



www.manisteecountydemocrats.us

Monthly Meetings

Next Meeting Date:

May 18th

(3rd Thursday of month)

7 pm - 9 pm

Manistee ISD, Manistee

Meeting Agenda includes

Guest Speaker -

**Bob Daniels, Council on
Aging**

**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

**SAVE THE
DATE**

Meet the

1st Congressional

Candidates

June 15

Madden Home

Senator Gretchen Whitmer to Keynote

14th Annual Don Jennings Award Dinner

Former state Senate Minority Leader Gretchen Whitmer is running for the Democratic nomination for Michigan governor. "Together we can build the Michigan we believe in, because we still have what we need most — the strength, the talent, the vision and the grit of the incredible people of this state," Whitmer wrote.



Senator Whitmer will be the Keynote Speaker at the 14th Annual Don Jennings Award Dinner. **The Dinner will be held September 9 at the Manistee National Golf and Resort.** The Dinner is held annually in memory of Don Jennings and his commitment to Social Justice.

As minority leader, Whitmer was known as a fiery orator and fierce critic of Republican policies, including right-to-work legislation Snyder signed in late 2012. In 2011, she fought an anti-bullying proposal that included a religious exemption, arguing it would have allowed discrimination against gay students. The exemption language was removed before passage. Whitmer made national news in late 2013 when she disclosed in a floor speech that she was a victim of rape, using her personal story to fight now-enacted legislation banning private insurance plans from covering abortion. She argued the law would require women to decide whether to purchase "rape insurance."

Whitmer most recently worked as interim Ingham County prosecutor.

COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

The Danger of Assuming



Last month, my wife, Shirley, and I took part in the *March for Science* in Washington, D.C.. We were amazed by the large number of people who felt compelled to show up for the Earth Day event on a chilly, drizzly day. We were also heartened by the display of determined activism we heard and saw.

I am always filled with pride when visiting our nation's capital. I guess it is the natural effect of all those monuments, museums, and historical places that make me proud of our country. While there, we visited the newest museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

All that patriotic stimulation has me thinking about our government, the current political environment, and the welfare of our country. It also brought back old memories from my past that reminded me of just how fragile our treasured liberties can be. Specifically, I thought of a night in 1967 during the uprising in Detroit. I was living in northern Royal Oak and finishing up a teaching degree at Wayne State University after serving 5 years in the Air Force.

Royal Oak, like all the other suburbs along the Woodward corridor, had declared marshal law and ordered everyone to stay in their homes. There wasn't any rioting or violence of any kind going on outside of Detroit but the authorities feared that the events going on in Detroit might spread. Those fears lead them to suspend everyone's right to freely travel and peacefully assemble. It offended me that our freedoms could so easily be suspended.

Anyway, I decided that no civil order was going to confine me to my home and I resolved to go for a walk alone through my neighborhood at 10:00 p.m. Off I went and wandered the very empty streets until I came to Woodward Avenue between 13 and 14 Mile roads. There I witnessed a group of like-minded citizens being tear gassed by police across the street. At that point I decided to return home and headed back in that direction. Shortly, a police car pulled up and two policemen got out and placed me in their car. Luckily they drove me home, let me out and told me to stay indoors, which I obediently did. I remember concluding from this experience that it might not be all that difficult to stage a military takeover of civilian control of our government. All it would take would be an executive order declaring marshal law which nearly everyone would obey, place an armed soldier on every corner and it would be complete.

Every time I hear some declare that could never happen in America, I am reminded of my experience that night. These kinds of things happen regularly around the world and in fact have happened on a small scale in our own county throughout our history. We assume that our laws will protect us; after all, our most sacred set of laws, our constitution, guarantees our rights and liberties. We assume that our institutions will always respect our rights. We assume that no despotic lead would dare to take away our freedoms. But, are these valid assumptions?

Such assumptions lead to complacency. A large number of our fellow citizens never bother to vote, that most basic of our duties. Many take no interest in government or how well or poorly it serves our basic needs. Most of us just 'assume' that everything will always go on as before with or without our individual input. There is no guarantee that this is so. We must never lose sight of the fact that 'we the people' do ultimately have power, but only if we choose to exercise it. The surest way to give up power is to think that we don't have any.

So, inform yourself about issues and search out the facts as much as possible. Don't be afraid to talk to friends and relatives on the other side about issues that are important to us all. Join with others and let your voice be heard! It's the citizen-rooted behavior that will keep our nation strong.

MANISTEE COUNTY DEMOCRATS

MY EXPERIENCE AT THE BERGMAN TOWNHALL IN GAYLORD

BY SAM GETSINGER, *RESIST LEELANAU*



For months we asked for a town hall meeting with our representative, Jack Bergman. Bergman said he would schedule one during recess, but he waited until the last minute to say where and when it would be, and then, rather than holding his first Town Hall meetings in high population areas of the 101st like Marquette and Traverse City, he chose Escanaba and Gaylord.

I decided to attend the one in Gaylord despite the one and a half hour drive. I arrived at 4:30 pm for the 6:00 meeting to find that the first two rows were already filled with people who appeared to be Bergman supporters, one of whom was wearing a Jack Bergman t-shirt. I took a seat in the 3rd row. The police arrived next and then approximately 300 people started filling the room after signing in and showing photo IDs. If participants wanted to, they could write questions for Bergman. I wrote 4, but was told only one would be accepted. They kept the other questions, telling us all questions would be answered by email. It has now been more than 3 weeks and no answers have been forthcoming.

Most of the people at the event were not Bergman supporters, and nothing he did changed their minds. He arrived twenty minutes late and by then the crowd was quite annoyed. At that point he sent out a local supporter to make opening remarks, followed by a minister who said a prayer. When Bergman finally appeared, the questions selected for him to answer were chosen by a woman wearing a Bergman t-shirt. The answers he gave mostly ranged from evasion and vague truisms (asked about the wall, he said he's in favor of strong borders) to standard GOP talking points (he says he's in favor of repealing Obamacare, and served up the usual statements about how its failing, has been a disaster, etc.). About the only answer that the audience liked was that he would try to maintain funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Overall it was infuriating. The fact that he waited so long to have a town hall meeting, held it miles away from the largest population centers, announced it with very little notice, required attendees to sign in and show an ID to prove they live in his district, and limited questions to written only, one per attendee, and then had the questions filtered by a supporter did not send a good message. Attendees had brought posters, signs, and a box of "agree/disagree" papers but were told that none would be allowed in the hall. So the crowd expressed their dissent with their voices - the only thing left after all of the restrictions the congressman imposed. He practically invited the crowd to become unruly. Bergman wanted to be able to say that he had held a town hall, but didn't want to actually engage in a real dialogue with his constituents. It also seemed that he was purposely making the event frustrating and unproductive, perhaps in order to tamp down attendance at future town hall meetings. Good luck with that!

The next day on Bergman's Twitter account there was a clip of the crowd chanting "Separation of Church and State" during the prayer. Jack's comment was, "As a father and a grandfather I know how to deal with temper tantrums." I tweeted back, "Not a temper tantrum but constitutional rights of the constituents that you swore to represent". He later took his tweet down, apparently having thought better of it.

In view of Bergman's arrogance, lack of substance, and evident disdain for his own constituents, my opinion of him fell into the category of "Reject and Replace"!

Science and Earth Day Rally



On April 22, 2017, Gary Madden, Chairperson of Manistee Dems, and I, Shirley Madden, Membership Chair of Manistee Dems, participated in the Science and Earth Day Rally in Washington, D.C. The day was windy, rainy and chilly but the weather could not dampened the spirit of the thousands of people there; children, teenagers, parents, grandparents, scientists of all genres and even those who were disabled carried signs promoting science and protecting our environment.

On this date, there was an impressive global March for Science seen in many states across our nation and in other countries around the world. This event was held in more than 600 cities and on 6 continents. As reported on Facebook even scientists at Antarctica, (which is the seventh continent), cheered for the marchers at the rallies. There were some signs, which were anti-Trump, but most signs were stressing the importance of more funding for science and for environmental issues.

There were many speakers and musical performances for this event. Even though we were not able to spot him in the crowd, Bill Nye, the science guy, was there and seen by many. One speaker mentioned that only 40% of our schools have a computer science program. She said computer science is at the forefront of every field. To compete as a country we need to compute.

Another speaker mentioned that science is not a boy’s game, it is everyone’s game. She named several women who have made tremendous gains in various fields of science.

Caroline Solomon, who is deaf, is a Gallaudet University biologist, gave an outstanding speech.

Kavya Kopperapu, 16, a student at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, and founder of the Girls Computing League, said, “In my future career, I don’t want to be known as a girl that happens to be a computer scientist. I want to be known as a computer scientist that happens to be a girl.”

After four hours, or more, the crowd marched down Constitution Avenue with several chants, one of them, “Build labs, not walls.” The warmth of the crowd erased the weather conditions during the march.

Shirley Madden



MANISTEE COUNTY DEMOCRATS

Voters should choose their politicians. Not the other way around.

- States are allowed to individually determine who makes redistricting decisions and how district lines are redrawn. In Michigan, the State Legislature completely controls this process right now, with no input from the voters. They draw district lines that benefit themselves, and whichever party holds the majority of the power gets to make all the choices.

Partisan redistricting, also known as gerrymandering, occurs when politicians draw voting map lines unfairly to benefit themselves or their political party. Politicians are able to draw voting maps based on party affiliations, race, and other criteria in order to keep themselves in power by packing their opponents into districts or by spreading them across several districts to minimize their voters.

With gerrymandering, **politicians choose their voters, rather than voters choosing their politicians.**

Gerrymandering has evolved over the years as highly advanced computer programs and tools have been created to help politicians maximize their reelection potential while minimizing their opponents.

The Michigan Constitution of 1963 begins with the following words: “All political power is inherent in the people.”

Right now in Michigan, politicians have the power to draw the lines, and therefore they’re making the rules. Politicians are manipulating our voting maps to keep themselves in power. It's time to change that to make your vote matter and your voice heard. Voters Not Politicians is working to transfer political power back to the people and away from the politicians

Volunteer! Volunteers all over the state are working night and day to support the Voters Not Politicians ballot initiative and we need your help! Our greatest need right now is to build our petition circulation team. We need:

- - 3,000 Petition Circulators to collect signatures starting in late spring or early summer. We are looking for motivated volunteers with comfy shoes!
- - 100+ Local Captains to coordinate the circulation process and campaign canvassing efforts.
- - 14 Regional Directors to manage the circulation process and campaign canvassing in their region. Regional directors will lead a team of Local Captains.

Training will be provided and no experience is necessary! To learn more about our volunteer opportunities, go to www.votersnotpoliticians/volunteer

Donate! To help fund the campaign, please go to www.votersnotpoliticians/donate and donate to the Voters Not Politicians ballot question committee.

Share the cause with a friend! Redistricting reform affects every voter in Michigan. Bring a friend with you to a Town Hall. Invite them to like the Facebook page www.facebook.com/votersnotpoliticians/ Encourage them to sign up for the email list to stay updated!

2017 Manistee DEMS Membership Year

January - December 2017

How you benefit from being a member of the Manistee County DEMS?

- ★ Influence local policy and candidates
- ★ Receive email, phone, and newsletter notifications about upcoming **Democratic** events
- ★ Attend the monthly business meeting featuring Guest Speakers
(Third Thursday of each month at 7 pm, at the Dial A Ride Building
JAN, FEB, MAR Manistee ISD Meeting Room)
- ★ Volunteer opportunities for specific events such as Parades, County Fair and Blue Tigers

Share your ideas to make the Democrats a relevant voice in our County
 Join our discussion group by signing up on our website
 Go to our WEBSITE at manisteecountydemocrats.us
 Join us on FACEBOOK [facebook.com/groups/21048470915534](https://www.facebook.com/groups/21048470915534)
 Or on TWITTER <https://twitter.com/manisteedems>

-----CUT & SEND BACK BOTTOM PORTION-----

Please join today and send in a separate membership form for each member of your household

Last Name _____ First _____ MI _____

Other joining members in same household _____

Address _____

City _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Alternate Phone _____

E-mail _____ Send my newsletter by email

2017 Membership Levels Per Individual

- 100 Club - \$100.00
- Gold Club - \$50.00
- Silver Club - \$25.00
- Supporter - \$10.00
- Grassroot Supporter - Count me In - No Charge _____

_____ Amount of Enclosed Check

Please make checks payable to
 Manistee County Democratic Party

Send this completed form along
 with your check to:
 Manistee County Dems
 P.O. Box 65
 Manistee, MI 49660