

# Community Matters

*A Voice of, by, and for the People of Delaware, Ohio*

**June 2017**  
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**Send info, articles, or comments to**  
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## LOCAL EVENTS

### **First Friday: Artful Spaces (6/2) – \$**

Visitors are invited to participate in the "Artful Spaces in Downtown Places" event on First Friday on Fri., June 2 (6-9 pm). First Friday remains free & open to the public, but the self-guided tours of various finished and unfinished spaces that are normally closed to the public is a ticketed event. This year the list includes OWU's Slocum Hall and Ross Art Museum. Tickets are \$10 at the Greater Gouda (12 N. Sandusky St.) and after 5 pm on the day of the event at the Main Street Delaware office at 20 E. Winter St. Children 12 and under are free. In addition to the tour, there will be extended dining and shopping hours as well as free entertainment & children's activities.

### **Fundamentals Welcomes Courtney Rene (6/2)**

In conjunction with First Friday, Writer Courtney Rene will visit Fundamentals at 25 W. Winter St. on Fri., June 2 (6:30-7:30 pm). Rene is the author of "Before the Dawn," "The Full Moon Rises," "Howl in the Night," and the "Shadow Dancer" series. Paranormal is the Ohio author's primary genre. For more info, visit her website, [www.courtneyrene.com](http://www.courtneyrene.com).

### **Master Gardeners at Gallant Farm (6/3)**

The Delaware County Master Gardeners are joining Preservation Parks for an event at Gallant Farm on Sat., June 3. You may learn about growing vegetables, herbs, berries, container gardening, bee keeping, seed saving, rain barrels, composting, and more from local experts. Informal MG talks will run continuously from 10 am to 1 pm. Gallant Farm is located at 2150 Buttermilk Hill Rd. just north of Delaware. – It is not yet too late to start a summer or container garden. Give gardening a chance! The kids will have fun and learn from it.

### **Sun & Moon Poetry Festival (6/3)**

There is some confusion about the venues and times of the all-day Sun & Moon Poetry Festival to be held on Sat., June 3. However, this is what we have been able to ascertain. The event consists of three parts: 1. "Space Junk: An Eco-Poetry Workshop" will be held from 10 am to 12 pm at the Public Library (84 E. Winter St.). The workshop is free & open to the public. 2. "Poetry at Stratford" will

be held from 2-6 pm at the Stratford Ecological Center (3083 Liberty Rd.). The event includes a nature hike. Tickets are \$5 per person or \$10 per family. 3. "Poetry at Perkins Observatory" will be held from 8-10 pm at Perkins Observatory (3199 Columbus Pike = US 23 S). Tickets are \$10 each.



### **Poetry at Perkins Observatory (6/3) – \$**

The 4<sup>th</sup> annual "Poetry at Perkins Observatory" will be held Sat., June 3, 8-10 pm. Eight poets will read work related to the night sky and the cosmos, followed by sky-watching activities (weather permitting). This year's festival is co-sponsored by the Full Crescent Press & the Ohio Poetry Association and features the following 8 Central Ohio authors: Dave Noble (host), Charlene Fix, Geoff Anderson, Louise Robertson, Mark Jordan, Izetta Thomas, Herbert Woodward Martin, Pat Hurley, and Amit Majmudar. In case of rain or clouds, guests will enjoy a guided tour of the observatory. Tickets for this fundraising event are \$10, available by calling 740-363-1257. OWU's Perkins Observatory is located at 3199 Columbus Pike (US 23 S). The entrance is just south of MTSO.

### **Ikea Opens (6/7)**

The Swedish home retailer will open its new store in the Polaris area on Wed., June 7. The store expects between 10,000 and 15,000 shoppers each day during opening week. Police are warning that Interstate 71 ramps at Polaris and Gemini Place will likely have to be closed to avoid long lines and high-speed crashes on the highway. It is also probable that Ikea's 1,200-space parking lot will fill up quickly. In that case, visitors will have to park in supplemental parking lots with shuttle service. Existing businesses in the Polaris area are worried about a general paralysis and slowdown during Ikea's opening week. – Our advice is to stay away from Ikea and Polaris during the week of June 5 and to check out the new store at a later point.

### **Sustainable Delaware Ohio (6/10)**

Sustainable Delaware Ohio (SDO) meets on the second Saturday of each month at the Public Library (84 E. Winter St.) from 9:30 to 11 am in the Community Room. Its mission is to promote economic, social, and environmental sustainability in the city and county of Delaware through awareness, advocacy, and action. The meetings are open to the public.

### **NOW Watershed Festival (6/10)**

The fourth annual Northern Olentangy Watershed (NOW) Festival will be held Sat., June 10 (12-3 pm) at Mingo Park, 500 E. Lincoln Ave., right next to the Olentangy River. This is the first festival organized by Delaware's new Watershed / Sustainability Coordinator Collin Smith. As always, there will be booths by non-profits and for-profits, food trucks, entertainment, and children's activities. The event is free & open to the public.



### **Blues & BBQ Benefit for Andrews House (6/10) – \$**

The Andrews House is holding its annual Blues & BBQ Festival on Sat., June 10, at the Delaware County Fairgrounds (Junior Fair Building, 236 Pennsylvania Ave.). The event starts at 5:30 pm. There will be live music featuring the Nicely Brothers, the Crazy Gringos, and others. The emcee is Steven Kline. Tickets are \$25 (music only) or \$35 (dinner & music). Only non-alcoholic drinks are available, but the poster says, "feel free to bring your favorite adult beverage." For more info on the Andrews House, the beneficiary of the evening, visit [www.andrewshouse.org](http://www.andrewshouse.org).

### **"A Taste of Downtown Delaware" (6/14) – \$**

The Second Annual "A Taste of Downtown Delaware" will be held Wed., June 14 (5-8:30 pm). There are 17 participating restaurants this year. Presale tickets are \$30 at the Chamber of Commerce (32 S. Sandusky St.) or from any Rotary Club member; tickets on the day of the event are \$35.

### **Movies at Mingo (6/16, etc.)**

Thanks to the YMCA, your favorite family event is returning to Mingo Park this summer! Come enjoy the outdoors and watch a free kids movie with your loved ones. Films are shown near the playground, weather permitting. Activities start at 7:45 pm, movies at 8:15 pm. Feel free to bring folding chairs, blankets, snacks, drinks, etc. Alcohol is not permitted in the park. Here is the schedule: Fri., June 16 – "Sing"; Fri., July 21 – "Moana"; and Fri., Aug. 11 – "Finding Dory."

### **St. Mary Festival (6/16-17)**

The 2017 St. Mary Parish Festival takes place Fri. – Sat., June 16-17 (5 pm – midnight), at St. Mary Catholic Church at 82 E. William St. The family-friendly event features two entertainment stages with half a dozen live bands, rides, inflatables, Kiddie Land, midway games, raffle prizes, a silent auction, church tours, a bake sale, food trucks, a photo booth, a beer garden, and more. The festival is free & open to the public, but the food and the rides do require money. Wristbands for unlimited rides & inflatables are \$20 (good for one day only); individual rides are \$1 each. For details & schedules, visit [www.stmaryfestival.com](http://www.stmaryfestival.com).

### **"Medieval Faire" in Ostrander (6/17)**

The Delaware County District Library (DCDL) is hosting the annual Medieval Faire on Sat., June 17 (12-3 pm), at the Ostrander Branch. Nicole Fowles from the DCDL writes that the event has grown quite a bit, so you may want to check it out: "Featuring the Knights of the Rose jousting group, archery and javelin throwing demonstrations, and a marketplace with trades like blacksmiths, potters, soap makers, spinners, and food, it is a perfect event for the whole family."

### **Summer Begins (6/21)**

Summer officially begins Wed., June 21, at 12:24 am. On that day, the sun will rise at 6:03 am and set at 9:04 pm. After June 21, the days are getting shorter again.

### **Dedication of Water Plant Education Center (6/24)**

Sat., June 24 (10 am – noon), is the day for the official dedication of the Education Center of the the Water Treatment Plant at 3080 US 23 N, adjacent to Riverview Park. The public is invited to tour the new center, which describes how Delaware produces and distributes its drinking water.

### **Central Ohio Symphony (6/24)**

As part of the Summer Solstice Festival concert series (June 18-24), the Symphony will perform on Sat., June 24, at 6 pm at Austin Manor at the corner of W. Central Ave. and Elizabeth St. in Delaware's Northwest Neighborhood. – During the festival, small music ensembles will give free concerts in several locations around the city and county of Delaware. The Symphony's motto is "Engaging the community through music," and the idea is to reach people where they live and work. However, no other specific information was available at press deadline. Visit [www.centralohiosymphony.org](http://www.centralohiosymphony.org) for the complete schedule.

### **"Green Drinks" Delaware Meets (6/28)**

Green Drinks is a national and international organization that organizes informal get-togethers to discuss issues related to sustainability and environmentalism. The local group, founded by David Soliday and sponsored by Sustainable Delaware, meets at 7 pm on the last Wed. of every month at the Old Bag of Nails at 66 N. Sandusky St. Topics vary and have included solar panels, recycling, building community, green businesses, bicycling & bike paths, and so on. To learn more about Green Drinks, visit [www.greendrinks.org](http://www.greendrinks.org).

### **Main Street Delaware Awards Ceremony (6/29)**

Main Street Delaware has announced that it will hold its annual awards ceremony on Thurs., June 29, at OWU's Ross Art

Museum (60 S. Sandusky St.). At the City Council meeting on May 22, Executive Director Susie Bibler announced that the City of Delaware will be the recipient of one of the awards for improving the downtown ambience through flower pots, hanging baskets, and tree lights.

## **CITY OF DELAWARE**

### **2017 Summer Meal Program at SWCI**

Since Woodward Elementary is still under construction, its summer-meal program has been moved to the Second Ward Community Initiative (SWCI) facility at 50-A Ross St. The program is open to all children between the ages 1 and 18. It begins Tues., May 30, and ends Fri., Aug. 11. (School starts up again Wed., Aug. 16.) Free lunches will be served from 12-1 pm.

### **Free Kids Movies at the Strand**

Once again, a series of eight kids movies will be shown at the Strand Theatre (28 E. Winter St.) this summer: "The Wizard of Oz" (June 6), "Angry Birds" (June 13), "Trolls" (June 20), "Sing" (June 27), "The Secret Life of Pets" (July 11), "Lego Movie" (July 18), "Storks" (July 25), and "Babe" (Aug. 1). The films are screened every Tues. at 11 am and 2:30 pm. There are free to all with a suggested donation to a local charity. For details, see the website of the Delaware City Schools (under "Community Opportunities").

### **The City of Delaware in June**

City Council meets Mon., June 12 and 26. The Planning Commission will meet Wed., June 7, the Board of Zoning Appeals on Wed., Jun. 14. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board has its monthly meeting on Tues., June 20, the Shade Tree Commission on Tues., June 27. Lastly, the Historic Preservation Commission gathers on Wed., June 28. The Civil Service Commission meeting scheduled for June 7 has been canceled. All meetings are held at 7 pm in City Hall (1 S. Sandusky St.) unless otherwise noted. Several meetings were canceled in May, so it's a good idea to check the City's website ([www.delawareohio.net](http://www.delawareohio.net)) before your visit. Meetings are streamed live and can be viewed in real time or at a later point.

### **Jim Browning Replaces Joe DiGenova**

Delaware has a new City Council member, Jim Browning. He was elected at a special meeting of City Council May 15 and was sworn in May 22 City Council meeting. He replaces Joe DiGenova. Browning will serve as an appointed member of City Council until Nov. 7. If elected by the voters in Nov., he would serve until the expiration of his term in Nov. 2019. Browning was selected from a field of six candidates. If his name sounds familiar, it is because he served as co-chair for the "Moving Delaware Forward" road levy PAC last year. His appointment will be viewed by many as a reward for having served in that capacity. It is also noteworthy that he did not present any supporting petitions, unlike four other candidates. And although he stumbled on a couple of questions during the interview, it didn't hurt his chances as a pedigreed insider. There is something to be said for continuity and predictability. In that sense, Browning's appointment is "a solid choice" and "a good fit" for City Council. However, there is also something to be said for a new perspective and a fresh start to overcome some of the distrust and resentment that is out there. Also, the current make-up of City Council is not representative of Delaware's population as a whole. In that sense, Browning's appointment is a missed opportunity. After the failed road levy, perhaps there should have been focus groups, retreats, and independent assessments, but Council seems to have seen limited value in and need for introspection and soul-searching.

### **The Oath of Office**

According to Delaware's City Charter (Section 23), the Oath of Office reads as follows: "I solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the constitution of the United States and of the State of Ohio, and that I will in all respects obey and comply with the provisions of the Charter and ordinances of the City of Delaware, and will faithfully discharge the duties of my office or employment." – Some faiths prohibit the swearing of an oath (e.g., the Quakers), so politicians are given the choice between swearing or affirming. It was disappointing to see that Jim Browning seems to have given little thought to the meaning of the oath of office. He repeated "I

swear or affirm" instead of choosing one word or the other. Perhaps he should have received better instructions? We gather from this little incident that Browning is a loyal and obedient follower who will faithfully execute whatever orders he receives.

### **The Building Industry Association (BIA) and the City**

The Building Industry Association (BIA) of Central Ohio is an industry-advocacy and lobbying group. As the City of Delaware and Delaware County are growing rapidly, with lots of new development areas in the pipeline, the BIA is paying more attention to Delaware. The trade association has started to make requests and demands that would effectively deregulate existing protocols and rules. This could well be another example of the "Trump effect." The BIA started its initiative complaining about the supposedly "expensive and onerous" tree-replacement rules that are in place. Since then, City staff and the BIA have had "a series of meetings and discussions concerning (...) proposed revisions" that seek so-called "improvements" to make the development process more "user-friendly." According to a Planning Commission Staff Report dated May 3, the BIA even went so far as to suggest the elimination of City Council for public-improvement projects to minimize delays. Obviously, this would be a highly irregular step. The document does not state how the Planning Department responded to the string of requests. However, both the Planning Commission and City Council were "amenable" to removing the language from the existing ordinance that stipulates that the replacement fee for major trees be no less than \$100 per caliper inch. In an email dated May 22 Councilwoman Lisa Keller explained the situation as follows: "I discovered the BIA was making requests regarding our city's processes. The planning department remained in staunch opposition to any change that took direction away from the city council. The BIA was instructed that procedural changes to assist with some paperwork and process concerns (to help bring clarity to the process) could be discussed BUT policy changes needed to be requested of council in public meetings and open to public input and participation. Through my participation in these meetings, I can assure [the public] our planning department exhibited the highest degree of professionalism and accountability both in the way they conducted themselves and how they handled the requests of the BIA." We hope that Lisa Keller is right and that there are robust checks and balances in place. Public confidence in the integrity of government is imperative. "Community Matters" would welcome a full report and explanation of the extent of the "requests" that the BIA has made behind closed doors as well as the City's response.

### **An Entertainment District for Delaware?**

Delaware might soon have a community entertainment district (CED) where open containers are permitted. The topic was discussed at the May 22 meeting of City Council. Inspired by southern cities such as Memphis and New Orleans, Ohio legislators enacted a law in 2015 that allows municipalities to establish permanent outdoor refreshment or entertainment areas that are exempt from the state's prohibition against consuming alcohol in public spaces. Cities with populations of more than 50,000 could create up to two such districts, cities with populations of more than 35,000 (such as Delaware) are limited to one. Supporters say the law is about economic development, revitalization efforts, and attracting younger people. Opponents fear disorderly conduct and mayhem, but police patrols should be able to handle any problems. Toledo was one of the first Ohio cities to jump on the opportunity when it created a half-square mile entertainment district in the downtown area. Their legislation could serve as a template for Delaware: Outdoor drinking is limited to certain hours, with the hours extended on weekends, holidays, and special events. Customers cannot bring their own drinks; they must buy from local taverns. Middletown has created a similar district. The City of Dublin has also prepared an informative 21-page study of CEDs. Columbus and Cincinnati are reportedly intrigued by the idea as well.

### **City Council Discusses Medical Marijuana**

In a first, City Council started to preliminarily discuss the issue of medical marijuana at its May 8 meeting. The City has fielded a number of inquiries from entrepreneurs about growing and dispensing medical marijuana, which is now legal under Ohio law provided strict conditions are met. However, current city ordinances prohibit any and all "agricultural" activities within the municipal limits. (This includes not only animal husbandry, but technically even vegetable and community

gardens.) Clearly, the cultivation of medical marijuana is an opportunity for economic development with the potential to create new jobs and tax revenue, something that City Council likes to see. Councilwoman Lisa Keller also noted that marijuana has been proven to provide relief to "people who suffer" from certain medical conditions. Perhaps even the late councilmember Joe DiGenova, a Vietnam veteran, would agree. Although no formal vote was taken, individual members of City Council authorized City lawyer Darren Shulman and Planning Director David Efland to pursue the issue, conduct research, and report back to City Council.

### **Why Levies Fail**

A number of years ago, "Community Matters" reviewed the reasons why the 2014 Columbus Zoo 1.25-mill property-tax levy failed by a landslide (70%). The details cannot be listed here; they alone would fill a whole page. However, it might be interesting to look at some of the conclusions we drew at that time: 1. Voter buy-in is imperative. If voters do not see clear benefits for themselves, their families, and their community, they will not support a levy. 2. Related to that is the principle of minimizing harm to property and safety, health and the environment. Controversial aspects of a project should be taken off the table, not rammed through, to ensure a project's overall success. 3. Effective communication is likewise of paramount importance. Without a clear and convincing vision & mission statement and well-defined objectives the need for a levy sounds less convincing. 4. Trust and transparency are likewise indispensable. Distrustful and resentful residents will not cooperate with authorities. Instead, they will look for excuses to defeat the levy. Confident voters will support even a permanent levy; an unsure voter will not. 5. Trust is the result of, among other things, excellent financial stewardship. The handling of taxpayer money is an almost sacred act that demands great sensitivity. Any perception of wastefulness, whether real or imagined, will backfire. There are many other lessons to be learned from the failed zoo levy. But these five reasons alone may help understand why in 2016 the "Moving Delaware Forward" levy failed and why – we hope – the 2017 Preservation Parks levy will succeed.

### **Delaware City Schools Face Deficit**

The State of Ohio has long neglected and underfunded its public K-12 schools, despite the fact that its constitution demands a "thorough and efficient" school system. Delaware City Schools is no exception. Even though the local district is growing and has added 240 students over the last two years, it has received no additional funding. If nothing changes, it faces an \$18 million deficit within 3 years, according to Superintendent Paul Craft. – What are the options? 1. Austerity measures: Dave Yost, auditor of state, has suggested "eliminating the equivalent of 15 full-time positions including library staff, remedial specialists, counselors, and other staff; cutting 20 teacher positions; adopting an across-the-board 6.5% staffing reduction; freezing base salaries and step increases for two years; and moving all employees into a high-deductible health plan coupled with a health-savings account and requiring all employees to pay 20% of their health-insurance premiums." ("Delaware Gazette," 5/27) Yost also recommended the closing of the Willis Education Center. 2. A school levy: The second option is to place a levy on the Nov. ballot to combat the looming deficit. Details are being worked out right now and could be approved by the board as early as June or July. However, the amount of \$18 million is quite a bit of money and thus the property-tax levy would have to be steep if it were to cover the entire deficit. The higher the levy, the more unpalatable it becomes, of course. 3. A political strategy: The third option is to fight against cuts and for better funding. There are many ways to do so, litigation all the way up to the Ohio Supreme Court being one of them. The Ohio Supreme Court has consistently stated in the past that the current school-funding formula is not working and does not ensure functional, efficient, and equitable schools. In addition, educators should work to ensure that political leaders are elected who make public education a priority. For example, Ohio continues to pump about \$1 billion annually into dubious, worthless, and/or fraudulent charter schools and e-schools (such as ECOT), in part because political campaigns enjoy their financial support. – School funding in the U.S. is a national disaster and disgrace, subject to whatever economic and political wind is blowing at any given moment. To ensure more robust school funding, Delaware City Schools should join forces with other school districts and

pursue a three-pronged approach that combines elements of all three options outlined above.



### **City Plans to Raze Engineering Building**

The City of Delaware plans to demolish the former Engineering Building located at 20 E. Williams St., between St. Mark's Lutheran Church and the old "Delaware Gazette" building, to create more public parking. The current design concept shows 26 parking spaces, incl. 2 for handicap parking. The idea was mentioned at the Finance Committee meeting on April 11 and has since been discussed by City Council in executive session, according to the "Delaware Gazette" (5/26). On May 22, Council approved \$150,000 as part of its revised 2017-22 capital-improvement plan (CIP). City Manager Tom Homan has stated that he is eager to see the project underway as early as this year. However, since the building is in Delaware's historic district, its demolition will have to be discussed and approved by the Historic Preservation Commission first. – The former Engineering building is an attractive and structurally sound two-story red-brick house that was built in 1901. It has 12 rooms, a basement, and a total of 8,232 square feet. From a historic-preservation point of view, it is the nondescript "Gazette" building (also owned by the City) that has little curb appeal and low architectural value.



### **Garage Sale Season Is Here**

Garage and yard sale season has started. Buyers and sellers are reminded of the city's regulations for such "home sales." The chapter 741 section can be found in the "Codified City Ordinances." Here is a quick summary: "Home sales" are limited to 3 per year; to 3 consecutive days each; and to the period from sunrise to sunset. New and unused merchandise is not permitted, but the incidental sale of a never-worn sweater, a never-read book, or a never-used coffeemaker should not constitute a crime in the eyes of "Community Matters." Other rules concern garage-sale signs. They should be no larger than 4 square feet in size. Signs may be displayed 1 day prior to the sale and must be removed within 24 hours of the end of the sale. While most of these rules seem reasonable, section 741.06 then reads, "A single sign may be placed on the property where the sale is to be conducted, and on three private properties within 3,000 feet of the sale with written permission of the property owners. In no case shall the signs be placed on public property of rights-of-way." Obviously, hundreds of people holding garage sales and putting up signs violate this last rule every year, thus technically committing a misdemeanor crime. Many residents feel that the City is overzealous when it removes such signs. Instead, it should accept existing reality, relax the sign rule somewhat, and permit small garage-sale signs on weekends in tree lawns, provided they do not block a motorist's vision and are removed immediately after the completion of the sale. "Home sales" are a benign and popular form of entertainment in the summer and contribute much to the "Delaware spirit." There is little evidence that a two-foot-tall garage-sale sign poses a traffic hazard.

### **Colloquium on Global Health Challenges**

The organizer of OWU's 2017-18 Sagan National Colloquium (SNC) on "Global Health Challenges," Dr. Randy Quaye, has announced that the preparations for the next interdisciplinary colloquium have been finalized. There will be a series of 12 speakers who will explore a wide variety of topics including global epidemics, environmental protection, food insecurity, and national security. Local presenters will include Heather Lane and Adam Howard from the Delaware General Health District and Chris Fink (HHK) from OWU. The colloquium runs from Sept. 12 through Nov. 2. All lectures and documentaries are free & open to the public. Please visit [www.owu.edu/snc](http://www.owu.edu/snc) for details on the speakers.

### **OWU Honors Faculty Members**

During the 2017 Commencement Weekend, Ohio Wesleyan honored a number of faculty members: Chris Fink (Health & Human Kinetics) received the Sherwood Dodge Shankland Award for Encouragement of Teachers. Retiring faculty member Karen Fryer (Geology) was presented with OWU's Adam Poe Medal in recognition of her service. Kim Lance (Chemistry) posthumously received the Daniel E. Anderson Campus & Community Conscience Award. Novelist Bob Olmstead (English) received the Welch Award for Scholarly or Artistic Achievement. Brad Trees (Physics) received the Bishop Herbert Welch Meritorious Teaching Award. Lastly, Tom Wolber (Modern Foreign Languages) was the recipient of the Bishop Kearns Award for faithful witness to the ethical, spiritual, and missional values of OWU.

### **Distinguished Achievement Award for Woody Clark**

At the 2017 Alumni Reunion Weekend, held May 19-21, OWU alumnus Woodrow ("Woody") W. Clark II '67 received a Distinguished Achievement Citation. The Ohio Wesleyan Alumni Association Board of Directors honored him "for his work as a longtime advocate for the environment and renewable energy as a lecturer, author, and activist. (...) He is an internationally recognized expert on sustainability and green energy and was a contributor to the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that won a Nobel Peace Prize in 2007." He shared the prize with Al Gore.



### **Reminder: DATA Bus Offers Summer Pass – \$**

The Delaware Area Transit Authority (DATA Bus) once again offers a summer pass for anyone age 18 and under from June 1 through Aug. 31. The price of \$25 is unchanged from last year. The pass permits unlimited travel within Delaware County. In addition, starting this summer the Green Route that connects Delaware with Polaris Mall and Columbus is adding Saturday service. For more info, visit [www.ridedata.com](http://www.ridedata.com).

### **Erosion Problems at Grady Memorial Hospital**

Following-up on information provided by the City of Delaware and an article in the "Delaware Gazette" dated May 6, we inspected the site at the southwest corner of Grady Memorial Hospital where a slope has eroded and caved in to the point that a small landslide seems possible. Obviously, the problem has gone on for years judging by the number of stakes, retention boards, and filling materials that were haphazardly added in the past. However, it seems the hospital has determined that the time for unplanned emergency measures is now, before the hillside collapses and damages part of the building itself. According to information from the Delaware Gazette, the plan is to install a series of self-anchoring stonewalls to reinforce the slope. A number of trees will have to be removed to accomplish the goal, but the hospital has pledged to follow Delaware's tree-replacement guidelines. The problem is localized and seems relatively small, but looks can be deceiving. A permanent solution to the perennial problem is probably much more expensive than it appears to the untrained eye.

### **The 1974 Olentangy Fish Kill**

On June 20, 1974, a fire and explosion destroyed a chemical storage building in the rear of the Pennwalt Chemical Corporation plant at 421 London Rd. It does not seem that anyone was injured and killed in the accident, but an unknown amount of chemical liquids escaped through the underground storm drain into the Olentangy River, about half a mile away. There it caused a major 4-mile-long fish kill. The EPA supervised the subsequent clean-up. A 1957 photograph owned by the Delaware County Historical Society shows the facility located in the northeast corner of the intersection between London Rd. and the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. We have not yet been able to find out much more about the fire and explosion, believed to have been caused by lightning. The next step is to look at contemporaneous newspaper articles. The extent of the "clean-up" is also not clear. Is there

contaminated soil on the site today? It would be nice if either the City or the Health Department maintained a complete and accurate database of such polluted fields and superfund sites in Delaware – there are quite a few.

### **Courthouse Nears Completion**

The completion date for the new county courthouse on N. Sandusky St. has been pushed back from June 30 to July 31 because of bad weather and a labor shortage. The building has 94,450 square feet and costs about \$38 million. It has 5 levels, incl. 2 levels of underground parking. Security was a major consideration, and so there are separate facilities and elevators for prisoners and visitors. According to a spokesperson, there are 165 security cameras in the building. – The colossal building provides an interesting window into the mindset of an unassailable security, police, and prison state at a time when social services, educational programs, and environmental protections are being hollowed out.

### **Electric Bicycles Now Available in Delaware**

Electric bikes have been popular around much of the world for decades. In China alone, at one point more than 20 million were sold every year (I don't have current figures). In the U.S., not so much. But that is slowly changing. The local bicycle shop, Break-Away Cycling at 17 W. William St., now has e-bikes for sale. Each bicycle gives you the option of unassisted pedaling, assisted pedaling, and no pedaling. They have rechargeable batteries and reach a top speed of 20 mph if not pedal-assisted. A one-time charge allows you to travel between 20 miles (without pedaling) and 60 miles (with pedaling), making it a nice vehicle to travel to work with. Other population groups that might benefit from e-bikes are aging baby boomers or people with medical impairments. It takes about 4 hours to fully charge the battery at work or at home, according to bike-shop owner Dan Nagley. You do not need a license to ride an e-bike. Break-Away has a number of Trek and Elektra models for sale, ranging between \$1,500 and \$5,000. (Best Buy and Walmart also sell them, but we did not check whether the local stores carry them.)

### **DCDL Book Discussions**

If you haven't done so yet, pick up a copy of Delaware County District Library's summer programs for all ages. The adult book noon discussions at the Delaware's main branch include Margaret Atwood's "Oryx and Crake (June 6, 1 pm), Nancy Horan's "Loving Frank" (July 11, 1 pm), and Beryl Markham's "West of the Night" (Aug. 1, 1 pm). Evening discussions include Carrie Brown's "The Stargazer's Sister" (June 28, 7:30 pm), Matthew Desmond's "Evicted" (July 26, 7:30 pm), and J. Ryan Stradal's "Kitchens of the Great Midwest" (Aug. 30, 7:30 pm). Of particular significance may be "Evicted," a nationally acclaimed non-fiction book about the brutal practice of home evictions of tenants who have fallen on hard times.

### **Arena Fair Theatre**

Delaware's Arena Fair Theatre has held auditions for two new musicals. "Godspell" will be performed July 14-16 at OWU's Chappellear Drama Center, "Hairspray" Nov. 3-5 at the troupe's new home at the Delaware County Fairgrounds. The company is also offering new classes on Basic Theater, Advanced Theater & Stagecraft, and Preparing for That Big Audition.

### **Habitat for Humanity**

Habitat for Humanity has started to build its 60<sup>th</sup> home in Delaware County. The house at 252 S. Franklin St. will be occupied by a woman with 2 children. During National Women Build Week, the local volunteers included Mayor Carolyn Riggle, Councilmember Lisa Keller, Assistant City Manager Jackie Walker, and Council Clerk Elaine McCloskey. Retailer Lowe's is the official sponsor of National Women Build Week.

### **Secret Identity Comics Opens**

Secret Identity Comics at 34 N. Franklin St. opened on May 5. Laura & Kelly McFarland will sell comic books as well as various comic paraphernalia such as toys and T-shirts in their new 600-square-foot store. For the owners, the shop is both a business and a hobby. Hours are Tues. – Thurs., 3:30-8 pm, Fri., 3-9 pm, and Sat., 11 am – 8 pm. Their website is [www.secretidcomics.com](http://www.secretidcomics.com).

### **A New Store for Dogs in Downtown Delaware**

A new self-service dog wash and retail store, Real Big Puppy, will open June 1 at 28-B S. Sandusky St. The retail portion of the shop will offer dog food, toys, collars, and beds. The wash area in the back can accommodate dogs as large as Great Danes.

## **COUNTY & CENTRAL OHIO**

### **Delaware County Farmer's Markets**

According to the "Columbus Dispatch," there are currently 5 farmer's markets in Delaware County. 1. Delaware Farmer's Market, downtown Delaware (N. Sandusky St.), every Sat. 9:30 am - 12:30 pm, and every Wed. 3-6 pm, through Oct. 28; 2. All Life Community Market, 5700 Columbus Pike, every Thurs. 4-7 pm, through Oct. 26; 3. Powell Farmer's Market, downtown Powell (N. Liberty St.), every Sat. 9 am – noon, through Oct. 28; 4. Sunbury / Big Walnut Area Farmer's Market, Sunbury Square, every Sat. 9 am – noon, through Oct. 14; and 5. The Village Market, Shawnee Hills (9406 Dublin Rd.), Mon./Tues./Thurs./Fri. 10 am – 7 pm, Sat. 10 am – 6 pm, and Sun. 11 am – 6 pm, closed Wed., through Oct.

### **DGHD Recommends Vaccination**

Ohio has fallen to the national bottom when it comes to immunization rates. There was a time (1998) when 97% of all K-12 students were immunized against major childhood diseases. The percentage has since plummeted to below 90%. Even more distressing is the fact that only 86% of Ohio's toddlers under the age of 3 receive the recommended measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) shots. The lower the immunization rates, the higher the risk of outbreaks. Preventable diseases are returning because of complacency or hesitancy. Ohio had major mumps and measles outbreaks just a few years ago, and there were directly related to the growing vaccination skepticism we are seeing around the nation. Your trusted physician and your local health district will tell you that immunization is perfectly safe. (Scores of studies have proven, for instance, that there is no link whatsoever between MMR vaccines and autism – a fraudulent and disproven claim that Arthur Wakefield made years ago in England. As a result, he was stripped of his medical license.) Instead, vaccinations will protect children and communities. According to information from DGHD, "routine childhood immunizations ... will prevent 42,000 early deaths and 20 million cases of disease, with a net savings of \$13.5 billion in direct costs, respectively." "Community Matters" does not shy back from questioning ideology-based or industry-funded science when necessary. But the science of immunizations is irrefutable, and we are happy to repeat what every reputable national and international medical association says, "Immunizations save lives."

### **Preservation Parks of Delaware County**

Preservation Parks has announced that it will seek a countywide levy renewal in support of its 9 parks. The current .6-mill levy, which generates about \$3.6 million annually, expires in 2018. Preservation Parks wants to increase the tax levy to .9 mill, which would bring in an additional \$2.1 million per year over the next 10 years. The funds will be used to open up more parks, construct new trails, and maintain the system. A new park along Delaware's Pollock Rd. (115 acres) will open in the foreseeable future. Preservation Parks is also in process of acquiring 112 acres in Orange Township. A third location is in the northeast quadrant of the county (Porter Township). At the moment, Preservation Parks manages 1,410 acres that are protected from development. Property taxes make up the bulk of the revenues (about 80%). Without them the park system would be much diminished. – Tax renewals and increases are never popular, especially if the objectives are hazy. In this case, however, the benefits for residents are crystal-clear. There are public parks within a short driving or biking distance in many corners of the county. They offer plenty of opportunities for recreation and exercising, hiking and bird-watching, playing and exploring, family celebrations and dog walks, and even paddle-boating. They feature nature centers, fishing ponds, hiking trails, picnic shelters, sledding hills, boat launches, pollinator gardens, wildlife habitat, vernal pools and wetlands, and so on. Plus, every month Preservation Parks offers dozens of educational programs for every age group, summer or winter. In 2016, more than 365,000

visitors enjoyed Preservation Parks. – An attractive park system helps recruit and retain professionals and their families to the county, ensuring sustainable growth. “Community Matters” hopes that the voters of Delaware County will support the fall levy.

### **Preservation Parks Continues “Into the Ice Age”**

In May, Preservation Parks of Delaware County launched its “Into the Ice Age” summer program with “Ice Age,” the movie. Its sequels will be screened June 30 and July 28, also at Deer Haven Park (4183 Liberty Rd.). Bring a lawn chair or blanket. Also at display is the full-size replica of a mastodon. A study booklet is available.



### **Islamic Center of Delaware County**

At the Delaware City Council meeting of May 8, Nicol Gazi from the Islamic Center of Delaware County presented the invocation. Kudos to City Council for having the courage to welcome members of the Islamic faith into Council Chambers. Not many people in Delaware may even be aware that there is an Islamic Center in the county. The Polaris masjid (place of prayer) is located in Lewis Center, not far from US 23 S. Because of on-going hate crimes, the exact address is not revealed here, but it can easily be found through a Google search. The Center has recently purchased a new 7,000-square-foot site in the same area and plans to move there in 2018 once the current leases expire in Nov. 2017. The website is [www.polarismasjid.org](http://www.polarismasjid.org).

### **Local Trump Voters Are Frustrated**

On May 6, the Columbus Dispatch published an interesting letter to the editor by Delaware resident Christopher Acker under the headline “Republicans are letting us down.” We have read letters penned by Mr. Acker in the past. They were full of hateful venom against “progressives,” the Democrats, and Obama. He also railed against food stamps, student loans, subsidized housing, and countless other things. Even the GOP was and is in his crosshairs. In 2013 he wrote, “The Tea Party is our only hope. (...) The Tea Party is the real Republican Party, not the old establishment or the RINOs.” And he added that “draining the swamp” might necessitate “refreshing the tree of liberty as described by Thomas Jefferson.” That’s quite a statement... When Trump won the election in November 2016, Mr. Acker must have been elated. Finally the wall would be built. Obamacare repealed. The EPA eliminated. Planned Parenthood defunded. All his dreams seemed to have come true. However, imagine his profound disappointment now. The proposed federal budget contains “nothing” in it that Republicans promised: “There is no money for the ‘wall,’” he laments, and there are no cuts for Planned Parenthood, foreign aid, and the EPA. The Republicans need to take charge, Mr. Acker asserts impatiently. “If they do not, they are through” and would lose millions of votes in the 2018 mid-terms. – In the grand scheme of things, Mr. Acker is not an important actor, but his letter is indicative of a certain volatile mood among Trump supporters. They still believe in their man, but they are frustrated by his obvious inability to affect change due to the many restrictions imposed by the U.S. Constitution, the economy, Congress, the voters, and by reality in general. Trump is obviously in a precarious position. He can either remain an extreme right-wing ideologue, thus alienating more and more mainstream Americans. Or he can attempt to become more “normal” and acceptable, but that would be perceived as a betrayal by his loyal followers. There is some evidence that Trump has now chosen the latter path, so the future for Mr. Acker and his fellow travelers looks dim.

### **Central Ohio Is Doing Well**

According to a recent report by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, large swaths of Ohio areas have yet to recover from the Great Recession. Only a handful of cities have recovered their lost jobs; a number of rust-belt cities have even fewer jobs today than they did in 1990. Central Ohio, however, is the exception. Both the City of Columbus and the Columbus Metropolitan Area are growing. The

report projects a net addition of 300,000 people by 2040, which would raise the total population to 2.4 million. (MORPC anticipates 3 million people by 2050.) Traditional manufacturing cities in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin continue to lose ground whereas vibrant university towns such as Ann Arbor, Columbus, Indianapolis, and Madison are bucking the trend. Cities with educated professionals and diversified industries generally fare better economically.

### **Kayaker Drowns at Alum Creek Reservoir**

Kayaker Shawn Leasure, 40, died at Alum Creek Reservoir during the Memorial Day weekend near the State Rt. 36/37 bridge across the lake. After helping a friend in a capsized kayak get back to shore, he swam back out to retrieve his lost paddle and drowned. Leasure was said to be able to swim, but he did not wear a life-jacket. His body was recovered the next day after a search involving sonar and K-9 units. – It is not a good idea for inexperienced kayakers or canoeists to venture out on a blustery day with white-top waves. Boats can take in water and/or overturn. Even the experienced rescuers struggled with the wind and the waves, according to press reports, and lost equipment. Earlier this month, two kayakers drowned in the whirlpool of a low-head dam of the Scioto River near Marion. If the water looks unsafe, don’t swim or paddle in it.

### **The Kirkersville Murders**

By all accounts, Thomas Hartless was a dangerous man with a long history of anger issues and violent acts. He had multiple felony convictions and just recently spent another 90 days in jail for assault. His girlfriend, fearing for her life, had obtained three court protection orders against him in the past few months alone. And yet, Hartless was able to obtain, and to keep, more than 60 firearms in his Utica home in neighboring Licking County – rifles, shotguns, revolvers, pistols, and air or pellet guns. On May 12, Hartless used 2 of these weapons to kill 4 people in the small Ohio village of Kirkersville (also in Licking County), including his girlfriend and the town’s police chief. How is it possible that a violent offender could get away with stockpiling so many deadly weapons? Licking County Municipal Judge Michael F. Higgins has now taken steps to ensure that such a disaster does not repeat itself. In the future, probation officers and their supervisors must be familiar with all the reports on a criminal’s history; a lethal-risk assessment is now mandatory; judges must issue no-contact orders with victims when appropriate; all domestic-violence probationers will be equipped with a GPS monitoring device; felons must agree to start and finish a treatment program; and officers will search the homes of probationers to ensure they comply with the no-weapons rule. It is unfathomable why this was not done before and that “an unhinged and mentally ill” man (court documents) like Hartless was free to terrorize and to endanger his community for years. Do law-enforcement and probation officers have their priorities straight?

### **Writer’s Group Publishes Anthology**

The Delaware County District Library (DCDL) Orange Branch Writer’s Group has published its first anthology. The work, appropriately (but boringly) entitled “2017 Orange Branch Writer’s Group Anthology,” is a compilation of short stories, verse & excerpts of longer works written by 12 local authors. They are Jim Cash, Lori Dalton, Gina Davey, Kymberly Flewelling, Sherry L. Jones, Jonathan William Peterson, Lisa R. Petty, T. E. Stretten, Gail Ukockis, Connie Warner, Linda Wesner, and Beverlee Wilson. The unveiling of the anthology took place May 17 at the DCDL’s Orange Branch.

### **“Thurberville” by Bob Hunter**

Bob Hunter, former Columbus Dispatch columnist, has published a new book entitled “Thurberville” (Trillium 2017, 344 p., list price \$29.95). It focuses on the childhood, youth, and OSU years of humorist and cartoonist James Thurber (1894-1961) who is arguably Columbus’ most acclaimed writer. Hunter describes the love-hate relationship that Thurber had with his hometown throughout his life and explores the many landmarks associated with him.

## **THE STATE OF OHIO**

### **Ohio’s Opioid Deaths 4,000+**

An unofficial analysis conducted by the "Columbus Dispatch" (May 29) has concluded that opioid deaths in Ohio have jumped from 3,050 in 2015 to at least 4,149 in 2016, about a 36% increase. The actual number is likely to be even higher because 6 counties did not report their figures and cases are still pending in others. In 2014 and 2015, Ohio had the dubious distinction of being #1 in fatal heroin, fentanyl, and carfentanil overdoses in the nation. The death toll would have been even higher if it weren't for naloxone that has saved the lives of many overdosed patients. There is, unfortunately, consensus that a turnaround is still far away. The numbers are still going in the wrong direction. 2017 might be another record year for Ohio. – Many people, incl. law-enforcement deputies, still have the mindset that drug addicts come from "bad families," lack personal responsibility, make poor choices, and therefore deserve to be dumped in jails. Police officers and prosecutors are not trained about prevention efforts, treatment options, and rehabilitation. Very slowly, however, society is beginning to understand that addiction is a curable illness. A positive outcome is not guaranteed, but given time and space, resources and research it is possible to make progress. Given the seriousness of the problem, Ohio needs to invest more resources and remove barriers to treatment such as long waiting lists.

### **Watch for MORPC's Summer Ozone Alerts**

Many people don't realize it that Ohio's air is among the worst polluted in America. The Central Ohio region received an "F" last year from the American Lung Association. On hot summer days, ozone forms when the sun bakes the gases emitted from tailpipes and smokestacks. When air pollution reaches dangerous levels, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC, pronounced "morp-c") sends out alerts warning young, old, and sick people to avoid prolonged or heavy outdoor activities. The scale runs from 0 to 500. An alert kicks in when the level exceeds 100. The level thought to begin affecting the general population is 151. In 2016, MORPC reported ten (10) high-ozone days. – According to the World Health Organization, globally about 92% of the population breathe bad air, which is responsible for about 3 million premature deaths each year. The International Energy Agency puts the number even higher at over 6 million annually. Politicians, however, aren't paying much attention to such inconvenient statistics. Instead, they create distractions (such as non-existing "voter fraud") to deflect criticism and to escape culpability. The Trump administration has recently announced plans to scrap vehicle and power-plant emission standards altogether and to severely cut the EPA budget. If this comes to pass, watch for more bad-air days.

### **Millions of Homeowners Remain Underwater**

5.5 million homeowners with mortgages (9.7%) remain "underwater," meaning they own more on their mortgage than their houses are worth. Four of the nation's top five metro areas with the highest percentage of seriously underwater homeowners are in Ohio: Cleveland (22.9%), Akron (20.3%), Dayton (20.3%), and Toledo (20%). The average in Ohio is 17.1%, the second-highest rate in the U.S. In several cities, incl. Columbus, the situation is actually getting worse instead of better. – Politicians like to brag about job creation and economic recovery, but obviously Ohio's middle class continues to suffer. No meaningful progress has been made during the last 8 years. We are not aware of any legislation designed to help underwater homeowners. Politicians are expert advocates and fundraisers for their own campaigns, but when it comes to helping people in distress they show less enthusiasm.

### **Ohio Pipeline Halted**

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has ordered Texas-based Energy Transfer to stop new drilling activities in Ohio. Drilling already underway and non-drilling activities may continue. In Feb., the company started to install the underground Rover Pipeline that will eventually run all the way from W. Virginia (southeastern Ohio) to Michigan (northwestern Ohio). The \$4.2 billion project, however, has led to at least 18 documented violations of state and federal laws. One of them was the release of 2 million gallons of bentonite (a drilling lubricant) into a protected wetland area adjacent to the Tuscarawas River in Stark County. The OEPA has imposed a fine of \$431,000 on Energy Transfer for its reckless air and water pollution. The pipeline builder has shown no contrition and is

fighting the state. In the Columbus Dispatch (5/11), Theodore Decker pointed out that the co-founder of Energy Transfer, billionaire Kelcey Warren, was "a significant donor to the campaign of Donald Trump" and that "until last year, Trump had been a shareholder." Under the circumstances, the victory for those Ohioans who believe that environmental and human health matters may be short-lived.

### **State Senator Kris Jordan**

Ohio Republicans are having a bit of an image problem these days. After Josh Mandel, it is now State Senator Kris Jordan who is in the headlines. In his campaign literature, he called himself "a full-spectrum conservative" who is "100% pro-family" and who "keeps families in mind" in everything he does. However, in 2011 deputies were called to his Powell home and Jordan was charged with "assault, domestic violence, and disorderly conduct" ("Columbus Dispatch," 5/14/17). In 2016, his wife, Delaware County Recorder Melissa Jordan, filed for divorce. The trial is set to begin June 26 in the Delaware County Common Pleas Court with visiting judge Michael Brady presiding. Under existing law, as confirmed by the Ohio Supreme Court, records of public officials cannot be shielded from public scrutiny. However, Jordan wants to keep the on-going proceedings sealed and confidential. So far, the request by the "Dispatch" for access to Jordan's financial records and other documents has not been granted. Like Josh Mandel, Kris Jordan demands transparency and accountability from others, but sees himself as above the law.

### **Green Party Candidate for Governor**

Constance Gadell-Newton is the Green Party candidate for Ohio's governor race in 2018. The 37-year-old lawyer has a B.A. degree from OSU and her legal degree from Penn State Univ.'s Dickinson Scholl of Law. She is currently co-chair of Ohio's Green Party and a law partner with Bob Fittrakis, a fellow Green Party leader. Gadell-Newton promotes protecting the environment and the development of renewable energies. She also supports living wages, wage equity for women & minorities, universal health care, free college tuition, and the treatment of drug addiction as a medical condition. – It is interesting to note that every one of her proposals is already a reality in Europe and supported by liberals and conservatives alike. In the U.S., however, the Green Party remains a barely recognized third-party outsider.

### **Ohioana Library's Future Is Uncertain**

The first things to go when budgets are tight are often the arts and humanities. When it comes to priorities, they are rarely on top. The 88-year-old non-profit Ohioana Library has a \$459,714 budget for the current fiscal year, which ends June 30. To pay for its First Ave. location, it gets \$120,000 from the State Library. Some \$179,000 come from grants, donations, and sponsorships. The rest, \$280,714, is from the State of Ohio. The Ohio House, however, recently voted to eliminate that amount in its entirety. If the Ohio Senate goes along with the plan and does not restore at least part of the amount, the future of the Ohioana Library is very much uncertain. Fewer purchases would have to be made, and support staff would have to be laid off. The value of the collection and the services the library provides to the public would deteriorate. Future generations will not look kindly at the way the Ohio House is gutting the state's culture. – The Ohioana Library collects and maintains books written by and about Ohio writers. It also collects sheet music, publishes an electronic newsletter, and puts on the annual Ohioana Book Festival. A recent letter to the Columbus Dispatch pointed out that "tourists come to visit Malabar Farm, Thurber House, the Zane Grey Museum, and other literary landmarks," thus bringing revenue to Ohio. The website of the Ohioana Library, [www.ohioana.org](http://www.ohioana.org), is worth a visit.

### **Cedarville University Allows Concealed-Carry**

Following the lead of Liberty University in Virginia, Cedarville College near Dayton became the first public or private school of higher education in Ohio to expressly allow faculty and staff members with permits to carry concealed weapons on campus. The Board of Trustees approved the measure on May 8. Cedarville is a private Christian university with about 3,300 students.

### **"Fire in the Heartland"**

Daniel Miller's documentary "A Fire in the Heartland" is about the 1970 killings of four Kent State University students. When college students rallied against racism and the Vietnam War, the Ohio National Guard was brought in by KSU president Robert White and Ohio Governor James Rhodes to put down the anti-war protests. Under circumstances that remain unexplained and murky even today, 28 guardsmen fired approx. 67 rounds. 13 unarmed students were shot. Four students between the ages of 19 and 20 died; a fifth student suffered permanent paralysis. Filmmaker Daniel Miller, born and raised in Ohio, was a student at Kent SU at that time (1968-70). He was one of about 100 students who were arrested, charged, and taken to court. (The guardsmen responsible for the shots, on the other hand, claimed to have fired in self-defense and were all acquitted.) For his project, Miller interviewed many contemporaries. The documentary was recently updated to include additional material, incl. the misguided and failed attempt by Kent SU to build a gymnasium on the site of the May 4<sup>th</sup> shootings to eradicate the memories.

### **Ohio Sales Tax Holiday (Aug. 4-6)**

For the third year in a row, the Ohio Legislature has approved a sales-tax holiday to help families make school-related purchases. It ends at 11:59 on Sunday. The rules are essentially unchanged from last year. Families do not have to prove that they have school-age children. During the popular holiday, the following items are exempt from sales tax: school supplies priced at \$20 per item or less; school instructional material priced at \$20 per item or less; and clothing priced at \$75 per item or less. The exemption from the sales tax does not cover electronics and sports equipment. For more info or FAQs, visit [www.tax.ohio.gov](http://www.tax.ohio.gov).



### **Dogs in Restaurant Patios**

Many U.S. states allow owners to take their dogs to open-air restaurant patios and yards. Ohio is not among them. Health departments continue to send out letters reminding restaurateurs that dogs (as well as other animals) are banned on the premises, incl. outdoor seating areas. Joe Blundo recently poked fun at the antiquated law in the "Columbus Dispatch" (5/21/17) when he wrote, "(Ohio) tolerates algae-choked waterways, air fouled by coal-fired power plants, and earthquakes caused by injection wells. But it detects a public-health menace in a dachshund napping at the feet of a diner. Please." – We agree. Companion dogs are family members. They eat in the kitchen, sleep in the bedroom, and are often taken to work. They help children to build up a robust immune system and become better socialized. Dogs have become an integral part of society and should no longer be segregated and relegated to the back of the bus. The decision whether or not to permit dogs in restaurants patio areas should not be left to the state but handed over to the restaurants themselves. If more dog owners were allowed to eat and drink in such spaces, with their dogs on a leash, it would help the bottom-line of many an establishment. Isn't Ohio supposed to be "open for business"?



### **Rearview Mirrors Instead of Spotters?**

Current Ohio law requires boaters towing someone at high speed to have a "spotter" on board, someone who keeps a close eye on the person on the far end of the rope. Some boaters and Ohio legislator John Becker now want to replace spotters with rearview mirrors. Becker says that 21 states allow a rearview mirror instead of a spotter and that "Ohio's law forces you to leave the state" if you don't have a third person on board. – Ohio's waterways are crowded. The state has the 9th-highest boat registration in the nation. A water skier was killed in crowded conditions on Alum Creek Lake in 2015. We

therefore agree with the position of Governor Kasich and Mike Miller (at Ohio's Division of Watercraft) who state that replacing spotters with rearview mirrors would weaken water safety for everyone. A spotter's gaze is firmly focused on the people skiing or tubing behind the powerboat. Like any motorist, however, a boater cannot look forward and backward at the same time. Divided attention leads to inattention, which almost inevitably contributes to more accidents.

### **Nature Conservancy Purchases Largest Tract Ever**

In 2016, the Nature Conservancy acquired the largest land tract in Ohio ever – a contiguous piece of land that encompasses 1,000 acres in Ohio's Adams County. It has since been named "Smoky Hollow Preserve," the Smoky being a tributary to the Ohio River. The acquisition brings the Nature Conservancy's "Edge of Appalachia Preserve" system up to 19,418 acres. The long-term plan is to create an unbroken corridor for wildlife in southern Ohio that stretches from the original preserve in West Union to the Shawnee State Forest in the east. The site is rich in fauna and flora and includes various rare, endangered, and recovering species. Within a year or two, a trail will provide access to a 555-foot-high overlook of the Ohio River. (For a 3-minute video of Smoky Hollow Preserve, go to [www.dispatch.com/videos](http://www.dispatch.com/videos).)

### **"Beautiful Ohio" – State Song**

Did you know that Ohio has an official state song? In 1969, the Ohio Legislature adopted "Beautiful Ohio" as Ohio's state song. The original lyrics are by Ballard MacDonald while the waltz-like music was composed by "Mary Earl" (whose real name was Robert A. King) in 1918. In 1989, with the permission of the Legislature, Wilbert B. McBride created an entirely new set of lyrics that were intended to be more reflective of modern Ohio. For example, he added cities and factories to the landscape that was entirely natural in the original poem. – High-rise cities and humming factories have their value, but somehow we remain unimpressed with the official state song that says very little about the real beauty and wonders of the State of Ohio.

### **Beautiful Ohio**

I sailed away,  
Wandered afar,  
Crossed the mighty restless sea;  
Looked for where I ought to be.  
Cities so grand, mountains above,  
Led to this land I love.

### **Chorus**

Beautiful Ohio, where the golden grain  
Dwarf the lovely flowers in the summer rain.  
Cities rising high, silhouette the sky.  
Freedom is supreme in this majestic land;  
Mighty factories seem to hum in tune, so grand,  
Beautiful Ohio, thy wonders are in view,  
Land where my dreams all come true.

## **THE NATION**

### **California Is Leading the Way**

Thomas Friedman made an interesting argument in the New York Times last month (5/4). As far as the future of the U.S. under Trump is concerned, he is not counting on the Democratic Party. Instead, he is counting on California. – With 39.5 million residents California is the most populous state in the U.S. What happens in the Golden State gets noticed and cannot be ignored. Car manufacturers, for example, can only sell cars in California that meet the state's strict emission standards, also adopted by a dozen or so other states. So, car makers are forced to respond to the requirement, no matter what what the federal guidelines under the Trump administration say. The same goes for pretty much everything else – clean-energy standards, social services, education, consumer protections, immigration reform, prison policies, LGBT rights, pesticides, and so on. It would be perilous to ignore the Californian market, which is also a trendsetter and leading indicator. Friedman also mentions (quoting Kevin de León, leader of the California Senate) that "California has far more clean-

energy jobs than there are coal jobs in all of America." Clearly, a clean-energy future and economic growth are not mutually incompatible. In fact, the California model suggests that the two actually depend on each other.

### **Americans Are Delaying Retirement**

About 19% of Americans age 65 and older are still punching the clock, the highest percentage since 1962. Many more report they would like to work, but that they can't get a job. As life expectancy has grown, some enjoy going to work. However, the majority of them work until the age of 70 and even beyond for the simple reason that they cannot afford to retire. Their nest eggs are small or – in about 20% of the cases – nonexistent. Access to retirement plans is very unequal in the U.S., and existing pension plans are not as robust as they once were. The "golden years" have ceased being golden long ago. Many Americans are worried and fearful about the prospect that they will outlive their savings and not be able to afford the healthcare they may some day need.

### **Hunger in America**

If you believe the official statistics (which we don't), the number of Americans identified by USDA as food-insecure has fallen from 50 million (about 15%) to 42 million (about 13%) in 2015. But the reality is very different. Feeding America, a Chicago-based nonprofit group, says that the gap between what individuals & families earn and what they need (the "food-budget shortfall") is actually widening and stands at \$530 per person annually. Many low-income families have reported that they tried to apply for the SNAP (food stamp) and other federal assistance programs, but that they were rejected because they supposedly earned too much to qualify. The current threshold for a family of four is \$24,000 per year. That number is inadequate because if you factor in monthly rent payments it does not leave families with much. In addition, the current Trump administration has proposed making eligibility requirements even tougher and to further reduce SNAP benefits. Of course, if you set the threshold at, let's say, \$20,000 per year, the number of eligible people shrinks. On the surface, politicians can then claim that the number of food-insecure folks has fallen. But that number game does absolutely nothing to eradicate the problem of hunger, which remains pervasive throughout America – in rural and urban areas, in the north and the south, among whites and ethnic minorities. In some respects, the U.S. resembles a third-world country more than it does a sophisticated industrialized nation. The enormous and unsustainable income inequity that we see in the States is but one example.

### **The Other Terror Threat**

It might come as a surprise to many people, but according to law-enforcement agencies domestic right-wing terror is a far greater threat to American police officers and citizens than violence from Islamic extremists. In a nationwide survey among police and sheriff's departments, 74% of the respondents listed homegrown violence as the biggest threat. While public debates have focused on radical Jihadists, the leading source of ideological violence in America is from the dozens and hundreds of patriot groups, sovereign citizens, the KKK, white supremacists, militias, and neo-Nazis. People associated with these groups commit crimes almost every day, including murder. Several states, however, have no laws on their books that define the term "hate crime." Others do not collect any data. In many cases, there are questions about the motivation of a perpetrator and his (or her) mental state. The "New York Times" notes that research on right-wing extremism has also run into resistance from Republicans, who suspected an attempt to smear conservatives. Right-wing extremism and violence is – intentionally or unintentionally – severely underreported in the U.S., giving people a false sense of the actual reality. Americans need to be reminded that ideologically driven violence comes in all shapes and sizes, from within the body politic and without.

### **Cancer-Treatment Costs Rarely Discussed**

Cancer treatment can cost more than \$100,000 a year and has bankrupted many patients and their families. However, physicians rarely discuss the cost of cancer treatment. In a recent study by the American Society of Clinical Oncology, only 8.5% of doctors brought up the topic during their interactions with patients. Others discussed it

only after patients initiated the conversation (19.5%). In the majority of cases (72%), however, there was no discussion at all. And when they did occur, they were limited to only 1 to 2 minutes on average. There is no other industry where costs aren't an integral part of the discussions. Clearly, this is an area that must be better addressed by doctors and their patients. Fearing personal bankruptcy and the unknown, some patients even decline cancer treatment. That should not happen in a civilized society.

### **Richard B. Spencer & Free Speech**

Richard B. Spencer is widely regarded as "a top figure in the alt-right movement," which has attracted white supremacists, racists, and neo-fascists. Born in 1978, he received a B.A. from the Univ. of Virginia and an M.A. from the Univ. of Chicago. From 2005 to 2007 he was a doctoral student at Duke Univ., but he dropped out of the program. In 2010, he founded AlternativeRight.com, later called AltRight.com. In 2011, he became president of the National Policy Institute (NPI), a think tank for white nationalists. Spencer has unashamedly stated that he is a champion for the white race, and the white race only. In his view, white folks are under siege and the most persecuted people on earth. They are desperately trying to protect their heritage and identity. Obviously, there is no diversity to be found in the white ethno-state he wants to create in North America. On the contrary, he has called for "peaceful ethnic cleansing," including the elimination of Jewish and Muslim elements. In a recent interview with the "Chronicle of Higher Education" on the occasion of a speech at Auburn Univ., he also said quite a few hateful things about African-Americans, accusing them, for example, of "sexual abuse of white women." Being black, he says, is easier than being white because black identity is instinctive and comes natural; it is devoid of intellectual depth. In other words, in his warped racist view blacks are dumb, barbaric, and dangerous – primitive *Untermenschen* compared to the superior white master race. Spencer was repeatedly cited in the manifesto written by Anders Behring Breivik who killed 79 people in Norway in 2011. – Should a person so full of hateful venom be allowed so speak on college campuses whose mission it is to foster knowledge and understanding, peace and tolerance? Conservatives say "yes"; freedom of speech and expression is an absolute value for them. However, we have never heard of conservatives inviting convicted felons or known Islamic terrorists. (Spencer is considered a criminal in the eyes of the European Union and barred from entering countries.) There are limits to hate speech and hate crimes, but where exactly the demarcation line lies is a tricky question. In our view, however, a college campus should be free to cancel lectures, concerts, or rallies if and when necessary to ensure the safety of people and property. When militant provocateurs descend on a college campus with the cynical intent to cause mayhem and warfare (as Hitler's brownshirts used to do), then university administrators and public-safety officials have the right and the duty to intervene.

### **White Supremacist Sues Trump**

Matthew Heimbach, 26, from rural Indiana is a white racist and supremacist known for his online railings against Blacks, Jews, gays, and immigrants. He is an advocate for separate "ethnic states" based on race, ethnicity, and religion. He used to be an enthusiastic supporter of Donald Trump. When a black university student protested at a pro-Trump rally in Louisville, Kentucky, held in March 2016, Heimbach knew what he had to do. He says that Trump had directed him and others to take action and to forcefully remove the protester from the premises. After Heimbach was sued for assault and battery, he quoted a verbal promise made by Trump earlier to pay the legal costs of anyone who removed a demonstrator. Unfortunately for Heimbach, Trump refused any culpability or liability. Trump's lawyers have stated that Heimbach and others were not authorized "agents." Therefore, Heimbach was not entitled to indemnity. Heimbach, feeling "betrayed" by Trump, promptly sued. The unusual litigation is but one of many civil actions pending against the president. Trump may not have kept his word in Heimbach's case, but he has kept his word to create many new jobs in the nation. Well-paying jobs for lawyers, that is.

### **Roger E. Ailes (1940-2017)**

Roger Ailes who created and ruled, for two decades, Fox News Channel has died at the age of 77. He was born and raised in

Warren, Ohio, a blue-collar town near Youngstown. His father worked at the Packard Electric Company and was known to be abusive. Even as a millionaire, Ailes perceived himself as a working-class man and remained resentful of the "coastal elites." After graduating from high school, he attended Ohio University in Athens where he worked on the college radio station. He graduated in 1962. In his younger years, he worked in theater and television. The lessons he learned there he later applied to politics, which – in the eyes of Ailes – was just another stage or arena where the visual and emotional aspects mattered as much or perhaps even more than content. In the process, he changed both the political and the media landscape. Politics became entertainment, and news and entertainment became politicized. Under his rule, Fox News Channel was decidedly not "fair and balanced." The audience skewed white, male, and old, and its practice was to hate, attack, and destroy. The network never used its influence to introduce a positive conservative platform. Blending and blurring fact and fiction, the news channel contributed to the erosion of reason and the intellectual demise of America. People who used Fox News as their primary source of information developed a warped view of the world. Ailes introduced ideology and hostility into journalism that caused distrust and divided the nation. Newt Gingrich said about Ailes, "Without his success at Fox News, Trump could have never won." Jeffrey Jones of Peabody Awards went even one step further when he stated, "Ailes created Donald Trump as politician." Ailes' personal life paralleled that of Fox News. It too was a race to the bottom, characterized by predation and exploitation. He was an aggressive and confrontational bully known for temper tantrums. He also developed a reputation for abusing his power and for sexual harassment, including unwelcome groping and demands for sex in exchange for job security and career advancement. On July 21, 2016, Fox News dismissed him after the scandal had widened to the point where it included scores of women. Fox is struggling to come to grips with its sexualized culture to this day. – Roger Ailes was a gifted entertainer, but he did the nation a disservice when he blended show business and politics in unsavory ways. History will not remember kindly the current age of demagoguery that he helped usher in. Ultimately, Roger Ailes is a tragic figure who squandered his undeniable talents instead of using them in constructive and productive ways. On balance, he has done more harm than good.

### **A Freudian Interpretation of Trump Voters**

Sigmund Freud's influential book "Civilization and Its Discontents" ("Das Unbehagen in der Kultur") contains powerful insights that might help explain not only the populism of the 1920s and 1930s but also the current wave of populism. According to Freud, there is an irreconcilable conflict between culture and nature. The demands of culture and the demands of nature are incompatible, hence the antagonistic contradiction. Culture is predicated on the conquest of nature, requiring either voluntary renunciation ("Triebverzicht") or involuntary subjugation. Any time when and where culture flourishes, there are alienated people who express open resentment and hostility ("Feindseligkeit") toward it. Culture and civilization, when taken too far, can become disconnected from nature and become unsustainable. The pressure to conform and perform can become so unbearable ("unerträglich") that it can lead to psychosomatic disorders. As a psychoanalyst, Freud was familiar with the broad spectrum ranging from quiet despair and agonizing pain to complete mental breakdown. Especially in times of accelerated growth and change, many people cannot cope.

Once again, we find ourselves in such a moment of frustration, anger, hatred, and blind fury against the establishment and the elites, against intellectuals and scientists, against consensus and normalcy. "Too much testing," people complain, "too many regulations." "Too many taxes," "too much political correctness." People feel confined and restricted. Reason itself becomes the loathed enemy because it is in the name of logic and science that individuals are disenfranchised, depersonalized, and dehumanized. The anarchic response of populism is to reject, repeal, defund, shut down, destroy, abolish, and eliminate, even when it is against the self-interest of the perpetrators. In many cases this leads to cases where violence breaks out and beatings and shootings occur. In the eyes of the establishment and the elites, these right-wing know-nothing anarchists ruled by wild, dangerous passions are imbecilic morons, at least half of them "a basket of deplorables." In the eyes of the deeply wounded and

genuinely suffering victims of modernity and globalization, it is a just and noble revolutionary fight to see their dignity and value restored.

Is the conflict between culture and nature as timeless, universal, and intractable as Freud pessimistically postulated? Are culture and nature indeed mutually exclusive? We don't think so. The call of the wild is always there. Nature is irrepressible. However, not all cultural achievements are antithetical to nature – there are many examples where culture and nature live in harmonious and peaceful balance with each other and have formed sustainable relationships. However, a precondition for that is respect for the natural world and natural law – the inalienable, God-given rights that every human person is endowed with, whether man or woman, rich or poor, white or black, documented or undocumented. The American Revolution was to a large extent based on the concept of natural law, but sadly this has since been forgotten.

### **The Rise and Fall of Yik Yak**

Gossip, slanderous trash talk, sexually suggestive posts, and bomb threats were common on the anonymous social-media site Yik Yak, widely used by high-school and college students. Many cases of homophobic, misogynist, and racist messages have been documented. Most "yaks" were innocuous and benign, some perhaps even useful, but many messages used offensive, demeaning, and intimidating language that qualified as "hate speech." For a while, in 2014-15, a fierce debate was raging between advocates of free speech on the one hand and people who wanted to rein in the outlet for repulsive racism and sexism on the other. Some people even saw value in the crude, unvarnished views of students. After complaints from affected students, concerned parents, and worried law-enforcement officers, some school districts and college campuses banned Yik Yak. The debate is now settled. Yik Yak is no more. The company launched by two university students in 2013 went belly-up in April of 2017 after a steep decline in user numbers, from 1.8 million in Sept. 2014 to 125,000 in Sept. of 2016. In April 2017, the company's intellectual property was sold to Square Inc., a mobile payment company, for only \$1 million. – Yik Yak was an interesting experiment and would make the topic of a fascinating academic study about dialectics. The social-media site was a tool. Like any tool (say, a hammer), it can be used for both constructive and destructive purposes. You can build a house with it, but you can also commit crimes with it. When you add the anonymity factor, however, the temptation to abuse Yik Yak for negative instead of positive purposes was too great for "yakkers." This is, in our view, what ultimately did the company in.

### **Another Hazing Death**

Prosecutors are taking a harder line against hazing practices that involve death at colleges and universities. A generation or two ago, hazing deaths due to alcohol or physical abuse were tolerated by society as part of the fraternity or college experience. No more. For example, after sophomore Timothy Piazza died at Penn State earlier this year prosecutors filed criminal charges against 18 Beta Theta Pi students involved in the alcohol-soaked initiation ritual; 8 of them are facing felony charges. Interestingly, there are no figures kept by officials or authorities on hazing incidents such as excessive drinking, injuries, rapes, and deaths. In 2013, however, Bloomberg News documented at least 60 fraternity-related deaths over a 8-year period. The actual figures remain a mystery. In an interview, Penn State president Eric Barron warned, "It could be the end of Greek life at Penn State." However, even when colleges do revoke charters, fraternities find creative ways to continue their anarchic traditions. They move off-campus, change their name, or go underground.

### **Sheriff David Clarke Accused of Plagiarism**

Milwaukee County Sheriff David A. Clarke, Jr., 60, has built a loyal following among conservatives and says that he has been appointed assistant secretary of the Dept. of Homeland Security. A CNN report now alleges that he committed plagiarism in his 2013 master's thesis entitled "Making U.S. Security and Privacy Rights Compatible." Clarke is accused of serial intellectual theft – stealing ideas, content, and language from others without proper attribution, which is a serious offense in the academic world. It is an ethical breach that has derailed many a promising career in Europe and America. (In case anyone rejects the accusations as "fake news," they are well documented on the Internet.) The Naval Postgraduate School

in Monterey, Calif., which is dedicated to distance learning, has confirmed that it is investigating the allegations against Clarke.

### **The NAACP at the Crossroads**

The NAACP is ready for a fresh start. The current president, Cornell William Brooks, is stepping down and will be replaced by a new leader. The group has decided it is time to push back harder and more effectively against the Trump agenda. It is also concerned about its continued relevance after becoming eclipsed by the more youthful, visual, and vocal Black Lives Matter movement. Many observers agree that the NAACP has become too staid, bureaucratic, and risk-averse. While the association has a long and distinguished history, it is no longer aggressively fighting for ordinary people, minorities, and the least among us – incarcerated men, undocumented women, HIV patients, the homeless and mentally ill, or hungry children. It has given up the fight for social justice, voting and civil rights, education, and environmental justice. It is indeed on the verge of becoming inconsequential and irrelevant. It will take more than a new president to rejuvenate the ossified NAACP and change its entrenched 64-member board.



### **Colin Kaepernick Remains Jobless**

Quarterback Colin Kaepernick has not been recruited by a football team after he was kneeling instead of standing during the national anthem at the beginning of televised football games. His silent protest was intended to draw attention to the shameful treatment of African-Americans in the U.S. Some say that Kaepernick's shortcomings as a quarterback are to blame for his joblessness, but the more likely culprit is his nonconformist stance as an independent thinker. The owner of the New York Giants, John Mara, recently confirmed that view in an interview. Mara said that any football team that signed on Kaepernick would experience an angry backlash from emotional football fans. Ironically, Mara made no mention of Josh Brown whom his team signed on despite the fact that he was arrested for domestic violence. In numerous cases the NFL has welcomed violent men accused of battery, assault, rape, and other crimes. Kaepernick has committed no crime. Instead, he exercised, as former President Obama put it, his constitutional right to free speech and expression. It seems NFL owners and fans are not concerned about actual felonies. Apparently, these are minor, inconsequential details. But a real patriot who cares about his country's people and future is considered a dangerous man and prevented from finding appropriate employment. This says a lot about the values of not only of the NFL but of America as a whole.

### **"An Inconvenient Sequel" by Al Gore**

Al Gore has written a follow-up to his bestselling "An Inconvenient Truth" (2006). Titled "An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power," it presents new information on climate change, its dire consequences, and what to do about them. The illustrated "action handbook" is scheduled for release July 25 (Rodale Books, pbk., 320 pp., \$25).

### **Beatrice Trum Hunter (1918-2017)**

The author of "The Natural Foods Cookbook" (1961) and 37 other titles, Beatrice J. Trum Hunter, she died in New Hampshire at the age of 98. A native of Brooklyn, she and her then-husband purchased property in Deering, N.H., which they converted into a sylvan diner that exposed city dwellers to organic and natural foods. Among her friends and acquaintances were environmentalist Rachel Carson and nutritionist Adelle Davis. According to her "New York Times" obit, Hunter was deeply influenced by "100,000,000 Guinea Pigs" (by Kallen / Schlink), a best-selling book published in 1933 that critically looked at the food industry, became the catalyst for creating the FDA, and changed her life. With quiet determination, Hunter educated the American public long before anyone else about the danger of processed foods, artificial additives, and pesticides. Instead,

she promoted whole grains as well as fresh vegetables and fruits. As late as 2011, she wrote a book entitled "Our Toxic Legacy: How Lead, Mercury, Arsenic, and Cadmium Harm Our Health."



### **Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959)**

Designer and architect Frank Lloyd Wright was born 150 years ago on June 8. The anniversary of this world-renowned artist will be celebrated with numerous exhibits, lectures, workshops, books, and concerts. Over his long career (he died at the age of 91), Wright designed over 1,000 structures and left a decisive mark on modern art. He is best known for his unique way of blending organically and harmoniously nature and culture in a seamless way.

## **THE WORLD**

### **Non-Communicable Diseases Biggest Killer**

A milestone has been reached in medical history. For the first time in documented human history, communicable diseases (e.g., the plague, malaria, tuberculosis, or AIDS) are claiming fewer lives than non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, strokes, diabetes, or respiratory illnesses. On the one hand, this is a major medical accomplishment. On the other hand, it is disconcerting to see that public education and awareness of this very fundamental is lagging. People are not as alarmed about obesity and asthma, which are slow-moving disasters, as they are about the Ebola or Zika virus. As a result, national and international funding for research on non-communicable diseases is not considered a priority and still in its infancy. It is admittedly difficult to change people's behavior and to convince them to eat better, exercise more, and smoke less. However, there are many things individuals and families, schools and employers, communities and societies can do to prevent unnecessary fatalities. Better food choices could be offered, recreational facilities can be built, tobacco and sugar could be taxed, homicides and suicides could be prevented, safer roads could be built, harmful chemicals could be phased out, the air and water could be cleaned, and so on. In due time this will happen, of course, but in the meantime any delay means the needless death of millions of people every year.

### **Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons**

A United Nations disarmament panel has presented the first draft of a global treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons, including the development, manufacturing, testing, use, sale or purchase, or stockpiling. The goal is "a world without nuclear weapons." The U.S. says that this is a naive, idealistic, and unattainable dream. None of the 9 countries known to possess nuclear weapons (Britain, China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, and the U.S.) support such a treaty. However, more than 120 countries support the draft. Supporters of a ban also refer to the successful bans of chemical weapons, cluster bombs, and land mines. Some people have pointed out that nuclear weapons are old and obsolete technology by now and not essential to national security anymore. In the future, cyber attacks can be launched on a grand scale that dwarf the devastating and paralyzing effects even of nuclear bombs. Peace activists have hailed the nuclear-weapons ban as a watershed moment and a milestone in the history of humankind.

### **Trash Talk**

Humans are horrible litterbugs. For as long as we have been around, the world has been our dumping ground. That was less of a problem in prehistoric times when the materials we used were mostly organic and biodegradable. Today, however, we use lots of plastic and other synthetic stuff that lasts forever. Study after study describes how even the farthest corners of the world are covered with alarming quantities of junk. Remote and uninhabited Henderson Island in the Pacific Ocean was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1988 because of its rare and pure ecology, but today its beaches are littered with tons of detritus, mostly plastic. Similar reports are coming from

both the Arctic and Antarctic regions of the world. Ocean currents transport the flotsam or jetsam everywhere. Plastics have made their way into the food chain, killing countless bird and fish every year. It is also suspected of negatively impacting fertility, but there is much science does not yet understand about plastic pollution and its effects. Not only are humans contaminating the land and the water, but space junk is also becoming a real threat to satellites and space travel. Eventually, international treaties will have to be signed and global clean-up initiatives be organized lest the problem gets completely out of hand. It is folly to believe that nation states alone can tackle global epidemics, natural disasters, armed conflicts, climate change, or – in this case – environmental pollution. The age of nation states is over, although not everyone understands that.



### **Bullfighting in Spain**

Bullfighting remains controversial in Spain, where it has become a highly politicized issue. It was banned in Catalonia in 2012, but other areas assert that it is part of Spain's protected cultural heritage. Thousands of animal-rights activists marched earlier this year in Madrid, demonstrating against the violent practice. They say that bullfighting is among the world's most blatant forms of animal cruelty, with bulls being slowly lanced and stabbed to death for the amusement of spectators. Almost 2,000 animals are slaughtered in this manner every year. Younger and more urbanized generations have little appetite for the atavistic barbarity anymore, but others consider bullfighting to be an integral part of Spanish national identity, which must be preserved.

### **Canada Sees Surge of Foreign Students**

While colleges and universities in the U.S. struggle to fill classrooms and dorms, Canadian institutions are seeing record numbers of foreign students, incl. students from the U.S. While the United States is still the leader in international education with about 1 million international students, Canada is catching up fast and currently has about 350,000 international students – a per-capita rate that far exceeds that of the U.S. The "Trump effect" is certainly a major factor in this development. International students do not feel safe in the U.S. anymore as stories about racial discrimination and hate crimes are reported on a daily basis. There are also compelling economic reasons for studying in Canada. It is much cheaper and avoids the accumulation of crushing debt. Another reason is the extremely onerous visa process of the U.S., which is slow, lengthy, and costly. The Canadian process is simple, online, and fast. It is also much easier and quicker to acquire citizenship in Canada. Health care is a fourth factor that is often quoted. The future of the Affordable Health Care Act in the U.S. is in limbo while in Canada enrolled students, incl. those with preexisting conditions, are automatically eligible for health care through their university. Lastly, college students being college students, do not like the harsh criminal-justice system in the U.S. when they drink alcohol or smoke "a little weed." In the U.S., a "crime" of this nature can put their entire future in jeopardy while Canada is more relaxed about such inconsequential things. – The U.S. is no longer as attractive to international students as it once was. One of the inevitable long-term consequences will be a labor shortage in the STEM sciences. In many fields, the U.S. is already experiencing a shortage of physicians and engineers.

### **Will English Remain the Dominant World Language?**

English is the unassailable lingua franca in global commerce, science, technology, diplomacy, culture, tourism, etc. Most educated people understand and speak it to some degree. However, no language has ever kept its position as top dog in human history. Megatrends come and go. Latin was once widely spoken in Europe. English is the dominant language at the moment, but will it remain there? Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, recently joked that after the so-called Brexit "slowly but

surely English is losing importance in Europe." Given the nationalistic tendencies of the Trump administration ("America first!"), the same could be said for American English. A retreat from the world stage leads to a diminished role of these actors. Although Silicon Valley products and Hollywood movies still rule the world, English has begun to lose some its prestige and luster. It is impossible to predict the future, but some day historians and linguists may point to the year 2016 as a pivotal watershed moment. What would replace English? Chinese, which does not have an alphabet, is difficult to learn. Although an economically important country, it is not a popular one. A more likely candidate might be Spanish, which is relatively easy to learn and already widely spoken throughout Latin and North America. Artificial languages such as Esperanto have never reached critical mass despite the obvious need to have a world language, and so we are not putting much stock in them. Another option – some day artificial intelligence and machine translations through pocket or arm-wrist devices may render a global lingua franca superfluous, but at the moment this is pure science fiction.

### **More on Svalbard**

The Feb. issue of "Community Matters" contained an entry on the Svalbard Global Seed Vault on the Norwegian island group of Spitsbergen. Svalbard is a subterranean facility, safe from natural or human-caused disasters such as volcanoes, earthquakes, sea-level rise, or terrorism. It was built in a geographic area known for its permafrost conditions – or so the designers thought. An interesting new development has since taken place. Due to climate change, arctic regions have warmed dramatically over the past decades, by as much as 6 degrees Fahrenheit. Meltwater is now gushing into the entrance of Svalbard, threatening to flood the seed collections in the interior chambers. The meltwater has not yet reached the vault itself, and appropriate measures have since been taken to improve the construction and to ensure the safety of Svalbard's precious contents. "It was not in our plans to think that the permafrost would not be there and that it would experience extreme weather like that," a spokesperson for the Norwegian government said. – In the U.S., there is widespread denial that climate change even exists or that it is caused by man. It is "not in the plans" of conservative Republicans either, but some day there will be a rude awakening when coastal cities are under water or much of the interior suffers from desertification.

### **John McCain Makes the Case for Human Rights**

"It is foolish to view realism and idealism as incompatible. (...) Our values are our strength and greatest treasure. We are distinguished from other countries because we are not made from a land or tribe or particular race or creed, but from an ideal that liberty is the inalienable right of mankind and in accord with nature and nature's Creator. To view foreign policy as simply transactional is more dangerous than its proponents realize. Depriving the oppressed of a beacon of hope could lose us the world we have built and thrived in. It could cost our reputation in history as the nation distinct from all others in our achievements, our identity and our enduring influence on mankind. Our values are central to all three. Were they not, we would be one great power among the others of history. We would acquire wealth and power for a time, before receding into the disputed past. But we are a more exceptional country than that. We saw the world as it was and we made it better."

*John McCain, the Republican senator from Arizona, made his remarks in a recently published essay about international human rights. The piece was in response to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson who has stated that human rights should play no role in U.S. foreign policy. Donald Trump has famously pursued an agenda that disregards human-rights violations by strongmen such as Duterte, Erdogan, Putin, and Xi. Needless to say, critics of McCain have pointed out that he himself has quite a history of being a bellicose "war hawk."*