



THE NEXT CHAPTER

A Democratic Party Newsletter Made for and by Gratiot County Members
Chief Editors, Nancy O'Brien & Lisa Gregory

Chair Chat By Christie Freestone



"The Gun Lobby's interpretation of the Second Amendment is one of the greatest pieces of fraud, I repeat the word fraud, on the American people by special interest groups that I have ever seen in my lifetime.

The real purpose of the Second Amendment was to ensure that state armies - the militia - would be maintained for the defense of the state.

The very language of the Second Amendment refutes any argument that it was intended to guarantee every citizen an unfettered right to any kind of weapon he or she desires."

by Warren Burger (1990) , Conservative Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

If you are unsure of what Critical Race Theory is all about, we saw a clear example of it in the Tennessee State Legislature last week.

Just days after the Covenant Elementary School shooting in Nashville, passionate students and their families stormed the galleries of their House and Senate chambers to demand gun reform of their elected officials. When the Republican House Speaker would not turn on the microphones of Representatives Gloria Johnson, Justin Jones and Justin Pearson, the proceedings came to a halt when Jones and Pearson led chants through a bullhorn in support of gun reform.

The Republican controlled House responded with an unprecedented decision. They voted to expel the two, black male legislators while allowing the white, female legislator to keep her seat in the House. In a statement shared on social media, Tennessee House Republicans said it was a "sad day" for the state - but they defended the vote as "the only path forward" in response to the Tennessee Three's "disrespectful" actions.

Former President Barack Obama tweeted, "No elected official should lose their job simply for raising their voice - especially when they're doing it on behalf of our children. Silencing those who disagree with us is a sign of weakness, not strength, and it won't lead to progress."

--Continued on page 2

Gratiot County Democratic Party 2023 Goals

- 1 Continue to grow party membership in the county with an emphasis on attracting varied members
- 2 Become more of a presence in the townships and villages of Gratiot County
- 3 Attract more voters and candidates as well as provide support for elected Democrats

IN THIS EDITION

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- Membership
- The PBB Disaster at 50
- The Next Chapter Book Club
- Dems at Work
- Coffee With the Dems
- Snacks and a Movie

Chair Chat - Continued from page 1

On April 10, the Metro Council of Nashville called a special meeting to fill Jones' seat and unanimously voted to reinstate him. Prior to the vote, Nashville mayor John Cooper said he was "proud" that the council was meeting and would "send [Jones] right back to continue serving his constituents." Representative Justin Pearson expects to be reinstated by his district this week. Both men expressed their intentions to regain their seats on a permanent basis in upcoming special elections for those positions.

The Kaiser Family Foundation, an independent research organization for health, polling and news, released the following key findings about gun-related incidents in the United States (April, 2023):

- (21%) of U.S. adults say they have personally been threatened with a gun.
- (19%) say a family member was killed by a gun (including death by suicide).
- (17%) have witnessed someone being shot.
- (4%) have personally shot a gun in self-defense.
- (4%) have been injured in a shooting

In total, about half (54%) of all U.S. adults say they or a family member have had one of the above gun-related experiences.

Gun reform activist and survivor of the Parkland School shooting in 2018, David Hogg, spoke at Alma College last fall. The audience was inspired by his passion and powerful words when he said, "To those politicians that say change will not come, I say we will not stop until every man, every woman, every child, every American can live without fear of gun violence. To that I say, 'No More!'"

Three bills related to gun reform passed in the Michigan Senate last week. The bills, which expand background checks, require safe storage and establish a red flag law, were passed along party lines. These proposals will now go to the House, where a similar proposal for expanded background checks was passed last week. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said she will sign the legislation if it reaches her desk. Michigan Democrats Deliver!

Our work as a nation will not be done until state and federal lawmakers who refuse to end gun violence are voted out of office because the citizens they represent had the courage to speak as loud as the Tennessee Three this last week.

Membership Reminder

If you have not updated your membership information in 2023, we are asking you to fill out a new membership form. You can do this online or by mailing your form. There is no cost for membership but donations are always welcomed.

If you have any questions, please contact us at: gratiotdems@gmail.com.
989-285-1212

[Click here for the Membership Form](#)

[Click here to register online](#)

SAVE THE DATE

The PBB Disaster at 50

A conference to commemorate and learn from the poisoning of Michigan

Thursday, May 18 – Saturday, May 20, 2023
Alma College | Alma, MI

From May 18–20, a coalition of groups and institutions (Alma College, Central Michigan University and Emory University as well as the Pine River Superfund Citizen Task Force and U.S. EPA) are hosting ***The PBB Disaster at 50: A Conference to Commemorate and Learn from the Poisoning of Michigan***. The conference will bring the critical lessons of the disaster back into public discussion and consciousness, with the hope it will inspire continued action to address long-term environmental and human health outcomes and behaviors.

However, as the recent national media (NY Times, CNN and National Public Radio) attention to St. Louis and the PBB disaster shows, we mostly want to hold the conference to help others see the lessons from the local experience.

As you may know, in May, 1973, the Michigan Chemical Company in St. Louis, Michigan, accidentally shipped a flame retardant made of polybrominated biphenyl (PBB) to a livestock feed mill, where it was mixed into animal feed. At least 8 million people in Michigan consumed PBB in milk, cheese, eggs and meat. Researchers continue to identify health problems connected to the exposure, and St. Louis has three Superfund sites still contaminated with PBB and other hazardous chemicals.

In addition to a number of presentations by nationally recognized environmental and human health experts, historians, and creative artists, the conference will offer the following activities:

1. touring one or more farms quarantined as a result of PBB
2. visiting the St. Louis Superfund sites led by US EPA experts
3. screening the BBC film *The Poisoning of Michigan*, with comments from participants
4. observing a continuing PBB health screening by experts from Emory University
5. a luncheon on Saturday, May 20 honoring a group of nominated "PBB Heroes"

While the conference is free, we need you to go to the conference website to register so we can plan seating. There will be a livestream of the proceedings and recordings of sessions made available after the conclusion of the conference.

For more information, and to register to get your free tickets, visit <https://rb.gy/zvfdfw> or visit the conference website at <https://tinyurl.com/PBB50thEvent>

The Next Chapter: A Book Club

And There Was Light: Abraham Lincoln and the American Struggle

By Jon Meacham

4.9/5

On Saturday, March 4, 2023 we met to discuss Jon Meacham's book. With over 15,000 books about our sixteenth president already published, why did Jon Meacham choose to write yet another? Well, he develops several main insights that he wishes to contribute to the ongoing conversation about Lincoln, one of which is the relevance and timeliness of the politics and divisiveness of the 1850s and 1860s to America since 2016.

The main thrust of this volume is to make coherent the whole history of Lincoln's thoughts on slavery from his teen years until his assassination. While some have seen in the record inconsistencies or hypocrisies, Meacham lays out his argument (with ample evidence—some in our group thought perhaps too much evidence) that Lincoln's view of slavery evolved over time as circumstances changed. The ethic of Meacham's Lincoln is fairness: "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master".

Several participants commented that while reading *And There Was Light*, they saw parallels between the age of Lincoln and today's combat in the public media between the powers of democracy and oligarchy. Members who participated rated the book an average of 4.8 out of 5. All agreed that Meacham's depth of research is impressive. I personally am relieved that I don't have to read the other 15,000 books now.

--submitted by Daniel Patterson

The Dictionary of Lost Words

5/5

By Pip Williams

We met to discuss Pip Williams' book on April 1, 2023. This piece of historical fiction is a meticulously researched novel about the process of collecting words for the first edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, but also includes the contributions of women in the collection, which has been previously left out. The main character, Esme, as a small child watching the men sort words for the dictionary, begins her own collection of words discarded by the men.

Our book club members discussed some of the broader themes touched on by the book including representation (or lack thereof by women, the working class, spoken words not found in books), the power of words, and the immense undertaking of cataloging all of the words in the English language. The book also touches on the suffrage movement and the effects of World War I on families in England.

We rated the book a 5 out of 5 stars. We felt that the author did an amazing job interweaving historical facts and events with a believable fictional main character.

Our May book club read is *The Cold Vanish* by Jon Billman. All of these books are available at Ballyhoo Books in Alma.

--submitted by Nancy O'Brien

Dems at Work in Our Community

Each month, members of the Gratiot County Democratic Party volunteer at the Community Cafe at the Alma Presbyterian Church. The Community Cafe serves a meal each Thursday.



GCDP Members Nancy O'Brien, Jeannine Haag, and Nancy Gott

POP CAN DRIVE

**WE ARE COLLECTING RETURNABLE
CANS AND BOTTLES TO RAISE
FUNDS, AND YOUR DONATIONS ARE
APPRECIATED. DROP THEM OFF IN
THE OFFICE**

COFFEE WITH THE DEMS

Join us the first Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m.
for your favorite beverage and fun conversation.

*You're
Invited!*



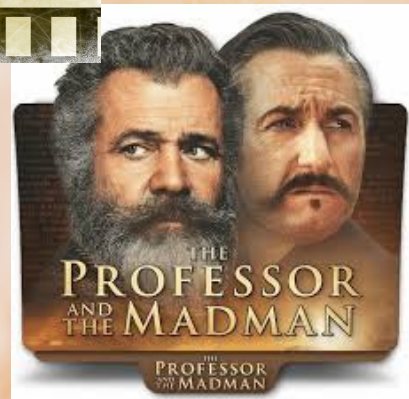
May 2 - River Rock | St. Louis
June 6 - Riverdale Tavern | Riverdale

Join us for Snacks and a Movie!

We will get together April 28 at 7PM at the GCDP office to watch "The Professor and the Madman" (2019), a movie inspired by the true story of Professor James Murray's work in compiling words for the first Oxford English Dictionary. While this film complements last month's book club novel, it will be fun for everyone, even if you have not read the book.

All are welcome - bring a friend!
Popcorn and snacks will be available to purchase

April 28
7:00 PM
GCDP Office



Looking for a place to host your event?

*Our GCDP office is available .
Contact us at: 989-285-1212 or
gratiotdems@gmail.com
for more information!*

Michigan's New 2nd Congressional District Democratic Party

[CLICK HERE TO
LEARN MORE](#)



**MICHIGAN 2ND
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT...**
New Michigan 2nd Congressional...
michigan2nddemocrats.com



Earth Day Celebration

Sat., April 22, 2023, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Island Park Pavilion, Mt. Pleasant

Free Children's Activities, Giveaways, Music,
Earth Friendly Information, Food

Sponsored by Mt. Pleasant CCL & Mecosta Water Protectors



SAVE YOUR STUFF!

GCDP will be having a garage sale in June. Before you throw away or give away your treasures, consider saving them to donate to our sale.

Support our Alma Public Library

All are Cordially Invited to an OPEN HOUSE

Hosted by the Friends of the Library

Wednesday, April 26th
3:30-6pm

Alma Public Library
Help us Celebrate

National Library Week
&
Honor Our Wonderful Library!

There's More to the Story

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK April 22-28, 2019

Please Join Us for Entertainment, Tours, Presentations, a Scavenger Hunt, Kids Activities, Complimentary Door Prize Raffle & SNACKS & BEVERAGES (while they last!)

Earth Day

Join Us
Clean out your garage,
barn, basement or shed!

METAL RECYCLING

WHEN
APRIL 22
9am - 2pm

WHERE
Alma Public Library
parking lot
500 E. Superior, Alma

ACCEPTING
Iron, steel, aluminum, copper, tin, old appliances.
Anything metal!

If you have anything BIG to donate (like a car or tractor) take it directly to Padnos 1430 Williams Street, Alma.

Metal Collection by Padnos Central Michigan in partnership with WMLM
All proceeds go to the Healthy Pine River group

AT THE LIBRARY
WMLM will broadcast live from 10am to 12 Noon with special giveaways.

Follow Healthy Pine River on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
Tune in to WMLM at 105.9 FM





GRATIOT COUNTY DEMOCRATS EVENTS AND INFORMATION



Gratiot County Democratic Office 1686 Wright Ave. Alma, MI

STOP IN!

OFFICE HOURS:

Wednesdays | 4 p.m.-6 p.m.

Saturdays | 10 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

CONTACT: 989-285-1212

gratiotdems@gmail.com

gratiotdems.net

EVENTS

- **April 17** - Gratiot Democratic Party General Membership Meeting
7 p.m. - Gratiot Dems office
- **April 22** - Earth Day

- **May 2** - Coffee with the Dems
9 a.m. - River Rock, St. Louis
- **May 6** - The Next Chapter Book Club **with author visit via Zoom!**
10 a.m. - Gratiot Dems office
The Cold Vanish by John Billman
- **May 15** - Gratiot Democratic Party General Membership Meeting
7 p.m. - Gratiot Dems office

- **May 18-20**
The PBB Disaster at 50 | Alma College

- **June 3** - The Next Chapter Book Club
10 a.m. - Gratiot Dems office
The Living Great Lakes by Jeremy Dennis
- **June 6** - Coffee with the Dems
9 a.m. - Riverdale Tavern
- **June 19** - Gratiot Democratic Party General Membership Meeting
7 p.m. - Gratiot Dems office

We need volunteers to work at the Gratiot Dems office on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Click here to follow the link to sign up.

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER](#)

GRATIOT DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Executive Committee and Committee Chairpersons

Chairperson: Christie Freestone

Vice-Chairperson: Al Bartholomew

Secretary: Lisa Gregory

Treasurer: Brent DeVries

Parliamentarian/Governance: Nancy O'Brien

Candidates/Elections: Bobbie Renshaw

Event Logistics: Renee Faustmann

Finance: Brent DeVries

Fundraising: Liz Weaver

Membership: Caroline DeGraaf

Public Relations: Michael Lynch

Community Outreach: Nancy Gott

Reid-Knox Forums: Ed Lorenz

Resolutions and Petitions: Betty Apple

CLICK OR SCAN
TO VISIT OUR
CALENDAR!



FOLLOW, SHARE, AND LIKE US
ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA
NETWORKS



CLICK OR SCAN
TO CHECK OUT
OUR WEBSITE!

