



# BASTROP COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY NEWSLETTER

A Monthly Publication Dedicated to Moving Bastrop County Forward

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Jan. 1**

First day to submit applications for **Ballot by Mail** for all elections to be held in 2018

**Jan. 10**

**Bastrop County Dem ladies luncheon**  
*The Roadhouse in Paige*  
1:00 p.m.

**Jan. 11**

**BCDP community meeting**  
*Kerr Community Center*  
1308 Walnut St.  
7:00 p.m.

**Jan. 14**

**Annual Bastrop MLK Scholarship Program**  
*Mt. Rose Missionary Baptist Church*  
507 Toliver Street, Bastrop  
3:00-4:30 p.m.

**Jan. 15**

**29th Annual Bastrop County Holiday Commission Walk for Peace, Justice, and Equality**  
*MLK Community Park, Smithville*  
9:00 a.m.

**Jan. 28**

Decee Cornish, award-winning Black history storyteller, presents  
**"To Love This Earth: A Tribute to George Washington Carver"**  
*Bastrop Opera House*  
2:30 p.m.



## Message from the Chair

# 2018 Is Democrats' Time for Optimism and Opportunity

By Cheryl Reese

Happy New Year, everyone. Thanks for your continued participation in the Bastrop County Democratic Party. With the new year we have a new optimism and opportunity to make significant gains nationally and statewide.

If you follow the news, you know how important it will be for each of us to do everything we can to assist Democratic candidates at all levels of government.



Bastrop County Democratic Party Chair Cheryl Reese accepts Dock Jackson's check and application to run for Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1.

While we had only three Democratic candidates step up for countywide offices for 2018, they are well qualified and deserve your support. Two candidates, Benton Eskew, County Court-at-Law judge, and Katherine Hanna, Precinct 3 Justice of the Peace, are unopposed in the March 6 Democratic primary and Nov. 6 general election. Dock Jackson, who has an exceptional history of public service, is a candidate for Precinct 1 Justice of the

Peace. He is unopposed in the Democratic primary. In November he will face the winner of four candidates in the Republican primary.

Sen. Kirk Watson, representing state Senate District 14, which includes Bastrop County, is seeking re-election. He is unopposed in the Democratic primary and will face a Republican challenger in November. Many thanks to Sen. Watson for his excellent job representing constituents and for his generous support of the Bastrop County Democratic Party. He recently donated \$1,500 to the BCDP general fund, and paid the \$1,614 cost of our local ballot-by-mail campaign. *(continued on next page)*

### *Message from the Chair, continued*

We also have an outstanding Democratic candidate, Michelle Ryan, for State Representative, District 17, which includes Bastrop County. Ryan is unopposed in the Democratic primary. She is a well-qualified dynamo, and with our help can take the job from the incumbent Republican in November.

The Democratic Party also is fielding excellent candidates for U.S. Senate and House seats, including U.S Representative districts 10, 17 and 27, as well as all major state offices up for election. I urge you to study the qualifications of Democratic candidates, especially where multiple Democrats are running for the same office, and be sure to vote in the March 6 primary.

Finally, the BCDP's 2018 convention will be on March 24, location to be determined. It will be an opportunity to meet fellow Democrats and candidates and take up state and local resolutions. Please mark that date on your calendar and please consider volunteering to help.

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## **The Importance of Reliable Rural Internet**

*By Michelle Ryan, Candidate for Texas House*

"Reliable rural internet." It's one of my primary campaign topics. I am adamant that high-speed internet be as accessible and affordable in our rural areas as it is in our larger cities, and I support classifying the internet as a public utility and implementing an internet infrastructure plan similar to the Rural Electrification Act of the 1930s.

Why is this important?

**Education:** The internet brings expanded educational opportunities to students and adults. Students can use internet courses to supplement traditional learning, and studies have shown that students without the benefit of internet access fall behind their peers who have access. Adults can learn new skills and technologies when the training isn't available in their area. These educational choices give folks one more effective option to help them succeed.



*(continued on next page)*

### *The Importance of Reliable Rural Internet, continued*

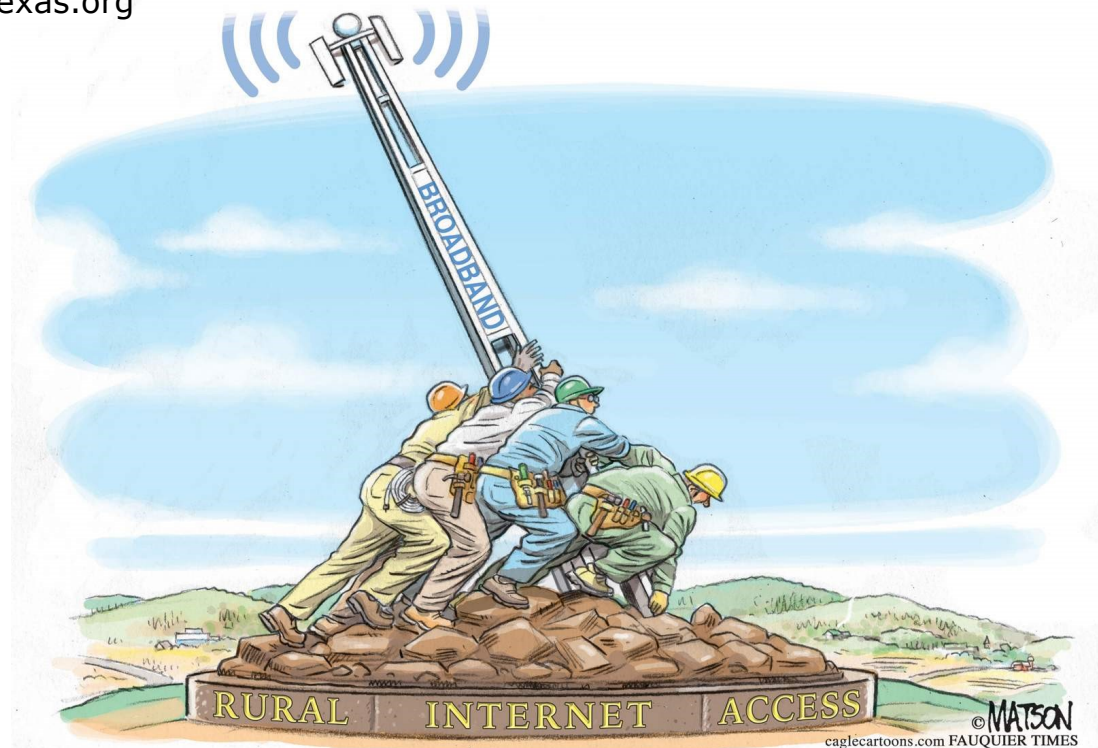
**Jobs:** While I would like to see more traditional jobs with higher pay reaching our rural areas, there are proven small business and career opportunities available with internet access. Even the smallest company with an internet presence has access to a global market. Our entire economy depends on reliable, high-speed internet and our rural areas deserve the same chance at success as their peers in more-connected areas. As more jobs are automated or shifted off-site, this connectivity becomes even more critical.

**Health care:** Eighteen rural hospitals in Texas have closed since 2013, and I doubt those will be the last. Telemedicine can fill some of this treatment gap while we're working to solve this crisis, but the connection bandwidth required for this telemedicine technology can be far more than what is typically available in most rural areas (if internet service is available at all), which means many areas are effectively denied this vital health care option.

Reliable, affordable, high-speed internet access is essential for current and future educational choices, business and career opportunities, and health care access. I want folks to be able to live in the rural setting we love and not have to sacrifice their education, their career, or their health.

I'm Michelle Ryan, Democratic candidate for State Representative District 17, and I'm asking for your support and your vote in 2018.

[www.michellefortexas.org](http://www.michellefortexas.org)



## Retirement Plans

By Mark Timerman

I turned 60 a while back, and as most people probably do, I am looking at how I am going to reach my retirement goals, if at all possible now. When I was in my teens and early 20s, I didn't care or even think about retirement, like most of us "grasshoppers."

But then I settled down, started a family and started to plan out my life. Early on I thought I had all my ducks in a row. Then my employer started taking away benefits that I was relying on for retirement. Gone was my retirement plan, replaced by a completely inadequate "profit-sharing" plan, which they no longer match, in order to take care of the stockholders and show profit at any cost.

I used to think I would never be stuck with Social Security as my only plan, but reality has changed. Health insurance was never in the plan from my employer, but like many people I figured that I would rely on Medicare and Medicaid, which was not a bad option for older people going into retirement.

In 2013, only 23 percent of companies offered a health plan that employees could take with them upon retirement. Contrast that to back in 1988, when 66 percent of companies offered health insurance to retirees—a huge difference.



Today, I am now staring at the real possibility that I may have to work much longer than I want to, just to keep my health insurance. It seems that the Republican Party is hell bent on taking away all forms of health assistance for everybody. They want to repeal the Affordable Care Act, take away all the safety nets for the poor, and begin the process of eliminating not just Medicare and Medicaid, but also taking away our Social Security.

What am I going to do about it? At this point, I think it's time for the 98 percent to "retire" the Republican Congress that is foisting this on the American people. As a member of the 98 percent, I plan to actively organize and campaign for that effect. Who's joining me?

## Single-Payer Health Care Explained

Single-payer health care is a health care system financed by taxes that covers the costs of essential health care for all residents, with costs covered by a single public system (hence 'single-payer').

At the BCDP's December meeting, guest speaker Bill Haschke presented information on the advantages, and some perceived disadvantages, of the single-payer (universal) health care plan. Some of the many advantages include the following:

- Everyone is covered, and each person may choose the doctor who best suits his or her needs, limited only by an individual doctor's current workload.
- Payments are based on a percentage of individual incomes.
- There are no lifetime limits or exclusions for pre-existing conditions.
- It saves money by reducing administrative costs for physicians, hospitals, and patients.

The primary disadvantage cited by Haschke is that there may be some wait time for procedures that can be postponed.

One interesting statistic provided by Haschke showed 73 percent of people support single-payer health care coverage, but only 57 percent of those are willing to have their taxes increased to pay for it. However, it is clear that the majority of Americans want single payer and are willing to pay for it.



Haschke also provided information on the status of universal health care in other countries, particularly Canada, which implemented it in 1966. The earliest country to implement universal health care was Germany in 1941, and the most recent was Israel in 1995.

For additional information regarding health care systems across the globe, please go to this link: <http://international.commonwealthfund.org/>

## **Bastrop County Democratic Party Participates in Lost Pines Cookie Crawl**

Dec. 23, 2017: Joining with numerous downtown Bastrop businesses and organizations, BCDP opened its doors to flocks of children participating in the first annual Lost Pines Cookie Crawl. Our members contributed dozens and dozens of yummy cookies, so many that we were able to offer each child two cookies, one to keep and one to leave for Santa. Everyone seemed quite impressed with our selection of cookies. One parent asked, "Who made all these cookies?" and we replied "Democrats!"



## New Year's Resolve

*By Steve Chamberlain*

Happy New Year to all the good people of Bastrop County. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday sharing good times with family and friends. It may be your last. Now that the holidays are over and reality is settling back in, we know there is much to be done. It is time for Democrats to take the gloves off. Time to stand up against the greed and corrupt corporate takeover of our government.

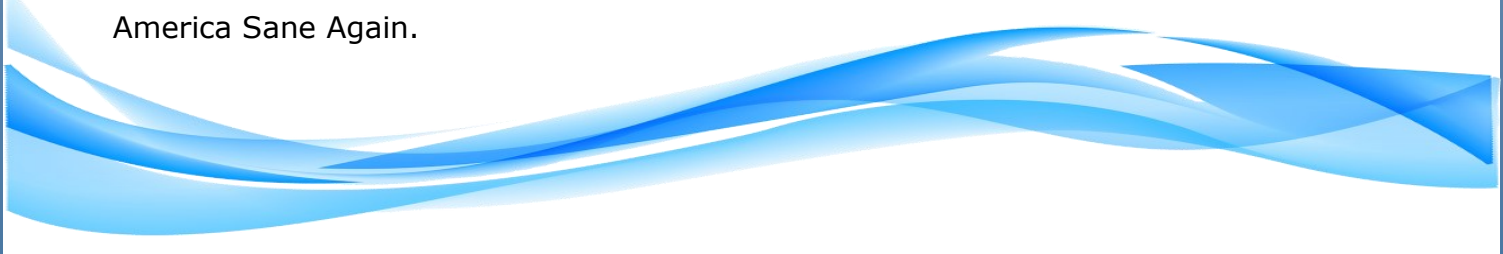
Everyone with a soul celebrated the election results in Alabama. Then we were dragged back into the depths of hell with the corporate giveaway, aka tax reform. Please educate yourselves (while we still have an open and free internet) as to who benefits from these tax cuts: corporations, owners and CEOs of the corporations (aka big donors), and most of the Republicans voting for the bill. (Yes, I know it would have been easier to just say the top 1 percent.) The truth is out there. Don't be fooled by the lies that are constantly spewed by the ruling class.

As Adolf Hitler said, "...in the primitive simplicity of their minds they [the masses] more readily fall victim to the big lie than the small lie, since they themselves often tell small lies in little matters but would be ashamed to resort to large-scale falsehoods. It would never come into their heads to fabricate colossal untruths, and they would not believe that others could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously."

As we all know, Trump is rarely known to tell a small lie. Therefore, it is up to us to keep the truth in front of people. An expression that comes to mind states, "The best way to show that a stick is crooked is not to argue about it or spend time denouncing it, but to lay a straight stick alongside it."

The point is we must organize and fight to win back democracy in America. We must stand up for common decency and preserve the foundation upon which America was built. We must get off our lazy rears and vote.

Now we have the chance in 2018 to redeem our collective soul and restore order to the chaos that has beset our country as a result of the 2016 elections. We must all resolve to combat apathy and create a **BLUE** wave that sweeps our country, Making America Sane Again.





## **How I Learned To Stop Reminiscing and Look Forward to 2018**

*By Trent Mareth, Precinct 1001 Chair*

"There's no such thing as the good old days." It's a phrase I only heard my grandfather speak a few times, but it always made an impact. Today it means more to me than it has any right to. It's a touchstone I revisit almost daily, and it has helped me keep my sanity through this frenetic news cycle we're living in. There's safety and comfort in "the good old days" where things are familiar and there are no surprises.

The future, on the other hand, is unknown; it can be scary and overwhelming, but that's not all. The future can be better than the past. It can be a place of hope, where we can embrace the best parts of the past and fix the misdeeds born out of fear across our history.

There are those we will have to drag along with us into the future, and those still who will try to drag us into the past. Progress, however, can't be stopped. At worst it can be diverted, and that's what gives me hope when there are so many reasons to feel hopeless. No matter how dark and regressive our current direction may seem, we can change it. That's what the Democratic Party of this new era is about: change.

That's why I've gotten involved as a Democratic precinct chair. I'm here to help support, promote, and encourage everyone to continue to look forward to the better future we will create. I have chosen to embrace change, and I invite you to do the same. We can create that change, not just for the sake of it, but so that the lives of everyone can be improved.

These days I've adopted a new version of my grandfather's phrase. It's more elegant and more to the point. It also came from the mind and experiences of someone a bit more famous than he, so maybe the weight it carries for me will better transfer to others:

"To improve is to change, so to be perfect is to have changed often."

—Winston Churchill

## 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:

### RESISTANCE ACTIVITIES

- **Bastrop County Indivisible for District 10**  
Contact Ginger Redden [bcitx10@gmail.com](mailto:bcitx10@gmail.com)
- **Indivisible TX-27 Bastrop**  
Contact Robin Rieck [rrieck@austin.rr.com](mailto:rrieck@austin.rr.com)
- **Hogeye Huddle**  
Contact Michelle Ryan [hogeyehuddle@gmail.com](mailto:hogeyehuddle@gmail.com)

### LIVELY DISCUSSION GROUPS

- **Bastrop County Democratic Ladies Monthly Luncheon**  
Contact Mary Liz Singleton [marylizsingleton@gmail.com](mailto:marylizsingleton@gmail.com)
- **Drinking Liberally**  
Contact Marsha Correia [marshac1017@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marshac1017@sbcglobal.net)
- **Uppity Women Monthly Caucus**  
Contact Carole Marmell [cmarmell@gmail.com](mailto:cmarmell@gmail.com)

### VOTER REGISTRATION

- **Become a Volunteer Deputy Registrar**  
Contact Mary Liz Singleton [marylizsingleton@gmail.com](mailto:marylizsingleton@gmail.com)

### BCDP LEADERSHIP ROLE

- **Precinct Chair • Volunteer Coordinator**  
Contact Cheryl Reese [cheryl.reese@yahoo.com](mailto:cheryl.reese@yahoo.com)

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

Contact Cheryl Reese [cheryl.reese@yahoo.com](mailto:cheryl.reese@yahoo.com)

### COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

- **Photographers for meetings and events**
- **Webmaster**
- **Writers to contribute articles/ letters-to-the editor to local newspapers**  
Contact Bill McCann [bmccann42@gmail.com](mailto:bmccann42@gmail.com)

### SUPPORT STAFF ROLE

- **Volunteer in the BCDP Office**  
Contact Diana Kern [expectrecovery@gmail.com](mailto:expectrecovery@gmail.com)

### VOTER OUTREACH

- **Block Walking • Phone Banking**  
Contact your local Precinct Chair  
[www.bastropdemocrats.org/contact-us/](http://www.bastropdemocrats.org/contact-us/)

### CONTRIBUTE TO THE BASTROP COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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

**KEEP IN TOUCH VIA THE BCDP NEWSLETTER**  
Visit [www.bastropdemocrats.org](http://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)
- Blake Farenthold, District 27: 202-225-7742 (DC); 361-884-2222 (Corpus Christi)

### 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.