

The Democrat

A roundup of events, ideas, and opportunities
for area Democrats and their friends.

Monthly Newsletter

Consolidated Series 2, Issue #1 Jan 2018

Quiz

What were Trump voters' opinion a month after the election?

Page 15

Feature

Statement from state committeeman Jim Gangitano.

Page 4

Blast

The word "fascist" is used far too often and too casually these days. Let's see what Mussolini said about his particular version of fascism.

Page 6

Review

"The Human Computers," three brave and brilliant African-American women, who helped launch America's space program.

Page 11

Statement from the Chair

Greetings, fellow Democrats!

Our new year is off to a good start. We are still looking for a few candidates. If you know someone who is interested in running for office, please give Jack Wrightington or Jewel Dickson a call.

We have several exciting upcoming events. We hope you will plan on being part of the action.

Mark your calendar for March 17th, St. Patrick's Day. We will be having a DEC fundraiser at the Elks Club on International Speedway Blvd. featuring jazz by Jeff Shepherd, Political Satire by Roy Zimmerman, finger foods and good fun. The cost is \$25.00 per person. Pay by check at the door or on the website with credit card. Go to the website: volusiademocraticparty.org and hit contribute. Type what you are paying for. See the flyer on the following page. Invite your friends and neighbors.

Mark you calendar for March 24th for a fundraiser for Melissa Martin who is running for Senate 14 against Dorothy Hukiill. This fundraiser is being

hosted by Pamela and Gary Wilkins who live in Venetian Bay. The event is from 5 to 7 PM.

Mark your calendar for March 24 for a march in New Smyrna Beach to coincide with the Washington, D. C. march relative to guns. More details will follow. The march will be from 10 am to 12 pm.

Also, mark your calendar for March 24 & 25 for Spring Port Orange Days. We will be needing volunteers to man our booths which will have voter registration and candidate signing opportunities.

In addition, please put May 5 and May 12th on your calendars. May 5th will be the statewide Persisters march and festival for the Democratic Women's Club of Florida to be held at Earl Brown Park in DeLand. May 12th will be our Campaign Kick-off and Straw Ballot at The Center in Deltona. We hope to have many democratic candidates at this event. Information will be coming out soon.

Have a great month and watch your emails!

Jewel

Funny songs about
Peace and Justice

RezZist

Elks Club

3764 W. International Speedway Blvd
Daytona Beach

Saturday, March 17
6 pm

tickets - \$25

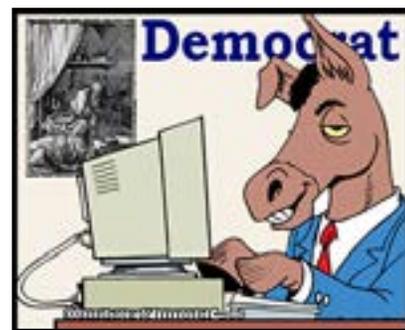
sponsored by the Democratic Executive
Committee of Volusia County

roy
Zimmerman

"With music this good
and humor that insightful,
there is good reason
to be optimistic."
-No Depression Magazine

Editorial

We have met the enemy...and he is us!



Wayne Dickson

It isn't about you, and it isn't about your "tribe."

It's about *us*. It's about the common good. It's about strengthening the bonds that unite us, and resisting the pettiness, selfishness, ignorance, and fear that would rend us apart.

I'm not talking about "us" in any abstract or generalized sense, either. I'm talking about *us*, the members of the Volusia County Democratic party; us, those who are reading this newsletter right now.

The principles here have been expressed many times in many different ways through the centuries. Here's a particularly powerful and eloquent statement by I.F. Stone.



I.F. "Izzy" Stone was one of the greatest journalists of the 20th century. He worked for a number of major newspapers, mostly in the New York and Washington area, but his real claim to fame is *I.F. Stone's Weekly*. This was a four-page newsletter created entirely by Stone himself. To maintain his freedom and independence, he accepted no sponsorship and ran no advertising. His subscribers included a majority of the most powerful and influential people in Washington.

What follows is an excerpt from a speech Stone delivered in 1982.

You know, I have so little to say here this evening, but there's so many things that have been said over and over again that need to be said again and again. And, it's too small a planet—it grows smaller all the time in terms of travel time.

We are becoming one family. We share each other's technology and culture and poetry and philosophy. And we have to begin to think of ourselves as a family. We have to begin to enjoy the differences in the human family like we enjoy the differences in a garden of flowers.

And there's a race on—and the real race and the real ideological conflict is between

those universalists who want to think in terms of mankind and those reversions to barbarity and tribalism, who are still hung up in ancient, anachronistic hatreds like we see in Ulster, like we see in Israel, Palestine. That we can see in so many parts of the world.

Without some system of world law we're lost. And we can't have a system of law without a sense of community. And we can't have a sense of community without the underpinning of recognition of ourselves as parts of a family. And there's very little time left to muster this broader vision against the ancient, conditioned reflexes and psychoses of mankind and his homicidal tendencies.

But either we learn to live together, or we die together. Is it necessary—is it necessary to have to repeat after 2,000 years all the things you people read in Sunday school?!

How—how absent-minded—how forgetful!

That sounds like a lead-in for a discussion of national and international relationships, doesn't it? And it is – but only in part. Most of the discussion will face in the opposite direction:

Notice that every upside down triangle has rightside up triangles above it and to each side. (To make it easier to see, I colored the central triangle at each level, moving up or down—same pattern, getting more detailed or less detailed.)

Microcosm toward the top, macrocosm toward the bottom. Doesn't matter. The patterns and relationships remain the same.

toward Florida's 6th Congressional District, Volusia County politics, and the DEC.

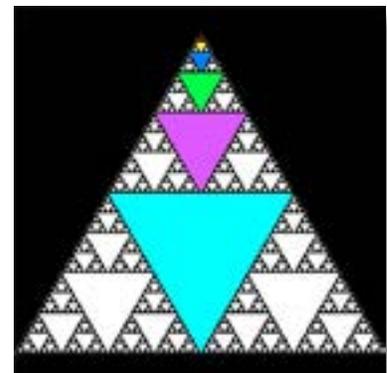
A story I first heard when I was a kid: After a particularly pointed sermon one Sunday, the pastor was pulled aside by the chairman of the deacons. The deacon said, "You'd best tread lightly, Brother Beauregard! You've left off preachin' and gone to meddlin'."

I'm going to meddle.

Fractal geometry

I've written before about the parallels between microcosms (small worlds) and macrocosms (large worlds), but it doesn't seem to have stuck. I used a literary analogy that first time. This time I'll use something a bit more "techie."

Fractal geometry is a method for understanding and describing the occurrence of repeating patterns in the natural world. The key is that no matter how closely you zoom in or how distantly you zoom out, the phenomenon will reveal the same or nearly the same structural pattern.



Let's adapt that perspective in examining the subject at hand. Let's imagine that in his speech I.F. Stone had been talking, not about the *macrocosm* (religious conflict in the Middle East, genocide in Yemen, nuclear war on the Korean peninsula, etc.), but about the *microcosm*: Florida Congressional District 6—that is, about me, you, and the other residents of Volusia and nearby counties.

In fact, let's narrow it down still further. Let's look at members of the Democratic Party of Volusia County.

I'll list a few of the items I.F. Stone mentions. You can continue the exercise by looking for other items you consider especially important or thought-provoking. In every instance let's ask how we brothers and sisters in the 6th District human family measure up to the ideals Stone implies—focusing especially on how we ourselves individually measure up.

- *And we have to begin to think of ourselves as a family. We have to begin to enjoy the differences in the human family like we enjoy the differences in a garden of flowers.*
- *[T]he real race and the real ideological conflict is between those universalists who want to think in terms of mankind and those reversioners to barbarity and tribalism. [Think of this figuratively and with sophistication. For example, what kinds of "tribes" exist **within** the DEC?]*
- *[E]ither we learn to live together, or we die together. [Again, figuratively—not just of physical death, for example, but of, say, losing elections.]*

Learning from Monty Python: laughing with an ouch

Monty Python was born in 1969, when a group of five young British comedy actors plus an American animator gathered at a tandoori restaurant in Hampstead called *The Light of Kashmir*.



In addition to their talent, they also had in common high intelligence, excellent education, irreverence, and a determination to shatter conventions and kick as many sacred cows in the kiester as they possibly could.

Their 3rd and arguably best film was *Life of Brian*, a satire of subjects drawn from the Christian New Testament. I say "satire" rather than "parody" advisedly. Satire holds its subject up to a moral standard and mocks it with irony when it falls short.

The film was extremely controversial when first released. For example, the initial producers bailed. Former Beatle George Harrison stepped up and financed the film himself.

Decide for yourself. Does the film speak truth? Can truth be blasphemous?

Two discrete groups of conspirators arrive in Herod's palace via the sewers at the same time on the same night.

They introduce themselves. Those to our left are *The Campaign for a Free Galilee*, those to our right *The People's Front of Judaea*.



They greet one another amicably enough and share their respective plans...which are, in fact, the same plan.



Immediately they begin to squabble and start a shoving match, arguing about which of them thought of the plan first and should thus be given credit and allowed to proceed.



Brian tells them that they're stupid to fight among and scheme against themselves, that they should join forces against their common enemy.

"What!?" they shout in unison, looking about. "*The Judaeian People's Front?*" (Another group of conspirators.)



Instead of the Judaeian People's Front, they see Roman guards. Startled, they shrink back in silence against the walls.



Despite Brian's effort to make peace and urge cooperation, as soon as the guards have passed by, the two groups of conspirators resume their fight—this time with lethal weapons.



Having returned, the guards watch with bemusement as their enemies attack one another.



Who can blame them? Why risk injury and waste resources when you can just stand by and watch your enemies fall apart and destroy themselves?



The last man standing is Brian—who was unarmed and had been trying to stop the killing, not contribute to it.

Tough cookies!

Brian looks up and sees...



He sees “the man.”



And he foresees....



The cross!



Making connections/drawing parallels

The conflicts among the various individuals and groups we encounter in the movie are patent. What about the conflicts and inappropriate behavior we encounter among ourselves, the Volusia Democrats?

For everything we say or do, we should ask ourselves a number of questions—both before and after acting:

- I. *Cui bono?* Who/what benefits from what I'm about to say or do?
 - A. The very first answer here should be liberal values, principles, and policies.
 - B. The common good: the greatest good for the greatest number [while protecting the rights and needs of the minority].
 - C. The causes and organizations I've determined to champion. Race? Environment? Ethnicity? Voting protection? Whatever. The part is never more important than the whole. The tail should never wag the dog.
 - D. Last should be my own benefit: ambition, money, power, prestige, recognition, protecting of a sensitive ego, feeling of entitlement, etc.

- II. *Cui malo?* Who or what is hurt, suffers, is disunified, etc. by what I say or do? Why? Does the damage I'm causing have a justified purpose? [First, do no harm!]



Basic Newtonian physics

For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Apply that by analogy to psychology, sociology, and politics.

Human beings act on emotion first, logic second (if at all!). When we say or do something, and we're lucky, we'll get the result we want. However, tacitly and often unintentionally, we'll also be saying or doing something that will elicit a result we neither intend nor desire.

Standard logic example: Two girls are attending the annual *Orange vs. Black Halloween Bowl* football game. One observes that everyone on the *north* side of the stadium is wearing orange, and the other agrees.

What color are the people on the *south* side wearing?

The answer is that we have no idea whatsoever. Could be orange. Could be black. Could be chartreuse. The girls spoke only about the north side, but a majority of people "hear" them saying—or at least meaning—something about the south.

That happens to us every day right here in Volusia County: We "hear" people saying and doing things they never actually said or intended. And they make the same error in respect to us.

We need to be careful about what say or do—what we email, "cc", text, say on the phone. We need to assume we'll be misunderstood and be prepared to set things right.

And, above all, we all need to be the grown-ups in the room. We all need to cut each other some slack, assume the best, forget grudges, talk honestly and generously.

Blast from the Past

Thomas Jefferson

Religious Freedom



If asked to name something Thomas Jefferson wrote, a majority of Americans would think of *The Declaration of Independence* (I hope!). If asked to name something else he wrote, an even greater majority would be stymied.

That's a shame—not only because Jefferson was an outstanding writer (and recognized as such by his peers) but also because much of what he wrote is deeply relevant today. A good place to start looking for such material—seriously!—is Jefferson's gravestone. He designed the stone himself, and he was adamant about what should and should not be carved on it:

“... on the faces of the Obelisk the following inscription, & not a word more:

Here was buried Thomas Jefferson
Author of the Declaration of American
Independence
of the Statute of Virginia for religious
freedom
& Father of the University of Virginia

‘because by these,’ he explained, ‘as testimonials that I have lived, I wish most to be remembered.’”



Ignorant Islamophobia

Why was the statute for religious freedom so important to Jefferson? And why is it still so relevant? A pretty good clue is evident in an **incident** that occurred in Louisiana a couple of years ago:

Rep. Valarie Hodges, R-Watson, says she had no idea that Gov. Bobby Jindal's overhaul of the state's educational system [allowing parents to use the vouchers they would receive for religiously-affiliated schools] might mean taxpayer support of Muslim schools.

“I actually support funding for teaching the fundamentals of America’s Founding Fathers’ religion, which is Christianity, in public schools or private schools,” the District 64 Representative said Monday.

“I liked the idea of giving parents the option of sending their children to a public school or a Christian school,” Hodges said.

As it happened, the first school to apply for certification under the new law was Muslim. Ms. Hodges was stunned. It had never occurred to her that any faith except Christianity would qualify as “religious.”

She said, “Unfortunately it will not be limited to the Founders’ religion.... We need to insure [sic] that it does not open the door to fund radical Islam schools. There are a thousand Muslim schools that have sprung up recently.”



The third item mentioned on Jefferson’s gravestone was his being the “Father of the University of Virginia” – an emblem of his insistence that to flourish, a democracy requires an educated electorate. What we have here is not just a voter, but a legislator. An ill educated

legislator, trying to make the next generation even more ignorant than she.

John Adams, one of those “founding fathers,” insisted, “The government of the United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion.” Don’t believe him, Ms. Hodges? Check his assertion against *The Declaration of Independence*, *The Articles of Confederation*, *the Federalist Papers*, *The Constitution*, and *The Bill of Rights*.

Letter to Danbury Baptists

I think it’s helpful to read Jefferson’s *Letter to the Danbury Baptists* before moving on to the *Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom*. The letter was written amidst a conflict in Virginia about the issue of having an official or state church. The Baptists had written to Jefferson seeking his support for their position demanding separation of church and state.

Wait! The *Baptists* were in favor of the separation of church and state? Yes, they and a number of other more or less Christian sects, along with those who weren’t at all Christian. One major reason was that the dominant religion at the time was Anglicanism. Minority religions understandably objected to having their tax dollars given to someone else’s denomination. Can’t say as I blame them.

Jefferson’s Letter to the Danbury Baptists The Final Letter, as Sent

To messrs. Nehemiah Dodge, Ephraim Robbins, & Stephen S. Nelson, a committee

of the Danbury Baptist association in the state of Connecticut.

Gentlemen

The affectionate sentiments of esteem and approbation which you are so good as to express towards me, on behalf of the Danbury Baptist association, give me the highest satisfaction. my duties dictate a faithful and zealous pursuit of the interests of my constituents, & in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the discharge of them becomes more and more pleasing

Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should “make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” thus building a wall of separation between Church & State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection & blessing of the common father and creator of man, and tender you for

yourselves & your religious association, assurances of my high respect & esteem.

Th Jefferson Jan. 1. 1802.



Edited draft of Jefferson’s letter to Danbury Baptists.

Nice, concise, and clear. Now here’s the statute—not so concise, more legal jargon, but same basic principle:

82. A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, 18 June 1779

Well aware that the opinions and belief of men depend not on their own will, but follow involuntarily the evidence proposed to their minds;

that Almighty God hath created the mind free, and manifested his supreme will that

free it shall remain by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint; that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments, or burthens, or by civil incapacitations, tend only to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness, and are a departure from the plan of the holy author of our religion, who being lord both of body and mind, yet chose not to propagate it by coercions on either, as was in his Almighty power to do, but to extend it by its influence on reason alone;

that the impious presumption of legislators and rulers, civil as well as ecclesiastical, who, being themselves but fallible and uninspired men, have assumed dominion over the faith of others, setting up their own opinions and modes of thinking as the only true and infallible, and as such endeavoring to impose them on others, hath established and maintained false religions over the greatest part of the world and through all time:

that to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical; that even the forcing him to support this or that teacher of his own religious persuasion, is depriving him of the comfortable liberty of giving his contributions to the particular pastor whose morals he would make his pattern, and whose powers he feels most persuasive to righteousness; and is withdrawing from the ministry those temporary rewards, which proceeding from an approbation of their personal conduct, are an additional

incitement to earnest and unremitting labours for the instruction of mankind; that our civil rights have no dependance on our religious opinions, any more than our opinions in physics or geometry;

that therefore the proscribing any citizen as unworthy the public confidence by laying upon him an incapacity of being called to offices of trust and emolument, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion, is depriving him injuriously of those privileges and advantages to which, in common with his fellow citizens, he has a natural right;

that it tends also to corrupt the principles of that very religion it is meant to encourage, by bribing, with a monopoly of worldly honours and emoluments, those who will externally profess and conform to it;

that though indeed these are criminal who do not withstand such temptation, yet neither are those innocent who lay the bait in their way;

that the opinions of men are not the object of civil government, nor under its jurisdiction;

that to suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles on supposition of their ill tendency is a dangerous falacy, which at once destroys all religious liberty, because he being of course judge of that tendency will make his opinions the rule of judgment,

and approve or condemn the sentiments of others only as they shall square with or differ from his own;

that it is time enough for the rightful purposes of civil government for its officers to interfere when principles break out into overt acts against peace and good order;

and finally, that truth is great and will prevail if left to herself; that she is the proper and sufficient antagonist to error, and has nothing to fear from the conflict unless by human interposition disarmed of her natural weapons, free argument and debate; errors ceasing to be dangerous when it is permitted freely to contradict them.

We the General Assembly of Virginia do enact that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.

And though we well know that this Assembly, elected by the people for the ordinary purposes of legislation only, have no power to restrain the acts of succeeding Assemblies, constituted with powers equal to our own, and that therefore to declare this act¹¹ irrevocable would be of no effect in law; yet we are free to declare, and do

declare, that the rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right.

[Editor's note: For the sake of readability and comprehension, I modified this by breaking large blocks according to contemporary conventions of paragraphing.]

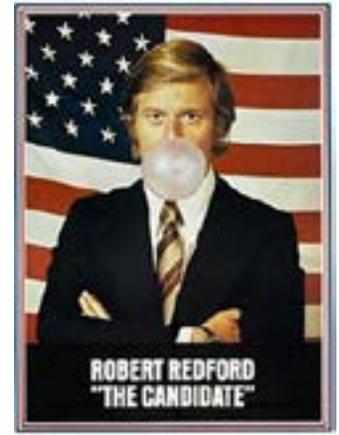


Refusal to pay taxes to support the Church (Congregational in his case) was one of the reasons Thoreau spent the night in jail, as he describes in Civil Disobedience.

Review

The Candidate

Wayne Dickson



The Candidate was released in 1972. It was well received at the time, screenwriter Jeremy Larkin winning an Oscar. After that, the film gradually faded from most people’s memory. In 2016, however, it received renewed attention thanks to the candidacy of Donald Trump.

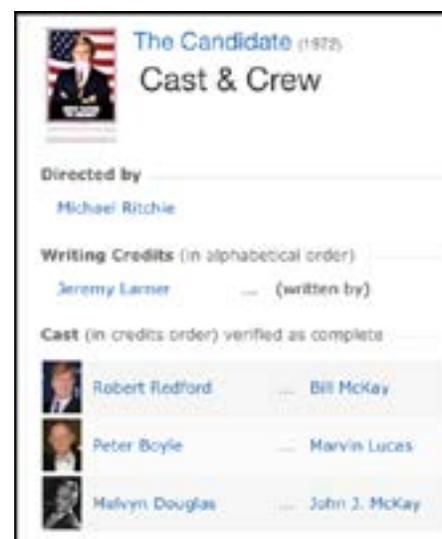
In the 1972 movie, a young idealist (played by Robert Redford) is persuaded to run for Senate in a race he cannot possibly win. His purpose is to publicize and promote his very liberal ideas, his condition that he be allowed to say whatever, whenever he wants without anyone’s attempting to “handle” him.

In the 2016 election, a not-so-young cynic (played by Donald Trump) is persuaded to run for President in a race he cannot possibly win. His purpose is to publicize and promote himself and his business interests, his condition that he be allowed to say whatever, whenever he wants without anyone’s attempting to “handle” him.

The 1972 *Candidate* was a darkly comedic satire; the 2016 candidacy seemed like a joke at the time but has proved to be a darkly non-comedic disaster. What was recognized in 1972 as an ironically hyperbolic impossibility has an 2016-2018 become a nightmarish reality.

One more not-so-funny parallel: The 1972 candidate Bill McKay actually wins, contrary to his own and everyone else’s expectations. Having won, he turns to his campaign manager and says, “What do we do now?” If what we read in *Fire and Fury* is true – and it hasn’t been seriously challenged – the same thing happened with 2016 candidate Donald Trump. No one, including Trump, expected him to win. In effect, he and everyone around him looked at one another and said, “What do we do now?”

The candidate is a good movie, and it’s worth watching for its own sake. However, it’s also a benchmark against which we can measure the ongoing demolition of our democracy. It’s an enjoyable film, and it’s also soberly thought-provoking.



Quiz

Who wrote that?



A	Chris Hayes	E	Bandy X. Lee	I	Bill O'Reilly
B	David Cay Johnston	F	Rachel Maddow	J	Greg Palast
C	David Frum	G	Chris Matthews	K	Michael Wolff
D	Naomi Klein	H	Lawrence O'Donnell		

Put the letter of the author's name beside the number the title of her or his work. (Hint: At least seven of the authors either are hosts or have been guests on MSNBC.)

- ___ *Trumpocracy: The Corruption of the American Republic*
- ___ *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 27 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Assess a President*
- ___ *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*
- ___ *Playing with Fire: The 1968 Election and the Transformation of American Politics*
- ___ *Bobby Kennedy: A Raging Spirit*
- ___ *A Colony in a Nation*
- ___ *Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House*
- ___ *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*
- ___ *Drift: The Unmooring of American Military Power*
- ___ *It's Even Worse Than You Think: What the Trump Administration Is Doing to America*

Who will tell the would be emperor that his manipulative sycophants have snookered him? that his beautiful new garments are a fiction? that we all see him for what he really is?





Answers

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. A |
| 2. E | 7. J |
| 3. D | 8. I |
| 4. H | 9. F |
| 5. G | 10. B |



Please! Talk to us!

*Like it? Loathe it? Suggestions? Corrections?
Continue the conversation?*

Wayne

wayne@looking4light

Dana

dunmirede@gmail.com