

GRATIOT COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

THE NEXT CHAPTER

JULY/AUGUST 2023 EDITION

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



Chair Chat

By Christie Freestone

"Human rights education should involve more than the provision of information and should constitute a comprehensive life-long process by which people at all levels in development and in all strata of society learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies." --UN General Assembly

Democrats believe that the economy should work for everyone, health care is a right, our diversity is our strength, and democracy is worth defending. Democrats advocate for the civil rights of **all** Americans. We stand united in advocating for equal social opportunities and equal protection under the law, regardless of race, religion, or other personal characteristics.

These rights are for **all** Americans, including our children. Protecting our children from unlawful discrimination, bullying and harassment is foundational to who we are as Democrats. It is our responsibility to make sure that democracy prevails for even our youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

The Alma School Board is in the process of voting on several policies: one concerns student expression and another deals with gender identity. When polled at the last school board meeting, five of the six members present were opposed to adding

the phrase "hate speech or symbols, including, but not limited to, swastikas or Confederate flags," to the student expression section of the document. Only one school board member believed this phrase should be included in board policy. Additionally, some of our elected school board members felt there was no need to include a gender identity section at all.

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In June of 2021, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights issued a Notice of Interpretation explaining that it will enforce Title IX's prohibition on discrimination on the basis of sex to include: (1) discrimination based on sexual orientation; and (2) discrimination based on gender identity. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any education program or activity offered by a recipient of federal financial assistance.

The Department's interpretation stems from a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in which the Supreme Court recognized that it is impossible to discriminate against a person based on their sexual orientation or gender identity without discriminating against that person based on sex. The Supreme Court upheld the right for LGBTQ+ people to live and work without fear of harassment, exclusion, and discrimination. Consequently, LGBTQ+ students have the same rights and deserve the same treatment. Hence, all students—including LGBTQ+ students—deserve the opportunity to learn and thrive in schools that are free from discrimination.

I retired last year after serving as a Gratiot County teacher in private and public schools for over 40 years. Several times throughout my teaching career, I observed discrimination, bullying and harassment of students and their families of minority race, religion and diversity. Sadly, little has changed for diverse populations in our county in the past 40 years.

There is public comment time at the beginning of all Alma School Board meetings. If you would like to express your opinions before decisions are made which will impact our local students, please plan to attend the next school board meeting on Monday, August 14, 2023 at 6:00PM at the Alma Middle School multi-purpose room. If you cannot attend the meeting but would like to contact individual school board members, you can find contact information on the Alma Public Schools webpage.

The next few meetings of the Alma School Board are at 6:00PM: Aug. 14, Aug. 22, Sept. 11, Sept. 26, Oct 9 and Oct 24.

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

Candidate Corner



As always, I want to start by thanking everyone who has supported me. Your kind words and encouragement mean the world to me.

This week, my daughter sent a ballcap to me that reads, "Make Lying Wrong Again." The hat is blue, of course. I realize that, for the good of the country, not everything can be transparent. A great difference exists, however, between lack of transparency and deception. Members of the Republican Party are still broadcasting that armed IRS agents are coming for small business owners. The truth is that additional funding for the IRS has gone primarily to customer service and audits for the richest Americans; the ones who do not pay their fair share of taxes. In 2022, only about 20% of all calls to the IRS were answered. In 2023, about 80% of calls were answered. That is where our money is going.

They also tell us that the government is coming for our gas stoves and our inefficient washing machines. This is not true. Scare tactics are all they have, so they are the tools they keep using over and over again. If the only tool you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

Lies and scare tactics only hinder positive progress. I am proud to be part of "We The People," not "Me The People." If we all have the opportunities to achieve, we can collectively work to move this country forward. If we all row together, we will reach our destination more quickly, together. Lack of opportunity keeps us from reaching our potential as a community, a state, and a nation.

Ron Desantis says that he wants to make America into Florida. I want to make America into Michigan.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the picnic and at our next meeting. God Bless You and God Bless America.

Michael Lynch, Candidate, US Congress, Michigan Second Congressional District

Please Join the Gratiot County Dems for their 2nd Annual Summer



Picnic



HOTDOGS, BEVERAGES,
BONFIRE,
GAMES & SMORE FIXINGS PROVIDED

Thursday, August 10th
6:00 PM TO DUSK



Raycraft Farm

5652 West Adams Road~ Alma, Michigan
989-388-1893



Please Bring a Dish to Pass & a Chair

FAMILY FRIENDLY!

ALL are Welcomel....Please feel free to invite a friend or two!

Best Burger Cookoff for Perpetual Trophy Bragging Rights

Grills Provided...
bring your burger
prepared & ready to grill.
Judged by
(3) Blindfolded Judges!

Homemade Pie Auction

Perpetual Trophy for Highest Bid!

ALL Pie Auction Proceeds
benefit the Gratiot County
Democratic Party

**PLEASE RSVP to 989-463-8530 by August 8th
with # attending, dish you will bring and desired entry into
pie auction, burger cookoff or both!**



DE-CLUTTER FOR A CAUSE

DONATE YOUR UNWANTED ITEMS

ALL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT

THE GRATIOT COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

ITEMS WANTED:

BOOKS; TOOLS; CLOTHING
HOUSEHOLD ITEMS
GAMES & TOYS
FURNITURE/APPLANCES
WHATEVER!

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 9TH
9AM-5PM

MULTI-FAMILY YARD SALE

221 HASTINGS STREET
ALMA

MORE INFO CALL RENEE 989-463-8530 OR ARTHUR 989-763-7344



4th Annual Road Rally Escape Room Edition

A fundraiser for the Gratiot County Democrats



Can you solve the puzzles, follow the clues, find the stolen document and rescue democracy from the clutches of bad characters? Come find out!

Join the fun

**Thursday, Sept. 14 at 5:30 p.m.
Gratiot Democratic Party Office
1686 Wright Avenue**

Solve the puzzles to reveal locations around Gratiot County. Travel from place to place as you search for the missing document and defeat the evil doers. You can find registration forms at the GCD office or register online at GratiotDems.net



--See next page for more information


4TH ANNUAL GCDP ROAD RALLY

Who says you can't save democracy and have fun at the same time? The Gratiot County Democratic Party aims to do both at their upcoming Road Rally on September 14. According to Michele Ringle, organizer of the event, this year will be the fourth year for the annual fundraiser, but this year there will be a fun twist. "The players sign up as teams who then work together to solve puzzles like you would in an Escape Room. The answers to each puzzle will lead them from place to place in Gratiot County," explains Ringle. "The scenario is that players are looking for an important document that has been stolen by some bad characters. They need to recover the document and get it out of Gratiot County and deliver it to President Biden to save Democracy!" Ringle revealed that the puzzles could be coded messages, riddles, math puzzles or other types of ciphers. The game will lead participants to an undisclosed ending location for an after-Rally celebration. "People who have done our Road Rally in years past have had a great time and really enjoyed themselves. Plus, we raise money for the Gratiot County Democrats to use towards promoting Democratic candidates for local, state and national offices," Ringle claims.

Those who would like to participate in this exciting event can pick up a registration form at the GCD office at 1686 Wright Avenue, or go to the Dems website at GratiotDems.net to register online.

4th Annual Road Rally Escape Room Edition

A fundraiser for the Gratiot County Democrats



The Gratiot County Democrats are hosting a fundraiser. This is your chance to have a great time, support the Democratic Party, and challenge your brain all at the same time. How could it get any better!

How Do You Participate?
It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Grab some friends!
2. Print, fill out and mail in the registration form, along with your contribution of \$25 per person. (Please pay by check to Gratiot County Democratic Party.)
3. Show up at the Gratiot County Democrats Office on Thursday, Sept. 14 at 5:30 p.m. We will do the rest!

Registration Form
Please fill out and mail, along with your payment to:
Gratiot County Democrats
P.O. Box 154
Alma, MI 48801

Team Name: _____

Team Captain's Name: _____
Address: _____ Occupation: _____
Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

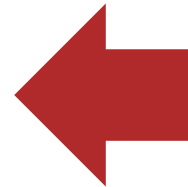
Second Team Member's Name: _____
Address: _____ Occupation: _____
Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Third Team Member's Name: _____
Address: _____ Occupation: _____
Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Fourth Team Member's Name: _____
Address: _____ Occupation: _____
Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

(If you have more team members, print and fill out another form. Only one vehicle per team.)
The information being asked for is required by law for all political donations.
Please make your donation in the form of a check payable to: Gratiot County Democratic Party.

Click on the registration form to download and print



Click the button below to register online



The Next Chapter: A Book Club

The Silent Patient

By Alex Michaelides

5/5

West With Giraffes

By Lynda Rutledge

5/5

The Next Chapter Book Club By Nancy O'Brien

The book club met on July 8 to discuss a fiction book, *The Silent Patient* by Alex Michaelides. Alicia is a successful artist who comes home one night and shoots her husband five times in the face. She then remains silent throughout her trial and conviction. Alicia is placed in a secure psychiatric unit where her new therapist, Theo, attempts to get her to tell her story.

This book had twists and turns and intrigue that many book club members did not expect. It was a thriller that earned 5 out of 5 stars from everyone! If you like surprising plot twists, then this book is for you.

Our next meeting was on August 5 to discuss a historical fiction book entitled *West with Giraffes* by Lynda Rutledge. It is narrated by a 105 year old man who experienced a unique adventure escorting two giraffes across the U.S. in 1938, from New York to San Diego. This incredible true story was entertaining and touching. The author blends real-life figures with fictional ones and includes many of the events relevant to that time in history: the Dust Bowl, Hitler threatening Europe, hobo life, and the Great Depression, to name a few.

Our book club members loved this book and it earned a 5 out of 5 stars. One of our members did some research to find actual photos of the truck that carried the giraffes from coast to coast.

Our next book club meeting is on September 9 at our office in Alma. We will be discussing *Read Dangerously* by Azar Nafisi. Please join us!

UPCOMING BOOK CLUB MEETINGS

September 9
Read Dangerously
by Azar Nafisi

October 7
Wild, Beautiful, and Free
by Sophronia Scott

November 11
Allow Me to Retort
by Elie Mystal

December 2
Beartown
by Fredrik Backman

Michigan's Second Congressional District Democratic Party

Our focus is on putting Michigan issues first, fighting for families, seniors, students, and veterans, and working to elect Democrats across the state, while holding Republicans accountable across the board. From the grassroots to the Capitol steps, the only way we can move our state forward is if we work together to build a stronger, better Michigan Democratic Party.



[CLICK HERE TO
LEARN MORE](#)



On behalf of the Second Congressional District Michigan Democratic Party we are delighted to invite you to become a sponsor and to join us at our Blue Wave Gala on Saturday, September 30, 2023. It is our premier annual fundraiser. Proceeds from the dinner support our efforts to build the party, support our candidates and win elections.

CK's Place - Banquet Hall
11515 Northland Drive
Big Rapids MI 49307

Registration and cash bar: 5:00pm - 6:30 PM
Dinner service: 6:30 PM
Program: approximately 7:15 PM

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE
AND PURCHASE TICKETS](#)

Block House Trivia



Congratulations to Blue Wave for their first-place win at this week's trivia competition. Join us Wednesdays at Block House in Alma at 7:00 to help us continue our new winning tradition.

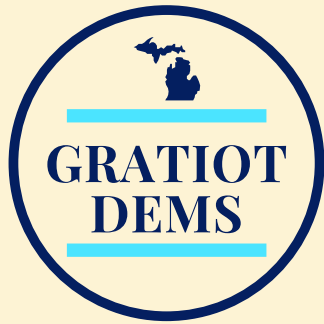
BIDENOMICS

MI DEMS

- ✓ Making smart investments in America.
- ✓ Empowering American workers.
- ✓ Promoting competition to lower costs and help small businesses.

*You're
Invited!*

Have coffee with us!



Coffee with the Dems

September 5 - 9AM - River Rock | St. Louis

October 3 - 9 AM - Ballyhoo Books and Brew | Alma

November 7 - 9AM - JJRubys | Ithaca

December 5 - 10AM - Anschutz Cafe | Breckenridge





*Are you 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!*

Building Use Form



POP CAN DRIVE

We are collecting returnable cans and bottles to raise funds, and your donations are appreciated! Please drop your cans and bottles off in the office.

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](#)



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 p.m.

CONTACT: 989-285-1212

gratiotdems@gmail.com

gratiotdems.net

EVENTS

- **August 10** - 2nd Annual GCDP Picnic
6 p.m. - Raycraft Farm
- **August 21** - GCDP General
Membership Meeting
7 p.m. - Gratiot Dems office
- **September 5** - Coffee with the Dems
9 a.m. - River Rock - St. Louis
- **September 9** - GCDP Garage Sale
- **September 9** - The Next Chapter Book Club
10 a.m. - Gratiot Dems office
Read Dangerously by Azar Nafisi
- **September 14** - 4th Annual Road Rally
5:30 p.m. - Gratiot Dems office
register online at GratiotDems.net
- **September 18** - GCDP General
Membership Meeting
7 p.m. - Gratiot Dems office
- **September 30** - Blue Wave Gala
michigan2nddemocrats.com/bluewavegala.html
- **October 3** - Coffee with the Dems
9 a.m. - Ballyhoo Books - Alma
- **October 7** - The Next Chapter Book Club
10 a.m. - Gratiot Dems office
Wild, Beautiful and Free by Sophronia Scott
- **October 16** - GCDP 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!

