

# Clinton County Democratic Party Newsletter



August 2025



## We Can't Let Perfection Be the Enemy of the Good

*By Kathie Elliott.* At our August meeting last week, a candidate for the 7th Congressional District was a keynote speaker, and another attended to speak during the candidate portion of the agenda. I couldn't help but think how rich our pool for this position is with a total of five

candidates who've filed to run against Tom Barrett. There will likely never be a "perfect" candidate. With all their talents, knowledge, and experience combined, we may come close, but of course we have to choose from among them. Yet, these candidates have done what few of us ever will. They have all stepped up to the plate and put themselves in the public eye for praise, questioning, judgment, ridicule, and maybe even physical harm. They are leaning into the unknown with courage and action.

Two days later at the Mint Festival parade, I saw some of our members and allies watching and cheering us along the parade route. Later, one of these members reached out to tell me why they weren't in the parade, and why we haven't seen much of them lately. It seemed like they felt guilty that in some way they fell short of what a CCDP member should be, but that wasn't necessary! They have big, important things happening personally. There is no perfect CCDP member, and there are many ways we all support the party. We all have strengths, interests, fears, and aversions. We have lives and other responsibilities. But I'd like to share two mindsets and invite you to consider whether/how you may want to work on them.

The book *How We Learn to Be Brave* by Mariann Edgar Budde (see mini-review below) invites us to step up to the plate when courage is required, but also stresses that in our lifetimes we will only be faced with a few moments that ask us to be truly, deeply, courageous. We don't know today what incredible acts of courage may be necessary in the future, but this administration is giving us some clues as to what may be asked of us to preserve democracy. Members who develop a mindset to routinely push themselves into their discomfort zone are preparing themselves to be brave in much bigger ways when needed. We should all be building our "courage muscle." Don't underestimate the power of trying something new.

We also don't know what any other CCDP members are going through and what their bandwidth for service and courage is. There will be times we pass on a volunteer opportunity because we have other obligations or we need to preserve our physical or mental health. There are also times when we don't volunteer because we simply "don't feel like it." Members who develop a mindset of choosing action by overriding their inner teenager and forcing themselves to do something that's important even when they "don't want to" are helping everyone. They're building stamina for when we no longer have a choice about what we will or won't do, they're helping other volunteers who showed up even though they also had other things they would rather be doing, and they're demonstrating by actions and personal sacrifice what they are willing to do for the greater good.

Don't try to be the perfect CCDP member, but DO be engaged and active when you can. Through the opportunities CCDP provides, strive to cultivate the important mindsets of courage and action. We need members committed to both!



## Showing Up Might Be the Most Important Thing You Can Do!

*By Melany Mack.* Feeling discouraged? Feeling like there is nothing you can do to effectively push back on the destruction the Trump administration has unleashed on our country? It's easy to become

distracted from what's important when the administration's "flood the zone" strategy freshly assaults us with news of the latest outrageous (and often illegal!) actions taken by Trump and his minions.

We are democrats because of our belief in social justice, equal political rights, equal opportunity, and the rule of law. We are Democrats, that is formal

members of a political party, because that party enacted policies (regulating big business, progressive taxation, protecting the environment, enacting civil rights legislation, creating safety net programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, to name just a few) that helped give rise to a state that encouraged a strong middle class. It was never perfect—far from it! Yet, over the years we made progress in becoming more inclusive, affirming, and accepting.

The progress that was made didn't just magically happen. Social and political struggles made significant institutional changes possible. And it was people just like us, according to Roman Krznaric, author of *History for Tomorrow*, engaged in the “disruptive power of solidarity,” who made the difference. You can bet that they also experienced profound discouragement and overwhelming sadness. But they did not give up in the face of extreme adversity. And neither can we.

It's vitally important that we show up as often as we are able at protest rallies because large turnout numbers help send a clear message to our community and to our elected leaders that we are paying attention and that we will push back against threats to our social, political, and environmental wellbeing. Every time we show up for a protest rally, call or write our representatives and senators, engage in honest conversations with our family, friends, neighbors, and in the broader community, we are making a difference.

As a people we do have power, if we claim and exercise it, to build towards the kind of world we want to live in. In the words of Howard Zinn, “The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now, as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.”



## Order Your Fall Festival Tickets Today!

Join CCDP for its third annual Fall Harvest Festival fundraiser at Phillips Orchards & Cider Mill's Orchard Market, 1995 East Gratiot County Line Road, St. Johns, on Saturday, September 20, from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. This will be a great opportunity to mix and

minge with Democratic elected officials, candidates, and community members, while enjoying delicious apple cider, donuts, and assorted snacks. A delicious treat and beverage are included with the cost of your ticket and hard cider will be available for purchase. [Get your tickets today](#) for what promises to be a wonderful event!



## Pick Up Yard Signs During August Office Hours

Show others what's important to you as a Democrat in Clinton County by placing one of our new signs in your yard! We have plenty available and are asking for a \$10 donation. You can pick up signs at office hours on August 16 and August 23 at CCDP headquarters, 105 W. Railroad Street, St. Johns, from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Let's get these great signs in yards across the county!



## Board of Canvassers Vacancy & Perspective from Current Member

*By Eunice Link.* Consider putting your name forward for consideration to be a member of the Board of

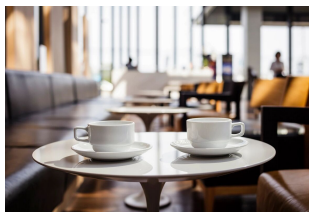
Canvassers! Endless months of election campaigns all culminate in getting the voters to the polls. Most everyone thinks that election day is the end of it, but to me and the other three Board of Canvassers members, this is where we begin. It takes us a week or more to validate our county's outcome for state and local elections. Local elections that involve just a few precincts may just take a few hours.

First of all, I offer a shout out to Clinton County's clerk, Deb Sutherland, and her wonderful staff. They are exactly the kind of public servants who you want to oversee our elections. I have witnessed firsthand how the security of our elections is facilitated by their knowledge, patience, and kindness; the specific election procedures and laws; and the redundant checking. I may not be happy with the results every time, but I know that every vote was accurately counted and validated.

In Clinton County, the Board of Canvassers consists of four people, two Democrats and two Republicans. The position is very much an auditing job. We have a manual with specific instructions for each step of the process, as well as clerk staff to answer questions and look up anything that isn't matching. Each voting precinct is opened one at a time. With each election, there are several options on how the voter chooses to cast their ballot: in person on election day, absentee, early voting, and overseas voting. Each of those ballot types may be managed with slightly different steps, but the end results are the same. There is record matching with poll books, tapes, signatures, and spreadsheets. It takes a bit of time to get in a rhythm to manage the process. Believe me when I say it takes all four of us to catch the errors. All of us, regardless of political affiliation,

want our part of the election process to be correct for certifying the election outcome.

On a personal note, I have enjoyed working with the Republican team. There have been a few turnovers in the past couple of years which means starting at the beginning and walking through the steps several times. I have learned new parts of the process because of their questions and listening to the clerk explain the information. Democrat or Republican - we find common ground, complete the task, and enjoy each other in the process. [Contact Kathie Elliott](#) by **August 22** if this important role speaks to you!



## Coffee & Conversation Returns September 16

Join us at the DeWitt Biggby, 13181 Schavey Road, at 1:00 p.m. for an opportunity to catch up with fellow local Democrats and share what is on your mind about current events and what we can do here in Clinton County to make a difference. The conversation is always lively and we hope to see you there!

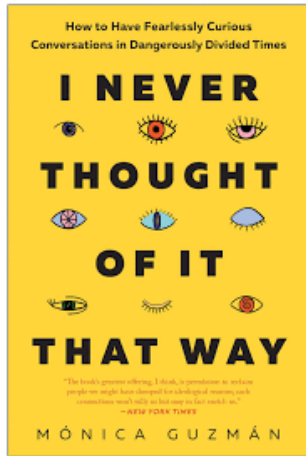


## Improving Our Environment One Trash Bag at a Time

*By Matthew Boak.* Thank you to all who made it out to our July trash cleanups! We had a great group of volunteers for each event, and we filled 30 bags between the both of them!

September is right around the corner and CCDP is already planning for its last trash cleanups of the season. Our carpool lot cleanup will take place on Sunday, September 21, at 10:00 a.m. We will meet at 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 Road, DeWitt. Our Adopt-A-Highway cleanup will take place on Sunday, September 28, at 8:30 a.m. We will meet at 7585 W. Grand River Highway, Watertown Township.

Safety vests and trash bags will be provided for both events. Participants are responsible for bringing gloves, water, etc. If you plan to attend, please help us keep track of our volunteers by [sending an RSVP](#).



## Join Our October Common Read Experience

We are excited to announce that CCDP's third Common Read will take place on October 15 at 7:00 p.m. our office, 105 W. Railroad Street, St. Johns. We will discuss *I Never Thought of It That Way: How to Have Fearlessly Curious Conversations in Dangerously Divided Times* by Monica Guzman.

Goodreads notes that Guzman, the liberal daughter of Mexican immigrants who voted for Donald Trump, examines how to bridge our current political divide

using curiosity. "Partisanship is up, trust is down, and our social media feeds make us sure we're right and everyone else is ignorant (or worse). But avoiding one another is hurting our relationships and our society. In this timely, personal guide, Guzman, the chief storyteller for the national cross-partisan depolarization organization Braver Angels, takes you to the real front lines of a crisis that threatens to grind America to a halt—broken conversations among confounded people."

Buy your copy today from your favorite local bookstore or independent online retailer and watch social media for RSVP information.



## CCDP Adopts Impartiality Resolution

*By Matthew Boak.* At CCDP's July meeting, our membership adopted "[A Resolution To Support Impartiality In the 2026 Democratic Primary Process](#)." This resolution states that we, as the Clinton County Democratic Party, agree to not endorse or promote any candidates for the 2026

primary elections; agree that all Democratic primary candidates will have the same opportunities to appear in front of our members and attend our events; agree to not entertain nor condone influences from outside entities, candidates, or elected officials in attempting to endorse, or make the appearance of endorsing, any candidate; and agree to accept whomever emerges from the primaries as winning Democratic candidates.

CCDP plans to utilize the guidelines established in this resolution as we move through the primary season and interact with Democratic candidates for primaries in all offices, local, statewide, and federal. It is sure to be a competitive primary season, and we are looking forward to it!





## From CCDP's Library...

We wanted to remind you of CCDP's growing library in our office. One recent addition is *How We Learn to Be Brave: Decisive Moments in Life and Faith* by

Mariann Edgar Budde who has served as Bishop of Washington since 2011 and whose name you may recognize from her inauguration prayer service for Donald Trump, at which she urged him to have mercy on vulnerable populations, including LGBTQ+ people and immigrants. In this easy and confidence-building read, we learn that each day presents us with opportunities to be courageous, and each opportunity builds on previous ones to prepare us for those big moments of courage that we face only occasionally. Bishop Budde explores a range of decisive moments: the decision to go, the decision to stay, the decision to start, the decision to accept that which we did not choose, and the decision to step up to the plate.

Browse all of our materials the next time you visit the CCDP office, and feel free to donate if you have a timely title you've finished that another might enjoy.



## Upcoming Events

**August 16: DeWitt Ox Roast Parade.** Stepping off at 10:00 a.m. [RSVP](#) to let us know if you plan to walk.

**September 4: CCDP Membership Meeting.** Clinton County Courthouse, 100 E. State Street, St. Johns.

Social time begins at 6:30 p.m. with the meeting beginning at 7:00 p.m.

**September 6: Ovid Carriage Days Parade.** Stepping off at 11:00 a.m. [RSVP](#) to let us know if you plan to walk.



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