

NEWS AND NOTES - April 2018

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The time of choosing has arrived for Democrats in Portage County and across Ohio. Polls are now open, and voters will decide between now and May 8th - a mere 15 days from now - what direction our state (and our Party) should go.

If you are still struggling to make up your mind on candidates or issues, I would recommend that you take advantage of one of the many tools available to you between now and Election Day to get educated. The Kent League of Women Voters produces an excellent guide called [Vote 4-1-1](#) tailored to each precinct in the County, and past versions of our newsletter contain profiles of candidates in contested races (available in our [archive](#)). Read, learn, and VOTE!

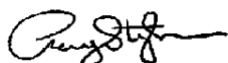
It is also only a few short weeks until our local Party chooses its membership for the next four years - and the process begins for selecting new leadership that will culminate with our reorganization meeting (details below and [here](#)). As you know, it is my intention to serve out my term - and just my term. I will not be a candidate for Chair going forward.

While there will be time for valedictory statements later, I want to take this opportunity to say it has been my sincere honor leading this Party for the past 16 years. We have much to be proud of - and much remains to do. I believe our Party is positioned to continue succeeding in Portage County for years to come, and intend to do my part to make sure that happens.

What follows are notes about upcoming opportunities to get involved locally - before May 8th and beyond. If there's anything else you think we should include here in the future, please don't hesitate to let us know by contacting County Treasurer Brad Cromes via [email](#).

Thank you, as always, for all you do.

Onward,



Craig Stephens, Chairman
Portage Co. Democratic Party

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

SHERROD BROWN CAMPAIGN: County Treasurer Brad Cromes, in his capacity as Regional Volunteer Coordinator for the Sherrod Brown campaign, is in the process of identifying leaders supporting Sherrod's bid for another term as our U.S. Senator in a number of different interest groups (i.e. Agricultural/Rural, Military Members & Families, Disability Community, Latinx, etc.). If you believe you or someone you know would be a good fit, please contact him [here](#).

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UPCOMING EVENTS

[Kline for Commissioner Campaign Kick-Off](#) - April 24, 2018 - 4:30 - 6:30pm - English Pub, 320 E. Main St., Ravenna, OH 44266

You're invited to join Commissioner Vicki Kline as she launches her campaign for another term serving Portage County! Reservations are \$35/person, \$60/couple, and event sponsorships are available at the \$100, \$250 and \$500 level. Please make checks payable to "Friends of Vicki Kline." Donations are

accepted from those who cannot attend, and should be mailed to Friends of Vicki Kline, 1368 Mockingbird Dr., Kent, OH 44240.

[Federated Women Bourbon & Dinner Pairing](#) - May 15, 2018 - 5:30pm - 8pm - Little City Grill, 802 N. Mantua St., Kent, OH 44240

The Federated Democratic Women of Portage County are hosting their first-ever Bourbon & Dinner Pairing Fundraiser at Little City Grill. Come enjoy some fantastic spirits, matched with delicious small plates prepared by the Little City kitchen. Tickets are \$45 per person, and are limited. Checks, payable to FDW, should be mailed to: Suzanne Coia, 3960 Summit Rd., Ravenna, OH 44266. Tickets must be purchased by May 8th. NO WALK-INS ACCEPTED. Questions? Contact Pat Nelson, patnelson330@gmail.com or 330-322-9417.

[Mary Jane Trapp for Judge Kick-Off](#) - May 16, 2018 - 4pm - 6pm - Tavern 1888, 106 E. Main St., Ravenna, OH 44266

Judge Mary Jane Trapp is seeking to return to her former seat on the 11th District Court of Appeals this year, and we want to start her off right in Portage County! This is a "Save The Date," so check the website and our Facebook [Page](#) for more information as it becomes available.

[Central Committee Reorganization Meeting](#) - June 6, 2018 - 6pm - 8pm - Elks Club, 776 N. Freedom St., Ravenna, OH 44266

The reorganization of the Portage County Democratic Party will take place on Wednesday, June 6, 2018 @ 6 pm at the Ravenna Elks Club located at 776 N Freedom St., Ravenna OH 44266. Pursuant to the Ohio Revised Code and our Party's Constitution at the reorganization meeting several objectives will be accomplished. First, duly elected candidates for precinct committee will receive the oath of office from the party's current Parliamentarian, Glenda Enders. Second, after receiving the oath of office the central committee people will then elect party officers for the period from 2018 to 2022. The officers to be elected are Chair, 1st Vice Chair, 2nd Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Parliamentarian.

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ELECTIONS UPDATES

BALLOTS POSTED: Curious what's on your ballot this May? The Board has now posted ballots online. [Take a look](#), do your homework, and be prepared when early voting starts!

ABSENTEE DEADLINE: In-person absentee voting (or "early voting") ends for the May 8, 2018 Primary Election at 2pm on Monday, May 7, 2018. Voters wishing to vote by mail must postmark their ballots no later than Monday, May 7, 2018 to ensure that they are counted. For a complete breakdown of the early voting process, visit the Board's [website](#).

ELECTION DAY: Polls will be open for voting in the Primary Election on Tuesday, May 8, 2018 from 6:30am - 7:30pm.

POLLING LOCATIONS: Not sure where you vote? [Find out!](#)

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GET TO KNOW YOUR CANDIDATES - Candidate for State Rep. Denise Baba

Traditionally in this section, we focus on profiles of our elected office holders. Given that our Primary Election for the 75th Ohio House District being vacated by Kathleen Clyde is contested by 3 talented local activists, we think giving you some information on each of them is a better use of this space for the time being.

This month, in our third and final installment of this series, we are profiling Denise Baba, a member of the Streetsboro Board of Education and recent past president of the Ohio School Boards Association.

We sat down with Denise to discuss her candidacy, and a lightly edited version of our conversation follows.

Thanks for taking the time to chat with us Denise. Can you give us a little background about yourself? Where did you grow up? Where did you go to school? What's something unique about you that sets you apart?

"I was born and raised in the Warren area where I attended Howland High School. In high school I was a member of the Speech and Debate team, sang in the choir, was active with the Pep Club and participated in Young Explorers and Junior Achievement. Following high school graduation I went to Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois near Chicago. At Northwestern I held an on campus job at the student union, was active with a student film group and pledged as a little sister to a fraternity while I obtained a Bachelor of Science degree. After returning to the Mahoning Valley I worked as an on-air TV news reporter for WYTV Channel 33 in Youngstown. While at WYTV I also anchored morning news updates and served as fill-in host for the station's local morning show. I left Channel 33 after five years to become Director of Communications for the Warren Area Chamber of Commerce.

Following the merger of the Youngstown, Warren and Niles Chambers of Commerce I became the Communications Director for the Youngstown-Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce. Later, I returned to school and received a Master of Education degree from Cleveland State University. I also hold a Certificate of Paralegal Studies from Kent State University. I enjoy learning new information and consider myself a 'lifelong' learner."

What are you most proud of having accomplished in your career to date?

"I am particularly proud of my service on the Streetsboro school board. During my time on the board I have seen many positive changes within the school district. The opening of our new high school was a particularly exciting time. Our students now have a facility that will contribute to the quality of their educational experience. Today's young people face challenges much different than those of years past. Changes in interpersonal communication influenced by social media, concerns over school safety and an uncertain workforce future due to increasing technological advances are having an impact. A good public education system is extremely important to prepare our young people for the challenges they will face. It has been a real privilege and a highlight of my personal experience to serve on my local board of education as we strive to meet the needs of the children in our district. In addition to serving my local school district, it was also an honor to serve as the 2017 President of the Ohio School Boards Association. In that position, I had the opportunity to travel around the state and gain a better understanding of issues impacting all of Ohio's 1.7 million public school students while advocating on their behalf."

What challenges facing our community are the most troubling to you?

"I'm very troubled by the opioid crisis facing our state and which is having an impact right here in Portage County. Lives are being lost, families are being harmed and our social service safety net is burdened. Greater emphasis must be placed on mental health and addiction treatment and recovery.

When an individual has an addiction the impact often touches many lives. For instance, as addiction rates have risen in Portage County a 'by-product' is an increase in the number of children being placed in foster care. As a community, we have a vested interest in reducing the rate of addiction.

While making Narcan more widely available to prevent overdose deaths is a positive step, more must be done to address the root cause of addiction."

What opportunities are you most excited about for Portage County and Ohio going forward?

"I'm looking forward to greater economic growth and development for Portage County and the state of Ohio. It's said that 50% of the U.S. population lives within a 500 mile radius of northeast Ohio. We here in Portage County can offer an excellent location for business, tremendous higher education facilities and an outstanding workforce. Great things are happening all around Portage County, from the new movie theater being developed in downtown Ravenna to plans for a new city hall in Kent and new business investment in Streetsboro. There is much to celebrate in Portage County, but there is still more work to be done. We need to protect and enhance our neighborhoods and communities,

look after our natural resources and continue to ensure that Portage County remains a wonderful place to live, work, and recreate."

Thanks again, Denise, and good luck!

For more on Denise's campaign, follow her on [Facebook](#), visit her [website](#), or send her an [email](#).

For past profiles, please see our Newsletter [Archive](#).

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ICYMI - NEWS AND NOTES

Advance Ohio - [Top 10 contested Ohio House Democratic Primaries to Watch in 2018](#) - March 20, 2018

"...Clites and Baba are the frontrunners to take over term-limited Rep. Kathleen Clyde's seat in southern Portage County. Clites entered the race more than a year ago - the Ravenna resident hasn't run for office before, though as an associate director with the Northern Ohio Hemophilia Foundation, she successfully lobbied the Ohio House to preserve funding for a children's medical assistance program. Baba, a former TV reporter, serves on the Streetsboro Board of Education and is ex-president of the Ohio School Boards Association. Freitas, who entered the race at the last minute, is the former president of a transgender advocacy group at Kent State University."

Lakewood Observer - [Say 'Yes' to State Issue 1, Fair Districts On May 8th](#) - March 21, 2018

"The bipartisan agreement which resulted will end the old, anything-goes potential for partisan gerrymandering. Starting after the 2020 census, new maps will require substantial support from minority-party legislators. Issue 1 includes additional positive reforms as well. It will add transparency to the process. It will sharply reduce the silly-string districts like our own, which extends all the way from Lakewood to Toledo. It will, ultimately, make government more accountable to voters."

Columbus Dispatch - [Hundreds of Moms Come to Statehouse to Demand Stricter Gun Laws](#) - March 21, 2018

"The advocates, volunteers from Moms Against Gun Violence, also attended a press conference with Democratic state Sens. Joe Schiavoni of Boardman and Sandra Williams of Cleveland to support their proposed 'red flag' legislation that would allow guns to be seized from a person who is deemed a risk to themselves or others."

Youngstown Vindicator - [Great Lakes Victory Shows Power of Bipartisanship](#) - March 26, 2018

"In one of the more notable victories of common sense over recklessness in the era of President Donald Trump, a large contingent of Democratic and Republican lawmakers joined forces to just say no to one of the chief executive's most misguided and foolhardy proposals of his tenure...The efforts of those and other legislators and supporters mean ongoing preservation and enhancement of one of our region's most precious and vital natural resources - the Great Lakes - will not be gravely endangered in the foreseeable future."

PRIZM News - [Meet the 12 LGBTQ Ohioans Running for Office in 2018](#) - March 26, 2018

"The first transgender Ohioan to seek elected office, Lis Kenneth Regula is running for auditor in Portage County. He's a biologist and University of Akron faculty member, a mentor at Kent State University's LGBTQ Center and chairman of the Kent Environmental Council. Regula says he would work to modernize county government processes and make it more efficient. His professional experience requires the same skills as a county auditor, he says."

Ohio Public Radio - [What Democratic Candidates for Gov Say They'll Do to Fight Opioid Crisis](#) - March 27, 2018

A breakdown of the positions of all the Democratic candidates for Governor regarding the opioid crisis in our state.

Record-Courier - [Commissioners Want to Create Catch-All Application Process](#) - March 27, 2018

"A month after they passed a resolution outlining the basic requirements for all boards and

commissions that the commissioners appoint to, the board discussed on Tuesday possible amendments to that resolution. On Feb. 15, the board quietly passed a resolution saying "the board intends to create a formal process to enable a careful and critical examination of individuals who apply to vacancies on the aforementioned (numerous) public boards in order to identify the most qualified candidate(s) to fill each board vacancy."

Advance Ohio - [AG Candidate Dettelbach Rolls Out Ethics Proposals, Attacks Dave Yost](#) - March 28, 2018

"Democratic Attorney General candidate Steve Dettelbach, in a full-throated attack on his Republican opponent Ohio Auditor Dave Yost, said Wednesday he wants tougher ethics regulations for statewide office holders. Dettelbach has been critical in recent months of Yost's response to allegations of misconduct at the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow, a troubled charter school that was found to owe the state millions of dollars before it closed this year."

WFMJ - [Ohio Gov Candidates Talk Trade During Interview](#) - April 6, 2018

A review of the positions of candidates for Governor on the issue of trade.

Record-Courier - [Commissioner Candidates Talk Budget, Administrator's Role](#) - April 7, 2018

"Staffing, budget issues and whether there's a need for a county administrator were hot-button issues at the table when voters and candidates running for county commissioner came face to face on Saturday in Kent. The Face2Face Forum was organized by the League of Women Voters of Kent."

Cincinnati Enquirer - [Amid FBI Investigation, House Speaker Rosenberger Resigns](#) - April 10, 2018

"Under investigation by the FBI for his lavish lifestyle, Ohio House Speaker Cliff Rosenberger resigned late Tuesday."

Record-Courier - [Portage Officials Challenge for Budget Increases](#) - April 10, 2018

"Several elected officials in Portage County are gearing up for a budgeting fight with the Portage County Board of Commissioners. And at least one board member is standing his ground against them."

Record-Courier - [New System Would Force Elected Officials To Stay Within Budgets](#) - April 18, 2018

"Portage County commissioners are considering creating a standardized pay scale. Doing so would allow commissioners, who control the budget process for all elected officials, to place fiscal responsibility on county department heads."

Youngstown Vindicator - [Sherrod Brown Sends Blistering Letter to GM Over Lordstown Layoffs](#) - April 18, 2018

"U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown sent a blistering letter to General Motors CEO Mary Barra this week demanding answers about the 1,500 Lordstown Assembly Complex layoffs coming in June. 'This decision will be devastating to the families and communities of the workers whose lives will be impacted, and it is particularly galling after your company received massive tax benefits from the recent enactment of the corporate tax cut bill,' wrote Brown, a Democrat of Cleveland. 'I urge you to reverse this decision and instead invest your tax windfall in the facility and workers in Lordstown.'"

Talking Points Memo - [Ohio 2018 Races to Decide Future of Voting Rights in Bellwether State](#) - April 19, 2018

"Kathleen Clyde, a progressive member of the State House now running for Secretary of State, told TPM she would 'stop the purging of hundreds of thousands of infrequent Ohio voters on day one.' 'I will work to shift the state's focus to turning those voters out and getting them excited about the process, not canceling their right to vote,' she said."

Ohio Public Radio - [Calls For Investigation Into Former House Speaker](#) - April 20, 2018

"...Democrats want the Legislative Inspector General and the Franklin County Prosecutor to conduct an independent investigation into Rosenberger's activities leading up to his resignation, especially looking into his relationship with lobbyists who were advocating for or against bills in the legislature."

Record-Courier (Editorial) - [Portage Budget Woes May Harm Sales Tax Chances](#) - April 22, 2018

"The surprising news that Portage County Sheriff David Doak may spend at least \$310,000 more than

allocated in his 2018 budget added more fuel to the county's growing budget debate last week. That's a bit unusual for April, long after Portage County commissioners settled on a spending plan for the year...Regardless, it's time for all county leaders to get on the same page."

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For more news and notes on the activities of Democrats from around Ohio, subscribe to the Ohio Democratic Party Daily Update [here](#).

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