



From the President's Desk:

By *Mary Lou Ambrose*



Recently, Joe and I were fortunate enough to visit Denmark for 10 days. Because our son-in-law, Peter, has relatives there, we were able to sit down several times and talk with them in depth about what is happening in the US and Europe. We specifically discussed how the US affects Denmark and the rest of the world. These are serious, educat-

ed, middle class people, as are most of their neighbors.

In general, they are terrified of not only Donald Trump but of the people with whom he surrounds himself and the things he has done. They are dumbfounded that we let him get away with the things he does. The Danes read a lot, and discuss what is happening in the world. Their newspapers are full of information about Trump and about the US. They have a better concept of the political climate in Europe than we have, and are close

enough to Russia to be personally frightened of Putin. The far-right politicians who are taking power in neighboring countries also concern them, as do some of the more capitalistic actions of their own companies. They are concerned with Italy's new government and England's vote to leave the EU. Merkle's minimal win in the last German election is a big concern and, of course, Putin's take-over of Crimea frightens any small country close by. They will never forget that Denmark was occupied

by Germany during WWII. With so many outside pressures, a country as small as Denmark is in a vulnerable position, and the citizens are well aware of that.

The questions we were asked most frequently were "How did Trump get elected, especially with all the negative things uncovered about him?", and "Why aren't your politicians coming out against him?" They pointed out that politicians stood up against Nixon, why not against Trump? These are hard questions that we ask

[MLA → next page](#)

meeting

Habitat for Humanity CEO

Mike Sutton

Monday, June 18 — 6:30—8:45 pm

Acropol Family Restaurant, 1135 Starkey Rd, Largo, Florida 33771

Come hear from Habitat for Humanity CEO Mike Sutton on how important affordable housing is for the future of Pinellas County and how Habitat for Humanity is leading the charge for affordable housing in such a densely populated County. Also, hear breaking news on Habitat's newest project — 75 new homes!"

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Michael Sutton, CFRE
Chief Executive Officer

MLA From Page 1

ourselves frequently, so they are difficult to answer. I, for one, do not yet understand why Americans voted in such large numbers for a man who does not care about them or about this country.

One of the things we learned from the Danes was that capitalism is creeping into their socialism. Two of Peter's cousins work for a large international insurance company. They travel a lot, so initially we paid no attention to the fact that they had traveled several times to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. It turns out that their company is moving some of its "back room" departments to that area and that they traveled there to do training. That sounded a lot like what was happening at the New York Life insurance Company in New York where I worked in the 1980s. Many people there trained lower-paid people who shortly thereafter replaced them. Another concern was about Management fighting the Unions. One of the cousins is a Union Rep for her area and was anticipating a difficult upcoming meeting because Management was trying to take back benefits. Another Union problem was that teachers were not permitted to teach as they had previously, and were forced to administer "too many tests." (Sound familiar?) All this in an historically Socialistic country.

The fact is, they still have a lot of benefits. Their schools are still among the best in the world, yet they fear they are not what they

once were. Almost everyone speaks English plus another couple of languages in addition to Danish – and they speak English much better than most Americans. They pay a lot of taxes and get a lot of benefits. Health care is not something they need to worry about. They get a great deal of vacation time, and their pensions are protected. They are cared for by their government more than they realize. However, there are some shadows over their system.

What was reinforced to us is that good people are the same everywhere. Most of you have traveled more than we have. If you have any experiences you would like to share, please email me at fldem406@gmail.com. Use the heading "Travel." We will do our best to publish what we receive.

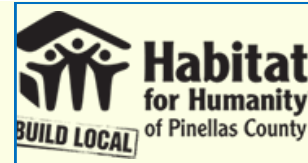
Sometimes, out of nowhere, life walks in and knocks you down. While I was writing my President's letter, I received a call that Billy Walker had suffered a massive heart attack and was not expected to recover. I later heard that he had been removed from life support. My first thought was that I wondered if I had thanked him enough for all he had done since the day I met him.

Billy was a hard-working Democrat. He got things done and did not make a big deal about it. When I went looking for a photo of Billy for my email to the group, I could not find photos of Billy posing; only photos of Billy working. He was the best DEC Treasurer we have had in my memory, He volunteered as Treasurer for important candidates. He was a supportive member of the Largo Club

and served as Treasurer and later as Vice President. A short time ago, he stepped back from most things, including the Largo Board. I found, though, if I needed help, Billy was there.

More than all of that, Billy Walker was a good person. He cared about people and Democratic values. He will be missed. ☞

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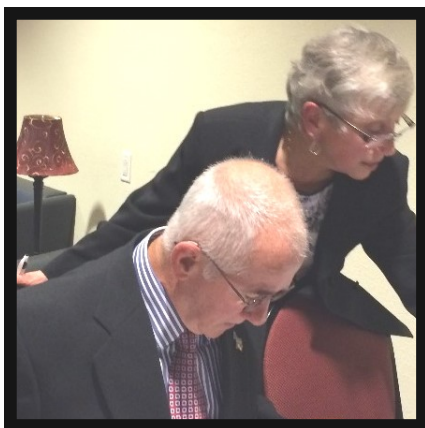


Our speaker is Mike Sutton, CFRE,

Chief Executive Officer, Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County Mr. Sutton's experience in the non-profit sector includes a breadth and depth of knowledge in all aspects of development, management, marketing, communications, recruitment of volunteers and fund-raising. Accustomed to working with business and community leaders, faith based organizations, and prospective donors. Ability to quickly access opportunities and issues and develop and implement appropriate response strategies.

Comfortable working in a results-oriented environment of high expectations. Skilled at training and mentoring staff to higher levels of production. Strong written and verbal communication skills. The energy and ability to juggle multiple tasks. Skills & involvement include: strategic planning, operations management, financial management, organizational development, program development and management, volunteer and staff training, marketing and communications, and fund raising. ☞

In Memoriam



William Michael (Billy) Walker, 12/24/1947—6/15/2018, along with wife Toni, was a mainstay of Pinellas County Democratic politics for the last decade. He was a Veteran of the US Navy, a member of the IBEW and the American Legion Post 273.

He served as treasurer of the Club and set up our Political Committee. At the same time, he was treasurer of the Pinellas County DEC and the Pinellas County Veterans Caucus, of which he was also a founding member. Most recently, Billy was serving as Campaign Treasurer for Amy Kedron's campaign for Pinellas County Commission.

Billy and Toni were both delegates to the 2016 Democratic National Convention, supporting Hilary Clinton.

We extend our condolences to Toni and family. Billy was such an integral part of our community, his passing will leave a hole in our hearts and in our local party.

Editor

Rest in Peace, Dear Friend. ☹

Team,

I am heartbroken to say that we lost Billy Walker today. He had a heart attack yesterday and was removed from life support today. Billy was a great give back Democrat. I said to he and Toni at our last DEC meeting that they never said no to any ask and how much it meant to me and all of us.

Toni has asked for privacy, so please give her the time to process this.

We approved Billy's application this week and I'd like to have that vote at our next meeting.

Life is too short. I'm going to make a conscious effort to keep that in mind and honor the important work my friend did.

Susan McGrath
Chair, Pinellas Democratic Party

Wow. What a shock. We will miss his tireless efforts for our party. A great guy, a great Democratic and a great loss. Our thoughts and positive energy go out to Toni and his family.

Regards,
Paul Ford. Chair, HD 65



From Charlie Tucker:

Since the 2012 election, Bill, Rich Piper, and I have met for brunch each month and shared time as friends. Bill and I were together alone this past Thursday and shared conversation about life and health. I will miss that. Bill mentored me into the Democratic Party, as I was a Republican, and he taught me all the details of being Treasurer for the Club. He taught me a lot about politics and mentored me and others on how to serve. He shared his boat and his fishing knowledge with this novice and I will not forget those times.

He was my friend. I miss my friend. God-speed!

Billy Walker

So how do we all grieve for a friend like Billy? We think of all the good things we experienced with him.

He was so efficient. He got that member list out to Board members every month. Never made a mistake as far as I know. He was so loving. And we all could see how he treated Toni when she became ill. He always offered and gave a helping hand - with my refrigerator, with setting up the table for meetings, with questions about anything mechanical that I had. He was so fun to be around. We picked on each other with good humor every month at our Board meetings, trying to decide who could be meaner to the other, and loving every minute. I miss you Billy, and will miss you more each day. You were a good man and you and Toni deserved each other. The best thing I can do for you is to offer Toni any help she may need in the coming weeks and months, and I do so now.

Lois Fries

I was very saddened to learn that my good friend and fellow Democratic Veterans' Caucus member Billy Walker has died. Billy was a fervent Democrat, a worker not a watcher, a doer not a talker, a thinker not a complainer. A lifelong Union member, he worked hard for Democratic causes at all levels. He helped me in my Belleair Bluffs City Commission campaigns, as well as many campaigns of many much higher level office seekers. He worked for the Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club and the Democratic Veterans' Caucus as well as the Democratic Executive Committee. It would be difficult to find a more devoted and loyal Democrat than Billy Walker, and our Party has suffered a huge loss. We will miss you, friend!

Joe Barkley

Highlights from May Meeting



Ben Diamond: thanks to all of you for inviting me to your meeting. Well, I went to Tallahassee to try and get something done. I am running for reelection to make more progress. I attended school in Pinellas County and attended UF. We have so much to change in Tallahassee. Florida is in a stranglehold by special interest. I am working to right the course with our environment. We are living here in Florida because it is such a special place to live. We used to all work together to protect all of our natural resources, but after all of



these years with Republicans in charge, our environment has been handed over to these special interests in exchange for campaign contributions.

The Parkland School shooting survivors came to Tallahassee to talk to the legislators. Many other people came to support the students on this issue. Yet, only lip service was paid by the Republicans. Unfunded mandates were their contribution to the further detriment of our public education.

Many good school safety bills are loaded with poison pills by Republicans to make them difficult to pass. The legislature continues to undercut public education. Parents and teachers alike agree that more counselors are needed. No money is provided.

Bills on important needs such as criminal Justice, transportation, a multi-county approach to hurricane preparedness never see it to the floor. Inexperienced appointees are For example, Florida is unprepared to handle a category 5 hurricane. The current political appointees who are charged with preparedness do not have the expertise to coordinate such a big important project. So much is being ignored. So much needs to be changed.

Conservatives
vote their
FEARS.



Liberals vote their
HOPES.



fb.com/livingblueinNorthCarolina

Amy Kedron : Amy introduced herself and explained by she wants to serve on the Pinellas County Board. was born in Buffalo, NY and grew up on a street that had about as many factories on it, as homes. When American jobs were sent overseas, Amy saw how it destroyed not only wages, but communities. As a Catholic School student, there were only nine kids in her fourth grade class because parents could no longer afford tuition. Soon after, the school closed as well as the church, local businesses and grocery stores. What was once a tight-knit, community began to feel hopeless.



So Amy did something about it. She was determined to understand the root causes of her hometown's challenges, so she became the first person in her family to go to college. She earned two Ivy League degrees, a doctoral degree and a law degree researching and then implementing the best ways to put economies, communities and families back together. ♪

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

July 2018

Anna V. Eskamani is an Orlando Native and



daughter of Iranian immigrant parents, who has worked relentlessly her entire life to protect all members of our community. A community organizer who is fighting unapologetically

for progressive values, Anna currently serves as the Senior Director of Public Affairs and Communications for Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida.

She is an advocate for women's health and equality. Anna is also a PhD student in Public Affairs at the University of Central Florida. She has also been featured on the cover of *Time* magazine, (see insert) and is a candidate



for HD 47.

Anna serves on local boards, including Valencia College's Peace and Justice Institute, and is a founding member of the Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, a gun safety advocacy coalition that formed after the Pulse nightclub massacre. ♡

August, 2018



Come hear from four (4) additional candidates. Dr. Rich Piper has been invited to moderate this forum.

Carrie Pilon — Candidate for FL Senate Dist 24. A Pinellas County native, Carrie Pilon understands the hard-working people who call this peninsula home. A successful lawyer, she still takes time to lead Girl Scouts, work with the PTA, and volunteer as a tutor to make our communities stronger.



Amy Kedron — Candidate for Pinellas County Commission District 6/ Dr. Amy Kedron was born in Buffalo, NY. Amy left frosty Buffalo for sunny Florida in 2010 and began working as a professor at USF St. Petersburg and Ringling College, teaching students how to build stronger businesses, organizations and communities.



Jeff Larsen — Candidate for Pinellas County School Board. Jeff Larsen is a middle school reading teacher at a Title I school. He is proud to call Tarpon Springs home and has served the city as a Commissioner and Vice Mayor for the past six years.



Alex Heeren — Candidate for FL House District 66. an educator with Pinellas County Schools. He is running for the Florida House of Representatives in District 66. His life has been dedicated to serving our community, and he now wants to serve by taking our voices and our values to Tallahassee.



CR update—page 1

These recommendations are tentative and preliminary, as multiple groups are still conducting in-depth reviews of each proposed amendment. There will be additional analysis to be presented in the future, but the tentative recommendations below do provide a reason for the recommendation. If you use these as talking points when discussing with voters, be sure you give them the reasons provided for the recommendations.

Type of Amendment:

- LRCA = Legislative Referred Constitutional Amendment
- CICA—Citizen Initiated Constitutional Amendment
- CR = Commission Referred Amendment (CC)

Type	Title	Subject	Description	Tentative recommendation
LRCA	Amdt 1	Taxes	Increases the amount of a home's value exempted from property tax	Vote NO; this would negatively impact municipal & county government operations as well as agencies that depend upon taxes.
LRCA	Amdt 2	Taxes	Makes the cap on non-homestead parcel assessment increases permanent	Vote NO: this would benefit real estate investors (<i>Makes permanent an amendment passed in 2008, which caps annual increases on large commercial properties. Harms local governments by reducing revenue for parks, libraries, fire and police services, road repairs, etc.</i>)
CICA	Amdt 3	Gambling	Requires voter approval of casino gambling	Neutral; would allow citizens to decide where gambling is permitted; but usurps local government decision on gambling.
CICA	Amdt 4	Suffrage	Restores the right to vote for most people with prior felony convictions upon completion of their sentences	Vote YES! <i>Felons who have served their sentences should not be disenfranchised from voting.</i>
LRCA	Amdt 5	Legislature	Requires 2/3 vote of legislature to impose or increase tax or fee	Vote NO. Requires a super majority of the legislature to impose or increase tax or fee; making it more difficult to balance the state's budget. <i>Ties the hands of future legislatures which could prevent them from addressing future needs - ALEC model legislation</i>
CR	Amdt 6	Judiciary	Adds a Marsy's Law to state constitution, increases judicial retirement age to 75, and prohibits judges from deferring to administrative agencies in interpreting law	Vote NO:: Establishes a series of rights for crime victims. Increases the mandatory retirement age for judges from 70 to 75. <i>Victims' rights are already in the Constitution. Eliminates a provision that victims' rights cannot interfere with constitutional rights of the accused. Effectively prevents judges and hearing officers from relying on expertise found in agencies who created regulations in the first place.</i>

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CRC update—page 2

Type	Title	Subject	Description	Tentative recommendation
CR	Amdt 7	Education	Requires death benefits for first responders and military members, a supermajority vote for college fees, and adds state college system structure to constitution	<p>Vote NO::</p> <p>Requires the payment of death benefits when law enforcement officers, first responders are killed while performing official duties. Establishes a governance system for the 28 state and community colleges. Requires a supermajority vote by university boards of trustees and the Board of Governors when raising student fees.</p> <p><i>Vote no on all of these as existing statutes and organizations are already fulfilling these needs</i></p>
CR	Amdt 8	Education	Establishes school board term limits, allows state to operate non-board established schools, and requires civic literacy in public education	<p>Vote NO:</p> <p>Imposes an eight-year term limit on school board members. Allows an alternative process for approving public schools, including charter schools, rather than by local school boards. Establishes a requirement for the teaching of civic literacy in public schools.</p> <p><i>Vote no on all of this as it is an attempt to weaken local control of schools and pave the way for more charters and voucher systems</i></p>
CR	Amdt 9	Environment	Bans offshore oil and gas drilling and vaping in enclosed indoor workplaces	<p>Vote YES :</p> <p>Prohibits drilling for gas and oil in state coastal waters Ban vaping and the use of electronic cigarettes in workplaces.</p> <p><i>Vote yes to preserve the quality our environment and personal space at work</i></p>

Continued—next page

CRC update—page 3

Type	Title	Subject	Description	Tentative recommendation
CR	Amdt 10	Admin of Gov't	Prohibits counties from abolishing certain local offices, changes start date of legislative sessions, and adds an executive office and executive department to constitution	<p>Vote NO: Requires all charter-county governments to have elected constitutional officers, including sheriffs. Allows the Legislature beginning its annual session in January in even-numbered years. Create an Office of Domestic Security and Counterterrorism in the Department of Law Enforcement. Revises the constitutional authority for the Department of Veterans' Affairs.</p> <p><i>Vote no as this there is no need to further militarize law enforcement. Takes control away from Florida's charter counties. Legislature currently has power to set another date for sessions.</i></p>
CR	Amdt 11	Admin of Gov't	Repeals the following: (a) a prohibition against aliens owning property, (b) a requirement for a high-speed ground transportation system, and (c) a provision saying that changes to a criminal statute are not retroactive	<p>Vote NO: Removes language that prohibits "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning property. Removes obsolete language that authorizes a high-speed rail system. Revises language to make clear that the repeal of a criminal statute does not affect the prosecution of any crime committed before the repeal.</p> <p><i>Vote no to keep the original High Speed Rail amendment that was overwhelmingly passed in 2006 by 63% of voters.</i></p>
CR	Amdt 12	Gov't Acc	Prohibits public officials from lobbying for compensation while in office and six years thereafter	<p>Neutral Imposes a six-year lobbying ban on former state elected officials, state agencies heads and local elected officials. Creates a new ethics standard that would prohibit public officials from obtaining a "disproportionate benefit" from their actions while in office.</p> <p><i>You can vote yes to provide some measure of control on third party moneyed interests in Tallahassee. Or you can vote no as amendment Does not address the real problems with money and influence in politics; and a comprehensive lobbying framework should be done statutorily, where unforeseen problems can be more readily addressed.</i></p>
CR	Amdt 13	Gambling	Prohibits betting on dog races	<p>Vote YES: Bans greyhound racing at Florida tracks after Dec. 31, 2020.</p> <p><i>Vote yes to end this cruel and antiquated practice.</i></p>

Contact your Federal Representative!

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All of the officers were elected
March, 2017. Next election is March,
2019

Additional contact information is avail-
able on

Why Join the Largo/Mid- Pinellas Democratic Club?

The club provides a variety of ways to stay informed and involved in local, county, state and national political discussions. But we're not just about talk. We will be part of the action in finding the best candidates and getting them elected, as well as supporting the most important causes. We will write letters, make phone calls, knock on doors, register voters, and whatever else it takes to bring change to our communities, our county and our state. But, just as important, we also want to make time to enjoy each other's `company and celebrate each other's efforts at social events throughout the year. Grassroots politics is effective and fun!

As a member of the Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club you can:

- Meet other active Democrats
- Meet and get to know your elected officials and potential candidates
- Raise funds and work for candidates
- Participate in community service projects
- Hear speakers and discuss issues of local, state and national importance
- Attend special events and monthly meetings.



Check out our all new WEBSITE! WWW.Largodemocrats.ORG

Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club

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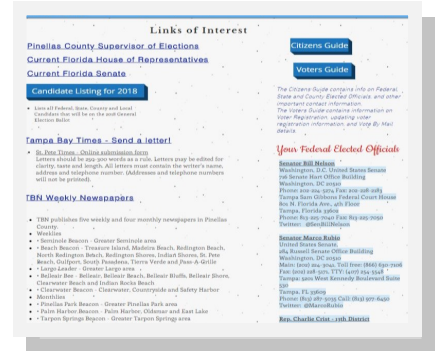
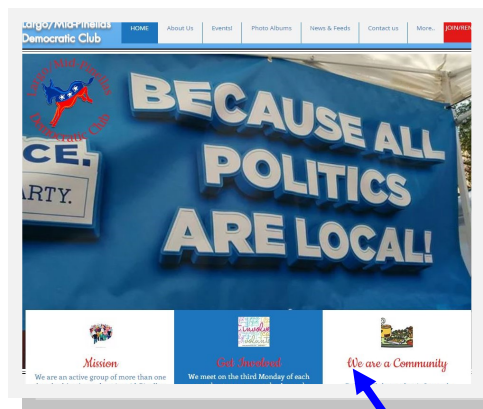
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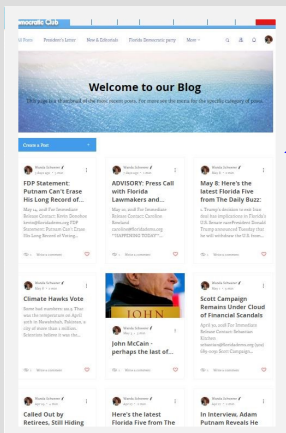
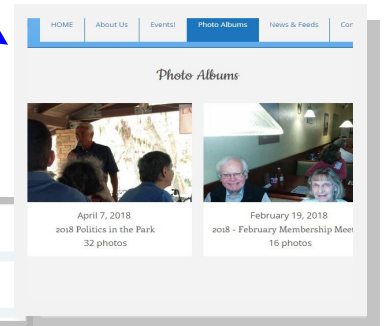
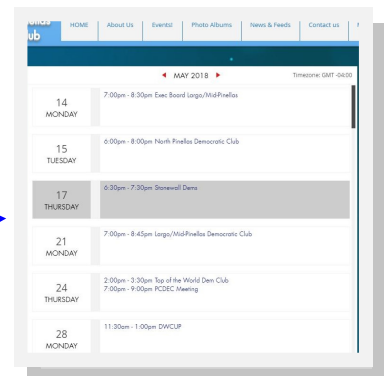
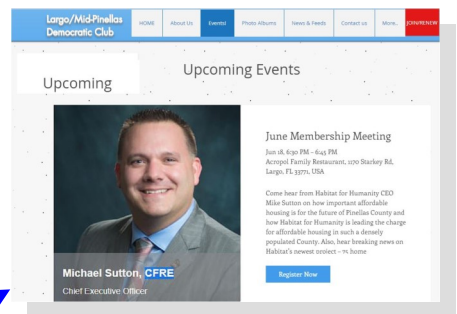
JOIN/RENEW

After 10 years, it was time for a complete revamp of the Largo/Mid-Pinellas Democratic Club website. Be sure to check out the new site. You can pay your annual dues online via credit card. You can "register" (RSVP) for a meeting.



WWW.LARGODEMOCRATS.ORG

Please visit our new website. NOTE that it has changed from .com to .org!!! There are many sub-menus with valuable information. Don't overlook them.



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