

Community Matters

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

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Send info or articles, questions or comments, requests to subscribe or unsubscribe to delawarecommunitymatters@gmail.com

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On Humility & Community (Philippians 2: 3-5)

"Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

CALENDAR OF LOCAL EVENTS

Full Moon (1/1 + 31)

The Wolf Moon on the night between Jan. 1 & 2 is a Supermoon. The following full moon is also in January, on the 31st. Two full moons within the same month is a rare phenomenon, called a Blue Moon. The phrase "once in a blue moon" is derived from that. In Feb., there will be no full moon at all. – Free open to the public. ;)

Asbury Noontime Organ Recital (1/4)

Asbury's First Thursday Noontime Recital Series continues on Jan. 4 (12:15-12:45 pm) with a concert by Alex Armstrong, a graduate student at the Univ. of Oklahoma and a recent OWU graduate. Asbury United Methodist Church is located at 55 W. Lincoln Ave. Free & open to the public.

First Friday (1/5)

Main Street Delaware celebrates First Friday on Jan. 5 (6-9 pm) in downtown Delaware. During "FREEze Fest," businesses will be offering FREE events & no-cost activities, FREE food & drink tastings (e.g., cheese, honey, popcorn, and tea), demonstrations, make-and-take crafts, entertainment, and more. Stop by the Main Street Delaware office at 20 E. Winter St. on Jan. 5 for your complete list of participating downtown merchants. For more info, visit www.mainstreetdelaware.org.



Library Has a New Bookmobile (1/5)

The current Delaware County District Library (DCDL) Bookmobile is retiring after 16 years and 106,000 miles and will be replaced with a new Sprinter Bookmobile. An official ribbon cutting is planned for First Friday, Jan. 5 (6 pm), outside the Delaware Area Chamber of Commerce at 32 S. Sandusky St. After the brief ceremony, the bookmobile will be open for the public to tour.

Gallery 22: A Fiber Trio (1/5)

Gallery 22 at 22 E. Winter St. will feature "A Fiber Trio" in January & February. Textiles and other fiber art work by Deb Baillieul, Rebecca Dickson, and Tammy Wallace will be on display. The art exhibit opens with a reception on Fri., Jan. 5 (6-8:30 pm). For more info, visit www.gallery22.net.

Luke Miller's Bicycle Trip around the World (1/9)

In 2016, Delaware County native Luke Miller set off to bicycle around the world. Now halfway done, he is returning to Delaware to spend a month at home before heading out again. On Tues., Jan. 9 (7 pm), he will speak at Willis Education Center / WEC (74 W. William St.) about some of his adventures in Asia and show pictures. The event is sponsored by Delaware City Schools and the City of Delaware's Sister City Advisory Board. Free & open to the public.

Habitat for Humanity (1/10)

Habitat for Humanity of Delaware & Union Counties has another Volunteer Orientation on Wed., Jan. 10 (6-7 pm), at 305 Curtis St., near the Restore facility. If interested in helping Habitat accomplish its mission to build homes and hope, please call Volunteer Coordinator Linda Warren at 740-363-9950 or by emailing volunteer@habitatdelawareunion.org.

Northwest Neighborhood Association Meets (1/11)

The Northwest Neighborhood Association (NNA) has its next regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Thurs., Jan. 11 (7:30 pm) at the Andrews House (39 W. Winter St.). A current project is the Boardman Art Garden. – The NNA has been committed to preserving the quality of life & fostering a sense of pride in Delaware's Northwest Neighborhood since 2001.

YMCA's Daddy-Daughter Dance (1/12)

The YMCA will hold its popular Daddy-Daughter Dance on Fri., Jan. 12 (6:30-8:30 pm) at OWU's HWCC student center. An ice-cream bar will be available at 6:30 pm, followed by games & dancing. A professional digital photo is included in the price of \$25 per couple. Admission is \$10 for each additional daughter. Formal dress is encouraged. Registration is going on now. The event may sell out.

Sustainable Delaware Ohio (1/13)

Sustainable Delaware Ohio encourages residents to "Refuse – Reduce – Reuse – Recycle"! Let's keep the planet clean and green. Monthly meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month (9:30-11 am) in the Community Room of the Main Library. For more info, go to SDO's website and/or Facebook page.

Martin Luther King Service (1/14)

The 33rd annual worship service to celebrate MLK will be held at Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church (140 S. Washington St.) on Sun., Jan. 14 (3-5 pm). The featured speaker is Bishop Lawrence Reddick III of the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church. A 1974 OWU graduate, Reddick is the 51st bishop elected in CME Church and presiding bishop of the 8th Episcopal District in Dallas. Free & open to the public.

Martin Luther King Breakfast (1/15) – \$

The Delaware County MLK Celebration Committee & OWU are inviting you to honor the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on Mon., Jan. 15 (7:45-9:30 am). The celebration will be held in the

Benes Rooms of OWU's HWCC Campus Center. The breakfast buffet opens at 7:45 am, with the program to follow promptly at 8:30 am. This year's keynote speaker is Bishop Lawrence Reddick III, an OWU graduate of the class of 1974. Tickets are \$20 per person. Proceeds support scholarships for local high-school students.

"The Annual State of the City" (1/18) – \$

The Delaware Area Chamber of Commerce presents "The Annual State of the City" address with Mayor Carolyn Kay Riggie & City Manager Tom Homan on Thurs., Jan. 18 (11:45 am – 1 pm). The event will be held at SourcePoint (800 Cheshire Rd.). The cost is \$20 for chamber members, \$25 for non-members. Tickets include a lunch buffet. Please RSVP by Jan. 15. – We repeat what we wrote last year. We would prefer it if tax-paying residents would not have to pay \$25 to hear the annual state-of-the-city address by their elected representatives. This creates the perception of a pay-to-play scheme and does not foster trust.

"Range of Vision" at the Ross Art Museum (1/18 – 3/30)

From Jan. 18 through March 30, OWU's fine arts faculty members will exhibit their latest creations, featuring works in clay, metal, painting & drawing, fabric, photography, printmaking, sculpture, and graphic design, at the Ross Art Museum, 60 S. Sandusky St. Participating faculty are Kristina Bogdanov, David Bugay, Cynthia Cetlin, Frank Hobbs, James Krehbiel, Jeffrey Nilan, and Jonathan Quick. The show officially opens with a reception & celebration on Thurs., Jan. 18 (4-6 pm). The Ross is open Tues., Wed., and Fri. from 10 am to 5 pm.; Thurs. from 10 am to 9 pm; and Sun. from 1 pm to 5 pm. The museum is handicap-accessible. Admission is always free. Visit www.owu.edu/ross for more info.

Historical Society Presentation (1/18)

The first public presentation of the Delaware County Historical Society (DCHS) this year is scheduled for Thurs., Jan., 18 (7 pm) at the Barn at Stratford (2690 Stratford Rd.). Steve Bemiller will discuss "Famous Firsts in History," focusing on the first use of everyday objects. Free & open to the public.

High School Band Festival (1/20)

The 54th annual OWU President's High School Band Festival, featuring high school musicians from multiple counties and OWU's own Symphonic Wind Ensemble, will take place Sat., Jan. 20. This is an all-day event, the highlight being a concert in Gray Chapel inside University Hall at 7 pm., conducted by OWU music professor Larry Griffin. Free & open to the public.

"How We Got On" (1/20) – \$

Columbus-based "Available Light Theatre" presents the multicultural play "How We Got On" by the African-American writer Idris Goodwin, to be performed at OWU's Chappellear Drama Center (Main Stage) on Sat., Jan. 20 (8 pm). This contemporary ode to the roots of rap & hip-hop spins the story of Hank, Julian & Luann as three talented, determined suburban teens coming of age in the 1980s. Dreaming of fame and fortune in the music scene, they must overcome isolation, dysfunction & rivalries to make the music that defines their lives. Directed by Drew Eberly, the inspiring production features Treasure Davidson, Rudy Frias, David J. Glover & Wilma Hatton. Tickets are \$10 general admission, \$5 faculty / staff / seniors & non-OWU students, and free for OWU students with valid IDs.

Volunteer Opportunities at SourcePoint (1/23)

Come learn about volunteer opportunities at SourcePoint (800 Cheshire Rd.) on Tues., Jan. 23 (4-6 pm). Chat with staff & volunteers, enjoy light refreshments, take a tour of the center, and go through an orientation & training program. Please RSVP, but walk-ins are also welcome. To learn more, visit www.mysourcepoint.org/volunteer.



Delaware's Got Talent (1/23)

Do you have a unique talent? Here is your opportunity to shine! The Delaware Main Library is presenting the first ever "Delaware's Got Talent" night on Tues., Jan. 23 (6:30-7:30 pm) for children ages 6-11. Kids can do whatever they wish to do (as long as it is age-appropriate and in good taste): sing, juggle, tell a joke, recite a poem, show a card trick, do a cartwheel, play an instrument, etc. A mic / mike and speaker are provided. Performers are asked to inform the library about their plans ahead of time. To sign up, visit www.delawarelibrary.org.

Author Visit at DCDL (1/24)

Local author Jane Corder Moore will visit the Delaware Main Library on Wed., Jan. 24 (7-8 pm). She is the author of the 2016 book "Enlarge My Territory: A Love Story." Following a devastating automobile accident that left her husband, Jimmie, a quadriplegic paralyzed from the neck down, Jane Corder Moore follows a day-by-day accounting of his rehabilitation, her faith journey throughout the ordeal & the touching end of Jimmie's life. Later on, she unexpectedly finds new love with another Jim. They travel together and find their territory greatly expanded.

"Flatt Lonesome" Band Performs in Marion

Bluegrass band "Flatt Lonesome" will perform in the historic Palace Theatre in Marion (276 W. Center St.) on Fri., Jan. 26 (8 pm). Tickets are \$18 and \$12 for children. – "Flatt Lonesome" is a young, new group of pickers fresh to the scene. While deeply-rooted in bluegrass music's historic classics, they also have an energetic flair for country sounds, progressive jams & soul-stirring gospel music. The 6-member band is comprised of Robertson siblings Kelsi Harrigill (mandolin, vocals), Charli (fiddle, vocals) & Buddy (guitar, vocals) along with Dominic Illingworth (acoustic bass), Paul Harrigill (banjo) & Michael Stockton (resophonic guitar). The Tennessee-based band first arrived on the bluegrass music scene in 2011. It has since then skyrocketed to the top of the music industry & collected coveted music awards such as the most recent 2017 International Bluegrass Music Association Vocal Group of the Year and three 2016 IBMA trophies: Vocal Group of the Year, Album of the Year for their record "Runaway Train" & Song of the Year for "You're the One." The event is sponsored by the Ohio Arts Council. For more info, visit www.marionpalace.org.

Master Gardeners Seed Swap (1/27)

If you are a gardener, this is the time to plan and get seeds. The Delaware County Master Gardeners in collaboration with Preservation Parks are holding a free seed & plant swap on Sat., Jan. 27 (9 am) at Gallant Farm (2150 Buttermilk Hill Rd.). If you have no seeds to swap, don't worry – there will be extras.

Author Peter H. Reynolds Visits Delaware City Schools (1/29)

Award-winning author & illustrator of children's books Peter H. Reynolds will visit Delaware on Mon., Jan. 29, and spend the day with the 2nd and 3rd graders of Delaware City Schools. In the evening (6-7:30 pm), there will be a public event at the Willis Education Center (74 W. William St.). Reynolds will give a presentation, followed by a book signing. Copies of his newest titles – "The Word Collector" and "Happy Dreamer" – will be available for purchase. Or, to guarantee a book, order through Fundamentals (25 W. Winter St., phone 740-363-0290) prior to the event and receive a 20% discount. – Peter Reynolds has sold more than 20 million books in over 25 languages around the globe. In 1996, he founded FableVision with his brother Paul as a social-change agency to help move the world to a better place. His official website is www.peterhreynolds.com.

Tour d'Anches Trio Performs (1/30)

OWU's Music Dept. presents the Tour d'Anches Woodwind Faculty Trio on Tues., Jan. 30 (8-9 pm) in Jemison Auditorium inside Sanborn Hall (23 Elizabeth St.). The members of the Tour d'Anches reed trio are Nancy Gamso (flute / clarinet), Karen Pfeifer (oboe), and Emily Patronik (bassoon). They will perform works by Claude Arrieu, Henry Barraud, Jean-François Dandrieu, and Fritz Kreisler. Free & open to the public. – "Anche" is the French word for "reed." The woodwind instruments used by the trio use so-called reeds to produce sound.

CITY OF DELAWARE

Pennyhoarder.com Ranks Delaware 5th Nationwide

The finance website Pennyhoarder.com has ranked the city of Delaware fifth in the nation for being one of "the best cheap cities for new families." The Penny Hoarder (www.thepennyhoarder.com) is part of Taylor Media Corp. Factors considered included median rent or mortgage costs, health-care costs, and regional price parities. However, Penny Hoarder's selection was not all about money. Other components were also included, among them pollution & water violations, violent-crime rate, school grades, access to healthy food, civic associations, and museums & libraries. Parks, farmer's markets, the downtown, and historic preservation were also mentioned. Delaware is ahead of many other cities in the nation, among them Burlington, Arlington, Boulder, and Ann Arbor. – In October, Delaware was also recognized by Money Magazine as one of the top 100 places to live in America.

The City of Delaware in January

City Council meets Mon., Jan. 8 and 22. Other meetings are (in chronological order): Civil Service Commission – Wed., Jan. 3 (3 pm), Sister City Advisory Board – Tues., Jan. 9 (6 pm) + Sister City Presentation at Willis (7 pm); Board of Zoning Appeals – Wed., Jan. 10, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board – Tues., Jan. 16, Planning Commission – Wed., Jan. 17 (changed from Jan. 3); Airport Commission – Thurs., Jan. 18; Shade Tree Commission – Tues., Jan. 23, and Historic Preservation Commission – Wed., Jan. 24. All meetings are at 7 pm in City Hall (2nd floor) at 1 S. Sandusky St. unless otherwise noted. Please note that meetings are routinely postponed, preponed, or canceled. Unscheduled meetings may be added. We recommend you check the City's website before venturing out in the cold.

Delaware Police Gets New Weapons

At the working sessions for the 2018 budget, Delaware Police Chief Bruce Pijanowski said that one of the projects for this year is the replacement of duty firearms with a new and updated weapon system. Current firearms will be replaced with a new model and new caliber (9 mm). Pijanowski explained that this is in line with current trends in law enforcement. The old weapons will be traded in for credit. Both in the budget proposals and in Pijanowski's narrative at the budget work sessions, firearm technology was prioritized over community engagement. The weaponization and militarization of the police force remains a concern for many in the community. The police chief did not mention the acquisition of military surplus, which the Trump administration is pushing. City Council did not ask about body cameras either, but they don't appear in the 2018 budget.

Delaware's Community Promotions Fund

The December 2017 issue of "Community Matters" listed the amounts allocated to various community groups in the proposed city budget for 2018. The recipients were the Arts Castle (\$15,000), the Central Ohio Symphony (\$10,000), Main Street (\$20,000), and the Second Ward Community Initiative (\$11,530). Apparently, there has been some internal back and forth since then. Some council members were inclined to give Main Street Delaware the full amount (\$25,000) after the successful First Friday in December, taking the difference away from the Arts Castle and the Symphony. (Certain council members seem to be willing to stand up for the Crew in Columbus, but not for the arts in Delaware.) In the end, however, it appears that Main Street was indeed fully funded (\$25,000), but not at the expense of the other groups. City Council allocated the total amount of \$112,530 for the Community Promotions Fund, which also includes some other expenses. At least two groups that also applied for funding received zero money, according to statements made at the 12/6 budget work sessions. City Council provided no rationale for their rejection. Community Promotions Fund decisions are made behind closed doors.

A Debate over Delaware's Sister Cities

The City of Delaware is maintaining two active sister-city partnerships at the moment – with Baumholder in Germany and Sakata in Japan. However, city council members seem divided over the

value these international relationships constitute for residents. George Hellinger sees "no value, none" for the majority of the population. Several male colleagues seem to agree with him and favored axing a small \$5000 allocation for hosting visiting delegations in the city's \$22 million budget for 2018. Mayor Carolyn Riggle and Councilwoman Lisa Keller, on the other hand, are very much in favor of sister-city programs and have participated in them. Columbus has a dozen or so such sisters around the globe, and the on-going exchanges in education and research, the arts and sports have been helpful to bring in fresh ideas, build bridges, and form business partnerships. It is interesting to note that men in general place lower value on the bonds that unite people than women (e.g., relationships, communication skills, and service & community organizations). In the end, City Council approved by majority vote a compromise that was not unreasonable under the circumstances: \$2,500 for the Sister City Program. – By the way, what George Hellinger says about sister cities could also applied to Delaware's airport, cemetery, golf course, the splash pad, tennis courts, etc., that are not self-supporting. For the majority of the population these features have "no value, none," but that does not mean they should be eliminated, right? It is precisely amenities of this nature that enrich cities and make them livable.

Beer Sales at Hidden Valley Golf Course

To help generate revenue and make Hidden Valley Golf Course self-supporting, City Council has approved the sale of beer in the clubhouse beginning in 2018. Although alcohol is officially prohibited in Delaware's parks, beer has always been consumed there in considerable quantities. Just have a look into the trash cans or the dumpster!

Keep Sidewalks Clear of Snow!

The City of Delaware is reminding residents and businesses of their responsibility regarding sidewalks. According to the City's codified ordinances (521.06), property owners are responsible for keeping sidewalks clean. This ensures safety for all, particularly your neighbors and children walking to school.

Christmas Tree Collection

The annual Christmas tree and holiday greens collection period runs from Mon., Jan. 8, through Fri., Feb. 2. Trees cannot be plastic-bagged and must be clear of decorations so that they can be mulched and recycled. Any residual yard waste will also be collected during that time.

9th Citizens Academy Coming Soon

Consider enrolling in Delaware's 9th annual Citizens Academy. The bi-weekly program allows residents a behind-the-scenes look into the various municipal departments. The 9 sessions run from February through June. Participation is free. Registration details will be announced in January.

"The Problem with City Boards"

Council Member George Hellinger made some interesting comments at the December budget work sessions. He sees certain "problems" with city boards and commissions. He hypothetically mentioned, for example, if the city owned a marina, the Marina Commission would likely be stacked with stakeholders who have a vested interest in boats. In his opinion, that should not be the case. It is probably true that residents serving on the Airport Commission are knowledgeable about airplanes, residents serving on the Shade Tree Commissions about trees, and residents serving on the Historic Preservation Commission about historic buildings. But is that necessarily a bad thing? We would argue that such people bring desirable knowledge and expertise to the table that helps City Council make better-informed decisions. In fact, when residents apply to boards and commissions, they are asked to demonstrate interest and commitment. We could be wrong, but it sounds like Hellinger is advocating for additional and/or different voices on committees, voices that would ensure less lop-sided recommendations. Or is he advocating for the abolition of commissions that give residents a voice and sometimes even a vote altogether? (The City was definitely not happy when the Historic Preservation Commission indicated that it could not, in good conscience, approve the requested demolition of the Sheets / Engineering Building at 20 E. William Street.) However, if

such a step were to be implemented, it would inevitably lead to dissent and friction. – By the way, isn't what Hellinger says not also a perfect description of City Council itself? It is stacked with people who have a vested interest in certain things. Countervailing and counteracting voices are largely absent, creating the potential of one-sided echo-chamber decisions. How about more diversity on City Council?

Christopher A. Acker on Airport Commission

Delaware resident Chris Acker was unanimously appointed by the Delaware County Commissioners to serve on the City's Airport Commission. His term commences Jan. 1 and will end Dec. 31, 2020. However, since the City just enacted a uniform term end for all citizen-board appointments, he will actually serve until June 30, 2021. – We don't usually comment on citizen volunteers, but readers of the Delaware Gazette will recognize the name Chris Acker. He is one of those fervent right-wingers who want to "take America back," if necessary "by refreshing the tree of liberty as described by Thomas Jefferson." That means bloodshed, in case you are wondering. Here is Jefferson's full quote: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure." In 2013, Acker wrote, "the tea party is our only hope." He and his cabal have been railing against the welfare state and food stamps, subsidized housing and unemployment compensation, EPA mandates and "dictator" Obama for countless years. Most recently, he wrote op-ed pieces in defense of the unconscionable tax plan by Trump and the GOP. We will watchdog what Chris Acker says and does on the Airport Commission. Hopefully, he will behave reasonably and not bring the city and the county into disrepute.

Rally in Support of Internet Neutrality

Net neutrality is history after the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) decided on Dec. 14 to end it after the Trump administration expressed its support for the measure. But the decision did not go unchallenged. Local resident [Hong Nguyen](#), for instance, attempted to raise awareness of the issue by emailing, protesting, handing out leaflets, and talking to passerby. Nguyen is a graduate from Hayes High School and currently enrolled in a teacher-education program at Ashland Univ. For a brief period, she also served on Delaware's Sister City Advisory Board. The end of net neutrality means that the internet will no longer be as open as before. Providers can now charge more for priority service, slow down or block information, and dilute privacy rules. It may also lead to an erosion of free speech and innovation. Just like everyone has open and equal access to water, electricity & gas, internet companies should be treated as utility businesses. A tiered system is unfair and undemocratic, but Republicans have long favored such inequality. Chances are that FCC's unpopular decision will be overruled by the next administration. Alternatively, the end of net neutrality might spawn alternative services such as municipal networks.



Martin Luther King Breakfast

Bishop Lawrence Reddick III, an OWU graduate of the class of 1974, is this keynote speaker at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Breakfast to be celebrated on Mon., Jan. 15. (For details, check the "Local Calendar of Events.") Bishop Reddick became the 51st bishop of the Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church upon his election in 1998, and he currently serves as the presiding bishop for the 8th Episcopal District. During his tenure, Bishop Reddick has expanded the Church's work in Africa and helped found the interfaith Alabama Faith Council. One of Bishop Reddick's life-long goals is to help eradicate world hunger by lobbying Congress as a board of directors member of the organization Bread for the World.

Yascha Mounk on Responsibility

On Nov. 30, Harvard lecturer Dr. Yascha Mounk gave a presentation entitled "Responsibility in Capitalist Democracy" on the

OWU campus. The event was sponsored by the College Democrats and the President's Club, both of which are student organizations.

There was a time when "responsibility" meant that individuals had a sacred civic and moral duty *toward* helping families, friends, neighbors, communities, and country, according to Dr. Mounk. No more. Today, the word "responsibility" has acquired a different meaning. Society demands personal "responsibility" and accountability *from* each of its members. If you are perceived as a "responsible" and deserving actor, you will be praised and rewarded. When in need, you will receive assistance. If you make bad choices and are not self-sufficient, however, praise and assistance will be withheld and you will be punished by being laid off, cut off, evicted, imprisoned, etc. Key entitlements are made conditional on good behavior. Conservatives in particular have anger issues with "irresponsible" persons who are perceived as not wanting to work, not staying thin and healthy, not being heterosexual, not remaining free of substance abuse, or not speaking English. According to Dr. Mounk, this dichotomy of responsible vs. irresponsible, superior vs. inferior people is pernicious and has poisoned American democracy. Values such as equity and solidarity, privacy and dignity, affordable housing and food security, health and happiness are often ignored in the process. The result is exponentially growing divisiveness. The conservative ideology of personal "responsibility" and its punitive consequences needs to be revisited and reframed, Dr. Mounk says. The overwhelming majority of the population has every intention to live "responsible" lives, but they often lack the economic and educational foundations or opportunities to do so. Even society's neediest aspire to exercise genuine agency. Instead of judging individuals on their past, society should look at their potential for the future. Instead of penalizing "irresponsible" individuals, society should partner with them and empower them. Instead of stigmatizing and / marginalizing people, society should embrace and include them. This is what must be done to reclaim and stabilize democracy, Dr. Mounk concluded.

Dr. Mounk has written a number of very readable books. His OWU lecture was based on "The Age of Responsibility: Luck, Choice, and the Welfare State" (Harvard UP, 2017). His "The People vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom Is in Danger and How to Save It" (Harvard UP) is scheduled for publication in March 2018.



Growing Plants in Space

What happens to plants in a low-gravity or no-gravity environment? OWU botanist Dr. Chris Wolverton will have some answers soon. In December, after several delays, a recycled SpaceX rocket took off from Kennedy Space Center in Florida to deliver seedlings of *Arabidopsis thaliana* (a weed in the mustard family widely used as a model plant) to the International Space Station where it arrived on Dec. 17. Starting in mid-January, the ISS crew will apply varying levels of gravity, from 0 (zero) G zero to an Earth-like 1 G. Wolverton and his assistant are able to monitor the plants in near-real time. Once the experiment is concluded, the plants will be frozen and returned to Earth for further study of their gene expressions. – The research is important because it helps humans understand how to cultivate plants in space. Some day, this might be important for space travel.

Molly Meyers LaBadie Joins Delaware County District Library

The Delaware County District Library (DCDL) welcomed Molly Meyers LaBadie as deputy director for the Library on Dec. 11. She is filling the position vacated by Don Yarman who became director of the Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) in September. LaBadie joins DCDL with more than 15 years in public library service, working in youth services, management & training capacities. Most recently, she worked as a trainer with Worthington Public Libraries, coordinating & training more than 160 staff members. During her tenure there, she also acted as a children's librarian, overseeing the summer reading & volunteer programs, and as a youth services lead

librarian, supervising youth services team members and training new staff members in customer service, creativity & mindfulness.

DCDL Book Club Discussions

Once again, the Delaware Main Library has chosen some stimulating books to be discussed in January & February: "Barkskins" by Annie Proulx (Jan. 2, 1 pm), "White Trash" by Nancy Isenberg (Jan. 31, 7:30 pm), "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest" by Ken Kesey (Feb. 6, 1 pm), and "1984" by George Orwell (Feb. 28, 7:30 pm). The first two are new titles, the last two are classics. Isenberg's title is non-fiction. All four books are highly recommended. – Check DCDL's quarterly newsletter for the full winter 2017-18 program or visit www.delawarelibrary.org.

Turning Point to Open in 2018

Turning Point director Paula Roller has announced that reconstruction is on track to be completed by April of 2018. She expects the new facility to be "fully operational by July 1." The 7.5-acre property sits at 500 N. Liberty St., next to the Delaware County Fairgrounds and has 13,000 square feet of living space. Once finished, the facility will contain 13 bedrooms and 3 efficiency apartments. – Delaware County has been the largest Ohio county without a dedicated domestic-violence shelter.



Banks Farm Market Demolished

Former Banks Farm Market at 304 London Rd. / 110 David St. was demolished on Dec. 20. City officials considered the building a blighted property and used state funds to raze it, at no expense for the Banks family. Henry Banks, who is still alive, closed his business 2 or 3 years ago due to old age and medical conditions. His market was the one place in the neighborhood where residents could get fresh fruit and vegetables. The London Rd. corridor area is now more than ever a so-called food desert.



Bradley Greenhouse Demolished

The structures on the former Bradley Greenhouse property at 36 Moore St. on Delaware's east side are currently being demolished. As of 12/20, many were already gone. After the death of the owner, Vern Christian, the 5.2-acre property was put up for auction on July 13, 2017 and eventually transferred from owner Doris M. Christian to Cutman Land Company, Ltd., at 457 E. Central Ave., for \$130,000, according to the "Delaware Gazette." We do not know at this point what plans the company has. In our humble opinion, an effort should always be made in word and picture to document what was there before something of value is irretrievably lost. – Local farmer Paul Etheridge said it perhaps best: "Vern and his greenhouses may be gone, but hundreds of gardens live on that continue the beautiful green work that was Vern's and his wife's."

Update on Lidl

The German-owned grocery store Lidl (rhymes with "needle") does not yet seem to have submitted any preliminary plans to Delaware's Planning Commission and City Council. (The Shade Tree Commission saw and approved the landscape plan in October.) However, the current business on the site, Delaware Marine at 710 Sunbury Rd. (State Rt. 36/37 E.), was being emptied out in December. The building will be demolished and replaced with a new 36,000-square-foot structure. The discounter is similar to Aldi's, but has its own bakery.



Gretchen A. Lamphere (1944-2017)

Delaware realtor Gretchen Lamphere died suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of 73 on December 16. Born in Detroit, Michigan, she moved to Delaware in 1972 where she started to work as a RE/MAX real-estate agent. She was also a tireless community volunteer for organizations such as the Common Ground Free Store, Family Promise, Habitat for Humanity, People in Need, and Turning Point. In addition, she was a member of supporter of St. Mary Church. In short, Gretchen Lamphere was "a pillar of the community."

Pulte Homes Construction Worker Killed

Another Hispanic construction worker died on Dec. 2 after falling from the second story to the basement of a Pulte home under construction. The accident that killed Juan Carlos Ortiz-Rodríguez, 47, happened at 712 Eagle Walk Rd., which is part of the Glenross subdivision near Cheshire Rd. Ortiz-Rodríguez lived at 755 Steltzer Rd. in Columbus and was born on 8/4/70. The police report did not include any additional information such as his country of origin, but the Columbus Dispatch mentioned there were communication barriers when the investigating police officer arrived. A second construction worker died last March at a development in the Cheshire Woods subdivision, only a few miles away. – Construction workers operate under difficult and dangerous conditions. They are out summer and winter, rain or shine, and often work overtime. Americans don't want the jobs or are unable to perform them. Schedules are tight and time is money. From what we have observed, worker safety is not ever a consideration. Neither the construction companies (Pulte is no exception) nor the Latino workers themselves have what might be called "a culture of safety." It's actually a miracle that not more have fallen from roofs or died in other ways. The corporate builders seem to operate under the callous premise that migrant workers are cheap, disposable labor not worthy of the kind of consideration given to white Americans. Delaware's Planning Commission & City Council routinely discuss and approve new developments, incl. Pulte Home projects, but the notion of worker safety has never once been an issue. Here is a radical new idea: how about some language that holds developers accountable for compliance with state laws, without micromanaging the details? Perhaps developers with abysmal safety records should not be permitted to operate within the city. – Addendum 12/20: According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 5,190 people were killed on the job in 2016, the most since 2008.

The "Can Opener" at Route 521

Twice in December, a semi truck hit the railroad overpass across Route 521, between Harris Rd. and Routes 36/37 E. The bridge has an even lower clearance (12 feet, 5 inches) than the railroad overpass across W. Central St. (12 feet, 7 inches), the original "Can Opener." There are warning signs at both bridges, but obviously they are not effective enough. Years ago, the City successfully applied for ODOT & MORPC funds to install an expensive high-tech laser-guided alert system for trucks along Central Ave., but the project was delayed for technical reasons. The Columbus Dispatch recently quoted City spokesperson Lee Yoakum saying that it will be "late March or April" when the overheight detection & warning system will finally be installed and activated. The railroad bridge at Rt. 521 has considerable

less traffic than the one at W. Central Ave. A laser-guided system would not be cost-effective there. However, cheaper alternatives are available to address the issue. – As Delaware continues to grow (it'll hit the 40,000 mark sometime this year), it becomes apparent that some of its traffic infrastructure is outdated and obsolete. Railroad bridges that are too low for modern tractor-trailers are just the tip of the iceberg. Blaming and fining truck drivers for what are systemic flaws and deficiencies in the state's infrastructure seems unfair to us, by the way. It is the authorities' responsibility to ensure public safety.

Are Carriage Rides "Torture" for Horses?

A 12/23 letter to the editor of the Columbus Dispatch stated that horse-drawn carriage rides are "nothing short of torture for the horse": "Making these sensitive animals pull oversize loads like carriages is cruel. Horses are forced to toil in all weather extremes, dodge traffic, and pound the pavement all day long. They might develop respiratory ailments because they breathe in exhaust fumes, and they can suffer debilitating leg problems from walking on hard surfaces." The letter writer, April Zobel, also complained that once horses are no longer useful, the owner can discard them with impunity and they may end up in the slaughterhouse. She wants carriage rides be "completely banned." – Horse-drawn carriage rides have been a huge issue in New York City and elsewhere for decades. Some of the animals indeed have 9-hour shifts and never see a pasture. It is a big for-profit industry, with millions of dollars at stake. However, in Delaware the situation is very different. Provided the draft horses are treated kindly, there is nothing wrong with an occasional horse-parade appearance or carriage ride. We have watched the horses, and they don't appear to be stressed, overworked, or abused. As long as that remains the case, we don't see the necessity for a total ban on horse-drawn carriages or hansom cabs in Delaware.

An Actress Born in Delaware

Kathryn Fuller (1922-2012) was born to Gilbert & Ruth Eagon in Delaware, Ohio. She earned a degree in Theater from Ohio Wesleyan University where she met her future husband, Mark H. Fuller, who was then enrolled in the U.S. Navy V-12 Unit at Ohio OWU. They were married in July 1945 in New York. Following the war, Kathryn and Mark resided in California. The couple had four sons and two daughters. Kathryn Fuller began her professional acting career with performances at the Pasadena Playhouse, Theatre Americana (Altadena), and Glendale Centre Theatre. Eventually, she began to make appearances on television, in films, and on stage and to work as a writer and director as well. As a playwright, she authored "Lightning in the South" and co-authored the comedy "Lutie." Her many stage, television, and film performances are too numerous to list here, but a full obituary (written by her daughter Babette Fuller) can be found on the internet.

SourcePoint Awards Grants to Nonprofits

SourcePoint recently approved \$626,938 in funding for 18 local nonprofits that serve senior citizens in Delaware County. The organizations are (in alphabetical order): The Alpha Group, the Alzheimer's Association, Catholic Social Services, Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging, Common Ground Free Store, Delaware Area Transit Agency (DATA), Delaware County Juvenile & Probate Court (youth performing community service for older adults), Delaware Speech & Hearing Center, Drug-Free Delaware, Employment for Seniors, Grace Clinic, HelpLine, The Legal Aid Society of Columbus, Lutheran Social Services, The OhioHealth Foundation, People in Need & Willow Brook Christian Services. DATA received the largest amount – \$210,168 to support local public transportation, including fixed routes and paratransit services. Several of the groups are located right in the City of Delaware.

Keep Delaware Beautiful Honors Award Winners

On Dec. 6, the Health District's "Keep Delaware County Beautiful" (KDCB) program, coordinated by Jenifer Way-Young, recognized several community businesses, government services & nonprofits for their recycling programs, for keeping Delaware County litter-free, and for their beautification efforts. Among the winners were: Berkshire Township, Friction Metals, Ohio Wesleyan Univ. & Orange Township / Home Depot. Individual awards went to Mike Williams for setting a positive example by installing 42 solar panels on

the roof of Williams Insurance at 475 Pennsylvania Ave.; to Chris Roshon and the Van Gundys for their help with the Scioto River Sweep; and to Eagle Scout Caleb Warrick for constructing a chimney swift tower at the Stratford Ecological Center (near the pond). – KDCB regularly organizes river clean-ups and special-collection events. It also partners with Delaware's Watershed / Sustainability Coordinator. Public participation is welcome.



Stratford Ecological Center Is Going Solar

Stratford Ecological Center at 3083 Liberty Rd. is moving forward with its plans to install 156 solar panels on its machine shed and its animal barn (depicted above). The project is scheduled to start at the end of January and could be completed within 4 to 8 weeks, depending on the weather. The solar-panel array will cover up to 90% of Stratford's electrical use. Delaware County-based Consolidated Electric Cooperative recently donated \$5,000 to the center, an amount that was matched by Consolidated's partner and lender CoBank of Greenwood Village in Colorado. A number of local individuals, businesses, and non-profits have also contributed funds to the project.

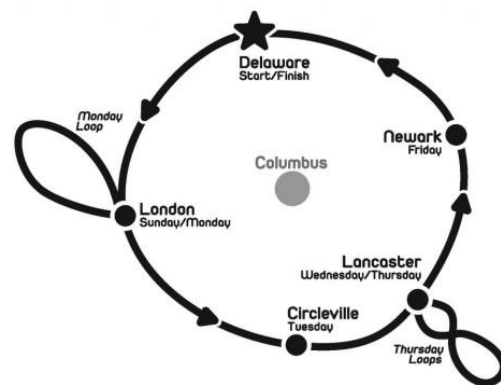
Stratford Ecological Center in 2018

Mark your calendars for the following 2018 events at Stratford Ecological Center (3083 Liberty Rd.): Maple Sugar Days, Feb. 17 + 24; Maple Sugar Pancake Breakfast, Sat., March 3; Llama & Sheep Shearing Day, April 21; and Harvest Fair, Sat., Sept. 22.



Stratford Has New Chimney Swift Tower

Stratford Ecological Center has a new chimney swift tower similar in design and size to the one depicted above. Chimney swifts are birds that spend a lot of time flying and eating insects. The new tower will provide a roosting site as well as a resting-and-shelter site for the birds during their annual migration to South America. The tower, located near Stratford's pond, was an Eagle Scout project for Caleb Warrick and his team. He is a student at Olentangy Liberty High School, class of 2020. – OWU is currently also looking at constructing a chimney swift tower on its campus.



GOBA Coming to Delaware in June

The 2018 Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure (GOBA) is coming to Delaware in June of 2018. The weeklong bike tour will start and finish at the Delaware County Fairgrounds. Sponsored by Columbus Outdoor Pursuits, GOBA is a leisure biking adventure that involves scenic

countryside views, historic sites, and various fun activities. It is not a race and therefore suitable for all ages, young and old. Riders will gather in Delaware on Sat., June 16, and camp overnight. On Sun., June 17, they will hit the roads with stops in London, Circleville, Lancaster, and Newark. The daily distance is no more than 50 miles. Riders will return to Delaware on Sat., June 23. Online registration opened Dec. 1. Participation is limited to 1,500 people because of logistics and safety. More info is available at www.goba.com.

Looking for a Sledding Hill?

There are unofficial multiple sledding hills in the city and county. However, if you are looking for a designated slope, check out Preservation Park's sledding hill in Gallant Woods Park (2151 Buttermilk Hill Rd.), north of Delaware. It has been in operation for a number of years now. Nearby restrooms are open year-round. – Another sledding hill is near the Marina in Delaware State Park on Route 23 N., at the south entrance of Mink Run Trail. There are no nearby restrooms.

DELAWARE COUNTY & CENTRAL OHIO

Low Unemployment Rate in Central Ohio

In Central Ohio, the average unemployment rate was 3.5% in November. Delaware County had the lowest rate with 3.1%. Seasonal factors (the end of the holiday season & winter) are likely to cause the rate to go up slightly in the new year, but the area is close to full employment. Statewide, Mercer County in northwestern Ohio had the lowest rate at 2.7%, Monroe County in eastern Ohio the highest with 7.2%.

Dublin Bans Tobacco Sales for People under 21

According to the Columbus Dispatch, the City of Dublin has now joined Columbus, New Albany, Powell, Bexley, Grandview Heights, and Upper Arlington in outlawing tobacco sales to customers younger than 21. What is particularly interesting is the fact that underage tobacco buyers and users will NOT be charged in Dublin. Only vendors risk fines ranging from \$250 to \$500, and licenses could be suspended or revoked. The Dublin approach is one that might work for Delaware and one that the community might support. The Parks & Recreation Advisory Board discussed last November a possible no-smoking policy in Delaware's parks.

Drug Liaison Program

The Delaware County Sheriff's Office has a "Drug Liaison" program. Julie Krupp, who is in charge, can be reached at jkrupp@co.delaware.oh.us or by calling 740-833-2829. The program is a 1-stop resource to help a substance abuser, family member, or friend struggling with drug or alcohol problems. It provides *education & prevention, * treatment information, * referrals & assistance to treatment, * access to services (outpatient treatment, support groups, life-saving tools), and *on-going support. It sounds like a good program in this day and age of a devastating opioid epidemic.

The flyer does mention the word "confidentially." However, we wonder what exactly that means. If and when people contact the Sheriff's Office with concerns about drug abuse, will that information truly remain "confidential" and private? Will a record be created? Will it be shared with law enforcement, prosecutors, or other entities? Will there be follow-ups and punitive consequences? Is this an instance where the Good Samaritan law applies? And why does the flyer and website not say that anonymous questions are also welcome? As long as it is not stated crystal-clearly that callers and emailers won't have to fear negative repercussions for themselves, family members, or friends, many people might remain distrustful and fearful.

Franklin Co. Offers Free Spay/Neuter Service

Franklin County Commissioners approved a free spay / neuter program in December for eligible low-income residents. Of the 10,000 dogs that the Franklin County Dog Shelter & Adoption Center took in in 2016, 85.6% were not spayed or neutered. More spayed & neutered dogs means fewer puppies, fewer unwanted & stray dogs, fewer dog attacks & bites, and fewer euthanizations, thus saving

money in the long run. The program, called "Sny-It," is free for low-income dog owners at or below 150% of the poverty level. For a family of four, that's \$36,450 per year. The program will initially focus on pit bulls & pit-bull breeds because ¼ of the dogs that the shelter takes in are pit bulls or pit-bull mixes.

Central Ohio African American Chamber of Commerce

To represent black-owned businesses in Mid-Ohio, a new Central Ohio African American Chamber of Commerce has been formed. A kick-off event will be held Jan. 18 at the group's headquarter in Destiny Center (1561 Old Leonard Ave.). Under Executive Director J. Averi Frost, the organization plans to focus on "access to capital and new markets, procuring government contracts, and building relationships through partnerships." There are some 17,000 black-owned businesses in Central Ohio, according to Frost. – Mid-Ohio already has a Minority Business Association for women, minorities, and other groups. There is also a Hispanic Chamber of Commerce that is a division of the Columbus Chamber of Commerce.

BIA Has New Executive Director

The Building Industry Association (BIA) of Central Ohio, a trade lobbying group dedicated to protecting the industry, has chosen a new executive director. Effective Dec. 18, Jonathan Melchi is replacing former director Jim Hilz. Melchi, 38, does not seem to have a background in the building industry per se. His degree is in Political Science from OSU, and he was VP of Government and External Affairs for Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Distributors International before joining the BIA. Melchi's appointment is a signal that the BIA intends to take its lobbying efforts more seriously than ever.



Police Dog Alex Retires

K-9 Alex (depicted above) recently retired after having been a police dog with the Delaware County Sheriff's Office since 2010. As is often the case with older dogs, he has developed arthritis and hip dysplasia. His handler, Troy Gibson, was given ownership of the dog for the cost of \$1 by the County Commissioners on Dec. 21. Alex has been replaced by Cash, a Belgian Malinois. Cash is the third police canine Gibson is handling. Not surprisingly, Alex and Cash are not getting along well and have to be kept separated. There is jealousy involved, and Alex is also suffering from separation anxiety when Gibson is at work. – Police dogs serve in many capacities. Alex was used in drug busts, searches for missing people, K-9 demonstrations, and in apprehending fleeing suspects. The cost for a trained police K-9 ranges from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Gahanna Police Chief Hunts Coyotes

As neighborhoods are expanding into the traditional hunting grounds of coyotes, uninformed and fearful people want the animals gone. Some hunters are willing and ready to do the dirty work for them. A few years ago (6/3/13), the Columbus Dispatch had an article on Mark Frederick, a devout Christian who made it his holy ministry "to bring down the area's growing coyote population." Another law-and-order man who also uses a military AR-15 assault rifle to go after the coyote population is Dennis Murphy, Gahanna Police Chief since 1997. He moonlights as a coyote hunter in the suburbs of Columbus. His business, Wildlife Balance Solutions (in existence since 2006), also traps and removes other "nuisance animals" such as beaver, deer, muskrats, opossums, raccoons, and skunks. Like Frederick, Murphy is an unapologetic and unrepentant trapper and hunter: "I have no qualms about killing as many coyotes as I can." In a recent interview with the New York Times (12/26), safety considerations are not mentioned. (It is a well-established fact that coyotes are typically shy and nocturnal and keep their distance from people.) Instead, when Murphy thinks of coyotes "he sees dollar signs." A tanned coyote hide can fetch as much as \$100 apiece on the international market. Coyote

fur is often used to trim jackets and parkas. A picture shows Murphy with dozens of coyote hides in both hands. – Biologists have a very different viewpoint. Not only are coyotes typically harmless for humans, they are beneficial by eating small rodents, insects, and other vermin. Scientists such as Stan Gehrt from OSU praise the remarkable intelligence and resilience of the species. Also, eradication efforts are almost pointless because when under threat coyotes start producing much larger litters. Lastly, coyote hunting in populated areas has led to numerous tragic mishaps. People and family dogs have been killed at dusk or dawn when visibility is poor. – Murphy's "Wildlife Balance Solutions" does not seem very balanced. A better strategy than eradication might be to learn to peacefully coexist with coyotes. It is also unfortunate that people like Murphy perpetuate the stereotype that all Ohioans are unsophisticated hillbillies who indiscriminately shoot at anything that moves.

Columbus Sets Homicide Record

As of 12/31, Columbus has seen 143 homicide victims. The previous high of 139 was set 26 years ago, in 1991. The per-capita rate is considerably higher than in Chicago or New York City. It is not entirely clear what's behind the spike, but it seems to be symptom of a deeper malaise. Generally speaking, crime rates are down in the nation, including violent crimes. The situation may be unique to Columbus, one of the most segregated cities in the country. Trust between police and the community has broken down; the lack of cooperation from witnesses is getting worse. The proliferation of more powerful firearms, the current opioid epidemic, and the existence of gangs are not helping either. More than half of the victims are young men between the age of 18 to 30. Also, politically and economically Ohio is in many respects a regressive state, ranked at the bottom in multiple categories. Progress is slow or non-existent. For low-and-moderate-income (LWI) folks, including the middle class, the financial situation has actually deteriorated.

A New Center for Human-Animal Interactions

Interactions between humans and animals are an every-day occurrence, but there is very little research done on the topic. OSU has now created a new Center for Human-Animal Interactions Research & Education (CHAIRE), housed by the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. The center will focus on 4 primary areas: animal welfare & behavior, conservation & human-wildlife conflict; ways in which animals benefit human health & well-being (zootherapy); and companionship. A typical area of inquiry would be canine and equine therapy. Participating partners of the new center include the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium, the Ohio Wildlife Center, Buckeye Ranch, Ohio 4-H, and Pilot Dogs. A kick-off event where CHAIRE's vision & mission was presented was held 12/7/17.

Gramercy & Fundamentals – Two Indie Bookstores

Amazon.com has not killed and replaced all independent bookstores. In fact, brick-and-mortar "indies" are enjoying a resurgence. A case in point is Gramercy Books in downtown Bexley (2424 E. Main St.), which recently celebrated its first anniversary and seems to thrive. Owner Linda Kass, a Bexley resident, has hosted more than 75 events during that year, including many that featured local and regional authors. The key for Gramercy's success has been the personal touch, the local connection, and the sense of community. A café with yummy drinks and food helps foster a comfortable atmosphere. Amazon.com may sell a lot of soulless commodities, but independent bookstores and other niche businesses sell unique experiences that the digital world cannot replicate – a warm sense of place and belonging, the experience of authenticity, and the ability to meet and talk to friends and like-minded people. "Community engagement is the secret sauce," says Oren Teicher of the American Booksellers Association. "That emphasis on personal, local, authentic interaction with customers is something that all retailers are learning to apply." Gramercy's website is www.gramercybooksbexley.com.

Here in Delaware we have Fundamentals at 25 W. Winter Street. Owner Tami Furlong is also putting in long hours to keep her stock of books, toys, and games fresh and carefully curated. She knows her customers well and is able to give them their personal advice. Fundamentals is primarily a K-12 bookstore for children, parents, and teachers. (Most of the books are located on the second store, by the way.) However, anyone can order any title by stopping

by, calling, or emailing. The requested title is usually here within a day or two. We have certainly used Fundamentals many times in the past and were always pleased with the service. Fundamentals' website is www.funbooksandmore.com.

Anthony-Thomas Chocolates

Ohio chocolate manufacturer Anthony-Thomas, located at 1777 Arlingate Ln. (off Interstate 270 at Roberts Rd. in Columbus), is open for educational factory tours every Tuesday & Thursday from 9 am to 3 pm. Appointments are not necessary. Summer tours are more frequent. Children under 2 are free; ages 3-18 are \$1.00 per person, ages 19+ are \$2.00 per person. The admission fee may be used towards a purchase. – The company is local and family-owned. Greek immigrant Anthony Zanetos and his son Thomas founded the chocolate & candy business in 1952. For Anthony-Thomas, community outreach and social responsibility are an important part of their mission. For example, they can help help with fundraising efforts, which is also good for their business. To learn more, visit www.anthony-thomas.com.

James Roy Hopkins at the Columbus Museum of Art

The Columbus Museum of Art at 480 E. Broad St. features "James R. Hopkins: Faces of the Heartland" through April 22. The retrospective spans the entire career of Ohio artist Hopkins (1877-1969), from his youth in Irwin, Ohio, to his 25-year tenure at OSU and beyond. Of particular interest may be the paintings he created during and after his summers of 1915-17 in the Cumberland Mountains of Kentucky. The artist befriended the local mountain people with whom he felt a deep connection. His compassionate portrayals of the Cumberland Falls community make up his best-known series of works. The subjects are shown truthfully with the evidence of their hard lives visible on their faces, but Hopkins was also sure to portray them with respect and dignity. This is the first Hopkins retrospective since 1977. To learn more, visit www.columbusmuseum.org.



The Kroger Art Project

Cincinnati-based Kroger introduced the Kroger Art Project in 2015 with the installation of murals at a store in Lexington, Kentucky. In 2016, the company hired designed Bo Wachendorf to expand the project and bring it to roughly 100 new and renovated stores. In Central Ohio, there are now five locations: Columbus (on Morse Rd.), Grove City, Lancaster, Marysville, and Newark. The large murals in Grove City and Lancaster were created by local artists and pay homage to the heritage of their communities. Visitors will recognize landmarks and events. – Artists typically submit proposals through local arts councils that partner with the Kroger Art Project. Selected artists receive a honorarium, participating arts councils a management fee.



Sunrise Sanctuary

Sunrise Sanctuary in neighboring Union County is a non-profit organization that rescues and cares for farm and companion animals who were abandoned, abused, or neglected. Sunrise encourages more humane and compassionate behaviors and believes that each living creature has value and deserves to live free of suffering and exploitation. Sunrise currently holds over 170 animals. The visiting season is closed for the winter, but during the rest of the year the sanctuary holds Barn Days that are open to the public. The

new schedule will be posted soon. Donations are accepted year-round. Sunrise is located at 16730 Martin Welch Rd. north of Marysville. The best way to reach it is by going west on State Rt. 37.

OHIO

Ohio Raises Minimum Wage to \$8.30 per Hour

As of Jan. 1, Ohio's minimum-wage earners are getting a 15-cents-per-hour raise, to \$8.30 an hour. Ohio's sub-minimum wage, which applies to restaurant and other workers who receive tips, is increasing 7 cents an hour, to \$4.15. However, the annual total for a full-time workers making minimum wage (about \$17,596) remains below the federal poverty level, especially when taxes are factored in. It's time for Ohio to pass a \$15-per-hour minimum wage. This would also be a boost for the economy since low-income earners are likely to spend their raises to cover the basics.

Ohio's Opioid Epidemic

Life expectancy in the U.S. continues to fall, in part due to the opioid crisis. According to just released figures, drug overdoses killed 63,632 individuals in 2016, nearly 20 per 100,000. In 2015, "only" 52,404 died. According to a recent analysis, the White House Council of Economic Advisers pegs the true cost of the opioid crisis at \$504 billion, six times more than previous estimates. The number includes both prescription opioids as well as illicit opioids. – In Ohio, drug overdoses killed 4,329 individuals in 2016 (or 39.1 per 100,000 people), up 24% over the 3,310 drug deaths in 2015. That is the second-highest rate in the nation, trailed only by West Virginia's 52 per 100,000 people. Statewide, emergency responders administered 31,800 doses of naloxone in 2016. Without life-saving naloxone, fatal overdoses would be even higher. The opioid epidemic is not something that can be fixed by arresting drug users and sticking them in jail. This is more than a law-enforcement problem. Columbus Health Commissioner Dr. Mysheika W. Roberts says, "It will take prevention, education, and treatment – a comprehensive approach." However, even Ohio politicians like Attorney General Mike DeWine admits that "we're not doing enough of this."

Kasich Picks Westerville for Final Speech

John Kasich has chosen Westerville as the site for his final speech as governor of Ohio. He has requested that legislators convene for a joint session on Tues., March 6 (7 pm), at Fritsche Theatre on the campus of Otterbein University. The House and the Senate must approve the time and location before it is official.

Ohio's Cities under Financial Stress

A new report by Ohio State Auditor Dave Yost shows that a growing number of cities and counties in the Buckeye State exhibit signs of fiscal stress. Since 2008 the General Assembly has cut funds to local governments nearly in half, to just \$382 million. Almost two thirds of Ohio's 88 counties and 111 out of 247 cities (45%) show an increase of financial warning signs such as spending that exceeds revenue, steep debt service, and high pension liabilities. Seven cities (Akron, Canton, E. Cleveland, Girard, Lorain, Maple Hts., and Norwood) and one county (Morgan) are in actual financial "distress," but others (e.g., Cincinnati and Youngstown) are headed there too. Central Ohio is doing relatively well compared to the rest of the state. – It is clear that the last decade in Ohio has been a failure politically and economically. Little or no progress has been made. In some respects, the Buckeye State has even gone backwards and now ranks nationally at the bottom in many areas. A fresh start is needed.

What the Ohio GOP Lacks

Ohio House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger, R-Clarksville, said something noteworthy in the wake of Roy Moore's loss and Doug Jones' win in Alabama on Dec. 12. He stated that the Ohio GOP needed to take a close look at itself to ensure that members and candidates represent the party "in a correct way." Specifically, he mentioned "morals, integrity, and values." He then opined: "I think that's where our party is lacking, and we've got to figure out how to strengthen that." Current GOP candidates such as Mandel and Renacci are essentially campaigning as Trump clones. They are definitely not bothering with "morals, integrity, and values." However, Moore's

defeat in Alabama should be a wake-up call for them. The strategy to mimic Trump's showmanship and brinkmanship is a counterproductive one. – Governor John Kasich has also stated that "the party is losing the future as we're standing here today." He is encouraging the Ohio GOP "to have an agenda that not reflected on yesterday, but on tomorrow."

High School Graduation Rates

For the first time in U.S. history, the proportion of Americans 25 or older with high-school diploma has topped 90%. In Ohio, the percentage was 89% in 2016. In the 7-country Central Ohio region, Delaware County has the highest number of residents who graduated from high school with 96.6%. However, it must be noted that a high-school diploma does not necessarily make graduates workforce-ready or college-ready. Both employers and universities lament the fact that thousands of high-school students are unprepared or underprepared. In Ohio (and elsewhere), graduation standards are low compared to the rest of the world. Currently, students are permitted to graduate simply for having an attendance rate of at least 93%, for having done community service, or for having work experience even if their academic record is poor. It is doubtful that better graduation rates are the result of higher educational attainment. Instead, they appear to be the result of "dumbing down" standards. Ohio does not even require 8th-grade proficiency anymore for high-school graduation. Of the 2016-17 students who took either the ACT or the SAT (and those are the better scholars), only 24.9% had score high enough to demonstrate that they don't need any remedial courses when they go to college. The Columbus Dispatch suggested on 12/30 that Ohio's high-school diplomas have become meaningless.

Hiring Promises Often Broken

Companies routinely receive lucrative financial incentives such as tax reductions or waivers, loans, grants, or worker training when they create or retain jobs. But not all entities hold up their end of the bargain and honor their pledges. Ohio's annual report shows a compliance rate of only 78.3% in 2016, down from 84.8% in 2015. The compliance rate is low as 63.8% to 68.1% if just considering tax credits, loans, and grants. In such cases, the Development Services Agency attempts to proportionally reduce benefits or claw back awards that have been made. – On the local level, the situation is similar. Not every business can and will achieve compliance when it comes to job promises. The City of Delaware routinely provides financial incentives to businesses, but it is not clear what enforcement measures are in place to hold companies accountable and to ensure compliance.

CAARE Is a Front for Coal

Don't be fooled – the Campaign for American Affordable and Reliable Energy (CAARE) is a front for Ohio's coal industry. CAARE has not publicly disclosed who its members are and where it gets its money from, but its mission is "to protect, preserve, and promote America's affordable and reliable coal-fired electricity generation." As such, CAARE has been involved in litigation against solar and wind energy. John Stock, who works as legal counsel for the group, has in the past done work for Murray Energy, the Ohio-based coal company.



Home-Energy Assistance Program

The federally funded Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (E-HEAP) is once again available for eligible renters & homeowners. The heating season runs from Nov. 1 through Mar. 31. Income eligibility is 175% of the federal poverty guidelines (\$43,050 for a household of 4). The program provides one-time assistance to households threatened with disconnection, already disconnected, or have less than 25% supply of bulk fuel, wood, or coal. E-HEAP also covers assistance in establishing or transferring service. Payment is made directly to utilities. There are bureaucratic hurdles to overcome when applying as well as lots of paperwork to submit. That includes social-security numbers for every household member and proof of

citizenship. For more info or an appointment, contact Delaware County's "Bridges Community Action Partnership" or call 740-369-3184. They are located at 555 Sunbury Rd. The website is www.bridgescap.org. – A similar E-HEAP program is also available for people age 60+.

All-Ohio SWCS Annual Conference (1/19)

The All-Ohio SWCS Annual Conference will take place on Fri., Jan. 19 (9:30 am – 4 pm) at Der Dutchman Restaurant in Plain City (445 S. Jefferson Ave., off State Rt. 42). The cost is \$40 for SWCS members, \$50 for non-members if registration is received by Jan. 15. For on-site registration, add \$10. This year's focus of the Soil and Water Conservation Society conference will be water quality.

Omarosa Manigault Newman

Ohio-born celebrity Omarosa Manigault Newman, 43, was a high-profile face in Trump's White House. On Dec. 13, however, she was dismissed as public liaison by White House Chief of Staff John Kelly. (She will collect her \$179,700 salary through Jan. 20, however.) Manigault Newman was born in Youngstown in 1974 and grew up there. She was a volleyball player, a beauty pageant contestant, and became the first African-American woman to become Miss Youngstown. She graduated from Central State Univ. in 1996 with a degree in broadcast journalism. After appearing on "The Apprentice" television show, a friendship with Donald Trump developed. She campaigned for him and later joined him in the White House. – The reasons for her dismissal are confidential, but it seems that Trump liked her whereas several senior officials did not. Kelly took away her ability to come and go as she pleased and limited her access to the president, whom she has known for 15 years. – Manigault Newman has announced that she has every intention to tell the world her side of the story in the near future.

Writer William H. Gass Is Dead (1924-2017)

Writer William H. Gass died at the age of 93 in St. Louis. Born in Fargo, North Dakota, his family moved to Warren, Ohio, when he was only six weeks old. He graduated from Warren G. Harding Senior High School, where his father worked as a coach and teacher, and attended Kenyon College and Ohio Wesleyan Univ. For 3½ years, he served as an ensign in the Navy during WW II before graduating from Kenyon College (1947) and receiving a Ph.D. in philosophy at Cornell Univ. He taught at various places before settling at Washington Univ. in St. Louis (1969). – Gass is a writer's writer. His many experimental novels, novellas, stories, and essays are not easily accessible although Ohio, the Midwest, and autobiographical elements play a central role in his work. In addition, his literary work is dark, and the difference between fact and fiction, truth and lies is not always clear. The author is also not exactly interested in plot and character. He published his first novel, "Omensetter's Luck," in 1966. It was subsequently translated into seven languages. His magnum opus is "The Tunnel" (1995), a book with 600+ pages about a history professor, William Frederick Kohler, who attempts to write, and fails, a study of Nazi Germany and the question of personal and collective guilt or innocence. "The Tunnel" is one of the great novels of the 20th century, but it is difficult to read and even more difficult to understand.



Update on Baby Fiona

Baby Fiona will be 1 year old on Jan. 24, 2018. The hippo is now closing in on 650 pounds and has transitioned to solid foods such as hay, fruit, lettuce, beet pulp, and grain. She continues to do well. – After she was born prematurely, weighing only 29 pounds, Fiona became an international celebrity. The Cincinnati Zoo has just issued a first book on her.

NATION

How America Got Its Name

For centuries, the European view of the world was based almost entirely on Ptolemy, the Roman mathematician who lived in the second century. Ptolemy covered only 270 degrees in his world map, which included Europe, Asia, and Africa. But when Christopher Columbus stumbled onto the New World in 1492, the maps had to be redrawn to include the newly discovered fourth part of the world. It was German cartographer and publisher Martin Waldseemüller (1470-1520) and author Matthias Ringmann who wrote the word "America" on the map, consisting of 12 so-called globe gores. It is not entirely clear why they passed over Columbus in favor of the Italian explorer, navigator, and cartographer Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512), whose Latin name was Americus Vespucius. It is believed that Waldseemüller was under the erroneous impression that it was Vespucci, not Columbus, who first visited the American mainland in 1497. It is doubtful that Vespucci set foot on the mainland first, and Waldseemüller himself did not use the name "America" again in his later work. However, it was Vespucci who proved that America was a new continent and not part of the Asian "West Indies," as Columbus thought. So, in a way Vespucci was indeed the true "discoverer" of America. In any case, the name "America" took hold and was adopted by mapmakers around the world.

The Republican War against "Entitlements"

Wealth distribution is a dirty word for Republicans, but not when it means transferring money from the poor to the rich. Not satisfied with the ginormous tax break they gave the mega-wealthy in December, Republican leaders in the House have now set their sights on decades-old "entitlement" programs for the people who depend on social safety nets – Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, unemployment compensation, health insurance, disability benefits, old-age pensions, and other assistance programs. Social Darwinism believes in the meritocracy and superiority of certain individuals, classes, or races. Those who are fit survive and prosper, the rest suffers and gets discarded. Republicans have demonized "the welfare state," as they call it, for decades and want to end it. Their main argument is that the safety net is a hammock that leads to "a culture of complacency and dependency." They not opposed to voluntary charity, of course. They love it when churches and non-profits step up to the plate. But they are unwilling to pay for public assistance themselves – unless, of course, it involves tax-break entitlements, government subsidies, and corporate welfare for the rich and powerful.

Trump Ignores Climate Change

In his first national-security address, President Trump predictably did not identify climate change as threat to national security. Instead, he promoted "energy dominance" and criticized "anti-growth" agendas. That stance puts him at odds not only with the American public and the world community, but also with the Pentagon. The military continues to warn that a changing climate is likely to lead to natural disasters, food insecurity, rising sea levels, increasing numbers of refugees – all of which poses grave national-security concerns.

Trump Fights Climate Change – in Ireland

In 2014, Trump International Golf Links purchased the Irish golf resort at Dooneg, County Clare, for €8.7. Mr. Trump then applied for a permit to construct a 1.7-mile long sea wall to prevent storm waters from eroding three holes of the course. The application included clear references to climate change and global warming and focused both on current and future threats to the integrity of the golf course. In the U.S., Trump is well-known for calling climate change "a hoax." The original application was withdrawn among widespread accusations of hypocrisy and criticism by environmentalists, but a downsized version has since been resubmitted and has now been approved by the county council. The plan is to build a line of two low, concealed sea walls of 2,840 feet in length on the landward side of a public beach adjacent to the golf course. Some residents supported the plan, hoping for future investments and jobs, but other locals and environmentalists opposed the project. Undoubtedly, the walls will significantly alter tidal flows, erode the beach and dunes, and divert

storm surges into neighboring properties. The Irish Green Party also opposed the plan; their advice was to move the golf holes farther inland.

Doug Jones Wins in Alabama

In a stunning upset that captured the attention of the entire nation, Democrat Doug Jones won Alabama's special Senate election on Dec. 12, beating his Republican opponent Roy Moore. (Moore has yet to concede the race. In fact, he has not conceded his losses in the 2006 and 2010 Republican primaries either.) Alabama is one of the reddest of red states, and Moore enjoyed the warm endorsement of President Trump. However, he was also accused of right-wing extremism and old sex crimes. Moore's defeat is widely seen as a major embarrassment for Donald Trump and Steve Bannon and another self-inflicted wound for the GOP. Jones' victory is hailed as a watershed moment for Democrats, women, African-Americans, and the younger generation who were galvanized and turned out in large numbers. Voter participation was almost 40%, significantly higher than predicted. – Democrats will have 49 seats in the Senate once Jones is sworn in on Jan. 3, the Republicans 51. This will make it harder for President Trump to push his agenda through Congress.

The Situation in Puerto Rico

What's happening Puerto Rico is a disgrace. Months after Hurricane Maria slammed into the U.S. territory on Sept. 20, only half of the island has electricity. In many cases, power won't be back until spring. The official death toll was 64, but independent news organizations have documented that the number of deaths was well over 1,000. Puerto Rico does have certain internal problems, incl. corruption, but it is also true that the island has suffered from systemic neglect for decades. Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, but the territory lacks full sovereignty and does not have voting representation in the U.S. Congress. Hence there is little incentive for U.S. politicians to help their fellow citizens.

Evangelicals Have Lost Credibility

After Donald Trump and Roy Moore, Evangelical Christians have lost their credibility. The brand is severely tainted. The term "evangelical" has become a synonym not only for misogyny and pedophilia but also for racism and white supremacy. The editor of "Christianity Today," Mark Galli, says: "No one will believe a word we say, perhaps for a generation. Christianity's integrity is severely tarnished." Prominent evangelical author Beth Moore wrote on Twitter, "We've let evil overtake the entire reputation of Evangelicalism. The lust for power is nauseating. Racism, appalling. The arrogance, terrifying. The misogyny so far from Christlikeness, it can't be Christianity." – Of course, there are also many outraged Evangelicals who have disavowed Trump and Moore. Among them are women, millennials, African-Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. But they are minorities. It is clear that the old brand is forever tarnished and must be replaced by new leaders and a new language. Among the terms brainstormed by Mark Galli are Followers of Jesus, Gospel Christians, and neo-Evangelicals.

Global Arms Trade

Of the top 100 global defense companies, 38 are based in the United States. Total global arms sales amounted to \$375 billion in 2016, with the U.S. having the largest share (\$217 billion or 58%). Lockheed Martin was the world's largest arms seller with sales of \$40.8 billion, a 10% increase from 2015. Boeing was second at \$29.5 billion, Raytheon third at \$22.9 billion. Other continents and countries pale in comparison with the U.S. where arms sales are a big industry. Russian companies, for instance, account for only \$26.6 billion or 7.1% of total sales. Both Lockheed Martin and Boeing produce and sell more weaponry than all of Russia combined.

Migratory Bird Treaty Diluted

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 made it unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, or sell migratory birds. The law also applied to dead birds and bird parts such as feathers, bones, eggs, and nests. Over 800 species are currently on the list. The act has always made exceptions for birds that were considered harmful or a nuisance. For example, birds are routinely culled in and near airports to avoid collisions with aircraft. Under the Trump administration, however, the

Dept. of the Interior (DOI) has begun to systematically dilute and roll back protections for migratory birds. The energy sector has long complained that the 1918 act constituted governmental overreach unfriendly to the industry. In a new policy, the DOI has now announced that it will no longer prosecute oil-and-gas operators that "incidentally" or "accidentally" kill migratory birds. In the past, birds have been killed by the hundreds in oil-waste pits and as a result of unplanned oil spills. Transmission lines are another hazard for birds. The new policy also applies to solar and wind operators. – The opinion was drafted by Daniel Jorjani, Principal Deputy Solicitor of the DOI. As such, he is in charge of the legal issues involving Energy & Mineral Resources, Water Resources, Public Lands, Parks & Wildlife, Indian Affairs, and General Law. Before joining the Trump administration, Dan Jorjani worked in leading positions for the fossil-fuel billionaires Charles and David Koch. His current mission is to remove additional roadblocks for the oil-and-gas, mining, and timber industries. More new policies from Jorjani and the DOI can be expected.

ISIS Loves America's Permissive Gun Laws

In a video released by the Islamic State, a camouflaged speaker urges militant Muslims "to take advantage" of the America's weak gun laws to obtain weapons & ammunition and to carry out armed attacks. ISIS propaganda magazine "Rumiyah" has written in the past (according to the New York Times) that "with approximately 5,000 gun shows taking place annually within the United States, the acquisition of firearms becomes a very easy matter." American counterterrorism officials are indeed worried about the ease with which mass shooters and terrorists can obtain lethal weapons. The outgoing director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Nicholas Rasmussen, lamented in December that violent extremists have "no difficulty gaining access" to deadly weapons. He stated that permissive U.S. gun laws enable mass murderers to carry out large-scale attacks.

Firearm Deaths in the U.S.

"USA Today" reported in December that 1.2 million people have died in all the U.S. wars between 1775 and 2017. However, an even larger number – 1.53 million – has died in firearm-related incidents between 1968 and 2015. "USA Today" quoted statistics obtained from the U.S. Dept., of Veterans Affairs and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's an average of 32,553 people per year, which does sound accurate and is in line with other statistics we have seen. That figure typically includes homicides, suicides, and accidents. – Do more guns make us safer? That's not our impression and not what international statistics show. Typically, countries where firearms are banned or restricted have significantly lower homicide and suicide rates.

U.S. Decides to Keep Cluster Bombs

Cluster bombs are ghastly weapons that are banned by 102 countries, largely because they indiscriminately kill and maim anyone, including civilians who are not anywhere near the intended targets. As many as 95% of the victims are civilians, according to a European source. The number of casualties doubled in 2016 compared to the previous year. The U.S. has not signed the treaty, but under President George W. Bush it pledged to sharply reduce their use. Under President Trump, the Pentagon has now decided to reverse the policy and to once again allow the U.S. military to arm itself with cluster munitions. Cluster bombs include a wide variety of rockets, bombs, missiles, and artillery that scatter smaller weapons (submunitions) over a broad target area. A single dispenser can release several hundred bomblets. There are more than 2.2 million cluster munitions within the U.S. In South Korea, the U.S. maintains a stockpile of more than 1.5 million cluster munitions, containing over 90 million bomblets, directed against North Korea. The U.S., the world's largest arms exporter, also provides cluster bombs to nations it considers allies, e.g., Saudi Arabia. Another problem with cluster bombs is that submunitions fail to detonate in about 20% of all cases, resulting in "duds" that can explode years and decades after armed conflicts have ended.

Brutal Housing Shortage

Across the nation, many metropolitan areas face a brutal shortage of affordable housing, leading to gentrification, homelessness, and even disease. Developers create apartment complexes and smaller dwellings at a slower rate, and most

municipalities allow them to get away with it rather than requiring them to also construct cheaper housing stock for low-and-moderate-income people. Many communities have zoning restrictions that prohibit tiny houses or homes for multi-general families. Others follow a policy of demolishing substandard housing rather than rehabilitating salvageable structures, thus aggravating the existing shortage of affordable housing. This is not a sustainable situation, and states such as California have now introduced legislation that will take away power from local governments to solve the crisis. In the future there may be mandatory inclusionary zones (IZ) and/or rent stabilization programs, for instance. This is not likely to happen in Ohio any time soon, but if the state does go blue in 2018 or 2020, there is a chance that the Buckeye State too will see new housing goals. Cities like Delaware should be proactive in this respect and start to think about ways to create a housing market that meets the needs of residents rather than line the pockets of developers.

Police Faulted for Charlottesville

The police badly mishandled the Charlottesville rally of white supremacists on Aug. 12, according to a 200-page report issued on Dec. 1 by former U.S. attorney Timothy Heaphy. The Charlottesville Police Dept. (CPD) and the Virginia State Police (VSP) were under orders to remain in a safe zone behind barricades rather than risk injury responding to conflicts. Officers were directed not to intervene in all but the most serious physical confrontations. An officer assigned to keep cars off a street with demonstrators felt threatened at one point and was withdrawn, permitting the vehicular assault that killed Heather Heyer. Rather than protecting the safety of the public, the police officers placed a higher priority to their own safety. That allowed right-wing radicals (as well as some antifa fighters on the left) to implement their military operation. Lack of reliable intelligence and/or complacency was another problem. Both University President Teresa Sullivan and law enforcement were misinformed, underestimated the threat, and were blindsided. For nearly two more days, Sullivan was in denial and failed to condemn the neo-Nazis with their Tiki torches who ghastly resembled the German Nazis of the 1930s. Once again, the police watched passively while the fascists took over cities and universities. The report also sharply criticized the police for hindering the investigation by withholding requested documents, deleting text messages, not making field commanders available for interviews, and for falsifying at least one document to make it appear that the department had made preparations for a mass disturbance.

Update 12/19: Charlottesville Police Chief Al S. Thomas, Jr., resigned two weeks after the Heaphy report.

High-Speed Police Pursuits

In 2015, "USA Today" investigated high-speed chases conducted by police departments. What the newspaper found was disturbing. About a third of police pursuits end up in crashes. Over the years, these chases have killed thousands of people – suspects, police officers, and innocent passengers and bystanders. The paper also determined that the number of chases and deaths was vastly underreported. The nation's 18,000 police departments report data in widely varying ways or not at all. For example, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has no requirement that police note they were chasing a motorist, so crashes that occur as a result of high-speed chases are not differentiated from other crashes. There is no national database on any number of things police do or do not do. As a result, there is a significant lack of data when it comes to police accountability. That includes the fact that to this day nobody knows for sure how many suspects and bystanders are shot and killed by law enforcement in the line of duty; the best estimate is that the number is well over 1,000 per year, disproportionately minorities. A growing number of police departments have begun to put restrictions on vehicle pursuits, but newspapers still report numerous cases every year where drivers pursued as a result of various minor traffic violations or for shoplifting end up dead. Police officers should always do a quick risk-benefit analysis before hitting the gas pedal. Vehicle-pursuit policies should clearly state that not every transgression is worth pursuing if the risk to public safety becomes too great. Dangerous pursuits should be called off if necessary or when the identity of a suspect is already known. In 2015, a Columbus police officer was chasing someone on Sullivant Ave. at a speed that topped

100 mph in a 35 mph zone and promptly killed an elderly man pulling out of a parking lot. That is reckless.

In Delaware County and within the City of Delaware too high-speed pursuits are not uncommon either. In April of 2017, a policeman recognized a wanted convict on London Rd. and started to chase him. As the man went through several red lights, the officer was "forced to do the same," according to the Delaware Gazette. No, he wasn't. Maybe the officer determined this was safe to do so, but in cases like this the risk may well outweigh the benefit. Although taxpayers pay almost \$8 million per year for the Delaware Police Department, its practices are not transparent. Written policies, if they exist, are not open for public inspection. There is no annual report. There is no committee that oversees the DPD. The Police Chief, Bruce Pijanowski, has answered specific questions when we asked him, but a genuine culture of transparency and public accountability is missing.

The New Seven Deadly Sins

The BBC reported on 12/16, based on a report by the "Washington Post," that the Trump administration has created a list of 7 forbidden words from official CDC documents as the agency is preparing its next budget: *diversity, fetus, entitlement, evidence-based & science-based, transgender, and vulnerable*. For example, CDC personnel was instructed to replace the phrase "evidence-based" or "science-based" with the phrase "CDC bases its recommendations on science in consideration with community standards and wishes," a phrase that significantly dilutes scientific rigor. It's conceivable that in many cases parochial and tribal "community standards and wishes" will have a higher priority than scientific evidence. Climate change will be a perfect example for that. Any time political ideology replaces sound science, it should be cause for deep concern. Obviously, the move has serious consequences that could be detrimental to public health and safety. It also means that there will be no future funding for programs that address any of these things. After the passing of the controversial tax bill, the GOP is prepared to dismantle the safety net next. "Entitlements" will be slashed and/or eliminated, erasing even the very language to describe the safety net. Ditto transgender people. Trump wants them gone from the military and from the dictionary. The GOP has long been involved in language wars, but Trump in particular has been torturing and mutilating the English language to the point it's becoming unrecognizable. – It is noteworthy that Trump is a happy practitioner of several of the real deadly sins, including *greed, lust, pride, vainglory, and wrath*.

"Not Qualified"

The American Bar Association (ABA) has rated a record number of Trump nominees for judgeships as "not qualified." The latest example is nominee Matthew S. Petersen who has never handled a single civic or criminal trial in his life. When asked by the Senate Judiciary Committee, he could not explain basic and simple questions of law. Other judicial nominees included Jeff Mateer and Brett Talley. Mateer in 2015 said he believed that transgender children were "Satan's spawn." Talley in 2011 defended the KKK and concealed the fact that he is married to a White House official. He is also the author of horror books and has participated in ghost-hunting events, but has never tried a case. Nominees for judgeships are not the only ones lacking competence and experience, which under normal circumstances would render them unfit for office. It was recently reported that Rex Tillerson admitted being similarly out of his element when he took over as Secretary of State. Too many in the Trump administration are professionally unqualified for their jobs. They were picked for political reasons rather than their mastery of subject matter. In several cases the intent to dismantle a reputable state agency by a maverick outsider was deliberate (e.g., DeVos, Pruitt, and Tillerson).

Atlanta Airport Shuts Down

A sudden power outage brought the Atlanta International Airport – the world's busiest – to a complete standstill on Sun., Dec. 17. The lights went out at around 1 pm and remained dark for the next 11 hours. More than 1,500 flights were grounded, diverted, and/or cancelled. Luckily, the control tower did not lose power because it had a separate electrical feed. It took Delta and other airplanes days to fully recover from the problem. A fire in an underground electrical facility seems to have been responsible for the blackout. – The power outage demonstrated once again the vulnerability of America's power

grid. In addition to the main system the airport did have a power-generating backup system, but that too failed because it was too close to the fire. The airport is now considering a change in the configuration. It also shows the degree to which modern civilization has become almost totally dependent on electricity (as well as fossil fuels) to the point it has become a debilitating addiction.

Alternative Nobel Prize for Robert Bilott

Four human-rights activists received the Swedish "Right Livelihood Award" in December, better known as the Alternative Nobel Prizes. Among them was environmental lawyer Robert ("Rob") A. Bilott, who has his law degree from OSU. Bilott, born in 1965, was instrumental in filing a lawsuit against chemical giant DuPont for its dumping of carcinogenic fluoropolymer acid (PFOA), better known as Teflon or C8. It contaminated the drinking water of some 70,000 people in West Virginia. – We don't recall reading about this important award in the American press.



The End of "Cape Wind"

"Cape Wind," a proposed offshore wind-turbine project near Cape Cod in Massachusetts, is dead after developer Jim Gordon gave up and pulled the plug. The project was controversial from the start and led to 16 years of bitter and relentless opposition and litigation. Perhaps the biggest problem was the location of the wind farm's 130 massive turbines in Nantucket Sound, visible to many wealthy waterfront owners like former Sen. Edward M. Kennedy. But ordinary people were also opposed, including Native Americans and naturalists. – "Cape Wind" was an interesting test case for environmentalists. As early as 2010 we wrote an essay in which we concluded "that Cape Wind is a flawed proposal that ignores the people, the culture, and the wildlife of Nantucket Sound." The decision not to build near an inhabited area frequented by many tourists was the correct one. Today, wind farms are typically constructed truly offshore and not visible from land. However, wind power remains popular. New farms are built every year on land and in water. The demise of Cape Wind should not be interpreted as an indictment against wind energy per se.

"Sitting Is the New Smoking"

The typical American spends up to half of his/her waking life sitting – in a car or in an office, at the computer or in front of the TV. However, too much sitting is harmful to your health. Drexel University researchers are now saying that "sitting is the new smoking." They are urging employers to encourage workers to sit less and move more. Employers should incorporate active design into the work space, such as moving coffee makers, restrooms, or parking spaces farther away from desks. Holding standing meetings is another idea. They are also suggesting more breaks & walks, treadmill desks, or chairs that come with resistance bands for on-the-job strength training. If employers don't pivot toward a more health-focused culture, they may one day be held liable for the damage they caused by sedentary workplaces. The Drexel University research will be published later this year in the Lewis & Clark Law Review. A sessile lifestyle has been linked to high blood pressure, obesity, high cholesterol, and an increase of heart disease. Physical and mental activity is also known to delay the onset of dementia. – We might add that too much sitting is also not good for the health of K-12 children. It is against their nature to be forced to be inactive. The human body and mind is hard-wired to walk and run, talk and play. There are ways to incorporate physical activity into the classroom as well.

Walkability Growing in Popularity

A majority of Americans (53%) say they would like to live in neighborhoods within walking distance to shops, restaurants, and other amenities, according to a survey conducted by the National association of Realtors. That's up from 48% in 2015. With 62%, millennials show the strongest desire for walkable & bikeable communities.

FDA Questions the Value of Homeopathic Products

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) seems ready to crack down on the growing number of unproven alternative remedies. The vast majority of low-risk homeopathic medicines would remain on the market, however. Only products containing dangerous and potentially toxic substances linked to injuries and deaths would be removed. Homeopathy products used to be a niche market, but have grown into a \$3 billion industry, according to FDA figures. Most scientists regard homeopathic medicines as a form of modern-day snake oil and don't believe in their value, but alternative medicine does have its believers. Homeopathic remedies typically contain diluted drugs, vitamins, and minerals. They are considered dietary supplements by the FDA, meaning the agency does not review their safety or effectiveness before they are being sold.

The Worst Passwords

The list of the 25 worst computer passwords that people use includes "12345," "123456," "1234567," and "12345678," and "123456789." Hackers love it when people foolishly choose weak and predictable passwords like "hello," "password," or "letmein." Other bad choices are the year in which were born, e.g., "1990" or "1995." First names such as "robert" or "michelle" or sports teams are likewise too easy to crack. Passwords should be complex and include letters, numbers, and symbols. In recent years it has also become popular to use full sentences that are easy to remember but hard to guess.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Kraft Foods merged with H. J. Heinz Co. in 2015. The new company, "Kraft Heinz," just released its first corporate social-responsibility plan. Kraft Heinz is investing \$200 million to grow a better world by improving animal welfare, ending the destruction of rainforests, fighting world hunger, and ensuring that raw materials are sustainably sourced. For example, part of the plan is to use eggs only from cage-free hens in all global operations by 2025. Why are companies such as Kraft Heinz and many others interested in sustainability efforts? Here are a few reasons: 1. Consumers (especially millennials) demand it and are even willing to pay more for products with a better environmental and social footprint. 2. Practicing social and environmental sustainability enhances the reputation of companies, resulting not only in more sales but also in happier and more committed employees. 3. Corporate social-responsibility plans allow companies to reduce risk and to develop more robust supply and distribution chains. Sustainable, responsible, and impact investing in the U.S. totaled \$8.72 trillion in 2016, according to the U.S. Sustainable and Responsible Investment (SIF) Foundation (www.ussrif.org). However, there is still a long way to go. For example, California-based As You Sow (www.asyousow.org), is planning to pressure Kraft Heinz and other corporations to take more concrete action on recyclable packaging.

"Memories" and "Experiences" Are Top Sellers

Many people bought fewer consumer products this holiday season. Instead, they opted to purchase unforgettable activities, experiences, and memories. On top of the list were dinners, wine tastings, spa certificates, travel, sightseeing tours, gym memberships, concerts, and other events. Millennials and Gen Z shoppers, in particular, place a higher value on immaterial things and go for experiential gift-giving and gift-receiving. There are various explanations for this trend, some more plausible than others. One thing is certain, however. Younger generations are tired of buying useless and meaningless "stuff," which soon becomes obsolete and forgotten. Instead, they are rediscovering the timeless value of relationships and community, experiences and memories. Generating less waste is also good practice from an environmental point of view.

Toys May Spy on Children

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is warning parents that internet-connected toys may be used to spy on their children, putting their privacy or safety at risk. "Connected" talking dolls or teddy bears, tablets or smart watches designed for kids can be used by hackers, identity thieves & blackmailers to collect, transmit & store information such as locations, conversations, and images. (Manufacturers and governments, too, have been known to collect

such information from toys and devices.) The FBI is advising parents to research the toy's manufacturer online and read the company's privacy & security policy; create strong passwords; not use free Wi-Fi that's open to the public; and to shut off toys when not in use. Toys with cameras & microphones should be stored away and covered up when not in use. The FBI did not name specific toys or brands, but the New York Times on 12/22 listed several of them. Among them are the My Friend Cayla doll, which has been called "an illegal espionage apparatus." Another potential spy device is the Furby Connect doll made by Hasbro & the BB-8 droid, released with "The Last Jedi."



The Hottest Toy of the Season

The hottest toy of the season is the Fingerling, a five-inch robotic monkey that gently grips your finger with its arms and legs, blinks its eyes, and blows kisses. You can cause it to go to sleep and even to pass gas. Fingerlings can also snore, say hello, and talk gibberish. When one monkey starts to sing, it sets off sensors in nearby Fingerlings who then chime in. Kids love their new friends and the emotional connection with them. Parents drive long distances to find the \$15 toy, which is often sold out at Walmart and other stores. Scalpers have started to charge desperate families exorbitant amounts of money for specimens, and counterfeiters are selling fake monkeys with limited capabilities. The Canadian company WowWee created the new toy, which are manufactured in – where else? – China.

"Feminism" Is the Word of the Year

2017 was literally a big year for "feminism." The online dictionary Merriam-Webster says "feminism" and its definition was the most-researched word during Trump's first year as president. Additional major spikes occurred when the hashtag #MeToo emerged and "Time" chose "The Silence Breakers" as the 2018 "Person of the Year." It certainly is true that abusive conduct once considered "normal" for boys and men is no longer acceptable in the 21st century. However, there are also many professions and segments where the new awareness has not yet taken a foothold. – The British Oxford Dictionary went with the term "youthquake," defined as significant cultural change arising from or influenced by young people. It is also a good choice. Both the feminist and the youth movement will help shape the future.



"The Story of Ferdinand"

"The Story of Ferdinand," written by Munro Leaf and illustrated by Robert Lawson in 1936, is a timeless tale for children about a Spanish bull who refuses to fight because he would rather stay in his pasture, lie under his favorite cork tree, and smell the flowers. He sure does not like to be pricked by bumblebees, bandelleros, picadores, and the matador. When the book came out, it was attacked by Communists and fascists as bourgeois and/or degenerate pacifist propaganda. Both Hitler and Franco banned it. However, the charming book has stood the test of time and has now been made into a full-length computer-animated movie by Carlos Saldanha ("The Ice Age"). Delaware's Strand Theatre started to show it in December, and Fundamentals has been selling copies of the book briskly. New farm animals and wildlife and some slap-stock comedy were added to fill the 100+ minutes, but the film remains faithful to the book's original messages – peace is better than war, and it's important to be true to yourself even if others consider you a misfit. The movie also includes

an anti-bullying message. In this day and age, it may also be viewed as a work of art that questions gender stereotypes.

Book Recommendation: "Janesville, Wis."

New York Times writer Andrew Ross Sorkin has called it "the most illuminating business book of the year." In "Janesville: An American Story" (Simon & Schuster 2017, 368 pp., now avail. as pbk.), reporter Amy Goldstein takes a close look at the middle-class town Janesville, Wisconsin, after General Motors closed a factory there in 2008. The economic and psychological impact was devastating, and Goldstein's story is heartbreaking. The author interviewed characters from across the political spectrum to show all sides of the story. It becomes clear quickly that Janesville is a microcosm of all the complex issues with which communities across the U.S. are confronted, including many in Ohio. Janesville's 2008 economic collapse resulted in the evisceration of the middle class and helps understand the political collapse in 2016.



The Instant Pot

"Community Matters" is not in the advertisement business, but we are making a rare exception for "the Instant Pot." The electric mini-cooker was invented by Robert Wang and is manufactured by his Canadian company Double Insight in Kanata, Ontario. The Instant Pot is not another technological gimmick that people don't need. It has revolutionized home cooking and may well represent an actual, lasting shift in the way people prepare meals and eat. "Potheads," as devotees of the new cult call themselves, use the kitchen appliance for virtually everything: pressure-cooking, steaming, sautéing, even making yogurt and cheese cakes. Vegetarians and paleo dieters in particular were drawn to the Instant Pot from the start. Many, many new cookbooks have already been written for the Instant Pot. The appliance typically sells for \$99, with some models below and above that price. The internet played a big role when they were first sold, but in the meantime they are available in most mainstream stores. – Here is a secret inventor Wang revealed to "New York Times" reporter Kevin Roose: in every official photograph of an Instant Pot, the unit's timer is set to 5:20 – a series of numbers that, when spoken aloud, sounds like "I love you" in Mandarin Chinese, Wang's native language. "It shows how much we care about our customers," he says.

WORLD

Sustainable Development Goals 2030

The following 17 global goals were adopted unanimously by all member states of the United Nations in 2015, incl. the U.S. More in-depth information on each point can be found on the internet.

- End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- End hunger, achieve food security & improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Ensure inclusive & equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water & sanitation for all
- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable & modern energy for all
- Promote sustained, inclusive & sustainable economic growth, full & productive employment, and decent work for all
- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive & sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation
- Reduce inequality within & among countries
- Make cities & human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient & sustainable

- Ensure sustainable consumption & production patterns
- Take urgent action to combat climate change & its impacts
- Conserve & sustainably use the oceans, seas & marine resources for sustainable development
- Protect, restore & promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt & reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
- Promote peaceful & inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable & inclusive institutions at all levels
- Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Davos 2018: World Economic Forum

The 48th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum will be held in Davos, Switzerland, from Jan. 23-26. The 2018 topic is "Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World." More than 2,500 world leaders from over 100 nations will be enrolled in over 400 sessions during this 4-day event. The 2018 forum will make the case for a renewed commitment to international collaboration. The economic forum does not make policy, but it brings together politicians and industrialists, thought leaders and entertainers to discuss transformational change, transnational cooperation, sustainable development, and innovative megatrends of the future. Among the 14 "systems" explored at the annual Davos summit of summits are health & healthcare, food & agriculture, educational attainment & gender equity, environment & natural resources, infrastructure development, transportation & mobility, science & technology, etc. Unfortunately, President Trump's narrow nationalistic "America First" agenda is the antithesis of what the World Economic Forum represents. The current U.S. administration does not believe in "a shared future" when it comes to international trade, scientific research, fighting epidemics, climate change, etc. Don't expect Davos to be widely discussed this January, but America is ignoring the World Economic Forum at its peril. To learn more, visit www.weforum.org.

Canada Is Open for Business

Things have become ugly and uncertain in the U.S. There is anti-foreigner rhetoric, there are travel bans, and there is talk about ending entire immigration categories. Under President Trump, the country has lost international stature and is now less attractive as a destination for students, workers, and tourists than in the past. The unpredictability has been a boon for neighboring Canada. International students are welcome there and offered a path to permanent residency. A fast-track visa program brings foreign talent to the country within 1 to 2 weeks as compared to the years it takes in the U.S. where there is no guaranteed outcome. Many Canadian cities (such as Edmonton, Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver) have become technology hubs that attract tech workers from around the world. Startups and a number of established American companies such as Facebook, Google, Microsoft, and Uber have set up shop north of the U.S. to take advantage of the talent graduating from Canadian colleges and universities. Unfortunately for America, the long-term effect of this trend will be more innovation and higher productivity in Canada and a correspondingly lower GDP and living standard in the U.S.

Esperanto – a Language of Hope and Peace

Over the centuries, many artificial languages have been created, but none was as successful and important as Esperanto. Invented by Polish-Jewish physician Dr. L. L. Zamenhof (1859-1917), it is read and spoken on all continents, including in North America. What Zamenhof dreamt of was world peace (the word "esperanto" means hope). The language was designed to be learned easily, and so both its pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar are simple, predictable, and practical. For example, all nouns end in -o, adjectives in -a, and adverbs in -e. The language is based on Indoeuropean concepts and incorporates Germanic, Romance, and Slavic components as well as elements of Latin and Greek. Zamenhof was born on December 15, and so Zamenhof Day ("Zamenhof Tago" to Esperantists) is celebrated annually on that day. Even in the 21st century, there are numerous newspapers and books, songs and radio broadcasts, associations and conferences dedicated to Esperanto. Young people too show interest. Perhaps the most famous Esperanto speaker in the U.S. is billionaire

George Soros, whose father was a speaker and writer of Esperanto in his native Hungary. English is essentially the world's lingua franca today, but for many reasons Esperanto continues to survive and thrive.

"Britain First"

When President Trump retweeted three videos disseminated by Jayda Fransen from the "Britain First" group, it caused an international furor and was widely denounced, including by the UK government, as wrong and reckless. The videos allegedly showed Muslim immigrants engaged in violence, but all three were produced abroad and were either downright false ("Muslim migrant beats up Dutch boy on crutches") or deliberately taken out of context and misattributed. "Britain First," which emerged in 2011, is an ultranationalist fringe group preaches hatred against all things Muslim. Group members believe that Christian civilization is under threat and siege from Muslims. Its deputy leader, Jayda Fransen (31), has organized "Christian patrols" that marches into Muslim neighborhoods, invades mosques, and accosts members of Islam. In 2015, Fransen and the group's leader, Paul Golding (35), were barred from entering mosques or Islamic centers without an invitation. Fransen has been arrested and convicted for harassment multiple times. She was back due in court in Belfast on Dec. 14 for "using threatening, abusive, insulting words or behavior." – During his campaign, President Trump too called for "a total and complete shutdown" of Muslims coming to the U.S." Since elected, he has continued his war against Islam. President George W. Bush and Barack Obama were careful not to equate Islam with terrorism, but Donald Trump is making no such distinction. There is clearly an affinity between Trump's and Fransen's Islamophobia, between "America First" and "Britain First." Within hours, Jayda Fransen thanked the American president for his warm support, writing "You've shed light on my plight here in Britain, in that I am facing prison for giving a speech in which I criticized Islam. This is evidence that Britain has become Shariah-compliant." Many voices condemned Trump for normalizing hatred and for legitimizing a violent neo-Nazi group known for illegal activities. Some accused him for slowly building a case to persecute, round up, and drive out Muslims, similar to what once happened to Jews in Spain and Germany.

The Grenfell Tower Blaze

More than 6 months after the devastating Grenfell Tower fire in London that killed 71 people, most of those left homeless (incl. more than 300 children) are still living in hotels and emergency accommodations. They say that have been neglected before the fire and continued to be uncared after the fire. Deregulation and lack of enforcement are among the reasons for the devastating disaster, which exposed deep gaps in living conditions between the rich and the poor. A Scotland Yard investigation is supposedly underway, but authorities seem to be in no hurry to get to the truth of it all. A preliminary 121-page report conducted by Judith Hackitt and released on 12/18 makes a number of sensible recommendations, but does not examine how the influence of the building industry has crippled safety standards and weakened enforcement efforts.

The Global Magnitsky Act

Sergei L. Magnitsky was the Russian lawyer who died in pretrial detention after exposing a tax-theft scheme involving Russian officials. Last year, the bipartisan Global Magnitsky Act (co-authored by Senators Ben Cardin and John McCain) passed in the U.S. It is intended to push against "a global culture of impunity" and to punish people around the world involved in corruption and human-rights violations. Sanctions have now been imposed on 52 people and entities. Included in the list are Benjamin Bol Mel (South Sudan), Dan Gertler (Congo), Yahya Jammeh (Gambia), Maung Maung Soe (Myanmar), and Mukhtar Hamid Shah (Pakistan). The sanctions freeze assets the individuals or entities may hold in the U.S. and also prevent them from using American financial institutions abroad. – Human rights advocates and activists applauded the announcement, made on 12/21, but Democrats criticized that only 1 person from Myanmar was blacklisted. A bloody crackdown on Myanmar's Rohingya minority in Rakhine State has forced at least 650,000 of them to flee the country.

The Status of Jerusalem

Ignoring decades of U.S. policy and the international consensus U.S. President Donald Trump declared in December that

Jerusalem, not Tel Aviv, is the rightful capital of Israel and that the U.S. would move its embassy there. The United Nations General Assembly on Dec. 21 overwhelmingly denounced Trump's unilateral declaration. 128 U.N. members voted for the resolution and against the U.S. action, 35 abstained, 9 voted against it, and 21 were absent. U.S. efforts "to bully" and "to blackmail" countries, as critics called it, proved ineffective. Among the 9 countries that supported the U.S. declaration and voted against the resolution were the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, and Togo – small island states that few Americans have ever heard of. They were of course handsomely rewarded with "aid" for selling their vote. The U.N. resolution is nonbinding, but it sends a strong signal that the world is not happy with America's new foreign policy. The U.S. has badly misinterpreted the centrality of the Jerusalem issue for close allies such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, or Turkey. The strong and unshakeable international consensus is that the final status of Jerusalem must be decided between Israel and the Palestinians. Now that the U.S. has taken sides, Arab and Muslim leaders say it cannot ever again serve as an unbiased arbiter in the peace process.

The Brazilian Zika Babies at the Age of 2

Thousands of babies were born in Brazil with microcephaly in 2015 and 2016, after their mothers were infected with the Zika virus. The northeastern state of Paraiba was hit particularly hard, but states such as Pernambuco were also affected. American and Brazilian researchers have now assessed the motor skills and cognitive abilities of these babies. The most severely affected are significantly disabled, unable to walk or even sit, eat or swallow, and they have virtually no language. Vision and hearing problems are common, impairing their ability to learn and develop. Many have seizures and/or have developed pneumonia or bronchitis. After 2 years, some have barely reached the level healthy babies display at the age of 6 months. Reliable numbers are not available, but the researchers estimate that "hundreds" of Zika babies will require a lifetime of around-the-clock care involving enormous amounts of time, labor, and money. Their future is doubtful because the situation is complicated by Brazil's systemic poverty and lack to health-care access.

Climate Change Is Affecting Winter Olympics

Climate change has warmed the world and melted snow and ice everywhere. The shortage of snow is a problem for athletes preparing for the Winter Olympics in South Korea, Feb. 9-25. They had to travel far and wide in search of suitable wintry conditions. American and Canadian skiers were forced to journey as far as Argentina, Finland, or Switzerland because North American glaciers have disappeared. Jonathon Lillis, world champion in men's aerials skiing, says: "Conditions are not as good as they used to be. You see videos of people skiing on glaciers back in the '80s and '70s, and half of that glacier doesn't even exist anymore."

D.J.I. Drones Might Be Used for Spying on U.S.

The U.S. government has warned American users of Chinese-made D.J.I. drones that data collected by the devices might end up in China. Da Jiang Innovations Science and Technology Company (D.J.I) dominates the overall drone market, with a nearly two-thirds share in the U.S. and Canada. Commercial drones are equipped with technology to monitor infrastructure such as bridges & dams, pipelines & power lines, roads & rail hubs. To strengthen its market share further (and possibly for more nefarious reasons as well), D.J.I. has been focusing on utilities, agriculture, law enforcement, transportation, and other entities. Customers typically have no idea where their data might end up. Generally speaking, domestic and foreign companies operating in China are forced to cooperate closely with the Chinese government, including American companies such as Apple and Facebook. For example, foreign investors are now required to store their data within China's territory where access is easier. The separation of government and private industry does not exist in countries such as China and Russia. Chinese-made D.J.I. drones, Russian-made computer software, foreign-made telephones, etc., are starting to raise serious concerns about national security in America.

Recommended Books

If you are interested in genealogy, you might want to read A. J. Jacobs' informative and entertaining book, "It's All Relative:"

Adventures Up and Down the World's Family Tree" (Simon & Schuster 2017, 336 pp., \$27). The author takes a global look at genealogy, from mitochondrial DNA to privacy issues, from Neanderthals to Mormonism, and from finding tombstones to electronic databases. His conclusion is that we are all more or less interrelated and that there is no such thing as "racial purity." Not surprisingly, the author is a strong advocate for world peace. – Another delightful title is "The Annotated African American Folktales," ed. by Henry Louis Gates & Maria Tatar (Liveright / Norton 2017, 651 pp., \$39.95). The illustrated collection, which should be in every school & library, starts with tales from Africa, moves on to Caribbean and Creole folklore, and includes nearly 150 African American stories.

What the Koran / Quran Actually Says

Distinguished scholar and public intellectual Garry Wills has published an illuminating new book, "What the Qur'an Meant and Why It Matters" (Viking 2017, 226 pp., \$26). What the author does is heroic and astounding. He sweeps aside all uninformed and misinformed preconceptions about Islam and the Koran to take a fresh and honest look at what the holy book of Islam actually says. What he discovers may revolutionize the current discourse on Islam in the West, if people would only open their minds and hearts. The Koran's overall tenor, evoked constantly, is one of mercy and forgiveness. Violence must be avoided because it is not conducive to a moral life. "Jihad," the author point out, does not mean "holy war" at all; instead, it means "striving" toward higher ground. As for "shariah," the word appears only once in the Koran. It means "path" (not "law"), as in being "on the right path." And there is zero evidence of Shariah law. As in Church law, orthodox rules and regulations were added in later centuries and other countries. They bear little or no relation to the Koran. The 72 virgins in paradise who are said to await modern-day jihadists don't exist in the Koran either; they were invented out of thin air. The Koran is, instead, an attempt to communicate with God. It is a fluid conversation and dialogue, not a prescriptive and proscriptive rule book. The New York Times Book Review has called Wills' monograph "perhaps the best introduction to the Quran." – No doubt there will be people who will ludicrously attack Wills for being an "apologist" of Islam and perhaps even terrorism. But given the Pulitzer Prize winner's decades-old reputation and track record, they have no standing.

Animal Adjectives

Most people know the meaning of "bovine," "canine," "equine," and "feline." And maybe they can figure out the meaning of "asinine" and "porcine" if they start to think about it. But how about other stranger such as "caprine" and "ovine," "lupine" and "ursine"? There are hundreds of such words, many of them rare and exotic. See if you can match the following animals with their appropriate adjective.

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 01. ___ anatine | a. ape, monkey |
| 02. ___ apian | b. bear |
| 03. ___ arachnine | c. beaver |
| 04. ___ asinine | d. bee |
| 05. ___ avian | e. bird |
| 06. ___ bovine | f. butterfly |
| 07. ___ canine | g. cat |
| 08. ___ caprine | h. cow |
| 09. ___ castoridine | i. dog |
| 10. ___ cetacean | j. donkey |
| 11. ___ corvine | k. duck |
| 12. ___ cygnine | l. fish |
| 13. ___ equine | m. fox |
| 14. ___ feline | n. goat |
| 15. ___ lepidopteran | o. horse |
| 16. ___ leporine | p. mouse, rat |
| 17. ___ lupine | q. rabbit |
| 18. ___ murine | r. raven, crow |
| 19. ___ ovine | s. sheep |
| 20. ___ piscine | t. spider |
| 21. ___ porcine | u. swan |
| 22. ___ simian | v. swine, hog |
| 23. ___ ursine | w. whale |
| 24. ___ vulpine | x. wolf |