

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

Ashley Corn Show (8/1 – 8/3)

The Village of Ashley will host its annual Corn Show on Thurs., Aug. 1 (5-10 pm), Fri., Aug. 2 (5-11 pm), and Sat., Aug. 3 (5-11 pm). There will be sweet corn, Otterbacher Carnival Rides & Games, bingo, food booths, community booths & lots more. Musicians include 3 of a Kind, Burning Diesel & White Lily Singers. Funds raised will be used by American Legion Post 518 to benefit youth activities. For info, go to www.villageofashley/events or call Scott Lucas at 740-815-5176.

Ohio Tax-Free Weekend (8/2 – 8/4)

Ohio Tax-Free Weekend is now permanent. This year, it starts Fri., Aug. 2 (12 am) and ends Sun., Aug. 4 (11:59 pm). During these 3 days only, you can buy certain items and not pay any state sales or use tax. The list includes school supplies and instructional materials that cost no more than \$20 each, and all clothing items that are less than \$75 each.



Pelotonia 2019 (8/2-4)

Pelotonia was established in 2008 with the objective to fund life-saving cancer research. Pelotonia is a 3-day experience that includes a weekend of cycling, entertainment & volunteerism. There are 7,360 riders registered for the 2019 race. Through its first 10 rides, Pelotonia raised more than \$184 million for cancer research. Quite a few residents of the City of Delaware and Delaware County have participated over the years. Many have trained bravely throughout spring and summer. One of them is Dr. Leslie Beyer-Hermsen who has

thus far raised over \$1,500 for her \$2,000 goal. You can see the riders' profile and support them by making a donation on their behalf by visiting <https://yourpelotonia.org> or <http://pelotonia.org>.

10th Global Big Latch-On (8/2)

Big Latch-On is an international organization that promotes breastfeeding and supports mothers who breastfeed. The local chapter is celebrating the 10th Global Big Latch-On on Fri., Aug. 2 (10 am) at the Veterans Park Splash Pad on the YMCA grounds, 1121 S. Houk Rd. The big latch-on starts at 10:30 am sharp (late arrivals cannot participate) and is followed by a Breastfeeding Welcome picnic. Please RSVP to Liz Prothero, 740-203-2057. To learn more, visit www.biglatchon.org. The event is also part of Ohio's Breastfeeding Awareness Month.

First Friday (8/2)

First Friday's theme is "Cops and Shops." The 6-9 pm event celebrates Delaware's law enforcement agencies. There will be police vehicles to explore (and probably a few horses as well). Free food is available while supplies last. Rock, blues, and pop music is provided by Delaware's own Twisted Britches band, consisting of Mike Dummitt, Jeff Brown, Zack Long & Nick DeFrancisco. Once again, a shuttle bus will circulate to and from Hayes Bldg. (145 N. Union St.) every 15 min. A staffed bike corral is set up at the corner of N. Sandusky & Central Ave.

Dublin Irish Festival (8/2-4) – \$

This year's Dublin Irish Festival will be held Aug. 2-4. Doors open at Dublin's Coffman Park (5200 Emerald Pkwy.) on Fri. at 4 pm. General admission is \$15 and free for children 12 and under. For details, visit www.dublinirishfestival.org.

Stratford Road Clean-Up (8/3)

Sustainable Delaware Ohio (SDO) and Liberty Casting have jointly organized a much-needed clean-up along Stratford Rd. The groups meet Sat., Aug. 3 (8-10 am) at Liberty Casting's parking lot near the cemetery. All equipment and a simple breakfast are provided. Make sure to bring water to stay hydrated and wear sturdy, closed shoes because of broken glass and sharp metal. The event is not suitable for children because of Stratford's heavy traffic and lack of sidewalks.

Fish with a Cop (8/3)

After the success of last year's event, a 2nd "Fish with a Cop (and a Fireman)" has been scheduled for Sat., Aug. 3, at Blue Limestone Park (500 W. William St.). Kids between ages 6 and 13 are eligible and will receive a free rod-and-reel combo. There will be 2 sessions (8-11 am & 12-3 pm) with up to 75 participants each. In addition to fishing, ODNR naturalists will be present and there will be a display of boats. For further info, go to Eventbrite. – As of 7/18, both sessions are full.

Car & Dog Wash to Benefit Marching Band (8/3)

The Delaware Hayes Marching Band will hold a Car & Dog Wash on Sat., Aug. 3 (9 am – 1 pm). For a donation, patrons can have their cars and/or dogs washed at the same time. The fundraiser will be held at Saint's Auto Service, 99 E. Central Ave., on the east side of the Olentangy River.

6th Annual Shred-It Day (8/3)

Fidelity Federal Savings and Loan will hold its 6th Annual Shred-It Day for customers and the Delaware community on Sat., Aug. 3 (9 am – 12 pm) at the Kroger Parking lot on N. Houk Rd., near the Fidelity Federal branch (1940 State Rd. 37 W.). The limit is 4-6 boxes of paper per visitor. Retired American flags are also accepted for proper disposal.

Farewell Recital & Reception for Adryán Rojas (8/3)

Adryán Rojas has graduated from Hayes High School in Delaware and will be off to study Violin Performance at the Manhattan School of Music. MSM, founded in 1917, is a premier music conservatory in New York. It has produced many notable alumni in the fields of classical music, jazz, education, and music industry. A farewell recital & reception will be held Sat., Aug. 3 (7 pm) in the

Jemison Auditorium inside OWU's Sanborn Hall, 23 Elizabeth St. The program includes works by Bach, Massenet, and Mendelssohn. Free & open to the public. – Adryán Rojas, the son of Juan Armando Rojas and Jennifer Rathbun, has played as a soloist with the Central Ohio Symphony. He has also been part of the Chamber Music Connection in Worthington. Over the years, he has given many chamber-music concerts as well as solo recitals. You can hear him play Bach on YouTube.

Hartford Independent Fair (8/4-10) – \$

The annual Hartford Independent Fair is a unique joint venture between Licking, Knox, and Delaware counties. It is located in Croton (formerly called Hartford) inside Licking County, just across the Delaware County line and only a few miles from Sunbury. This year's 161st fair takes place Aug. 4-10. The focus remains on agriculture along with the promotion of 4-H and youth activities, but it also features amusement rides (not included in the general admission price), motor races, a classic car show, a lumberjack show, rodeos, a truck-and-tractor pull, a horse-and-pony pull, a demolition derby, a harness racing, educational workshops, kayaking, fishing, archery, magic shows, music, food, etc. The 183 shaded acres also include a museum, a church, a natural-resource & energy-efficiency area, and campsites. General admission is \$7; kids 8 and under are free. To learn more, visit www.hartfordfair.com. They say this is "the biggest little fair in the world."

Delaware Book Club (8/6)

The Delaware Book Club meets Tues., Aug. 6 (7 pm) at Delaware's Panera Bread to discuss Charles Martin's "Water from My Heart," a novel of love and redemption. (If anyone has more info on the book club and its next selection, please share!)

Walk & Bike Audit Training (8/7)

The Delaware General Health District (DGHD) and Creating Healthy Communities are hosting a joint walk & bike audit training, conducted by ODOT's Active Transportation Academy (ATA). The training will be held Wed., Aug. 7 (1-5 pm) in the DGHD Training Room, 1-3 W. Winter St. The workshop includes a ½-mile walk along E. Winter & E. Central. The training is free & open to all. Please RSVP by Aug. 2 to Josie Bonnette (jbbonnette@delawarehealth.org), or call 740-203-2034.

Stratford's "Enchanted Evening" (8/8)

"Enchanted Evening" is Stratford Ecological Center's major annual fundraising. This year, it will be held Thurs., Aug. 8 (5:30-9:30 pm) at the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium (Africa Event Center) and includes live music by Museaic, a local flute-and-guitar duo. Early arrivals at 4 pm may tour the zoo for free. Tickets are \$100 for individuals, \$200 for couples, and up. For more info, contact davidhoy@stratfordecologicalcenter.org.

Marysville's All Ohio Balloon Festival (8/8-10) – \$

The annual All Ohio Balloon Festival is perhaps something you and your family might want to check out. This year, it is held from Aug. 8-10 at Union County Airport (15,000 Weaver Rd. in Marysville). There will be balloon & helicopter rides, balloon artists, bounce houses, slides, an obstacle course, zoo animals, musical entertainment, and more. Visit www.allohioballoonfest.com for info & prices.

One People Meets (8/8)

One People meets Thurs., Aug. 8 (7 pm) at First Presbyterian Church, 73 W. Winter St. Please use the rear entrance. One People attempts to bring residents of all colors together. Founder Dick Jackson and his wife, Janet, are moving out of state this month, and the organization would benefit from some fresh blood.

Dave Staley Event Now an Aquathlon (8/10) – \$

Delaware's annual Dave Staley Aquathlon & Youth Splash-n-Dash Aquathlon is Sat., Aug. 10 at Mingo Park, 500 East Lincoln Ave. Both events are similar to the former Staley triathlon, but without the cycling leg. The aquathlon is designed to be a fun event for all individuals regardless of their fitness and experience level. There are

several distance options: * adult (16 and older): 400 m pool swim + 3.1-mile run; * youth (ages 11-15): 200 m swim + 1-mile run; and youth (ages 6-10): 100 m swim+ 1-mile run. Check-in starts at 7 am, with the adult event beginning at 8 am. Youth races are staggered for 9 am, 9:30 am, and 10 am. Cost is \$35 for adults and \$25 for youth between the ages 5 and 15. Age is based on age on Dec. 31, 2019. To register, do a quick Google search ("Dave Staley Aquathlon 2019").

Grove City EcoFest (8/10)

The annual Grove City EcoFest will be held Sat., Aug. 10 (9 am – 2 pm) in Grove City's Town Center (Park St. & Arbutus Ave., east of Broadway). There will be zones dedicated to sustainability, wildlife, health & wellness, kids, etc. The mission of the Grove City EcoFest is to promote sustainability and to encourage a healthier community. The zero-waste EcoFest is a fun celebration showcasing green exhibitors & interactive family activities to inspire healthier living and environmental preservation. To learn more, visit www.ecofest.grovecityohio.gov.

Walk to End Alzheimer's (8/10)

The annual Walk to End Alzheimer's will take place Sat., Aug. 10. Registration starts at 8 am, a ceremony is scheduled for 9 am, and the walk starts at 9:30 am. The group meets near the fountain on OWU's Jay Walk. Please dress appropriately for the weather and wear comfortable shoes. For questions, contact Lindsay Collins (licollins@alz.org). To learn more about the organization, visit www.alz.org/walk.

Sustainable Delaware Ohio Meets (8/10)

SDO has its monthly membership meeting on Sat., Aug. 10 (9:15-11:15 am) at First Presbyterian Church, 73 W. Winter St. Please use the rear entry. SDO's mission is to promote economic, social, and environmental sustainability in the community through awareness, advocacy, and action. The meetings are open to the public, but only members in good standing are eligible to vote.

Workshop for Survivors of Sexual Assault (8/10)

The HelpLine Sexual Assault Response Network (SARN) is offering a free workshop for survivors of sexual assault on Sat., Aug. 10 (10 am – 1 pm). The location of the "Retreat from the Heat" workshop will be disclosed upon registration. Nora Flanagan is SARN coordinator and workshop facilitator. To learn more and to register, visit www.helplinedelmor.org. HelpLine of Delaware and Morrow Counties is located at 11 N. Franklin St.

Festival Latino (8/10-11)

Festival Latino will be held Aug. 10-11 in Genoa Park in downtown Columbus (11 am – 8 pm). There will be music, dance, food, fashion, art, activities, free health screenings y mucho mas. The event is free / gratis! To learn more, visit www.festivallatino.net.

Fundraiser for Emma Jones (8/10) – \$

A pool party and fundraiser for Democratic candidate Emma Jones will be held Sat., Aug. 10 (4-7 pm) at 268 Sylvan Dr. (Oakhurst Neighborhood). Mirles-Jones is running against Cindy Dinovo for Clerk of Delaware County Municipal Court. Suggested contributions start at \$30. Please bring a dish to the potluck dinner. RSVPs to friendsofmirlesjones@gmail.com would be appreciated.

Gospel Sing at Mingo Park (8/10)

The Amazing Grace Singers present "Love Lifted Me," an evening of gospel singing at Mingo Park's shelter (500 E. Lincoln Ave.) on Sat., Aug. 10 (6-8 pm). The event, which will be held rain or shine, is free & open to the public. There is some picnic-table seating, but it is recommended that you bring a lawn chair.

DCHS Presents "Stratford: A Mill Town" (8/11) – \$

The Delaware County Historical Society presents "Stratford: A Mill Town" on Sun., Aug. 11 (2-5 pm) at 2690 Stratford Rd. The tour provides the opportunity to learn the history of the village of Stratford and its mills (1811-1896). Ten buildings will be visited, with van transportation provided by Coughlin Automotive Performance

JCDR. Tickets are \$20 for members, \$25 for non-members. Children 12 and under are free. Preregistration is required. Please visit www.delawareohiohistory.org and follow the link to Eventbrite. Alternatively, you may call DCHS at 740-369-3831, ext. 3.

Delaware City Schools (8/14)

Wed., Aug. 14 is the official start of Delaware City Schools' new year. The school year runs through May 27, 2020. Effective Aug. 1, Heidi Kegley is the new superintendent of the district following Paul Craft's departure.

DACC Grand Opening (8/15)

The Delaware Area Career Center (DACC) will hold its Grand Opening on Thurs., Aug. 15 (5-8 pm) at 4565 Columbus Pike (US 23 S). The north campus and the south campus are now consolidated under one roof. (The facility at Rt. 521 will be used by Delaware County in the future.) There will be refreshments & games at the event as well as tours. All ages are welcome. For educators and business partners, there will be additional tours throughout the school year. Some 1,100 students will study at DACC beginning Aug. 13. For more info, visit www.delawareareacc.org.

Delaware County Democratic Party (8/15)

The Central Committee of the Delaware County Dems meets Thurs., Aug. 15 (7:30-9 pm). Meetings are usually held at the Willis Education Center at 74 W. William St., 2nd floor. The meetings are open to the public.

Outdoor Exploration Expo (8/17)

Preservation Parks is bringing back the Outdoor Exploration Expo for a 2nd year! Come and have a fun day exploring the outdoors and trying out some new activities on Sat., Aug. 17 (10 am – 4 pm). On tap: target sports (archery & boomerang), outdoor cooking, fishing, gear displays, and fitness sports (trail fun, martial arts, hiking). The expo is for all ages! The location is Camp Lazarus (4422 Columbus Pike / US 23 S). Free & open to the public. For more info, visit www.preservationparks.com.



Benefit in the Barn (8/17) – \$

The 2019 Benefit in the Barn, hosted by the Delaware Co. and Union Co. Farm Bureaus will take place Sat., Aug. 17 (6 pm) at Gar-Mar Farm, 6040 Dublin Rd., south of Delaware. Doors open at 5 pm, dinner starts at 6 pm (catered by City Barbeque), and the Central Ohio Symphony will perform at 7 pm. All net proceeds benefit the Delaware Co. Hunger Alliance and Union Co. hunger relief agencies. Tickets are \$35 per person (\$30 for Farm Bureau members) and include dinner and the concert. The cash bar is extra. Special sponsorships are available. For more info & tickets, visit www.benefitinthebarn.org.

Classes Start at OWU (8/21)

Ohio Wesleyan Univ.'s fall semester starts Wed., Aug. 21 and ends Dec. 6, followed by a week of final exams. More than 400 new freshmen and –women are expected to arrive on campus.

New Exhibit Opens at the Ross Art Museum (8/21)

Renowned photographer and OWU alumna JoAnn Verburg '72 focuses her camera on a series of mundane objects. Alternating between still life and snapshot, Verburg considers the items we consume, as well as their environmental impact when discarded and forgotten. The exhibit, entitled "After / Before," runs from Aug. 21 through Oct. 20. A curator's tour and exhibition reception is planned for Wed., Sept. 18 (5 pm). To learn more about the artist, visit <http://joannverburg.com>. The Ross is located at 60 S. Sandusky St. Free & open to the public.

Point Project Open House (8/21)

The City of Delaware is hosting a 2nd open house for the Point Project to share new information, incl. preliminary construction

limits and phasing. The session will be held Wed., Aug. 21 (5-7 pm) in the gymnasium of Conger Elementary School at 10 Channing St. Attendees may arrive any time. Written comments will be accepted through Sept. 20. Free & open to the public.

Another Summer on Winter Concert (8/21)

After two popular and successful free concerts on W. Winter St. between Sandusky & Franklin streets in June and July, it was decided to have a final "Summer on Winter" concert on Wed., Aug. 21 (7-9 pm). The Hoodoo Soul Band performed in June, Reaganomics in July. Shucking Bubba Deluxe (SBD), a 6-piece band, will be next. All 3 concerts are "DORA" events where guests can drink alcohol within a designated outdoor recreational area.

Delaware County Republican Party (8/22)

The next Central Committee meeting of the DCRP is Thurs., Aug. 22 (7 pm). The Executive Committee meets the same day. Meetings are normally held at Northgate Church on State Rt. 36/37 E., across from Cracker Barrel.



Olentangy Watershed Clean-Up (8/24)

This fall's Olentangy Watershed Clean-Up will start at the Waste Water Treatment Plant at 225 Cherry St. and work its way upstream. All equipment (and a free T-shirt) is provided, but participants must wear sturdy, closed shoes because of slippery rocks, glass shards, and sharp metal in the water and sign a liability waiver. Bring "waders" if you have them. Participants under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. For questions or to sign up, contact Caroline Cicerchi, Delaware's Watershed / Sustainability Coordinator, at 740-203-1905 or ccicerchi@delawareohio.net.



Galena Summerfest (8/24)

Come and enjoy Galena's 10th annual Summerfest on the square in the quaint village of Galena. It will be held Sat., Aug. 24 (11 am – 11 pm). With well over 10,000 people expected to attend, families & friends from all over Ohio can celebrate the end of summer with great music, delicious food, a variety of local vendors, a KidZone, & more than 70 vendors representing arts, food & nonprofits. Celebrate the end of summer with the special outdoor communities of Galena, Hoover Reservoir, and Big & Little Walnut Creeks. For more info, visit www.galenasummerfest.com.

"Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" (8/25)

Labor Day weekend in September is one of the deadliest on the road. That is the reason why local law enforcement will begin its "Driver Sober or Get Pulled Over" campaign on Aug. 25. There will be increased patrol for drivers impaired by alcohol and illicit drugs, but also by prescription medications that prevent them from operating vehicles safely.

Ryan J. Haddad Performance & Talk (8/30)

Writer, actor, and OWU alumnus Ryan J. Haddad is returning to his alma mater in a solo play called "Hi, Are You Single?" on Fri., Aug. 30 (7-9 pm) in Chappellear Drama Center. He first staged his play in March 2015 at OWU. A conversation with Haddad will follow. Haddad has a physical disability (cerebral palsy) and wears leg braces, but he refuses to let that diminish his sex drive and gay lifestyle. His humorous play is "an examination of intimacy, rejection, and judgment." Free & open to the public, but the show may or may not be appropriate for people under 17/18. To learn more about the artist, visit www.ryanjhaddad.com. (The event is part of OWU's 2019/20 Sagan National Colloquium that focuses on all the ways that

OWU alumni are actively working to change the world. The full program has not yet been announced.)

UPCOMING EVENTS

All Horse Parade, Sept. 8, Delaware
Delaware County Fair, Sept. 14-21
Community Unity Festival, Sat., Sept. 28, Ross Park
(note the new date!)
Harvest Fair, Sept. 28, Stratford Ecological Center
R. B. Hayes Statue Unveiling Ceremony (Oct. 4)
Ohio Gourd Show, Oct. 4-6, Delaware Co. Fairgrounds
Election Day, Tues., Nov. 5

CITY OF DELAWARE

The City of Delaware in August

City Council meets Mon., Aug. 12 + 26 at 7 pm. Additional board and commission meetings include Public Works / Utilities (Tues., Aug. 6, 6 pm), Civil Service (Wed., Aug. 7, 3 pm), Planning Commission (Wed., Aug. 7, 6:30 pm), Zoning Appeals (Wed., Aug. 14, 6:30 pm), Parking & Safety (Mon., Aug 19, 6 pm), Shade Tree Commission (Tues., Aug. 27, 6:30 pm), and Historic Preservation Commission (Wed., Aug. 28, 6:30 pm). It is possible for meetings to be cancelled due to a lack of quorum or of agenda, so always check the City's website (www.delawareohio.net). Meetings are streamed live on the same website and can be viewed at any time.

City Council Discusses Partnership with YMCA

City Council members have once again heard numerous complaints about the YMCA and the recreational programs it runs, incl. the swimming pool at Mingo Park. The issues mentioned at the City Council meeting on July 8 included a host of issues: lack of leadership, professionalism, safety, cleanliness, data, adequate staff, etc. It seems the Health Dept. recently got involved over water quality and safety. The partnership is definitely under strain. The question is whether or not it can be saved and repaired. The City hopes and believes it can be done given that the YMCA Delaware is under new leadership. President / CEO Tony Collins was present and pledged to carefully listen to stakeholders and work closely with the City. He sounded sincere. If he stays long enough, he may be able to restore both trust and quality.

HPC and Delaware's East Side

There is renewed interest in revitalizing Delaware's east side and, in conjunction with it, in expanding Delaware's historic district across the Olentangy River. The area along E. Central, E. Winter, E. William, and Lake Street contains historic structures of significance and value for which there are currently no protections in place. Given current development trends, they are at risk. For that reason, at its May 22 meeting the Historic Preservation Committee launched a formal inquiry regarding the protocol and process to reassess the current boundaries. Changing the district boundaries would constitute a zoning-code change and thus require review, concurrence, and adoption by the Planning Commission and City Council. In light of the expansion of E. William Street, the Point project, and the overall vision of Delaware's next Comprehensive Plan the idea may or may not gain traction. At its July 24 meeting, HPC continued the preliminary conversation about the possibility and desirability of expanding the existing historic district designation on the east side of Delaware. However, because three members were absent it was decided to table the discussion until the Aug. 28 meeting. A joint work session consisting of HPC, the Planning Commission, and City Council may be the first step to establish what the vision for Delaware's east side is.

Spring Street Hotel Project Not Moving Forward

During a presentation for City Council on July 22, Delaware's Economic Development Director Sean Hughes stated that the hotel project on Spring Street, adjacent to OWU, was not going to move forward. Developers wanted to erect a 6-story Hampton Inn at the site, but it appears the asking price for the piece of land was too

steep to make the project economically feasible. Property prices in Delaware have skyrocketed in recent years as the downtown area has become more desirable. Unfortunately, it means that the two buildings at 7 Spring St. (Auto Repair) and 27 Spring St. (NAPA) may remain vacant eyesores for years to come.



Delaware Welcomes New Chief Prosecutor

Delaware welcomes Natalia S. Harris as the city's new chief prosecutor. According to a 7/29 City of Delaware press release, she brings to the municipal court nearly 20 years of legal experience, incl. the last 4 heading Cincinnati's prosecution division. Prior to that, she worked in Dayton and Columbus. She replaces Melissa Schiffler who in April was named Delaware County Prosecutor. Harris graduated from Central State Univ. in 1997 and obtained her law degree from the Univ. of Dayton.

Delaware Creates New Court Dockets

Two specialized dockets at the Delaware Municipal Court have earned final certification from the Ohio Supreme Court's Commission on Specialized Dockets. Judge David Sunderman's Mental Health Docket and Judge Marianne Hemmeter's Mission Court Docket, a veteran's treatment court docket, were certified in June. The certification requirements include establishing eligibility criteria, evaluating effectiveness, and assembling a treatment team for implementing daily operations of the specialized docket.

Specialized dockets are courts that are dedicated to specific types of offenses or offenders and use a combination of different techniques for holding offenders accountable while also addressing the underlying causes of their behavior. Other specialized dockets in Ohio courts deal with issues such as drugs & alcohol, domestic violence, and human trafficking.

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor congratulated the Delaware Municipal Court and Judges Sunderman and Hemmeter. "Specialized dockets divert offenders toward criminal justice initiatives that employ tools and tailored services to treat and rehabilitate the offender so they can become productive members of society. Studies have shown this approach works by reducing recidivism while saving tax dollars," the Chief Justice said.

Suspended Drivers Offered Amnesty

Millions of people with suspended driver's licenses are trapped in a never-ending cycle of debt: without a driver's license they cannot get a job, but without a job they cannot afford to pay steep court fines and new fees to get suspended driver's licenses reinstated. Ohio's harsh license-revocation laws, which are among the worst in the nation, effectively criminalize poverty, disproportionately penalize minorities, and destabilize communities.

In 2018, however, the Ohio legislature passed House Bill 236, the Reinstatement Fee Amnesty Initiative. From Jan. 31 through July 31, for a 6-month period, the initiative reduced or waived license reinstatement fees for drivers who were suspended for certain violations. People who received SNAP benefits (food stamps) qualified for complete amnesty while others qualified for a 50% reduction. Approximately 410,000 Ohioans were eligible for the program, which gave many people a much-needed fresh start. Franklin, Licking, Perry and other counties held driver's license reinstatement "clinics" with high levels of participation. Finally, literally days before the program's termination, Delaware County joined them by offering a similar clinic on Fri., July 26, limited to 50 "clients." Participants learned about how to get a license reinstated, but no new cards were printed on site. It is not clear why it took Delaware County six months to get its act together, but it is a very red county where Republican prosecutors and judges are often resistant to common-sense change. Instead of embracing progress, the system dragged its feet and waited until the very last minute to implement the state-imposed mandate.

Sadly, the Ohio program did nothing to curb new suspensions of driver's licenses. According to the Columbus Dispatch

(1/28/19), there are 32 ways to have a driver's license suspended in Ohio. Many have nothing whatsoever to do with safety on roads. "You can have your license suspended for failure to pay child support, dropping out of high school, failing to pay fines, missing a court hearing, or failing to provide proof of insurance" (Columbus Dispatch, 2/22/19). In 2016, the largest number of license suspensions was for failure to provide insurance (1.25 million), followed by people who failed to appear in court and/or pay fines (500,000).

Update 7/24: Some 80,000 Ohioans have applied for amnesty in the program's first six months, and it appears the program has now been extended until the end of 2019.

Moving Forward Circle

Moving Forward is a group of community members committed to helping participants make the change from "offender" to productive citizen. Ex-offenders need support, housing, a job, education, and support. Moving Forward focuses on the future rather than the past and is intended to reduce recidivism, make communities safer, and make the transition into civil life as smooth as possible. Elements of restorative justice are used in the approach (e.g., accepting responsibility, civic engagement). Diane Bricker from the Delaware County Adult Court (117 N. Union St.) is the contact person. Moving Forward Circle meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month (10 am – 12 pm) at the Andrews House, 39 W. Winter St.

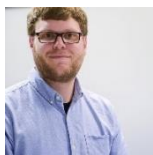
City Council Elections

City Council members Chris Jones (1st Ward), Lisa Keller (2nd Ward), Jim Browning (3rd Ward) are up for reelection on Nov. 5. As of July 31, none of them have filed at the Delaware County Board of Elections. The deadline is Wed., Aug. 7 (4 pm). Jim Browning has announced that for personal reasons he is not running again. Council members serve 4-year terms. Their compensation is small considering all the hours they put in, the material they read, and the meetings they conduct.

Campaign contributions are legal as long as reporting guidelines are followed. However, all candidates should consider rejecting contributions from corporations such as the Building Industry Association (BIA). Sooner or later, the BIA and BIA-affiliated developers will submit plans to City Council, expecting a return on their investment. It's better to avoid such conflicts of interest and even the perception of impropriety.

As of July 31, the only person who has filed for one of the three wards in question is Mike Rush, 778 Canal St., a candidate for 2nd Ward who is taking on Lisa Keller. Also running for 2nd Ward seems to be Libertarian Stephen Tackett. A flyer with his name and "a few key issues" was recently disseminated at homes in the 2nd Ward, but Tackett has yet to file.

Fourth-Ward Elections



Kyle Rohrer represented the Fourth Ward on City Council from 2015 to 2019. He is not running again, after having been chosen to run as elected Municipal Judge by the Republican Party. Trying to fill the 4th Ward seat is **Drew T. Farrell**, an OWU history graduate (2010). After receiving an MA in Instructional Technology from Miami Univ. (2017), he is now working as an educator for Westerville City Schools. Locally, he has volunteered for Main Street Delaware and is the owner of Drew Farrell Photography. Farrell is 31 years old and married to Whitney, also a teacher. The couple lives at 228 W. Lincoln Ave. and has one daughter. On Facebook, Farrell says that he has considered running for City Council for some time. Traffic and infrastructure are high priorities for him as are quality city services, historic preservation, and green spaces & parks for walking, biking, and other forms of recreation. His Facebook page is www.farrellforfourth.weebly.com.



Drew Farrell's opponent is **Sarah R. JanTausch** (sometimes spelled Jantausch), a local graduate of Delaware Christian High School and also a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan (2014) where she played golf and graduated with a BA in Politics & Government. She is listed as a 26-year-old registered Republican who lives at 243 W. Lincoln Ave. Her birthday is Aug. 28, so she will be 27 by the time of the elections. She is a member of the Central Committee of the Delaware County Republican Party. In 2018, when she was profiled by "CityPulse: Your Guide to Columbus," her job was listed as Director of Outreach for the Ohio Lieutenant Governor, Mary Taylor. At one point, she was also an assistant to David J. Hansen, the former president of the conservative Buckeye Policy Institute president and promoter of school choice and charter schools in Ohio. In the same interview with CityPulse JanTausch added she was "pursuing a master's degree in management and leadership in the Western Governor's University Business College," an online school. In a brief ad-hoc interview JanTausch stated that her top priorities for Delaware would be traffic and the continued success of downtown businesses and the rest of the city.

"Community Matters" has talked to both Drew and Sarah and believes that they are both intelligent and articulate candidates with a genuine interest in the local community.

The Ravines at Olentangy

On Feb. 12, 2018, City Council approved Ordinance 18-05, an ordinance for Fischer Homes for approval of "a temporary sales trailer" at The Ravines at Olentangy located at the corner of Curve Rd. and Armstrong Rd. The temporary sales trailer was supposed to be "permitted for a maximum of six months or until the model home received building occupancy permit, whichever occurs first." That stipulation was in accordance with Delaware's Codified Ordinances (1149.01). Although a number of homes have since gone up there in the new development on the city's east side, as of July 15 – nearly eighteen months later – the trailer is still there. And there is no indication that it is going to be vacated any time soon.

As far as "Community Matters" is concerned, the trailer is not a priority. It is not a safety issue, and it is located in the boondocks. There are worse eyesores in the city and more urgent needs. It is, however, interesting to note that the City of Delaware often seems to use different, more lenient sets of standards for developers who are out of compliance. Private residents would not get away with such flagrant violations of zoning laws and ordinances. The City has a reputation of strictly enforcing rules and going after private delinquents. Developers, on the other hand (especially if they contribute to campaign funds), are treated with velvet gloves. City authorities should note that perception matters. There is a reason why many residents, across the political spectrum, are distrustful and suspicious of City Council and City officials.

Bike Trail over William Street Closed

As part of the E. William St. widening project, the Springfield Branch Bike Trail East will soon be closed over E. William St. until next summer. The existing bridge will be demolished and replaced to better realign the E. William & Lake St. intersection and to make room for large trucks.

Belle Commons Business Park

On the docket for Planning Commission's Aug. 7 meeting (6:30 pm) is a request by Makapa LLC for approval of a rezoning amendment for Belle Commons Business Park from residential (R-3) to mixed use (R-3 PMU / Planned Mixed Use Overlay District). The 11+ acres are located on the north side of Belle Ave. and the east side of Liberty Rd. In the past, Makapa LLC has applied and received approval for building single-family units on the property, but the company and Planning Commission were reminded by concerned residents that adjacent Liberty Casting is the worst emitter of toxic air

emissions in Delaware and a company with a history of deadly fires and explosions. Constructing a business park along Belle Ave., while not ideal, is a better option than family homes with children. The Planning Commission does permit public comments should anyone be interested in the issue.

Former City Mayor and County Commissioner Dies

Donald ("Don") E. Wuertz (1938-2019), former mayor of Delaware and Delaware County Commissioner, has died at the age of 80. He was born in Dublin, Ohio in 1938 and graduated from Hilliard High School in 1956. After serving in the Army from 1961-63, he worked for the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture for 37 years. In the 1970s and 1980s, he served on Delaware City Council for 12 years, 8 of them as mayor (1978-81 and 1986-89), and later as Delaware County Commissioner for 8 years (1995-2002). He was affiliated with the Republican Party. A funeral service was held July 26, with a burial following in Dublin Cemetery. – Current Delaware Mayor Carolyn Kay Riggie has called Wuertz an outstanding man and asked for a moment of silence at the July 22 meeting of City Council. Others also praised Wuertz as "a faithful public servant who always worked for the betterment of the community."

Citizen Police Academy Starts Sept. 3

The next Citizen Police Academy begins Tues., Sept. 3 and will run every Tuesday from 6:30 to 9:30 pm through Nov. 12. There will be one Saturday morning session on Oct. 5 from 9 to 11:30 am. Students will also participate in a 4-hour ride-along program. Topics include criminal law / patrol procedures, officer safety / self-defense, criminal-justice system, drug investigations, traffic stops, building searches, criminal investigations, domestic violence, and firearms training. The Citizen Police Academy is free. Applicants must be 18 or older and are subject to a background check. Felony, weapons, assault, and drug offenses may disqualify applicants from participation. For more info and a registration form, visit <http://bit.ly/2bg9BPY>.

Upon successful completion, participants may join the Delaware Citizen Police Academy Alumni Association (DCPAAA). Members assist the DPD with large-scale community events and other duties. According to a DCPAAA presentation at City Council on June 24, the 501(c)(3) volunteer organization currently has 47 members and serves as "a liaison" between police and the public. Its stated mission is "to support the police department." Among the additional services mentioned were neighborhood patrols and house-watching.

For years, "Community Matters" has suggested the creation of an independent civilian oversight board, which is something many cities have, to help improve community relations and community trust. However, the City of Delaware and the Delaware Police Department have not been receptive to the idea.

Ironman Cyclist Killed on Route 23 N

On Aug. 28, Kristen J. Oswald of Royersford, Pennsylvania was struck and killed by a tractor-trailer on U.S. Rt. 23 N between Troutman and Penry roads while riding a bicycle during the Ironman 70.3 triathlon. A safety zone had been established for competing cyclists, but it appears Oswald, 44, was riding outside the designated safety zone. She was declared dead at the scene. Her husband, Christopher Oswald, was also competing in the triathlon and had to be located. The crash continues to be under investigation.

More than 7,000 bicyclists will be participating in Pelotonia on the weekend of Aug. 2-4, and their safety is also a concern. On June 4, a cyclist training for Pelotonia was struck and killed on U.S. Rt. 36/37 E.

Cheryl "Flynn" Cannon, 1964-2019

Somehow "Community Matters" missed the story of Flynn Cannon, a local resident who was evicted last winter and died homeless, "cold and alone," on Jan. 7 at age 54, according to Hong Nguyen. She shared the story with Delaware City Council on July 22 while expressing the need for a homeless shelter in Delaware. Comments left by others on the website of Robinson Funeral Home

confirm that the way Flynn passed away was "sad." Her body was found by Nikki Hogarth from First Presbyterian Church. (She did not respond to an inquiry from "Community Matters.") Flynn's official obituary notes that she "enjoyed attending meals throughout the community" and participating at festivals, First Friday events, and fairs. A graveside service was held Jan. 14 in Oak Grove Cemetery.

Flynn was a fixture in the community. Many people knew her face, but not her name, in part because Flynn had some mental-health issues and did not like to talk to strangers. She was perhaps best known as a loyal friend and companion of Mary E. Rose whom she often accompanied, walking alongside Mary's red electric scooter and sporting colorful clothes. The two did a lot of things together. According to Mary Rose, Flynn was "a very secretive person" who did not like to answer questions. However, she was conscientious and dependable in everything she did.

Here is another little factoid that few people will remember. For many years, Flynn helped members of Delaware's Shade Tree Commission bag hundreds of pine-tree seedlings to give away to the public. Although she was not compensated for the volunteer job, she loved it and was heartbroken when the process changed and her services were no longer required.

"Community Matters" does not yet know the specific circumstances of Flynn Cannon's eviction and untimely death, but intends to learn more about this doleful tale.



Breakaway Cycling Is Looking for a New Facility

The owner and manager of Breakaway Cycling, Dan Negley, is looking for a new home for his retail store at 17 W. William St. after his landlord jacked up the rent and rejected what Dan calls a "reasonable offer" to purchase the building. Dan Negley is currently looking for a suitable place to own, not to rent – preferably near existing bike trails. Since Marysville no longer has a bike shop and sends more customers to Delaware, Dan is also open to the possibility of a building on the west side. If you happen to have a brilliant idea, please share it with him. Dan says he wants the community to know what his situation is now so that people won't be blindsided later.

Delaware is a rapidly gentrifying city. By and large, urban renewal is a good thing, but sadly it also means crushing rents for businesses and apartments in the downtown area. Some low-cost shops and restaurants are slowly being displaced as are the people frequenting them and working there. During the upcoming City Council elections, residents should ask candidates about their plans to keep gentrification at bay.



Cross Strings Now Open at 26 W. Winter St.

Music store Cross Strings LLC has moved from 11½ W. Winter St. to 26 W. Winter St., across from Choffey's, and is now open for business. The store sells acoustic and electric guitars as well as an interesting variety of ukuleles. It also accepts consignment sales and repairs guitars and banjos. In addition, it offers guitar and piano lessons as well as voice lessons.



RNR Tire Express Coming to Delaware

As reported in May, RNR Tire Express will open a store this fall at 150 S. Sandusky St., formerly occupied by Goodyear Auto Service. The franchise carries a complete line of quality name brand tires and wheels. Remodeling efforts are underway and include some

significant exterior “face-lifting” alterations and new signage. Plans have so far not yet been approved by the Planning Commission and City Council, but this could be a case where applications are handled “administratively,” without public knowledge and feedback. It seems to be the new trend. A contractor on site stated that RNR Tire Express hopes to open in September.

Keen Edge Sharpening

Do you need your knives, scissors, or garden pruners sharpened? Dave Whaley is your man. He is present at the local farmer’s market every Saturday morning and can sharpen household tools on the spot. He also handles bigger items such as lawnmower blades and hedge trimmers, axes and shovels, but those he has to take to his shop in Marion. Pick-up and delivery service is available for large orders. Ordinary scissors start at \$4, knives at \$6. Ask for a complete price list at his table, now located next to Amato’s. There is also a new Delaware drop-off and pick-up location at Greater Gouda, 12 N. Sandusky St.

Central Ohio Symphony Receives PNC Grant

The Central Ohio Symphony has received a \$25,000 grant from the PNC Foundation through the PNC Arts Alive initiative. This is the 5th time the Symphony was awarded a PNC Arts Alive grant, part of a multi-year, \$3.25 million initiative of the PNC Foundation that supports visual and performing arts groups in the region with the goal of increasing arts access and engagement in new and innovative ways. The Symphony’s project, “Building Community,” will take place in April 2020 and focus on community from the worldwide to the national to the local. The project will culminate in the final concert of the Symphony’s 41st season on April 25, 2020, featuring international trumpet artist Pacho Flores performing the new Arturo Márquez Trumpet Concerto; the Symphony No. 1 by 20th-century composer George Walker, the first African-American composer to win the Pulitzer Prize; and the performance of Peter Boyer’s “Ellis Island,” a work that includes the orchestra, video, and actors.

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from the PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture.

Coming Up at The Strand

- Aug. 09, Dora & the Lost City of Gold
- Aug. 16, The Angry Birds #2
- Oct. 18, Malificent – Mistress of Evil
- Nov. 22, Frozen #2
- Dec. 01, Star Wars – The Rise of Skywalker
- Dec. 13, Jumanj – The Next Level
- Feb. 14, Sonic the Hedgehog
- Mar. 27, Mulan (2020)
- June 19, Pixar’s “Soul”
- July 10, Ghostbusters 2020
- July 31, Morbius

COSI Science Festival Expanding to Delaware in 2020

The 2019 COSI Science Festival was a great success, drawing about 40,000 people to educational events in Columbus. COSI has now announced that the hands-on Science Festival will return in 2020 (May 6-9). Next year it will include 6 additional partner cities in contiguous counties: Circleville, Delaware, Heath, London, Marysville, and Pickerington. A 3-year, \$850,000 investment grant from Battelle is allowing the STEM sciences festival to become an annual event, involving schools, libraries, community centers, and even local businesses and bars. More than one hundred community events are planned for 2020, culminating with the Big Science Celebration on Sat., May 9.

Recyclability of Plastics #1-7

There are recurring reports that the recycling container at St. Mary Catholic Church (corner of E. William & Henry streets) no longer accepts plastics #3-7. Those reports are incorrect. “Community Matters” inspected the Waste Management container and also studied

WM’s website (www.recycleoftenrecycleright.com). There is every indication that the company continues to accept all plastic bottles and containers, including yogurt cups. The only stated exception are loose plastic bags and plastics film such as Saran wrap. Waste Management also does not want your foam cups and containers. All metal items are welcome, by the way, as are all paper products. So, to the best of our knowledge, continue to use the Waste Management container at St. Mary to recycle all your plastics #1-7 products. The only problem with the container is that it is often jam-packed because it is not emptied frequently enough.

OHIO WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

OWU 2019-20 Academic Calendar

In fall, the first day of classes is Wed., Aug. 21, the last day Fri., Dec. 6. Mid-semester break is from Oct. 9-11, Thanksgiving break Nov. 25-29. In spring, the first day of classes is Wed., Jan. 15, the last day Tues., April 28. Spring break is from March 9-13. Commencement is Sat., May 9, 2020.

OWU Construction Projects

Work will begin soon for construction of “The Village,” a new senior-housing apartment complex for students along S. Liberty St. The three connected buildings will include single bedrooms within 4-room, 6-room, and 8-room units. The Village provides seniors with the kind of privacy and transitional living experiences that has become the standard at many other colleges and universities. The Thomson Convenience Store, currently housed in Thomson Hall, will be relocated inside the Village. In addition, Smith Hall West will be completely renovated and modernized, to be reopened in fall of 2020. The entire residential-renewal program, which includes additional phases, will cost \$60 million. – Smaller construction projects this summer included façade work at Beeghly Library, new roofs, and LED lighting for academic buildings.



Chad Johns Interim Chaplain

Following Jon Powers’ retirement, Dr. Chad E. Johns ’02 (cejohns@owu.edu) will serve as Interim Chaplain in 2019-20. A national search will be launched in fall, according to a 7/18 memo by OWU President Rock Jones. – Dr. Johns graduated from OWU with a BA in Psychology and minors in Physics and Astronomy. He earned his M.Div. from Boston Univ. School of Theology in 2005 and received his doctorate in Ministry in 2015 from Wesleyan Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., with a dissertation on the religious dimensions in the works of British fantasy writers J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, and J. K. Rowling (“Harry Potter”). He has been employed at OWU since 2005 in various administrative, teaching, and pastoral capacities and is very familiar with the institution and its students. Among other things, he has been the director of OWU’s Spring Break Interfaith Service Week and is a member of OWU’s Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Lyman Leathers Memorial Service

According to information from OWU, the memorial service for Dr. Lyman Leathers (1929-2019), former Professor of English and Humanities-Classics, will be held Tues., Sept. 3 (4 pm) in the Benes of OWU’s HWCC Campus Center. The service features several speakers representing the various facets and interests of his life, incl. musicians. Leathers was a lifelong fan of opera, a life trustee for Opera Columbus, and served as art critic for the Delaware Gazette. A reception follows. Free & open to the public.

OWU Closes Registration for Lifelong Learning Institute

After the 200 mark was reached just after 2 weeks, registration is now closed for OWU’s new Lifelong Learning Institute and the 10 courses it offers beginning Sept. 23. Given LLI’s success,

plans are in the works for a spring 2020 term (March 16 – April 30) and beyond.

OWU Performs "The Country House" & "Eurydice"

In Fall 2019, OWU will perform "The Country House" by Donald Margulies. Specific show times are Oct. 4-5 (8 pm) and Oct. 6 (2 pm). In this dramatic play, a theatrical family and friends return to a summer home in the Berkshires. A Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, Margulies provides a witty, yet piercing look at relationships as a multi-generational family of performers come to terms with the roles they play in each other's lives. Directed by faculty member Prof. Elane Denny.

In Spring 2020, OWU will perform Sarah Ruhl's play "Eurydice." Specific show times are Feb. 13-15 (8 pm) and Feb. 16 (2 pm). The award-winning modern playwright takes the classical Orpheus myth of love and loss and gives it a new perspective in this imaginative and poetic work. Told from the point of view of Orpheus's wife, Eurydice, this play is by turns magical, exuberant, hopeful, and heart-rending. Directed by faculty member Bradford Sadler.

Both plays will be performed in the Studio Theatre inside OWU's Chappellear Drama Center, 45 Rowland Ave. Tickets are \$10 for general admission and \$5 for senior citizens, OWU employees & non-OWU students. Admission is free for OWU students with a valid OWU ID. To reserve tickets, call the box office at (740) 368-3855. For more information, visit www.owu.edu/theatreanddance.

OWU Performs Musical "The Secret Garden"

From April 17-18 and 24-25, OWU's departments of Theatre & Dance and Music will collaborate on a rarely seen and heard performance of "The Secret Garden," based on the book by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-1924), lyrics by Marsha Norman, and with music by Lucy Simon. Specific show times are April 17-18 (8 pm), April 19 (2 pm), and April 24-25 (8 pm). The show brings an enchanting classic to vivid life in an award-winning musical for all ages. Orphaned Mary returns to England to live on a foreboding estate that has dark mysteries to discover in this tale about love, forgiveness, healing, and renewal. Stage direction is by D. Glen Vanderbilt Jr., and music direction is by Jason Hiester & Jennifer Whitehead. The play will be performed on the Main Stage inside OWU's Chappellear Drama Center, 45 Rowland Ave. Tickets are \$10 for general admission and \$5 for senior citizens, OWU employees, and non-OWU students. Admission is free for OWU students with a valid OWU ID. To reserve tickets, call the box office at (740) 368-3855. For more information, visit www.owu.edu/theatreanddance.

"The Secret Garden" by Frances Hodgson Burnett by Tom Wolber

OWU is scheduled to perform a musical version of "The Secret Garden" in spring of 2020, and so this may be an opportune moment to reprint a slightly revised excerpt from an email exchange that took place in 2014 after coming across the 1911 novel totally serendipitously. It was a strangely moving and uplifting experience.

"The author of *The Secret Garden* is well acquainted with pain and suffering, tragedy and death. However, she does not stop there. She is looking for a way out of the doldrums. And she finds it, but not in modernity, in the STEM sciences, in artificial intelligence, or in economics. She finds it in nature – in a secret garden that Mary and Colin, both of them horribly afflicted and anguished children, start to explore together. The plants and the animals show them the way, and as the therapeutic magic of nature kicks in, the two begin to gradually heal in body and mind. And let's not forget the character of Dickon, the nature boy who can talk to birds and is friends with all animals. The vegetables he grows are bigger and healthier than anyone else's.

Even though the book is more than 100 years old, it is timeless and universal – and thus a 'classic.' There is much 'noble simplicity, silent grandeur' (Winckelmann) in it. Given how nature-deprived contemporary children and adults have become, this is a title that can help reconnect us with the natural world. The novel might also provide an answer to overmedicalized children suffering from certain

mental-health issues such as ADHD. As Thoreau states in *Walden*, there is no dark melancholy to be found anywhere in nature. As Freud pointed out repeatedly, cultural discontentment and mental pathologies are closely related. Once we have retrieved and regained what we have lost (nature, identity, authenticity, etc.), it is possible for alienation and melancholy to simply vanish and to rediscover hope and happiness. At the end of the book, a broken family and a broken world celebrate their renewal and rebirth – all thanks to the enchanted garden.

If you have an old copy of *The Secret Garden* sitting somewhere, I encourage you to read or reread it. Its magic will speak to you if you are willing to listen. Consider buying it as a birthday or holiday present for a teenager. The pantheonic novel is a transformational, life-affirming adventure that deserves to be much better known. It is as good, or perhaps even better, than *Harry Potter*. It may even inspire you to start cultivating your own flower and vegetable garden. "Il faut cultiver notre jardin."

OWU Lacks Tuition Guarantee

As of Fall 2019, all 13 of Ohio's public undergraduate universities offer a tuition guarantee, now mandated by the Ohio legislature. Tuition guarantees ensure that in-state undergraduate students pay the same price for tuition over 4 years without price increases. The restriction does not apply to various other fees, incl. room & board. Students must complete their degrees and obtain their diplomas within the 4-year time frame or they will forfeit the guarantee.

Tuition guarantees are rapidly becoming the national norm. Hundreds of colleges are offering them at this point. Families need to have transparency, predictability, and certainty that they can afford to pay the high tuition bills over a longer period than just one year, or they might get spooked. Four-year degree guarantees puts families at ease. It is therefore time for Ohio's private colleges to follow suit. Some already have instituted tuition-guarantee policies, but others – including OWU – are lagging behind. There may have been conversations at the higher levels of administration and the Board of Trustees, but there has been zero discussion of tuition-guarantee program at faculty meetings and in faculty committees. At this point, not having a tuition-guarantee program is a disincentive for students to attend OWU and other private colleges. The school and its GLCA sister institutions should take additional steps to prove that college affordability remains a top priority. To be sure, OWU already offers a very steep tuition-discount rate to incoming students. Generous merit-based and need-based assistance is available. Few students pay the so-called sticker price. But OWU is not a leader in the exploration of additional ways to ensure college affordability; it is a follower.

There are schools out there that are experimenting with truly exciting innovative programs. Among them are tuition freezes and even tuition reductions; 4-year degree guarantees; guaranteed job placements; financial assistance for alumni who earn less than a certain minimum amount after graduation; tuition-deferment programs; income-share agreements; income-based repayment options; and loan-repayment assistance.

DELAWARE COUNTY AND CENTRAL OHIO



Mobile-Home Communities

After WW II, mobile homes bridged the gap between apartment living and conventional home ownership. To this day, they are widely in use. Estimates are sketchy, but as much as 8-10% of the American population may live in them. When is it then that when

the topic of "affordable housing" comes up, mobile-home units are never mentioned as a viable option?

According to the "2019 Delaware County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan," there are 281 residential mobile homes (aka. trailer homes) within the City of Delaware. In all of Delaware County there are 1,278 mobile homes. These figures do not include Columbus, Dublin, and Westerville. They also do not include mobile homes at campgrounds. Across the nation, some 25 million Americans live in trailer units. This type of structure is of course less resilient to tornadoes than "normal" homes. In addition, some mobile-home communities can be found on less desirable land such as flood plains, which is why FEMA and the Ohio Emergency Management Agency (EMA) are interested in them.

"Community Matters" has identified and toured the mobile-home parks within Delaware and several trailer parks outside as well. Two things in particular are striking: 1. It is peculiar how invisible mobile-home communities are. They are hiding in plain sight, off major streets and roads, and yet most people seem unaware. Newspapers don't write about them, and City Council never mentions them. Delaware's Codified Ordinances specifically require a robust buffer zone on the outer boundaries intended to completely conceal the parks from view. People who live there also seem reluctant to talk about their neighborhood as if it were a shameful stigma. The old stereotype of mobile-home parks as blighted, low-income housing for "white trash" or "trailer trash" is still very prevalent.

2. However, "Community Matters" also discovered that this deleterious image is largely a myth. The mobile homes we encountered were for the most part clean and well maintained, had attractive landscaping and nice patio areas, fencing and carports, and sported modern sedans and SUVs. Clearly, the owners were taking pride in their property, and it was our sense that the parks are safe for kids. In addition, the local ordinances are pretty strict about mobile-home parks and require paved sidewalks, functional streets, low density, setbacks, recreation and open space, evergreen hedges and trees, and so on. Delaware's trailer parks are definitely not slums or ghettos for society's rejects. These hoods have every right to exist and to receive the same kind of attention and services as other neighborhoods do. In reality, however, they seem to have no seat at the table. (Parenthetically speaking, the trailer park off Lake St. is technically a campground, not a mobile home park. It explains why residents there do not have direct access to the water and sewer system.)

Here is another interesting factoid. As real-estate prices continue to shoot up, especially on the West coast, some developers are gobbling up mobile-home parks and replacing them with high-rise buildings or multi-family housing. The New York Times reported on 7/22 that Seattle has only 2 mobile-home parks left, down from 5 in 2007. And one of them, Halcyon Mobile Home Park, is now for sale as well. Delaware is still years and perhaps decades away from this to happen, but sooner or later the local parks will see similar pressure, especially parks located off the major thoroughfares such as US 23, Rt. 36/37, and Sandusky St.

NAMI Family-to-Family Course

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness. This fall, NAMI Delaware and Morrow Counties will be offering a free 12-week educational course for families and close friends of individuals living with a mental-health condition. The course will be held at the NAMI facility at 814 Bowtown Rd. Wednesday nights (6:30-8 pm) beginning Sept. 11 and ending Nov. 20. The course is designed to help family members understand and support their loved one living with mental illness while maintaining their own well-being. It includes information on illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression, and others. The program is taught by trained and experienced teachers who are also family members and know what it's like to have a loved one living with mental-health challenges. Register online at www.namiofdel-mor.org/family. The last day to add the course is the 3rd week of class on Sept. 25. For questions and more info, contact Sarah Hyatt at shyatt@namiofdel-mor.org or call 740-815-1767, ext. 104.

August Is Breastfeeding Awareness Month

The Surgeon General, the State of Ohio, and the Delaware General Health District (DGHD) recognize August as Breastfeeding

Awareness Month. Breastfeeding is not only economical and convenient, it also provides infants with the best nutrition possible as well as antibodies to protect them from most infections. Breastfeeding is legal and encouraged in all 50 U.S. states, and mothers have a right to nurse their babies in all public and private spaces. The local Breastfeeding Coordinator is Tracy Jennings at the Delaware General Health District at 3 W. Winter St. (tjennings@delawarehealth.org).

August Is Also National Immunization Awareness Month

August is also National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). Schools and colleges are ideal settings for communicable diseases to spread. The State of Ohio requires certain vaccinations before entering school. Children entering kindergarten must be vaccinated for polio, chicken pox, measles / mumps / rubella (MMR), hepatitis B, and diphtheria / tetanus / pertussis (whooping cough). In later grades, booster shots are required as is an age-appropriate dose of meningococcal vaccine. College students should be vaccinated against meningitis, which is rare but deadly.

Murdered Body Found at Alum Creek Lake

On July 4, ODNR officer Adam Martin found a female body in a shallow grave next to Alum Creek Lake, near the east side of the Rt. 36/37 bridge across the lake and about a mile west of the intersection with I-71. The body was identified as that of Brittany D. McDowell of Columbus, who was 28 years old. The Columbus Dispatch reports that she "had convictions for solicitation, drug possession, and other offenses." The case is investigated as a possible homicide due to multiple gunshot injuries to her body and the fact that she was found in a shallow grave, which appears to rule out suicide. The Delaware County Coroner's Office will make the final determination. The investigation is on-going.

Update 7/10: After receiving a tip from a cleaning service, John David Cheo Bartholomew, 24, of Columbus was arrested on July 9 and booked into the Delaware County Jail. Bond was set at \$1.5 million since Bartholomew is considered a flight risk. He will be charged with murder, tampering with evidence, and abuse of a corpse. Police is still gathering evidence and have seized his vehicle and obtained a search warrant, but according to press reports statements made by Bartholomew and evidence found at his home support the charges. It is assumed that the murder was committed in Franklin County on July 4 and the body buried in the wooded areas that surround Delaware County's Alum Creek Lake. It seems Bartholomew picked up McDowell on July 4 at Sullivan Ave. in Columbus for sex. He apparently shot and killed her after an argument about money, but details are still emerging. Bartholomew has since been charged by a grand jury with aggravated murder, robbery, tampering with evidence, and abuse of a corpse. A Delaware County trial has been scheduled for Oct. 29.

Chamber of Commerce Issues New Directory

The Delaware County Area Chamber of Commerce has issued the 2019 edition of its "Community Profile and Membership Directory." The letter-size, 60-page brochure is heavily illustrated and printed on glossy paper. Part I (pp. 5-25) provides general community information: community character; arts & culture; education; parks & recreation; healthcare; shopping, dining & entertainment; banking, finance & insurance; business, industry & commerce; and agriculture & horticulture. Part II (pp. 27-57) is a membership directory, organized by categories from Accounting to Web Design. An alphabetical listing of members concludes the directory. Businesses come and go, people retire, circumstances change. Even a cursory look at the membership directory shows that the included information is not always current. However, the guide is a valuable tool that should be in the hands of every public official, business owner, and community influencer. The directory is available free of charge at the chamber office at 32 S. Sandusky St. and at the Public Library.

However, let's also state the obvious: "Community Matters" and the Chamber of Commerce's "Community Profile and Membership Directory" are pretty much on opposite ends of the spectrum. You will not hear any critical and disparaging words in the glossy brochure – it's all sunshine and it never rains. Poverty, racial tensions, the opioid crisis, climate change, etc., do not seem to exist in the community if you believe the establishmentarian and denialist narrative the

Chamber puts forth. A publication such as "Community Matters" is therefore essential to complement the journalistic spectrum.

DATA Bus Has New Name & Website

At the July Fourth parade, the Delaware Area Transit Agency (DATA Bus) system at 119 Henderson Ct. displayed a large new bus that made us curious. It seats 64 and was marked with a new webpage (www.delcotransit.com) that we had not heard of before. It seems that DATA is quietly transitioning to a new name, "Delaware County Transit" and a new website. Currently, both www.ridedata.com and www.delcotransit.com are valid addresses to access the same website. An official public announcement has yet to be made.

Delaware County Foundation

The president of the Delaware County Foundation, Marlene Casini, has announced her plan to retire at the end of the year. A search committee has been appointed to identify a successor. The foundation currently has assets in the amount of \$14 million, received \$23 million in donations, and awarded \$13 million to nonprofits that provide services to Delaware County residents.

Melissa Ackison Stirring Up Trouble Again

Melissa Ackison, a Marysville Republican running for state senator (District 26), is once again busy polarizing her community. Earlier this year, she vociferously objected to an educational "Drag 101" event in Delaware. She accused the people organizing the event of promoting sexualized, exploitative, and potentially criminal activities. The lady doth have a rightwing political agenda designed to attract attention and help with fundraising.

Now the Columbus Dispatch (7/30) reports that Ackison is after a Marysville elementary school teacher, Austin Syar, who celebrated Pride Month at the Marysville Public Library with books such as "Welcome to the Family" and "I Am Jazz." Ackison's Facebook posts have caused a firestorm. Most people are in support of Syar, the school district, and Marysville Public Library. Below are the amazon.com descriptions of the two illustrated books mentioned in the Dispatch article. Judge for yourself if the titles in question are designed "to manipulate" and "to brainwash" the minds of children, as some conservatives claim:

1. "Welcome to the Family" by Mary Hoffman. – "This book takes one element of The Great Big Book of Families – the arrival of new members into a family – and explores all the different ways a baby or child can become part of the clan, including natural birth within a nuclear family, adoption, fostering, same-sex parents, and many other aspects of bringing babies or children home. Following in the approach of the Great Big Book series, "Welcome to the Family" includes 12 double spreads, each exploring one theme, and lots of humor, jokes, and fun along the way. A unique information book, "Welcome to the Family" spreads an important and positive message: every family is different and every family is equally valid and special, no matter how or when their children arrive."

2. "I Am Jazz" by Jessica Herthel. – "The story of a transgender child based on the real-life experience of Jazz Jennings, who has become a spokesperson for transkids everywhere. From the time she was two years old, Jazz knew that she had a girl's brain in a boy's body. She loved pink and dressing up as a mermaid and didn't feel like herself in boys' clothing. This confused her family, until they took her to a doctor who said that Jazz was transgender and that she was born that way. Jazz's story is based on her real-life experience and she tells it in a simple, clear way that will be appreciated by picture book readers, their parents, and teachers."

Pelotonia Criticized for Not Vetting Victims

Like football, Pelotonia has almost become a religion in Ohio. However, there are unhinged or criminal people who try to personally benefit from the organization. John Looker, 50, was one of them. For years he made up fanciful stories about being a cancer victim and survivor and then kept the donations he raised in the name of Pelotonia. It may not have been a lot of money – perhaps between \$1,500 and \$1,800. The reputational risk to the annual bike race was the bigger problem. In the wake of the Looker scandal, the organization has been accused of not vetting and verifying featured cancer victims enough. Pelotonia had its suspicions about Looker, but

regulations on patient privacy prevented the organizers from questioning and investigating his claims. Critics believe the organization has a moral duty to warn the community of possible fraud and deception and to take steps to prevent abuse in the future. Looker, by the way, has confessed to his lies and blamed them on mental illness. He has agreed to pay \$1,800 in restitution and a \$2,000 civil fine – a total of \$3,800. He has also been barred from holding any position with a charitable organization in Ohio that involves money.



Where in the World Is Andrew Anglin?

Andrew B. Anglin, born in 1984 and now 34, is the elusive Worthington man who in 2013 founded The Daily Stormer, named after the Nazi newspaper "Der Stürmer." The neo-Nazi and white-supremacist website has since been blacklisted by a number of national and foreign hosts and Anglin is in hiding after having lost two lawsuits (by Dean Obeidallah and Tanya Gersh) against him. Various people have made efforts to locate him, but attempts to reach him through mail and visits have so far been fruitless. His lawyer, Marc Randazza, his father, Greg Anglin, and his brother and sister were all contacted, but they have refused to cooperate. Anglin himself has said that he is Nigeria, Africa. The Huff Post wrote at one point that he was in Germany. Other places where people thought he might be include Russia. Most think he never left Central Ohio and is hiding somewhere in plain sight, but no one seems to know for sure.

It appears that the authorities in charge are likewise not interested in the truth, effectively shielding Anglin from accountability and collection. It is a well-documented fact that politicians and the legal-justice system look the other way when it comes to right-wing hate speech, hate crime, and domestic terrorism. Columbus Magistrate Elizabeth A. Preston Deavers explicitly refused to authorize subpoenas and to force Anglin's father and brother to testify under oath if they knew where Andrew was living. She also refused to authorize subpoenas for services Anglin uses, such as web hosts, domain registrars, internet-service providers, and banks. Law enforcement has the means and ways to locate and apprehend anyone, even across borders, and it seems pretty clear that if they wanted to find him they could do so with relative ease. Andrew Anglin and his Daily Stormer are not a priority for them. As of July 31, the website is up and running and continues to vilify Blacks, Jews, Muslims, and women, and Anglin himself continues to be one of the most active contributors.

U.S. Conference of Mayors Coming to Columbus

For the first time ever, the U.S. Conference of Mayors will be held in Columbus, Ohio. The event will take place June 23-27, 2022, at the Greater Columbus Convention Center. About 1,000 mayors, partners, and staff attend the annual conference. The tourism bureau estimates that attendees will spend \$1.4 million on hotels, restaurants, and transportation during their visit.

Fresh Start for Mount Carmel

Mount Carmel Health System, owned by Michigan-based Trinity Health, has fired 23 people. Nine others remain on administrative leave. Both the President / CEO Ed Lamb and the Executive Vice President, Dr. Richard Streck, are also leaving after the scandal involving Dr. William Husel, 43, who administered deadly doses of fentanyl and other drugs to some 35 elderly patients. The physician denies the charge and says he was merely providing "comfort care" to end-of-life patients. Husel was charged on June 5 with killing at least 25 people over a 4-year period. While the doctor is often described as "a rogue physician," it is also true that what happened is a systemic "institutional failure" of unprecedented magnitude. More than 2 dozen families are in process of suing the hospital. They are complaining that Mount Carmel is not cooperating with them and not forthcoming with information. Two cases have been settled. Trinity Health has announced that it will appoint an interim CEO soon.

In the meantime, a tentative trial date for Dr. William Husel has been set for April 27, 2020. It is expected to last for 4 to 8 weeks. The physician remains free after posting bond for \$1 million.



"All Sides with Ann Fisher" Celebrates 10th Anniversary

One of the best-known and beloved radio voices in Central Ohio and beyond is that of Ann Fisher, host of "All Sides with Ann Fisher" on WOSU / NPR News (89.7 FM). The informational and commercial-free talk shows can be heard every weekday morning (10 am – 12 pm) and are repeated at night (8-10 pm). On the program, you can learn about a wide variety of things such as politics, health, education, sports, the economy, gardening, technology, birding, astronomy, cooking, and much more. Fisher typically has 2 to 3 guests on her shows who are experts in their fields. Coverage is fair and balanced and – unlike certain other talk shows – free of venom. The programs are archived and can easily be accessed and replayed without charge. – Print journalist Fisher started her show in Aug. 2009 after Fred Andrie retired. The transition to a different platform and different technology was huge and risky, she says, but she mastered it. Ann Fisher, 61, is a graduate of Michigan State Univ. She started her career with the Grand Rapids Press before moving to the Toledo Blade. She moved to Columbus in 1998, where she wrote for the Columbus Dispatch. Ann Fisher lives in Worthington where she maintains, or tries to if the deer allow it, a vegetable garden.

ProEnergy Ohio a Questionable Group

ProEnergy Ohio LLC, a for-profit group that wants \$57 million of Columbus' money for green-energy initiatives, has delivered petitions to Columbus City Council to place the issue on the Nov. 5 ballot. The Franklin County Board of Elections has already certified enough signatures for the measure to make the ballot.

The problem is that ProEnergy Ohio is a group that is unknown to public officials and environmental organizations such as Sierra Club or the Ohio Environmental Council. It has not reached out and not formed partnerships. The group employs just 3 people, among them John Clarke and George Cooper, and has "a virtual office" only. ProEnergy Ohio may or may not be a legitimate group, but Columbus City Council spokeswoman Lee Cole is right when in an email she expressed concerns "about any proposal to divert tens of millions of dollars away from city services to an unknown entity with limited public oversight." As things stand at the moment, a high degree of skepticism is in order. It is even possible that deception and fraud plays a role here because the company may benefit from a perceived association with ProEnergy Services, an unrelated international company headquartered in Sedalia, Missouri. "Community Matters" cannot in good conscience recommend this business until much more information becomes available and the issues of transparency and accountability are resolved.

Mid-Ohio Indie Author Book Expo (8/10)

Like last year, the 2019 Mid-Ohio Indie Author Book Expo will take place Sat., Aug. 10 (3-7 pm) at the Vaughn Hairston YMCA (3500 First Ave.) in Urbancrest (Grove City), Ohio 43123. The expo is intended for self-publishing authors & illustrators. Parking & admission is free for the public, but participating authors & illustrators pay a fee and must register by Aug. 3. There will be food vendors, door prizes, and activities for children. For more info, visit www.midohioindies.com.



The Unsung Pawpaw
by Tom Wolber

It looks like there will be a bumper crop of pawpaws (also spelled "papaws") this year. Trees are loaded.

Asimina triloba belongs to the family of tropical plants, but it is actually a native tree with unique characteristics and a long history. The fruit is the largest edible fruit native to the U.S. and the only edible native fruit in Ohio. When immature, it is green and smooth. As it ripens in late summer or early fall, it turns yellow and light brown. The fruit is best to eat after it drops naturally. When unripe, the flesh is white and hard and not yet sweet. The taste is hard to characterize, but it might be described as a mixture of banana, mango, papaya, pineapple, and melon. Once peeled and after extracting the large brown or black seeds inside, the pulp can be used for a wide variety of things – smoothies, ice cream, pudding, puree, popsicles, preserves, jam, relish, salsa, guacamole, baklava, bread, and even craft beer. Connoisseurs say recipes that don't require cooking are better. If you heat the pulp, do it slowly because it easily burns. The fruit is nutritious and contains high levels of vitamin C, antioxidants, minerals (e.g., calcium, iron, magnesium, and potassium), and protein. Fully ripe fruit is delicate, bruises easily, and lasts only a few days. It should be eaten quickly. Because pawpaws are highly perishable, they are rarely found at supermarkets. However, you will occasionally see them at the local farmer's market. (By the way, "Community Matters" has a bag of local, vernalized pawpaw seeds for free distribution. Contact us!)

Native Americans ate the fruit and used the trees to make rope, nets, mats, and cloth. Some tribes called September the moon of the pawpaws. The plant also serves medicinal purposes. Pawpaw trees are the host plants to swallowtail butterfly caterpillars who feed on the young leaves while pawpaw sphinx moths caterpillars prefer older leaves. The pawpaw was recognized as Ohio's official native fruit in 2009, and there is an annual Ohio Pawpaw Festival at Lake Snowden near Athens (www.ohiopawpawfest.com). The 2019 dates are Sept. 13-15.

At the 38th annual Columbus Pride Parade (June 15), the uplifting anthem "This Is Me" from "the Greatest Showman" was performed by Virginia West. The actual tune can easily be found on the Internet. A crowd of about 500,000 attended the 2019 Pride activities in Columbus, Ohio. Columbus Community Pride, an alternative event that emphasizes queer, transgender and people of color, also took place the same day. Coincidentally, the same tune was also performed at the Grand Finale Concert of the OWU Summer Music Camp on July 12. It seems to be a song that resonates with people.

Keale Settle, "This Is Me" (from "The Greatest Showman")

I'm not a stranger to the dark
Hide away, they say
'Cause we don't want your broken parts
I've learned to be ashamed of all my scars
Run away, they say
No one will love you as you are
But I won't let them break me down to dust
I know that there's a place for us, for we are glorious

When the sharpest words wanna cut me down
I'm gonna send a flood, gonna drown them out
I am brave, I am bruised
I am who I'm meant to be, this is me
Look out 'cause here I come
And I'm marching on to the beat I drum
I'm not scared to be seen
I make no apologies, this is me

Another round of bullets hits my skin
Well, fire away 'cause today I won't let the shame sink in
We are bursting through the barricades
And reaching for the sun (we are warriors)
Yeah, that's what we've become
Won't let them break me down to dust
I know that there's a place for us
For we are glorious

When the sharpest words wanna cut me down
 Gonna send a flood, gonna drown them out
 I am brave, I am bruised
 I am who I'm meant to be, this is me
 Look out 'cause here I come
 And I'm marching on to the beat I drum
 I'm not scared to be seen
 I make no apologies, this is me

And I know that I deserve your love
 There's nothing I'm not worthy of
 When the sharpest words wanna cut me down
 I'm gonna send a flood, gonna drown them out
 This is brave, this is bruised
 This is who I'm meant to be, this is me
 Look out 'cause here I come (look out 'cause here I come)
 And I'm marching on to the beat I drum

(Marching on, marching, marching on)
 I'm not scared to be seen
 I make no apologies, this is me
 (Whenever the words wanna cut me down
 I'll send the flood to drown them out)
 I'm gonna send the flood, gonna drown them out
 This is me

STATE OF OHIO

A 4% State Income Tax Cut

Ohio residents are getting a 4% Ohio income tax cut, amounting to \$25 a year for an individual with a taxable income of \$41,000 and \$50 annually for a family of four making \$73,000. The two lowest tax brackets were eliminated; those earning less than \$21,750 a year will pay no state income taxes.

However, residents should keep in mind that a reduction in state and federal taxes is not necessarily good news because it often leads to a shortfall in revenues. Tax cuts on the state level result in levy renewals and increases and new levies on the local level. Delaware residents currently support levies for libraries, mental health, parks, schools, senior services, and so on. The City of Delaware is eager to introduce a new transportation levy (the first attempt in 2016 failed). In Franklin County, there is an additional zoo levy and the children services levy. It saves taxpayers no money if on the one hand Ohio reduces its income tax by 4%, but on the other now (in the 2019-21 budget) allows an additional sales tax for the construction of "detention facilities" and a tax levy on "school safety." It is a shell game that makes dishonest politicians look good, but in fact saddles individual taxpayers with an increased burden. It is perfectly understandable when low-income folks or people on fixed income complain about being "taxed enough already" (TEA) or being "taxed to death."

Legal Age for Tobacco Changed to 21

As part of Ohio's new \$68.9 billion budget, the legal age to buy or receive tobacco products has increased from 18 to 21, effective October. "Tobacco products" includes vaping, alternative nicotine products, or papers used to roll cigarettes. The state will lose about \$23 million annually in sales and taxes as a result of the policy change.

First Case of Measles in Ohio

Measles was declared an eliminated disease in the U.S. in 2000. However, due to falling vaccination rates there have been major outbreaks since. As of July 3, 28 states have reported a total of 1,109 confirmed cases. Ohio, which last had a significant outbreak in 2014, has now joined the list with a new case in the state's northeastern Stark County. With 88.3%, Ohio's vaccination rate is among the lowest in the nation, and the risk of another measles outbreak is real. The Ohio Dept. of Health is urging everyone to get vaccinated for measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR). Franklin County Public Health has started to offer walk-in clinics for MMR vaccinations.

For those without health insurance, discounted services are available. In Delaware, the Health District at 3 W. Winter St. offers MMR walk-in clinics Fridays from 1-4 pm.

Mad River Mountain Ski Resort Sold

Vail Resorts of Colorado has bought the Mad River Mountain ski resort near Bellefontaine, along with 3 other Ohio ski & snowboarding slopes (Alpine Valley, Boston Mills, and Brandywine). In fact, Vail acquired all 17 properties of Peak Resorts Inc. for a total of \$264 million. The deal allows Mad River season pass holders access to many other Vail facilities. Chairman and CEO Rob Katz says the company plans to invest \$15 million in the 17 former Peak properties.

Hocking Hills Hiking Guide

A new illustrated guide by veteran backpacker Mary Reed describes 25 "Hocking Hills Day Hikes" (Get Out! Publ. 2019, 91 pp., \$14.99). The small format (7 x 4 inches) slips neatly into your pocket and can be consulted on the trail. For planning purposes, an e-book version is also available. Each entry describes directions to each site, has trail maps & descriptions, explains canine compatibility, and lists facilities such as restrooms, picnic areas, and visitor centers. In addition, it highlights hidden gems and interesting wildlife and plants that hikers might encounter. Mary Reed is also the author of an earlier book, "Hiking Ohio: A Guide to the State's Greatest Hikes."

Ohio's Tourism Industry

Tourism is an important part of the economy. In some countries, it is the no. 1 industry. Tourism continues to play an important role in Ohio's economy as well. In 2018, visitors spent \$36 billion, up from \$35 billion the previous year. That spending led directly or indirectly to an estimated \$46 billion in sales, up from \$44 billion the year before. The number of tourism visits increased from 219 million to 222 million in 2018; 44 million of them were overnight visits. Some 429,000 jobs are supported by tourism, an increase of 1,000 from 2017. – The tourism industry requires a safe and welcoming environment. It is imperative that attractions, restaurants, and hotels practice diversity, inclusion, and equity. Ohio could do much more in this respect, for example by passing legislation that ensures that the LGBT community is not discriminated against.

"Find It Here"?

"Find it here" is Ohio's new tourism motto. It is so devoid of any real meaning that people poke fun at it all the time. We are happy to do the same.

If you are looking for polluted air and contaminated soil you will definitely find it here. There are plenty of bankrupt coal and nuclear plants to be bailed out. If you are looking to join the opioid wave, there are lots of opportunities to participate. If you are a fan of gerrymandering and voter suppression, this is one of the top states for you. Ditto abortion bans. Ditto mass incarceration. Ditto toxic algae. Like corruption scandals? Welcome to Ohio! The Columbus Dispatch wrote on 5/29: "For the past half-century, compared with the nation as a whole, Ohio has declined in nearly every measure of economic well-being and quality of life."

If, on the other hand, you happen to look for clean air and water and renewable energy, you will not find it here. LGBT protections are nowhere to be found either. Well-funded K-12 schools and high graduation standards? Forget it. Few teenagers are work-ready or college-ready. Compassion and empathy for minorities and immigrants? Sorry. California may be better suited for you. Didn't a member of the Trump administration recently call Ohio "the armpits of the nation" or something to that effect? So, sadly the truth is that not everything can be found here. Ohio has a long way to go before it is an attractive state to work, live, and play.

Steep Bill for Trash Removal from Ohio's Roads

Ohio's drivers throw out heaps and heaps of trash from their car windows – food wrappers, bottles and cans, empty cigarette packs, dirty diapers, drug paraphernalia, pieces of clothing, shoes, and "trucker bombs" (bottles filled with urine). Or they stop and unload tires, furniture, toilets, televisions, refrigerators, bicycles, and so on. In 2018, the Ohio Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) filled 396,000 bags full of garbage at a cost of \$4.1 million. It took volunteers more than 157,000 hours to collect all that garbage. And

that's just from interstate and U.S. routes outside towns and cities. ODOT is not happy about the needless expense and Ohio's taxpayers should not be either. Without having to constantly clean up after dirty litterbugs, ODOT could for example double its efforts to improve its Safe Routes to School program.

"Hillbilly Elegy" to Be Filmed in Ohio's Middletown

J. D. Vance published his bestseller "Hillbilly Elegy" in 2016. It is now going to be a film produced and directed by Ron Howard. Although most of the movie will be shot in Georgia, where they offer generous tax credits, parts of the picture will be filmed in Middletown, Ohio, where most of the book is set. "Hillbilly Elegy" is about struggling and dysfunctional families with Appalachian backgrounds in which drug abuse, domestic violence, and lack of education is rampant.

Hunting Licenses down in Ohio

Hunting season begins Sept. 1 in Ohio. So far, 376,435 hunting licenses have been purchased in 2019, a decline of almost 14,000 compared to the 2018 total of 390,268. The state has seen a steady decline of hunting licenses over the past 60 years. Although Ohio's population has risen from 9.7 million in 1958 to 11.7 million in 2018, hunting-license sales have fallen from 692,500 in 1958 to 390,268, a decline of about 43%. About 7.1% of Ohio residents bought a license in 1958; today the percentage is only 3.3%.



Achoo! Hay Fever Season Starts

If you are one of the 15 to 20 million Americans allergic to ragweed, you dread hay-fever season. It normally runs from mid-August and fizzles out in mid-September. However, it seems this year hay-fever season started early, at the end of July. If you see and hear people sneeze uncontrollably in broad daylight, chances are they are victims of pollinosis. Ragweed allergy is the most common type of allergy. Symptoms include a runny nose, red and itchy eyes, a scratchy throat, violent sneezing attacks, hot flashes, and sleepless nights. In more extreme cases and seasons, asthma-like symptoms can also occur, making breathing laborious. Effective over-the-counter products are hard to find. Even anti-histamines such as Claritin have their limits. Many people have never gone to a doctor for help, fearing that the ensuing hassle, ordeal, cost, and side effects may be worse than the symptoms, so there are a lot of underdiagnosed and untreated sufferers out there. By the way, a surprising remedy to alleviate nasal congestion is Vicks VapoRub. The active ingredients are menthol, eucalyptus, and camphor, and it works beautifully!

Here are a few additional ragweed factoids. There are some 50 varieties of the plant in the U.S., and they are prolific indeed. A single plant can produce about 1 billion grains of pollen every season. The wind can scatter them for days and hundreds of miles, so even if you not anywhere near a ragweed plant you cannot escape it.

If you are allergic to ragweed, be aware that a secondary allergy to certain kinds of vegetables is common. Eating any kind of melon or cantaloupe can make your mouth swell, your throat hoarse, and your voice temporarily disappear. Cucumbers, squash, zucchini, and similar gourds can have a similar effect.

OSU scientists Kent Harrison and Emilie Regnier discovered a decade or so ago that there is some kind of a symbiosis between earthworms and ragweed seed. The worms like to drag the seeds with their mouths into their burrows, away from seed-eating rodents, where there are ideal conditions for germination. It is not clear why the worms are protecting the seeds. The researchers hypothesize the worms like to feed on the decaying hulls and the associated fungi and bacteria. Who would have thunk it!

THE NATION

How Trump Is Viewed from Abroad

Sir Kim Darroch – a skillful, experienced, and respected diplomat – has been the U.K.'s ambassador to the U.S. since January 2016 and thus had plenty of time to observe and assess the presidency of Donald Trump and report back to London. His confidential cables to the British Foreign Office were recently leaked to the tabloid "The Mail," which released excerpts of them. The British Foreign Office has confirmed the authenticity and accuracy of the memos. In a statement, a spokesperson said that "the British public would expect our Ambassador to provide Ministers with an honest, unvarnished assessment of the politics in their country." Darroch describes Trump as an incompetent, inept, and insecure leader and his administration as clumsy, chaotic, and dysfunctional. He also raised the concern that the Trump administration poses a serious threat to multilateral trade agreements and climate action and to international associations such as World Trade Organization and the United Nations. Darroch's evaluation of the American president is not unusual. Indeed, it is fairly typical for the way foreign leaders view Donald Trump.

Although Darroch only did what his job as envoy required him to do, in retaliation President Trump tweeted that he would no longer deal with the British ambassador and immediately disinvented Darroch from a White House dinner. Essentially, he declared Darroch persona non grata – an unprecedented breach of etiquette. In the same series of tweets, in which he called Darroch "wacky" and "a very stupid guy," he also assailed British Prime Minister Theresa May for having botched Brexit. Nigel Farage, leader of the Brexit Party on the U.K., tweeted, "Kim Darroch is totally unsuitable for the job, and the sooner he is gone the better." In the past, Trump has repeatedly suggested that far-right Farage would make a "great" ambassador to the U.S., and he has effectively endorsed Boris Johnson as the next leader of the UK. Johnson has denied that he is dancing to Trump's tune. There are a number of theories why the "leak" occurred and who was responsible. A leading theory is that it was attempted by pro-Brexit forces to torpedo plans to appoint security adviser Mark Sedwill as successor of Darroch at the end of 2019 or the start of 2020. It could even be that the Trump administration had a hand in it, although the president no doubt will eventually insist that there was "no collusion."

Update 7/10: In the meantime, Kim Darroch has resigned from his position as British ambassador. Although he was widely praised in the UK, clear lack of support by Boris Johnson, the successor of Theresa May, was a decisive factor in his decision. The case is seen by many as a historic moment with perhaps long-lasting ramifications.

Chinese Invest Less in U.S.

"Trade wars are good and easy to win," President Trump famously declared in 2018. If only it were true. There was a time when Chinese companies aggressively invested in the U.S., buying real estate, manufacturing plants, and struggling businesses. In 2016, Chinese foreign direct investment in the U.S. was \$46.5 billion. In 2018, however, the amount had fallen to a tepid \$5.4 billion, a precipitous drop of 88% since Trump has taken office. A frenzy of disposal activity is occurring in the real-estate market: Chinese investors are leaving the U.S. market. It is by now clear that after years of increasing convergence and integration the world's two largest economies have started to decouple and diverge. The distrust is mutual. In the U.S., it's almost as if the 19th-century Chinese Exclusion Act is being reintroduced. Barriers have risen, and the not-so-welcome mat is out for all to see. Expect more tariffs to be imposed and consumer prices to be raised.

The problem for the U.S., however, is that China has been systematically cultivating economic relationships with the world for a long time. It has bought and built plantations, railroads, ports, and manufacturing plants in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America and will easily find new partners and make new trade deals. For the U.S., which is more isolated than ever, it is not so easy. The punishing tariffs the Trump administration has imposed even on close political friends and allies are an obstacle to building trust and signing trade

pacts. U.S. farmers are struggling to find customers for their corn and soybeans, beef and pork. They absolutely depend on exports, and without buyers abroad many will have no choice but to go out of business. The little bit of compensation the Trump administration has given to large operators is not enough to sustain them all. To be sure, the U.S. continues to sell a lot of military hardware to countries such as Saudi Arabia, but that does not help farmers.

Trump Drops Citizenship Question

The Trump administration has dropped its plans to add a question about citizenship to the 2020 census after the Supreme Court rejected its contrived rationale. Critics said the question was intended to suppress the number and impact of Hispanic residents in the U.S. However, Trump's climb-down was not a complete retreat. Instead, he issued an executive order instructing government agencies to compile citizenship data from existing federal records – an option that was available to the Trump administration all along. The Census Bureau already has access to all Social Security, food stamp, and federal prison records. Using such data, the citizenship status of 90% of the population could be determined. Of course, no counting system is ever complete and accurate. Just like there are enormous discrepancies in the estimated numbers of homeless in America, there are enormous discrepancies in the estimated numbers of documented and undocumented residents. In addition, there are methodological disagreements about how to count migrants, travelers, and students.

Trump Administration Forms "Commission on Unalienable Rights"

The Trump administration is the most "disruptive" American presidency in memory. If, for example, you thought the question of human rights was settled by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, think again. Everything is being relitigated. "What does it mean to say, or claim, that something is in fact a human right?" Secretary of State Mike Pompeo asked. In his view, human rights have "proliferated" and "drifted" and been "manipulated" to a point where they ought to be redefined. The Trump administration would like to reduce unalienable human rights to the basic guarantee of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" mentioned in the Declaration of Independence.

To that end, Pompeo has formed a 10-member "Commission on Unalienable Rights," chaired by conservative legal scholar Mary Ann Glendon. She is an outspoken critic of abortion rights and a zealous opponent of same-sex marriage. Several other people on the commission are also known to hold views that support discriminatory policies against the LGBT community, women's rights, and U.S. treaty obligations. It is too early to know precisely where the commission is going. But the general direction is clear. In an era where foreign refugees and asylum seekers are once again housed in concentration camps, the commission could well conclude that human rights only apply to citizens of the U.S.; that acts of wars are not violations of human rights; that extrajudicial killings and torture are justified; and that the LGBT community does not deserve special protection. The panel might also give President Trump cover in his dealings with genocidal dictators. It is a well-established fact that Trump is a climate-change denier. After withdrawing the U.S. from the U.N. Human Rights Council and the creation of this new task force, he now deserves to be called a "human-rights denier" as well.

Organizations such as Amnesty International and the American Civil Liberties Union have sharply criticized the Trump administration's intent to roll back human rights. The American Jewish World Service has also denounced the advisory panel because of its unconstitutional pro-Christian bent. In an editorial (7/13), the Columbus Dispatch wrote, "The United States should be in the forefront of the fight for civil, political, and human rights, and the defense of freedom and democratic institutions." Sadly, however, under President Trump the U.S. is regressing into a regime that makes a mockery of enlightened values.

Trump Offends African-Americans

It is the job of presidents to unite the country, not to divide it. Trump, however, is different. A sad example is his negative view of Black America. He frequently goes after African-American athletes, entertainers, and politicians. A recent victim is Rep. Elijah Cummings,

D-Maryland, who is the chairman of the House Oversight and Reform Committee and in charge of conducting oversight of the executive branch. Trump accused Cummings of incompetent leadership and doing a terrible job in Baltimore, a majority-black district where "no human being would want to live." It is, in Trump's words, a "rodent-infested mess" and "the worst run and most dangerous [place] anywhere in the United States." He also wrote that money funneled to Baltimore had been "stolen or wasted." Only a few days ago, Trump encouraged the four members of the Democratic "Squad" to go back to their "broken and crime-infested" countries. (All four are U.S. citizens, and three were born in the U.S.) When Al Sharpton defended Cummings, saying that Trump has "a particular venom for blacks and people of color," he too was harshly attacked by the president. – Trump has a long history of talking about "infestation," which links non-whites to filth, violence, and criminality and renders them subhuman and inhuman. Infestations legitimize exterminations, of course. Martin Luther King is absolutely right when he said, "racism is evil because its ultimate logic is genocide." The U.S. is currently in the midst of organized and expedited roundups, "removals," and "deportations" on an industrial scale. Students of history are well aware of what the next logical step might be unless the insanity can be stopped.

George Takei's American Story

George Takei, a native of Los Angeles and thus a U.S. citizen, spent ages 5 to almost 9 imprisoned by the U.S. government internment camps during WW II, along with 120,000 other Japanese-Americans. Now 82, he has a new graphic memoir out, "They Called Us Enemy" (Top Shelf Productions, July 2019, 208 pp.). He wanted to tell the story before there was no one left alive to do so. He was also driven by the realization that once again, in 2019, the cycle of inhumanity, cruelty, injustice, and putting people in concentration camps is repeating itself.

George Takei, who played the role of Hikaru Sulu on "Star Trek," has become a leading activist for social justice and LGBT rights. He has appeared on many television shows, at "Star Trek" conventions, and documentaries have been made about him. He has also publicly come out as being gay in 2005, at age 68. He regretted having waited for so long to do so, but he had feared that his acting career would be deep-sixed otherwise. In an interview he said, "The government imprisoned me for four years for my race. I imprisoned myself about my sexuality for decades."

auschwitz

auschwitz was not far away
and happened only yesterday
could it happen here today

there are those who say no way
some want to pray without delay
in this age of evil and decay

victims of the past may say
the nation has gone far astray
the cleansing is already underway

camps and cages are on display
the leaders have launched a grim replay
when the bill comes due all pay

Trump the Environmentalist

It was a surreal scene. On July 8, President Trump delivered a speech dubbed "America's Environmental Leadership." He was flanked by two of his senior "environmental" officers – one a former coal-industry lobbyist (Andrew Wheeler) and one a former oil lobbyist (David Bernhardt). In his remarks, he said patently false things such as "From day one, my administration has made it a top priority to ensure that America has among the very cleanest air and cleanest water on the planet." Wheeler added, "America is and will remain the gold standard for environmental protection." Bernhardt likewise emphasized, "It is an honor to serve a President who has been focused on conservation stewardship since day one." Trump and his cronies did not mention climate change, offshore drilling for oil and

gas, the proposed rollback of environmental regulations such as the Clean Water Act, and the shrinking of public lands for use by miners, frackers, loggers, and ranchers. There are countless instances where Trump & Co. are the exact opposite of "faithful stewards of God's glorious creation."

Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta Resigns

The churn in the White House continues. Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta resigned July 12. In 2008, when he was a federal prosecutor in Miami, he made a lenient sweetheart deal with financier Jeffrey Epstein who was accused of sex-trafficking charges involving underage girls. Victims, illegally, were not informed of the secret deal. Epstein spent 13 months in jail, but was permitted to go to his office 6 days a week for 12 hours a day. Billionaire Epstein was friends with Bill Clinton and Donald Trump in the past as well as with many other wealthy people and celebrities. Epstein also rubbed elbows with the Wexners of Columbus, Ohio, but's a story for another time. In 2002 Trump said, "I've known Jeff for fifteen years. Terrific guy. He's a lot of fun to be with. It is even said that he likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side." Epstein's sexual predilections were known, and people like Acosta enabled him to continue his solicitous and predatory behavior. Although Acosta denied any wrongdoing on his part, he resigned in order not to be a distraction for Trump during the presidential elections in 2020. Patrick Pizzella, the department's deputy secretary, is succeeding Acosta on an acting basis. Trump is expected to nominate Eugene Scalia as his next secretary of labor.

Another One Bites the Dust

Dan Coats has been fired as director of national intelligence. Trump has long questioned the assessments and conclusions of the intelligence community, including those involving Russia. He trusts Vladimir Putin more than his own 17 intelligence agencies. The president said he would nominate Rep. John Ratcliffe as Coats' replacement. The Texas Republican is a staunch ally and defender of Trump.

A few days after Trump expressed his preference for John Ratcliffe, the nominee was in deep trouble. Not only does he have little or no intelligence and international experience, it also seems that he embellished and overstated his thin résumé. For example, contrary to what he has stated he was never involved in the prosecution of terrorist cases. This is another instance where Trump prioritized loyalty over expertise. Since it unlikely that the Senate will confirm Ratcliffe, expect his name to be pulled from consideration soon.

Trump May Oust Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross

Speaking of churn, there are reports that President Trump is also frustrated with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross over the failure to add the citizenship question to the 2020 census. SCOTUS called the administration's rationale to add the question "contrived" and implausible. So, another cabinet member of the current Caligula administration will bite the dust sooner or later once a successor has been identified.

President Trump Teaches History

Would you want to have President Trump as your history teacher in high school? Come to think of it, he probably knows as much or as little about national and global history as certain athletic coaches who teach history on the side.

During his "Salute to America" speech, the president stated that in 1775 "our army manned the air, it rammed the ramparts, it took over the airports, it did everything it had to do, and at Fort McHenry, under the rocket's red glare it had nothing but victory. And when dawn came, their star-spangled banner waved defiant."

Obviously, there were no "airports" in 1775. When the error was pointed out, Trump blamed rain and the teleprompter. However, his statement contained another glaring error as well. The battle at Fort McHenry that inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star-Spangled Banner" took place decades later, during the War of 1812. It is not possible to blame the teleprompter for that. It is Trump and his speech writers who were responsible. Their ignorance of history is both legendary and appalling. The Trump administration is known to have hired dozens of folks not based on their expertise but on their

ideological fervor and loyalty instead. However, the American public is equally ignorant about a great many things. It was recently pointed out in the media that few Americans would pass the citizens' test required from immigrants. One wonders how many listeners caught the mistakes. Rick Perry was obviously not one of them. During Trump's "America's Environmental Leadership" speech on July 8, Perry called Trump's remarks "one of the greatest history lessons that I have ever seen before." Lastly, one cannot help but worry about the soundness of decisions the Trump administration would make in a real crisis situation.

Trump's "Trucker Bombs"

President Trump likes to compare his tweets to bombs and hand grenades. Like any juvenile, he loves to see them go off and cause damage and consternation. The bigger and louder the explosion and disruption, the greater his satisfaction. After all, he loves tanks and fighter jets! So what if vulnerable populations are scared by his diarrhea of the mouth – they are coddled weaklings and snowflakes. Of course, the president's tweets are mostly foreworks and showmanship with few practical consequences, but even many of his voters believe that Trump needs to tweet less vigorously and focus more on positive things such as his accomplishments in the economic arena.

We could not agree more. Trump's racist tweets remind us of "trucker bombs" – bottles filled with yellow urine that drivers throw out of their windows because they don't take the time to pull in at rest stops. It is a dirty, disgusting habit because eventually someone needs to clean up the mess. It is also illegal. The Ohio Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) just reported that in 2018 alone it filled 396,000 bags full of garbage, collected at interstates and U.S. routes and costing the state millions. Trump's puerile rants may be fun for some, but there are long-term risks and costs associated with them. For example, the GOP may never fully recover from the reputational loss the tweeter-in-chief has inflicted on the brand. And globally, America's stature has been in steep decline ever since Trump moved into the White House. If it weren't an insult to the long-distance drivers of semi-trailers, perhaps the president should be called "Trucker Trump" from now on.

Trump Administration Reinstates Federal Death Penalty

The last federal execution happened in 2003, but after a 14-year hiatus the Trump administration has announced it will reinstate the federal death penalty. There are currently 63 inmates on federal death row. Given the high rate of exonerations in the nation, some of these men may be innocent. There are not many countries in the world left that impose the death penalty. With its latest step, the U.S. is rejoining autocratic countries such as China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and North Korea.

A Third Set of Democratic Debates

The next round of Democratic debates will take place Sept. 12-13 in Houston, Texas. If fewer than ten candidates qualify, the debate will be limited to one night. Currently, only seven of the 24 candidates meet the new, more stringent benchmarks (130,000 unique donors and at least 2% of support in four polls). Those seven are: Biden, Booker, Buttigieg, Harris, O'Rourke, Sanders, and Warren. Close to qualifying are Castro, Klobuchar, and Yang. Of course, candidates excluded from the televised debates may continue to run for president, but any lack of visibility will hurt them and drive their numbers further down.

Pete Buttigieg Releases Plan to Address Race Issues

Presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg, mayor of South Bend, Ind., has released a plan designed "to dismantle racist structures and systems" in government. This comes after weeks of scrutiny of Buttigieg's inconsistent record on racial justice and after a white police officer shot and killed a black man in South Bend in June. The comprehensive plan includes a little bit of everything – from voting rights to criminal justice and from education to health. However, particular attention is paid to the issue of policing, use of force, sentencing, and incarceration. Buttigieg wants to eliminate or reduce harsh sentences for drug offenses; decriminalize and legalize marijuana on the federal level; limit solitary confinement; and abolish

the death penalty. The plan also includes legal standards for the use of force by police officers and the creation of a federal database of police officers fired from their jobs for misconduct. Racial inequities are systemic and pervasive in the criminal-justice system. Reforms of whatever kind are always welcome.

The New NAFTA Is the Old NAFTA

The proposed U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is essentially identical with the current North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), ratified in 1994. With some exceptions, the new accord is a carbon copy of the old one. USMCA requires automobiles to have 75% of their components made in North America as opposed to 62.5% under NAFTA. Pharmaceutical companies are protected longer from generic competition, which does not benefit patients. What the two plans share is a distinct lack of enforcement mechanisms to protect the labor force and the environment. While Republicans like the "NEWFTA" deal, Democrats such as Sen. Sherrod Brown call it a stinker.



Is the Betsy Ross Flag a Symbol of Racism?

When shoemaker Nike planned to celebrate the Fourth of July with a new sneaker that sported the Betsy Ross flag, Colin Kaepernick privately objected. He alerted the company that the flag had been co-opted by groups espousing racist ideologies. Nike listened and canceled the release of the special Air Max shoe. Cries of outrage were heard around the nation. Politicians on the highest level got involved and objected to "the current onslaught of political correctness and historical revisionism." They demanded that Nike be punished and boycotted. It seems though that Nike's core customers – the millennials and the Gen Z consumers – remained unfazed by the conservative calls for resistance. Nike's association with Kaepernick has been an asset for the company, not a liability.

It is true that the Betsy Ross flag, which sports 13 stars, is primarily a historical relic – a patriotic symbol of early America. That's what the flag represents to Lisa Moulder, director of the popular Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia. However, it is also true that in recent years the flag has increasingly cropped up in association with racist ideologies. The Ku Klux Klan in particular has used the image for fliers and messages and in ritualistic meetings, along with the Confederate "rebel flag." In 2016, a school superintendent in Michigan noted that the Betsy Ross flag has come to symbolize "exclusion and hate." For non-whites especially both the Confederate flag and the Betsy Ross flag embody not freedom from British rule but racism, slavery, and captivity. These are sentiments that cannot be disregarded.

Our conclusion: the Confederate and the Betsy Ross flags are fine to display in historic museums or in conjunction with national monuments. However, they do not represent modern America anymore. After all, it's been a while since America had 13 states or the South seceded from the North. The two flags should therefore not be used in public life.

Pelosi and Trump Attack Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the "Squad"

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has attacked and belittled Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the "squad," saying the insurrection of the left is intolerable and must be stopped. Pelosi has dismissed the Green New Deal and calls for the impeachment of President Trump, prompting AOC's chief of staff, Saikat Chakrabarti, to compare the Democratic establishment to the "new Southern Democrats" or Dixiecrats. Others have said that Pelosi's dog-whistles are not much different from those of President Trump who added fuel to the fire when he demanded that the "squad" go back to whatever "shithole" countries they came from. (For the record, all 4 are U.S. citizens, and only Ilhan Omar from Michigan was born abroad.) Sadly, the Democratic intraparty fight is a distraction that only benefits Republicans. Pelosi should keep in mind that the four colored women she resents so much are the future leaders of the country. Young

people will remember that the old guard is putting up obstacle after obstacle in the path of progress.

State Supreme Courts Mostly White and Male

A study conducted by the Brennan Center for Justice looked at 60 years of data and found that state supreme courts do not look anything like an increasingly diverse America. Nearly half of the states do not have a single justice who is black, Latino, Asian, or Native-American. 18 states have never seated a black justice. This lack of diversity creates a crisis of legitimacy for the justice system. The public perception suffers when the only person of color in a courthouse is in handcuffs. Women are faring better – they hold 36% of the seats, but 17 states have only one female justice. Few cases ever make it to the U.S. Supreme Court. It is in state courts where the vast majority of cases filed in the U.S. are heard. Lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion can lead to flawed information and biased outcomes. To command legitimacy, courts must become more diverse and better reflect the American population.

Joe Biden's Plan to Reform Criminal-Justice System

For some 40 years, Joe Biden was a tough-on-crime politician who supported the death penalty and championed the 1994 crime bill that many experts associate with mass incarceration. Now running for president for the 3rd time, Biden has changed tactics and released a comprehensive plan aimed at combating mass incarceration and reducing racial disparities in the criminal-justice system. His proposed reforms include the elimination of mandatory minimum sentencing, the end of cash bail, and the abolishment of capital punishment. His plan also calls for rooting out unconstitutional and unlawful policing (a common phenomenon) and for more prosecutorial discretion. It also sets the goal of offering housing to all formerly incarcerated people when they are released.

Critics have pointed out that Biden is the man who helped create the very criminal-justice system he now seeks to overhaul. They also say that his plan falls short in many respects. For example, Biden is not in support of marijuana legalization as opposed to some of his rivals in the presidential race (e.g., Kamala Harris) who support full resentencing for and expungement of marijuana-related convictions. Cory Booker had this to say: "The proud architect of a failed system is not the right person to fix it. The 1994 crime bill accelerated mass incarceration and inflicted immeasurable harm on black, brown, and low-income communities. [...] His plan falls short of the transformative change our broken criminal-justice system needs."

Distrust Growing among Americans

A new study released by the Pew Research Center looks the levels of trust and distrust in the U.S. today. It will probably come as no surprise that trust in public officials and in fellow citizens is shrinking. Generally speaking, older, more educated, and higher-income Americans are more likely to be "high trusters" because for them the system has worked by and large. But Americans who feel underserved and disadvantaged are "low trusters," including younger generations. White respondents show a higher level of trust (27%) than black respondents (13%) and Hispanic respondents (12%). Not only do Americans trust politicians and agencies less; almost two thirds said that trust in each other has also deteriorated. Also, many respondents indicated that it was becoming harder for them to tell the difference between what is true and what is untrue. In a polarized world the facts themselves have become controversial, climate change being a good example. Needless to say, distrust can get into the way of identifying and fixing problems. In a broken political culture, logjams and gridlock are the inevitable result. Under the circumstances, the future does not look promising.

Earthquakes in California

A series of strong earthquakes and aftershocks has hit southern California in July. The strongest one had a magnitude of 7.1 on the Richter scale. Since the epicenter was located in the desert near the town of Ridgecrest, there were few injuries. However, damage to infrastructure was considerable. More than 80,000 earthquakes were recorded in the Ridgecrest area since July 4. Tremblors are an inevitable consequence of the fact that the Earth's continents drift and bump into each other.

Puerto Rico's Governor Faces Calls to Resign

Puerto Rico's governor, Ricardo ("Ricky") A. Rosselló, has made a number of missteps in recent months and is facing calls to resign. The latest scandal, dubbed "RickyLeaks" and "TelegramGate," is an exchange of chat messages in which he and other men mocked politicians and other prominent people, incl. members of his own party. The conversations included misogynistic & homophobic, vile & profane language. When someone suggested to shoot and kill San Juan's mayor, Carmen Yulín Cruz, Rosselló approved: "You would be doing me a favor." Two of Rosselló's cabinet members resigned over a separate corruption scandal, incl. his secretary of state and lieutenant governor Luis Rivera Marín. Rosselló, 40, has also faced severe criticism for his mishandling of hurricane Maria in 2017. It took his administration a year to acknowledge that thousands of people had died in the storm's aftermath. The government is bankrupt and subject to a Congress-created financial oversight board. Both Puerto Rico's Senate president and House majority leader have stated they had lost faith in the governor. Puerto Rico's non-voting member in Congress, Jenniffer González-Colón, has also said that Rosselló should not seek reelection in 2020. Despite mass demonstrations against his administration, the increasingly isolated governor has indicated that he has no intention of stepping down. He has, however, made one minor concession by saying that he does not plan to run for reelection. For protesters, this is not enough. They want him out now. Another target of their ire is the unelected oversight board ("la junta") that manages the island's finances and is responsible for painful austerity measures.

Update 7/25: Amidst relentless criticism, mass protests, and the prospect of impeachment proceedings, Rosselló announced that he would resign as governor effective Aug. 2. Puerto Rico desperately needs a fresh start, and discredited Rosselló was not the man to lead the effort. The debate over who will replace him has not yet been settled as of July 31. Possible candidates have either resigned or are unwilling or unable to serve.

Carnival Cruise Lines Fined \$20 Million

The cruise line giant Carnival Corporation and its Princess subsidiary have a long history, going back to 1993, of deliberately and illegally dumping trash, plastic, food waste, and oil into the oceans. Despite having been fined \$40 million in the past for intentional acts of environmental pollution, the practice continued. In 2013, a whistleblowing engineer revealed the existence of "magic pipes" to bypass the ships' water-treatment systems and dump oil waste directly into the sea. After more violations were discovered at 8 of Carnival's companies, a frustrated U.S. District Judge Patricia Seitz in Miami, where Carnival is headquartered, imposed an additional penalty of \$20 million on the company and threatened to fine the cruise line up to \$10 million *a day* if it didn't comply with environmental laws by court-imposed deadlines. At a hearing on June 3, the company pleaded guilty to 6 probation violations, including more dumping in Bahamian waters, falsifying training records, warning ships ahead of impending inspections, and lobbying the U.S. Coast Guard to redefine what constitutes a "major nonconformity" with the law. Judge Seitz had insisted that company officials attend the hearing, and they did. Seitz told CEO Arnold Donald and other senior officials, "You not only work for employees and shareholders. You are a steward of the environment. The environment needs to be a core value and I hope and pray it becomes your daily anthem." – Environmental groups such as Stand.earth called the \$20 million fine "a slap on the wrist" of a rich company and expressed disappointment that it was not steeper.

Agriculture and industry complain a lot about regulations, arguing that government should leave them alone because they are supposedly responsible actors. However, the case of Carnival Corporation once again demonstrates that for-profit businesses cannot be trusted to do the right thing. Without strict regulations, they would screw everybody and everything. Regulations are necessary to safeguard workers, consumers, and the environment.

Chaos at Mass Shootings

Many people believe that all it takes is "a good guy with a gun" to stop mass shootings. That is nonsense. The scenes are often so chaotic, especially at night, that it is not clear who the

perpetrators, defenders, and victims are. The scene at the May 7 shooting at STEM School Highlands Ranch in Denver is typical. A security guard responding to the shooting not only shot twice at a sheriff's lieutenant but also at a female student. Alex McKinney, the 16-year-old student who started the shooting, was killed in the shoot-out. The name of the security guard was not released.

Netflix Is Losing Subscribers

Recent price increases have spooked Netflix subscribers, and the company lost 126,000 of them in the second quarter of 2019. Netflix remains an influential company with some 60 million paid subscribers in the U.S., but the reversal raises an interesting question. Where is the limit of how much people are willing and able to pay for entertainment and technology? There are plenty of existing and emerging competitors in the streaming arena around that all are (or will be) cheaper, among them Apple, Disney, Hulu, NBCUniversal, and WarnerMedia. When companies lose sight of their original mission and that jack up prices too high, they lose customers and suffer reputational loss damage.

Fight over Telescope on Hawaii's Mauna Kea

Mauna Kea is Hawaii's tallest mountain (4,703 meter or 13,803 feet). The snow-capped dormant volcano on the Big Island is considered sacred land to the indigenous population who reveres it as a region where the gods live. Modern astronomers, however, have long wanted to build a giant 30-meter telescope on the mountaintop that would allow them to study the clear night sky and answer elusive questions about the universe. They selected the site in 2009, but it has been mired in legal battles and protest rallies ever since. So far, nothing has been built. In July, once again a group of Native Hawaiian elders ("kupuna") staged a protest and blocked the road to the summit of Mauna Kea. The New York Times reported on July 23 that at least 33 people were arrested.

While astronomers have good scientific arguments on their side, the fact is that the Native Hawaiian population was there long before Europeans discovered the Sandwich Islands, as they were called in the past. As was typical during colonial times, their culture and language were systematically oppressed and erased. Even today, indigenous populations are marginalized and impoverished in the U.S., Canada, Australia, Russia, China, Japan, Brazil, and so on. While scientific research is important, the need to respect and protect vulnerable native population groups is perhaps even more imperative. It seems that this is another case where the state's economic interests are put ahead of Native Hawaiian cultural and land-use rights. Hundreds of astronomers around the world have published a letter in the journal "Nature" in which they oppose the arrest of protesters and the insensitive ways the project has been pushed forward. Mauna Kea has attracted global attention and has become an important test case.

Binge-Drinking Common America

Binge-drinking is common in all age groups. A new study concludes that over 38% of college-age adults have recently drunk excessively, the highest rate of any age group. But older adults can be binge drinkers too. About 1 in 10 older adults is considered a binge drinker, incl. the many Baby Boomers. Problem drinking not only negatively impacts people's health conditions and outcomes, it is also a risk factor for vehicle crashes and falls. The study defines "binge drinking" as consuming 5 or more drinks in one sitting for men, 4 or more for women. A drink is equal to a can or bottle of beer, a glass of wine or a wine cooler, or a shot of liquor or a mixed drink. The study, which was published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, did not examine the causes of excessive drinking. However, it is clear from simple empirical observation in any community that alcohol – along with drugs and guns – enjoys an outsized role in U.S. culture. It is probably fair to state that these things will not make America great again.

Breastfeeding Still Controversial

All 50 states have laws that specifically allow women to breastfeed in any public or private place, including restaurants. But that hasn't stopped the debate whether breastfeeding is a normal and natural activity or a matter of public (in-) decency. Many women continue to be shamed and belittled when they breastfeed their

infants. The Dutch airline KLM is now in the middle of a heated debate over breastfeeding. Its official policy states, "breastfeeding is allowed onboard as long as no other passengers are offended by the practice." Even before flights take off, mothers are handed blankets by the airline to cover themselves up – signaling to them that uncovered breastfeeding is abnormal and indecent. Stunned and furious women have pledged never to fly with KLM again. A British doctor asked if the company also required customers to cover up their brown or dark skin if it offends other passengers.

Have Drug Overdoses Peaked?

Overdose deaths in the U.S. have been steadily climbing since about 1990 and topped 70,000 in 2018. The overdose epidemic has killed more people than any other in U.S. history. Millions have died. However, there is now a glimmer of hope that the numbers have peaked. The CDC estimates that in 2019 there were between 68,000 and 69,000 overdose deaths, a slight decrease compared to 2017. Experts do not know yet what it all means. The lower number may be result of Narcan, the nasal spray version of naloxone, and not necessarily an indication that the opioid problem is diminishing.

Subscription Economy Is Growing

Is the "sharing economy" over? Is the "subscription economy" next? Many people have a newspaper and/or magazine subscription or subscribe to video streaming services such as Amazon Prime, Hulu, or Netflix. In a way, utilities such as water, sewer, electricity, and natural gas are subscription services as well. But some folks go much further and have subscriptions for BARK (dog toys & treats), Birchbox (beauty products), Dollar Shave Club (razors & grooming products), Handy (cleaning products), Moink (meat), Simple Times Mixers (cocktail mixers), Switch (jewelry), and Winc (wine). There are hundreds of such services out there for books, flowers, games & puzzles, outdoor products, soap, socks, teas & coffees, toys, underwear, and so on. Users should watch out, however. All that stuff sometimes comes in faster than people consume it and piles up. Also, it can financially ruin you. Luckily, there is a subscription service for that as well – Truebill helps you keep track of your subscriptions for \$3 per month.

Be Aware of Pet Leasing

First of all, you should never buy a new dog for thousands of dollars from pet store or a breeder. There are lots of beautiful rescue dogs languishing in shelters, and some of those, incl. "mutts," have the best personalities and are in the greatest of health.

But if you do, be aware of a relatively new practice called "pet leasing." Many buyers have purchased new dogs, intending to pay for them in monthly installments, only to discover that the puppy remained the property of the lending company as long as money was owned. Not only did that add a lot more to the bill, but shady lending companies come and go, sell their businesses, or send debt collectors after customers if they fall behind in payment and to repossess the animal. A number of states have outlawed pet leasing for that reason, among them California, Indiana, Nevada, Washington, and New York. Connecticut legislators are mulling over a possible ban. But the practice remains legal in Ohio. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) told pet sellers in 2018 that must disclose to customers if puppy sales are leases, but not every pet store has done so.

The New Nationalism

Diseases once thought extinct are making headlines again, in part because vaccination rates have fallen off. The same is true for dangerous political ideologies such as nationalism and fascism.

In July 2019, the National Conservatism Conference took place in Washington's Ritz-Carlton. Conference organizers attempted to differentiate themselves from racists and supremacists, but did not always succeed. For example, one of the speakers was law professor Amy Wax who last year got into trouble with her school, the Univ. of Pennsylvania, when she questioned the academic abilities of black students. In her address, she made the case for allowing only immigrants to the U.S. who are culturally compatible: "In effect, this means taking the position that our country will be better off with more whites and fewer nonwhites." That is, of course, the position of President Trump and his defenders as well. Tucker Carlson from Fox News was there as well, saying that immigrants such as Rep. Ilhan

Omar from Michigan, a U.S. citizen born in Somalia, were "dangerous to this country." "Send her back," an incited mob recently shouted at a recent Trump rally while the president watched on with a big grin. He later called the chant "patriotic." Two authors peddling their wares were there as well: Yoram Hazany, "The Virtue of Nationalism" (Sept. 2018), and Rich Lowry, "The Case for Nationalism: How It Made Us Powerful, United, and Free" (Nov. 2019). Both writers are trying hard to free the concept of nationalism from its close historic association with militarism and war, racism and fascism. Lowry is the editor of the "National Review," a conservative periodical. Once his book is published this fall, there will probably be an interesting public debate over the dialectics of nationalism. At the moment, there is little evidence that nationalism is making America strong, united, rich, and free. The opposite seems true: the current retreat is making the country weaker, poorer, fractured, and isolated.

Colson Whitehead, "The Nickel Boys"

Colson Whitehead's novel "The Nickel Boys" is based on the true story of the Arthur G. Dozier School for wayward boys in Marianna, Florida. More than 100 children died in that house of horror between 1913 and 1960. Skeletons were still being excavated after the school closed in 2011. Whitehead's protagonists are Elwood and Turner, two colored boys. They endure abuse, beatings, forced labor, starvation, and sexual assault. Despite all that, Elwood clings to the fantasy that eventually justice would prevail. The novel ends with the climactic scene of an escape from the prison school. At least one of the boys makes it out eventually, only to find himself in Jim Crow America. With "The Underground Railroad" and "The Nickel Boys," Colson Whitehead has firmly established himself as a great African-American writer. His books are unsettling and devastating, but necessary reading, especially in this day and age.

Joyce Carol Oates, "My Life as a Rat"

With her latest novel, "My Life as a Rat," Joyce Carol Oates dives deep into America's fraught race wars. The main protagonist, the "rat," is Violet Kerrigan who lives in the fictional town of South Niagara, New York. The name "Niagara" clearly evokes the country's original sin and fall from grace. At the beginning of the novel, it is 1991 and Violet is a 12-year-old girl who overhears her older brothers (Jerome and Lionel) discussing their brutal murder of an African-American boy biking home on a dark road. After she more or less inadvertently tells social workers and police officers at her school about what she learned, she is immediately ostracized by her own parents and friends as a "rat" who has betrayed her brothers, her family, her church, and her white community. Her father never speaks to her again. She is banished and exiled by the "tribe" and grows up lonely and estranged, fearful and vulnerable. She also experiences sexual abuse by a high school teacher and ends up in a bad relationship with an alcoholic professor. Toxic masculinity has long preoccupied Oates. When Violet's father dies of a sudden stroke while drunk, she is summoned home and becomes reunited with her sister and her mother who is dying of cancer. Violet's encounter with the one brother who has since been released from prison (the other one was murdered while incarcerated) is the climax of this heart-wrenching novel. – Joyce Carol Oates is a prolific writer. Some have said she writes too much and too fast. However, "My Life as a Rat" is an indelible experience that will stay with you for years to come. If literature is capable of creating and enhancing empathy and emotional intelligence, then surely this is a must-read book.

Edward Snowden Publishes Memoir

Edward Snowden has written a memoir, "Permanent Record." It is scheduled to appear Sept. 17, according to his publisher, Metropolitan Books (an imprint of Macmillan Books). The book, written while in exile in Moscow, focuses on his relationship with the National Security Agency (NSA). For some, whistleblower Snowden is a traitor. For others, he is a hero. Either way, his is "an incredible American story," according to his publisher.

George Bird Grinnell (1849-1938)

George Bird Grinnell was an influential American explorer, naturalist, conservationist, anthropologist, historian, editor, and novelist. A massive new book by John Toliaferro explores his life and work – "Grinnell: America's Environmental Pioneer and His Restless

Drive to Save the West" (Liveright 2019, 606 pp., \$35). As a young man, Grinnell lived next to the Audubons. He later became the editor and publisher of "Forest and Stream" (1876-1911) and the co-editor of the Boone and Crockett Club – both platforms that promoted the preservation of fish-and-game habitat and the restoration of America's wildlands. He fought against the illegal poaching of the buffalo, helped organize the Audubon Society and the New York Zoological Society, and had a hand in the Migratory Bird Act of 1918. Among his best-known publications are detailed studies of the Cheyenne Indians and other Native-American tribes and nations. In addition, he wrote countless nature stories and novels for boys. Grinnell pursued so many interests and projects that he can be an elusive figure, but thanks to Taliaferro we now have a fuller understanding of the man and his life, work, and impact.

Television Makes Us Stupid

A new Italian study by Ruben Durante, Paolo Pinotti, and Andrea Tesei, published in the American Economic Review, took a close look at the role that television played in the rise and fall of Silvio Berlusconi, the showman, womanizer, and former prime minister of Italy. Berlusconi effectively used his privately owned TV network Mediaset to promote his political brand. The authors conclude, "we find that individuals exposed to entertainment TV as children were less cognitively sophisticated and civic-minded as adults, and ultimately more vulnerable to Berlusconi's captivating rhetoric." In other words, mindless entertainment television makes voters less prepared to resist or question emotional and demagogical entreaties. Plenty of people have pointed out the similarities between Silvio Berlusconi and Donald Trump in the past. Television is one area where the two populist politicians showed an uncanny ability to indoctrinate and manipulate susceptible people.

Schools Forced to Drop Their Confucius Institutes

The U.S. loves to display military hardware around the world. China has cultivated more subtle ways to curry favor with foreign countries. Since 2004, it has created more than 100 Confucius Institutes in the U.S. and more than 500 worldwide. It also supports the teaching of Chinese language and culture at American K-12 schools. The arrangement worked for a while, but questions about possible ulterior motifs of Confucius Institutes have gotten louder in recent years. Are they possibly part of a broader spying campaign against the U.S.? Some conservative politicians say – without positive proof – that the institutes may serve as outposts to establish a "beachhead," recruit spies, steal intellectual property, and keep a watchful eye on Chinese students studying in America. Defenders of the language programs say that the institutes have nothing to do with politics. Program directors have stated that they have seen no evidence of interference with academic integrity. In fact, many foreign countries maintain cultural-exchange programs in the U.S. to promote their language and culture, among them France, Germany, and Israel.

In 2018, Sen. Ted Cruz, a Texas Republican, attached an amendment to the military spending bill that prohibited American institutions with Confucius Institutes from receiving funds from the Defense Dept. for Chinese language training. For many schools – among them the Univ. of Oregon – this was a painful choice. They and a dozen others have dropped their affiliation with the Chinese Confucius Institutes within the past year in order to preserve Defense Department funding. These are dark days for anyone doing bilateral or multilateral work.

Soccer Star Megan Rapinoe Has Book Deal

Megan Rapinoe, a captain of the U.S. women's soccer team, has said, "It's our responsibility to make this world a better place." She has now signed a book deal with Penguin Press. Expected to be out in fall of 2020, the untitled memoir will include her biography, her athletic career, and the broader message of social justice such as LGBT rights and pay equity for women. In a recent interview with "Time," Rapinoe lamented the fact that the American dream was not accessible for everyone. In addition, the soccer star will write or co-write an inspirational middle-school reader for Razorbill, a division of Penguin, about the power young people have to change their communities and the world. Although Rapinoe is a sharp and articulate person, she has many commitments. Projects of this nature

are typically co-written or even ghost-written by professionals in the field and/or thoroughly vetted and edited.

Smartest Dog Dies

Border collie Chaser has died in Spartanburg, South Carolina at the age of 15. His owner, retired psychology professor John W. Pilley, taught him more than 1,000 words after hearing about Rico, a dog who could identify more than 200 items. He used animal toys, balls, Frisbees, and various plastic items to systematically teach Chaser 1,022 nouns. After Pilley died in 2018, wife Sally and daughter Robin took care of the dog. Chaser has been in declining health in recent weeks. – Psychologists know that higher animals have not only a language of their own, they can also learn to understand human language in much the same way as we learn a foreign language. Dogs in particular have been bred to be attuned to humans and understand us well. Anyone who has spent time with dogs knows that even perfectly normal and average canines are capable of learning dozens of words and proper names.

Abbreviated Words

The English language loves to abbreviate and simplify things. People seem to prefer short mono- or bisyllabic words over polysyllabic ones, which take time and effort to pronounce. Many truncated forms have become so common that no one even thinks about the original word anymore: ad, app, bike, bus, condo, croc, exam, fan, fridge, gym, hippo, idiot, info, lab, math, memo, mic, phone, photo-op, porn, props, repo man, rhino, semi, in sync, teen, etc. But there hundreds more that are commonly used, especially within certain professional settings. At colleges & universities, for example, you will routinely hear words like admits, apps, dorms, exams, frats, grads, orgs, profs, and undergrads. "I have my lit sem to go to," someone said the other day. There has been a proliferation of such terms. Other languages do it too, but English seems to excel in it.

Can you figure out the full, unabbreviated form of the following words: ammo, bods, body cams, celebs, certs, cigs, combos, congrats, creds, demo, Dems, docs, eps, family faves, the Feds, foto ops, improv, indie bookstore, invites, Jags, jammies, to be in juvie, libs, mags, meds, mins, narcs, obits, pics, pols, preemie baby, regs, reps, stats, subs (2 meanings), techies, temps, undies, unis, veggies, vets (2 meanings)?

THE WORLD

Thousands Killed in Venezuela

The U.N. human rights chief, Michelle Bachelet, reported in July that Venezuela's government and pro-government death squads known as "collectivos" killed 5,287 opponents last year, plus 1,569 people this year through May 19. The actual number could be much higher. Bachelet is a former Socialist president of Chile. In the past, she refused to openly criticize Nicolás Maduro's repressive regime. Her report was based on some 550 interviews with victims, witnesses, lawyers, and human-rights activists. She had an unusual degree of access and even met with Maduro himself. The Venezuelan government rejected the report's conclusions as "distorted," subjective, and erroneous. Observers have criticized the report for not demanding an independent U.N. commission to investigate the killings. Instead, the report calls for the Venezuelan government to set up an investigation. In the meantime, the killings continue unabated...

Update on Sudan

Despite very large protests, the military junta in Sudan, under General Mohamed Hamdan (known as Hemeti), has fought tooth and nail to hold on to power and privileges. However, international sentiment has shifted after a brutal crackdown on June 3, and even countries such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are now in favor of a peaceful transition to a civilian government in Khartoum. In a power-sharing deal struck between demonstrators and the army and facilitated by the African Union, both sides agreed to form an 11-member transitional council with 5 civilians, 5 military members, and 1 person jointly agreed on. Elections are to be held in 2 to 3 years. Hemeti did not voluntarily

agree to the compromise, and he may yet attempt to use the time and space provided by the deal to consolidate his power and do away with the transitional council. Skepticism about the whole affair is justified because there is no indication that the arrangement gives civilians meaningful control over the security forces, natural resources, and decision-making. However, it seems that the immediate crisis is now over.

Ebola a Public-Health Emergency in Congo

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced on July 17 that the deadly Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo is now "an international health emergency." It had rejected such a designation on 3 previous occasions, but a year into the epidemic there has been no sign of a slow-down. The disease has spread into Goma, a border city with Rwanda, and into Uganda. So far, more than 1,800 people are known to have died. The declaration typically results in greater international attention and funding. However, it comes with the risk of stigmatization, travel restrictions, and loss of economic activity. – This is the 5th international health emergency declaration in history. Previous ones were issued for Ebola, Zika, the swine flu, and polio.

Elections in Ukraine

Corruption and nepotism is endemic and rampant in large parts of the world, including in Eastern Europe. It's good to see that voters in Ukraine finally had enough of wealthy kleptocrats running and ruining the country and enriching themselves in the process. Some of them held on to their seats for the sole purpose to stay out of jail. At the July 21 snap elections, Servant of the People, led by President Volodymyr Zelensky, won 43.12% and clinched about 253 seats in the 450-seat parliament, replacing oligarchs with ordinary people such a photographer, a fitness-center director, an anesthesiologist, and even people without steady work. Zelensky himself, 41, was a television actor before elected president. To be true, many members of Servant of the People lack knowledge and experience, and voters did not get to know them well enough. Undoubtedly, a number of things will go wrong. However, a fresh start was desperately needed.

Saudi Women Granted Greater Freedoms

Royal decrees in Saudi Arabia are granting women greater freedoms. They are now allowed to register marriages, divorces, and the birth of a child and to be legal guardians of minors. Women ages 21 and older are also permitted to apply for passports and to travel without the permission of a male relative. These new laws empower women up to a certain point, but divorce laws, child-custody laws, and inheritance laws still harshly discriminate against women. While women are now permitted "to register marriages," they are still now allowed to marry without the permission from a male relative. In addition, many advocates for women's rights remain imprisoned for their activism. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's effective ruler, has sharply reduced political dissent in the kingdom.

Gun Buybacks in New Zealand

In the wake of the Christchurch massacre, New Zealand has started a massive gun buyback program of semiautomatic weapons that are now banned. On July 13, the first of more than 250 planned buyback events was held in Christchurch. Over 150 gun owners turned in 224 outlawed semiautomatic weapons and more than 200 gun parts. They received 95% of what police determined to be the "fair-market value" of their weapons or a total of NZ-\$433,682 (nearly US-\$300,000). Some gun owners were said to be dissatisfied with the level of compensation they received. The number of weapons in the country is unknown because New Zealand does not track the vast majority of its gun sales. Estimates indicate that the country has between 1.2 and 1.5 million guns across its 4.6 million residents. It is not clear how effective gun buybacks are. The math is not convincing. Assuming that at each of the 250 gun-buyback events 224 weapons are turned in for destruction, the total would be 56,000. That's only 3.7% of the 1.5 million guns said to exist in New Zealand. However, the program not only creates much-needed public awareness but does in fact take some of the most dangerous weapons off the streets. In the U.S., gun buybacks were once common, but you hardly hear about them now.

Controversy over Naomi Wolf's Book "Outrages"

Renowned scholar Naomi Wolf, Ph.D., has published a new book that has been the cause of much controversy. "Outrages: Sex, Censorship, and the Criminalization of Love" was released in Great Britain earlier this year, but the U.S. publisher, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, has abruptly delayed publication because of questions about accuracy.

"Outrages" examines the criminalization of homosexuality in Victorian England, exemplified by the life of the closeted poet and critic John Addington Symonds (1840-1893). There is no question that manifestations of love were – and still are – criminalized by society. "Indecency" is a criminal offense to this day. In England, homosexual men often lost their jobs, committed suicide, or were imprisoned. The sad case of Oscar Wilde is just the tip of the – er – iceberg. Until 1861, sodomy was even punishable by death. Wolf's book is essentially correct as far as the harsh criminalization of homoerotic love is concerned.

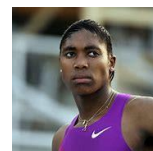
The specific controversy is about a section of her book in which Naomi Wolf interprets the ambiguous term "death recorded" as meaning that the prisoner was executed for having committed a homosexual act. Critics of her study claim that she misunderstood the legal term, which – according to them – means a death sentence was not given. They argue that there is no known case of a British execution based on homosexuality after 1835.

Whether or not gay men were executed in England is not trivial. Details matter. The truth must be established. However, it seems the whole focus on the meaning of the phrase "death recorded" is a red herring, intended to distract from the overarching truth of the book, which is that the biased criminal-injustice system effectively ruined and ended the social and professional lives of countless men on the basis of their individual pursuit of happiness. If Wolf's book contains errors, they need to be corrected in a subsequent edition. (No book is ever error-free, by the way.) But to ban and suppress an academic study on the basis of an alleged inconsistency or misinterpretation smacks of extreme censorship. It seems there are still forces out there eager to erase LGBT history and white-wash society. In the meantime, let's remember the dictum of soccer star Megan Rapinoe, "We have to love more and hate less."



Colombian Wins Tour de France

Egan Bernal, 22, has won the 2019 Tour de France, a brutal 2,000-mile bicycle race through high mountains and wilting heat, hail and landslides. Born in 1997, he is the youngest winner since WW II and the first ever from Latin America. Despite public misconceptions, the Tour de France is very much a team sport. However, they say that Bernal was raised at altitude in Colombia and comfortable in thinner air. That gave him an advantage in the Alps.



The Caster Semenya Conundrum

What should sports associations do with intersex athletes such as Caster Semenya of South Africa? The conundrum continues being debated on the highest levels of sports 10 years after track-and-field runner Semenya was first embroiled in a gender verification test. Now 28, she is one of a handful of female athletes born with male chromosomes or, in other words, "biologically male athletes with female gender identities." They produce testosterone after puberty in what scientists refer to as the "male range," giving them an advantage against other female athletes. Semenya says she was born with her "genetic gift" and it is her fundamental "human right" to be what nature meant her to be. That is certainly true. The International

Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), on the other hand, says that athletes with testosterone in the male range gain an unfair advantage in muscle strength and oxygen-carrying capacity. To preserve a level playing field and the integrity of female competition, the IAAF has therefore instituted strict threshold levels for testosterone. Athletes exceeding the caps are required to lower their testosterone levels for 6 months before competing and maintain those lower levels. Semenya has refused to undergo hormone therapy or surgery and says she is being targeted, humiliated, and discriminated against. The U.N. Human Rights Council and the World Medical Association have intervened in support of her. Unfortunately for her, a Swiss court has now reinstated the hormone restrictions imposed by the IAAF, barring her from an upcoming 800-meter run in Doha, Qatar. – This is a case where good people may agree to disagree. Without knowing much more about the case, “Community Matters” is not in a position to say what the correct ethical choice would be.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Earth Is Heating Up

The history of Earth’s climate is recorded in tree rings, ice sheets, mineral deposits, coral reefs, ocean sediments, and more. It is a large database that international scientists have only recently begun to systematically explore. Several studies have now shown that certain climate changes such as the so-called the Medieval Climate Anomaly (950-1250) or the Little Ice Age (16th – 19th century) were in fact regional trends and not part of universal warming or cooling. The Contemporary Warming Period, on the other hand, is a truly global trend not seen in at least 2,000 years. In the past, volcanic eruptions have often been the driver of global temperature change. Today, however, it is greenhouse gases in the atmosphere that play the dominant role in driving global temperature, leading to peak temperatures in all continents, including the Arctic and Antarctic.

Expect “a Floodier Future” ...

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has issued a new study in which it predicts “a floodier future.” In fact, widespread storm flooding is already here as is “sunny-day flooding” (tidal flooding). Sea levels are currently rising at a rate of 3 millimeters a year, or about an inch every 8 years. While that may not sound like much, it does add up. And it could turn out that sea levels will not rise at an incremental linear speed, but at an exponential speed as ice sheets in the Arctic, Antarctic, and mountain glaciers around the world continue to melt. High-tide and storm flooding causes numerous problems – disrupted shipping, damaged infrastructure, power outages, interference with fresh- and sewer-water systems, degraded property values, missed work days, flood-insurance expenses, beach erosion, acidification of agricultural fields, and so on.

... and “a Hotter Future”

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have issued a 96-page guide for the world’s cities in which they warn of a hotter future. The worst heat waves in Europe over the last 500 years were all in the last 17 years. The month of June was the hottest June in 139 years of record-keeping, according to NASA. The Red Cross points out that heat waves are predictable, allowing agencies to set up cooling centers and distribute fans. Heat waves are most dangerous to vulnerable people already at risk, including the elderly, the sick, and the poor. The guidelines also include recommendations such as painting rooftops and sidewalks in reflective white paint. Some cities have begun to plant more shade trees to mitigate the negative impact of urban heat islands. Companies are urged to make allowances for outdoor workers to rest during peak heat hours.

Relentless Heat Wave in Europe

Central Europe was in the grip of another heat wave in July. Record after record fell as temperatures reached over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (and over 40°C) in France, the Benelux countries, and Germany. In the UK too temperatures reached triple digits. Air-conditioning is uncommon in Europe, and many people suffered from the wilting heat as a result. In 2003, a similar heat wave killed 15,000

people in France. This time around, Central Europe seems to be better prepared. Warnings have been issued and neighbors have been encouraged to check up on vulnerable people. The heat dome is moving to Scandinavia next and may also break records in Norway and Sweden.

Correlation between Higher Temperatures and Violence

Two recent studies have shown a correlation between rising temperatures and increasing aggression and violence both on an individual and a geopolitical level. Although correlation is not causation, the studies suggest that higher temperatures are a direct driver of violent behavior. For example, no correlation was shown between property crimes and higher temperature, but the two studies found a significant relationship between high temperatures and violent crime in the city of Los Angeles between 2010 and 2017 and terrorist attacks around the world between 1970 and 2015. There is reason to believe that a hotter world will be a more violent one.

Many Companies Ignore Climate-Change Issues

A global report published on July 10 by London-based Transition Pathway Initiative that examined 274 publicly listed companies found that only 1 in 8 is reducing emissions in line with the Paris Climate Agreement. A quarter of them don’t even report greenhouse gas emissions, and nearly half of them don’t adequately consider the risks of climate change when making business decisions, according to the report. While many wealthy investors may be indifferent about climate change, others may be swayed by the report to redirect their money to companies that are more socially and environmentally responsible.

Moody Rating Agency Takes Climate Change Seriously

Under pressure from investors, the rating agency Moody Corporation Moody has purchased a controlling stake in a company that measures the risks of climate change, California-based Four Twenty Seven (427). There have been few examples of cities and counties getting lower credit ratings because of climate risks such as sea-level rise, hurricanes, wildfires, or heat stress, but nervous investors have taken notice of these risks and have increasingly demanded more information and transparency. The result could well incentivize cities and counties to develop plans to mitigate the deleterious effects of climate change, or risk seeing their credit being downgraded. Moody also rates institutions such as colleges and universities. S&P Global and Fitch Ratings has also warned state and local governments that climate change could negatively impact their credit ratings. A lower rating typically results in higher interest for borrowers to compensate investors for their increased risk.



Greta Thunberg Is Coming to North America

Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old Swedish climate activist, is coming to New York to attend a U.N. summit on global warming. Since she does not fly, she has been looking for an alternate means to cross the Atlantic. She is now scheduled to travel on the 60-foot racing sailboat Malizia II, a zero-emission vessel outfitted with solar panels and wind turbines. Comfort will be minimal. The boat has no kitchen, refrigeration system, AC, or showers. The trip is expected to take about 2 weeks. She will be accompanied by her father and a filmmaker. After New York, she plans to go to Canada and Mexico. In December, she will attend the annual U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change talks in Santiago, Chile. Greta Thunberg, a leading advocate for climate action, has taken a leave of absence from school. She has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Now that Thunberg has become a global force to be reckoned with, she is coming increasingly under attack. Attempts to discredit and delegitimize her are underway not only by conservatives but also by the establishment. She is being called “precocious” and extreme. Critics rarely fail to mention that she has Asperger and is autistic. In short, she is “unrealistic” and “out of balance” and should therefore her attempts “to sow panic” should not be taken seriously.

However, among younger generations she is an absolute folk hero. People who dismiss her do so at their own peril.

Clothing Rentals a Growing Industry

Clothing-rental services are a fast-growing national industry. It is estimated to increase from almost \$1.3 billion to more than \$2.5 billion in 2023, according to market-research firm GlobalData. Urban Outfitters is the latest company to start a new clothing-rental service called Nuuly. For a subscription price of \$88, shoppers can choose among a wide assortment of brands and styles. Once returned, the items are dry-cleaned before being rented out again. Rent the Runway, Le Tote, and American Eagle's Style Drop offer similar clothes-sharing services.

Locally in Delaware, we have "What the Tux" at 1 N. Sandusky St., behind Barley Hopster. Even though it is a specialty store that focuses on tuxedos for special occasions, it is a similar concept. Rentals there include pants, vests, shorts, ties, socks, and shoes. There is no need to buy expensive new clothes if you can temporarily rent them for 1/10 of the price they would cost new.

A Climate Change Action Plan for Delaware, Ohio by Terry Hermsen et al.

The document below is a preliminary outline based on a number of workshops and summits sponsored by the Central Ohio Community Project (COCP) and held in 2018 and 2019. Thanks to everyone who participated and contributed. The draft is a work in progress, to be revised and refined. This version dates from July 2019; the complete document is 30 pages in length. Once finished, it will be submitted to the City of Delaware later this year so that it can be incorporated into the next Comprehensive Plan.

1. Recognition of Climate Change and Its Effects

The City of Delaware acknowledges that a warming climate will affect our area in extensive and diverse ways over the next 10-15 years and will prepare accordingly.

We will work to address the emerging effects of climate change across all layers of the upcoming Comprehensive Plan, seeking collaboration with area institutions, non-profits organizations, and informed citizenry at large.

We will make use of all the resources available to us to inform our residents and take a leading role in the region in terms of reducing our carbon emissions and lessening the impact of the climate crisis on the population, including the climate change mitigation recommendations from the Byrd Polar Institute's report of December 2018.

We re-commit ourselves to complying with and implementing the goals of MORPC's Sustainable 2050 plan.

2. Energy Transformation (Including Housing)

We will establish an Energy Special Improvement District (ESID) in Delaware, making use of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing to facilitate energy retrofitting for our business and other buildings within the city, along with providing greater flexibility for solar installation.

We will seek methods of reducing our energy reliance on fossil fuels and creating a 50% non-carbon energy grid by 2030 and a 90% non-carbon grid by 2040.

We will pass regulations to prohibit homeowner associations from restricting solar-energy installations.

We will work with City Council to pass environmentally friendly zoning laws (e.g., to ease an increased installation of solar panels).

We will confer with the City of Worthington on their recent Energy Aggregation program, to make opting for renewable energy more feasible for their residents.

We will confer with officials in the City of Athens to learn about their community carbon tax that has funneled tax dollars into the establishing of city-wide solar installations.

We will seek ways to reduce our reliance on natural gas from fracking operations, shifting to less than 10% by 2030 and eliminating this resource by 2040.

We will seek grants to apply green roofs for cool buildings – with a project goal of five green roofs in the city by 2030 – and

establish programs to encourage green retrofitting of existing structures, including the repair, restoration, rehabilitation, and weatherization of existing housing stock.

3. Development of Greenways and Green Spaces

We will develop a "Green Infrastructure" plan for the city over the next five years, starting with establishing a Green Infrastructure Commission and seeking grants to infuse these environmental and economic principles into how the city grows, to offset our carbon footprint, enhance the quality of life for our residents, and provide new economic opportunities.

We will support – economically and through policy adjustments – the development of a set of greenways across the city, seeking greater connectivity, access of parks, biking, walking and other means of engaging with nature.

We seek preserve and expand green spaces, working with the Shade Tree Commission to increase the city tree canopy by 30% over the next ten years.

We will borrow the "Tree Protection and Mitigation Order" that Columbus instituted in 2015 that seeks to limit the removal of or damage to all trees on city property or along rights of way during development and construction.

We will develop programs to encourage homeowners and other landowners to reduce their reliance on mowed lawns, with the goal of replacing 15% of lawns in the city with expanded tree cover, gardens, prairies, and wetlands, as appropriate and recommended, by 2030.

We will work with area biologists on ways to restore "biophilic resurgence" to our city, as exemplified by the city of Austin, Texas.

We will work with area and regional planning groups to create a system of greenways and river-restoration initiatives that link Delaware to surrounding communities.

We will explore ways to highlight (and where possible "daylight") the Delaware Run as a more visible, biological presence in the middle of the city, seeking funds to dechannelize its route through the city, improve its level of biodiversity in flora and fauna, on the order of the restoration of Little Sugar Creek in Charlotte, North Carolina and the Nine Mile Run Restoration Project in Pittsburgh.

4. Transportation Transformation

We pledge to develop policies to reduce area-wide reliance on the single-driver car.

We will adopt a complete-streets policy, emphasizing walkability and bikeability.

We will investigate and weigh the option of autonomous vehicles as a way to reduce traffic congestion.

We will create a ride-share app program to encourage greater use of carpooling, in the city and between the city and Columbus.

We will set aside land for a ride-share parking lot in a convenient location for commuter travelers.

We will select five bike-lane corridors across the city to ensure that all major areas of the city are safely accessible by bicycle, both for adults and young people, linking those corridors with the above mentioned greenways.

We will develop a mass transit plan that will link DATA Bus (Delaware County Transit) with COTA out of Columbus, establishing express bus lanes for safe, reliable, and frequent travel means for avoiding the single-driver car.

We will work in conjunction with DATA Bus to investigate the feasibility of creating a cross-county bus transit system between Delaware, Marion, and Marysville, to make it easier for residents to work at places such as the Honda plant in Marysville.

We will begin the process of seeking funding for a establishing a light-rail system from Delaware to Columbus, to be in place by 2030.

We will establish a program to reduce transportation costs for individuals and families living in poverty across the city.

5. Zero Waste and Composting Initiatives

We will consult with Worthington's pilot program for food scraps drop-off and make plans to institute such a program in Delaware.

We will consider linking city-wide composting with OWU's fledgling vermiculture initiative.

We will investigate Bexley's city-wide composting plans to create a similar system in Delaware.

We will develop an upcycle center on the south side of town to encourage means of reskilling, reusing products, etc.)

We will work with area small cities (via the Regional Hub plan in progress) to develop a closed-loop recycling system, vs. collecting items to be shipped elsewhere.

We will work with other small cities in the area to create a large-scale anaerobic bio-digester for the recycling of wastes, cooperating with, adapting and/or expanding existing processes at Renergy.

We will work with Sustainable Delaware Ohio to create a ban on the use of plastic bags and other plastic products.

6. Farming, Food, and Land

We will work with area farms and advocates for the support of the local-food movement to support such initiatives as: a) working with institutions within the city, such as hospitals and schools, to commit to raising their purchases of locally grown foods on a sustainable basis; b) helping to establish a food processing plant within the city for food preparation, freezing and processing, to offer small area farmers greater opportunity to make their products available all year; c) working in conjunction with the OSU-Extension and the Master Gardeners to provide expertise to school gardens and micro-farms within the city.

We pledge to develop five small micro-farms across the city by 2030, to provide jobs, address food insecurity and access to healthy food for a wider array of our residents.

We will double the number of restored and newly created wetlands in our city and, in conjunction with the county, our surrounding area, including pocket wetlands along area streams to reduce excessive run-off from increased rainfall and more frequently large storms.

We will work with large- and small-scale area farmers to reduce use of chemical fertilizers on their fields, replacing those methods with means of revitalizing soils.

We will establish, in conjunction with the above, a program to measure and reduce the amount of algae-generating flow into our streams and rivers, reducing the city's use of chemical-based fertilizer and promoting the same with city residents.

We will work with area parks and other organizations in the area around Delaware to conserve more farmland from development, aiming for 20,000 preserved acres in the five counties to the east, west and north of Delaware by 2030.

We will work with area small farms on creating an agro-diversity program to foster crops that are climate-change resistant to be grown, sold, and consumed locally.

We will work with the Main Street Delaware to expand our local farmers markets, studying ways to ensure a good return on investment for area small farmers and CSAs.

We will work with City Council to remove obstacles to urban gardening and farming.

7. Climate Change Support for Underserved Areas of the City

We will research programs to help defray the effects of climate change on needier population across the city, helping to lower the cost of energy and transportation.

We will seek grants to implement these recommendations.

We will link with other smaller cities in Central Ohio to create well-paying green jobs in building retrofitting, mass transit options, and the creation of green businesses.

We will develop programs at the DACC and area technical colleges to prepare students for the emerging jobs in sustainability and climate-change resilience.

8. Health and Wellness

We will work with the Delaware General Health District's climate-change position paper to apply its principles and recommendations (to be developed in conjunction with the DGHD).

Americans Not Eager to Go to Mars

President Trump wants to create a Space Force and send people to Mars, but Americans seem to have other priorities. Going back to the moon and to Mars ranks low on most people's priority list of space activities. Their no. 1 priority is asteroid and comet monitoring because the chance of collisions, however remote, is real. Americans are not opposed to scientific research and space exploration. More than half say that it is important or very important to expand the knowledge of Earth and the solar system. However, they prefer that robots explore the universe instead of humans. Few people think that setting up permanent human settlements in space is a worthy goal. Even the International Space Station (ISS) is enjoying tepid support only. Lowest on the priority list of Americans? Trump's Space Force is supported only by 19% of adults in the AP-NORC poll conducted in May 2019.

Cost is certainly a major consideration for rationally thinking people who believe that fixing things on Earth should be a priority, among them climate change. One North Carolina worker is quoted as saying, "It would cost a lot of money to send somebody to Mars. We have roads and bridges that need repaired here."

"Community Matters" shares this sentiment. It is a noble endeavor to improve our knowledge of the solar system and beyond through telescopes and unmanned missions. Great nations should have great science programs. But the billions required to send people up and out into space, and bring them back alive, seems both wasteful and risky. There are plenty of projects on planet Earth that are much more urgent.

Space Force

President Trump has nominated Barbara Barrett to serve as the next secretary of the Air Force. If confirmed by the Senate, she will oversee the creation of the new Space Force long coveted by the president. Barrett, 68, was once a Republican candidate for governor of Arizona and is a former U.S. ambassador to Finland. She is best known for being a prolific GOP donor and the wife of former Intel CEO Craig Barrett. She does have a pilot's license though. – Barrett would replace Heather Wilson, a retired Air Force officer and former Republican congresswoman who is leaving to become president of the Univ. of Texas, El Paso. Wilson has consistently voted against Hispanic and LGBT minorities and is opposed by UTEP students and faculty.

International Space Station Welcomes Guests

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has announced that the International Space Station is now open for business to private citizens. For a mere \$58 million round-trip ticket you can travel there. Accommodations run about \$35,000 per night, for trips up to 30 days long. Guests will have to meet the same medical standards, training, and certification procedures as regular crew members. Citizenship is not a requirement. To get into orbit, guests have to make travel arrangements with SpaceX and Boeing. Sadly, however, amenities aboard the ISS are severely limited. There is no beach, for instance. In 2001, California business Dennis Tito was the first visitor to the ISS. Several others have since followed.

Militarization of Space

The U.S., Russia, and China are working furiously to militarize and weaponize space. The era of fighting in space is inching ever closer. France has now joined these countries in building a space command. India may be next. Of course, it's all done under the pretext of defending satellite infrastructure; nobody is admitting that the same military hardware could be used for offensive purposes. – For now, the European Union is not getting involved. France is going it alone, facing resistance from Germany and other European nations.

Ufologist Stanton T. Friedman Dies

Ufologist Stanton T. Friedman (1934-2019) has died at the age of 84. He was a true believer that extraterrestrials were frequent visitors to Earth and careening around in nuclear-powered "flying saucers." He wrote, or contributed to, a number of books in which he espoused his beliefs. He often accused the government of covering up the arrivals and departures of such aliens. Friedman carved a lucrative career out of his false views, deriving his income largely from lecture fees. The more outrageous his claims, the higher his

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income, of course. At least, Friedman was honest enough to admit that he himself had never met an alien or seen one of their space ships. Neither have we. There are normally earthly and mundane explanations for unexplained aerial phenomena or unidentified flying objects (UFOs), incl. secret military programs. On the other hand, it is of course impossible to prove a negative. There exists the extremely remote possibility that intelligent life capable of space travel does exist on other planets.

"Fake news" is not a new phenomenon. In the past, however, people like Friedman were considered mavericks, cranks, and lunatics who lived on the fringes. Nobody would ever dream of putting them in positions of responsibility and power. Today, it seems, the firewall between fact and fiction has crumbled. Fabulists and fibbers rule the world, and honest factfinders are dismissed and ignored.

The Secrets of "Area 51"

"Area 51," a unit of Nellis Air Force Base, is the highly secretive military site in southern Nevada where the Air Force tests aircraft and trains military pilots. Conspiracy aficionados have long maintained that this is not all what happens there. Ufologists have claimed that the base is devoted to the study of extraterrestrial life and the reengineering of extraterrestrial aircraft, and that it even holds aliens from outer space in captivity.

A California Facebook prankster, Matty Roberts, has now suggested that people "Storm Area 51" on Fri., Sept. 20 (3 am). Millions have seen the satirical post and probably got a good laugh out of it. It is clear from the language and the associated jokes that the entry was made in jest and the suggested battle plan was implausible ("Naruto runs" and vaping clouds). However, some intellectually challenged folks seem to have taken the post literally and seriously. They have started to book rooms in nearby towns and made plans to travel there. "People are coming," says the owner of an inn in Rachel, Nev. The Air Force is concerned about a possible invasion as well and has warned that "any attempt to illegally access military installations or military training areas is dangerous." The area is well-guarded, with signs warning trespassers that they could face prison time or "deadly force" if they got too close. In addition, there are plenty of surveillance cameras and motion sensors. All of that adds fuel to the fire, of course. Doesn't it prove, critics may ask, that the Air Force is indeed hiding some deep and dark secrets in Area 51?

A deadly show-down between the military and a bunch of moronic idiots on Sept. 20 would be unfortunate indeed. "Community Matters" recommends that the Air Force hold an Open House instead, with fresh cookies and cold lemonade, and show taxpayers where their hard-earned money goes. It's called transparency and accountability. At the very least, the gathering should be converted into a more harmless festival, free of violence on either side.

HAPPY NEWS

United Way Pushes "Board Diversity"

The boards of many charities and other non-profits do not look like the communities they serve. Typically, they are more than 80% white and have too few African-Americans, Latinos, and Asians. Veterans, immigrants, and people with disabilities are also underrepresented. If the boards resembled the local populace more closely, they would be less than 65% white. Starting in 2020, United Way of Central Ohio plans to make "board diversity" a requirement in its next grant-application process. Charities and non-profits must demonstrate more diverse boards or a board-approved plan for achieving diversity to be eligible for grants. Inclusive boards make better decisions, says Lisa Courtice, president and CEO of United Way of Central Ohio. United Way funnels tens of millions of dollars to as many as 80 member agencies each year, so organizations will have their work cut out.

There is, of course, also a significant wealth disparity between board members and the population at large. Two-thirds of board members make \$150,000 or more per year. United Way decided not to include income in its upcoming diversity criteria, but holding BOTs accountable is a good first step.

A Minister of Gun-Violence Prevention

The Presbyterian Church has installed its first-ever minister of gun-violence prevention. Rev. Deanna Hollas, 52, will oversee supporters of gun-violence prevention in all 50 states from her place of ministry, Retreat House Spirituality Center in Richardson, Texas. Part of her role is to provide pastoral care for victims and survivors of gun violence. The church, Hollas says, has always been political. "That is still the role of the church today: to speak a word of peace into a world of violence."

Trump Signs 9/11 Victims-Fund Bill

On July 29, President Trump signed a bill that ensures that the compensation fund for victims and first responders to the Sept. 11, 2001 attack does not run out of money until 2092. The bill ends years of legislative gridlock, delays, and resistance while the number of Ground Zero-related cancer illnesses grew.

Artists against Funds from the Fossil-Fuel Industry

British Petroleum (BP) has been sponsoring the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, the Royal Opera House, and the Royal Shakespeare Company for years, contributing millions of dollars. The institutions continue to welcome BP's sponsorship, saying the funding gives more people the opportunity to experience art. They also point out that they are heavily dependent on private philanthropy because of a lack of government subsidies.

Critics, however, call it an attempt "to greenwash" BP's sullied reputation. In July, a group of 78 British artists concerned about climate change have called on these institutions to cut ties with BP. Actor Mark Rylance stated, "I do not wish to be associated with BP any more than I would with an arms dealer," and resigned from an honorary position with the Royal Shakespeare Company. While BP and other fossil-fuel companies pretend to be on a greener, more sustainable path, the truth is that BP invests only 3% of its available capital in renewable energy – "a glaring contradiction between words and actions," the letter of the 78 British artists said. In the U.S., artists have become more awake and more aware of their ability to influence museums' decisions. The National Portrait Gallery recently turned down a \$1.3 million donation from the Sackler family, known to have profited from the opioid crisis.

Ethiopia Plants Millions of Trees

One of the best things you can do to combat climate change is to plant trees. The Earth Day Network has called for planting 7.8 billion of them – one for every living person on Earth. Planting a trillion trees in large countries such as Brazil, Canada, China, India, Russia, and the U.S. would significantly slow down the speed of climate change. – On July 30, the African country of Ethiopia closed its schools and government offices and went to work planting 200 to 300 million seedlings around the country. The effort was part of the prime minister's plan to plant a total of 4 billion trees in his country this year to combat deforestation and to reverse climate change. By 2000, just 4% of Ethiopia was covered by forests. The government supports forest-compatible trades such as beekeeping, making bamboo furniture, and producing essential oils.

New York Bans Declawing of Cats

New York has become the first U.S. state to ban the declawing of domestic cats after Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the measure on July 22. Most European countries, several Canadian provinces, and some American cities (incl. Denver, Los Angeles, and San Francisco) already prohibit the procedure. Many veterinarians supported the ban, saying the declawing procedure, which involves cutting through bone, tendon, and nerves to amputate the first segment of a cat's toes, is unnecessary, cruel, and disfiguring. It also puts outdoor cats at risk when they cannot climb trees to escape from predators. However, the largest veterinary organization, the New York State Veterinary Medical Society, argued that declawing should continue to be allowed as a last resort for felines that won't stop scratch furniture. About 25% of cats in the U.S. are being declawed, and the ban means less income for veterinarians who perform the procedure. Supporters of the new law were jubilant and expect additional proposals to emerge across the country. Similar bills are already pending in California, Massachusetts, and New Jersey.

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