

# Community Matters

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

**February 2020**

**Vol. 5, no. 8**

**Send info, articles, questions & comments to  
[delawarecommunitymatters@gmail.com](mailto: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

### **Grand Opening at RNR Tire Express (2/1)**

RNR Tire Express at 150 S. Sandusky St. is celebrating its Grand Opening on Sat., Feb. 1 with prizes, giveaways, music & food (provided by KB Dawgs). Prizes are drawn at 2 pm; you must be present to claim.

### **Groundhog Day (2/2)**

Groundhog Day is celebrated annually in the U.S. and Canada on Feb. 2. There is of course no scientific evidence for the belief that if a groundhog (woodchuck, gopher) sees its shadow on this day, winter will persist for 6 more weeks.

### **Super Bowl LIV (2/2)**

The 54<sup>th</sup> Super Bowl will take place in Miami Gardens, Florida. The Kansas City Chiefs and the San Francisco 49ers are duking it out.

### **Iowa Caucuses (2/3)**

The biennial Iowa caucuses signal the start of the election season. New Hampshire is next. Super Tuesday is March 3 this year. The Ohio primaries will take place March 17.

### **Volunteer Open House at SourcePoint (2/3)**

SourcePoint at 800 Cheshire Rd. has an Open House for volunteers on Mon., Feb. 3 (4-5:30 pm). Come learn about the many volunteer opportunities that help support local seniors "thrive after fifty-five." Opportunities include Meals on Wheels drivers, medical transportation drivers, enrichment-center leaders, home-chore volunteers, fitness-center attendants, desk monitors, caregiver-relief companions & more. Enjoy light refreshments and take a tour. Experienced staff and volunteers will be available to answer questions. Visit [www.mysourcepoint.org](http://www.mysourcepoint.org) to learn more about SourcePoint.

### **State of the Union Address (2/4)**

President Donald J. Trump will deliver his 2020 State of the Union address on Tues., Feb. 4 (9 pm EST). He is expected to tout the economic accomplishments of his administration. Following his address, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan will deliver a 10-minute Democratic response.

### **Outdoor Sirens Testing (2/5)**

Delaware County tests its outdoor sirens at noon on the first Wednesday of each month. This is a planned, routine test, and there is no reason to be alarmed.

### **Poetry Reading at OWU (2/5)**

On Wed., Feb. 5 (4 pm), Molly McCully will read some of her work in the Bayley Room of Beeghly Library. McCully is an award-winning poet who teaches at Kenyon College. She has had cerebral palsy since birth. A forthcoming prose collection is "Places I've Taken My Body" (2020).

### **The Opioid Epidemic in Ohio (2/5)**

The co-editors of "Not Far from Me: Stories of Opioids and Ohio," Berkeley Franz & Dan Skinner, will discuss the opioid crisis in Ohio and engage attendees on Wed., Feb. 5 (7-8 pm) in the Delaware Main Library (Community Room), 84 E. Winter St. The Central Ohio Symphony will begin the evening with a drum circle. (The Symphony's executive director, Warren Hyer, contributed a chapter to the book.) The event is designed to help facilitate a community discussion to encourage critical, historically-informed dialogue around opioid use, with the aim of reducing stigma. Advanced registration is requested ([www.delawarelibrary.org](http://www.delawarelibrary.org)), but walk-ins are welcome.

### **Asbury Organ Recital (2/6)**

Asbury's First Thursday Noontime Organ Recital Series continues with a concert by Matthew Nadalin, Director of Music & Organist at St. Joseph Parish in Dover, Ohio. He will perform music by Howells, Peeters & Buxtehude on Thurs., Feb. 6 (12:15-12:45 pm) at Asbury UMC, 55 W. Lincoln Ave. Free & open to the public.

### **OWU Science Lecture: Bluebirding (2/6)**

OWU Science Lecture Series continues Thurs., Feb. 6 (4:10 pm) in SCSC Science Center 163 with a presentation by Dick Tuttle, local ornithologist. Over the past 50 years, he has raised more than 55,000 native birds from 10 different species. In this seminar, entitled "The Beaver Hypothesis: Bluebirding before the 17<sup>th</sup> Century," he will discuss how birds were able to find suitable cavities for nesting before humans began building bird boxes for them. Specifically, he will investigate the role of beavers as engineers of suitable nesting habitat, and describe the effects of early fur traders on populations of beavers and songbirds. He will conclude by linking all of these ideas to modern conservation efforts by arguing that sometimes to move forward you need to look backward. Free & open to the public.

### **Chamber of Commerce: Annual Dinner & Awards (2/6) – \$**

The Delaware Area Chamber of Commerce will have its 2020 Annual Dinner & Awards Night on Thurs., Feb. 6 (5-9 pm) at Hilton Columbus / Polaris at 8700 Lyra Dr. The reception & cash bar opens at 5 pm, dinner is served at 6:30 pm. Tickets are \$80 per person. – The

Chamber promotes "a favorable business perspective and climate" for its members. This premier event is obviously not for salt-of-the-earth people who earn the new minimum wage of \$8.70 per hour.

### **First Friday: "Love Is in the Air" (2/7)**

"Love Is in the Air" is the theme for First Friday on Feb. 7 (6-9 pm). At 6:30 pm, you may witness a previously selected couple getting married by Mayor Riggle inside Gather (53 N. Sandusky St.). Other couples can renew their vows at 7:30 pm, with Mayor Riggle officiating. In addition, romantic carriage rides await (\$15 per couple).

### **Democratic Debate (2/7)**

The next Democratic debate, hosted by ABC, will be held Fri., Feb. 7 (8 pm) in Manchester, New Hampshire. The thresholds for participation are the same as for the January debates in Des Moines, Iowa. However, after biting criticism that the Iowa stage was entirely white, a new pathway has been opened for minority candidates. Any candidate awarded at least one pledge delegate to the Democratic National Convention, as calculated by the Democratic Party, will be able to participate. Seven candidates have qualified for the debate: Biden, Buttigieg, Klobuchar, Sanders, Steyer, Warren, and Yang.

### **"Suffragette" (2/8)**

The League of Women Voters (LWV) is bringing to the Strand Theater (28 E. Winter St.) a special showing of "Suffragette" (2015), directed by Sarah Gavron and starring Carrie Mulligan & Meryl Streep. Come celebrate 100 years of women's right to vote in America on Sat., Feb. 8 (10 am). A follow-up discussion is optional. Tickets are \$10 and help support LWV's educational programs.

### **Chocolate Walk (2/8)**

The annual Chocolate Walk is Sat., Feb. 8 (12-6 pm). The self-guided tour starts at 20 E. Winter St. where participants receive a map & a goody bag. Each participating store will hand out a different treat. Tickets are \$20. Pre-purchase tickets are available at [www.mainstreetdelaware.org](http://www.mainstreetdelaware.org) or at The Greater Gouda at 12 N. Sandusky St. – **The event is sold out!**

### **Black History Month #1 (2/8)**

February is Black History Month. The first of 3 events organized by the Delaware African American Heritage Council (DAAHC) takes place on Sat., Feb. 8 (2-5 pm) at the Main Library (84 E. Winter St.) when Johnnie Jackson & Whitney Gherman will facilitate a conversation surrounding "Colorism, Anti-Black Racism, and White Supremacy."

### **Family Night at St. Mary (2/8)**

St. Mary Catholic Church will celebrate a Family Night on Sat., Feb. 8 (5:30 pm) at 66 E. William St. Special guest speaker will be Anna Mitchell, news director at Sacred Heart Catholic Radio in Cincinnati and producer & host of Son Rise Morning Show. [For more info, go to [bit.ly/stmaryfamilynight](http://bit.ly/stmaryfamilynight).]

### **OWU Trombone Recital (2/9)**

Tony Weikel, trombone, will give a guest recital on Sun., Feb. 9 (3:15 pm) in Jemison Auditorium inside Sanborn Hall, 23 Elizabeth St. Weikel is an adjunct instructor at several regional universities and professionally plays in several orchestras. Free & open to the public.

### **The Oscars (2/9)**

The 92<sup>nd</sup> Academy Awards Ceremony will air Sun., Feb. 9 (8 pm) on ABC (Channel 6). There are 9 picture nominees and 19 actors. The Oscars continue to be criticized for the fact that "white men" dominate in the movie industry.



### **Full Moon (2/9)**

How about looking up tonight instead of looking down? The full-moon spectacle is free & open to the public. For your convenience, no tickets or reservations are required.

### **Delaware Buckeyes Book Club (2/11)**

The Delaware Buckeyes Book Club will discuss the novel "Eleanor & Abel" by Annette Sanford on Tues., Feb. 11 (6:30-8 pm) at Taranto's Pizza, 1282 E. Powell Rd. in Lewis Center. The event is free, but dinner & beverages are on your own. To learn more, visit [www.delawarebuckeyes.org](http://www.delawarebuckeyes.org).

### **Black History Month #2 (2/12)**

Black History Month continues with a presentation by local students as they express the theme through visual, creative, and performing arts. As was the case last year, the event will take place at Willis Education Center, 74 W. William St. (6-8 pm).

### **Gypsy Moth Open House (2/12)**

The annual Open House on Gypsy Moth Treatment Program is Wed., Feb. 12 (6-8 pm) in Mingo Park, 500 E. Lincoln Ave. Aerial gypsy moth spraying occurs in late June. David Adkins tells visitors that the treatment is "not considered harmful to humans," but please note that gypsy-moth spraying remains controversial.

### **Mister Rogers' Neighborhood (2/12)**

The Delaware County District Library (DCDL) is celebrating Mr. George Rogers and his neighborhood on Wed., Feb. 12 (6:30 pm) in the Main Library's Community Room with inspiring tales, music & friends. The event is appropriate for all age levels, from toddlers through adults. The story time focuses on social & emotional development.

### **OWU Celebrates Darwin Day (2/13)**

Charles Darwin's "Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection" is one of the pillars of the entire discipline of biology. In honor of his birthday, there will be cupcakes and photos with "Darwin" on Thurs., Feb. 13 (3:30-4:30 pm) in the Atrium of OWU's SCSC Science Center. (International Darwin Day is actually on Feb. 12.) Sponsored by OWU's Zoology Dept. All are welcome.

### **High School Honor Band Festival (2/13)**

The High School Honor Band Festival on Thurs., Feb. 13 (7:30-9 pm) features the OWU Symphonic Wind Ensemble & Hayes High School Wind Ensemble, conducted by faculty member Richard Edwards & Andy Doherty in Gray Chapel inside University Hall, 61 S. Sandusky St. On the program are works by L. Bernstein (Candide Overture), J. Teixidor (Amparita Roca), J. B. Chance (Variations of a Korean Folk Song) & A. Márquez (Danzón No. 2). Free & open to the public. – The concert is part of a 3-day band boot camp (Feb. 13-15) for Ohio high school students. The grand festival finale is Sat., Feb. 15 (2 pm), also in Gray Chapel.

### **OWU Performs "Eurydice" (2/13)**

Sarah Ruhl's play "Eurydice" will be performed inside OWU's Chappellear Drama Center from Feb. 13-15 (8 pm) and Sun., Feb. 16 (2 pm). Directed by Bradford Sandler, the 2003 play tells the story of Orpheus and Eurydice from the woman's point of view and focuses on her choice to stay in the underworld or to return to earth. Tickets are \$10; \$5 for seniors, students, and OWU staff; and free for OWU students with a valid student ID.

### **Valentine's Day (2/14)**

The story behind Valentine's Day is murky. The Catholic Church recognizes several Valentines as martyrs and saints. According to one plausible legend, however, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. / C.E. Roman Emperor Claudius II. prohibited young men from getting married because they were needed as soldiers. Valentine, a Christian priest, defied him and continued to marry couples. He was executed for his transgression. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Pope Gelasius declared Feb. 14 Valentine's Day. Today, we associate the day with love.

### **Two Gardening Workshops at Stratford (2/15) – \$**

1. Stratford Ecological Center is offering an "Organic Gardening" workshop for adults on Sat., Feb. 15 (9-11 am). Learn simple organic gardening techniques that will have your neighbors wondering how your garden produce can look so great without using harmful pesticides & herbicides. From the soil to those pesky bugs, the workshop explores the basics of organic gardening. The cost is \$10 / person. Advance registration is required.

2. Following the first workshop, Delaware County Master Gardeners and Stratford staff will teach participants about native plants and how they benefit & sustain local wildlife on Sat., Feb. 15 (11:30 am – 1 pm). Participants will receive seed to add to or start their native plant collection. The cost is \$10 / person. Advance registration is required. Call 740-363-2548 to register. Stratford is located at 3083 Liberty Rd., south of Delaware.

#### **A New Drum Circle (2/16)**

A new community drum circle is in process of being formed. The group will meet on Sun., Feb. 16 (2 pm) in Hilborn Room at Mingo Park, 500 E. Lincoln Ave. The idea is to have fun. Chair are available, but bring a lawn chair for extra comfort. Local resident JoAnna Decker is spearheading the initiative, but the group would welcome a dynamic volunteer to coordinate activities.

#### **Free Movie at the Strand Theatre (2/17)**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Free Movie Event at the Strand Theatre (28 E. Winter St.) features "Sonic the Hedgehog" on Mon., Feb. 17 (11 am). Kids must be accompanied by an adult. Seating is limited, so please RSVP by Feb. 12.

#### **Monti Washington at OWU (2/17)**

As part of Black History Month, Monti Washington will come to the OWU campus (HWCC Campus Center, Benes B) on Mon., Feb. 17 (8 pm). Washington is an actor, author, and motivational speaker. His interactive presentation shares his inspiring journey from the streets to the stage. Free & open to the public.

#### **Voter Registration Deadline (2/18)**

Voter Registration deadline is Tues., Feb. 18 (9 pm). Ohio's Primary Election is Tues., March 17. You are eligible to vote if you are a citizen of the U.S.; if are at least 18 years old on the day of the General Election on Nov. 3; if you will be a resident of Ohio for at least 30 days immediately before the Nov. 3 election; if you have not been incarcerated for a felony conviction; if you have not been declared incompetent for voting purposes by a probate court; and if you not been permanently disenfranchised for violations of election laws. For more info, visit [www.delawareboe.org](http://www.delawareboe.org).

#### **Faculty Recital at OWU (2/18)**

Jeremy Smith, trombone, and Liguang Zhao, piano, will give a faculty recital on Tues., Feb. 18 (8 pm) in the Jemison Auditorium inside Sanborn Hall, 23 Elizabeth St. Free & open to the public.

#### **Historical Society Presentation (2/19)**

Delaware County Historical Society continues its monthly series of presentations with a lecture by Dr. Ric S. Sheffield on Wed., Feb. 19 (7 pm) at The Barn at Stratford, 2690 Stratford Rd. He will speak on "Hidden Communities: African-Americans in Ohio." Sheffield teaches African Studies, Legal Studies & Sociology at Kenyon College. Free & open to the public, but donations are accepted.

#### **Delaware Got Talent (2/19)**

The Delaware County District Library (DCDL) is hosting its 3<sup>rd</sup> Delaware's Talent Show on Wed., Feb. 19 (6:30-7:30 pm) in the Community Room. Talented students, adults, and families are invited to make music, sing, dance, juggle, etc.

#### **One People Meets (2/20)**

One People meets at First Presbyterian Church at 73 W. Winter St. on Thurs., Feb. 20 (7 pm), a week later than normal. Please use the rear entrance. One People is a local group dedicated to bridging the ethnic divides within the community.

#### **Middle Grade Book Club Meets (2/22)**

Beanbag Books at 25 W. Winter St. (formerly Fundamentals) has started a new Middle Grade Book Club for teenagers. The selection for Sat., Jan. 18 was Jennifer Nielsen's "Words on Fire." The title selected for the next meeting on Sat., Feb. 22 (2 pm) is "The Hunger Games" by Suzanne Collins.



#### **Arena Fair Theatre Celebrates Mardi Gras (2/22) – \$**

Arena Fair Theatre invites you to a Mardi Gras Masquerade Gala at The Barn at Stratford (3690 Stratford Rd.) on Sat., Feb. 22 (6:30-9:30 pm). The unforgettable evening includes a dinner, entertainment, a live auction & a cash bar. Don your best Mardi Gras attire and mask! Tickets for the fundraiser are \$40 (single), \$70 (couple), and \$300 (table of 8). More info at [www.arenafair.com](http://www.arenafair.com).

#### **Faculty Exhibition at Ross Art Museum (2/25 – 4/5)**

This year's annual exhibition of works by OWU's fine-arts faculty will be Feb. 25 through Apr. 5. The show features new works in clay, metal, painting & drawing, fabric, photography, printmaking, sculpture & graphic design by Kristina Bogdanov, David Bugay, Cynthia Cetlin, Frank Hobbs, James Krehbiel, Jeffrey Nilan & Jonathan Quick. A public reception is scheduled for Thurs., Feb. 27 (5 pm). During the school year the handicap-accessible museum is open daily except Mon. and Sat.; admission is always free.

#### **Hot to Spot Fake News (2/25)**

The Delaware County District Library (DCDL) is inviting adult residents to learn about techniques to spot and evaluate information that is false and misleading. The event will be held Tues., Feb. 25 (6-7 pm) in the Community Room of the Main Library. Free & open to the public.

#### **MTSO Lecture on Climate Change (2/25)**

Rabbi Julia Watts Belser, Ph.D., from Georgetown Univ. will deliver a lecture entitled "Reading Noah's Ark in the Age of Climate Change: Jewish Stories on Gender, Disability, and the Politics of Survival" on Tues., Feb. 25 (7 pm) in the Alford Centrum at MTSO, 3081 Columbus Pike (U.S. 23 S). Free & open to the public.

#### **OWU Science Lecture (2/27)**

Dr. Ram Lalgudi from Airable Research Lab will give a lecture entitled "Soy-Based Consumer and Industrial Products" on Thurs., Feb. 27 (4:10 pm) in OWU's SCSC Science Center #163. Soybeans play a significant role in the development of innovative green and sustainable industrial and consumer products. You will hear how newer soy-based materials are helping to address consumer concerns, incl. the removal of bisphenol-A from food packaging, the removal of toxic phthalates from children's toys & the use of sustainable materials in building. To learn more, visit [www.airableresearchlab.com](http://www.airableresearchlab.com). Free & open to the public.

#### **Climate-Crisis Summit (2/29)**

The Regional Ohio Action for Resilience (ROAR), formerly called the Central Ohio Communities Project, has organized a climate-crisis summit on Sat., Feb. 29 (9 am – 4 pm) at Stratford Ecological Center, 3083 Liberty Rd. The purpose is to spark a more cohesive climate-crisis agenda for the region and to commit to local projects of significance. Representatives from various groups will be present. The keynote speaker is Ryan Mooney-Bullock, Director of Green Umbrella (Cincinnati). Local resident Terry Hermsen from Otterbein Univ. is spearheading the initiative.

#### **Black History Month #3 (2/29)**

Black History Month concludes with a "Soul Food Soiree" on Sat., Feb. 29 (1-4 pm) at the Food Truck Depot, 190 E. Central Ave. Vendors of African-American food include black-owned Gumbo's, What the French Toast, Jimmie G's BBQ & Omar's Caribbean Cuisine along with music, games & prizes. The event is free, but you are on your own for food.

### **Central Ohio Symphony Performs (3/1) – \$**

The Central Ohio Symphony will perform its 3<sup>rd</sup> concert of the season on Sun., March 1 (3 pm) in Gray Chapel inside University Hall on the OWU campus, 61 S. Sandusky St. On the program are 4 works: "Festive Overture" by William Grant Still, the "Sinfonia Concertante" by Mozart (with two soloists), "Capriccio Espagnol" by Rimsky-Korsakov & "Roman Festivals" by Respighi. General admission is \$25, but seniors pay \$20, students \$6, and little children \$4. For more info and tickets, visit [www.centralohiosymphony.org](http://www.centralohiosymphony.org) or stop by the Symphony's office at 24 E. Winter St. during regular business hours.

### **Writer Ben Lerner at OWU (3/3)**

Novelist Ben Lerner will read from his work on Tues., March 3 (4:10 pm) in Merrick Hall 301 on the OWU campus. His latest novel, "Topeka School," is one of the best books in 2019. His presentation is OWU's 2020 Carpenter Lecture. Free & open to the public.

### **Arnold Sports Festival (3/5-8)**

The 2020 "Arnold" will be held March 5-8 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center and Ohio Expo Center. Now in its 32<sup>nd</sup> year, the event includes a Kids & Teens Expo. Some 200,000 fans and 22,000 athletes are expected. Visit [www.arnoldsportsfestival.com](http://www.arnoldsportsfestival.com) for more info.

### **Noontime Organ Recital (3/5)**

Michael D. Schreffler will be the soloist in Asbury's First Thursday Noontime Organ Recital Series on Thurs., March 5 (12:15-12:45 pm). Asbury UMC is located at 55 W. Lincoln Ave. Free & open to the public.

### **Mother / Son Super Hero Party (3/13) – \$**

This year's Mother / Son Super Hero Party is scheduled for Fri., March 13 (6:30-8:30 pm) at Mingo Park, 500 E. Lincoln Ave. The cost is \$25 per pair, \$10 for each additional child. Kids age 3-17 can enjoy inflatables, an obstacle course, backyard games, costume characters, dancing, ice cream & more. Tickets are available online or at the YMCA's Welcome Desk, 1121 S. Houk Rd.

### **Habitat for Humanity Fundraiser (3/17) – \$**

Habitat for Humanity will have its 18<sup>th</sup> annual "Soups for Shelter" dinner & fundraiser on Tues., March 17 (4:30-7:30 pm) at St. Mary Commons, 66 E. William St. The cost of \$15 includes a meal, dessert & bowl. Kids 10 & under are free.

### **"400: An African Epic" (3/17)**

OWU's Music Dept. presents a guest concert featuring Mark Lomax, percussion, on Tues., March 17 (8 pm) in Gray Chapel inside University Hall on the OWU campus, 61 S. Sandusky St. Mark Lomax II, Ph.D., is a Columbus-based drummer and composer. "400: An African Epic" was released in 2019 on the occasion of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the introduction of slavery in America. The entire album collection runs more than 8 hours, but the concert will be limited to about 60 minutes. Free & open to the public.

### **Ohio Democratic Party Legacy Dinner (3/15) – \$**

The 2020 Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) Legacy Dinner will be held Sun., March 15 in the Battelle Grand Ballroom of the Greater Columbus Convention Center. The confirmed keynote speaker is Congressman Joe Kennedy III from Massachusetts. Individual tickets are \$250 per seat.

### **Corrections:**

*Photographer and painter Austin Tolliver had a solo show of his work ("Mortality") at Gather on Jan. 17. He is not the Nashville-based artist that the information we received alluded to (@austintolliver), but an edgy 17-year-old self-schooled Delaware resident. Most of the displayed works were large photographs, but there were also a number of original and intriguing art works. Tolliver has also T-shirts for sale that he designed (@suburbvnxutsider).*



### **A Place of Warmth**

"A Place of Warmth" is now in its 5<sup>th</sup> season even though its founder, the Rev. Jon Peterson, passed away earlier this year. Zion Church of Christ at 51 W. Central Ave. offers homeless men a place to spend the night any time the temperature is predicted to drop to 20 degrees Fahrenheit or below. In December, this was the case several times. The center admits guests between the hours of 8 pm and 10 pm. A police officer is present to ensure everyone's safety. – Volunteers and donations are welcome to keep the project going.



### **Missing: Clyde Britton**

The Delaware Police Department continues to investigate the disappearance of Clyde Britton, 59, of Delaware. The African-American man was last seen in the area of his Spring Street apartment on Jan. 3. He did not have access to an automobile and is believed to have left the area on foot. Britton did not show up for his work shift and did not call his place of employment regarding an absence on the following Monday, which was uncharacteristic for him. Officers have searched several areas of the city – on foot, utilizing specialized K9s, and a drone. Britton is 5'11", slender, and weighs 155 lbs. According to some sources, he may be disoriented. Anyone with information regarding his whereabouts should be asked to contact Delaware Police at 740.203.1112 or [policetipline@delawareohio.net](mailto:policetipline@delawareohio.net). – Police Chief Pijanowski has confirmed that Britton is still missing.

### **"State of the City 2019"**

A new video has been placed on the City of Delaware's website ([www.delawareohio.net](http://www.delawareohio.net)), "State of the City 2019." 17 minutes in length and narrated by Lee Yoakum, it introduces Delaware's leadership, highlights several of the city's accomplishments in 2019, and looks forward to projects to be wrapped up in 2020 and beyond. It is noteworthy that it not only praises Delaware as "a leading place to do business"; it also emphasizes the need for "housing options for everyone" and green spaces. The video acknowledges that Delaware was the birthplace of both Rutherford B. Hayes and African-American educator E. W. B. Curry. Delaware honored its sons in 2019 with respectful ceremonies. Of course the video is lopsided in the sense that it only punctuates the positive. Some folks may criticize the absence of certain signature features (e.g., OWU, the Symphony, and the airport). Regardless, the short film is informative and balanced and worth watching by all who care about the city.

### **The City of Delaware in February**

City Council meets Mon., Feb. 10 and 24 (7 pm). The Feb. 10 meeting will be at 6 pm, followed by a joint meeting with Delaware City Schools at Willis Education Center at 7 pm. In addition, there is a strategic work session on Mon., Feb. 3 (6:30 pm), dedicated to discussing the City's priorities for 2020. – Meetings of boards, committees & commissions include the Public Works / Utilities Committee (Tues., Feb. 4, 6 pm), Civil Service Commission (Wed., Feb. 5, 3:30 pm), Planning Commission (Wed., Feb. 5, 6:30 pm), Finance Committee (Tues., Feb. 11, 4:30 pm), Shade Tree Commission (Tues., Feb. 25, 6:30 pm), and Historic Preservation Commission (Wed., Feb. 26, 6:30 pm). Meetings are typically held inside City Hall (2<sup>nd</sup> floor), 1 S. Sandusky St. The Board of Zoning Appeals (Feb. 12) and the Parking & Safety Committee (Feb. 17) were cancelled due to lack of agenda items. It is possible for additional meetings to be cancelled, so always check the City's

website ([www.delawareohio.net](http://www.delawareohio.net)) for updates. It is also possible for meetings to be added.

### **Finance Director Dean Stelzer Retires**

After a long career in public service, Delaware's Finance Director Dean Stelzer retired effective Jan. 31. At the Jan. 27 meeting of City Council, a proclamation was read on the occasion. Mayor Riggle, City Manager Homan, and council members thanked Stelzer for his distinguished service. Stelzer himself stated that, when done well, "government can be effective" and provide services of value for residents and citizens. (Conservatives rarely admit that government action is ever justified, which makes this a noteworthy statement.) – Stelzer's successor is Justin Nahvi. The two have been working together to assure a smooth transition.

### **11<sup>th</sup> Citizen's Academy**

The 2020 Citizen's Academy begins Feb. 13 and ends May 21. A graduation ceremony is planned for June 8. The free program allows up to 20 participants a look behind the curtains of the various city departments, incl. Police, Fire, Public Works, Public Utilities, Parks, and more. With one exception, the 9 sessions are held Thursday evenings from 6-8 pm. Registration closes Feb. 7 (5 pm). For details and registration information, go to [www.delawareohio.net](http://www.delawareohio.net). Under "City Hall," you will find the necessary links.

### **YMCA Offers Discount for Delawarians**

The local YMCA has now made it clear that "anyone who lives and/or works in the City of Delaware gets 20% off monthly rates." The statement is on the YMCA's website. In the past, residents had to ask for it, and many were unaware. – However, please note that the discount applies for the (more expensive) monthly rates only, not for the annual rates. Customers also need to consider the \$25 "join fee" and the taxes that apply. A break-down of the various categories can be found on the YMCA's website.

### **U.S. 23 Corridor Study**

On Jan. 6 City Council discussed the U.S. 23 Corridor, prompted by a lengthy study produced by MKSK Studios, an economic development and urban planning group. Chris Hermann from MKSK was the main presenter and speaker. He was introduced by Bob Lamb, Delaware County's Economic Development Director, and flanked by Ryan Rivers, Chair of the Orange Township Board of Trustees and Chair of One Delaware (formerly Delaware NOW), a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit behind which the Building Industry Association (BIA) of Central Ohio hides. Members of One Delaware's executive group include Ron Sabatino, Skip Weiler, other big names in the building industry, and their attorney, Steven Cuckler, who is also the new Chair of the Delaware County Republican Party.

The study, which cost about \$100,000, can be found on Delaware website (City Council, 1/6/20). It suggests 5 broad strategies, 3 area plans, and 5 action steps. The ultimate goal is to fully "develop" the U.S. 23 Corridor not only between Delaware and Franklin County, but also north of Delaware in Troy Township. According to the study, there is opportunity for additional commercial "investment" because "only" 67% of the land is currently developed. To attract new developers, builders, and companies, the study points out the need for a common vision, a single direction, and the streamlining and simplification of local zoning ordinances. For the industry, home rule is an impediment to sustaining the economic momentum. To give readers a taste of the mindset behind the study, even rivers and reservoirs are portrayed as "constraints to growth" rather than unique assets worthy of celebration and preservation. Not coincidentally, the word "density" was mentioned numerous times during the discussion. Higher density means more profit, but it may not be what local communities want and need.

A major flaw of the study is the fact that it fails to address specific land uses, incl. the key issue of attainable housing. Where will the workers for the proposed companies and factories live? They cannot afford residences that cost \$300,000 and up and may not be able to shop in the retail stores that will eventually spring up along U.S. 23. Most companies and factories will not consider the U.S. 23 Corridor unless there is a guarantee that the available workforce is adequate. It seems developers and builders have little interest in the granular details of balanced growth.

Something else was completely ignored during the presentation and the ensuing discussion. The Columbus Dispatch reported on Jan. 7 that Central Ohio is "a hotbed" for drug operations with so many interstates and state routes in the area. More growth and development will inevitably bring more lawbreaking to the U.S. 23 Corridor, incl. drug deliveries, criminal gangs, and human trafficking. For various reasons (incl. the conducive infrastructure, number of truck stops, lack of economic opportunities, and lax enforcement), Ohio is among the nation's most active places for human trafficking. Every workshop on human trafficking points that out that sad statistic. There are already a number of suspected "massage parlors" along the corridor in question.

Lastly, Councilwoman Lisa Keller – quite correctly – raised a few additional uncomfortable questions. Who or what is One Delaware (formerly Delaware NOW)? It has acted as a political lobby group and political action committee (PAC) in the past, even though it is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit group. Where does its dark money come from? Why are its quarterly meetings private? Why have the residents of Berlin Township, Orange Township, and Liberty Township not been consulted about the corridor study? And how is it possible that meetings where all 3 Orange Township trustees were present for deliberations were closed to the uninvited public? There are clearly a number of legal issues at stake that may be in violation of Ohio's Ethics Commission.

Orange Township trustee chair and One Delaware chair Ryan Rivers in particular is playing a key role here. He seems ambitious and hungry for power, according to the Delaware Gazette (1/7). His webpage says, "Ryan is currently serving his first term as Orange Township Trustee and President of the Delaware County Township Association [DCTA]. He has been a business owner since 2010, and [is] a current member of the Delaware Chamber of Commerce. Ryan has developed many partnerships with local organizations and businesses." He is, of course, also a Central Committee member of the Delaware County Republican Party. His address is listed at 2564 Bold Venture Dr. in Lewis Center. But what exactly is his motivation? Is he hoping to enrich himself personally through land deals? Or is he part of a larger cabal, as his political and economic connections suggest? Orange Township residents should watch him closely.

It is fine to study an issue in an objective and unbiased manner. More information is always better than less. In this case, however, the process has been messy, murky, and dubious. And if the process is flawed, the outcome is likely to be flawed as well.

### **Orange Township Is the "Epicenter"**

Orange Township, in the words of Trustee Chairman Ryan Rivers, is "the epicenter" of a rushed scheme to develop the US 23 Corridor, as envisioned by the above-described plan. Orange Township has now "agreed to partner" with the Delaware County Finance Authority (DCFA) to assist with the development of the township's portion of the 23 Corridor. According to press reports, Orange Township voted to pay DCFA \$50,000 for consulting and "zoning assistance." What really happened, however, amounts to a brutal power grab orchestrated by Ryan Rivers. He sidelined Trustee Debbie Taranto, phased out the township's solicitor (Michael McCarthy), and fired yearslong administrator Lee Bodnar. Rivers, the BIA, and the Delaware County GOP are now in total control of the situation after local residents have been silenced and local laws overturned. Their goal is a one-stop commercial zoning process that will ensure quick approval of projects without much public input. Several articles in the Delaware Gazette and the Columbus Dispatch have described the sequence of events. Some unpleasant scenes can also be seen on video. – Could something like this happen in the City of Delaware? The BIA has tried for years to usurp local ordinances and to implant industry-friendly individuals, and they have partially succeeded. However, as long as City Council members such as Lisa Keller remain vigilant and do their due diligence, the BIA is unlikely to make more headway. In addition, at a recent meeting of City Council Mayor Carolyn Riggle stated that Delaware has a full staff of professional planning and development experts and that therefore there is no need to hand over control to the Delaware County Finance Authority. However, make no mistake. At the next round of elections in 2022, the BIA will try again to worm its way into City Hall.

## **BIA Cancels 2020 Parade of Homes**

The Building Industry Association (BIA) of Central Ohio has cancelled the 2020 BIA Parade of Homes, scheduled to be held at Beulah Park Living in Grove City. The last time Central Ohio cancelled a parade was in 1973. There are several reasons for this change of plans. Construction spending is down in the U.S., the first annual decline since 2011, and there is much uncertainty and anxiety about the economy. However, the primary factor seems to be the growing discrepancy between the million-dollar homes showcased at the annual parades and what buyers are interested in and can afford. Only 3 of the 14 homes at last year's Evans Farm parade have sold. For most people, homes between \$800,000 and \$1.2 million remain a pipe dream. The BIA is aware that it has lost touch with ordinary people and that the parade has grown "far beyond the reach of most buyers." It will develop a new format. Future BIA parades are likely to have multiple price points and multiple locations, as is the case in other communities.

## **Delaware Women's March**

The 4<sup>th</sup> national and international Women's March took place Jan. 18. This year's focus was on women's bodies & rights, immigration, and climate change. Delaware too held such a non-partisan march. Despite bad winter weather, scores of people showed up at the Delaware County Court on N. Union St. to listen to speeches by various women candidates for political office. People from all age groups were in attendance as well as a large contingent of male allies. Among the speakers were Crystal Lett, Alaina Shearer, and Rachael Morocco. A representative from the League of Women Voters (LWV), Mindy Hedges, also spoke on behalf of the right of women to vote and to have a seat at the table. Some speakers noted that to this day women are underrepresented in the political arena. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) has yet to pass on the national level. Domestic violence and gun violence were also mentioned. Due to the cold winter rain, the march up and down Sandusky St. to William St. was an abbreviated one. Here are some of the slogans people carried and/or chanted during the march: "Bridges, not walls." – "Love, not hate, makes America great." – "Women's rights are human rights." – "Girls just want to have fun(amental rights)." – "We will not be silenced." – "When they attack, we fight back." – "Power to the people." – "The people united will never be divided."

## **Delaware City School Board Elects New President**

At its Jan. 6 organizational meeting, the Delaware City School Board of Education elected Matt Weller as its new president; Francis O'Flaherty was elected Vice President. Weller thanked outgoing board president Jayna McDaniel-Browning for her leadership in 2019; she remains a board member. – The Board of Education is comprised of 5 elected members and an appointed student member. It approves all personnel, financial, and policy decisions. It normally meets Mondays at 6 pm at Willis Education Center, 74 W. William St. The meeting dates are posted on the website of Delaware City Schools.



## **Delaware County District Library**

The 7-member Board of Trustees is the governing body of the Delaware County District Library. The board sets policy, hires & supervises the director & fiscal officer, approves the budget and financial practices, and creates the library's strategic plans. 4 board members are appointed by the County Commissioners while the other 3 seats come from Court of Common Pleas appointments. Current members are Michael Butler (President), Holly Quaine (Vice President), Ceena Baker (Secretary), Nickolas K. McCoy, Neil Neidhardt, Brenda Eldridge & Scott Tiede. The board normally meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 5 pm. The meetings, with rotating locations, are open to the public.

The latest addition to the board is Pastor M. Scott Tiede from Delaware Bible Church. He was recently appointed by the judges of the Court of Common Pleas of Delaware County. His 7-year term began Jan. 1. He is no doubt a fine father, engineer, and pastor. However, Delaware Bible Church is not known to be a progressive

church. Its website emphasizes that the congregation believes that the Bible is inerrant, infallible, and must be read literally. The website also contains, under "What We Believe," the following doctrinal statement: *"XVIII. Homosexuality and Same-Sex Marriage  
We believe that sexual union was established exclusively within the context of a male-female relationship and that sexual union is to be entered into only within the context of marriage between a male and female. Homosexual activity is condemned in the Scriptures. It is described as degrading and as an indecent act. Scripture further teaches that one who persists in this practice will suffer grave consequences. 1 Corinthians 6:9 & 10 also teach that one can turn away from this practice; therefore, we reject, as non-biblical, the teaching that homosexuality is an acceptable lifestyle and that it is the result of one's genetic makeup."*

It is impossible to believe that Pastor Scott Tiede's appointment by politically conservative judges of Delaware County is unrelated to last year's uproar about a planned "Drag 101" library program that ended up being canceled. Supposedly the DCDL provides "an inviting environment" that encourages "free inquiry" and "discovery," as stated in the library's Mission and Vision Statements. To be sure, it makes sense for boards of trustees to be balanced and include different perspectives. However, the addition of Pastor Tiede begs the question to what extent the library's stated tenets are now at risk. His very presence is viewed by some as an attempt to create a hostile environment for people on the LGBTQ+ spectrum and to restrict free inquiry. That would be antithetical to the educational mission of any library. Community Matters very much hopes that DCDL will remain a place where everyone is equally welcome, equally valued, and equally served.

## **Great Decisions 2020**

Great Decisions 2020 will once again be held at William Street UMC at 28 W. William St. every Friday from 12-1 pm from Feb. 14 through April 3. The speaker series is free & open to the public. Coffee & tea are provided. The program is below. More detailed flyers are available at the Public Library.

- Feb. 14: Erinn Nicley, The Northern Triangle – El Salvador, Guatemala & Honduras
- Feb. 21: David Staley, Artificial Intelligence & Data
- Feb. 28: Blake Michael, Red Sea Security
- Mar. 6: Carol O'Brien & Christy Utley, Labor Trafficking
- Mar. 13: Sean Kay, Climate Change & the Global Order
- Mar. 20: Irfan Nooruddin, India & Pakistan
- Mar. 27: Ji Young Choi, China's Road into Latin America
- Apr. 3: Jim Franklin, The Philippines & the U.S.

## **Call for 2D and 3D Artwork Created by Seniors**

Entries are being accepted for the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Senior Showcase, a countywide juried art exhibit at the Arts Castle in May and June of this year. Individuals age 55 and older are encouraged to submit their work by March 6 (5 pm) at the Arts Castle, 190 W. Winter St. The categories are: 2D (computer, drawing, mixed media, painting & photography) and 3D (ceramics, fiber, metal, glass, wood, stone, jewelry & sculpture). Cash prizes will be awarded in various categories. Winners will be announced at the artists' reception on Sat., May 2 at the Arts Castle. Their work will be displayed from May 3 through June 21 at the Arts Castle, then at the Delaware County District Library (Orange Branch) and at Willow Brook at Delaware Run. They are the 3 co-sponsors of the event. For guidelines, pick up a submission packet at the Arts Castle, Gallery 22, at any library branch, or Willow Brook at Delaware Run or go to [www.artscastle.org/seniorshowcase](http://www.artscastle.org/seniorshowcase). For queries, contact [seniorshowcase@artscastle.org](mailto:seniorshowcase@artscastle.org).

## **Symphony Receives NEA Grant**

The Central Ohio Symphony has received a Challenge America grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to support its "Building CommUNITY." The project will focus on the strengths of an inclusive community, culminating in the final concert of the 41<sup>st</sup> season on Sat., April 25 (7:30 pm). The concert will feature George Walker's "Sinfonia for Orchestra No. 1," Arturo Márquez' "Trumpet Concerto" (with Pachó Flores, soloist), and Peter Boyer's dramatic "Ellis Island: The Dream of America," with actors and video. The "Building CommUNITY" project has also received a

PNC Arts Alive! Grant from the PNC Foundation. More info about the program and the concert will become available in the coming weeks. The Symphony's website is [www.centralohiosymphony.org](http://www.centralohiosymphony.org).

### **There Is So Much More on E. Winter St.**

There is a sign on N. Sandusky St. that says, "There is so much more on West Winter Street" – books, flowers, coffee, vinyl records, draft beer, musical instruments, health items, and so on. The shops are well-known and well-frequented.

What many people don't know is that there is also "so much more on East Winter Street," across the Veteran's Bridge on the other side of the Olentangy River. There are a number of stores that most Delawarians have probably never frequented. Here is a list of them:

Delaware Pet Grooming (121 E. Winter)  
Beer Cooler Drive-Thru (131 E. Winter)  
Redman Lodge – Bar & Restaurant (137 E. Winter)  
Safeway Electric Co. (141 E. Winter)  
Blue Awning Collections – Antiques (147 E. Winter)  
The Modern Maid – Cleaning company (165 E. Winter)

The former Del-Kai Dojo martial-arts place at 167 E. Winter is currently vacant.

### **Alpha Group Holds Casino Night Fundraiser**

The nonprofit Alpha Group is holding a "glitz & gold" Casino Night fundraiser at the Hilton Columbus (Polaris), 8700 Lyra Dr., on Feb. 21 (6-10 pm). The event includes hors d'oeuvres & dessert, casino games, jeopardy, music, prizes, and more. Tickets are \$50/single, \$90/double. Prices go up after Feb. 17. The Alpha Group at 1000 Alpha Dr. in Delaware helps people with disabilities succeed. To register, go to [www.alphagroup.net](http://www.alphagroup.net).

### **Liberty Casting on OSHA's List of "Severe Violators"**

The Columbus Dispatch reported on Jan. 12 that after a deadly accident in 2018 Liberty Casting on Stratford Rd. was placed on the "Severe Violators Enforcement Program" (SVEP) list of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). About 650 companies nationwide are currently on this "naughty" list, according to reporter Dean Narciso. The legislation was enacted in 2010 to target "recalcitrant employers who demonstrate indifference to the health and safety of their employees through willful, repeated, or failure-to-abate violations." Ramifications for employers include mandatory follow-up inspections. Removal from the program is possible after a 3-year probation period. – Liberty Casting's record and reputation in the area of toxic air emissions is equally egregious. However, this has never stopped local powers that be from calling Liberty Casting "a good employer" and even giving it an award. The company is situated within municipal limits, in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, and currently employs about 250.

The Dispatch article notes that the SVEP lists 18 severe violators just within the quarter of the state that includes Columbus. Why Ohio's disproportionate representation on the list? Well, it is certainly due in part to the manufacturing history of the state, but in part it is also due to the prevailing laissez-faire attitude in industry-friendly Ohio. For example, the fracking industry in the eastern portion of the state has generated a lot of worksite injuries and fatalities.



### **Workers at Quality Carriers on Strike**

Workers at Quality Carriers (1200 S. Houk) went on strike early in January. The Teamsters Union Local 413 protested unfair labor practices and mandatory 12-hour work days and 7-day weeks for truck drivers. It seems, however, that the strike was settled and/or withdrawn by Jan. 24. There was zero local press coverage in Delaware. – Quality Carriers (formerly Lloyd Transportation) employs 30 to 40 drivers in Delaware. A similar strike seems to have taken place at a QC facility in Columbus. Quality Carriers is a national company that specializes in the transportation of hazardous chemicals, incl. latex, resins, caustics, hydrogen peroxide, fertilizer, oils & fluids, acids, alcohols, and more.

### **Gypsy Moth Spraying in Delaware**

Aerial spraying against gypsy moth is a typical event in June, but the practice remains controversial. The Ohio Dept. of Agriculture claims the substance used against the moths is not harmful to humans. However, the manufacturer warns: "Harmful if swallowed or absorbed through skin. Avoid contact with skin, eyes, and mouth." In an emergency, it recommends calling the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC). The manufacturer also says that its product is for terrestrial use only: "Do not apply directly to water or to areas where surface water is present." However, in practice the substance seems to be sprayed indiscriminately over land, ponds, and streams. A USDA study on Disparlure and Disrupt II has determined that there is "insufficient data" on the subject and adds that the assumption that Disparlure is harmless "cannot be substantiated due to the lack of chronic toxicity data." – If you attend the Open House on gypsy-moth spraying on Feb. 12 (6-8 pm), you will see and hear a robust defense from David Adkins. However, please be aware that there is a flip side to each coin.

### **SWCI Offers Eco Course**

In partnership with Sustainable Delaware Ohio (SDO), the Second Ward Community Initiative (SWCI) at 50 Ross St. is offering a 6-week course for teenagers entitled "Eco-Friendly Work Zone" from Feb. 7 through March 12 (Thursdays, 6-7 m). Topics will include lifecycles, upcycling, zero waste, supporting local, composting, and gardening. Participation is free.

### **Stratford Book Talks**

Below is the 2020 schedule for the monthly "Book Talks" at Stratford Ecological Center, 3083 Liberty Rd. Retired librarian Liz Barker will be your guide in the exploration of great nature writing, incl. homesteading, gardening, and agriculture. The group meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday (6:30-8 pm) of each month. The cost is \$10 for the entire year.

Jan. 24 – Youth Adventures  
Feb. 28 – Desert Worlds  
March 27 – Nutrition Chain  
April 24 – Future Food  
May 22 – Kitchen Gardens  
June 26 – Butterflies  
July 24 – Glaciers  
Aug. 28 – Tasha Tudor & Beatrix Potter  
Sept. 25 – Horses Then & Now  
Oct. 23 – Apples & More  
Nov. 20 (3<sup>rd</sup> Fri.) – Plastics  
Dec. 18 (3<sup>rd</sup> Fri.) – Conserving Resources

### **At the Strand Theater**

Currently playing at the Strand, 28 E. Winter St.: Birds of Prey, 1917, Dolittle, Jojo Rabbit, Bad Boys for Life, Sonic the Hedgehog (2/14) & Uncut Gems.

Coming soon: Mulan 2020 (3/27), Peter Rabbit 2 (4/3), Black Widow (5/1), Pixar's Soul (6/19), Ghostbusters 2020 (7/10), and Morbius (7/31).

The "Sensory Series" movie of Feb. 2020 is "Dolittle" (Sat., Feb. 15, 10 am). The series is for people on the autism spectrum. Singing, dancing, and movement is welcome.

### **Delaware Dog Park Closed for Maintenance**

The Delaware Dog Park at Mill Run Rd. will be closed from Feb. 14 until about Apr. 15 for turf maintenance and turf recovery. The mid-April date depends on weather conditions and is subject to change. In the meantime, a number of Delaware Parks have walking trails open to pets on leashes: Kensington Park, Mingo Park, Smith Park, and Wetlands Park (the future Mill Run Park).

### **Grandfather Clock Repair Services**

If you have an old grandfather clock in disrepair, there are a number of services you can call in the Central Ohio area. Here are a couple of family-owned businesses that were highly recommended on Delaware Nextdoor last fall: 1. Professional Clock Repair, 661 N. County Line Rd., Sunbury, 740-965-3550. 2. Grandfather Clock

Company, 8 E. Main St., Westerville, 614-895-7420. They can also be contacted through the internet. Both companies make house calls for big clocks.

Once again, a spooky thing happened. Within hours of our Google search, advertisements for grandfather clocks popped up on many unrelated websites of news services when we accessed them, incl. the Delaware Gazette, the New York Times, and MSN. We have zero interest in purchasing such a clock. This tracking is a form of unwanted stalking and harassment that should not be legal.

## OHIO WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY & HIGHER EDUCATION



*The flag of Paraguay is red, white, and blue. The flag is unique because it differs on the obverse and reverse. One side shows the national coat of arms, the other the seal of the treasury.*

### **OWU Creates Hayes Scholarship Program**

OWU has announced the creation of a new Rutherford B. Hayes Scholarship Program for up to six (6) students from Paraguay. Each year, OWU will offer one (1) full-tuition scholarship to a student from Paraguay based on grades, test scores, and a virtual interview. In addition, OWU will offer up to five (5) \$40,000 scholarships each year to admitted students from Paraguay who have at least a 3.4 gpa and a minimum 1250 SAT or 26 ACT score. The scholarship was formally announced in a ceremony in Merrick Hall on Jan. 10, which was attended by Paraguayan ambassador Manuel Cáceres and several local dignitaries. International students have long enriched the campus, OWU Pres. Rock Jones stated. Students from Paraguay may enroll at OWU as early as this coming fall. – Mayor Carolyn Kay Riggle noted in her remarks that the City of Delaware is “working toward a sister city” program with Paraguay, to complement the relationships it has with Germany (Baumholder) and Japan (Sakata).

In 1878, President Hayes was selected as an international arbiter to solve a territorial dispute between Paraguay and Argentina following the Triple Alliance War (1865-70). His decision to grant Paraguay the sovereign rights over the lands between the Pilcomayo and Verde rivers was crucial in the country’s history, and further enabled the legal protection of Paraguay’s territorial integrity in the 20th century. Hayes remains a revered folk hero in Paraguay to this day, with a holiday, a province, a town, a museum, and a soccer team named in his honor, among other things.

### **OWU’s Lifelong Learning Institute**

Ohio Wesleyan Univ. is offering another session of its popular Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) to Delaware County residents age 55 and older. For a flat fee of \$75, interested individuals can take as many of the courses below as they wish (provided seating permits it). The courses include no tests or term papers. Registration (online, mail, or telephone) began Jan. 15 and concludes Feb. 28. The 6-weeks program extends from March 16 through April 25. – The program features over a dozen courses and/or lecture & workshop series. Among the topics are “Women of Hitchcock,” “DNA & Genealogy,” “Health-Care Reform,” “Healthy U,” “Immigrants & Refugees,” “Technology Skills for 2020,” “Chess,” “The U.S. Constitution,” and more. Among the lecture series are “Science in Action,” “My Favorite Lecture,” an “LLI Evening” speaker series, and a “Gardening” workshop taught by the Master Gardeners. For specific days and times, please visit [www.owu.edu/LLI](http://www.owu.edu/LLI) or contact Debbie Lewis (740-368-3078 or [dslewis@owu.edu](mailto:dslewis@owu.edu)) beginning Jan. 15. Posters are available at the Public Library and elsewhere.

### **Martin Luther King Lecture**

In addition to the Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast on Jan. 20, OWU held a noontime MLK celebration on campus that was free

and open to students and the public. Dr. Korie L. Edwards from The Ohio State Univ. was the keynote speaker. Entitled “The Moment Is Now,” her address focused on the role of time in the fulfillment of King’s dream. Many were opposed to his keen sense of urgency and for insisting on freedom and justice in the here and now. They believed King’s impatience was radical and extreme. They thought it would be wiser to wait, pray, and hope until the time would be ripe for achieving his dream. But freedom and justice delayed is freedom and justice denied. The silence of good people meant complicity and the continuation of white dominance. And perhaps King sensed that his time on Earth would be short. Half a century after his assassination in 1968 his dream remains unfulfilled. The politics of white supremacy and hegemony continues unabated in the areas of incarceration, deportation, and others. The waiting game has not paid off for African-Americans.

This may be an interesting lesson for climate-change activists. They are also warned against radicalism and extremism and admonished to be patient. There will be a lengthy transition period, they are told. Coal may be phased out in 20 years, fossil-fuels in 40 years, and carbon-neutrality achieved in 60 years. As was the case with the civil-rights movement, however, this might just be a deliberate delaying strategy to preserve the current power structure for decades to come. Whatever timeline is offered, it will always retreat, ensuring the dream remain unfulfilled. As the case of Martin Luther King Jr. illustrates, the time to act is now, not in the distant future.

### **OWU Faces Challenges**

For American higher education, it is a time of unprecedented disruption and upheaval. OWU too is facing major challenges, incl. declining enrollment and an annual \$2.6 million deficit. In a memo to all employees, dated Jan. 21, OWU President Rock Jones presented an outline of how the institution plans to address the issue. There will be a complete and comprehensive review of both academic and administrative programs in 2020, as mandated by OWU’s Board of Trustees in Oct. 2019. There is no question that the university will contract and have a smaller footprint in the foreseeable future. Seven faculty searches to fill vacant positions were recently cancelled and buy-outs were briefly discussed at the last faculty meeting. The trick is to shrink the administrative offices and academic programs without compromising the institution’s 178-year-old liberal-arts mission. The focus remains on the student experience and on student success, but what exactly does “providing a 21<sup>st</sup>-century liberal-arts education” mean? That answer has yet to be found and articulated in a coherent and compelling fashion. In addition, OWU will develop a new strategic plan over the next 1½ years, replacing the current strategic plan that runs through 2021. Lastly, there is an on-going search for the chief academic officer, the so-called provost, as well as several other key positions. This is a time of renewal for the college, but unfortunately it is also a time of much uncertainty and anxiety.

### **OWU and Honorary Degrees**

Over its long history, OWU has conferred hundreds of honorary degrees to eminent people in their respective fields or who have contributed to the betterment of the world. A joint trustee-faculty committee solicits proposals, evaluates the credentials of the candidates, and recommends to the faculty and the Board of Trustees the names of persons to be considered. Many distinguished and deserving individuals have received such honorary degrees from OWU. Occasionally, however, controversy can ensue. Many years ago, the faculty turned a submitted and recommended name down. In another case, OWU awarded an honorary degree to Dr. Deborah Lipstadt, a distinguished scholar of Jewish Studies. Representatives from national Islamic groups protested and demanded that the degree be revoked. (As far as it is known, the university ignored the objection.)

The slate of the current candidates of honorary degrees, which shall remain confidential, includes two individuals who, on balance, have undoubtedly had a positive impact on the world. However, nobody who works in administration escapes criticism. In one case, there was controversy about missing funds in the amount of \$175 million. In the other case, the individual in question did not disclose a serious conflict of interest that also involved millions and billions of dollars. Is the Committee on Honorary Degree doing its due diligence when it assesses the credentials of the candidates? It would

not be beneficial to the institution to bestow honorary degrees on people who have not behaved ethically at all times. It would also be embarrassing to see students, unions, victims, or other groups protest at the award ceremony. To protect the integrity of OWU's honorary degrees and to minimize the risk to the institution, a robust vetting process is indispensable.

### **OWU Soccer Coach Jay Martin Honored**

On Jan. 17, OWU Men's Head Soccer Coach Dr. John A. Martin was inducted into the United Soccer Coaches Hall of Fame at a ceremony in Baltimore. Jay Martin is the "winningest" coach in NCAA men's soccer history. Induction is considered the highest honor in American college soccer. With the addition of the class of 2020, there is now a total of 68 inductees. A short, 3-minute video has been created that shows how he became involved in soccer and how he approaches the art of coaching. – Martin received his Ph.D. from OSU and joined OWU in 1977. He has been instrumental in establishing the Sister City relationship between Delaware, Ohio and Baumholder in Germany. Visit [www.unitedsoccercoaches.org](http://www.unitedsoccercoaches.org) to learn more.

### **OWU Book Club Returns**

After a 1-year hiatus, OWU's Book Club returns this semester. The current selection is Robin J. DiAngelo's "White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism" (2018). The book club is open to OWU faculty, staff, and students. However, if there is a community member genuinely interested in the topic, please get in touch with Lisa Ho ([llho@owu.edu](mailto:llho@owu.edu)). The first meeting is scheduled for Thurs., Feb. 6 (12 pm). The plan is to discuss chapters 4-6 on Mar. 5, chapters 7-9 on Apr. 2, and chapters 10-12 on Apr. 30. Details will be announced in the "OWU Bulletin." – Previous selections included various titles on higher education, books on inclusion and diversity, "Hillbilly Elegy," "Between the World and Me," "Good Bones," and many more.

### **2020 OWU Mock Convention**

This year's OWU Mock Convention will be held Feb. 21-22 in Gray Chapel inside University Hall, 61 S. Sandusky St. It begins Fri., Feb. 21 (4 pm) and continues Sat., Feb. 22 (9 am – 12 pm). The event is free & open to the public. Since 1972, the conventions have focused on the non-incumbent political party, so the 2020 event will select a Democratic president and vice president. Student portraying eight Democratic presidential candidates have been preparing for the event for weeks and months. Visitors can meet each "candidate" and learn about their platforms, e.g., Biden, Buttigieg, Sanders, and Warren.

### **2020 OWU Summer Music Camp**

The 2020 OWU Summer Music Camp for band, choir, and orchestra students in grades 6-12 is scheduled for July 6-10. Both day camps and overnight camps are available. (Overnight campers should check in Sun., July 5 by 6 pm.) All students will participate in daily ensemble rehearsals. In addition, many elective activity options as well as private lessons are available. Supervised recreational activities will complement the camps. The week concludes Friday with two Grand Finale Concerts, one for middle-school ensembles and one for high-school ensembles. The day-camp package is \$325 for the week, the overnight-camp package \$525. The cost is lowered by \$25 if registration is received by April 3. Registration closes June 1. Applications for scholarships are due March 2. The director of the camp is Dr. Rich Edwards. For more info and registration materials, visit [www.owu.edu/summermusiccamp](http://www.owu.edu/summermusiccamp) or send an email to [musiccamp@owu.edu](mailto:musiccamp@owu.edu).



### **OWU Alumnus Benjamin Wiant (1935-2020)**

Benjamin F. Wiant has passed away at the age of 85 from complications of Parkinson's Disease. Ben Wiant graduated from OWU in 1957 with a bachelor in music and a master's degree in music from the Univ. of Cincinnati. For a while, he pursued a Ph.D. program at the

Univ. in Michigan. Trained as a performing pianist and musician, he gradually developed great expertise as a piano technician and became nationally and internationally known as a high-level expert in piano building & restoration. Among his many positions was that of Chief Technician for the Lancaster Festival and for Grand Teton Music Festival. He was also resident technician for the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. Wiant, who died in his home & workshop on Dublin Rd. in Hilliard, won much praise from performers worldwide for his skills as a "piano whisperer." A celebration of his life is forthcoming.

### **DACC Offers Adult Programs**

The Ohio Technical Center for Adult Education, a division of the Delaware Area Career Center, offers adult programs in the following areas: Law Enforcement (starts 3/9), Fire Safety Inspector (starts 2/10), Cybersecurity for Business (Feb. 20-21), Cybersecurity for Home & Family (March 14), and MS Word and Excel (Feb. & March). To register, visit [www.delawareareacc.org/adult-education](http://www.delawareareacc.org/adult-education).

### **Ohio Colleges Concerned about Chinese Coronavirus**

The new coronavirus is quickly spreading in China and around the world, and colleges & universities are taking notice. Every year, some 369,000 Chinese students study in the U.S., and more than 11,000 U.S. students travel to China. Two students from Miami University who visited China in January have been instructed to stay at home while their testing results are being processed by the CDC. Due to concerns, Miami also postponed basketball games. (The tests ended up being negative.) The Univ. of Akron cancelled its annual Chinese New Year Gala. Denison Univ. and Capital Univ. sent out emails about the illness to their campus communities. An OWU student studying in China this semester is leaving the country and will complete her study online. OSU has restricted all nonessential travel to China for students, faculty & staff. However, at this point in time there are no reported infections in Ohio, and the virus is not spreading in any Ohio community. The infection risk remains very small, and there is no reason for anxiety, fear & panic.

Health officials point out that influenza is a much more serious threat than the novel coronavirus. According to CDC, there have been an estimated 19 million cases of flu, 180,000 hospitalizations, and 10,000 deaths in the U.S. this influenza season alone. Worldwide, flu epidemics cause between 3 to 5 million severe cases and up to 650,000 deaths.

### **Ohio Colleges with Low Rates of Pell Grant Recipients**

Low- and moderate-income students often receive so-called Pell Grants, worth up to \$6,195 per academic year, which they do not have to pay back. Education Reform Now (ERN), an advocacy group, says in a new report that the state average of Pell Grant recipients in Ohio was 29.38% from 2015 to 2018; the median was 36.27%. But there are significant differences among the colleges and universities. Miami Univ. in Oxford enrolled far fewer students who receive Pell Grants than any other public college in Ohio (10.9%). In fact, it is the second-lowest rate among all public colleges in the U.S., behind William & Mary in Virginia. Ohio's 6 other lowest rates were Kenyon College (9.4%), Oberlin College (9.5%), Univ. of Dayton (13.2%), Case Western Reserve Univ. (13.4%), OSU (16.7%), and the College of Wooster (17.3%). Denison Univ. is not far behind with 20.77%. Low Pell Grant rates often indicate the absence of first-gen students, students of color, low-income students, and working-class students. For them, significant barriers remain, even with Pell Grants and other financial aid. Oberlin, Kenyon, and Denison are attended by a disproportionate number of white, wealthy, and self-paying students. These institutions are, according to ERN, "among the worst in the nation" as far as underserved groups are concerned. Students from richer families are great for the treasuries and endowments of these colleges, but it is not good for campus diversity. At OWU, according to ERN, the rate of Pell Grant receivers was 35.02% from 2015 to 2018, which is better than the state average. For a copy of the entire 24-page report, visit [www.edreformnow.org](http://www.edreformnow.org).

### **OSU: State of the University Address**

On Jan. 30, OSU President Michael V. Drake presented his last State of the University address. Drake is retiring at the end of the academic year. In his remarks before the University Senate at the Ohio Union, he praised the progress the university has made over the

past years. Among the institution's accomplishments is a greater focus on need-based aid for low-and-moderate (LMI) students and more attention to mental-health needs on campus. Incredibly, however, Drake did not mention the ongoing scandal and litigation the school is facing over former OSU physician Dr. Richard Strauss. The doctor sexually abused 177 students under the guise of treatment, according to investigators. Lawsuits representing 350 plaintiffs are pending against the university. Settling these claims will cost OSU millions and millions, but so far OSU has not accepted responsibility and claims the statute of limitations has expired. A bill in the Ohio House is pending that would grandfather in the victims of Dr. Strauss, but OSU lawyers and lobbyists are fighting it. University Senate secretary Ben Givens praised Michael Drake for his bold and admirable leadership...

### **OSU Quiet on Epstein Inquiry**

One of Jeffrey Epstein's beneficiaries was Ohio State University. Epstein's private foundation, CUOQ, donated \$2.5 million to the school in 2007. It was a partial fulfillment of a \$5 million pledge Epstein had made in 2005 to support the Woody Hayes Athletic Center. The money was later applied to the naming of the Les Wexner Football Complex. Last year, OSU announced that it was "reviewing" Epstein's donation and his CUOQ Foundation and take action as appropriate. On Jan 16, the Columbus Dispatch reported that "the review is ongoing" and that it was unknown when it would be completed. It seems OSU is in no hurry to wrap up the investigation. Instead, the game plan seems to be to wait until the furor is over and memories are fading. – Jeffrey Epstein died Aug. 10 in a prison cell in Manhattan while awaiting trial.

### **Babson College Fires Instructor**

Last month President Trump suggested in a tweet that America should bomb 52 cultural sites in Iran "fast" and "hard." Doing so would constitute a war crime, of course, and the Pentagon quickly walked back Trump's ill-advised remark. In a sarcastic, equally hyperbolic response, Babson College lecturer Asheen Phansej, who is born and raised in America, suggested in a private Facebook post that maybe Ayatollah Khamenei might want to develop a similar list of 52 cultural sites in America. He has since apologized for his "bad attempt at humor." However, that did not stop Babson College, a private business school for entrepreneurs in Wellesley, Mass. ([www.babson.edu](http://www.babson.edu)), to suspend and later terminate the adjunct professor who serves as Director of Sustainability and teaches "Sustainable Entrepreneurship Inspired by Nature." Like other colleges and universities, Babson College has nice-sounding statements on the importance of free speech and inquiry, but it is obvious that in practice they mean very little. Firing a professor for making a private statement unrelated to his or her employment is egregious overreach, even if the statement in question was in poor taste. Being a business school, Babson was probably more concerned about its name than the right to free speech of students, faculty, and staff. It does seem peculiar that Trump gets away with outlandish statements, which were not a joke, while people who respond in kind are harshly penalized. PEN America has characterized Phansej's firing as "deeply disturbing" and called for his reinstatement, and the AAUP noted the apparent lack of academic due process. No doubt the case will lead to a lawsuit and eventual settlement that will cost the school not only plenty of money but will also lead to reputational harm.

## **DELAWARE COUNTY & CENTRAL OHIO**

### **2020 Census**

Delaware County gearing up for 2020 census. Census Day is April 1<sup>st</sup>. Where you live on that date determines where you are counted for the U.S. Census. For example, students in college on April 1<sup>st</sup> should list their college address when completing their form. Changes for the 2020 Census include:

- Accurate address lists with automated field operations will keep residents' info confidential and safe.
- For the first time, census takers can respond on-line, by mail or by phone.

- Residents will receive a postcard with a personal identification number that they can enter securely on-line.
- The decennial (10-year) Census only has nine questions.
- Response data will reduce in-person visits to non-responding households.

The Regional Planning Commission and County Auditor's office have worked with the Census Bureau to identify all addresses where people can live. It is important that everyone is counted as census data impacts all of us. Among other things, census data are used to:

- Forecast future transportation needs for all segments of the population
- Forecast future housing needs for all segments of the population
- Analyze local trends
- Create maps to speed emergency services to households in need of assistance
- Plan for public transportation services
- Establish fair-market rents and enforce fair lending practices
- Plan for school projects
- Determine areas eligible for housing assistance and rehabilitation loans

Census employees will always have: 1. badges with photo IDs & 2. black canvas bags and laptops with 2020 census logos.

### **Delaware County Property Taxes Due**

Delaware County homeowners should note that property taxes are due Feb. 10 countywide. (The next biannual payment is due July 10.) Here is something else Delaware County homeowners need to be aware of. Some residents were shocked to see their name appear on a list of allegedly "delinquent" homeowners last November. This is what seems to have happened. Normally, the mortgage company (lender) takes care of tax payments. When the mortgage is paid off after 15, 20, or 30 years, it becomes the responsibility of homeowners to make the payments. However, it seems that during the transitional period there is often a communication breakdown between the mortgage company, the Treasurer's Office, and the homeowner. The Delaware County Treasurer, who does not know that the mortgage is paid off, continues to bill the mortgage company instead of the homeowner. The mortgage company, of course, ignores the requests for additional payments. Suddenly, homeowners end up being "delinquent" without ever having been contacted by the Treasurer's Office and without even knowing about the situation. The current treasurer, Michael Ringle, has confirmed that this is a perennial problem.

In one local case, the problem was quickly settled and the penalty waived, but no apology was issued for what amounted to public defamation. But what about folks who don't read newspapers and remain unaware that they are in a pickle? So please heed this advice: once you made the last mortgage payment on a home in Delaware County (congratulations!), immediately call or visit the Treasurer's Office at 145 N. Union St. (1<sup>st</sup> floor), make them aware of the situation, and ask for guidance on your next steps. It seems that if you wait for them to take the initiative and make the first move, you would wait a long time.

### **"Seduced by East Africa"**

Sunbury resident Marjorie Lyon Wilhelm has self-published a small book entitled "Seduced by East Africa: A Memoir." She and her former husband Bill, who worked for OSU on agricultural contracts, spent several years in Uganda, Kenya, and Somalia as a young couple with children. She has since returned to East Africa for more research and to refresh her memories. Her illustrated book (vi + 123 pp.), which focuses on the continent's people, contains a number of short essays about her many positive experiences in Central Africa. Wilhelm will discuss her collection at a Meet the Author event set for Tues., March 17 (6:30 pm) at the Community Library in Sunbury (44 Burrer Drive). The book is \$8 or \$11.50 if mailed. For more info or to order, contact Wilhelm at [jgl430078@gmail.com](mailto:jgl430078@gmail.com). The volume is not available anywhere else. – Not along ago, a certain person called all of Africa "a s-hole." Be prepared to encounter a very different viewpoint in this collection.

### **DKMM Special Collection Events 2020**

The DKMM Solid Waste District has posted its Special Collection Events for 2020 on its website ([www.dkmm.org](http://www.dkmm.org)): Sat., April

25 (9 am – 1 pm), Hazardous Waste & Paint at Morrow Co. Fairgrounds; Sat., May 16 (9 am – 1 pm), Electronics & Paper Shredding at Marion Co. Fairgrounds; Sat., June 6 (9 am – 1 pm), Hazardous Waste & Paint at Delaware Co. Fairgrounds (236 Pennsylvania Ave.); and Sat., Aug. 22 (9 am – 1 pm), Electronics & Paper Shredding at Knox Co. Fairgrounds. Hazardous waste, electronics, and paper shredding are free, but fees apply for televisions (\$20 each) and latex paint (\$2 each). Explosives, ammunition, asbestos, freon-containing devices & medicines cannot be accepted. There will be no tire-recycling event in 2020 due to lack of participation in 2019.

### **Indivisible Delaware & Lewis Center Progress Hold Postcard Parties**

Indivisible Delaware and Lewis Center Progress are starting to hold weekly postcard parties every Tuesday night from 6-8:30 pm. Meetings will alternate between Señor Antonio's (back room) at 8617 Columbus Pike (US 23 S) in Lewis Center (Feb. 4 & 18) and Amato's Wood Fired Pizza (back room) at 6 S. Sandusky St. in Delaware (Feb. 11 & 25). The goal is to motivate local voters to update their voter registration by the BOE deadline (Feb. 18) and to prepare for the November elections. Supplies and addresses will be provided. Donations to cover postage are always appreciated. Indivisible, "a group of progressive activists," is on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/groups/indivisibledelawareohio](http://www.facebook.com/groups/indivisibledelawareohio).

### **Peg Watkins Honored by Ohio Democratic Party**

The Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) has honored Delaware County Democratic Party (DCDP) Chairwoman Peg Watkins by naming her the 2019 Tim Burke Large County Chair of the Year. David Pepper, ODP Chair, presented the award last December in Columbus. It is named after Tim Burke, former Hamilton County Chairman who served for 25 years. Watkins succeeded Ed Helvey as Chairwoman after he stepped down in 2018. – It is not easy being a Democrat in Delaware County, but following President Trump's election in 2016 the DCDP has made progress in increasing membership, fundraising, fielding candidates, and seeing candidates elected. The local party is now looking at a new headquarters. However, there has also been some internal conflict about leadership. DCDP's First Vice Chair resigned and was replaced at a meeting on Jan. 16. Joydeep Gupta was elected by the Executive Committee to fill the unexpired term.

### **NAMI of Delaware & Morrow Counties**

NAMI Delaware and Morrow Counties will be offering 2 classes beginning in March: NAMI Peer-to-Peer is a free, 8-week course for people living with mental health conditions, while NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 8-week educational course for family & close friends of individuals living with a mental-health condition. Peer-to-Peer will meet on Tuesdays beginning March 3, and Family-to-Family will meet on Wednesdays beginning March 4. Both will be held at the NAMI office at 814 Bowtown Rd. in Delaware. For more info, visit [www.namiofdel-mor.org](http://www.namiofdel-mor.org).

### **Delaware County Foundation Offers Scholarships**

In 2019, the Delaware County Foundation at 737 Enterprise Dr. #A in Lewis Center gave away \$300,000 in scholarships to students graduating from a high school physically located in Delaware County. Many scholarships are available for 2020, with the earliest deadline being March 1. For a complete list of available scholarships, incl. for students from private schools and home-schooled students, visit [www.delawarecf.org](http://www.delawarecf.org).

### **Price Farms Organics**

Established in 1997, Price Farms Organics offers for sale quality mulch, topsoil & compost for all of landscaping & gardening needs. They also carry sand, gravel, straw, hay & other products sold in bulk. Delivery is available. Many products are now also available in bags. Feel free to bring your own containers to load.

Price Farms Organics is an Ohio EPA Certified Class II composting facility. It is the designated DKMM (Delaware, Knox, Marion & Morrow) Compost Site for Delaware County, accepting biodegradable materials such as tree limbs, grass, leaves & soil from residents of Delaware and surrounding counties for recycling at no charge. Incoming materials must be cut to lengths of less than 4 feet

and diameters less than 12 inches. Sizes greater than this will be considered oversized and charged a rate of \$42/ton. All stumps are considered oversized. Other compostable materials such as manure and commercial pre-consumer food remnants are also accepted at our site in accordance with our EPA permit. Paper products are welcome at the farm for recycling as livestock bedding, but cardboard can no longer be accepted. Price Farm Organics is a compost facility that recycles products that are organic in nature, meaning biodegradable. However, products are not "certified organic."

Price Farm Organics is located at 4838 Warrensburg Rd. west of Delaware. The facility is open 6 days a week, all year. Winter hours are Mon. – Fri., 8 am – 4 pm, and Sat., 9 am – 1 pm. Closed on Sun. & holidays.

### **A New Mulch & Soil Recycling Facility**

According to a public notice in the Delaware Gazette (1/25), Kurtz Bros. of Westerville intends to build "a seasonal mulch and soil recycling facility on a 10-acre lease from Trucco Construction at 3531 Airport Rd., Delaware." The property is located in Delaware Township and not under the jurisdiction of the City of Delaware. – Kurtz Bros. provides homeowners and landscapers with mulches, topsoils, composts, and aggregates. It currently has 4 locations in Central Ohio. Visit [www.kbcolumbus.com](http://www.kbcolumbus.com) to learn more about the company.



### **New Dog Parks at Delaware State Park**

Ornithologist Dick Tuttle reports in the Jan. issue of Delaware County Bird Club Newsletter that two new dog parks are coming to Delaware State Park. A dog park near the beach and another one near the check-in station are set to open in spring. The fencing is already up, but some grass has to grow before they open later this spring. – If you and your dog(s) love to hike, use the opportunity to check out the miles and miles of trails surrounding Delaware Lake and Alum Creek Lake.

### **Preservation Parks Book Club**

Preservation Parks' Gallant Farm Literary and Cowpie Society has selected the following books for discussion: "Little Women" by Louisa May Alcott (Feb. 26), "The Underground Railroad" by Colson Whitehead (Mar. 25), "Lonesome Day" by Larry McMurty (Apr. 29), and "Walden or Life in the Woods" by Henry David Thoreau (May 27). Meetings are Wednesdays at 6:30 pm at Gallant Farm, 2150 Buttermilk Hill Rd., north of Delaware. The books are appropriate for ages 14+.

### **Delaware County Bird Club**

The Delaware County Bird Club meets monthly in Preservation Parks' Deer Haven Park, 4183 Liberty Rd. Here are the topics for the next few months: Mon., Feb. 24: "Birding in the Arctic Tundra" with Tyler Ficker; Mon., Mar. 23: "Three Days with the Condors" with Tom Sheley; and Mon., Apr. 27: "Native Bees in Ohio" with Carl Gleditsch. Doors open at 6:30 pm, programs begin at 7 pm.

### **Preservation Parks Announces Date for Aviary Grand Opening**

Preservation Parks of Delaware County (PPDC) has announced that the ribbon cutting and grand opening of its new Aviary at Deer Haven Park (4183 Liberty Rd.) is Sun., April 19 (12-5 pm). Activities will be ongoing throughout the day. In partnership with Ohio Nature Education, permanently injured birds of prey and perching bird species will be on display on a rotating basis. The aviary will be available to visitors during normal park hours.

### **Preservation Parks Plans New Kayak Launch Site**

Preservation Parks of Delaware County (PPDC) has invited bidders to submit proposals for a new kayak / canoe launch site along the Olentangy River by Feb. 18. The project involves a partially paved

driveway and 20 parking spaces at State Rt. 315 (Olentangy River Rd.), 1165 feet south of Home Rd. in Liberty Township. The estimate for the Trails End Lane & Parking Lot, incl. embankment and erosion control, is \$179,765. PPDC already maintains a kayak launch site on the Olentangy River at Main Rd., south of the Delaware Lake Dam. – There is a growing demand for such launch sites along rivers and lakes. Community Matters applauds PPDC's efforts to help grow and support the local kayak community.

### **Morgan Harper vs. Joyce Beatty in District 3**

Four-term Rep. Joyce Beatty, 69, is running again in Ohio's District 3, which encompasses much of urban Columbus and surrounding parts of Franklin County. Beatty has name recognition, but she is also someone who has deep ties to the entrenched Democratic establishment. She now has a formidable challenger in Morgan Harper, 36. Harper holds an M.A. degree from Princeton Univ. and a law degree from Stanford. Unlike Beatty, she is associated with the Democratic Party's liberal wing. She has praised the Green New Deal and supports Medicare for All. She wants to raise the minimum wage, create new protections for immigrants, and end the "forever wars" in the Middle East. – Sadly, moderates within the Democratic Party are not eager to let new voices enter, according to Harper: "Before I launched this campaign, I was told I was going to pay for it, that I wasn't going to be able to get another job here, that this would be the end of me." Beatty, who calls herself "a real leader," has belittled the newcomer as an idealist incapable of passing "real legislation" and in need of "mentoring."

### **More Overdose Deaths in Franklin County**

During the first 9 months of 2019, the number of overdose deaths in Franklin County increased by 15% over the same period in 2018. Coroner Dr. Anahi Ortiz's office reported 421 OD deaths in that time period. Opioids accounted for 90% of them, with fentanyl responsible for nearly 84% of those. The rest were related to heroin or carfentanil use. More men (69.4%) than women (30.6%) died of overdoses. The majority of victims were white (67%) compared to blacks (28%) and other ethnic groups. There is obviously no slowdown in drug-related deaths in Franklin County. Authorities say that the presence of east-west and north-south interstates makes Columbus "a hotbed" for crime, drugs, and human trafficking. Columbus Public Health Commissioner Mysheika Roberts was not surprised by the numbers. In a statement, she stressed that "addiction is a disease of the brain, and we need to treat it like a medical condition."



### **Mid-Ohio Food Collective**

Mid-Ohio Foodbank has changed its name, brand, and logo. Its new name is Mid-Ohio Food Collective to better reflect the five areas of focus: Mid-Ohio Foodbank, Mid-Ohio "Farmacy," Mid-Ohio Farms, Mid-Ohio Markets, and Mid-Ohio Kitchens. The new logo was inspired by a crown of lettuce with 5 leaves. Matt Habash, President and CEO of the organization, says, "We're really working to build the connection between farm and health." Unchanged is the mission, which is to reduce poverty and improve public health by getting fresh food to people in need.

### **Mayor Ginther's State of the City Address**

On Feb. 13, Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther will give the annual State of the City address at West High School. Several companies are supporting the event as sponsors, among them companies with big contracts with the city. Stantec Consulting Services, which won more than \$4 million in contracts with the city in 2019 alone, is contributing \$25,000. United Healthcare, the city's health-insurance administrator, is paying \$10,000. In total, 15 companies and organizations are providing a total of \$74,500 to pay for Ginther's address. Neither the mayor nor Stantec and United Healthcare see a conflict of interest. They say the State of the City address is "purely a community event," unrelated to business and politics. "I don't think that there is anything new or unusual going

on," says Ginther, a Democrat. Sadly, he is probably right. The sponsorships go back to former Mayor Michael Coleman's administration. Clearly, however, the situation creates the perception of impropriety. Supporting the mayor's speech has been a way for companies to ingratiate themselves to City Council and city staff for many years. Businesses and organizations that donate money are likely to be looked at more favorably at the next round of grants and contracts. It is understandable that the city does not want to spend taxpayer money on such events, but the current system is problematic. Less lavish gatherings with smaller footprints and lower costs are one idea. Another one is to cap sponsorships at, perhaps, \$1,000 each. That would reduce the obvious impression that private companies seem to hold a lot of sway over the city administration.

### **Commission Recommends Civilian Review Board for Police**

Appointed by Columbus Mayor Andrew J. Ginther, the Community Safety Advisory Commission started to meet in 2018. For the past 18 months or so, the commission reviewed best police practices. It has now issued a 119-page report that contains 80 recommendations. Among them are:

- the creation of an independent civilian review board
- public participation in criminal investigations of police personnel
- a morality clause for all police officers, indicating that they agree to equal protection for all residents and renounce white supremacy
- a greater focus on recruiting women and minorities
- the creation of an anonymous internal whistleblower hotline for police officers to report allegations of abuse, harassment & racism
- the creation of a community-affairs bureau
- the creation of an annual community survey to measure the public's perception of the police department
- increased training in cultural sensitivity and de-escalation tactics
- the creation of a youth-services unit
- more attention to officer wellness, incl. secondary trauma & burnout
- incentives for officers to receive an annual physical & mental health exam

### **Changes Coming to the Columbus Dispatch**

As a result of the merger of GateHouse Media and Gannet in 2019, the Columbus Dispatch will cease printing at 5300 Crosswinds Dr., effective March 6. Printing and production will be shifted to Indianapolis, 3 hours away. The current facility will be sold. The move will affect 188 employees in Columbus. The geographic distance will require earlier deadlines. The morning paper will therefore not include many developments in yesterday's politics, business, or sports. However, subscribers can find up-to-date information online and on mobile devices (dispatch.com & buckeyextra.com). Readers will also notice a return to the larger, classic broadsheet size because the Indianapolis facility cannot accommodate the Dispatch's current compact format, in use since 2013. The weekly "This Week" freebies serving Central Ohio will also have the new format. Executive editor Alan D. Miller pledged that the move would not negatively impact the Dispatch's commitment to local news.

### **John Glenn Columbus International Airport**

The John Glenn Columbus International Airport and the Rickenbacker Passenger Terminal saw a combined total of 8.9 million passengers in 2019, a nearly 6% increase from 2018. John Glenn served 8.6 million passengers (96.5%), Rickenbacker 308,780 passengers (3.5%). The airport has up to 160 departures a day to 47 destinations, incl. many direct flights to cities such as Houston, Salt Lake City, San Francisco & Seattle that were previously accessed by connecting flights. Among the airlines that serve Columbus are Southwest, American, Delta, United & Spirit.

Also, the airport has announced that it is switching to 100% renewable energy through a collaboration with AEP Energy and Worthington Energy Consultants. The airport hopes to save almost \$13 million in energy costs, according to Joe Nordone, president and CEO of the Columbus Regional Airport Authority.

### **LGBT-Friendly Companies in Central Ohio**

The 18<sup>th</sup> Corporate Equality Index, released by the Human Rights Campaign, gave perfect scores of 100 to 9 Central Ohio companies and law firms. They are: Abercrombie & Fitch, American Electric Power (AEP), Cardinal Health, Designer Brands, Huntington Bancshares, L Brands, Nationwide, Vorys, Sater Seymour & Pease, and Wendy's. A total of 1,059 companies were evaluated nationwide. In Ohio, 24 companies had a score of 100. 32 additional companies had a score of 90 or above, and 36 others had a score of 80 or above. The national Corporate Equality Index is based on four factors, designed to protect LGBTQ+ employees from discrimination. The categories are: non-discrimination policies, employment benefits, inclusive culture, and responsible citizenship.

### **Leslie H. Wexner May Step Down as CEO of L Brands**

There are multiple reports that Leslie H. Wexner, the CEO of L Brands, is considering stepping down. Wexner, 82, has been sharply criticized for his close association with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Wexner employed him as his personal adviser for many years and handed him sweeping powers over his finances, private life, and philanthropy. Also, one of Wexner's brands, Victoria's Secret, has been struggling in recent years amid falling sales. Last October, Victoria Secret laid off 15% of its employees in Columbus. The Wall Street Journal reports that L Brands is in conversation with Sycamore Partners to sell all or part of Victoria's Secret.

In Central Ohio, Les & Abigail Wexner have played an outsize role. They financed OSU's Wexner Center for the Arts, donated \$100 million for OSU's Wexner Medical Center, gave \$163.4 million to the Columbus Foundation and \$41 million to help cover the cost for the National Veterans Memorial & Museum, and supported Republican and Jewish causes with additional millions of dollars. It is fair to say that the Wexners have left a permanent imprint on Ohio.

### **United Way Cuts Budget and Lays Off Workers**

Two years ago, United Way of Central Ohio had about 90 full-time workers. After another recent round of budget cuts and the elimination of 20 positions, United Way is left with a staff of 44. The landscape of philanthropy has changed, especially among younger people, and traditional charities are struggling. In 2007, UW generated about \$56 million in donations. The current funding cycle is expected to end on June 30 with only about \$31 million, a decrease of nearly half. In response, UW has moved to a year-round fundraising model, is pushing its partners to develop more board diversity, and is developing a strategic planning process.

### **Protest at MLK Breakfast in Columbus**

At the Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast in Columbus on Jan. 20 two members of the Columbus Freedom Coalition interrupted Mayor Andrew J. Gunther's speech by shouting "Justice for Julius! He deserved to dream." The words were in reference to Julius Tate Jr., a black teenager age 16, who was shot and killed by a Columbus SWAT officer in 2018 during a sting operation. The protesters were forcibly escorted out of the Greater Columbus Convention Center although they had tickets for the event. In a statement, the Columbus Freedom Coalition said, "the City has consistently endangered and deprioritized the lives of Black people, people of color, poor people, and other marginalized peoples." It is indeed highly ironic that "the two people at the breakfast who best illustrated King's living legacy," as Theodore Decker put it in the Columbus Dispatch (1/26), were reprimanded for behaving badly in polite company. The rest of the 2,000 people in attendance sat there and said nothing. Some attendees even clapped when Mia Santiago and Dkeama Alexis were hauled away. Such behavior is an utter betrayal of King's legacy. The charges against them should be dropped immediately. Indeed, MLK breakfasts often are little more than empty, meaningless, self-congratulatory ceremonies. Lip service is paid to justice and equity, but the actual situation in the nation's streets and jails is very different.



### **Swenson's Expands into Central Ohio**

Swenson's opened its first Central Ohio drive-in restaurant in 2018 on Sawmill Rd. Several others followed in short order, including one near Polaris Fashion Place. The iconic throwback restaurant chain does not have indoor or outdoor seating. Instead, servers take orders from customers in their cars. The food is then consumed inside the vehicles or taken to go. Swenson's many fans, called "Swenatics," love the hamburgers and cheeseburgers, onion rings, and seasonal smoothies and milkshakes.



### **Wing Squad**

Another restaurant that is poised to enter the Central Ohio market is Wing Squad, a delivery-only restaurant. The service provides customers with 6 different kinds of chicken wings, sides, and desserts via food-delivery services such as GrubHub, Uber Eats, DoorDash, and Postmates. Columbus is one of 16 American cities chosen to introduce the new concept.

### **Pianist Daniil Trifonov Coming to Columbus**

Russian-born pianist Daniil Trifonov is scheduled to come to Columbus on June 5 and perform Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 with ProMusica Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Music Director David Danzmayr. This is a huge development and a gigantic coup for ProMusica. Although he is still young (he turns 29 in March), the Russian-born pianist and composer is an international superstar and, like Beethoven, an intense and pioneering musician. His repertoire includes not only classical and Romantic music, but many 20<sup>th</sup>-century composers as well. The fact that someone like Trifonov is even considering Columbus, Ohio as a venue speaks well for the city. In his wake, other artists of note will follow suit, enhancing Central Ohio's cultural life and reputation in the process. – It is Trifonov who suggested Beethoven's Third, and Danzmayr enthusiastically accepted the idea.

### **Bob Hope Exhibit in Columbus**

Bob Hope (1903-2003) enjoyed an 80-year career as a comedian and entertainer. From 1941 until 1990, he also performed at military camps and bases to boost morale. The National Veterans Memorial & Museum at 300 W. Broad St. in Columbus is now showing a special exhibit that was created in New Orleans in 2018. Columbus is the first stop of a planned 6-city tour. "So Ready for Laughter: The Legacy of Bob Hope" runs until April 17. Hours are 10 am through 5 pm Wednesdays through Sundays. Standard admission is \$17. Discounts apply for seniors, students, youth, and groups. Admission is free for children under 5 and for military veterans and active duty members. To learn more, visit [www.nationalvmm.org](http://www.nationalvmm.org).

### **Home & Garden Show (2/22 – 3/1)**

The Columbus Dispatch Home and Garden Show will be Feb. 22 through March 1 at the Ohio Expo Center at 717 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. in Columbus. Visit [www.dispatchhomeandgardenshow.com](http://www.dispatchhomeandgardenshow.com) for more info.

### **Inniswood Metro Gardens Worth a Visit**

For many people, Inniswood Metro Gardens at 940 S. Hempstead Rd. in Westerville is a favorite hang-out. Inniswood is a carefully curated botanical garden and nature preserve, home to more than 2,000 plant species on 123 acres. The Spring Run forms the western border of the park. There are specialty collections of conifers, daffodils, daylilies, hostas & roses. In addition, there are several feature gardens, including an herb garden and a rock garden. The Innis House features workshops, art exhibits, a quarterly book club & a non-lending horticulture library. It also houses the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Quilt Show in February. Walking in the park is easy, but please note that picnics, pets & bicycling are allowed only outside the formal gardens. Inniswood is part of the Franklin County Metro Parks system, funded by taxpayer money. It is free & open to the public daily from about

dawn to dusk / dark. For more info, maps & programming guides, visit [www.metroparks.net](http://www.metroparks.net).

## STATE OF OHIO

### Ohio's Legacy Cities

Legacy cities are older, industrial urban areas that have experienced significant economic and demographic decline, resulting in population loss, unemployment, poverty, opioid addiction, vacancies & diminished services. Sadly, Ohio has plenty of such struggling legacy cities. The nonprofit Greater Ohio Policy Center (GOPC) in Columbus Ohio, dedicated to urban revitalization and sustainable growth, has identified 22 of them: Akron, Canton, Chillicothe, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Elyria, Hamilton, Lima, Lorain, Mansfield, Marion, Massillon, Middletown, Portsmouth, Sandusky, Springfield, Toledo, Warren, Xenia, Youngstown & Zanesville. (Columbus and surrounding areas are not included because Central Ohio is growing and doing well.) Greater Ohio's latest study, an update from its 2016 report, finds that the situation is not hopeless. Population losses are slowing, the unemployment rate has dropped, and poverty rates are slowly improving. However, statewide challenges remain. Ohio's legacy cities would benefit from more public and private investments. The group suggests that the State of Ohio work more with these cities and help with façade improvements, streetscaping, public art, transit-oriented development, job training, housing for all income levels, a fund for redeveloping blighted areas and brownfields & public transportation, among other things. 16 of the smaller cities of the 22 legacy cities have formed a Reinvention Cities Network. (To learn more, visit [www.greaterohio.org](http://www.greaterohio.org).)



### Ohio's Road-Safety Laws among the Worst

In an annual report by Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (<https://saferoads.org>), a national nonprofit founded by consumer groups and insurance companies, Ohio ranked near the bottom in a number of categories. The report examines 16 specific road-safety laws and asks whether or not states have met the goal. Ohio has enacted 5 of the 16 laws, which ties it with Arizona. Only Missouri, Montana, S. Dakota & Wyoming passed fewer laws. The study criticizes that texting while driving is not a primary offense in Ohio. In addition, Ohio's nighttime restrictions for teenagers and others begin at midnight; the report's authors favor a 10 pm curfew. And the study points out that there is no mandatory helmet law for motorcycle riders. – The "best" states have 10 or more laws enacted.

### Smoking in Ohio

In the latest annual report card by the American Lung Association, Ohio received two "A" grades for having smoke-free air and for raising the minimum age to buy tobacco to 21. However, the association also gave Ohio two "F" grades for the state's lack of control and prevention efforts and for its relatively low tobacco tax. For its smoking cessation programs the state received the grade of "D." On a 4.0 scale, that translates into an overall grade-point average of 1.8 or "C-". Some 21% of Ohio adults smoke, compared to 13.7% of adults nationwide. At least 28% use at least one tobacco product. – The ALA recommends that Ohio align the cigarette tax with the other forms of tobacco products (e.g., cigars and chewing tobacco). The average cost of a pack of 20 in Ohio is \$6.10, which includes a state excise tax of \$1.60 and a state sales tax of \$0.37. The amount of \$6.10 puts Ohio in the middle of the nation (#23), according to the "2020 Sales Tax Handbook."

### 41,642 Small Children in Ohio Uninsured

The number of uninsured infants, toddlers & preschoolers in Ohio is increasing. According to a recent study by the Georgetown Univ. Center for Children and Families, it climbed from 3.6% in 2016 to 5% in 2018, a 40% jump that ranks as third-highest in the nation.

The total number of children under 6 in the U.S. who lack health insurance rose from 3.8% in 2016 to 4.3% in 2018 and surpassed 1 million in 2018. The 7 worst performers are Texas (with the highest share), followed by Florida, California, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Ohio & Arizona. – Uninsured children who are injured or ill can receive free emergency care, but they miss out on regular visits to pediatricians, optometrists, and dentists.

### House Bill 329 Would Prohibit Youth Tanning

Tanning beds are popular among teenage girls, but many are unaware that indoor tanning sessions significantly increase a person's risk of melanoma. About 100,000 new melanoma cases are diagnosed every year. Almost 7,000 people are expected to die of the radiation disease in 2020. The prohibition of indoor tanning by youth could prevent 61,839 melanoma cases, 6735 deaths, and save \$343 million in treatment costs, according to a 2017 article in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology. That is why the American Cancer Society is in support of the bipartisan Ohio House Bill 329, which would prohibit commercial tanning services for those under 18.



### Invasion of Spotted Lanternflies Possible

Pennsylvania has been combating spotted lanternflies since at least 2014, but the invasive species continues to expand its habitat and might soon reach eastern Ohio. Human travel poses the greatest risk for spreading the insect. Although its preferred food source are trees of heaven (the ailanthus), another invasive species from Asia, it will also feed on other wild and orchard trees as well as grapes, hops, and other crops. Lanternflies take in the sap of plants and trees, but they also produce a substance that blankets the leaves of their hosts and blocks photosynthesis. Understandably, both foresters and farmers are worried. Ohio wine growers are extremely concerned after learning that some Pennsylvania vineyard growers lost 100% of their crop and vines. The Ohio Dept. of Agriculture (ODA) is asking people to report signs of the insect to their Columbus office. Research into how to best combat the lanternflies is on-going.

### Protective Netting in Baseball Parks

Ohio State Rep. John Patterson, a Democrat from Geauga County, has introduced legislation that would require all major and minor baseball league teams in Ohio to install protective netting by 2021. It may not happen frequently, but over the years many people hit by balls suffered concussions, permanent brain damage, broken bones, loss of eyesight, and even death. Among the victims have been a number of children. NBC News found at least 808 reports of foul-ball injuries from 2012 to 2019. Currently, protective netting is typically limited to the area around the dugout. The new legislation would mandate netting from foul pole to foul pole.

### Andrew Brenner Proposes Redundant Law

Ohio has a lot of serious problems, but lack of free speech on college campuses is not one of them. Ohio Senator Andrew Brenner, R-Powell, has proposed a law (Senate Bill 40) that prohibits state universities from restricting free speech on college campuses. Brenner says his bill was inspired by events like the violent protests surrounding rightwing speaker Milo Yiannopoulos on the campus of the Univ. of California, Berkeley. Amidst security concerns, Yiannopoulos' speech ended up being cancelled. Under the Forming Open and Robust University Minds (FORUM) Act, restrictions for both left-wing and right-wing groups would be lifted. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) says the bill would remove autonomy from institutions. If passed, the AAUP stated, the state must provide more money for security when controversial speakers or groups (e.g., the KKK) come to a campus and pose a

danger to public safety. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Ohio has stated that it views the bill "redundant" because Ohio already has robust First Amendment rights. – Andy Brenner has a long track record as a conservative warrior in the culture wars. He has denounced K-12 schools as a form of "socialism." And we are still waiting to hear how the introduction of mandatory cursive writing in schools would help propel Ohio forward. Free speech and open minds are certainly a good thing, but it seems that the true aim of Brenner is to open the floodgates for right-wing ruffians and white supremacists on college campuses.

### **Buckeye Firearms Association Fires Jim Irvine**

Ohio's most powerful gun organization, the Buckeye Firearms Association (BFA), has fired its long-time leader and lobbyist, Jim Irvine. The move was political in nature. The BFA has been under increased pressure from an even more extreme rival organization, Ohio Gun Owners. Its "no-compromise" leader, Chris Dorr, has accused Irvine of being "the instrument of compromise" and the BFA of "betraying" gun owners by working with Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine on moderate proposals such as common-sense "Red-Flag Law." – According to the Columbus Dispatch, Dean Rieck is BFA's new Executive Director. He is in support of HB 178, which would allow anyone legally owning a firearm to carry it without passing a training course or submitting to a background check.



### **Skunk Cabbage**

Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) is the first flower that emerges in spring, often as early as February. Because of its ability to generate its own heat (thermogenesis), it can bloom even in snow. The plant loves soggy conditions, so look for it in wetlands. Individual plants have massive root systems, making it difficult to transplant, and can be up to 100 years old.

## **THE NATION**

### **White House Expands Travel Ban for Muslim Countries**

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Donald Trump endorsed a total travel ban for all Muslims who wanted to visit the U.S. Even the conservative courts thought that would constitute religious discrimination. The current iteration of the ban includes restrictions on 5 Muslim-majority countries (Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria & Yemen) as well as North Korea and Venezuela. Now the White has added 6 more countries to the list: Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan, and Tanzania. That brings the total to 13. Refugee and human-rights organizations point out that millions of asylum-seeking people are stranded in conflict zones. To disqualify them from consideration is, in their eyes, a xenophobic abuse of power: "It will harm refugees, alienate our allies, and give extremists propaganda for recruitment." One quarter of the entire population of Africa is now prevented from entering the U.S. Democrats criticized the ban as "clearly discriminatory against people from predominantly black and Muslim nations." There is no hard evidence of national security threats that would warrant the imposition of harsh travel restrictions. Current law already prohibits the import of terrorism, so this is primarily an election-year gimmick to rally the red base.

### **Trump Rolls Back Restrictions on Land Mines**

A 2014 Obama-era directive stopped the production and use of anti-personnel land mines because of humanitarian concerns. The Trump administration has now ended these restrictions. The new

directive, formally announced on Jan. 31, asserts that it is possible to deploy land mines "responsibly" to ensure the military's warfighting advantage while also limiting the risk of unintended harm to civilians. – The U.S. is one of 32 countries that have not signed the 1997 Ottawa Convention, commonly referred to as the Mine Ban Treaty. It prohibits the production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, and use of land mines. Among them are China, India, and Russia. 164 states are currently party to the treaty. The Trump administration's step was widely condemned. The EU said in a statement that the use of antipersonnel land mines "anywhere, anytime, and by any actor remains completely unacceptable." Many countries and organizations are worried about Trump's efforts to tear apart legal frameworks that took decades to build. – 59 countries around the world still have old land mines on their territory. They are deadly remnants from former wars and other conflicts. It is innocent civilians, and also domestic livestock and wild animals, that make up the vast majority of casualties.

### **Raising the Minimum Wage Prevents Suicides**

The link between the economy and people's physical and psychological wellbeing has long been clear, although some conservatives deny it. A new study published in the Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health has found that raising the minimum wage might significantly lower the depression and suicide rate in the nation. Raising the minimum wage by \$1 in each state might have saved more than 27,900 lives between 1990 and 2025. An increase of \$2 could have prevented more than 57,000 suicides. Other studies have also found a correlation between human health and the minimum wage. There is little doubt that raising the minimum wage can be an effective intervention to prevent suicides and suicide attempts, but not everyone agrees. The conservative American Enterprise Institute argues that the link is not clear-cut and says raising the minimum wage could cause an employer to cut someone's else's job, harming that person. The lead author of the study, Emory Univ. researcher John Kaufman, believes that an increased minimum wage (currently only \$7.25 at the federal level) offers other benefits as well, such as economic stability for children.

### **More Democrats Dropping Out of the Race**

The field of Democratic candidates for the office of president is getting smaller. On Jan. 10, self-help author and spiritual adviser Marianne Williamson, dropped out of the race and laid off her staff. She never was a top-tier candidate and faced criticism over some of her misinformed statements regarding vaccines and mental health. – On Jan. 13, New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, ended his campaign. His departure means that there is only one African-American person left in the field – former Massachusetts Senator Deval Patrick. Few people seem to know him, however. – Lastly, Maryland politician John K. Delaney left the race on Jan. 31. With their departure, the Democratic field has shrunk to 11.

### **An All-White Debate in Iowa**

Andrew Yang failed to qualify for the Jan. 14 debate in Des Moines, Iowa. (He will be back on stage on Feb. 7 for the debate in New Hampshire.) Other minority candidates have quit the race altogether. The result was an all-white stage: Biden, Buttigieg, Klobuchar, Sanders, Steyer & Warren. People of color have been effectively erased from the arena. This is an outcome that is scandalous. The Democratic Party claims to be inclusive and friendly to minorities, but the reality is different. This unfortunate situation will not motivate millions of people of color, incl. 32 million eligible Latino and 30 million African-American voters, to come out on Election Day and support the Democratic Party. Why should they when the party does a poor job representing them? If Trump is reelected on Nov. 3, it will be due in part to this grave strategic error in judgment.

### **Iowa Caucuses**

Days after the Feb. 2 Iowa caucus, there is still no winner. However, it seems that Pete Buttigieg won 26.7% of the Iowa delegates compared to Bernie Sanders with 25.4%. (Both have claimed victory.) Elizabeth Warren is in third place with 18.3%, followed by Joe Biden with 15.9% and Amy Klobuchar with 12.1%. National frontrunner Joe Biden was a clear loser after having run a tepid campaign. Yang, Steyer, Gabbard were hovering at around 1%

or less. Bloomberg skipped the Iowa caucuses and focused instead on Super Tuesday in March. – The Iowa caucuses were plagued by major technical difficulties that delayed the vote count for days. It was “unclear” when the full results could be released.

### **Joe Biden Was Not Part of the Civil-Rights Movement**

Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. has sometimes stated that he was “involved in the civil-rights movement” of the 1960s. Although he was born in 1942 and old enough to be involved, he was not. In moments when he was not out politicking, Biden has conceded that he was “not an activist.” “I was not out marching. I was not down in Selma. I was not anywhere else.” He was “a suburbanite kid” at the time and not part of any great movement. – Later in life, he collaborated with Southern segregationists in Congress for years. He has also been criticized harshly for his role in the tough-on-crime and war-on-drugs policies in the 1990s that led to the mass incarceration of millions of black and brown people. Because of his association with former President Barack Obama he may enjoy a certain reputation as a friend of African-American men and women, but his support among those between the ages 18 and 34 is not as strong as that of Senator Bernie Sanders.

### **Is America Ready for a Gay President?**

If nominated and elected, Pete Buttigieg of Iowa would be the first openly gay president in the history of the U.S. He is married to Chasten, his husband. Is the nation ready for this? On the one hand, two-thirds of Americans say someone’s sexual orientation does not matter. Belonging to the LGBT community has become mainstream. Educational institutions and businesses have long embraced diversity, equity, and inclusion. On the other hand, there are still evangelical Christians and other groups who oppose homosexuality in general and same-sex marriages in particular. Buttigieg’s response to this is that he understands the Bible, and especially Jesus Christ, to be advocating tolerance and acceptance, not rejection and condemnation. There is no question that America has come a long way to decriminalize “sodomy,” as male homosexuality was once called. But as is the case with women, African-Americans, and Jews, it is not entirely clear if full acceptance and “electability” has been achieved. There is still too much overt and covert discrimination going on. To this date, for instance, Ohio does not have a law that protects the LGBT community against discrimination in housing and in the job market.

### **Michael Bloomberg Courts African-Americans**

Democratic presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg used the occasion of Martin Luther King Jr. Day to woo African-American voters. The former New York City mayor spoke out against the long history of race-based economic and political segregation in the country. He stated, correctly, that “for black Americans there was nothing that white landowners, businesses, banks, and politicians might not take: their wages and their homes, their businesses and their wealth, their votes and their power, and even their lives.” One might also add: their freedom and dignity. His plan for “righting” the historic wrongs envisions a \$70 billion investment in the nation’s most underserved neighborhoods. Elements of the plan include, among other things, improved access to banks and housing, bias training for police officers, and elimination of voter disenfranchisement.

Bloomberg’s plan is not a bad one. It flirts with the concept of reparations. However, African-Americans have heard such promises before, and little has changed in their lives. Also, it might not be easy for them to trust a man who, in his former life as mayor of New York City, supported stop rampant discrimination against and incarceration of minorities. The police were not there to serve them. Instead, they behaved like a hostile occupation force. Although he has belatedly apologized for his punitive stop-and-frisk policy, African-American columnist Charles M. Blow wrote he could never ever forgive and forget what Bloomberg did to an entire generation of black and brown boys and men. Bloomberg must be aware that his reputation among African-Americans is irreparably damaged, so it seems that his plan is really geared toward winning over white liberals.

### **Amy Klobuchar Faces Questions about Her Time as Prosecutor**

Being “tough on crime” has launched the political career of many a former prosecutor, among them Amy Klobuchar from Minnesota. She is now facing allegations that she wrongly convicted a black teenager when she served as prosecutor in Minnesota’s Hennepin County from 1999 to 2006. The case involved the accidental shooting of an 11-year-old girl by gang members. 16-year-old Myon Burrell was accused and convicted of the crime although he has consistently maintained his innocence and no gun, fingerprints, or DNA has ever been tied to him. In addition, another man has confessed to the crime. The case largely rested on jailhouse informants who were promised reduced sentences and cash payments if they “cooperated” with police. Prosecutors are known to use dubious tactics to gain convictions at any cost, whether just or unjust. For too many, winning is everything. Following the investigative report by A.P., civil rights groups such as the NAACP have called on Klobuchar to immediately suspend her campaign for president, given her role in sending an innocent teenager to jail for life. Burrell is now 33 and still in prison. – Senator Kamala Harris of California faced similar questions about her role as prosecutor before she dropped out of the race.

### **U.S. Manufacturing in Contraction**

There was a time when manufacturing was king in America, but the trend has been downward since WW II that ended in 1945. Like other post-industrial nations, the U.S. is very much a service economy. Currently, only between 8% and 8.4% of all jobs are in manufacturing, and the sector continues to shrink. In Ohio, about 12.5% of the jobs are in manufacturing, but here too the sector is contracting. In December 2019, the nation shed another 12,000 manufacturing jobs. Exacerbating the structural problem are Trump’s trade tariffs. Anticipated large export orders did not materialize, and production decreased. Both farmers and factory workers are important voters for Trump, but both sectors are obviously in decline. There is little a president can do to reverse such megatrends.

### **Dot-Org Public Interest Registry for Sale**

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) will decide this month whether the private-equity firm Ethos Capital can buy the Public Interest Registry (PIR) for \$1.1 billion. Numerous non-profit organizations use the dot-org suffix (as well as some for-profit companies and individuals), and they are worried that the cost of registering will skyrocket as Ethos will attempt to recoup its investment. About 700 national organizations oppose the sale, among them the Girl Scouts and the YMCA, Sierra Club, and Greenpeace. Worldwide, there are some 10 million dot-org names registered. Ethos Capital and the Internet Society, which runs the registry now, say the concern is misplaced and promised to keep the prices “low.” – Domain names are less prominent these days as more people use websites and apps to access information, but they are still important for email addresses, billboards, and other forms of advertising. An easy-to-remember name is worth millions of dollars.

### **African-American Prosecutor Sues White Legal Establishment**

St. Louis’ African-American prosecutor Kimberly Gardner has sued the city’s largely white legal establishment. After being elected in 2016, she took steps to make the police department more accountable and transparent. The police force is deeply mistrusted by many in the African-American community, which makes up half of the city’s population. She created a list of more than 50 police officers who lacked credibility because of misconduct or other reasons. And she attempted to institute changes in the city’s “fundamentally racist” criminal-justice system. The conservative backlash was fierce. She was demonized and vilified by the police union, by the white legal establishment, and by state Republicans. Some have called for her removal from office “by force or by choice.”

It is hard for outsiders to fully know and understand all intricacies of this case. Perhaps Gardner has made a minor misstep or two. She says she did nothing wrong. But according to the New York Times, this is just “one of many flash points around the country between the traditional law-enforcement establishment and a new wave of prosecutors who were elected after promising to rein in police misconduct, send fewer nonviolent offenders to prison, and repair relationships with minority communities.” Gardner has the support of other progressive prosecutors around the country. “The

keepers of the status quo that brought us mass incarceration, the overcriminalization of poor black and brown people, tough sentences, no redemption and no second chances won't give up their power quietly," according to Baltimore's chief prosecutor, Marilyn Mosby.

The battle has now reached a fierce climax. Using an old 1871 law originally created to restrict the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, Kimberly Gardner has accused city officials and others of "a racially motivated conspiracy to deny the civil rights of racial minorities."

### **Banking While Black**

When Sauntore Thomas, a black man in Detroit, wanted to open a savings account and make a deposit at a TCF Bank branch, the assistant branch manager called police. Thomas, 44, had won a race-discrimination suit against his former employer and was in possession of a significant amount of money in the form of checks. The bank questioned where the money was from. It also stated, inaccurately, that the checks were "void" and filed a police report against Thomas that alleged check fraud. Thomas had no difficulties opening an account and depositing the checks at another bank the very same day. He has since filed a racial-discrimination lawsuit against TCF Financial Corporation. – The story first appeared in the Detroit Free Press and has quickly attracted national attention. (The New York Times reported about it on 1/26.) Being stopped and even arrested for "walking while black," "driving while black," "banking while black," etc., is a common experience among African-Americans to this day.

### **"The Base"**

"The Base" is a paramilitary white supremacist group that wants to overthrow the government, start "a race war," and create a white "ethno-state." White supremacists often use the word "Boogaloo" when referring to that war, which they view as inevitable. The group started online in 2018, but has since become more active in the physical world. It has also shifted from merely discussing acts of violence to assembling assault rifles, stockpiling ammunition, conducting target practice, and making improvised explosive devices. Three members of the group were arrested last month in Maryland: Patrick Jordan Mathews, 27, Brian Mark Lemley Jr., 33, and William Garfield Bilbrough IV, 19. Only one day later, another trio of "Base" members was arrested by the FBI in Georgia: Michael John Helterbrand, 25, Luke Austin Lane, 21, and Jacob Kaderli, 19. The Georgia members stand accused of planning to assassinate a married couple associated with the Antifa movement, along with other felony charges.

### **Borden Declares Bankruptcy**

After Dean Foods, Borden Dairy Co. has become the 2<sup>nd</sup> major milk producer to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Milk consumption in the U.S. has dropped by 6% since 2015 as more customers opt for dairy-free options such as almond, soy, and oat milk. But Borden also struggled with other problems, incl. pension & retirement obligations. – Borden, headquartered in Dallas, operates 12 milk processing plants and distributes nearly 500 million gallons of milk annually to grocery stores, food services, schools, restaurants, and hospitals. It had \$1.18 billion in sales in 2018, but its losses were almost \$15 million. Borden hopes to emerge from bankruptcy and a reorganization within 6 months or less.

### **Pier 1 Is Closing Half of Its Stores**

Pier 1 Imports, the home décor company, is closing 450 of its 942 stores. It will also shutter some of its distribution centers and lay off people at its corporate headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas. Details have not yet been announced, and it is not clear if any of the Central Ohio stores will be affected. Store-wide sales in some places may be an indicator of plans to close. Sales fell in the most recent quarter by 13% to \$358 million, and the company reported a net loss of \$589 million. Both online and brick-and-mortar competition (e.g., Ikea) have hurt Pier 1 Import. Some investors expect a bankruptcy filing.



### **Discounter Aldi Continues to Expand**

The discount grocer Aldi ended the year 2019 with nearly 2,000 stores in 36 U.S. states. It plans to add 500 more by 2022. The estimated revenue was \$18.4 billion, up from \$16.8 billion in 2017. Clearly, Aldi is doing something right. These days, their new and remodeled stores have expanded fruit-and-vegetable sections, organic foods, fresh meats, artisan products, and store-baked goods. The stores also offer a limited selection of clothes, toys & books for children. Aldi is active online as well, offering a grocery-delivery service as well as same-day beer and wine delivery. The grocer is able to keep prices low by offering mostly private-label products and a narrower spectrum of items, by asking customers to bring their own bags and package their own groceries, and by advertising less glamorously. Aldi's national market share is still small compared to Kroger and Walmart, Costco and Meijer, but it is growing. The larger rivals are anxiously watching the newcomer. For many families with budgets, Aldi has become their primary shopping destination. – The local Aldi store in Delaware is located at 973 Sunbury Rd. (36/37 East).

### **Warren Buffett Is Giving Up on Newspapers**

Billionaire Warren Buffett is getting out of newspapers. He is selling all of Berkshire Hathaway's publications to Lee Enterprises for \$140 million, incl. the Buffalo News in New York, the Omaha World-Herald in Nebraska, the Tulsa World in Oklahoma, and the Winston-Salem Journal in North Carolina. The deal covers a total of 31 dailies in 10 states as well as 49 paid weekly publications with digital sites and 32 other print products. Once approved, the proposed deal will double the audience size of Lee Enterprises. Lee says it expects to eliminate about \$20 million in annual expenses.

### **The Dollar Is 500 Years Old**

The most widely used currently in the world, the US dollar, can be traced back to a tiny town in Germany. It was in Joachimsthal (Joachim's Valley) in the Bohemian Erzgebirge ("Ore Mountains") where Count Hieronymus Schlick minted the first silver dollar in 1520. The count named his new coin "Joachimsthaler," which later became shortened to "Thaler" or "Taler." The German word "Thal" or "Tal" (valley, "dale") is the etymological root of the word. As many as 12 million silver dollars may have been minted and quickly spread around Europe and beyond. Many languages and cultures accepted the coin, calling it "daler," "dalur," "taller," "talar," "taliro," "tallero," "tolar," and so on. It was Dutch colonists who brought the coin to America in the 17<sup>th</sup> century where they called it "daler," which became "dollar." The US-\$ became the official currency in 1792. – Today, Joachimsthal is no longer German. It is part of the Czech Republic, called "Jáchymov," and has become UNESCO's newest World Heritage site. If you ever travel there, don't fail to visit the Royal Mint House museum. Guided tours include a visit to the museum's extensive underground complex where once coins were minted.

### **The Righting**

The political right and the political left live in parallel universes. How they think and talk is very different. That is why in 2017 journalist Howard Polskin launched a newsletter and website he called "The Righting" ([www.therighting.com](http://www.therighting.com)). It aggregates articles from right-leaning publications and sites and shares them with moderates and liberals. As curator he is aware that by doing so he runs the risk of amplifying far-right messages, but he believes that it is essential for educated persons to understand the world view of the right and to know where their ideas come from. A recent peak at his stories yielded information claiming that \*the Australian fires are the result of arson, not climate change; \*Greta Thunberg needs mental treatment; \*Muslims are not peaceful people; \*Bernie Sanders is a dangerous man; \*the Washington Post represents the deep state; \*Democrats want to annihilate Israel; \*Democrats support terrorism; and \*Dems are rooting for a coronavirus pandemic.

### **More Americans Feel Lonely**

63% of men and 58% of women feel left out, isolated, and lonely in America, according to a new report by health insurer Cigna. Feelings of loneliness were prevalent across generations, with younger people feeling especially estranged. The report, which uses the 80-point UCLC Loneliness Scale, found an increase of nearly 13% since 2018. Loneliness is linked to health issues such as anxiety and depression. Disconnected students and workers are more likely to miss work due to stress or illness. For retired seniors, loneliness has also been associated with cognitive decline and heart disease. The report notes that conditions in the workplace can make a difference. A good work-life balance, shared goals, in-person connections, and deep conversations can increase job satisfaction and reduce loneliness. Volunteering, joining a club, political activism, or having a pet can also provide a sense of purpose. – Human compassion, warmth, and companionship are indeed in short supply these days. Social media cannot compensate for the absence of meaningful human contact. In fact, the Cigna report notes that the sense of isolation and loneliness is highest (73%) among heavy users of social media.

### **1.5 Million Students Homeless**

More than 1.5 million public-school students nationwide reported being homeless at some point during the 2017/18 school year, according to the National Center for Homeless Education at the Univ. of North Carolina at Greensboro, which is funded by the Dept. of Education. Compared to the 2015/16 school year, this was a 15% increase and the highest number in more than a decade. Texas reported the largest rise; its number of homeless students doubled to more than 231,000. The 137% increase in students staying in “unsheltered” places such as abandoned buildings and cars was particularly alarming. – The report did not go into the reasons for this alarming trend. However, experts blame several factors. Natural disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires were a contributing cause. However, the biggest issue seems to be lack of affordable housing. Many families and students do not report homelessness because of stigma and fear that they would be separated. Housing instability is associated with poor health and developmental delays in children.

### **Suicide Rate Highest Since 1941**

The latest figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate a slight decrease in cancer, drug overdoses, and homicide deaths in 2018, which is good news. However, the suicide death rate hit its highest level in almost 80 years. Suicides with guns rose by nearly 600, to more than 24,400 annually.

### **Summit on Human Trafficking**

President Trump held a White House summit on human trafficking on Jan. 31 and announced an executive order to combat it. The initiative will establish a new position on the Domestic Policy Council devoted to trafficking, create a new website with resources, and mandate the procurement of better methods for quantifying the problem. It certainly is a positive development that sex, labor, and other forms of trafficking have caught the attention of the president. More awareness of the issue is a good first step.

Activists, however, noted the lack of a concrete action plan and requisite financial resources to combat human trafficking. They also criticized the White House for its singular focus on domestic trafficking and American citizens. Vulnerable immigrants are excluded from consideration although they are often the ones most at risk. Several advocacy organizations declined participation in the summit after learning that it would be a one-way street and that their input was not solicited. The executive director of Freedom Network USA, for instance, pointed out that the Trump administration withheld a \$13.5 million grant to provide housing to victims of human trafficking after learning that a portion of the money might also support noncitizens. President Trump, it seems, is not interested in combating the scourge of “human” trafficking; he is only interested in fighting against the exploitation of voting “citizens.” Another way of putting it is to say that in his view only citizens are fully “human” and entitled to the protection of the federal government.

### **Many Autistic Children Undiagnosed**

According to new findings published in “Autism Research,” about one-fourth of children with autism spectrum disorder fall through the cracks. The researchers at Rutgers Univ. analyzed records of some 266,000 8-year-old children in 11 states and found that 4,550 (1.7%) of them met the diagnostic criteria for autism. Of those children, 1,135 (24.9%) had not been diagnosed with the disorder before. Children of color were more likely to be underdiagnosed than white children. – Autism is the nation’s fast-growing developmental disability. The causes of autism remain unknown. Some studies have suggested a link to chemicals in air pollution, pesticides and anti-depressants in pregnancy. Contrary to fraudulent and debunked misinformation created by Andrew Wakefield, there is absolutely no evidence of a correlation between vaccines and autism. Dr. Wakefield was stripped of his right to practice medicine in Great Britain.



### **Rush Limbaugh Has Lung Cancer**

Conservative talk-show host Rush Limbaugh has revealed that he has advanced lung cancer. He is known for his love of cigars. In 2015, he questioned the link between tobacco smoking and cancer. Limbaugh also has a history of drug addiction and several other health issues, incl. obesity and deafness. The Rush Limbaugh show, which debuted in 1988, will continue to be broadcast every weekday from 12-3 pm. However, the host indicated that he would certain days off to undergo testing and treatment. Limbaugh is a staunch ally of Trump and, like the president, has said countless offensive, profane, and hate-filled things against women and minorities. He also is a climate-change denier. However, he remains a popular and well-paid talk-show host.

During his annual State of the Union address on Feb. 4, President Trump awarded Limbaugh the nation’s highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which was created by John F. Kennedy in 1963. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) called the ceremony “nauseating” and Limbaugh “a virulent racist.” It is certainly true that Rush Limbaugh is in a different league than Martin Luther King Jr., Toni Morrison, Rosa Parks, Elie Wiesel, Simon Wiesenthal, Oprah Winfrey, and other fighters for civil rights and minority rights who received the Medal of Freedom in the past.

Some television viewers were no doubt shocked to see how much the bearded and white-haired Limbaugh has aged. He looked 79 instead of 69, his biological age. Limbaugh has “stage 4” lung cancer, which usually means it has spread, is incurable, and terminal.

### **New Rules for Emotional Support Animals**

The U.S. Dept. of Transportation has proposed new rules for service animals and emotional support animals (ESAs) allowed on commercial airplanes. In recent years, the use of ESAs has skyrocketed. People have arrived in airports with miniature horses, pigs, birds, rabbits, rats, snakes, and other untrained pets. Among them were people who simply wanted to avoid the hefty fees normally charged for traveling pets, typically \$100 one way. The DOT has now decided to tighten the rules and only permit specially trained dogs as service animals. Emotional-Support Animals would be banned altogether unless the airline permits them. The airline industry and many veteran groups are pleased with the recommendation. “The days of Noah’s Ark in the air are hopefully coming to an end,” said the president of the Association of Flight Attendants. Some advocates for the handicapped say the new rules are misguided and make it harder for the disabled to travel. Many people depend on trained or untrained emotional-support animals to get through their day. If passengers have proper medical documentation, airlines and other entities should not dismiss their special needs as frivolous. Under the

new rules, however, it is entirely up to the airline whether to allow an animal to fly for a passenger's emotional support. – The public has 60 days to comment on the proposed changes, which were announced Jan. 22.

### **Nelson Perez Replaces Archbishop of Philadelphia**

Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia is stepping down after reaching the age of 75, the traditional retirement age for bishops. Appointed by Pope Benedict XVI in 2011, he is admired by conservatives and traditionalists and has been among Pope Francis' sharpest and most prominent critics. He is a fierce opponent of gay rights and has advocated for the denial of communion to Catholic politicians who back abortion rights. Succeeding him is Nelson Perez, 58, the current Roman Catholic bishop of Cleveland and an ally of Francis. The appointment, effective Feb. 18, makes him the first Hispanic archbishop of Philadelphia. It also signals Francis' strong intent to change the ideological direction of the Catholic Church in America. The archdiocese in Philadelphia is traditionally a cardinal's seat. Chaput was never elevated to that position, but it is possible that Perez might someday one of the cardinals who select the next pope.

### **"A Very Stable Genius" (2020)**

Investigative reporters Philipp Rucker and Carol SD. Leonnig from the Washington Post have written a new book entitled "A Very Stable Genius: Donald J. Trump's Testing of America" (Penguin 2020, 480 pp.). Released Jan. 21, it is obviously an attempt to understand the 45<sup>th</sup> president and the decision-making process in his administration. The book is based on hundreds of hours of interviews with more than 200 sources, corroborated by memos, calendars, diary entries, video footage, and the like. The picture that emerges is not a reassuring one. At critical times, the president was dangerously uninformed or underinformed about a great number of things, incl. world geography, world history, and international law. Chaos, scandal, and bluster were omnipresent throughout the first 3 years of his impulsive reign. It is also clear that the president is increasingly disconnected from informed experts and professionals, whose advice he shuns. The only constant was Trump's pathological need for blind loyalty and constant affirmation, at the expense of facts and truth.

### **John Bolton's New Book**

John Bolton's forthcoming book, "The Room Where It Happened: A White House Memoir" (Simon & Schuster, 528 pp.), is said to undercut President Trump's claim that there is no connection between withholding military aid to Ukraine and investigating the Bidens. His unpublished manuscript, which he submitted to the White House for review in December, also voices grave concerns over the fact that Trump has embraced authoritarian leaders such as Putin, Xi, and Erdogan and granted them personal favors. Trump has also praised other tyrants such as Bolsonaro, el-Sisi, Hussein, Kim Jong-un, and Qaddafi. Although the book has not yet been published (it is scheduled to come out March 17), it is already an Amazon bestseller. However, it is not inconceivable that the American public will never see Bolton's account because there is the possibility that it will be suppressed by the powers that be in Congress and the White House. The White House has sought to block the book, claiming it contains classified information. – The memoir's title, by the way, is a quote from the musical "Hamilton," in which Aaron Burr sings "The Room Where It Happens." He later kills Alexander Hamilton in a duel.

### **The 10 Most Checked-out Books**

New York Public Library has compiled a list of the 10 most checked-out books in its 125-year history. Half of them are children's books or books for young readers. Other books are often school assignments. Here is the list:

- "The Snowy Day" by Ezra Jack Keats
- "The Cat in the Hat" by Dr. Seuss
- "1984" by George Orwell
- "Where the Wild Things Are" by Maurice Sendak
- "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee
- "Charlotte's Web" by E. B. White
- "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury
- "How to Win Friends and Influence People" by Dale Carnegie
- "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" by J. K. Rowling

- "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle.

### **"American Dirt" by Jeanine Cummins**

A new novel by Jeanine Cummins (out Jan. 21) has received much praise and criticism. It seems to be a work that mirrors our age of anxiety. The novel starts in Acapulco, Mexico, where 8-year-old Luca lives. His father, Sebastián, works as a journalist, his mother, Lydia, runs a bookstore. One day, during a family celebration, a drug cartel shows up and kills 16 members of the family, among them Luca's father. It was Sebastián's report on the head of the drug cartel that sparked the mass execution. Miraculously, Lydia and Luca survive, but suddenly they find themselves to be refugees and migrants. They have joined thousands of other Latinos who fear for their lives and try to cross into the U.S. It is an arduous journey of more than 1,500 miles. Cummins describes violence, sexual brutality, and kidnapping. But there are also encounter random acts of kindness during their ordeal. This is no doubt a compassionate novel, perhaps even capable of changing hearts and transforming inhumane policies. Half a million have been printed, and Oprah Winfrey has picked it as her book-club choice.

However, the novel has also been criticized for several reasons. Some called it shallow and predictable, written in flawed, easy-to-follow page-turner language. Others have called her work inaccurate and inauthentic although Cummins was born in Spain, had a Spanish mother, and identifies as both white and Latina. Her description of Mexico as a lawless, corrupt, and violent country run by drug cartels has been called stereotypical and sensationalized. (The fact is, however, that there were 34,000 reported homicides in Mexico in 2019, many of them gang-related. A total of 60,000 people are missing in Mexico's drug wars.) And, inevitably, the charges of "cultural appropriation," "exploitation," and "trauma porn" have been leveled against her. Cummins readily concedes that she does not know if she was the best person to tell this important story, but it is hard to see neocolonial imperialism in her work. The fact is she researched her novel extensively on both sides of the border and consulted plenty of works about Mexico and migration by other authors. Her intentions were good. She did her level best to produce a book that reflects the actual experience of Mexican migrants. Should she have remained silent and not told this deeply empathetic story of a humanitarian and existential crisis? The novel teaches a timeless and universal lesson. We are but all minutes and steps away from calamity, and few of us are prepared because we take too many things for granted.

A historical parallel to "American Dirt" may be Harriet Elisabeth Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (1852). The abolitionist novel changed history, but it was similarly attacked for its emotional simplicity and for ethnic stereotypes. George Orwell called it the quintessential "good bad book." Of course, the sharpest critics were the Southern slave-owners. Who are Jeanine Cummins' sharpest critics? Whose interests are they defending? Why are they so eager to shut down the conversation, silence the author, and distract from the refugee problem. "Community Matters" will tackle and dissect the novel soon and come up with its own independent assessment. For the moment, we agree with the Feb. issue of "BookPage": "American Dirt' is an important book for the current political moment, providing readers with a better understanding of the motives behind such journeys at a time when migrants are readily and easily vilified."



### **Jim Lehrer (1934-2020)**

Broadcast journalist and former host of the nightly PBS NewsHour Jim Lehrer has died at the age of 85. He was also a highly respected debate moderator. In addition he wrote a series of novels, plays, and memoirs. His debut novel, "Viva Max" (1966), was made into a movie. Raised in Texas, Lehrer started his career in Dallas

before working as a correspondent in Washington, D.C. He was known as an objective, balanced, and fair newspaperman, although his show was also at times criticized for refusing to take stances and render judgments.

### **Elijah Cummings Leaves Behind Memoir**

Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Maryland) died in 2019 at the age of 68, but left a nearly finished memoir. His widow has now completed the manuscript with the help of Jim Dale. Entitled "We're Better Than This: My Fight for the Future of Our Democracy" will be published June 30 by Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins (320 pp., \$28.99). The book is part memoir, part a call-to-action. – Cummings' widow, Maya Rockey Moore Cummings, ran in a special primary on Feb. 4 for the seat left open by her husband's death, but lost against Kweisi Mfume.

### **The Ideology of Ayn Rand**

Here is an interesting letter to the editor, written by Barbara Lipkin and published in the Columbus Dispatch on 1/19:

*"When I first read 'Atlas Shrugged' for a high-school assignment, I was so impressed with Ayn Rand's philosophy of strength, independence, and forging through life on one's own that I reread the book a few more times in the next few years. The final time I was a young mother, and as I read, I realized that there were no children in Rand's cast of characters, no old people; no one was sick or disabled. Where were they? How were they supposed to manage on their own?"*

*"That's when I became a Democrat, even a socialist. It finally dawned on me that total self-reliance is fine as long as you are young, healthy, and strong. But no one gets through this life on her own. It takes a village to support a community, to raise and educate children, to care for the sick and elderly. Who wants to live in a world where the weak are thrust aside and forgotten? Rand's philosophy could never be mine. Her words allowed me to crystallize my own thinking. I grew up."*

### **rules are for suckers**

only losers follow rules  
they are but a bunch of fools

successful men break the rules  
brazen winners use all tools

we hate restraints of any kind  
and pay policemen to be blind

we lie cheat bribe and steal  
in our quest to seal the deal

all is forgiven if you win  
losing is the greatest sin

to the strong belongs the future  
in the dust we leave the moocher

we are the movers and the shakers  
the nation's bold and fearless makers

the world is owned by daring heroes  
not by law-abiding zeros

### **Gold Price Up**

Trouble in the Middle East caused the price of gold to go up sharply and reach as much as \$1,591 per ounce. It was the highest level since April 2013. Nervous investors often consider gold a safe haven in times of escalation and crisis. They are now fully in defensive mode, fearing the worst – military war and economic disruption. Military hostilities may or may not have ended after an Iranian missile strike against American forces, but the price of gold is likely to stay above \$1,500 for the foreseeable future. The emerging coronavirus has the potential of derailing major segments of world trade.

## **THE WORLD**

### **Corruption Pervasive Across the Globe**

The world has made little or no progress against corruption in the public sector. For several countries, incl. the U.S., Transparency International's ranking even decreased. The score for the U.S. is 69 (of a possible score of 100), which places the U.S. in 23<sup>rd</sup> position among 180 countries and territories worldwide. The Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden rank highest, along with Singapore and New Zealand. At the bottom are countries such as Somalia with a score of 9 (the lowest), S. Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Venezuela, Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Afghanistan, N. Korea, Libya, Haiti, and others. Canada's "Corruption Perception Index" score is 77 (#12) whereas Mexico's CIP score is only 29 (#130). – The damage that endemic corruption does is often underestimated. If millions, billions, and trillions of public funds are diverted into private hands, it means that community projects such as domestic infrastructure, schools, and hospitals are chronically underfunded. Entire societies suffer while a handful of kleptocratic billionaires enjoy a life in luxury.

### **Ukrainian Jetliner Brought Down by Missiles**

The Ukrainian jetliner that crashed on Jan. 8 in Iran minutes after take-off may have been brought down by two surface-to-air missiles. All passengers and crew members aboard the Boeing 737 were killed. Among the 176 people aboard were 57 Canadian nationals. There was strong evidence that missiles were to blame, according to Canadian and U.S. sources. However, for a while it was not clear who or what was behind the attack. It could have been an unintentional mistake at a time when tensions were heightened after the assassination of Iranian General Suleimani by U.S. forces, it could have been mechanical failure, or it could have been a terrorist attack. For 3 days, Iran forcefully denied responsibility and human error, calling it "impossible." However, the country eventually admitted that it inadvertently fired 2 missiles against the civilian aircraft and apologized to the families of the victims.

### **Taiwan Reelects President Tsai Ing-wen**

Pro-democracy president Tsai Ing-wen defeated populist mayor Han Kuo-yu with 57.2% of the votes. Han ran on a platform of closer ties to Mainland China while Tsai is a proponent of continued Taiwanese independence from Beijing.

### **Brexit Now in Effect**

In a 2016 referendum, Britain decided to leave the European Union (EU). After several years of intense drama, dysfunction, and paralysis, the day for "Brexit" came on Jan. 31. Nationalistic "leavers" praise the increased independence and prosperity that the new pathway is said to usher in, pro-European "remainers" worry that the country will be left poor and isolated on the world stage. Any real effects won't be felt for quite some time because there will be a transition period between Jan. 2020 and Jan. 2021. Brexit is not popular in Scotland and Northern Ireland, which adds another layer of uncertainty. Brexit is also widely rejected among younger people and has created a lasting generational rift.

### **Middle East Peace Plan a Charade**

Both Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the American President, Donald Trump, are facing serious legal problems as well as upcoming elections. Could it be that the main purpose of their much-anticipated plan to resolve the intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict was to divert attention from their difficulties and to create the illusion that something positive is happening? It sure seems this way because the plan is not a serious effort to forge a sustainable peace. The Palestinians themselves were not involved in the peace plan, which is very favorable to Israel. They were not even consulted. When President Trump revealed the plan on Jan. 28, flanked by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and others, there was no Palestinian leader present. The plan was dead on arrival the minute the White House formally recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, a decision condemned by many in the Middle East. Israel got everything it asked for in the plan. It gets to annex the West Bank and gains sovereignty over the entire Jordan Valley. In addition, it

retains control over Jerusalem. Netanyahu called it "a great plan for Israel," and he is right. Palestinian leaders have stated that under these circumstances they cannot and will not consent to the plan in its current iteration. The so-called peace plan is not "a historic moment." It is a charade and a land grab that will do nothing to bridge and heal the historic rift between Israel and the Palestinians. In fact, it deepens the dispossession of the Palestinians through continued occupation, oppression, and annexation, and by imposing discriminatory laws for separate groups living in the same territory. For Palestinians, the plan is not a new dawn but the continuation of a darkness that has hung over them for decades. The overwhelming majority of Arab leaders feel the same way.



### **Holland or the Netherlands?**

For decades, the terms "Holland" and "the Netherlands" have been used interchangeably, even by the Dutch government itself. However, this has now changed. Technically, the Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of 12 provinces, only 2 of which make up "Holland." It is true that the region of Holland has contributed the most to the country's economy and wealth, but to ignore the other 10 provinces is perceived by people who live in these regions as a slight. The peoples of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland don't like to be called "English" either. Effective Jan. 1, all branches of the Dutch government will now use the term "Netherlands." The branding campaign includes an updated NL logo that replaces the old "Holland tulip" (see image above). It may be hard to see for the uninitiated, but the letters NL are supposed to resemble tulip leaves. The color orange is a reference to the Dutch royal family. It was William of Orange (Willem van Oranje) who led the Dutch to religious and political independence from Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Global Rate of Sepsis Alarming High**

The BBC has reported that the number of sepsis cases and resulting deaths is more than twice as high as previously thought. Sepsis is also called "blood poisoning." New research published in the "Lancet," which considered medical records from 195 countries, found about 49 million cases and 11 million deaths per year. That rate is higher than that of cancer. 85% of the known cases are in low-and-moderate-income countries, but it is also common in industrial first-world countries. Children are especially at risk. – Sepsis can be prevented by practicing good hygiene and avoiding bacterial, viral, and fungal infections.



### **A New Virus Coronavirus from China**

Doctors have begun to see a new type of viral pneumonia in people who worked in or visited the Chinese city of Wuhan. Close to 40,000 cases have so far been identified and over 800 people have died, but researchers fear that the actual number of undetected and undiagnosed cases could be as high as 100,000. There is also a huge backlog of unprocessed and undetermined cases. The unknown 2019-nCoV (novel Coronavirus) has prompted worries about a pandemic, in part because it is similar to SARS, which infected 8,000 and killed 800. The viral disease has quickly spread to other Chinese cities and to at least 23 countries in Asia, Europe, and America. On Jan. 30, the

WHO declared the coronavirus "a public health emergency of international concern."

International cooperation is badly needed, but Trump's "America First" policy treats global-health security not as a necessity. It has cut back the CDC's overseas efforts, discontinued a monitoring program for new viral threats, and eliminated the office of pandemic response. It is not certain at all that the U.S. would be prepared to handle a large outbreak. Shortages of supplies and hospital beds are to be expected. In addition, currently the CDC is the only national agency with the facilities to test for the new coronavirus. It takes up to a week to get the test results back. What is urgently needed is the ability to test suspected patients at the point where personal health care is provided. More designated facilities to safely quarantine suspected cases under medical supervision might also make sense. In addition, it should not have to take years for new vaccines to be developed. That process must be much speedier than it currently is.

### **Advocate for Monarch Butterflies Dead in Mexico**

One of Mexico's foremost and fiercest advocates for the monarch butterfly has vanished. Homero Gómez González, 50, was last seen and heard from on Jan. 14. It is widely believed that his disappearance may be linked to his activism against illegal logging in El Rosario, one of a dozen or so butterfly sanctuaries in Mexico. – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that between 1990 and 2015 a billion butterflies have vanished due to habitat loss, pesticides, climate change, and other factors. Monarch butterflies are one of many endangered and threatened species.

Update: Gómez' body has been found. The murdered body of a second man associated with the butterfly-sanctuary movement has also been located.

### **Former Pope Benedict XVI vs. Pope Francis**

Former pope Benedict XVI has co-authored a book with a fellow conservative, Cardinal Robert Sarah from Africa, that includes an ardent defense of celibacy for Catholic priests. Abstinence from marriage and sexuality must remain a cornerstone criterion for priestly ministry, according to Benedict. The current Pope, Francis, also defends celibacy, but exceptions are currently under consideration to allow the ordination of men already married before they enter priesthood. At the time of his retirement in 2013, Benedict vowed to keep silent on key theological issues to give Francis room and not undermine his papacy. The book, "From the Depths of Our Hearts: Priesthood, Celibacy, and the Crisis of the Catholic Church," is coming out in the U.S. (Ignatius Press) on March 12, according to amazon.com.

There are reports that Benedict XVI has requested to have his name withdrawn from the new book as co-author. However, his name as a contributor remains and the text remains unchanged. There are also reports that San Francisco-based Ignatius Press is refusing to remove Benedict's name: "Ignatius Press considers this a coauthored publication" because it contains not only a chapter penned by Benedict but also a co-written introduction and conclusion. Money may be part of Ignatius Press' calculation, but this is also a political decision that signals support for Benedict's orthodoxy and enmity for Francis' openness to reforms. It is no secret that Benedict XVI is a traditionalist in the old European style whereas Francis, from Argentina, is more Christ-like with respect to helping and embracing the poor, sick, migrants, and even gays & lesbians. Both popes have strong defenders. In the U.S., Francis has been never fully accepted as pope. Cardinal Sarah from Guinea is a far-right ideologue who has long been pushed by the Church's right wing as a contender to be pope. This controversy, however, is likely to have killed his chances. Some have accused him of taking advantage of a feeble, old man who may no longer be in control of all his faculties. Former Pope Benedict XVI is 92.

### **Who Is the Most Innovative Classical Composer?**

Composers such as Bach, Haydn, and Mozart were incredibly creative, prolific, and influential. But when it comes to avant-gardist experimentation and innovation, their names are unlikely to be called first. The classical period between 1750 and 1800 was not known for radical novelty. Beethoven's revolutionary work may have a better chance of being nominated. And obviously Romantic composers such as Brahms and Mendelssohn would also

rank high. – A team of South Korean researchers from KAIST has now come up with a name that may surprise even the experts. They scored some 900 piano compositions written by 19 composers between 1700 and 1900 for their “novelty” and uniqueness, as opposed to musical language and vocabulary they “shared” with other composers. Using computer calculations, it was Russian composer Sergey Rachmaninoff who rose to the top.

Rachmaninoff is a very fine composer of beautiful piano music and piano concerts. However, he stands at the end of a long line of pioneering composers such as Chopin, Liszt, Scriabin, and Debussy. There are definitely derivative elements in his oeuvre. Also, the list of 19 selected composers of piano music excluded those who did not write for the piano, e.g., Verdi and Puccini, Mahler and Strauß. They were equally innovative artists. So, it might not be wise to accept the conclusion of the Korean research team at face value. They conducted an interesting thought experiment, but the methodology was perhaps flawed. It is highly unlikely that their word is final.



### **“Honeyland,” a Beekeeper’s Tale**

“Honeyland” is a Macedonian documentary by directors Tamara Kotevska and Ljubomir Stefanov. Nominated for two Oscars, it follows the humble and peaceful life of beekeeper Hatidze Muratova who practices beekeeping traditions that go back centuries. Her golden rule is: leave half of the honey for the bees. But her life is upended when new neighbors arrive. They are greedy, obnoxious, quarrelsome, and foul-mouthed. When the father, Hussein Sam, takes a stab at beekeeping himself, things get ugly. The New York Times calls the film “an environmental allegory of the earth’s wonders being ravaged by the consequences of human greed.” The documentary premiered at the Sundance Film Festival last year where it came out at the top with 3 awards. Film critic A. O. Scott named it the best movie of 2019. – The documentary, in Turkish and Macedonian with English subtitles, will be shown at Gateway Film Center in Columbus later this month.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**



### **Sunrise Movement Endorses Bernie Sanders**

The Sunrise Movement has endorsed Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont as president in a landslide. More than 75% of the young climate activists backed Sanders while about 20% chose Elizabeth Warren as their favorite. Sunrise’s signature policy is the ambitious proposal known as the Green New Deal, co-sponsored by AOC. The organization was once a small collection of college students, but has since grown to 318 chapters nationwide, with more than 10,000 members. The group says it is “building an army of young people to stop climate change and create millions of good jobs in the process.” That sounds like a program that has merit. The closest chapter to Delaware seems to be in Dublin, Ohio. Is it time to start a Delaware County chapter? (To learn more, visit [www.sunrisemovement.org](http://www.sunrisemovement.org).) – Sanders has a \$16.3 trillion plan for a Green New Deal that would eliminate fossil fuel in the U.S. by 2050. In addition to Sunrise, almost all progressive groups are endorsing Sanders while Warren seems to have lost momentum. Dream Defenders, a group that focuses on criminal-justice reform, also backed Sanders in January.

### **New Jersey Builders Must Consider Climate Change**

New Jersey will become the first U.S. state that requires developers and builders to take into account climate change and

rising sea levels if they want approval for projects. New Jersey’s initiative, announced by Gov. Philip D. Murphy on Jan. 27, adds a new layer of oversight and will impact where and what developers can build. It will also limit the volume of emissions spewed into the air. The new regulations are scheduled to go into effect in Jan. 2022. They would also apply to all state-funded projects.

New Jersey Republicans predictably denounced the move, arguing that the proposal would have a chilling effect on economic growth. Obviously, concerns from the business community will need to be considered. On the other hand, the clear and present danger of tidal flooding and sea-level rise in the coastal state cannot be ignored either. The state has the difficult task of striking the right balance. The rule-writing process will include both business and environmental leaders. Its goal is to gain as much public support as possible.

New Jersey has 130 miles of coastline. In the last 100 years, the water level has risen by 1.5 feet and is expected to rise by as much as another foot by 2030. Critics say that Murphy’s proposal is a good first step to build resiliency, but they are urging him to move faster and not wait another two years. They are urging the governor to take steps right now to freeze construction in sensitive and risky areas.

### **BlackRock Pledges to Be More Sustainable**

With about \$7 trillion assets, BlackRock is the world’s largest money manager. In the past, its track record on sustainability has been weak. Ceres, a sustainability nonprofit, ranked it 43<sup>rd</sup> among 48 asset managers. However, under pressure from stakeholders and activists, BlackRock has now begun to pivot and to prioritize climate-change issues. Chairman and CEO Larry Fink wrote that BlackRock would exit investments with high environmental risks, especially coal. He did not rule out, however, support for oil-and-gas companies. Other investment companies have taken similar steps. In December, Goldman Sachs said it would no longer lend money to oil-and-gas projects in the Arctic. It remains to be seen if such efforts are more than shambolic attempts intended to create the illusion of meaningful change. In any case, BlackRock’s pivot is likely to be closely watched by its competitors, among them Vanguard, R. Rowe Price, and JPMorgan Chase.

### **Extinction Rebellion**

Climate-action groups are routinely viewed by the powers that be as potential extremists, criminals, and terrorists. Last November, UK police included the British protest group Extinction Rebellion in an official document that listed extremist and violent organizations, alongside neo-Nazis and Islamic fundamentalists. (The list also warned against people who oppose wearing fur, hunting foxes, and eating meat.) The 12-page guide to “safeguarding young people and adults from ideological extremism” was distributed to police officers, schools, and teachers. A spokesperson for the Counterterrorism agency later apologized for the “error of judgment” and emphasized that police does “not classify Extinction Rebellion as an extremist organization.” Conservative British Home Secretary Priti Patel, however, refused to find fault with the guide. Extinction Rebellion engages in peaceful civil disobedience only, but that has not stopped British police from arresting hundreds of members over the past year. – The same mindset prevails in America. Ohio legislators have introduced a bill that criminalizes protests near “critical infrastructure” of the oil-and-gas industry. The real extremists are, of course, the fracking, mining, and logging industries that have no respect for home rule, human health, and the natural world.

### **Greta Thunberg in Davos**

Greta Thunberg was back in Davos for the 50<sup>th</sup> World Economic Forum where she called for an immediate end to all fossil-fuel exploration and extraction as well as all fossil-fuel subsidies. She was promptly criticized President Trump, also in attendance, and his Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. Trump called Thunberg “a prophet of doom” and “an heir of yesterday’s foolish fortune tellers.” Mnuchin mocked the Swedish climate activist, who is 17, by saying she should go to college and study economics before criticizing world leaders. In response, Thunberg said that it doesn’t take a college degree in economics to see and understand the devastating effects of climate chaos in the world. German Chancellor Angela Merkel regretted the deep divide between those who believe in climate

change and those who don't and stated: "It's almost worse than in the Cold War. We must overcome it."

### **Climate-Change Lawsuit Dismissed**

The 9<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has dismissed a lawsuit by the Oregon-based advocacy group Our Children's Trust filed 2015 in Eugene on behalf of 21 young people. The lawsuit claimed that the climate policies of the U.S. and the country's reliance on fossil fuels harmed people's futures and violated their constitutional rights. It sought an injunction ordering the administration to phase out fossil-fuel emissions and reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). The case bounced around in federal court for years, and multiple trials were canceled. The court's 2:1 verdict stated that the youngsters had a compelling case and that climate change was an undeniable reality. However, the court also argued that the plaintiffs lacked legal standing and that the proper venue for addressing America's energy policies and fossil-fuel emissions was Congress and not the court system. (Good luck getting Congress to do anything!) – At least 9 similar lawsuits filed by other climate activists across the nation are still pending.

### **Climate-Change Refugees Have a Right to Asylum**

In a landmark ruling, the U.N. Human Rights Committee in Geneva has declared that refugees cannot be deported back to their home countries if their lives are threatened by climate change, e.g., sea-level rise. Until now, plaintiffs had to prove that their personal lives were in imminent danger. The new decision states that it is sufficient to provide general evidence that human survival is at risk in an area threatened by climate change. The decision is likely to have far-reaching consequences. The wake-up call is unlikely to be welcomed by governments with nationalistic agendas.

### **Wildfire Smoke Damaging to Human Health**

The unprecedented wildfires in California and Australia have caused concerns about the long-term health impact from smoke exposure. Like the smoke from volcanic eruptions, smoke plumes or smoke waves can travel hundreds and thousands of miles across continents and oceans. Compounding the danger is the proliferation of construction material from petroleum-based products, ranging from exterior siding to plumbing pipes. Incinerated homes produce smoke that is more toxic than wood does, but the long-term and cumulative health risks are largely unknown. Researchers estimate that an estimated 20,000 people die prematurely every year in the U.S. due to wildfire exposure. They expect the number to go up this century. It is known that firefighters have significantly higher rates of lung cancer and heart disease. Rhesus monkeys at the California National Primate Center who were accidentally exposed to a prolonged period of wildfire smoke as infants in 2008 developed lungs that are 20% smaller than another group of monkeys born the following year. California doctors have also seen hundreds of cases of lung damage and respiratory diseases that show a direct correlation between health struggles and smoke exposure.

### **Australia Not Changing Course**

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has called for a royal commission into the government's response to the country's devastating bushfires. Critics are doubtful that anything of substance will come out of the inquiry. First of all, they say, it is a fob-off and stalling tactic intended to delay meaningful action by at least 1 to 2 years. Secondly, Morrison has already signaled that there will be no shift in his administration's policies to reduce the mining of fossil fuels, curb emissions, and invest more in renewable energy. The prime minister has made it very clear that he will not put coal jobs at risk or raise taxes in the pursuit of lowering carbon emissions. What he may do, instead, is to develop "practical" solutions to adapt to climate change and make the country more resilient. "Adaptation and resilience" are key, in his words. An example may be vegetation management and land clearing. Scott Morrison is strongly supported by the climate-change deniers working for the media empire of Australian-born Rupert Murdoch, 88.

### **More Than 1 Billion Animals Dead in Australia**

The conservation group WWF-Australia estimates that 1.25 billion wild animals have so far died during the recent devastating

wildfires in the continent. The count does not include insects, frogs, and bats. It is based on observed population densities of mammals, birds, and reptiles from previously published studies. The number is difficult to verify because no doubt many animals managed to flee. However, scores more died later of burns, hunger, and thirst. Whatever the numbers, the decimation of Australia's wildlife is immense. It is possible that various species are now threatened, endangered, extirpated, or extinct. It is heartening to see that many people are taking care of orphaned and injured kangaroos, koalas, and other wildlife, but there is no denying that Australia's biological Armageddon is one of the worst in recorded history.

### **Australia Want to Kill 10,000 Wild Camels**

BBC reported on Jan. 9 that Australia has approved a plan to shoot and kill 10,000 wild camels by helicopter. Supposedly, the animals drink too much water, depriving people and livestock of the precious commodity amid hot temperatures, a drought, and wildfires. The animals are also said to be a "danger" to families and communities. There are an estimated 1 million feral camels in Australia. – This might be a taste of what is to come. It is easy to envision conflicts over water in the future. To survive, animals and people first and foremost require water. In parts of the world, it may be water that will be the new currency, not oil and gas, and wars will be fought over access to water.

### **"Meine Oma fährt im Hühnerstall Motorrad"**

There is a silly kids' song in Germany, called "Meine Oma fährt im Hühnerstall Motorrad" ("My Grandma Rides Her Motorcycle in the Chicken Coop"). She also has glasses with curtains, a radio in her molar, a walking cane with a rear light, and so on. Grandma is "ne ganz patente Frau" (a very clever woman). Now a new version of the song has emerged that turns the old lyrics on their head. Grandma still rides her motorbike in the chicken coop, but it is not the environmentally cool and correct thing to do anymore. She also owns an SUV, eats steak every day, and travels on cruise ships. Instead of ending with "ne ganz patente Frau" (a very smart woman), the new verses accuse her of being "ne alte Umweltsau" (an old environmental swine), akin to "ne alte Nazisau" (an old Nazi swine). That is language that unjustly vilifies the elderly who may be less environmentally aware and savvy. On the other hand, consider the context in which the song arose. We live in a world where catastrophic weather events are now everyday occurrences: wildfires, hurricanes, droughts, wildlife extinctions, pandemics, etc. Young people have every right to be worried about the future. Their lives are at risk, but few members of the older Boomer generation seem to care. "Even most green politicians and climate scientists go on flying around the world, eating meat and dairy," complained Greta Thunberg in one of her speeches. It is understandable when young people criticize Grandma and Grandpa for their lifestyle choices, but perhaps they should learn to do it in ways that do not alienate their grandparents. It would be better to have Granny as a friend and ally in the fight instead of an enemy.

### **Goats Help Prevent Wildfires**

The California city of Anaheim, southeast of Los Angeles, has resorted to an unusual way to fight wildfires. It has contracted with the company Environmental Land Management to keep herds of goats grazing on its hillsides nearly year-round. Beginning last summer, some 400 goats worked their way through Deer Canyon Park, a nature preserve with many steep hills, valleys, and peaks, where they are invasive grasses and dried brush. Demand for wildfire-prevention goats has soared in recent years. Goats are of course only one piece of the many-pronged prevention efforts, but they can effectively clear away underbrush that serves as fuel for wildfires. It should be remembered that the problem of wildfires (like the problem of flooding) is also in part a people problem: residents have increasingly moved into areas that are hazardous, putting them in conflict with nature.

### **Delaware Resident Defends William Happer**

On Jan. 16, one of the local climate-change deniers published a letter in the Delaware Gazette that primarily relied on debunked and discredited Prof. William Happer as her authority. As "Community Matters" explained in the Sept. 2019 issue, the 80-year-

old has no formal training in climatology and has been an outlier in the scientific community for decades. He was fired by the Clinton administration from his position as director of energy research in 1993 because of his untenable positions. Happer is best known for his view that CO<sub>2</sub> is beneficial to agriculture: "more CO<sub>2</sub> will benefit the world." Of course plants take in CO<sub>2</sub>, but Happer's position ignores the fact that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases such as methane have increasingly resulted in climate chaos, heat waves, droughts, wildfires, and declining yields. It is also important to note that Happer's CO<sub>2</sub> Coalition has received big money from energy executives and right-wing foundations, incl. the Mercer family. The fossil-fuel industry loves the professor emeritus because he is part of the machinery that very deliberately sows the seed of doubt on the efficacy of climate change. Reputable, peer-reviewed scientific journals have rebutted Happer's outlandish claims point-by-point.

The other two scientists mentioned in the letter, Freeman Dyson and Patrick A. Moore, have equally dubious credentials. Physicist Dyson, 96, has admitted that he does not know much about "the technical facts" of climate change. One thing that he says is true, though: trees and forests are effective for carbon sequestration and can help mitigate the effects of global warming. – Moore maintains that there "no scientific proof" that humankind is responsible for the climate crisis. He has attacked Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg as an evil "puppet" with a mental disorder. The letter of the Delaware resident echoes this defamatory viewpoint. Thunberg is now 17, by the way (not 16 anymore, as the letter claims), and perfectly able to think for herself. She is not the one being brainwashed and indoctrinated by false preachers spreading misinformation.

#### **Some Reader Comments**

- "grassroots journalism at its best"
- "the best source of information in town"
- "the very definition of fake news"
- "if I ever read my name again, I will seek due process through the courts"
- "a beacon in the ailing world of local news"
- "dedicated to lifting up the community"
- "you will pay a price for this"
- "a bullet is reserved for you"
- "thanks for pulling back the curtain on many local issues"
- "love the fire in your belly"

#### **Pete Buttigieg's Rules of the Road**

Early in his campaign, Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg drafted "Ten Rules of the Road" for his staff and supporters to embody. Many of the rules are worth considering and embracing as we chart and navigate the course of our own private lives. Please note that reprinting Buttigieg's rules here is not intended as an endorsement of his candidacy for president. However, "Community Matters" does applaud him for modeling a positive campaign that is respectful and truthful, meaningful and joyful. More politicians should emulate him in this respect.

#### **Pete Buttigieg, "Ten Rules of the Road"**

##### **RESPECT**

*In our thoughts, words, and actions we cultivate a sense of respect. We respect one another on this team, we respect the office of the Presidency, and we respect every individual we encounter on the campaign trail, including our competitors. The better we hold up this value among ourselves, the better it will reflect outside. It will represent a quiet antidote to the idea that this project is too audacious to be taken seriously.*

##### **BELONGING**

*We seek to serve and unify a diverse nation. Let us build a campaign team and a coalition of supporters that kindly embraces and reflects the increasingly diverse party and country to which we belong. We will honor this value not just in our makeup but in our practices, as we*

*proactively work to include people of different backgrounds and viewpoints in every major decision, and cultivate a sense of welcome to all.*

##### **TRUTH**

*Honesty is in our nature, and it is one of our greatest means of restoring faith in our democracy among everyday Americans and building a national movement rooted in trust and faith in our country and our beliefs. Internally and externally, our effort will be characterized by fidelity to the truth.*

##### **TEAMWORK**

*We are all working in service of our country and to elect a President who will represent our values and make American lives better. In moments of disagreement, the temptations of pride and ego will arise. Rooted in our mission, let our common purpose be a touchstone as we foster a climate of trust and mutual respect.*

##### **BOLDNESS**

*We will not hesitate to take bold stances and to accept risk in the defense of our values. Our respect is reserved for people, not for conventions. We accept no truisms without questioning. The spirit of originality will create the pressure and permission for us to do things not done before, to stand out from the crowd not by waving our arms for attention but by the fact of being different.*

##### **RESPONSIBILITY**

*The conduct of a campaign can be as influential as its outcome. Everyone on this team has a responsibility to live up to our values, and every participant, from a first-time volunteer to the candidate and top staff, must model this. When there is a mistake, we take ownership, learn, adjust, and move on. Missteps are inevitable, but they should never be repeated. We own our choices and our work.*

##### **SUBSTANCE**

*There is no point mounting an unorthodox, underdog campaign unless it is one of substance. We have the opportunity to bring meaningful ideas forward for debate. We will take questions seriously and answer them directly. We will lay aside the superficial in favor of the meaningful. We embrace complicated challenges, and will work to improve the overall dialogue in how campaigns talk about policy.*

##### **DISCIPLINE**

*A project like ours will require enormous discipline. Through energy and determination, we will handle our resources with the stewardship they deserve, mindful that this campaign is fueled by the gift of other people's time, money, relationships, and reputations.*

##### **EXCELLENCE**

*A functioning presidential campaign is such a marvel that we may at times be amazed simply by the fact of what we are doing. But the standard we should hold ourselves to in every part of our work is not whether it is at the level of a presidential campaign, but whether it is at the level we would expect of the best presidential campaign of this time.*

##### **JOY**

*Amid the great challenge we have accepted, let us be joyful. We are privileged to be in the very center of the most important conversation in the world. We are assembling a team of wonderful human beings. Along the way we will all get many opportunities to lift one another up and lift up those we encounter. The American presidential election is the world's greatest civic and democratic ritual. It will shape us but we can shape it too. Let us shape it, partly, by spreading the joy of working for our beliefs.*