

Dems In Dimmitt

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from Dimmitt, Amarillo and Lubbock, and some from Hereford. There was one guy from Gaines County. He said his wife is a teacher and came home one day and told him that if the Republicans are trying to make for more home-schooled kids and public-funded private schools, they are succeeding. He was referring to the lack of funding for public schools.

The meeting was to remind we Democrats that there are others like us out there, and that we need to remain faithful and get organized.

I didn't take notes as I normally would, and decided I wouldn't report on this. However, after the meeting was over, I decided I would write an informal story about the meeting, which was inspirational for me, a woman raised by two FDR Democrats, the late Paul and Irene Brooks.

Hart used to be a Democratic stronghold in the Panhandle, along with Paducah and Tulia. A side story...recently, I picked up an area newspaper covering Silverton, Quitaque, Matador, Guthrie and that country. On the front page was the mayor of Paducah pictured with Ted Nugent at a bow hunt. The mayor wrote a story about how proud he was to meet Ted and had the aging rocker sign a bow for his son. The mayor said Nugent doesn't smoke or drink, and seemed enamored. I thought how said that this mayor would be enamored of Nugent.

I do think it's admirable he doesn't smoke or drink...however...Nugent, when helping Gov. Abbott campaign for the governorship, called President Obama a sub-human mongrel and went on to rave about his being raised a Communist in Chicago. I know this kind of talk is considered good by some, but I think Nugent should be put out to pasture. He is truly a Gun Nut.

I am often embarrassed by

what some Texans say about President Obama, and don't have a thing to back up their vile language. This Jade Helm military maneuver operation has brought out some crazies. I recently read in the *New York Times* that a hair stylist in Christoval (military exercises going on there) that the residents who think black helicopters are about to descend on their little town are only worried about their guns and their beer. I had to laugh and think how brave she is to speak up.

Some people who get their information from Fix (Fox News) and Rush Limbaugh and his ilk don't have the answer to the troubled Middle East and to Iran, are able to afford health insurance and could care less about those who can't, weren't worried about the Debt when W was the president...I could go on and on.

I digress...back to the Dimmitt meeting. (I didn't get everybody's names, by the way.) A woman from Hereford said that the judges in Deaf Smith County (I presume she meant the JPs and the county judge) had decided to not marry anyone at all after the Supreme Court had ruled in favor of same-sex marriage. She said that it's an option for judges to perform weddings, but is not required. She did say that the Deaf Smith County Clerk was issuing licenses to same-sex couples. She was wondering if it is possible to have the state mandate that judges perform such ceremonies.

I thought to myself, "That will never happen in Texas...it will be a long time if it does." I am not as concerned about this as she seemed to be right now. I think same-sex couples can find some pastors and perhaps a few judges that will perform their weddings...this will become more accepted as time passes. It's not that homosexuality was just discovered...it has been with us since Creation...it's just not been acceptable.

One man from Amarillo, a retired coach, said that farmers should remember how their ancestors, who were Democrats, got their electricity through FDR's Rural Electrification Act. He further said that farmers should be Democrats because of the federal government's monetary support of agriculture through the years. I smiled, thinking of my father.

Donald Trump came up in various conversations. I can't imagine anybody taking this egomaniac, narcissist serious. His remarks about Mexicans are appalling. There are people who believe him. On Meet the Press on Sunday, host Chuck Todd said that research indicates that immigrants (legal or otherwise) commit far fewer crimes than the general population. And, remember, President Obama has deported many Mexican illegals. People who don't like the President and really don't have a good reason why just hone in on crazies like Trump. I firmly believe that there are people who resent the President because he is black (actually, he's biracial). I am sure that there are a few Democrats in Castro County who either don't vote or, dare I think it, vote Republican because they can't bring themselves to vote for a black man. And, these people will look you in the eye and say they are a Christian. Puhleez!

One guy, Sergio Velasquez from Dimmitt, who lives in Amarillo, said that everybody should be a Democrat because Democrats are for everybody. I really enjoyed listening to him throughout the meeting. After the meeting was over, he and I visited a bit. He said that he is worried about the public schools, especially in rural areas, and how people segregate themselves. He said that no transfers should be approved. I told him I didn't even know the policy on transfers anymore. I doubt that the Texas Education Agency spends much time on it

anymore. I told him I share his concerns, and appreciated his thoughts because I had been troubled by this for years, and that I didn't see any solution to it in the near future. Velasquez is involved with the Panhandle Chapter of Tejano Democrats.

I had to laugh when he told us that when he and his family moved into what I gather is a more upscale neighborhood in Amarillo, that he could sense people thinking, "There goes the neighborhood." He said he could imagine the neighbors (white) thinking, "Will he be painting his house pink or turquoise?" I had to laugh.

It was a foregone conclusion that if more Democrats would just bother to vote that Texas would return to its Democratic roots.

I said that I want to be involved in getting more people in Hart registered. (This is a goal I hope to reach in the next year or two.) I said that Hart is largely Hispanic and I suspect there are few Hispanics actually registered to vote. Velasquez said that the Hispanics in Texas are not voting, something we all know, and how vital it is for them to wake up.

The push by Republicans for Voter ID was discussed. It was agreed that it's not to stop voter fraud (fraud is not the problem...it's apathy), but to put up barriers to vote.

Don Nelson of Dimmitt remarked how the state of Oregon is having success with voting by mail, wholesale. The Texas legislature should be pushing for more people to vote and not fewer voters. The Republicans in the Legislature want fewer voters because they know the more Texans who vote, the more Democratic the state will become.

Velasquez said that the Legislature should use non political committees to redistrict. Of course, they should, but this won't happen

soon. Redistricting should not be partisan.

A Lubbock woman says that some tell her they can't be a Democrat because of abortion. Velasquez and Thomas both said they personally are opposed to abortion, but find it important to keep it legal. My stance, as I've written before, is that women have been getting abortions for years, and it won't stop. Keeping abortions safe in the first trimester is important. We Americans need to make contraception more available and push for more stability for young people. I don't know the exact answers, but taking away legal abortions is not the answer. The liberals want more contraception and the conservatives want to push for chaste relationships.

Barron Wants To Run For Neugebauer's Seat

Ezekiel (Chico) Barron, a 2005 Hart High School graduate, was present at the meeting, along with his father. The young Hart man (employed at Centennial Bank in Hart) said he is seeking the 500 signatures required to file to seek election to the 19th Congressional district, now held by Randy Neugebauer.

He spoke to the crowd, telling them that he will work for those who would vote for him and for those who would not.

One Lubbock woman said that it's important to encourage Democrats to run for City Councils and for school boards, even though these are not partisan positions. She said this would be an important step in getting Democrats involved.

I came away from the meeting feeling a bit more motivated to get more involved in the political system. I wish that Hale County had a more potent Democratic organization. I know I could be inspired by going to Lubbock and Amarillo to some Democratic meetings, but it would be more helpful to have them closer. I invite my fellow Democrats to get on board. We have taken the back seat far too long.