

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

Outdoor Siren Testing (7/3)

Delaware County tests its outdoor warning sirens at 12:01 pm on the first Wednesday of each month. Since the county had a number of actual tornado warnings in recent weeks and months, a friendly reminder seemed appropriate.

Central Ohio Symphony (7/4)

The Central Ohio Symphony will perform another July Fourth concert on Thurs., July 4 (7:30 pm) on the campus of OWU between near Philipps Hall. Mary Beth Freeman from the Delaware Area Career Center (DACC) will serve as host and commentator. On the program are popular patriotic songs, hymns, and tunes, from Dvorak, Sousa, and Tchaikovsky to modern film music. The Delaware Community Chorus under artistic director Joshua Brodbeck will perform several pieces. Free & open to the public if you bring your own chair or blanket. Rental chairs are \$6 each.

Fourth-of-July Fireworks (7/4)

Byers Auto Group, Meijer & OhioHealth are the main sponsors of this year's July 4th firework show in Delaware. Fireworks begin at 10 pm and are preceded by the 3 pm parade and the 7:30 pm concert. Sponsors support the fireworks while the City provides the necessary funds for traffic control and public safety. Any place on or off Henry St. will give viewers a good look. Bring a blanket or chair and clean up after yourself. – Please be reminded that exploding fireworks can frighten and terrorize domestic animals. Don't leave them outside exposed to noise and odors. Every year, dogs run away from home and end up dead in the streets or in animal shelters.

First Friday: "Chalk It Up for Freedom" (7/5)

The community is invited to create sidewalk chalk art at the First Friday event on Fri., July 5 (6-9 pm). Individuals, nonprofits, and businesses are encouraged to decorate the downtown sidewalks for free. Artists are asked to bring their own chalk and then simply select

a sidewalk square anywhere on Sandusky St. (between Spring St. & Central Ave.) or Winter St. (between Franklin & Union streets). In addition, Delaware's own classic rock cover band "Ra88" will entertain guests with live music. The band features Phil Jones on guitar and lead vocals, John Fuller on drums and backing vocals, and Brett Alexander on keyboards and backing vocals. For those riding bicycles, a free bike corral will be set up at the corner of S. Sandusky & Spring streets. DATA Bus will provide free shuttles every 15 minutes from the parking lot at the Hayes Del. Co. Services Building, 145 N. Union St., to the heart of downtown.



New Exhibit at Gallery 22 (7/5 – 8/24)

Gallery 22 at 22 E. Winter St. has a new exhibit. "Exploring the Figure: Summoning the Muse" features bronze sculptures by Renate Fackler and charcoal drawings by James ("Jim") T. Mason. The opening reception is Fri., July 5 (6-8:30 pm). Both artists are from the Central Ohio region. Fackler's studio is in Columbus' German Village while Mason is best known for re-imagining a Seurat painting at Columbus' Topiary Park.

Little Brown Junior Golf Classic (7/6)

The 44th annual Little Brown Jug Junior Golf Classic will take Sat., July 6 at Delaware's Hidden Valley Golf Course, located at 580 W. William St. It is open to all youth between the ages 7 and 17. The \$5 entry fee includes green fees for 9 holes of golf, lunch, a participation medal, and trophies for the winners of the 4 age divisions. The rain date is Sat., July 13. Registration materials can be found on Delaware's website under Parks & Recreation; on the website of the Delaware County Kiwanis Club, or in person at 580 W. William St. For more info, contact event coordinator Edward Schlote at eschlote@gmail.com. (Unfortunately, it seems the registration deadline was June 28.)

Summer on Winter Concert (7/10)

The Columbus-based band The Reaganomics will perform on Wed., July 10 (7-9 pm) in an open-air venue on W. Winter St. between Sandusky & Franklin streets. The concert is free & open to the public. (Learn more at www.reaganomics.com.)



"Earthsongs at Stratford" (7/10)

Stratford Ecological Center at 3083 Liberty Rd. is hosting "Midsummer Airs: A Casual Evening of Earth Songs" on Wed., July 10 (7-9 pm). Featured poets & musicians are Allison Asarch, Jeff Gundy & Terry Hermsen. There will also be an open mic for people to read a poem, recite a text, or sing a song. The evening is supposed to be casual and fun. Sponsored by Central Ohio Communities Project, Stratford Ecological Center & Sustainable Delaware Ohio. Free & open to the public.

One People Meets (7/11)

One People has its monthly meeting on Thurs., July 11 (7 pm) at First Presbyterian Church, 73 W. Winter St. Please use the rear entrance. The group will evaluate the Juneteenth Celebration held June 15 and plan for future events such as the Community Unity Festival at SWCI on Sept. 14. One People, which attempts to bring residents of all colors together, is also conducting "Community Walks" and helps with "Laundry Love."

Grand Finale for OWU's Summer Music Camp (7/12)

A week-long Summer Music Camp at OWU will conclude with a grand finale concert in Gray Chapel inside University Hall on Fri., July 12 (3 pm). Almost 100 students entering 6th through 9th

grade are participating in the summer camp and will perform instrumental and choral music. Families, friends, and the public are invited to this free concert.

Delaware Family Festival (7/13)

The Delaware Family Festival on Sat., July 13 (11 am – 2 pm) is annual block party on W. Winter St. to build community and fellowship with music, fun & food for people of all ages. There will be a free lunch from 12-1 pm (while supplies last), face painting, games, draft stations & more. Sponsors include the Andrews House, Delaware Police Dept., Family Promise, Family Resource Center, Helpline and First Baptist Church, First Presbyterian Church, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, William Street UMC, and Zion United Church of Christ.

"Rock the Bald" Fundraiser (7/13)

Do you want to be "a shavee"? "Rock the Bald" is a fundraiser for St. Baldrick's Foundation to conquer childhood cancers. The charity event will be held Sat., July 13 (1-4 pm) at Son of Thurman, 5 N. Sandusky St. in downtown Delaware. To learn more about the cause, visit www.stbaldricks.org.

Beer-and-Wine Festival at Boardman Arts Park (7/13) – \$

A beer-and-wine festival is coming to Boardman Arts Park at 154 W. William St. on Sat., July 13 (1-6 pm). Breweries and wineries will have several selections of beer, wine, mead, and cider to taste. The band "Six Pack Theory" will perform from 2 to 4 pm. Plus, there is an art show with pottery, jewelry, home décor, stain glass, and demos. In addition, there will be games, a 50/50 raffle, a silent auction, 6 food trucks, beer-and-wine sales, and so on. Parking is free on the other side of W. William St. Tickets are \$35 and allow guests up to 10 "tastes". Designated-driver passes are \$10 and include free soft drinks. No one under 21 is permitted to attend the event.

DCHS Presents "Boomerang History" (7/14)

World-renowned boomerang expert Chet Snouffer will discuss – and demonstrate – "Boomerang History" on Sun., July 14 (6 pm) at the Barn at Stratford, 2690 Stratford Rd. This should be a memorable event. Champion Snouffer is "the Michael Jordan of the Boomerang world." Free & open to the public (all ages). To learn more about Snouffer, visit www.chetsnouffer.com.

Police Basketball Camp (7/15-17)

Delaware Police Dept.'s 7th Annual Youth Basketball Camp is from July 15-17 (9-11 am each day). It is free for boys and girls entering grades 5 through 7. The camp will be at Dempsey Middle School at 599 Pennsylvania Ave. and is limited to 50 participants. Registration is required and handled on a first-come-first-serve basis. The information and registration link is <http://bit.ly/2I89HeV>.

Forum on Impeachment (7/16)

Is impeachment inevitable or avoidable? A nonpartisan forum of experts on the impeachment question will be held Tues., July 16 (6:30-8:30 pm) at the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA) at 390 Worthington Rd. in Westerville, near the intersection of Polaris Pkwy. & I-71. Invited speakers include Anthony DeStefanis, Dennis Laich, Michael Les Benedict & Tony Mughan. The event will be moderated by Mike Larson. Sponsored by Need to Impeach, Indivisible Ohio District 12, and Indivisible Delaware Ohio.

Full Moon (7/16)

Enjoy the full moon tonight. Free & open to the public.



BIA Parade of Homes (7/13-28) – \$

The 2019 Parade of Homes put on by the Building Industry Association (BIA) of Central Ohio will take place July 13-28. The site chosen is Evan Farms in Lewis Center (1550 Lewis Center Rd.), a new walkable, mixed-use neighborhood built upon principles of New Urbanism. Fourteen homes will be featured. The concept is great, but there is a reason why the price of the homes is never mentioned in the ads. Tickets are \$18 for adults (parking included); children 12 and

under are free. The parade is open daily. Tour includes "lots of walking." Pets are not permitted. For discount tickets and event information, visit www.biaparade.com. For more info on Evan Farms, visit www.evansfarmoh.com.



Delaware County Democratic Party Fundraiser (7/18) – \$

The Delaware County Democratic Party's annual fundraiser is scheduled for Thurs., July 18 (7-9 pm) at the Scioto Reserve Country Club, 7383 Scioto Parkway, in Powell. Inspirational speakers include Beth Liston, Rhine McLin, and Danny O'Connor. Individual tickets are \$50 and include a dessert buffet. Sponsorships are available. A cash bar is extra. Reservations are due by July 15. For more info, visit DCDP's website.

Classic Car Show (7/20)

The 26th annual Performance Classic Car Show will take place all day Sat., July 20 in downtown Delaware. Judging is from 1-3 pm; awards will be presented at 4 pm. There will be 100 trophies, two 50/50 raffles, and live music (5-7 pm).

Easton Town Center Celebrates 20th Birthday (7/20)

Easton Town Center is celebrating its 20th anniversary this summer with several public events. On Sat., July 20 (5-9 pm) there will be a concert featuring 1990s music by Popgun, Larger Than Life, and The Price Experience. Free & open to the public.

Delaware Lake Clean-Up (7/20)

The Olentangy Watershed Alliance (OWA), in conjunction with the City of Delaware's Watershed / Sustainability Coordinator Caroline Cicerchi, is hosting a clean-up at Delaware State Park Beach on Sat., July 20 (9-11 am). – At 1 pm on the same day and at the same place, the American Kayaking Association (AKA) will take individuals and groups for free 30-minute paddles on the lake.

Model Airplane Demonstration (7/20)

The Westerville Public Library is hosting a "Library Fly Day: Model Airplane Demonstration" on Sat., July 20 (9 am – 2 pm) at Alum Creek State Park, 6590 Africa Rd., in Galena. The Dinneen Flying Field is on the east side just below the dam, across from the beach. See a variety of radio-controlled racing, sport & model planes. An hour of flight instruction begins at 9 am. Then trainers will assist children in trial flights. Free hot dogs, chips & soft drinks while the supply lasts. Hosted by the Westerville Model Aeronautics Association. (Several sources list the day as July 27, but that is incorrect according to the Westerville Public Library. Please disregard the erroneous date.)

Scioto Gardens Festival (7/20)

The annual Scioto Gardens Festival will take place Sat., July 20 (9 am – 6 pm) at 3351 State Rt. 37 West, a mile or two west of Miller's Country Gardens. Please park at one of the churches on the right-hand side and wait for a shuttle bus. Dozens of artists, craftsmen & musicians welcome guests throughout this uniquely natural nursery setting. Native and unusual plants are available for sale along with the work of many fine artists. Mellow music, great food & free gardening workshops are offered throughout the day. Free & open to the public. – As reported previously, Michael & Linda Johnson sold the nursery business (but not the land) in May to a team of 6 partners who will carry on their legacy and allow them to enjoy a well-deserved retirement. The new group of owner-partners includes Christine Dille, Mark Dille, Amy Dutt, Denise Gualtieri, Penny McDowell & Annette Wright. While there may be changes here and there, they are committed to producing high-quality plants that will awaken any landscape.

Food Truck Festival (7/20)

The 2nd annual Delaware Pacer Bands Food Truck Festival will take place at the Delaware County Fairgrounds (236 Pennsylvania Ave.), on Sat., July 20 (4-9 pm). The festival features live music,

vendors & at least a dozen food trucks. It benefits grades 6-12 of the Delaware Pacer Bands. Free & open to the public. For more info, go to Eventbrite.

Ohio State Fair (7/24 – 8/4) – \$

The annual Ohio State Fair takes place in Columbus from July 24 through Aug. 4 this year. There are amusement rides, food vendors, a petting zoo, and tons more. Admission ranges from \$6 to \$10; children 5 and under are free. For more info, visit www.ohiostatefair.com.

Rachel Ignatofsky at Delaware Main Library (7/25)

Rachel Ignatofsky, author of "The Wondrous Workings of Planet Earth," will visit the Delaware Main Library at 84 E. Winter St. on Thurs., July 25 (6:30 pm). The storyteller has a talent for making science fun, accessible, and exciting. Free & open to the public.

Ice Cream and Trucks (7/26)

Children of all ages can enjoy free ice cream and explore all kinds of trucks on Fri., July 26 (4:30-7 pm) at West Berlin Presbyterian Church, 2911 Berlin Station Rd.

Christmas in July (7/27)

Held at the Delaware County Fairgrounds (236 Pennsylvania Ave.) on Sat., July 27 (9 am – 5 pm), the 2nd annual Christmas in July event features over 200 vendors of arts and crafts in an outdoor setting.

Ironman 70.3 (7/28)

The Ironman 70.3 triathlon will be back in town on the weekend of July 26-28. The actual race will be held Sun., July 28. It begins with a 1.2-mile swim in Delaware Lake, followed by a 56-mile bike ride, and ends with a 13.1-mile run. The race finish is at OWU's Selby Stadium at Henry St. Thousands of athletes and their families and friends will be in town that weekend, so expect detours and crowds.

All Disabilities Fest in Columbus (7/28)

The annual "All Disabilities Fest" in Columbus' Genoa Park on the Scioto River (303 W. Broad St.) on Sun., July 28 (9 am) showcases the talents of the Columbus disabilities community. The festival features a children's Fun Fest, learning activities, bouncy houses, and food trucks. The day kicks off with a Disabilities Walk (9 am – 12 pm) in downtown Columbus. Free & open to the public. Visit www.upfad.org for more info. UPFAD stands for "Unlimited Possibilities for All Disabilities."

Green Drinks (7/31)

The Green Drinks gathering will be Wed., July 31 at 7 pm at the Old Dog Alehouse at 13 W. William St. If the weather is nice and if there is room, the group will meet outside on the patio.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Symphony Concert & Fireworks, Thurs., July 4, OWU Campus
Ohio State Fair, July 24 – Aug. 4, Columbus
Ironman 70.3, Sun., July 28, OWU Campus
Community Unity Festival, Sat., Sept. 14, Ross Park
Delaware County Fair, Sept. 14-21
Harvest Fair, Sept. 28, Stratford Ecological Center
Ohio Gourd Show, Oct. 4-6, Delaware Co. Fairgrounds
Election Day, Tues., Nov. 5

CITY OF DELAWARE

The City of Delaware in July

City Council meets at 7 pm on Mon., July 8 and 22. Additional commission and meetings include the Sister City Advisory Board (Tues., July 9, 6 pm), the Board of Zoning Appeals (Wed., July 10, 6:30 pm), the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (Tues., July 16, 6:30 pm), the Planning Commission (Wed., July 17, 6:30 pm), the

Airport Commission (Thurs., July 18, 6:30 pm), and the Historic Preservation Commission (Wed., July 24, 6:30 pm). Please note that meetings are often canceled due to a lack of agenda items or a quorum. Always check the City's website (www.delawareohio.net). Other than City Council's executive sessions, all meetings are open to the public. They are also streamed live and archived on the City's website. Not infrequently, however, there are technical problems with the videos. For important discussions, it's best to attend in person.

Juneteenth Celebration

Delaware held its second annual Juneteenth Celebration on June 15 in Blue Limestone Park. Juneteenth is the day when slavery ended in Texas in 1965 and some 250,000 enslaved people saw their freedom. The official program kicked off at 11 am sharp, with food and festivities following thereafter. Pastor Mike Curtis from Second Baptist Church started with an opening prayer. Mayor Carolyn K. Riggle then officially opened the two new basketball courts in the rear of the park, stressing the positive health impact of such recreational facilities and amenities. She thanked Ted Miller and Bruce Pijanowski for helping to implement the plan developed by the Delaware Community Coalition and One People to bring the community together. 2nd Ward Representative Lisa Keller praised the positive impact that SWCI at 50 Ross St. has had on the entire community. Other city leaders in attendance included 3rd Ward Representative Jim Browning, Fire Chief John Donahue, and City Manager Tom Homan.

The featured guest speaker of the day was former Ohio State Senator Charleta B. Tavares, now the CEO of PrimaryOne Health in Columbus and contributor to the "Columbus & Dayton African-American News Journal." She provided a brief synopsis of Black history in America, including slavery, the Underground Railroad, the Abolition movement, and the Civil-Rights movement. She urged her audience to carry on the good work and to make an effort to record and document the city's proud history of emancipation and equity efforts before memory fades. Lastly, she applauded Delaware's officials for being "forward-thinking" leaders and supporting the Juneteenth Celebration.

Lastly, Benny Shoults from the Delaware County Historical Society gave a brief summary of the life and work of Delaware-born educator E.W.B. Curry (1871-1930), founder of the Curry Institute, author of at least two known books, and long-time editor of "The Informer," a nationally disseminated educational and religious monthly. There is currently an exhibit on him (as well as other sons and daughters of Delaware) in the Meeker Homestead Museum at 2690 Stratford Rd. Shoults has conducted a significant amount of travel and research and made interesting discoveries about this "hidden hero" of Delaware. He is hoping to install 2 "Curry Way" markers along London Rd. to raise awareness and perhaps even an official Historical Marker to honor the legacy of this remarkable man.

E.W.B. Curry's "A Story of the Curry Institute" (1907)

Elmer Washington Bryant Curry's book "A Story of the Curry Institute" (Urbana, Ohio, 1907) is an interesting read. There are many things readers can learn from it although it is short (48 pages) and heavily illustrated.

1. The text contains some, but not many biographical details about Curry and his family. His father, George Curry, worked as an itinerant Baptist preacher for 28 years, 14 of them in Athens, Ohio. He died in 1899. Elmer was born and lived on the south side of Delaware, on London Rd. (called South Street back then). "Our home was ... a log cabin on South Street." At one point the family home was on the corner of 37 David and Harrison streets. Besides the boy, there were also 2 girls. Curry played the cornet and bass violin in high school and graduated in 1889. Eventually, he enrolled at Ohio Wesleyan University, but he does not inform the reader about his years there. (Contemporaneous OWU records list him as a student, but it seems that he never officially graduated with a formal degree.)

2. The "birthplace" of the Curry Institute was a small kitchen shed on David Street. It measured 12 x 14 feet and was "the laughing stock of the community" (11). Enrollment was 6 students in the first year, with tuition being 25 cents per week. However, the school grew, attracted more students, and eventually needed a more permanent place. After a stint in Mechanicsburg years later, Curry moved to Urbana, Ohio in 1897 where the institute remained for decades. A state charter was granted in 1906.

3. The school was not intended to be a purely academic institution. It wanted "to educate the heart, head, and hand." Vocational and industrial skills were no less important than scholarly endeavors. Curry frowned upon idleness and insisted that everyone, both blacks and whites, be active, productive, and useful members of society. He had no patience with folks who were not self-reliant. His institute deliberately wanted to be "a Tuskegee in the North" (33) in the footsteps of Booker T. Washington (1856-1915). (A few years after the publication of "The Curry Institute," the author visited Booker T. Washington in Alabama.) To that end, in 1907 the school bought a working farm of 75 acres between Urbana and Springfield, reminiscent of the holistic education that Delaware's MTSO is pursuing in the 21st century. It is noteworthy that Curry's ultimate goal was to participate "in the uplifting of humanity" (17) and "in transforming the human into the angelic" (19).

4. School educators know a lot about money troubles. For Curry too, this was a perennial concern. The school was poor and had to scrimp a lot. To supplement revenues, the institute sold brooms, baking powder, and buckeye jewelry. Donations in whatever size were always welcome. Curry also mentions speeches on behalf of the Anti-Saloon League as a source of income for the school. (A second volume he published later collects many of his public speeches.) The last pages of his history of the Curry Institute are essentially a cry for help for a school in permanent financial distress. The little book ends in 1907, but according to another source the institute received in 1913 a generous gift of \$2,000 from Martha Fouse, a former slave. Perhaps philanthropic donations of this sort were the ultimate purpose of his little history of the Curry Institute.

Delaware Hires Assistant Manager

Kyle Kridler, economic development administrator for the City of Dublin, has been appointed assistant city manager, effective June 12. He brings experience in multiple areas, incl. budgeting, economic development, capital improvement planning & human resources. Kridler was the economic development lead for some of Dublin's most high-profile projects, incl. its Historic, Bridge St. & Perimeter Commerce Districts. He also helped to administer Dublin's business retention, expansion, attraction & creation program. Prior to that, he served 2 years as a management assistant in the Dublin manager's office, and 3 years in a similar position with the City of Westerville. "I believe that effective local government is strengthened by community collaboration, innovation and building partnerships," Kridler says. "I have been very impressed by the direction of the community and am eager to be a part of the Delaware team." Kridler replaces Jackie Walker, who is retiring after 27 years, the last 5 as assistant city manager. He was selected from a pool of 91 applicants. The assistant city manager is a key member of Delaware's executive team and assists with labor relations, procurement, sustainability, human resources, risk management, health care administration & oversight of the Dept. of Administrative Services. – Kridler earned a BS degree in Business Management from Penn State Univ. (2008) and an MA degree in Public Administration from Wright State Univ. (2012) In 2007, as an undergraduate, he spent one semester at Freiburg Univ. in Germany. (It's a small world!)

Planning Dept. Now in City Hall Annex

The City of Delaware's "Planning & Community Development Department" has moved into the 2nd floor of City Hall Annex, formerly the home of the Delaware Gazette and now owned by the City. Visitors can either use the ground-level entrance at 18 E. William St. (CoHatch) or the newly installed 2nd-floor skywalk ("overhead walkway") that connects City Hall with the annex building. The new location is roomier than the old, cramped space and includes a conference room and table space big enough to handle the large blueprints that the department processes on a daily basis.

The Politics of Tax Abatements

Jim Manos is a wealthy man who owns multiple properties. He does not seem to be a man in need of tax breaks. What happened at the June 10 meeting of Delaware City Council is therefore noteworthy and even disturbing. City Council, without hesitation, approved a \$500,000 tax-incentive agreement with Mr. Manos to build his \$2.2 million Wesleyan Inn at 235 W. William St. in exchange for the promise of 4 new full-time jobs and 8 new part-time jobs, the

equivalent of 8 full-time equivalents (FTE), worth \$250,000. The peculiar thing is that Mr. Manos did not ask for the tax break. He did not need it. The 100%/15-year tax abatement was completely unnecessary. He was committed to building no matter what. Manos says he was not even aware of the option until it was brought to his attention by Sean Hughes, Delaware's Economic Development director. It was the City that aggressively initiated the deal, not the developer. Why would the City do such a thing, waste \$250,000 to \$500,000 in tax revenue that would otherwise have gone to underfunded infrastructure, schools, and so on? It makes absolutely no sense. Was it done to inflate Mr. Hughes' statistics and make him look good? Let us enlighten us if you can think of a plausible reason.

Many states and cities offer tax abatements to lure companies to their shores. Oftentimes, such tax breaks make sense. In exchange for creating 100 new jobs, for instance, the company may be offered 15 years of 100% freedom from property taxes. But there are problems. Who monitors and verifies these numbers? What if a company does not meet payroll goals? What if a company is sold or goes bankrupt? In Ohio, the compliance rate has hovered at around 80% in recent years. Happily, the state has become more savvy and has now imposed stipulations that allow money to be clawed back when companies fail to keep their promises. But the elephant in the room remains. The breaks that select developers get merely shifts the tax burden to the rest of taxpayers. 1% gets tax deductions, but the other 99% end up having to make up the difference. Various solutions have been suggested for situations if and when tax abatements are truly desirable (which was not the case here). For example, homebuilders could be asked to pay a \$15 minimum wage for their employees or to set aside 15% of their housing stock as "affordable housing." But unwarranted corporate welfare and subsidies are not a responsible way to handle taxpayer money.

Controversy over Main Street Delaware's Decisions

The 15-member board of Main Street Delaware has issued two new policies that have been met with shock and consternation within the non-profit community.

The first one is a rule that prohibits "informational tables" at farmer's markets. The Republican and the Democratic parties used to have information booths on Saturday mornings where people could learn about candidates and events, but the new rule prohibits the free flow of information. Stifling free speech on a public sidewalk may also be illegal under the First Amendment. For example, Delaware has City Council elections coming up in the fall. It would be very unfortunate if candidates, including incumbents, were not allowed to meet and greet their voters. Many nonpartisan groups are also negatively impacted by the decision, which effectively bans them from the public arena.

A related second decision now requires that all "vendors" on First Fridays, including non-profits, produce a "certificate of insurance" (COI). Most small, local nonprofits with shoestring budgets probably have no idea what that is, how to get it, and how much it costs. The nonprofits we talked to were caught blindsided by the decision and at a loss of how to go about procuring a COI. Main Street Delaware has issued no guidance. The board made the decision without conducting proper research and without reaching out to stakeholders. Contrary to what we heard from one Main Street Delaware representative, COIs are not "free." In fact, extra liability coverage for your nonprofit "business" costs hundreds of dollars annually, an expense that few nonprofits can afford. The perception among nonprofits is that their participation is no longer welcome at First Fridays either. (One way to solve this particular problem may be a request to sign waivers indemnifying Main Street Delaware as an organization. Whenever volunteers participate in city-sponsored clean-ups, for instance, they are asked to sign such waivers.) – Last April, Main Street Delaware celebrated the local "civic pride." "Community Matters" agrees with the view of those who say that the decisions by MSD's board are adversarial and detrimental to Delaware's positive community spirit and should be amended or rescinded in their entirety.

Below is Main Street Delaware's official response to the concerns of not-for-profits that unfairly feel banished from Farmer's Markets and First Fridays. It was sent out June 18. Note the tone-

deaf, corporate legalese of the letter that emphasizes self-protection and self-preservation above all else. The organization may have matured and become more professional, but we fear it is beginning to lose touch with ordinary people. This could also be another sign of gentrification, a process that slowly but inexorably squeezes out those with fewer means. What might be "a good business decision" is not necessarily in the best interest of the community as a whole.

Thank you for sharing the rough draft of your piece for the next issue of Community Matters. We are glad that you have interest in our organization and our role in the community. Main Street Delaware, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization whose mission and vision is to provide a vibrant experience of downtown Delaware that is inclusive, preserves our rich history and supports a dynamic future. As a private organization, we have no ability to restrict anyone's right to free speech. We do, however, have an obligation to ensure that our events, including the Farmer's Market, do not endanger the public as well as the obligation to direct our efforts to the advancement of our mission.

The 2018 Main Street Delaware Farmers' Market Season was the largest in the organization's history, both in the number and variety of vendors and the number of shoppers. The growing success of the Farmers' Market raised some concerns with the Delaware Police Department which we were asked to address as part of the City of Delaware issuing the permit for Main Street to use the sidewalks. Main Street Delaware formed a committee comprised of Farmers' Market vendors, Farmers' Market managers, and citizens. That group recommended the elimination of purely informational tables to allow more space for local farmers / crafters who provide "Homegrown / Homemade" items.

The Main Street Board received and discussed the committee's recommendations and agreed that the Farmers' Markets should focus on farmers, small / local businesses. We explained the policy and the reasons with the City of Delaware and the political parties prior to the market season. With this change, we have also had to deny businesses who monetarily sponsor the Farmers' Market permission to set up informational tables at the market.

Nonprofits and informational groups remain welcome at First Fridays and we want to continue to be inclusive in that regard. In fact, we sought out and partnered with Citizens Climate Lobby and Sustainable Delaware for our recent Civic Pride First Friday. To ensure that we remain inclusive, our Board has agreed to consider the concerns you have raised and explore other options. In doing so, however, we must also protect the funds entrusted to our organization by the public and find a solution to this issue. If an organization does not have sufficient funds to purchase insurance, it also would not have enough to defend itself (or defend and indemnify Main Street Delaware) in any lawsuit arising from that organization's activities in its booth. This places Main Street Delaware's assets and organization at risk. The purpose of the vendor insurance requirement is simply to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. We will have more discussion with our board and our insurance provider regarding other options.

Our goal, as always, is to be inclusive and a positive voice and resource in the community.

*My best,
Susie Bibler
Executive Director
Main Street Delaware*

"Drag 101" at Secret Identity Comics

After the Delaware County District Library was forced to cancel the Drag 101 event on June 5 because of safety reasons and death threats, Secret Identity Comics (www.secretidcomics.com) at 34 N. Franklin St. offered to host the program instead. It turned out to be a great community celebration in support of love and tolerance, diversity and equity. Selena T. West and her friends were stunning, regardless whether you like drag or not. About 250 people, among them elderly folks and many children, gathered on both sides of N. Franklin St. to show their support. Many came dressed up in creative ways and colorful hair and carried inspiring signs that read, "Libraries are for everyone," "Drag is art," "Love trumps hate," "Shash away

haters," "Pray the homophobia away," and "No one should live in a closet." At least one member from City Council was present, but few other officials. For better or worse, the event was somewhat ad hoc. There were a lot of good private conversations, but no planned speeches and the like. However, the message was unmistakably clear: "Hate has no home here." The rally was well covered by in-town and out-of-town reporters and television crews. There were no signs of counter-protesters, but police patrolled the area and quietly stood by in case of civic disturbances.

The great turn-out and positive spirit was a pleasant surprise. Perhaps there is more good than bad in Delaware after all. Wouldn't it be great to have an annual and local "Love Parade" or "DelFest" event that would educate the public, allow all kinds of voices to be heard, and to celebrate diversity? As columnist David Brooks recently pointed out in the New York Times, reprinted in the Columbus Dispatch, younger generations are very much in favor of such pluralism.

BE THE CHURCH
*Protect the environment. Care for the poor.
Forgive often. ~~Reject racism.~~
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.*

Shared by Pastor Julie

William Street UMC Celebrates 200 Years

On June 8, William Street United Methodist Church celebrated its bicentennial with a concert by Brass Band of the Western Reserve, directed by Dr. Keith M. Wilkinson. OWU's Chaplain Jon Powers played the role of Adam Poe, William Street UMC's first minister and instrumental founder of OWU.

Under current pastor Julie Carmean, William Street UMC remains "a community of Christ-followers growing in love of God and neighbor." Here is a description included in the concert program. It is also on the church's website. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all Delaware churches were as inclusive? Sadly, however, this is not the case. There are local churches that openly discriminate against members of the LGBT community, for instance.

Asbury UMC Explores God's Creation

"Exploring God's Creation" is a 3-part summer series hosted by Asbury United Methodist Church at 55 W. Lincoln Ave. It is part of Asbury's study of environmental awareness and climate justice. All ages are invited to share a meal and explore the following topics: Water (Wed., 7/10), Birds (Wed., 7/24), and Field & Forest (Wed., 8/7). Events are from 6 to 8:15 pm. Free & open to the public.

William Street United Methodist Church "This We Believe"

We believe every person is of sacred worth and created in God's image. We commit to Jesus' example of inclusive love, care, and intentional hospitality with persons of every race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, faith story, physical or mental ability, economic status, or political perspective. It is our goal to love God with our whole lives and to love one another as God loves us. Jesus said, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This we believe and strive to practice.

Grady Memorial Offers Tobacco-Cessation Program

Grady Memorial Hospital at 561 W. Central Ave. is once again offering a tobacco-cessation program. It begins July 10 and runs through Aug. 14 and is offered every Wednesday night at 6 pm. The free class is taught by Matthew Munroe and Doug Clark from Pulmonary Services. Preregistration is required. Please call 740-615-2518 for more info and to register.

Stratford to Switch to Geothermal Heating & Cooling

Stratford Ecological Center at 3083 Liberty Rd. has received a \$34,650 check from the AEP Foundation to enhance and replace its existing geothermal heating and cooling system. Geothermal systems use networks of underground pipes to heat or cool water. Because the earth has a steady temperature of 55 degrees Fahrenheit (12.8 degrees Centigrade), the system will cool buildings in summer. In winter, it helps to warm them. Additionally, AEP is providing "net metering" for Stratford's solar-energy production. David Hoyt, Stratford's development director, says the farm and AEP are united in "modeling renewable energy in the central Ohio community." Stratford Ecological Center is a 236-acre organic farm and education center on the south side of Delaware. It is open to the public Mon. through Sat. The website is www.stratfordecologicalcenter.org.

Stratford Ecological Center Is Now Plastic-Bag Free

Stratford's Farm Market is now plastic-bag free! Customers are encouraged to bring their own reusable grocery bags when they come to purchase you-pick produce, grass-fed meats, or any other Farm Market goodies. Reusable bags, made by volunteers, are available (donations welcome). Stratford is open daily except Sundays and holidays, but will be closed July 4-7. Currently for sale are:

- grass-fed lamb (individual cuts, halves & wholes). (Please call ahead for halves/wholes)
- grass-fed beef
- pork
- pick-your-own produce in the greenhouse
- local Latshaw (raw) honey, and
- spotted-salamander handmade soap

Summer 2019 Music Series

Harmony in the Park

The YMCA will once again present hour-long "Harmony in the Park" concerts on eight Sundays in July & Aug. (7 pm) at the Bicentennial Park Gazebo on S. Washington St. & Park Ave., across from Fire Station #1. In case of rain, concerts may be moved to the Delaware Community Center YMCA at 1121 S. Houk Rd. Here is this summer's lineup:

- Buckeye Valley Alumni Band (July 7)
- Worthington Civic Band (July 14)
- Ohio Heartland Chorus & Marionaires Chorus (July 21)
- Trombones Plus (July 28)
- Ain't Misbehaving (Aug. 4)
- Olentangy Men's Chorus (Aug. 11)
- Ice Cream Social (5:30 pm), Three of a Kind (6:30-6:45 pm) & Delaware County Concert Band (Aug. 18)
- Buckeye Ballroom Big Band (Aug. 25)

Preservation Parks

Preservation Parks of Delaware County also has a line-up of free weekly concerts for all ages. They range from Classical to Bluegrass, Celtic & Rock. Their Thursday Evening Concert Series takes place at Gallant Woods Park, north of town at 2151 Buttermilk Hill Rd., 7-8:30 pm.

- Spittin' Image (July 11)
- Marquis 66 (July 18)
- Hedgehog String Band (July 25)
- Lone Raven (Aug. 1)
- Central Ohio Symphony (Aug. 8)
- Party of 5 (Aug. 15)

2019 Creative Strings Festival

The annual Creative Strings Workshop and Festival is taking place in Central Ohio from June 30 through July 5 this year. A public showcase concert is planned for Mon., July 1 (7-9 pm) at William Street United Methodist Church, 28 W. William St. The schedule includes additional concerts in Columbus and the Mid-Ohio region. The grand-finale concert will be Fri., July 5 (7-9:30 pm), once again at William Street UMC. Both concerts are free & open to the public, but donations are suggested and accepted. Details can be found at www.creativestrings.org. The founder of the Creative Strings Festival, now in its 17th year, is Christian Howes, a Hayes High School graduate (see www.christianhowes.com).

Central Ohio Symphony Announces 2019/20 Dates

The Central Ohio Symphony has announced the following dates for the 2019/20 season, its 41st: Sat., Oct. 26 (7:30 pm); Sun., Dec. 15 (2 + 4:30 pm); Sun., March 1 (3 pm); and Sat., April 25 (7:30 pm). Please mark your calendars.

Here is a preview of the Symphony's 41st season. (The program has not yet been announced anywhere else, not even on the Symphony's website.) 1. The Oct. 26 concert features Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Dror Biran as soloist) and Sibelius' Symphony No. 2. Also on the program is Christopher Weait's "Divertimento for Strings." The composer, who is celebrating his 80th birthday, plans to be in attendance. – 2. The Holiday Concert on Dec. 15 includes many festive pieces that are appropriate for the season. Renowned dulcimer player Mark Alan Wade, a 1999 OWU graduate, is the featured soloist. – 3. The March 1 concert focuses on Mozart's "Sinfonia Concertante," Rimsky-Korsakov's "Capriccio Espagnol," and Respighi's "Roman Festivals." A work by African-American composer William Grant Still, "Festive Overture," will open the concert. – 4. The April 25 concert highlights rarely heard contemporary music: George Walker's Pulitzer-Prize-winning Symphony No. 1, Arturo Márquez' "Trumpet Concerto" (with Pacho Flores as soloist), and Peter Boyer's "Ellis Island" that focuses on the immigration story. The latter piece includes actors, narrators, and film.

Delaware Has Two Local Chors

The Delaware Community Chorus rehearses Monday nights (7-9 pm) at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 45 W. Winter St., in the Undercroft. Joshua Brodbeck is the artistic director. Members are selected by audition. The choir gives two public concerts per year. The season runs from Sept. (Labor Day) to May (Memorial Day), so it seems there is normally no activity during the summer. However, this year the chorus will be participating in the July 4th concert of the Symphony. (Visit www.delawarechorus.org for more info.)

Sweet Adelines, a female choir, also rehearses Monday nights (7-9 pm) at their new location at First Presbyterian Church, 73 W. Winter St. Please use the rear entrance and come upstairs. You can hear the choir next during the Harmony in the Park series on July 21 (7 pm). (Visit www.ohioheartlandings.org for more info.) – Both choirs welcome prospective members.



The Dipped Donut

The Dipped Donut, the donut shop located at 256 S. Sandusky St., behind Super Wash & Tan, opened at its new location on June 11. Many people may not realize it, but it has been open for business inside Super Wash & Tan for many years, according to co-owners Jeni & Carl Reida. Both walk-ins and pre-orders are welcome. Prices are \$1.75 for a single donut, \$8.50 for half a dozen, and \$16 for a dozen. Not every flavor is available every day of the week, but a multitude of glazes and toppings can be had at all times. Donuts are on the small side, but the beauty is that you can customize them by choosing your own glaze and topping. As far as drinks are concerned, there is coffee, milk, soda, and water. Store hours are M-F 7 am – 1 pm and Sat.-Sun. 8 am – 1 pm. Sit-down tables are currently not available because by law the store would then be required to have a public restroom. The Dipped Donut is on Facebook where you can see pictures. The email address is thedippeddonut@gmail.com. The website, www.thedippeddonut.com, is still under construction. – During a recent visit, the Dipped Donut enjoyed steady walk-in business.

No More Concerts at Pat's Cave

The owner of "Endangered Species: The Last Record Store on Earth" at 11 W. William St. has informed Community Matters that there will be no more concerts in the Pat's Cave, the concert venue in the basement of the Knights of Pythias building at 9 W. Winter St. Patrick Bailey started the project in spring 2018 and has since hosted a large number of bands and solo performers. While many concertgoers traveled long distances to hear their favorite musicians,

he recently stated in a brief interview, local residents have not shown sufficient interest to keep the concert series going. It is suspended for the time being. Bailey is not yet sure what to do with the concert hall, which has a maximum capacity of about 250 people. If anyone has a bright idea, feel freed to contact him.

Rev. Dr. C. Everett Tilson

In a Delaware Gazette column published on June 14, Judge David Hejmanowski highlighted former MTSO professor Rev. Dr. C. Everett Tilson (1923-2006) and his instrumental role in the Civil-Rights Movement. Few people will have heard of Rev. Tilson, so here is some additional background information.

Dr. Tilson was born and raised in Seven Mile Ford, Virginia, an all-white town at the time. It was the 1852 novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin" by Harriet Beecher Stowe that opened his eyes to the injustices around him. He received his Ph.D. from Vanderbilt Univ. in 1952. Along with other religious leaders, he was arrested in 1964 while attempting to accompany African-American worshippers to an Easter Sunday service at an all-white church in Jackson, Mississippi. Dr. Everett later became professor of Old Testament at Methodist Theological School in Ohio, as it is called today, and retired in 1988.



A Public Bicycle Repair Stand

What a thoughtful addition to Delaware! On June 18, we discovered that a public bike-repair stand has been bolted to the ground next to the DATA Bus hub on Park Ave. The brand is Park Tool (www.parktool.com), a bike-tool company that has been in business since 1963. The all-weather work station is about 4 feet tall and blue. It includes 8 sets of tools tied to retractable steel cables. Among them are wrenches, screw drivers, hex rings, and more. There is also a manual bike pump that allows any bicyclist (not just DATA customers) to pump up their low or flat tires for free. We tested it, and it works great. In case you have questions, there is an app you can use.

According to Denny Schooley from DATA Bus, it was the City of Delaware that put in the work station. After some additional sleuthing, it turns out that the project was a joint collaboration between the City of Delaware and the Creating Healthy Communities grant at Delaware General Health District (DGHD), spearheaded by Abbey Trimble. Signage and instructions will be added soon. – The new stand is a welcome addition to Delaware's growing bike infrastructure.

Rugged Maniac Will Be Back in 2020

The Rugged Manic 5K Obstacle Course will be back at the Delaware County Fairgrounds next year. It has been scheduled for Sat., May 9 (9 am). Registration is already open. For more info and to preregister, visit www.ruggedmaniac.com.

OHIO WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI)

The May 4 open-house event for OWU's new Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) showed a robust community interest in the initiative. The inaugural fall term will run from Sept. 23 through Nov. 1, with 10 courses being offered. Online registration (preferred) opens July 15 and runs through Sept. 4. Mail & phone registration starts July 22. The fee for the fall term will be \$75. Participants can take multiple courses for that one price, subject to availability. Eight of the 10 classes will be on OWU's campus, one at Willow Brook Christian Village (South Campus), and one at the Strand Theatre. The non-credit courses will be taught in a non-competitive, relaxed environment, free of required textbooks, tests & term papers. However, motivated individuals can certainly go above and beyond the call of duty and do extra work. Here is the list of courses being offered this fall. More details can be found in a brochure that's being circulated right now.

- Academy-Award Winning Films (Tracey Peyton), Strand Theatre
- DNA Testing (Kelli Berghheimer)
- My Favorite Lecture (Various OWU Faculty)
- Lifespan Maintenance of Knowledge (Lynda Hall)
- The Universe and Your Place in It (Tom Burns)
- Whirled Religions: A Traveler's Guide (Jon Powers)
- Rutherford B. Hayes (Bill Rietz et al.)
- Veg-Centric: Trending Now (John Lindeboom), Willow Brook Christian Village (South)
- A Matter of Balance (Leslie Menges)
- The OWU Connection (Lisa Ho)

OWU Fires Two Librarians

At Ohio Wesleyan Univ. it is customary to celebrate faculty and staff when they retire or leave for other reasons and to recognize their contributions and achievements. It is also customary to announce staffing changes to the community to keep everyone in the loop. It is therefore puzzling and shocking to see two librarians fired very abruptly on the last work day of the fiscal year (Fri., June 28) and to learn that their positions have been eliminated. Given the current decline in enrollment and tuition revenue, it is perfectly understandable that hard business decisions had to be made. Once again, staff positions are being phased out, leaving departments, programs, and offices decimated and dysfunctional and creating backlogs and delays. However, it seems that in this case the situation was handled particularly poorly and inhumanly.

At this point, the entire story is not known. There may be pieces missing in this reporting. However, OWU's administrators had plenty of opportunity to respond to comments and inquiries, but the institution – which does not discuss personnel matters – chose not to provide any explanations. Absolute silence and deep secrecy is surrounding this particular case, adding more unnecessary mystery. So, this story may be incomplete, but it is not for lack of trying.

According to emails from Public Services Librarian Joy H. Gao, with OWU for over 20 years, she and Joyce Laurence were suddenly and unexpectedly informed by the Director of Human Resources that they lost their position effective immediately. Gao notes that she would preferred it if she had been informed by her immediate supervisors, the Director of Libraries and the Associate Provost for Academic Support and Chief Information Officer. OWU has been a selective federal depository for government publications since 1845, and both Gao and Laurence were in charge of the service. It may also be the case that the Trump administration, in office since 2017, is producing fewer government documents than previous administrations. Perhaps the time has come to reduce or phase out the program and the associated positions, although both Gao and Laurence did much more than curate government documents. Gao writes that she perfectly understands the need to periodically reassess staff positions. That is not the issue here.

What she cannot accept are the specific circumstances of her unexpected and unceremonious departure. She was given "a few minutes" to remove personal items from her office in Beeghly Library before being escorted out by a security guard. Both she and Laurence were "treated as criminals, thugs" and felt "humiliated," the emails say. Laurence was crying hard. Gao notes that the way she and her colleague were abused and anguished was not aligned with the lofty values OWU teaches and models: "The people involved showed no compassion and they have no hearts." She also states that she chose to speak up and make some noise not for herself but to warn others of possible layoffs and the dark inhumanity that OWU's administrative machine is capable of. Unfortunately, this is not the first case of this kind. Low-level staff is routinely treated as chattel by insensitive career bureaucrats and automatons who are unmoved by the impact of their decisions on real people. "Disappearances" are not uncommon. The names of Gao and Laurence were immediately "erased" from the website of the OWU Libraries. What happened makes a total mockery of the notion that OWU is a "community" and a "family" where people trust and take good care of each other. Missteps of this nature can lead to reputational loss, harm efforts to recruit and retain students and personnel, and diminish donor enthusiasm. The vaunted institution, founded in 1842, deserves better than this. In conclusion, here is a quote from poet Maya Angelou: "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people

will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

More Turnover at OWU

A certain amount of administrative turnover is normal in higher education. However, in 2019 and 2020 record numbers of faculty and staff have retired or transferred. When you ask, most will offer perfectly rational reasons such as a job offer elsewhere. But why are they retiring now or applying for jobs elsewhere in the first place? If you dig deeper or happen to know the folks in question, it becomes clear that besides perfectly valid personal reasons there are also profound structural and systemic reasons behind the decisions to depart: shrinking enrollment, students who are not college-ready, stagnating salaries, rising health-care premiums, the prospect of exigency and future layoffs, dissatisfaction with the administration, burnout, and low morale. That OWU is facing a crisis is undisputed. The real question is: How serious, deep, and irreversible is the problem?

It was just announced that three mid-level administrators have now joined the exodus. Registrar Shelly McMahon has accepted the position of Registrar at Meredith College in Raleigh, North Carolina, and the Director of Physical Plant, Peter Schantz, is also leaving OWU. Bob Wood, Director of Public Safety, is said to retire in October. Existing staff will fill the positions on an interim basis, meaning financial savings for the cash-strapped institution but also bottlenecks with respect to ongoing work. In the meantime, there are ominous rumblings about a possible faculty vote of non-confidence this fall...

Lyman Leathers (1929-2019)

Retired professor of English and Humanities-Classics Dr. Lyman L. Leathers has passed away at the age of 90. He was born and raised in Ohio and received his Ph.D. at the Univ. of Pennsylvania with a dissertation on Ohio-born poet and playwright F. Ridgely Torrence (1874-1950). He became a visiting professor at OWU in 1961 and an award-winning full-time teacher in 1971. He retired in 1994. Lyman was a man who believed in the value of a liberal-arts education, incl. the fine and performing arts. Although – or because of – he was on crutches ever since he had been stricken with polio at age 18, he loved life and opera, was a life trustee of the Opera Columbus, and served as art critic for the Delaware Gazette. A memorial service at OWU will be announced at a later date.

Unfortunately, on Sept. 18, 2014 Leathers made headlines when, at age 85, he fell asleep at the wheel of his car and collided with a motorcycle. The biker and his wife both died, leaving behind three children. Lyman was found guilty by Judge David Gormley on two accounts, but was spared prison time.

DELAWARE COUNTY & CENTRAL OHIO

PIN's School Shoes & Supplies Program

People in Need's annual distribution program of school shoes and supplies begins Tues., July 16, at 138 Johnson Dr. in Delaware. Johnson Dr. is off London Rd. on the south side of town. To make an appointment (no walk-ins!), call 740-363-6284. All pre-K through 12 kids in Delaware County are eligible. The program is intended for families with low-and-moderate incomes (LMI), but there are no eligibility guidelines based on wages or salaries. Proof of address and a picture ID are required. (To learn more about PIN's many additional services, visit www.delawarepeopleinneed.org.)



NAMI of Delaware & Morrow Counties

The mission of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Delaware & Morrow Counties, located at 814 Bowtown Rd. on Delaware's east side, is "to improve the quality of life and ensure dignity and respect for persons with serious mental illness, and offer support to their families and close friends." The advocacy and support

group does quite a bit of programming. This summer, starting July 17, it offers "Trauma Sensitive Yoga," "Forum on Community Resources," "STABLE Accounts," and "Secondary Trauma." In addition, there are a dozen support-group meetings at various local and regional locations. For their full services and schedule, visit www.namiofdel-mor.org.

Delaware County Foundation Offers Grants

Once again, the Delaware County Foundation offers grants to nonprofits. The grant application deadline is Aug. 15. In 2019, nearly \$1 million was awarded by the Foundation to eligible organizations providing food, housing, mental health services, arts & environmental education, and student enrichment programs. Grants ranged from \$500 to \$35,000. Apply online at www.delawarecf.org/grants.

DGHD Discusses New Facility with Residents

On June 4, the Delaware General Health District invited the public to an open house where it presented its plans for a new facility at 470 S. Sandusky St. Pastor Jason Allison was kind enough to open the doors of nearby Terra Nova (425 S. Sandusky St.) for that purpose. – First, Health Commissioner Shelia Hiddleston introduced her board and senior staff. She then explained that due to space limitations and restricted parking opportunities at the current location, 1-3 W. Winter St., the DGHD has been exploring an alternate location for the past two years before purchasing the former "LeRoy Jenkins property" at 470 S. Sandusky St., south of Oak Grove Cemetery. The planning process has barely begun, but the current vision is to build a 30,000-square-foot facility that will have one single ADA-accessible level, along with 200 parking spaces. Seven proposals have been received from architects so far, but a decision about the final design won't be made until July. Construction is likely to begin in spring 2020. Hiddleston also explained that the building would be located close to S. Sandusky St. with an ingress and egress at that road. Per order from the Fire Dept., there will be an access drive from Magnolia Dr. on the property's west side, but it would be restricted and only be used in emergencies. There currently is a house on the property, but it is in bad shape. It has a leaking roof and asbestos problems. It is not yet clear what the long-term plans for it are.

Multiple nearby residents attended the meeting and had all sorts of predictable questions about DGHD's clientele, hours of operation, drainage, lighting, fencing or a buffer zone, and so on. DGHD has a fleet of some 30 vehicles. Since about 15 of them will be parked overnight, some lighting will be necessary to deter vandalism. Storm-water drainage is an issue all along the Olentangy River. Snow melt and rain events can lead to flooding. The DGHD plans to include a retention / detention pond in its plans and has pledged to work with the city to work on proper drainage. There is currently an old chain-link fence surrounding the property, but a decision has yet to be made if it will be removed and replaced with a modern fence. Fencing would add to the cost of the project and may not be feasible. One resident asked if the DGHD offered needle exchange and drugs for addicts. Hiddleston noted that the DGHD is not in the business of so-called "harm-reduction programs" and does not give out drugs and needles. There are other agencies in the county that handle outreach to people at risk for substance abuse. Hours of operations are restricted to 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, with occasional evening classes and board meetings and Saturday morning activities. The building will be closed at night and on most weekends.

On a final note, Hiddleston emphasized that the current tax levy, which expires in 2024, cannot be used for building projects. It is intended for "operations" only. The levy millage will remain the same. Instead, DGDH has identified other sources of money. In addition, the buildings are 1-3 W. Winter St. will be sold and the proceeds used for the new facility.

In addition to the meeting at June 4, plans will need to be approved by the City of Delaware's Planning Commission and City Council itself. There will be plenty of opportunities for residents to see the preliminary and final plans as well as to speak at public hearings.

Community Matters wishes to thank the Health District for being exceptionally transparent and proactive. This is the way all public entities should conduct business. The future neighbors of DGHD appreciated the opportunity to be seen and heard. Health Commissioner Shelia Hiddleston and Public Information Officer Traci

Whittaker both pointed out that they are always available for questions. They emphasized that instead of listening to unfounded rumors residents should always contact them first for factual information. Check the website (www.delawarehealth.org) or the Facebook page for updates or call the Health Commissioner directly at 740-203-2202.

SourcePoint Has New Executive Director

Fara Waugh is the new executive director of SourcePoint at 800 Cheshire Rd. On July 1, she is replacing Robert ("Bob") Horrocks who is retiring. After an extensive search that yielded over 100 applications, SourcePoint picked internal candidate Waugh based on her 24-year experience with almost every aspect of the organization. Most recently, she led the creation of a 5-year strategic plan. As a result, a smooth transition is expected. Waugh has an MA degree from OSU in Social Work and is a licensed independent social worker (LISW). She lives in Westerville with her husband, Jay Fry.

The Delaware County Byxbe Campus

In 2017, the Delaware County Commissioners approved a contract to purchase the Delaware Area Career Center (DACC), North Campus, at 1610 State Rt. 521 northeast of town for \$1.7 million to become the new Delaware County Byxbe Center. The Commissioners have now approved design plans and appropriated additional \$607,100 for the necessary renovations. The campus encompasses nearly 20 acres and includes a 128,313-square-foot structure built in 1974. The new facility will house the sheriff's administrative offices, the county engineer, the sanitary engineer, the Delaware County Regional Planning Commission, the facilities-management dept., and the Delaware County dog shelter. Reconstruction is scheduled to begin in 2020, with an expected move-in date of 2021. The new Center is named after Moses Byxbe Sr. (1756-1826), one of the founders of the City of Delaware. He is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery.

The "Historic Courthouse" at 91 N. Sandusky St. will house the Board of Commissioners, the Veterans Service Commission, Economic Development, Fiscal Services, Communications, and Human Resources. The "Carnegie Building," built as a library, will become a secure facility to house the 911 Center, the EMS Dept., and the Emergency Management Agency. The total cost for relocations and renovations is estimated to be \$22 million. If and when liquidated, the sale of the various vacated buildings is expected to bring in about 25% of the cost.

A New Transfer & Recycling Station

Delaware County is looking at a new transfer and recycling station to be built at 1020 US Route 42 N. However, the county has yet to receive proposals to design, build, and finance the project, let alone sign a contract. At the earliest, the new facility would open in 2021, according to Erik McPeck, deputy director of operations for the Regional Sewer District.

Bicyclist Killed on US 36 East

Bicyclist Michael A. Tighe, 39, of Westerville, was killed on U.S. Route 36 East on June 4. He was riding his bike westbound on the right berm near N. Old State Rd. when he was struck and killed by Brooke A. Dienst, 29, of Delaware. It is not yet known why Dienst crossed the white edge line that separated the car lanes from the berm. Distracted driving is a possibility as is mechanical failure. Tighe was wearing a helmet, but did not survive the crash and was pronounced dead at the scene. The cyclist, a cancer survivor, worked as an oncology nurse at University Hospital East and was on a training ride for Pelotonia, the annual bicycle ride to raise money for cancer research. – The crash demonstrates that even a marked shoulder, berm, or lane does not prevent accidents. Ideally, there should be dedicated and protected bicycle lanes in place that are physically separated from motor traffic by a barrier. In the absence of them, it would make sense to install a line of plastic bollards or rumble strips between the right car lane and the shoulder or berm. Rumble strips are effective. According to ODOT, their cost is only between \$700 and \$1,000 per mile.

Tornado Shelter Fails to Open

Despite official tornado warnings for Delaware County, the new Tornado Shelter in Delaware State Park owned by ODNR did not automatically unlock its doors on June 15 as designed. Park visitors and area residents found themselves locked out. After a second tornado warning was issued, a maintenance worker had to travel from Union County to manually open the door with a key. The Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources (ODNR) has apologized for the "malfunction" and vowed to correct it in the future. Delaware-based 2K General Company says it has identified and corrected the "controls issue" that prevented the shelter from unlocking. It is also recommending monthly verification through simulation testing. ODNR and Delaware County EMA are also in conversations about possible backup systems, including a coded keypad or more keys being handed out to people and/or made available in a lock box.

The shelter worked properly in May when tornado warnings were issued and some 95 people sought cover. If a tornado had hit Delaware State Park on June 15, the stranded people could have been hit by flying debris and worse. There are 210 campsites at the park, and on Father's Day weekend the occupancy rate was 90%.

Otterbein's 2019/20 Theater & Dance Calendar

Otterbein Univ. in Westerville has announced its calendar of musicals and plays for next season. With one exception, all performances take place at Fritsche Theatre in Cowan Hall, 30 S. Grove St. Single tickets are \$22 for plays and \$30 for musicals. Season tickets are \$98 (\$115 including "Radium Girls" as an optional extra.) For more info, visit www.otterbein.edu/drama:

- "Chicago" (Sept. 26 – Oct. 5)
- "Radium Girls" Oct. 24 – Nov. 2, Campus Center Theatre, 100 W. Home St.)
- "Dance 2019: Together Again" (Dec. 5-8)
- "The School for Scandal" (Feb. 13-22)
- "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder" (March 26 – Apr. 4)

Rabbit-Rescue Nonprofit in Worthington

Did you know there was a rabbit-rescue organization in Worthington? The Ohio House Rabbit Rescue (OHRR) operates a rescue and adoption center and administers educational resources and programs about how to care for rabbits as pets. Their address is 5485 N. High St. (between Rt. 161 and Morse), and their website is www.ohiohouserabbitrescue.org. Their latest initiative is the possible creation of a rabbit-friendly automobile license plate. State Rep. Beth Liston (D-Dublin) introduced HB 300 on Jan. 28. The Rescue would receive \$15 from each license plate to help support its mission. The Midwest BunFest on Sat., Oct. 19 is the next big "happening" of the organization, according to the website.

No Gypsy-Moth Spraying in Delaware County

The Ohio Dept. of Agriculture once again conducted aerial treatments aimed at disrupting gypsy-moth mating in June. Some 61,000 acres in 12 infested Ohio counties were selected as targets. While Franklin Co. was one of them, Delaware Co. was spared this year. – The gypsy moth is a small invasive species that feeds on the leaves of more than 300 different trees and shrubs. It can permanently damage or kill their host, a worrying prospect for the timber industry. Gypsy moths are now established in 51 of Ohio's 88 counties, according to ODA's website. While the chemicals used are allegedly harmless to people and wildlife, gypsy-moth spraying is controversial. The manufacturer's language includes words and phrases such as "caution," "dangerous," "hazardous," "toxic," "harmful to pets," "keep out of hands of children," "if swallowed, call poison center immediately," etc. However, this is an instance where ODA can come in, disregard the home-rule principle, and spray even over privately owned properties.

Mysterious Plane Causes Concern

Here is a peculiar story related to the previous one. A small yellow airplane buzzing noisily and repeatedly over Clintonville at treetop level caused a stir on the morning of June 12. Wondering what was going on, concerned residents called the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Interestingly enough, the FAA was completely in the dark and had no answer. It had not been informed by the Ohio Dept. of Agriculture (DOA) or the airplane company (Al's Aerial

Spraying in Ovid, Michigan) that gypsy-moth spraying was underway in Franklin County, according to the Columbus Dispatch (6/14).

The story is almost funny, but it is also concerning and even disturbing for two reasons: 1. Gypsy-moth spraying is an annual event that happens every June. The dates and locations are posted on the DOA website and are often announced in the media. It is understandable if local residents are caught unaware, but it seems inexcusable that the FAA is caught uninformed and blindsided about the program. "Community Matters" expected the spraying and looked up the details as early as May. The FAA, on the other hand, did not seem to pay any attention. 2. It is also disturbing to see what appears to be a lack of communication between two important government agencies such as the Ohio DOA and the Columbus FAA office. In the case of a real emergency, would the relationship be a functional or a dysfunctional one?



BMV Offers New Service

Ohio's Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) has 186 officers in the state, and in populous areas the wait can be significant. The state is now piloting a new program, "Get in Line, Online," that allows Ohioans to electronically reserve a spot in line, similar to making a reservation in a restaurant. After customers check in, they have a 4-hour window to show up and jump ahead in the line. Gov. DeWine says, "this new technology will save drivers valuable time." The program started on June 17 in a dozen BMV deputy registry offices in Central Ohio. The Delaware BMV is not on the list. – Of course, the pilot does nothing to reduce the total wait time for people. It simply advantages some and disadvantages others without addressing the underlying problem of long lines. Customers without online reservations will now have to wait even longer. The program thus creates the illusion of progress without actually changing anything. (Visit www.bmv.ohio.gov to learn more about the BMV.

Channel 10 Sold to Tegna

The Dispatch Broadcast Group is selling a number of television and radio stations to Tegna Inc. The sale includes WBNS-TV (Channel 10) and WBNS Radio (1460 AM and 97.1 FM). The deal brings to an end the Wolfe family's media presence in Columbus, following the sale of the Columbus Dispatch to GateHouse Media for \$47 million in 2015. The purchase still needs to be approved by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), but the president and CEO of Tegna, Dave Lougee, is not expecting any objections. Virginia-based Tegna Inc., created in 2015, currently owns 49 television stations in 41 markets. Lougee emphasized that all company-owned stations "reflect a local ethos."



Central Ohio Woman Linked to Fake Facebook Accounts

Unfortunately, Central Ohio is a hotbed for right-wing radicalism. The latest case is that of Kelly Monroe Kullberg, a 59-year-old far-right Christian evangelist who lives in Upper Arlington. A recent Snopes report written by Alex Kasprak discovered that Kullberg created and maintained a network of as many as 24 fraudulent Facebook pages followed by 1.4 million users. Her sites pretended to be owned and operated by "Catholics for Trump," "Blacks for Trump," "Teachers for Trump," "Seniors for Trump," "Jews and Christians for America," and so on. Many of her pages contained anti-Muslim rhetoric. The Columbus Dispatch (6/10) reports that specific claims included: "Survivors of the Parkland High School massacre are funded by billionaire Democratic Party donor George Soros; the Notre Dame Cathedral fire in France was started by Muslims; and that Islam is not a religion." Kullberg's strategy of spreading false and deceptive

messages mirrors the play book of Russian troll farms and is intended to sew hate and division in America. All her known Facebook pages have been removed since Snopes published its report, but it took Facebook a while to react. Kullberg has also authored or edited several books on Christian faith, incl. "Finding God at Harvard" and "Finding God beyond Harvard." Her LinkedIn account also lists her as a speaker and consultant.

Legionnaires' Disease Outbreak

A Legionnaires' disease outbreak at Mount Carmel Grove City hospital has led to the death of one person, 72-year-old Deanna Rezes. At least 15 other people were diagnosed with the disease. All stayed at the new Mount Carmel hospital in Grove City in April and May of 2019 where they contracted the disease. Legionella bacteria are often found in complex and hard-to-reach building water systems such as cooling towers, hot-water tanks, and plumbing systems. The disease kills about 10% of those diagnosed, but the fatality rate can be higher for sick and/or older people with weakened immune systems.

Even though the \$361 million hospital just opened in April 2019, the problem is that during construction water lines may sit stagnant for months, allowing bacteria to grow. According to the Ohio Dept. of Health, it is not uncommon for Legionella bacteria to be found after construction. The obvious solution is a law that requires water lines and fixtures to be thoroughly flushed and disinfected before a building goes online. The Columbus Dispatch recently mentioned several times that Ohio is the only state in the entire nation that does not have a licensing program for hospitals that would require plumbing regulations. Last year, there were 930 confirmed cases of Legionellosis in Ohio, which has one of the highest rates in the nation.

Dr. William Husel Out of Jail on Bond

Former Mount Carmel physician Dr. William Husel, charged with 25 counts of murder, is out of jail on bail after posting bond. Prosecutors will have to prove that he intended to kill his patients by administering 500, 1000, and up to 2000 micrograms of fentanyl and other substances to them, considered to be lethal doses. Husel's attorney, Richard Blake, denies that his client intended to cause any harm and says the doctor provided "comfort care" to patients who were near death. According to Mount Carmel, the physician ordered excessive doses of painkillers for at least 35 patients over a 4-year period. He was fired on Dec. 5. At least 30 additional Mount Carmel employees and 5 managers were also suspended. Given the daunting task for both the prosecuting and the defense team, the trial is not expected to begin any time soon. The case has attracted national attention.

A Full-Time Job Is Not Enough

Time and again we hear that the poor are supposedly lazy and indolent and need to learn to become self-sufficient. However, the fact is that many or most of the most common jobs in Ohio simply do not pay enough to rent a modest 2-bedroom apartment or to keep a car on the road, according to a new report issued jointly by the National Low Income Housing Coalition and the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio. More and more families are showing up at homeless shelters due to this high-rent, low-wage gap. In Columbus, workers would have to make \$17.50 an hour (or \$36,000 a year) to afford a 2-bedroom apartment without having to spend more than 30% of their income, the standard for housing affordability. Statewide, the average hourly wage needed to accomplish this is \$15.73. Clearly, a mandatory Ohio minimum wage of \$15 for all adult employees seems like a reasonable demand to address the situation. – The same conclusion was reached by the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies. There is a geographic disconnect between where the jobs are and where affordable housing is located. Public transportation is spotty, creating barriers for low-income people. One third of Ohio counties have no access to public transportation at all. Executive director Philip E. Cole would therefore like to see more funding dedicated to public transportation.

The executive directors of the 3 organizations also called on lawmakers to make more resources available for the Ohio Housing Trust Fund, which supports housing for low-income families, finances

home repairs for seniors, and helps the homeless. Cole from the OACAA correctly points out that wealthy companies get a lot of financial assistance in the form of tax abatements and tax deductions while there is no corresponding largesse toward the poor. In his view, low-income people are no less deserving of support than wealthy corporations.

Innovative Organics Recycling

Innovative Organics Recycling at 2121 Integrity Drive South in Columbus, just south of I-70, was the source of a putrid smell around Memorial Day weekend. Theodore Decker reported on June 9 in the Columbus Dispatch that the food-recycling company had received a large shipment of rotten, contaminated meat. Owner George Hunyadi thought he would be able to handle the load, but once the business realized the magnitude of the problem it stopped composting the compromised meat and sent it to the landfill instead. The malodor led to questions and concerns. City and state officials got involved to address the issue, but OEPA spokesperson James Lee says "we do not believe the odors at the facility are a threat to human health or the environment." That may well be true, but he forgot to mention that the Ohio Administrative Code (3745-15-07) prohibits emissions that cause "a public nuisance." While companies that recycle food waste are a good thing, it seems the industry has yet a lot to learn about best practices.

Columbus Celebrates ComFest

Columbus' ComFest started on the OSU campus in 1972 as a small countercultural event. Although it is now in its 47th year and has grown huge, it has stayed true to its roots and the original message of peace, love, unity, and social justice. Organizers very intentionally do not advertise the independent festival, now held in Hilliard's Goodale Park. It's all about the message and purpose, not about growth and profit. Naturally, ComFest has also become a venue for various free-spirited subcultures. Here, you can express yourself without being judged and condemned. Topless women and wafts of marijuana smoke are not uncommon. At the 2019 ComFest, there were 180 vendors, 200 bands on 6 stages, 47 workshops, and 13 guest speakers. Progressive activism remains at the core of the event, among them environmental sustainability, women's reproductive rights, and voter registration drives. If you have never been to ComFest, you should definitely check it out. Many visitors come back year after year.

WitchLab: Occult & Oddities Vendor Fair

Are you a Harry Potter fan? According to recent newspaper ads, "WitchLab" is a monthly "occult & oddities vendor fair," held in the "Arcane Alley" at 1185 W. Broad St. in Columbus. Dates are May 26, June 30, July 21, Aug. 18, and Sept. 15 (1-6 pm). Plans for Oct. and beyond have not yet been announced. Vendors offer boutique items and services in the areas of occult, oddities, antiques, ritual supplies, taxidermy, art, tarot, astrology, classes, books, jewelry, crystals, herbs, dream interpretation, fortune telling, and more. The vendor fair appears to be an outdoor event that's free & open to the public. WitchLab is also a regular store that's open daily except on Mon. and Tues. For additional info, visit www.witchlab.com.

STATE OF OHIO

Ohio's Next Budget Delayed

The Ohio legislature was unable to finalize the next 2-year budget by the June 30 deadline. The House and the Senate versions continue to have irreconcilable differences over the nearly \$69 billion budget. Instead, the House voted to approve an interim budget for a 17-day period with a 90-2 vote. State government and services are continuing uninterrupted for now. Still, there was considerable frustration in both chambers. Governor DeWine also expressed disappointment over the stalemate, which is a political embarrassment for him. Ohio Democratic Party Chairman David Pepper used tough words to describe the situation: "Tonight's vote demonstrates a level of dysfunction and dereliction of duty that would get most working Ohioans sent to the unemployment line. As GOP legislative leaders have traded barbs and made excuses, Gov. Mike

DeWine hasn't been able to get his own party in line and deliver an on-time budget. That's an abysmal failure of leadership."

Multiple sticking points remain as of June 30, among them taxation, school funding, and health care. HB 6, the plan to bail out Ohio's nuclear power plants, is also an unresolved issue. House Speaker Larry Householder, who was elected with bipartisan help, is standing behind elements sought by Democrats while the Senate is intent on eliminating certain programs. For example, the House wanted to include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) coverage for first responders in the budget, while the Senate stripped it out. The new budget deadline is now July 17.

Piketon: "Not a Public Health Concern"

Pike County has the 2nd-highest cancer rate in the state and is well-known for contamination stemming from the former uranium-enrichment plant near Piketon. Uranium, plutonium, and neptunium have been found in the air, water, and soil. The U.S. Dept. of Energy has now admitted that from 2000 to 2017, for 18 years, "a minor miscalculation" resulted in "underreporting" of contamination incidents. However, the agency continues to assert that the new dose levels "remain far below EPA limits and are not a public health concern." – Fearful residents searching for the truth were furious: "The community has been left in the dark, and it's not fair," said one of them. Another one asks, "Can you trust anything the DOE puts out there?" The Pike County General Health District is finalizing the process of hiring an independent third party to conduct tests at Zahn's Corner Middle School, now closed, and other areas.

Four Ohio Democrats Support Reparations Commission

The Columbus Dispatch (Darrel Rowland) reports that four of the five Democratic lawmakers in Congress are in favor of House Resolution 40, a bill that would create a commission to study the issue of slavery reparations. They are Sen. Sherrod Brown, Rep. Joyce Beatty, Rep. Marcy Kaptur, and Rep. Tim Ryan. Joyce Beatty says it is time to start the conversation given the deep structural problems in the education and criminal-justice system. Sen. Sherrod Brown also stressed that African-Americans feel the impact of slavery even today. The 5th lawmaker, Rep. Marcia Fudge, did not return repeated requests for comment.

Ohio's New Gas Tax in Effect

Starting July 1, Ohio's gas-tax increase is going into effect. The new rate is 38.5 cents per gallon, 10.5 cents more than the old rate. The tax on diesel is rising from 28 cpg to 47 cpg, an increase of 19 cents. A new policy requires retail fuel pumps to show the rate of the new taxes. The money will be used for the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges; it cannot be used for other purposes. The increase is estimated to generate \$865 million annually in additional revenue. About \$550 million will go the state and about \$300 million to counties, cities, and townships. According to ODOT's website (www.dot.state.oh.us/budget), the City of Delaware is slated to receive a total of \$1,962,705 in fiscal 2020, \$755,148 more than in fiscal 2019. The figure for fiscal 2021 is even higher. According to City officials, that amount is still not enough to improve and maintain the road infrastructure of Delaware, now a city of 41,000. However, it does lessen to some extent the urgency to pass another transportation levy after the latest attempt in 2016 was defeated.

Ohio Still Debating Graduation Requirements

Ohio is still torn over high-school graduation requirements. Finding the sweet spot between setting the bar too low or too high has been difficult. The State Board of Education is leaning toward a lower and softer bar with fewer standardized tests. Instead, it would like to see "alternative pathways" for students to demonstrate readiness for work or college. Non-academic "experiences" such as playing in the band, community service, or holding a part-time job should also count toward graduation, according to the board. The higher the graduation rate, the better for ODE's and the state's reputation. – The business community, on the other hand, wants tougher and more rigorous standards. In their experience – and in the experience of colleges and universities – few graduates are actually prepared for career or higher education. Members of that consortium are Ohio Excels, the Alliance for High Quality Education,

the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, and 75 suburban school districts. They argue that a high-school diploma should be meaningful.

One key difference between the two competing plans is the so-called capstone project, a culminating student experience that is supposed to demonstrate the ability of critical thinking and independent work. While such as capstone project can indeed be a meaningful measure of educational attainment, one of the problems is that it is not likely to be consistently and rigorously enforced across Ohio's 88 counties. There is also the problem of oversight, illegitimate help, and plagiarism. The business consortium is not in favor of capstone projects as proof of proficiency and competence.

In today's U.S., little value is placed on education compared to other countries. Getting an excellent education should be the highest priority of young people, but their heads are mostly filled with useless junk knowledge. Few students have the necessary motivation and work ethic to study long hours. That is in part due to a lack of role models. Seen from this point of view, the consortium is absolutely right in demanding a more rigorous approach. At the same time, however, a much greater effort must be made to ensure that more students succeed, esp. underserved children in urban and rural areas. Everyone must be afforded the opportunity, resources, and support to do well in school, not just the privileged. Thorough, fair, and equal school funding is a must. The current funding system, which is based on property taxes, is utterly broken.

Pike County Sheriff Indicted on 16 Charges

Pike County Sheriff Charles Reader, 45, has been indicted by a grand jury on 16 misdemeanor and felony charges: 7 charges of conflict of interest, 4 charges of theft in office, 2 charges of theft, and 1 charge each of tampering with evidence, tampering with records, and securing writings by deception. He is accused of stealing drug-forfeiture money from arrests and impounded vehicles to pay for his gambling addiction. His arraignment is scheduled for July 2. As of 6/30, Reader has not been arrested and has not resigned from his position. He plans to plead not guilty. However, since some of the charges are federal felonies, he will likely be removed from office while the case is pending. Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost has said that Sheriff Reader should resign. – County sheriffs have wide discretion in how to enforce the law. Time and again, incl. in Delaware County, there have been instances where they have abused their position. The Columbus Dispatch reports that in Ohio the salaries of sheriffs are based on population size. For a county the size of Pike, with a population of under 30,000, the sheriff is paid about \$62,000 a year. The average pay for a sheriff in Ohio is \$102,089 annually.

James Alex Fields Sentenced to Life

Sentencing for James Alex Fields Jr. was moved up from July 3 to June 28. Fields, 22, is the Maumee, Ohio man who plowed his car into a crowd of anti-Nazi demonstrators at a 2017 white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. One person, Heather Heyer, was killed that day and dozens injured. Fields pleaded guilty to 29 federal charges in a plea agreement that avoided the death penalty. On June 28, he was sentenced to life in federal prison. His lawyers had pleaded for mercy, citing mental-health problems and a difficult childhood. However, in the view of Thomas T. Cullen, the U.S. attorney for the Western District of Virginia, "this was calculated, it was cold-blooded, it was motivated by this deep-seated racial animus." Attorney General William P. Barr said in a statement that Fields' act constituted "domestic terrorism."

Controversy at BGSU over Lillian Gish

In 1915 D. W. Griffith directed "The Birth of a Nation," one of the most influential movies ever. Based on the 1905 novel "The Klansman" by white supremacist Thomas Dixon (1864-1946), it portrays the supposed inferiority, depravity, and savagery of black people and describes the heroic rise of the KKK. The book was Dixon's answer to Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Griffith's film is technically brilliant, but morally a disaster.

The star of the silent movie was Lillian Gish (1893-1993). She and her sister, Dorothy, were Ohio natives who grew up in Urbana. Bowling Green State Univ. (BGSU) awarded Lillian Gish an honorary degree at one point, named a film theater named after her, established a scholarship in her name, and to this day maintains Gish memorabilia. For more than 40 years, the theater was housed in

Hanna Hall. In 2017, the decision was made to relocate it to the Bowen-Thompson Student Union.

After African-American students complained about the name displayed at the Gish Film Theater, the university formed a task force to look into the matter. The working group included administrators, faculty, staff, and students. On April 17, it recommended the removal of the Gish name to BGSU President Rodney Rogers. In May, the BGSU Board of Trustees passed a resolution agreeing with the recommendation. The rationale included the fact that it is the school's mission to ensure an inclusive learning environment free of hostility. The Board also noted that upon reviewing the totality of Lillian Gish's acting career, no evidence was found that she ever distanced herself from Griffith and/or his film. The Board did not revoke the honorary degree it had bestowed upon the actress, however. Likewise, the Gish memorabilia and the Gish scholarship remain unaffected.

Many prominent artists from around the nation objected to stripping Lillian Gish's name from the venue named after her and asked that it be restored. They argued that she was one of the greatest actresses ever; that she is "a scapegoat" in a broader political debate; that a single film should not disqualify her; and that universities are supposed to be "bastions of free speech." These are all good points, but anyone who has seen the movie or excerpts of it will agree that it is irredeemably offensive and repugnant. It is America's equivalent to Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and has absolutely no place in the 21st century. To prominently display her or Griffith's name on a public building would be an affront to the American values of equal and civil rights.

Youngstown's "Vindicator" Closes

Mahoning County's only daily newspaper, Youngstown's award-winning "Vindicator," will cease publication on Aug. 31 after 150 years of operation. The newspaper's first edition was published in 1869. Publisher Betty J. H. Brown Jagnow and general manager Mark A. Brown published a letter (www.vindy.com) in which they explained their "gut-wrenching" decision, which was based on financial considerations. Facing declining advertising and circulation revenues and unable to find a buyer, the paper is shutting down for good. The WFMJ-TV television station owned by the same family will not be affected by the closing. U.S. Rep. and presidential candidate Tim Ryan called the news "heartbreaking." He said, "local newspapers are critical to our democracy. We need to support them." Communities are ill-served without a local paper.

THE NATION

Trump is Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious

One anti-Trump protester in Orlando, Shaun N., wore a rainbow-colored sign that read, "Super, Callous, Fragile, Racist, Sexist, Nazi, POTUS." You may not agree with all or any of his characterizations, but you have to admit that his statement was witty and poignant and certainly not worse than what Trump tweets every day. His mother, by the way, attended the rally. This generational gap is typical for the nation. Young people are abandoning Trump and the Republicans in droves. Long-term, the GOP may never recover from this exodus.

The Seven Unmentionables

In 2012, China's leader Xi Jinping issued what has become known as "The Seven Unmentionables." The list of taboo subjects includes universal values, democracy, civil & human rights, media independence, pro-market liberalism, judicial independence, and criticism of the Communist Party. These things cannot be taught, discussed, or written about with criminal charges.

It seems the White House has developed a similar Orwellian list of "unmentionables." Top on the list is probably "climate change," followed by "science-based" or "evidence-based" and "Paris Climate Agreement." What are some of the other forbidden words or phrases that are banned within the agencies? Clearly, "diversity" and "transgender" are also on the list. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) must be called "ObamaCare," and "undocumented immigrants" are "illegals." Also, when was the last time anyone heard President Trump talk about "renewable energy"? Instead, he waxes poetic about "beautiful coal." Another word that is not in Trump's vocabulary is

"apology." He and his administration have never apologized for any of their many egregious mistakes and misdeeds. As is the case with Chinese president Xi, an apology would be tantamount to admitting weakness and losing face.

News about the Democratic Debates

Democrats plan to hold 3 nationally televised debates this summer: on June 26-27 in Miami (NBC), on July 30-31 in Detroit (CNN), and on Sept. 12-13 (ABC). Up to 20 candidates will be included in the events (10 each night). In March the Democratic Party announced that Fox News would not be picked to host any of the 12 upcoming primary debates. Fox News has often been accused of having an inappropriately cozy relationship with President Trump. Consorting with Fox is a stigma for many liberal and progressive Democrats.

On June 13, the Democratic National Committee announced the names of the 20 candidates qualifying for the national debates in June and July. Not making the cut were Montana Gov. Steve Bullock, U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton, and Wayne Messam. These three candidates failed to meet the required polling and fundraising numbers, which stand at 1% and 65,000 donors at the moment, but will double in September and October. Exclusion does not preclude eventual success, but not being among the debaters will not help improve name recognition.

Sarah Sanders Is Leaving the White House

Sarah Sanders, the combative White House press secretary, left her job at the end of June. President Trump praised her performance and expressed his hope that someday she would decide to run for governor of Arkansas. Sanders' father, Mike Huckabee, was governor of the state from 1996 to 2007. She is said to nurture the same ambition. – The deeper truth is, however, that there was something very wrong with her tenure at the White House. Media briefings used to be a daily thing, but Sanders stopped giving them altogether more than 3 months ago. In addition, her integrity was severely compromised after years of staunchly defending every whim and lie of Donald Trump, contradictions be damned. Besides, the president very much prefers to tweet for himself, so it was time for her to go. Her position is expected to be filled on an interim basis by Hogan Gidley. Several names are under consideration for a permanent position, among them Morgan Ortagus and Stephanie Grisham. It is not clear what role the next press secretary would play. Trump seems to define the role as a personal adviser, advocate, and defender of the president rather than a neutral conduit between the White House and the media.

Another Woman Accuses Trump of Sexual Assault

E. Jean Carroll, a well-known and respected advice columnist for "Elle" magazine ("Ask E. Jean") and author of several books has accused Donald J. Trump of sexual assault and rape. She is describing the incident in her forthcoming book, "What Do We Need Men For? A Modest Proposal" (St. Martin's, July 2, 2019, 288 pp.). An excerpt was published earlier in June by the New York magazine. The White House has denied the claim, dismissing it as yet another fake story intended to make the president look bad. Despite photographic evidence to the contrary, Trump has declared, "I've never met this person in my life." – Carroll, now 75, writes that in 1995 or 1996 she encountered real-estate developer Trump outside a New York store and that he recognized her from a previous occasion or occasions. The moment they were alone, she writes, "he lunges at me, pushes me against the wall, hitting my head quite badly, and puts his mouth against my lips." She tried to push him away, but he pushed down her tights and attacked again. Carroll alleges that he unzipped his pants and penetrated her with his fingers and his penis before she managed to flee. At least 19 other women have also accused Trump sexual misconduct. Carroll writes that she stayed quiet all this time because of the shameful way these women were attacked and mistreated. Many received death threats. Friends confirm that Carroll shared the news with them back then and that it is not a newly fabricated story, as claimed by defenders of the president. – Carroll's book contains other instances where men harassed, assaulted, groped, strangled, and yelled at the author. Unfortunately, reviewers note it has little to offer in terms of understanding the root causes of toxic masculinity nor does it provide realistic fixes.

Maverick Justin Amash Strays from the Herd

Congressman Justin Amash, a Republican from Michigan with a libertarian streak, is a brave man unafraid of going it alone. He has been a contrarian forever and has weathered controversies in the past. After reading the redacted Robert S. Mueller report in full, all 448 pages, he concluded as a trained lawyer that President Trump had indeed "engaged in impeachable conduct" based on his obstruction of justice. There are "specific actions and a pattern of behavior that meet the threshold for impeachment," he tweeted. The backlash was immediate. He was attacked by Republican colleagues, Michigan constituents, and Donald Trump himself. Apparently, the "freedom of speech" principle only applies to people who agree with them. Trump called Amash "a total lightweight" and "a loser who sadly plays right into the hands of Democrats." Many accused him of "giving aid and comfort to the enemy," which is the definition of treason. Amash, 39, serves in a safe Republican seat in Michigan's Grand Rapids area, but he has lost the support of many Trump voters and is now facing challengers in the primary next year. It's hard to say at this point if Amash's principled voice will lead to his political downfall or – in the long run – a glorious future in a post-Trump world. – It is ironic that Amash's accusations against Trump are more damning than those made by the tepid Democratic leadership. Nancy Pelosi and others have strongly discouraged any talk of impeachment, fearing it would backfire and strengthen the resolve of Trump's base.

A Growing Reparations Movement

The idea of reparations for African-Americans is gaining traction, esp. among Democrats. August 2019 marks the 400th anniversary of the first documented slave ship in the port of Jamestown, and the topic of "restorative" or "reparatory justice" is hot. With the exception of Joe Biden, most Democratic candidates for 2020 are supporting House Bill 40 that calls for an act to create a "Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans." The commission would explore the history of slavery and its lingering effects, hold hearings and educational meetings across the nation, and make recommendations to Congress. A historic hearing took place June 19, with Ta-Nehisi Coates and others attending.

There is currently no consensus of what the term "reparations" entails. It is unlikely to be a check for every black household in America. Instead, it might be in the form of interest-free loans; tuition assistance; student-loan forgiveness; community development; affordable housing; old-age pensions; and so on. As the Civil War ended, William T. Sherman promised black Americans "40 acres and a mule," but the promise was not kept. It was rescinded by President Andrew Johnson after the assassination of President Lincoln. Economists have attempted to calculate how much "40 acres and a mule" would be worth today and calculated it to be \$80,000 per person or \$2.6 trillion total. Using different methods, others arrived at \$123,000 per person.

Conservatives reject the idea of reparations for African-Americans. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell spoke for many when he says he opposes reparations for slavery for several reasons. He said the nation has already paid its dues by fighting the Civil War, by passing civil-rights laws, and by electing a black president. He is also against reparations because it would be hard to determine whom to pay and how much to pay. Lastly, he noted that "no one currently alive was responsible for that." Other critics have pointed out that some of the richest people in American are African-Americans. Should Oprah Winfrey be entitled to collect reparations, the Wall Street Journal asked? They also contend that only a small subset of Americans were slave-holders. Another argument is that a reparations program would be unaffordable and bankrupt the country. According to polls, the majority of Americans believes the government could and should do more to improve the conditions of African-Americans. However, just 3 in 10 Americans think the government is obligated to make up for slavery and discrimination that occurred in the past.

It certainly is appropriate to form a commission to study the issue of slavery, America's original sin, and the possibility of reparation payments. The country has yet to issue a formal apology for the many wrongs of the past. How to then achieve "restorative" or "reparatory justice" is a separate matter. A national consensus is years and decades away.

Joe Biden and the Question of Reparations

Joe Biden, 76, has been involved in politics for decades. That is not always an advantage for him. He has said and done many things over his long career that are embarrassing and even unacceptable judged by today's standards. That includes his relationship to women and African-Americans. On June 19, he embarrassed himself again when he praised two long-dead virulent segregationists for their "civility." He was talking about senators James O. Eastland (1904-1986) of Mississippi, Sen. Herman E. Talmadge (1913-2002) of Georgia, but he had similarly warm relationships with Sen. Jesse Helms (1921-2008) and Sen. J. Strom Thurmond (1902-2003). All were racist and segregationist "Dixiecrats" opposed to mixed marriages ("miscegenation") and the civil-rights movement. Biden himself was opposed to school integration through court-ordered busing at that time.

Sen. Cory Booker and Sen. Kamala Harris both objected to Biden's remarks and accused him of "coddling" with segregationists and supremacists. New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio pointed out that in the eyes of James Eastland his multiracial family would have been illegal. Biden has so far refused to apologize for his controversial statement, or for any other. The issue played a major role in the first round of debates among Democratic candidates when on June 27 Sen. Harris squarely attacked Biden for his inconsistent record on civil rights. That should not have come as a surprise for the Biden circle, but it was puzzling to see how utterly unprepared they were for the blow.

Why did Biden choose to talk this way when he could have easily picked other, less toxic examples to illustrate "civility"? One school of thought suggests it was an intentional attempt to court white swing voters of the South, informing them that he is comfortable working with segregationists and racists. That would also explain Biden's refusal to address the issue of slavery reparations. Another school of thought believes that Biden, a septuagenarian, is simply out of step and out of tune with the modern, multicultural Democratic Party. Either way, Biden's uninformed and insensitive comments were "political malpractice" (E. J. Dionne) and rightfully started a firestorm of protest that has yet to subside. Anyone convinced that Biden is "a safe choice" and "the best hope" for Democrats should study his record and reconsider. Remember that Hillary Clinton was also considered "a safe choice" in 2016. Biden too might be a passenger on the Titanic, blissfully ignorant of the disaster that's looming on the horizon.

Never Biden

Just like there is a (dwindling) number of "Never Trumpers" in the Republican Party, there are people in the Democratic Party who have vowed never to support Joe Biden. Come to think of it, there are a lot of parallels between Biden and Trump, besides both being rich, entitled, and spoiled white septuagenarian males out of touch with the daily struggles of real people. They live in the past, having nostalgic feelings about a time when America was supposedly "great" and blacks knew their place. They both enjoy coddling with segregationists and supremacists. Making opportunistic, transactional, and amoral "deals" is something that both excel in and have been practicing for decades. Fundraising and pay-to-play games seem to be their primary focus. Observers have also noted their handsiness with women, touching and groping them without permission. Both supported a tough-on-crime approach that discriminated against African-Americans and led to mass incarceration. Their eagerness to start wars without a sound rationale (Biden voted for the Iraq war) is also noteworthy as is their zealotry to deport undocumented immigrants who haven't committed crimes. It would not be his "focus," Biden said when pressed on the issue, but he and Obama have deported millions. Another trait that Trump and Biden share is their refusal to apologize for anything, no matter how asinine and offensive their gaffes. It seems they were brought up in distant, troglodytic times when even the slightest sign of contrition would be considered evidence of male weakness. Their handlers have a hard time keeping their charge in check. Joe Biden is the Democrats' Trump. If that's best the party can come up with, shame on it.

The Case for Elizabeth Warren

Does anyone remember what Hillary Clinton stood for? Does anyone truly know what Joe Biden represents – is he currently for or against abortion and the Hyde Amendment? They and other prominent Democrats were and are bland, vanilla characters, guarded and cautious centrists, establishment politicians primarily interested in the status quo. Sure, they have name recognition. But you cannot expect systemic and structural change from politicians best known for giving lucrative speeches to rich people, coddling and telling them what they want to hear.

Elizabeth Warren is different. She did not hold public office until 2013, meaning her value system remains uncompromised. Her roots are in a different world. For decades, she has been an activist and an advocate for ordinary people, best known as the brain child behind the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Warren represents Main Street, not Wall Street. She has consistently, for decades, fought against income inequality and corporate greed.

And best of all, more than anyone else she is the dominant "ideas candidate." She is a serious intellectual with grand and bold ideas that actually address substantive issues. Unlike some of her competitors who get media coverage and credit just for "showing up male," she is a hard worker who has developed an impressive and far-reaching set of policy ideas, covering just about every important topic and threat the nation faces. She has a plan for more income parity, affordable housing, health care, child care, college tuition, student debt, and the opioid epidemic. She has plans to reduce corporate malfeasance, for ending corruption, for taxing the superrich, and for breaking up monopolistic tech giants. She has plans for reducing America's bloated war budget, for disentangling the military from unnecessary foreign wars, for creating more distance to undemocratic regimes around the world, and for strengthening ties with America's traditional allies. She has also embraced the New Green Deal and has announced a \$2 trillion plan for combatting climate change. People may not agree with all her policy priorities, but thanks to Warren's persistence many of her ideas are now openly discussed in America, making new insights and progress possible. Warren is not an anti-capitalist, but the way. She wants a fair system where everybody plays by the same rules and an economy that benefits everyone. Her vision and mission is to restore the American dream, not to destroy it. She deserves credit for setting a high bar in a world littered with junk knowledge and fake news.

Pete Buttigieg

Mayor Pete Buttigieg was asked during the June 27 Democratic debate about the poor race relations in his town – South Bend, Indiana – where a black man, 54-year-old Eric Logan, was killed on June 16 by a white police officer (Sgt. Ryan O'Neil) in a routine encounter. Logan may or may not have been a thief, but why was the officer's body camera not turned on? Why was he transported to the hospital not in an ambulance but in a police car? Why are officers not being held accountable for misconduct? Why are African-American underrepresented on the police force? Why did the mayor fire the city's first black police chief? Why is there no discernible progress years after Ferguson, Missouri? "I couldn't get it done," Buttigieg responded. It was a simple and humble answer, but it left a lot unexplained and many people dissatisfied and angry. On the other hand, from the point of view of white voters his answer does not necessarily represent a personal failure on his part, disqualifying him from the race. His fundraising efforts remain unaffected. South Bend is a microcosm of the nation, and it can be said that the entire country "couldn't get it done." There are few communities with harmonious race relations; those that seem to have them are probably fooling themselves. White voters may feel that it would be unfair to single out Buttigieg when the problem is structural. Black voters, on the other hand, may not agree with making excuses for the mayor. Buttigieg is struggling to connect with minorities other than the LGBT community. They are holding him, and his ilk, and perhaps the entire Democratic Party establishment responsible for systemic problems in policing, housing, education, health care, and economic equity. If government does not reflect African-Americans, they may not bother to vote and just stay home on Election Day.

David McCullough's "The Pioneers"

Historian David McCullough, winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom, has a

new book out that quickly became a bestseller: "The Pioneers – The Heroic Story of the Settlers Who Brought the American Ideal West" (Simon & Schuster 2019, 331 pp., illus., \$30). Despite the grandiose title, it is essentially a microscopic history of the City of Marietta on the Ohio River. The book is certainly an interesting read, in part because it incorporates a lot of contemporaneous sources and because it addresses fascinating details about the fauna and flora of the original Ohio woods; the daily struggles of the settlers, including the threats of winter, starvation, diseases, wild animals, and alcoholism; and early shipbuilding on the Ohio River.

However, the strength of the book is also its weakness. The Native Americans, whom McCullough consistently refers to as "Indians," are described from the point of view of the white settlers, which is extremely biased. For them, the native tribes were a constant "menace." Many considered "the extermination policy" (45) to be the proper course of action against "the red devils." Neither the settlers nor McCullough make an effort to differentiate between the Cherokees, Chippewas, Creeks from the South, Delawares, Kickapoos, Miami, Mingos, Mohawks from Canada, Ottawas, Pottawatomies, Seneca, Shawnees, Six Nations, and Wyandots (102). The alliance of Native Americans under the leaders Little Turtle and Blue Jacket is absolutely astonishing and worth writing a separate book about. However, the readers learn almost nothing about their individual customs, beliefs, and warfare. While some tribes and nations seemed to be friendlier than others, the townsfolk did not trust any of them and remained suspicious and fearful, expecting the worst any day. The Native Americans held a "particular hostility" for surveyors (75), "knowing they were the ones preparing the way for still more white invaders" (76). In 1791, an attack occurred against the small settlement of Big Bottom, 30 miles upstream from Marietta. McCullough's description is illustrative. Fourteen settlers were killed in the bloody "massacre" carried out by the "horrid savages" who were Delawares and Wyandots, according to the author. They "slaughtered" and "plundered" indiscriminately, leaving no one alive. Later, the reader learns that the Indians once again tomahawked, scalped, butchered, massacred, and desecrated settlers (106) when they routed General Arthur St. Clair's ill-prepared army. In McCullough's narrative, the white settlers consistently are "heroes" while the Native Americans are uncivilized savages. His choice of words denies them their individuality, humanity, and legitimacy. McCullough laments that the settlers and the military were "ignorant" of who their enemies were, but he himself can be accused of the same lack of awareness and knowledge.

Historically speaking, however, it could be argued that it was the other way around – the Native Americans, not the white settlers, were the true victims. The new immigrants, many of whom were illegal aliens, had come to steal the land from the indigenous population, to whom it belonged, and with it their livelihood. The Indians were doing what any good patriot would do – defend their world and their culture against the evil invaders from the east. McCullough does have the decency to mention the infamous 1782 massacre by American militia of 96 peaceable Delaware (Lenape) Indians in Ohio's Gnadenhutten (cf. 8), although he misplaces the location, but essentially he ignores the innumerable war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the whites against "the red man." (To read that doleful tale, you should consult the 1970 book "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" by Dee Brown.) Alas, the heroic struggle of Native Americans against their conquerors was largely in vain. It was in 1830 that the last of the natives were deported from Ohio as a result of the Indian Removal Bill enacted by Congress. "Only the Indian names were to remain – names like Chippewa and Chillicothe, and Cuyahoga, Ottawa, Muskingum, Sandusky, Scioto, and Seneca, as well as the name of the state and the great river" (230).

A Push to Rescind Wounded Knee Medals

An estimated 250 Native Americans were slaughtered in the 1890 Wounded Knee massacre in South Dakota, many of whom were women and children. Medals of honor were given to 20 soldiers from the 7th Cavalry Regiment for participating.

Advocates for Native Americans have called on Congress for years to revoke these Medals of Honor. In 1990, Congress apologized to the descendants but did not revoke the medals. In 1996, Sen. John McCain once again rejected the request, saying that "retroactive

judgment" was unwarranted. However, O. J. Semans, a member of the Rosebud Sioux in South Dakota and co-founder of Four Directions, has continued to spearhead the effort. He is supported by 3 members of Congress: Rep. Paul Cook of California (R), Denny Heck of Washington (D), and Deb Haaland of New Mexico (D). "Medals of Honor should be honorable," says Heck, adding that the medals awarded in conjunction with the Battle of Wounded Knee do not fit the category.

Billionaires in Support of Wealth Tax

Eli Broad, Abigail Disney, Chris Hughes, Liesel & Regan Pritzker, George Soros, and other billionaires are among those disturbed by the deep gulf between rich and poor in the country. They are calling for measures to address the glaring income inequality and to provide more funding for climate-change research, public health care, and affordable housing. They are pointing out that no amount of philanthropy can compensate for the deep inequities that plague the American economic system. They are in favor of a federal "wealth tax" that would generate trillions of dollars. Several Democrat candidates for president have called for similar measures. Elizabeth Warren has proposed a 2% tax on assets of \$50 million or more and a further 1% on assets over \$1 billion. Candidates Pete Buttigieg and Beto O'Rourke have also embraced the idea of a wealth tax. Sen. Ron Wyden is advocating to treat capital-gains income as taxable income. A wealth tax, says Eli Broad, can start to address "the economic inequality eroding the soul of our country's strength."

Is the U.S. Running "Concentration Camps"?

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez caused a stir when she suggested on June 17 that the U.S. is running "concentration camps" at the southern border in which masses of migrants are brutalized in dehumanizing conditions. Conservatives in particular were incensed that she dared to equate American "detention centers" or "internment camps" with Nazi death camps and the Holocaust. For the record, AOC did do no such thing. Her use of the term "concentration camp" to describe the mass detention of civilians without legal recourse is historically absolutely correct. The camps that housed 110,000 Japanese-Americans during WW II are often referred to as "concentration camps." Technically, the Guantánamo prison is also an extra-legal concentration camp because it houses prisoners who will never see a judge. The British used the equivalent of concentration camps during the Boer Wars at the beginning of the 20th century. China is said to house countless nonconformist Uighurs in "reeducation camps," another euphemism.

Regardless what you call the holding facilities for migrants at the southern border, they are camps of horror and terror where families are separated and uncared-for children kept in cages. Many have died. A rose by any other name would smell just as sweet, says Shakespeare. A gulag by any other name would be just as terrible, we might add. This is happening on our watch, in our time, and on our soil. Inevitably, some day we will have to apologize and atone for this abuse and make amends.

A Prosecutor Falls from Grace

Linda Fairstein was once a celebrated prosecutor and public figure in New York and called by "Glamour" a woman of the year. Today, she is thoroughly disgraced. Fairstein's case with the highest profile was the prosecution of 5 black and 1 Latino teenager – the so-called Central Park Five – who were wrongly sent to prison for allegedly having beaten and raped a white woman in 1989. Even though zero forensic evidence tied the boys to the crime and DNA evidence pointed to another perpetrator named Matias Reyes, Fairstein and others ignored the facts and sent the teenagers to prison where they languished for years until their convictions were vacated in 2002. Without admitting wrongdoing, New York City settled a lawsuit with them for \$41 million in 2014.

Hundreds of innocent people are sent to jail and prison every year because in their zealous and fervent goal to win convictions at any cost prosecutors frequently develop tunnel vision and not only disregard exculpatory information but sometimes actively delay or suppress its release. It should be the goal of prosecutors to prevent wrongful convictions, but that is not what is happening. Under federal law, prosecutors are typically immune from being sued and held accountable, so the potential for prosecutorial

misconduct is great. Fairstein is not a rogue villain and outlier; she typifies an entrenched criminal-injustice system that is racist to the bone. Coincidentally, one commentator, Clarence Page, pointed out that Donald Trump at that time bought full-page ads in four New York newspapers calling for the innocent teens to be executed. As late as 2016, he insisted on their guilt. Even today, he refuses to apologize.

The new 4-part Netflix series "When They See Us" by Ava DuVernay, which dramatizes the historic events, was the last nail in Linda Fairstein's coffin. Even though the film takes certain liberties, as all works of art do, its essential message is correct: a gross injustice was done as a result of racial bias. As a result, Fairstein, 72, is discredited to the point where she resigned from the board of several prominent organizations and institutions, incl. Vassar College, her alma mater. Fairstein also pursued a successful career as a bestselling writer of 24 crime novels ("Blood Oath" came out in March), and her publisher – Dutton, an imprint of Penguin Random House – has announced it has decided to terminate the relationship. Online petitions and a hashtag #CancelLindaFairstein have called for a boycott of her books.

For the record – in a Wall Street Journal op-ed piece Linda Fairstein herself has called the Netflix series "so full of distortions and falsehoods as to be an outright fabrication. ... None of this is true." The New York Times noted on June 12 that at least one of the things she has called "falsehoods" was indeed documented: the teenagers were deprived of food during the initial questioning, an issue that did come up in a pretrial hearing but was blithely ignored.

SCOTUS Condemns Racism in Jury Selection

Curtis Flowers, a black man and death-row inmate, was arrested in 1996 for the alleged murder of 4 people in Mississippi and has been in jail ever since. During that time, the state of Mississippi has attempted to prosecute and sentence him 6 times. All told, the prosecutor in the case, District Attorney Doug Evans, removed 41 of 42 prospective black jurors. Looking for excuses to eliminate them, he asked them on average 29 questions each while asking white jurors only one question each. The U.S. Supreme Court has now intervened and determined that Evans' practice violated the 1986 Batson v. Kentucky ruling that prohibits the striking of potential jurors on the basis of their race. The vote was 7-2, with Judge Kavanaugh writing for the majority. Justice Clarence Thomas dissented and was partly joined by Neil Gorsuch.

Curtis Flowers has always maintained his innocence. There is indeed evidence that the State of Mississippi used faulty forensic evidence and unreliable testimony when it presented the case. But the issue before the Supreme Court was the application of equal justice under the law, not Flowers' guilt. Therefore the State of Mississippi is perfectly free to convict Flowers again, for the 7th time...

SCOTUS Bans Citizenship Question

The U.S. Supreme Court has barred the Trump administration from adding the citizenship question to the 2020 census, saying that the rationale provided was "contrived," "incongruent," and unconvincing. Both Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and the U.S. Justice Dept. said in statements that the Census Bureau will start the process of printing the decennial questionnaires without the controversial question. However, President Trump has called that information "fake" news and insisted that his administration was absolutely moving forward with the question. It's chaos in the White House, as usual. The constitutionally mandated census calls for the actual enumeration of everyone in the U.S., not just citizens.

Supreme Court Upholds Partisan Gerrymandering

In a win for Republicans, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that partisan gerrymandering (redistricting) is not within the jurisdiction of the courts. The Roberts majority noted that extreme gerrymandering is indeed unjust, but said that the solution lies with Congress. Justice Elena Kagan dissented, saying "for the first time ever, the court refuses to remedy a constitutional violation because it thinks the task beyond judicial capabilities. The partisan gerrymanders here debased and dishonored our democracy, turning upside-down the core American idea that all governmental power derives from the people." For Ohio, the decision means that the current 16 congressional districts will remain unchanged until 2022.

Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown condemned the ruling: "The Supreme Court failed Ohioans today. Voters should be picking their representatives, not politicians picking their voters."

Death Sentences in Only a Handful of Counties

Here is an interesting statistic. There are currently 3,142 counties or county equivalents (parishes, boroughs, etc.) in the U.S., more if U.S. territories are included. However, death sentences were handed down in only 27 of them in 2018 (0.86%), compared to 60 in 2012 (1.9%), according to the Death Penalty Information Center. In other words, whether or not convicted felons receive the death sentence does not depend on the severity of their crimes, but instead on their ZIP codes. For the same type of crime, you may receive the death penalty in one county but not in another. It is obvious that the law is not applied equally and fairly at all times and in all places. Instead, it is applied randomly, capriciously, and erratically. Can anyone seriously call this "justice"?

Another Case of Police Brutality

It would be easy to fill a whole book with examples of incidences where police officers inappropriately and disproportionately used force despite the fact that it was unwarranted and even detrimental to public safety. Another sad case has emerged in the city of Phoenix in Arizona. Not all details are yet available and some are contradictory, but Phoenix' mayor Kate Gallego and police chief Jeri Williams agree that what transpired in their city was inappropriate, unprofessional, sickening, and disturbing.

It was in late May when a family of four went to a Dollar Store. Unbeknownst to the father and mother, one of their little daughters (4 years old) walked out of the store with a doll that had not been paid for. The store manager alerted law enforcement to a possible shoplifting occurrence. Police promptly went in search of the car and found it one mile away from the store with everyone inside. Screaming expletives and drawing weapons, two officers dragged everyone out, grabbed people, pushed them to the ground, and handcuffed the man, Dravon Ames. Time and again they used the "F word" and threatened to shoot the father. Chief Williams stated he was disturbed by both the language and the actions of his officers and criticized the fact that they did not maintain their professionalism and proper training at all times. He placed them on desk duty and promised an internal investigation. Mayor Gallego said in a statement that she was "sick" over the videos. "This is not who we are," she said, apologizing to the city and calling for a community meeting on June 18. The Phoenix couple has since filed a notice of claim, a precursor to a lawsuit. The family is seeking \$10 million in damages. Their 4-year-old still has nightmares and is wetting the bed out of distress.

Phoenix had 44 police shootings in 2018, far more than other cities of its size. The New York Times reports that on June 12, 2018, Alexander Andrich was shot and killed by police while holding an object that an officer believed to be "a threat." In the eyes of the law that is a good enough excuse to shoot people. It turned out to be one end of a set of handcuffs that officers had just put on one of the man's wrists.

72 Philadelphia Cops Assigned to Desk Duty

A comprehensive investigation into the Facebook use of various law enforcement officers from agencies across the nation has revealed the widespread use of racist and otherwise offensive memes and messages. The project, spearheaded by lawyer Emily Baker-White, matched 3,500 Facebook pages with current or former officers. In Philadelphia, Police Commissioner Richard Ross has placed 72 officers of his force on desk duty after discovering disturbing, disappointing, and upsetting posts. Some messages "clearly advocated violence or death" against protected classes based on ethnicity, national origin, sex, religion, and race. Some officers are likely to be fired, others will face sanctions or be put on probation. The police union, the Fraternal Order of Police, has said it plans to support and represent the officers targeted in the investigation. Since the city has a total force of 330 officers, that's a staggering percentage of 21.8% that are taken off the streets. It makes it clear that police bias and misconduct is not just the result of a handful of outliers and "rogue" officers, as is frequently claimed. It is systemic, and Police Commissioner Ross is correct in his decision that his entire

department undergo anti-bias and anti-racism training. He also noted that city officials will from now on periodically audit officers' Facebook accounts.

Rikers Prison Detrimental to Health, Safety

Paul Manafort, Trump's former campaign chairman, was sentenced to 7½ years in prison. He was expected to be transferred to New York's notorious Rikers Island prison complex this summer. Rikers has 10 major prisons that can accommodate up to 15,000 people, according to one source. However, Manafort's attorneys raised concerns over his "health and personal safety" at Rikers. It seems they prevailed because Manafort has since been moved to a minimum-security facility near Scranton, Pennsylvania. Critics, including legal analysts, immediately concluded that Manafort was afforded "preferential treatment." Lots of inmates complain about where they are housed, but their grievances are typically ignored by the Justice Dept. and the Attorney General. The case suggests that we have indeed two systems of justice – one for white and wealthy people, and another one for colored and poor people.

What is particularly intriguing here is the tacit admission by the Justice Dept. and perhaps even the White House that conditions at Rikers are detrimental to people's "health and personal safety." It is known to be one of the 12 worst jails in the country. If that is the case, then why is the prison still allowed to operate? It should have been shut down years ago. New York Mayor Bill de Blasio has called for Rikers to be shuttered, but his timeline (by 2026 or 2027) makes it clear that a presidential run in 2020 is more important to him than closing a prison that is rife with abuse and violence.

City Pays \$600,000 Ransom

Riviera Beach City in Florida, part of the larger Miami metropolitan area, has agreed to pay hackers the amount of 65 Bitcoin (about \$592,000) to get back data that was encrypted. City Council voted unanimously to approve the demand because it saw no other way to retrieve its records. Riviera Beach City, which is roughly the size of Ohio's Delaware, has since invested almost \$1 million in new computers and hardware to ensure this won't happen again. The cybercriminals were able to enter the system after a Police Dept. employee clicked on an email link that allowed malware to be uploaded. This kind of extortion happens more frequently than is commonly known. A similar breach cost Baltimore \$18 million recently to repair damages, and Atlanta expects to pay \$17 million to recover from an attack that happened last year. To avoid negative publicity, private banks, companies, or hospitals often quietly end up paying the amount demanded by the intruders.

The case illustrates the necessity of robust defense systems and the need for a backup database. Hacking is especially pernicious when it involves national defense systems and power grids. Cyberwarfare has progressed to the point where it is possible for nations, incl. the U.S., to paralyze the entire network of other countries. And yet, there is reportedly a shortage of experts in the field who can mitigate the problem.

Dead "Baby" with no Pulse or Heartbeat

After a jogger in one of New York's Crocheron Park in Bayside discovered what appeared to be lifeless infant, he alerted police. Emergency medical technicians were unable to detect a heartbeat and declared the 3-month-old baby "dead" at 7:45 am on Tues., June 18. Following established protocol, police cordoned off the scene and investigators began to collect evidence. Arriving news crews quickly spread the word that another horrific crime had been committed. The Queens community was up in arms. – It was not until 10:45 am, three hours later, that a team from the city's medical examiner's office determined that the body was not human after all. It was a life-size doll, complete with a diaper. Perhaps the whole thing was a ghoulish prank intended to amuse or shock, but it does raise the question why paramedics and dozens of other responders were unable to distinguish a doll from a person. Any child could have done so. It seems this is an instance where rigid training and protocol, bias and zealotry may have blinkered medics and police to the point where they threw out common sense. Too much professionalism can lead to zombie vision, it seems.

While this particular story may be amusing, it does raise serious questions about the ability of emergency services and law

enforcement to exercise sound judgment. If they cannot distinguish an inanimate doll from a real baby, how would they be able to differentiate a person with mental-health issues from an unimpaired person, for instance?

Barnes & Noble Sold to Elliott Advisers

Barnes & Noble was acquired for \$638 million by Elliott Advisers, the same hedge fund that purchased the British bookstore chain Waterstones in 2018. James Daunt, chief executive of Waterstones, will also act as Barnes & Noble's CEO. In recent years, Barnes & Noble has been decimated by online booksellers such as amazon.com. Its own digital strategy failed, and the company lost more than \$1 billion on its Nook e-reader. For a while, it looked like the bookstore chain may go belly-up. It closed more than 150 stores, leaving it with 627. The purchase by Elliott was welcomed by the publishing industry, which breathed a sigh of relief after the announcement. A collapse of Barnes & Noble would have been devastating. – Elliott Advisers is an affiliate of Elliott Management, founded by Paul Singer. Singer is an influential Republican donor, but he also has given money to campaigns supporting same-sex marriage. He was a critic of President Trump before the election in November 2016, but ended up contributing \$1 million to Trump's inaugural fund.

The Price of Gold Tops \$1,400

Even if you own not a single gram or ounce of gold, the price of gold is always worth watching. As geopolitical tensions and risks are rising, gold is shining once again. Whenever the economy tanks, the price of gold goes up because it is considered a safe haven for investors. In economically stable times, the price of gold falls again. The current gold rally is indicative of a sharp economic slowdown, regardless of what ruling politicians may say. By June, the price has risen well above \$1,400 per troy ounce (31.1 grams), a level last seen in 2014. The current rates are of course still far below of the record prices in 2011 and 2012, but they are a warning sign that not all is well.

Facebook Launches Cryptocurrency Libra

Facebook announced on June 18 an ambitious plan to launch a new cryptocurrency by 2020. Called Libra, it is part of a new Facebook subsidiary named Calibra. The company says it is in conversations with eBay, Mastercard, PayPal, Spotify, Uber, and others as potential partners. If successful, Libra would be a major competitor to Bitcoin and other digital currencies. Company officials noted that Libra would open up online commerce to millions and billions of people around the world who do not have standard bank accounts or credit cards. It would also allow people to send money across borders without incurring significant fees. Long-term, Calibra might also offer services such as lending or investing.

Not everyone was enthusiastic about Libra. Immediate concerns included questions over Libra's usefulness and reliability as well as anti-trust issues, money laundering, and privacy considerations. Anticipating these concerns, Facebook says Libra will be run independently by a nonprofit entity based in Switzerland and, because it uses blockchain technology, overseen by multiple companies. Supposedly, financial data will never be used to target ads at customers. Facebook also says that Libra will be backed by the dollar, the euro, and other currencies to ensure it won't wildly fluctuate. The project is certain to face tough scrutiny from regulators. If approved, however, it could be a game-changer.

Chinese Travel to U.S. in Steep Decline

For years, the U.S. travel industry has benefitted from Chinese visitors who, on average, spend more (\$6,700 per stay) than visitors from other countries. However, their numbers are now in sharp decline, affecting airlines, hotels, attractions, and retailers. According to data from the National Travel and Tourism Office, the number fell from 3.2 million in 2017 to 2.9 million in 2018 (a 9% drop), and continues to fall in 2019. A Bank of America Merrill Lynch report estimates that a worst-case scenario of a 50% decline would mean a \$18 billion hit to the American travel industry. There has been a slowdown in the Chinese economy, but the main culprit for this negative development is the on-going political enmity and economic trade wars between the U.S. and China. Chinese visitors and students

have been interrogated and subjected to other forms of intense scrutiny and feel less welcome than they did in the past. The State Dept. now demands detailed information about the social-media use of visa applicants, and graduate-level students of STEM sciences have been denied entry because of fears of economic, industrial, and military espionage. As a result of these and other developments, the U.S. is becoming a more and more isolated country and is losing touch with the rest of the world.

Practical Advice for New Homebuyers

If you have owned a house for a number of years, ignore this entry because you already know how expensive home maintenance can be. New Homebuyers, however, are often ignorant about what it takes to be a responsible homeowner. Being inexperienced, they limit their calculations to principle, interest, taxes, and insurance (PITI). However, they should be aware that there are also outlays for utilities (water, sewage, refuse) as well as steep expenses for new furniture or carpeting, a new roof, a new water heater, a new HVAC system, a paint job, new windows, new columns, a new fence, landscaping, lawn service, pest control, blacktopping, and so on. The list is endless. Also, the new home may be in the suburbs, which adds transportation needs. The purchase of each new or used car, insurance, maintenance, and fuel adds thousands of dollars. No wonder, then, that young people find themselves priced out of owning a new home or discover too late that their new home is unaffordable.



Meet Megan Rapinoe

Megan Rapinoe, who just turned 34, is said to be one of the most dynamic soccer players the nation has ever produced. She also has a major off-the-field profile as a social activist and spokesperson for LGBT and women's rights. She may well be the representative athlete of the moment. In 2016, she became the first white athlete and the first woman to support Colin Kaepernick's protests against racism and police violence. She is currently a party to a gender discrimination lawsuit against U.S. Soccer for which she appears to have the support of FIFA, the world's governing body of soccer. Rapinoe, who lives with her partner Sue Bird, is gay – a fact that informs her world view. The American flag, she says, does not protect everyone equally. It discriminates against blacks, women, and gay people. In an interview, she also stated that her older brother Brian has drug-addiction issues for which he is currently in jail. Rapinoe says that people incarcerated for drug-related problems are "just normal people; they're your brothers and your friends and your family." For all these reasons, Megan Rapinoe is not a friend of Donald Trump. Whether the U.S. women's team wins or loses the women's World Cup, she will therefore not visit the White House. However, she has accepted an invitation by Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to visit the House of Representatives. – The NBA is another league whose teams have not accepted invitations to the White House after championships. The Cleveland Cavaliers were the last NBA team to make this pilgrimage when President Obama was still in office.

The U.S. women's team just won the quarter final against France. It will play England in a semifinal Tues., July 2. The Women's World Cup final will be played Sun., July 7. The U.S. is hoping to win a record 4th World Cup title.

Taylor Swift's "You Need to Calm Down"

In conjunction with New York Pride, to commemorate Stonewall, and to show her support for LGBTQ+ rights, rich and famous pop star Taylor Swift (born in 1989) has issued a new single called "You Need to Calm Down." Despite the fact that she advocates love instead of hate and is using her platform and popularity for a good purpose, some people are hopping mad about it.

It is understandable that homophobes are outraged. Taylor Swift pokes fun at them, portraying them as troglodytic country bumpkins and semi-literate rednecks who can't even spell correctly when they write, "Homosexuality is a sin." It must be remembered

that Swift started out as a country singer, and some conservatives feel betrayed by her. It is less understandable, however, that LGBT advocates have objected to the song. They are saying that it is too little too late; that Swift is using the song as a promotional tool to advertise her new album, "Lover"; that her single is a form of "cultural appropriation" by a cis person; and that she should have targeted President Trump and Vice President Pence instead of ordinary folks. These people need to follow Taylor Swift's advice and calm down a bit. It is absolutely great that the evolving and maturing popstar has now openly joined the movement for equality. Her song combines good entertainment with a strong message, and members of the LGBT movement should welcome their sister with open arms. Why be mad when you could be glad / GLADD?

dan bullock (1953-1969)

he went to Vietnam at fifteen
where death embraced him soon
a grenade hit his bunker
he died on the seventh of June

many young boys perished
on that distant shore
while bravely fighting a pointless
and unpopular war

black men in large numbers
were sent to diminish their race
America was eager to keep
its supreme white face

today mass incarceration
keeps people of color in prison
so that the nation can continue
its ruthless eugenist mission

THE WORLD

Travel Plans? Do Research!

Before you make travel plans, have a look at the State Department's Travel Advisories. Among the countries with the highest level of risk (#4: "Do Not Travel") are Afghanistan, Iran, Libya, Mali, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan & South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen. Level #3 ("Reconsider Travel") includes Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Congo (Democratic Republic), El Salvador, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Lebanon, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Pakistan, and Turkey. Detailed information is available about each of the 210 countries listed. Given the current Ebola outbreak and violence committed by militias, the Democratic Republic of Congo should probably be ranked as #4. Although Cuba remains banned for U.S. tourists, it is ranked #2 in safety.

Canada has a similar Travel Advice & Advisories program as does Britain's Foreign Travel Advice. In addition, there are private companies such as GeoSure and WorldAware that assist travelers. Bruce McIndoe from WorldAware is right when he says that average people shouldn't worry too much about violent crime and terrorism. It is road safety, health issues, and petty crime that tourists and business travelers should be concerned about. Car crashes, diseases, and theft are the most prevalent incidents.

The U.S. itself is not ranked on the State Dept.'s list. Most countries would probably list it in the #2 category, but there are some that have advised its citizens to stay away from the U.S. because of mass shootings or racially motivated attacks.

Global Population Trends

There are currently 7.7 billion people on Earth. Previous forecasts projected 11.2 billion in 2100, but that number has now been revised down. The global population is estimated to increase to 9.7 billion by 2050 and may peak at 10.9 billion in 2100, according to new estimates by the United Nations. The main reason for the adjustment is the trend of declining fertility around the world. A fertility rate of 2.1 births per woman is required to ensure replacement of generations, but in a number of countries the rate is

lower than that. The world's lowest ratio is in Japan (1.8) where the population is shrinking. The new projections state that by 2050 about 48 countries will have ratios below 2.0. These countries are mostly in Europe, North America, and Asia. While fewer babies are being born, the proportion of older people increases. This trend too has troubling implications for countries with large numbers of retirees. The so-called "support ratio" is falling around the world, putting enormous pressure on welfare, health-care, and pension systems.

Needless to say, the above numbers are estimates that do not factor in pandemics, wars, climate change or other cataclysmic events that have the potential of wiping out large numbers of people.

A Sharp Increase of Migrants from Africa

The Americas are seeing a sharp increase of refugees and asylum seekers from sub-Saharan countries such as Angola, Cameroon, and Congo, but also from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, and others. Hundreds have landed in Ecuador, which does not require visas, and walk from there to Mexico and to the U.S. The explosion in migrants from Africa comes at a time when Libya, Turkey, and southern European points of entry have started to crack down on immigration.

Rumors that some of the migrants may bring the Ebola virus or other tropical diseases to Mexico and the U.S. are unfounded fearmongering. Of course, it cannot be ruled out that some infected migrants may slip through the controls that are in place. However, it should be noted that Ebola has an incubation period of up to 15 days while it takes refugees many weeks and months to reach Tijuana or other ports of entry at the U.S.-Mexican border.

The best, cheapest, and most humane way to address the refugee problem is to help improve the situation in their home countries through humanitarian aid, economic assistance, diplomatic pressure, and – if warranted – military training. This way, people have an incentive to stay in their home countries instead of fleeing wars, gang violence, disease, droughts, famines, and so on. The U.S. has squandered trillions of dollars in Afghanistan and other pointless wars. It would have been better for everyone if that money had been spent on developmental aid in Third-World & Fourth-World countries.

EU Reaches Trade Deal with Mercosur

The European Union has signed a far-reaching trade deal with Mercosur, the economic alliance of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Together, the two regions encompass 780 million people. The agreement was years in the making, but picked up speed after President Trump's election in 2016. In response to America's protectionist and isolationist tariffs and policies, the EU bloc has also recently reached free-trade agreements with Canada, Mexico, and Japan, leaving the U.S. behind. While the historic alliance between Europe and the U.S. is fraying, the trade agreement "brings Europe and South America closer together in a spirit of cooperation and openness," a spokesperson for the EU stated. The deal has yet to be finalized and ratified.

Czech Prime Minister under Siege

Democracy is not dead in Eastern Europe. In June, hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated against Prime Minister Andrej Babis and demanded his resignation. Babis, a populist billionaire, has abused the democratic system, used his office to enrich himself and to benefit his business conglomerate (fertilizer company Agrofert), and he has misused subsidies from the European Union. His justice minister resigned after the police recommended fraud charges against Babis. Protesters are demanding a return to "decency" and "commitment to public service." Babis has dismissed all accusations against him as "lies" and said that he would continue to make the Czech Republic "great again." – It sounds like Donald Trump has a relative in the Czech Republic that we did not know about until now. Interestingly enough, in 2013 Babis was accused of having been a secret-police agent during the Communist era, under the code name Bures. He has also denied these claims as "nonsense."

Unrest in Albania

Unbeknownst to most Americans, the small Mediterranean country of Albania has experienced significant political unrest for several months. Protesters in the capital of Tirana and elsewhere have accused Prime Minister Edi Rama's socialist government of

systemic corruption, vote rigging, and organized crime. Documents show that he may have "stolen" the 2017 parliamentary election, which gave the ruling Socialists a comfortable majority. The leader of the center-right Democratic Party, Lulzim Basha, has urged his countrymen to continue the rallies against his opponent until the Prime Minister and his cabinet resign. Citing the need to reduce tensions, President Ilir Meta decreed on June 8 that he is canceling upcoming local elections on June 30. Needless to say, his announcement is likely to have the opposite effect. As of June 30, the elections were going ahead as scheduled.

Albania is one of the poorest countries in Europe. It did become a member of NATO in 2009, but is not yet a member of the European Union. Negotiations about EU membership were supposed to start in June. Rama has so far been backed by both the EU and the U.S. However, in light of the on-going political crisis the talks may be delayed. It is also possible that Brussels and Washington will reassess their commitment to him. After decades of socialist rule, Albania's democratic roots are fragile and shallow.

Opposition Candidate Wins Again in Turkey

Ekrem Imamoglu from the People's Republican Party (CHP) won Istanbul's mayoral elections on March 31 of this year, but the ruling A.K.P. party of President Erdogan annulled the victory under questionable and possible unlawful circumstances and called for new elections. Rerun elections were held Sun., June 23. This time Imamoglu won with even a greater majority (54%) while the candidate of the government, Binali Yildirim, collected about 45%. Istanbul is Turkey's largest city and economic and cultural center. It is also a city of cosmopolitanism, secularism, and liberalism in which people live and dress as they wish. Losing control of Istanbul is an embarrassment for strongman Erdogan and his biggest political defeat so far. Imamoglu's triumph is considered a win for democracy and justice, both of which Erdogan has attempted to hollow out through autocratic decision-making. Some observers view Imamoglu's victory as "a turning point" for Turkey.

Israel Gives Trump Tiny Birthday Present

The international community has long learned that flattery is the way to Trump's head and heart. Poland promised the creation of a "Trump Camp" in exchange for military aid. Israel has now rebranded the Bruchim settlement in an occupied region "Trump Heights" (Rasmat Trump) to show its gratitude for Trump's unwavering support in recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the occupied Golan Heights as Israeli territory. To be sure, the settlement is only a tiny, isolated, and miserable outpost in the desert. It has a population of 10 people and is surrounded by land mines. Frankly, the whole ceremony, which was attended by U.S. Ambassador David Friedman, looked more like a sick joke than anything else. However, the hope is that Bruchim's newly acquired notoriety will attract more settlers in the future. – Trump Heights joins George W. Bush plaza in Jerusalem, a square the size of a modest living room.

Egypt's Morsi Dies

Former Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi has died during a court session at the age of 67. He was diabetic and had a history of severe health problems, but was reportedly denied proper care and the medication he needed for his condition and liver disease. In the eyes of human-rights observers, this was "murder." His family was not allowed to claim the body. He was secretly buried somewhere in Cairo within 24 hours to avoid a public funeral. The case sheds glaring light on Egypt's authoritarian government and harsh criminal-justice system where thousands of political prisoners languish in crowded prisons. – Morsi won the elections in 2012, but was violently overthrown in 2013 by his defense minister, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi who still rules Egypt today with an iron grip. The Muslim Brotherhood, to which Morsi belonged, was branded a "terrorist" organization and ruthlessly persecuted, along with liberals and journalists. Hundreds were killed, imprisoned (incl. Morsi), or went into exile. (For the record, the group does not meet the U.S. definition of a terrorist entity.) As president, Morsi was flawed and a failure, but that is no justification for the inhumane treatment he received.

The Situation in Sudan

In the African country of Sudan, protesters have been pushing for a civilian government for weeks and months. They were able to oust long-time leader Omar Hassan al-Bashir, but in his stead other military generals were sworn in. The army junta demonstrated its unwillingness to cede control in a brutal rampage that occurred on June 3. Heavily armed troops killed dozens of people, flung dead bodies into the Nile, raped women, and burned tents. Local doctors counted at least 118 bodies. The Internet was shut down, and news channels are under strict state control. General Mohamed Hamdan, known as "Hemeti," is now the de facto ruler in Khartoum, the capital. His bloody history is well known since he has been Bashir's enforcer for years. War has also made Hemeti and other Sudanese generals wealthy – a privilege they are not inclined to cede. Both al-Bashir and Hemeti have been accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Not surprisingly, Hemeti's patron is Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman, the murderer of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Although mass rallies continue, Sudan's path to a civilian and democratic government is not looking promising at the moment.

Ebola in Congo and Uganda

The situation continues to look grim in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The death rate topped 1,000 in May. By mid-June, over 1,400 people were known to have died from Ebola. Officials fear many additional deaths may be occurring in remote villages where distrust of outsiders is strong. It is the second-deadliest outbreak in known history. The fatality rate of Ebola is about 66%.

Particularly worrisome was the news that the highly contagious disease has now spread to neighboring Uganda. Uganda's healthcare system is supposedly well-prepared to handle an outbreak, but reports indicate a severe lack of equipment and supplies in the affected areas. It is not clear what happened to the millions of dollars spent on preparing for Ebola. It is reasonable to suspect corruption, which is widespread and endemic in Africa and many other parts of the world. Despite the obvious crisis, the World Health Organization (WHO) declined to call the situation a public-health emergency. Such a declaration would raise the level of international political, financial, and medical support.

Hong Kong: Victory of the People

Hong Kong was handed over by the British to the Chinese in 1997 and promised autonomy. While it was able to maintain a semiautonomous status over the years, Chinese pressure to curtail civil liberties and to end the city's political independence has been steadily mounting. China's leader, Xi Jinping, has demanded ever greater obedience and submission from Hong Kong, Tibet, and Muslim-dominated areas. China also claims ownership of Taiwan. The latest attempt is new legislation that would allow the extradition of dissidents, other "criminal" suspects, and even foreign visitors from Hong Kong to the Chinese mainland where they would face a harsh and opaque Communist-controlled court system in which torture and "disappearances" are common. Public outrage was huge. As many as 1 to 2 million of protesters were in the streets, denouncing the move that is championed by Carrie Lam, Hong-Kong's chief executive hand-picked by the China. At one point, demonstrators surrounded the Legislative Council, forcing it to delay the final vote. Police used tear gas and pepper spray, rubber bullets and bean-bag rounds against the people in the street. Officials reported more than 80 injured people, but that number could easily be an undercount. – After days and weeks of fierce unrest and strong opposition from the business community, the Hong Kong government on June 15 halted the extradition bill, which for many symbolized the end of freedom and independence. It is a major retreat and defeat for Carrie Lam. However, demonstrators want more – a full withdrawal of the bill, an investigation into police brutality, and a guarantee that participating protesters would not be criminally charged. Many demonstrators and opposition figures have called for Lam's resignation. She may yet prevail, but her brand is severely damaged and she will be replaced in due time.

American President Trump declined to pick a side in the conflict. Populists are said to stand in solidarity with the people, but billionaire Trump is not a real populist. He has never thrown as much as a bone to the working class. He is an anti-democratic politician enamored with dictators and other strongmen. He could have and

should have stood up for American values in the Hong Kong case, but he chose to placate Xi Jinping.

"Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un"

North Korea may be the most isolated, elusive, and secretive country in the world. Information is hard to come by, and much of it is false. Nevertheless, it is possible for astute researchers to get a general sense of where the country stands. One such heroic effort is by the New Zealand journalist Anna Fifield who just attempted a biography of North Korea's supreme leader under the title "The Great Successor: The Divinely Perfect Destiny of Brilliant Comrade Kim Jong Un" (Public Affairs, 2019). Fifield describes Kim's childhood and the years he spent in Berne, Switzerland under the alias Pak Un. When his father's health declined, he was summoned back to North Korea. As leader, Kim pursued a double strategy. On the one hand, he ruthlessly terrorized the nation and had members of his own family killed. On the other, he permitted the rise of entrepreneurship and the rule of market principles even for state-run companies. For North Korea's elite, life is not necessarily bad since they have access to luxury goods from the West – for the price of complete submission, of course. This is similar to the situation of real-existing socialism in Eastern Europe prior to the fall of the Iron Curtain. However, it must also be noted that for millions of ordinary people life in the North Korean gulag is utterly miserable – something that Krys Lee's review in the Washington Post inexplicably failed to note. "The book makes a convincing argument that with Kim at the helm North Korea is painfully forging its way toward a more prosperous, stable future," Lee and Fifield say. Not everyone will share the Trumpian view that Kim is a benign dictator who only has the best interests of his people at heart. Anyone old enough to remember the situation in Eastern Europe during the Cold War knows that the leaders, who enjoyed a lavish lifestyle while their subjects languished, were in it for themselves. Lee's review also does not mention the grave danger that North Korea's nuclear arsenal poses to the world. This is not yet "the definitive biography of Kim Jong Un."

Japan Resumes Commercial Whaling

Under the guise of "research whaling," Japan has hunted and killed whales for decades, selling the meat as "by-products." As announced in 2018, the country has now withdrawn from the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and will for the first time in 31 years pursue open and unrestricted commercial whaling once more. According to reports published in 2018, it will however limit whalers to its own national waters and not operate in the Antarctic. Whaling ships are set to leave from ports in Shimonoseki (Yamaguchi Prefecture) and Kushiro (Hokkaido Prefecture) and will target 3 kinds of whales: minke, Bryde's, and sei. Whale meat was once popular in Japan, but it is far less so now. The Japanese whaling industry employs fewer than 300 people directly and is dependent on government subsidies in the amount of \$46 million annually. Still, the industry has a certain appeal among traditionalists and nationalists.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Citizens' Climate Lobby – Delaware Chapter

Delaware members of Citizens' Climate Lobby were among the 39 Ohioans (a record) attending the CCL International Conference June 9-11 in Washington, D.C. There were 1,500 attendees; of those, "only" 1,200 could be fitted into the congressional meetings on June 11. CCL members had meetings with 529 of the possible 535 Senate and House offices. They all individually met with staff in at least two offices. Lobbying for Rep. Troy Balderson were 12th District CCL members Lindsey Kohlenberg, Marianne Gabel, and Tyler Gillette. They discussed the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (EICDA), which would put a rising fee on carbon emissions and return the collected revenue to Americans in equal shares. (Those are the key points. There are many more at the website energynnovationact.org). Economists on the left and the right are in a strong consensus that a carbon fee would be the most effective way to reduce emissions. CCL hopes to make passage of the EICDA a "bridge" issue, not a "wedge" issue.

(The meetings of Citizens' Climate Lobby's Delaware chapter are currently held on the 2nd Saturday of each month, 11:30-1:30. For more info on the local chapter and a contact address, visit <https://citizensclimatelobby.org/chapters/>.)

OSU Launches Sustainability Institute

The Ohio State University in Columbus has "made sustainability a priority." Over 600 teaching faculty and research scientists are already engaged in climate-change activities. Earlier this year, OSU launched a new Sustainability Institute. It will coordinate and cultivate multidisciplinary teaching and research to develop "solutions to some of our most pressing social issues influencing and affected by climate change: sustainable energy; healthy land, water and air systems; and smart and resilient communities." The institute will also advance on-campus solutions such as creating a university that will be "carbon-neutral" by 2050. Kate Bartter is the new executive director of the Sustainability Institute. On June 12, she published an op-ed piece in the Columbus Dispatch entitled "OSU's Sustainability Institute leads climate change research, teaching." It is available online. The institute is located at 3018 Smith Laboratory at 174 W. 18th Ave. Its website is <https://si.osu.edu>. Check often for upcoming events.

In May, OSU has also announced that it will be a founding member of the 2020 Midwestern Higher Education Climate Summit, to be held in St. Louis. The gathering is expected to be the largest meeting of Midwestern colleges and universities focused on mitigating the effects of climate change and moving to a 100% clean-energy economy. Washington Univ. in St. Louis will serve as anchor and host for the climate summit, with support by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Climate Change Poses Risk to Markets

By law, Rostin Behnam's seat on the 5-member Commodities Futures Trading Commission in the U.S. must be filled by a Democrat. Lawyer and trader Behnam has used his unique position as a bully pulpit ever since. He recently warned that global warming has the potential of inflicting harm to the nation's agricultural sector, affecting production, food costs, insurance markets, and the mortgage industry: "It's abundantly clear that climate change poses financial risk to the stability of the financial system," he stated. In his view, the risk from climate change was comparable to that posed by the mortgage meltdown that triggered the 2008/09 financial crisis.

Behnam is not alone in his view. Banks, insurance companies, industries, and nations around the world are all worried about the long-term effect of global warming on the stability of their systems. Insurance companies, for example, have to consider the financial risk of more devastating floods and destructive wildfires. Manufacturers need to keep a close eye on their supply chains. Many countries around the world will be impacted by climate-change refugees due to droughts, epidemics, sea-level rise, and other factors. – Rostin Behnam is understandably worried when he looks at the inaction of the Trump administration regarding the existential threat of global warming: "It concerns me that we are not taking steps to protect the people of our country with the best facts, the best science, the best numbers."

"The Anthropocene Project"

Man has wrought many beautiful things, but he has also wrought many horrible things that are pushing Earth closer and closer to collapse: the nuclear bomb, pollution, deforestation, landfills, toxic superfund sites, mountain-top removal, species extinction, cancer-causing chemicals, climate change, and so on. This is the age of humans ("anthropos"), the Anthropocene era. Traditional geologists may be in denial, but it is quite possible to detect microplastics, pharmaceuticals, radioactivity, garbage, and so on pretty much everywhere in the environment. They will remain there for as long, long time. Two Canadian filmmakers (Jennifer Baichwal and Nicholas de Pencier) and one photographer (Edward Burtynsky) have traveled to 22 countries around the world to research and document "places of obvious, physical human incursions on the landscape." They are calling their expansive, multidisciplinary body of work "The Anthropocene Project." The exhibition is already on display in other parts of the world. Their film will be shown in the U.S. this fall.

Prepare to be shocked by what's going on in every continent of the world.

Trump's Nominee for U.N. Ambassador

President Trump's nominee to be the next U.S. envoy to the United Nations is Kelly Knight Craft. She holds extensive investments in fossil fuels, and her husband – Joe Craft – is CEO of Alliance Resource Partners, one of the largest coal producers in the country. She and her husband have donated millions to Republican campaigns. Trump rewarded her with an ambassadorship to Canada, but her frequent absences from that post were "very troubling," "staggering," and "an abdication of leadership," according to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the past, Craft has said that there "good scientists on both sides" of the climate debate. When pressed during her nomination hearing she indicated she does believe human behavior has "contributed" to climate change and that global warming is "a real risk to our planet." If confirmed, she said, she would be "an advocate for addressing climate change," a topic of major concern for the United Nations. Not every senator on the committee was convinced by Craft's specious assurances. It is well known that actions speak louder than words. In this classic case of a conflict of interest, Craft would continue to personally profit from the burning of fossil fuels. Also, Trump has an infamous history of putting foxes in henhouses, chosen and placed to destroy agencies from within. Some Democrats have already declared that they plan to oppose her nomination.

A Taste of What's to Come?

First some background. Democrats have an 18-12 majority (60%) in the Oregon Senate. The presence of 20 members (66%) is required for a quorum to conduct business in the chamber. By not showing up for votes, Republicans can prevent legislation from being passed. (In states where Republicans have the majority, Democratic lawmakers have used the same walk-out tactic.)

This is what happened on June 20 and 21 over disagreements on HB 2020, a controversial cap-and-trade bill. The Oregon House passed the measure on Mon., June 17, but at the end of the week when it was the Senate's turn the Republican lawmakers did not show up. They left the capital, Salem, to hide out of state. Under Oregon law, legislators can be fined \$500 for each day they are AWOL and can be forced to return, by state police, a step announced by Democratic Gov. Kate Brown on June 20. The Republican lawmakers, however, vowed to stay their course until Oregon's legislative session ended June 30. None of them were found until they returned voluntarily on June 29. The cap-and-trade bill is extremely unpopular among Oregon's misinformed loggers, ranchers, truckers, and many rural voters. Opponents say the Oregon bill poses "an existential threat" to their way of life. Of course, proponents argue that doing nothing about global warming poses "an existential threat" for everyone as well. Republicans want to send the plan to voters where it has a realistic chance of being defeated.

What happened next is ugly and perhaps a harbinger of what's to come if other states or the nation as a whole adopts similar measures to address climate change. Reportedly, large numbers of armed and potentially violent "militia groups" were planning to gather at the state Capitol, threatening the safety of Democratic lawmakers, staff, and citizen visitors. More than 1,000 opponents were planning to show up, according to the Oregon GOP. As a result, the June 22 session of the Senate was canceled. It is not clear at this point what the fate of HB 2020 will be. It seems unlikely it will be approved before the deadline. Senate Minority Leader Herman Baertschiger said in a statement, "Our mission was to kill cap-and-trade. That's what we did." It appears Republicans accomplished their mission, albeit at a steep price.

President Trump has yet to weigh in, but he has stated in the past that climate change is "a hoax" and has been promoting fossil fuels such as "beautiful" coal, oil, and gas. He is likely to tweet, as he often does, that there are "good people on both sides of the issue." Climate change and what to do about it has become an extremely polarizing issue in the nation. Fierce battles are being fought, and the divide between red states and blue states is growing. If current trends continue, the U.S. could well face another civil war, involving armed conflict and open hostilities.

HAPPY NEWS

Denmark Cuts Emissions by 70%

The conservative Danish People's Party suffered a heavy defeat in June. Various left-leaning parties won a majority in the 179-member Parliament, allowing Social Democrat Mette Frederiksen to become prime minister. At age 41, she is Denmark's youngest-ever prime minister. Major action on climate change is expected. Frederiksen vowed to achieve a 70% cut in emissions by 2030. Other changes are likely to include a reforestation program and a ban on plastics. Questions remain about how exactly Denmark will meet its targets and pay for them, but it is clear that after years of conservative rule the Scandinavian country is off to a new start.

Himalayan Glaciers Retreating and Vanishing

The melting and vanishing of glaciers around the world is a stark reminder that climate change is real and on-going. The latest study, published in the journal Science Advances, looked at satellite images of 650 glaciers in the Himalayas. The researchers found that due to rising temperatures glaciers have been shrinking in size and thickness for at least 45 years. Himalaya's glaciers are considered the "water towers" of Asia and serve as an insurance policy against droughts in the summer. In the warmer seasons, meltwater from the mountains provides water for people, animals, and crops. Long term, receding and vanishing glaciers are endangering people's livelihoods. – Another study, published last May in Nature, came to a similar conclusion. It describes how Himalaya's glaciers are melting faster in summer than they are being replenished in winter by falling snow.

Sydney Declares Climate Emergency

Australia has been hit hard by the effects of climate change, but in national elections in May voters narrowly reelected the incumbent conservative coalition that is opposed to climate-change policies. The coalition successfully made cost the dominant issue in the debate, arguing that climate-change legislation would lead to job losses and have a price tag of \$181 billion. Lost in the discussion was the fact that the decarbonization of the economy would provide new business opportunities, create thousands of jobs, and generate revenue.

In any case, Australia's largest city, Sydney, has now moved to declare a climate-change emergency. Mayor Clover Moore lamented the lack of national leadership and emphasized that it is therefore up to cities and states to pursue the goal of a carbon-free future. Sydney, which has made sustainability a priority for at least a decade, will reduce carbon emissions by 70% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050. It also plans to host a climate conference for female leaders next year.

Australia is acutely vulnerable to global warming. It just experienced the hottest summer on record as well as water shortages and a crippling drought. The country's tropics are spreading south, bringing storms and diseases to places unaccustomed to such problems. The Great Barrier Reef, the largest coral reef in the world, is also threatened by the rising temperatures.

The 17 Global Goals

In 2015, world leaders agreed to the following 17 global goals for sustainable development, to create a better world by 2030 (2030 Vision). Much more information about each and every goal is available on the internet.

- No poverty
- Zero hunger
- Good health & well-being
- Quality education
- Gender equality
- Clean water & sanitation
- Affordable clean energy
- Decent work & economic growth
- Industry, innovation & infrastructure
- Reduced inequalities
- Sustainable cities & communities
- Responsible consumption & production
- Climate action
- Life below water
- Life on land
- Peace, justice & strong institutions
- Partnerships for the goals

Galena Is Now a Bee City USA

Galena has joined more than 100 other cities and villages around the U.S. to become a member of Bee City USA. The vote by Galena Village Council means that Galena will strive to improve its landscapes by providing pollinators healthy habitat, rich in native plants and free of insecticides. Pollinators include not just bees and other insects, but also birds and bats. The Galena Bee City USA Committee meets monthly on the 2nd Tuesday at 7 pm at Galena Village Hall, 109 Harrison St.

Bee City USA is an initiative by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, a nonprofit based in Portland. Ohio members are Gahanna, Galena, Lithopolis (their honeyfest is Sept. 6-7 this year), Vandalia, and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. There is also a network of 67 Bee Campuses USA. Kenyon College and Owens Community College (Findlay Campus) are currently the only two members in Ohio. Ohio Wesleyan Univ. has so far shown zero interest in becoming a Tree Campus USA or a Bee Campus USA. Sustainability has never been a priority for OWU administrators.

A Nina West Way in Columbus

Drag seems to have its moment. The City of Columbus has renamed Hull Alley at High Street as The Nina West Way in honor of the Nina West Fund at the Columbus Foundation. Nina West, the drag persona of Andrew Levitt, has raised more than \$2 million for charities nationwide. Stonewall Columbus in cooperation with the Short North Alliance initiated the project. A crowdfunding campaign raised the funds to install the new street sign (\$800). An official ceremony was held June 14 to kick off the annual Stonewall Columbus Parade. Nina West attended the unveiling and served as Grand Marshall of the 2019 event. Nina West / Andrew Levitt is portrayed in the July 2019 issue of "Columbus Monthly."



"Highlights for Children" Takes Stand

After the death of 23-month old Valeria Martinez Ramirez in the Rio Grande River, the Columbus-based kids magazine "Highlights for Children" has issued a statement that emphasizes the importance and well-being of all children, including those in detention camps and cages at the southern border. The company's CEO, Kent Johnson, wrote in a statement that "Highlights" is opposed to the separation of immigrant children from their families. "This is an appeal to elevate the inalienable right for all children to feel safe and to have the opportunity to become their best selves." Inevitably some people objected to the "political" nature of the statement. However, it is easy to agree with Johnson who said, "This is a statement about human decency, plain and simple." – Founded in 1946, "Highlights for Children" is dedicated to the belief that "children are the world's most important people." Every Highlights product helps children become their best selves and curious, creative, caring, and confident individuals.

New Visitor Center at Hocking Hills State Park

Hocking Hills State Park is one of the most scenic parks in Ohio, if not in the country. Some 4 million visitors flock to it annually. A new \$6 million visitor center has now opened that has more than double the space of the old center, which was demolished. The 2-story building has two floors and includes exhibits showcasing the fauna and flora of the park, a state-of-the-art interpretive center, simulated trails and main sites that familiarize visitors with what to expect, and a gift shop. The center also does a lot of programming, which includes canoeing and kayaking, and emphasizes the need to protect and preserve Ohio's natural resources. – If you have never been to Ohio's Hocking Hills State Park, you should definitely set aside a day to explore it. It is a unique experience.



White Pelicans Returning to Ohio

Habitat destruction, toxic pesticides, hunting and other hazards made white pelicans go extinct in Ohio. However, there are reports that they are slowly returning to the Buckeye State. They have increasingly been seen in larger lakes and along rivers, esp. around Lake Erie. In 2018, a white pelican spent time along the Scioto River in downtown Columbus and became a local celebrity. Breeding pairs have been spotted in Lake Erie islands on the Canadian side of the border.

White pelicans are large, heavy birds with wingspans of up to 9 feet. They like to swim in the shallows, seining through the water and scooping up small fish. Their pouches can hold up to 3 gallons of water. Flocks of pelicans have learned to form feeding lines and herd fish to the shore or into a corner where they can be snapped up wholesale. Some fishermen mistakenly believe that pelicans pose unwelcome competition for them, damaging fisheries. The main catch of pelicans is "rough" fish such as minnows and shiners that fishermen are not interested in. There is no reason to target the beautiful birds.

Jesuit School Shows Backbone

After a longtime and "highly capable and qualified" teacher at Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School in Indianapolis teacher married someone of the same sex, the archbishop of Indianapolis, Charles C. Thompson, demanded that the school dismiss the unnamed teacher and not renew his contract. However, the school declined to follow orders from headquarters. President William Verbryke pointed out that same-sex marriages are civilly recognized in Indiana. He and the board also expressed concern over church "interference" with personnel and curricular matters. As a result, the Grand Inquisitor issued a harsh decree that the institution would no longer be recognized as a Catholic school by the archdiocese. Heresy must be punished. The archbishop maintains that the teacher's marital status does not conform with church doctrine; that the school no longer embraces the "fullness of Catholic teaching"; and that it had lost its "Catholic identity." The cutting of ties is expected to have little practical effect, however, because the school is not financially dependent on the archdiocese. About half of its 800 students are non-Catholic. In fact, it could be that the ensuing publicity and the school's independent stance will end up strengthening its profile. Rev. James Martin, a Jesuit priest and leading advocate for greater LGBT inclusion in the church, said, "this is the most Catholic thing that the school could do."

NYPD Apologizes for Stonewall

50 years after it happened, New York City's police commissioner James O'Neill has apologized for the violent raid on June 28, 1969 at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar on Christopher Street in New York's Greenwich Village. He called the laws of the time "discriminatory and oppressive" and said "the actions taken by the NYPD were wrong – plain and simple," he said. O'Neill vowed that "this would never happen in the NYPD in 2019." The official apology was long overdue, but given the fact that New York is hosting the monthlong "WorldPride" this year it was inevitable. Maybe the wounds of the past can now begin to heal.

50 years ago, it was common for police to raid gay bars and arrest people for "sodomy," "cross-dressing" and other "crimes." Even today, police violence against LGBT people goes on. They continue to be criminalized, locally and nationally. Law enforcement often lacks proper training in dealing with LGBT folks. Transgender people in particular are frequent victims of police misconduct, bias, ridicule, insult, harassment, and abuse. The New York police commissioner at the time, William J. Bratton, never apologized for what happened, and for decades the police maintained the raid was justified. O'Neill himself has said for years that an apology was unnecessary. – The 1969 raid is today widely regarded as a seminal event in the gay-rights movement, and Stonewall is a national monument.

Update 6/12: Days after NYPD Police Commissioner James O'Neill apologized for the way LGBT people were treated in the past, transgender woman Layleen Polanco was found dead in her cell inside Rikers Island jail complex. Unable to afford a \$500 bail, she had been incarcerated for nearly 2 months. She was known to have a seizure disorder, and according to officials violence or foul play is not

suspected. However, LGBT advocates were quick to point out NYPD's hypocrisy. According to them, the criminal-justice system continues to victimize transgender people, especially those of color. Some called the arrest and incarceration of Polanco, a Latinx woman, "a death sentence." Protesters called for the infamous Rikers Island complex to be shut down, an action that New York's mayor and presidential candidate Bill de Blasio supports.

Banks End Relationship with Private-Prison Industry

Due to growing public pressure, several U.S. banks have ended or are ending their relationship with private-prison companies this year, especially those that operate inhumane detention facilities at the southern border. Wells Fargo and JPMorgan announced in March that they would do so. Bank of America joined them in June. Jessica Oppenheim, a spokeswoman for the bank, explained, "The private sector is attempting to respond to public policy and government needs and demands in the absence of longstanding and widely recognized reforms needed in criminal justice and immigration policies." Banks are taking the step somewhat belatedly, but they are waking up to the fact that they do have a certain social responsibility. It is also a good business decision for them because otherwise they risk becoming targets of consumer boycotts and seeing their reputation decline.

"There Is More to Life than Profit"

Wayfair, the Boston-based home-furnishings retailer, was eager to sell \$200,000 worth of bedroom furniture to a government contractor that runs a detention center for migrant children in Texas. But when employees found out that their company profited from incarcerated children, they were incensed and objected loudly. More than 500 employees signed a protest letter. In addition there was a walk-out near the company's headquarters that was a mix of employees and several hundred members of the public. Wayfair engineer Tom Brown is quoted as saying, "for me personally there is more to life than profit." Many people quickly started to tweet a #BoycottWayfair hashtag. As is typical for many companies, Wayfair issued a tone-deaf response saying that it is standard practice to fulfill orders for any customers acting within the law and refused to back out of the contract. In other words, if the devil himself offered a business deal and stayed within the law, Wayfair would be happy to negotiate with him. However, a couple of days later the company did say that it plans to donate \$100,000 to the Red Cross. (The Red Cross has nothing to do with the detention facilities.)

It is gratifying to see that so many people have not yet lost their basic human decency despite the fact that we are living in dark times.

Millennials Are Embracing Sobriety

More and more people are embracing the benefits of a sober lifestyle, and the alcohol industry is worried about its future. Younger people are especially attracted to sober, alcohol-free gatherings. There are sober nightclubs, weddings, birthday parties, dance events, cook-outs, and so on. Sober is sexy and cool. There are probably multiple reasons behind this trend. First of all, alcohol is heavily taxed and expensive, and many millennials and Gen Z folks are financially struggling. However, there is also growing awareness of the benefits of "wellbeing" – a mindful lifestyle that emphasizes physical, mental, and emotional balance. Sharelle Klaus, founder of DRY, also says that people today value human connections and want to be "present" with their friends. Staying sober allows people to keep that edge and clarity rather than lose themselves in an alcoholic stupor.

The beverage industry is still trying to figure out if the new trend is a momentary blip or if it has staying power. But there is no question that nonalcoholic malt beers and "mocktails" are seeing a resurgence. At the moment, no-alcohol brews are only about 5% of the beer market, but sales growth is outpacing alcoholic beer 5 to 1. People in the industry are convinced that this is the future and that the market is just getting started.

California Issues Apology to Native Americans

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has issued a formal apology for his state's "dark history" that included violence, exploitation, dispossession, the forced separation of children from their parents,

cultural genocide, and a "war of extermination" in which tens of thousands died. His executive order dated June 18 also included the formation of a "Truth and Healing Council." More than 100 leaders from Native American nations and tribes were present at the ceremony. – There was, however, no talk of possible compensation or reparation for the many "wrongs" committed (the word "crime" is carefully avoided). The fine print states, "This Order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person." Native-American leaders were cautiously optimistic that a new chapter has started in their relationship to the State of California. They are now awaiting meaningful action.

As far as Community Matters knows, the State of Ohio has never issued a formal apology for its own "dark history." A similar "war of extermination" was also waged in the Buckeye State. In addition, large numbers of indigenous peoples were deported west to make room for white settlers.



Joy Harjo First Native American U.S. Poet Laureate

Poet and musician Joy Harjo, a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation and Oklahoma resident, became the first Native American to be chosen by the Library of Congress as U.S. Poet Laureate. She will succeed Tracy K. Smith this fall. Harjo, 68, has published 8 books of poetry. Another one, "An American Sunrise," is scheduled to appear in August. She has also written a memoir about her difficult childhood and youth, "Crazy Brave," and literature for children & young adults. In addition, the multidisciplinary artist who also plays the saxophone has released 5 albums of original music and won a Native-American music award in 2009. In addition, she has held teaching appointments at various universities. Harjo's themes are justice and reckoning, healing and transformation. Her poems, she says, are "carriers of dreams, knowledge, and wisdom."

***This Morning I Pray for My Enemies*
by Joy Harjo**

*And whom do I call my enemy?
An enemy must be worthy of engagement.
I turn in the direction of the sun and keep walking.
It's the heart that asks the question, not my furious mind.
The heart is the smaller cousin of the sun.
It sees and knows everything.
It hears the gnashing even as it hears the blessing.
The door to the mind should only open from the heart.
An enemy who gets in, risks the danger of becoming a friend.*

Safety of Horses Finally Addressed

Thirty horses have died at California's Santa Anita Park since Dec. 26. Nearly 10 horses a week on average perished at American racetracks in 2018, which translates to about 500 horses annually that die on or off the track or have to be euthanized due to injuries. The rate is much higher than in the rest of the world. As a result, there have been calls to shut Santa Nita down or at least declare a moratorium.

California has now announced that thoroughbreds at the Santa Anita track would be put under increased scrutiny to ensure that unsound horses are not forced to race. A 5-member review panel will determine if horses are at elevated risk of injury before each race. It is led by Dr. Rick Arthur, equine medical director of the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB), and chief steward Darrel McHargue. The team, which includes independent veterinarians and stewards, must agree unanimously. Decisions made by the team of experts are final. According to press reports, this level of scrutiny has never before existed in American horse racing.

Zuzana Caputova Sworn in as President of Slovakia

On June 15, Zuzana Caputova was sworn in as the first-ever female president of the small Central European country of Slovakia. Born in 1973, she became an environmental lawyer and fought successfully against a toxic landfill in her hometown of Pezinok, a small town near the capital of Bratislava. Her party, Progressive Slovakia, is proudly pro-Europe and supports minority and gay rights. Slovakia is a country rife with corruption, neo-Nazis, and political assassinations. However, Caputova is a tough, stubborn, and calm fighter who has an intact moral compass that favors the forgotten and the dispossessed. If someone like Caputova can win against the entrenched establishment, there is yet hope for humanity.

France Outlaws Destruction of Unsold Goods

France destroys unsold food items and consumer products worth €800 million (about \$900 million) every year – a colossal waste of resources that defies reason and is a moral scandal. The country is now considering legislation that would ban the practice. By 2023, retailers and manufacturers will have to donate, reuse, or recycle unsold products. The destruction or landfilling of usable goods and edible items could result in financial fines or even prison time. Companies such as Amazon will no longer be able to throw away products that are still fit for human consumption. In France, large supermarkets are already required to donate to charity, rather than discard, food that is still good to eat. This is a growing trend as Europeans are becoming increasingly conscious of the problem of waste and its connection to climate change.



Rescue Dog Frida Retires

Frida, the yellow lab, has officially retired with honor and distinction after dozens of missions in search for victims of earthquakes, either dead or alive. Her career as a rescue dog was international – she worked as a first responder not only in her home country Mexico, but also in Ecuador, Guatemala, and Haiti. The reports about her are not all consistent, but she appears to have found 12 people who were still alive and over 40 dead bodies. In the eyes of many Mexicans Frida is such a hero that some have suggested she be made president.

don't be evil

don't be evil and do no harm
take this lesson to heart
love thy neighbors and all people
while you live do your part

when others suffer and are in pain
don't be deaf and blind
learn to share and deeply care
and always be gentle and kind

don't hurt plants and animals
and don't pollute the earth
every weed and every worm
has its immeasurable worth

be a friend and not an enemy
to strangers whom you meet
offer them a cup of water
and wash their dusty feet