

COMMUNITY FORUM

Facing truth

As we all watch, with horror, the chaos in Springfield caused by Trump's stories, as we wonder how so many people can believe them, it's important that we keep in mind that the process happening here is a human one, and one that we all share on some level.

If we take this down from a political level to an individual one, we'll find that we all have a complicated relationship with truth. Truth is a tricky subject because it scares us. Because we see it, but since it often goes against the way we want our world to be, we reject it in favor of our illusions. We all do this at some level. If you've read Althusser, you'll have seen that he lays it out in terms of ideologies. We are born into ideologies, we adopt more on the way, and whether we like it or not, they become a part of our identity, of who we are, and we cannot exist without them.

But we can know them for what they are if we have the courage to look.

We have all been gaslighted at some time or another. Someone gets angry with what we are saying and tells us we're crazy, or insinuates that there is something wrong with us. But this, in itself, is transparent. Think about how we tend to react to a person we know has psychiatric issues: we don't get angry and shout at them; generally we treat them gently and with compassion. So if someone is trying to convince you that you are crazy and they are angry and yelling at you, then keep in mind that what they are really saying is that you are exposing a truth that they have been working very hard to keep covered up. They may have done such a good job that they have managed to keep it hidden even from themselves — which is the whole point. When we speak something someone else doesn't want to hear, it makes them hear it, it makes them see it, and that often brings up grief. Anger is a form of grief. If they can convince you that you are crazy, then they don't have to face that grief. They can keep it covered up.

Trump knows this very well — hence all the name-calling and belittling of anyone he

wants to discredit. These are the people he feels threatened by. These are the people who can expose his illusions and threaten the entitlement he has crafted for himself. And that's why people follow him. He is attracting those who feel threatened, those who feel their entitlement slipping. The patriarchy. The white nationalists. But mainly the patriarchy. Because the least political man who is feeling his power slipping at home is going to vote for someone who understands that. And yes, that is still a good portion of our society.

Times are changing, certainly, but slowly. We often accept generational ideologies as Truth, as The Way Things Are, instead of recognizing that these "truths" have been propagated over time by those who found a way to seize power and wanted to keep it. Ideologies are purposefully created to benefit one group over another. Over time, they become part of our culture and accepted as truth. Raymonde Carroll wrote a wonderful book on this, called "Evidences Invisibles." She compares French and American culture and the ideologies each takes as "givens" of the human experience, but which, in fact, are cultural constructs.

Truth and authenticity are not the same thing.

Truth can be fabricated. Truth can be manipulated. Authenticity cannot. Authenticity is the willingness to look beyond ideologies, beyond dissimulation, beyond expectations, to accept what is real, right here, right now.

There is a we/they, although I see it more as a spectrum than an actual divide. There are no monsters. We are all fragile beings. We are all afraid. Some people face that fear and others run from it or camouflage it with entitlement. And those who run from it or camouflage it do atrocious things to keep it hidden.

Both on individual and political levels, we need to remain authentic and to allow no space for what is not.

—Brenda Bertrand

Vote 'Yes' on Issue 1

Passage of statewide Issue 1 in the forthcoming election is a vote for American democracy — the way it was intended to be. To quote Abraham Lincoln, it is "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

Issue 1 is a proposal to change how legislative and congressional districts in our state are determined. If passed by a majority "yes" vote, Issue 1 will create a Citizens Redistricting Commission to draw districts that reflect the diverse communities in Ohio and the people who live in them. In a 1776 essay entitled "Thoughts on Government," John Adams pondered how a legislature should operate and how the representatives who enact laws should be chosen. Adams wrote, "As good government is an empire of laws, how shall your laws be made? ... By what rules shall you chuse [sic] your Representatives? ... The greatest care should be employed in constituting this Representative Assembly. It should be in miniature, an exact portrait of the people at large. It should think, feel, reason, and act like them."

Passage of Issue 1 will ban the practice of gerrymandering, where voting districts for legislative representatives are manipulated to favor one political party, politician or class of people. The legislative branches at the state and national levels of our American democracy were intended to reflect the will of the people and to enact laws that benefit the people — as in "We the People!"

You may already know that the Ohio Ballot Board and Secretary of State Frank LaRose issued a summary of Issue 1 that is blatantly deceptive. The campaign for passage of Issue 1, which is also known as Citizens Not Politicians, or CNP is a coalition of people and organizations that seek to end gerrymandering in Ohio by removing politicians from the redistricting process. CNP contested the ballot summary, but the Ohio Supreme Court's decision on the matter only ordered the redrafting of two statements in the 10-point summary. Therefore, the description of Issue 1 on the ballot will remain confusing,

misleading and deceitful. Even so, the ballot summary does not change the language or intent of the proposed amendment to create a Citizens Redistricting Commission. If you want to end the practice of gerrymandering in Ohio, if you want fair voting districts for the election of representatives in our state and federal legislatures, vote "yes" on Issue 1.

One final point: Our American democracy depends on an independent judicial branch of government that follows the law and does not act like politicians in robes. In Ohio, voters elect judges, so it's our job to be informed. The Ohio Supreme Court ruling that has allowed the ballot summary of Issue 1 to contain prejudicial statements, which are intended to sway voters into rejecting the proposal, was issued by a 4-3 ruling. Justices Kennedy, Fisher, DeWine and Deters were in the majority. Justices Donnelly and Brunner wrote dissenting opinions, with Justice Stewart joining them. In their dissents, Justice Donnelly said the majority opinion took terms such as "gerrymandering" and "partisan political outcomes," and detached them from the context of the proposed amendment, thereby producing "ballot language that is clearly contrary to both the letter and the spirit of the proposed amendment." Justice Brunner opined that saying the amendment would "require gerrymandering" is "misleading, deceitful, and a fraud upon the voters." She also said the Ballot Board needs to rewrite "what is the most stunningly stilted ballot language that Ohio voters will have ever seen." In the coming November election, there are three races for open seats on the Ohio Supreme Court. When you do your research on the candidates for political offices, don't forget to know who is vying for spots on the highest court in our state.

And one more point: Vote "yes" on Issue 1. Spread the message. Get politicians out of the redistricting process and return that power to the people.

—Rebecca Mark

Voting Blue is critical

I was very disappointed to read Reilly Dixon's recent column about the election for several reasons, especially his referring to Kamala Harris as "the lesser of two evils," his main reason being that she doesn't have an instant solution to the chaotically complex conflict between Israel and Arabs that has been going on for literally three quarters of a century. Because Reilly believes that she is not an absolutely perfect match to leftist/liberal values/goals, he is encouraging people to waste their vote on an unelectable candidate; this strategy hurts vulnerable groups of people, and I am deeply saddened that Reilly does not understand this. We liberals are not a majority; we must listen to moderates' needs and opinions if we want to win an election.

Choosing who to vote for is not like choosing one's spouse/mate; the candidate does not need to perfectly match one's values and goals. Rather, choosing who to vote for is like choosing a public transportation bus: You choose the one going in the general direction that you desire to travel. Later, you'll transfer to another bus going even closer and eventually, in time, you'll end up at your chosen destination. Voting for a third-party candidate who has zero chance of gaining even 1% of the vote is like getting on a bus that has no engine and no driver; it's going nowhere. Meanwhile, history has proven that your wasted vote helps the bus/candidate that's headed in the opposite direction from your ethics and goals.

Those voters who insisted in 2016 that Hillary Clinton and Trump were basically the same and who either didn't vote or voted third party are the reason that we lost our protection of Roe v. Wade and why we now have a SCOTUS more loyal to Trump and the pope than they are to our citizens and Constitution. Ms. Clinton won the popular vote, and if only a few handfuls of third-party voters in a couple of swing states had voted for her, we would now be blessed with the most progressive SCOTUS in the history of our nation. These third-party voters are the reason thousands of Brown toddlers were separated at the border from their families for months or even years; they're the reason that Trump was able to sign the largest tax break for billionaires, widening our wealth/income gap even further; they're the reason — well, you get the picture. The list goes on and on, and it's obvious to anyone paying attention which side is actually "evil."

Kamala Harris has specific plans to help financially struggling people; to make healthcare more affordable; to help balance unequal rights for POC, immigrants, LGBTQ and women. Trump plans to deport millions of immigrants, sign a national abortion ban, privatize Medicare/SS and widen our wealth/income gap even further. If you truly care about vulnerable groups of people, I urge you to ignore Reilly's narrowly focused advice; instead please vote Blue in this truly critical election.

—Pan Reich

PATTERDALE HALL DIARIES | BY CHRIS WYATT



Wyatt's predilection

JULY 25, 2024

We need to make some repairs to the back of the Hall — well, all of the Hall really — but the back is the most rotten.

Sam, our chimney guy, will do the work, but I just have to wait to see how much it will cost because I really don't have savings. I do want to go back to the UK at some point. Ideally, we need two new windows and then barn siding to protect what is left of the structure. I will guesstimate a price and then double it, and if that's what it is then that is what it is. The side of the house will need to wait until next year. The barn siding should protect the house enough to get me to retirement.

Karen was chatting to Sam about the Hall and he said that the two millstones by the front door were the smallest that he has ever seen. Later Karen was reading about small corn mills in one of the Foxfire books. The dimensions of the mill were the same as the dimensions of Patterdale Hall and so it may well be that it was originally a corn mill, which makes sense given what is farmed 'round these parts.

Red barn siding has been decided on. I would prefer black.

AUG. 10, 2024

Crop explosion! It's a good thing I like delicate squash because the plants are enormous and covered in fruit.

Interestingly, I seem to have two different types of delicate; most are the traditional zucchini shape, but others are more globe shaped and the coloring is the same.

I'm fairly certain they will taste the same and we will find out in a couple of weeks. I've been using Fox Farm fertilizers, and also a fish-based fertilizer, and the combination has done amazing things to Jim's soil — which was already superb. I can highly recommend Fox Farm products; they are a company founded in Humboldt County in the mid-1980s, and their products have about the most colorful, happy labels. I'll probably get a soil supplement from them to help the vegetable beds recover over winter. For now, though, I'm switching to bat guano and worm castings, which should make everything good and delicious.

Today will be the beginning of the annual stick and tinder gathering. We probably have enough wood to get us through a mild winter, but I have not collected any tinder for starting fires. Karen has been cutting back honeysuckle and clearing paths and herb gardens with the side effect of piling up twigs and branches.

I'll take the loppers to everything, and we'll soon have enough stuff to start a good number of fires. It's Aug. 10 and I'm already thinking about winter; my squash aren't even ripe yet. Perhaps I'll lay out the sequence of fertilizers that I have used so I don't forget — another useful aspect of the diary. The soil was enriched with well-rotted cow manure over winter and covered with cardboard. When the plants were in the ground they received a high nitrogen organic fish-based fertilizer, then once flowering began, I switched to a high phosphorus fertilizer, and now that we have robust flowering, I have moved to bat guano and worm castings, which are high in phosphorus and potassium.

It is working well, and if the crops are robust at the end of the growing season, then I'll stick with this approach.

AUG. 15, 2024

An exciting day today: Yellow Springs Brewery is making the English pale ale "Wyatt's Eviction," and so I shall show up to empty the mash tun and generally get in the way.

Wyatt's Eviction is based on the recipe for Timothy Taylor's Landlord, which is my favorite British beer. Landlord is made from Golden Promise malt and Styrian Goldings hops; Eviction is made from Golden Promise malt, Styrian Goldings (Celeia) and East Kent Goldings hops.

I'm keen to find out what yeast will be used and what the starting and finishing gravities will be. Landlord is 4.2% alcohol by volume, and I suspect Eviction will be closer to 5%. It is very wonderful to have a beer named after you, and I'm really happy that after 11 and a half years, Yellow Springs Brewery is still brewing it. It really is a very simple, clean-tasting and refreshing beer.

But why exactly do I have a beer named after me? Well, many years ago I was driving to judge beer at Bockfest in Cincinnati with Jeffrey, the original head brewer at YSB. At that point he was just a very successful homebrewer. On the way, I mentioned that if he ever became a professional brewer, he should make a clone of Timothy Taylor's Landlord as it was a very simple beer to make, was delicious and had won more medals in competitions than any other British beer. About a year later Jeffrey became the brewer at YSB and Wyatt's Eviction was on tap the day they opened their doors.

Why "Eviction?" Well, landlords evict, simple as that. The beer should be on tap again in mid-September.

AUG. 16, 2024

People are trespassing on the property again.

Random pickup trucks driving up to the house while Karen is there alone. I have put the chain back up and locked it, though it won't stop anyone who really wants to get out there. Our neighbor has described folk out in the country as "brazen;" she routinely has folk parking on her property and wandering through their yard and woods looking for mushrooms.

I wonder if police realize that these simple country folk are actually armed to the teeth. Trespass seems a dangerous game out here.

*Originally from Manchester, England, Chris Wyatt is an associate professor of neuroscience, cell biology and physiology at Wright State University. He has lived in Yellow Springs for 17 years, is married and has two children and an insane Patterdale terrier.

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DOWN TO EARTH

AN ENVIRONMENTAL POINT OF VIEW



Celebrate Public Lands Day

By Bethany Gray

National Public Lands Day is celebrated annually at public lands in the U.S. on the fourth Saturday of September. It promotes both enjoyment and conservation of public lands, and the fees to federally managed lands are waived. Three federal agencies and 700 volunteers launched the first National Public Lands Day in 1994 and for the past 30 years, it has also become a day of volunteer service.

Two of our local public lands, the Village-owned Ellis Park/Kennedy Arboretum and State-owned Clifton Gorge Preserve and Nature Center, became certified habitats with the National Wildlife Federation, or NWF, this year, contributing "points" toward our community's annual recertification process with the NWF.

Ellis Park has benefited over the years from volunteers of the Tree Committee, who work with the Village and provide "boots on the ground." They have not only planted trees but also assisted in their maintenance, including protecting them from deer and beavers. In recent years, they have enhanced the northern corridor of the park referred to as the "bird sanctuary" with more native shrubs to sustain pollinators and birds.

Currently, the Tree Committee is working on an accreditation process for the Arboretum. The Environmental Commission and Habitat Team have been working on establishing a native pollinator prairie north of the pond, creating a riparian area to help filter runoff. Native plants have much longer root systems than turf grass to filter and slow/absorb runoff. With the help of volunteers, dozens of bluebirds have fledged from the nest boxes at Ellis Park since 2018,

as well as tree swallows — aerial insectivores that provide natural mosquito control wherever they choose to nest. Dogs are often unleashed at this park — there is a sign posted in the parking lot that dogs must be leashed here, which wildlife also appreciate. (Dogs can be unleashed at the YS Dog Park).

Clifton Gorge is among the most visited state nature preserves in Ohio. The 268-acre preserve protects "one of the most spectacular dolomite and limestone gorges in the state," according to the ODNR website. Registered as a National Natural Landmark in 1968, it encompasses a two-mile stretch of the Little Miami, a state and national designated Scenic River. The shaded slopes provide a cool, moist environment for northern species, including hemlock, red baneberry, Canada yew, arbor vitae and mountain maple. Spring wildflowers abound each year here, including the rare snow trillium.

Volunteers from the Ohio Natural Areas and Preserves Association help remove invasive plants from the scientific portion of the Gorge that is not open to the public. A native plant garden borders the building that serves as the district headquarters and nature center. While leashed dogs are permitted at the adjacent John Bryan State Park and at Glen Helen, they are prohibited at Clifton Gorge and all state-owned nature preserves.

The Habitat team is organizing a volunteer opportunity on National Public Lands Day, Saturday, Sept. 28, 9–11 a.m. We will be weeding out unwanted species from the Ellis Pond Prairie. Bring gloves and the tool you favor for weeding. Email catherinezimmerman@yahoo.com with questions.

For more information about habitat property certification or other educational resources, visit yswildlifehabitat.com.

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