



www.manisteecountydemocrats.us

Monthly Meetings

Next Meeting Date:

September 21

(3rd Thursday of month)

7 pm - 9 pm

Dial-a Ride, Manistee

Meeting Agenda includes
Guest Speaker -

News from Lansing
and District 101

Officers

Chair- Gary Madden
genie42br@gmail.com

Vice Chair-
Laurel Mason
laurele52@charter.net

Secretary- Peg Raddatz
peg.raddatz@gmail.com

Treasurer-
Judy Cunningham
jpc4466@gmail.com

Dates to Remember

9/17 Don Jennings Dinner

9/21 DEMS Meeting

10/8 Country Picnic

You are cordially invited to attend

The 14th Annual Don Jennings Award Dinner

Sunday, September 17, 2017

Manistee National Golf and Resort, Manistee, MI

4797 US 31 S

Social Hour 6:00 pm

Dinner 7:00 pm

Keynote Speaker:

Abdul El-Sayed

Michigan Democratic Gubernatorial Candidate

Jeanne Butterfield

Don Jennings Award Winner

Ticket Price \$60

(\$5 discount if purchased prior to September 8)

*Send check to Manistee Dems - P.O. Box 65, Manistee,
MI 49660*

Or

Reserve and Pay Online: manisteecountydemocrats.us

Reserve Only: donjenningsdinner@gmail.com

For information, call Peggy @231-510-3726



Gary Madden

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

Like most Americans I was shocked by the recent events in Charlottesville, Virginia. The images on TV of torch carrying Nazis chanting hate slogans and hooded klansmen marching in the streets were chilling and brought to mind the early days of Hitler's rise in Germany and of the huge march of the Ku Klux Klan down Pennsylvania Avenue in our nation's capital in the 1920's. The sight of a white nationalist running down demonstrators and killing Heather Heyer and later another white nationalist claiming that the perpetrator was justified because people had put their hands on his car, was truly disturbing to all of us.

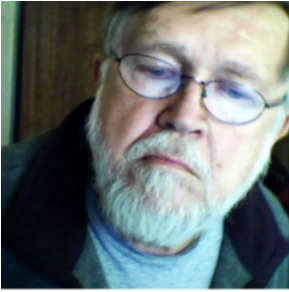
All week, as we listened and read various perspectives on these terrible events, it became apparent that we still have a lot of work to do to purge our society of the sins of this nation's history. As shocked as we were by the events, President Trump's words to the nation tacitly supporting white nationalists, the KKK and Nazis were truly shocking. Mitt Romney's comments that the president's remarks "caused racists to rejoice, minorities to weep, and the vast heart of America to mourn" were especially poignant to me.

Fortunately, we also witnessed an enormous wave of condemnation against the hate mongers among us, and the sadly inadequate response of our president. We can take heart in the large numbers of demonstrations against racism, bigotry, and hatred that sprang up all across the country, including twice here in Manistee.

For me, one of the most touching expressions of pain that I heard this past week came from story corps on PBS. An elderly African American woman shared a childhood memory she carried with her throughout her life. When she was five year old, she said, her family set off on a long trip in their car. Along the way they ran out of gas out in the country somewhere. Her father got out and literally pushed the car down the road until they came to a gas station that had a prominently displayed "Whites Only" sign. She saw her father go up to the door, knock with his head hanging down and his hands folded in front of him. When a white man came to the door, her father asked him if he could please buy some gas so that his family could go on their way. The man refused to sell him some gas and closed the door in his face. As her father returned to the car another white man came out, apologized and gave them the gas they needed for the car and refused to accept payment.

Imagine how the children in that car felt watching their father go through that humiliating experience. Did it diminish their father's stature in their young minds? Yet these are the kinds of experiences African Americans faced routinely when traveling in this country. This is why they traveled with a copy of "The Green Book." Published until 1970 or so, it was a directory of all the places that served black people in the country. Today, you can see a copy at the Museum of African-American History in Washington D.C.

I think of my earliest childhood memories. They do not include such experiences and I am grateful for that. As people of goodwill, we all need to talk about these issues with family, friends and neighbors so that the process of ridding our society of hatred and bigotry can move forward. We cannot truly come together as a nation until this difficult work is accomplished. Only then will our country genuinely prosper and become one people.



MUSINGS FROM LEE TRUCKS

No, not Jonathon Swift's satire. Just a few ideas to float that might be important in political races coming up. I originally posed this on the 101st District group, but I thought that it might be apropos for this group. Since that time I have been musing on the realization that most of these ideas do not speak to the malaise that many voters in the last election felt, both Republican and Democrat. Not that the results would not be favorable to this group, but just that convincing them that they would benefit would be difficult. e.g.:

1. Read <https://baselinescenario.com/2017/06/15/telling-a-better-story-a-new-economic-vision-for-the-democratic-party/#more-16694>

2. Adopt a "Medicaid for All" program for the state of Michigan. Taking the primary responsibility away from businesses should radically improve the business climate while improving the health and well being of the population. This is not a radical proposition. Canada achieved national health insurance after several provinces paved the way. Medicare might be a better model, but the state does not have the power to adopt universal Medicare.

Medicaid sounds like giving my hard earned money to someone else.

3. Adopt a graduated income tax in Michigan. There was energy in that area about forty years ago, but conservatives forced through a constitution amendment...which complicates things. It is, however, one of the small things that can be done to counteract the natural tendency of the capitalist system to accumulate money at the top.

To those who don't understand marginal tax rates, mentioning the higher rates on higher incomes sounds like a big (and punishing) increase even though it might be a decrease to particular individuals.

4. Eliminate the deductibility of property tax. Most of this largess goes to higher income people who have more property. Most people don't itemize anyway.

A technical sounding change that sounds like a tax increase even though the average person would not feel it or only feel it marginally.

5. Formally adopt the provisions of the Paris Accords. Michigan sits in the middle of the world's largest reservoir of fresh water and protecting and preserving it should be a highest priority. Adopting the Paris Accords would only be symbolic, but a valuable symbol none the less.

Dan Scripps was demagogued to defeat on the issue of water. Although conservation is generally popular, "not in my backyard" is prevalent. People are quick to support a minimal and even ephemeral loss of their friends and neighbors.

6. Strengthen and equalize public education. Michigan is vying with Mississippi for the worst education system in the United States. This can't continue.

Equalizing education funding is a winner, but talking about spending more on education is difficult when public school teachers and administrators are the upper middle class of most of our Northern Michigan communities.

MUSINGS CONTINUED

7. Eliminate tuition at all state colleges and universities for all income levels. We know that the world is becoming increasingly dependent on knowledge workers.

You hear people say why should they get it free? I had to pay for my college, but what they don't understand is that there is a natural progression from public elementary education to public secondary education to public post secondary education as the world becomes more complex. If education is a public good, then we should be willing to provide it to all regardless of their income.

8. Strengthen workers rights. We all know that it's us that make things happen, but the fruits of our labor and productivity are not fairly distributed.

At least since Ronald Reagan the few rights that labor had in dealing with capital have been radically reduced, but because the only rights left are those in unionized professions and unionized professions are better paid than non-unionized, labor actions that involve a strike are interpreted as some sort of perverted elitism.

9. Work to reform the judicial system which excessively punishes the poor for being poor and favors those who can afford bail and a good legal representation. Work tirelessly to reverse the American tendency to see the solution to all problems as being violence.

This is hard. Insuring the rights of what many see as the guilty and even despicable is hard to popularize. If the guilty have no rights, we are all potentially guilty.

10. Institute a tax on financial transactions like mergers and acquisitions. The effect would be to reduce the dominance of financial markets and increase the economic importance of traditional business activities...manufacturing, services, agriculture. This would reduce the volatility of the stock market and stabilize peoples pensions and saving.

This would be hard to implement given the incredible strength of the banks and markets, but it would do more than anything else to reduce or eliminate the tendency of capital to accumulate at the top at the expense of labor. The tax need not be large. Big enough to discourage the flippers, but minimally effect legitimate transactions.

11. Strengthen and aggressively enforce anti-trust legislation. Every merger and acquisition is a consolidation of capital and power. If competition is good, make sure that businesses compete. Mergers and acquisitions rarely benefit the consumer, the stockholder or the worker. The only major beneficiaries are the bankers and the manipulators.

Consumers like larger business, but they don't realize that the consolidation of goods in one location is also a consolidation of money and power in that location. This not only effects the economy of the community, it effects that political dynamics and social interactions. It makes it harder for new businesses to start and limits entrepreneurship. People become more like cogs in the big machine.

12. Pass a law that makes it illegal to use military force for economic or political purposes. True defense and peacekeeping would be allowed and encouraged.

Our society is plagued with an excessive amount of violence. We could do worse than setting an example at the top. We need to evolve to a society that doesn't see violence as the solution to every problem.

We couldn't go far wrong by adopting the words of FDR.

"There is nothing mysterious about the foundations of a healthy and strong democracy.

The basic things expected by our people of their political and economic systems are simple. They are:

Equality of opportunity for youth and for others.

Jobs for those who can work.

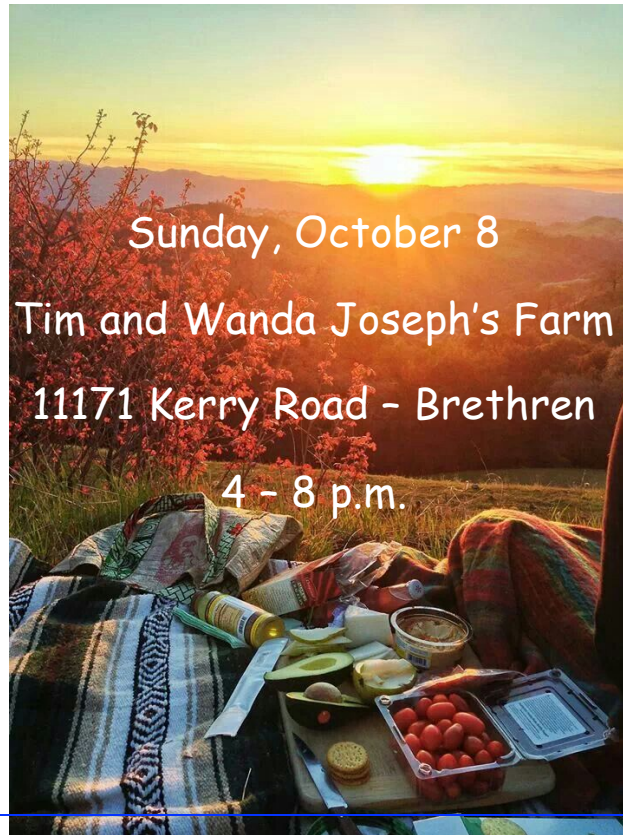
Security for those who need it.

The ending of special privilege for the few.

The preservation of civil liberties for all.

The enjoyment of the fruits of scientific progress in a wider and constantly rising standard of living."

COUNTRY PICNIC 2017



Sunday, October 8

Tim and Wanda Joseph's Farm

11171 Kerry Road - Brethren

4 - 8 p.m.

Free

Come - Enjoy a good meal of local Manistee County Food

Meet the Candidates from

the 1st Congressional District

Brats and Cider will be Provided

Bring a Friend - A Dish to Pass - Your Own Tableware

And Some Apples for Pressing into Cider!

There will be Music and Lively Political Discussion

For More Information, Call 231-477-5381



ABDUL EL-SAYED TO KEYNOTE DON JENNINGS DINNER

The Keynote Speaker for the 14th Annual Don Jennings Award Dinner is Abdul El-Sayed, Michigan Democratic Gubernatorial Candidate. Abdul El-Sayed was born and raised in Michigan. His family reflects the diversity of our state, including immigrants who left Egypt in pursuit of greater opportunity in America, and farmers, teachers, and small-business owners who have lived in Gratiot County, Michigan for generations. Abdul is a product of Michigan public schools. He captained his high-school football, wrestling, and lacrosse teams, and went on to play lacrosse for the University of Michigan. He graduated in 2007, where he was honored to deliver the student commencement speech alongside President Bill Clinton.

Abdul went on to become a Rhodes Scholar, earning a doctorate from Oxford University and a medical degree from Columbia University. As a public health professor, Abdul became an internationally recognized expert in health policy and health inequalities.

At 30, Abdul became the youngest health official of a major American city when he was brought home by Mayor Mike Duggan to rebuild Detroit's Health Department after it was privatized during the city's bankruptcy. As Health Director, he was responsible for the health and safety of over 670,000 Detroiters, working tirelessly to ensure government accountability and transparency, promote health, and reduce cross-generational poverty.

After witnessing the systematic failures of government only a few miles away in Flint, Abdul worked hard to ensure that children attending Detroit schools and daycares were drinking lead-free water. He has also served expectant mothers and women by creating programs aimed at reducing infant mortality and unplanned pregnancy. He built a program to give schoolchildren across the city glasses if they needed them. Abdul also stood up for children with asthma by taking on corporations that wanted to pump more harmful pollutants into our air, working with them to reduce emissions and invest in parks.

Though the work continues, under Abdul's leadership, the Detroit Health Department has become a state and national leader in public health innovation and environmental justice, in one of the fastest municipal public health turnarounds in American history.

Abdul is called to public service by a core belief in people. He believes that all people can thrive when we value each other and our communities, we seek to protect and defend our vulnerable, and when we create the kinds of opportunities that empower people to dream for a better future.

Abdul lives in Detroit with his wife, Sarah, a mental health doctor. He loves water sports, working out, good biographies, coffee, and Michigan sports.



JEANNE BUTTERFIELD,
2017
DON JENNINGS AWARD

Jeanne A. Butterfield moved her high energy and skills to Manistee just a few years ago but her leadership has already made its impact on our Community. She served two years as the Vice Chair of the Manistee County Democratic Party. Regionally, she chaired the 101st House District Democratic Coordinating Committee. Currently, Jeanne chairs the Manistee group of “We the People”, a nonpartisan group focusing on state and national human rights issues. In all these roles, Jeanne has demonstrated personal commitment and her ability to mobilize others.

Before moving to Manistee, Jeanne established herself as a long-time immigration policy expert and advocate. She most recently served as Special Counsel at the Ruben Group, a public policy consulting firm in Washington DC. She also served as the Executive Director of the American Immigration Lawyers Association in Washington and before that was their Director of Advocacy. Earlier in her career, she worked extensively on the whole range of immigration issues including employment, family-based immigration advocacy, and refugee and asylum protection.

Ms. Butterfield received her law degree at Northeastern University School of Law in Boston and is a member of the Massachusetts State Bar. She frequently advises immigrants facing possible deportation through in ICE proceedings.

Jeanne and her partner Al Frye open their hearts and their home to a variety of community agencies and issues. She is a Volunteer at the Vogue. She is a trained musician and lends her talents as a pianist to several local causes. Jeanne and Al frequently host events at their home on Lake Michigan. Although reasonably new to the area, Jeanne and Al are definitely “Pure Michigan.”

TRUMP MEETS THE FOUNDING FATHERS

US senators scattered for their summer recess earlier this month, leaving behind a big unfinished agenda and a peeved president. The chief executive has lambasted lawmakers for failing to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, for their investigations into Russia and its possible collusion with his campaign, for their arcane voting rules, and for passing sanctions legislation against Russia. He took a parting shot tweeting, "You can thank Congress" for a US-Russia relationship that is at an "all-time & very dangerous low."

President Trump may think his problem is with certain politicians in Congress. But in a broader sense, the resistance he's encountering is due to America's system of governance. The story of his early presidency might be called "Donald Trump meets the Founding Fathers," as a beginner politician runs up against the checks and balances designed to prevent tyranny and forge consensus.

Mr. Trump and his team are "surprised at the intransigence and resistance they're meeting, when in fact, every other president has met them," says Don Ritchie, former Senate historian. This outsider White House "didn't anticipate these things because they hadn't experienced these things" as former governors or legislators.

It's not uncommon for presidents to meet resistance in Congress even when their party is in control. Democrats Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, John Kennedy, and Jimmy Carter all faced pushback, despite Democratic majorities. Party members rebelled against F.D.R.'s attempt to pack the Supreme Court. They spurned Truman on his domestic agenda. President Carter was too conservative for many Democrats – witness Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy's challenge to him in the 1980 primary.

Rather than presidents versus the opposition party, "it's really presidents versus Congress as an institution," say Mr. Ritchie, recalling Kennedy's observation that he didn't realize how powerful Congress was until he was no longer one of its 535 members.

"It's great to have strong leadership and outspoken leadership in the White House," say John Giles, the Republican mayor of Mesa, Arizona. But he also harks back approvingly to the speech by Senator John McCain (R) of Arizona during the health-care debate last month. "Senator McCain gave us a great civics lesson ... that the Senate and the Congress is not subservient to the president. They are the president's equal."

Francine Kiefer

The Christian Science Monitor Weekly