



BASTROP COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY NEWSLETTER

A Monthly Publication Dedicated to Moving Bastrop County Forward

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UPCOMING EVENTS

March 12
Stonewall Democrats meeting
The 602 on Main
919 Main St., Bastrop, 7pm

March 13
BCDP women's luncheon
El Nuevo
201 Childers Dr., Bastrop, 1pm

March 14
BCDP monthly meeting
Kerr Community Center
1308 Walnut St., Bastrop, 7pm

March 30
Scholarship applications due to HS counselors. See p. 6

April 6
Scholarship fundraiser in Smithville. See p. 6

April 9
Stonewall Democrats meeting
The 602 on Main
919 Main St., Bastrop, 7pm

April 10
BCDP women's luncheon
Cedar's Mediterranean
904 College St., Bastrop, 1pm

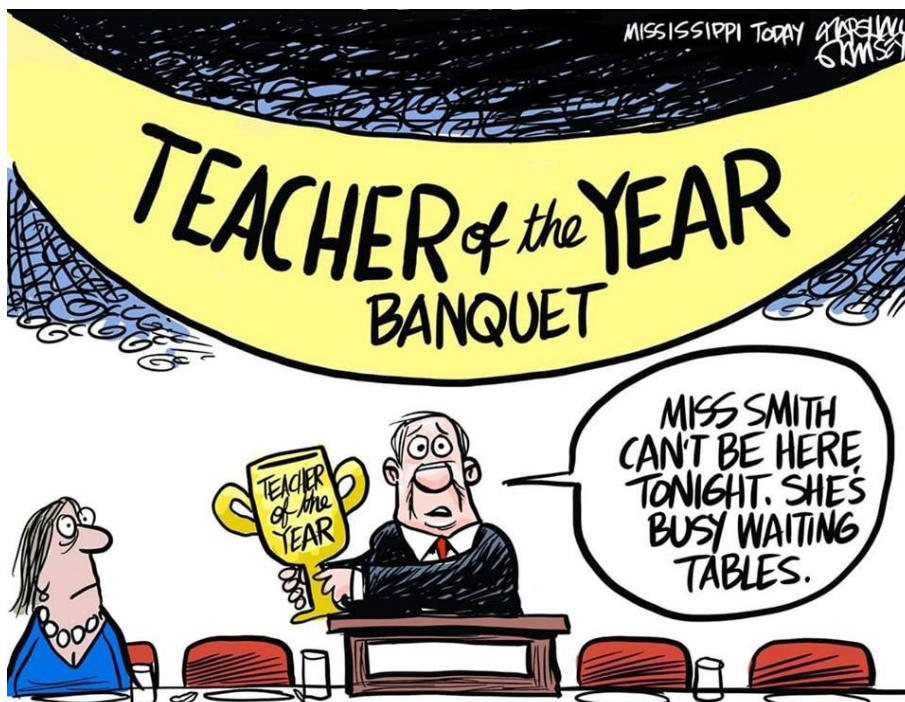
April 11
BCDP monthly meeting
Kerr Community Center
1308 Walnut St., Bastrop, 7pm

May 4
City council/school board elections,
7am-7pm

May 8
BCDP women's luncheon
The Roadhouse in Paige, 1pm

May 9
BCDP monthly meeting
Kerr Community Center
1308 Walnut St., Bastrop, 7m

May 14
Stonewall Democrats meeting
The 602 on Main
919 Main St., Bastrop, 7pm



Sometimes you have to take a stand

By Bill McCann

When you have the opportunity to take a stand for something you firmly believe in, you gotta go for it. Steve Chamberlain, BCDP vice chair, recently went for it twice in four days.

At a state Senate committee hearing on Thursday, Feb. 7, Chamberlain testified in opposition to the confirmation of David Whitley as Texas secretary of state. Four days later he and his wife Sharon drove more than 600 miles to El Paso to take part in a counter rally against President Trump and his unwanted border wall.

Whitley confirmation hearing



Like many Texans, Chamberlain was upset when Whitley, who was appointed secretary of state in December, issued a press release alleging that 95,000 persons identified as non-U.S. citizens have a matching voter registration record in Texas, and about 58,000 of them have voted.

“It was no doubt voter intimidation and he (Whitley) did not belong in that job,” Chamberlain said. “I thought I needed to do my part and raise hell.”

When he learned that the Senate Committee on Nominations had set a hearing on Whitley’s confirmation, the first thing Chamberlain did was call the offices of all seven senators on the committee to register his opposition. The second thing he did was go to the hearing and sign up to testify. He was one of about 25 persons to testify following a grilling of Whitley by Sen. Kirk Watson (D-Austin) and others. Most of the speakers opposed Whitley’s confirmation.

Using his experience as a volunteer voter deputy registrar, Chamberlain testified that naturalized citizens were often wary of the voting process and could be intimidated into not voting. He echoed other statements that Whitley’s actions were either gross negligence or an attempt to suppress minority votes. Either way, Whitley didn’t deserve the job, he said.

“I tried to make it about my personal experience,” Chamberlain said, adding that he had learned about using personal stories at recent legislative advocacy training he had completed.

The biggest difficulty, he said, was trying to squeeze what he had to say into the two minutes he was allotted to speak. His advice to anyone planning to testify in the future: make sure you know your subject, and stick to what’s most important.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

El Paso anti-Trump rally

Chamberlain barely had time to catch his breath when he learned there would be a citizens rally, starring Beto O'Rourke, in El Paso to counter Trump's campaign and border-wall rally there. Being retired, he and Sharon were able to get ready and head out on short notice.

"Like many people, we're sick and tired of Trump and all the hatred," Chamberlain said. "It was a long way, but we thought it was important to go."

They left at 5 a.m., Monday, Feb. 11, for the 10-hour drive to the rally that evening. The previous day they made signs for the mile-and-a-half march that would take them to within a quarter-mile of Trump's rally not far from the U.S.-Mexico border. There was a large police presence in the area, but no trouble that Chamberlain saw, other than occasional shouting and middle-finger pointing from some Trump followers nearby.



After the march, O'Rourke gave a fantastic speech that excited the thousands of people who attended, he said.

"The people were fired up against Trump and the wall," Chamberlain said. "It was good to be among like-minded people who were standing up to fight injustice."



Amy Fariss for Bastrop ISD School Board

"Good reading and critical thinking skills are the cornerstones of a successful education. Shared fate in education can make our community more prosperous or disadvantaged. The role of the school board is to holistically support kids, teachers, and parents so that the educational experiences of our children produce socially and emotionally intelligent young people." —Amy Fariss

Amy Fariss and family moved to Bastrop County in 2010 so that her spouse could expand as an artist and Amy could be closer to the land. In 2016, after two years as foster parents, they were able to adopt their now-9-year-old daughter. In order to reduce the gap of their daughter's developmental delays, their daughter has attended private, charter, and public schools. She will again attend their neighborhood BISD school in fall 2019.

Amy completed a Bachelor of Arts in criminal justice from St. Edward's University in 1992. She worked for Travis County's Pretrial Services, the SHORT Program (the Drug Diversion Court under the District Attorney's office) and assisted in the data analysis, research, and writing of public and private grant submissions.

In 1999, Amy completed a masters of interdisciplinary studies in the school of Occupational Education at Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University). She worked in management and training for several Central Texas businesses in the landscape and horticultural products world. In February 2019, Amy completed 11 years with corporate Whole Foods Market. She worked as a senior analyst in compliance and quality standards to enhance food safety, farming sustainability, and social welfare.



Creating net positives in education

When our kids succeed, we all succeed. Professionally and as a parent, Amy has witnessed how unmet needs impact a child's ability to learn. She's seen how personal challenges, the continuous need for classroom resources, and a difficult-to-navigate special education system have had negative impacts on kids, teachers, schools, school districts and communities. Amy is committed to enhancing the learning experiences for all, but especially for those who are struggling. Amy will seek transparent accountability to state and federal regulations and to the innovation that could help all kids succeed at BISD.

Let's not blow this

Commentary by Shirlie Ashworth Sweet

I read an article a few days ago, I think by Nate Silver. It showed that Trump's base wasn't big enough now to get him re-elected. Let me repeat that: He CAN'T win on his base alone.

The only way he can win is if the Democrats enter 2020 in disarray, and he knows it. Hence, this post. It's only March, and he's already playing divide and conquer.

I'm going to say this, then forever hold my peace:

- Resisters, know thine enemy. His name is TRUMP.
- Democrats, don't let Sanders' presence cloud your judgment.
- Bernie supporters, pledge to support the Democratic candidate, whoever he/she is.

UNITY

If we have a redux of 2016, it'll be our political undoing and an international catastrophe. The whole world is looking to the Democrats for salvation from this monster. NATO is on the chopping block. The future of the Earth's climate is contingent on our being unified on Nov. 3, 2020. Progressives who hate their fellow progressives are a gift to McConnell and Trump. And think about the balance of the Supreme Court. Remember that during the upcoming primaries.

- The Democrats are offering a wide field of great candidates.
- The Republicans are offering four more years of Trump.
- The Democratic challengers are women, black, Hispanic, and energized.
- The Republican field is Trump.

DON'T BLOW THIS WITH INTERNECINE BICKERING!

Myself, I'm going to wait and see who tickles my fancy after the debates. I've already zeroed in on two or three who interest me, none of whom is Bernie Sanders. But if Bernie Sanders *should* happen to secure the nomination, I'd crawl through 100 yards of broken glass to vote for him.

Because the alternative is Donald John Trump, the worst, most foul, corrupt, crooked, despicable creature to ever slime his way into our discourse.

And if he should be re-elected next year, it'll be because just enough Democrats lost sight of who the REAL enemy is, and tipped the balance towards him.

Don't be an idiot. Work together. We won't survive four more years of Republican rule.



Scholarship Committee seeks funding

The Bastrop County Democratic Party will once again be offering the Molly Ivins Civic Scholarship to all high school seniors who are residents of Bastrop County and will graduate with the class of 2019.

The scholarship can be used at any accredited technical school, college, or university. The scholarships are sponsored by local Democrats to promote civic awareness and leadership. Scholarship applications are available to students as of Feb. 25. Students will need to check with their school counselor for the application. Applications will be due March 30. In 2018, BCDP awarded five scholarships totaling \$2,250, ranging from \$250 to \$1,000.

The Scholarship Committee will begin its fundraising efforts to raise its goal of \$6,000 to ensure that one student at each high school in Bastrop County (Bastrop, Cedar Creek, Colorado River Collegiate Academy, Smithville, McDade, and Elgin) gets a \$1,000 scholarship. We have a couple of opportunities for our membership to help us reach our goal.

The Bastrop County Democratic Party will be participating in Smithville's City Wide Garage Sale on April 6 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Michele Rutherford has graciously offered her garage as our location (704 Main St. in Smithville) and has offered to store all donations in her carport. She just asks that you give her a heads-up by calling or texting her cell (512-284-3260) before dropping off donations. Please start gathering any and all items, big and small, that you would like to donate to our fundraiser and get them over to Michele's by Friday, April 5. We would also appreciate any volunteers who could pitch in for a few hours the day of the sale. If you are interested in working the day of the sale, please call Dayna Beck at 512-789-3295. To drop off items between now and April 6, please call Michele at 512-284-3260. Head to Smithville on April 6 to donate, buy, or visit.

You can donate to Bastrop County Democratic Party Scholarship Fund via ActBlue: <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/mollyivinsscholarship>. Any and all donations are greatly appreciated.

If you are interested in joining the Scholarship Committee, please contact Shanda Hernandez at joshanda_bastrop@yahoo.com or 512-573-9149.



Good thing we've still got politics in Texas—finest form of free entertainment ever invented.

—Molly Ivins

Bastrop Democrats donate to Bastrop Empty Bowl Project

In addition to selecting a beautiful handmade bowl as a souvenir and getting to taste delicious soups made by area restaurants, visitors to the Feb. 23 Bastrop Empty Bowl Project chose from a variety of homemade cookies for dessert. Many of the yummy cookies were provided by members of the Bastrop County Democratic Party. When Annie Marrs sent out a call for cookie donations, the following BCDP members were happy to respond: Anne Beck (pictured lower right), Ginny Bratrud (pictured lower left), Deena Eden, Dock Jackson, Bj Jenkins, Carole Marmell, Annie Marrs (pictured upper left), Kay McNally (pictured upper right), Cheryl Reese, and Karen Sterling.



The annual Empty Bowl Project helps fund the Bastrop Emergency Food Pantry's emergency food program, bridging the gap between the basic nutritional needs of many county residents and their ability to address these needs on their own. Event proceeds, grants, and donations also empower the pantry's efforts to inform, counsel, and lift the thousands among us—one out of every seven Bastrop County residents—who are living in poverty or experiencing food emergency.

Seeking healthy solutions

By Mark Timerman

It is disheartening to hear the cries from the right about socialized medical care. They talk about how evil it is and how it will bankrupt the country. All the while they don't seem to mind too much about socialized corporate welfare and bailouts for companies that make billions but pay no taxes. That's kind of hypocritical when you think about it.



But let's remind ourselves about why we need universal health care. The most obvious reason is that health care is a right, not a privilege. No one should be denied expert health care based on economic status. Secondly, the biggest reason for people to declare bankruptcy in the USA is health care bills. People can't pay their medical bills, so they sell everything and borrow whatever they can to try and save the life of a loved one. Thirdly, the system we are now using is a disgrace. It forces hospital emergency rooms into being the safety net for the poor and financially challenged. The system we are using is so fraught with problems and ridiculous rules. Restrictions placed upon our health care system cost the country enormous amounts of money. This is why a Band-Aid costs \$6 at a hospital. And lastly, the health care system is rife with corporate greed. CEOs at the top health insurance companies made over \$340 million combined in 2017. That sum includes the CEO at UnitedHealth Corp., who made over \$82 million in total compensation.

The United States is still the only industrialized nation without a health care plan that covers all. The methods used by other countries for providing health care are as diverse as the countries that have implemented universal coverage. Why is insurance so expensive here in our own country that working class people can't afford it? It is outrageous that we can't sort through all the different options and come up with the best of all plans to implement in this country. One thing is for certain. You don't see the citizenry of other countries trying to throw out their own health care.

Texas Legislature update

Legislators have filed thousands of bills in the Texas House and Senate. Many of those bills will be considered for action by legislative committees, and others won't. It is too early in the legislative process to start following individual bills yet. However, if you want to find legislation that's important to you and follow along, here's how:

Create an account at MyTLO (Texas Legislature Online)

<https://capitol.texas.gov/MnuMyTLO.aspx>



Then you can create alerts for bills relating to topics that are important to you. You'll be notified by email when legislation related to a particular topic moves forward in the process.

<https://capitol.texas.gov/MyTLO/Alerts/Subjects.aspx>

Or you can look up specific legislation based on bill numbers and create alerts to be notified when specific bills move forward.

<https://capitol.texas.gov/MyTLO/Alerts/Bills.aspx>

You can check the calendar for committee hearings.

- In the House: <https://capitol.texas.gov/Committees/MeetingsByDate.aspx?Chamber=H>
- In the Senate: <https://capitol.texas.gov/Committees/MeetingsByDate.aspx?Chamber=S>

You can also search for bills that your representative or senator has authored or co-authored:

<https://capitol.texas.gov/Search/BillSearch.aspx>

Choose your representative or senator in the dropdown menu under "Author," and check "Primary," "Joint," and "CoAuthor," then click the Search button on the far right top.

Folks can sign up for alerts with the many advocacy groups related to what's important to them, whether it's school finance, women's health, environmental issues, LGBTQ issues, etc.

Equal justice for all

Commentary by Robin Rieck

Photos surface in the media of a Democratic senator behaving badly, and women come forth to allege that he made unwanted advances toward them. Within weeks he resigns under pressure. A Democratic incumbent governor's racist behavior while attending medical school is exposed, and Democrats immediately call for his resignation. Meanwhile, we watch daily as Republican officials rally behind their incumbents and bend the rules of order until they break in order to shield them from the consequences of their misdeeds. Some Democrats now say that we are too quick to condemn those in our own party. They claim that when we set the bar too high we discourage promising candidates from seeking office and bring a premature end to the careers of incumbents.

**DOUBLE
STANDARD**

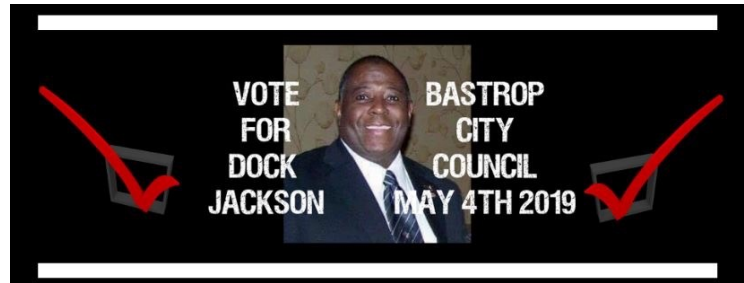
Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's 1980s-era medical school yearbook photo is every bit as offensive as Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's photo in front of a Confederate flag from the 1990s. Photos documenting the sexist behavior of former Sen. Al Franken cannot be ignored as we condemn

former Rep. Blake Farenthold's repulsive remarks about a female staff member. The notable difference is that Gov. Northam and Sen. Franken were called out by members of their own party, while Republican officials remained silent about McConnell and Farenthold.

We must hold the bar high for all public officials regardless of party affiliation. At a time when we see Republicans who are seemingly blind to the offenses of an entire administration and who refuse to acknowledge, much less remove, the corrupt and guilty among their party, Democrats must double down on our efforts to "keep our house clean." No, the two parties aren't the same, as many people allege, and turning a blind eye to misdeeds and attempting to justify them by pointing to the other side will continue to erode confidence in our public officials, alienate voters, and normalize bad behavior.

Dock Jackson files for Bastrop City Council Place 5 Seat

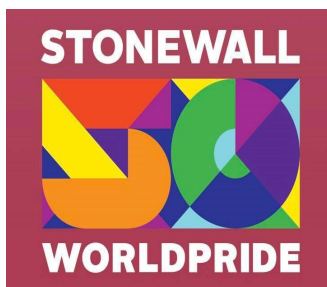
Former Bastrop City Council Member Dock Jackson has filed for a place on the May 4 ballot. Jackson served on the council for 24 years until 2016. In 2018 he ran for Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1. Jackson stated "After many discussions and encouragement from local citizens I've decided to throw my hat in the ring to return to the Bastrop City Council. There is still a need for me to contribute to our growing city, and with my years of experience I think that I can be helpful in shaping its future development. With my unique perspective of Bastrop and its history, I have much to give to our community."



Jackson is running for Place 5 on the ballot, a seat currently held by Deborah Jones. Herb Goldsmith is also on the ballot for this seat.

Previously Jackson served in Place 1 on the council, but that seat is currently held by Willie "Bill" Peterson, who is also seeking re-election. He is being challenged by Ishmael Harris.

Bastrop County Stonewall Democrats schedule upcoming meetings



The next Bastrop County Stonewall Democrats meeting is Tuesday, March 12, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at The 602 On Main (919 Main Street). We'll be in the back room. The April 9 and May 14 meetings will be at that same location and at the same time.

We have started to collect our yearly membership dues. It's \$35 for general and \$120 for sustaining. The sustaining membership allows you to be recognized by the Texas Stonewall Democrats at its conference and at the Texas Democratic Party's biannual convention. Dues can be paid on our ActBlue page <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/bastrop-county-stonewall-democrats-1> or by a check made out to Bastrop Co. Stonewall Democrats or cash. Any one of our officers can accept the membership dues. This information can also be found on our Bastrop County Stonewall Democrats Facebook page. ALL are welcome!

Uppity Women Caucus holds monthly meeting

A group of uppity women meets monthly to hold lively discussions on political issues with like-minded friends. Their February 20 meeting was held at Bassano's. Members of the caucus attending included, from the left clockwise: Cheryl Cato, Mary Noonan, Carole Marmell, Jane Overall, Andy Maguire, Doris Maguire, Melanie Hunt, Kathryn Danforth, Robin Rieck, Fran Danis, and Karen Sterling.



The Uppity Women's Monthly Caucus has dinner on the third Wednesday of each month, beginning at 5:30 p.m. Locations vary. For more information, check out their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1788067584756643/>

Calling all Bastrop County Democrats

We need your support! We are asking for 2,019 Bastrop Democrats to donate one dollar—just a buck—every month this year to support our local Democratic Party. Please help us promote and support our countywide initiatives, including improved roads, rural internet, and environmental resources. If you're already making a recurring contribution, raise it by one dollar. And if you're inclined to give more, by all means, go for it!



Donate at

<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/bastrop-county-democratic-party-1>

HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

There is much to do at all levels as we strive to thwart the Republican agenda and turn Bastrop County, the State of Texas, and America BLUE. Here are some possibilities for your consideration:

ACTIVIST GROUPS

- **Bastrop County Indivisible**
Contact Ginger Redden bcitx10@gmail.com or
Robin Rieck rriECK@austin.rr.com
- **Bastrop County for Beto**
Contact Mary Liz Singleton
marylizsingleton@gmail.com or
Robin Rieck rriECK@austin.rr.com
- **Hogeye Huddle**
Contact Michelle Ryan hogeyehuddle@gmail.com
- **Stonewall Democrats of Bastrop County**
Contact Madi Eden mk@aifx.net or
Dayna Beck aspENrox@gmail.com

LIVELY DISCUSSION GROUPS

- **Bastrop County Democratic Women's Monthly Luncheon**
Contact Mary Liz Singleton
marylizsingleton@gmail.com
- **Liberals Dining & Drinking (LDD)**
Contact Marsha Correia
marshac1017@sbcglobal.net
- **Uppity Women Monthly Caucus**
Contact Carole Marmell cmarmell@hotmail.com

VOTER REGISTRATION

- **Become a Volunteer Deputy Registrar**
Contact Dayna Beck, aspENrox@gmail.com

BCDP LEADERSHIP ROLE

- **Precinct Chair • Volunteer Coordinator**
Contact Cheryl Reese cheryl.reese@yahoo.com

CANDIDATE FOR OFFICE AT THE LOCAL OR COUNTY LEVEL

- Contact Cheryl Reese cheryl.reese@yahoo.com

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

- **Writers to contribute articles/letters to the editor to local newspapers and for this newsletter**

Contact Bill McCann bmccann42@gmail.com

SUPPORT STAFF ROLE

- **Volunteer in the BCDP Office**
Contact Carole Marmelle cmarmell@gmail.com

VOTER OUTREACH

- ♦ **Block Walking • Canvassing**
Contact James Denny jedenny@comcast.net

CONTRIBUTE TO THE BASTROP COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

[secure.actblue.com/donate/
bastrop-county-democratic-party-1](http://secure.actblue.com/donate/bastrop-county-democratic-party-1)

KEEP IN TOUCH VIA THE BCDP NEWSLETTER

Visit www.bastropdemocrats.org

Who Represents Me?

U.S. Senate

- John Cornyn: 202-224-2934 (DC); 512-469-6034 (ATX)
- Ted Cruz: 202-224-5922 (DC); 512-916-5834 (ATX)

U.S. House of Representatives

- Michael McCaul, District 10: 202-225-2401 (DC); 512-473-2357 (Austin)
- Bill Flores, District 17: 202-225-6105 (DC); 512-373-3378 (Austin)
- Michael Cloud, District 27: 202-255-7742 (DC); 361-884-2222 (Corpus Christi); 361-894-6446 (Victoria)

Texas State Senator

- Kirk Watson: 512-463-0114

Texas State Representative

- John Cyrier: 512-463-0682

Visit www.bastropvotes.org to find out your district and precinct. Additional contact information can also be found at this link.

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