

# The Delray Democrat

March 2021

## Good Government

Michael K. Cantwell

In the aftermath of the bloodiest battle of America's first Civil War, the man considered one of our two greatest presidents spoke with his characteristic eloquence of his hope that America would "have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." The words are as timely, and precious, today as they were then.

Abraham Lincoln founded the Republican Party, but it has been decades since Republicans evinced any interest in government, much less a government of, by, and for the people. We can actually date the transformation to January 20, 1981, when the man Bette Davis once called "little Ronnie Reagan" conned millions of Americans into believing that "Government is not the solution to the problem: government is the problem."

That depends on the governors, of course. "Republicans campaign on the theme that government is bad," as Al Franken once quipped, "and they can't wait to get elected and show just how bad it is." The most recent and horrifying example was Trump's grotesque mishandling of the pandemic, in which more than 400,000 Americans died of Covid-19 on his watch.

He ignored [warnings](#) from his own administration that the government was "underfunded, underprepared and uncoordinated for a life-or-death battle with a virus for which no treatment existed"; he allowed the virus to proliferate by failing to organize national testing and tracing; he abandoned those on the

front lines by failing to use the federal government to organize the production and distribution of personal protective equipment; he ignored and ridiculed scientists; and he undermined governors who sought to contain the virus with closures and mask mandates.

Anyone who doubts that Trump is responsible for tens if not [hundreds of thousands](#) of Americans dying needlessly must explain how it came to pass that America has accounted for 20% of global Covid deaths despite constituting only 4% of the world's population. We are the richest country on earth and yet lead the world in Covid deaths.

### **Republicans Excel at Showing America How Bad Government Can Be**

Trump is the poster child, but "bad government" has been the hallmark of every Republican administration over the last four decades. To be fair, of course, it's hard to provide for or protect ordinary Americans when you don't see that as part of your job description.

The AIDS epidemic began in 1981, but it was 4 years before Reagan even uttered the word publicly. His press secretary joked about the "gay plague" and 89,343 people died on Reagan's watch.

George W. Bush launched a \$3-trillion war based on lies that killed thousands of Americans and untold numbers of Iraqi civilians. He then bungled the response to Hurricane Katrina and let the banks run wild, causing ten million Americans to lose their homes and precipitating

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what was then the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. As a result of Donald Trump's colossal incompetence, today that is only the *second* worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

### **When Democrats Govern**

Albeit unwittingly, Reagan was prescient of Republican failure when he quipped, "The nine most terrifying words in the English language are 'I'm with the government, and I'm here to help.'" When Democrats control the reins of government, however, Americans are grateful for the assistance, particularly when it arrives in the wake of yet another Republican disaster.

Franklin D. Roosevelt stands with Lincoln atop our presidential pantheon. FDR came closest to realizing Lincoln's invocation of a government of, by, and for the people. He lifted the country out of the Great Depression and

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**ALL PEOPLE'S DAY® DIVERSITY FESTIVAL**  
**GOES VIRTUAL FOR THE FIRST TIME AFTER 10 YEARS**

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*The one hour Festival streams on March 20<sup>th</sup> at 11am and repeats for 8 Hours on [www.AllPeoplesDay.org](http://www.AllPeoplesDay.org)*

This year's 2021 All People's Day® is a free spectacular virtual retrospective of ten years of free festivals at Pompey Park in Delray Beach, FL.

All People's Day honours people of all ages, colors, religions, cultures, sexual orientations, sizes, and different abilities.

Highlights from our 10 years of festivals show the positive and passionate aspects of connecting with people from different cultures. This is done through visual arts, music, dance, and crafts for all ages.

“Our goal is to help form a better world. And for the first time ever the festival will be streamed online,” said Founder Susan Berkowitz-Schwartz. Many of the interactive projects incorporated into the festival were the brainchild of art therapist Berkowitz-Schwartz.

These highlights capture the festivals' diversity rarely seen in one venue, that until the pandemic, was held live once a year.

The festivals were run entirely by volunteers. Hundreds of people have been involved as committee chairs, volunteers, sponsors, non-profit and product booths.

Founder Susan Berkowitz-Schwartz, started this holiday of diversity in 1973. Her imprint and words are in the video. Below are the three traditions of the holiday:

**The Craft Dough People** teaches children that everyone is made from the same ingredients and should therefore be treated with equal respect.

The **Symbol for the festival** has four families of different cultures with arms crossing their hearts, holding hands, surrounding a globe, hoping for peace and understanding in the world.

**Origami Peace Cranes** are an international peace symbol in tribute to a young Japanese girl named Sadako. She was dying of Leukaemia from exposure to the Nuclear Bomb in Hiroshima. Sadako tried to fold 1,000 cranes to bring peace to the world.

This video is dedicated to Black Lives Matter as well as Monica Heron and Jack Lieberman who sadly passed away and were festival favourites.

“My husband Elliott Schwartz filmed all ten festivals with volunteer videographers and edited the enormous footage to make this extraordinary video experience.” said Susan Berkowitz-Schwartz.

**Examples of performers** seen in the video are: African American music, Irish dance, Japanese drummers, Mexican dance, Caribbean music, Native American hoops, and Chinese dance, with music and dance from Hip Hop to Americana Folk.

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## The New Golden Calf

Rob Resnick

On February 26, 2021, the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) stooped to a new and blasphemous low. They unveiled a large golden statue of Donald Trump and paraded it through the halls so attendees could pay homage. It would simply have been ridiculous if it did not represent the horror ahead for the Republican Party and the nation. Rather than rid themselves of Trump and the destruction he wielded on their party, Republicans have doubled down. They continue to embrace the big lie where over 2/3 cling to the baseless claim, contrary to all evidence and logic, that Biden did not win the election. They speciously deny that the insurrection even occurred, let alone that it was Trump and his followers that led it.

not force Americans to choose between “two evils” as many foolishly come to believe as they cast their ballots.

Florida Republicans are especially problematic. Senators Rubio and Scott and Governor DeSantis are all hard-core Trump devotees, wholly committed to the new right wing Republican Party. None cares an ounce about democracy or the good of the nation. They only crave power and will step all over each other to prove their worth to Trump voters as they explore their presidential ambitions. The idea that any of these despicable men could be president should scare all voters. Add to that Congressmen Gaetz, Mast, et al, and Florida may well be ground zero for the political fight for the country’s survival.

*The Trumpist Republican party is no longer the conservative alternative to Democrats but has now been completely transformed into a crypto-fascist party akin to those in Europe and elsewhere.*

CPAC, an annual conference for the right wing of the party, was frequently seen as a side show where anyone wishing to be viable for national office would appear and bow to the audience. It has degenerated to the absolute extreme of modern-day Republicanism, not simply as the Trumpist Party, but as a white supremacist and extremist party. CPAC, and the Republican party over which it has absolute control, engages in an open alliance with groups that until recently mainstream Republicans have kept at bay. The views expressed throughout CPAC, Congressional Republicans, and Republican officials in many states, are in sync with the far right. The Trumpist Republican party is no longer the conservative alternative to Democrats but has now been completely transformed into a crypto-fascist party akin to those in Europe and elsewhere.

They view Trump as their absolute leader. They espouse the type of authoritarianism we have fought throughout our country’s history and which we defeated in World War II. For many Americans, this is hard to fathom. Could the Republican Party really have become a right-wing party committed to absolute power, against democracy, and focused on policies that truly threaten our future? It is hard to for them to accept this, but the facts demonstrate it is the case. Democrats must remain vigilant and through credible communications ensure Americans see the existential danger. Democrats must also carefully craft their own message and policy priorities so as to

The stakes could not be higher. Losing elections now is no longer about which party controls the legislative agenda and whether our state or national government leans more liberal or more conservative. Every election now until and unless the Republican Party sheds its embrace of extremist groups and authoritarianism comes with a life-or-death impact. The damage done by extremist judicial appointees, open season on the environment (in fact banning any discussion of climate change), banning sustainability, runaway spending that will keep working families in poverty as their benefits are stripped away, the Constitution is shredded like a rag, and of course the strange power of Russia over our own government, will be irreversible.

Democrats and all Americans – it is imperative that EVERY citizen take a stand to protect democracy. If you think groups like the Proud Boys and other militias and supremacists could never be in control, you are burying your head in the sand. Trump enabled them and his minions are continuing those efforts. They will do anything to win just to hold power. It was Trump and his allies who tried to steal the election through criminal means. It was Trump’s followers who stormed the Capitol to murder our elected officials and upend democracy. If we let them do it again, and next time they will be much better prepared, the United States is over. We must all work to prevent this.

# How Florida Republicans Are Killing Floridians

Michael K. Cantwell

It's not rocket science. Simple logic suggests that people lacking health insurance are more likely to die prematurely . . . and unnecessarily. Because of the cost, the uninsured are likely to forgo regular check-ups and doctor's visits, so conditions that might have been treatable become intractable by the time the patient arrives at an emergency room. Not surprisingly, empirical studies have supported the link between a lack of health insurance and an untimely death.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) sought to reduce the number of uninsured Americans (and the attendant deaths) by expanding Medicaid to cover Americans too poor to purchase health insurance but earning too much to qualify for traditional Medicaid. The program began in 2014 and covered anyone earning up to 138% of the federal poverty rate.

Florida has the fourth highest rate of uninsured in the country, [behind](#) only Georgia, Oklahoma, and Texas. Republicans firmly control state government, and they have refused to expand Medicaid even though the federal government would foot 90% of the cost. If the legislature passed and Ron DeSantis signed a bill expanding Medicaid, some 800,000 of the 2.8 million Floridians lacking health insurance would be covered . . . and lives would be saved.

How many lives? Or, more trenchantly, what is the human cost of their continued refusal? A pre-ACA [study](#) conducted at Harvard Medical School at a time when 45 million Americans lacked health insurance estimated that 45,000 people died annually as a result. Applying that ratio suggests 800 Floridians are dying needlessly every year because of Republican inaction, a figure roughly in line with a 2019 study

*Republicans control both the legislature and the governor's mansion, and they have refused to expand Medicaid even though the federal government would foot 90% of the cost . . . A 2019 study estimated the failure to expand Medicaid in Florida had led to 2,776 deaths over the prior 4 years.*

For the first three years, the program was fully funded by the federal government, with its contribution gradually dropping to 90%, where it now stands. The ACA also included a stick to accompany the carrot – any state that refused to expand Medicaid would lose all federal funding for traditional Medicaid.

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld most parts of the ACA in 2014 but struck down Medicaid expansion as unconstitutionally coercive. States that chose to participate would still be reimbursed, but states that refused to participate could not be punished.

that [estimated](#) the failure to expand Medicaid in Florida had led to 2,776 deaths over the prior 4 years.

It seems that Florida Republicans are more interested in inventing nonexistent problems to draft laws that would reduce turnout from Democrats (SB 90) or in criminalizing the protected First Amendment activity of groups it disfavors (H.R. 1) than it is in protecting Floridians from dying prematurely. But Republicans have always put party before people.

## DCDB Membership

**It's time to renew your annual 2021 Democratic Club of Delray Beach Membership** or join the DCDB if you've not already done so. Membership is on a calendar year basis and the dues help provide funding for operational projects, such as *The Delray Democrat*, other working supplies and signage for our sign waving events. If you're not yet a Club member, please consider joining.

We're a progressive club working for social, economic, and racial justice. As a member of both the Florida Democratic Party and the Palm Beach County Democratic Party, our goal is to educate people as to why they should vote Democratic and use Vote-by-Mail as a critical tool in support of this goal. We're looking forward to turning Florida BLUE by electing a Democratic governor and a Democratic Senator in 2022.

The membership application is on the back cover. Please consider joining or renewing!  
Char Lane, Membership Committee Chair.



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created a middle class that was once the envy of the world. That changed when Reagan replaced FDR's New Deal with his own Raw Deal, and ordinary Americans have been suffering ever since.

Nearly 80 years after the Great Depression began, we almost fell into another, with 800,000 jobs being shed monthly when Bush left office. Within 10 months of Obama's inauguration, some 4 million jobs were lost. Despite the monolithic opposition of the same Republican Party responsible for the crisis, Obama added 11.5 million jobs during his two terms and averted another Great Depression. And now here we go again, with Joe Biden inheriting an economy that has lost 10 million jobs and a pandemic that has killed more than half a million Americans.

*There are signs that the pendulum is swinging back with Joe Biden in the White House, at least in terms of the public's desire for and appreciation of good government. Three-quarters of Americans support the recently passed American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, including 60% of Republicans.*

### **"To Promote the General Welfare"**

Democrats are the party most associated with programs that "Promote the General Welfare," one of the goals of government identified in the Preamble to our Constitution. They created Social Security, unemployment insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act. There was a time, however, when Republicans actually believed in and heeded the constitutional command.

Teddy Roosevelt established the Food and Drug Administration to protect Americans from unsafe food and used the government to break the power of monopolies that held consumers and rivals hostage.

Dwight D. Eisenhower and even Richard Nixon used government on behalf of the people. Ike built the interstate highway system and Nixon established the Environmental Protection Agency and signed the Occupational Safety and Health Act and the Clean Water and Clear Air Acts.

With Joe Biden in the White House and Democrats controlling Congress, there are signs the pendulum is swinging back, at least with respect to the public's desire for and appreciation of good government. Three-quarters of Americans support the American Rescue Act of 2021, including 60% of Republicans.

The bill goes well beyond an economic stimulus, as it includes measures that will reduce income inequality and significantly cut child poverty.

Republican columnist David Brooks is already referring to Joe Biden as a "[transformational president](#)" and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 as "one of the most important pieces of legislation of our lifetimes." Michelle Goldberg has suggested that the malignant shadow cast by Ronald Reagan is finally dissipating, referring to Biden's as "[The First Post-Reagan Presidency](#)."

### **The Way Forward**

This is only the beginning. There's so much more to accomplish for an administration already channeling FDR. Passing an Infrastructure/Green New Deal bill

is essential both as a jobs program and a matter of national security. The jobs created will pay part of the cost – call it "trickle-up economics." The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act signed by Obama proved that "trickle-up" actually works while simultaneously (and once again) exposing Reagan's "trickle-down" as a con game invented and espoused by professional liars for credulous fools.

Indeed, Trump's tax bill may have finally driven the stake through the lie that wouldn't die. Now even Joe Manchin is [talking](#) about repealing some of the tax cuts to the wealthy and increasing the corporate tax rate to help pay for the infrastructure bill.

Increasing IRS funding to pursue tax cheats and avoiders will pay for itself many times over. The IRS recently [reported](#) that nearly one million wealthy individuals had failed to file taxes over the prior three-year period, costing the government nearly \$46 billion in taxes. A recent [article](#) estimated that increasing the IRS budget by \$100 billion over the next 10 years would raise \$1.15 trillion.

So stay tuned. Republicans have not even paid lip service to good government in 40 years. The idea is so old (and venerable) that it's become new again, and JRB is going to run with it.

# The Former Republican Party

Rob Resnick

The Republican Party was established in the 1850s when the Whig Party, in essence its predecessor, lost favor among voters over issues involving slavery. The original Republicans took a stronger position towards abolishing slavery and Abraham Lincoln took that message to the White House after the 1860 election as the first Republican president.

Now, approximately 160 years later, it is the Republican Party undergoing a tumultuous transformation. Will it go the way of the Whigs and be replaced by a successor party focused on traditional conservatism and/or center right ideology or will it survive in its new form as a right-wing party that embraces extremism and authoritarianism akin to similar parties in Europe and elsewhere.

Throughout our history there have been attempts at new or “third parties” to compete with the two established parties. The original Republicans were unique in that they rose quickly and eclipsed the Whigs into extinction, thus maintaining our

Donald Trump was not the first to invite support of extremists, but he dramatically altered the party through his open embrace and total alliance with extremists including white supremacists, anti-government militias, overt authoritarianism, etc.

Only with support from such groups could the Republicans even hope to maintain power as a party of predominantly White Americans. Race, and rejection of impending multiculturalism, became the hallmark of the modern Republican Party now completely shedding its political policy and ideology in favor of just holding power and all costs.

Over generations the Republican Party fluctuated between a center-right and traditional conservative party with fairly consistent and predictable policy platforms covering the full range of issues. They gave themselves the label of “Constitutional conservatives,” which at least arguably indicated a commitment to democracy and the rule of law. That is a debate for another time, perhaps no longer

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traditional two-party system. It is interesting to ponder what would have happened if both the Whigs and Republicans remained in addition to the Democrats and whether three viable parties could have survived. More recently we saw the rise and fall of the Reform Party in the 1990s, never really gaining traction as a viable national alternative to the Democrats and Republicans. The key to original Republican survival was likely the critical issue of slavery and desire of voters for a party committed to abolition and the Whigs floundering if not failing on that issue.

Ironically in the modern era race may again be the decisive factor in the demise or wholesale transformation of a major political party. While the Democratic Party recognized and seemingly embraced the rapidly changing demographic picture of the nation, understanding that the U.S. will not long remain a majority White country, the Republican Party openly rejected this inevitability.

relevant. Republican leaders in Congress and many state governments embraced then President Trump’s disdain for democracy, rejection of the rule of law, and open defiance of the Constitution and limits of executive authority. They did so knowing full well they were trading conservative ideology for extending political power, now without an ideology to guide it.

It was abundantly clear to anyone paying attention that Donald Trump lost the 2020 election. There was no rampant fraud that challenged in any way Joe Biden’s victory. All of these Republican leaders knew it, but such truth was not controlling as they were more focused on maintaining power at any cost. The will of the people be damned, democracy now an inconvenience, the Constitution just an old piece of paper, the sole focus was keeping Trump in the White House and wielding unlimited power. There were unprecedented,

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concerted, centralized efforts to disenfranchise communities of color so that these predictably Democratic votes would not be counted, and Trump would “win” the election. Due to the pandemic, and an inability to take the time to stand in long lines, etc., it was necessary for these communities of color to rely on the completely lawful option of voting by mail. For months Trump spread baseless conspiracy theories about voting by mail in preparation for his plan to try and have the ballots thrown out. There was no legitimate challenge to the ballots, just his knowledge that if they were properly counted, he would lose.

While there were Republican election officials in Georgia, Arizona, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere who did their sworn duty and counted all properly cast ballots, there were party leaders across the nation swarming to Trump’s side as confederates in his disenfranchisement and election theft plot. Every one of them stood against democracy, against the rule of law, against the Constitution, and against the clear will of the American people. Every one of them chose authoritarianism over democracy. This conspiracy led directly to the insurrection against the Capitol on January 6, 2021, the last desperate attempt to undermine democracy and overturn a valid election by Trump’s extremist hoard.

Despite the unprecedented, dangerous, and deadly attack just hours before, Trump’s Congressional allies engaged in fraudulent, baseless objections to the Electoral College vote in a despicable and disingenuous display.

Why would Republican leaders participate in Trump’s plot to steal the election and undermine democracy? Why have they embraced his anti-democratic rhetoric for the past four years? This is the transformation of the Republican Party, the old party of Lincoln and even Reagan, to the new Republican Party, no longer a center-right or conservative party. It is now solidly a right-wing party beholden to authoritarianism over democracy, embracing an alliance with extremist groups in rejection of freedom and the rule of law. They have little or no policy platform or ideology that guides them. They are about wielding power. Absolute power. Power unchecked by our Constitutional checks and balances. To learn more about this new party, examine the rise of similar right-wing parties in Europe. There are stark similarities.

For four years, most Republican officials and voters

excused every Trump transgression under the guise of placing right-wing ideologues on all levels of our judicial system. They planned for these judges to ignore the law and provide favorable rulings allowing them to violate the election, consolidate power, and wield absolute power in the future. Thankfully, this plan failed, at least in 2020, where judges denied Trump’s bogus election claims. However, this does not end the crisis. These judges, with lifetime appointments, will rule on numerous cases of great importance concerning our government and our rights. If Trump was the practice run, what happens when there is a better planned and prepared effort to thwart democracy? What happens if our government finally understands the need to address the unlawful operations of the extremist groups, now fully integrated into the new Republican Party?

The 2022 and 2024 elections will be pivotal to our nation’s future and the future of democracy, the rule of law, and our rights. Historically the party in power does poorly in the midterm election, meaning the Democrats have a real chance to lose control of the House and Senate in 2022. The new Republican Party is prepared to do what it takes to win those seats and then challenge for the White House in 2024. The American people must reject the new right-wing Republicans, voting against them in every election at every level going forward until and unless the party returns to its traditional role as a center right or mainstream conservative party. The right-wing party wielding power in Congress and state houses across the nation poses a clear threat to our future and our continuation as a democracy.

We cannot allow this great nation to be transformed into an authoritarian country with absolute rule by an infallible leader. Trump and his allies worked extremely hard and came way too close to succeeding in this effort and now we are armed with experience and knowledge of what is to come. As for the Democrats, they must provide viable options for the former Republican voters to ensure the new Republican Party cannot win local, state, and national campaigns. People in Idaho will not vote for a Massachusetts style liberal, but there are enough good people there who will reject right-wing authoritarianism if Democrats give them a good Idahoan alternative. Additionally, former mainstream Republicans who still respect democracy and the rule of law, must either regain control of their party or successfully establish its replacement, much like the Republicans did to the Whigs. Country first!

# What We're Reading

## The New York Times

Jim Tankersley and Jason DeParle, [How Shifting Politics Re-energized the Fight Against Poverty](#): “Its first major legislative act under President Biden was a deficit-financed, \$1.9 trillion ‘American Rescue Plan’ filled with programs as broad as expanded aid to nearly every family with children and as targeted as payments to Black farmers. While providing an array of benefits to the middle class, it is also a poverty-fighting initiative of potentially historic proportions, delivering more immediate cash assistance to families at the bottom of the income scale than any federal legislation since at least the New Deal.”

David Brooks, [Joe Biden Is a Transformational President](#): “The Covid-19 relief law that was just enacted is one of the most important pieces of legislation of our lifetimes. As Eric Levitz writes in New York magazine, the poorest fifth of households will see their income rise by 20 percent; a family of four with one working and one unemployed parent will receive \$12,460 in benefits. Child poverty will be cut in half.”

## Democracy Now

[The End of Trickle-Down Economics? Joe Stiglitz on the “Transformational” \\$1.9T American Rescue Plan](#): “First, let me say it was enormously important that the economy be rescued, and that’s why that \$1.9 trillion package was so important. But within it, it was designed to begin a transformation. And what you talked about earlier, the number of people who are being lifted out of poverty, is absolutely essential. You know, the first act passed under the previous presidency, one of the few acts in the process of what is called reconciliation, was a tax bill in December 2017. And nothing — the difference couldn’t be clearer. That was a tax bill that helped the billionaires and the corporations. The money went to the top. This is a transformation with the money going to the people who really need it.

## Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2021 Membership Application and Renewal



Date \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Name/names of household members \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Community/Condo Name \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

(E-mail addresses are shared with the Palm Beach County Democratic Party so our members will be kept abreast of the latest County Democratic Activity. If you do not wish to receive this information, please initial here \_\_\_\_\_ and we will not share your E-mail address.)

Preferred method of contact: E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Text \_\_\_\_\_

Send newsletter by: E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Hand delivery \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. Mail \_\_\_\_\_

I/we are in South Florida from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ each year or are a permanent resident \_\_\_\_\_.

Payment: Individual \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Household \$35 \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to Democratic Club of Delray Beach and mail to P.O. Box 8224, Delray Beach, FL 33484. Thank you and welcome to our Club.