

Community Matters

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

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Send info, articles, questions & comments to delawarecommunitymatters@gmail.com

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Constitution of the State of Ohio (Article 1, § 11): "Every citizen may freely speak, write, and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of the right; and no law shall be passed to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech, or of the press. In all criminal prosecutions for libel, the truth may be given in evidence to the jury, and if it shall appear to the jury that the matter charged as libelous is true, and was published with good intentions, and for justifiable ends, the party shall be acquitted."

CALENDAR OF LOCAL EVENTS

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Sunday in Delaware (12/1)

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day is officially Dec. 7. However, the Delaware County Veterans Association will lead a Pearl Harbor Day remembrance ceremony on Sun., Dec. 1. Events will take place 12:45-1 pm on the Winter St. bridge across the Olentangy River and include the playing of taps, a rifle volley & a wreath ceremony.



Sakata Exhibition Opens at Arts Castle (12/1)

A student art exchange has been arranged between the City of Delaware and its sister city in Japan, Sakata. Under the title "Hometown through My Eyes," the Arts Castle will be hosting more than 40 two- and three-dimensional artworks from Sakata students from Dec. 2 through Jan. 12. Expect to see a lot of cherry trees! A private VIP reception, hosted by the City of Delaware, is planned for Sun., Dec. 1 (3-5 pm). Gary DeCoker, Rand Guebert, Tom Homan,

and Carolyn Riggle will make remarks at 3:30 pm. Music is provided by the Hayes String Quartet.

Winter at William Street Concert (12/1)

The 11th annual Winter at William Street Concert will take place Sun., Dec. 1 (7 pm) at William Street UMC at 28 W. William St. In addition to the church's musicians, members of the choir from North Union High School will be part of the concert. Free & open to the public. Proceeds from a free-will offering will benefit Turning Point.



Join the celebration!

Advent Recital at St. Peter's (12/1)

Saint Peter's Episcopal Church at 45 W. Winter St. is offering a program entitled "Advent: Meditations on the Coming of the Messiah" on Sun., Dec. 1 (7-8 pm). The vocal soloist is Keni Hansen; she will be accompanied on the piano by organist & choir master Jeff Ward. Free & open to the public.

Lessons & Carols (12/2)

OWU's annual Lessons & Carols concert, featuring sing-along holiday carols & spiritual readings, will be celebrated on Mon., Dec. 2 (7 pm) in Gray Chapel inside University Hall, 61 S. Sandusky St. In addition to OWU performers under the direction of Dr. Jason Hiestler, the concert will feature the Delaware Community Chorus, Powell UMC Chancel Choir & Buckeye Valley High School Choir. The lighting of Ohio Wesleyan's Ron Hudler Memorial Christmas tree will follow the concert. Free & open to the public.



Burger King Ribbon Cutting (12/5)

Burger King at 1034 State Rt. 37 W. (Central Ave.) is finished. According to info provided by the Chamber of Commerce, a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the fast-food restaurant will take place Thurs., Dec. 5 (11:30 am). The grand opening is Sat., Dec. 7.

Asbury Organ Recital (12/5)

Linda Forry is the soloist of Asbury's First Thursday Noontime Recital on Dec. 5 (12:15-12:45 pm). She is the director of Traditional Worship and Organist at Marysville First UMC. Coffee & tea are provided. Asbury is located at 55 W. Lincoln Ave. Free & open to the public.



OWU Hosts Social Activist Mark Harris (12/5)

California artist and social activist Mark Harris will speak in the Bayley Room (2nd floor) of Beeghly Library on the OWU campus on Thurs., Dec. 5 (7 pm). His topic is "Revolution through Art: Battling Social Injustice One Piece at a Time." Harris is an artist and educator who combines his passion for art and social justice, advocacy and activism. His works deal with many critical issues society faces today. Also on display will be works by Ricardo Morales that focus on environmental racism. Free & open to the public. The event is sponsored by VIVA, COW, and Global Studies.

Delaware Community Concert Band (12/5)

Everyone is invited to the Winter Concert of the Delaware Community Concert Band on Thurs., Dec. 5 (7:30 pm) at Dempsey

Middle School, 599 Pennsylvania Ave. In addition to festive holiday music and sing-alongs under the direction of Anne Brandyberry, there will be a silent auction, a guest conductor raffle, and refreshments. Admission is free, but please cash & personal checks only for the auction and the raffle. – DCCB is on Facebook. It rehearses Thursday nights (7-9 pm) at Dempsey Middle School, but perhaps not during winter break.

First Friday (12/6)

Main Street Delaware celebrates "Home for the Holidays" Dec. 6-8. On Fri., Dec. 6 (6-9 pm) there will be the lighting of the Christmas tree at 6:30 pm, musical performances, carriage rides (\$1 per person, free for children 5 and under), children's activities, visits with Santa at the Strand Theatre, and more. The celebration continues Sat., Dec. 7 with a shopping extravaganza (11 am – 6 pm) and a scavenger hunt. The annual Christmas parade will kick off from Mingo Park on Sun., Dec. 8 at 3 pm and travel south to Wilmer St. For details and additional info, visit www.mainstreetdelaware.com.

New Exhibition in Gallery 22 (12/6)

Gallery 22 at 22 E. Winter St. is opening a new exhibit on Dec. 6 (6-8:30 pm) in conjunction with First Friday. Called "Memories in the Making," it features the creative work of 16 artists who suffer from the early stages of Alzheimer's disease or other dementia-related illnesses. They were participants in a year-long art class taught by instructor Terry Claymier. Funding was provided by Greif Inc., headquartered in Delaware. The exhibit runs from Dec. 6 through Dec. 20. Regular visitation hours are Fri. and Sat., 6-8:30 pm.

Jazz Christmas Concert (12/6)

Following the tree lighting, there will be a Jazz Christmas Concert in Pat's Cave, 11 W. Winter St., on Fri., Dec. 6 (7-9 pm). Come on in and warm up. The concert is free of charge, as confirmed by Patrick Bailey himself.

Arts Castle Presents "Winter Wonderland" (12/7)

The Arts Castle Dance Academy presents "Winter Wonderland" on Fri., Dec. 6 (7 pm) at Willis Education Center, 74 W. William St. We are not sure, but dancers will probably be the children and teenagers enrolled in dance classes at the Arts Castle. Admission is a canned good to be donated to a local food pantry.

OWU Students Perform One-Act Plays (12/6-7)

Students in OWU's directing & playwriting classes will present "One-Act Plays" on Dec. 6 & 7 (8 pm) in Chappellear Drama Center, 45 Rowland Ave. There are 12 "One Acts" total; 6 will be performed Fri., the other 6 Sat. The plays may contain adult themes and language. Free & open to the public.

Christmas Cupboard Fundraiser at Andrews House (12/7) – \$

Andrews House at 39 W. Winter St. has its annual Christmas Cupboard fundraiser on Sat., Dec. 7 (9 am – 1 pm). You can fill your cupboard with cookies and other seasonal baked goods and enter to win raffle prizes, some of them of a high value. All proceeds benefit programs of Andrews House, a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit community center.

Roop's Toy Drop-Off (12/7)

Roop's 14th Annual Toy Drop-Off will be held on Sat., Dec. 7 (12-5 pm) at 17 Union St. (City Parking Lot & Roop's Bar). New, unwrapped donations are needed for 3 age groups, both girls and boys. Cash and checks for gift cards for older children are also accepted. Delaware's firemen will be there as well as Santa.

Holidays at Hayes High School (12/7)

The students at Hayes High School are celebrating the season with a "Holidays at Hayes" event on Sat., Dec. 7 (1-4 pm). There will be a movie marathon ("The Grinch," "Frosty the Snowman" & "Charlie Brown"), followed by music (Hayes Singers), games & snacks. Admission is one new, unwrapped toy, to be donated to People in Need.

Holidays in Ashley, Powell & Sunbury (12/7)

Ashley, Powell & Sunbury are celebrating Christmas on Sat., Dec. 7. The Village of Ashley will have a parade at 6 pm, followed by a Christmas concert in the Public Library, a Christmas village display at First Commonwealth, and other events. The City of Powell is hosting a free holiday event from 2-5:30 pm in and around the Municipal Building, followed by a tree lighting at 6 pm in Village Green Park. The Village of Sunbury celebrates Christmas on the Square from 4-8 pm. There will be a craft & gift fair, a parade (5:30 pm), a tree lighting at 7 pm, and ice carving, among other activities.

PIN's Holiday Clearing House (12/8)

People in Need's largest annual event, the Holiday Clearing House, is coming up Sun., Dec. 8 (8:30 am – 5:30 pm) at the Delaware County Fairgrounds, 236 Pennsylvania Ave. In 2018, Holiday Clearing House distributed over 1,100 bags of groceries or nearly 17,000 meals to Delaware Co. residents. 1,084 children, 598 adults, and over 260 seniors had a brighter holiday season. – PIN continues to accept new toys, new coats, food, and monetary gifts through Sat., Dec. 7 at the Delaware Co. Fairgrounds and at Delaware City & Co. fire departments.

Open Mosque Day (12/8)

To encourage neighbors to get to know them, ten Columbus-area mosques are opening their doors as part of a statewide event. The second annual Ohio Open Mosque Day will take place Sun., Dec. 8 (1:30-4:30 pm). Participating mosques include the Noor Islamic Cultural Center at 5001 Wilcox Rd. and Polaris Masjid, 8542 Cotter St. in Lewis Center.

Delaware Community Chorus (12/8) – \$

The Delaware Community Chorus is opening its 50th season with a full performance of "Gloria" by English composer John Rutter and other holiday songs on Sun., Dec. 8 (3 pm) in Powell United Methodist Church (825 E. Olentangy St. / Powell Rd.) in Powell. There will be brief reception following the concert. Tickets are \$15 and available through www.delawarechorus.com, Eventbrite, and at the door. – The Spring 2020 concert will be Sun., May 3.

Olentangy Watershed Alliance (12/10)

The Olentangy Watershed Alliance (OWA) meets next on Tues., Dec. 10 (10 am) at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, 225 Cherry St. The agenda includes many upcoming events, incl. the next NOW Watershed Festival tentatively scheduled for June 20, 2020. The meetings are open to the public.

One People Meets (12/12)

One People is a local organization that is working to overcome the city's racial divides. It meets monthly at First Presbyterian Church at 73 W. Winter St. Please use the back entrance. The next meeting is Thurs., Dec. 12 (7 pm).

Yard-Waste Collection Ends (12/13)

The City of Delaware will end its curbside yard-waste collection on Fri., Dec. 13. Any residual yard waste will be collected in January during the tree-and-holiday-greens collection period.

Republican Party Celebrates Christmas Party (12/13)

The Delaware County GOP is celebrating its Christmas Party on Fri., Dec. 13 (7-9 pm) at the Delaware Golf Club, 3329 Columbus Pike.

Christmas Breakfast at Hardware Exchange (12/14) – \$

The John Freeman Foundation's Annual Christmas Breakfast at the Hardware Exchange (141 S. Sandusky St.) will take place Sat., Dec. 14 (5:30-11:30 am or until the food runs out). You pay "whatever you think it's worth." Proceeds benefit local charities.

Sustainable Delaware Ohio Meets (12/14)

SDO is a 10-year-old local group dedicated to economic, social, and environmental sustainability. It meets monthly at SWCI, 50 Ross St. Please note the change of venue. The next meeting is Sat., Dec. 14 (9-11 am). Meetings are free & open to the public.



Habitat for Humanity Completes Another Home (12/14)

Habitat for Humanity is celebrating the completion of yet another house with an official dedication ceremony on Sat., Dec. 14 (11 am). The new home is located at 25 Smith St. on Delaware's east side, between Joy Ave. and Wilder St. – Another home is currently being built by volunteers at 80 Noble St.

Holiday Pet Food Drive at Alum Creek Dog Park (12/14-15)

Alum Creek Dog Park at 3993 Hollenback Rd. in Lewis Center is having a pet-food drive to benefit SourcePoint Meals on Wheels of Delaware Co. and Hospets of Union Co. on Dec. 14 & 15 (11 am – 4 pm). Items needed include dog & cat food, kitty litter, gift cards to pet stores, and cash & checks. You can also donate online at <mysourcepoint.org/pet> and <hospets.org>.



Central Ohio Symphony (12/15)

The second concert of Central Ohio Symphony's 41st season is Sun., Dec. 15 (2 & 4:30 pm). The two identical concerts in OWU's Gray Chapel inside University Hall (61 S. Sandusky St.) will feature world champion dulcimer player Mark Alan Wade and a premiere of his composition "Good King Wenceslas." In addition, there will be a performance of "The Night before Christmas," narrated by Jack McDaniel. The program includes many more seasonal favorites to enjoy for the entire family, incl. sing-alongs. Tickets are \$25 general admission & \$20 for seniors. Discounts are available for students (\$6) and children 6 and under (\$4). University Hall is a century-old building with limited ADA-accessibility, but there is a stair-elevator that connects the basement with the first floor and the concert hall. An attendant is present during the concerts. (See more on Mark Alan Wade under "City of Delaware.")

Sixth Democratic Debate (12/19)

The 6th debate will take place be held on Thurs., Dec. 19 at Loyola Marymount Univ. in Los Angeles. The debate will be hosted by PBS NewsHour and Politico. At last check, Biden, Buttigieg, Harris, Klobuchar, Sanders, Steyer, Warren, and Yang met the polling and fundraising thresholds. Despite meeting the criteria, Kamala Harris has since dropped out of the race.

Winter Begins (12/21)

Dec. 21 is the official start of winter. In Ohio, sunrise is at 7:50 am, sunset at 5:09 pm. This is the shortest day of the year – 9 hours and 18 minutes.

Sensory Film Series: "The Grinch" (12/21) – \$

Once a month, the Strand Theatre at 28 E. Winter St. shows a movie that is appropriate for people on the autism spectrum or for others with special needs. Singing, dancing, and movement are welcome. On Sat., Dec. 21 (10 am), there will be a free showing of "The Grinch." A small free popcorn and can beverage are provided by the Autism Society of Central Ohio.



Hanukkah Begins (12/22)

Hanukkah, the 8-day Jewish festival of lights, begins at sundown on Sun., Dec. 22.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

YMCA's Daddy-Daughter Dance (1/11)

The next YMCA's Daddy-Daughter Dance is scheduled for Sat., Jan. 11 (6-8 pm) at OWU's HWCC Campus Center. Tickets are already on sale. They are \$25 per couple and \$10 for each additional child. The event sells out quickly. Recommended ages are 4-17.

Bishop Backers Day & Expo (1/25)

OWU's next Bishop Backers event is scheduled for Sat., Jan. 25 (12-3:30 pm) at Branch Rickey Arena and Gordon Field House, 105 S. Sandusky St. The day includes free basketball games and a community expo for local businesses, agencies, and non-profits. There is no fee for vendors. The Columbus Zoo is scheduled to bring a number of "ambassador" animals to the expo. Free & open to the public.

CITY OF DELAWARE

The City of Delaware in December

City Council meets on Mon., Dec. 9 (7 pm) and Thurs., Dec. 19 (7 pm). Budget Work Sessions are planned for Mon., Dec. 2 (6:30 pm), Thurs., Dec. 5 (6:30 pm), and – if needed – for Thurs., Dec. 12 (6:30 pm). Additional board, committee & commission meetings include: Planning Commission (Wed., Dec. 4, 6:30 pm) and Records Commission (Mon., Dec. 16, 10:30 am). The Shade Tree Commission and Parks & Recreation Advisory Board do not meet in December. The following meetings were cancelled: Civil Service Commission, Dec. 4; Board of Zoning Appeals, Dec. 11; Parking & Safety, Dec. 16; and Historic Preservation Commission, Dec. 18. – City offices are closed Dec. 24 & 25.

City Council Members Sworn In

At the Nov. 18 Organizational Meeting of City Council, the four elected or reelected ward representatives were sworn in: Chris Jones – 1st Ward, Lisa Keller – 2nd Ward, Cory Hoffman – 3rd Ward, and Drew Farrell – 4th Ward. Their terms expire in 2023. Following their oaths of office, City Council elected a mayor and vice-mayor from among the 3 councilmembers at large. Mayor Carolyn Riggle was reelected unanimously for another 2-year term. The election for vice-mayor was contested. Both George Hellinger and Kent Shafer were nominated. In a voice vote, Shafer won with 4 votes against Hellinger with 3 votes. The votes of Chris Jones and Carolyn Riggle were somewhat predictable, but it was shocking and disappointing to see newbie Cory Hoffman vote for Shafer, a man who has accepted thousands of dollars from the Building Industry Association (BIA) in campaign contributions. Hoffman seems to have paid little attention to city affairs in recent months and years or he would not have done so. We know him to be an honest man who refused to accept donations from lobbyists and corporations in the past.

Drew Farrell Walks and Bikes to Council Meetings

Newly elected City Council member Drew Farrell plans to walk or bike to City Council meetings as often as he can. There is currently no bicycle rack at City Hall, but City Manager Tom Homan said he would look into the possibility of installing one. In a brief interview, Farrell says his entire family consists of bicyclists, incl. his little daughter who currently uses training wheels. He likes to bike and walk for health reasons. He also stated that it makes him feel more connected with people and Delaware's neighborhoods. He can stop and talk anytime he wishes. Lastly, walking and biking cuts down on costs for gasoline and parking. Drew Farrell bought his latest and greatest Trek bicycle at Delaware's Breakaway Cycling, a full-service retail and repair shop now located at 220 E. William St. in Delaware. – Thank you, Drew, for setting a good example for the residents of Delaware.

Community Promotion Fund

The City of Delaware's Community Promotion Fund allocates revenues from the city's hotel & motel occupancy tax to civic and cultural organizations, events, and activities that positively promote Delaware and enhance its quality of life. The deadline to apply was Sept. 20. The proposed budget amount for 2020 – \$114,000 – is unchanged from the 2019 amount. The beneficiaries are Main Street Delaware (\$35,000, up \$5,000), Arts Castle (\$10,000), the Central Ohio Symphony (\$10,000), the Second Ward Community Initiative / SWIC (\$11,500), and – for the very first time – the Arena Fair Theatre (\$5,000). An additional \$35,000 will be allocated to the July 4th fireworks. \$5,000 is designated to go to the promotion of Delaware's Sister-City partnerships in Baumholder (Germany) and Sakata (Japan), and \$2,500 for "Special Events," of which Delaware has many. Since the Rutherford B. Hayes statue is finished and installed, no more money goes to that. The total is thus \$114,000. If and when Delaware adds more hotels and motels, or if and when Airbnb facilities are taxed, the total amount could one day go up.

The Enclave at the Ravines at Olentangy

T&R Properties (Ron Sabatino & Son) has proposed a preliminary development plan for the Enclave at the Ravines at Olentangy, containing 87 single-family units on 15 acres on the north side of Curve Rd. and west of Rochdale Run. A problem that gave City Council member Lisa Keller pause is the proximity of a closed landfill off Curve Rd. within 1,000 feet of the proposed development. At the first hearing on Nov. 11, the Director of Public Utilities / City Engineer Bill Ferrigno stated that "none of the units being discussed will fall within that 1,000-foot buffer" (Delaware Gazette, 11/30). However, during the second hearing he corrected himself saying that "approximately half of the proposed lots for the Enclave would, in fact, be located in the buffer zone," necessitating additional monitoring, disclosures, and notifications. Even though the landfill was closed and capped in about 1990, it still produces underground leachate and airborne methane emissions. There are no reports of underground fires, which is sometimes the case with old landfills. Despite all that, Ferrigno says there is no evidence for contamination and therefore no reason to be concerned. Director of Planning David Efland stated that the submitted plan was "preliminary" and should therefore be approved, with minor details such as possible environmental contamination to be sorted out at a later point. The Sabatinos say that they "met and exceeded" all OEPA rules. The problem with that statement is, of course, that the OEPA's standards have become quite permissive over time. "Low risk" does not mean no risk. It is very doubtful that City Council has a complete and accurate set of data available to make the decision that's best for the community. Councilman George Hellinger voiced his opinion that City Council should wait with its approval at least until after a meeting with the OEPA on Dec. 9. A motion to suspend the rules, made by none other than BIA and Sabatino friend Kent Shafer, failed because it did not receive a supermajority of 5 votes. (This was a blatant conflict of interest for Shafer, whose campaign was supported by Sabatino and the BIA with thousands of dollars. The ethical thing to do would have been to recuse himself, not make motions on behalf of his patron.) The Enclave at the Ravines at Olentangy was taken to a third reading and approved by City Council on Mon., Dec. 9. – In communities around the nation, residents on top of or near old landfills have run into difficulties with home insurers. And many discovered too late that they were sitting on "dead properties" that they could not sell.

Springer Woods Section 3

Westport Homes plans to build 121 single-family homes on approx. 47.5 acres between W. William St. and Warrensburg Rd. There is nothing wrong with the proposed development project per se. However, it should be pointed out that as Delaware expands west and inexorably closer to South Section Rd., increased conflicts with National Lime & Stone Co. at 2406 South Section Line Rd. are the inevitable outcome. Westside residents worry about the ongoing loud blasts at the quarry, which often exceed the permissible decibel levels. They are also concerned about the ground vibrations which, residents say, have damaged walls, foundations, windows, doors, and driveways. In the considerate view of many, the environmental impact of National Lime & Stone Co. is not "acceptable," contrary what OEPA and/or ODNR have determined. Taxpayer-funded infrastructure such

as roads may also be negatively impacted. It is of course difficult to prove conclusively that the company's activities are responsible for all property damage in the area. At the very least, however, City Council, the building community, and future homeowners must be aware of the issue and disclose the risk to prospective buyers. If this does not happen, City Council and Westport Homes may well be looking at a class-action lawsuit down the road.

Schultz Elementary to Be Expanded Again

Schultz Elementary School at 499 Applegate Ln. is in need of being expanded once again, from currently 76,010 to 92,672 square feet, a 22% increase in size. Most of the expansion will be in the form of a new south wing. Also in the works is the extension of Penick Ave. to Cobblestone Dr. That connector will include a new bus loop and drop-off on the south side of the school, which will alleviate traffic on Applegate Ln. Past school-expansion projects included public hearings; this one will presumably be no different. – The Planning Commission unanimously approved the project on Dec. 4. It will go to City Council next (Dec. 9 & 19).

2 Electronic Recycling Drop-Off Events

In partnership with the Delaware Knox Marion Morrow (DKMM) Solid Waste District, the City of Delaware will offer two electronic recycling drop-off events. The 1st will be a string / holiday light collection that runs from Nov. 29 through Jan. 2. Indoor drop-off boxes will be available at various locations around the city, incl. all locations of the Public Library. The 2nd event will be a single-day drop-off for electronics on Sat., Jan. 4 (8 am – 12 pm) at 241 Cherry St. Computers, cables, batteries, etc., will be accepted. Some fees may apply for certain electronics such as televisions. The 2nd event is for city residents only, so bring an ID with your address or a utility bill. For more info, contact Jenifer Way-Young at the Health District (jway-young@delawarehealth.org).



Lodal's EVO MAG-20 Model

City of Delaware Is Getting 2nd Automated Garbage Truck

At a recent meeting of City Council, the Director of Public Works / City Engineer Bill Ferrigno reported that the city is very satisfied with its first "articulating arm refuse collection vehicle," i.e., a garbage truck with a robotic or hydraulic lift arm that can grab and dump garbage cans on its own. He said the truck, while expensive, has cut back on injuries and repetitive-motion problems among workers. It is used on all city routes, but many residents say they have never seen it. Either that or they did not recognize the refuse hauler for what it was. A second vehicle has been ordered from Lodal Inc. in Michigan, but because of a significant company backlog it won't be delivered until the second half of 2020, according to Ferrigno.

CDC Issues E. Coli Warning on Romaine Lettuce

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) has warned consumers not to eat any romaine lettuce from Salinas, California because of an E. coli outbreak that has so far affected 19 states, incl. 12 cases in Ohio. New Jersey-based company Missa Bay, which produces the product for Ready Pac Foods, has recalled more than 75,000 pounds of pre-packaged salads. The local Kroger stores sell produce from Salinas, so check your fridge. There has been conflicting info provided by media, but the latest update simply says,

"if the label says 'grown in Salinas,' throw it away." The E. coli strain behind the outbreak produces a toxin that can cause painful cramps, bloody diarrhea, and vomiting. No deaths have been reported, but a number of people experienced kidney failure.

Warehouse Fire on Park Ave.

Contents in a large warehouse at 435 Park Ave. caught fire in the early hours of Dec. 9. The sprinkler system kept the flames in check, but nearly 750,000 pounds of product had to be removed from the crowded building to ensure that the fire was fully extinguished. In and around the building was much smoke and the fire crews went through bottles of oxygen quickly. Crews were on site for nearly 22 hours. There were no reported injuries or deaths. – The warehouse is owned by Phoenix Investors, based in Milwaukee. It is currently being leased by MWD Logistics, a company that specializes in storage and distribution. A portion of the 450,000-square-foot building is used by Scotts in Marysville, which is where the fire broke out. The cause has not yet been determined. Old-timers know the building as the old Sunray Stove manufacturing plant.

Pearl Harbor Ceremony

The Delaware County Veterans Association led a Pearl Harbor Day remembrance ceremony on Sun., Dec. 1 (12:45-1 pm). The brief, but solemn event took place on Winter St. bridge across the Olentangy River and included a speech, the playing of taps, a wreath ceremony, and a rifle volley. It also included a display of the flags of the four U.S. Army branches by the Hayes ROTC and the singing of the national anthem. More than 2,400 people were killed in the Pearl Harbor attack on Dec. 7, 1941. In his speech in front of a small crowd, Chairman Dwight Cimino emphasized that the ceremony was intended to be a day of mourning and remembrance of the dead and wounded, not a day of celebration. He expressed his hope that today's world leaders will not repeat the mistakes of the past and avoid devastating future wars if and when there are better options.



Mark Alan Wade, Dulcimer Player

On Sun., Dec. 15, residents of Delaware County and the City of Delaware will have the opportunity to watch and hear renowned dulcimer player Mark Alan Wade as part of the holiday concert of the Central Ohio Symphony. Mark is actually an orchestral trumpeter by trade. Originally from Marysville, he is a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan and has a doctorate in Trumpet Performance from OSU. He has played in a dozen orchestras, but he is probably best known as a National Hammered Dulcimer champion who performs all over the world on hammered dulcimer, mountain dulcimer, trumpet, piano, guitar, and penny whistles. He is located in Akron when he is not traveling. If curious, several of his dulcimer tunes are available for free on YouTube. Some of his CDs are likely going to be for sale at the December concert. To learn more, visit his extensive website (www.markalanwade.com).

Arena Fair Theatre in 2020

The Arena Fair Theatre, under its artistic director Gregory L. Patterson, will celebrate carnival with a festive "Mardi Gras Masquerade Gala" on Feb. 22, 2020. – The musical chosen for June / July 2020 will be either "The Sound of Music" or "The Fiddler on the Roof." Both are well-known crowd-pleasers. Event details will be available soon.



Delaware Community Chorus

Following its December concert, the Delaware Community Chorus will take a short holiday break, then resume rehearsals in January to prepare for its May 3 spring concert. New chorus members (both men and women) are welcome to join at the start of each semester. Rehearsals are held Monday evenings from 7-9 pm at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 45 W. Winter St. Interested singers may contact Artistic Director Joshua Brodbeck at joshubrodbeck@me.com.

Boardman Arts Park

The Boardman Arts Park at 154 W. William St. has received a \$5,000 grant from the William Street United Methodist Church Foundation to help erect a pergola. The shade structure will function as a 360-degree pavilion with 6 arms, each 12 by 20 feet, featuring a sliding infinity canopy. Since the total cost of the pergola exceeds the generous donation from the William Street UMC Foundation, more fundraising is necessary. A date for the installation and completion of the project is not yet available.

Joe & Linda Diamond Receive Award

The Delaware County Foundation recently honored Joe and Linda Diamond with its Spirit of Philanthropy Award. The couple are long-time residents of Delaware and love the community. Their leasing and rental company, Rosebud Properties, is focused on the restoration and preservation of historic structures in the downtown area. Among their projects was the Strand Theatre. In the past, the Diamonds also received awards from the Delaware Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Delaware, and Ohio Wesleyan Univ. The Diamonds remain engaged citizens who fully participate in the social, cultural and political life of the city.

Arts Castle Gallery Shop

If you are looking for unique and affordable holiday or birthday gifts, check out the Arts Castle's Gallery Shop, located at 190 W. Winter St. The actual entrance is on Elizabeth St., by the way. The handicap-accessible Gallery Shop is located on the entrance floor and offers a broad spectrum of 2- and 3-dimensional art pieces created by local and regional artists, incl. original paintings, sculptures, ceramic, jewelry, glass art, textiles, photography, books, cards, and even soaps. Hours are Tues. through Fri., 1-5 pm. Gift cards are available. The shop is also open during many special events at the Arts Castle. Acceptable payment options are cash, checks, and credit cards. Gift cards are available.

Smith Permaculture Wants Your Lawn!

Smith Permaculture has an interesting business proposal for homeowners: lend your yard to local organic farmers and receive 50% of the harvest. For more information, call 661-390-0630 or email them at helpfulneighborco@gmail.com. On their flyers, they list the following benefits of their farming practices: promoting native species & habitats; building up your soil with micro-organisms & mycelium networks; increased curb appeal; exchanging unproductive & costly grass for a productive landscape; providing nutrient-rich food for your family; strengthening & growing the community; reduced reliance on grocery stores; helping pollinators; preventing soil erosion & floods; emergency preparedness; reduced CO₂ emissions; and conserving water & insulating the soil. – We don't know anything about the company and cannot vouch for them. If anyone has any experience with them, please share!

Habitat for Humanity Offers Home Preservation Program

Over the years, Habitat for Humanity of Delaware & Union Counties has built dozens of homes in the city. It is less known that Habitat for Humanity also has what they call a "Home Preservation Program." It offers minor exterior home repair to qualifying homeowners such as exterior house painting, porch repair, siding & trim repair or replacement, landscaping (planting, weeding, reseeding, removal), wheelchair-accessible ramps, and window or door repair or replacement. Habitat volunteers will complete the projects with the help of the homeowner. The homeowner will then repay the cost of the project with zero-interest monthly payments that s/he can afford. To learn about requirements for eligibility, contact Kathy Crosbie,

Director of Homeowner Services, (740) 363-9950 x2003, or visit Habitat for Humanity online.

Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity

Bryan S. Pemberton, 34, was found not guilty of aggravated murder by reason of insanity. On Jan 25, 2018 he shot and killed Ali Al Azirjawi off Stratford Rd. in Delaware. Three licensed psychologists determined that Pemberton suffers from a serious mental disease that renders him incompetent and prevents him from knowing the consequences of his actions. It is unlikely that Pemberton will go free, however. County Prosecutor Melissa Schiffl's office says it will continue to advocate for his confinement to a secure facility in order to protect society. Press reports did not address the question why Pemberton had a shotgun in the first place. It is obviously way too easy, even for people with severe mental-health issues, to acquire firearms. Second-Amendment advocates claim that preventing mentally ill people from owning guns infringes upon individual rights. They are opposed to so-called red-flag laws, but common sense suggests that dangerous firearms in the hands of unstable individuals is not a good idea.

The Wesleyan Inn

The saga of the Wesleyan Inn at 235 W. William St. in Delaware continues. It seems developer Jim Manos has given up on constructing a boutique hotel because the for-sale sign is back up again. As of 11/15, the property is listed with Coldwell Banker (King Thomson). The asking price is \$239,000, which seems exaggerated given the dilapidated condition of the uninhabitable home, formerly owned by OWU and often referred to as "Perkins House." Maybe the hope is someone with deep pockets will want to demolish it and replace it with a lucrative business, which Delaware's zoning laws would permit at that address.

New Program Guides Available

Winter is upon us, and Preservation Parks of Delaware County and Delaware County District Library have issued their new quarterly newsletters and programs. The Arts Castle will probably follow suit in January. The free guides are available at the Public Library and other local venues as well as online.

DCDL Book Club

The Delaware County District Library runs afternoon and evening book clubs in Delaware, Orange, Ostrander, and Powell. For details, check DCDL's website or the quarterly program guide. Titles explored during upcoming discussions in Delaware include: "Snow Flower and the Secret Fan" by Lisa See (Tues., Dec. 3, 1 pm), "Heartland" by Sarah Smarsh (Tues., Jan. 7, 1 pm), and "Asymmetry" by Lisa Halliday (Tues., Feb. 4, 1 pm). The evening book club will tackle "There, There" by Tommy Orange (Wed., Dec. 4, 7:30 pm), "The Disaster Artist" by Greg Sestero (Wed., Jan. 29, 7:30 pm), and "The Third Hotel" by Laura Van Den Berg (Wed., Feb. 26, 7:30 pm).

Delaware County Bird Club

The Delaware County Bird Club meets monthly. The meetings are free & open to the public. They are normally held at Deer Haven Park (41834 Liberty Rd.), but because of on-going construction the Dec. meeting will take place at Shale Hollow Park, located at 6320 Artesian Run in Lewis Center.

Mon., Dec. 9 (7 pm), Shale Hollow Park: "Delaware Reservoir Christmas Bird County Overview," with Rich Bradley;

Mon., Jan. 27 (7 pm), Deer Haven Park: "The Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative," with Matthew Shumar;

Mon., Feb. 24 (7 pm): Deer Haven Park: "Birding the Arctic Tundra in Alaska," with Tyler Ficker.

Ohio Governor Visits Stratford Ecological Center

On Oct. 21, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, accompanied by his wife and three grandchildren, visited Stratford Ecological Center at 3083 Liberty Rd. Also in tow were the Director of the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture, Dorothy Pelanda, and staff responsible for developing children's activities. The group visited the barn, livestock, gardens, prairies, pond, and beehives, followed by a hearty beef stew and apple-pie lunch. According to nature guide Pauline Scott, "all agreed it

was a wonderful visit." Apparently it was the first time an Ohio governor came to visit Stratford.

Zion AME Welcomes New Pastor

Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church at 140 S. Washington St. has a new pastor – Rev. Dr. Ruth McCants Locke. She has degrees from South Carolina State Univ. and OSU and earned her doctorate in ministry from United Theological Seminary in Dayton. In addition to being pastor at Zion AME, she is employed as a speech-language pathologist in Columbus. She and her husband have one son. – Zion AME worships Sundays at 10 am. The community is invited to attend.

Camp Lazarus May Get Smaller

The Simon Kenton Council of the Boy Scouts of America is one of largest in America, serving 18 counties in Ohio and 1 in northern Kentucky. The council maintains 4 primary camps within Ohio: Camp Lazarus in Delaware, Camp Falling Rock in Newark, Chief Logan Reservation in Ray, and Camp Oyo in Portsmouth. The camps are expensive and unsustainable to maintain, however, and there is a lot of deferred maintenance. The council has therefore decided to sell, lease, or license any or all portions of the Chief Logan Reservation in Ray, southeast of Chillicothe. It has also decided to sell or lease 60 acres of Camp Lazarus in Delaware along US 23 South. Parts of the 230-acre camp are under a conservation easement, but it is not immediately clear whether the southeast corner of the property could be bought by developers or not. The area in question is heavily wooded, contains a tributary to the Olentangy River, and is prime wildlife habitat. It would be unconscionable ecocide to remove the thousands of trees and replace them with housing or businesses. Instead, one option would be to expand the adjacent Seymour Woods State Nature Preserve. Another option is for Preservation Parks of Delaware County to acquire the property and manage and preserve it in perpetuity. The City of Delaware might also play a role because it recently annexed Camp Lazarus. This could someday be an adventure park with natural play areas. – It is our understanding that conversations about the future of the property have already started.

Credit Unions in Delaware

Credit unions offer services similar to those of banks, but they are not-for-profit cooperatives whose boards are elected by the membership. As a result, members have a greater say. Income earned from operations goes back to the coop in the form of higher dividends and lower fees and loan rates. Thus, greater savings are possible for customers. Members do not have to live in Delaware County. There are two main and full-service credit unions within the City of Delaware: 1. [CES Federal Credit Union](http://www.cescu.com), located at 33 London Rd. Their website is www.cescu.com, and 2. [Pathways Financial Credit Union](http://www.pathwayscu.com) (formerly called Western Credit Union), located at 879 W. William St. Their website is www.pathwayscu.com. Both are part of a broader network of credit unions under the same name. We have watched both institutions over the years and consider them trustworthy. A third credit union in Delaware is the much smaller Corco Federal Credit Union, located at 325 S. Sandusky St., Ste. 201. However, we know nothing about the business. They may be a fine institution, but they are not active and visible in the community. No one has ever mentioned it to us. For lack of information, we are therefore not in a position to recommend Corco Federal Credit Union.



Chess Column

Chess is a game that can teach dozens of valuable life lessons – camaraderie, logical thinking, creativity, tactics & strategy, the balance between offense & defense, instant vs. delayed gratification, the importance of efficiency, winning & losing with grace,

and so on. There is a lot of casual and competitive chess going on in the Greater Columbus Metropolitan area, incl. in Delaware, Dublin, Marion, and Marysville. Local chess players of the Hanging Pawns Club meet every Saturday morning and early afternoon at Choffey's Coffee in downtown Delaware, 17 W. Winter St. Bruce Lindman, the founder of the club, has been active in chess for decades and used to run a chess club for children at the Public Library. Some of the kids are now adults and continue to be active players. At a recent competitive chess tournament in Marysville, Kalen Sutander achieved a perfect 4-0 score, winning all four of his games. Players of all levels and ages are welcome to come to the meetings at Choffey's. USCF membership is not required. Boards and clocks (if needed) are provided; some instruction is available.

One of the club members is Tom Wolber, a card-carrying member of the U.S. Chess Federation. In a recent interview he said he was grateful for the opportunity to play chess with friends on a weekly basis and to keep his mind stimulated. He regretted, however, that chess is merely a hobby for him and that he does not have time to devote himself to intense study and to improve his rating, which is barely half as good as that of the world's best players. Below are two short games he recently played – one against a lower-rated and another against a higher-rated player. Both games are quite instructional and can teach you about how to avoid blunders. Black is considered harder to play because white always starts the game and thus has the initiative.

R. D. (White), Tom Wolber (Black)

01. c4 – Nf6 02. Nc3 – g6 03. g3 – c6 04. Bg2 – Bg7 05. e4 – d6 06. d3 – 00 07. Nh3 – Ng4 08. 00 – Ne5 09. f4 – Bg4 10. Qb3 – Qd7 11. fxe5 – Bxh3 12. Bxh3 – Qxh3 13. Qxb7 – Nd7 14. Qxc6 – Bxe5 15. Bf4 – Bd4+ 16. Kh1 – Rab8 17. Nd5 – Rxb2 18. Nxe7+ – Kg7 19. (White resigns because mate on h2 or g2 cannot be avoided.)

T. D. (White), Tom Wolber (Black)

01. c4 – Nf6 02. g3 – c6 03. Bg2 – e6 04. e3 – d5 05. b3 – g6 06. Nc3 – Bg7 07. Nge2 – 00 08. 00 – e5 09. Ba3 – Re8 10. d4 – e4 11. Nf4 – Bg4 12. Qd2 – Nbd7 – 13. f3 – exf3 – 14. Bxf3 – Qc7 15. Bxg4 – Nxc4 16. Nd3 – Rxe3 17. Rae1 – Bxd4 18. Ne2 – Rxe2+ 19. Rf2 – Rxd2 20. Bb2 – Bxf2 21. Nxf2 – Rxf2 22. h3 – Qxg3 23. Kh1 – Rh2++

OHIO WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

OWU Cancels Faculty Searches

In April of 2019, OWU approved 7 tenure-track positions in Art History, Education, French, Geology, Microbiology, Psychology, and Theater History – mostly to replace individuals who are retiring or have left for other reasons. However, in light of a downward trend in student enrollment and budgetary shortfalls, OWU has now cancelled these searches even though they were well underway and hundreds of applications had already been received (154 for French alone). These positions will now be converted to one-year term positions or replaced with part-time units. It appears the administration and the two faculty committees in charge of budget and personnel had the option of rescinding the searches or of laying off or not granting tenure to an equal number of junior faculty members. Not surprisingly, they prioritized the existing faculty. However, the Hobson's choice OWU made was bad for morale either way. A promise made was broken. It seems OWU has badly misjudged the enrollment trajectory for years, living in denial and always hoping for a miracle. It wasn't so very long ago that some folks were dreaming of 2020 students by the year 2020. Today, OWU is down to about 1,500 and falling.

Here is another unfortunate consequence of the cancelled job searches. Early in the academic year, there was a workshop devoted to the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the hiring process. The provost indicated that DEI was "the goal." Sadly, the rescission is a setback for campus diversity. For the foreseeable future, OWU's faculty will predominantly remain white. Students of color will seek in vain teachers and mentors who look like them.

Mission Accomplished: Journalism Program Axed

OWU used to have a vibrant and flourishing Journalism Department that has produced many outstanding and award-winning

alumni over the years. And under the able and professional leadership of Journalism professor Paul Kostyu the program produced the nation's oldest continuing student newspaper, the weekly "Transcript." It was a terrific asset and provided a great public service to the OWU students, faculty, and staff and the greater Delaware Community. For historians, it remains a treasured resource. However, these days are over.

Dr. Kostyu has retired and the Journalism program is being discontinued. A while back, "The Transcript" went exclusively online and is no longer a forceful presence on campus. You have to actively look for it. It has only published two full issues in 2019, in addition to occasional stories. Important stories go unreported or underreported. All this is just fine with the administration and the faculty. They never liked investigative journalism and the Transcript's inconvenient coverage of campus news in the first place. Some refused to interact with the newspaper, thus undermining transparency, democracy, and the free press. At one point, an illiberal faculty majority even banned the presence of pesky reporters at the monthly faculty meetings even though other "guests" are regularly admitted. Transcript reporters encountered the same hostile work environment on campus as journalists did and do under the Trump administration. They are considered "enemies of the people," to be mocked, demonized, and victimized. As a result, the Journalism Dept. lost disrespected and demoralized students. Low numbers are now being quoted to justify the discontinuation of the program when, in fact, the low numbers are the result of a deliberate scheme to underfund the "Transcript" and to deny Journalism tenure-track positions. Journalism at OWU did not fail, as the narrative goes; it was starved to death. "Community Matters" is well acquainted with the notion of repressive tolerance (Herbert Marcuse), attempts to silence independent voices, and achieve "Gleichschaltung," which is why we consistently supported the "Transcript" and other publications in the past and contributed to them.

For whatever it's worth, Journalism students at Delaware's Hayes High School are regularly producing a wonderful print paper, "The Talisman." The last issue is 16 pages in length and has a wide variety of relevant, timely, and informative news. It is unfathomable why the same thing can't happen at OWU, supposedly a liberal, open-minded institution, with a lot of talent. There is anecdotal evidence that curious students interested in a career in Journalism are now exploring other options. Luckily, schools and media outlets that take Journalism seriously still exist elsewhere.

when the time comes

when the time comes
what will you do

will you turn a blind eye
or face the evil

will you raise your voice
or remain silent

will you light a candle
or keep the door closed

will you harbor the victims
or be complicit in their deaths

will you join the fight
or hide in fear and darkness

will you die in dignity
or live in shame and infamy

"When the time comes" was a phrase spoken by an Ohio Wesleyan student at the Nov. 13 "One OWU" gathering in solidarity against racism and white supremacy. On that night, many students of color and non-Christian faiths expressed their mortal fear of possible persecution and pogroms in the U.S. Privileged people who say such fears are unfounded or exaggerated have an incomplete understanding of human history.

Trans Day of Remembrance

Hate crimes against LGBTQ+ people are up in the nation. On Nov. 20, a group of students celebrated the international Trans Day of Remembrance (TDOR) at the Jay Walk Fountain on the OWU campus, among them even a smattering of faculty members. Trans Day was founded in 1999 by transgender writer and activist Gwendolyn Ann Smith in memory of those who were killed for their gender identity and sexual orientation. During the candle vigil, the names of those are read who lost their lives during the last 12 months in the U.S. Following the ceremony and a moment of silence & reflection, the group walked to nearby SAGE, one of OWU's small-living units, for refreshments and the opportunity to make posters and write letters to elected representatives.

OWU's Lifelong Learning Institute Continues

More than 250 people registered for OWU's first Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) in Fall 2019. The 6-week curriculum for Spring 2020 is in the works. The semester is scheduled for March 16 through April 24, with registration beginning in January. – OWU recently received a \$10,000 grant from SourcePoint to improve access to LLI's adult educational programming.

Overuse of Chemicals

"Municipalities across central Ohio increasingly grapple with how much, if any, chemical treatment they should use to make their fields greener and more inviting. Concern about runoff into streams and rivers, dangers to the public, and feedback from the public give communities pause about how much is too much." (Columbus Dispatch, 12/1) Some communities have stopped using phosphorus in their fertilizer mix. Others do not use weed killers, with the exception of sports fields.

And then there are places such as Ohio Wesleyan which thoughtlessly continue to use prodigious amounts of artificial pesticides and fertilizers despite the proximity of the Delaware Run and the Olentangy River. Students and faculty have repeatedly brought up the topic with various directors of Buildings and Grounds over the years (Setzer & Schantz), with absolutely no effect. One of the arguments has always been that the aesthetics of the campus is of paramount importance. However, trash and empty beer cans in plain sight throughout campus is a lot more offensive to most people than an occasional dandelion or clover plant. At the very least, OWU should limit its use of weed-killing and fertilizing chemicals to high-profile areas. This not only would save thousands of dollars in the long run, but it would also be better for human health, wildlife, the campus arboretum, and water quality. "Community Matters" has repeatedly pointed out that OWU's indifference to environmental concerns and neglect of sustainability is unacceptable in this day and age of climate crisis. A number of years ago, students and faculty developed an aspirational "Sustainability Plan" for OWU, but even a cursory look at it shows that little has been implemented. For example, the goal of installing basic solar and wind technology on campus for both pedagogical reasons and energy awareness has never been pursued by the administration. OWU is failing to equip its students with knowledge and competence to develop climate-change resilience.

OWU Alumnus Ron Leibman Dies

Ron Leibman, an OWU alumnus who graduated in 1958, has died of pneumonia at the age of 82. According to the New York Times, Ron Leibman (1937-2019) discovered his love for the theater at Ohio Wesleyan University. He became an award-winning actor with a distinguished 6-decades career in theater, film, and television. He remained first and foremost a stage actor, however. He played many unhinged Shakespeare characters and starred in movies such as "Norma Rae," "Slaughterhouse-Five," "Kaz," and "Where's Poppa?" BBC says he may be best remembered for his role as Dr. Leonard Green in the sitcom "Friends."

Delaware in 1844

We recently came across William G. Williams' "Ohio Wesleyan University, 1844-1894." It is part of a larger volume edited by E. T. Nelson, "Fifty Years of History of the Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio, 1844-1894" (Cleveland, Ohio, 1895, vi + 547 pp.) and full of fascinating details. The following excerpt can be found on pp. 19-20. The quaint historic spelling has been left intact.

Delaware in 1844

Delaware in 1844 was a little village of twelve hundred inhabitants, away from the lines of travel, of commerce, of intercourse. There were no railroads in the State, and but few good pikes. In bad weather it took the tri-weekly stage a whole day to plough its way hither from Columbus. There were no paved walks or graveled roadways in the town; and in the Winter the Faculty and students extemporized walks of tan-bark, or else literally waded through the mud to their lodgings down town, to the post-office, or to church. There were no street lights, and on dark nights lanterns were necessary. There was no town-clock; but the courthouse bell was rung at 6 o'clock in the morning and at 9 o'clock at night. There was no bookstore in town; there was a single weekly newspaper. (...) The University grounds, while not a public common, were often the common pasture of the town, overrun by cows and hogs; the surface was mostly as nature left it, rough, ungraded, brushy, and in the low ground, swampy. The sulphur spring was, of course, the chief attraction. To strangers, the taste and the odor of the water was not inviting; but the water is wholesome and refreshing; and people soon forget its sulphurous character, and acquire a fondness for the water which they never lose."

DELAWARE COUNTY & CENTRAL OHIO

Jennifer Bell for Ohio's 12th Congressional District

Jennifer Bell (D-Columbus) has officially announced her candidacy for Ohio's 12th Congressional District, currently occupied by Troy Balderson (R-Zanesville). The Ohio primary is March 17. Bell works as a nurse practitioner with a focus on mental health, substance-abuse disorders, and homelessness. She is originally from Marion, a city that has struggled with the loss of manufacturing jobs and the opioid epidemic. Not surprisingly, health care is one of her priorities. She says that it is disgraceful how insurance companies and some hospitals turn patients away if it is not profitable to help them. Bells adds that she is refusing to take money from political PACs or special-interest groups. She laments that at candidate training "it was all about raising money, more money, and even more money." Bell can be reached at jenny@jennybell2020.com.



Alaina Shearer Kicks Off Political Campaign

Alaina Shearer (D) from Liberty Township has kicked off her campaign to run for Ohio's 12th Congressional District on March 17, 2020 in Delaware. According to sources, she will have at least two Democratic opponents – Benjamin Weislogel and Rachael Morocco. The Republican opponent on Nov. 3 will be incumbent Troy Balderson (R) of Zanesville. Even though Alaina Shearer, 40, lives in Liberty Township, just outside Powell, she is at heart a townie from Delaware. She was born here, and her first memories are of downtown Delaware, she says. Her father was a physician, and her mother owned the downtown "Essentials" store. She graduated from Ohio Univ. with a B.A. in 2001 and worked as a journalist before raising her family and starting her own digital business. You can find much more information on her website, www.alaina2020.com. As far as her political positions are concerned, the site lists equality for women, paid family leave, and health care. According to the *Columbus Dispatch* (10/24) she has been in touch with Emily's List, which supports women's rights. Shearer is from a gun-owning family, she says, but as a mother of 4 school-age children she is also worried about mass shootings and therefore supports stricter background checks. In addition, she has stated that her kids are alarmed by the effects of

climate change and that more needs to be done about it. As a successful businesswoman, she is also eager to overcome division and to bring people together. Shearer is adamant about conducting a positive campaign, but her opponent Troy Balderson, whom President Trump supports, is known to have used negative misinformation about rivals in the past. This will be an uphill battle for whichever Democrat wins the primary, but there is always hope that truth, positivity, and decency will win the day. In 2018, Balderson beat Democrat Danny O'Connor by a close 51% to 47% margin. It is not inconceivable that the district will flip this time around.

Rachael Morocco Is Running for District 67

Rachael Morocco is running for Ohio State Rep. of District 67, in western Delaware County. She was born and raised in the Cleveland area, has her bachelor's degree from Mt. Union College and her medical degree from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine. She is currently a pediatrician at Nationwide Children's Hospital and a professor at OSU. She and her husband, Frank, live in Lewis Center with their two young sons. On her website and Facebook page she says that as a physician she can only help one patient at a time. As a state representative, she would have a greater impact on issues such as affordable health care, childcare, and the educational system. Here are some of her priorities: *"I believe we can agree across the aisle on some key goals, including: More honesty and integrity in the government, Stronger schools and better school funding, More affordable college and job training, Lower health care costs and better access to quality care, More opportunity for all who need it, Focus on keeping our communities safe, Reduced risk of gun violence in our schools and communities, Upgraded infrastructure with reduced congestion as our communities grow."* More information can be found at her website, www.rachaelmorocco.com.



GOP Selects New Delaware County Treasurer

Following the death of Jon Peterson on Oct. 10, the Delaware County GOP has selected a new county treasurer to serve the remainder of Peterson's term. Michael Ringle, deputy legal counsel at the Ohio Treasurer of State, was appointed following an election that he won against Donald Rankey. Ringle, who lives in Lewis Center, was sworn into office on Mon., Nov. 25 by Common Pleas Judge James Schuck. Ringle is a native of Beavercreek in Greene County and has his law degree from OSU. The Treasurer's office will be on the 3/17/20 ballot for the next term beginning 9/6/21.

Tanger Outlets Sued over Added Fees

Tanger Outlets, the Delaware County mall, is being sued for unjustly enriching itself by tacking on an "NCA charge" of 0.5% to retail purchases, without disclosing the additional fee to customers. Nicholas Fiorelli from Cincinnati cited, for example, a 76-cent NCA charge added to a \$150 purchase he made at Brooks Brothers. His lawyer estimates that Tanger and its tenants have illegally collected more than \$5 million through the fee since the outlet mall opened in 2016. Tanger established the "facilities charge" on all sales to help the mall's debt. It is currently capped at 0.5%, but could be raised to 1% if Tanger's board of directors agrees. – NCA appears to stand for "New Community Authority," a revenue-raising mechanism to pay for facilities and infrastructure in accordance with Chapter 349 of the Ohio Revised Code. The issue is not whether the NCA charge is justified. The problem seems to be the lack of disclosure. The class-action lawsuit is asking the court to repay the money that Tanger Outlets has overcharged customers since its opening.

A Second Chance for Ex-Convicts

The unemployment rate for 5 million ex-convicts in the U.S. is about 27%, according to a 2018 study by the Prison Policy Initiative. More than 600,000 are released from jails and prisons each year, but

many struggle to find employment and housing or to qualify for credit for a car or education because of their criminal background. In many cases, the stigma is permanent, holding individuals, communities, and the economy back. Some employers (e.g., Chase and Huntington) and public governments have eliminated the "Have you ever been convicted of a felony?" question from employment applications and do not check until an applicant has been preliminarily offered a job. Some states have gone even further and have banned companies from asking the question altogether, figuring that the people in question have already paid their dues to society and do not need to be punished again for the same misdemeanor or felony.

In Central Ohio, there are businesses such as Hot Chicken Takeover and CleanTurn Enterprises that concentrate on hiring people with criminal backgrounds. In their experience, ex-convicts are eager to prove themselves and are committed and loyal employees. Mid-Ohio's largest employer, JPMorgan Chase & Co., has started an interesting experiment deliberately intended to create more opportunities for such individuals. In 2018, Chase has hired 2,100 people in the U.S. with criminal backgrounds, about 10% of the company's new hires. Many were convicted of nonviolent crimes such as disorderly conduct, drug possession, and drunken driving. Chase is also providing people with entrepreneurship training and tools to achieve financial goals.

"Municipal Equality Index" Measures LGBT Friendliness

The national Municipal Equality Index annually looks at more than 500 cities nationwide to assess whether local ordinances foster diversity, inclusion, and equity and protect LGBTQ+ folks from housing and job discrimination. While the situation looks grim on the federal and state level, 6 of 8 cities in Ohio earned a perfect 100 score, far above the national score of 60. Ohio's LGBT-friendly cities are Akron, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Toledo. Lakewood in the Cleveland area earned a respectable score of 87, but Dublin in Central Ohio only received a rating of 31. While the City of Dublin offers protections & legal benefits to its own LGBTQ+ employees, it lacks broader anti-discrimination laws. Although Delaware has a population of 42,000, it is not on list. However, the situation here is similar to the one in Dublin. In other words, there is much room for improvement. Now that Delaware has a reconstituted City Council after the Nov. 5 elections, perhaps the time has come to push for fairness and equity for everyone on the local level.

There are no protections in place for the LGBTQ+ community on the state level in Ohio. Efforts to enact laws against housing and employment discrimination have failed for decades in the Republican-controlled House & Senate. The Ohio Fairness Act, introduced this fall, is the latest attempt to achieve equity. The proposal has the support of more than 800 businesses and virtually all chambers of commerce in Ohio. The situation is even worse on the federal level. The Trump administration has worked overtime to prevent and even roll back LGBTQ+ protections in housing, employment, healthcare, education, the military, and other areas. Sadly, not everyone in the U.S. is made feel welcome, safe, and protected.

NAMI Offers Light Therapy

Columbus and Central Ohio can be a gloomy place in winter. In fact, the folks at BestPlaces just ranked it #7 among the nation's "Gloomiest Cities." Winters can be dark and depressing, leading to seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Enter light therapy. NAMI of Delaware & Morrow Counties, located at 814 Bowtown Rd., recently had a donor who gave them light-therapy lamps. The agency is opening up its office on Wednesdays 9-11 am for anyone to use them for free. Visitors are welcome to come, sit in the support-group room, have a cup of coffee or tea, and spend some time relaxing or reading. – Ohio Wesleyan Univ. too offers light therapy to seasonally depressed students suffering from SAD.

Glenross Christmas Lights

Between Nov. 22 and Jan. 1, more than 250 homes in Delaware County will have light displays choreographed to classic Christmas carols played on 94.1 FM. "Lights of Glenross" begins on Balleter Dr. and includes Glenross, Glenross North, and Braumiller subdivisions. Showtimes are Sun. through Thurs., 5-9 pm, and Fri. & Sat., 5-11 pm. Learn more at www.lightsofglenross.com.

Looking for a Sledding Hill?

There are multiple unofficial sledding hills in the area, but two designated ones are the sledding hills at Preservation Parks' Gallant Woods Park (2150 Buttermilk Hill Rd. north of Delaware) and Blues Creek Park (9627 Fontanelle Rd. north of Ostrander). There is also a sledding hill at the Delaware State Park off US 23 North, adjacent to the Marina. The hills are open for free sledding fun when the conditions are right.

Columbus Is Looking for Its Next Police Chief

The City of Columbus has narrowed its list of candidates for the next police chief to 2 names: Thomas Quinlan, currently the interim chief for the division, and Perry Tarrant, former assistant chief for the Seattle Police Department. Columbus mayor Andrew Ginther, a Democrat, has made it clear that he wants "a change agent" in the position and more diversity in the division. Both Quinlan and Tarrant fit the bill somewhat, but Tarrant, an African-American, would undoubtedly be the more transformational leader whereas Quinlan has stated that we should not change culture and "change conductors on a fast-moving train." In the past, the Columbus Police Department has failed to keep up with the evolution of the community at large and was disconnected from minority neighborhoods. It is obviously important that every community in the city feels equally included and protected. The Police Union, by the way, was fiercely opposed to opening the search up to outsiders. That's the same brotherhood that has protected and defended rogue officers even when they were accused of and disciplined for blatant misconduct such as shooting unarmed black people. For that reason, many in the Columbus community are ready to welcome an "Outside Chief for Change." Tarrant has a proven track record of being a change agent who utilizes 21st-century policing. – Mayor Ginther will announce the city's decision before the end of the year.

Franklin County Prosecutes Too Many People with Addiction

A study by the Health in Justice Action Lab at Northeastern Univ. School of Law in Boston has found that Franklin County ranks 17th in the nation and 3rd in Ohio in the number of times it files homicide charges in fatal opioid overdoses from 2000 through 2019. A group of Ohio law-school professors has now criticized the county for prosecuting and incarcerating people with substance-abuse disorder instead of using evidence-based treatment and intervention. Franklin County Prosecutor Ron O'Brien, a Republican, says his office focuses on prosecuting "drug traffickers," but the law professors pointed out in their letter that the people who are being prosecuted are often individuals who struggle with substance abuse themselves and may include friends and family members of the dead, not callous, hardened "drug dealers." When it comes to criminal-justice reform and treating addicts not as criminals but as people in need of treatment, Ohio is still an unenlightened state.

In response to the criticism by the professors, retired judge Robert Nichols wrote a letter to the Columbus Dispatch. In it, he dismisses the "academics" and expresses his disenchantment with the transition from retributive justice (retaliation and punishment) to restorative justice (treatment and rehabilitation). He writes: "During emphasis on retributive incarceration, violent crime was dramatically reduced. Drug-abuse deaths have soared under the rehabilitation model." For that reason, he concludes that "O'Brien's prosecutions are necessary, appropriate, and consistent with the law and the norms and values of a mature society." Sadly, statements like Nichols' show that criminal-justice reform is being subverted every inch of the way by zealous prosecutors, judges, and law enforcement. People invested in the status quo have no interest in efforts to de-incarcerate and divert non-violent offenders. They are not happy unless the incarceration industry, from which they profit, hums at full throttle. In the rest of the civilized world, incarceration is the exception, not the rule.

Pelotonia Sets New Records

Pelotonia's bicycle riders and volunteers have raised \$207 million for cancer research since 2008. In 2019 alone, the fundraiser generated \$23.2 million. The year 2019 also marked Pelotonia's highest participation level ever. It attracted more than 13,000 riders and volunteers, spread across nearly 340 teams. Also in 2019, a new Institute for Immuno-Oncology opened on the OSU campus. Pelotonia

had pledged \$65 million toward the institute. The center is dedicated to advancing immune-system therapies to fight cancer.

Heartland BancCorp Expands

Heartland BancCorps, headquartered in Whitehall, currently owns 16 offices in Central Ohio. The community bank is now acquiring Victory Community Bancorp in Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, in a transaction worth \$41.1 million. Victory has 3 offices in northern Kentucky that are part of the Cincinnati market. The deal is expected to close next spring. – Heartland's chairman and CEO is G. Scott McComb. He spoke about ethical leadership at OWU a while back. In 2018, however, he had to apologize for making inappropriate and unsubstantiated comments about a Democratic candidate. The controversy led to calls by the AFL-CIO and other groups to stop doing business with Heartland.

Alessandro Siciliani Remains Music Director

As reported in the October issue, last summer the Music Director of the Opera Project Columbus (OPC), Alessandro Siciliani, was accused by multiple women of sexual misconduct and unprofessional behavior. Several top administrators resigned in protest as a direct results of the incidents, but Siciliani remains music director to this day. Opera Project Columbus has now hired 3 new high-ranking individuals to fill the positions of executive director, artistic administrator, and chorus master. The new positions have been in effect since mid-September, but were not announced until 2 months later. The organization's website [www.operaprojectcolumbus.com] states, "the artistic heart of OPC is Maestro Alessandro Siciliani." It seems OPC was unable and unwilling to perform the necessary heart surgery to stay healthy. In addition, Siciliani has a good friend in George Skestos, a major donor. It appears that fundraising, rather than ethical and artistic integrity, is the OPC Board's main goal. There is no doubt that the board's tone deafness and denial has already led to significant reputational loss and may lead to boycotts in the 2019/20 season. The next works on the program are "Die Fledermaus" and "L'elisir d'amore."

Elton John Is Coming to Columbus in 2020

As part of his Farewell Tour, Elton John is coming to Columbus' Schottenstein Center on Sat., April 25, 2020 (8 pm). This appears to be his only show in Ohio. Tickets went on sale Nov. 22. Prices range from \$141 to \$2,511 each. There is a limit of 8 per customer. Visit www.ticketmaster.com for more info.

STATE OF OHIO

Ohio House Bill 164

Ohio legislators never fail to amaze. For example, on Nov. 13 the House of Representatives passed HB 164, the Ohio Student Religious Liberty Act of 2019, with 61 to 31 votes. The new law, if enacted, would require that "no school district ... shall prohibit a student from engaging in religious expression in the completion of homework, artwork, or other written or oral assignments." Furthermore, instructors "shall not penalize or reward a student based on the religious content of a student's work."

Ohio already has plenty of laws that protect freedom of speech. What the proposed law has in mind is something more nefarious. It is intended to once again sneak in, through the back door, creationism and intelligent design into the academic curriculum. Supposed a student claimed on an assignment that Earth is flat, was created by God 10,000 years ago, and that evolution is a hoax. As proposed, the law would prohibit the teacher from penalizing a student for being scientifically illiterate. The legislation, sponsored by an ordained minister (Timothy Ginter of Salem), continues a troubling trend – the notion that not knowing science, and dismissing science, is ok in Ohio. By equating empirical facts and superstitious beliefs, the state continues to be on a collision course with the STEM sciences. The Buckeye State is already producing plenty of illiterate and in numerate high-school "graduates" who are neither work-ready nor college-ready. This bill does nothing to ensure educational attainment.

There is another aspect to consider as well. "Religion" is notoriously difficult to define. What if a "religion" or cult includes the belief and practice of polygamy, drug use, weapons, hazing rituals,

witchcraft, white supremacy, etc.? Would educators be prevented from intervening and commenting, in their own classrooms? If the answer is no, then the bill is clearly intended to favor Christianity, which would be unconstitutional.

Ohio Is Not the Smartest State

The website Safehome.org recently ranked Ohio as one of the dumbest states in the nation. Based on data on bachelor's degrees and college prep scores, Ohio ranks 43rd in the country. Safehome's findings for Ohio are: only 17% of adults 25 and older have a bachelor's degree; 84% graduated from high school in 2017; the median SAT score in 2018/19 was 1,097; and only 43% met ACT benchmarks. Some people have criticized the results. In response, Safehome readily admits that its calculations do not take into account things like "emotional intelligence" or "common sense." The 10 dumbest states are: Idaho (lowest), Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, Louisiana, Alaska, Hawaii, Mississippi, Ohio, and Kentucky. The 10 smartest states are New Jersey (highest), Utah, Massachusetts, N. Carolina, Montana, Virginia, Kansas, Wisconsin, Oregon, and Minnesota.

Ohio Suicide Rate Up 56% in Past Decade

Ohio's suicide rate has increased by 56% between 2007 and 2018, according to the Ohio Dept. of Health. Among people ages 10 to 14, suicide is the leading cause of death. In 2018 alone, there were 271 people between the ages of 10 and 24 who killed themselves. In 2007, there were 174 such suicides. The suicide rate among adults 65 and older has also grown from 176 in 2007 to 333 in 2018, an alarming 89% increase. Overall, the number of suicides in Ohio increased to 1,836 in 2018, up from 1,268 in 2007.

GateHouse Media and Gannett Co. Merge

Shareholders approved the merger of GateHouse and Gannett, creating the largest newspaper colossus in the country. About 550 newspapers, 300 of them weeklies, will have the same owner. The new company will operate under the name "Gannett Co." and be based in McLean, Virginia. It includes newspapers such as the Columbus Dispatch, The Cincinnati Enquirer, the Akron Beacon Journal, and USA Today. The combined print circulation will be 8 million. Company spokespeople talked about the importance of quality journalism, but the whole point of the merger is substantial cost savings in the form of "centralized services." While local news coverage may continue to some extent, content will increasingly be produced at centers and disseminated from there. There will be a decreased focus on meaningful local coverage and investigative journalism. There will also be an increased emphasis on digital revenue. It is possible that Gannett will cut unprofitable print days at some of its publications. – Union officials condemned the merger, saying "the deal is bad for journalists, it's bad for readers, and it's bad for the future of local journalism. Local papers will likely vanish, jobs will be slashed, and reporting will suffer."



"Tamir Rice Safety Handbook"

Tamir Rice was the 12-year-old black boy who was shot and killed by white Cleveland police officers in 2014. He was naively playing with a pellet gun, which the police took for a real gun. Tamir was dead within seconds of the arrival of a squad car. The officers were cleared of criminal wrongdoing, but a settlement with the family cost the city \$6 million. – Samira Rice, Tamir's mother, and the ACLU have now jointly produced a 6-page booklet entitled "Tamir Rice Safety Handbook." It advises children and teenagers how to interact with police, how to protect themselves from overzealous officers, and

how to assert their rights in different scenarios. The guide is available online and can be downloaded or printed out as a pdf.

The introduction of the booklet emphasizes that it is important for black children "to protect yourself" against police. Experience has shown that even if people do everything right, things can still go wrong. "Know that police can lie and ask trick questions" to coerce vulnerable young people. 1. The most important lesson is to stay calm, to not run, to not argue or resist, and to always keep your hands where police can see them. It is imperative to ask the police for permission before you retrieve your ID or cell phone because otherwise they may believe you are reaching for a weapon. (This happened to one of us once.) 2. In addition, besides telling police basic information such as name, DOB, address or showing them your driver's license and proof of insurance, you do not have to answer any other questions without your parents or guardians and/or a lawyer present. Anything you say, write, or sign can and will be used against you in a court of law. 3. Also, without a warrant the police are not allowed to search you, your phone, your car, or your home. If they do it anyway, claiming evidence of a crime, say that you do not consent (agree), but do not resist. – It is sad indeed that the trust between police and many communities is tenuous, to say the least. Not everyone is convinced the police is there to protect them. Many have learned to keep their distance even if they have information that may be valuable for law enforcement. *(The above information is not intended as legal advice, the ACLU says.)*



Fire at the African Safari Wildlife Park

A Nov. 28 blaze at the African Safari Wildlife Park south of Port Clinton in northern Ohio (Ottawa County) destroyed a barn and killed at least 10 animals that were trapped inside. Among them are 3 giraffes, 3 river hogs, 3 bongos, and 1 springbok. No person was injured. Because of the extensive damage, it could not be determined what caused the fire, but there were high winds and power outages that week. Criminal activity is not suspected. – The park is a 100-acre drive-through facility with over 400 animals. Visitors can watch and feed them. The safari park is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums through 2021, meaning it meets above-average standards. It is now closed for the winter until spring 2020.

Sherrod Brown Writes Book

Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown has written a new book – "Desk 88: Eight Progressive Senators Who Changed America." The profiled Democratic senators include: Hugo Black (Alabama), Al Gore Sr. (Tennessee), Theodore Francis Green (Rhode Island), Robert F. Kennedy (New York), Herbert H. Lehman (New York), George McGovern (South Dakota), William Proxmire (Wisconsin), and Glen Taylor (Idaho). Brown's profiles are informative and enjoyable, according to the Columbus Dispatch, but the lack of a woman must be noted. Also, Alabama's Hugo Black was a member of the KKK in 1926 when he won his Senate seat and supported the internment of Japanese-Americans in WW II. However, Brown seems to believe that Black later redeemed himself with landmark decisions on civil liberties and labor laws.



High Barrier for Growing Hemp

Hemp is an extremely versatile plant that can be used for biodegradable textiles, shoes, bags, rope, construction, insulation, and other purposes. Although it was legalized in Ohio in 2019, the state has erected numerous barriers that make it almost impossible for small farmers to grow the crop. Hemp farmers must use at least a quarter acre and grow at least 1,000 plants. The Dept. of Agriculture

is also proposing a license fee of \$500 for each patch of hemp. In addition, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture requires states to know the location of every hemp plant and send inspectors to each plot. Lastly, farmers must have their products tested at labs to ensure they don't exceed the threshold of 0.3% THC. All that adds up to significant costs for farmers. The rules are intentionally designed to favor larger operations. An official reason for all this red tape is that police would have a hard time differentiating legal hemp from illegal marijuana if too many people grew the crop. That argument is a contrived one, of course. It is more likely that Big Ag wants to keep competition low and profits high. It is obvious that large corporations are eager to monopolize hemp production and are using politicians to help them achieve this goal.

Ohio Environmental Council

On Oct. 24, Chris Tavenor from the Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) defended the use of fracking brine to de-ice Ohio's roads in the "Columbus Dispatch." Fracking brine is toxic, radioactive, and contains many unknown chemicals that are secret and proprietary. When spread on roads, much of the liquid ends up in waterways, contaminating fauna and flora. Many environmentalists were shocked to read Tavenor's misinformation, as evidenced by a letter to the editor on Nov. 1. On Nov. 5, OEC's executive director, Heather Taylor-Miesle, responded with a letter of her own. She admitted that OEC had made "a mistake": "After the article ran, we became aware of powerful new scientific evidence uncovered by advocates who are leading on the issue." The new data, she says, shows that brine is, as a general matter, "highly radioactive." Of 151 samples taken of Ohio brine, all exceeded federal safe drinking water standards and 148 of them exceeded environmental discharge limits. The new evidence, according to Taylor-Miesle, shows that oil-and-gas wastewater is indeed "a danger to the public and the environment and it should not be spread on Ohio's roadways."

Heather Taylor-Miesle's conclusion is the correct one. It is peculiar, however, that the OEC did not seem to have known that until just recently. Anyone who has followed the debate over hydraulic fracturing over the last decade is perfectly aware of the grave dangers that the unresolved issue of fracking brine presents. There are two logical answers. Either OEC is uninformed and not "leading," as Taylor-Miesle suggests. Or OEC has betrayed its mission and is now in cahoots with the fracking industry, possibly in a quid-pro-quo exchange, and spreading disinformation. Either the OEC is dumb or dishonest. We are still waiting for an explanation and have so far withheld our membership dues for 2020.

Building Collapses in Downtown Cincinnati

Building collapses are common in Third-World where corruption, shoddy practices, and poor oversight are endemic. They are unusual in the U.S. However, on Nov. 25 a building under construction in downtown Cincinnati partially collapsed, injuring several workers. One person, 58-year-old Preston Todd Delph from Hebron, Kentucky, was found dead. He was employed by Gateway Concrete Forming. The tall structure partially collapsed after 420 cubic yards of concrete had been poured and had begun to harden. At this point, not much is known what caused the incident. If safety rules and regulations were broken by builders or contractors, it could lead to charges of reckless endangerment and manslaughter, as was the case after a 2013 building collapse in Philadelphia.

"Parent and Child" by Mildred Howland

A reader located in Bexley recently sent an abbreviated version of the following very nice poem by Mildred R. Howland to the *Columbus Dispatch* (11/18/19). Even though it is dated, it expresses, she said, the current "era of such betrayal of decency, civility, and morality." We would like to thank her for sharing it with the broader public and for raising an important issue. Unfortunately, we have not been able to find out anything about the author. Searches came up empty. If anyone can help, please get in touch with us. Below is the poem's complete version, with the correct title and format:

**"Challenge"
by Mildred R. Howland
(from "Parent and Child")**

How shall we teach
A child to reach
Beyond himself and touch
The stars,
We who have stooped so much?

How shall we tell
A child to dwell
With honor, live and die
For truth,
We who have lived a lie?

How shall we say
To him, 'The way of life
Is through the gate
Of love,'
We who have learned to hate?

How shall we dare
To teach him prayer
And turn him to the way
Of Faith
We who longer pray?

THE NATION

Articles of Impeachment

House Democrats are preparing formal articles of impeachment against Donald J. Trump, the 45th president of the United States. He is accused of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. He is alleged to have enlisted a foreign power (Ukraine) to corrupt the U.S. election process and to endanger national security. Voting is expected by the Judiciary Committee and the House, where Democrats have a majority, before Christmas. If approved, the Senate would then take up the charges. Since Republicans have a majority there, it is unlikely that the Senate will impeach the president. However, there is likely to be a bitter fight right when primary states are beginning to get ready for Super Tuesday on March 3. – Impeachment has occurred only 3 times in history (Andrew Johnson, Richard Nixon & Bill Clinton). Republicans are highly critical of the impeachment process. They have called it a "coup" attempt and an effort to overturn the election results of 2016. Trump himself regularly refers to it as "a partisan witch hunt."

PISA Test Results Disappointing

Every 3 years, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducts a rigorous global test that evaluates the academic achievements of 15-year-olds. The most recent test focused on students' reading skills, although math and science were also tested. Students were assessed whether they understood nonfictional reading passages, whether particular claims were supported by textual evidence, and whether they were able to distinguish facts and opinions. It comes as no surprise that many Asian and European countries outperformed the U.S. in the latest PISA test, conducted in 79 countries. The performance of American teenagers has been stagnant and lagging for at least 20 years. Two-thirds of American students are not "proficient" readers. Many had scores so low that it appeared they had not mastered reading skills of the 10-year-old. It comes as no surprise that as a result of a flawed educational system many Americans are functionally illiterate and innumerate.

There have been many attempts over the years to move the needle in the U.S. (e.g., No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, Common Core, Every Student Succeeds, etc.), but so far little has helped. Some blame the fact that the U.S. lacks a centralized system for teacher education, school funding, instructional materials, and performance standards. Others point to the glaring socioeconomic disparities in the nation, school segregation, and racial injustices. However, the biggest obstacle may be a societal mindset that does not prioritize education above all else. For many students and parents, sports trumps school. Others watch television and play video games instead of improving their knowledge. An abiding culture of drinking and drugs is yet another obstacle to better educational

outcomes. The Trump administration in particular disrespects science and education. There are conservative politicians in Ohio who favor vocational schools over liberal-arts institutions. That is not the case in other countries where people understand that education is the basis for all progress. There, educational systems are fully funded and teachers are highly respected. Their PISA test results are a matter of national importance and a source of national pride or shame.

Societies that do not value education face a grim future. In order to make America great again, more attention needs to be paid to K-12 schools and higher education.

Trump Is "the Chosen One"

According to the gospel of Rick Perry, Secretary of Energy, President Trump was chosen by God to lead the country. This is a common view among evangelical Christians who say that Trump has "the mandate of heaven" (Pat Robertson). Trump himself has used the phrase "the chosen one." Of course his followers know that their man is an imperfect vessel. But, Perry says, "God has used imperfect people all through history. King David wasn't perfect. Saul wasn't perfect. Solomon wasn't perfect." Franklin Graham too has compared Trump to the biblical King David who impregnated beautiful Bathsheba and schemed to have her husband killed. – Not everyone agrees with the sentiment that Trump has the blessing of the Lord and is doing God's work. Many Christians who take the Bible seriously consider such talk hubristic and blasphemous. For them, humble Jesus Christ is the better role model.

Biden, Bloomberg, Trump Are Stuck in Last Century

Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, 77, has entered the presidential race. As it turns out, he too has a long history of making disrespectful, insensitive, demeaning, crude, and boorish comments about women. Anticipating close scrutiny, Bloomberg's team admits that "his words have not always aligned with his values and the way he has led his life" and that "Mike has come to see that some of what he has said is disrespectful and wrong." Bloomberg, Biden, and Trump are approximately of the same generation. That cohort's values were different. These men grew up in a machismo world where women were objects and bragging about sexual exploits was common. Sure, some of these men have grown and matured in recent decades, but most still share a general cynicism about the #MeToo movement. When push comes to shove, they still defend the rapist instead of his victim. For example, Bloomberg has stated in a deposition that in his view a woman's rape allegation has only standing if it is supported by "an unimpeachable third-party witness." – This is the 21st century. Isn't it time for presidential candidates who are more in tune with the cultural values and norms of the present instead of the 20th century?

Joe Biden Does Not Resonate with Young Voters

"Nothing about Biden resonates with younger voters," a Democratic consultant recently stated. They tend to see Biden as a paternalistic or avuncular guy from a different century with antiquated views on racial matters, climate change, and other issues. His past willingness to work across the aisle with Southern segregationists, for example, was a total turnoff. His association with former president Obama is meaningless to younger voters. Nothing about Biden excites them. The policy proposals of Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren are more in line with the thinking of millennials and people who belong to Gen Z.

President Trump Pardons War Criminals

Presidents have the power to pardon convicted criminals and grant mercy for humanitarian reasons when appropriate. Donald Trump, however, has been known to show clemency to people for ideological reasons, thus abusing the letter and spirit of pardons. He recently pardoned three military men for serious crimes they committed in Afghanistan and Iraq. 1st Lt. Clint Lorance was convicted of murder for ordering soldiers to fire upon unarmed Afghan men in 2012. He served more than 6 years in prison. Another pardon went to Maj. Mathew L. Golsteyn, a former Green Beret accused of killing a suspected bomb maker while deployed in Afghanistan. He was set to stand trial next year. Trump also ordered a promotion for Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Edward Gallagher, a Navy SEAL convicted of posing with a dead Islamic State captive in Iraq in 2017. Gallagher

shot civilians in Iraq, killed a captive enemy with a hunting knife, and threatened to kill fellow SEALs if they reported him.

Top military leaders have pushed hard against clearing these 3 dishonorable men because it undermines the military's code of justice. And it certainly is unprecedented to clear a soldier of murder charges before the case is even tried. However, Trump seems to agree with those who view all service members as war heroes, regardless of their conduct. This viewpoint put him in direct conflict with top military brass. In an unprecedented move, Navy Secretary Richard V. Spencer, who disagreed with Trump's decision to intervene in internal military matters, was ousted. President Trump has since used the three men (Lorance, Golsteyn, and Gallagher) as a talking point in his reelection campaign, calling them "three great warriors." He has also indicated that he wishes to campaign with these war criminals onstage.

How Healthy Is President Trump?

Since being president, Donald Trump has had 9 visits to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, incl. an unscheduled 2-hour examination on Nov. 16. It is not known what kinds of tests he had that day. It is noteworthy that after the previous visit it was announced that the president was "in very good health" even though his body-mass index was 30.4 and he takes drugs to control his elevated cholesterol. After this visit to Walter Reed, White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham announced that "the president remains healthy and energetic without complaints." A mysterious, unscheduled visit shrouded in secrecy; a physical condition that has deteriorated from "very good" to merely "healthy"; a cryptic remark that he is not complaining despite unspecified ailments; and the fact that he was not seen in public for several days led to much speculation that there may be something amiss with the 73-year-old man. As a result, Washington was buzzing with rumors for a while. Even his wife, Melania Trump, was reportedly caught off-guard by the unplanned visit and wondered if her husband had had a heart attack. – No doubt many people would love to get their hands on more specific information, but an emperor's or president's true health is always a state secret of the utmost importance. There is a long tradition of presidents hiding medical conditions from the public. Americans will probably have to wait 50 years or longer to learn the truth about the physical and mental state of Donald Trump.

Michael Bloomberg Is Running

Against the advice of many, former mayor of New York Michael Bloomberg, 77, has declared that he is indeed running for president. He has so far spent almost \$35 million in television ads. The amount is expected to reach and exceed \$100 million before all is said and done. Critics, incl. his Democratic rivals, are not happy. One of them, Governor of Montana Steve Bullock, tweeted, "Another billionaire who thinks the Democratic nomination is for sale." Bloomberg's fortune is estimated to be worth more than \$50 billion. Politically, Bloomberg, a former Republican, is a moderate Democrat, not far apart from Joe Biden and Pete Buttigieg. Some even question his Democratic credentials, pointing to his opposition to paid sick leave, his opposition to a wealth tax, his tough-on-crime policies as New York mayor, and his close ties to Wall Street.

Trump Campaign Bans "Bloomberg News"

It is well known that President Trump is not a friend of a free and independent press. He has the unfortunate tendency to disrespect and retaliate against anyone who disagrees with him and to surround himself with loyal sycophants. This has led to a hostile work environment for many journalists. The Trump reelection campaign has now announced it will no longer credential reporters from "Bloomberg News" at its rallies and other public events. During much of his 2016 campaign, Trump refused to give credentials to the Washington Post, BuzzFeed, Politico, and other outlets whose coverage he personally disliked. These news organizations were supposedly biased against him. He does, however, patronize and endorse media outlets that give preferential treatment to him, incl. Fox News. – Bloomberg News is owned by billionaire and Democratic presidential candidates Michael Bloomberg.

Pete Buttigieg Popular among Boomers

Pete Buttigieg may be struggling to attract Millennials, African-Americans, and progressives, but he has found a lot of supporters among older white Americans. They are impressed by his polite manners, military service, Christian values, and moderate positions. Unlike Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren, he is not an advocate for big, structural change. Few seem to be bothered by his sexuality (he is married to another man). Buttigieg, in turn, has embraced the boomers with his "Gray New Deal" that focuses on retirement security and "Medicare for all who want it."

Pete Buttigieg's Problem

There is an important chapter missing in Pete Buttigieg's biography – the 3 years he worked for McKinsey & Co., the infamous consulting company that helps clients find inefficiencies, cut costs, and lay off workers. Just recently, it was revealed that McKinsey consultants advised ICE on how to cut food and medical care for detainees to save money. The company has also worked with authoritarian regimes in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and China. Buttigieg left Kinsey in 2010, but a nondisclosure agreement (NDA) prevents him from describing his work for the company in detail. He seems to have worked on projects involving energy efficiency and economic opportunities in war zones (Iraq and Afghanistan), but nothing is certain. We do not know who his clients were and what his work entailed. Clearly, the public has the right to know all relevant information about a presidential candidate, especially if there are potential conflicts of interest involved. Kinsey's NDA stands in direct opposition to the public's expectation of transparency. How can voters ever trust someone whose record is hidden and shielded from scrutiny? Buttigieg could unilaterally break the agreement, but he would then likely face a lawsuit. Alternatively, Kinsey could release him from the NDA, but confidentiality and secrecy is deeply baked into the company culture, and so far Kinsey has refused to lift the ban. Does the public have a right to know Kinsey's proprietary information if it involves a prospective president? This is obviously a serious issue, and Buttigieg, Kinsey, and the entire notion of lifelong NDAs are now being tested. The only thing clear is that no one should become president of the United States of America when there are significant unanswered questions about his or her background. That would compromise both the president as a person as well as the integrity of the presidency itself. Radical transparency is needed. The dilemma is a moment of existential crisis for the Buttigieg campaign. It could even spell the end of his run.

Update: Under growing pressure, Pete Buttigieg has received permission from McKinsey & Co. to reveal specifics of his work he performed during his 3 years with the company. A spokesperson for the Buttigieg campaign said the candidate would make public his list of clients "soon." It remains to be seen how detailed and complete it will be. Buttigieg will pledged to open his fundraisers to reporters and reveal the names of people raising money for him. His actions are a tacit admission that he would not have been able to win the fight over transparency. It is sad, however, that it required relentless public pressure and scrutiny for a presidential candidate to do the right thing.

Julián Castro Cares about the Poor

Julián Castro's presidential campaign focuses heavily on public policies that would help the poor, the vulnerable, the lost, and the forgotten. Saying that the nation has an obligation to make sure all children have enough to eat, he has called for free meals for all public-school students and for a 30% expansion of SNAP (food stamps). He would also erase all school-lunch debt. In areas known as food deserts, he would open grocery stores subsidized by the government and run by local agencies. During his campaign stops, Castro has visited homeless camps, food pantries, and refugees in sanctuaries. This fall, he was the only Democratic candidate to visit Edith Espinal, an undocumented mother of 3 American children who has been living in a Columbus church since 2017. – The school-lunch program would cost under \$20 billion per year, which is a scintilla of the money designated for "national security" in 2020. – It is peculiar that many conservative Christians support Donald Trump who has shown no concern for the poor and is eager to pry food stamps out of their hands. It is people such as Julián Castro who are the true disciples of Jesus and his teachings. Read, for example, "The Gospel According to Matthew," one of the great texts of humanity.

Cory Booker Wants to See Investments in HBCUs

Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey has proposed a \$100 billion investment in historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other minority-serving institutions. His proposals call for an additional \$30 billion for STEM education and another \$30 billion for investments in infrastructure and facilities. Booker has also indicated that he plans to double the value of Pell grants for students, from \$6,200 to \$12,400. – Other Democratic candidates have announced similar plans (Biden, Buttigieg, Harris, Sanders), in an effort to win the votes of African-Americans, but Booker's is the most ambitious proposal so far. HBCUs are facing declining enrollment, financial difficulties, and are threatened with loss of accreditation. Fully funding them is one way of paying reparations for centuries of slavery.

More Democrats Pull Out of the Presidential Race

Steve Bullock, Kamala Harris, and Joe Sestak are the latest Democrats who just ended their presidential campaigns. Earlier in November, Wayne Messam and Beto O'Rourke dropped out. The field is now down to 15 Democratic candidates. Only 8 have qualified for the Dec. 19th debate: Biden, Buttigieg, Harris, Klobuchar, Sanders, Steyer, Warren, and Yang. Harris has since suspended her campaign.

An All-White Debate Stage in December?

How embarrassing for a political party that prides itself of being diverse and inclusive! It seems that on Dec. 19 there will be an all-white roster of politicians in Los Angeles. At this point, it seems unlikely that Cory Booker, Julián Castro, or other non-white candidates will be onstage in Los Angeles. Some say it was the debate rules set by the Democratic National Committee that disproportionately affected minorities, undercutting the party's much-touted image as a bastion of diversity. Not having anyone of color onstage means minority voices will not be seen and heard, which could well alienate voters of African-American, Hispanic, and Asian descent. This is as real problem. The Trump campaign is probably elated about this. When the rules were created in the distant past, the process seemed fair and equitable. However, the flawed outcome suggests that mistakes were made. It seems the U.S. has not been able to fundamentally change an election system that preferences billionaires (Bloomberg, Steyer, Trump) and other wealthy people and perpetuates white dominance. According to Ohio Rep. Marcia L. Fudge, "we have a system ... that is not in any way intended to elevate the most qualified candidate but designed to elect the person with the most money or most access to it." – **Update:** Andrew Yang, an Asian-American, has since qualified for the 6th debate. However, there won't be an African-American or a Latino/a onstage.

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards Narrowly Wins

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards (D) narrowly won the race against Baton Rouge businessman and GOP donor Eddie Rispone (R), getting 51% of the vote and winning a 2nd term. Rispone had the support of President Trump, who made 3 trips to the state to rally against Edwards, making it a test of his own popularity. Edwards' victory is another setback for Trump. Earlier this month, Democrat Andy Beshear unseated Republican Gov. Matt Bevin in Kentucky. As of January 2020, 24 of the nation's governors will be Democrats, up from 15 at the end of 2017.

Pension Plans in Crisis

Most public and private pension plans are in decent shape, but others are in big trouble and in danger of becoming insolvent. The Pension Rights Center estimates that about 125 multi-employer pension plans jointly run by employers and unions are facing pension cuts of up to 70%. Some have already gone bankrupt. The Central States Pension Fund, one of the biggest in the country, is on track to go broke in 2025. It covers more than 40,000 retirees in Ohio and nearly 400,000 in the nation, mostly retired Teamsters truck drivers. There is a federal Pension Benefit Guarantee Corp. in place that serves as a backup when plans fail, but it has its own problems and is running a \$65 billion deficit. While known, the problem of pension plans has been ignored for years. In fact, a number of years ago Congress passed a law that allowed multi-employer pension plans to reduce benefits to shore up their sagging finances, to the detriment of

employees. Only now are “rescue plans” being discussed. Unfortunately, it looks as if taxpayers will ultimately have to bail out the failing pension plans.

Life Expectancy Keeps Shrinking

A new study published in “JAMA” looks at life expectancy in the U.S. from 1959 through 2017. It rose from 69.9 years to 78.9 years. In 2011, however, it stopped growing and has since declined across gender, racial, and ethnic lines. There is no single “smoking gun.” Drug addiction, traffic fatalities, suicide, homicide, alcohol, obesity, and heart disease are some of the culprits. The report reveals that there is a broad erosion in health, compared to other countries. “The whole country is at a health disadvantage compared to other wealthy nations,” according to the study’s lead author, Dr. Steven Woolf. In Ohio – of the U.S. states with the sharpest decline in life expectancy – the mortality rate for people ages 25 to 65 increased by 21.6% from 2010 to 2017. Among youths between the ages of 10 and 24, suicide increased by 56% from 2007 through 2018.

Fact or Fiction?

America is a bitterly divided and polarized country. One thing that many agree on, however, is that it is increasingly difficult to know what a true and honest fact is. According to a new poll (Associated Press – NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and USAFacts) many people (47%) say they have a hard time distinguishing the true from the false. Only 31% say that it is easy for them to do so. Many are convinced that much of the information they consume is biased, dishonest, or downright fraudulent. Most have little or no confidence and trust in the data they receive from the press, television, social media, politicians, and businesses. The good news is that at least three-quarters of people still think that it is important for information to be objective, evidence-based, and accurate. What constitutes an undeniable fact, however, is something that can be controversial. Most people will readily agree that $2 + 2 = 4$ and even that the earth is round instead of flat. But when it comes to things like evolution, homosexuality, abortion, climate change, belief in God, or President Trump sharp divisions become evident very quickly. What may be a fact to one person another person will call “a lie” or “a hoax,” and vice versa. – The best way to foster “news literacy” is to keep an open mind and to familiarize yourself with a variety of viewpoints. There are two sides to every coin, and the truth is often somewhere in the middle. It is fundamentally wrong to get all your information from a single source, be it Fox News or the Washington Post. Don’t turn the television off when a Democrat speaks, and consider reading a book written by a leading conservative. You do not have to agree with “the other side,” but at the very least you should be familiar with what they have to say and understand the language they use.

Hate-Crime Violence Reaches New High

The FBI reports that hate crimes have reached a new high in 2018. Physical assaults accounted for 61% (4,571 attacks) of the 7,120 incidents classified as hate crimes. As immigration has replaced terrorism as a top concern under the Trump administration, Latinos in particular face more violence. Transgender people and people with disabilities are also facing more crimes against them. Reported hate crimes against African-Americans, however, were the lowest since 1992. – State and local police forces are not required to report hate crimes to the FBI. The great majority (87%) of the 16,039 law-enforcement agencies that did send data for 2018 said they had no information on hate crimes. 25 cities with populations of more than 150,000 reported no hate crimes, and no hate crime was reported by any law-enforcement agency in Alabama. It can safely be assumed that the 2018 data shared by the FBI grossly understates the problem of hate speech and hate crime.

Vaping Industry Has Trump’s Back

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has listed the vape brands most commonly associated with hospitalizations. Dank Vapes was the brand used by 56% of the hospitalized patients. Other product names at the top of the list included TKO (15%), Smart Cart (13%), and Rove (12%). – Health groups support a ban on vaping products, but the vaping industry is fighting hard against a prohibition of e-cigarettes, saying jobs would disappear. President Trump seems to have bought into this argument after saying in

September that he would favor a ban on most flavored e-cigarettes. There are about 2,300 reported cases of lung injuries associated with e-cigarettes (“Evali”) in the U.S.; 47 people are confirmed to have died from the disease. To worry about the loss of a few jobs seems cynical under the circumstances.

The Salt Lake Tribune

“Salt Lake Tribune” Now a Nonprofit

Utah’s “Salt Lake Tribune” has become the nation’s first daily newspaper to be granted nonprofit status by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The nonprofit status requires that the publisher, Paul Huntsman, transfer ownership to a board of directors – a board that will be representative of the communities the paper serves. Protections are built in to ensure the journalistic independence of the paper. There will be strict firewalls between the newsroom and the governing body, advisers, donors, advertisers, and sponsors. The new nonprofit will no longer be able to endorse political candidates, but it is of course free to weigh in on issues and policies in accordance with its mission. The publication is permitted to charge for subscriptions and will continue to sell advertising. Residents can support their local paper with tax-deductible donations. The IRS did not restrict the Tribune’s broad scope, which includes sports coverage. – Huntsman bought the Tribune in 2016 and says his primary mission was to keep it alive. He seems to have found a pathway to sustainability.

Television News Shows Popular

America has to thank President Trump for making news programs relevant again. Shows that are focused on current news and politics are doing both well and good. The Trump era has elevated news in an unprecedented way. Among the most popular TV programs are “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” (CBS), “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon” (NBC), and “Jimmy Kimmel Live” (ABC). Millions of anxious people watch these and other shows every night, desperately trying to make sense of a world in turmoil. Others rely on newspapers for information or balanced radio programs such as NPR or BBC. Many people who never cared about politics in the past regularly watch or listen to the news now. Complacency is no longer an option.

Risk for Dementia Can Be Reduced

A new study has shown that many adults are confused about the reasons for mental decline in old age and what can be done about it. For one thing, there is no evidence that taking supplements such as fish oil or ginkgo improves or protects one’s memory. Research has shown, however, that a healthy lifestyle, regular walks or exercise, a balanced diet, limiting alcohol and not smoking makes dementia less likely. There are definitely things you can do to maintain a sharp mind even in old age. Mental and social stimulation are also proven ways to reduce the risk of Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia. However, researchers say that challenging activities such as taking a class or a trip, learning something new, or playing chess is better than staying within your comfort zone. On the other hand, a sedentary lifestyle associated with obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure increases the dementia risk.

California Rep. Duncan Hunter Pleads Guilty

California Rep. Duncan Hunter, one of President Trump’s earliest supporters, has pleaded guilty to misusing campaign funds and is prepared to go to jail. He will be sentenced March 17. Hunter has also indicated that will resign his seat in Congress after the holidays. He and his wife Margaret Hunter were charged with spending more than \$250,000 campaign money on a family trip to Italy, plane tickets, golf outings, and purchases of household items. He has also misused campaign funds for extramarital affairs. Hunter, who is turning 43, denied wrongdoing in the past, calling the allegations “fake news” and a “witch hunt.” To this day, he has not publicly apologized and has only admitted to having made “mistakes” and not having “monitored” his expenditures closely enough. The Los Angeles Times has written about Hunter, “No one who diverts campaign funds into his own pockets should be allowed to remain in public office.” We agree.

Washington College Bans Larry Shue's "The Foreigner"

Larry Shue's "The Foreigner" is an award-winning comedy. It is performed frequently, from the high-school to the professional level. The play is decidedly against xenophobia, racism, and the KKK and promotes diversity, inclusion, and equity. However, Washington College (www.washcoll.edu) in Chestertown, Maryland, cancelled a show planned for Nov. 8-9 at the last minute. One of the characters in the play is Owen Musser, a county property inspector in Georgia. He is a dangerous racist who schemes to illegally condemn a fishing lodge and convert it into a meeting place for the Ku Klux Klan. At one point he says that when the KKK is in power, they would kill all foreigners. Actors dressed up in white KKK robes are part of the farcical play. A spokesperson for Washington College said, "the campus was not prepared for the content of the show."

We assume (hope) that Washington College did not cancel the play because it shows the KKK in a bad light. That would be absolutely scandalous and unforgivable. Our understanding is the play was suspended because some people were afraid the depiction of white KKK robes might instill fear and horror in some tender folks, thus traumatizing them. To that we respond that nobody is forced to go to the theater. A trigger warning might have been more than sufficient. In addition, the KKK is real and making a comeback in parts of the country. To pretend that this reality does not exist is doing students a disservice. They need to develop coping strategies and resilience. "The Foreigner" offers them the opportunity to come to grips with the fact that they will face many challenges down the road. By cancelling the show, Washington College is not preparing its students for the real world.

George Zimmerman Sues for \$100 Million

George Zimmerman is the self-declared Florida neighborhood watchman who shot and killed Trayvon Martin in 2012. The unarmed 17-year-old teenager was returning from a store with Skittles and a drink. At his criminal trial, Zimmerman claimed that Martin looked "suspicious" to him and that he shot him in self-defense. Incredibly, he was acquitted of homicide in 2013. However, as a result of this infamous act he has not found employment since. Zimmerman has now filed a \$100 million lawsuit against the teen's family, a publishing firm, and a law-enforcement agency for "defamation," "fabricated evidence, and "malicious prosecution." Trayvon's mother, Sybrina Fulton, is the lead defendant. Simultaneously with the lawsuit, a video documentary came out that essentially makes the same point. Obviously, this is an orchestrated attempt to change the narrative and a shameless attempt to profit off the lives and grief of others.

AARP Celebrates Movies for Older Folks

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit and nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older. In 2018, AARP gave "Green Book" its "Movies for Grownups" award. The 8 nominees this year include "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood," "Bombshell," "Little Women," "Marriage Story," "Once upon a Time in Hollywood," "The Irishman," and "The Two Popes" as movies that fight "ageism" and resonate with older and mature viewers. The complete list of nominations also includes categories for best actors and actresses, screenwriters and directors, feature films and documentaries, etc. For more info, visit www.aarp.org and go to "Entertainment." The winners will be announced in January.

Donald Trump Honors Popular Artists

President Trump has had an uneasy relationship with many in the arts and humanities and has skipped events like the annual Kennedy Center gala. At the beginning of his tenure, Trump even wanted to abolish the NEA and the NEH. For the first time since taking office, he has now awarded the National Medal of the Arts and the National Humanities Medal to 8 individuals. The National Medal of the Arts went to country singer Alison Krauss, philanthropist Sharon Percy Rockefeller, the Musicians of the U.S. Military, and actor Jon Voight. Recipients of the National Humanities Medal were the conservative think tank Claremont Institute, philanthropist Teresa Lozano Long, restaurant chef Patrick O'Connell, and writer James Patterson. Among the 2019 recipients are no great, pioneering artists of national and global significance. It comes as no surprise that Trump's selection criteria were based on political considerations rather than artistic merit.

Trump Not a Friend of Energy Efficiency

President Trump is the opposite of an environmentalist. For example, he does not like energy-efficient light bulbs because, he says, they are more expensive than the old ones. (He did not mention that they are almost indestructible and last a lot longer.) In addition, "I hate to say it, it doesn't make you look as good. Of course, being a vain person, that's very important to me." He is also not a fan of water-efficient toilets and showerheads. Older toilets used as much as 6 gallons of water per flush whereas newer ones use as little as 1.28 gallons. He criticized that people now have to flush their toilets "ten times, fifteen times as opposed to once," thus ending up using more water. It could well be that folks sometimes have to flush twice to clean their toilet bowl or shower for an extra minute, but modern toilets, faucets, and showerheads do save a lot of water, energy, and money over time.

a ship of fools

the white house is a ship of fools
in all its wings insanity rules

experts are not welcome there
memories and minds are bare

educators tried to teach
but the fools were out of reach

they play and watch tv a lot
deadly dangers they see not

they revel in their insane lust
long forgotten are truth and trust

they are lawless and lascivious
and often cruel and devious

temper tantrums are incessant
they are infants in the present

the capricious captain has no vision
the crew knows not of any mission

the ship of fools has lost its way
and will surely sink one day

wayward it drifts into the night
soon it will be out of sight

never from its lunatic trip
shall return this doomed ship

for these men no bells will ring
and of them no bard shall sing

"Triggered" by Donald Trump, Jr.

Donald Trump Jr., the president's eldest son, is a private citizen whose most significant claim to fame is his parentage. That has not stopped him from publishing a book, "Triggered: How the Left Thrives on Hate and Wants to Silence Us" (Nov. 5, 2019). This is poorly written right-wing propaganda, with little analysis, depth, and substance. The book may indeed enjoy a limited "natural" audience and "organic" sales. However, it appears that GOP-affiliated groups have bulk-ordered the title by the tens of thousands to artificially increase demand and to push it onto bestseller lists despite its lack of insights and quality. Watch for the book to end up remaindered and in thrift stores within a year or so.

State Nicknames

Elections are coming up, and oftentimes states are referred to by their nicknames. Which states and nicknames belong together? For a complete list, google "state nicknames."

Arizona	Aloha State
California	Badger State

Florida	Beaver State
Georgia	Beehive State
Hawaii	Bluegrass State
Illinois	Buckeye State
Indiana	Empire State
Iowa	Evergreen State
Kentucky	Garden State
Louisiana	Golden State
Michigan	Grand Canyon State
Minnesota	Granite State
New Jersey	Hawkeye State
New Hampshire	Hoosier State
New York	Keystone State
Ohio	Lone Star State
Oregon	Mountain State
Pennsylvania	Palmetto State
South Carolina	Peach State
Texas	Pelican State
Utah	Prairie State
West Virginia	Sunshine State
Washington	Volunteer State
Wisconsin	Wolverine State

THE WORLD

New NAFTA Deal Agreed On

The 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been amended and approved by representatives of Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. House Democrats had insisted on changes that included workers' rights, environmental protections, and prescription-drug prices. Robert Lighthizer, the U.S. Trade Representative, said the revised trade agreement, now called USMCA, will make everyone "richer." President Trump has called it "the best and most important trade deal ever made by the USA" and will no doubt tout it as a major victory for his administration. In essence, however, the modernized NAFTA agreement is the same as before. The House is expected to approve the deal in December, but the Senate is unlikely to discuss it until after the impeachment trial. Some Republicans are reportedly unhappy about the concessions made to Democrats to win their support.

U.S. Senate Backs Hong Kong Protesters

The U.S. House and Senate unanimously passed a bipartisan bill in support of the protesters in Hong Kong. If signed by President Trump, the bill would impose sanctions on Chinese and Hong Kong officials responsible for human-rights violations. Even if Trump, who rarely talks about human rights, were to veto it, the bill might be enacted because it has a veto-proof majority in Congress. The bill comes at a time when the U.S.-Chinese trade war is escalating, when China has detained at least one million Muslim ethnic minorities, and when it is attempting to undermine the autonomy and freedom of Hong Kong. The bill is part of a strong bipartisan effort in Washington to push back against China and its leader, President Xi Jinping. – **Update:** President Trump wavered for a while, saying he did not want to jeopardize his good relationship with the Chinese president and endanger a possible trade deal. In the end, however, he did sign the bill.

Normalcy Wins in Romania

On Nov. 24, Klaus Iohannis defeated his populist opponent, Viorica Dancila, in a landslide victory. Emulating Viktor Orban of neighboring Hungary and her mentor Liviu Dragnea (now in prison), Dancila was following the dark path of illiberalism, nationalism, corruption, incompetence, and conspiracy theories, and scandals. For example, the Romanian government shamelessly attempted to decriminalize a number of graft offenses. Iohannis' win means a return to a Romania that is reformist, democratic, lawful, and European. Iohannis, of the National Liberal Party, is a known and respected entity among Western nations. He may not be the most charismatic leader, but he is considered to be a safe steward. It looks like Romanians finally had enough with the daily drama of the past years. Maybe, someday people in the U.S. will come to a similar conclusion.

Uproar over Pensions in France

French President Emmanuel Macron, a pro-market conservative, wants to standardize and reform the complicated French pension system. However, the French, concerned about their future, want none of it. They are happy with the welfare state which promises them a safe retirement and a decent standard of living. The poverty rate among those older than 65 is less than 5% in France (compared to almost 20% in the U.S.), and life expectancy is increasing. Why change a system that benefits millions of people? People fear that they will have to work longer and have less money if Macron pushes through his pro-business initiative. Adding to the general anxiety is the fact that his plan contains very few clear specifics. It is not clear who the winners and losers will be. Anxious and enraged citizens have now thrown the country in turmoil, basically shutting it down in a nationwide strike. – Other politicians have attempted to change the deeply entrenched French pension system in the past, but none has ever succeeded. It is unlikely that the outcome will be any different this time. Macron is not popular in France. As a trained investment banker, he is widely considered arrogant, imperious, and out of touch with ordinary people. Macron's mentor, Alain Juppé, found himself in a similar situation 25 years ago. He too tried to tackle the pension system, but was forced to back down during a general strike. His government collapsed soon after.

Maltese Prime Minister Will Step Down

In 2017, investigative reporter Daphne Caruana Galizia was killed by a car bomb in Malta, a tiny island in the Mediterranean Sea and the smallest EU country. She had spent decades exposing corruption and nepotism among the political and business elite, incl. the prime minister of Malta and other top figures in the government. Her death sparked international condemnation, but it also signaled a new normal for journalists around the world. Their job is a dangerous one. They are often demonized and harassed, imprisoned and murdered. It now appears that Malta's Prime Minister, Joseph Muscat, and his staff were responsible for the assassination. His chief of staff, Keith Schembri, was arrested and is alleged to have been the instigator of the crime. He is accused of hiring three known criminals and paying them €150,000 to assassinate the journalist. However, he has since been released. Muscat and his senior leaders are denying wrongdoing, but Muscat is reportedly planning to step down. According to BBC, he has announced that he will resign as Labour Party leader effective Jan. 12 and as Prime Minister "in the days after." Protesters are demanding his immediate resignation. At this point this is an evolving story, and it is not clear what will happen next other than that Labour will attempt to cling to power.

The Labour Party came to power in 2013. Social Democrat Muscat was reelected in 2017 despite allegations of corruption. Using the recently published cache of "Panama Papers," Caruana Galizia reported at that time that Muscat's wife owned secret offshore companies in Panama and received payments from abroad. Malta is a known European hub for gambling and money laundering. It is infamous for its culture of collusion and impunity. One major source of income is the sale of Maltese passports for millionaires.

Finland Selects Youngest Prime Minister Ever

Sanna Marin, 34, has become the youngest prime minister in Finland ever. She is replacing Social Democrat Antti Rinne who resigned over his inept handling of a workers strike. Marin started her political career in 2012 when she was elected to the local council of Tampere. She became a member of Parliament in 2015. A left-leaning liberal and Social Democrat herself, Marin says that she has benefitted from "the welfare state," as some dismissively call it, throughout her life, especially during difficult times. It enabled her to have a safe childhood and get a good education. One of her priorities as prime minister is climate change. Finland wants to be carbon-neutral by 2035. – The current government coalition will remain unchanged. It consists of 5 partners: the Social Democrats, the Center Party, the Greens, the Left Alliance, and the Swedish People's Party of Finland. 4 of the 5 parties are headed by women, and 4 of the 5 are younger than 35. This represents the rise of a new generation of politicians in Scandinavia.

Upcoming Elections in United Kingdom

Great Britain will hold early elections on Dec. 12. The country is bitterly divided, but polls suggest that Prime Minister Boris Johnson is likely to win a 68-seat majority in Parliament. Brexit is of course front and center in the election campaign, but other factors also play a role. For years and decades, the conservative Tories pursued an unpopular policy of austerity. In recent months, however, Johnson has made new promises to ordinary people in the hope to win them over. It remains to be seen how gullible British voters are. The public spending will not last, of course. In the long term, the Conservative Party remains committed to "a small state" and "rampant individualism." Of course, Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has his own credibility issues. His Brexit policy has been muddled and indecisive. Some even say that he doesn't have one. As in the U.S., voters are facing a barrage of distortions and misinformation, making it difficult for them to distinguish facts from fiction, and truth from lies.

Hindu Nationalism on the Rise

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has taken a sharp turn to the right. Modi and his party now see India as "a Hindu nation" despite the fact that the constitution gives all people the right to practice their religion freely. Hindu nationalism is now ubiquitous, and the 200 million Muslims in the nation (14% of the population) are fearing the worst. They have become the enemy of the people, and their citizenship is being questioned. Hindu nationalists and supremacists are waging open war against the Muslim minority, killing them by the dozens. The latest attempt by the Indian government is a bill that establishes a citizenship test for Muslims. The legislation would make it easier to detain and deport any Muslim resident who cannot produce proof of citizenship, even if their families have lived in India for generations. Such people are now referred to as "migrants," meaning laws protect that "citizens" no longer apply to them. (Islam arrived in India hundreds of years ago, a fact that Hindu nationalists often ignore.) The Citizenship Amendment Bill would render many Muslims second-class citizens and stateless non-citizens. Indian Muslims are deeply unsettled, fearing the country's slow descent into a Hindu theocracy or fascist state... – Critics argue that the scapegoating of Muslims serves as a distraction from India's many pressing issues. The economy has slowed, and the environmental pollution is horrendous. This may be true, but it does not change the reality for those thousands and millions of Muslims for whom an enormous network of detention camps is currently being built.

NATO at 70

The NATO "summit" in London on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the alliance was a decidedly low-key affair. The reason – NATO may be in its worst crisis ever. A central point of NATO is Article 5, which stipulates that if any one NATO member is attacked the others will come to its defense. President Trump, however, refuses to affirm this most basic tenet and has blown up every NATO summit he ever visited. There have been reports (attributed to John Bolton) that indicate that if Trump is reelected in 2020, the U.S. may leave NATO. In the meantime, NATO member Turkey under Erdogan is drifting away from the alliance and into the Russian camp. French President Macron has said that NATO is without leadership and essentially "brain dead." He is advocating for "strategic autonomy" – i.e., an independent European armed force. Given the distrust and antagonism between Europe and the U.S., President Trump, who attended the London conference, left in a huff. It is unlikely that anything will change until after the November 2020 presidential elections in the U.S.

Russia Banned from 2020 Olympics

Russian athletes could once again be banned from the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, which will open July 24, and other sports events because of extensive state-sponsored doping. The compliance review committee of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has recommended a 4-year ban for Russia, which would also include the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar as well as other track-and-field, swimming, gymnastics, basketball, and boxing events. The committee concluded that Russia has removed hundreds of positive doping tests and fabricated different ones to conceal its extensive program, perhaps the largest in the history of sports. The Executive Committee of WADA will rule on

the recommendation at its next meeting on Dec. 9 in Paris. While the agency is expected to support the decision, the president of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Brusch, is opposed to a blanket ban on Russian athletes. It seems therefore likely that the IOC will once again allow Russia to send a team of clean competitors under the name "Olympic Athlete from Russia," but they would wear neutral uniforms. The Russian flag and national anthem would be banned. While this may seem an acceptable compromise to some, it is likely to be criticized as being too lenient by others. Many loud and important voices demand that all Russian athletes be fully banned to protect Olympic legacy and integrity. – **Update:** WADA's executive committee has agreed to the proposed 4-year ban. The Russian flag, anthem, and name cannot be used. Competing Russians will do so under the designation "Authorized Neutral Athlete." Russia is expected to appeal the decision at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland within 21 days.

Volcano Erupts in New Zealand

An island volcano off the coast of New Zealand erupted on Dec. 9. About 47 international tourists were on the island at the time. Dozens more were cruising the area in boats. Most were evacuated, but at least 8 are confirmed dead and many were critically burned. 8 additional persons are still missing and presumed dead. Privately owned White Island (also known by the indigenous Maori name Whakaari) is New Zealand's most active volcano and a popular tourist destination. The disaster raises the question why people were allowed to visit the island despite the danger and despite the fact that scientists had noted an uptick in volcanic "unrest" with substantial gas, steam, and mud bursts in recent weeks. The answer is that tourist visits drive the area's economy to such a degree that safety precautions have been a secondary consideration. That is now likely to change. Chatter that the volcano erupted "suddenly" and "unexpectedly" is meant to exculpate authorities, but eventually someone will be held liable for the reckless deaths and injuries.



Legal Fight over "Fearless Girl"

"Fearless Girl" is an iconic bronze statue created by American artist Kristen Visbal. Not surprisingly, replicas made by Visbal have popped up all over the globe, including in London, Melbourne, and Oslo. Visbal says, "Remember, I created her for the world." – However, the company that purchased the original, State Street Global Advisers, is calling the copies unauthorized trademark violations and is waging a fierce legal battle against them. It brought legal action against the sculptor in February 2019 and has now filed a lawsuit against Australian firm Maurice Blackburn that commissioned one of replicas and installed it in Melbourne's Federation Square. Visbal has begun a campaign on her own, which she calls "Free Fearless," in an effort to assert her rights to her creation. She denies that "Fearless Girl" was conceived, commissioned, and launched by State Street Global Advisers and that the company has exclusive control over the statue. – The Wall Street company has a long history of discriminating against women and in 2017 was forced to pay millions to settle a lawsuit against its female employees who earned less than male employees. In terms of gender equity, State Street Global Advisers has the worst record when it comes to women's rights, according to a 2019 report by Morningstar.

The World's Big Sleep Out

Sat., Dec. 7 is the World's Big Sleep Out. For one night, people will sleep in iconic places, their hometowns, or in their own backyards in solidarity with those who experience homelessness and displacement due to natural disasters, war, and climate change. Some 60 cities around the world are participating. The United Nations estimates that 1.1 billion people live in adequate housing and that 100 million have no housing at all. For the first time in history, the U.N. will host a summit on homelessness in New York next February.

To learn more, visit www.bigsleepout.com. There you will find instructions how to join the movement and have your own Big Sleep Out in your hometown or college campus. The next Big Sleep Out is December 2020.

A New Novel by Swedish Author Johannes Anyuru

Swedish author Johannes Anyuru, the son of a Ugandan and Muslim father and a Swedish mother, has published a new novel – “They Will Drown in Their Mothers’ Tears” (Two Lines Press 2019, 272 pp., list price \$22.95). Anyuru, 40, has published poetry, fiction, and play before, but the 2017 work is his literary breakthrough and his first novel that was translated into English. In this futuristic dystopia, white supremacists come to power in Sweden and start to round up Muslims in a 21st-century genocide. There are many turns and twists in this tale, some more believable than others, but ultimately the book ends on a positive note.

Britishisms 101

autumn – fall
biscuits – cookies
bloke – man
boot (of a car) – trunk
brolly – umbrella
coach – bus
chips – French fries
flat – apartment
football – soccer
frock – dress
holiday – vacation
jumper – sweater
lift – elevator
loo – toilet
lorry – truck
mate – friend
nappy – diaper
pants / knickers – underwear
perambulator – stroller
pudding – dessert
queue – line
rubber – eraser
rubbish – garbage
telly – television set
torch – flashlight
the tube – subway

CLIMATE CHANGE

“Climate Emergency” Is Word of the Year

Oxford Dictionaries has chosen “climate emergency” as the 2019 Word of the Year. The annual citation highlights words or expressions that reflect the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the year and have a lasting impact as a term of cultural significance. The word reflects a deliberate decision by some organizations and news agencies to use the “climate emergency” instead of “climate change,” to better convey the urgency of the situation. Oxford Dictionaries points out that issues relating to the climate played a dominant role in 2019. Other words on the shortlist included “climate denial,” “climate action,” “eco-anxiety,” “extinction,” and “flight shame.”

Climate Summit in Madrid, Spain

The international climate summit known as COP25 meets in Madrid, Spain from Dec. 2-13. House speaker Nancy Pelosi plans to attend part of the conference, along with other congressional Democrats. No Republican members of Congress will be in attendance, but the U.S. may send some low-level diplomats as observers since it is officially still a member of the Paris Climate Change Agreement. At the conference, U.N. General Secretary Antonio Guterres stressed that the world is close to a point of no return. He condemned our “addiction to coal” and sharply criticized what he called “a lack of response among governments, a lack of political will” to combat the climate emergency.

Michael Bloomberg Fights Climate Change

One of the participants of the Madrid conference on climate change was former New York mayor and presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg. “The reason I am here in Madrid is really pretty simple: I am here because no one from the White House is here.” Bloomberg is one of the few American politicians who views climate change as “the greatest existential threat facing humanity” and said that, if elected, his first act as president would be to rejoin the Paris climate agreement. He called President Trump “a climate denier” who “consistently sides with polluters” and promised to be a different leader.

NC’s Charlotte Fights Climate Change

Charlotte, North Carolina is on the forefront of combatting climate change and sea-level rise. The City of Charlotte and County of Mecklenburg have won national praise for demolishing 460 homes, apartment complexes, and other structures in flood zones and replaced them with grasslands. More voluntary buyouts are in the works. They also provide technical and financial assistance to homeowners and landlords looking to elevate their properties above flood level. The buyout program has so far cost \$64 million, but it has also saved some \$28 million in property damage and reduction in emergency rescues. Charlotte launched its innovative program as early as the 1990s. It has since become a model for other cities.

However, as catastrophic storms and floods are becoming the new norm in the U.S. and around the world, there is the open question whether even man’s best efforts will be enough to withstand the effects of climate change. Widening a flood plain by a few extra acres may not be sufficient to handle the devastating storms and floods of the future. City planners remain optimistic that they can engineer their way out of the climate emergency, but as experiences in Japan and elsewhere have shown that hope may be unrealistic. Even the most advanced systems are proving to be no match for ever-stronger weather extremes. It will not be possible to save all places. Evacuation may be the cheaper, better, and more sustainable option.

Venice Is under Water

The Italian lagoon city of Venice has always had issues with flooding. But in November, Venice was hit with its worst flood in over half a century, caused by a 6-foot tide that submersed St. Mark’s Square and other parts of the city. Damage was extensive. As the sea levels rise inexorably, the future of Venice is very much in jeopardy. Construction on Moses, a system of 78 underwater sea barriers, started in 2003, but it is plagued by corruption and cost overruns and remains unfinished. Even if someday it were to be completed, it would be obsolete by then. The system is only designed to hold back tides of 1.1 to 1.3 meters (about 4 feet), not 2 meters and more. – Coastal cities around the world are the first in line to face the effects of climate change. There is only so much that human engineering can accomplish, given time and cost constraints. Increasingly, some areas and entire cities may have to be abandoned.

Los Angeles Will Plant 90,000 Shade Trees

In this age of climate change, the issue of shade is drawing the attention from urban planners. Los Angeles is a city where the temperatures can easily reach triple digits, making walking or waiting for the bus a miserable experience. The city is now rushing to deploy shade structures to nearly 750 bus stops. It has also hired its first forestry officer (Rachel Malarich) and announced a goal of planting 90,000 shade trees by 2021. Wealthy Angelinos live on canopied streets (35% tree canopy on average) whereas poorer folks are exposed to the hot sun more often (10-12% tree canopy on average). Shade is not distributed in the city in an equitable manner. The street trees also provide additional benefits by absorbing carbon, cooling urban heat islands, and cleaning the air.

Verdi’s “Requiem” as a Warning against Climate Change

In March 2019, the Central Ohio Symphony delivered a phenomenal performance of Giuseppe Verdi’s “Requiem.” The concert review by local music critic Tom Wolber, published in the “Delaware Gazette,” suggested that “future generations may see the ‘Requiem’ in the context of climate change – a warning that we must change

our egregious ways” or face a day of reckoning. The Greek conductor of MusicAeterna, Teodor Currentzis, has taken this interpretation even further at a recent performance in New York. He used a film by avant-garde director Jonas Merkás (1922-2019) as background, projected on two large screens. According to the “New York Times” (11/23), “the film is a metaphoric reflection of the ecological and sectarian threats posed to the natural world. A montage shows shaky close-ups of flowers, parks, open fields, murky ponds, city streets, archival imagery of concentration camps and children suffering from famine, polluted waters, fires and floods.” “New York Times” music critic Anthony Tommasini did not care much for it and dismissed the film (for him, “the musical experience” was more important), but Currentzis’ approach has merit. It is indicative of the fact that there will be a time in the foreseeable future where *everything* will be viewed through the lens of climate change. Many people have already arrived at the point where they speak of “climate emergency” as a clear and present danger for humanity and the planet.



Is Greta Thunberg a Time Traveler?

A century-old black-and-white photograph has emerged that shows a girl with a striking resemblance to Swedish climate-change activist Greta Thunberg. Indeed, the two people look absolutely alike. As a result, some people have speculated – either seriously or facetiously – that Greta Thunberg may be a time traveler. Despite popular television shows about time lords who travel back and forth through time (e.g., “Dr. Who”), such a mode of traveling is not possible given our understanding of physics. However, if – hypothetically speaking – Greta Thunberg were a time traveler, should we not take her dire warnings seriously? Maybe she has returned from a distant future with useful knowledge to alert humans of impending gloom and doom unless they change their destructive ways? Anyway, time traveler or not, Greta Thunberg is currently on her way to Madrid for the next U.N. climate summit. She has just been called the “Person of the Year 2019” by TIME magazine.

Australia’s Koalas Threatened

Large and deadly brush fires in Australia have ravaged the habitat of koalas, which are a national symbol of the continent. Hundreds have died; others were rescued in a badly burned and dehydrated stage. Koalas are currently not endangered, but the population has significantly declined and could go extinct. The Australian Koala Foundation has calculated that there are only 80,000 of the marsupials left in the wild.

Citizens’ Climate Lobby (CCL)

On November 12, Citizens’ Climate Lobby members from all over the U.S., including from Ohio, were on Capitol Hill to get support for the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (HR 763) now in Congress. The EICDA would impose a fee on carbon with the revenue collected being distributed to households, not used by Congress. Marianne Gabel from the Delaware chapter and Sheila Fox of the Columbus chapter were voices for Ohio’s 12th District, talking with staff of Rep. Troy Balderson. Gabel also was in groups that were meeting with staffs of Sen. Sherrod Brown, Rep. Anthony Gonzalez (OH-16), and Bill Johnson (OH-6). CCL is in continuous communication with Congress to get bipartisan support for this climate action. – The local CCL group meets monthly in downtown Delaware. If interested in their activities, contact “Community Matters.”

HAPPY NEWS

Scott Warren Acquitted in Arizona

A humanitarian group called “No More Deaths” has been placing water, food, and clothes in the hot and unforgiving Arizona desert to help migrants survive who are trying to reach the U.S. Thousands of undocumented immigrants have died over the years trying to make the journey. The group is not engaged in human smuggling, but offers medical and other assistance when needed. Border Patrol officers and federal prosecutors, however, see it differently. They have monitored and harassed the group and poured out or destroyed water jugs left by the volunteers for the migrants. Prosecutors have put one of the volunteers, teacher Scott Warren, on trial. He could have faced years in prison for “harboring” migrants, a felony. The first trial ended in a deadlocked jury. When prosecutors attempted to convict him again, it took another jury less than 2 hours to acquit Warren. The Washington Post noted that “prosecutors were all but laughed out of court.” – Helping people in dire need is never a crime, but the Christian thing to do. The attempted criminalization of basic human kindness is a sick travesty that shows how warped and corrupt the criminal-justice system has become.

City of Asbestos Plans Name Change

Asbestos is a town of some 7,000 people in Canada’s Quebec province. The town’s most prominent landmark is a mile-wide crater where the mineral asbestos used to be mined until the operation shut down in 2012. It was the world’s largest asbestos mine. The City Council of Asbestos has now concluded that its name is an obstacle to further economic development. Businesses do not wish to be associated with the toxic name. Cancer-causing asbestos is today banned in over 60 countries. The city has invited residents to come up with a new, more inviting name. Hundreds have already replied, but not all submissions were supportive. It appears that some people are angry about the initiative. Change is hard, even if it is for the better for the community and for society.

Great Britain Reintroduces Beavers

Beavers are excellent hydro-engineers. Long before the Army Corps of Engineers existed, beavers built and maintained millions of dams and ponds, preventing more severe downstream floods. Even during droughts, beaver ponds retained water, creating fertile habitat for countless other fauna and flora species. Great Britain has now announced plans to reintroduce beavers to combat unprecedented floods that have inundated communities and farmland. Project manager Ben Eardley says, beavers “will help make our landscape more resilient to climate change and the extremes of weather it will bring.” In light of many catastrophic wildfires around the world in recent years, even in Nordic countries, such wetlands may also serve as an insurance against devastating blazes.



Maurice the Rooster Can Keep Crowing

Maurice the Rooster has become a cause celebre in France. A retired couple new to the area sued his owner, Corinne Fesseau, because the bird’s early-morning crowing offended their urban sensitivities. However, the judge in the coastal city of Rochefort, Julien Papineau, not only rejected the complaint, but fined the couple 1,000 euros in damages to Fesseau for reputational harm, plus court costs. – In densely populated Europe, court cases involving animal noises and smells from farms are not uncommon. People have also sued churches for ringing their bells at all hours of the day and night. In France, rural values are esteemed and defended. Judge Papineau emphasized that the rooster has a right to crow. “We’ve got to accept nature’s sounds.”