

WILLOW VALLEY DEMOCRATS PLUS NEWSLETTER

September 2024

**Paid for by Willow Valley Democrats Plus Club
Treasurer, Julia Powers
Editor Ross Fairweather (rossfair63@gmail.com)**



Addressing the Issues

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If you are not already on our mailing list, contact Jen Porter at jenporter@comcast.net.

Summary of Tim Walz

Heather Cox Richardson's Excellent Summary of Tim Walz

HEATHER COX RICHARDSON

AUG 7

Today Vice President Kamala Harris named her choice for her vice presidential running mate: Governor Tim Walz of Minnesota. Walz grew up in rural Nebraska. He enlisted in the Army National Guard when he was 17 and served for 24 years, retiring in 2005 as a command sergeant major, making him the highest-ranking enlisted soldier ever to serve in Congress, according to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

He went to college with the educational benefits afforded him by the Army, and graduated from Chadron (Nebraska) State College. From 1989 to 1990, he taught at a high school in China, then became a social studies teacher in Alliance, Nebraska, where he met fellow teacher Gwen Whipple, who became his wife. They moved to Minnesota, where they both continued teaching and had two children, Hope and Gus, through IVF.

Walz became the faculty advisor for the school's gay-straight alliance organization at the same time that he coached the high-school football team from a 0–27 record to a state championship. The advisor "really needed to be the football coach, who was the soldier and was straight and was married," Walz said in 2018.

Walz ran for Congress in 2005 after some of his students were asked to leave a rally for George W. Bush because one of them had a sticker for Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry. Walz won and served in Congress for twelve years, sitting on the House Agriculture Committee, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Voters elected Walz to the Minnesota state house in 2018, and in his second term they gave him a slim majority in the state legislature. With that support, Walz signed into law protections for abortion rights, supported gender-affirming care, and legalized the recreational use of marijuana. He signed into law gun safety legislation and protections for voting rights, and pushed for action to combat climate change and to promote renewable energy.

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Summary of Tim Walz (cont'd)

Strong tax revenues and spending cuts gave the state a \$17.6 billion surplus, and the Democrats under Walz used the money not to cut taxes, as Republicans wanted, but to invest in education, fund free breakfast and lunch for schoolchildren, make tuition free at the state's public colleges for students whose families earned less than \$80,000 a year, and invest in paid family and medical leave and health insurance coverage regardless of immigration status.

While MAGA Republicans are already trying to define Walz as "far left," his votes in Congress put him pretty squarely in the middle. His work with Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan to expand technology production and infrastructure funding in the state was rewarded in 2023, when Minnesota knocked Texas out of the top five states for business. The CNBC rating looked at 86 indicators in 10 categories, including the workforce, infrastructure, health, and business friendliness.

Walz checks a number of boxes for the 2024 election, most notably that he hails from near the battleground states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania and comes across as a normal, nice guy. He favors unions, workers' rights, and a \$15 minimum wage. He is also the person who coined the phrase that took away the dangerous overtones of today's MAGA Republicans by dubbing them "weird." As a student of his said: "In politics he's good at calling out B.S. without getting nasty or too down in the dirt.... It's the kind of common sense he showed as a coach: practical and kinda goofy."

Walz is also a symbol of an important resetting of the Democratic Party. He has been unapologetic about his popular programs. On Sunday, July 28, when CNN's Jake Tapper listed some of Walz's policies and asked if they made Walz vulnerable to Trump calling him a "big government liberal." Walz joked that he was, indeed, a "monster."

"Kids are eating and having full bellies so they can go learn, and women are making their own health care decisions, and we're a top five business state, and we also rank in the top three of happiness.... The fact of the matter is," where Democratic policies are implemented, "quality of life is higher, the economies are better...educational attainment is better. So yeah, my kids are going to eat here, and you're going to have a chance to go to college, and you're going to have an opportunity to live where we're

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Summary of Tim Walz (cont'd)

working on reducing carbon emissions. Oh, and by the way, you're going to have personal incomes that are higher, and you're going to have health insurance. So if that's where they want to label me, I'm more than happy to take the label."

Right-wing reactionary politicians have claimed to represent ordinary Americans since the time of the passage of the Voting Rights Act—on August 6, 1965, exactly 59 years ago today—by insisting that a government that works for communities is a "socialist" plan to elevate undeserving women and racial, ethnic, and gender minorities at the expense of hardworking white men.

Historically, though, rural America has quite often been the heart of the country's progressive politics, and the Midwest has had a central place in that progressivism. Walz reintegrates that history with today's Democratic Party.

That reintegration has left the Republicans flatfooted. Trump and J.D. Vance expected to continue their posturing as champions of the common man, but on that front the credentials of a New York real estate developer who inherited millions of dollars and of a Yale-educated venture capitalist pale next to a Nebraska-born schoolteacher. Bryan Metzger, politics reporter at *Business Insider*, pointed out that J.D. Vance tried to hit Walz as a "San Francisco-style liberal," but while Vance lived in San Francisco as a venture capitalist between 2013 and 2017, Walz went to San Francisco for the first time just last month.

Head writer and producer of *A Closer Look at Late Night with Seth Meyers* Sal Gentile summed up Walz's progressive politics and community vibe when he wrote on social media: "Tim Walz will expand free school lunches, raise the minimum wage, make it easier to unionize, fix your [carburetor], replace the old wiring in your basement, spray that wasp's nest under the deck, install a new spring for your garage door and put a new chain on your lawnmower."

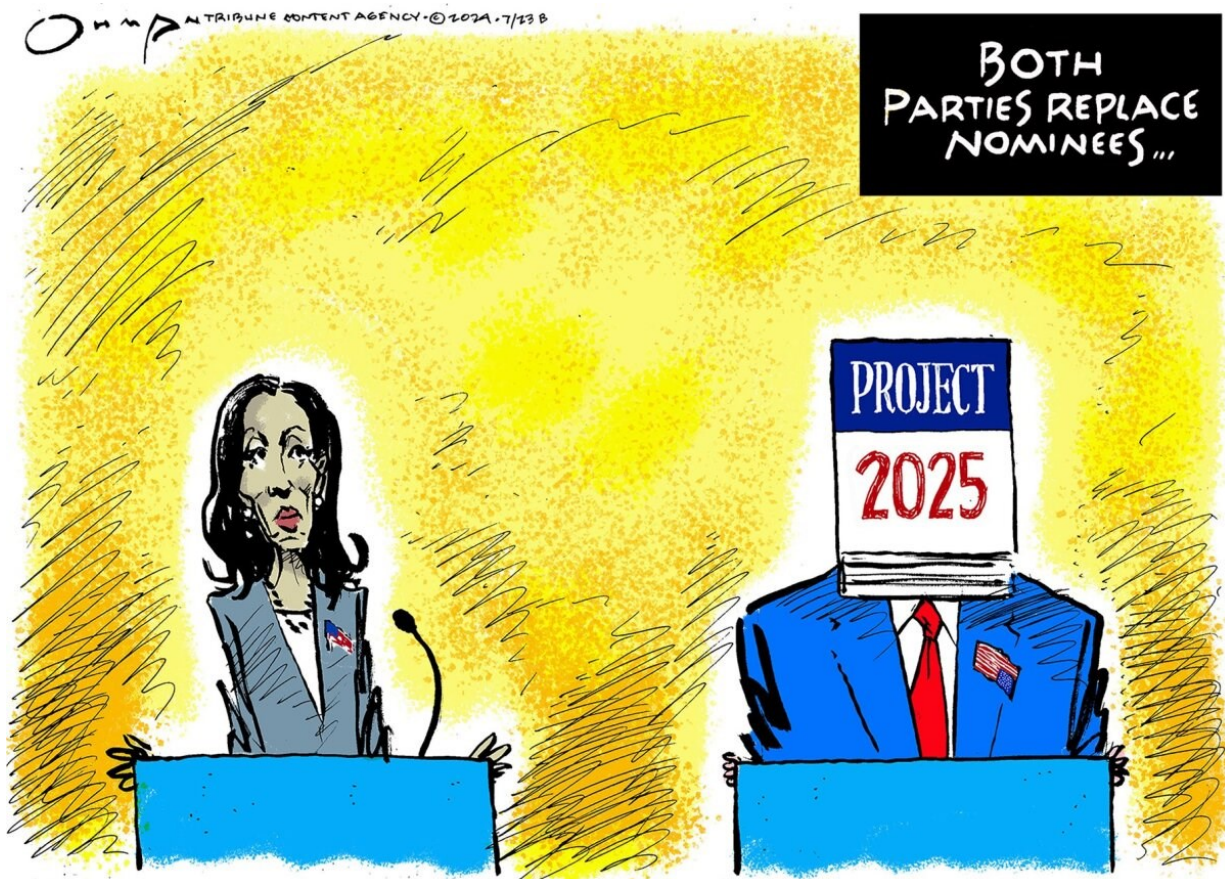
Vice President Harris had a very deep bench from which to choose a running mate, but her choice of Walz seems to have been widely popular. Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and Joe Manchin of West Virginia, who are usually on opposite sides of the party, both praised the choice, prompting Ocasio-Cortez to post: "Dems in disconcerting levels of array."

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Summary of Tim Walz (cont'd)

Harris and Walz held their first rally together tonight in Philadelphia, where Pennsylvania governor Josh Shapiro, who had been a top contender for the vice presidential slot, fired up the crowd. "Each of us has a responsibility to get off the sidelines, to get in the game, and to do our part," he said. "Are you ready to do your part? Are you ready to form a more perfect union? Are you ready to build an America where no matter what you look like, where you come from, who you love, or who you pray to, that this will be a place for you? And are you ready to look the next president of the United States in the eye and say, 'Hello, Madam President?' I am too, so let's get to work!"

Pennsylvania is a crucial state, and Shapiro issued a statement offering his "enthusiastic support" to the ticket. He pledged to work to unite Pennsylvanians behind my friends Kamala Harris and Tim Walz and defeat Donald Trump."



Joyful Warriors

Joyful Warriors

Harris and Walz are upending nine years of angry politics

Dan Rather and Team Ready

Aug 12



For the past nine years Americans have been subjected to a political reality suffused with anger and acrimony. Ever since Donald Trump entered the political arena, he has been in fighting mode. His anger is ever present. For many of us, it's also incredibly tiring. Almost a decade on, the act is getting — like Trump — a little old and a lot stale. And if it was possible, this time around the former president is angrier than before. His temperament has hung over our nation like a persistent dark cloud.

In trying to explain why Kamala Harris and her running mate, Tim Walz, seem to have broken the spell of negativity, it may be as simple as they're in a heck of a lot better mood than Trump. Rays of sunshine rather than dark clouds are the order of the day.

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Joyful Warriors (cont'd)

How did the Democratic ticket get such a quick boost in the polls? Perhaps it's because Harris and Walz look like they're having a good time. Democrats, at least for the moment, are positive, happy, and looking forward. Or maybe voters are just tired of it all. Let's don't overthink this.

Harris's entrance into the race injected crucial energy into a campaign that was limping at best. But it is more than that. Democrats, who were resigned to Biden as their failing candidate, were euphoric with relief when Harris hit the ground not just running, but running to win.

The addition of the avuncular Walz has extended the honeymoon. At their first joint appearance a week ago, he thanked her for "bringing back the joy." She smiles and laughs unabashedly, and her legion of supporters is right there with her. She very clearly enjoys the work of being a presidential candidate, and that is infectious. Harris has taken this idea a step further and dubbed the two "joyful warriors."

The juxtaposition of soft and hard is no accident. As joyful warriors, the two are able to stand up to the bullies on the other side with a glint in their eyes. They can call out Trump and his running mate, JD Vance, on their hate-filled rhetoric and alternative facts with big smiles on their faces. If they fight fire with fire or, in this case, hate with hate, it could turn off a lot of voters, especially those who are still making up their minds.

Donald Trump hasn't gotten that memo. He and his campaign have been knocked back on their heels. Twenty-one days ago, he thought he had the election in the bag. Then everything changed. He was unprepared ... for his new opponent and for the optimism she has kindled. His tendency toward rage-fueled incoherence has been amped up by her genial ease on the campaign trail.

In an attempt to wrest the spotlight away from Harris, Trump held a news conference last week where he not only didn't make any news, but he spent most of his 64 minutes in front of microphones lying. According to NPR, which analyzed the appearance, Trump told 162 lies. That's 2.5 falsehoods per minute. And his demeanor was anything but sunny. He was accusatory, scowling, and distressed. *The Washington Post's* Matt Bai suggested that Trump's motto could be "Don't worry, be angry."

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Joyful Warriors (cont'd)

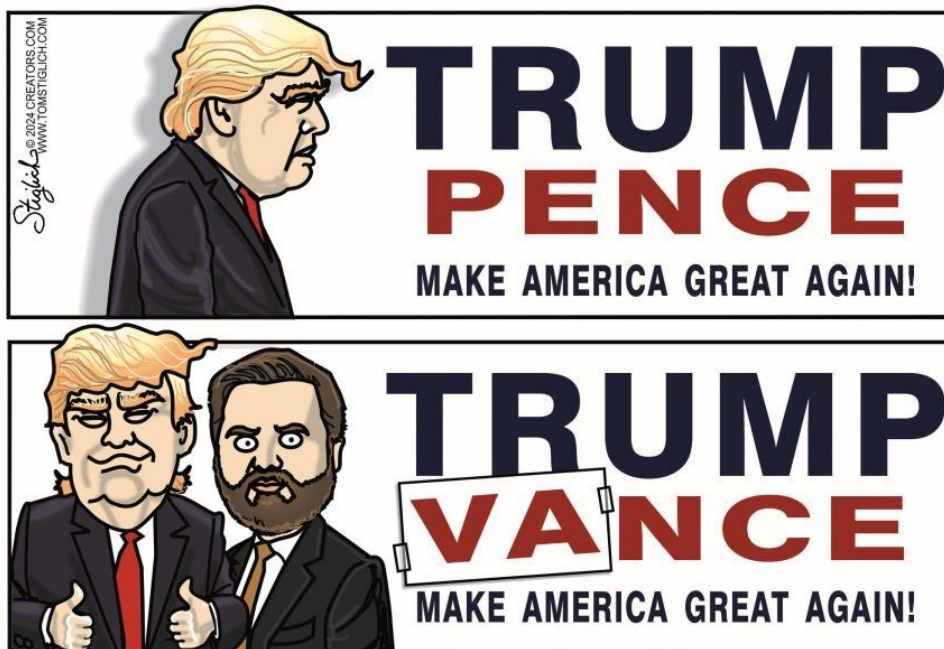
Things likely won't improve for Trump in the short term. The Democratic National Convention takes place next week in Chicago. With the Democrats as unified as they are, the convention should be a lovefest for Harris and Walz with an appreciative nod to Biden's decades of service to the country.

Then we hit the longest two months in politics. With the conventions behind them, the summer over, and Election Day looming, the candidates will do nothing but campaign and try to sway that very small constituency of fence-sitters who will decide the election. The margins in this race are slim at best.

Democrats will need more than smiles and positivity. Harris and Walz will need to articulate policies for how they plan to govern.

The next president will almost certainly be the candidate who can get out the vote. History has shown it is far easier to do that when voters are enthusiastically for their candidate, rather than simply voting against the other person.

I'm grateful I get to witness Harris's candidacy ... this real-time civics lesson, that is playing out in packed arenas all over the country. It's a much-needed balm to an electorate exhausted from almost a decade of grievance politics. It is also a joyful shot across the bow at a man who is determined to end our democracy that has endured for almost 250 years.



Tom O'Brien's Op-Ed

As I gear up for this week's Democratic National Convention in Chicago, I find myself reflecting on our past month here in Lancaster County — and the energy, enthusiasm and sheer joy we've felt since Vice President Kamala Harris entered the race for president.

Kamala Harris and Tim Walz have shown us that elections don't have to be a contest of who scares you the most, but who gives you hope and who will make your life better. Together, they've put forth a forward-looking vision that gets at the heart of what it means to be an American: to invest in communities, not insult them; to unite people, not divide them; to follow the rules, work hard and leave no one behind. Their vision has generated overwhelming support from the people of Lancaster County — we've seen it every day, in the phone calls we make and at the doors we knock.

More than once, our volunteers have met folks who previously weren't inclined to vote, but now wish to sign up for their own volunteer shifts to get out the vote. On block-walking shifts, we've been approached by dozens of strangers, asking for Harris-Walz yard signs and occasionally donning homemade Kamala T-shirts. Across Lancaster County, we've seen people rally around this ticket and its vision of a future in which people don't just get by, but get ahead.

Now, Lancaster County isn't the first place you'd expect to see an outpouring of support for a Democratic presidential nominee. But people have watched former President Donald Trump alienate and betray our community with harmful policies, divisive rhetoric, disregard for the rule of law, and disrespect for our nation and the democracy we all cherish. And they want nothing to do with it.

I've met staunch Republicans who can't stomach voting for Trump after he enabled the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol and now dangles pardons over the convicted rioters' heads. I've seen independents disgusted by Trump bragging about overturning *Roe v. Wade* and fearful that he will ban abortion nationwide if returned to the White House. I've watched middle-of-the-road voters tell their neighbors about the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025, a blueprint for a second Trump presidency. I've also heard those voters share their concerns about Trump's plans for the Affordable Care Act and Medicare. They know his plans are too extreme for Lancaster County.

The truth is, Trump doesn't care about communities like ours because he doesn't understand us. Trump doesn't know what it's like to sit up late at night trying to figure out how to pay the bills — and hopefully put a little away, too.

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Tom O'Brien's Op-Ed (cont'd)

That is exactly why he abandoned us in his first term. He let factories that were institutions in Pennsylvania shutter because jobs were shipped overseas. He dragged us along with the promise of a transformative infrastructure bill, only to deliver major tax cuts to his billionaire golf partners while forcing working families to foot the bill.

Lancaster County deserves a president who not only listens to us, but reflects our values — and that person is Vice President Harris. It was Harris and Joe Biden who actually delivered that transformational infrastructure bill, which we see every day in our roads, bridges and airports. It was Harris who helped create new jobs in our state, save our pensions and lower health care costs — including prescription costs — for older Pennsylvanians. And it is Harris who will keep fighting to deliver for communities such as Lancaster County.

What happens here in the commonwealth this November will quite literally decide the fate of the next four years. This election will be close, but Lancaster is going to be the force that helps to elect Harris and Walz.

In Chicago, I will be joining the other delegates from the 11th Congressional District — state Rep. Izzy Smith-Wade-El, Lancaster Mayor Danene Sorace, Lancaster City Council member Janet Diaz and Dr. Efrem Magtagnob — to witness history.

Together, we are going to organize and mobilize behind Vice President Harris and Gov. Walz — and we are going to win.

Tom O'Brien is the chair of the Lancaster County Democratic Committee. He was previously the president of the Manheim Township Board of Commissioners.

Join our General Meeting on Wednesday, September 25th

10 AM Cultural Center Education Room

Guest speakers are:

Bob Rudy, Democratic candidate for PA State General
Assembly

Trex Proffitt, Democratic candidate for PA Senate

Jim Atkinson, Democratic candidate for US Congress

Don't miss these speakers!

Coming Events

**Join our
Understanding Democracy Series
on Tuesday, September 17th
10 AM Cultural Center Education Room**

Project 2025: Overall Themes and Key Elements

Project 2025 is an initiative organized by the Heritage Foundation with the aim of promoting a collection of conservative and right-wing policy proposals to reshape the United States government and consolidate executive power should Donald Trump win the 2024 presidential election.

We will look at some overall themes that are woven through the Project 2025 document and then focus on some of the elements that seem most worthy of our attention. One theme that permeates the document is a Christian and biblical worldview. We will start with a video produced for a Continuing Care Community in Colorado and follow that with a discussion of the issues raised.

**on Tuesday September 24th
10 AM Cultural Center Education Room**

How Trauma Shapes How We Handle Divisive Subjects With Others

We live in a time when almost everything has become politically charged. More and more people are afraid to express their opinions or vocally support their preferred candidates for fear of being verbally or physically attacked. How can we move beyond this? How can we have productive discussions while treating people with respect?

Our guest speaker, Amber Martin, will help us answer these questions and help move us beyond feeling afraid, angry, or defeated by emotionally fueled counter-opinions. Amber is our elected county Treasurer, a former teacher and has held several other elected offices. She is also a Certified Mediator and owns Your Family Resolutions, which provides custody mediation and pregnancy support services to families in need.

We hope you can join us. All are welcome.

How Do You Pronounce Her Name?



It's pronounced like

"Comma, La."

Thanks to @nycjayjay on
Threads for this one

How'd you like to be our next Membership Chairperson?

We're looking for candidates to take over being our Dems Plus Club Membership Chairperson.

The objective of the role of Membership Chair is to recruit, maintain and grow Club membership. This entails recruiting new members, following-up with new visitors and prospective new members, welcoming new members, maintaining a list of current members, following up with those who have not yet committed to renew their membership. It also includes getting to know recruits and finding areas of interest for their Club participation.

This opening is effective January 1, 2025. Interested candidates should contact Jen Porter at 717-464-4449 or jenporter@comcast.net.

How'd you like to be our next Webmaster?

We're looking for candidates to take over being our Dems Plus Club webmaster. Maybe your son or daughter would be interested.

The objective of the role of the webmaster is to create and maintain our Dems Club website. This opening is effective January 1, 2025. Interested candidates should contact Jen Porter at 717-464-4449 or jenporter@comcast.net.

Water Street Ministries Recap

Water Street Ministries Recap

Fifteen of us embarked on our trip to Water Street Ministries On July 31st.

Led by Keith Stetter and his partner, Dominic Tuttle, we split up into two separate groups for our tour. We started in the dining hall, a spacious, sun-filled room with an open kitchen and serving areas for food selection. This is where people



come together from all walks of life to talk about their day and the challenges they've faced.

Kevin then took us to the concierge area where guests can check-in and residents can find out what's going on that day. Permanent residents are housed in this large building, with apartment-like setups for moms with children to double rooms for singles.

From there we walked around the corner and saw the medical facilities which included two dental examination rooms and a physicians exam room. They were absolutely immaculate, as was the entire facility!



Water Street Ministries Recap (cont'd)

We then walked over to the new Provident Place which is used to provide overnight shelter for men and women (separately). Cots are lined up in rows with hand-stitched quilts on them. Lockers are available for securely stowing personal belongings while simultaneously charging up their cell phones! This newly refurbished



building was implemented in late 2019, just in time of the Covid-19 pandemic. It contains industrial washers and driers, and has shower and bathroom facilities that look like new.

As we wrapped up our tour, we noticed this small garden area with seating on the back side of the complex. They have truly used every bit of available space to their advantage!



We still have a few openings for our September 11th tour.

Contact Ross Fairweather to register: 717-405-8447 or rossfair63@gmail.com. Due to limited parking at Water Street Ministries, you will be picked up by a volunteer driver near your residence and returned by 12:30 pm.

General Meeting Minutes 08-28-2024

Willow Valley Dems Plus General Meeting August 28, 2024

President Jen Porter opened the meeting at 10 a.m. by thanking member Margaret Babb for her creation of PA Blue Wave bracelets on sale at the meeting. All bracelets were purchased, but Margaret plans to create more.

President Porter next introduced guest speaker Izzy Smith Wade-El, PA State House Representative for District 49.

Guest Speaker: Rep. Wade-El gave a brief background of his education, his work in therapeutic counseling and programs to combat poverty. He served on City Council for five years and with the Lancaster County Homelessness Coalition. In November 2022, he was elected to his seat in the PA State House and is running unopposed in 2024. He then spoke of current projects.

- There is a need to address lack of affordable housing in Lancaster, especially for those over 65.
- The recent Democratic National Convention displayed the spirit of energy and support for those running in the November 2024 election, an event he termed a “moment in history.”
- The Get Out the Vote effort includes a bilingual canvassing program to knock on over 30,000 doors. He encouraged all registered Democrats to vote.

Following his talk, Rep. Wade-El opened the floor for questions and further discussion.

- Pennsylvania’s approach to affordable housing is hampered by resistance to state-wide zoning. This resistance creates inequality in availability of affordable housing.
- The Democratic Party needs to appeal to rural farmers to cross the boundaries since they share many of the basic values of the Party.
- Regulations are needed in the construction of manufactured housing communities often owned by out-of-state corporations.

President Porter thanked Rep. Wade-El for his time and informative talk.

Business Meeting

Treasury/Membership: President Porter reported the balance as \$6,420.27 and current membership of 252, including 67 new members. **Motion** by Susan Highfield that the Club donate \$500 to Water Street Mission for its work with the homeless in Lancaster. Barbara Bonanno seconded. **Motion carried.**

Advocacy: Barbara Bonanno explained the current projects:

- Phone calls to registered Democrats in Willow Valley who have not joined the Club have been completed.
- The first batch of post cards to Lampeter-Strasburg Democrats who have never voted by mail with instructions have been completed.
- Get Out the Vote cards from Grandmothers for a Brighter Future to support the candidacy of Bob Casey will be mailed September.
- In October, “Post Cards to Swing States” will be mailed encouraging all Democrats to vote.

General Meeting Minutes 08-28-2024

New Business: President Porter

- President Porter thanked member Jerry Henige for his work providing information sessions on Project 2025. Three sessions were held in August with two scheduled for September (9/17 and 9/24) and two in October (10/15 and 10/23). All sessions are held in the Cultural Center Education Room at 10 a.m.
- A webmaster is needed for the website. President Porter invited those present to consider the post and possibly to ask if a child or grandchild would be interested.
- The Lancaster County Democratic Committee needs immediate help with data entry and is seeking volunteers.
- A second field trip to Water Street Mission will be held Wednesday, September 11. Contact Ross Fairweather to sign up.
The West Lampeter Fair will be held Wednesday – Friday, September 25-27. Volunteers to man the Democrats table may sign up with SignUpGenius notice from Annabelle Simpson's email.

Upcoming Events:

Wednesday, Sept. 11, field trip to Water Street Mission

Wednesday, Sept. 25, general meeting 10 a.m. Cultural Center Education Room with speakers Trex Proffitt and Bob Rudy (confirmed) and possibly Jim Atkinson.

Wednesday-Friday, Sept. 25-27, West Lampeter Fair

Wednesday, Oct. 30, general meeting, possible round table discussion about Project 2025.

Lucy Painter, Secretary