

Community Matters

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

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

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CALENDAR OF LOCAL EVENTS



Miller's Country Gardens Reopens (4/1)

Miller's Country Gardens at 2488 State Rt. 37 W. (about 1 mile west of Kroger's) reopens for the season Mon., April 1, according to their Facebook page. The family farm is the favorite garden center and country market for many people, and children enjoy the animal barn with donkeys, goats, mini horses, sheep, and more. For sale are vegetable & flower plants, bulbs & seeds, soil & mulch, hanging baskets & concrete statues, and more. In addition, there are freshly baked pies & ice cream. Once back in business, Miller's is open daily. Check www.millerscountrygardens.com for details. – While headed west, you may also want to check out Scioto Country Nursery & Gallery at 3351 State Rt. 37 W. It too is open daily.

OWU Lecture on the Portrayal of Animals (4/1)

Dr. Laura Brown from Cornell Univ. will discuss "Other-than-Human in Species and Specie" in OWU's HWCC Campus Center (Benes Rooms) on Mon., April 1 (4 pm). One of her recent books is "Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes: Humans and Other Animals in the English 18th Century." Her talk represents the 2018-19 Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholars Lecture. Free & open to the public.

Warning Siren Test (4/2)

Outdoor warning siren tests are conducted every first Wednesday of the month at 12:01 pm. The practice started in 2017. In a real emergency, sirens are activated when a tornado warning is

issued or when another large-scale emergencies loom. If that is the case, residents are asked to seek shelter.



Chicano Artist to Speak at OWU (4/2)

Denver-based Chicano artist Carlos Frésquez (born in 1956) will speak in the Bayley Room of OWU's Beeghly Library on Tues., Apr. 2 (6:30 pm) about his art, which fuses classic masters with modern pop and even graffiti. The event will be followed by a reception. – From March 5 through May 20, Frésquez has a "Chicanismo" exhibition titled "From Here to There" ("Desde aquí, desde allí) at Gallery 2001 inside Beeghly Library (1st floor). Of particular intrigue is his series "Repurposed Thrift-Store Landscapes" that adds the black silhouettes of running illegals (refugees or slaves) to traditional American landscapes. Frésquez teaches at Metropolitan State College of Denver and has exhibited drawings, sculptures, prints, installations & paintings in at least 30 U.S. states and 10 countries. Free & open to the public.



Poetry Reading by D. A. Powell (4/4)

California poet, filmmaker & artist D. A. Powell will present a poetry reading in OWU's Merrick Hall (Rm. 301) on Thurs., April 4 (4 pm). Powell, born in 1963, is best known for his focus on the AIDS pandemic. His reading represents the 2019 Carpenter Lecture. Free & open to the public. To learn more about Powell, visit www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/d-powell.

Sister Suppers in Delaware (4/4) – \$

Sister Suppers (www.sistersuppers.com) is a movement of women (and anyone identifying as female) that creates bonds and community from within our homes through the power of sisterhood. Dedicated hosts around the country open their homes, cook & facilitate women's circles for deeper connection & conversation. Sister Suppers is a place to connect, create, collaborate & celebrate. "We stand for women inspiring women, women supporting women and women igniting women," says Amy Eiken, the only Sister Supper host in Ohio. Please join her for an evening of delicious home-made food and conscious conversation on Thurs., April 4 (5:30 pm). Please RSVP at www.sistersuppers.com. If you can't make this one, save the date for May's Sister Supper on Thurs., May 9 (5:30 pm).

OWU Lecture on North Korea (4/4)

Vice President of the Korea Economic Institute of America, Mark Tokola, will discuss "The Prospect of North Korea's Denuclearization" in the Bayley Room of OWU's Beeghly Library on Thurs., April 4 (7 pm). His talk is sponsored by the East Asian Studies Program. Free & open to the public.

MTSO Lecture on Civility (4/4)

Dr. Najeeba Syeed from the Claremont School of Theology in California will present a lecture titled "The Death of Civility: On the Birth of Dignity-Based Interfaith Ritual and Practices" on Thurs., April 4 (7 pm) in the Alford Centrum at MTSO, 3081 Columbus Pike. Born in India, Syeed, who is Muslim, came to the U.S., at the age of 3. She has worked as an ecumenical liaison and peacemaker for many years. Her talk represents the 15th annual Lecture on World Religions and Interreligious Relations. Free & open to the public.

Great Decisions #7 (4/5)

Great Decisions continues with a lecture by OWU's Saif Rahman (Economics), "De-Coding U.S.-China Trade." It will take place on Fri., April 5 (12-1 pm) at William Street United Methodist Church, 28 W. William St. Free & open to the public. Coffee & tea are provided.



Zassy's Spring Vendor Market (4/6-7) – \$

Zassy's Spring Vendor Market is "an upscale indoor / outdoor shopping event," according to organizers. You will find handmade, 1-of-a-kind items, furniture, vintage pieces, farmhouse décor, boutique style clothing & more! Food trucks and beer & wine gardens benefit JDRF (juvenile diabetes). The event is being held at the Delaware County Fairgrounds, 236 Pennsylvania Ave. on the weekend of April 6-7. Hours are Sat., 4/6, 9-11 am (VIP only!) and 11 am – 5 pm as well as Sun., 4/7, 9 am - 3 pm. General admission is \$5 at the gate. Children 14 & under are free. Leashed dogs are welcome. Parking is free.

Easter Open House at Anthony-Thomas

If you and your family love chocolate, consider going to Thomas-Anthony's annual Easter Open House at 1777 Arlington Ln. in Columbus on Sat., April 6 (9 am – 3 pm). The company is one of the largest chocolatiers in the Midwest and always eager to give tours. Exit I-270 at Roberts Rd. and turn south on Wilson to Arlington. For more info, visit www.anthony-thomas.com.

OWU Conference on Latin American Immigrants (4/6)

OWU's Global Studies Institute is hosting a conference entitled "So Far from Home, So Close to the Homeland: Latin American Immigrants in Rural Ohio" on Sat., April 6 (12-6 pm) in 301 Merrick Hall. The building is handicap-accessible and has an elevator. Keynote speaker is Jeff Stewart from the Immigrant Workers Project. Other presentations include faculty & student research from Denison, Kenyon, OWU & Wooster. Registered attendees will receive lunch & reception. Free & open to the public, but please register by March 28 at www.owu.edu/gsi/immigration-conference. Contact address is Dr. Bob Gitter at rgitter@owu.edu.

COCP Climate Action Workshop (4/6)

The Central Ohio Communities Project (COCP) under the direction of Dr. Terry Hermsen is working on a climate-action plan for the City of Delaware. Various task forces have been meeting to address renewable energy, green spaces, agriculture & land conservation, recycling & upcycling initiatives, gardening & composting, climate justice, and so on. Following the Feb. 2 summit, the working groups will reconvene on Sat., April 6 (1-4 pm) at Stratford Ecological Center, 3083 Liberty Rd. Keynote speaker Josh Lapp, a city planner from Columbus, will discuss urban sprawl and sustainable transportation systems. After his presentation, the task forces will report on the status of their respective action plans. Community residents are welcome to join existing task forces or create new ones. Free & open to the public.

First Friday (4/6)

The theme of April's First Friday celebration (Fri., April 6, 6-9 pm) is "Civic Pride." Multiple agencies, businesses, and nonprofits will be in the historic downtown area, among them the Health District, Delaware SWCD, Preservation Parks, and Kroger Company. There will be eco-friendly demonstrations, a scavenger hunt, street-and-alley clean-ups, and a free bike corral. You can also test-ride the DATA Bus for free from William St. to Central Ave.

In addition, Amanda Mowry's Modern Woodmen, a nonprofit financial advising service, is inviting the public to an open house at 79 N. Sandusky St. Refreshments will be served. Lastly, COhatch will be open to visitors that evening as well.

OWU Choral Art Society Concert (4/7)

Under the direction of Jason Hiester, the OWU Choral Art Society will perform Sun., April 7 (3:15 pm) in Gray Chapel inside University Hall, 61 S. Sandusky St. Free & open to the public. If you missed the last Central Ohio Symphony concert, you can hear some of the choral pieces of Verdi's "Requiem" again.

Bird Club Event at Deer Haven Park (4/7)

Tom Sheley, owner and operator of the Wild Birds Unlimited nature shop at 6654 Sawmill Rd. in Columbus, will speak on Eastern Wood Warblers on Thurs., April 4 (7 pm) at Deer Haven Park, 4183 Liberty Rd. Sheley is active in various conservation and naturalist groups and an avid photographer. This is a joint meeting of the Ohio Young Birder's Club and the Delaware County Bird Club. Free & open to the public.

OWU Lecture on WW I Veterans (4/8)

Historian Dr. Julie Mujic presents "A Vast Change Has Come over the Streets: The Postwar Lives of World War I Veterans in Columbus, Ohio" in the Benes Rooms of OWU's HWCC Campus Center on Mon., April 8 (7:30 pm). His talk represents the 2019 Vogel Lecture. Free & open to the public.

Annual Italian Dinner to Benefit Family Promise (4/9) – \$

The 10th Annual Italian Dinner to benefit Family Promise of Delaware County will be held Tues., April 9 (5-8 pm) at St. Mary Catholic Church, 82 E. William St. Family Promise is a temporary shelter for families with children. It provides a safe place to stay, meals & resources to help families find permanent housing & employment, if needed. Family Promise partners with United Way of Delaware and receives some government funds and grants from local foundations. In addition to the community meal, there will be entertainment & a silent auction. To-go food is available. Meals are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 5 and under.

Author Visit at Orange Branch Library (4/9)

Author Mindy McGinnis will visit the Orange Branch Library on Tues., April 9 (7 pm). She will share the research behind her award-winning gothic thriller "A Madness So Discreet." Also included is a brief history of the Athens Lunatic Asylum, the setting of the novel. McGinnis is a graduate from Otterbein Univ. and lives in Ohio. Free & open to the public.

One People Meets (4/10)

One People, a local nonpartisan group founded by Dick Jackson, wants to unite the residents of Delaware across racial divides and to strengthen the community. The next meeting is Wed., Apr. 10 (7 pm) at First Presbyterian Church (Library Room) at 73 W. Winter St. Guests should use the entrance off N. Washington St.

Delaware County Republican Party (4/11)

The next meeting of the Del. Co. Republican Party's Central Committee is Thurs., April 11 (7-9 pm). Their website does not provide a location. Visit <delawaregop.org> for info on the party.

Great Decisions #8 (4/12)

Great Decisions continues with a lecture by OWU's Jeremy Baskes (History), "The U.S. and Mexico: Partnership Tested." It will take place on Fri., April 12 (12-1 pm) at William Street United Methodist Church, 28 W. William St. Free & open to the public. Coffee & tea are provided. Dr. Baskes' talk concludes the 2019 Great Decisions lecture series.



"Twain's Tales" (4/12-13) – \$

Dempsey Middle School presents "Twain's Tales," based on stories by Mark Twain on Fri., April 12 (7 pm) and Sat., April 13 (7 pm) in the Auditorium of Willis Education Center, 74 W. William St. The performance also features the Columbus-based Goldsberrys Bluegrass Band. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$5 for students & seniors.

Northwest Neighborhood Association (4/12)

The April meeting of the Northwest Neighborhood Association is Fri., April 12 (7:30-8:30 pm) at the Andrews House, 39 W. Winter St. Kris Pergaman will discuss spring gardening. (Visit www.delawareanna.org to learn more about the NNA and the Boardman Arts Park.)

"Newsies: The Broadway Musical" (4/12-14) – \$

Buckeye Valley High School at 901 Coover Rd. presents Disney's "Newsies: The Broadway Musical," based on the book by Harvey Fierstein, on Fri., April 12 (7:30 pm), Sat., April 13 (7:30 pm), and Sun., April 14 (2:30 pm). The book, movie & musical tell the story of the 1899 Newsboys' strike in New York City. Tickets are \$15, for students & seniors \$10.

OWU Students Perform "Hamlet" (4/12-14) – \$

William Shakespeare's classic play "Hamlet" will be performed in the Chappellear Drama Center on the OWU campus April Fri., April 12 (8 pm); Sat., Apr. 13 (8 pm); and Sun., April 14 (2 pm). More than 50 students are participating in the production. Tickets are \$10 general admission, \$5 for students & seniors; and free for OWU students & staff with a valid ID. To reserve tickets, call the box office at 740-368-3855.

Amy Rigby Performs in Pat Cave (4/12) – \$

Songwriter Amy Rigby ("Old Guys," 2018) will perform in the Pat Cave (11 W. Winter St.) on Fri., April 12 (8 pm). Doors open at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$12.

Sustainable Delaware Meets (4/13)

Sustainable Delaware Ohio (SDO) meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month from 9:15-11:15 am at First Presbyterian Church, 73 W. Winter St. Please use the entrance off N. Washington St., behind Willis Education Center. Guests are welcome. SDO's mission is to promote economic, social & environmental sustainability through awareness, advocacy & action.

"We Are Women" Concert (4/13)

Delayed several times, "We Are Women" is a faculty & guest concert that features Jennifer Whitehead (soprano) and Carolyn Redman (mezzo soprano). The narrator will be Christopher Purdy from WOSU FM Classical 101 Radio. The event will be held Sat., April 13 (7 pm) in Jemison Auditorium inside OWU's Sanborn Hall, 23 Elizabeth St. Free & open to the public.

Osprey Homecoming (4/14)

Preservation Parks of Delaware County celebrates the return of the ospreys at Alum Creek Reservoir on Sun., April 14 (1-4 pm). The event at Hogback Ridge Park (2656 Hogback Rd., west of I-71) includes various activities, incl. watching the beautiful birds through spotting scopes. Free & open to the public.

Tax Day (4/15)

Local, state, and federal (IRS) tax returns are due Mon., April 15.

Yard Waste Pick-up Resumes (4/15)

The City of Delaware normally resumes its curbside yard-waste collection on or around April 15 of each year. Depending on demand and weather, you may see pick-up trucks even earlier. Yard waste must be in biodegradable lawn / leaf bags, in clearly identified 32-gallon containers, or in bundles. – Old-timers may remember the time when Delaware gave away paper bags for free. That was a nice service, but the city hasn't done so in years.

OWU Chamber Orchestra Concert (4/16)

The OWU Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Olev Viro, will perform on Tues., April 16 (8 pm) in Gray Chapel inside University Hall, 61 S. Sandusky St. Free & open to the public.

Soulful Potluck (4/17)

The Soulful Potluck is a regular monthly event at Amy Eiken's Ripple Effect, 61 Westgate Dr. in Delaware. The next potluck is Wed., April 17 (6 pm). Bring a dish to share, otherwise the event is free. It's an opportunity to meet like-minded people who are interested

in good food & great conversation. Every month is a new topic or guest speaker and sometimes even a movie. April's guest speaker is Therese Spaulding who will be talking about "The Great Law of Peace." This was the oral constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy. Many aspects of it made their way into the U.S. constitution. Come learn more about this interesting and widely unknown connection. Please RSVP at amy.eiken@yahoo.com.

"Local Expressions" at Pathways Credit Union (4/18)

Pathways Financial Credit Union at 879 W. William St. (across from Willow Brook Christian Village) is holding an Open House on Thurs., April 18 (5-7 pm). "Local Expressions" features work by student artists from Hayes High School and wine from Delaware's Blend of Seven Winery. (Other beverages are available as well.) While visiting, you are also encouraged to learn about the benefits of credit unions.

Public PUCO Meeting (4/18)

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) will hold a local hearing about a proposed 4-6% increase in the gas-distribution rate on Thurs., April 18 (6 pm) in the Community Room of the Delaware Main Library, 84 E. Winter St. The public is welcome to attend & testify for or against the request made by the Suburban Natural Gas Company. For more info, visit www.puco.ohio.gov.

Historical Society Lecture (4/18)

The Delaware County Historical Society is in process of putting together an exhibit dedicated to Elmer W. Curry (1871-1930), an African-American who graduated from OWU in 1892 and went on to create schools. "The Curry School: 1890s Private School in Delaware" is a presentation by Benny Shoults & Barbara Terzian about this remarkable man. It will be held Thurs., April 18 (7 pm) at the Barn at Stratford, 2690 Stratford Rd. Free & open to the public, but donations are accepted.

Delaware County Democratic Party (4/18)

The next monthly meeting of the Del. Co. Democratic Party's Central Committee takes place Thurs., April 18 (7:30-9 pm) at Willis Education Center, 74 W. William St. (2nd floor). Free & open to the public. [Visit www.ohiodeladems.org for more info.]

Family Day at the YMCA (4/20)

The YMCA is combining Healthy Kids Day and the Easter Egg Hunt into one new event, "Family Festival." It will be held Sat., Apr. 20 (9 am – 12 pm) at the YMCA, 1121 S. Houk Rd. Two identical Easter-egg hunts are scheduled for 9:30 and 11 am at Veterans Park. Both times, there will be 5 different age groups for kids between 1 and 9. Concern has been raised about overcrowding and lack of parking on the site, so consider walking or biking to the Y on that day.

Earth Day at Mingo Park (4/22)

The City of Delaware, Keep Delaware Beautiful, OWA, and OEPA are celebrating Earth Day in Mingo Park on Mon., April 22 (4-6:30 pm). Tree seedlings (provided by Green Columbus) will be planted at the north end of the park, and there will be a concurrent litter clean-up throughout the park and in the river. All supplies are provided. Participants under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is required. Please visit the Earth Day Columbus or the City of Delaware website or contact Caroline Cicerchi (740-203-1905 or ccicerchi@delawareohio.net).

OWU Symphonic Wind Ensemble (4/23)

OWU's Symphonic Wind Ensemble, conducted by Richard Edwards, will perform Tues., April 23 (8 pm) in Gray Chapel inside University Hall, 61 S. Sandusky St. Free & open to the public.

Earth Day Celebration at the Columbus Zoo (4/27) – \$

The Columbus Zoo at 4850 Powell Rd. celebrates Earth Day on Sat., April 27 (9 am – 5 pm). Guests can learn about ways that we can work together to improve life on Earth for all living creatures. Stop by Conservation Lake for special games, performances & animals. Times & activities to be determined. Also, make your way through the Zoo and watch some of your favorite animals enjoy special Earth Day

treats and enrichment made from recycled materials. Schedules to be determined. For more info, visit www.columbuszoo.com.

Shawn Maxwell Quintet (4/27) – \$

The Shawn Maxwell Quintet from Chicago, known for its dynamic and original jazz music, will perform in the Pat Cave (11 W. Winter St.) on Sat., April 27 (8 pm). Doors open at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$10.

Central Ohio Symphony (4/27) – \$

The final concert of the Symphony's 40th season has a local focus. Jacob Miller will perform George Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F major. Frank Lee Ruggles' film "Chasing Light" will be accompanied by compositions written by Jennifer Jolley and Lauren Spavelko. Dvorak's popular Symphony No. 9 ("From the New World") concludes the concert. Tickets are \$25 (\$20 for seniors) and can be purchased at the Symphony's office at 24 E. Winter St., at the door, or online (www.centralohiosymphony.org).

Ohiana Book Fair (4/27)

The 13th Annual Ohiana Book Fair will be held Sat., April 27 (10:30 am – 5 pm) at the Columbus Metropolitan Library (Main Library) on S. Grant Ave. in downtown Columbus. Please note that this is a new venue. There will be some 150 authors & illustrators, panel discussions, special activities, food trucks, and more. Free & open to the public.

Fish-Habitat Assembling (4/28)

The Olentangy Watershed Alliance (OWA) and the Army Corps of Engineers are building fish-habitat structures to be placed in the Delaware Lake. The event will take place Sun., April 28 (9 am) at the playground below the Delaware Dam. All tools & safety gear are provided. Participants under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.



May Day at the Boardman Arts Park (5/1)

Another May Day event will be held at the Boardman Arts Park on Wed., May 1 (11:30-12:30). In partnership with St. Mary, some 40 fourth graders will perform dances around the May pole. Free & open to the public.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2019

- Earth Day, Mon., April 22
- Election Day, Tues., May 7
- Rugged Maniac, Sat., May 11, Del. Co. Fairgrounds
- Arts Festival, May 18-19, Downtown Delaware
- Juneteenth Festival, June 15 (Blue Limestone Park)
- Northern Olentangy Watershed Festival, Sat., June 22, Mingo Park
- Symphony Concert & Fireworks, Thurs., July 4, OWU Campus
- Ironman, Sat., July 28, OWU Campus
- Community Unity Festival, Sat., Sept. 14, Ross Park
- Delaware County Fair, Sept. 14-21
- Election Day, Tues., Nov. 5

CITY OF DELAWARE

The City of Delaware in May

City Council meets Mon., April 8 & 22 (7 pm). A work session is scheduled for Mon., April 1 (6:30 pm). Additional meetings of commissions, committees & boards include the Finance Committee (Wed., April 3, 3:30 pm), the Planning Commission (Wed., April 3, 6:30 pm), the Sister City Advisory Board (Tues., April 9, 6 pm), Board

of Zoning Appeals (Wed., April 10, 6:30 pm), the Airport Commission (Thurs., April 18, 6:30 pm), the Shade Tree Commission (Tues., April 23, 6:30 pm), and the Historic Preservation Commission (Wed., April 24, 6:30 pm). The scheduled meetings of the Civil Service Commission (April 3) & Parking & Safety Committee (April 15) were canceled. It is possible for additional meetings to be canceled due to a lack of quorum or agenda items.

Workshop on Housing

On March 4, City Council devoted 2 hours to a workshop on the housing situation in Central Ohio and Delaware's housing needs. Among the presentations Council members heard were those by BIA Executive Director John Melchi and Economic Development Director Sean Hughes.

Melchi summarized the 10-county report the BIA produced last winter in conjunction with Columbus 20/20. In Central Ohio, he stated, there are more job opportunities than housing opportunities. According to MORPC, the mid-Ohio region can expect a population growth of another 1 million by 2050, necessitating the construction of some 470,000 homes or apartments. However, in reality the area is "underbuilding" by the thousands. The lack of available housing is already an impediment for both existing employers and prospective businesses. Some companies will not come to Columbus and surrounding areas, other are moving out of the region. Retention is higher for employees living closer to their place of work. The farther employees live away, the smaller the applicant pool gets. Jobs and housing are intimately linked, but without adequate housing stock jobs cannot be filled. (A related problem is the ease of transportation.)

What is the cause for the housing shortage? Melchi explained that "the 5 L's" that drive the cost are: land, labor, lumber & steel, lending, and local governments (fees, bonding, regulations, processes, standards, etc.). When asked, Melchi stated the issue of density trumps all other considerations. It is the 800-pound gorilla in the room. Smaller lots, homes, and apartments are becoming more popular, according to Melchi, but the regulatory framework of many communities is not necessarily aligned with the housing market.

Sean Hughes confirmed that local employers do see a problem as far as jobs and housing are concerned. For wage earners, rents are rising faster than their income. For many folks and families, even a 1-bedroom apartment (\$705) or a 2-bedroom apartment (\$928) in Delaware is unaffordable, and they have to commute in from neighboring towns. Transportation and childcare are big issues as well, according to Hughes. Affected jobs include restaurant servers, warehouse workers, grounds laborers, caregivers, production employees, and so on.

Smoking in City Parks

At the meeting of City Council on Mon., March 25, smoking in city parks was on the agenda. The proposed ordinance envisions that smoking be banned within 50 feet of all "park facilities," but be permitted elsewhere in the parks, e.g., on the trails.

During the public hearing, many community members voiced their support for a total ban of smoking in the parks of Delaware City, including the chair of the Tobacco-Free Delaware Coalition and the Health Dept. A member of Sustainable Delaware Ohio spoke on behalf of SDO and stated the organization's view that smoking should not be permitted anywhere within the precious little parkland that we have in the city (only 3% is designated park space). The entire park acreage should be considered "park facilities," including the athletic fields and the trails. In addition, there is the problem of cigarette butts, which get washed into the watershed. Others reminded City Council that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board had originally recommended a total ban of all tobacco products in the parks as well, including vaping and chewing products. (The exception is the Hidden Valley Golf Course, where alcohol and tobacco would be permitted.)

The only person who spoke against the ordinance was, not surprisingly, Edward Paxton, owner of Woodland Cigar Company at 46 N. Sandusky Street. Understandably, he is fighting for his business interests. But again, the park system was not created for smokers to puff but for adults and children to exercise, play or watch ball games, or enjoy nature. There are plenty of other public and private areas where smokers can practice their unhealthy habits. For the record, on 9/28/17 councilman Kent Shafer received a check for \$50 from Woodland Cigar Company, according to the Delaware County Board of

Elections website. It is not a lot of money, but it casts a shadow over Mr. Shafer who likes to talk about government "overreach" and has defended the right of smokers to pollute the air. Is he advocating and voting for what's in the best interest of the health of the Delaware community as a whole?

It would be disappointing, but not surprising, if City Council voted (presumably on April 8 or 22) to ignore the overwhelming community preference to keep parks free of tobacco products. City Council members should be responsible leaders and role models. Isn't there a Healthy Kids Day coming up in April? But sometimes it may seem they are beholden to narrow business interests instead of being bold and independent problem solvers.

George Hellinger's "Transparency Initiative"

At the Feb. 25 meeting of City Council, under "Council Comments," at-large member George Hellinger provided his colleagues with a copy of what he referred to as a "transparency initiative" and requested that it be discussed on a future Council agenda. The stated intent of the initiative was to combat the public perception that City Council hides things and is not always as open and forthright as it claims to be. This leads to "growing distrust," according to Hellinger. The councilman is an independent thinker with high standards. The delicious irony is, of course, that Hellinger's "transparency initiative" itself was highly confidential. He has not offered to share it with the public. City Council is discussing it, or ignoring it, behind closed doors without anyone else having the faintest idea what it is all about. Things like that happen quite frequently at City Council. During public meetings, incl. those of board and commissions, "updates" and "addendums" are circulated, discussed, and approved while the attending public is in the dark. If City Council is serious about transparency, accountability, and building trust, it needs to be less opaque about a great many things.

Food Trucks and the Law

Food trucks have become a staple in many cities, but local ordinances often have not kept up with their actual use. This is true for Delaware as well, as councilman George Hellinger pointed out at the City Council meeting on March 11. There are plans for a permanent "Food Truck Depot" at 59 Potter St. on the city's east side, as reported in the March issue of "Community Matters," but under current city ordinances that would not be permitted. Section 1149.01 stipulates that "mobile food vendors" are only allowed for up to 45 days per calendar year, are not located with 50 feet of any residential use, do not offer tables & seating, and meet other conditions. Clearly, City Council needs to revisit this section of its Codified Ordinances (and probably many others as well).

Contest in the Second Ward

Councilmember Lisa Keller has represented the Second Ward since 2008. She has done so fairly effectively. She has good political instincts and often poses critical questions that no one else asks. Doing "due diligence" is a point of pride for her. On the other hand, there have been occasions over the years where she came across not as a congenial and convivial person who gets along with everyone but as needlessly harsh, petty, and even vindictive. In 1964 the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed "the principle that debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wide-open, and that it may well include vehement, caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials." Lisa Keller has not always respected this principle.

Keller is now facing a contender in the general election. Unlike other unsuccessful candidates for City Council in the past, Michael Rush has closely observed the city for some time and knows its business. He has also served on the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board for years. In addition, he is currently a member of the Steering Committee that is tasked to help shape the city's next Comprehensive Plan. His wife Colleen serves on the Sister City Advisory Board.

At this point, little is publicly known about the values these two candidates hold. Hopefully the competition will not merely be an empty popularity contest. There should be real and meaningful debate about the future of Delaware, and it may well include robust debate.

Delaware's Tree Canopy

For a while now, Delaware's Shade Tree Commission has been curious about the percentage of Delaware's tree canopy. Many U.S. cities have conducted tree-canopy inventories and reported values between 15% and 60%. On August 19, 2018 the "Columbus Dispatch" reported that Pittsburgh had 42%, Cincinnati 39%, Minneapolis 31%, and Austin 30%. American Forests recommends a 40% benchmark for most urban areas, except desert cities. STC member David Carey, who works for the USDA's Forest Service, has now conducted a survey for the City of Delaware. Using Google maps through Forest Service-approved i-Tree software (www.i-treetools.org), he calculated a tree-canopy cover between 19.6% and 25.9% in the four wards, or of 24% for the city overall. The figures include, of course, the wooded areas within the city as well as the tens of thousands of privately owned trees. It is not clear what methodology other cities around the nation have used to calculate or estimate their tree canopies, so Delaware's numbers have to be taken with a grain of salt. However, it is clear that the city could do even better when it comes to parks, green spaces, nature preserves, wildlife habitat, and total tree canopy.

Trees provide countless benefits to residents and enhance a community's quality of life. The esthetic beauty of the tree canopy increases curb appeal and thus property values. Their shading and wind-breaking effect helps with heating and cooling bills. Delaware's trees save the community \$193,000 annually in electricity and gas bills, according to researchers at The Ohio State University (OSU). Trees also absorb carbon dioxide (CO₂) and produce oxygen, improving air quality. Nearly 16 million pounds, or 8,000 tons, of carbon have been sequestered by Delaware's street trees over time and would represent carbon credits worth \$24,000 per year if a carbon-trading system were in place. Another noteworthy aspect is the trees' ability to retain considerable amounts of rainwater, which helps reduce storm-water runoff and flooding. Delaware's public trees intercept more than 6 million gallons of storm water annually. Each tree – depending on its size, health, and the climate it grows in – provides an annual benefit of no less than \$50. Linda Unterhill (in *Way of the Woods*, 2009) even claims that patients with a view of trees outside their windows heal faster and have fewer post-operative complications. Public-housing projects lacking trees and green spaces report nearly twice the crime rates as those that are landscaped attractively. Similar claims are made by Jill Jonnes in her 2016 book, *Urban Forests: A Natural History of Trees and People in the American Cityscape*. The STC believes that Delaware's urban forest is a worthwhile investment, as the benefits, both material and immaterial, are substantial. The same OSU researchers have calculated the value of Delaware's urban forest to be more than \$700,000 in total annual benefits to residents through ecosystem services such as storm-water remediation and decreased cooling and heating costs. Last, but not least, trees provide habitat and a food source for countless pollinators and birds.

Delaware's Largest Private Employers

On April 1, the City of Delaware will have a work session on its next Comprehensive Plan. According to background information provided in a report by a consulting firm (Randall Gross' "Delaware Together: Economic Baseline Assessment"), the businesses below are currently Delaware's largest *private* employers:

Ohio Health (Health Care) – 1,500 employees
Kroger Distribution Center (Logistics) – 1,100
Ohio Wesleyan Univ. (Education) – 600
Advance Auto Distribution (Logistics) – 400
Vertiv Corporation (R&D) – 350
PPG Industries (Paint Manuf.) – 330
Domtar / AHP (Manuf.: Hygienic Products) – 300
Jegs Automotive (HQ / Admin.) – 250
Liberty Casting (Foundry) – 230
International Paper (Manuf.: Cardboard Products) – 175
MW Accous-a-Fiber (Manuf.: Acoustic Products) – 150
Sam Dong (Manuf.: Copper Products) – 100

Healthcare and social services represent 16% of Delaware's jobs, manufacturing 14%, and education and retail 11% each. – According to city officials, Kroger is the largest private employer.

Residents Get 10% Discount at the YMCA

At the 3/19 meeting of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board it was stated that people who live and/or work in Delaware receive a 10% discount at local YMCA programs. Apparently, this is a well-kept secret because few residents are aware of the benefit. It is available only when you register in person, but not when you register online. We do not know if the discount extends to summer camps as well.



Arena Fair Theatre

Arena Fair Theatre has announced its line-up for 2019/20. For auditions, check their new website (www.arenafair.com).

- "Working: The Musical" (June 14-16, 19)
- "To Kill a Mockingbird" (Sept. 19)
- "A Christmas Story: The Musical" (Dec. 19)
- "Over the River and through the Woods: Disney Musical Tribute" (Feb. 20)

"Muses & Mentors" at Arts Castle

"Muses and Mentors" is an Arts Castle exhibit that runs from March 4 through April 28. Featured are works by Queen Brooks, April Sunami, Erin Smith Glenn, and others. The exhibit at 190 W. Winter St. is in conjunction with the annual 3rd-grade project.

Fundamentals Books and More

The new owners of Fundamentals Books at 25 W. Winter St. are Jody & Michael Everett. They are essentially continuing the business in the way the previous owner, Tami Furlong, ran it for 30 years, but some changes will be phased in over time. Fundamentals is open Tues. – Fri. 10-5:30 and Sat. 10-4. It is closed Sun. & Mon. The new website is www.beanbagbooks.com.

St. Mary Boy Scouts Mulch Sale

Boy Scout Troop 249 from St. Mary Catholic Church is holding its annual mulch sale. Brown & black mulch bags containing 2 cubic feet are available for \$5 each. Orders of 50+ bags are discounted to \$4/bag. Payment is due at delivery, which is free within Delaware County. Orders are accepted until Mon., April 22, the day after Easter Sunday. Contact stmarymulch@gmail.com for orders and questions or call Ray at 614-571-7466. You can also stop by at the St. Mary School office, 66 E. William St. Please provide your name, address, phone no. & email.

Olde Thyme Herbalist Club

The Olde Thyme Herbalist Club meets every 2nd Saturday of each month at 1 pm at a member's home. Join them to learn about herbs and their use for cooking & crafts, and to make new friends. The club has been in existence for many years. For more info, call 614-314-6183.

What Is "Laundry Love"?

Laundry Love is a ministry started by First Presbyterian Church, located at 73 W. Winter St. Church members are aware that many Delaware neighbors do not have the option of doing their laundry at home. Many do not even have a home! In partnership with Super Wash & Tan at 256 S. Sandusky St., the church now provides free washing & drying for the "hidden folks" who do not have access to appliances or who cannot afford to use coin-operated machines. The last Laundry Love day was Wed., March 27 (5-8 pm). People started to line up for the service as early as 3 pm. Laundry Love depends on volunteers, donations, and in-kind contributions such as laundry supplies. If you are able and willing to help, please contact Wayne Moore (moorewrmoores@aol.com). Nikki Hogarth appears to be the volunteer coordinator, though.

"Compassion Christian Church" Opens

Compassion Christian Church opened Sun., March 24 at 41 Firestone Dr., on the premises of what used to be a Salvation Army outpost. Formerly located in Radnor, Compassion Christian Church purchased the property last year and has been upgrading it for

months. It now houses the church, a spacious nursery, classrooms, and a playground. Youth programming includes all age groups, from nursery and pre-K through K-12. The new church is on Facebook and has a website, www.compassiondelaware.org.

A 2018 message from Al Perry, Lead Pastor, indicated that teaching the Christian Bible is the church's main focus. According to that letter, in Delaware County only 7% of the people attend a Bible-believing and Bible-teaching church on any given Sunday. The church hopes to reach the other 93% of people "who are living their life without God." If you are bothered by this language of exclusion and condemnation, you are not alone. These days many people are "spiritual, but not religious," especially younger folks. True religiosity is not defined by the number of Bible or Koran quotes you can recite, but by your unconditional love, how welcoming and inclusive you are, and by your neighborly actions. Unfortunately, one look at the church's website tells you all you need to know. There is an unhealthy obsession with human sexuality, as if gender is what defines humanity and Christianity:

"We believe that God creates each person as male or female; that these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the "image of God" in humankind; and that each person's biological gender is an intrinsic, immutable aspect of his or her nature and identity. We believe the Bible teaches that God established marriage in the beginning as a lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman; that He has reserved sexual intimacy as an expression of love and commitment between married couples; and that any intimate expression of sexuality outside of Biblical marriage is sin."

Unfortunately, it seems the love of Compassion Christian Church does not extend to LGBT people. They are devalued, excluded, and stigmatized for living in "sin." Watch for gay-conversion workshops next. This is precisely the reason why many people have given up on organized religion. The dogmatic and intolerant ideology of this new house of worship is neither compassionate nor Christian, as far as "Community Matters" is concerned. Jesus never uttered one word about homosexuality, one way or the other. Instead, he loved and embraced even the sinners, prostitutes, and criminals, not to mention the poor, sick, and persecuted. Freedom of religion is an important concept. At the same time, however, Compassion Christian Church does not represent the better angels of Delaware. Under the circumstances, it's hard to see the church stay in business long – unless the congregation has a change of heart and charts a new course.

OHIO WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

OWU Accreditation Renewed

OWU is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. The latest comprehensive evaluation took place last month. The visiting team studied OWU's mission, integrity, teaching and learning (both resources & quality and evaluation & improvement), and overall planning & effectiveness). While the final decision has not yet been approved by HLC's Institutional Actions Council, the visit team recommended reaffirmation of accreditation for the next decade. The next reaffirmation visit would occur in 2028/29. The team noted that OWU met all but two of the 21 core components. Concern was raised over a somewhat weak link between academic programs and budget decisions. The team requested that OWU perform a review of all academic programs by 2024 and demonstrate how these reviews inform budgeting decisions. – HLC's conclusions are public and are usually made available on its website (www.hlcommission.org) within 1 to 2 months after team visits.

Dr. Diane Y. Petersen – 2019 OWU Commencement Speaker

OWU's 2019 Commencement Speaker on May 11 will be Dr. Diane Y. Petersen, M.D. In 1965, she made history when she became the first African-American woman in the nation to be initiated into the Tri Delt (Delta Delta Delta) sorority. While at OWU, she majored in Speech. After graduating in 1966, she earned an M.A. in Communicative Disorders from Northwestern Univ. in 1968 and a medical degree from the Univ. of Michigan in 1982. Working as an ear, nose, and throat specialist, she enjoyed groundbreaking memberships

in several professional organizations as well. She is retired today, but continues to be active in local and philanthropic organizations.

WCSA Priorities

The president of OWU's Wesleyan Council on Student Affairs (WCSA), Austin Moore, addressed the student body on March 21, sharing with them his priorities. He started out by saying that students play a powerful role at OWU. Obviously, OWU needs them and will listen to them. However, students must be informed and active, or little will change. One of the major areas of dissatisfaction seems to be in the area of student services. In the eyes of many, counseling services are inadequate. The waiting periods are too long, and more must be done to address mental-health issues. Feminine-hygiene products in the restrooms would be nice amenities to have as would be shuttle buses to grocery stores and shopping malls. WCSA will require sexual-assault training for all student clubs applying for WCSA money next academic year, including sport teams. Moore also mentioned the need for GRE prep courses to support students applying for graduate school. Another systemic weak area is diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The academic curriculum is too "white" in the view of students of color. An additional area of concern is the reduction or disappearance of university funding for student emergencies next year. This may have a negative impact on student retention. The leadership of WCSA has not always been proactive and assertive in the past, but the current president promised an invigorated student government that that will work on behalf of all students. For instance, he pledged to hold monthly town-hall meetings. – During the Q/A period that followed, several other concerns were voiced by students in the audience. Many buildings on the historic campus are not ADA-compliant. Access to free birth-control supplies is something that is being discussed nationwide. A crosswalk-countdown system on S. Sandusky Street for visually impaired students was mentioned. Lastly, one student would like to see American Sign Language (ASL) taught on campus.

As far as the disappearance of the student-emergency funding is concerned, OWU's Vice President for Student Engagement and Success, Dwayne Todd, explained in an email that the money was the result of a 2-year grant from the Great Lakes Foundation. That grant has now expired, and the university is in process of identifying other external sources to provide emergency-grant funds for students experiencing difficulties. In addition, financial help is available internally if a student requires it, for example through the Chaplain's Office. WCSA also has unused money that it could make available to students in need.

"The Transcript" Retracts Story

A story published in the "Transcript" student newspaper at OWU caused consternation and led to a major article in the "Columbus Dispatch" written by Dean Narciso (3/6). In its online Feb. 28 edition, "The Transcript" published a front-page article that accused one of the leaders of OWU's student government, WCSA, of misusing school funds "for personal use" and hence of "corruption." No evidence was provided. Instead, the writer of the article, a freshman with no background in journalism, freely admitted that his story was essentially based on unsubstantiated gossip, hearsay, rumors, misinterpretation, and speculation. Clearly, none of that meets even the most rudimentary journalistic standards, and the decision to retract the story and ask the 245 subscribers to delete it was the correct one. The story had not yet been published on its website or social-media pages.

OWU faculty and staff do not review the independent "Transcript" newspaper before publication, which is standard practice at the college level. However, in the future "Transcript" editors and advisors must work on processes that ensure higher quality and better outcomes. What happened was a valuable lesson that needs to be remembered for years to come.

("Community Matters" knows the names of the two students involved, but is withholding them to protect their privacy.)

Bernard Murchland on "Becoming a Philosopher"

Bernard G. Murchland, who taught philosophy at OWU from 1967 to 2004, is the author of a new book entitled "Becoming a Philosopher: Selected Reviews and Essays, 1960-2015." A native of Canada, Bernie Murchland spent his formative years at the Univ. of Moncton, the Univ. of Montreal, and the Univ. of Ottawa. There he fell

under the spell of French Existentialism, an experience that shaped him forever. Not surprisingly, themes of existentialism are dominant in his new collection of articles and reviews. As he matured, however, themes of theology, education, democracy, and social & political philosophy also began to play a prominent role and are explored in additional essays. "Becoming a Philosopher" is available at OWU's Campus Store, located on the lower level of the HWCC Campus Center. – In addition to this collection of essays, Murchland has published numerous additional books, articles, and book reviews. For many years, he was also the editor of "Civic Arts Review," a journal for which he contributed many editorials.

OWU Launches "Lifelong Learning Institute" – \$

OWU is inviting older area residents to go back to school this fall. The first "Lifelong Learning Institute" will run from Sept. 23 through Nov. 1 this fall. About 10 offerings are expected. The registration fee is \$75 for as many classes as participants choose to take. As is the case with Elderhostel programs, the non-credit courses will be taught in a non-competitive, relaxed environment, free of tests and term papers. Partner organizations include SourcePoint, Willow Brook Christian Communities, and DCDL. The Delaware County Foundation has provided a grant to help start the initiative.

The community is invited to learn more about LLI during an event on Sat., May 4 (10 am – 12 pm) in the Benes Rooms of OWU's HWCC Campus Center. Five presenters will offer 15-minute previews of the courses they plan to teach in the fall. Topics include astronomy, knowledge retention, cooking with vegetables, movies, and Rutherford B. Hayes.

Kathryn C. Schwartz (1926-2019)

Kathryn Carlisle Schwartz died March 3 at the age of 92 at Willow Brook Christian Village at Delaware Run. In 1947, she married Austrian-born Paul Schwartz with whom she had 3 children. Later in life, in 1976, she earned her Ph.D. in English at OSU and taught English composition and literature at OWU from 1978 until her retirement in 1993. Her husband was Professor of Music at Kenyon College during that time and a noted composer of solo, chamber, choral, and symphonic works. He passed away in 1999, also at the age of 92. Kathryn Schwartz was active as a teacher and scholar. A major publication was "Baptist Faith in Action: The Private Writings of Maria Baker Taylor, 1813-1895," published in 2003. However, she was also active within the Gambier community and, after the couple relocated to Delaware in 1986, in the Delaware community. Locally, she served in the Delaware County Democratic Party, the League of Women Voters, and as a trustee for the Central Ohio Symphony. At one point, she was a member of the Delaware City Charter Review Commission and the Community Impact Team of United Way. Hers was a life well lived and impactful. "Faith in action" is a good self-characterization. Kathryn Schwartz is survived by two of her daughters, one of whom (Angela Schwartz Mead) is a renowned cellist in Switzerland, as well as sons-in-laws, grandchildren, and a nephew. A memorial gathering will be held Sun., April 14 (3-5 pm) in the Summit Room at Willow Brook at Delaware Run, 100 Delaware Crossing W.

"Something's Afoot" by the Rev. Jon R. Powers, OWU Chaplain

Chaplain Powers wrote the piece below for the Delaware Gazette, which published it on March 29.

Do we even see them?! Over there, in the shadows... Out of sight... After hours... Those nameless ones... Who on earth are they, anyway? Somehow, without our even noticing their existence for the most part, they make it all happen, day after day after day: Our waste baskets get emptied. Our toilets get cleaned. Our garbage gets carted away. Our floors get swept or vacuumed. Our food gets cooked and served. But who are these people, anyway?!

Most of us live in a culture not unlike Jesus' time, when those who wait upon us to clean up our daily messes are faceless, nameless, and all-too-often downright invisible. In Jesus' day, they called these invisible people slaves. It was this kind of slave who

washed the feet of any guest upon their arrival to any household. As that slave was washing the feet of a guest, the guest was culturally obligated to totally ignore the existence of that slave; any acknowledgement of that slave's existence was absolutely forbidden. Indeed, the guest was to make eye contact only with the host, chat only with the host, and pretend that the slave was not even present in the room with them.

I must be gentle here, but I must also be truthful: Today we call these same people housekeepers, custodians, maids, garbage collectors, grill cooks, or food servers. Yet the social treatment of slaves in Jesus' time is disturbingly similar to the way we look upon and treat those who are our helpers today. No matter where I travel – downtown Delaware, nationally or internationally, in airports, hotels, court houses, jails, hospital, local churches, and even within my own beloved university – our cultural view and treatment of those who care for our most basic needs seems no more caring or loving than it did in Jesus' day. Perhaps this comparison can help us understand what a confusing shock it was for Jesus' disciples, on the very last day of his life on Earth, when he turned over even these hard and fast tables to teach us all the link between these invisible slaves and himself as the Lord of all Humanity.

"So Jesus got up from the supper table, set aside his robe, and put on an apron. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the feet of the disciples, drying them with his apron." (John 13, The Message) I am so done with this biblical passage being used as a token ritual of foot washing or forehead dabbing fellow Christians. I invite you join me to ponder this passage in more depth. Consider what it was that Jesus was trying to teach here: All those whom we have held to be our invisible, nameless helpers are, in fact, the very presence of Christ.

My goodness! Perhaps Jesus is trying to say to us that these good salt-of-the-earth souls deserve a living wage and a retirement package, and real eye contact, and a genuine "Thank you for all you do for us." Just maybe, this curious passage of John's Gospel has everything to do with how Jesus invites us to treat our so-often-out-of-sight, after-hours, nameless helpers who make it all happen, day after day after day. These sacred servants who empty our trash, clean our toilets, scrub our floors, collect our garbage, cook and serve our food – they, above any of the rest of us, deserve our honor, appreciation, and respectful treatment as the truly holy ones in the eyes of God.

A Statement on the United Methodist Special General Conference from MTSO President Jay Rundell

Friends,

The 2019 United Methodist Special General Conference concluded earlier this evening here in St. Louis. We have experienced difficult days as delegates representing the great breadth of our global church struggled to determine crucial aspects of our common life and connection. In a very real sense, they wrestled for the soul of our church. While there are still important details that need clarification from the denomination's judicial council in the months ahead, the gist of where we stand now is that the church has reinforced its exclusive language regarding the place of LGBTQ people in our denomination and have added what I believe to be draconian enforcement provisions.

The body defeated legislation that would have made our church fully inclusive and also resisted passing a compromise plan that would have created space for differing approaches in different contexts. Once again, I believe our church did great harm under the auspices of doctrinal fidelity and in the name of Jesus. Additional items were addressed concerning details of how some churches might depart the denomination in the future, and many details are yet in need of clarification. In addition to the deep hurt committed to individuals, the results of this conference will likely have extensive implications for the church's boards, agencies, institutions and schools. We will keep you posted as to how we are affected and how we can move forward together.

MTSO has a long history with the United Methodist Church. We also have a long history of speaking and acting for justice. We will redouble our efforts to teach and preach a gospel of love and inclusion. We will stand with our LGBTQ students, staff, faculty, alumni, trustees and friends. We will actively resist the misuse of

scripture, tradition, reason and experience in fostering discrimination and division. We are committed to providing theological education for a just, sustainable and generative world. By that, we mean the whole of God's world and all of God's people. More now than ever, all means all.

Peace, Jay

President Jay Rundell sent the above statement to the MTSO community Feb. 26. At its regularly scheduled meeting March 1, 2019, the MTSO Board of Trustees voted unanimously to affirm his statement.

DELAWARE COUNTY & CENTRAL OHIO

Delaware County Board of Elections **Primary Election May 7, 2019**

Municipal Court Judge

Melissa K. Riggins, Powell (Rep.)

Kyle E. Rohrer, Delaware (Rep.)

Municipal Court Judge

Marianne T. Hemmeter, Delaware (Rep.)

Clerk of Municipal Court Delaware County

Cindy Dinovo, Delaware (Rep.)

Kris Jordan, Ostrander (Rep.)

Emma Mirles, Delaware (Dem.)

Voter registration deadline is Mon., April 8 (9 pm). You are qualified to register if you are a citizen of the U.S.; if you are 18 or older before the general election on Nov. 5; if you are a resident of Ohio for at least 30 days before the election; if you are not incarcerated for a felony conviction; if you have not been declared incompetent for voting purposes; and if you have not been permanently disenfranchised for violations of election laws. For more info, visit www.delawareboe.org.

Delaware County Democratic Party

According to a recent message from the Delaware County Democratic Party, these are their current candidates:

- **Emma Jones** is running for Delaware Municipal Court Clerk in Delaware County. <https://www.votemirles.com/>
- **Melanie Farkas** is running for Township Trustee in Liberty Twp. <https://www.melaniefarkas.com/>
- **Joydeep (Jay) Gupta** is running for Orange Township Fiscal Officer. <https://www.votejaygupta.com/>
- **Heather Stevens Karr** is running for Powell City Council. <https://heatherkarr.com>
- **Drew Farrell** is running for Delaware City Council, Ward 4.

Another Person Dies in Delaware County Jail

A Caucasian man from Ashley, Edward M. Sullivan, was found dead on the floor of his Delaware County jail cell on Fri., March 8. He was pronounced deceased at 4:06 am. Born in 1973, he was only 46 years old. The cause of death is unknown, but an autopsy will be conducted. "Foul play" is not suspected. The Delaware Gazette reported that Sullivan was incarcerated March 6 for "violating conditions of community control." It was not explained why this non-violent crime was a "jailable" offense.

By and large, U.S. jails and prisons are not equipped to handle medical emergencies or mental-health crises. It is not clear if this played a role in this case. The pattern for city and county law enforcement is to never follow up with updates. People seem to die in the Delaware County Jail on a regular basis, and no explanation is ever given. There is a deplorable lack of transparency. Chances are the public will never hear the results of this autopsy and internal review either.

The Delaware County Jail

Most people have no idea what's going on in the Delaware County Jail. During a recent "Law Enforcement and Court Day," the Leadership Delaware Class of 2019 toured Delaware law-enforcement, court & jail facilities. Below is an excerpt of their informative report. The full document can be found in "Chamber Notes," the newsletter of the Delaware Area Chamber of Commerce (April 2019).

"Lastly, we took the DATA buses' trolley to the Delaware County Jail. Located on US 42 North, the facility has undergone many changes throughout the years. When it was initially built in 1988, it only housed 60 inmates. Fast forward to today and through at least three expansions, the jail can now house 289 inmates. Unbelievably so, their kitchen is still equipped for feeding 60 inmates! The food is contracted out but made in the Sheriff's department kitchen. The state of Ohio requires that Monday through Friday inmates get three meals daily and two meals on the weekends but Delaware always provides three meals, with thirteen officers on first and second shift and ten on third shift.

They take everything they do into consideration for the safety of the inmates and the people who work at the Sheriff's department, with every door locking before another door opens. Lock-downs are mandatory while officers change shifts, and head counts are performed at each lock down, all for the safety of everyone involved.

Visitations are limited to 30 minutes through a video chat only. The only face-to-face visitations are with clergy and attorneys. This helps to keep confusion down during transfers. The only inmates that are allowed on the outside of the jail are work-released inmates. These inmates have work privileges but must return to the jail by 4:30 pm for lock-down. These inmates are not housed with the general population for safety reasons.

When inmates arrive at the jail, they are booked. During booking they are fingerprinted, have their picture taken, and have a medical intake performed. An officer goes over their charges, such as how long their stay is, and if they are a repeat offender. Next, they must shower and be inspected. All their personal belongings are shrink-wrapped and put in the property room. They are given their uniform based of their charges: yellow uniforms are a minimum classification, orange medium classification, and black-and-white are maximum classification inmates.

Medical staffing is on-site 24/7 and a mental health counselor is available Monday through Friday. Inmates are given free time throughout the day to exercise, play cards, and communicate. If the weather permits, they go outside for fresh air. Inmates are checked on every hour to be sure everyone is safe and accounted for. Being booked in the jail is not cheap with a \$68.00 charge daily. The general population at the jail has a stay of 30 days. That is \$2,040 for a month's stay! What a well-oiled machine the Delaware Sheriff's department runs!"

DATA Receives Federal Funding

The Delaware Area Transit Agency (DATA) is one of 10 transit projects in Central Ohio that received funding from MORPC. The FTA's Section 5310 Programs funding is provided to programs that will enhance the mobility of older adults and individuals with disabilities. DATA will receive \$35,774 for operating costs, which requires a 50% local match. In addition, \$110,029 was granted for software, which requires a 20% local match. And \$94,191 was given for "capitalized maintenance," which likewise requires a 20% local match. This portion of the grant covers the cost of preventative maintenance of the buses. The total funding is \$239,994. DATA receives no money from the City of Delaware or Delaware County, so federal funding is vital to the program.

National Library Week (April 7-13)

National Library Week, first observed in 1958, is celebrated April 7-13 this year. In Delaware, each day of this week highlights parts of library life such as National Library Workers Day on Tues., April 9 and National Bookmobile Day on Wed., April 10. The State of America's Libraries Report is also released this week, which includes the highly anticipated Top Ten Frequently Challenged Books of 2018.

Delaware County Fairgrounds

Delaware County Fairgrounds at 236 Pennsylvania Ave. has demolished the Junior Fair Building to make room for a new 24,000-square-foot, \$3-million Agricultural Center. Once completed (in 2020), it will house the fair office, the DCAS Hall of Fame, and the junior fair. Funding for the new center, which will have a heating-cooling system, comes from the 3-percent, 5-year hotel-bed tax approved by county voters in 2016.

DCHS Restores the Barn at Stratford

The Delaware County Historical Society has completed the renovations at the Barn at Stratford, 2690 Stratford Rd. According to an email message, "part of the horizontal beam has been replaced, and the supports have been redone and have new concrete footers. The floor of the loft above has been replaced with red oak, which has improved the ceiling visible from below. There are also additional exit doors, with signs above them, along the front of the barn." In addition, a new projection and sound system has been installed. Visitors can see the improvements if they attend the public events on either April 18 or May 16." The DCHS also plans to host an open house in early May.

New DCDL Site Identified

The Delaware County District Library (DCDL) has announced that it has chosen the location for a new Liberty Township Branch Library. The new site, a space within a planned 11.7-acre development project at Home and Steitz roads, has been the preferred location all along. Groundbreaking will occur within 9-12 months, with the branch opening in 2021. The existing Powell branch at 460 S. Liberty St. will remain open during construction and beyond.



Canine Companions to Relocate to New Albany

Canine Companions at 4989 State Rt. 33/37 East plans to move into a much larger \$21-million facility in New Albany in late 2020. The new location at 7480 New Albany Circuit Rd. will have seven times the space. However, fundraising the project is on-going. – Canine Companions for Independence (www.cci.org) is the world's largest nonprofit provider of assistance dogs, according to their website. The Delaware location, in existence since 1990, is one of 6 in the nation. The organization places more than 350 dogs per year with recipients.



Cloud Nine Musical Instruments

The Ostrander couple of Michael and Pam Allen have been creating beautiful musical instruments for more than 40 years. Together they make mostly hammered dulcimers, but also violins and more recently Swedish nyckleharpas (pictured above). Their luthier business is located at 5701 Stover Rd. in Ostrander, OH 43061. The phone no. is 740-666-4253, their email address info@cloudninemusical.com. For more details and pictures, visit www.cloudninemusical.com.

Otterbein Univ. Performs "Singin' in the Rain" – \$

Amid controversy, Otterbein Univ. replaced the musical "Westside Story" with a production of "Singin' in the Rain," directed by Christina Kirk. The 1985 Broadway musical is based on the 1952 MGM film. The show debuted March 28 and will also run April 4-6 at Fritsch Theatre at Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove St., in Westerville. General admission is \$30.

Josephinum Welcomes New President

The Pontifical College Josephinum at 7625 N. High St. north of Columbus has a new president. Rev. Steven P. Beseau will become

the 17th Rector / President of the seminary effective July 1. He succeeds Rev. Monsignor Christopher J. Schreck. Inaugural festivities will be held in fall of 2019. – Beseau attended the Univ. of St. Mary of the Lake in Illinois and the Pontifical Univ. of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome. He was ordained in 1995 and has extensive pastoral experience as a parish priest, high-school chaplain, and director of a campus center. He comes to Columbus from Cincinnati's Athenaeum of Ohio where he teaches Moral Theology. (To read the full press release, visit www.pcj.edu.)

Workers Priced Out of the Housing Market

According to a new study by the real-estate information service Attom Data Solutions, workers in 335 of the 473 counties in the report (71%) did not make enough money to afford a typical home. Workers in Ohio's Delaware, Fairfield & Licking counties "are priced out of the market" because they don't earn enough to buy a median-priced home. In Franklin County, the situation is slightly better. There, the annual average income of \$55,328 is enough to afford the \$162,500 median price of a home. (Source: Columbus Dispatch, 3/28/19)

Questions Surround Incoming Columbus Bishop

On March 29, the Rev. Robert Brennan was installed as the 12th bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Columbus, replacing Bishop Frederick Campbell who is retiring. Brennan is taking over at an inauspicious time. The diocese just released a list of 36 clergy members "credibly accused" of child abuse. There are now questions about Brennan's own role as vicar general at the place of his former employment from 2002 to 2010, the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Brennan has said he did not have any personal "involvement" with clergy accused of sexual abuse at that time. People have a hard time believing this, however. A vicar general is a person appointed by a bishop to assist with the government of the diocese. A grand jury investigation in 2003 determined that the Rockville Centre diocese protected at 58 priests over the decades. More than 300 people have come forward since the diocese began a compensation program for abuse victims in 2017. It is therefore patently impossible that Brennan was not knowledgeable of and involved with discussions surrounding sexual abuse by diocesan employees. In the absence of full transparency, victim groups suspect that Brennan is "part of the problem and not part of the solution."

On March 15th, the Rev. Bishop Brennan issued a statement intended to clarify his role in the Diocese of Rockville Centre on Long Island. He stated that at that time he was certainly "aware" of allegations of sexual abuse by clergy members, but that he was not personally "responsible" for the processing of these allegations. However, Brennan admitted that he "met with some victims," according to the Columbus Dispatch (3/16) – something he failed to reveal during a news conference in February. On the surface this is nothing but a debate over semantics – the exact meaning of words such as "involvement." On a deeper level, however, what's at stake here is the bishop's and the Catholic Church's credibility and legitimacy. And so far full transparency remains elusive. The culture of secrecy continues.

"Ohio: Champion of Sports" – \$

"Ohio: Champion of Sports" is a new exhibition at the Ohio History Center in Columbus at 800 E. 17th Ave., off I-71. It opened last month and will stay up at least through Sept. 2020. The interactive exhibit highlights 26 sports and spans 3 museum floors. Instead of being organized chronologically, its 6 themes are: character, adversity, innovation, identity, tradition, and victory. General admission is \$12; discounts apply for children, students & seniors. More info at www.ohiohistory.org.

The Last Drive-In Theater in Columbus

Once upon a time, drive-in theaters were common in the nation. Today, only 24 remain in Ohio. Central Ohio once had 15 such venues, incl. Delaware's Kingman Drive-In Theatre at 229 Cheshire Rd., which closed in 2001. Today, however, the only one left is the South Drive-In Theater at 3050 S. High St. in Columbus. (The Skyview Drive-In in Lancaster is its nearest competitor.) The Columbus drive-in uses digital projectors and has a renovated snack bar. Guests can use speakers attached to stationary poles, but they can also tune into FM radio to get sound. They are welcome to bring lawn chairs or blankets,

as well as their own food and beverages. South Drive-In opened its 70th season with a double feature of "Dumbo" and "Captain Marvel." For more info, visit www.drive-inmovies.com. (Source: Columbus Dispatch, 3/29/19)

THE STATE OF OHIO



Governor Mike DeWine's Priorities

Gov. Mike DeWine's first State of the State address on March 5 contained proposals that even Democrats could embrace. His approach was conciliatory & bipartisan and included a long shopping list of items – early childhood education, the opioid crisis, Ohio's transportation infrastructure, the health of Lake Erie, more money for state parks, community colleges and career centers, a guaranteed tuition freeze for each student, and so on. He presented a cabinet that is one of the most diverse in Ohio's history, and he surprised some by extending former governor John Kasich's executive order barring discrimination over gender identity in state employment.

Of course, the real test comes when DeWine's presents his first budget proposal. His speech did not address K-12 funding; he will not be an education governor. Neither did he mention support for renewable energies; Ohio will continue to limp behind other states. His proposed gasoline-tax increase will not result in a significant increase in support for mass-transit projects; currently Ohio ranks 40th in the nation in this respect. Ohioans will have to wait and see what his top priorities are. His stated support for the so-called heart-beat bill does not sound promising in this respect. DeWine has also a record of strongly supporting the Second Amendment. Hopefully, it is not a sign that he will continue to fight unwinnable culture wars that leave Ohio in the lurch. Under Kasich, the Buckeye state suffered enough of that.

Graduation Requirements Remain Weak

The Ohio Board of Education has once again voted (14 to 1) to approve new graduation requirements that reduce the state's reliance on standardized tests. In the past, students received credit for good attendance, their gpa, internships, holding a job, alternative educational "experiences" (e.g., community service), etc. The goal was to hand as many diplomas as possible, regardless whether or not students were prepared for college or work. This pattern continues to hold true. The current proposal includes a "culminating student experience," but there is concern that this capstone project is largely undefined and may not be implemented consistently across school districts. Although the Board denies it, there is the almost universal perception that state requirements for high-school graduates continue to be unreasonably low and weak. Pat Tiberi, president of the Ohio Business Roundtable and a member of Ohio Excels, says that "it is a disservice to students to promote them without the skills they need to succeed." Colleges, businesses, and the military struggle to find qualified recruits; remediation efforts are the norm. The answer is not to relax the requirements, but to demand more rigor and to put the school system front and center in young people's lives. Ohio is not setting the bar high enough. Society as a whole is neglecting the issue of education, which should be the no. 1 priority. The students themselves often do not see the value of knowledge and skills. Many live blissfully in alternative realities and fantasy worlds comprised of movies and video games instead of being grounded in the real world. – It is said that states and countries that stand still fall behind. America has already experienced a measurable decline compared to the rest of the world.

Ohio Excels

A new non-partisan business coalition, Columbus-based "Ohio Excels," wants to improve the status of education in the state. It strives to ensure that every high-school student is prepared for success. Lisa A. Gray, a former teacher and the founding president, recently stated, "Higher education, the business community, and the

military rely on the diploma to signal that students are prepared. Unfortunately, this is not always true." She added that more than a quarter of students attending Ohio's public colleges require remediation, businesses struggle to find suitable employees, and the military has trouble identifying qualified recruits. To attract companies with higher-paying jobs, Ohio needs a workforce with a higher level of training and education than is currently the case. The economy of the future demands better-prepared students. To learn more about Ohio Excels, visit www.ohioexcels.org.

3/26 Update: Pat Tiberi, President and CEO of the Ohio Business Roundtable, elaborated on the goals of Ohio Excels in an op-ed piece published in the Columbus Dispatch. "Workforce development," he says, is the top-of-mind concern for CEOs. Ohio needs an education system that prepares today's students for the jobs of tomorrow and tomorrow's students for the jobs that don't yet exist. Unfortunately, he says, the current K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions seem "ill-prepared" to do so. – It is easy to agree with Tiberi's focus on excellent "education experiences" for everyone, from pre-K to universities. America has long neglected academic excellence. However, his call for career paths that are "aligned with the needs of our changing workplace" is too myopic. What the country needs more of is creative talent, innovative engineers, and critical thinkers. Vocational training and skills are important, but not enough to ensure that the U.S. will remain on the cutting edge.

Gas-Tax Increase

By the March 31 deadline, Ohio's House and Senate were unable to come to a consensus on a higher gas tax. The House is proposing an 11-cent-per-gallon increase, plus a 20-cent-per-gallon increase on diesel fuel. The Senate is offering a 9-cent-per-gallon increase, plus a 16-cent-per-gallon increase for diesel fuel. For ordinary Ohioans, the 2 cents difference would make little difference over the course of a year. What's really at stake here is political grandstanding and posturing. Governor Mike DeWine originally wanted an 18-cent increase, but both the House and the Senate rejected a steep 64% increase of the current 28-cent tax. There is no agreement on what Ohio's actual needs are. Some lawmakers are of the misguided opinion that the state does not need to make any infrastructure and safety improvements or invest in new projects.

Ohio's Prison Population Not Shrinking

There is talk about criminal-justice reform and reducing the prison population. However, a new study shows that new bills introduced during the previous two-year session of the legislature "did not reduce the prison population as originally projected." Ohio's incarcerated population remains at just over 49,000, meaning jails and prisons are near 130% capacity. Despite some legislative efforts, many judges continue to hand out harsh sentences instead of using probation, diversion, treatment, and/or community-control sentences for low-level felonies. They also imprison high numbers of people for committing technical probation violations or for their inability to pay fees & fines. In addition, lawmakers have created a number of new crimes, for example for drug or sex offenses. Republican lawmakers, prosecutors, and judges are actively "undermining reform efforts" in Ohio, according to the ACLU.

DeWine Calls for Review of Jail-Inspections Process

Governor Mike DeWine has asked for a review of Ohio's jail-inspections process after discrepancies in reports about the Cuyahoga County Jail where 8 inmates died in 2018. The jail was found to be out of compliance with 84 standards by federal marshals, but a 2017 report by the Ohio Dept. of Rehabilitation and Correction showed few issues. Nationwide, conditions in jails and prisons are often inhumane. Civil-rights abuses are rampant. Adequate treatment for physical and mental conditions is frequently nonexistent.

Sherrod Brown Declines to Run for President

Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown has announced that he is not running for president in 2020. He spent months exploring the possibility and visited early-voting states, receiving positive press for his dignity-of-work campaign. He is a champion for workers and organized labor. Despite his undeniable appeal, however, there were also obstacles. The field of democratic candidates is crowded, and it is difficult to stand out and raise money. Brown has little national name

recognition on the national stage compared to Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and others. Also, he is a middle-aged white male in an era that seems to favor new faces, especially the faces of women and minorities. In addition, there are unresolved political contradictions in his tactics and strategy that are rarely discussed in the media. Brown has been an indefatigable fighter for the common man and woman, but he also has a strong pragmatic streak. In order to save or create jobs in Ohio, he has shown willingness to make pacts with the devil, i.e., manufacturing, corporations, and the military. He has aligned himself with President Trump against free trade (e.g., NAFTA) and for tariffs and protectionism. He is also not known to be an environmentalist; his comments on the Green New Deal were dismissive. His ideological purity is tainted in many ways and may not stand up to closer scrutiny. His Midwestern brand may have worked for Ohio, but it is difficult to see it take off in more progressive states.

Nickie Antonio Introduces LGBT Legislation for the 5th Time

Despite a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized same-sex marriages in all 50 states, gays and lesbians can still be denied housing, employment, and services in Ohio. Lawmaker Nickie Antonio, D-Lakewood, has once again introduced a bill that would update Ohio's anti-discrimination laws to include employment, housing, and public-accommodation protections for the LGBTQ community. Previous versions of Senate Bill 11, dubbed the Ohio Fairness Act, received little traction in past Republican-dominated legislatures, but perhaps this time is different. Two dozen municipalities and two counties have already passed ordinances that bar discrimination against LGBT folks (the City of Delaware and Delaware County are not among them), but Senate Bill 11 would create blanket protections across the entire state. LGBT rights are supported by the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and would allow businesses to recruit and retain more top talent. "When we say the words of the Pledge of Allegiance, we say 'with liberty and justice for *all*,' not just '*some*,'" Nickie Antonio noted in a speech.

Hemp May Become Legal in Ohio

Ohio farmers are currently barred from growing hemp, a versatile plant that be used for a wide variety of products. However, Senate Bill 57 would change that. The 2018 federal farm law reclassified hemp as a commodity (like corn and soybeans) rather than a drug, making it possible for states to change their laws if they wanted to do so. Many have already enacted new laws and/or created pilot programs. As usual, however, Ohio is behind the curve. Farmers are eager to embrace the plant. More than 250 people attended the recent hemp summit at the Delaware County Fairgrounds, according to the Ohio Hemp Farmers Cooperative. – On March 28, the Ohio Senate voted unanimously to decriminalize hemp and hemp products and to set up a new licensing system for the cultivation of the crop. The bill will now go the House. The decriminalization of hemp is a good step that will create jobs, introduce new products, and help the economy. However, there is concern that a handful of large corporations will attempt to monopolize the production and distribution of hemp.

Wall Funding Jeopardizes Military Projects in Ohio

The House and the Senate have both rejected the White House's emergency funding of the Wall, prompting the first veto of Trump's presidency. Since Congress holds the power of the purse, mandated by the Constitution, funding for the Wall has to come from other sources. The Pentagon has now provided Congress with a list of military projects that could be delayed or permanently deleted to finance the border barrier.

Several military facilities in Ohio are potentially affected by the plan, totaling about \$112 million that the Buckeye State is poised to lose, as well as an unknown number of jobs. The list of possible cuts includes the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton (\$61 million) as well as several smaller projects in or near Dayton, Mansfield, Ravenna, Toledo, and Youngstown, ranging between \$6.8 million and \$15 million.

Democrats have called Trump's call for a border wall a "fake emergency" and are not happy about seeing important military projects in Ohio gutted. Rep. Tim Ryan, D-Niles, said, "Not only is the president undermining Congress and the Constitution, his actions make America and our service members less prepared to deal with threats at home and abroad."

Victims of Human Trafficking Tracked

It seems incredible, but until now there has been no official compilation of known victims of human trafficking in Ohio. This has now changed with a new study conducted by the Univ. of Cincinnati. The study identified 1,032 victims between 2014 report 2016 as well as another 4,209 individuals "at risk" of being trafficked during the same period. The researchers compiled and examined data from 14 different agencies, incl. law enforcement, juvenile courts, and child welfare. The study found that 86% of the 1,302 victims were minors. Most were young girls in Ohio's urban centers. 58% of them were white, 35% were African-American, and 6% were multiracial. At-risk populations include drug users, the homeless, chronic runaways, and youth frequently truant from school.

The lead author of the study, criminal-justice expert Dr. Valerie Anderson, says despite her team's best efforts untold numbers of victims have had no contact with the system and remain uncounted. Because of the paucity of data, the researchers can't even tell if the problem of human trafficking has grown in recent years or not. However, the study's findings will now serve as a baseline going forward.

Ohio Does Not Regulate Its Hospitals

According to the Columbus Dispatch (3/14), Ohio is the only state in the nation that does not license its hospitals. This lack of oversight has created a system of self-regulation that is prone to corruption and failure. The recent case of Dr. William Husel, a long-time Mount Carmel employee who is accused of causing the wrongful death of at least 35 patients, is a prime example of why more independent oversight is needed. Hopefully, lawmakers will now address the issue. However, it is sad to see that it always seems to take a major disaster or scandal before they wake up. The Boeing scandal, opioid epidemic, toxic algae, or ECOT are cases in point.

Concealed-Carry Licenses

The annual "Ohio's Law on Concealed Handguns" report shows a total of 168,302 concealed-carry licenses were issued to state residents in 2018. 98,927 were renewals and 69,375 new CCWs licenses. In addition, 1,436 licenses were denied statewide in 2018. In Delaware County, the total number of licenses issued in 2018 was 2,659 – 963 new ones and 1,696 renewals. That's an increase of 23% compared to 2017 when 2,057 licenses were issued. CCW licenses must be renewed every five years. If you do the math, it appears that only 6.65% to 7.65% of private residents have concealed-carry licenses. Of course, this does not account for unregistered guns or those owned by law enforcement. It also does not account for multiple weapons that many individuals may own. Estimates indicate that the number of firearms in the U.S. exceeds the number of people living in the country. – To learn more about Dave Yost's report, go to www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/ConcealedCarry.

White Supremacist James A. Fields Pleads Guilty

James Alex Fields of Maumee, Ohio has pleaded guilty of intentionally plowing his car into a crowd of protesters on Aug. 12, 2017, killing Heather Heyer and injuring dozens of others who were protesting against white supremacists marching in Charlottesville, Virginia. He had previously said he feared for his life. Under a plea agreement, federal prosecutors will not seek the death penalty against him. He is facing, however, life in prison. In a statement of facts, Fields admitted that he had expressed and promoted white-supremacist ideology through social media. He openly supported Nazi ideology, defended the Holocaust, and advocated violence against people of color. He also admitted that he deliberately drove his car into an ethnically diverse crowd because of their race, color, religion, or national origin. Fields, 21, was convicted of first-degree murder and other charges in a Virginia court last December and will be sentenced on both federal and state charges by U.S. District Judge Michael Urbanski on July 3.

Few Schools Offer Tampons Freely

Society has made menstruation a taboo subject. In most schools, female students have to ask for tampons in a nurse's clinic. It wastes time and stigmatizes them. Some students even stay at home. A growing movement now wants to make menstruation products

available for free in all school restrooms, providing them through wall dispensers or free-standing boxes. Some U.S. states already mandate the availability of such products in certain schools, based on family income and student grades. In Ohio, however, the effort is lagging. Few schools offer the service, although it would cost only \$5 to \$7 per student annually. One New York school reported that attendance increased once free menstrual products were offered in restrooms. Clearly, the idea has merit. Just like schools provide free toilet paper and soap, they should provide freed tampons to those who need them.

THE NATION

Record Number of Deaths from Alcohol, Drugs & Suicide

The Trust for America's Health and the Well Being Trust have analyzed the latest available statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and come to the following conclusions: In 2017, more than 150,000 Americans died from alcohol, drugs, and suicide – the highest number since the collection of federal mortality data started in 1999. Nearly a third of these deaths (47,173) were suicides. The causes of these deaths are complex, but glaring inequalities in income and health care are contributing factors. In addition, there is the growing sense of loneliness and despair in America. Without a social network and psychological resilience for many people the loss of a job, home, loved one, or their freedom (due to incarceration) can trigger deep traumas.

Congress Rejects Trump's Emergency Declaration

Both the House and the Senate have rejected President Trump's declaration of a national emergency at the U.S.-Mexican border. The construction of "The Wall" has been a focus of Trump's candidacy and presidency, so the stunning bipartisan rebuke is significant. Lawmakers were questioning not only whether the emergency was real, they were also concerned about the constitutional issue that grants Congress, not the President, the power of the purse. Trump has said that he plans to veto Congress' decision. It would be the first veto of his presidency.

Trump Officially Nominates David Bernhardt

President Trump has made the nomination of David Bernhardt for Secretary of the Interior official. He has led the department since Ryan Zinke's resignation amid multiple ethics investigations. Bernhardt, 49, has had a career as a lawyer and lobbyist for oil-and-gas companies. Since 2011 he also worked for the Westlands Water District, a group of California farmers who demanded access to more irrigation water to the detriment of the San Francisco Bay Delta and the endeared species that live in it. Since joining the Interior Dept. in 2017, Bernhardt has worked hard to weaken the Endangered Species Act, which would free up more territory for the fossil-fuel industry and more water for agriculture. He was supposed to recuse himself for two years from any matter or issue that he lobbied for in the past, but in the Trump administration such technicalities have long been abandoned.



Boeing's 737 Max 8 Grounded

In Oct. 2018, a Boeing 737 Max 8 crashed in Indonesia, killing 189 people. Now a similar crash involving another 737 Max 8 model occurred on March 10 in Ethiopia, which killed 157 people. Victims included citizens from 35 different countries and at least 22 employees of the United Nations. Both planes were new and considered reliable, but now questions about the safety of Boeing's most popular jetliner have arisen. It appears mechanical issues were not the culprit. Instead there is speculation whether the new software system and/or the pilots' unfamiliarity with it is to blame. American pilots have reported similar incidences of sudden nose dives, forcing them to disconnect the autopilot. In response, almost every country in the world grounded their 737 Max 8 planes following the latest crash. The Indonesian airliner Garuda has gone even one step further and

has canceled a large order of 49 passenger planes, citing "lost confidence." In all, 371 new jets are currently in service around the world.

The story was different in the U.S., where Boeing is headquartered. For days the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) resisted calls to ground the planes, saying it saw no reason to question the "airworthiness" of the 737 Max 8. Boeing has thousands of additional orders on its books, and it appears that concerns about profits, the stock market, and jobs trumped safety concerns. In the U.S., the cautionary principle is generally ignored, and Boeing enjoys a very cozy relationship with the FAA. That relationship is now subject to investigations. Amid mounting pressure and harsh criticism, President Trump on March 13 issued an emergency order that halted the flights of Southwest and American Airlines, the two American carriers that use the 737 Max 8 model. It was the correct call. – A software patch is said to become available in April.

Trump Nominates New FAA Director

After the debacle involving the Federal Aviation Administration's inappropriately close relationship with Boeing, President Trump nominated former airline executive Stephen Dickson to head the FAA. The agency had been under interim leadership since Michael Huerta left more than one year ago and is now subject to intense scrutiny after two crashes involving the Boeing 737 Max 8 model. Dickson appears to be a man of great professionalism and integrity, but will face questions whether a former Delta Air Lines executive is the right man to head a government agency that is supposed to be independent from the industry. He will no doubt be asked about the dual mission of the FAA – overseeing and promoting the aviation industry – and if this constitutes a conflict of interest.

FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb Resigns

Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, announced last month that he would resign in April. Gottlieb, a physician, was adamant about reducing the epidemic of smoking and vaping, resulting in increasing pushback from Republicans in Congress. Conservative groups fought against his efforts to ban teenage vaping and menthol cigarettes. Industry analysts are seeing Gottlieb's departure as "a positive." They expressed "optimism" that the initiatives he championed would now end. – The head of the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Norman ("Ned") E. Sharpless, 52, will temporarily take charge of the agency until a new FDA commissioner is found. Gottlieb has indicated that he supported Sharpless' appointment.

Breast Implants Can Lead to Health Problems

About 400,000 women get breast implants every year, many for reconstruction after mastectomies (100,000), but most for cosmetic reasons (300,000). Worldwide about 10 million women have breast implants. For many years, complaints from thousands of women that breast implants are causing health problems such as pain, fatigue, and even cancer were dismissed by the industry and by doctors in its employ. Patient activism has now prompted the FDA to take another look. The agency does not track the total number of implants on the market, allowing it to plead ignorance ("insufficient evidence"). However, the FAA admits that implanted devices may make some people sick and interfere with the quality of their life. Silicone is one of the materials under scrutiny. The FDA has sent warning letters to two makers of breast implants, criticizing them for studies that were deficient, too small, had too many participants who dropped out, and did not track the long-term health effects of breast implants. As noted in another newsletter entry, the cautionary principle is routinely ignored in the U.S. Unlike in Europe, companies do not have to prove the safety of a product before launching it. The burden of proof rests on the victims who were harmed by a substance or safety flaw. It can take years and decades before they are made whole again.

Corn Production Contributes to Air Pollution

Air pollution is the largest environmental health-risk factor in the U.S., and agriculture contributes in a number of ways to cardiovascular problems, respiratory illnesses, and even birth defects. An interesting new study published in "Nature Sustainability" analyzed the different stages of corn (maize) production and calculated that the damage to human health in some areas is greater than the economic

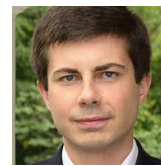
benefit derived from corn cultivation. Ammonia from fertilizer application was by far the largest contributor (about 70%) to corn's air-pollution footprint. The researchers found that corn production accounts for 4,300 premature deaths related to air pollution each year. They recommend that corn not be grown near densely populated areas. They are also proposing to inject nitrogen-based fertilizer into the ground because this way less ammonia is released into the air and water.

Justice Democrats

Justice Democrats is a small grassroots organization that wants to replace moderate and centrist Democrats with liberal, progressive candidates who refuse to take corporate PAC or lobbying money, are pushing for strong climate-change measures, are promoting free public colleges & trade schools, are advocating Medicare for all, and asking for higher taxes for the wealthy. Additional demands include the abolishment of ICE and the death penalty. Justice Democrats support politicians such as Alexandria Octavio-Cortez, Bernie Sanders, and Elizabeth Warren who have a clear policy vision – something that traditional Democrats sometimes lack. In 2018, Justice Democrats endorsed 78 candidates and recruited 12 of them to run for office. – Entrenched establishment Democrats are unnerved by and unhappy with Justice Democrats. These pragmatics claim, without proof, that progressive politics play into the hands of President Trump and will result in the loss of seats to Republicans. They argue that conventional consensus-building is more effective than rocking the boat. However, it could be that these septuagenarian and octogenarian politicians are simply out of touch with the new millennial generation that demands clearer ethical stands than established Democrats are able to deliver. A good case study is Hillary Clinton. Considered a "safe" centrist, she was unable to galvanize her base in 2016 and lost to Trump. A similar fate may await Joe Biden if he decides to run.

Fringe Issues Now Front & Center

For years, Democrats have ignored certain issues. Many centrist Democrats still do, wanting to play it safe. However, a new generation of young Democrats are now advocating bold and courageous new initiatives. Among the topics openly discussed in 2019 are the impeachment of President Trump, the abolition of ICE, the swearing off of corporate money, race reconciliation & reparations, criticism of Israel's human-rights abuses, ending the Senate filibuster, expanding the Supreme Court, breaking up banks & industries, taxing the wealthy, free college tuition, and – of course – the Green New Deal. None of would have been thinkable under the old guard, incl. Hillary Clinton. In fact, certain Democratic leaders such as Nancy Pelosi have expressed their strong displeasure with all of the above suggestions. However, these audacious ideas are at this moment what defines the next generation of Democrats and their path to electability. And why not? The conservative Tea Party and the Trump administration have shattered plenty of norms over the years with outrageous and outlandish proposals. It is now the Democrats' turn to upend the status quo and create a society that is more democratic, equal, and just.



Pete Buttigieg Doing Well in the Polls

Pete Buttigieg, the 37-year-old Democratic mayor of South Bend, Indiana is doing remarkably well in early polls. He trails Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders, but is running neck-and-neck with candidates such as Elizabeth Warren. Searches for his name on Google are surpassing searches for Beto O'Rourke. He also showed strength in the area of fundraising. Buttigieg (pronounced "boot-edge-edge") comes from an academic family and is a Rhodes scholar himself. It is fair to call him a progressive. He is openly gay and married, emphasizes health care and education, and is in favor of expanding the Supreme Court and abolishing the Electoral College. Politically, he is better grounded than Beto O'Rourke and not afraid to take a stand. He is also thoroughly at home in real-world issues. As mayor of South Bend, he faced many non-partisan problems such as blighted houses,

snow removal, and fixing potholes. It is reasonable to assume that Buttigieg would continue the same non-ideological approach in the White House.

Governor Jay Inslee Is Running for President

Jay Inslee, the 68-year-old Democratic governor of Washington State since 2013, has announced his intention to run for president in 2020. The field is definitely getting crowded, but what distinguishes Inslee is his long-standing commitment to combating climate change. For him, it is “the most urgent challenge of our time” and the no. 1 priority because it touches everything – jobs, health, safety, and the children’s future. He has embraced the Green New Deal and says he would push the nation to global leadership in low-carbon and carbon-free energy. His message to the coal, oil, and gas industry – “that gravy train is over.” A lawyer and prosecutor by training, Inslee credits his father, a science teacher, for his appreciation of the natural world. A short, 82-second video released by his campaign, “Our Moment,” mentions the word “climate” a dozen times.

Democrats Will Not Work with Fox News

Although there are still a handful of reputable journalists working at Fox News (e.g., Chris Wallace), the television station has essentially become President Trump’s uncritical colluder, enabler, and cheerleader. Fox network stars such as Sean Hannity regularly advise the president and have attended partisan events standing on his side. Many Fox News alumni have joined Trump’s inner circle. The intimate relationship between Fox News and President Trump is not an appropriate one because it compromises journalistic independence. Although the network remains popular, Democratic Party Chairman Tom Perez has now concluded that Fox News is not in a position to host fair and neutral debates and will therefore not be a broadcast partner in any of the anticipated 12 debates being held during the 2020 presidential election campaign. For many Democrats consorting with Fox is a stigma. – Critics of the Democrats’ decision to boycott Fox News say it creates more division in the country instead of less.

Economic Growth Is Slowing

The White House expects the economy to grow at a robust rate of more than 3% for the next several years. This optimistic forecast, however, is at odds with most other predictions, incl. the Federal Bank’s. A slowdown is already underway. The Fed expects 2.1% growth this year, down from a more upbeat forecast of 2.3% in December. Independent economists estimate the 2019 growth to be 1.7%, 1.5%, and even as low as 1.3%. The outlook for 2020 is even bleaker. Experts agree that the White House’s figures are unrealistically high. Under the weight of Trump’s trade war, a struggling manufacturing industry, a global economic slowdown, and the fading stimulus from the 2017 tax cuts the general outlook is dim. As the U.S. is moving closer to the 2020 presidential elections, the economic performance matters. Trump’s reelection could hinge on it. Once again, there is a fundamental disconnect between what the Trump administration claims and what the facts on the ground indicate. At this point, only a fool would take the pronouncements coming from the White House at face value.

Where Is My Tax Refund?

As the first tax returns for 2018 came in, taxpayers were discovering an unpleasant surprise: their refunds were smaller than expected, and more people actually owned the IRS money than before. Shock and anger were widespread. There are at least two reasons for this development: 1. Taxes rose for many folks because people lost the ability to deduct expenses. The new tax code eliminated several popular exemptions and deductions, increasing the tax liability. 2. Because of the tax-code changes, employers withheld less money and paid higher checks in 2018. In fact, some 30 million workers may have had too little withheld from their paychecks. Many households have come to rely on the annual cash infusion in spring. They were effectively using their withholding as a savings plan and are now furious that they are not getting more money. – Over time, people will get used to the new system. What taxpayers can do on their own is to heed the IRS’ advice and do an annual “paycheck checkup” to ensure they have the proper amount withheld. The vast

majority of people did not update their withholding status last year, leading in many cases to a rude awakening.

The Crane Index

There are many unorthodox economic gauges – the Big Mac index, the Super Bowl Indicator, the Buttered Popcorn Index, and others. One of them is the RLB Crane Index, named after Rider Levitt Bucknail, a construction consulting firm. The index is a tally of tower cranes in 13 American cities, from New York to Los Angeles. This winter, the total number of cranes on the list was 423, slightly down from a high of 439 in 2015. With 59 cranes, Seattle is the top city in the U.S. on the latest index. In general, West Coast cities – Los Angeles (44), Portland (26), San Francisco (29) – are doing well, proportionally better than larger cities such as Chicago (26) or New York (28). Economists know that cities are the true drivers of economic growth, which is also true for Ohio. Cities are booming and will continue to do so because – compared to other parts of the world – the U.S. is still less urbanized. In the meantime, rural Americans will increasingly be left behind. This, of course, also has political implications because cities tend to have more educated people who tend to lean Democratic.

But here is a little factoid that should concern American patriots and nationalists. How is it that Toronto, in Canada, leads the Crane Index with 104 units? What accounts for Toronto’s attraction? It can’t be the weather. So what is Canada doing that America is not?

Investors Excited about “Opportunity Zones”

Investors are eagerly awaiting a second batch of rules and regulations from the Trump administration about the so-called opportunity zones. The zones, created by the 2017 tax law, use tax advantages to lure capital to economically disadvantaged cities, suburbs, and rural areas. The hope is to revitalize districts that are lagging. The “opportunity funds” are supposed to create living-wage jobs, affordable housing units, and community advisory boards. They are also meant to avoid displacing residents. Critics, on the other hand, fear that the funds and tax incentives will be subject to loopholes, serve mostly as a hand-out to rich real-estate developers, and increase the problem of gentrification. “Enterprise zones,” “promise zones,” and “opportunity zones” have been around for decades, but they indeed benefit developers more than they do neglected and underserved communities.

Wisconsin Judge Invalidates Republican Power Grab

During the lame-duck session in December, Republican legislators in Wisconsin pushed through sweeping changes intended to restrict the authority of the state’s newly elected Democratic governor, Tony Evers, and his attorney general. A Dane County judge, Richard Niess, has now issued a temporary injunction against the measure, which was widely perceived as an unlawful power grab. The former governor, Scott Walker, supported the vote at the time and has been accused of being “a sore loser.” The judge said the process did not meet the requirements of Wisconsin law, and so the measures had no standing. Evers immediately instructed his attorney general, Josh Kaul, to withdraw Wisconsin from a multistate lawsuit against the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Republicans criticized Niess’ ruling, saying it would cause “chaos.” However, the true chaos was created when conservative Wisconsin lawmakers ignored the will of the people and attempted to disempower the new governor.

The College-Admission Scandal

Hundreds of special FBI agents fanned out on March 12 to arrest scores of parents, coaches, and exam administrators & proctors in a widening scandal involving fraud and bribes to get children into elite colleges. It was the largest college-cheating scheme ever prosecuted. Among the 50 or so people arrested were famous Hollywood actors, national CEOs, and other wealthy people. The ring leader of the scam is said to be William R. Singer, owner of Edge College & Career Network and CEO of Key Worldwide Foundation (“The Key”). He is alleged to have received bribes in the amount of \$25 million between 2011 and 2018 to guarantee rich children’s admission to colleges regardless of their academic or athletic abilities. Singer and his associates fabricated documents, doctored test scores, staged or photoshopped pictures, faked athletic prowess, bribed college employees, and made purported “charitable contributions” to

institutions. He is charged with racketeering conspiracy, money laundering conspiracy, conspiracy to defraud the U.S., and obstruction of justice and has pleaded guilty. In the majority of cases the students involved in the scam did not know their admission was contingent upon paying a bribe; no student was charged of wrongdoing.

The colleges and universities mentioned in the various press reports include Boston College, Boston Univ., Brown Univ., UCLA, Georgetown, Northeastern Univ., Rutgers, the Univ. of San Diego, Stanford, Tulane, Yale, the Univ. of Southern California, the Univ. of Texas at Austin, Wake Forest Univ., and others. Of course, they all rejected any culpability. Instead, they portrayed themselves as "victims." Some put staff members on administrative leave or fired them and said they would "review" their admission operations. The fact of the matter is, however, that a separate college-admission process for the affluent does exist and is deeply entrenched. There are back doors and side doors all over the place. If you are wealthy, you can game the system – at the expense of others who are less fortunate. The scandal highlights the abominable degree to which American society, especially the millionaire and billionaire class, is corrupt and rotten to the core.

Some students have now filed class-action suits against some colleges & universities, saying they were denied a fair shot at admission. The lawsuit says, "Each of the universities took the students' admission application fees while failing to take adequate steps to ensure their admissions process was fair and free of fraud, bribery, cheating, and dishonesty." The plaintiffs may have a hard time holding institutions responsible, but who knows. In this day and age they may find a sympathetic judge or it could be that universities want to settle the lawsuits to avoid any further bad publicity.

Trump Cuts Special Olympics Budget

While Trump is showering businesses with generous gifts such as fewer regulations and tax reductions, he is punishing the recipients of services such as health care, welfare, unemployment benefits, and Social Security. Conservatives have long fought against "entitlements," but they see nothing wrong with corporate welfare, tax abatements for rich industries, and subsidies for obsolete sectors such as coal.

The Trump administration (Mick Mulvaney and Betsy DeVos) has now proposed \$17.6 million in federal cuts to Special Olympics funding, along with a \$7 billion package of cuts in education. Special Olympics started in 1968 in the U.S. and has since branched out to 174 countries and 5 million athletes. Cutting funds for the disabled is a cruel thing to do and deserves a special medal for insensitivity. However, America under the Trump administration is retreating from the world, and Trump personally has ridiculed disabled individuals at his rallies. He also has zero interest in the Education Dept.

Special Olympics Ohio, which promotes activities for some 22,000 special-needs students, says the proposed cuts would erode the organization's programming. Executive Director Jessica Stewart wrote in a written statement, "It is certain that it would hinder the progress made toward ushering in a new world of unity, tolerance, and respect."

Update 3/29: Amid widespread condemnation, Trump abruptly retreated and says that Special Olympics will be fully funded after all. After defending her proposal for days, DeVos now claims she fought for Special Olympics funding "behind the scenes." She had publicly stated earlier that in a time of difficult budget decisions, hard choices had to be made. The fact that Trump has "overridden" DeVos, and perhaps even set her up to fail, suggests to some people that the Education Secretary may be one of the next cabinet members to fall. Trump has mocked her for months and declared her and her entire department as "expendable." There was no word on the other \$7 billion of cuts in the education budget. Among the targets are after-school programs, funding for arts education, and an initiative serving gifted children.

"Commander in Cheat: How Golf Explains Trump"

Golf is a game of honor where players act as their own referees, keep their own scores, and assess themselves penalties for rule violations. The way someone plays golf (or soccer, chess, the piano, etc.) can be a window into their character and soul.

In a new book by former Sports Illustrated columnist Rick Reilly, "Commander in Cheat: How Golf Explains Trump" (Hachette

Books 2019), the president does not fare well in the etiquette and ethics department. Like in everything else he does, Trump brazenly inflates his accomplishments, bends and breaks the rules, kicks his balls back onto the fairway (his nickname was "Pele," after the soccer player), throws his opponents' balls into bunkers, manipulates the score sheets, and lies about winning championships. For example, Trump claims to have won 18 club championships, but Reilly was unable to verify a single one. Robert Mueller may have exonerated Trump from collusion with Russia, but "in golf he is definitely not exonerated," Reilly says.

United Methodist Church Admits Voter Fraud

According to the United Methodist Church's "Book of Discipline," homosexuality is incompatible with Christian values. In February, the global body of the church voted to continue its anti-LGBT policies that ban gay clergy and same-sex marriages. It has now come to light that voting "irregularities" occurred at the conference in St. Louis that cast doubt about the integrity of the entire process. According to the New York Times (3/15), several delegation members from conservative African countries cast ballots without being authorized and eligible to do so. Delegates are listed in official attendance records that never entered the U.S. because of visa issues. In addition, people voted whose names were absent from attendance logs and delegate election records. In February, there was a margin of 54 votes against the acceptance of LGBT folks. It is not clear if a new vote would change the final outcome, but it is now being debated because of the profound erosion of trust and the devastating impact of the decision. Given the compromised and tainted election process, a new vote in 2020 makes sense. In the meantime, there should be a moratorium on any and all attempts to criminalize gay UMC clergy members and to legalize same-sex marriages.

Climate Researcher Wallace S. Broecker Is Dead

Wallace Smith Broecker (1931-2019) has died at age 87. The Columbia Univ. scientist raised early alarms about climate change and popularized the term "global warming." In a landmark paper published in 1975, he correctly predicted rising carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere would lead to a pronounced warming trend. However, he not only warned the world about the risks of climate change, he also proposed solutions – chiefly the reduction of the use of fossil fuels. He also explored ways to remove CO2 from the atmosphere and even ways to change how the atmosphere reflects light. Although Broecker wrote 17 books and some 500 research papers, he avoided computers. Instead, he worked through problems with pencil and paper. He was dyslexic and had staffers retype his manuscripts and emails.

Christian Stores Closing

Two years ago, Family Christian Stores announced that it was closing all of its 240 stores in the U.S. due to declining sales. Now LifeWay Christian Resources, based in Nashville, has said it would close all its 170 stores, including 3 in the Columbus area. Closing sales will probably last several months at each store. The company cited fewer customer and lower sales as the reason for its step. However, the company will continue to sell Bibles, religious books, Christian music, gifts, church supplies, children's products, and more on its online platform (www.lifeway.com). The organization also offers digital resources online for Bible studies, worship planning, training, and more.

Valve Turners

Some environmentalists, climate-change activists, and advocates for indigenous rights have started to turn off the emergency valves of oil-and-gas pipelines in Canada and the U.S. These so-called "valve turners" are hoping to raise awareness about fossil fuels and oil spills. One of them, Michael Foster, says, "We were committed to nonviolence. We were committed to safety and making sure no communities were impacted or damage occurred. We weren't interested in damaging equipment." Nevertheless, he spend 6 months in jail after turning off a pipeline shut-off valve in North Dakota in 2016. The industry insists that valve turners be treated as "domestic terrorists." The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has created a template bill that carries stiff penalties and prison terms for protests that target "critical infrastructure" such as pipelines. It is

modeled after a 2017 Oklahoma law that carries penalties of up to 10 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine. Watch for it in Ohio.

Oklahoma and other states have experienced numerous earthquakes due to fracking activities, some of them severe. Oil spills are so common and ubiquitous that newspapers report on only the worst of them. Climate change is perhaps the biggest known threat to human civilization around the world. The question must therefore be asked: who are the true "domestic terrorists"? A handful of peaceful activists wanting to raise awareness or the trillion-dollar fossil-fuel industry that is slowly rendering the planet inhospitable and uninhabitable?

Here is another interesting ethical question. Utility companies are also "valve turners." They routinely turn off electricity, gas, and water service for low-income customers who are in arrears. Are they therefore "domestic terrorists," too, when they turn off "critical infrastructure"?



Chemical Fire Causes Major Disruption

A huge fire erupted on March 17 near Houston, Texas at a petrochemical storage facility owned by Intercontinental Terminals Company (ITC) in Deer Park. Several tanks containing flammable chemicals caught fire and were damaged or destroyed. The smoke plumes reached heights of up to 4,000 feet. About 700 people sought treatment for respiratory difficulties, nausea, headaches, and other symptoms in the disaster zone. A number of people were hospitalized. Officials played down the incident and initially maintained that the air was safe to breathe. While the fire was still burning, a containment dike next to the tank farm failed and released benzene, xylene, and other chemicals into the Houston Ship Channel, causing the Coast Guard to close the shipping canal, one of busiest in the nation. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has filed a lawsuit accusing ITC, a subsidiary of Japan's Mitsui & Co., of violating clean-air laws.

"Don't Be an Idiot!"

Geoffrey Turner from Latham, New York was a life-long smoker. He was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer in November 2018 and died Feb. 14, 2019. Shortly before his death at age 66, he wrote his own obituary. Among other things, this is what he said:

"I was an idiot who made the same stupid decision, day after day, multiple times per day. I was a smoker and even though I knew it may eventually kill me, I chose to deny the truth to myself. The pain and suffering I caused my family was not worth the perceived 'satisfaction' that really did nothing more than waste money, separate me from my family, and eventually destroy my body. [...] The moral of this story – don't be an idiot. If you're a smoker – QUIT NOW. Your life depends on it, and those that you love depend upon your life."

Horse Racetrack Shuts Down

Since the winter season opened Dec. 26, twenty-three horses have died at the historic Santa Anita Park in southern California. They were injured and died (often through euthanasia) on the dirt oval, during turf races, or while training. Unusually cold and wet weather may be the culprit, but race officials have so far not identified a cause. It could also be the case that owners and trainers demand too much of their horses. Animals-rights groups such as PETA have staged protests at the track, calling for a shut-down and a criminal investigation. PETA also criticized the use of drugs to mask pain and to force horses to run even when injured. Scheduled races are now indefinitely postponed or canceled. The racetrack, owned by the Stronach Group, has banned the use of whips and drugs on racing days. It has also called for complete transparency of all veterinary records. It was not clear when training and racing would resume. The horse-race industry realizes that the current system is broken, that it has a major public-relations problem, and that it may be one referendum away from disappearing.

"The Uninhabitable Earth" (2019)

"The Uninhabitable Earth: Life after Warming" (Tim Duggan Books 2019, 320 pp., \$27) is a new book about climate change by David Wallace-Wells. The causes of climate change is not the focus of the book. Instead, it highlights the catastrophic consequences of climate chaos – floods, pestilence, droughts, famines, wildfire, and so on – and the ensuing human suffering on a planet that will be in large part inhospitable and uninhabitable. Wallace-Wells even considers the extinction of the human race a possibility. Despite all that, the author remains somewhat optimistic. He believes it is possible to wake people up from their sleepwalking and to mobilize them. What does it take to do that? "Fear can motivate," Wallace-Wells writes. Feelings and knowledge can empower. If the right language is employed, action might follow. And that is what Wallace-Wells sets out to do – evoke in vivid biblical terms the scenario of an unprecedented Armageddon. Some may dismiss his approach as alarmist or "climate porn," but if this is what it takes to call people to arms, then so be it.



Catastrophic Spring Flooding

Spring flooding is nothing new. However, unprecedented flooding is expected for much of the Midwest this spring. Major flooding has already occurred in Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota. The entire Mississippi River watershed is affected. Some 200 million Americans are estimated to be at risk of some kind of flooding, 41 million of moderate flooding, and 13 million of major flooding. In addition, farm runoff will result in a larger-than-normal dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico. Scientists say climate change plays a role in the record increases of precipitation and flooding. Current flood protections are largely ineffective. Many levees were overrun this past month. The network of existing dams was not designed to handle the effects of climate change and needs to be reconfigured.

Two History Books Win Bancroft Awards

Two history books won the 2019 Bancroft Prize, one of the most prestigious honors in the field of American history. David W. Blight's "Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom" portrayed the 19th-century abolitionist, orator, and writer. It is sad, however, that it took 125 years for this definitive biography of Douglass (1818-1895) to emerge. – The other title requires a bit more context. Lisa Brooks' "Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War" focuses on the problematic history between Native Americans in New England and European colonialists & settlers and illuminates the often submerged indigenous viewpoint. Philip was Metacombet, a Wampanoag chief who named himself "Philip" and was involved in the First Indian War (1675-78), later called King Philip's War.

THE WORLD

U.S. Restores Diplomatic Status of the E.U.

In 2018, the Trump administration quietly downgraded the diplomatic status of the European Union, without even notifying Brussels or the ambassador. The unprecedented affront hurt a lot of feelings and led to bitter complaints. The U.S. has now, equally quietly, reversed course and permanently restored the original diplomatic status of the EU. Stavros Lambrinidis is the new top diplomat of the EU in Washington, replacing David O'Sullivan. It remains to be seen if the upgrade will "restore trust." As far as Europe is concerned, the Trump administration has made a collaborative relationship very challenging.

"Cost Plus 50"

Being a businessman, President Trump has a mercenary and transactional view of the world. Making and winning deals has been his focus in foreign politics as well. His view is a truncated one, of course, because it completely ignores immaterial values such as trust, alliances, peace, human rights, and so on. One of Trump's complaints has been that other NATO countries do not pay their fair monetary

share to the defense system. Once again, Trump's accounting is flawed because it does not take into consideration the many ways NATO countries and also Japan and South Korea pay America by providing land, infrastructure, foregone duties & taxes, bridgeheads to other countries & continents, etc. All these things translate into real cost savings for the U.S.

The Trump administration has now devised a scheme called "Cost Plus 50." Under the formula, countries would pay the full cost of stationing American troops on their territory, plus 50% more. It appears that this is going to be the new global standard, although it seems likely that individual countries will be permitted to make special "deals" and be exempt from the policy. It is not clear how the Trump camp defines "cost," but it is pretty clear that countries such as Germany (33,000 American troops), Japan (54,000), and South Korea (28,500) would end up paying considerable more money. Some allies have called the U.S. demand "extortionate." Some countries may decide that living without any American troops would be just fine. The EU has been discussing the creation of a European army for some time, for instance.

Treating American troops like mercenaries, to be bought and sold to the highest bidder and for "getting the best deal for the American people," can also have dangerous consequences in the long run. It is not inconceivable that an autocratic regime somewhere in the world might request the presence of American troops on its territory (for the right price of course) to squelch domestic or foreign threats.

3/15 Update: In testimony before the Senate, the Pentagon's acting defense Patrick Shanahan said "Cost Plus 50" was an erroneous report and that countries with U.S. troops stationed on their territory would not have pay the full cost of hosting those forces, plus 50% for the privilege. The Pentagon is not running a business, he noted, and emphasized that "payment comes in lots of different forms." It seems this is another area where Trump is at odds with his own agencies.

World Bank

President Trump has nominated David Malpass as the next president of the World Bank. In his announcement speech, he made it abundantly clear that he expected the future leader of the World Bank to put America first. This agenda has sent ripples of concern and fear through the member states because the World Bank is about global cooperation, not about narrow national interests. In recent decades, the World Bank has shown dedication to eradicating poverty and promoting education, public health, women's rights, infrastructure, renewable energy, and food production. There is also a strong commitment to combating climate change because it is a long-term risk to economic and social stability. If elected, would David Malpass honor these commitments or would he upend and destroy everything the World Bank stands for? Malpass has asserted his independence from the American president, but there is considerable doubt that he is his own man. Conservatives have cheered his nomination, hoping, for instance, he would overturn the World Bank's ban on financing coal-powered energy plants. With Malpass at the helm, the future of the World Bank is in doubt.

The International Criminal Court

Strongmen all over the world do not like the International Criminal Court in The Hague. They prefer to commit their crimes against humanity in obscurity and with impunity. That is the main reason why Burundi left the ICC in 2017. Now the Philippines has become another country to officially withdraw from the 1998 treaty established by 123 countries. Accused of murder, President Rodrigo Duterte has left the tribunal and declared the ICC no longer has any jurisdiction over his country and can no longer investigate crimes committed in the Philippines.

The U.S. is not far behind Russia, Burundi, and the Philippines. Concerned over accusations of possible war crimes, forced disappearances, torture, and other abuses in Afghanistan and elsewhere, John Bolton and Mike Pompeo have said that the U.S. would revoke or deny visas to any ICC personnel seeking to investigate the country or its allies, especially Israel. Their goal is to prevent the body from infringing on U.S. sovereignty: "We are determined to protect the American and allied military and civilian personnel from living in fear of unjust prosecution for actions taken to defend our great nation," Pompeo has stated. Bolton in particular has decried the

ICC as "illegitimate." U.S. officials have long regarded the ICC with hostility. Congress never ratified it. In other parts of the world, however, the ICC is valued as a symbol of international order, justice, and peace and an important check on ruthless dictators.

Israel's Golan Heights

In 1967, Israel captured the Golan Heights and has occupied them ever since. Responding to entreaties from Benjamin Netanyahu, who is facing a tough reelection on April 9, the Trump administration has now announced it would recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. The step does not affect the reality on the ground, but it sends powerful message to the world. International law does not permit the military conquest of another country's territory. By acknowledging Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, Trump is empowering strongmen around the world to use military force to achieve political goals. Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights is no different than Russia's occupation of Crimea. What if China now feels emboldened to gobble up Taiwan? It is understandable that Trump wants to strengthen Netanyahu, but this dramatic shift of American policy sets an ill-advised and misguided precedent for the future. There is no coherent strategy here. Trump's step obviously also wipes out any and all legitimacy to America's claim of being an honest, objective broker in the peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

Mass Protests in Algeria

Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika wanted to run for a 5th term on April 18 despite the fact that he is 82 years old and had a series of debilitating strokes that left him paralyzed. Reportedly, he is unable to read, speak, and write anymore. He has been visible to the public in portraits only (the "Frame"). Experts on BBC have even stated that Bouteflika may be "in a vegetative state" or something close to it. This obviously begs the question – why does he want to run again? Or, more correctly, in whose interest is it that the status quo continues? There is evidence that Bouteflika has not ruled the country for years and that he is merely a figurehead or placeholder. As early as 2015, the press reported that he may not be the one in charge. Instead, an autocratic and elitist cabal of powerful generals, politicians, and business people has exploited the oil-and-gas-rich country for power and money by means of political repression and vote rigging.

The announcement that Bouteflika would run again triggered angry mass protests across Algeria – the largest in over 30 years. Many people are fed up not only with his 20-year leadership, but with the system in general, which is largely built on patronage and corruption. They are accusing the ruling "clan" of defying the will of the people. Similar protests erupted when Bouteflika ran for a 4th term years ago. However, it appears that something has now shifted and that the mostly youthful demonstrators are enjoying some support and sympathy in politics, business, and the army. The police and army have not interfered with the mostly peaceful demonstrations. As a result of the massive rallies, Algeria's ruling elite has now announced that Bouteflika would not seek another term after all, but would be replaced – in accordance with Article 102 of the Constitution – by an interim president. At the same time, however, it also said that the election scheduled for April 18 would be postponed indefinitely. A panel or commission will be put in place to plan a rescheduled vote, which could be months and years away. The maneuver means that Bouteflika, or his handlers, plan to hang on to power for some more time, perhaps indefinitely. This is clearly not acceptable to "the street." The anger and rallies continue unabated. Protesters want nothing less than the complete and irreversible fall of the entrenched "Bouteflika regime," which they consider a cancer that is corrupting the body of the state, and the emergence of a new, democratic republic.

Caputova Wins in Slovakia

Many Eastern European countries with limited experience in democracy have illiberal political systems in place. Basic freedoms are often denied, and the independence of the judicial branch is compromised. Slovakia has its share of problems and populist demagogues too. In 2018, a young investigative reporter, Jan Kuciak, and his fiancée were assassinated – an event that shocked and galvanized the country. However, it is interesting to note that the frontrunner of the next national elections on March 16 was Zuzana Caputova, a progressive environmental lawyer. On the eve of the election, she had a commanding lead against her rivals and won the

first round with 40.5% of the votes. Social Democrat Maros Sefcovic came in second with 18.7%. A runoff election between the two is scheduled for March 30. The far-right politician Stefan Harabin was utterly defeated. – Caputova has rejected hatred and conspiracy theories and advocated for reason and civility. There is hope that sanity will prevail after all.

Update 3/31: With 58.4% of the votes, Zuzana Čaputová, 45, won the runoff election against Maroš Šefčovič on March 30. She will be Slovakia's first female president. Her inauguration is scheduled for June 15.

Brexit Hurting Britain's Reputation

For decades, the United Kingdom had a reputation for being a stable and pragmatic country where business could thrive. No more. Now it is viewed as a ship of fools. The Brexit disaster has tragically and irreparably damaged and perhaps even destroyed Britain's good name and fame. As the country is slowly committing political and economic suicide, hundreds of multinational companies are busy leaving the sinking ship and transferring their headquarters, capital, employees, products, and operations out of the UK to Dublin or the European continent (Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris, Frankfurt, etc.). Foreign manufacturers have abandoned plans to locate on the island. Regardless how Brexit unfolds, these lost jobs will likely never return. Days before the new, revised deadline (April 12) the country still does not know what it wants. There is no majority for either option in Parliament or in the population at large. Brexit has also bitterly divided the UK itself. The clashes have been compared to the schism between Catholics and Protestants, which led to religious wars.

Mass Shootings in New Zealand

New Zealand is a mostly peaceful country of 5 million at the end of the world. However, on March 15 the unthinkable happened. A heavily armed white supremacist and fascist from Australia opened fire in two Muslim temples in the city of Christchurch, killing 49 people and injuring an equal number. Brenton Harrison Tarrant, 28, is a far-right ideologue and terrorist who believes "the great invasion" of non-white foreigners, especially Muslims, must be stopped by any means necessary, to save the white race and Western civilization. One of his role models was Anders Behring Breivik from Norway who killed 77 people in 2011. Tarrant not only wrote a lengthy manifesto before he started his attacks, he also videotaped them live on Facebook and other social media for maximum virality. In his statement, he praised the American president Donald Trump as an inspiration and "as a symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose." Trump, in turn, said that right-wing extremism and white supremacy is not posing a growing threat to the world. However, the facts on the ground are clearly contradicting him.

history

the flag is threadbare
battered and worn
hoisted at half-mast
tattered and torn

it sags on the pole
sad and forlorn
there were no winners
the victims we mourn

we begged for mercy
from the angry norn
but friend and foe
like sheep were shorn

it is impossible
to forget and be reborn
but perhaps for the children
there will be a new morn

What's Producing Methane on Mars?

Over the years, methane gas has periodically or episodically been detected on Planet Mars. However, the source of the plumes remains a mystery. Methane decays relatively quickly, so what is

responsible for creating and replenishing the gas on an on-going basis? Methane could be the result of microbial life – methanogens that thrive in places lacking oxygen, such as in rocks deep underground. Or the source could be geological. Serpentinization, as the process is called, requires both water and heat. Methane could be released by melting ice through geological fault lines. Scientists are studying the evolving story, hoping to solve the intriguing mystery some day.

HAPPY NEWS

Cuyahoga Fish Safe to Eat

Fifty years ago, the Cuyahoga River in northeast Ohio was so polluted that it caught fire several times. The 1969 fire on the river, in particular, drew national attention and made the river a poster child of environmental pollution and neglect. It severely hurt Cleveland's and Ohio's reputation at the time. The federal EPA, whose creation was partially inspired by the fires, has now agreed with the OEPA's recommendation that restrictions on fish consumption be eased from Gorge Dam near Akron to Lake Erie in Cleveland. The OEPA says today fish caught in the Cuyahoga are "safe" to eat. There is no question that water quality has improved since the 1960s. However, press reports did not define the word "safe." Apparently, some restrictions still apply. There is not a single unimpaired body of water in Ohio where unlimited consumption of fish can be recommended. Progress has been made, but additional improvements and investments are necessary.

California Ends Capital Punishment

California's governor Gavin Newsom has placed a temporary moratorium on the death penalty, saying no one will ever be executed under this watch. If Newsom is reelected, the moratorium could last up to 8 years. There are currently 737 inmates on the state's death row. About 97% of them are men. Six in 10 are people of color. One in 25 is presumably innocent, according to an estimate by the National Academy of Sciences. Governor Newsom cited some of these statistics when he made his announcement and condemned the premeditated and discriminatory execution of people: "The death penalty is inconsistent with our bedrock values and strikes at the very heart of what it means to be a Californian," he said. A number of states have paused or abolished the death penalty in recent years because it has been shown to be discriminatory, prone to mistakes, ineffective as a tool to deter crime, and a form of cruel and unusual punishment. In California, no inmate will be released or have his sentence reduced as a result of the moratorium.

SUNY New Paltz Removes Tainted Names

The town of New Paltz, New York was founded in 1677 by 6 Huguenot families. The campus of the State Univ. of New York (SUNY) New Paltz has buildings named after these six families: Bevier, Crispell, Deyo, DuBois, Hasbrouck, and LeFevre. The problem is that all these families owned, bought, and sold black slaves. After months of debate, the school has now decided to change the names on the residence and dining halls to reflect the Native-American culture of the area instead. Some descendants of the Huguenot families are offended by the decision. They speak of "erasing history" and wiping out the town's heritage. They also accused the school of bowing to political pressure and correctness. Other family members welcomed the step. Says Catherine Harris, a LeFevre descendant, "Let the renaming of these buildings be one small step in the restorative justice this nation is seeking." The town's Huguenot historical society has made its own attempts of racial reconciliation. It now also hosts celebrations of African culture, music, and food in honor of Juneteenth.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Wants to Be More Bipartisan

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has traditionally been more closely aligned with the Republican Party than with the Democratic Party to the point where the chamber has come to support Republican politicians almost exclusively. In 2016, the chamber devoted all of its campaign money (nearly \$30 million) to Republican candidates. In 2018, the chamber endorsed 191 Republicans vs. 7 Democrats (3.5%).

The problem is that the modern GOP is no longer the Republican Party of Ronald Reagan. The Tea Party and the Trump administration have moved away from traditional business values such

as free trade, immigration, and the Import-Export Bank. Also, the business community has little appetite for restricting LGBT rights, civil rights, women's rights, and voter rights. Climate change is another area of concern. The Trump agenda is not necessarily in the best interest of the business community. The sharp partisan imbalance has now prompted the Chamber of Commerce to take another look at its system of endorsements. It is now open to more bipartisan and nonpartisan solutions. "Bipartisan engagement" will henceforth be a consideration when discussing candidates. No doubt the chamber will continue to endorse conservative over progressive candidates. Its mission, after all, is to foster economic growth and prosperity. However, it is a welcoming sign that the chamber is willing to soften its hardcore ideological stance in favor of more pragmatic and constructive approach.

Bump stock



Bump Stocks Now Illegal in the U.S.

After a gunman used bump stocks in the 2017 Las Vegas massacre, which killed 58 people, the devices are now illegal in the U.S. The Supreme Court declined to put the ban on hold, recognizing that bump stocks perform the same function as a machine gun. However, legal challenges remain. Owners have 90 days to destroy the devices or to hand them over to authorities. After the grace period, anyone in possession of a bump stock can be charged with a federal offense punishable by up to 10 years in prison. No one knows how many of the devices were in circulation prior to the ban, but about 500,000 were sold. The largest manufacturer, Slide Fire, has shut down. Another manufacturer, RW Arms, handed over its remaining inventory of 60,000 bump stocks to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives which is shredding them. Second-Amendment people vehemently protested the prohibition and called it "the day freedom died." Gun Owners of America, the "No Compromise" gun lobby, says that most owners of bump stocks are not going to hand them in.

Dick's Sporting Goods Reduces Gun Sales

Dick's Sporting Goods Inc. operates 729 stores across the U.S. as well as 94 Golf Galaxy and 35 Field & Stream stores. In 2018, the chain started to replace hunting merchandise with sports equipment. These pilot stores posted strong sales and profit margins. CEO Edward Stack has now announced that hunting gear will be removed from 125 additional stores this year in areas where it does not sell well. Hunting rifles and ammunition will be replaced with merchandise that drives growth, he said. Depending on how the experiment goes, more will be added in the future. Declining interest in hunting is one factor, but it appears that solidarity with the victims of school shootings and social activism is another. Dick's made headlines last year when it banned assault-style rifles and the sale of all guns to anyone under 21. The company has since then experienced significant pushback from gun manufacturers and gun associations, and Stack has received threats against himself and his chain. Dick's is no longer a go-to-store for gun owners and hunters. However, Stack remains an undeterred proponent of gun safety. – In Central Ohio, Dick's Sporting Goods has 5 stores. The closest one to Delaware is in the Polaris area.

New Zealand Bans Assault Weapons

After the deadly March 15 attack against two mosques in Christchurch by a white supremacist and fascist, New Zealand's prime minister Jacinda Ardern moved swiftly to ban all military-style automatic and semi-automatic assault weapons in the country as well as detachable magazines that hold more than 5 rounds. A buyback program will be launched to take weapons already in the hands of residents out of circulation. U.S. law maker Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez wrote on Twitter, "this is what leadership looks like." Rep. David Cicilline (D-R.I.) says, New Zealand "politicians aren't bought and paid for by the gun lobby." The approach stands in stark contrast to the irresponsible way the NRA and its political allies in the U.S. handle mass shootings.

Volvo Limits Top Speed on New Vehicles

The Swedish automaker Volvo has announced that starting in 2020 all of its new vehicles will have a top speed of 180 kilometers (112 mph). Volvo has been a leader in automobile safety for decades. Speeding is a major risk factor, especially in countries without speed limits. The announcement is part of Volvo's Vision 2020, which has the goal of no one killed or seriously injured in new vehicles by 2020.



Costa Rica's Decarbonization Plan

The Central American state of Costa Rica, population 5 million, has a grand vision: its "National Decarbonization Plan" envisions the country to be fossil-fuel free by 2050. For President Carlos Alvarado and the first lady, Claudia Doble, "climate change is the greatest task of our generation."

On the plus side, the country's energy already comes largely from renewable sources. Also, Costa Rica has doubled its tropical forest canopy in the last 30 years – a draw for millions of tourists and a huge carbon sink. And there is little national controversy over whether Costa Rica should be a green pioneer or not. On the other hand, there are significant challenges that include antiquated transportation, industrial agriculture, and lack of waste management. Costa Rica plans to electrify its trains and buses, which will require government subsidies or higher fares. Recycling and composting systems are nonexistent. Many industries are exempt from having to pay taxes, and since tax collection is poor in general it is not clear where the billions needed to build the green infrastructure would come from. Some have demanded that the government rescind its ban on oil drilling in the country to generate revenues, but this is a quality-of-life issue as well as one that could compromise the tourism industry. – The political will to transition to a carbon-free future is there, but can it be done? Only time will tell if the great transformation is possible. Costa Rica is an experiment worth watching.

Museums Reject Tainted Donations

London's National Portrait Gallery has rejected a \$1.3 million donation from a charitable arm of the Sackler family. Members of the family own Purdue Pharma, the producer of OxyContin, which is linked to the opioid crisis. OxyContin is estimated to be responsible for some 200,000 overdose deaths in the U.S. over the last two decades. The gallery's ethics-advisory committee played a role in the decision. The Sackler Trust denies the allegations against the family, but decided not to proceed with the donation. During the same month, Scottish politicians have called on the Victoria and Albert Museum in Dundee to return a \$660,000 grant given by the Sackler Trust. A few days later, Britain's Tate Museums and New York's Guggenheim Museum have likewise announced that they will not accept future gifts from the family of Mortimer D. Sackler. Museums and universities are revisiting and revising their gift-acceptance policies to ensure that morally tainted money does not endanger their mission and reputation.

Gibraltar Bans Helium-Filled Balloons

What goes up must come down. In the past, during National Day on Sept. 10 the tiny British territory at the southern tip of Spain released 30,000 balloons, one for each Gibraltarian. However, Gibraltar has now become the latest community to ban the release of helium-filled balloons over concerns that they pollute oceans and lands and pose a deadly risk to marine wildlife. Images of garbage piles on beaches, dead animals with their stomachs full of plastic waste, and wildlife entangled in fishing nets have given environmental activists new momentum to push for action. Gibraltar joins a number of other European nations and U.S. states to ban the intentional release of balloons and lanterns. In 2018, the European Parliament also vowed to ban all single-use plastics like plates, cutlery, and straws by 2021.