



Lapeer County Democratic Party Newsletter

February 2025

Volume 5, Number 43

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- Information about LCDP and other news.

Interesting web pages

<https://www.secure.actblue.com>

You can make political contributions to LCDP

<https://www.michigandems.com>

Home to Michigan Democratic Party

Contact Us

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Vice Chair:

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Find us & follow us at:

www.lapeercountymichigandems.com (web page)

<http://www.facebook.com/lapeerdem>

Lapeer Dems meet the fourth Thursday of the month at 6pm (potluck then meeting) in the Lincoln Room at the Center Building, Lapeer.

Lapeer Democratic Party News:

Monthly Meetings:

February County Committee

meeting is 02/13/25 at 6:30pm. The meeting is held at our office in Lyric Mall, Lapeer. Open to members. The February General

meeting is 02/27/25 and is held at 6pm in the Lincoln Room, Lapeer Center building. Bring a dish to pass for the pot luck supper prior to the meeting. General meetings are open to all.



Welcome to Our New Party Chair and Farewell to Anissa Buffin

It is with great sadness that we bid farewell to our Chair, Anissa Buffin. She has worked hard for our party for over four years, but has decided to move to Washtenaw County for new job opportunities. We hope she finds happiness and prosperity in this new environment – thank you Anissa for your time, energy and leadership.

We welcome the new Chair, Alex Diedrich! He will soon be opening the search for a new Vice Chair. 2025 will be a year of new expectations for the Lapeer Democratic Party.

New Time for County Committee Meetings

The Lapeer Democratic Party County Committee will be meeting at 6:30pm on the Second Thursday of the month from now on. Meetings are held at the office at the Lyric Mall, Lapeer for members.

Hello from Alexander Diedrich, the New Chair of the LCDP

Firstly, I want to say thank you to Anissa Buffin for everything she has done to grow the party. Seeing her dedication to our mission and values has been inspiring and I hope to continue her legacy as best I am able.

I am a relative newcomer to Lapeer County. Now 31, I am originally from Oxford and received my BS in Microbiology at Michigan State University, and my DVM at The Ohio State University. (Yes, I put the “The” in front, they are college football national champions this year and they’ve earned it.) I returned home to Michigan to work as a veterinarian and my wife and I have lived happily in Hadley since 2019. I currently work as a traveling veterinarian across Southeast Michigan and get to meet and work with people and their furry families in a variety of communities, which I love.

I didn’t pay much attention to politics until I went to college. I grew up in a house where we didn’t talk about politics, it wasn’t polite conversation. I had to learn that politics happens whether you talk about it or not, pay attention or not. I was 8 on 9/11, my father worked in the Renaissance Center at the time, and I will never forget the abject terror, as my mother picked me up from school panicked that my father’s workplace might be on the list of terrorist targets. I can remember the outrage over the government missing in action over Hurricane Katrina, though I didn’t understand it then. I remember going to high school while President Obama was in office, and all the discord in my history book felt very far away indeed. I was ecstatic to be able to vote for the first time, and I felt like that was all I had to do.

It was a luxury to feel like I could pay so little attention, put forth such little effort and feel like everything would be okay. Since the era of the Trump years, I have been learning the consequences of treating politics like a spectator sport, and how fragile centuries of history really are. It still took those consequences coming up close and personal to really understand if you are not actively trying to shape the decisions and directions of our policies, someone else will do it for you, and you may not like it. My librarian family and friends have been harassed and threatened. My LGBTQ+ family and friends are fearful for themselves and the loss of their rights. Instead of joy, I was afraid when my friend in a southern state was pregnant with her baby boy that if something went wrong, she wouldn’t be okay because of Dobbs. I’m afraid if the Affordable Care Act is overturned a friend battling cancer wouldn’t be able to survive due to medical and insurance bills. In other words, to me, politics has become very personal in a way I was privileged to be sheltered from before.

The lesson I have learned, more than anything else, is to be present and engaged. Our politics are more national than they have ever been. I want to bring politics close to home, support our neighbors, and focus on building our Democratic brand here in our own community. As chair, I want to focus on competing for our school boards, our library boards, and our township and county offices. Carrying on from my predecessor I will continue building and maintaining a network of support for candidates with Democratic values at every level. That will include fundraising, but even more importantly it will require the hard work of persuasion, time, and dedication. I promise I will be working as hard as I can for the long haul to elect a government that is competent, transparent, and accountable. I hope you will too.

LCDP 2025 Garage Sale “Save Your Stuff”

Jim and Heidi Waid of North Branch will be hosting the Dems garage sale, this year, during the month of July. I am one that believes less is more. This is a great time of the year to declutter our homes, garages/barns, and find things that we no longer enjoy, or use. As the saying goes "One man's trash is another man's treasure"! Donated items can be dropped off starting May 1st, by appointment only. (Watch for more announcements) We will not be accepting any electronics, chemicals, books, or clothing. This decluttering will not only help you declutter your home, but it will help the Democrats to raise money for our future battles, and it allows someone else to get what they need/want at a reduced price. It sounds like a win, win situation to me! I look forward to seeing all of your treasures.

The Lapeer County Convention will be Saturday, February 8th, at 10 am at the Office of the Lapeer Democratic Party.

410 West Nepessing Street

Suite 211, Second Floor of the Lyric Mall

Lapeer, Michigan 48446

The purpose of the County and District Conventions shall be to elect members and alternates to the State Convention Committees and to consider resolutions to be forwarded to the State Party.

Each Congressional District shall be entitled to two delegates (one male and one female or not of the same gender identity) and two alternates (one male and one female or not of the same gender identity) on each of the following convention committees: Rules, Resolutions, and Credentials.

In order to be elected to a Convention Committee, a person must be a member of the Michigan Democratic Party for at least thirty (30) days prior to February 22, 2025, which is January 23, 2025. Committee members shall be apportioned among the various Counties of each District. Care should be taken to ensure that the delegates and alternates in each district are balanced by gender.

Delegates to County and District Conventions shall be members of the Michigan Democratic Party residing in the corresponding County or District whose membership was renewed at least thirty (30) days prior to the County or District Convention which if held on February 8, 2025, would be January 9, 2025.

** Precinct Delegates, Democratic elected officials, and Democratic nominees to partisan offices residing in the corresponding County or District may become members that day when they register at the County and District Conventions**

The Lapeer Democratic Party Needs Your Participation

The Lapeer Dems are making plans for 2025. To help elect Democrats in Michigan and get the word out about what MI Dems are doing we need everyone to volunteer to help on a committee. Here is a list of committees you can join:

- Political Action
- Social events/Outreach
- Membership
- Bylaws
- Fundraising
- Communications (newsletter, Facebook and Social Media)

If everyone adds their talents and time to the party we can do great things. If you have not already volunteered, please contact our Chair, Alex, at apdiedrich@gmail.com. Thanks for supporting your party.

Rally for Our Right to Read!

Once again, our freedom to read is under attack. Conservative Republican board members in Mayfield Township, Lapeer Township and on the Lapeer County Board of Commissioners have succeeded in establishing a **book-banning** majority of members on the Lapeer District Library Board. The Library Director spoke to members at our January meeting, and explained what this could mean for our library.

We believe that the Library Board's conservative majority will attempt to fire the library's director **without cause** at their upcoming meeting and then begin the process to pull books off the shelf. This could spell the beginning of the end to our county's outstanding library system.

Stand with us at the next Library Board meeting to support our library and our library director. Remember, **Dems Make a Difference!**

Where: Lapeer Center Building, 425 County Center St., Lapeer 48446

When: Thursday, February 20, 2025, 5:30 p.m.

What: Support your library through public comment or through your presence.

Contact: For more information, please reach out to Lapeer Dem/ Friends of the Library President, **Karen Rykhus**. Email: krykhus@yahoo.com Phone: 810-240-2110.



Let Your Representatives Know How You Feel...Regularly and Often!

By Dante M. Pirouz, PhD (Photo credit: Unsplash, Melinda Gimpel)

Like me, you may be feeling less than motivated to do much of anything right now, given the outcome of the election and how hard we worked. I believe this is the time to give ourselves some grace and take action in small manageable chunks as we heal, regroup and survive. After reading the new book “Atomic Habits” by James Clear, I became intrigued by his suggestion that turning small, easy actions into regular habits can lead to massive change.

One way that we can make a difference without adding much more stress into our lives is to regularly communicate with our newly elected representatives with short and sweet messages of what matters to us. I propose that we consider writing "letter to the editor" style messages to our representatives, both state and national, during this period of Republican rule.

These small actions can be squeezed in while you are watching TV, and you can successfully complete them whenever you feel the urge. And as my beloved Grandmother used to say, “the squeaky wheel gets the oil”...eventually. Rather than screaming at the TV when you hear of something nuts happening in Congress (which I’ve done a lot) or becoming passive and tuning everything out when it all gets too much (which I definitely feel like doing most of the time), you might want to think about sending a quick message to your representatives to let them know that you are keeping an eye on them and it matters what they do.

I regularly send our congressional representative a few sentences via her website’s comments page. I usually do it while watching the news when I’m already fired up anyway, and I try my best to keep it short, relatively civil, and to the point. Afterward I feel a small sense of satisfaction that I took five minutes and let my feelings be known. It is small act of defiance that I can fit into my busy, chaotic day and I think it can make a difference. Most of our representatives probably believe that what they are doing is condoned by everyone in their districts but if we start to let them know that there are many of us that are paying attention and will let them know when we disagree, they may be less likely to believe that they can act with impunity.

Here is what I include in every message:

1. Who I am: I always start out by stating my demographics: I’m an Army mom with a deployed kid, I’m a business owner, I’m a property owner, I’m an educator, I’m a mom, I’m a Democrat. You can decide how much you want to let your representative know about your demographics, but I think it helps for them to know that even if we are progressives, we represent important constituencies and are also contributing members of our

communities and deserve respect. Sometimes I choose not to put my party affiliation, because in my opinion it shouldn't matter what party persuasion for them to do their jobs. We pay their salaries, so our representatives are accountable to us whether we voted for them or not.

2. What is bothering me: I like to be specific about what I think is wrong about their vote or decision on an issue and, as a former teacher, I ALWAYS try to be civil yet persuasive with my language. Remember that your message doesn't have to be very long or perfectly articulated. You can just send a few sentences about whatever is concerning you. Honest sentiment from the heart can be very convincing. And at the end of the day, it matters more that you just send it!

3. That I expect a response: I always add at the end that I expect a response. Sometimes you'll get one and sometimes you won't. Sometimes it will be a phone call from a young intern and sometimes it will be a form letter with some sort of gas lighting talking points that you will recognize from Fox News but regardless we must demand that they take our communications seriously and respond to our concerns. When I don't get a response, I usually use that as an excuse to send another message reminding them that I expect to hear something from them.

While I tend to send many more messages that often include complaints and concerns to our Republican representatives, you can feel free to also send messages to our Democratic representatives, as well. You can ask questions, send them encouraging news from your neighborhood, request help on solving an issue. That's part of what their offices are charged with doing for us.

You can send a message directly on most representatives' websites where there is always a contact page. Or you can write a letter to their office or even call if you prefer to use offline methods.

Here are ways to communicate with our representatives in Lapeer County:

Congress: Representative Lisa McClain

Where to send an online message: <https://mcclain.house.gov/contact>

Where to call: (202) 225-2106

Where to mail a letter: 562 Cannon House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Senate: Senator Gary Peters

Where to send an online message: <http://www.peters.senate.gov/contact/email-gary>

Where to call: (202) 224-6221

Senate: Elissa Slotkin

Where to send an online message: www.slotkin.senate.gov

Where to call: 202-224-2512

The House is On Fire

By Gary Foster

Watching the US House of Representatives is much like watching a completely unpredictable and totally out of control house fire. Blazes flare, members scream, ridiculous and mindless rants blast across the country from end to end all to no useful purpose.

Unfortunately, like the house fire, the activities so far in the US House portend only destruction and dismay without a single promise of benefitting our national welfare. To date, they have had little for action but the few steps taken are dark and foreboding.

The House is narrowly divided between 218 Republicans and 215 Democrats with 2 vacancies (both of which are strong Republican districts) which means that Speaker Mike Johnson can afford only 2 desertions on any bill to avoid defeat.

One piece of legislation that almost makes sense – and got 46 Dem votes – is the Laken Riley Act which requires the detention of undocumented workers charged with larceny, theft or burglary. At least, on the surface, it's hard to argue with pursuing criminals although this totally denies the “innocent until proven guilty” premise of the US Constitution and is so targeted at undocumented workers with overtly racist tones that it leaves huge doubts about the fairness of application in the real world.

And that is the best of it.

One of the first acts by Speaker was to name Brian Mast (R – FL) as chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, a significant change from former chair Michael McCall (R – TX) who is a solid NATO backer and has supported Ukraine in their fight to end Russian occupation in their country. Mast has voted against aid to Ukraine on every occasion and promised there would be no more money poured “down that rabbit hole”.

In the other major Committee change, Speaker Johnson removed Mike Turner (R - OH) as Chair of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence at the direct request of the new President. Turner had been an outspoken and forceful critic of Russian “President” Vladimir Putin and of Russian aggression in the Ukraine.

In his place, Johnson named Rick Crawford (R – AR) as Chair. Crawford is a frequent and regular apologist for the Russian invasion of Ukraine and has often criticized “lax oversight” of the Intelligence community by the Biden administration. We can expect a lot of “investigations” of a very partisan nature from this myopic right winger.

The most recent declaration from House members as they toady to the new President is declaring California will have to make massive policy changes if there is to be any aid in recovering from the devastating wildfires around Los Angeles. Beyond the incredibly heartless, callous and just plain mean nature of this thinking, the members are laying the groundwork for shattering the slim House majority as a handful of GOP members represent Orange County and other areas afflicted by the wildfire.

As we sit, perhaps our best hope is the GOP members fracture and enter into total conflict on that issue and let it spill over (as they often do) into other arenas.

Why Should We as Members of the Democratic Party Attend Government Meetings? By Rebekah Fitts

Township hall, city council, school and library board meetings are all important for Democratic Party members to attend. Not only is it good to know what is going on in your neighborhoods and communities, it also helps you as an individual to have a voice in your neighborhood. You also have the opportunity to bring issues to your fellow Democrats for support and to get others involved to help in important issues that affect our society at large.

I was listening to the Democratic Party Chair election forum the Rural Caucus hosted, and the one thing I appreciated from both Al Williams and Mark Ludwig was that each talked about being involved in local politics and how Democrats as a whole are failing at this. I know I primarily vote Democratic but in the five years I have lived in Oregon Township and the four years I lived in Mayfield Township, I have only voted for local Democrat a handful of times for local positions, yet there is always a Republican on the ballot. Why do we not have people running for these local chair/council positions?

Let's face it; we are not in a good place in history. Not only for our nation with what is happening in Washington DC and the election of Donald Trump, but also as a party, and we can see it at its most basic levels. To build a good structure we must have a strong foundation. That foundation is our libraries, our schools, our neighborhoods and our townships. We need participation to build our foundation, and that involves You and I. It involves going to community government meetings and participating in the discussions, and as a Democratic Party member running for a board or council positions when they come up for election.

We as a party need people who can come into our meetings with knowledge of what is going on in our neighborhoods, our school districts, and our townships so that we can then start supporting initiatives that are important to us as Democrats. Initiatives are needed that will start rebuilding our party, the Democratic Party as a whole from the bottom up. We need to support our communities by speaking up, by showing up and by putting people on ballots who will do the same thing. Every township should have Democrats for all elected positions on the ballot. We want to win back the House and the Senate in Washington. We need to start by electing Democrats to our townships and to our city councils first if we want to win 2026 and 2028.

Below we are posting the yearly schedule of government council meetings. We appreciate those who do show up already and would like to extend our thanks and to help you in any way we can. Which includes communicating with the persons on the Communications Committee so that we can monthly post information that effects our communities and in doing so, we can extend information and support to the Democratic initiatives in the best interests of all our communities. This includes communicating with the people on the Communications Committee so that we can monthly post information that affects our communities. In doing so, we can extend information and support to Democratic initiatives in the best interests of all our communities.

Three Candidates Vie for Michigan Democratic Party Chair in February 2025

By Anita Harrand

Two candidates are seeking to be the next chair of the Michigan Democratic Party. The party is in a rebuilding phase and will need a real visionary. All the candidates agree the party needs to rebuild from the ground up, with more focus on grassroots supporters and a less top down approach. Here is some information about each person taken from various interviews and debates.



A community organizer and coalition builder for 25 years Al "BJ" Williams is out and about introducing himself to Democrats. He came to a Lapeer County Democratic Party General Meeting on 12/5/24 and 01/23/25. He feels the party needs to enlist and train more Precinct Delegates and needs a stronger grassroots presence. He states, "The job of the Chair is standing up our county parties, making sure we have Precinct Delegates in

every single precinct." He wants to prioritize unity and growth in the party.



Curtis Hertel former State Senator (D- East Lansing) who lost his bid for the U.S. House in 2024 is also supportive of a stronger grassroots effort in the party. He has experience with the party as a campaign chair for a caucus, recruited candidates and was an active member of the state legislature. He states, "I believe that a party is made up of people that are willing to go out and do the work and that we have failed to communicate and go out and work with those people. As Chair, I'm going to do that." He attended the LCDP meeting on 01/23/25.

Note: Mark Ludwig has withdrawn his nomination as MDP Chair but is running as Vice-Chair for Al Williams.

Congratulations to Joe Gutowski who was elected as the new Rural Caucus Chair for MDP!



Official Call to Convention for the Michigan Democratic Party's 2025 Spring State Convention

Saturday, February 22, 2025 at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center.

The Democratic Electors of the State of Michigan are hereby notified that by the direction of the Michigan Democratic State Central Committee, the 2025 Spring State Convention of the Michigan Democratic Party will be held at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center on Saturday, February 22, 2025.

At the 2025 Spring State Convention, Michigan Democrats will gather by congressional district to elect district officers and members to the State Central Committee. Members of MDP constituency group caucuses will meet and elect their leadership. On the Convention floor, Democrats will vote by congressional district to elect a Chair and two (2) Vice-Chairs of the State Central Committee.

All members of the Michigan Democratic Party are encouraged to attend the 2025 Spring State Convention.

An Overview of the 2025 Spring State Convention Timeline

Thursday, January 23

Membership deadline to be eligible to vote at the 2025 Spring State Convention.

*Does not apply to Precinct Delegates, Democratic Nominees, or Democratic Elected Officials.

Saturday, February 8

Deadline to hold County and District Conventions.

Sunday, February 9 by 7 PM

Deadline for County and District Convention Chairs to submit resolutions and committee members to the MDP.

Tuesday, February 11 at 6 PM

Convention Credentials Committee meets virtually.

Tuesday, February 11 at 7 PM

Convention Rules Committee meets virtually to consider rules for the Convention.

Wednesday, February 12 at 6 PM

Convention Resolutions Committee meets virtually.

Wednesday, February 19 at 9 AM

Credentialing Window Opens for the 2025 State Convention.

Saturday, February 22 at 2 PM

The credentialing window closes.

Saturday, **February 22**

Spring State Convention held at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center.

News about the newsletter

This newsletter is published monthly and is available by email to all members. **All members are encouraged to submit articles and information to the newsletter.** Submissions for the newsletter should be 800 words or less and need to be sent by email to the editors by the 18th of each month.

Send submission to the editors:

Anita Harrand at aharr76@hotmail.com

Alex Diedrich at apdiedrich@gmail.com

Lapeer County Democratic Party needs your financial support.

Annual dues renewal is December for the year 2025. If you want to mail your membership please send to: Lapeer County Democratic Party, PO Box 185, Lapeer MI 48446.

Here are other ways to pay your LCDP dues:

1. Pay at Act Blue: <http://www.secure.actblue.com>
2. You can visit our Facebook page: <http://www.Facebook.com/LapeerDems>
3. You can visit our website: [Lapeer County Democratic Party](#) Locate the “Get Involved” button.
4. You can fill out the attached form and mail with a check to the LCDP office:

Name _____

Home Address _____

Street City State Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

Home Phone &/or Mobile Phone _____

Renewal membership____ New membership _____

Membership types: _____ Student (\$10)

_____ Grassroots Supporter (\$20) _____ Lapeer Activist (\$50) _____ Lapeer Leader (\$100)

_____ Additional Contribution

_____ Total Amount of Your Check

_____ Check here if you wish to become a member by way of an “in-kind” contribution. We will contact you.

Thank you for joining us to ensure everyone has an opportunity to achieve the American dream, be paid a living wage, have basic health care, get a quality education without going into massive debt, and live in a clean/safe/justice-oriented world.

