

FOCUS

Democratic Club of Sarasota

An Informed Member is Our Best Voter



Volume 18, Issue 7

July, 2012

NO JULY LUNCHEON

With so many Club officers and Board members attending the Florida Democratic Party's annual Jefferson-Jackson festivities in Hollywood, Florida, organizing and running a regular luncheon meeting just wasn't feasible.

Instead, please join us on Tuesday, July 24 for Wine, Cheese & Politics, and on Saturday, August 11, when we return to Laurel Oak Country Club for our regular monthly luncheon.

If you're looking for something Democratic to do on July 14 to take the place of attending the luncheon, please consider helping one of the candidates listed on page 5. Direct the check you would have written to pay for your lunch to one of the campaigns. Spend the two hours volunteering for a candidate or the Sarasota County Democratic Party.

JULY 24 WINE, CHEESE & POLITICS

Democratic Candidate Round Up in Downtown Sarasota

Now's your chance to get to know each of our local Democratic candidates better. Figure out which ones you want to volunteer your time for. Decide whose campaigns will receive your hard-earned dollars.

The July 24th Wine, Cheese & Politics event at 1350 Main Street will feature our candidates in a format that will allow you to hear updates about their campaigns and ask questions. Candidates attending include:

- Keith Fitzgerald, running for United States Congress in a campaign that has attracted national attention,
- Adam Tebrugge, running for Florida House of Representatives for newly-drawn District 71 which includes

Sarasota areas west of the Trail and the Keys north of Siesta,

- Liz Alpert, running against Republican Ray Pilon for Florida House of Representatives for newly-drawn District 72 which lies west of I-75 and extends as far south as Osprey,
- John Torracco, running for State Attorney for the 12th Judicial Circuit, an office that is now open as the incumbent, Republican Earl Moreland, retires after 24 years.

The doors open at 6 pm on Tuesday, July 24, and the program begins at 6:30. RSVP to rsvp@sarasotadems.com or leave a message at 404-4678.

See Calendar on page 7 for details.

Last Month: Veterans for Common Sense

The June luncheon was a celebration of one of our nation's founding fathers, Thomas Paine, and his *Common Sense*. It was also an opportunity to learn about Florida Veterans for Common Sense. Gene Jones, the organization's President, provided an overview of the group and its activities before the main event — a celebration of the work of Thomas Paine through music and drama.

Florida Veterans for Common Sense got its start when local veterans came together to protest the run-up to war in Iraq. Although their mission is still to call for common sense in national decisions to go to war, their current focus is on improving conditions for

those who have served their country in war.

They strive to make life easier for vets in the local rehab facility by providing personal items, such as wheelchair gloves.

They help homeless vets get back on their feet by offering services and distributing useful surplus items.

One of Florida Veterans for Common Sense's most significant contributions to our community was the creation of the Courts Assisting Veterans program. Working with Judge Lee Haworth, they pursued establishing a

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*Focus Newsletter is a publication of
the Democratic Club of Sarasota
In print since May 1995*

Newsletter Mission Statement

The mission of the newsletter of the Democratic Club of Sarasota (*FOCUS*) is to promote the growth of the Democratic Party in Sarasota County, to inform Club members about Club events and other local events of interest to Democrats, and to address local, state and national issues of interest to Party members.

President

Mary Clupper (2014) – 359-0757 president@sarasotadems.com

FOCUS Staff

Editor: Debbie Trice – 924-2113 feedback@sarasotadems.com

Contributors: M. Clupper, T. Cook, P. Coville, J. DeVries

Editorial Staff: Diane Happy, Dee Widder

Photographers: Connie Goldstein, Jerry Osterweil, Gerry Preston

Circulation: Dick Stammer

Webmaster: Wizno.com webmaster@sarasotadems.com

Officers

Vice President: JoAnne DeVries (2014) 320-8825

joanne@sarasotadems.com

Treasurer: (2014)

treasurer@sarasotadems.com

Corr. Secy.: Tom Cook (2014) 923-1909

correspondingsecretary@sarasotadems.com

Rec. Secy.: Holly Treadway (2014) 355-1763

recordingsecretary@sarasotadems.com

Board Members

Georgia Blotzer (2015) georgia@sarasotadems.com

Tom Brommage (2015) 685-5653 tom@sarasotadems.com

Pat Coville (2014) (347) 675-3404 pat@sarasotadems.com

Ed Henne (2013) 350-3508 ed@sarasotadems.com

Helen Magill (2014) 320-7166 helen@sarasotadems.com

Sacha Rosenfeld (2013) (610) 564-0216 sacha@sarasotadems.com

Dick Stammer (2014) 371-2004 dick@sarasotadems.com

Jim Tate (2015) jim@sarasotadems.com

Contact President Mary Clupper if you wish to attend the meeting of the executive committee.

What do we include in the newsletter?

Democrats have a lot to say – and the Board encourages club members to say it with articles or letters to the editor for our newsletter!

Unfortunately, there is limited space. Dealing with this dilemma, the Board adopted the following list of policies and procedures:

Articles and letters to the editor from club members will be accepted on a space available basis using the following priorities:

1. Local information of immediate importance to club members
2. Articles or letters from members who have not written recently
3. Articles or letters relating to state issues.
4. Articles or letters relating to national issues.

Due to limited space, articles and letters should be written as concisely as possible (between 100 and 150 words) and once submitted, may be edited. Letters to the editor should contain statements of proposed action by the membership.

Submission Deadline:

Third Saturday of the month for the next issue

Email submissions to Feedback@SarasotaDems.com

Federal Government Contact Information

White House Comment Line 202-456-1111
White House Switchboard 202-456-1414
(WEB) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/> FAX: 202-456-2461

Bill Nelson (D) Toll free in Florida: 1-888-671-4091
United States Senator 202-224-5274
716 Hart Senate Office Bldg. FAX: 202-228-2183
Washington, DC 20510 (WEB) <http://billnelson.senate.gov>

Marco Rubio (R) Toll free in Florida: 1-866-630-7106
United States Senator 202-224-3041
B40A Dirksen Senate Office Bldg. FAX: 202-228-5171
Washington, DC 20510 (WEB) <http://rubio.senate.gov>

Vern Buchanan (R) 202-225-5015
United States Representative LOCAL: 941-951-6643
1516 Longworth House Office Bldg. (WEB) <http://buchanan.house.gov>
Washington, DC 20515 DC FAX: 202-226-0828

Congress Switchboard 800-962-3524

U.S. Capitol Switchboard — 24 hours a day
(800) 648-3516 or (800) 839-5276 or (877) 762-8762

State Government Contact Information

Governor Rick Scott (R)
Office of the Governor
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001 (WEB) www.flgov.com

Senate District 21

Mike Bennett, State Senator (R) 941-727-6349
3653 Cortez Road West, Suite 90 850-487-5078
Bradenton, FL 34210 bennett.michael.web@flsenate.gov

Senate District 23

Nancy Detert, State Senator (R) 941-480-3547
417 Commercial Court, Suite D 850-487-5081
Venice, FL 34292 detert.nancy.web@flsenate.gov

House District 55

Darryl Ervin Rouson, State Rep. (D) 941-708-8570
302 Manatee Ave E, Suite 304 850-488-0925
Bradenton, FL 34208-1901 (WEB) www.myfloridahouse.gov

House District 67

Greg Steube, State Rep. (R)
5830 Lakewood Ranch Blvd
Sarasota, FL 34240 850-488-6340
(WEB) www.myfloridahouse.gov

House District 69

Ray Pilon, State Rep. (R) 941-955-8077
1660 Ringling Blvd, Ste 310-311 850-488-7754
Sarasota, FL 34236 (WEB) www.myfloridahouse.gov

House District 70

Doug Holder, State Rep. (R) 941-918-4028
8486 South Tamiami Trail 850-488-1171
Sarasota, FL 34238-2953 (WEB) www.myfloridahouse.gov

House District 71

Ken Roberson, State Rep. (R) 941-613-0914
17825 Murdock Circle 850-488-0060
Port Charlotte, FL 33948 (WEB) www.myfloridahouse.gov

Democratic Party of Sarasota County

HQ: 7358 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota 941-330-9400
PO Box 5833; Sarasota 34277-5833
(WEB) www.sarasotadems.org headquarters@sarasotadems.org

President's Column

Dear Members and Friends,

I recently had the privilege to attend the Florida Democratic Party's Convention where we chose our delegates to the Democratic National Convention coming up in September. It was an exciting process to participate in.

Because delegates are elected based on Congressional Districts, the Sarasota nominees were mixed in with nominees from Manatee, DeSoto and Hardee counties (the old District 13). Forty of us were required to select four men and four women from among our group. Three representatives from Sarasota made it through the process. They are Rita Ferrandino, Sarasota County Democratic Party Chair; Henry Bright, State Committeeman; and our Club's own Vice President, JoAnne DeVries. We congratulate these friends and colleagues! We were very pleased to see the diversity of the total group of eight people who will represent us in Charlotte.

Throughout the meetings on Friday and Saturday, we heard from a lot of Florida's Democratic leadership. The topic we heard the most about was Vote by Mail (VBM). Our members have been hearing about VBM non-stop for the past several months. The Democratic Club Sarasota has invested over \$20,000 of your membership dues and contributions into this effort in our county. We are seeing good results, but there is still much work to do to get as many Democrats as possible committed to voting by mail.

Voting by mail combats many of the obstacles that have been created by the new voter suppression laws our Florida Legislature put into effect. Despite early voting days cut in half and all precincts being redrawn, time limitations and confusion about where to vote won't be issues if voters mail in their ballots. It's interesting that, with all the changes made to the voting process, the other side didn't change

any of the rules for voting by mail. That is simply because Republicans are good at voting by mail.

Our mandate is clear. We have to get Democrats to vote by mail.

We were also treated to several inspirational speakers at the FDP Convention. Senator Bill Nelson was there, and of course we heard rousing addresses from Florida Democratic Party Chair Rod Smith. We were welcomed to the meeting by Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn. He was delighted to greet over 500 Democrats, knowing that in August he is going to be welcoming a very large group of Republicans to his city. He said, "In 2008 we changed the guard and now the time has come to guard the change." But my favorite take-away was this line: "2008 was historical. 2012 is personal." I think we can all agree on this one.

As Election Day 2012 draws closer, we hope you are donating your time and money to the Democratic Party and clubs, Democratic candidates, and Obama for America. It's going to take every bit of effort we can possibly make to insure President Obama has a second term and that Bill Nelson holds onto his Senate seat.

This Club will continue to participate in outreach events in our county and to bring you social and educational events that keep you informed and in touch.

We look forward to seeing you at the "Koch Brothers Exposed" film showing on June 27th at Floribbean Restaurant and at our July Wine, Cheese & Politics gathering on July 24th.

Democratically yours,

Mary



Gertrude Hight and Muriel O'Neil



Richard Wilcox and John Clay

From Your Membership Co-Chairs

Dear Democratic Club Members and Friends,

Our June luncheon was truly a special event! Over 45 "Future members" attended and many of these guests stopped at the Membership table and became members on the day of the luncheon! I think the beautiful venue and the great program (Veterans for Common Sense) inspired all of us to get involved and get active in local politics!

Many of our Sustaining Members attended the June luncheon. Sustaining Membership is a special category of membership (\$200+ annual dues) that gives the Democratic Club of Sarasota additional funding for Outreach events as well as the Vote By Mail (VBM) Program. We truly appreciate this additional commitment from our Sustaining Members. A special thank you to all of our membership for your continuing support in this crucial election year.

The Democratic Club of Sarasota funded the majority of the Vote By Mail program in Sarasota County. Our club and other local Democratic Clubs have paid for printing and mailing the "Sign Up to Vote By Mail" cards you've seen at

Club events. We've been mailing these cards to Democrats who are likely to vote for our candidates, and the Sarasota County Democratic Party has coordinated volunteers making follow-up phone calls.

Vote By Mail is a top priority of OFA (Obama/Organizing for America) and the Florida Democratic Party. It remains a top priority for all of us in Sarasota County. Your membership dues, donations and attending our events continue to make it possible for the Democratic Club of Sarasota to fund the Vote By Mail program.

We continue to look for Outreach events where we can increase the Democratic presence in the community. Please contact us and let us know of any events you are aware of in Sarasota County.

Your Membership Co-Chairs,

JoAnne DeVries: joanne@sarasotadems.com or 320-8825
Georgia Blotzer: georgia@sarasotadems.com

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- I am registered as a Democrat in Florida.
- I am a Democrat but am registered in a state other than Florida, and I would like to become a Friend of the Democratic Club of Sarasota.

Enclosed is a check for \$_____ for a term of (circle) 1 yr \$20; 3 yrs \$52; 5 yrs \$80; 10 yrs \$150 or Sustaining Member @ \$200 or more per year

_____ Date _____ Signed

_____ Name _____

_____ Address _____

_____ City/Zip _____

_____ Phone _____

_____ E-mail _____

Referred by _____

- Please contact me about volunteering.

Send to: Democratic Club of Sarasota
Membership Committee
PO Box 51076
Sarasota, FL 34232-0329

New & Reinstated Club Members and Friends (in May)

Lurline Aslanian, Maria Barnes, Diana Batton, Rachel Ben-Avi, Brooke Butler, William Christopher, Jessie Hillman, Thor Hlasty, Raymond Johnson, Gene Jones, Christine Mattern, Taylor Parker, Paula Pulmano, Thomas Rivard, Jo Santiago, Maiah Taylor, David Tignor, John Torracco, Danielle Troiano, Sharon Winkler, Catherine Wolfe



Dick Stammer with Obama campaign gear and "Proud Sarasota Democrat" t-shirts. These items are available at Club events and Democratic Party headquarters to individuals who make donations to the Sarasota County Democratic Party.

Support Your 2012 Democratic Candidates

On Friday, June 8 at 12 noon, the Qualifying Period for candidates planning to run in the 2012 Election ended, and the races were set.

There are nine races in Sarasota County with candidates running as Democrats. Each candidate needs your support. Please offer what you can. Financial contributions, volunteer time and introductions to your friends and neighbors will all be appreciated.

The chart on the right lists the nine candidates and their contact information. Please note that, as a result of redistricting, district boundaries and numbers have changed since the last election. Please check the map on the back page to see which State House District you are now in.

In Other Races

Tax Collector Barbara Ford-Coates drew no opposition, so she is automatically re-elected. So, too, State Representative Darryl Rouson in District 70.

Kevin T. Connelly, who is a Democratic Precinct captain in Venice and played the role of Thomas Paine at the Club's June luncheon, is running for Sarasota County Charter Review Board without party affiliation.



A race we will all watch closely is for Supervisor of Elections. Three Republicans are running. Jon Thaxton is challenging Kathy Dent. Because Victoria Ann Brill is running as a write-in candidate in the General Election,

only Republicans will be allowed to vote in the Primary Election which will actually determine who will be Supervisor of Elections for the next four years.

President of the United States

Barack Obama

P.O. Box 803638
Chicago, IL 60680
Phone: 866-675-2008
Web: barackobama.com

United States Senator

Bill Nelson

972 W. Whitmire Dr.
Melbourne, FL 32935
Phone: 202-485-3138
Web: nelsonforsenate.com

U.S. Representative, District 16

Keith Fitzgerald

PO Box 3708
Sarasota, FL 34230
Phone: 941-870-4925
Web: gofitzgo.com
To Volunteer, contact:
KeithDavies5@gmail.com
or (631) 219-9270

State Attorney, 12th Judicial Circuit

John Torraco

PO Box 2841
Sarasota, FL 34230
Phone: 941-301-8696
Email: Vote4Torraco@gmail.com
Web: www.vote4torraco.com



State Representative, District 71

Adam Tebrugge

PO Box 770
Bradenton, FL 34206
Email: adamtebrugge@gmail.com
Web: www.atfh71.info
To Volunteer, contact:
jkCooper1@gmail.com
or (941) 807-0469

State Representative, District 72

Liz Alpert

PO Box 2725
Sarasota, FL 34230
Phone: 941-954-1700
Email: lizalpert@msn.com

State Representative, District 74

Andrew Saltman

PO Box 380382
Murdock, FL 34288
Phone: 941-426-4160
Email: andrew@saltman.us
Web: www.saltman.us

County Commissioner, District 3

Jennifer Cohen

1181 S. Sumter Blvd. # 111
North Port, FL 34287
Phone: 941-467-2549
Web: cohen4commissioner.com

Hospital Board Central Dist., Seat 1

Teresa Carafelli RN

330 South Pineapple Suite 204
Sarasota, FL 34236
Phone: 941-366 3231
Email: tcarafelli1@comcast.net

Photo Far Left: John Torraco, candidate for State Attorney, with Jean Russell (L) and Dr. Ayse Somersan (R)

Photo Left: Liz Alpert, candidate for Florida House of Representatives, District 72

Last Month: Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* is as relevant today as it was in 1776

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program to divert legal cases involving veterans with PTSD and TBI away from the criminal justice system so that these veterans can avoid incarceration and get the kind of help they need. Thanks, in part, to Judge Haworth's leadership, the program is active in the 12th Judicial Circuit. Similar programs are now authorized by the state of Florida, but are not operational due to lack of funding.

Florida Veterans for Common Sense took their name from a book written early in 1776 by Thomas Paine. At a time when many in the American colonies were still loyal British subjects — even as they protested the king's actions — Paine advocated for independence and outlined a "manifesto" of reasons to declare independence.

Blending music and a dramatic reading of Thomas Paine's words in *Common Sense*, three members of Florida

Veterans for Common Sense demonstrated to luncheon attendees that Paine's words are as relevant today as they were in 1776. "American Troubadour" Bill Schustik roused the audience with revolutionary and patriotic songs. Kevin T. Connelly portrayed Thomas Paine and responded to insightful questions from an early patriot played by Marc Killiam.

Gene Jones summed up the program, "Thomas Paine stands for the promise of America. We can't let that promise die. ... We can not let the 1% take over our country."

—Debbie Trice

Editor's Note: The full text of *Common Sense* is available online at no charge. One source is www.ushistory.org/paine/commonsense

Liz Alpert: A Living Legacy

Editor's Note: Paula John interviewed Liz Alpert and wrote this profile in the beginning of 2012. Liz recently announced that she is running to represent District 72 in the Florida House, unseating Ray Pilon.

Liz Alpert moved to Sarasota for the bayfront view from her condo. But after 10 years here, she is firmly part of the landscape. Moving here on her own after 17 active years in Tampa, she has been a Club member since she arrived and a Sarasota County Democratic Party precinct captain, served on the city's Human Relations Board until term-limited out, and worked on individual candidates' campaigns — all while earning a law degree from Stetson University. She now specializes in marital and family law.

Growing up in Illinois the oldest of eight children, Liz always admired women in politics though she never thought it was anything she could aspire to. But married to an attorney in Tampa and the mother of three girls, she turned her civic involvement in historic preservation into a focus on urban planning, and then ran for State Representative on a "smart growth" platform. She lost her race, in part due to running in a bad year for Democrats, and lost again in a later race for City Council. Liz also hosted a weekly public affairs show, entitled "Tampa Bay in Depth," where she interviewed prominent guests about civic affairs.

In her law practice, Liz helps clients see through their current pain to the relief of resolution, counseling to minimize conflict and settle without needing to go before a judge, when possible. Always one to read self-help books to learn how to deal better with adversity, Liz now uses her own life experiences to help empower others. She says, "You don't have to be a victim."

—Paula G. John

Editor's Note: "Living Legacies" is an occasional column highlighting the interesting lives and diverse achievements of our members.



Florida Veterans for Common Sense: American Troubadour Bill Schustik, Kevin T. Connelly as Thomas Paine, organization President Gene Jones and Marc Killiam as an inquisitive patriot.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

This information is presented as a guide only. While we do the best we can to present dates and times with accuracy, event times and venues do change. Please check with the event sponsor to confirm the details surrounding the event. Note: all telephone numbers are 941 Area Code, unless otherwise noted.

To request that your event be listed, email Tom Cook at willardcook@mac.com.

DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF SARASOTA EVENTS

27 Jun (Wed): Movie Fundraiser:

“Koch Brothers Exposed” This documentary shows how two of the world’s richest men, Charles and David Koch, are polluting the environment and bankrolling a vast network of organizations dedicated to serving the interests of large corporations. Join fellow Democrats at the new Floribbean Restaurant at 1400 Main St in Sarasota to hear from local candidates and watch the not-to-be-missed film. Time: 6:00 pm; check-in opens at 5:30. Cost: \$10 in cash or check at the door. RSVP: rsvp@sarasotadems.com or 404-4678

14 Jul (Sat): July Luncheon CANCELLED

24 Jul (Tue): Wine, Cheese & Politics

Join us for an evening of political discussion with the local Democratic candidates. The doors open at 6:00 pm for the 6:30 program. Location: 1350 Main Street, 6th floor lounge, in Downtown Sarasota. Cost: \$15 for members; \$20 for non-members. Wine, beer, cheese, and sweets will be provided along with non-alcoholic beverages.

RSVP: rsvp@sarasotadems.com or 404-4678
(RSVPs will be eligible for a door prize worth \$50)

11 Aug (Sat): Democratic Club of Sarasota Luncheon

The regular luncheons will return to Laurel Oak Country Club, 2700 Gary Player Blvd in Sarasota beginning at 11:30 am. Cost: \$23 for members; \$25 for non-members and walk-ins. Reservations (due by Aug 8): 379-9233 or reserve@sarasotadems.com



CLUB-SPONSORED OUTREACH EVENTS

None scheduled at press time

OTHER EVENTS

Sarasota-Manatee Democratic Meetups
Democrats Mean Business: www.meetup.com/Sarasota-Democrats-Mean-Business/
Search for other Meetups at
<http://democrat.meetup.com>

4 Jul (Wed): North Port Freedom Festival

North Port Democratic Club is sponsoring a Candidate Booth at the festival, 6:00–10:00 pm, at North Port High School Stadium, 6400 W. Price Blvd in North Port. There will also be games, food, refreshments and fireworks at 9:00 pm. Info: 941-467-2549 or www.cohen4commissioner.com

14 Jul (Sat): FDP Jefferson-Jackson Dinner

This is the Florida Democratic Party’s signature annual event, drawing thousands of Democratic leaders, supporters and activists each year. Tickets for the fundraising dinner at the Westin Diplomat Hotel in Hollywood, Florida, can be purchased at www.fladems.com/page/content/JJ2012/

16 Jul (Mon): North Port Democratic Club

The regular monthly meeting is held on the 3rd Monday, 7:00–8:45 pm. For details on the July meeting: 587-6244, mortner@votenorthport.com (President) or www.northportdems.org

21 Jul (Sat) Venice Area Democratic Club

Dr. Tom Boeke, of State College of Florida, will discuss issues with Israel and Palestine at the regular monthly meeting at 11:00 am (social time at 10:30) at Venice United Church of Christ, Naar Hall, 620 Shamrock Blvd in Venice. Info: 492-5965, erniezav@yahoo.com (President) or www.venicedemocrats.org

Photo Credits

Lisa Fudge — pages 4 & 6

Connie Goldstein — pages 3, 5 & 7

Photo Left: Verna Safran and Marvin Mills



www.SarasotaDems.com
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SARASOTA, FL 34232-0329

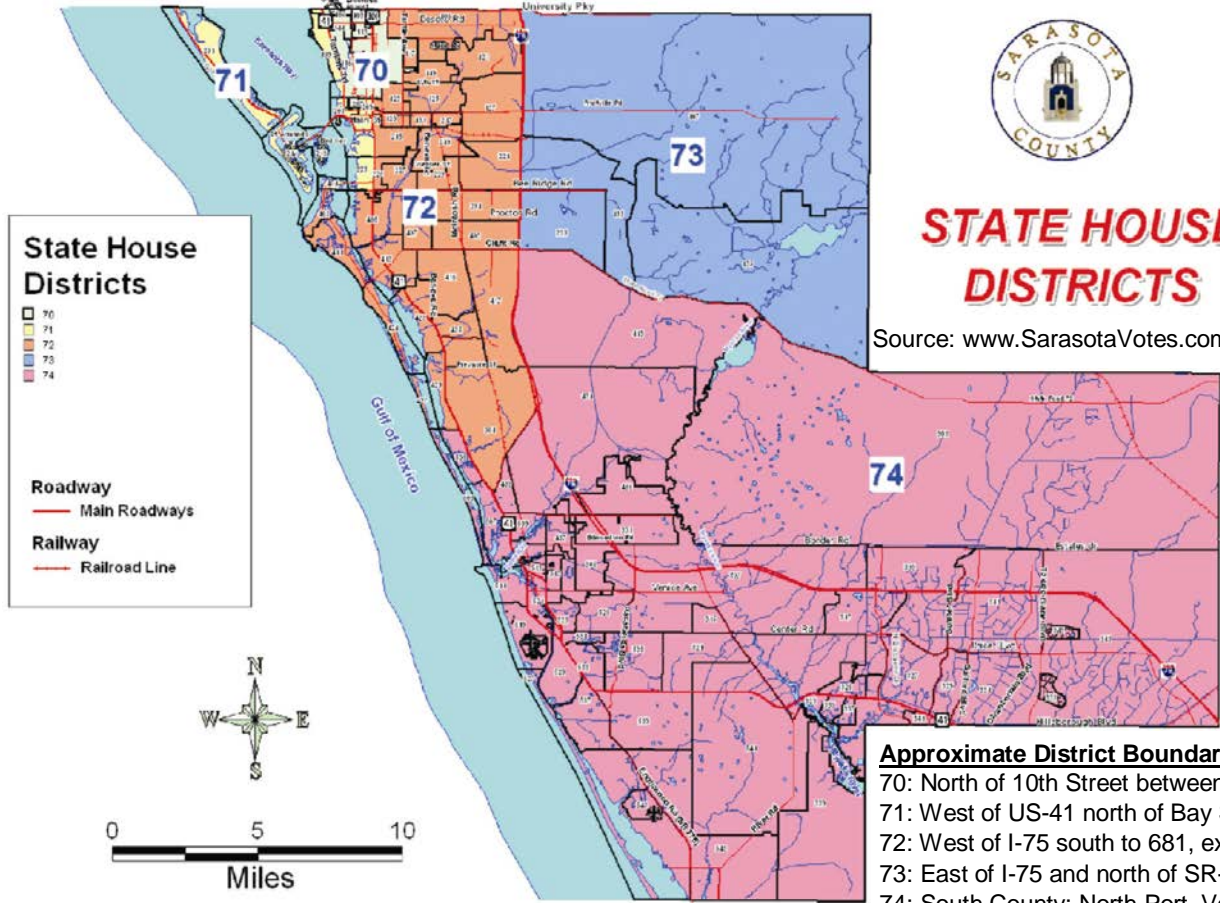
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- Marcella & Art Levin
- Mary Mc Enery
- Aileen & Bernard Schuman
- Joe Ziomek

MEMBERS



STATE HOUSE DISTRICTS

Source: www.SarasotaVotes.com

Select "Maps & Statistics" on left menu for full-color maps

- Approximate District Boundaries**
- 70: North of 10th Street between US-41 & Tuttle
 - 71: West of US-41 north of Bay St, northern Keys
 - 72: West of I-75 south to 681, excluding Casey Key
 - 73: East of I-75 and north of SR-72
 - 74: South County: North Port, Venice, Casey Key