# The **Belray Bemocrat**

November-December 2017

## MESSAGE FROM JACKIE SINATRA, PRESIDENT DCDB

First, allow me to thank everyone who attended our first two program meetings, after a summer spent planning an informative and action-packed season for our club! We've had large turnouts and I hope to see you all again for our next program meeting on November 14th on the Second Amendment. We try to make our programs as informative as possible, always with audience comments and questions, to make the evening as interactive as possible. So, mark your calendars and tell all your friends! All program meetings begin at 6:45pm for gathering and light refreshments and 7:00pm for panel discussion at Pompey Park, 1101 NW 13th Street, Delray Beach. Let us know if you need a ride! If you have a suggestion for a future program meeting, let us know!

As we begin a new election season, gearing up for the all important 2018 elections, we need volunteers and Precinct Captains to *Flip the State!* What is a Precinct Captain (PC), you ask? PCs take on a small region/development in zone 8, much of east Delray, and treat it like their own small business. You will be given guidance on how to stay in touch with your local Democrats to ensure they get out and vote! It is not about changing minds or cold-calling, but reminding Democratic neighbors to Get Out The Vote (GOTV)! It is fun and sociable and helps us feel less helpless in these very trying times. It *will* make a difference as we often lose races by very slim margins. Help *Flip the State!* 

If you cannot become a PC, please consider volunteering for any or all of our committees. You decide when you want to work and in what capacity. We need folks to help with programming, manning the office at 15127 Jog Rd., phone banking, neighborhood canvassing, voter registration and fundraising. For more information about becoming a PC, contact zone leader and club VP, Bob Averack at 203-980-3558 or

bob.averack@gmail.com.

Did I say fundraising? Yes, we always need money. Would you like to have a little gathering or huge party at your home? Let us know and we will do all the work! All we need from you are your friends and your home. Who doesn't like a party, and one for a crucial cause at that! For more information, call me, Jackie Sinatra at 561-699-9521 or jsinatra59@gmail.com.

Speaking of money, are you a member of our club? Are all your friends and family club members? It only costs \$15/ individual and \$25/family for one year. This price will increase by \$5 in January. Join now and get 2 months free! But, you can always just join the club without membership and get on our mailing list! To join, contact Mariane Kulick at 561-243-8098 or <a href="mailto:mklick@mindspring.com">mkulick@mindspring.com</a>. Or go to our website at <a href="mailto:DemClubOfDelray.org">DemClubOfDelray.org</a>. But, please consider becoming a paid member!

Upcoming programs will include a Volunteer Appreciation party and Toys for Tots drive, discussion panels on Immigration Reform and DACA, Criminal Justice Reform, Tax Reform, Race Relations, Campaign Finance Reform and Climate Change. Send us your ideas via the website at <a href="mailto:Dem-ClubOfDelray.org">Dem-ClubOfDelray.org</a>, Facebook, or contact me, Jackie Sinatra, 561-699-9521 or <a href="mailto:jsinatra59@gmail.com">jsinatra59@gmail.com</a>. And, please, <a href="mailto:Like">Like Us</a> on Facebook!

As you well know, our country's very existence and democracy is at stake. We *must all* get involved. Complacency is not an option. We *must RESIST!* Join us today to meet like-minded folks and make a difference! We need *YOU* and it feels good!

## "Make America Broke Again"

Michael K. Cantwell

That's the Republican mantra . . . and here they go again. Huge tax cuts for the wealthy, topped by massive tax cuts for corporations and the obscenely wealthy, all on the backs of the middle class and the poor. And the icing on the cake? A \$1.7 trillion increase in the deficit, so that when we vote the bums out and set about cleaning up another Republican mess, they'll holler that there's no money left to pay for the social spending that citizens of the rest of the industrialized world take for granted, the spending to which Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes was referring when he called taxes "the price we pay for a civilized society."

(Continued on page 5)

### A Psychologist's View

Maxine Schackman

It's been a mystery to me. The phenomenon of Donald Trump. This man is as stupid as they come. Yet he is able to reach people and create passion for his ideas. How does he do that?

As a student of human behavior and cognition, I was drawn to the conversation on a recent CNN "Smerconish Show." The guest speaker was Scott Adams. You might know of him as the creator of the comic strip Dilbert. He said that he has studied hypnosis and persuasion his entire adult life. He was promoting his new book "Win Bigly: Persuasion in a World Where Facts Don't Matter." I already knew that Donald Trump was a master manipulator who used the techniques of persuasion with laser precision. Early on I saw that he was able to seduce a significant segment of the population. Like Scott Adams, I was one of the few who predicted (realistically feared?) Trump's triumph.

I agreed with Adams when he said that Trump is a master persuader who has been able to weaponize his skill set. Using well-known techniques, Trump is seemingly able to bypass the rational centers of the mind and hit directly at the (irrational) emotions. Hypnotists and psychologists have long been aware that decisions are rarely made entirely by our rational minds capable of thinking things through. More often decisions are made by our emotional centers that "feel" what's right.

I was unaware during the CNN interview that Adams was a Trump supporter. Because I had also understood Trump's persuasive powers before most other people, I didn't assume Adams was in Trump's camp. Then I read the book.

The book reads like a friendly tutorial on the techniques of persuasion, using Trump's words and actions as examples of how it's done. But I didn't have to read

past page 2 to get my first "What the Hell?" moment. Adams wrote, "I expected Trump to rip a hole in the fabric of reality so we could look through it to a deeper truth about the human experience. And he did exactly that."

Wait a minute! Yes, I believe that Trump bypasses our rational centers. I guess you could call that "ripping a hole" in the fabric of reality. But. A deeper truth?? No.

Outside the fabric of reality is emotion. Emotions which we experience and feel "as if" they are truth. Emotions create feelings which we can actually experience physically. These feelings seem real but the beliefs that accompany them are often distorted and destructive to the individual. This is the entire basis of cognitive therapy.

Following your emotions can lead you astray. Thoughts and beliefs unmoored to rational thought are fantasies, hopes and dreams. They may have their value, but they are not "true." They are made up. They are clouds that can easily solidify in the mind until we come to think they are as "real" as apples. But they are not.

I have spent over 30 years helping people to discover their irrational beliefs. Inevitably they feel freer and happier when their personal emotional experience is consistent with objective reality.

On page 19, Adams tells us that "Persuasion is all about the tools and techniques of changing people's minds, with or without facts and reason." This is true. What he does not mention is that persuasive techniques can be used to help people (as do psychotherapists) or to harm them (as did Jim Jones). Simply being persuasive does not make you "right" or "good" or "wise."

(Continued on page 3)

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The views and opinions expressed in the articles herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Democratic Club of Delray Beach or the Democratic Party.

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(Continued from page 2)

On pages 24 and 25, he says, "If you have ever tried to talk someone out of their political beliefs by providing facts, you know it doesn't work..... facts are weak persuasion. If you're using super strong persuasion, you can be wrong on the facts, and even the logic of your argument, and still win."

Regrettably, I think we are all aware by now that this is very true for a significant segment of our population. Where Adams goes off track, in my opinion, is that he confuses being a successful persuader with being "right." For example, on page 10, "When Trump's critics accused him of laziness, ignorance, and cruel intentions, I saw a skilled persuader who knew what mattered and what didn't. Apparently, he was more right than wrong on his priorities, because he won the election."

As a psychotherapist, I also see Trump as a skilled persuader. But his only priority may be his own narcissism. If he is successful at persuading a large number of peo-

ple that he can speak directly to their fears, and hopes and that he has the power to save them from life's pain, does that make him "right?" Or is he merely taking advantage of his superior persuasive skills to get what he wants for himself?

Yes. Trump is a successful persuader. But successful for whom? For the American people or for Donald Trump?

Since joining the Democratic Party a few months ago I have met so many wonderful people. What I have noticed is that Democrats are very good at creating well-reasoned, cogent arguments. It is great to meet such an intelligent, articulate, and rational group of people.

In a recent email to me, Michael Cantwell wrote, "All too often Democrats win the intellectual arguments but lose the emotional ones and thus [we] need to get better at reaching the gut as opposed to the brain." I couldn't agree with him more.

As Rachel Maddow might say, "Watch this space. More to come."

## Floods, Fires and Hurricanes

Mariane Kulick

Climate change is no longer an abstract thing dreamed up by scientists, as the Republicans would have you believe. It's real and it has already begun. The worst will be left for our children and grandchildren but even now it's here and affecting our lives.

Were there always floods and fires? Yes, there were, but we are making them infinitely worse and more frequent. With all our technology one would think that we would make the earth safer and better. Instead we are hastening natural disasters.

We know that the first responders to the tragedy of 911 who breathed in the dust and smoke have been at risk for all sorts of health problems, including cancer, gastrointestinal diseases, and asthma. The people in Texas have been subjected to contaminated waters and chemical spills from industrial activities. Puerto Rico has already confirmed ten suspected cases of leptospirosis, a disease transmitted via contaminated waters. There is danger of the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases where there is stagnant water.

Research shows that our sea life is affected by increasing acidification as the oceans absorb the carbon diox-

ide we are emitting into the atmosphere. More than one billion people are dependent upon food from warm water coral reefs and they are dying. Global fish stocks are in decline and 90% of large fish are already gone.

The Environmental Protection Agency's website showed unhealthy or hazardous air conditions all over the Pacific Northwest and into Northern California, Idaho and Montana due to the wildfires across the area.

Unfortunately, the EPA under President Trump may show a danger, but is not interested in doing anything about it. His appointee, Scott Pruitt, prior to his becoming the head, was in the business of suing the EPA to get rid of environmental rules. So here we have as head of the EPA someone who does not believe in having an EPA. He rejects the most basic conclusions of climate science.

We owe it to our future generations to fight for a change in the administration and have an EPA which will, as it once did, be a guardian for the earth.

#### Healthcare in Florida

Hal Stern

Over the last nine months, we have watched Congress repeatedly attack the healthcare safety net. Financing access to healthcare is a confusing jumble of federal and state programs, and the Republican controlled Congress has used this to try and shred the safety net and hurt millions of people.

We Democrats oppose these efforts and we need to generate greater citizen support for initiatives aimed at improving access to affordable quality healthcare. We need to understand what programs Republicans in Washington and Tallahassee are promoting and attacking so we can effectively persuade our neighbors that voting for Democrats is voting for better healthcare.

Prior to the enactment of the Affordable Care Act (the ACA), Medicaid coverage was linked to federal cash assistance (welfare) programs that aided families with young children, people over 65 and people who were blind or disabled. In the 1990s, Congress expanded coverage for children by creating the Children's Health Insurance Program. CHIP allowed intact families with higher incomes and older children to qualify for Medicaid coverage.

This still left millions of our fellow citizens uninsured—as many as 48

million people. This is the hole in the safety net that the ACA was aimed at filling. First, the ACA changed Medicaid to cover everyone who earned less than 138% of the federal poverty level (Florida refused to expand Medicaid and still does not cover the poorest adults who are not in families with children, over 65, blind or disabled). Second, the ACA created the health insurance exchanges and helped pay the premiums for people who didn't qualify for Medicaid but who didn't earn enough to pay the full cost of insurance.

The national and state Republican dominated legislatures, now assisted by the Trump Administration, are working to destroy the safety net

Congress allowed CHIP funding to lapse as of September 30. Florida's CHIP program is the fourth largest CHIP program in America and covers as many as 340.000 children. Unless Congress acts, it is projected that Florida's CHIP program will run out of funds by January 2018. While there may be some federal funding available, the state budget assumed full federal funding. It is unclear what, if anything, our legislature can do or will do to plug this gap. What happens to

these childrens' healthcare?

- Trump has eliminated payments to insurance companies that help subsidize premiums—this will hurt working Floridians and Florida families. The uncertainty created by this Administration has already caused premiums for next year to dramatically increase.
- Shorten the open enrollment period for getting insurance, kill funding for navigators (the people hired to help people enroll in the programs best suited to their needs) and limit access to the government healthcare websites.
- Propose a tax plan that will cut \$1 billion from the Medicaid program and \$500 million from Medicare to provide tax cuts overwhelmingly benefitting the top 1% of taxpayers.

As Democrats, we understand how these Republican state and federal initiatives hurt our neighbors and many of the people we work with every day. We need to expose politicians who support these policies. We then need to urge our neighbors to vote for Democrats next November so that all Floridians can have access to predictable, affordable quality healthcare.

#### BY THE NUMBERS

41,000,000 Americans are food insecure.

44 percent of Americans would struggle to cover a \$400 emergency.

\$1,300,000,000,000 in college loans are outstanding and 8.5 million Americans are in default on college loans.

<u>Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, and Warren Buffett collectively</u> own more wealth than the entire poorest half of the US population while the <u>bottom 1 percent</u> of households are collectively \$196 billion in the hole, while the top **one percent** sit on \$33.4 trillion of combined net worth.

## Make America Broke Again, continued from page 1

Round 1 was the Reagan tax cut, funded by steep hikes in the Social Security tax, that led to a tripling of the cumulative deficit during his administration and a quadrupling by the time Bush I left office. After increasing taxes on high earners in 1993, the Clinton administration not only presided over the creation of 23 million jobs (thus puncturing the myth that higher taxes kill jobs) but turned over three straight annual SURPLUSES to the hapless Bush II administration.

Round 2 were the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts passed under W, with the now-disgraced Ayn Rand acolyte Alan Greenspan cheerleading the raid on the U.S. Treasury by claiming that surpluses were "bad." The cuts not only failed to create jobs (less than 400,000 private sector jobs were created during W's two terms) but they helped double the deficit. The odious Dick Cheney infamously claimed that "Reagan proved that deficits don't matter." Actually he would have been right if he'd but added "when a Republican is in the White House."

Despite monolithic opposition from Republicans, and phony shrieks from shills like Alan Simpson (who idiotically claimed that if we didn't start slashing social spending we'd be like Greece by 2010), the Obama administration managed to arrange for health insurance for an additional 20 million Americans, while creating nearly 11 million private-sector jobs.

And now, like some loathsome monster in a horror film, they're ba-ack with a tax plan under which the top 1% gets 20.6% of the benefits in 2018 and nearly 50% of the benefits in 2027 (and the top 0.1% get 10% of the total benefits in 2018 and 25% of the benefits in 2027).

To help pay for the breaks given to the rich and the obscenely rich, Republicans will eliminate tax credits and exemptions that benefit middle class families, such as deducting the interest on college loans or taxing tuition reductions for children of university employees. Indeed, one analysis of the House bill found that families with children will see their taxes increase once the bill is fully phased in. Another found that some 20 million taxpayers earning less than \$200,000 were pay higher taxes, with another 54 million of them receiving a "tax cut" amounting to all of \$100.

Not to mention exploding the deficit by \$1.7 trillion. Republicans claim that tax cuts will pay for themselves but only idiots and liars say that. But I repeat myself.

Some of the grifters behind the plan (like Trump) are only interested in the additional money they can steal from the public purse for themselves. Others (like McConnell and Greenspan) are prostitutes pleasuring the plutocrats who keep them in office. But for others (like Ryan), the rapacious plunder is just means to an end. The real goal is to Make America Broke Again so as to achieve their lifelong goal of destroying Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Get on the phones, people. Get your friends and neighbors on the phone. And get your pitchforks. This abomination will pass unless the switchboards are smoking with sustained outrage. Rubio's local office numbers are 305-418-8553 and (561) 775 3360 and his DC office is 203-224-4304.

### **Building on Virginia**

Mariane Kulick

All of us are, of course, overjoyed with the results of the Virginia election results and the wins in many parts of the country

They didn't just happen. There are many people who see the danger that President Trump represents, but it takes work to corral those votes and get them to the polls. We have a big job to do in Florida. We won Florida for two terms when Obama ran and we lost it last year. It is imperative that we get it back, that we

elect a governor, Bill Nelson as senator, and a host of local positions. Here in Delray Beach it is our job to see that Delray Beach votes as never before. It won't happen unless we make it happen. Our club has an Outreach Committee, devoted to this work. Don't just be a name on our contact list – be a force on our working list. Please call me at 561-243-8098.

### A Fall Cornucopia of Readings

Stephanie Braunstein

For those wanting something more than the television and internet "breaking news" versions of the state of our political affairs, this column will provide references to articles appearing in thought-provoking periodicals. If you are reading this column online, each article's title serves as a link to that article. If you are reading this column in print, you can use your favorite search engine to find the articles yourself. However, if you really want to experience reading at its finest, you should go ahead and buy print copies—remember those? There's still something so satisfying about holding a physical artifact and turning its pages, one-by-one. Plus, if you buy your own copy, you can tear out pages and attach them to your fridge door with magnets—the real things look much more aesthetically pleasing than a printout from a computer. If you don't want to store those pesky publications in your already over-crowded home, find them in a library—but, remember, do **not** tear out any pages from a library copy! So, here goes—Michael Cantwell and I are offering these suggestions for your fall reading pleas-

#### From The Atlantic Monthly

**Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The First White President"** . . . "It is often said that Trump has no real ideology, which is not true—his ideology is white supremacy, in all its truculent and sanctimonious power."

Jack Goldsmith, "Will Donald Trump Destroy the Presidency?" ... Donald Trump is testing the institution of the presidency unlike any of his 43 predecessors. We have never had a president so ill-informed about the nature of his office, so openly mendacious, so self-destructive, or so brazen in his abusive attacks on the courts, the press, Congress (including members of his own party), and even senior officials within his own administration."

#### From The Nation

Katrina Vanden Heuvel, "What's Even Scarier Than Donald Trump?" . . . "President Trump's increasingly manic careenings are terrifying to behold, but the remorseless suicide mission of the Republicans caucus in Congress should horrify us as well."

David Dayen, "How America's Biggest Bank Paid Its Fine for the 2008 Mortgage Crisis—With Phony Mortgages" . . . "Here's how the alleged scam worked. JPMorgan moved to forgive the mortgages of tens of thousands of homeowners; the feds, in turn, credited

these canceled loans against the penalties due under the 2012 and 2013 settlements. But here's the rub: In many instances, JPMorgan was forgiving loans it no longer owned."

Julie Reynolds, "How Many Palm Beach Mansions Does A Wall Street Tycoon Need: Vulture Capitalists Devour the News" . . . "Think of those luxury homes as the shuttered offices and fired workers of hometown newspapers across the United States, because gutting those newspapers helped make spending \$57.2 million on 16 Palm Beach mansions a trifling expense for the tycoon."

#### From the New Yorker

Ryan Lizza, "John Kelly and the Dangerous Moral Calculus of Working for Trump" . . . "Sean Spicer learned this on his first day on the job, when Trump sent him into the White House briefing room to tell the press lies about Inauguration-crowd sizes. He never recovered."

Amy Davidson Sorkin, "Why Bush and Obama Shouldn't Hold Back in Criticizing Their Successor". "this is a time when each man's party needs him, if in different ways: the Democrats to organize their despair and anger, the Republicans to articulate the nature of their doubt and compromises."

#### From The New York Times

Paul Krugman, "Lies, Lies, Lies".

Lies, Lies, Lies". . . "Modern conservatives have been lying about taxes pretty much from the beginning of their movement . . . But the selling of tax cuts under Trump has taken things to a whole new level, both in terms of the brazenness of the lies and their sheer number."

#### From Rolling Stone

Matt Taibbi, "The Madness of Donald Trump: The pressures of the presidency have pushed Trump to the edge, but is he crazy enough to be removed from office?" ... "The president of the United States is seeing things. He might as well be shooing imaginary ants off his suit. His followers still love him, but even they're starting to notice. They come for the old standards, but this new Trump material gets mixed reviews."

### The Art of the Hypocrite

David Kulick

I have to admire the hypocrisy of the Republican Party. How about those conservatives who are so concerned Under a Democratic government, Republicans never stop screaming about the deficit, but now they put forward a tax plan that explodes the deficit by trillions of dollars and they don't even have the decency to blush. In spite of arguing over and over that deficits strangle the economy, somehow their deficits are supposed to be self-financing.

Naturally their tax "reform" is all about cutting taxes on billionaires, since that's their only real concern. Talk about how it will help the middle class, but give the lion's share to the already obscenely wealthy. Trump, after saying that he won't profit from the "tax reform," will profit very handsomely. You won't.

They scream that Democrats are "Tax and Spend." Well, yes, that's how government is supposed to work. How we're taxed is important, and what you spend it on is important, but tax and spend is how government operates. Republicans have a different philosophy once you get past their endless rhetoric, it's called "Borrow and Spend". That's what they do every time they run the government. Huge deficits that the next Democratic administration has to deal with. Of course, that's the icing on the cake. Then they get to scream that we can't afford Medicare or Medicaid or any of the social programs on which people depend for their lives.

There's always morality of course, Marriage is all important, except for same sex marriage of course. But when your hero is on his third marriage, well, it's sort of hard to be too righteous, but that doesn't stop them.

Healthcare is a bit of a moral problem. How can you claim to be "pro-life" when you call any attempt to provide universal healthcare an infringement on someone's right to get ill and die?

Maybe the most incredible hypocrisy is wanting to jail Hillary Clinton for financial ties to a uranium deal with Russia when the President's campaign very likely committed treason with Russia. Or calling anyone "crooked" when you have a serial thief as President. Why is Trump so concerned that Mueller is investigating past Trump deals? Gee, I wonder.

about strict interpretation of the Constitution and "original intent"? Hey guys, when the second amendment was written, our arms were muskets. So yes, you have the right to own a musket, not an AK47.

And golf? When President Obama went on rare golfing vacations, the right repeatedly made it an issue, and the biggest critic was Trump. He said that he'll be too busy being President to play golf. Is he? In the first two months of his Presidency, Trump went to his golf courses 10 times. No comment from the right wing.

Then there's the whole gay rights issue. I'll just mention a few of the homophobes who turned out to be gay: Larry Craig, Bob Allen, George Rekers, Richard Curtis, Roy Ashburn, and Ed Schrock. More hypocrites will surely surface.

How about national security? Well, Hillary did use a private email server and private email account, not that any of them actually risked our security. Plenty of Trump administration senior staff have been using RNC servers with their private email accounts to conduct government business. And of course working with the Russians to steal an election might be considered treason, but not a word from Republicans.

And those 30,000 deleted private Hillary emails that caused endless Republican investigations? Well, the Bush White House managed to delete 22 MILLION emails, which were all around the time that the Republicans were lying to us about the need to go to war in Iraq and destabilize the entire Mideast.

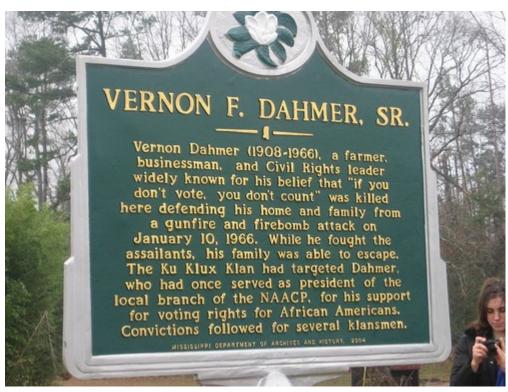
All you need to do to see real hypocrisy is replace "Trump" with "Clinton" in the headlines. Clinton threatens to fire Mueller. Clinton says that Putin says he didn't interfere in election. Clinton cabinet has umpteen undisclosed contacts with Russian oligarchs. Clinton campaign may have colluded with Russia. Clinton mum on Democratic Senate candidate's abusing underage girls. You get the idea. The right wing would be, correctly, screaming for impeachment at least, but we hear nothing. Because they're spineless hypocrites.

## "IF YOU DON'T VOTE, YOU DON'T COUNT"

"If you don't vote, you don't count" was both the credo and the epitaph of Vernon Ferdinard Dahmer, Sr., president of the Hattiesburg, Mississippi, NAACP, who was murdered by the Ku Klux Klan on January 10, 1966.

Democrats outnumber Republicans both locally and nationally, but we lose elections we should be winning easily because Republicans turn out in greater numbers than Democrats. This is especially true in midterm elections. Too many people have died fighting for the right to vote for anyone to sit home again. Get yourself registered if you're not already, make sure your friends are registered, and get out and get them out to vote.

Michael K. Cantwell



## Democratic Club of Delray Beach 2017 Membership Application

Date New_	Renewal	<u>_</u>
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: F	E-mail Mail	_ Phone
Send newsletter by: E-mail U.S. Mail		
I/we are in South Florida from	to	each year or are a permanent resident
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