

Clinton County Democratic Party Newsletter



May 2026

“It’s the action, not the fruit of the action, that’s important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there’ll be any fruit. But that doesn’t mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.”- Mahatma Gandhi



Your Vote Matters, And So Does Your Activism

By Kathie Elliott. We’ve entered the sprint to the August primary, and then the quick turn-around to the November mid-term general election. Have you selected your preferred Governor, Senate, and Congressional candidates yet? Have you met the individuals running to fill Senator Singh’s seat? Do you know what other races or issues are on your ballot and how you will vote?

Don’t let decisions about your candidates of choice ride until the primary. That would be a wasted opportunity. These are the months when campaigns need us to firmly commit with more than our vote. While our votes are valuable and valued, they are also the least we can offer candidates. What are you willing to do for your candidates that will help them get another 10, 20, 50 votes? Now is the time to reach out directly to the campaigns you support to make your donations, offer your time and talents, and commit to doing more

than you may be comfortable with to help them reach other voters and share their platform and values.

Since CCDP does not endorse primary candidates, we will be busy this summer promoting election security, democratic values, inclusion, and community. We will canvas, sponsor events, and reach out to voters. We will participate in parades, community events, and get-out-the-vote activities. Are you willing to delay, cancel, or reschedule some of your summer plans to help us elect Democrats who will protect us from another two years of dismantling our economy, democracy, and international relationships? We need many vocal members at all our events and activities to demonstrate how much we truly reflect the thoughts and values of many of our neighbors who don't feel comfortable speaking up but who may find their courage through us.

If you cannot be with us at a given event because you are working with your candidates or for another campaign that is important to you, we applaud you and look forward to seeing you out and about. Otherwise, please help CCDP show up and speak out throughout the summer. The margins in these races will be too narrow to leave anything to chance. Without exaggeration, the world as we know it is slipping further away from us every news cycle. It may take generations to restore what we've already lost. Literally, the survival of our families, and our nation, depends on Democrats regaining control of both houses of Congress and the State House in Michigan. We need to retain the State Senate and ensure we keep the trifecta of a Democratic Governor, Attorney General, and Secretary of State. This summer, let's honor those who founded our nation 250 years ago by meeting their courage with our own. Let's be willing to sacrifice our convenience and comfort to honor those who sacrificed their freedom, their families, and their lives for our country. Now is our moment!



May Is Mental Health Awareness Month

By Shelby Neathammer. Mental Health America is a non-profit that champions mental health policy improvement, education, advocacy, and research. It was established in 1909 by philosopher William James,

psychiatrist Adolf Meyer, and mental health advocate Clifford W. Beers. Beers struggled with mental health and experienced horrific conditions at a hospital while receiving treatment. It was this experience that led him to raise awareness of mental health treatment and to advocate for institutional reforms. In 1949, May was established as Mental Health Awareness Month.

Mental Health Awareness Month in the modern era exists to remind all of us to approach mental health with compassion, education, and community while trying to reduce stigma. In 2026, when things in our country continue to feel chaotic, it can feel challenging to cope with day-to-day stressors. If you are struggling, please know that you are not alone, and it is okay to seek out help. If you are seeking general mental health services, [Psychology Today](#) can be a useful tool to find a licensed mental health provider based on need, insurance type, and location. For general resources on mental health, check out [Mental Health America's website](#) for information on living with a mental health condition or ways to assist loved ones who are struggling.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, Community Mental Health has a 24/7 hotline at 517-346-8460. For a crisis impacting folks in the 2SLGBTQIA community, consider calling the LGBT National Help Center: 888-843-4564 (does not call police) or visit [The Trevor Project](#) for ways to assist 2SLGBTQIA youth. Additional population-specific support can be found by calling Blackline: 800-604-5841 (does not call police) or Stronghearts Native Helpline: 844-762-8483, which centers Native Americans & Alaska Natives (does not call police). Mental Health America's 2026 Mental Health Awareness Month theme is "More Good Days, Together," and as always, we are stronger together.

Join CCDP on June 17 for a Community Outing

By Katie Speirs. Summer is finally near, and hopefully that means we will all be able to enjoy sunshine and warmer weather even as we keep busy with CCDP activities in support of our Democratic candidates for office. While our beautiful state has so much to offer year round, there is truly



something uniquely special about Michigan summers. For many, it's common to enjoy our summers up north or at a lake, but local communities also offer treasures to enjoy close to home. One hometown gem is the Concerts in the Park Series hosted throughout the summer by the Clinton County Arts Council and the City of St. Johns, featuring a variety of musical genres and talented artists. These concerts are a wonderful way to enjoy a summer evening!

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. The Jeff Baldori Band performs a wide selection of music, including rock & roll, blues, and country. There is no admission fee for the concert, although donations are welcome. The concert will be held outside in a grassy area of the park. 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. We'll plan to have a CCDP logo sign so you can easily find us. Once we've gathered a good number, we will find a place on the lawn. We look forward to spending an evening in community with you!



A Summer Full of Volunteer Opportunities

By Matthew Boak. Summer is a busy time for all, and that goes for CCDP, too! The warmer weather brings many opportunities for us to get

out and about across Clinton County for festivals and parades that make the season special. Let's get our steps in and help make CCDP more visible at the same time! We are planning to have a group walking in the following parades:

- Elsie Dairy

Festival,
Saturday,
June
20,
11:00
a.m.

- 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
Lampighter
Festival,
Saturday,
September
19,
time
TBD

While we walk the parade route, we plan to hand out American flags, beaded necklaces, and CCDP yard signs. It is always a lot of fun to watch spectators get excited to see us! **We will only reserve a spot for CCDP in a parade if at least a dozen volunteers commit to participate.** If you would like to sign up to join any or all of these opportunities, please [email us](#). We will send you important information about each parade as it draws near.



May 1 Spring Banquet - A Spectacular Evening!

By Matthew Boak. The evening of May 1 was one of celebration for the Clinton County Democratic Party. Our Spring Banquet and

Silent Auction, held this year at the Eagle Eye Golf and Banquet Center in Bath Township, was another huge success. We had a great turnout and want to thank everyone who came out to support our organization and the work we are doing in Clinton County. To see both familiar and new faces filled us with so much gratitude for the community we continue to build here in Clinton County. Thank you!

We especially want to thank Attorney General Dana Nessel for serving as our Keynote Speaker. She emphasized just how important it is to continue the fight to preserve our democracy, and she has provided a great example by suing the Trump Administration over 50 times. The AG has been a steadfast advocate for our state and our democracy. We also offer gratitude to State Senator Sam Singh and State Representatives Emily Dievendorf and Penelope Tsernoglu for providing their annual remarks as the Democrats who represent us so well in Lansing. We brought special attention to Senator Singh's distinguished service as he has made the decision not to seek re-election after his term ends at the end of 2026.

We were grateful to be joined by Congressional District 7 candidates Bridget Brink and Will Lawrence, in addition to representatives from Matt Maasdam's campaign. Also joining us for the evening were State Senate candidate Mark Polsdofer, LCC Board candidate Hope Lovell, and DeWitt Township Supervisor candidate Joshua Taft.

We also want to thank the Michigan Democratic Party's Project 83 Director, Jeff Winston, for speaking and providing updates about MDP and the vital work they are doing across the state to prepare for the midterm election later this year.

Our social hour music was provided by Algie Watkins, a notable musician with deep roots, especially through teaching music at St. Johns Public Schools.

We had nearly 100 guests in attendance, over 30 silent auction items, and a great venue. Special thanks goes to the individuals on the Banquet Planning Committee: Tina Andrews, Theresa Kidd, Ann

McCulloch, Evelyn Quiroga-Klein, Kathie Elliott, and Matthew Boak. We are grateful for how far we've come, and are fired up for the work ahead in 2026 and beyond!



A Tale of Two Conventions

By Melany Mack. Was the Michigan Democratic Party Convention on April 19 an enthusiastic and engaging event or was it a chaotic and divisive free-for-all? It depends on whether you were there to experience it for yourself or are relying on reports from your newsfeed. I had

the privilege of attending the endorsement convention, and thought that, overall, it was a tremendous success. MDP Chair Curtis Hertel and his staff worked hard to provide a much more organized and smoothly executed event than last year's widely panned Renaissance Center convention. Curtis opened registration earlier, expanded staff and volunteer capacity, and held the event at Huntington Place, a more user-friendly venue. Credentialing went smoothly for most of the over 7,000 people who completed the process. There were plenty of easily accessible restrooms and a place to purchase lunch on-site. The caucuses seemed very well attended, and many candidates circulated among the crowd. It was very encouraging to see such a large crowd of diverse and enthusiastic Democrats officially backing candidates for state-wide office. MDP has published the [results of the endorsement convention](#).

A much different story about the convention is also circulating widely and the stories that seem to have monopolized the press revolve around a few delegates who loudly booed certain candidates as they tried to speak. Yet, most delegates did not engage in or condone this ugly and reprehensible behavior even though many articles in various news sources and what seemed to be a preponderance of comments on Facebook focused on the few who caused the problems rather than the majority who were courteous and respectful. An [excellent article](#) in *Michigan Advance* by Abigail Frost effectively pushes back against those who labeled the convention as divisive. It is well worth reading.

While overall the convention flowed smoothly, there were some mishaps that caused a delay in voting. Attendees were told that one or more of the volunteers who assisted with credentialing had made

an error which resulted in a couple of hundred people not receiving the link to vote from their phones. Special computers were set up for those people to vote, but it delayed tabulating the results. Other issues surfaced after the convention. It was learned that some people, perhaps as many as 200, had voted off-site, against party rules. State Senator Sylvia Santana who narrowly lost her bid for endorsement for one of two seats on the MSU Board of Trustees filed an appeal with MDP. Others have also criticized the electronic voting system that was used at the convention, including Attorney General Dana Nessel, who is calling for an independent audit. MDP spokesman Derrick Honeyman promises that the appeal process will be fair and independent. CCDP will report on the results of the appeal process when it has been completed.



Melt the Ice Hat Origin Story

By Frederic Bohm. Curious about the origin of the Melt the Ice Hats that my wife, Sue, knitted and donated to the CCDP Silent Auction? It is inspired by red, tasseled hats worn by Norwegians more than 80 years ago. Norway's beloved red knit Troll Hat, often called a nisselue or rød lue, became a powerful symbol of resistance when Nazi Germany occupied the country during World War II. After German

forces swept into Norway on April 3, 1940, and launched a program to “Nazify” Norwegian institutions, people wore the hats to assert their identity, solidarity, and defiance. Soon, wearing a red Troll Hat became an act of resistance, one that annoyed Nazis so much they banned them. It was a sign of protest then, and it has become a sign of protest and a visible message of defiance after the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) occupation and ensuing violence that broke out in Minneapolis last December.

Paul Neary, an employee of the Minneapolis yarn store, **Needle & Skein**, recreated a pattern for the Red Troll Hat. It soon became known as the “Melt the ICE hat” as thousands of Minnesotans adopted them as a symbol of protest. As of March, Needle and Skein raised more than \$705,000 through the sale of hats and patterns, which have been distributed to community organizations in the Twin Cities. Red Troll Hats remain

powerful symbols to protest authoritarianism and, once again, people all over the U.S. and elsewhere are wearing them to show their belief in democratic values and human decency.



CCDP Steps Up with Basic Needs Center Donations

By Shelby Neathammer. Starting in April, CCDP conducted another donation drive in partnership with the Basic Needs Center in downtown St. Johns. When we contacted Pastor Jim to determine what items might be most useful as we head into summer, he noted that peanut butter and jelly are ideal for kids over the summer break due to their shelf stability and ease of use. We also discussed that the Basic Needs Center often does not receive sunscreen as a personal care item, and it is costly for them to purchase.

Once again, our CCDP community came together and rocked it! We collected 89 items to support local community members, which included: 41 jars of peanut butter, 26 jars of jelly, 3 jars of applesauce, and 19 bottles of sunscreen. Thank you for your commitment to helping others! Keep a lookout this summer as we develop additional ways for you to show support to those in need.



Thoughtful Conversation at Pints & Politics

By Shelby Neathammer. On April 15, CCDP held our second Pints & Politics event at Phillips Cider Bar near Frandor. Our goal was to bring folks together in a casual setting to practice conversational skills from our common read books, *I Never Thought of It That Way* by Mónica Guzmán and *High Conflict* by Amanda Ripley. We recognize the discomfort that can come from even the thought of engaging in challenging conversations during such a crucial midterm election year. Whether you plan to canvass, call-in family members or friends on the other side of the aisle, or phone bank, it can be hard to know where to start.

At the event, our attendees were provided with packets listing communication skills and resources. We broke into small groups and,

using these packets, worked together to navigate several vignettes based on real-world scenarios of tricky political conversations. It was a wonderful way to learn with each other and from one another over delicious pizza and a crisp pint of cider! We hope you continue to support Phillips by stopping by their **three convenient locations**.

If you would like to check out the material from the event, we will have extra packets available at the CCDP office, 105 W. Railroad Street, St. Johns. Please stop by during our Saturday office hours from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., bring a friend, and work together on the vignettes. Keep an eye out on social media for our next Pints & Politics this summer. Let's keep the conversations going!



Don't Miss These Great Blog Posts

By Ann McCulloch. CCDP is grateful for the inspired writings of members Shelby Neathammer and Julie Schonfeld. Shelby

recently shared thoughts and resources on aligning purchasing power with one's values. Julie offered her perspective on why she and her husband have taken a more active role in CCDP and local politics. Both are compelling and timely. Be sure to **head to our website** to read these wonderful contributions to our CCDP dialogue. Have something you are interested in exploring? Email **Ann McCulloch** for more information.



Spotlight Event

May 30 - Greater Lansing Food Bank Drive-Thru Food Distribution, St. Johns:

Southpoint Mall, 1023 South Old US 27, St.

Johns. Volunteers are welcome at 8:00 a.m. for

training. Distribution runs from 8:30 - 9:45 a.m. or until all food is distributed. If you or someone you know needs a little extra food, you do not need to show proof of need, nor do you need to reside in Clinton County. You can pick up food for others up to 5 families. Whether you give help, or accept help, this is what community is for!

Other Events

May 23 - CCDP Saturday Office Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 105 West Railroad Street, St. Johns.

May 30 - CCDP Saturday Office Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 105 West Railroad Street, St. Johns.

June 4 - CCDP Monthly Meeting: DeWitt City Hall, 414 E. Main Street, DeWitt. Social time begins at 6:30 p.m., with the meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m.

June 6 - CCDP Saturday Office Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 105 West Railroad Street, St. Johns.

June 11 - Virtual Coffee Hour with State Senator Sam Singh: 8:00 - 9:00 a.m. [More information.](#)

June 13 - CCDP Saturday Office Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., 105 West Railroad Street, St. Johns.

June 13 - CD7's The Anatomy of an Election: 2:00 p.m., more details TBD.

June 17 - CCDP Community Event at Concerts in the Park: 6:45 p.m. meet up, 7:00 p.m. concert start, 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.

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