

# Donkey Talk

September  
2010

Meyerland Area Democrats Club: [www.meydems.org](http://www.meydems.org)



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The Meyerland Area Democrats Club is primarily composed of residents of the Meyerland-area election precincts. We are dedicated to the election of Democratic candidates and the promotion of issues of concern to Democrats.

The Club meets the third Monday of every month at Fadi's Mediterranean Grill, 4738 Beechnut across from Meyerland Plaza. Members meet at 6:30 p.m. to eat. The meeting and formal program begin at 7 p.m.

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## YOU Can Make a Difference: Dialing to Help Bill White and Texas

With only 2 months left until the election, the margin between part-time Perry and Mayor Bill White continues to be close.

The Meyerland Area Democrats have committed to the White campaign to staff phone banks at their Houston headquarters every two weeks, beginning Monday, Sept. 13, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Come by any time between those hours, even if you can stay for only an hour – every call counts.

This is no time for MeyDems to relax. While Rick Perry was busy planning his "Lobbyist Ball" to raise campaign funds from special interests, he was also named one of the League of Conservation Voters' "Dirty Dozen" state officials from across the country. He has ducked out on reporters' questions about rising homeowner's insurance rates and continued to ignore the \$18 billion budget deficit.

**Where is the phone bank?** At the White for Governor campaign office, located at 2100 West Loop South, suite 700.

If coming north on the 610 feeder, take the San Felipe exit and do U-turn at the light. The building will come up on the right. Park in the visitor section of the garage and punch #0700 to unlock the doors. Take the elevator up to the 7th floor and there will be a volunteer sign. Tell the front desk you're there for the MeyDems Phone Bank Night.

**Time?** From 6:30 until 9 p.m., every 2 weeks starting Monday, Sept. 13. Come any time between those hours. **Questions?** E-mail [info@meydems.org](mailto:info@meydems.org) or call David Monroe at the White headquarters, (713) 613-5390.

Perry's in it for himself. You can be in it for Bill White and Texas. Join other MeyDems on Sept. 13, dialing to make a difference.

**President Alan Guttman**

## A Lot at Stake for Texas in this Election

If you think this election doesn't matter, think again! With an \$18 BILLION budget shortfall looming, Gov. Perry is telling state agencies to cut their budgets. And in Texas, where there aren't a lot of services offered as it is, it will shock you to know what is being considered:

- Child-abuse prevention and early intervention would be cut, dropping 14,000 youths from abuse, neglect and juvenile delinquency-prevention programs. These children are at greater risk of ending up in our prison system or local jails, which cost more per capita.
- Beds would be cut at five state hospitals. This means 1,400 fewer Texans with mental illness would be served at the five hospi-

tals each year. Did you know the Harris County Jail has become the largest mental-  
*(continued on page 3)*



### Pictures from Aug. 16 Kickoff Meeting

Congressman Al Green was an inspiring speaker at the MeyDems August Campaign Kickoff meeting.

We had a huge turnout! More pictures are on page 3.



# Make Sure Your Vote Counts in Harris County

by Diane Trautman, Ed.D., Democratic Nominee for Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector, [www.dianetrautman.com](http://www.dianetrautman.com)

I am running as the 2010 Democratic nominee for Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector and Voter Registrar to make sure *your* vote counts!

In last month's newsletter, I discussed Paul Bettencourt's surprise resignation in 2008, the resulting Texas Democratic Party lawsuit against the Harris County Tax Office, and the rejection of thousands of voter applications. During sworn testimony of tax office employees, it was discovered that voter applications were being rejected on hyper-technicalities.

Here is what I will do to restore ethics and trust in Harris County's voter registration process:

- Improve transparency of the process
- Provide efficient and user-friendly customer service
- ENCOURAGE people to vote, rather than discourage them

First, I will coordinate with local state-agency offices designated as voter registration sites per the Texas Election Code, Section 20.001, to ensure they are optimizing voter registration opportunities among their clients. I also will review their past rates of voter registration in Harris County.

These Texas agencies include the Health & Human Services Commission, Dept. of Aging & Disability Services, and the Dept. of Public Safety (DPS), among others.

My other recommendations for insuring a complete and accurate voter roll include:

⇒ Adopting a clearly written policy for substantial compliance, similar to Travis and Dallas counties that prevents rejection of applications on hy-

per-technicalities. Rep. Scott Hochberg passed legislation preventing clerical errors causing people to be taken off the rolls. But Gov. Perry vetoed it, and his veto contained ... typographical errors!

⇒ Developing a process to review applications for county error or drivers-license mismatches before and after applications are sent to Secretary of State. Also, I will review and revise the policy of proactively cross-referencing other government records and DPS changes-in-address for voter-registration purposes. This overzealous program has resulted in keeping many off the rolls – including a woman whose family received a notice that she was removed from the rolls for being dead. She wasn't, but they had cross-referenced her name with TDL and other government records.

⇒ Creating a Deceased Family Member Notice Form and coordinate distribution through funeral homes, hospitals/hospices, and probate court to ensure deceased voters are removed from the rolls. Travis County has a similar form.

⇒ Ensuring the notice of incompletes uses more direct language clearly pointing out the application error, rather than providing a list of all possible errors.

⇒ Analyzing and monitoring the process where the DPS registers voters through the Motor Voter Law. There are numerous complaints from people who never receive their registration after doing this. This is important because 61 percent of all voter registration is done through this process.

⇒ An additional 13 percent of voter registration comes from mail-in applications and only 5 percent from volun-

teer deputy registrars. We must do better on this number.

⇒ Developing a special initiative for 18-year-old high school seniors to serve as Volunteer Deputy Registrars, with special networking events for them to attend where they can meet elected officials and learn more about the electoral process.

When I am elected and taxpayers walk through the doors of the Tax Office, I want them to know:

1. I will work hard to do more with less in this time of shrinking county budgets.
2. I will ensure your identity is protected and will not be offered for sale by tax-office employees (as has recently been the case in the tax office).
3. I will make sure the tax office treats all people with the fairness and respect due hardworking taxpayers. Grievances will be taken seriously and not rejected out of hand.
4. As voter registrar, I will make the Tax Office a true service organization instead of a political machine that seeks to tip the scales in one partisan direction or the other. I will simply do the job I'm elected to do. And by doing that, I will avoid the lawsuits and controversy that previously wasted millions of tax dollars.

I am ready to go to work for you to change the system. We have a unique opportunity in this 2010 election, but I will need your help. Put out a yard sign, visit my Website, become a Facebook fan, sign up for e-mail updates, or put a bumper sticker on your car. Spread the word to vote for me, **Diane Trautman**. And **VOTE EARLY!**



## Campaign Kickoff Meeting a Huge Success!

Headline speakers for the August meeting were Harris County Democratic Chairman **Gerry Birnberg** (pictured at far left), State Rep. **Ellen Cohen** (left), County Attorney **Vince Ryan** (pictured at left with MeyDems President **Alan Guttman**) and U.S. Rep. **Al Green** (pictured on page 1).

The enthusiastic crowd overflowed the Fadi's meeting room!



Other elected officials and hopefuls also were introduced: District Clerk **Loren Jackson** (pictured at right), **Cheryl Elliot Thornton**, **Judy Dougherty**, Hon. Judge **Robert Hinojosa**, **Mack McInnis**, **Brandon Dudley** and **Keith Branch**; Senate Dist 17 SDEC Rep **Alan Blakley**, Senate Dist 13 SDEC Rep **Mary Seymore** and Chair **Nat West**; and a number of Meyerland-area precinct chairs. Thanks to all who attended the meeting!



## Town Hall Discussion on State Board of Education

On Wednesday, Sept. 29 from 7-8:30 p.m., Rep. **Ellen Cohen** will host a town hall meeting at the Houston Community College West Loop Center, located at 5601 West Loop South.

The meeting will address issues affecting the State Board of Education, which will be meeting one week prior to the town hall. Panelists include:

- Rep. **Scott Hochberg**, Vice Chair of the House Committee on Public Education
- Honorable **Lawrence Allen**, Vice Chair of the State Board of Education
- **Kathy Miller**, President of Texas Freedom Network
- **Angela Miller**, Manager of Secondary Social Studies Curriculum for the Houston Independent School District
- **Sharon Pope**, Director of Publications for Texas Council for the Social Studies

Rep. Cohen invites you to attend to discuss your issues and concerns with the panelists. She looks forward to a great turnout!

## A Lot at Stake for Texas in this Election *(continued)*

health facility in the state? See what Sheriff **Adrian Garcia** has had to implement: <http://www.hcso.hctx.net/detention/MHU.asp>

- Community mental health services also would be cut, so nearly 10,000 fewer adults and nearly 2,400 fewer children would get services each year. See "Mental health cuts could be disastrous," July 24 *Houston Chronicle*: <http://www.chron.com/display/story.mpl/editorial/outlook/7123337.html>

- Immunizations would be reduced, leaving an estimated 56,000 children

without state-paid vaccinations.

- The Department of State Health Services' children's preventive dental services would be eliminated, leaving 9,000 children without care from the program.

- The Texas Grants college financial aid program would be slashed, dropping the number of students getting grants by 23,745.

- In one of the deepest proposed cuts, monthly welfare payments to extremely poor households with children would be cut about 20 percent, to an average

of about \$57 per person a month. In two-parent families, payments per person would be slashed by half, to about \$33.



Under Perry's plan we will pay more in the long run for these cuts! **Bill White** has a better way to balance the budget than on the backs of its poorest and weakest citizens. Please help us win all the Democratic races this November 2.

(Thanks to <http://offthekuff.com/wp/?p=30735> and the *Houston Chronicle* for this information.)

# Perry Profited by Nearly \$500,000, Says Dallas Morning News Exposé

You've seen the commercials about Gov. Rick "Goodhair" Perry's \$10,000-a-month luxury home lease as well as the inside dealings burdening Texans with the highest insurance rates in the nation.

What you may not know is the investigation by the *Dallas Morning News* finding Perry may have benefited from a curious real-estate deal to the tune of \$489,238.

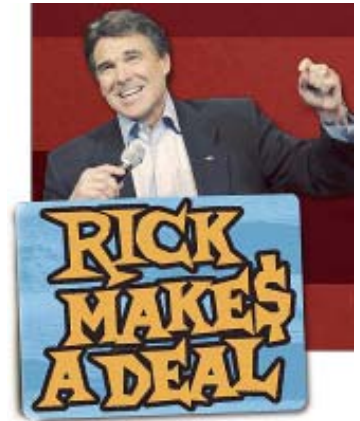
Basically, Perry bought a property in 2001 at Horseshoe Bay, a Hill Country Resort on Lake LBJ, for \$310,762 – but it was worth nearly \$450,000.

He then sold the property in 2007 for \$1.15 million to Alan Moffatt, a British national whose company once faced accusations of arms shipments to Africa for use in Rwandan genocide. An independent appraisal pegged the value of the property as \$800,000.

The juicy articles by the *Dallas Morning News* detail challenges to tax appraisals, no-commission sales, lack of gift declarations, an appoint-

ment to a university board of regents, and ties to several shady characters. (See <http://bit.ly/btiNgo> for the *DMN* story.)

For a more concise version of the *DMN* article (and the source of our "Rick Make\$ a Deal" graphic), go to the article, "Governor Perry Caught in Explosive Dirty Deals Scandal" at <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/noelle->



[cigarroa-perese/governor-perry-caught-in\\_b\\_663923.html](http://cigarroa-perese/governor-perry-caught-in_b_663923.html)

## Perry on Inaugural State-Level "Dirty Dozen" List

For the first time, the national League of Conservation Voters has put together a "Dirty Dozen" list on the state level – and Rick Perry made the list!

Perry is one of 12 candidates for state office from around the country named to the list for his consistent stances against clean energy politics and conservation initiatives.

"Rick Perry has consistently put corporate polluters and other special interests ahead of protecting our natural resources and working to make Texas a leader in the new clean energy economy," said David Weinberg, Executive Director of the Texas League of Conservation Voters.

### Meyerland Area Democrats Featured by Harris County Democratic Party

In a spotlight on local Democratic clubs, the Meyerland Area Democrats were featured on the County Party's Website at <http://www.hcdp.org/2010/08/spotlight-on-local-democratic-clubs-meyerland-democrats/>

## MeyDem Volunteers Call Surge Voters



MeyDems members and Meyerland-area precinct chairs took to the phones on Sunday afternoon, Aug. 1, to call 500 "surge voters" – those who voted for the first time in the big Obama surge in 2008.

They brought their cell phones to Debbie Kerner's home and invited those voters to the big Aug. 16 Campaign Kickoff Meeting. The club offered food to fuel the big volunteer effort.

There are more than 7,900 Democrats in the Meyerland area. Getting a big number of them to the polls on Nov. 2 will make the difference in sending Bill White and other Democrats to Austin!



The Texas Democratic party has an excellent slate of candidates who need your help! There are links to each campaign at [www.hcdp.org](http://www.hcdp.org)

**Governor** - Bill White  
**Lieutenant Governor**  
Linda Chavez-Thompson  
**Attorney General**  
Barbara Ann Radnofsky  
**Commissioner of the General Land Office** - Hector Uribe  
**Commissioner of Agriculture**  
Hank Gilbert  
**Railroad Commissioner** - Jeff Weems  
**Supreme Court Justices**  
**Place 3** - Jim Sharp  
**Place 5** - Bill Moody  
**Place 9** - Blake Bailey  
**Court of Criminal Appeals**  
**Place 6** - Keith Hampton