

# Dallas County Young Democrats

Volume 3, Issue 1

February 2007



## Upcoming Events:

**2007 YDA Convention  
Speakers/Entertainment  
Committee Meeting**  
February 12 - 6:30 p.m.  
Cafe Express  
3230 McKinney Ave.  
Dallas, TX 75204

**February Membership  
Meeting**  
February 13 - 7:00 p.m.  
Metro Grill  
4425 North Central  
Expressway  
Dallas, TX 75205

**Community Service  
Committee Meeting**  
February 15 - 7:30 p.m.  
Elbow Room  
3010 Gaston Avenue  
Dallas, TX 75226

**2007 YDA Convention  
Training Sessions  
Committee Meeting**  
February 18  
Cafe Express  
5307 E. Mockingbird Ln.  
Dallas, TX 75206

## Texas Legislative Issues Panel, Officer Elections Focus of February Meeting

contributions by Jennifer Roberts,  
Sam Templeton and Trisha Raines

We hope you will join us at our monthly membership meeting, Tuesday, February 13 at 7:00 p.m., as we host a variety of speakers who will address issues facing the Texas legislature this year. Each speaker will present a five-minute overview of their issue, followed by a Q&A period for the entire panel. Our panel will focus on the TXU/coal-fired power plants plan, animal cruelty legislation/horse slaughter, reproductive rights, current immigration issues and CHIP. Below, we have outlined the issues and noted the scheduled speakers.

In addition to our panel discussion, we will also be holding elections for our 2007 officers. Come early and stay late to meet our speakers and your fellow members!

### CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program)

A central issue in the recent gubernatorial elec-

tion, CHIP funding is again a hot issue for the Texas legislature. Created by Congress in 1997, CHIP is a federal block grant program designed to help states provide children's health care to low and moderate income families earning too much to qualify for Medicaid, but unable to afford private insurance. States provide matching funds from state revenues to obtain federal dollars. Responding to a budget shortfall, in 2003, the Texas legislature tightened eligibility requirements for Medicaid and reduced state matching money for the CHIP, leaving 170,000 previously insured children without healthcare and generating widespread protest. Funding was partially restored in the 2005 legislative session, but Texas still leads the nation in its percentage of uninsured children.

*Scheduled speaker: Janie Mezinger, Dallas CHIP Coalition's Executive Committee and Director of Public Policy for the Mental Health Association of Greater Dallas.*

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## President Clinton Speaks in North Texas

by Courtney Owen

"It's quite obvious that we have 90 percent of the Democrats in North Texas here tonight," former President Clinton said during a speech on February 8 at Nokia Live in Grand Prairie.

Funny, yes, but much of Clinton's two-hour speech and Q&A session was anything but. Discussing the interdependence of the world's countries and economies, Clinton presented grim statistics about everything from health care in the US to poverty and disease in Africa and Asia.

He suggested that this interdependence was a good thing, but with three problems: the current situation in the US and the world, he said, is unequal, unstable and unsustainable.

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Former President Bill Clinton told personal stories about a variety of world leaders, including Civil Rights pioneer Nelson Mandela.

# DCYD New Member Spotlight

by Juan Ayala

In the interest of helping our club grow and diversify, we have created a new feature for our newsletter. In it, we will introduce you to the newest members of the DCYD. Perhaps you will be reminded a little of what first prompted you to join - or of someone you should invite to our next meeting.

## What are your names?

Joe and Brittany Apple

## How did you hear about the DCYD?

"We went and checked out the website for the group just before a meeting."

## What did you think of your first meeting?

"We liked the openness at the beginning and people were friendly, the cocktails were nice as well."

## Had you been active in the Young Democrats before that meeting?

Joe said, "I grew up in Dallas and had been active before moving away from Dallas; I was interested in reconnecting when I moved back to Dallas." Brittany said, "I had never been involved before coming to the DCYD meeting with Joe; we met in Boston and have been back in Dallas for about three months."

## What would you say to someone considering coming to a DCYD meeting or joining the group?



New DCYD members Brittany and Joe Apple



Brian Felicella recently joined DCYD and has also agreed to serve as Events Director.

"It is a great way to meet new people and an easy way to get involved at the local level. I have already started inviting my friends." - Joe

"Everyone is approachable and easy to meet; it is a nice mix of meetings and events that is not overbearing but gives you lots to do." - Brittany

## What is your name?

Brian Felicella

## How did you hear about the DCYD?

"From a spirited group of friends at the Amsterdam Bar."

## What did you think of your first meeting?

"I thought it was very informative, I really liked the speaker and I thought the group was very welcoming."

## Had you been active in the Young Democrats before that meeting?

"My only previous political involvement was as a supporter of Ralph Nader, and that led to me being arrested. I have been living in Dallas for about a year and a half and that meeting was my first experience with DCYD"

## What would you say to someone considering coming to a DCYD meeting or joining the group?

"I registered to vote today, became a sus-

taining member today and I intend to bring a friend to the next meeting - I think that says I would and will recommend this group. I would say that if you believe in this group then you should become a sustaining member. If you are going to give your time why not also give some money?"

## President's Corner

### Looking Back and Moving Forward

I was recently asked to list all of DCYD's activities for the past year and to estimate our cumulative volunteer hours. It's a pretty impressive list and a pretty impressive number.

Between starting our new speaker series, The Texas Democratic Revolution, with an inaugural event featuring Senator John Edwards, to a huge voter registration initiative, volunteering for the Dallas County Democratic coordinated campaign, and our monthly community service projects, we put in more than 1500 hours last year. And frankly, that's a very conservative estimate. Not only did we work diligently to put our values into action in our community, we were proud to be part of the sea-change that swept Dallas politics and signaled a new era - our new blue island in a sea of red. As I look forward to this next year, I am no less excited.

So what does 2007 hold in store for us? I could tick off all of the incredible activities we have planned, but the list isn't really the point. Yes, we are hosting the national Young Democrats convention and our speaker series will continue. Yes, we will register more voters, issue position statements, endorse municipal candidates, and train our next generation of leaders. And we will certainly continue our community service. But the real answer to the question is "Whatever we make of it." Join us and help us continue to make Dallas a better place for all of us.

- Jennifer Roberts

# Speakers to Address Legislative Issues at February DCYD Meeting

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## TXU Coal-fired Power Plants

TXU, the biggest utility in Texas, is planning to build 11 new coal-fired power plants in Texas – many of them near DFW. Together, these plants will produce 78 million tons of CO2 per year, more than doubling the company's annual emissions of the global-warming-causing gas. TXU has announced no plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and, with coal plants already causing a third of the nation's carbon dioxide emissions, critics are emerging from all corners. So far, TXU's plan has inspired a hunger strike, an anti-coal coalition of 17 mayors, a group of 20 Dallas execs called Texas Business for Clean Air, and now, a lawsuit filed by four citizen and environmental groups based on Gov. Perry's fast tracking of the permit process. Perry issued an executive order two years ago -- which the groups say violated both state law and the Texas Constitution – lumping challenges to six plants into one hearing, scheduled to begin on Feb. 21. The battle in Texas may have important implications throughout the nation. According to Environmental Defense, TXU has told its shareholders that once it has built 11 coal-fired plants in Texas it is planning to move into Pennsylvania and Virginia.

*Scheduled speaker: Todd Howard of T. Howard and Associates, Inc. will update the DCYDs on the current state of the debate and TXU's plans.*

## Animal Cruelty and Horse Slaughter

Just outside of Dallas, there are two slaughterhouses. These two are unique – they slaughter horses so that the meat

for shipment to Europe and Japan for gourmet chefs to cook in some of the continent's finest restaurants. As word has spread of this practice, more and more people have mobilized to stop the slaughter of healthy horses for their meat. Last fall the U.S. House of Representatives voted to ban horse slaughter for human consumption, but opponents of the legislation blocked the measure in the Senate. Now, a federal court has ruled the two Texas facilities can be shut down for violating a 1949 Texas law banning the sale of horse meat for human consumption. However, one last horse slaughterhouse in Illinois is not affected by this ruling and continues operations. To get involved and help support a national ban on killing horses for human consumption check out [endhorseslaughtering.com](http://endhorseslaughtering.com).

With the 2007 Texas legislative session gearing up, there's also a move to close loopholes in the current animal cruelty laws - loopholes that allow people to get away with acts like killing a puppy with a lawnmower and burning a rabbit alive. For more information on the bill go to [http://www.thln.com/cruelty\\_laws.htm](http://www.thln.com/cruelty_laws.htm).

*Scheduled speaker: Skip Trimble from the Texas Humane Legislation Network will address these issues.*

## Reproductive Rights

The reproductive rights of women are facing several challenges this session, among them, the ineffective and mis-managed "alternatives to abortion" program. During the last session, the "alternatives to abortion" program appropriated \$5 million of family planning funding away from proven providers of women's health care and birth control - services that could have prevented un-

intended pregnancies in the first place - to promote "alternatives to abortion." However, agencies receiving this funding do not provide any health care services or help prevent unintended pregnancies. While \$1.7 million in funds have been given to this program to date, only 11 women have been served, leaving an estimated 8,500 Texas women left without care. Planned Parenthood of North Texas is taking on this issue, among many others, with aggressive in-district lobbying, a Lobby Day in Austin and numerous letter writing campaigns, among other initiatives.

*Scheduled speaker: Serena Hoffman, Community Advocate with Planned Parenthood of North Texas will speak about this and other issues, including the debate over the HPV vaccine .*

## Immigration Issues

The 80th Texas Legislature will consider numerous proposals on how Texas will handle immigration. Among these issues are workplace requirements, access to benefits, college tuition, identification and the role of state and local law enforcement agencies in enforcing federal immigration laws. Bills filed include legislation prohibiting local governments from operating day labor centers and the training of Texas peace officers to enforce federal immigration and customs laws. Recent attempts by Farmers Branch City Council to ban illegal immigration raise awareness even closer to home.

*Scheduled speaker: Elizabeth Villafranca, local businesswoman, heading the coalition to oppose the ordinances banning illegal immigration in Farmers Branch*

## Political Affairs Committee Update: Mayor and City Council Elections Endorsements

by Sarah Duncan and Trisha Raines

The Political Affairs Committee met January 31 to formulate a proposed new municipal endorsement process for the DCYDs. This process will be used to endorse candidates for the May 2007 Dallas Mayor and City Council elections. Beginning in mid-February, as the candidates officially file to run, DCYD will send each candidate a questionnaire that addresses the concerns of the youth vote of Dallas. Results from these questionnaires will be available on the DCYD website for our members to review. After a March Happy Hour with the candidates, the Political Affairs Committee will meet to decide on a slate of endorsees to put to the Board. After a Board vote, the slate

will then go to the Membership at-large at the April meeting for a final vote. For the chosen endorsees, we will encourage our members to volunteer in phone banks and block walks.

It's not too late for you to get involved! Municipal issues affect our everyday lives here in Dallas and we need to have a voice in them. We are open to any ideas on questions and what we can do to help our chosen endorsees. The Political Affairs committee is open to all members. If you are interested in taking part in this process, please contact Sarah at sarahanduncan@yahoo.com. Look for the March newsletter in your mailbox! This special edition will feature our mayoral and city council candidates.

## 2007 YDA National Convention Planning at Full Speed

by Trisha Raines

With the Young Democrats of America convention drawing near this July, organizers have been busy laying the groundwork for what they hope to be the most successful and dynamic convention to date. With a presidential election around the corner, attendance is expected to be high, as DCYD prepares the convention to not only focus on national politics, but to showcase Dallas culture as well.

In addition to YDA officer elections and business and caucus meetings, the convention will feature well-known political figures. To date, Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator Barack Obama, Governor Bill Richardson and former Senator John Edwards had confirmed their speaking engagements.

A "Dallas Dinner" is planned across the city in multiple locations for convention attendees. Also in the works is a large scale, multi-phase community service project focused on veterans and active duty troops. Convention goers can also expect training sessions, caucus meetings, banquets and a chance to interact with democratic leaders from all levels of government.

To facilitate the large-scale efforts, multiple committees are handling the various aspects of the convention including marketing, logistics, entertainment and fundraising. DCYD is always looking for dedicated members to contribute to the committee work. If you are interested in assisting, please contact Juan Ayala at [jjja613@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jjja613@sbcglobal.net). Our convention website will launch soon- watch our DCYD website for its unveiling!

Join us for the next  
Dallas County Young  
Democrats meeting!

February 13 - 7:00 p.m.

Metro Grill  
4425 North Central  
Expressway  
Dallas, TX 75205

## Clinton Suggests Looking for Solutions

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Clinton explained that, because it's never possible to kill, convert, or occupy all of your enemies "you do have to have a security policy, but building a world with more partners and fewer terrorists is always cheaper than going to war."

Clinton argued that while interdependence is good, maybe it isn't the best thing: "We should move the world from mere interdependence to a set of truly integrated communities based on shared benefits, shared responsibility, and a true sense of belonging," he said.

His ideas for the future of the US? Security strategy, real diplomacy efforts, and domestic improvements in the economy, health care and energy policy.

Health care in the US is, according to Clinton, in crisis due to the high financial burden the current system puts on individual citizens. "We're letting the financing tail wag the health care dog," he said about the current system.

Borrowing heavily from - and giving credit to - his former Vice President Al Gore's presentation on climate change, Clinton discussed energy issues and looked to countries such as the UK and Norway, where energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions are already a way of life, as examples of the direction in which the US should be moving.

If he was a young entrepreneur, he explained, he would start a business in the clean energy industry and "leave all of the doubters in the dust."