

THE BLUEPRINT

The quarterly publication of the
Dallas County Young Democrats

Spring 2008



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Technology and war bringing youth to the polls

by Kurt Watkins

With the advent of the Internet and Web sites like MySpace, Facebook and YouTube, elected officials and those seeking office have more ways in the upcoming election to reach out to younger voters.

Young adults have integrated online social networking into their life as their means to learn news and communicate. "I pretty much plan all of my events and talk to my friends through Facebook and text messaging," said Tiffany Brown Anderson, 26.

Many commentators from news

organizations solidly believe the Internet allows for more interaction and increased participation. Some point to timing or the appeal of relevant issues before and during the election cycle.

Voter turnout has not been as high as 2004's numbers since 18-to 20-year olds gained the right to vote in 1971, when the country had recently experienced assassinations and was fatiguing from the war in Vietnam.

"In the early 70s, we were faced with an unjust war in Vietnam, the same way we are faced with an unjust war in Iraq in 2008. It appears that with the looming

possibility...sparks the interest of the young electorate in America," said Patrick Morgan, 29.

The 1972 presidential election between Republican Nixon and Democrat McGovern still stands as the record for highest voter turnout among Americans under 30 years old, when 50 percent of that age group participated in the election.



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President's Letter: DCYD impacts the community

by Juan Ayala, DCYD President

This is my first article as President of the Dallas County Young Democrats, and I am excited to have the opportunity. When I think about what motivated me to join DCYD it was definitely the people. For so long it seemed as though I was either the only Democrat I knew or the only one anywhere near my age.

I have found a group of friends who care about what is happening in our community, country, and around the world. DCYD has given me so many opportunities from meeting elected officials, taking trips and attending fun and not-so-political happy hours.

I have also become much more involved in the community as a result of joining this group. I attended rallies welcoming home our troops, helped build a home with Habitat for Humanity, worked in a soup kitchen, and have been drawn into mentoring at DISD. During my tenure, I hope to keep up the excitement and involvement, as we continue our efforts to bring young people together and to empower them to make a difference.

Exciting times

This election season has seen a huge increase in the participation of young voters and this is as true in Dallas as it was in Iowa. While Dallas County saw a 500 percent increase in voters for the Democratic Primary, voters under 35 increased by 1656 percent compared to the 2004 primary. Our group of voters went from 6 percent of the

voters in the '04 primary to 21 percent in the '08 primary. Young voters have already had a significant impact this year and we intend to make sure that momentum continues into this November's elections and beyond.

Down ballot races matter

With two amazing presidential candidates it is easy to think that this November's elections are just about winning back the White House and changing our foreign policy. There is much more at stake in this election, things upon which you and I can have a tremendous impact.

Anyone who thinks local races do not matter should ask the 16 men set free because we elected a district attorney committed to justice in the last election. By electing Democratic judges, a sheriff and a district attorney, the legal environment has changed significantly and for the better.

Why you should get involved

At DCYD we seek to do more than just talk about the values of the Democratic Party, we try to live them. We work to get Democrats elected but also to make our community a better place. We know that change can and will come from the political process and from engagement on the community level, and we try to find a way to have an impact through both avenues.

We will register young people to vote and ask our members to make a specific commitment to getting their friends and family to vote this November. In addition, we will

continue our community service efforts focusing on the environment, education, immigration and veterans and their families. This year promises to be very busy and a lot of fun. I hope you can join us as we seek to get more young people involved in the political process and in making Dallas County an even better place to live.

DCYD meets the second Tuesday of every month at Zubar, 2012 Greenville Ave. at 7:00 p.m.; please join us and bring a friend.

The youth vote, continued from page one

The election cycle of 2008 appears posed to spark interest in the youth vote to record the highest numbers since the early 70s.

The Clinton and Obama campaigns have the potential to break the records of the early 1970s and the campaigns know it.

"I 'facebooked' Hillary," said Kate Stark, 25 – and she is not the only one. More than three-quarters of a million young adults are friends with Obama on the popular social networking site. In real space, Chelsea Clinton has visited numerous college campuses across the country on behalf of her mother.

With the important issues and the level of accessibility between voters and campaigns, 2008 is shaping up to be the year of the young voter.



The Blueprint

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Membership in the Dallas County Young Democrats is open to all Dallas County Democrats between the ages of 14 and 40. DCYD is one of the largest Democratic activist organizations in Dallas County, and one of the largest Young Democrats groups in the nation. Our activities include monthly meetings, happy hours, volunteering in the community, voter registration drives, speaker series and working on Democratic campaigns.

New member profile

DCYD welcomes one of its newest members, **Carmen Reza**. Below, Miss Reza has some insightful thoughts on our club.



Q: How did you hear about DCYD?

A: My cousin who lives in New York told me that I needed to go to meetup.com to find groups based upon my interests, as way to meet new people and make new friends.

Q: Did you enjoy the first meeting?

A: It was interesting, and I had never been to an actual Democrat meeting, except at school, so I enjoyed being with a group of people who have the same political leanings as me. It is good to know that there are Democrats in Dallas; I am not the only one who wants to be active and make Dallas blue.

Q: What would you say to someone considering joining the group or coming to a meeting?

A: I would tell them to come. There are many ways for you to get involved in the community and with the Young Democrats. You will meet so many people that are Democrats like you. If you feel like having many blue friends in a sea of hostile red, then the Young Democrats is the place for you.

- Marie Benton

Committee offers insight into election cycle

The 2008 campaign cycle is proving to be one of the most energized among voters less than 35 years of age in recent history. A record number of young voters participated in the local caucuses across Texas, helping to contribute to the historical turnout.

With the rising interest and participation of young voters in Dallas County, The DCYD Campaign and Party Relations committee is in a unique and exciting position to influence young voters across Dallas County. In the past year, the committee has endorsed more than 30 candidates for local and state elections.

Many of the candidates actively seek our endorsement and participation.

Helping the candidates who share the ideals supported by DCYD is a very easy talk that carries more value than any contribution. DCYD will lead the call in the county to establish a network of hardworking and enthusiastic volunteers as we build into the upcoming presidential election.

After the DNC Convention, DCYD will work to support the Democratic presidential nominee. Large-scale volunteer projects are being planned to make sure a Democrat is elected back into the White House!

For more information of the Campaign and Party Relations committee, please e-mail Ken Ostrom at knerkkner@yahoo.com.

- Ken Ostrom

Book Delivers a Conservative Knockout

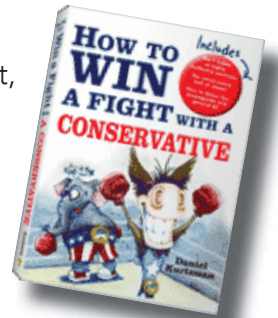
Coined by the author as the "ultimate fighting guide to politics," Daniel Kurtzman's 177-page book is a great read for any Democrat honing their faux debate skills for the upcoming elections this fall.

The author's mission was not to write a watered down how-to guide for dummies. The likelihood of winning an argument by citing Kurtzman is not very good. You might even get slugged if you trot out some of Kurtzman's witticisms with the wrong person (calling someone a *Crusadomasochist* – defined as an imperialistic neocon – might not win you any brownie points).

Kurtzman clearly appreciates satire, and peppers his book with witty

comments from Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert, Bill Maher and Dave Barry, along with his own.

Priced at under \$10, the book can be purchased online at Amazon.com. How to Win a Fight with a Conservative is the perfect read for those traveling to Austin in the summer for the senatorial conventions.



- Barry Crossno



Recently named "Best Restaurant of the Year" by VegNews Magazine, Oak

Cliff's newest culinary adventure, Spiral Diner, is located at the corner of Beckley and Zang. The second location of Spiral Diner, with the original located in Fort Worth, offers more than standard vegan and vegetarian fare.

The diner is owned by Amy McNutt, who became a vegan after learning about harmful practices in the dairy and egg industries. McNutt opened the diner to cater to others who shared her convictions. Spiral Diner's mission is to be 100 percent vegan and mostly organic, and also pledges to use only earth-friendly cleaning and serving materials. Additionally, the diner donates a portion of profit to local grassroots organizations.

Spiral Diner has a laidback atmosphere, exceptionally fresh food, and an extensive menu with most items priced below \$12. Vegans, vegetarians and curious people may dine Tuesdays – Saturdays, from 11 a.m. – 10 p.m. Brunch is served on Sundays from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. Spiral Diner is closed on Mondays. For more information, visit spiraldiner.com.

- Meredith McQuiston



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Upcoming DCYD Events

DCYD Day at the Ballpark

May 9 at 7:00 p.m.

Ballpark at Arlington

May General Meeting

May 13 at 7:00 p.m.

Zubar
2012 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, TX 75206

YDA Spring Conference

May 30 - June 1

Nashville, TN

Texas Democratic Party State Convention

June 5 - 7

Austin, TX

Visit dallasyoungdemocrats.org
for more event information.

Texas Young Democrats Convention

by Renee Hartley

More than 100 young Democrats from across the state of Texas descended upon Austin for the annual Texas Young Democrats convention. The convention was held the weekend of April 11, and offered participants the opportunity to participate in training sessions, meet with elected officials and party leaders, as well as the chance to network with other enthusiastic young Democrats.

The Technology 101 workshop was presented by Gary Moody, Executive Director of Young Democrats of Arkansas. This workshop provided attendees with innovative techniques to successfully target young voters and recruit new members. Brian Pendleton, Regional Field Director with the Texas Democratic Party, offered insight on how to get involved with the state party's current mission to reclaim the Texas House of Representatives.

Representative Mark Strama of Austin offered helpful tips for the 2008 election cycle. The class focused on the basic principles on what it takes to Run Young and Win Big! Information about the burgeoning field of "oppo" research was presented by Jason Stanford of Stanford Research. Stanford offered convention attendees a dose of reality about what opposition research is and is not. Stanford also issued advice on how to conduct yourself in your on-line world so that you can successfully run for office in the future.

As part of the Community Service Project, Chuck Rocha, Political Director from United Steel Workers and Becky Moeller of the AFL-CIO spoke about the rights of workers and what young Democrats can do to support the movement in Texas. DCYD member and past president David Hardt, current President of the Young Democrats of America, along with David Holmes, DNC Member, offered insight into how young people can become delegates to the national convention in Denver.

The following members of DCYD are currently holding statewide positions: Eric Weiss – Regional Director, Region 5; Steven Hartsell – Judicial Director, Region 5; Paul Tran – Chair, Minority Caucus; Joseph Oguntodu, Treasurer, Stonewall Young Democrats Caucus; Renee Hartley – National Committeewoman to YDA.