

# Clinton County Democratic Party Newsletter



June 2026

**"History doesn't just travel forward; it can go backwards if we don't work hard. So we can't be complacent. We cannot be complacent. Securing the gains this country has made requires perseverance and vigilance. And it requires voting. Because we've got more work to do." - President Barack Obama, Remarks at LGBT Pride Reception, June 9, 2016**



## **Our CCDP Community**

*By Kathie Elliott.* Being part of a community can be energizing and deeply rewarding. Our CCDP community is off to a great start this summer, with many of us volunteering for parades, Pride events, and meeting and operational roles, in addition to working with individual campaigns. Please continue to regularly check social media for events

as we schedule them or as they are shared with us. We continuously update our Upcoming Events Google Doc so CCDP members not on social media can stay in the know. With so much going on, please be sure to share events you see with us so that we can invite the greater CCDP community to participate.

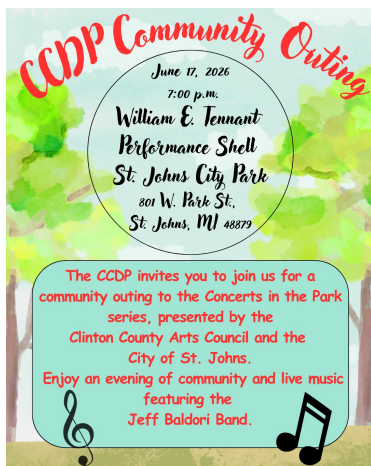
The summer is an especially important time for CCDP to increase visibility and demonstrate our strong membership numbers, so make sure to commit to one or more summer events right away. We hope to hit the pavement in Elsie this Saturday and would love a solid showing. We never want to turn down a chance to promote CCDP's

values and voting power because of a lack of volunteers. As long as we still hear “I thought I was the only Democrat in Clinton County,” then we know there is still work to be done! So, let’s commit to being present, active, and vocal over these next critical few months. May our visibility spur discussions about who we want to be as a county and as a nation, inspire others to join our movement, and increase voter turnout for candidates and proposals that reflect what we believe our nation is capable of. We can accomplish so much when we work together. Thank you for all you are undertaking!

In Solidarity,

Kathie

PS: At our office hours on Saturday, June 20 (see time and location in our events section), we will hold a drawing for two sets of tickets to State Representative Penelope Tsernoglous's **June 29 Campaign Kick Off Event**. Members with active status as of that date will have their names entered into the drawing. Not yet a member? Use the link at the bottom of this newsletter and join today!



## Join CCDP for Wednesday's Concert in the Park

*By Katie Speirs.* CCDP invites you to gather with us at an upcoming concert, be in community, and enjoy live music from the Jeff Baldori Band on Wednesday, June 17, at 7:00 p.m. at the William E. Tennant Performance Shell in the St. Johns City Park. There is no admission fee for the concert, although donations are welcome.

Attendees who would like to sit during the concert are welcome to bring seating accommodations that work for them, such as lawn chairs or blankets. We'll meet at 6:45 p.m. near the Main Pavilion, the brick structure just southwest of the performance site. At it is a non-partisan event, please do not wear any CCDP-branded apparel. Look for a small American flag to help identify our group. We look forward to spending an evening in community with you!

**Music Man and More!**



*By Melany Mack.* Every summer for the past 22 years, thousands of people have enjoyed free weekly musical concerts on Wednesday evenings in the City Park of St. Johns. In fact, Clinton County Democrats will meet there on June 17 to socialize and hear the Jeff Baldori Band (see details in the story above). This phenomenally popular Concert in the Park

Series resulted from an ambitious vision of one man, William (Bill) Tennant, who, with the help of Kaye Pilmore and the dedication and hard work of a team of volunteers and sponsors, helped bring that vision to life. The story behind the Concert in the Park Series inspires, illustrating how childhood experiences, a love of music, and a belief in the value of community can coalesce to create something amazing.

Bill's story is that of a hometown hero. Most people know that he was a public-school orchestra teacher for 36 years, 34 of them in St. Johns Schools. Many might even know that he was a founding member of the Clinton County Arts Council which is closely aligned with the concert series. But not too many know that the seed for all of it was planted when Bill was a boy growing up in Detroit. Please [visit our blog](#) to read "the rest of the story," which will help us appreciate our very own music man even more.



## Parade Walkers Needed!

*By Matthew Boak.* We are still collecting RSVPs for walkers for our upcoming parade entries, **especially for the Elsie Dairy Festival parade coming up this Saturday, June 20, at 10:45 a.m. at Elsie Park.** Please consider

joining your fellow Dems who have already signed up to walk. ***We need at least 12 signed up by this Wednesday*** to make a good showing! In addition to the Elsie Dairy Festival, we are planning to have a group walking in the following parades:

- Ovid Carriage Days, Saturday, July 11, 11:00

- a.m.
- St. Johns Mint Festival, Saturday, August 8, 10:00 a.m.
- DeWitt Ox Roast, Saturday, August 15, 10:00 a.m.
- Maple Rapids Lamplighter Festival, Saturday, September 19, time TBD

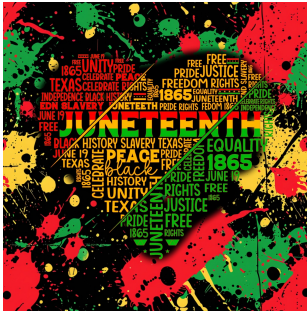
If you would like to sign up to join any or all of these opportunities, but especially Elsie, please [email us](#) and we will share additional information on exact timing and where to meet. Thank you!



## Many Hands Make Light Work for July Clean Ups

Looking for another way to participate in CCDP activities that make a difference? Join us as we clean up local roadways and parking hubs in the county! On Sunday, July 12, at 8:30 a.m., we will meet at 7585 W. Grand River Avenue, Lansing, to clear trash from the roadside as part of our Adopt-A-Highway commitment. And then on the following Sunday, July 19, at 10:00 a.m., we'll meet at 5900 S. Williams Road, St. Johns, for the first of our carpool clean ups that morning. Once this lot is cleaned, we will move south to the lot located at 2377 E. Round Lake Rd, DeWitt. Trash bags and safety vests will be provided for all volunteers, but you should bring your own gloves and water. If you

can attend either event, please [RSVP here](#). We hope to work alongside you as we do a little good work in our community!



## Reflecting on Juneteenth

*By Sue Barrick.* The origin of our observance of June 19 as Juneteenth National Independence Day is rooted in Galveston, Texas, when, on June 19, 1865, over two years after the Emancipation Proclamation, slavery came to an end in the former Confederate states. In it is

almost impossible to imagine such a lag these days. The rebellion, however, had continued to fester in the hearts of some Confederates who spirited their enslaved captives away from their homes to far away Texas, where, in the absence of Union forces, they could keep physical control of, hide the truth of liberation from, and continue to reap profits off their forced labor. It all changed that day in 1865 when Major General Gordon Granger's 1,800 heavily armed Union troops, including four Black regiments, landed at Galveston. On June 19, he read out General Order No. 3 to Galveston residents, giving notice that those who had been enslaved were now free and equal to their former masters. Here are words from that proclamation:

"The people are informed that, in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them, becomes that between employer and hired labor. The Freedmen are advised to remain at their present homes, and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts; and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere."

For the newly liberated quarter million people in Texas, June 19, 1895, would forever be remembered and celebrated. Families, churches and communities commemorated the occasion with annual gatherings, performances, special services, parades, processions, and picnics, and in song and dance. Children learned early the importance of remembering and participating in the annual festivities. The impression Juneteenth made on young Dr. Opal Lee (née Flake) in her home town of Marshall, Texas would move her to devote years of a

long life to seeing it made a national holiday. Born in 1926, the actual events in Galveston were still within living memory and happened not far from Marshall. She knew the joy of freedom but at age twelve would also encounter the terror of racism. In Fort Worth, Texas their new family home was torched by white rioters just days after they moved in.

She now is a 99-year-old retired educator and school counselor and remains a staunch civic activist. At 89, to draw attention for the cause of national recognition for a Juneteenth holiday, she set out to walk the 1,400 miles to Washington D.C. carrying her petition to Congress. Instead of trudging miles of open highway, she pivoted strategy to make the walk in 2.5-mile segments in communities where she could gather more names for the petition. The petition went viral after the shocking murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, bringing tens of thousands of signatures. Usher and Pharell Williams added their support, with the final number of signatures totaling 1.5 million. The rest is history. In 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day holiday into Federal law. Unlike some Federal Monday holidays, the date for Juneteenth is fixed on June 19, though many communities utilize the weekends before and/or after for extended festivities when the date falls during the work week. For her efforts to secure recognition of Juneteenth as a Federal holiday, President Biden also bestowed upon Dr. Lee the Presidential Medal of Freedom. May we all remember the significance of this day.



## **Rep. Tsernoglou Kicked off Committees After Calling for Epstein Investigation**

*By Tim Hughes.* State Rep. Penelope Tsernoglou was removed from her committee assignments by Republican Speaker Matt Hall a day after calling for an investigation of Jeffrey Epstein's activities in Michigan. Tsernoglou sponsored HR 284 calling for the establishment

of a six-member bi-partisan select committee to examine the Interlochen Center for the Arts and its relationship with Epstein. Tsernoglou's resolution cites documents released by the U.S. Department of Justice revealing a troubling connection between

Interlochen and convicted sex offenders Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell. Epstein contributed over \$400,000 to Interlochen and a cabin funded by Epstein was named in his honor. It is alleged that Interlochen served as the venue where Epstein and Maxwell encountered one of their first-known victims, a 13-year-old girl attending the school's summer arts camp. She later alleged that she was groomed and sexually abused by both individuals over the next few years, following her time at Interlochen.

The day after Tsernoglou and other Democrats held a press conference calling for a House floor vote on her resolution, Hall removed Tsernoglou from the House Oversight Committee, where HR 284 currently sits. She was also removed from the Public Health and Food Security Oversight Subcommittee and as minority vice chair of the State & Local Assistance Programs Oversight Subcommittee. Hall claimed Tsernoglou's removal from committee assignments was unrelated to the call for action on the Epstein legislation but was sparked by her comments on a different committee debate. Tsernoglou disagreed.

"The only thing that happened between my committee meeting on Tuesday and being informed of my removal from all committees today, was a press conference where I called upon Speaker Hall and Republican leadership in the House to investigate Jeffrey Epstein," Tsernoglou said. "Michiganders deserve answers, plain and simple and that's what we're trying to deliver."



## Happy Pride! An Update from The Call-In Coalition

*By Tess Miller.* Happy Pride! Those words ring throughout Pride Season. This summer, those words need to be sounded more loudly and proudly than ever before. For the 6th year, the St. Johns Call-In Coalition is "calling in the community" to help make this year's Pride the best one yet! The 2026 theme is "CommUNITY: Pride in the Park and reflects the decision to move Pride to the St. Johns Main City Park on **Sunday, June 21, from 12:00 noon - 4:00 p.m.** Moving to the park means that we will be in the shade, crucial for a potentially hot and humid day.

We are happy to hold space for around 16 vendors. Phillips Cider Mill

will once again be handing out free donuts! The band shell will feature open mic moments, speakers, and a drag show at the end of the day. For young kiddos, there will be a bounce house and Storytime with a Drag Queen. And because SJ Pride falls on Father's Day, we have a special event entitled "Drag Your Dad!" We encourage dads to collaborate with their families to dress up in drag or come as they are and use some drag items we will have on hand to wear. There will be a competition to see who is the "Best Drag Dad" of the day. Winners will go home with a gift basket!

We are also looking forward to having vendors in the pavillion, including the Fry Guy for sustenance and an ice cream truck to hit your sweet spot. As in years past, our Pride will conclude with a Drag Show hosted by Crystal d'Light, crowned Ms. Professional Lansing Pride 2025. Remember to bring your dollars to support the Queens and Kings of Pride.

We offer a special thank you to our sponsors: Cedar Creek Hospital, COR Counseling, Contigo Counseling Services, Studio Retreat, and the Minty Mitten. We appreciate all our supportive businesses! How can you help SJCIC? As we were not immune to the Federal cuts and threats to diversity, equity, and inclusion support, we have suffered grant-funding losses. If you feel you can spare a few dollars, [click here to donate](#) to SJCIC 2026 Pride. We are also [looking for volunteers](#) for help setting up and tearing down before and after on June 21.

The current Administration has made it abundantly clear that any and all laws protecting the vulnerable 2SLGBTQIA+ community are in danger. And I think we all know that Martin Niemöller poem "[First They Came](#)." In essence, if we do not do our part to stand up for vulnerable communities, we will all lose our rights and freedoms. As politicians cruelly use the 2SLGBTQIA+ as a political fan for the flames of division and hate, it is up to the vocal majority to stand up in support and demonstrate that love always wins.

## **Support the Briggs District Library!**

*By Kendel Darragh. I'm writing to share information with CCDP members as a Briggs*

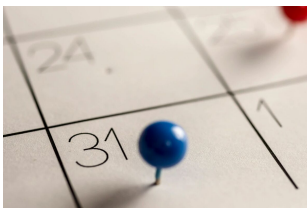


District Library board member, a campaign committee member, and as a library user. Since 1940, St. Johns has been fortunate to have a dedicated community library. In 2016, it transitioned to the Briggs District Library, which expanded the library's service area to match the St. Johns Public School District boundaries.

Because of this, every resident in the school district now shares in its support and benefits from all its services, programs and equipment.

To keep our library thriving, Briggs needs your support in the upcoming August election. The 10-year operating millage that passed in 2016 expired last December. This August, I, along with the rest of the board and library administration, will ask voters to approve a new .75 millage for 10 years and restore the funding gradually reduced by the Headlee Rollback.

The millage is essential to provide library services. It funds 80% of the library's operating budget. Without it, Briggs will no longer qualify for state financial aid to libraries, which would lead to additional, cascading funding losses. Briggs District Library remains a vital asset for all ages. It offers a wide variety of programs throughout the district like storytime, book clubs, Crafternoons, and the Cocoa Club. It also provides valuable services like Libby, Hoopla, and Michigan Legal Help. Finally, Briggs brings the unexpected, from garden seeds to a notary public to sack lunches. To learn more about the millage election and contribute to efforts to ensure its passage, please [read this letter](#). You can also visit the [Vote Yes 4 Briggs 2026 Facebook page](#). Thank you so much for your continued support!



## Upcoming Events

**June 17 - CCDP Community Event at Concerts in the Park:** 6:45 p.m. meet up, with concert beginning at 7:00 p.m., St. Johns City Park band shell.

**June 20 - CCDP Saturday Office Hours:** 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 105 West Railroad Street, St. Johns.

**June 20 - Elsie Dairy Festival Parade:** 11:00 a.m., more details TBD.

**June 21 - St. Johns Pride:** 12:00 noon - 4:00 p.m., St. Johns City

Park, more information coming soon.

**June 27 - CCDP Saturday Office Hours:** 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 105 West Railroad Street, St. Johns.

**June 27 - Lansing Pride: 1:00 - 9:00 p.m.,** Old Town Lansing, more information coming soon.

**June 28 - DeWitt Pride:** 12:00 noon - 3:00 p.m., Riverside Park, more information coming soon.

**July 9 - CCDP Monthly Meeting:** County Courthouse Commissioner's Room, 100 E. State Street, St. Johns. Social time begins at 6:30 p.m., with the meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m. Location may change to an outdoor pavillion/park.

**July 12 - Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup:** 8:30 a.m., 7585 W. Grand River Avenue, Lansing. [RSVP here.](#)

**July 19 - CCDP Carpool Lot Cleanup:** 10:00 a.m., 5900 S. Williams Road, St. Johns. Once this lot is cleaned, we will move south to the carpool lot located at 2377 E. Round Lake Rd, DeWitt. [RSVP here.](#)

**Join CCDP/MDP or Renew Your CCDP/MDP Membership**



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