have asked them 2 questions. Are you satisfied with the Canadian healthcare system? The answers were either satisfied or very satisfied. Would you trade your Canadian healthcare for U.S. healthcare. The answer was a resounding NO!!! You need to get the truth out about how Canadians feel about their healthcare. Many U.S.

**citizens believe the lies being told by the lobbies who want to maintain the status quo."**

**-- Penny Strowger**

**Sincerely,**

Debbie Birenbaum

President

Democratic Club of the Conejo Valley

PO Box 4421

Thousand Oaks, CA 91359

805-675-8785

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