

True Blue

The Adams County Democrat
October 2017

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

The Democratic Club of Adams County is pleased to announce that our club publication, True Blue, has been rekindled. We have been on hiatus since the 2016 election; but, with a new editorial board, we plan to bring you periodic issues in the future.

Many may wonder if such a publication is necessary and what are our objectives. True Blue will be a source of political news, facts, and commentary on the American political scene. We want our readers to know what's happening in Adams County, the rest of Ohio, and the nation. We intend to keep readers abreast of the election cycles, candidates, and changes in the political process. This part of True Blue will contain necessary facts for the voter.

Another part of our publication will contain articles that present viewpoints and commentaries on important issues facing American citizens. Articles may be on domestic or foreign affairs and might include issues such as immigration, tax reform, the North Korean enigma, and climate change. These articles would be designed to educate and to stimulate discussion on key issues. They would represent the viewpoint of a particular author.

We hope that our publication will keep readers aware of important political events and will entice them to become involved

in our democracy. We believe that American democracy cannot survive without our citizens knowing the issues and participating in the political process. ❖

Important Dates Related to Voting in November 2017 Election

October 11 – Early Voting Begins

November 7 – Election Day

For more detailed information, call the Adams County Board of Elections at (937) 544-2633 and/or visit their website at <https://www.electionsonthe.net/oh/adams/>

FACING THE FUTURE WITH HOPE

In the late nineties the then (Republican) Mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani, claimed credit for the fact that violent crime in the City had significantly declined. He boasted that it was his controversial policing techniques – including “stop-and-frisk” – that were responsible. New Yorkers, who were alert to his disregard of unreasonable search and seizure practices, and who knew his program could be viewed as an example of racial profiling, were

skeptical. Their skepticism was validated when it became known that violent crime was going down in cities across the country: something much larger and more significant was going on.

After years of study, the scientific community concluded that decreasing violent crime rates were the result of the invention of the catalytic converter and its use becoming the law of the land. Specifically, when heavy metals in the atmosphere

Facing the Future with Hope...con't

from the exhaust of motor vehicles, and especially concentrated in crowded city conditions – were measurably reduced, babies raised in cleaner air had less damage to the frontal lobe of their brains. Approximately 20 years later, those babies, grown to adulthood, had better overall impulse control.

The frontal lobe is the part of the brain that makes us uniquely human. It is the brain that we do not share with animals. It is the seat of reasoning, problem solving, decision-making, insight, initiative, concentration and impulse control. Without it, we are simply mammals, and like animals (even our beloved pets) we would operate more out of “pack mentality”: we would become territorial rather than cooperative and let fight-or-flight impulses do our thinking for us.

This article is not written to highlight the dangers of the Trump efforts to gut the EPA and environmental protections. It is written to encourage the Adams County Community to have hope. Many (most) of the high rates of devastating problems we face in Adams (such as high suicide rates, violence, neurological damage, drug abuse, death by cancer, death by lung disease, teen pregnancies, infant mortality) are linked to lead poisoning. Our overall low life expectancy rate (we rank 87th of 88 counties in Ohio) is the most graphic example of our current, perpetual, crisis. But when our two coal-burning power plants close, job loss and reductions in revenue will create a new level of crisis and may be likened to the crisis of a fever that increases just before it breaks, and the body starts to recover.

It is critical in this time to come together and develop a common vision as we move into the future. There are grant monies available for communities that have been handicapped by heavy metal poisoning. And there are monies available to promote economic diversification that will allow increased financial viability in communities that have been over-dependent on revenues from fundamentally predatory businesses.

We might begin by networking with our Republican friends and neighbors to lobby the state in clearly classifying the toxic wastes piled along the river. Consulting with the Ohio EPA made clear to me that decisions about what constitutes toxicity lies in the hands of legislators – not the scientists who say there is NO level of lead exposure that is “safe”. If these wastes are labeled “toxic” we are eligible for funding to do something about them. And possibly for money from the companies who leave them here. But if they are labeled “municipal”, we are on our own.

There has never been a time it was more important for us to join together, to honor each other’s thoughts and talents and, together, develop a common vision to face the future.

It is written: “Without a vision, the people perish.”(Proverbs)

(Begin a search to verify claims written above by googling “University- Cincinnati-studies-lead poisoning-criminal behavior- impulse control-suicidality-violence”. Google same for Xavier U. Stats can be found by county at official Ohio demographics and statistics websites.) ❖

NOVEMBER 6, 2018

is the date when...

33 Senate Seats

435 Seats in the House of Representatives and...

14 Governorships

will be up for re-election! Prepare for this!!

HIV/AIDS RISK REDUCTION

As the opioid and Hepatitis-C epidemics are making their way into the general population, so are HIV and AIDS. Unlike Hepatitis-C, HIV is also a sexually transmitted disease and can spread more quickly through a community than Hepatitis. Current strains of HIV are converting into full-blown AIDS in <2 - 2 years instead of the 10+ years of the 1980s. The CDC estimates that from 1 in 4 to 1 in 7 people who have HIV, do not know it. Ohio has received \$8 million+ from the CDC to reduce the number of people becoming infected, spreading the disease and dying of AIDS. This money is spent on a program that provides free and confidential testing and treatment. It operates, on a regular basis, through local Health Departments.

This Program does not do outreach or advertise. It is left to the County to raise consciousness

and inform the community of the dangers of HIV and AIDS - and to encourage participation in the free and confidential testing and treatment that are available. It is also left to the County to alert facilities handling bodily fluids, such as hospitals, dental offices and nursing homes, to be diligent in training and supervising staff in the use of universal precautions and the proper use of sterilization equipment and procedures. With treatment, people with HIV can live full life-spans. They can learn how to take precautions so as not to spread the disease. Today, babies born to mothers with HIV do not need to be born with HIV themselves. This service can be accessed by calling the Adams County Health Department (937-544-5547) <https://adamscountyoh.gov/Board-of-Health.asp>. It is free of charge and confidential. ❖

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Folks may wonder why you should support the Democratic Party in a county where registered Republicans outnumber registered Democrats by a little more than 3 to 1. While those numbers make it difficult to elect Democrats, it is doable.

The 3-1 margin doesn't include those registered voters who do not have a Party affiliation. Consequently, when qualified local Democrats step forward, they can be elected.

Local Democratic officials have a proven track record of service. They have governed responsibly and responsively to bring a healthy balance to local government. What the Adams County Democratic Party is trying to do is to elect more Democrats in Adams County.

Now that you've heard the "why," the "how" and the "what," we need your help to make a difference in Adams County.

How can your help? You can begin by buying tickets and attending the Party's annual Ham & Bean Dinner fund-raiser scheduled for Friday, October 20. Aftab Pureval, Clerk of

Courts for Hamilton County, will be our keynote speaker. Contact a member of the Democratic Central Committee to purchase tickets, which are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 12 years old and younger. Visit <https://www.adamscountydems.com> for a listing of Committee members and contact info. Or, contact Linda Stepp at lindajstepp@gmail.com to pre-purchase tickets, which will then be waiting for you at the door. ❖



OHIO DEMOCRATIC STATE-WIDE CANDIDATE DEBATES AND FORUMS

On September 12, the Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) and the Democratic County Chairs Association held the first of a series of planned debates and forums with declared Democratic candidates for state-wide offices. As this series was introduced, ODP Chairman David Pepper stated, “The current formula (in Columbus) is not working for eastern Ohio. By any measure, the state is failing the people of this area, and eastern Ohioans know it. We want to focus on a new direction.”

The first event, held in Martins Ferry, featured declared candidates for governor. Questions focused on the following issues: jobs, the economy, and the opioid crisis. A pod-cast of this debate has been posted for review in our Adams County Democrats Facebook group. It also can be accessed on-line at <https://ohiodems.org/live>.

Declared gubernatorial candidates (to date) are pictured to the right.

As more information about subsequent debates and forums becomes available, it will be shared via emails from Linda Stepp, Adams County Democratic Chairperson. Efforts also will be made to post links to pod-casts of these events in our Adams County Democrats Facebook group. And, you can text DEBATE to 90975 for updates regarding scheduling of upcoming debates and/or forums. ❖



Left to Right: Connie Pillich, Joe Schiavoni, Nan Whalen, and Betty Sutton. (Photo furnished by ODP.)

TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

Why should Adams County voters care about who is elected to serve as a township trustee or fiscal officer? One reason is that these individuals work with budgets that range from \$250,000 to nearly \$1,500,000. Some of this money comes from local property tax dollars – with the number of “mills” approved by voters within each township. Other sources include “local government money,” which is sent back from Columbus; restricted funds approved by voters for roads or cemeteries; a small percentage of state gasoline and motor vehicle taxes, as well as permissive motor vehicle monies, which must be used for roads or bridges; and money that has been acquired in the form of grants.

Township trustees are elected to a 4 year term of office. Their individual salaries are based upon the size of the budget for the township in which they serve. In Adams County this means that compensation for trustees elected in 2018 will range

from \$9,360 to \$11,342 per year. Health insurance and contributions to the Ohio Public Employees’ Retirement System are additional benefits.

What are the elected officials specific duties? Many voters can tell you that township trustees are “in charge of roads and cemeteries,” but most don’t think about what that means. In layman terms it includes responding when a school bus driver calls to say that a limb is hanging over a township road and obscuring visibility or perhaps, putting down some gravel, when a postal delivery person reports that there’s a mud hole located in front of a mailbox on a township road.

Using information gleaned from the Ohio Revised Code it would seem that taking care of cemeteries is the easiest to explain more completely – although it is important to note that not all townships have cemeteries. Basically, trustees are responsible for mowing public cemeteries within the township;

Township Officials...con't

setting rates for lots; marking the cemetery's boundaries; and, when necessary, providing for the burial expenses of indigent persons, who were residents of the township.

Road maintenance tends to be a bit more complicated. It involves constructing, reconstructing, resurfacing, and/or improving public roads within the township. It also includes keeping township roads clear of snow and storm debris. Other road-related responsibilities might involve erecting markers for houses and/or roads; resolving issues concerning public safety connected with the use or maintenance of private land; and, when necessary for the overall public good, establishing eminent domain over parcels of private property. Township officials are not responsible for county roads.

Less often discussed responsibilities include dealing with complaints of adjoining landowners, mostly concerning maintaining fence rows; establishing and enforcing noise and dumping ordinances within a township; adopting ordinances to regulate the location, size, and use of buildings within the township; and making decisions concerning outdoor advertising.

All of these responsibilities tie into the use of money. Budgets that township trustees establish allow them to enter into contracts for the expenditure of public funds. Sometimes this involves advertising and competitive public bidding. However, in case of an emergency or when expenditures are for less than \$50,000 for materials, supplies, or services, the three trustees can make a unanimous decision

without accepting bids.

Township fiscal officers are responsible for maintaining accurate records of the proceedings of all meetings of township trustees and of financial transactions. In fact, according to Ohio Revised Code, "No money belonging to the township shall be paid out, except upon an order signed by at least two of the township trustees and countersigned by the township fiscal officer."

This year Adams County voters will be electing two trustees in each township to a four-year term. Mostly due to Ohio's election cycle, there are no township fiscal officers up for election or re-election. However, if there were, they would also be elected to four-year terms of office.

The average resident/tax-payer of a township can stay informed concerning decisions made by their township officials by speaking with a trustee (contact phone numbers are listed on the Board of Elections web site) or by attending meetings in person. The following year's regular meeting dates are usually publicized in mid to late December. Notification concerning a meeting to finalize the preliminary budget typically occurs in mid to late June.

Many individuals elected to serve as a trustee or fiscal officer only work "part-time." However, according to the Ohio Township Newsletter, "township officials offer more personal service than any other unit of government." Township officials are also in an excellent position to gain experience that may help them become elected to a county or statewide office. ❖

TRUMP'S CUTS TO FOREIGN AID WOULD ERASE AMERICA'S LEGACY

President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and other Democratic and Republican leaders have said that American security depends on the "three-legged stool" of diplomacy, development, and defense.



And just as any stool is balanced, having a strategic balance between our dependence on diplomatic relations, foreign aid support for critical countries, and deploying our strong military defense when

necessary, is what maintains our country's safety, security, and position as a world leader.

Sadly, President Trump's initial budget request proposed slashing the budgets of the State Department and USAID

by more than one-third, a short-sided approach.

Our investment in foreign aid is less than one percent of our federal budget, but it's a key aspect of our leadership and influence around the world.

Trump's Cuts to Foreign Aid would Erase America's Legacy...con't

Reducing our commitment to these critical programs will reduce our impact in these far-flung parts of the world in danger of famine and other plagues.

Extreme poverty is a root cause of instability and can create a breeding ground for extremism. The U.S. development aid programs, including USAID, help ensure that millions of people around the world have food, life-saving medicines and clean water – the basics we take for granted living in this country.

Even U.S. military leaders have decried Trump's misguided budget cuts because it undermines America's influence – our greatest defense against extremism. Earlier this year, 16 top retired generals and flag officers submitted testimony in support of the U.S. development budget.

“American security is undermined by frail

and failing nations where hope is non-existent, and where conditions foster radicalism, produce refugees, spark insurgency, and provide safe havens for terrorists, criminal gangs, and human traffickers,” the generals wrote. “In this light, it is clear to us that strategic development assistance is not charity — it is an essential, modern tool of U.S. national security.”

Democratic, Republican and non-partisan leaders agree that Trump's development budget is short-sided and plots a perilous path for the future of America's role as a world leader. The Senate has a chance to fully fund the foreign aid budget when they return from August recess. I'm confident our Democratic U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown will continue to be a leader in the Senate on this issue and help maintain our country's position as a global power. ❖

WHAT IS AN ELECTRONIC POLL BOOK AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Beginning this election cycle, Poll Books will no longer be a part of the voting process in Adams County. When you arrive at the precinct to vote, you will begin by swiping your driver's license. An I-pad with an off-line, downloaded list of voters will then determine if you are registered and if you are in the correct polling place. If so, you will sign the I-pad and then you will vote.

If you arrive to vote without a driver's license, another form of ID can be used. Poll workers will enter the first three letters of your last name into the electronic system. If you are registered to vote, your name will be in the system. If you are at the right precinct, you will be permitted to vote. If you are at the wrong precinct, the poll worker will give you a slip of paper that will guide you to the correct voting precinct.

Remember, though, that you will need to show some sort of ID in order to vote. If you have questions, you can go online to <https://www.sos.state.oh.us/elections/voters/id-requirements/> or call the Adams County Board of Elections (544-2633) before Election Day. If your registration status is unclear on Election Day, a poll worker can still issue a provisional ballot.

These changes have been made for several reasons. An Electronic Poll Book is designed to (1)

make it easier for voters to be sure they're voting in the correct precinct (polling place); (2) require poll workers to make fewer decisions on who is eligible to vote and where they should vote; and (3) lead to the casting of fewer provisional ballots.

Adams County tax payers might also be pleased to learn that the state of Ohio paid for 85% of the cost of the new I-pads that will be used on Election Day ❖.

“98% of the adults in this country are decent, hard working, honest Americans. It's the lousy 2% that get all the publicity. But then we elected them.”

-Lily Tomlin

