



www.manisteecountydemocrats.us

Monthly Meetings

Meeting Date:

May 20th, 7pm
(3rd Thursday of month)
Virtual ZOOM Meeting

May Guest Speaker:

Ryan Bennett
Business Manager for the
Pipefitters Union

Leadership Team

Chair

John Helge
johnmhelge@gmail.com

Secretary

Rebecca Amidon
rebeccalamidon@gmail.com

Treasurer

Judy Cunningham
jpc4466@gmail.com

Social Activities Chair

Peggy Raddatz
peg.raddatz@gmail.com

Blue Tigers Chair

Shirley Madden
gspmadden@gmail.com

Communications Chair

Lee Trucks
leetrucks@gmail.com

Volunteers Chair

Al Frye
alfrye55@gmail.com

Membership Chair

Karen Kolb
kkolb53@yahoo.com

BLUE TIGERS

The dynamic Blue Tigers are the community outreach component of the Manistee County Democratic Party. The Blue Tigers are on the move and committed to serving Manistee County.

Each month, they have been working closely with Cassandra Kamaloski, of the Friendship Society, who has been promoting the **Feeding America Food Truck**. The Blue Tigers are right there, volunteering to help pack the tote bags with food and passing other food items to many families as they drive up in the lengthy lines to receive their food. Not only are they helping with the volunteer effort, but the Blue Tigers are also supporting this endeavor financially as we work closely with Al Frye, who heads up the volunteer efforts in our community.

The Blue Tigers have also been an incentive for students completing their high school curriculum or completing their GED. This organization has provided minimal scholarships for students who may need a little assistance in this endeavor, such as providing gas money so they can get to the campus. This organization has also extended their services to those students in college who may need some financial assistance in purchasing books. The Blue Tigers are on the move and we're here to support you to better your life by receiving your high school diploma, GED, or financial assistance in college.



COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR



John Helge

The members of the Manistee County Democratic Party appreciate this opportunity to share the ideas and ideals that we believe are focused on ensuring that our governmental entities at all levels are working for the greater good of society meaning every citizen of this great country. We recognize the daunting task of overcoming simplistic and misleading labels like socialism and communism that have been misapplied and weaponized against Democrats over the past few years. Those labels, misinformation, and denigrating catchphrases when combined with the relative anonymity of social media and the pundits on the 24-hour news channels have worked like a wedge creating a deep divide in our community, our state, and our nation. This division must be bridged if we are to succeed in responding to current and future challenges to our health, safety, economy, and American way-of-life. We hope this series will help us all build a foundation for that bridge.

Democrats in Manistee County do not believe the government at any level should regulate everything in our capitalism-based free trade marketplace, but since greed is currently such a driving force in our country, we need regulations to prevent corporations from cutting corners, destructing the environment, tainting food/water, monopolizing markets, or using unsafe materials in consumer goods.

The recent rise in gas and diesel fuel cost has been incorrectly blamed on the executive order that stopped construction of the Keystone Pipeline. It must be understood that this pipeline was not in service delivering Canadian tar sands crude oil to any US oil refinery. This low-quality crude oil is not desired or needed by US refineries who currently have an adequate supply of good quality crude oil from US wells. The recent rise in fuel prices is due to the basic free market capitalism principle of supply and demand. The big freeze that virtually shut down Texas in February also shut down a significant percentage of the US refineries supplying gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel. Demand has increased compared to this same time last year when the nationwide lockdown limited travel by airplanes and autos.

Governor Whitmer has also made an important executive decision ordering the shutdown of Enbridge's Line 5. The risk of a major petroleum leak from this 60+ year old pipeline into the Straits of Mackinac certainly justifies this order. The crude oil in Line 5 is also from the Canadian tar sands and is bound for Canadian oil refineries and ultimately Canadian fuel pumps. A small percentage of the total flow through this aged pipeline is extracted to provide a portion of the propane required in the Upper Peninsula. Our Governor has taken leadership action to ensure the supply of propane required for comfort heating will be maintained and propane costs will be regulated and closely monitored to prevent price gouging.

Democrats do not want the government's hands in everything -- we just do not trust corporate leaders, who are under pressure to increase profitability and satisfy stockholder demands, to consistently ensure that their products/practices are sustainable, safe, and priced honestly for the consumer. Democrats also believe it is important to hold our elected officials accountable for their actions and the performance of these governmental regulatory agencies that they are responsible to oversee. With reasonable regulations in place, consumers have recourse if they are harmed and companies are liable for medical bills, environmental cleanup, unfair business practices, and keeping their promises. This just seems like common sense when the alternative to government regulation is

allowing companies to bring their bottom-line profit motive into the equation at the expense of the common good.

Manistee County Democrats believe employers should be required to pay their employees a decent, livable wage. Somehow this is always interpreted as Democrats wanting teen-age burger flippers to be able to afford a penthouse apartment and a Mercedes. We are not advocating socialism where everyone is paid the same. What we mean by the concept of a living wage is that no one should have to work three full-time jobs just to keep their head above water. Restaurant servers should not have to rely on tips. Multibillion-dollar companies like Walmart and Amazon who currently pay little in taxes on their profitable business should not be subsidized by the federal government providing their employees with food stamps.

When Henry Ford paid his assembly line workers five dollars per day, enough to enable them to buy one of the Model T's they were producing, it resulted in explosive sales for Ford and significant economic growth because more money was in the pockets of the consumers who spent it on necessary goods and services. Since 1980 we have been assured by our elected officials that the economic theory of cutting taxes and putting more money in the pockets of the rich and corporations will create more high paying jobs. The "trickle down" theory has not fulfilled that promise even after several federal tax cuts that have only increased the federal budget deficit and the national debt. Manistee County Democrats believe workers should not have to work themselves into the ground just to barely make ends meet, and minimum wage should be enough for someone to work 40 hours a week and be able to put food on the table and a roof over their head.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR PROJECT

The Manistee County Democratic Party is setting up a Letter to the Editor writing Project. Every Monday a Messaging MEMO is distributed by the Michigan Democratic Party LTE Program and specifically, the 101st District Committee. Members of the four counties in the 101st will all be writing letters based on these talking points to provide a unified message throughout the district.

We need your help to keep democratic good news in the forefront, and hold republicans feet to the fire. The research is done for you. Just put pen to paper. If you are interested, please contact Peggy Raddatz at peg.raddatz@gmail.com.

EARTH DAY CLEAN-UP WALK

The MCDP will be joining the Manistee Friendship Society for their Earth Day Clean-up Walk on Thursday April 22! Participants are to gather at the Briny Building at 12:30PM. Then they plan to disperse to areas around the community that are in need of some litter removal and clean up. Dial-A-Ride services will be provided to and from the litter-prone areas they will identify. The entire group will reassemble at the Briny Building at 2PM with the bags of trash they have collected.

If you know of any areas around the community that are currently an eye-sore, contact John Helge at johnmhelge@gmail.com so he may forward your observations to the Manistee Friendship Society.

POSTCARD CREW

Dear Fellow Manistee Democrat,

Want to get involved? Want your voice heard in a meaningful way? Join the Postcard Crew!

Many of you have participated in postcard writing projects to support a variety of political concerns. Numerous studies have shown that handwritten postcards are an effective tool for influencing views and behaviors.

No doubt we will need to quickly address concerns as they arise. A Postcard Crew on standby would be an effective way to do that. When a lot of postcards, all speaking to the same issue, are received en masse they will get more attention.

Everyone in the Postcard Crew can use whatever postcard they choose and mail them individually. Handwritten postcards usually get more attention. Be sure to sign your name and city or township. (We want to emphasize that elected officials only pay attention to those who can vote for them.)

The Manistee County Democratic Party will send out alerts to the Postcard Crew when we need to call out Republican legislators. We can then bombard them with postcards objecting to their actions.

Fran Wallace and Mary Ortiz will track legislation from and about VanderWall and O'Malley. They decided that Mary will concentrate on Jack O'Malley and Fran will concentrate on Curt VanderWall.

They are going to start by looking at bills that have been referred to the committees of which Jack and Curt are members.

They will summarize the bills and why the Postcard Crew should express support or opposition to those bills.

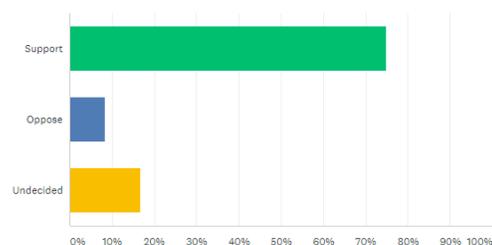
If you want to join the Postcard Crew, please contact Peggy Raddatz @ 231-510-3726 or peg.raddatz@gmail.com. The more the merrier and the greater the impact we can have.

MAPS BOND PROPOSAL

A survey was conducted by the MCDP executive board and the results show an overwhelming support for the MAPS bond proposal. This proposal is supported by the MCDP executive board as we feel the children of this community deserve the best opportunity to prosper by supporting our local schools. If you have any questions you can find more information at <https://chipslead.org/maps-2020/>

Do you support or oppose the MAPS bond proposal as stated above?

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Support	75.00%	27
Oppose	8.33%	3
Undecided	16.67%	6
TOTAL		36

HOW DO WE WIN IN 2022

ADVICE FROM MEMBERS

The Manistee Dems had astonishing successes in 2020. Our campaign office was constantly busy giving out signs, raking in donations from visitors and members, and signing up volunteers. We had enough cash to put up two Biden-Harris Billboards and 2 large *Get out the Vote* ads in the News Advocate. We had more members volunteering to make calls, run the office, and canvass the City than ever before. Our efforts had a huge impact and we had the largest voter turnout ever, over 70% countywide (State turnout was 73%). However, Republicans also turned out voters, and although we still won the city vote, we lost the rural vote big. Percentage-wise, there was very little difference between 2016 and 2020.

After the election, our new chair, John Helge, suggested members be asked their opinion on one topic: how can we start winning local and regional elections? For the past 4 years, our failure to win local elections has been disheartening.

After I made my calls, I was stunned by what I learned from this previously untapped resource. Here are major points from our members:

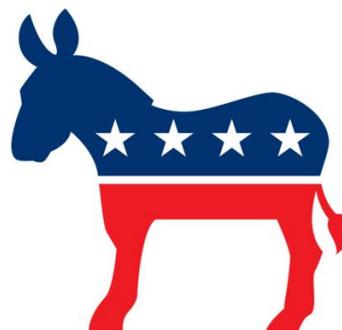
1. *KEEP WATCH ON OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS.*
2. *CREATE A MORE DIVERSE MESSAGE THAT REACHES OUT TO OUR RURAL VOTER.*
3. *WE NEED TO EDUCATE VOTERS ON THE VOTING PROCESS.*
4. *WE NEED STRONG CANDIDATES, GET THEM OUT IN PUBLIC AND TRAINED EARLY.*
5. *WE NEED SIMPLER AND CLEARER MESSAGING.*
6. *DEMOCRATS NEED TO TAKE OVER THE "PATRIOTIC PARTY" TITLE THAT HAS BEEN DISCREDITED BY TRUMP'S INSURECTION.*
7. *WE NEED TO FOCUS ON REACHING AND ENGAGING YOUNG VOTERS.*
8. *FIND A NEW BASE & MORE DEMOCRATIC VOTERS BY REACHING OUT TO NEW DEMOGRAPHICS.*

Although many members were angry at Trump's lies, they didn't feel that demonizing his followers would be productive. That is how Trump created dangerous divisions in our country.

I also learned that so many of our members have experiences we need to win; like running campaigns, having connections to the Tribe and rural communities, and good political instincts. I felt energized by my talks and what I learned gave me hope.

Judy Cunningham,

Manistee County Democratic Party Treasurer



2021 MCDP SOCIAL EVENTS

Arcadia Strawberry Social	June 17, 2021
Manistee 'Lil Big Shots	Week of July 4th, 2021 TBD
4 th Annual Membership Picnic Onekama Village Park	July 15, 2021
Manistee County Fair	August 2021
18 th Annual Don Jennings Award Dinner Manistee National Golf and Resort Social hour 5pm, Dinner 6pm	September 11, 2021
Joseph Farm Country Picnic	October 3, 2021
Manistee Dems Holiday Celebration	December 18, 2021

HOW TO BE A BETTER CAPITALIST

Let's get the US Congress to pass a law that lets an employer when advertising jobs, use the terms: "I am an American Capitalist Employer (ACE)", "I am a Democratic American Capitalist Employer (DACE)", or "I am a Republican American Capitalist Employer (RACE)".

To be designated as an ACE in an advertisement, the employer must be trying to pay himself/herself and all employees a living wage (LW), defined as being enough wage paid to an employee so he or she can provide basic livable necessities, like a place to live, food, insurance, etc., for himself/herself and family, when working a job at any business for a forty hour work week; meaning, the LW also must allow the employees to live above the poverty level. Once the ACE is making enough profits to pay a LW to all employees, the employer can then, keep all the profits for themselves or divvy it up as the ACE sees fit.

The left leaning ACE, once able to pay all employees a LW, would give raises, try to get better benefits for all, maybe will divide up, say, 1% +- of profits to employees as a yearly bonus, then all remaining profits go to the ACE. An ACE must give a minimum of 1% of yearly profits as some form of additional pay to all employees, to use the term Democratic American Capitalist Employer (DACE) in employment advertising.

To use the term, Republican American Capitalist employer, the ACE also must and does pay employees a LW. Then, a far-right leaning RACE employer may divide up the profits in any way they choose, like: to himself/herself and to his lawyers and politicians to keep the LW low, his/hers employer's taxes low, and an employee's benefits low, no help getting better health insurance, and pays 0% of profits to employees. A far- left leaning RACE might pay overtime. Oh, that's right, that law passed already, thanks to unions! Which employer would you want to work for?

Mark Anderson, MCDP Member

BIPARTISANSHIP EFFORTS

MCDP Chair, John Helge, wrote a letter to the chair of the Manistee County Republican Party requesting a bipartisanship joint statement on the November 2020 election. The following letter from MCDP Chair, John Helge received no response from the MCRP.

Greetings Chairperson Richard Schmidt:

I am writing this private letter as the Chairperson of the Manistee County Democratic Party to explore your interest in drafting a joint public statement to express confidence in the integrity of our elections and voting procedures. By all reliable accounts we should now be able to agree that there has been no evidence of fraud or illegal activity that would have changed the outcome of this election.

I trust you will agree with me that our election process and procedures worked as designed during the 2020 election. Going forward we should agree that the process requires and deserves scrutiny and audit to ensure continued reliability. Together we can continue to insist that our elected officials responsible for holding free and fair elections are taking those steps and continuing to provide voters with accurate and transparent information.

The unsubstantiated claims of massive fraud have damaged the trust required to maintain an effective democracy. We, as leaders, have the responsibility to speak the truth and work together to forge a path forward for the benefit of our members. Given the Republican Party's strength in the county, I would imagine you are at least as eager as I am to make sure Manistee County voters are not discouraged from turning out in the next election cycle.

I am sure you will agree that we have bigger issues challenging us on a national, state, and local level. We will naturally continue to have differences of opinion on governmental policy issues. Those kinds of debates are healthy and enable us to gain appreciation for the real potential that we may be closer to agreement than we are apart. By joining together to publicly end this election debate, we can do our part to start the recovery process for the benefit of everyone right here in Manistee County.

I look forward to hearing from you and working together to address this issue. Feel free to use my contact information below to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Respectfully,

John M. Helge
Chairperson
Manistee County Democratic Party



