

THE NEXT CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2024



A Democratic Party Newsletter Made for and by
Gratiot County Members
Chief Editors, Nancy O'Brien & Lisa Gregory



Chair Chat

By Christie Freestone

"Go within every day and find the inner strength so that the world will not blow your candle out."

Katherine Dunham, Social Activist

After a tough election cycle and disappointing losses for Democrats from local to national levels, it's easy to feel disheartened. Many of us, myself included, took the time to grieve these setbacks, acknowledging the emotional weight of the moment. But as we know, grief alone doesn't bring change. We've also committed ourselves to the hard work of reorganization, reflection, and refocusing our efforts. Thanks to the many folks who have shared their thoughts and concerns. We've come to realize that the challenges we face don't define us—they only fuel our determination to keep moving forward.

A key moment that lifted my spirits was seeing Democrats lead the way in Congress to avoid a government shutdown this year. Despite constant partisan divisions, Democrats in Congress prioritized the needs of the American people, coming together with solutions to keep vital services running and protect the most vulnerable. This stand showed our commitment to the values that matter: protecting the future of our children, securing affordable healthcare, and fighting for working families. When so much of the political landscape seems designed to divide us, it was a reminder that we are capable of working toward common good, even in the most challenging times.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the way that figures like Donald Trump continue to deceive voters with false promises. Trump campaigned on lies, promising working-class Americans that he would "drain the swamp," only to fill his cabinet with billionaires and special interest groups. Now, he's reversing many of those promises, leaving those who trusted him with little but disappointment. Meanwhile, the policies pushed by Trump's allies, including figures like Elon Musk, continue to disproportionately benefit the wealthiest among us while hurting the middle class—the very voters who put Trump in office. This is a harsh reality, but it also presents an opportunity for us to educate and empower local voters who have, at times, voted against their own interests.

As Democrats in Gratiot County, we have a critical role to play in educating our neighbors, friends, and family members about the real-world consequences of these policies. Many of our community members voted for Trump out of frustration or a sense that they weren't being heard. It's our responsibility to show them that the Democratic Party is committed to their needs—whether it's through fighting for fair wages, better healthcare, or policies that help farmers and local businesses thrive. Our strength comes from unity and listening to the concerns of our community, and it's through these efforts that we can help shift the conversation back to what truly matters: ensuring that everyone has a fair shot at success.

Looking forward, we're committed to action. In the coming months, we will focus on grassroots efforts to engage with local voters, providing clear information on the issues that directly impact them, and building a coalition that reflects our community's diverse needs. The road ahead won't always be easy, but we stand strong in our belief that together, we can make a difference. We will continue to lead with compassion, integrity, and an unwavering dedication to the well-being of all. Let's rebuild, reorganize, and move forward with the hope and strength that has always defined our party. Together, we will create the change that our community deserves.


Thank You Candidates!

We would like to express our greatest appreciation to our candidates for all of their time, hard work, and effort in running for office in our county. We recognize that running as a Democratic candidate in such a Red county is a formidable task, but these candidates were willing to accept that challenge.

Thank you for all of your efforts!



Michael Lynch
U.S. Congressional
Candidate - MI District 2



TIM
ODYKIRK
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
★★★ 92nd District ★★★
FORWARD **TOGETHER**



Kevin Taylor
Gratiot County
Commission
District 2

Sarah Foltz
Gratiot County Commission
District 4



ELECTION NIGHT



Gratiot County Democrats and friends came together on election night to support our candidates as the results came in. While the outcome wasn't what we had hoped, we will continue to work for our cause.

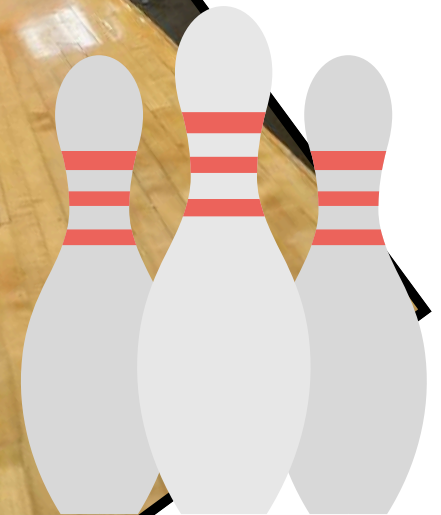
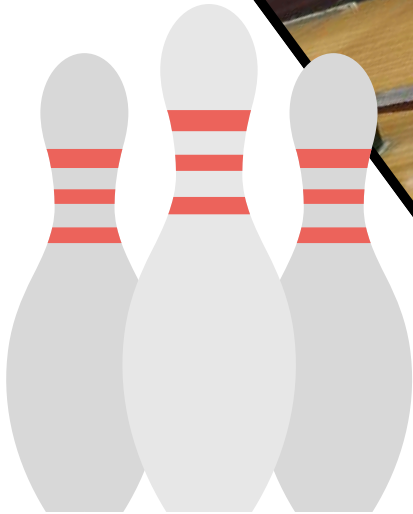
*The work goes on, the cause endures,
the hope still lives and
the dreams shall never die.*

-Edward Kennedy

SURVEY RESULTS

Thanks to everyone who took the time to fill out our online survey. The results will help to direct our activism and activities in 2025. Stay tuned for more information.

FAMILY BOWLING AT PINS



Gratiot Dems gathered at PINS on November 23 for much-needed fun and fellowship. There were snacks, games, prizes, food and, of course, bowling.

KEEP UP THE FIGHT



Our work continues! Gratiot Dem energy stays strong. Let's keep making a difference together!

The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. -Barack Obama

Office Volunteers Needed

We are still seeking volunteers to staff our office Wednesdays from 4-6 and Saturdays from 10-12. Even committing to one shift per month will be a great help. In the difficult times ahead, we want to be available.

Sign up using the link, or contact us at 989-285-1212.

[CLICK HERE TO
SIGN UP TO
VOLUNTEER AS
AN OFFICE
WORKER](#)

The Next Chapter: A Book Club

By Nancy O'Brien

What the Eyes Don't See 4.7/5 By Mona Hanna-Attisha

The Next Chapter Book Club met on October 5 to discuss this nonfiction book about the Flint water crisis. It was authored by the Flint pediatrician who blew the whistle on the effects of the changeover of water sources that resulted in elevated lead levels in Flint residents, particularly infants and children.

It begins with her childhood and close family ties to Iraq, and her drive to make her grandfather and parents proud by doing the right thing. When she noticed the blood levels of her youngest patients were rising and heard whispers about the water, she became determined, as a doctor and scientist, to find out what was happening. As a result, Dr. Mona spent countless hours running tests, comparing results, seeing patients, battling red tape and politicians, and missing family moments. She is the definition of a social justice hero to many and an example of a wonderful role model who happens to be an immigrant.

If you wondered about the Flint water crisis—what exactly happened and why—this is an excellent read explaining the many facets of the issue and why it's not the only city to have gone through this public health disaster. Our club gave it 4.7 out of 5 stars.

The Women 4.9/5 By: Kristin Hannah

The club met on November 2 to discuss this historical fiction novel. It is the story of one woman and her decision to use her nursing skills in VietNam during the war. This was a book that hit home personally for me as my father was deployed 3 times to Southeast Asia as a USAF pilot during these years. It touched many members of the book club as they also had brothers, or other relatives who served, or had relatives who were nurses and heard stories of how difficult it can be even during peacetime.

This is a powerful book about the VietNam war (and in fact, any war), trauma, grit, misogyny, resilience, and family stories we have heard forever that may or may not be factual. It reinforces the idea that family isn't always those we are tied to by blood, and the value of representation on every level. This is a book that will stick with me for a long time.

Our book club had a moving discussion about the book and rated it 4.9 out of 5 stars.

Ghosted 3.9/5 By: Nancy French

On December 7 we met to discuss two novels. We were feeling ambitious! The first novel was a biographical story told by author Nancy French who has made a career out of ghostwriting for conservative political contributors – books, speeches, articles, etc. It details her childhood in the Appalachian foothills with violence, abuse, poverty, and evangelical church attendance. She wants a different life, attends college, marries quickly, and moves to New York. Nancy finds success as a ghostwriter and everything falls into place – conservative politics, evangelical church membership, and parenthood. Then Donald Trump comes on the political scene, and she cannot condone him as a candidate. That leads to a loss of work, colleagues, church friends, and neighbors.

This was an interesting read. Our book club was divided on our opinions of the novel. We gave it 3.9 out of 5 stars.

The Next Chapter: A Book Club, continued

By Nancy O'Brien

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever

By Barbara Robinson

The second book we discussed on December 7 was this young adult novel. A few of our members are former teachers and had read the book years ago to classes and wanted to read a "feel good" Christmas themed story. It also happened to be a new movie in theaters and a play by the Gratiot County Players in December.

It's the story of a small church that is putting on the yearly Christmas pageant with a twist. This year the Herdmans, the worst kids in the history of the world, would be participating. They decided to attend church for the rumored food available, and stayed to star in the play about the birth of Jesus. This is a touching story that uses humor and the narrative voice of the 12 year old daughter of the newly appointed pageant director.

This book illustrates the adage that "Some children need love the most when they deserve it the least". Our book club rated it 4 out of 5 stars.

2025 BOOK CLUB CHOICES

JANUARY 4

Sing for the Lonesome Messenger

David Edward Edwards

FEBRUARY 1

Frozen River

Ariel Lawhon

MARCH 1

The Blue Hour

Paula Hawkins

APRIL 5

By Any Other Name

Jodi Picoult

MAY 3

Becoming Madam Secretary

Stephanie Dray

JUNE 7

Look for the Lie

Amy Tintera

JULY 12

The Briar Club

Kate Quinn

AUGUST 2

Wrong Place Wrong Time

Gillian McAllister

SEPTEMBER 6

The Woman with the Cure

Lynn Cullen

OCTOBER 4

The Giver of Stars

Jojo Moyes

NOVEMBER 1

The Ballerina of Auschwitz

Edith Eger

DECEMBER 6

Christmas Bells

Jennifer Chiaverini

*You're
Invited!*



Have coffee with us!



Coffee with the Dems

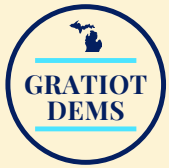
Join us the first Tuesday of each month

January 7 | February 4 | March 4

9AM

Ballyhoo Books | Alma





GRATIOT COUNTY DEMOCRATS EVENTS AND INFORMATION

EVENTS

- **January 4** - The Next Chapter Book Club
10 a.m. - Gratiot Dems office | *Sing for the Lonesome Messenger*
by David Edward Edwards
- **January 7** - Coffee with the Dems
9 a.m. - Ballyhoo Books and Brew | Alma
- **January 20** - GCDP General Membership
7 p.m. - Gratiot Dems office

- **February 1** - The Next Chapter Book Club
10 a.m. - Gratiot Dems office | *Frozen River*
by Ariel Lawhon
- **February 4** - Coffee with the Dems
9 a.m. - Ballyhoo Books and Brew | Alma
- **February 17** - GCDP General Membership
7 p.m. - Gratiot Dems office



[CLICK HERE OR
SCAN THE CODE
TO VISIT OUR
CALENDAR!](#)



FOLLOW, SHARE, AND LIKE US
ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA
NETWORKS



[CLICK HERE OR
SCAN THE CODE
TO VISIT OUR
WEBSITE](#)



OFFICE HOURS:
Monday-Friday | 12 p.m.-6 p.m.
Saturdays | 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Gratiot County Democratic Office
1686 Wright Ave.
P.O. Box 154
Alma, MI

CONTACT: 989-285-1212
gratiotdems@gmail.com
gratiotdems.net