



# THE COUNTY ASS

**Baltimore County  
Young Democrats**

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*Your 'Back to School' political resource.*

## Senator Sarbanes speaks out

By DAN MARTIN

When Paul Sarbanes, the Senior Senator from Maryland, agreed to an interview with me I was very excited and anxious to pick his brain on a variety of issues. After getting lost a few times in the District, I finally made my way to his Senate office. The Senator was very candid with me and I am grateful for the opportunity to spend some time with such an esteemed member of the Maryland Delegation.

**Dan Martin – What are you currently working on or what have you worked on in the past that directly relates to young people?**

Paul Sarbanes – Well, of course a good deal of the focus of many of the programs we try to push forward here relate to young people because they relate to the future of our country. Young people are the fundamental building blocks of the future of the country. We put a lot of emphasis on education at all levels. We want to be sure that people are not excluded from going to college because they don't have the financial means on which to do so. Any young person ought to be able to get an education to take them as far as their capabilities will permit. And they ought not to get blocked out from educational opportunities because of the financial circumstances of their family. I got to college on a scholarship and a loan and a job, and I feel very strongly about this. We can't compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century if we don't have an educated workforce. And it's obvious that the individual benefits from an education but people also need to appreciate that the society benefits by educating its people.

Now, on the banking committee on which I serve we've taken some initiatives, because we don't have jurisdiction over the general education programs, on things like financial literacy, to make sure people are literate when it comes to their financial affairs. We've concerned ourselves with this thrusting of credit cards on young people to get them sort of all involved in the credit card culture. Next thing you know they're declaring bankruptcy. These things have actually been almost pushed on them. We're very concerned about that problem.

We've tried to work at a strong economy and jobs. People go in and get an education and then they come out and they can't get a job. Any positive attitudes they built up are going to get destroyed from going through that experience. We need a fiscal policy on the part of the federal government that doesn't run deficits as far as the eye can see the way Bush is doing. That's just piling up the national debt and the burden of carrying that debt is being put off on the next generation. This generation of leadership and policy makers has to carry out their responsibility in a way that they meet their obligations to the next generation. I think that the measures that strengthen the economy, of course they benefit everybody, but I think they particularly benefit the young people. Let me take one that people don't [See Sarbanes, pg. 3]



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### What They're Saying

"Young Democrats not only represent the future of our party, they represent the 'NOW'. Young Democrats will energize families and communities throughout Baltimore County."



— **Jim Smith**  
**Baltimore County Executive**

## Week of soul-searching is just what the doctor ordered

By DELEGATE JON CARDIN

It was a true honor and a privilege to have been a guest at the Democratic National Convention in Boston from July 26-July 30. I was one of the many proud Democrats to join our national leadership in promoting our local Democrats and our presidential and vice presidential candidates. In doing so, I affirmed my commitment to the Democratic platform in which I believe.



In spite of the fact that the local Bostonians were scared away for the week and businesses, restaurants, and apolitical tourists packed up and went on vacation, the city swelled with energy. Let me explain.

Boston, one of the oldest and richest cities of political history in the United States, channeled our energies to the promotion of democratic policies. And so from the top of the Prudential Tower, I saw the exciting scenic overlooks of Fenway's Big Green Monster flanking B.U. to my Alma Mater -Tufts University, in the distant hills overhanging Harvard and MIT. But, I was more excited by the clarity of the JFK library on the shores of South Boston and the immeasurable foot traffic surrounding the Fleet Center and the North End, the Convention epicenter.

The celebrations were tremendous. But even more, each day, I was invited to join the Maryland delegation for important briefings by our local democratic leadership in a successful effort to inspire us and to challenge us. We were hosted by Montgomery Executive Doug Duncan, Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley, Baltimore Executive Jim Smith, and Prince George's Executive Jack Johnson, among others. Each host had prepared remarks explaining how we are and should remain united for education, for working men and women, for healthcare, for democratic principles. For example, Duncan stressed the success of attracting the biotech industry to Maryland. Jim Smith and Jack Johnson challenged us to continue our efforts to revitalize older suburban communities. And, the Mayor took his message to America about homeland security and the empowerment of American cities to make the world a safer place.

Additionally, our Senatorial and Congressional delegation presented common sense reasoning why we should ask you to recommit yourselves to the efforts and reelection of people like Steny Hoyer, Ben Cardin, and Barbara Mikulski. For example, Ben remains instrumental in streamlining and demystifying both the national healthcare and pension systems and Steny becomes Majority Whip, the conscience of the Congress, when the Democrats win back the House.

Finally, we had a number of special guests address our Maryland delegation including Howard Dean. Before meeting him, I thought of Dean as a party divider. With this in mind, I listened to him speak about unifying and believing in the principles of the democratic party that we all hold true. It was at that moment that I realized why I was there and why the Convention was so important.

For someone who has a real problem with the direction that Bush is taking us, fiscally, militarily, and socially, I was charged to work to unify and move our party in one direction. We try to be so much for so many that the Democratic party has lost part of its definition and its composure. It is my belief that bringing the party leadership together for a week of soul-searching at the Convention is exactly what we needed. And, now that we have focused our efforts to win and to provide a viable agenda after we win, I hope you will join our efforts in what I believe will make this country stronger and better.

I heard Obama wow the crowd. I listened to Bono sing about peace. I saw Clinton challenge America's fiscal conscience. I watched O'Malley and Elijah charge the administration not to neglect. I was inspired by John Kerry and John Edwards' honest and unwitting love for this country. The pervasive excitement and energy felt by the Convention audience could not have transmitted through the television audience. Nevertheless, I am here to tell you that we need to press on.

I am proud to be a Democrat. I am proud to say I support John Kerry, Ben Cardin, Barbara Mikulski, Dutch Ruppersberger, Elijah Cummings, and Steny Hoyer. I am proud to say that I think John Ashcroft has taken the Patriot Act out of context. I am proud to differ with President Bush by being pro-choice, pro-environment, and pro-stem cell research.

Bruce Springsteen said that it is how we conduct ourselves in difficult times without killing that which we hold dear (freedom of democracy) that will define us and determine our leadership quality. With that, I ask you to join my colleagues and me in promoting our fiscally responsible and socially progressive [democratic] agenda.



## Senator Sarbanes speaks out

*[Sarbanes, from pg. 1]* often think about – the minimum wage. We haven't raised the minimum wage in seven or eight years now. It clearly needs to be raised. One of the arguments that are used against raising the minimum wage by our opposition is that it's only young people that get paid the minimum wage. First of all, that's not the case. There are a lot of single mothers and others that make minimum wage. But secondly, what does that mean? Why shouldn't young people get an increase in their minimum wage too? A lot of young people are working those jobs in order to put themselves through college, or to help out their family because of difficult circumstances. If they're doing a job and producing a result they ought to get paid a decent wage for it. Actually, sometimes the opponents come along and they want to give a sub-minimum wage to young people, which I find outrageous.

**D.M. – What advice do you have for young people that are interested in getting involved in politics?**

P.S. – There are lots of ways and opportunities for young people to get involved. In some respects our system is pretty open, both in the political process and the community as well. There are lots of activities one can volunteer on to try to help others. There are lots of ways to be a responsible citizen in your community. I think as people move along in their educational process they have to have this dimension of trying to render some public service. You need to understand that the health of the community in which you live, and the nation of which we're a part of, are relevant to your own quality of life. We can't separate those things. Maybe you could get away with it for a short period, but if the community in which you live is not healthy, then it's going to effect your quality of life – probably sooner rather than later. We need the constant infusion of young people to keep our society vibrant and energetic and healthy. You don't get a democratic society going like a perpetual motion machine where it just goes on it's own accord after you start it. It can start not functioning very well. So we need each incoming generation to help give it a boost and re-invigorate the workings of our democracy. That's why the Young Democrats are so important, why they make such a great contribution.

**D.M. – There will be a lot of young people that don't make it out to vote. A lot of people say it's because they don't think their vote counts. I, on the other hand, think they're just turned off by the whole process of the electoral system. They're tired of the bickering back and forth, which has taken the place of thoughtful, intelligent debate. What can we do to change that?**

P.S. – First of all, I was a very strong proponent of lowering the voting age from 21 to 18, which we did of course. I was a very strong supporter of that move. And I have to be quite candid with you – I've been disappointed with *[See Sarbanes, pg. 4]*

## The environment matters

By KATE SKILTON

In the election of 2000, one in ten voters said their primary issue was the environment. In some states, the number of environment-first voters exceeded the margin of victory.

Those concerned with our environment are concerned about polluted water in our lakes, rivers and streams; about vehicle emissions and clean air; and about the road dominance of SUVs. Current federal regulations allow SUVs to have far worse fuel economy than any other vehicle on the road. Larger SUVs don't have any fuel-economy standards because they're so big that they no longer qualify as a "light truck."

In a time when our dependence on foreign oil is being questioned and presidential candidates are discussing developing alternative fuel sources, now is the time to stress that the environment should be a priority for everyone. Some say it's about the economy, stupid. But we Democrats "...reject the false choice between a healthy economy and a healthy environment. We know instead that farming, fishing, tourism, and other industries require a healthy environment. We know new technologies that protect the environment can create new high-paying jobs. We know a cleaner environment means a stronger economy."





## Senator Sarbanes speaks out

[Sarbanes, from pg. 3] the level of participation on the part of young people. After all, they have the longest time ahead of us. The health and strength of our society, of our economy, or our educational system and so forth is extremely important to them. Obviously, every vote counts. The last election is a pretty dramatic demonstration of that. And, if people don't participate it's not as if decisions won't be made, they'll just be made by a more limited electorate, which most likely will not be as sensitive as it should be to the needs and the aspirations of the younger element in our population.

**D.M. – So what do we do?**

P.S. – Well, I don't know. That's a good question. I don't have an easy answer for you. I think young people interacting with one another have to say, "Look, the really cool thing to do is to vote." You need to understand that decisions get made which then have an impact on your life and on your future. It's imperative to turn out for the vote. I think, unfortunately, a tendency

***"If you were to ask me what the one thing the Bush administration stands for I would say it's giving the economic benefits to the very wealthy."***

has developed that says, "I'm a potential voter and I have to be 'turned-on' to voting," instead of starting from the premise, "I'm a voter and I have a responsibility to make this democratic system work."

**D.M. – I came away from the Democratic National Convention very excited. What did you take away from it?**

P.S. – I thought we had a terrific convention. There was a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm. There was strong party unity. We came together to recognize the importance of this election. We heard from a number of extremely good speakers, and I think we came out of Boston headed for the November 2<sup>nd</sup> election in a very constructive and positive way.

**D.M. – You've worked with Senator Kerry for a long time. What qualities does he possess that will make him a successful president?**

P.S. – Well, I've served with him for twenty years here in the Senate. I think he'll be a first rate president. I think he has a vision for the country, both here and abroad, which I think is right on course. I think the Bush administration has gotten us off track. I think Kerry has a lot of strength. He's smart. He understands the issues, many of which are very complex. I think he has a sense of building a united America, and in the course of doing that, having a society

where everyone has a role to play. A society in which opportunity is available and in which there's a certain degree of fairness and equity amongst the members of our society, so all the economic benefits aren't going to the people at the very top, which is sort of the cardinal principle of the Bush administration. If you were to ask me what is the one thing the Bush administration most stands for I would say it's giving the economic benefits to the very wealthy, the top of the income and wealth scale. That's the one thing you can be certain they will be pushing on any occasion.

Kerry has a sense that we're all in it together. We have to build the strength for everybody and we have to have some fairness and equity in the workings of our society. We have to keep open the windows of opportunity so people can advance themselves. I think he has the intelligence and strength to carry through on that vision. I think he has the ability to work well with congress. So I think a Kerry administration would get our country back on track and then we'd be able to move it forward in a very positive direction.

**D.M. – On the other side of the coin, though, you have the Republican National Convention. I know you work with Zell Miller. What did you think of Senator Miller's speech at the RNC?**

P.S. – Well, I didn't see or here it, but from the reports, I gather it was a very mean-spirited speech, and I regret that that should have been the case. But there's going to be a lot of that. You're seeing it already, a lot of meanness in the course of this campaign. People then say, because of that I'm sort of driven out of participating. It ought to have just the opposite effect. Because of it, they ought to re-assert their participation. There's mean, nasty stuff going on in the campaign, which I agree is deplorable. But the response should not be to say, "I'm not going to participate," the response is, "I'm going to get in there and fight and do something about this." The way to do something about it is to make sure the people that are practicing the meanness don't prevail in the election. If you take a walk on it, it's more likely they will prevail, not less likely.





# Kerry, Bush, and the looming energy crisis

By DAN MARTIN

Not all of the experts agree on an exact date, but they do agree on one thing – it will happen sooner, not later. Some say 2014. Some say 2008. Some say it has already started. What are they talking about? It's called Peak Oil and it's a term that has been getting a lot of attention recently.

So what is peak oil? It's the threat we face in the not-so distant future when the world's oil production (supply) reaches it's peak and begins to decline, even as the world's population (demand) continues to grow. It's a problem that will have huge impacts on the world economy and change the way we live our lives forever.

As of right now, there is no alternative to oil. We have a multi-trillion dollar infrastructure powered almost exclusively by fossil fuels. Cars, trucks, roads, boats, docks, airplanes, airports, hospitals, schools, farms, manufacturing plants, food processing centers, water treatment plants – all run on fossil fuels. All plastics, pesticides, and fertilizers are derived from fossil fuels. You can't just retrofit the entire economy, or even significant parts of it, to run on an entirely different source of fuel.

The situation is so dire, even George W. Bush's Energy Adviser, Matthew Simmons, has acknowledged, "The situation is desperate. This is the world's biggest serious question." In an August 2003 interview, Mr. Simmons was asked if it was time for Peak Oil to become part of the public policy debate. He responded:

"It is past time. As I have said, the experts and politicians have no Plan B to fall back on. If energy peaks, particularly while 5 of the world's 6.5 billion people have little or no use of modern energy, it will be a tremendous jolt to our economic well-being and to our health – greater that anyone could ever imagine."

So, this being an election year, Peak Oil should be a huge topic of conversation, right? Don't bet on it. The idea of a life-altering epidemic is a little too much for the average voter to fathom. But if you take a good look at the energy policies of the two major-party candidates for president, you can see who better understands the implications of the Peak Oil crisis.

John Kerry's energy platform promises an investment in new technologies and alternative fuels, tax incentives that help automakers produce more fuel-efficient cars, and rewards for consumers who buy them. John Kerry realizes that tomorrow's energy economy will be fueled by new energy sources. The Kerry-Edwards plan will invest in the research and exploration needed to turn ideas into fuel and develop renewable energy sources.

So while he may not mention Peak Oil specifically, John Kerry's energy plan will set in motion the all-important task of eliminating our dependence on oil and, as a bonus, create jobs at the same time. The same cannot be said, however, for George W. Bush.

At a time when the nations priorities are to improve gas mileage and reduce dependence on oil, the current administration has instead provided an incentive for just the opposite – the biggest, least efficient SUVs available. That's right SUV lovers, George W. Bush will reward you more that \$35,000 in tax deductions for the purchase of an SUV weighing 6,000 pounds or more.

Just to be fair though, the President has taken steps to delay this problem. Bush has filled the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to its capacity of 700 million barrels to provide energy security in a case of major supply disruptions. Let's think about this shall we. The United States uses about 19 million barrels of oil a day. So when the oil does run out, Bush will have stockpiled enough to power the country for a little over a month. I feel secure.

There is no getting around it. The Peak Oil crisis is upon us and the upcoming elections will decide how we choose to deal with this threat. We have one candidate with a vision for tomorrow and a plan to combat the problems we will face, and one candidate that supports quick fixes and has no regard for our future or the future of our children. Come November 2, the decision is yours.

*For more info on Peak Oil you can visit the ASPO website at [www.peakoil.net](http://www.peakoil.net)*





**Baltimore County  
Young Democrats**

*Young enough to be young  
Republicans, but old enough to  
know better.*



**[www.bcyd.org](http://www.bcyd.org)**

**To Our Readers:** The County Ass welcomes letters from readers. All letters become the property of The County Ass, which reserves the right to edit them. Letters should include your name and address, along with day and evening telephone numbers. E-mail letters to: [communications@bcyd.org](mailto:communications@bcyd.org).

## **Calendar of Events**

### **Baltimore County Young Democrats General Meeting**

Wednesday September 15th at 7:00 pm

Carver Community Center in Towson

300 Lennox Ave.

For more info contact Jayson Williams at [president@bcyd.org](mailto:president@bcyd.org)

### **BCYD Happy Hour with County Executive Jim Smith**

Thursday September 16th at 7:00 pm

The Crease in Towson

For more info contact Jayson Williams at [president@bcyd.org](mailto:president@bcyd.org)

### **First Annual JHU College Democrats Kickoff BBQ**

Thursday September 30th 5:00-7:30 pm

Homewood Campus of Johns Hopkins University

For more info contact Aaron Glaser at [MrMet2000t@aol.com](mailto:MrMet2000t@aol.com)