

# BCDP NEWSLETTER

## BASTROP COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

- Dec. 3**  
**Can We Talk, part 3**  
First National Bank in Elgin  
6-8pm  
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- Dec. 7**  
Smithville Parade of Lights, 7pm  
**MORE ON PAGE 5**
- Dec. 10**  
**Bastrop Stonewall Democrats meeting,** The 602 Brewing Co.,  
919 Main St., Bastrop, 7pm
- Dec. 11**  
**BCDP Community meeting**  
First National Bank, 1312 US-290,  
Elgin, 7pm  
**MORE ON PAGE 5**
- Dec. 14**  
**BCDP cleanup** for Keep Bastrop Beautiful, Meet at BCDP Office,  
1009 Main St., Bastrop, 9am
- Dec. 14**  
**Bastrop Lighted Christmas Parade**  
**MORE ON PAGE 5**
- Dec. 18**  
**BCDP precinct chair meeting**  
Bastrop Public Library, 6pm
- Dec. 22**  
**Bastrop Stonewall Democrats cleanup** for  
Keep Bastrop County Beautiful  
Meet at soccer fields across from  
Bucee's on Hwy. 95, 4pm



## Message from the chair: Welcome to the Bastrop County Democratic Party

*By Steve Chamberlain*

I feel that a real welcome has been extended to me, and I thank you. Thank you also for electing me and entrusting me with the position of BCDP county chair. I am looking forward to meeting the challenges of the office. However, I realize that you, the members of BCDP and the citizens of Bastrop County, run the party. I am here to coordinate and help guide your actions and activism toward making us stronger and a major player in shaping our future.

We, the people, are the first and most powerful step in achieving these goals. Therefore, my first goal is to bring all Democrats of Bastrop County to the table. We can command the majority if we will all stand up and be heard. Be involved. Would you allow anyone to come into your home and set the rules? Of course not, but if you don't vote, if you're not active, that's exactly what you are doing.

I want to start by assuring the party is "user friendly." Let's make meetings fun, make events fun, where we unite as a family and have more camaraderie. Yes, there is a certain amount of boring business that must be accomplished, but we can get business done and still have fun.



So be involved. Bring your ideas to the table. Contact me any time with your ideas, thoughts, concerns, complaints, or just to talk. We will soon post a list of all precinct chairs with contact information. In the meantime, my email is [bcdp16@gmail.com](mailto:bcdp16@gmail.com), and phone is 817-360-0678. I hope to see and/or hear from you soon.

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### About our new chair

The Bastrop County Democratic Party's newly elected chair Steve Chamberlain is a long-time yellow-dog Democrat and advocate for working people. Born in 1952 in Fort Worth, he spent 64 years in and around Tarrant County. He attended the University of Texas at Arlington.

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He worked 22 years at the U.S. Postal Service, where he served as union shop steward advocating for the rights of the workers. After leaving USPS, he worked 20 years as a customer service representative with Halliburton, coordinating with foreign customers.

Steve and his wife, Sharon, moved to Cedar Creek in 2016 to be closer to family in Austin. While attending a Bernie Sanders rally in 2016, they met BCDP members and became active with the group. Steve became a precinct chair and also served as a BCDP vice chair. Steve and Sharon enjoy restoring, showing and driving vintage Volkswagens. They ran a vintage VW car show in Fredericksburg for 15 years.



Steve Chamberlain  
Chair, Bastrop County Democratic Party

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Steve's involvement with the BCDP has given him numerous opportunities to promote his advocacy for working people. One of those was a battle against a large waste hauler. After moving to Cedar Creek, he discovered Waste Connections planned to build a transfer station with potentially dangerous access on State Highway 21 and also located in a floodplain. Steve became a strong and active voice in opposing the project. After a long battle, the transfer station got approved by the state. But the company decided to move the location, thanks to additional regulations that opponents successfully sought.

Steve believes if he's not part of the solution he's part of the problem. As such, he has attended many rallies for social change. Earlier this year he drove to El Paso to participate in Beto O'Rourke's counter rally against President Trump's immigration policy. He also testified before a state legislative committee to oppose David Whitley's appointment as Texas Secretary of State after Whitley at-

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tempted to purge thousands of Texans from the voting rolls. Whitley subsequently resigned before being kicked out of his job after the Texas Senate failed to confirm him

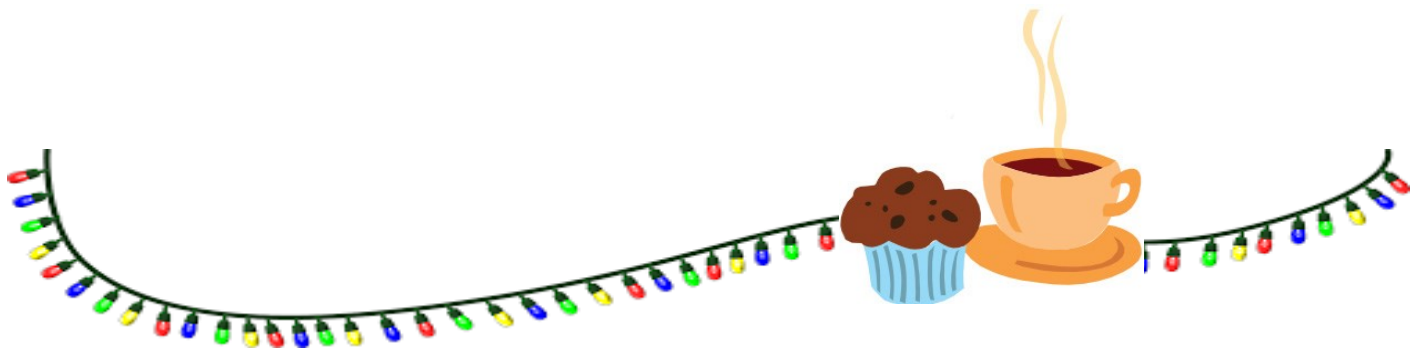
“Being a precinct chair and vice county chair, I have learned a lot more about how our government works and the process involved with testifying before the legislature,” Steve said. “I have also learned that anyone can speak before the Bastrop County Commissioners Court and can be involved with the changes in regulations that affect us all. Being involved is worth the effort.”

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## **BCDP Community Meeting Agenda**

Dec. 11, 2019 7:00 p.m.  
First National Bank  
1312 SH 290 Elgin, TX 78621

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Opening and word from chair                             | Steve Chamberlain  |
| 2. Announcements   |                    |
| • Impeachment postcard campaign                            | Mary Liz Singleton |
| • Hot cocoa at BCDP office during Bastrop Christmas Parade | Dayna Beck         |
| 3. Merry Christmas   | All                |
| Enjoy coffee and cake to celebrate the holidays!           |                    |





## Upcoming events: More info

December is loaded with informative and festive events, some so special that they warrant more attention than we had room for on page 1. Here are more details.

- **Dec 3: Can We Talk, Part 3.** Community conversation with Cheryl Reese, candidate for Precinct 4 commissioner. This conversation will be about internet accessibility in Bastrop County. First National Bank in Elgin, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
- **Dec. 7: Smithville Parade of Lights,** 7:00 p.m. Note: Please contact Michele Rutherford [michelerutherford34@yahoo.com](mailto:michelerutherford34@yahoo.com) if you can help with the BCDP float.
- **Dec. 11: BCDP community meeting.** This will be a social, with finger food, desserts, coffee, and water. Candidates will be invited to come and mingle. First National Bank, 1312 US-290, Elgin, 7:00 p.m.
- **Dec. 14: Bastrop Lighted Christmas Parade.** BCDP will be serving hot cocoa in front of the BCDP office prior to and during the parade, 1009 Main St., 5:00-7:00 p.m. Please contact Dayna Beck [aspenrox@gmail.com](mailto:aspenrox@gmail.com) if you can help.



## 2020 election schedule approved

*By Robin Rieck*

Bastrop County commissioners recently adopted a compromise schedule for the primary and national election in 2020 after local Democratic Party leaders fought for more early voting hours and Republicans sought fewer hours. The commissioners approved a schedule that will include extended hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on the first day and final two days of early voting at all four county polling locations, an 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday schedule, and 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Bastrop Courthouse location throughout the entire second week.

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The process began in June when Bastrop County Democratic Chair Cheryl Reese met with Bastrop County Elections Department Administrator Bridgette Escobedo and Bastrop County Republican Chair Dianna Greenwood to determine the 2020 election schedule. During negotiations Reese met resistance to her attempts to expand early voting hours to make the polls more accessible to voters, especially commuters who are out of the area during traditional business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The three reached a tentative agreement, which fell short of the goal to allow commuters more opportunities to cast their ballots.

County Judge Paul Pape ordered all parties back to renegotiate after Escobedo resigned to take another job. The commissioners had not approved the initial agreement before her departure. In follow-up negotiations, our BCDP leadership again emphasized the needs of commuters. This time the parties did not reach agreement before the Nov. 12 commission hearing.

At that hearing, outgoing BCDP Chair Reese and incoming Chair Steve Chamberlain again emphasized challenges facing voters who commute to Travis County daily while juggling work, traffic, and family obligations during 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. business hours. Their proposal would have extended voting hours from 7 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at each of the four polling sites during the entire second week and the one Saturday of early voting.

Greenwood argued that the number of hours offered for voting does not affect voter turnout. She compared apples to oranges by citing the 41.6-percent turnout achieved in 296 voting hours at four polling sites during the 2008 presidential election to the 22.3-percent turnout achieved in 798 voting hours at 10 polling sites during the 2010 midterm election. Her assertion that voter turnout is fueled by charismatic candidates, rather than voter access, omitted the fact that turnout is always higher in presidential elections.

The commissioners' decision represented a small step forward for Democrats in seeking added opportunities for citizens of Bastrop County to exercise their right to vote amid ongoing Republican attempts at voter suppression.

## Why I am running for commissioner

By Cheryl Reese

My name is Cheryl Reese. I am former chair of the Bastrop County Democratic Party and worked for many years to encourage citizens to register and vote. I am running for Bastrop county commissioner for Precinct 4. I am prepared to serve Elgin and all of its outlying areas included in the precinct. I am prepared to listen to your concerns and make the tough decisions.

I will seek to give voice to everyone in the community on issues of concern to them. This includes everything from diversity and jobs to housing, transportation and healthcare. I will work to keep citizens informed and engaged so that we are all a part of the decisions.

My priority issues include:

- **County roads.** Poorly maintained roads can cause safety problems for emergency vehicles, school buses and driving in general. These roads are important and should receive maintenance regularly, whether it is providing lighting on poorly lit roads, enlarging road signs to be read easily, clearing tree limbs from blocking signs, placing safety barriers on dead-end roads, fixing potholes, or repaving roads.
- **Accessible and affordable health care.** Bastrop is the 11th fastest growing county in Texas. As such, it is crucial for county leaders to look ahead to ensure we meet the healthcare needs of those who live in Bastrop County and those who will move here. We will meet the threshold of 100,000 citizens in the 2020 census.
- **Rural internet.** Citizens deserve internet services that work and are available to all parts of the county. As we think about the possible healthcare opportunities such as telemedicine, home-monitoring internet is important. Students should be able to complete homework on the internet at home rather than depend on the library or local businesses. Businesses should be able to complete business transactions and orders online so that they can compete and prosper.

These issues should concern all of us. They impact our lives directly or indirectly no matter who we are or where we live in the county. I feel I am the best candidate to give these and other issues the attention they deserve and help make county government work better for residents of Precinct 4 and throughout Bastrop County.

For more information about me, please check my website:

[reese4bastrop.com/](http://reese4bastrop.com/).



## Extortion vs bribery

Commentary by Mark Timerman



Even a five-year-old kid knows the difference between extortion and bribery, if not by definition surely in theory. “If you do that, you will get a spanking” is an example of extortion, or a threat. “If you do that, you will get a cookie!” is an example of bribery, or a reward. Both items are also a “quid pro quo,” which basically means “something for something,” a threat or reward motivation.

When President Trump asks the president of Ukraine to “do me a favor though” or else you won’t get the aid we promised you, it can be taken two ways. It can be extortion or a bribe. If you view the aid as the only thing to stop the Russians from invading you, it can be perceived as a threat. But if you view it as something that will promote your standing, it can be perceived as a reward. If the president had asked Ukraine to do something that was mutually beneficial to both countries, there would be no problem. But when he is asking for something that will benefit him personally, that is wrong and illegal. He could have just as easily asked for \$1 million instead of a political favor.

If I say to someone, “If you drive, I will buy the beer,” it is a rather innocent quid pro quo, something mutually beneficial for both. He gets a cold one, and I don’t have to drive. But if he takes my money and doesn’t come back, that is stealing.

When Trump’s foundation states, “If you give us money, we will do charitable things with the money,” that’s another innocent quid pro quo. But if the foundation uses the money to further personal political or business interests, that is misuse of funds. A judge recently determined the foundation did just that and imposed a \$2 million fine.

When I watched the House impeachment hearings recently, it seemed to me the Republicans couldn’t tell the difference between quid pro quo, extortion, and bribery. Maybe they should talk to a five-year-old for the meaning.



## Mike Renck files for sheriff

Four years ago I decided to run for Bastrop County sheriff because I thought the office needed to make significant improvements if citizens were to get the quality service they deserved. I firmly believed then—and still believe—that my background, skills, and the team I would put in place would make the office one we all could be proud of. I lost that campaign in 2016 but learned valuable lessons. I also learned I had wide community support, for which I was truly grateful.



Four years later the sheriff's office continues to lack needed leadership. In fact, I believe the situation has gotten worse. What I'm hearing in the community is that, while the operation has many competent employees, leadership, and openness with the public are sorely lacking. Many citizens, particularly people of color, continue to distrust the office.

Meanwhile, I am encouraged as the number of Democrats in the county continues to grow.

Democrats are energized nationwide and are determined to bring change. I am optimistic that this energy forcefield will extend to local races.

After considerable soul-searching, I have decided to seek election for Bastrop County sheriff in 2020. My name will be on the Democratic primary ballot in March. Once again, I ask for your help—volunteers for my campaign and financial assistance. Contact me at [mikerenck4sheriff@gmail.com](mailto:mikerenck4sheriff@gmail.com) or P.O. Box 32, Red Rock, TX 78662.

For those who don't know me, I am a long-time Bastrop County resident with more than two decades of experience in law enforcement, including two years at the Bastrop County Sheriff's Office and 21 years as a correctional officer at the Federal Bureau of Prisons. I have a bachelor of science degree in education from Texas State University. I also taught law enforcement at the Gary Job Corps Law Enforcement and Security Training Academy in San Marcos.

Being a good sheriff is more than wearing a badge and a big hat. It's leadership, openness and honesty. It's treating everyone with dignity. I will bring these qualities and more to the sheriff's office. I will improve training for staff, keep the public informed and engaged, and focus on serious crimes rather than things like broken taillights. Bastrop County citizens deserve better.

## 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](mailto:bcitx10@gmail.com) or  
Robin Rieck [rriek@austin.rr.com](mailto:rriek@austin.rr.com)
- **Hogeye Huddle**  
Contact Michelle Ryan [hogeyehuddle@gmail.com](mailto:hogeyehuddle@gmail.com)
- **Stonewall Democrats of Bastrop County**  
Contact Madi Eden [mk@aifx.net](mailto:mk@aifx.net) or  
Dayna Beck [aspenrox@gmail.com](mailto:aspenrox@gmail.com)

### LIVELY DISCUSSION GROUPS

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

### VOTER REGISTRATION

**Become a Volunteer Deputy Registrar**

Contact Dayna Beck [aspenrox@gmail.com](mailto:aspenrox@gmail.com)

### BCDP LEADERSHIP ROLE

**Precinct Chair • Volunteer Coordinator**

Contact Steve Chamberlain [bcdp16@gmail.com](mailto:bcdp16@gmail.com)

### CANDIDATE FOR OFFICE AT THE LOCAL OR COUNTY LEVEL

Contact Steve Chamberlain [bcdp16@gmail.com](mailto:bcdp16@gmail.com)

### COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

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

Contact Bill McCann [bmccann42@gmail.com](mailto:bmccann42@gmail.com)

### SUPPORT STAFF ROLE

**Volunteer in the BCDP Office**

Contact Dayna Beck [aspenrox@gmail.com](mailto:aspenrox@gmail.com)

### VOTER OUTREACH

**Block Walking • Canvassing**

Contact James Denny [jedenny@comcast.net](mailto: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 [bastropdemocrats.org/newsletter/](http://bastropdemocrats.org/newsletter/)

## 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](http://www.bastropvotes.org) to find out your district and precinct. Additional contact information can also be found at this link.

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