THE NEXT CHAPTER NEWSLETTER | APRIL 2025

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

Chair Chat By Christie Freestone

"Civilization begins with order, grows with liberty and dies with chaos." -Will Durant, American historian and philosopher

Mass chaos. That's the reality we're now living through. From soaring prices at the grocery store, to farmers struggling to make ends meet, to schools losing critical funding, the everyday American is feeling the pain of a government run on ego, not leadership. President Donald Trump said during his debate with Kamala Harris that he had a "concept of a plan" for our nation. But concepts don't build stable economies, they don't protect civil rights, and they certainly don't put food on the table. We've seen this story before—his first term brought us an unfinished wall, massive tax breaks for billionaires, and empty promises to middle America. And this time around, it's even worse.

In his first term, at the very least, there were some experienced voices in the room. People like General James Mattis and John Kelly tried—often in vain—to bring reason to the madness. But even they couldn't stick around. Why? Because Trump doesn't want advisors—he wants loyalists. In his second term, he's learned to surround himself with yes-men and fanatics more interested in appeasing him than upholding the Constitution. Our federal departments—Education, Health, Energy, even Homeland Security—are now run by people who lack not only experience, but also a commitment to democratic norms. The result? A nation spinning into dysfunction while its so-called leaders wage war on truth, science, and civility.

Look around: chaos at the border with families deported without trials, basic due process thrown out the window. This is not just a policy disagreement—this is an abandonment of the rule of law, eerily echoing authoritarian regimes of the past. If we learned anything from history, it's that when a government starts deciding who gets rights and who doesn't, based on whim or prejudice, we're on a dark and dangerous path. And while the lower courts and even the Supreme Court are beginning to push back against this unchecked power, they're only one piece of the puzzle. Congress—especially House Republicans—have completely abdicated their duty to serve as a check on the executive branch. They've turned into a cheering section, not a governing body.

Meanwhile, right here in Gratiot County, we're seeing the fallout. Trump's reckless tariffs hammer our farming economy. Promised cuts to Medicare and Medicaid threaten to close our hospital—the lifeline for so many of our seniors and working families. Education cuts hit our schools hard, leaving our children with fewer resources and fewer opportunities. This isn't abstract policy failure; it's real, and it's happening in our own backyards.

So what do we do? We organize. We mobilize. We march, we show up at town halls, we flood our legislators' offices with calls, letters, and emails. But we can do more. We can talk to our neighbors—especially those who feel disillusioned or left behind. We can build bridges across political lines by focusing on shared values: honesty, justice, decency. We can vote—not just in November, but in every local and state election that shapes the system we live in. And we can run for office, support local candidates who reflect our community's needs, and demand better from every elected official.

The cavalry isn't coming. We are the cavalry. If we want to preserve democracy, protect our families, and build a future worth fighting for, then we need to stand together—not as Democrats or Republicans, but as Americans. Our fight is not left versus right—it's right versus wrong. Let's rise, Gratiot County. Let's organize, educate, and resist. Let's save our democracy, together.

Gratiot County Democrats March for Democracy and More

The Gratiot County Democrats are taking action—one step at a time. In a series of energetic and inclusive marches, local residents have been gathering to show their support for democracy and raise awareness about critical issues like Social Security and healthcare. These marches aren't just about protest—they're about community. With handmade signs, and a sense of shared purpose, they've become uplifting events where people can connect, speak out, and enjoy the power of coming together for a cause.

"It's all about making our voices heard while having fun doing it," said one participant. "If you're passionate about protecting voting rights, preserving Social Security, or making healthcare accessible to everyone, there's a place for you here."

If you'd like to participate but don't have a sign—no problem! The office is fully stocked with markers, poster board, and all the supplies you'll need. Just stop by during office hours, get creative, and be part of the movement.

These marches are a reminder that democracy thrives when we all take part. Come for the cause, stay for the camaraderie—and help build a better future for Gratiot County and beyond.

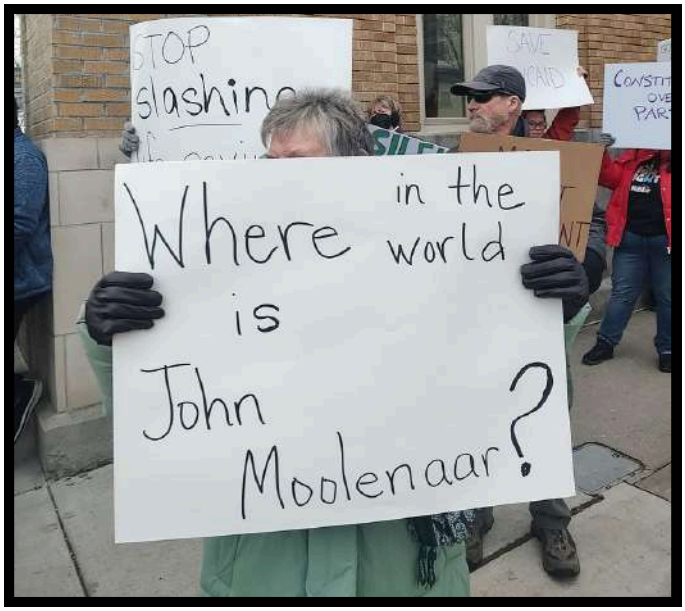
MARCH 4th for Democracy

GCDP members attended the March 4th protest in Lansing that was part of the 50 marches in 50 states resistance movement

Where is John Moolenaar?

Clare County Democrats planned a pop-up protest at John Moolenaar's office in Clare. GCDP members convened at the Clare Library with fellow concerned citizens and walked to Mr. Moolenaar's office, where we held signs and chanted for ninety minutes. Over 150 participants were counted and the number of positive responses from cars passing by far outweighed the negatives.

We definitely demonstrated that everyone does NOT think DOGE is doing a great job, the current budget proposal is NOT what is best for Americans, and we are fed up with Mr. Moolenaar not responding to our concerns.



GCDP March in Ithaca

ISSUES WE MARCH FOR: Education policies that harm our children, Environmental destruction, Economic inequality, Farming & rural struggles, Constitutional violations, Immigration lies & human rights abuses, The rise of authoritarianism, Republican leaders failing to stand against corruption

Marching for Democracy in St. Louis

Dems March in Alma

April 5 - Hands Off Protest Mt. Pleasant

The Next Chapter: A Book Club By Nancy O'Brien

The Blue Hour By Paula Hawkins

3.6/5

Our book club met on March 1 to discuss this nonfiction thriller about an artist and her friend who lived on a Scottish island that could only be reached when the tide was out. The artist's husband was a player and went missing 20 years ago. The artist dies, and leaves behind diaries and art pieces that have been left to a gallery. As the art expert looks into the diary and artworks, secrets unravel, lies are uncovered, and murder is exposed.

This story has lots of twists and turns, and characters are not who you might expect them to be. We had a good discussion about the story and its ending. We rated the book 3.6 out of 5.

By Any Other Name By Jodi Picoult

4.2/5

April 5 was the date of our book club meeting to discuss this historical fiction novel based on the real life story of Emilia Bassano, a woman writer in the 1500s in England, who may have been one of the authors of some of Shakespeare's plays and sonnets. The story is told in two timelines, one the life of Emilia, and one the life of her ancestor, Melina Green, in the present day, who is also a playwright trying to get her work seen on the stage. They are both ambitious women who find similar prejudices against women playwrights, set in different centuries and countries.

Our members discussed how some things in historical books remain similar in our present time; among them equity for women in the home and workplace. The author has done meticulous research into Emilia Bassano, and makes a good case why she may have authored plays and sonnets attributed to Shakespeare. There are 40 pages at the back of the book with an author's note and references to discuss this idea. We rated this book 4.2 out of 5 stars.

Our next meeting will be May 3 at 10:00 in our office in Alma. We will be discussing the book ***Becoming Madame Secretary*** by Stephanie Dray. All of these books are available at Ballyhoo Books in Alma.

2025 BOOK CLUB CHOICES

APRIL 5 *By Any Other Name* **Jodi Picoult**	**MAY 3** *Becoming Madam Secretary* **Stephanie Dray**	**JUNE 7** *Listen 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**

Tails Are Wagging Thanks to Local Democratic Donations

Dalis from Dalis to the Rescue and friends receive a donation from generous Gratiot County Democrats. An additional donation was made to the Gratiot County Humane Society, Thank you to Dalis and Dems for what you do to care for others in our county. Also pictured is Zoe, a friend and helper to animals

POSTCARD WRITING

GRATIOT DEMS

Block House Trivia

First place!

Join us Wednesday nights at 7:00 for trivia.

Join us for crafting!

Frosty Candles

We enjoyed making "Frosty Candles" and "Decoupage Easter Eggs." Watch for an email inviting you to our next crafting event!

You're Invited!

Have coffee with us!

GRATIOT DEMS

Coffee with the Dems

Join us the first Tuesday of each month

May 6 | June 3 | July 1

9AM

Ballyhoo Books Alma

Drinks with Dems

Stop in to share a beverage and visit about current issues.

All are welcome!

TUESDAY, MAY 20
ALMA BREWING COMPANY
7:00 PM

Report Social Security Disruptions

Attorney General Dana Nessel is increasingly concerned about any disruption in social security for Michiganders. If you have experienced any unusual disruption in your social security services or you have been prevented from accessing your earned benefits, we urge you to report these issues here.

The Department of Attorney General may use the information collected for future federal actions and will not share personal identifying information without consent. Residents who seek assistance with their Social Security claims or benefits should contact their representative in the U.S. House of Representatives or Michigan's U.S. Senators for assistance.

The Department of Attorney General is a state agency and is unable to provide direct assistance.

Office Volunteers Needed

We are 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

5 Calls

Spend 5 minutes, make 5 calls
Make your voice heard
5calls.org

usa gov

Find and contact your elected officialsUse USAGov's Contact

Use USAGov's Contact Your Elected Officials tool to get contact information for your members of Congress, the president, and state and local officials.

usa.gov/elected-officials

EVENTS

- **April 21** - GCDP General Membership Meeting
  7 p.m. - Gratiot Dems office
- **April 22** - March for Health | Gratiot Comm Hospital | 3-5PM
  Meet at GCDP office at 2:30
- **April 29** - | John Moolenaar's Office, Clare | 3-5PM

- **May 3** - The Next Chapter Book Club
  10 a.m. - GCDP office | *Becoming Madame Secretary* by Stephanie Dray
- **May 5** - March for Social Security | GCDP Office | 3-5PM
- **May 6** - Coffee with the Dems
  9 a.m. - Ballyhoo Books and Brew | Alma
- **May 19** - GCDP General Membership Meeting
  7 p.m. - Gratiot Dems office
- **May 20** - Drinks with Dems | Alma Brewing Company | 7PM

- **June 3** - Coffee with the Dems
  9 a.m. - Ballyhoo Books and Brew | Alma
- **June 7** - The Next Chapter Book Club
  10 a.m. - GCDP office | *Listen for the Lie* by Amy Tintera
- **June 16** - GCDP General Membership Meeting
  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:
Wednesday | 4 p.m.-6 p.m.
Saturdays | 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

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