

Community Matters

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

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Send info, articles, or comments to
delawarecommunitymatters@gmail.com

LOCAL EVENTS

Frank Chiou on Disney's "Moana" (5/2)

OWU music prof. Frank Chiou will speak on the original music of "Moana," an animated 2016 Disney movie, on Tues., May 2 (4:10-5 pm) in Benes Rm. A of the Hamilton-Williams Campus Center (HWCC). The film narrates the story of Moana, the daughter of a Polynesian tribal chief, who tries to ensure the survival of her people. The presentation is free & open to the public.

OWU Art Gallery Reception (5/3)

OWU's Werner Gallery in Edgar Hall (35 S. Sandusky St. is holding a reception for Rosellina ("Rosy") Avoscan on Wed., May 3 (5-6:30 pm). Her show, "Am I Us or Them?," can be viewed on the first floor of Edgar Hall (Rm. 116) from April 24 through Sept. Rosy Avoscan is the spouse of an OWU professor and a professional artist. The exhibit is her response to the international refugee crisis and includes photography, drawings, oil paintings, sculpture, and ceramics. The works reveal a strong empathy for the huddled masses trying to survive global conflicts. Thousands, including numerous children, have perished in transit. "It Could Have Been Me," is the title of one of her works.

Celebrating Seniors Event (5/4)

The 4th annual Celebrating Seniors Event will be held Thurs., May 4 (10 am – 1 pm) at Mingo Park, 500 E. Lincoln Ave. There will be free health screenings and lots of info about local senior services, safety, nutrition, insurance, caregiving, etc. In addition, there will be food, fun, and small prizes throughout the event, which is free & open to the public.

First Thursday Noontime Recital Series (5/4)

Asbury United Methodist Church continues its First Thursday Noontime Recital Series on Thurs., May 4 (12:15 pm), at Asbury UMC at 55 W. Lincoln St. Organist Carol Ann Bradley will perform works by Bach and others. Her concert will close out the season with a flourish. Beverages are provided. The concert is free & open to the public.

First Friday (5/5)

The theme of May's First Friday event is "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes," an attempt to raise awareness for domestic violence (physical and sexual). The march is free & open to the public. Participants are encouraged to wear high heels for the mile-long hike, which begins at

7 pm. Food, fun, music, and children's activities are part of the event. Businesses and restaurants will stay open late.

New Exhibit at Gallery 22 (5/5)

Gallery 22 at 22 E. Winter St. is hosting another art show for the Ohio Pastel Artists League (OPAL), which represents some 75 artists. The exhibit, "Pastels with a Punch," runs from April 30 through June 25. The official vernissage (opening reception) is from 6-9 pm on Fri., May 5, which coincides with First Friday. The show includes still life, portraits, and plein-air art.

Free Fishing Weekend (5/6-7)

ODNR is inviting all state residents to take part in the Free Fishing weekend. This year, the dates are Sat., May 6, and Sun., May 7. On those two days, fishing is free and a license is not required at public lakes and rivers.

Stockhands Horses for Healing (5/6) – \$

Stockhands Horses for Healing is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides equine therapy for children, adults, and veterans with physical, mental, developmental, or emotional disabilities. A fundraiser will be held on Sat., May 6 (6-9 pm) in the Benes Rooms of HWCC on the OWU campus. Tickets (\$45) are too steep for most people, but they support a good cause. Other ways to help Stockhands is by volunteering at their facility at 3788 Olentangy River Rd. south of Delaware. For more info, visit www.stockhands.org.

Powell Street Market (5/7)

Powell Street Market in downtown Powell is Sun., May 7 (9 am – 4 pm). The event will be held rain or shine. This is a fun family experience with 100 vendors & food trucks lining the streets. Antiques, hand-made arts & crafts, edibles, specialty products, and more are for sale. Shops & restaurants are open, too. And there are pony rides for children.



Sheep-Shearing Day at Stratford (5/7) – \$

Bring the whole family to the first sheep-shearing day at the Stratford Ecological Center (3083 Liberty Rd.) on Sun., May 7 (11 am – 4 pm). Stratford will provide visitors with a woolly experience when the resident sheep and llamas receive their annual shearing. Participants also learn about wool spinning & felting. In addition, there will be hayrides, demonstrations, and kids activities such as hula hooping. Registration is not required. There is an entrance fee of \$5 per family. For more info, visit www.stratfordecologicalcenter.org.

Arts Castle Exhibit (5/7 – 6/23)

The Delaware Artists Guild (DAG), a group of some 50 persons, is having its spring exhibit at the Arts Castle (190 W. Winter St.) from Sun., May 7 through June 23. The opening reception is scheduled for Sun., May 7 (2-4 pm). – The DAG welcomes beginners, professionals, business owners, or just fans of art.

Children's Book Author Troy Cummings (5/7)

Children's author and illustrator Troy Cummings will be speaking at the DCDL's Orange Branch Library on Sun., May 7 at 2 pm. He'll discuss writing and drawing monsters and will be available for book signing afterward. The popular Scholastic author is best known for the 12 books of his "horrorlarious" series "Notebook of Doom," but he has also written and illustrated other books (e.g., "Giddy-Up, Daddy!") and created illustrations for companies, products, books, newspapers, magazines, posters, websites, hospital rooms, greeting cards, puzzles, games, and so on. To learn more about him, visit www.troycummings.net.

Delaware Community Chorus (5/7) – \$

The artistic director of the Delaware Community Chorus (DCC), Daniel D. Hursey (74), retires this year. A farewell concert under the title "Hope Springs Forever" is scheduled for Sun., May 7, at 3 and 5 pm at St. Peter's Episcopal Church at 45 W. Winter St. The final concert under the director of Mr. Hursey features many favorite

solo, small group, and choir pieces. Tickets (\$10) are available at the door and at Toujours, 8 N. Sandusky St. – Leading the chorus after Mr. Hursey's retirement will be organist Joshua Brodbeck (29), the current assistant director. For more info, visit www.delawarechorus.com.

Preservation Parks Celebrates Mother's Day (5/14)

Preservation Parks of Delaware County celebrates Mother's Day on Sun., May 14 (1 pm) at the Emily Traphaven Park (5094 Seldom Seen Rd.) near Powell. Bring the family to enjoy activities that celebrate all mothers! Take a walk along the memory lane nature trail, create a Mother's Day gift, or plant a tree and enjoy a picnic snack with Mom. Visit www.preservationparks.com for more info.

Delaware County Board of Elections (5/16)

The Delaware County Board of Elections is holding a "Candidate and Issues Workshop" on Tues., May 16 (5:30-8:30 pm) at the Delaware County Board of Elections facility at 2079 US 23 N. The workshop is for people running for office; RSVP is required.



Bike to Work Day (5/19)

May is National Bike Month, sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists. The event is celebrated in communities from coast to coast. Established in 1956, National Bike Month is a chance to showcase the many benefits of bicycling – and encourage more folks to give bicycles a try. National Bike to Work Week is May 15-19. Bike to Work Day is Fri., May 19.

Delaware Arts Festival (5/20-21)

The 44th annual Delaware Arts Festival will be celebrated in downtown Delaware on Sat., May 20 (10 am – 6 pm), and Sun., May 21 (10 am – 5 pm). High-quality arts & crafts, entertainment, fun, and children's activities are part of the event. E. Winter St. will be a designated food street. Profits benefit the visual arts in Delaware County.

Preservation Parks Launches "Into the Ice Age" (5/26)

On Fri., May 26 (7 pm), Preservation Parks of Delaware County launches its "Into the Ice Age" summer program with "Ice Age," the animated movie, at Deer Haven Park at 4183 Liberty Rd. Bring a lawn chair or blanket. Additional activities on the weekend of May 27-28 will transport you back to the world of saber-toothed tigers and woolly mammoths. The Ice Age Safari also starts on Memorial Day weekend in all the parks. A study booklet will be available.

Downtown Farmers Market Begins (5/27)

Main Street Delaware's Farmers Market in downtown Delaware will open for the 2017 season on May 27 and run through Oct. 28. The weekly Sat. market opens at 9:30 am and closes at 12:30 pm, while the weekly Wed. market will run from 3 to 6 pm.

Swimming Pool & Splash Pad Open (5/27)

The Jack Florence Swimming Pool in Mingo Park (500 E. Lincoln Ave.) opens for the season Sat., May 27. Information on schedules and pricing can be found on the City and YMCA websites. The popular Spray-and-Play Park near the YMCA (1121 S. Houk Rd.) is also scheduled to open the same day, but inclement weather could delay that.

New Moon Half & Quarter Marathon (5/27) – \$

City Council has approved the sale of alcohol at the next annual New Moon Half & Quarter Marathon, scheduled for Sat., May 27, at Mingo Park and in downtown Delaware. Organizers hope to attract some 1,400 participants for this Greenswell Foundation charity event. About two-thirds of the visitors come from areas outside Delaware County, according to Greenswell's Craig Thompson. The plan is once again to have a beer garden located on N. Sandusky St., between William and Winter. The Greenswell Foundation exists "to support health and wellness initiatives in Central Ohio."

CITY OF DELAWARE

City Council in May

City Council will meet on Mon., May 8 and 22. The following commissions and boards have their regular monthly meetings on the days indicated: Planning Commission on Wed., May 3; Parks & Rec. Advisory Board on Tues., May 16; Shade Tree Commission on Tues., May 23; and the Historic Preservation Commission on Wed., May 24. An additional meeting is on Wed., May 3 (3 pm) when the Civil Service Commission meets. The Parking & Safety Committee meeting scheduled for May 15 has been cancelled (see below). All meetings take place at 7 pm in City Hall (1 S. Sandusky St.) unless otherwise noted. Also, it is possible for meetings to get canceled, so checking the City's website is always advisable.

Filling the Third Ward Seat

Delaware City Council has decided how to fill the Third Ward seat that became vacant after the death of Councilman Joe DiGenova on March 19. City Council will appoint a Third Ward resident who will serve until the next municipal elections (Nov. 7). At that time, the member may seek election to the seat and, if successful, would serve the remainder of the term, which expires in Nov. 2019. Interested candidates must be at least 18, residents of the Third Ward, and had to submit a formal application (cover letter, resume, and 3 references). Preference will be given to candidates who presented 25 or more signatures of Third Ward residents and expressed an interest in running for election in Nov., but this was not a requirement to apply. The deadline has now passed. The 7 candidates with completed applications have been invited to a public meeting with City Council on Mon., May 15 (5:30 pm).

City's Credit Rating Unchanged

Moody's credit rating of the City of Delaware remains unchanged at Aa2, which is two steps below the highest rating of Aaa. The City's finances are sound and robust. The median household income of \$64,233 is above average. Unemployment is low, with 61% of the workforce being employed in white-collar jobs. The growth rate is likewise healthy. However, the City's income is heavily dependent on income-tax revenues (about 80%), which are susceptible to economic fluctuations. In addition, there is a heightened debt load and the pension burden, which also plague other cities. Despite these factors, a Aa1 rating seems possible and perhaps even likely in the future. It would allow the City to take out loans for infrastructure projects at lower interest rates.

City Delegation to Sakata Is Back

From April 13-20, a 5-member City delegation visited Delaware's sister city Sakata in Japan. (See "Community Matters," April 2017.) At the City Council meeting on April 24, Mayor Carolyn Riggle provided a brief preview or overview of the visit, stating that the delegation had an extremely positive experience in Japan and was treated like royalty. A focus during the visit was economic and business development. A full report will be presented later.

Education Center at Water Treatment Plant Now Open

At long last, the City of Delaware's Water Treatment Plant at 3080 US 23 N has opened its Education Center. The 900-square-foot area features an exhibit that depicts the plant's history dating back to 1889 as well as the water cycle and treatment process from start to finish. The Education Center is open to schools, civic groups, and residents. However, for security reasons you must first call Public Utilities at 740-203-1900 to schedule a tour. – The Olentangy River is Delaware's main water source. The City also maintains several wells at Penry Rd. as a back-up.

Pilot Program for Bulk Item Pick-Up

The City of Delaware is starting a 6-month pilot program for the pick-up of solid-waste items, beginning May 9. Residents need to schedule and pay in advance. Items would be picked up on the second Tuesday of each month. There is a minimum fee of \$25 for up to 3 items per stop; additional items are \$10 each. All fees must be prepaid at Public Works, 440 E. William St. Permitted bulk items would include furniture, appliances, carpeting, mattresses & box springs (both must

be wrapped), exercise equipment, and bathroom items such as toilets, sinks, and tubs. Excluded are car tires, hazardous waste, and – of course – household waste and yard waste that are picked up at other times. – The program is a good option to have. There is only one concern we have. As long as there are fees involved to get rid of car tires and television sets, couches and refrigerators, paint or construction materials, people will continue to dump them illegally along roads, in creeks, or in parks. We regularly see large bulk items in the Delaware Wildlife Area. Also, household items generated by fires, evictions, or abandonments are excluded from the program, which also creates another incentive for people to illegally dump entire loads. Perhaps the City should look at ways to waive the fees in cases of indigence. Another practical and perfectly legal idea – two or three neighbors could collect their unwanted bulk items and then send in a single check, thus saving themselves money.

Delaware's Urban Forest

The Building Industry Association (BIA) has raised objections to the existing tree-replacement rules contained in Section 1168 of Delaware's Codified City Ordinances, in existence since 2004. The ordinance requires the developer or owner of a plot to replace each major tree "with trees that have a total caliper equal to, or greater than, the total caliper of the removed major tree" (Section 1168.04). Alternatively, developers can pay a replacement fee of \$100 per caliper inch into a Tree Bank Fund so that the trees can be replaced elsewhere. The stated goal, adopted in 2002, is "to maintain an equivalent tree canopy citywide before and after removal / construction." The BIA believes that this is an "onerous and expensive" burden on its members and is currently lobbying for exceptions to the rule. Rather than replacing trees caliper inch by caliper inch they are proposing a tree-by-tree replacement, for example by replacing a mighty oak with a young and cheap sapling. Several recently approved developments required the removal of hundreds of mature trees. If BIA's proposal were adopted, it is hard to see how Delaware's existing tree canopy can be maintained citywide.

Coughlin's Crossing

A recent letter to "This Week Delaware News" (April 23) encapsulates the feelings of many local residents about what happened at Coughlin's Crossing, a new 80-acre development site on between US 23 S and Stratford Rd. Beth Stevenson laments "the total devastation of big hardwood trees and 100-year-old spruce trees" to make room for Coughlin's Crossing, a mixed-use development. She concludes her letter by saying, "Shame on the city leaders for allowing this thoughtless destruction, and shame on the residents and neighbors for not demanding that the horror be stopped." – It is the City of Delaware's stated goal "to maintain an equivalent tree canopy citywide before and after removal / construction" (Ordinance 1168.07). Healthy major trees have to be either replaced on site or elsewhere (Tree Bank Site) or a fee of no less than \$100 per caliper inch must be paid into a Tree Bank Fund used to plant and maintain new street and park trees in other neighborhoods. In this case, which involved hundreds of lost trees, more than \$400,000 will be paid into the Tree Bank Fund over the next several years, benefitting all City's residents. However, Beth Stevenson's ire is understandable. Ordinance 1168.01 recommends a balance between "reasonable development of lands" on the one hand and the goal "to ensure the preservation of existing trees and natural wooded areas" on the other (Ordinance 1168.01). Whether or not this balance was achieved in this case is an open question. Clearly, in the eyes of many residents the resulting clear-cutting represented a failure. For the record, this was a case when Delaware's Shade Tree Commission was not consulted about the issue, either intentionally or unintentionally, and thus was prevented from submitting any input. Coughlin's Crossing did not appear on the agenda of the Shade Tree Commission until April 25, long after 939 major trees and thousands of additional ones were removed.

Inclusionary Zoning Programs

The 2016 homeownership rate in the nation was 63.7%, which means that more than one third of the population rents. However, rental costs have increased at a pace greater than wage gains, making affordable housing harder and harder to find. The average rent in Columbus is now \$898 a month, according to a recent article in the Columbus Dispatch. The average in the downtown area of

Columbus is \$1,300 and can reach up to \$2,000. What that means for low-or-moderate income (LMI) people is that they are being pushed out of the city, a problem that will only grow worse in the foreseeable future. High-end projects such as Coughlin's Crossing and Evans Farm in Delaware County are going up at the expense of workforce housing. – Some communities have therefore started to establish mandatory or voluntary "inclusionary zoning" (IZ) rules that require that a certain percentage of new housing remains affordable for LMI folks (e.g., 10%). In exchange, developers may benefit from incentives such as density bonuses or fast-track permitting to offset costs. Alternatively, municipalities may impose a fee or charge for developers who don't provide affordable housing options below market rates. Hundreds of communities across the nation have some form of IZ rules on their books. The City of Columbus is currently looking at them. The City of Delaware, which is also heavily dependent on individuals who work in low-wage or part-time service jobs that don't provide a living wage, should do the same. The national income inequity is larger than it has been in a century. Affordable and subsidized housing is one of the things authorities can and must do to ensure a level playing field for everyone. Any claims that IZ programs would constrict growth or force developers to build elsewhere are bogus. The right kind of incentive package will persuade developers to do so and help create communities that are economically more diverse and racially better integrated.

Ohio Wesleyan University

The last day of classes is Tues., May 2, followed by final exams. The term ends Tues., May 9. The grades of graduating students are due Wed., May 10 (5 pm), of all other students on Mon., May 15 (4:30 pm). Commencement is Sat. afternoon, May 13. Keynote speaker is alumnus Andres Duarte '65, an influential business leader from Caracas, Venezuela. His address is free & open to the public.

OWU Begins to Offer Online Courses

In November 2015, OWU's faculty approved a two-year pilot proposal to offer online summer courses for OWU students enrolled in the spring semester. In summer of 2016, 6 online courses were offered by a variety of departments and divisions. In summer 2017, seven more courses were added, more than doubling the total to 13. Some of the same faculty members who taught online courses in 2016 are once again on the course schedule for summer 2017, meaning they must have liked the experience. Students, too, seemed to value the option. They are more open to digital platforms than older generations, and it saves them room-and-board expenses. Although specific figures are not available, OWU's Provost Chuck Stinemetz indicated in March that online enrollment and revenue expectations were positive. Both in 2016 and 2017 the faculty had some questions and concerns about how to properly assess the success or failure of online courses. Some were also wondering if a digital delivery system is the way OWU, a traditional residential college, should be going. For example, how do you teach science without a hands-on lab component? A full-fledged discussion involving benefits and challenges as well as a cost-benefit analysis will hopefully take place in the fall of 2017. Despite the fact that online courses are a major departure from 175 years of OWU traditions and practices, it is interesting to see that there has been little pushback.

New Installation at OWU's Ross Art Museum

OWU's Richard Ross Art Museum at 60 S. Sandusky St. has opened a new exhibit in its atrium entitled "With Radical Love & Fierce Resistance," which runs through June 2. The first in a series of 3 installations, it features a selection of colorful banners on the museum's outside and conversation starters on the inside. Many questions and statements reflect urgent needs and concerns by OWU students and the community at large. Here is but one example: "How do I empathize with those who cannot empathize with me?" Erin Fletcher, the museum's new director, developed the exhibit with Minneapolis artist and editor Sam Gould who often uses public spaces as his canvas. Public engagement is the goal of Gould, Fletcher, and OWU. The installation encourages participants to resist a world full of hate and distrust and to create alternative "manners of communing." The exhibit is the first step "to rebrand" the Ross as a site and a hub for bridge-building and open conversation to overcome divisions. The installation will be followed in the fall by a video projection by Susanna

Crum and Tiffany Carbonneau on a building in Delaware. A third and final exhibit (to be determined) will be shown in spring 2018. – Artist Sam Gould spoke at at The Ross on Wed., April 19, and discussed the need to build bridges and create spaces for people to come together and address their common interests locally and democratically, free from outside influences.

Quilt Exhibit at Ross Art Museum

"With These Hands" is a juried exhibit of art quilts created by Quilt Surface Design Symposium (QSDS) artists. Starting May 19, it will be hosted by OWU's Ross Art Museum, 60 S. Sandusky St. For this summer show, the museum will be open Tues., Wed., Fri., and Sun. from 1-5 pm and Thurs. from 12-7 pm. The museum is handicap-accessible. Gallery admission is always free.

Maggie Smith Will Teach at OWU

Maggie Smith, the author of the popular poem "Good Bones," spoke on the OWU campus on April 5. She is a 1999 alumna of OWU and the author of three books of poetry ("Good Bones," "The Well Speaks of Its Own Person," and "Lamp of the Body") as well as prize-winning chapbooks. We are grateful to learn through OWU's student newspaper, "The Transcript" (4/20/17 issue) that Maggie Smith will join OWU during the 2017-18 academic year to teach English 120, "Introduction to Poetry Writing" and other courses. Students will read and discuss model poems and learn to write their own poems. Maggie Smith is replacing David Caplan, who will be on sabbatical leave.

OWU's Motto & Seal

"In lumine tuo videbimus lumen" is Ohio Wesleyan's official motto. In English, it means "In Thy Light We Shall See Light" or, more plainly, "In Your Light We See Light." The motto is a quote from Psalms 36:9. The biblical "thou" is obviously a reference to God who is the creator of all life and the light in the darkness. After all, OWU was founded by Methodists in 1842 who looked at God as the bedrock of all things. The open book we see in OWU's seal is therefore the Bible, not just any old textbook. Maybe it even shows the page from whence the quote was taken. Thirty-two light rays or spokes emanate from the tome in the form of a wheel – the light of God's inspiration and guidance. The number 32 is no coincidence. Those interested in numerology know that it is a holy number laden with both Christian, non-Christian, and pre-Christian meanings. It often suggests completeness and perfection. There are 32 pieces on the chess board. Some have claimed that the face of God would be formed by 32 letters of the alphabet if we knew them all. An interpretation that makes sense in the context of a university is to say that the number represents the 32 areas of inquiry, paths of wisdom, and/or God's ministries. Surrounding the Bible is a triangular shield (the trinity) that protects us from worldly sins and wickedness. A shield is an armorial device, but there is no complementary sword or spear. It is intended for defensive and peaceful purposes only, not for militant ones. If we trust God's word, i.e., the Bible, we are safe and protected. There could be other meanings hidden in plain sight, but the essential message is clear: Ohio Wesleyan University was founded as a school deeply rooted in biblical values, as a shiny city upon a hill, and a righteous fortress in an imperfect world. Its graduates were meant to be followers of God, peacefully doing His will and performing His work. It might also be noteworthy to point out that OWU's seal does not condemn, reject, and retreat from the world. On the contrary, the world is the stage, theater, or arena where we must stand, speak, and act. OWU sees itself not separate from the world, but as a part of it.

Diversity and Inclusion at OWU

Diversity and inclusion is currently a hot topic at OWU. The institution means well and is eager to leave behind past neglect and failure. A document that is currently circulating, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Statement," is hitting all the right buttons when it declares that "Ohio Wesleyan University recognizes and celebrates that each member of its community is unique and diverse." In particular, the policy statement says, "We are committed to creating an environment where underrepresented populations have equal access to resources and opportunities to learn and grow both personally and professionally." However, the reality still is very different. Many remember the incident reported by the "Delaware Gazette" a few years

ago when OWU's Public Safety and the Delaware Police, weapons drawn and with K-9 assistance, assaulted a Hispanic professor in his very own campus office because he looked "suspicious." Two recent reports indicate that OWU has indeed a long way to go before diversity, equity, and inclusion are fully realized at the institution. The "Status of Women Report, 2013-14" pointed out that women are systematically discriminated against: they are underrepresented, promoted at lower rates, saddled with more work, and earn less. Tenure denials are routine for women, but not for men. The 2016 "Report on OWU Faculty Diversity" came to similar conclusions. Only a handful of faculty members at OWU have a diverse background. The few exceptions feel isolated and disrespected, disenfranchised and victimized. Some reported "a culture of bullying, hazing, and harassment." The system in place for tenure, merit, and promotion was singled out as particularly onerous, secretive, and hostile. Over time, an insular, doctrinaire, and toxic hierarchy has evolved that does not treat faculty as equals at all. While OWU says it wants to welcome and celebrate each member of the community as unique and special, the faculty-personnel committee does the exact opposite. Its very goal is to discriminate, to segregate, and to practice apartheid. If a faculty member is "a good fit" for the OWU culture and enjoys departmental support, s/he receives all necessary assistance and mentoring and usually navigates the process with relative ease. If, on the other hand, an employee has a diverse and unconventional background (non-white, non-male, non-American, non-straight, non-Christian, etc.), then it gets dicey. Enshrined in the entrenched system is the perpetuation of existing homogeneous norms and values, to the detriment of heterogeneous minorities and other outsiders, no matter how fresh and brilliant. What determines a successful outcome is not "the concept of merit," contrary to the university's fairy-tale claim. Many who left OWU, either voluntarily or involuntarily, have gone on to successful careers elsewhere. The system is based on whether or not someone is accepted by and belongs to the tribal community, as determined by vague vibes and unarticulated biases and on what might be called "personality" or "collegiality." The personnel-evaluation process at OWU is a mindless and meaningless popularity contest that rewards conformity and punishes independence. If OWU is serious about changing the demographics and calculus and about creating a new culture with a greater emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion, it must start with a complete reset of its fundamentally flawed, pernicious, and counterproductive faculty-personnel system. It is the biggest impediment to a kinder, fairer, better institution.

Main Street Delaware Raises Vendors Fees

Main Street Delaware has raised prices for tables at First Friday events. For nonprofits, the fee is now \$25, for businesses \$50. The annual rate for nonprofits is \$250, for businesses \$500. The weekly vendors fees for Farmer's Market is \$15 and \$210 for the entire season. As a result of the price increases, fewer nonprofits will now be able to afford attending First Friday, which is regrettable. There was a time when nonprofits were able to table for free. A solution for nonprofits may be to collectively move to a street adjacent to the reserved block. Sidewalks are public spaces where people are free to speak and disseminate information of value to residents.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church Is 200

Even though the first building was not constructed until 1825, St. Peter's Episcopal Church at 45 W. Winter St. will celebrate its bicentennial anniversary on Sun., May 7. The original church is long gone, to make room for a bigger and better facility. The congregation, which welcomes everyone, is heavily involved in community outreach and service. The church owns Andrews House, co-sponsors Family Promise, and supports People in Need.

Delaware County District Library

One of the best things in Delaware is the conveniently located 35,000-square-foot public library, located at 84 E. Winter St. Access to a library card is free and refreshingly easy & unbureaucratic. Everyone should get one, including children and teenagers. Library hours are Mon. through Thurs., 9 am – 9 pm, Fri., 9 am – 6 pm, and Sat./Sun., 9 am – 5 pm. In addition to free information, the library offers numerous services, including a free community room for nonprofits. Different hours apply to the Delaware County Genealogical Society, located in the back of the building. – We appreciate all the

resources the DCDL provides, the library's public engagement, and the wonderful staff under the leadership of George Needham. For more info on the library or how to become a "Friend of the Library," read their quarterly newsletter or visit www.delawarelibrary.org.

Update on Boardman Art Garden

The Northwest Neighborhood Association (NNA) continues to pursue the idea of an "art garden" on the Ruth Boardman field owned by Delaware City Schools. Paul Craft, the schools' superintendent, has granted permission to pilot a temporary art garden for the next two years. Several Central Ohio artists have already donated pieces. The project will give the community an idea "what an art garden would look and feel like." Hopefully, residents will like and embrace the concept. All of Delaware would benefit from the presence of an attractive art garden that features topiaries, sculptures, and the like and bring visitors to town. For more info on the NNA, visit www.delawareanna.org.



Meeker Homestead Museum Open

Starting April 23, the Meeker Homestead Museum at 2690 Stratford Rd. will be open to the public every Sunday afternoon from 2-5 pm. The first special exhibit will be Delaware's Dinkey (streetcar, trolley, tram) and interurban locomotives that roamed the local and county streets in the early 1900s. Admission is free, but a donation of \$5 to support the museum and the Delaware County Historical Society is suggested. For more info, visit www.delawareohiohistory.org.

The Nithyanandeshwara Hindu Temple

Many people may not realize that Delaware has a Hindu temple, one of many in Ohio. The Nithyanandeshwara Hindu Temple, located at 820 Pollock Rd. on the Olentangy River, recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. The site hosts numerous free programs and classes that are open to everyone: yoga, meditation, health & well-being, vegetarian cooking, weight-loss, and the like. Planned additions include a school and some residential housing. For more info and to watch a 10-minute video, visit www.vedictempleohio.org. – Hindu temples are open to everyone regardless of color, race, origin, language, gender, sexual orientation, religious faith, or culture. However, guests are expected to be respectful, wear clean attire, and to take their shoes off before entering the worship area. Hinduism teaches "Dharma" (order, kosmos, harmony) and tries to overcome "Adharma" (disorder, chaos, disharmony). The highest state of enlightenment you can experience is "Advaita" – "Oneness with All" or awareness of the interconnectedness of all things. "The whole world is one family" (Hindu scripture).

Stratford's Farm Market

The Stratford Ecological Center, an organic farm at 3083 Liberty Rd., has fresh greens available to be picked in the greenhouse, incl. spinach, a variety of lettuces, kohlrabi & more. They also carry beef & lamb, goat & pork. More produce will be added as the growing season continues. Their website is www.stratfordecologicalcenter.org.

2017 Summer Meal Program

Woodward Elementary School is still under construction. Word has reached us that its summer-meal program will be moved to the Second Ward Community Initiative (SWCI) facility at 50-A Ross St. this summer. When it was located at the former Willis Intermediate School at W. William last summer, there was a significant drop in customers. The program is open to all children between the ages 1 and 18. It begins May 30 and ends Aug. 11, 2017. Free lunches will be served from 12-1 pm.

Public Can Help Control Mosquitoes

They are small and fragile, but they are the world's deadliest animals: mosquitoes. To keep them in check, empty containers, tires, gutters, etc., of standing water and replace the water of bird baths, pet dishes, rain barrels, etc., often. By denying mosquitoes

opportunities to lay eggs in water, you can help reduce their population. Since mosquitoes are short-lived and don't travel far, you can make a difference in your backyard and neighborhood.

COUNTY & CENTRAL OHIO

Obesity in Delaware County

**by Abbey Trimble, Health Educator
Delaware General Health District (DGHD)**

In Delaware County, 61% of residents are overweight or obese. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "overweight and obese individuals are at increased risk for many diseases and health conditions including hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, and more. Additionally, 31.5% of Delaware County children ages 2-5 are overweight or obese compared to 28.1% of Ohio children ages 2-5 who are overweight or obese. Delaware County is ranked #1 for overall health in the state, but falls behind in this category. The County Health Rankings indicate that this category is getting worse.

What is Delaware County doing to curb this trend? Many organizations are implementing strategies to encourage residents to be physically active, including "Safe Routes to Schools" planning, enhancing parks and playgrounds, multi-use trail planning, active transportation infrastructure through complete streets policy planning, shared use policies, and more.

The Partnership for a "Healthy Delaware County" and the DGHD are focusing on strategies to reduce obesity, like educating the public on healthy eating and active living through a campaign called "Every Day Choose 5321AlmostNone": Five (5) stands for 5 Fruits & Veggies, Make Them 1/2 Your Plate; three (3) stands for 3 Healthy Meals, Less Fast Food; two (2) stands for 2 Hours Screen Time, All Devices; one (1) stands for 1 Hour Moving, More When You Can; and "Almost None" stands for Almost No Sugary Drinks, Drink Water First. Since April 2016, multiple local organizations have made campaign education materials available to thousands of Delaware families. The Delaware YMCA provides a year-long evidence-based program for families of children diagnosed with obesity called the "Healthy Weight and Your Child" program. It focuses on healthy eating, regular physical activity, and life-long behavior change. Additionally, the Hunger Alliance is planning another option for families to access healthier foods by allowing SNAP benefits to be used at the Main Street Delaware Farmer's Market in 2017.

DACC Seeks Replacement Levy

The 2015 renewal levy for the Delaware Area Career Center (DACC) was invalidated by the Ohio Dept. of Taxation and the Ohio Supreme Court because more than 1,000 qualified voters in the surrounding counties of Franklin, Marion, Morrow, and Union did not have a chance to cast their ballots. Superintendent Mary Bath Freeman is now taking steps to once again put the renewal levy on the ballot this November. If passed, tax dollars would be collected starting January 2018. In the meantime, the \$45 million consolidation project is on hold.

Preservation Parks of Delaware County

Preservation Parks offers once again a full assortment of programs for all ages – a workshop on gourds (5/6), a hound hike (5/8), a movie night ("Ice Age," 5/26), a bird walk (5/27), a book discussion (5/31), a photo contest, and more. Families may also want to check out 1-day or 1-week summer camps for children ages 8 and up. For more info, read Preservation Parks' quarterly program guide or visit www.preservationparks.com.

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 previous summers. The pass costs \$25 and 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.

Ikea Columbus Opens June 7

The Swedish company Ikea will open its 44th store in the U.S., and its 2nd in Ohio, on June 7 (9 am). The new 354,000-square-foot store is located near the Intersection of I-71 and the Polaris area. It includes 50 show rooms, 3 model-home interiors, a supervised children's area, and a 450-seat restaurant. Eager beavers will be allowed to camp on the property 48 hours in advance of the doors opening.

Pit-Bull Debate Reaches Sunbury

Like many communities, Sunbury automatically classifies pit-bull terriers as "vicious" and bans them. Owners of the breed now want to see the ordinance overturned and made breed-neutral. They say it is unfair to discriminate against particular dog breeds. Dog experts and Humane Societies by and large agree that there is no such thing as a vicious dog breed. A dog's behavior instead depends on the way it was raised by the breeder or owner. In the wrong hands, they say, any dog can be dangerous. In the right hands, any dog can be friendly. A preponderance of evidence backs that claim up. Ohio used to be the only state to label pit bulls as "vicious," but changed the law in 2012 after lengthy debates. Charter cities, however, are free to have their own ordinances. The Village of Sunbury is not a charter city and therefore does not seem to have the right to ignore state law. However, it is currently looking into becoming a charter city.

Powell Nixes Chickens

At its April 4 meeting, Powell's City Council voted 5-2 against changing an existing ordinance that prohibits backyard chickens. Council determined that individuals and HOAs do not have the freedom to pursue their own happiness, calling it "a horrible precedent to set." Powell's City Council consists of seven white men, which may explain the prevailing paternalistic attitude.

OHIO

Dark Money at Work in Ohio

When Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel ran for U.S. Senate in 2012, a dark-money group spent more than \$1 million on his behalf. He lost against Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown anyway who was widely endorsed, even by the Columbus Dispatch. The same thing is happening once again. Mandel's bid for U.S. Senate in 2018 to unseat Brown is being funded with undisclosed donations from a mysterious Citizens for a Working America group based in Virginia, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit group that does not have to reveal its sources. In some cases, campaign money might even come from foreign governments trying to undermine the integrity of American elections. So far, Mandel has raised \$320,000; \$300,000 of that amount are of unknown origin. It is indeed ironic that Ohio's Treasurer insists on "transparency" and "accountability" down to the minutest details for others, but that he sees himself above the law.

Charitable Registration

Effective April 17, 2017, Ohio Senate Bill 227 makes changes to Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 1716.02 regarding charitable organizations located in Ohio and groups that ask Ohioans for contributions to file annual reports with the Attorney General's Office. The filings are public and intended to contribute to accountability and transparency within the charitable sector. Details are somewhat murky at this point. It appears that organizations NOT located in Ohio are exempt from the new requirement, ensuring the continued influx of "dark money" into Ohio politics.

Betsy DeVos Visits Public School

Here is a shocking, sensational, almost unbelievable story: Education Secretary Betsy DeVos visited a public school in Ohio's Van Wert in northeastern Ohio in April. Billionaire DeVos is a longtime advocate of private and charter schools and has nothing but contempt for the public-school system. She has made "school choice" a priority at the expense of traditional public schools. Her nomination was bitterly opposed by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and

the National Education Association (NEA). The Trump administration has proposed to cut the Education Dept. by \$9 billion, targeting programs "mostly benefiting low-income families," according to the Columbus Dispatch. Van Wert's public-school system has a graduation rate of 96%, according to the New York Times. The rate is much lower at charter schools and as low as 39% at an online charter school, both of which DeVos promotes heavily.

The Case of Maribel Trujillo-Diaz

Maribel Trujillo-Diaz from the Cincinnati area is the mother of four American-born children and the main breadwinner of her family. She has no criminal record and poses no threat to anyone, but recently she was torn away from her children and deported back to her native Mexico. Kudos to Ohio Senators Sherrod Brown and Rob Portman who both recognized the cruelty of this heartless and senseless act and attempted to intervene. Republican Governor John Kasich too opposed the deportation. The Archbishop of Cincinnati was involved as well. However, it was to no avail. The wishes of Ohio citizens and politicians were ignored and overruled. Is this how a democracy ("the rule of the people") is supposed to function? There is broad consensus among a majority of Americans that deportations of honest and hard-working parents of American-born children constitute cruel and unusual punishment, are a violation of Christian values and natural law, and make no economic or social sense because now the children are suddenly the responsibility of taxpayers. In the face of such blatant misconduct it should surprise no one if communities, churches, and schools come together to provide sanctuary for such unfortunate people. It is the right thing to do, just like it was once the right thing to protect run-away slaves or persecuted Jews in the past.

NATION

Are Hate Crimes Taken Seriously Enough?

The country is in the grip of a wave of hate crimes against minorities, incl. Jews. However, the response has been far from adequate. Several states (Arkansas, Georgia, S. Carolina, Wyoming & Indiana) have zero anti-hate statutes. It means that hate speech and hate crimes often go unreported and unprosecuted. In most states, existing bills are weak and ineffective. Bias-motivated crimes can result in vastly different punishments depending on where they occur. Only a handful of states have introduced legislation aimed at expanding definitions and beefing up penalties. Because there is no consensus and standard on what constitutes a hate crime and no reporting obligation, there is a general lack of information, which is of course by design. According to the New York Times, about 88% of law-enforcement agencies reported in 2015 that not a single hate crime had occurred in their jurisdictions. That is hard to believe. The official rate of hate-crime across the nation is with certainty much higher than what reported by the FBI. Reputable non-profits such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Council for American-Islamic Relations have all reported dramatic increases in hate crimes across the nation. It is clear, however, that authorities are not motivated to do everything they can to track the problem and to address it.

Electric Vehicles Are Coming

Electric vehicles (EVs) make up only 1% of global car sales at the moment. However, both car manufacturers and oil companies expect that to change in the near future. As the price for batteries is dropping and performance is increasing, EVs are more competitive than ever before. Industry analysts predict that by 2030 between 15% and 30% of all new vehicles will be battery-powered. The oil industry expects the demand for gasoline to peak at around the same time and then to gradually decline. Major car manufacturers are investing billions to electrify their fleets. Volkswagen has a goal of 25% by 2025. Toyota plans to phase out fossil-fuels altogether by 2050.

Heartland Institute Denies Climate Change

The Illinois-based Heartland Institute is a think tank on the forefront of numerous right-wing issues. The "institute," which is not affiliated with any reputable university, is now planning on sending as many as 200,000 copies of a book that denies climate change to every single K-12 and college science teacher in America. Heartland's

president, Joseph Bast, has called global warming an example of “fake news.” Not surprisingly, the pamphlet concludes that the impact of human activity on climate change, if it exists at all, is “not dangerous.” The slim volume (120 pp.), “Why Scientists Disagree about Global Warming,” is written by three authors (Craig D. Idso, Robert M. Carter, and S. Fred Singer) with no publication record in the field and furnished with a foreword by Marita Noon who writes for Breitbart. According to climate scientist Curt Stager at Paul Smith College, the book is misleading “unscientific propaganda” by a think tank that over the years has received money from the Koch Brothers and from Murray Energy. Needless to say, the book offers no definitive counter-arguments against the overwhelming evidence. There is no disagreement among scientists about climate change. Instead, there is a 90+% consensus among the scientists in the country and on Earth that climate change is real, the direct result of human activity, and dangerous. – By the way, it is interesting to note that one of the senior science directors affiliated with the Heartland Institute, geologist Dr. Jay Lehr, lives right here in Delaware County’s Ostrander. You sometimes hear from him in letters to local newspapers. If you are curious about him, check out what “PolluterWatch” says about his past record.

Trump Invites Duterte

Donald Trump’s affinity for authoritarian and autocratic strongmen is well-known (Erdogan, el-Sisi, Putin, Xi, etc.). He loves bad hombres, unless they are Mexican. But recently, the State Dept., the National Security Council, and the rest of the nation were caught off-guard when Trump invited dictator Rodrigo Duterte from the Philippines to the White House. Duterte, who came to power in June of 2016, has made the war against drugs the center piece of his populist agenda. Known for his open contempt for due process and “so-called judges,” he is responsible for the extrajudicial killings of “nearly 10,000 people,” according to the New York Times. Some of them were undoubtedly guilty of drug-related crimes, but many were innocent bystanders. The “war against drugs” has also been a convenient tool for Duterte to get rid of opponents to his undemocratic leadership style. Human-rights organizations have condemned Duterte’s ruthless and murderous regime and will undoubtedly exert pressure on the White House to rescind the invitation. It should come as no surprise that Trump also has a commercial interest in maintaining good relations with the Philippines: his name is stamped on a \$150-million tower in the capital, Manila. White House spokesperson Sean Spicer has confirmed that his boss wants “to set a new tone” and that human rights do not have the highest priority in the Trump administration.

Sanctuary Cities

A federal judge in California, William H. Orrick, has ruled that in accordance with the U.S. Constitution only Congress is authorized to withhold federal funds from so-called sanctuary cities and states, not the president. The ruling applies nationwide. Trump’s executive order, issued in January, is thus null and void. This is not the first setback for the inexperienced and unprepared Trump administration. Much to his surprise and chagrin, the new president had to learn that there are 3 branches of government in the U.S., each given power to check and balance the other branches.

Wisconsin Wants Schools to Drop Minimum Standards

Wisconsin’s governor, Scott Walker, wants his state to become the first in the nation to drop the requirement for a minimum number of hours in class. The current requirements are 1,050 hours for elementary schools and 1,137 hours for secondary schools. Walker’s view is in line with “school reformers” like Betsy DeVos who are pushing “school choice” and want to see an increase in online learning, which is cheaper. Digital platforms allow students to do academic work whenever and wherever they want. Numerous studies have shown, however, that online learning is vastly inferior to the traditional approach. In addition, online education is subject to widespread fraud, and schools have been given millions for nonexistent students or for students who don’t do the required work. Educators generally say that more class time is better than less. Walker’s and DeVos’ attempts to deconstruct the educational system will lead to a further “dumbification” of America, which seems to be their goal. A great nation, however, depends on informed and engaged citizens.



The Energy-Star Program

The Trump administration has proposed to phase out the popular, 25-year-old Energy-Star program. The program costs about \$50 million to administer, but saves \$50 billion every year in reduced energy costs. The program encourages energy efficiency in home products and office equipment. The blue-and-white Energy-Star logo appears on hundreds of products. There is bipartisan agreement that the program is a successful model for collaboration between the private and the public sectors. Over 1,000 U.S. companies have written a letter urging Congress to preserve it.

“This Fight Is Our Fight” by Elizabeth Warren

Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren has long been a champion of working families and an advocate for consumer protections. She has now written a new book, “This Fight Is Our Fight: The Battle to Save America’s Middle Class” (Metropolitan / Holt, April 2017, \$28), in which she sharply criticizes big banks, large retailers, for-profit education companies, think tanks, the Chamber of Commerce, and other businesses and groups for no longer having the interest of the middle class in mind. “Government,” she says, “increasingly works for those at the top.” Others are left with crumbs fallen from the table. Warren advocates for more transparency and accountability and condemns predatory behavior that benefits the rich at the expense of the poor.

Out of Touch: A New Book on the Clinton Campaign

An intriguing new book by award-winning journalists Jonathan Allen and Annie Parnes (“Shattered: Inside Hillary Clinton’s Doomed Campaign,” Crown 2017, 480 pp., \$28) casts a harsh light on Hillary Clinton’s failed presidential campaign. Many external factors contributed to her loss against Donald Trump on Nov. 8 (misogyny, Russian meddling, the behavior of FBI director James Comey, populist discontent with the establishment, etc.), but it is the authors’ opinion that Hillary Clinton herself bears the primary responsibility for her defeat. Her campaign made numerous unenforced errors, snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. Her core message remained undefined. Her staff relied on flawed and rosy data, and false loyalty prevented some of her staffers from speaking truth to power. Most importantly, Hillary Clinton, a lifelong insider, failed to connect with the white working class and its pain, agony, and fury. The authors also note a lack of forces on the ground. For example, she never set foot into Wisconsin, a major swing state where the Democratic Party promptly lost. We know from Greek mythology that supreme self-confidence – hubris – is a recipe for doom and disaster. This is what happened here, according to Allen and Parnes. Donald Trump better watch out because he, too, is a flawed hero full of hubristic illusions.

Bill O’Reilly Ousted from Fox News

Don’t feel sorry for Bill O’Reilly, once the highest-paid anchor of Fox News. He received a \$25 million settlement in addition to his regular salary in the same amount. Ordinary mortals can only dream of such sums. His ouster is a decisive victory for women and consumers. Retailers worried about reputational loss and possible boycotts quickly started to withdraw their support after O’Reilly’s sordid history of harassing and taking advantage of women came to light. More than 50 major brands were involved, and Fox did have no choice but to let O’Reilly go. Grass-roots consumers are increasingly savvy about mobilizing supporters and hitting companies where it counts – at the bottom line. Many businesses now take proactive steps to immediately disassociate themselves from socially and politically controversial issues such as racism, misogyny, or homophobia that might tarnish their brand and revenue stream.

“The Golden Passport” by Duff McDonald

A new book by veteran journalist Duff McDonald has made waves even before it was published on April 25: “The Golden Passport: Harvard Business School, the Limits of Capitalism, and the Moral Failure of the MBA Elite” (Harper 2017, 672 pp.) explores the history of

the Harvard Business School, founded in 1903. While it may sound like a boring monograph, it actually contains riveting material. Originally, the school's promise and purpose was to train business leaders who would work for the benefit of society. However, over time something went horribly wrong and this once broad view narrowed dangerously. Today, the school produces primarily greedy and callous leaders for corporate America (shareholders) rather than compassionate leaders who have the common good in mind (stakeholders). McDonald's magisterial study is a powerful and hard-hitting indictment of not only HBS; it is an accurate description of the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of a criminogenic capitalist system that has long ago abandoned the moral imperative of doing good and improving society at large in constructive ways. Income disparity and inequality in America is at a hundred-year high, and we seem to rapidly approach perilous pre-revolutionary times.

Nightmare at O'Hare

Airlines routinely sell more seats than are available, betting on the fact that not all passengers will show up. But on a recent United Airlines flight taking off from Chicago's O'Hare there were actually more passengers than available seats. When not enough volunteers came forward, the airline resorted to extreme measures and forcibly bumped a randomly selected passenger from the airplane. To the surprise of many flyers, they can do that with impunity. According to the Columbus Dispatch, about 475,000 people lost their seat last year. Usually, the airlines offer travel vouchers that are voluntarily accepted by passengers. But on Flight 3411 something went horribly wrong. The passenger, Dr. David Dao, lost teeth, broke his nose, and suffered a concussion when security forces dragged him out. (He has since reached a settlement with the airline.) – The incident shed a harsh light on the corporate practice of all airlines, not just United, to maximize profits and to minimize services and safety. Customers are often treated like chattel, crammed into tight spaces, and nicked-and-dimed to death. Dr. Dao's treatment is a perfect example of how ordinary people are often treated in corporate America – with contempt and disrespect, and with militarized brutality. Dr. Dao's experience is indicative of the way many of us live now. Flying used to be an enjoyable experience, but not anymore. Living in America used to be easy, but today there is widespread fear and anger. Obviously, airlines are not the only industry where lack of customer service is a problem. Unless you are among the wealthy and privileged, you see mistreatment of people every day or may even have experienced indignities yourself. Hopefully, the latest fiasco will serve as a catalyst for much-needed reforms in the airline industry and beyond.

The Power of Smartphones

When corporate America screws up, customers armed with smartphones are watching and recording. The same thing happens when law enforcement resorts to measures that are not aligned with community values or generally accepted standards. Smartphone cameras have the power to send embarrassing information and pictures via social media to thousands of people around the nation and, indeed, around the globe, all within seconds. In the past, companies were able to sweep unflattering data under the rug, but not anymore. Smartphones have made it more difficult for companies to hide malfeasance and misconduct. A recent example is the horrible incident involving the forced eviction of a passenger from an overbooked United Airlines flight. Smartphones have "democratized" information and empowered ordinary people to see change enacted.

Airbnb under Attack

The American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) is beginning to take Airbnb seriously. Initially dismissive, it is now developing a strategy to thwart the growing competitor. The plan is to start a comprehensive national campaign at the local, state, and federal level to discredit the start-up and to create more regulatory obstacles. It is easy to predict their playbook: there will be accusations that Airbnb is deficient in terms of safety and security; that it may violate local ordinances; that it does not collect hotel taxes; and that it may discriminate against minorities. No doubt the list will also include complete fabrications such as supposed evidence that crimes have been committed on property associated with Airbnb. The AHLA is also allocating significant funds for "academic research" that will

demonstrate that Airbnb is an outlier that breaks the law and must be reined in. In addition, the AHLA cartel is prepared to fund lobbyists and make contributions to politicians who will help craft legislation to restrict or perhaps even ban Airbnb in states. – Airbnb, valued at \$30 billion, is planning on going public in 2018. It is currently signaling its willingness to be more mainstream and to play by the rules.

Collisions between Boats and Whales

USA Today reported on 4/24 that collisions between whales and boats are surprisingly common. Researchers have photographed, counted, and analyzed data involving hundreds of whales whose bodies show old scars or fresh wounds caused by collisions with vessels. The actual total is unknown and presumed to be high because numerous animals do not survive the collisions and sink to the bottom. Whales are slow swimmers who spend a lot of time on the surface of the water. But the main culprit is the fact that as of now there are currently no international regulations or even guidelines in place to reduce the likelihood of boat-whale collisions. A good start would be to prohibit boats from traversing through known feeding and mating grounds of humpback whales and other marine mammals. The only exception should be for vessels that are actively engaged in whale watching.



Dog Whisperer Cesar Millan

Popular dog whisperer Cesar Millan has a new television show and a new book out. "Dog Nation," co-hosted with his son Andre, premiered March 3 on National Geo Wild. His book, "Cesar Millan's Lessons from the Pack," is co-written with Melissa Jo Peltier and appeared in 2017. Millan emphasizes a holistic approach to dogs: body (exercise), mind (discipline), and heart (affection) all matter. When dogs are messed up, he says, it is often the owners' fault. Millan says that not only the dogs must be trained but also the people. In his new book, he also discusses being an undocumented immigrant at one point of his life, having crossed the Rio Grande illegally. He says immigrants like himself "have amazing creativity and positive energy to offer."

United Methodist Church Rejects Gay Bishops

Since 1972 the country's third-largest denomination, the United Methodist Church, has a policy on its books that declares homosexuality as "incompatible with Christian teaching." In a recent decision, the Judicial Council (UMC's highest court) reaffirmed that openly gay bishops (in this case, Bishop Karen P. Oliveto of Denver) are in violation of the church's definition of marriage and stance on homosexuality. The UMC is so deeply and bitterly divided on the issue that a schism is possible. The Western Jurisdiction, which elected Bishop Oliveto last year, is being opposed by the South Central Jurisdiction. Some African and Asian churches are also opposed to gay marriages.

Avatar Sequels Planned

The 2009 movie "Avatar" by filmmaker James Cameron was a stunning futuristic movie that depicted the noble savages on the distant planet of Pandora. They have a pantheistic theology and worship Eywa, the Earth Mother. Consequently, they are fiercely protective of their lush forests and of nature in general. One day, however, greedy human soldiers arrive looking for rare minerals. They begin to ruthlessly oppress the Na'vi and destroy their unique environment. "Avatar" is a timeless story of conquest and exploitation on the one hand and of brave people fighting for their survival on the other. – As early as 2013, James Cameron has spoken of plans to produce sequels to the hit film, which became the highest-grossing film of all time. These plans have now taken on more concrete form. Four sequels are planned and scheduled for production between 2020 and 2025. The original actors of the movie are expected to return to their roles.