

# DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF WILLOW VALLEY

## NEWSLETTER

### January 2025

Paid for by Democrat Club of Willow Valley  
Treasurer, Steve Wright  
Editor Ross Fairweather (rossfair63@gmail.com)



## Addressing the Issues

### IN THIS ISSUE

#### Political News:

Honored to be by Your Side	2
Where is this Leading?	4
How to Survive in '25	9

#### Club/Local News:

Coming Events	13
Minutes	14

If you are not already on our mailing list, contact Jen Porter at [jenporter@comcast.net](mailto:jenporter@comcast.net).

# Honored to be by Your Side

## I am honored to be by your side in this fight.

Robert B. Hubbell      January 18, 2025

[https://roberthubbell.substack.com/?utm\\_campaign=email-home&r=19iva&utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_medium=email](https://roberthubbell.substack.com/?utm_campaign=email-home&r=19iva&utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email)

One of the most challenging tasks in writing this newsletter is settling on a title for each edition. That is especially so for today's edition. Finding the right words on the eve of the inauguration of the first president to attempt a coup is difficult. I considered the following titles for today's edition, all of which reflect some aspect of this fraught moment in our history:

*"A republic, if you can keep it."* (Benjamin Franklin)

Meeting the moment. (Various sources)

*"Never surrender."* (Winston Churchill)

The Great Capitulation (Various sources)

*"The law of the land."* (Joe Biden)

*"This is where we make our stand."* ([Carl Sagan.](#))

Instead, I just want to say that I am honored to be by your side in the coming fight.

People who care about our nation and its great charter are filled with conflicting emotions on the eve of an inauguration that will be equal parts desecration of the Constitution and mockery of the rule of law.

But it is worse than that. The inauguration will be an affront to the very idea of America. A nation born of an effort to free itself from a king and his aristocracy will come perilously close to recreating those royal offices in the Capitol Rotunda on Monday.

Oligarchs will preside over the installation of their Sun(tanned) King, who serves at their pleasure, a vassal of the billionaire class. Members of the working class will be forgotten, relegated to their status as subjects of the realm who exist to be taxed.

The inauguration has a singular purpose, which is prescribed by the Constitution: To swear loyalty and faithfulness to the Constitution. Trump's oath will become a lie the moment it is uttered. His Inauguration will be a show of garish pomp and circumstance, bread and circuses, smoke and mirrors.

Cont'd next page

## Honored to be by Your Side (cont'd)

Leaders should rise in revulsion and contempt at the unholy sight. Instead, they will attend inaugural balls, smartly commenting on the weather and Melania's dress, pretending not to notice the dire state of democracy. *"After all,"* they will think, *"Democracy is for the little people. We are above all that. Trump is king, we are protected, and the people were duped once again. Life is good (for us)."*

And yet somehow, we must not despair, we must not surrender, we must not give up. At the very least, we must endure, we must stand as witnesses to what is to come. That will be enough. If we can hold onto democracy, not quit, and not look away, the world will appear entirely different in four years.

Leaders should rise in revulsion and contempt at the unholy sight. Instead, they will attend inaugural balls, smartly commenting on the weather and Melania's dress, pretending not to notice the dire state of democracy. *"After all,"* they will think, *"Democracy is for the little people. We are above all that. Trump is king, we are protected, and the people were duped once again. Life is good (for us)."*

And yet somehow, we must not despair, we must not surrender, we must not give up. At the very least, we must endure, we must stand as witnesses to what is to come. That will be enough. If we can hold onto democracy, not quit, and not look away, the world will appear entirely different in four years.

But for me—and I hope for you, too—it is not enough to endure. We must fight in whatever way we can to preserve democracy. In the states, in counties, and in cities. We must contest school board elections, elect judges and justices, and regain control of state legislatures. We must note every mean-spirited, selfish, short-sighted action taken by vulnerable legislators in Congress. We must begin to prepare for the 2026 midterms on Monday, January 20, 2025.

The battle to come will not be easy. Some in the Democratic party believe the way forward is to assign blame and spot issues without offering meaningful solutions. Leave them in the dust as they chase their consulting contracts and cable-tv hits.

It is time to set aside our grief and disappointment. It is time to act. Expressing outrage is necessary and good so long as it is strategic and purposeful. Unchanneled rage and despair will discourage others. Righteous indignation with a goal will move us forward.

It is time to undertake the difficult, thankless, sacred work of reclaiming democracy. Every generation must do so. It is our turn. I will be in the fight every step of the way. And I am honored to be by your side.

# Where Is This Leading?

## Where is this Leading?

Joyce Vance

Jan 28

[Where Is This Leading? - Civil Discourse with Joyce Vance](#)

Late today, Donald Trump's acting attorney general fired the prosecutors who worked on the January 6 and classified documents prosecutions against Trump. Acting Attorney General James McHenry told the people he fired that he "does not trust" them "to assist in faithfully implementing the President's agenda."



Office of the Attorney General  
Washington, D. C. 20530

FROM: THE ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL *JM*

Subject: Notice of Removal from Federal Service

This letter provides official notice that you are being removed from your position at the Department of Justice, and from the federal service, effective immediately.

As President Trump declared on his first day back in office, "[t]he American people have witnessed the previous administration engage in a systematic campaign against its perceived political opponents, weaponizing the legal force of numerous Federal law enforcement agencies ... against those perceived political opponents in the form of investigations, prosecutions, civil enforcement actions, and other related actions." Nowhere was that effort more salient than in the unprecedented prosecutions the Department of Justice vigorously pursued against President Trump himself.

You played a significant role in prosecuting President Trump. The proper functioning of government critically depends on the trust superior officials place in their subordinates. Given your significant role in prosecuting the President, I do not believe that the leadership of the Department can trust you to assist in implementing the President's agenda faithfully.

As a result, pursuant to Article II of the Constitution and the laws of the United States, your employment with the Department of Justice is hereby terminated, and you are removed from federal service effective immediately.

If applicable, you may have a right to file an appeal of this removal with the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) within 30 days of the effective date of the removal action. For more information on how to file an appeal with the MSPB, please visit [www.mspb.gov](http://www.mspb.gov).

Cont'd next page

## Where Is This Leading? (cont'd)

An administration can't fire career federal prosecutors based on their perceived political loyalties. Prosecutors can be fired based on their conduct or performance if they are given notice, an opportunity to improve, and sufficient time to do so. But that's not what happened here. They were fired because they were assigned to prosecute Donald Trump.

The real witch hunt is here. And it's a warning to all other federal employees to mind their loyalty if they want to keep their jobs. That's the point. Trump knows he can't lawfully fire these people in this manner. He wants to make the point that he's willing to do it, in hopes others will stay in line.

Also today, the interim U.S. Attorney in Washington, D.C., who identifies himself in his Twitter bio as "@EagleEdMartin" has launched a probe into the 250+ January 6 cases the office prosecuted. His announcement follows Trump's day one executive order on "[weaponization of the federal government](#)" that directed the attorney general to search out what he characterized as misbehavior in Biden's DOJ and asked for "recommendations for appropriate remedial actions." In an email to staff earlier today, Martin [called the cases](#) "a great failure for our office" and said they need to get to "the bottom of it."

"You played a significant role in prosecuting President Trump," the letter said, according to parts read to [NBC News](#). "The proper functioning of government critically depends on the trust superior officials place in their subordinates. Given your significant role in prosecuting the president, I do not believe that the leadership of the department can trust you to assist in implement the president's agenda faithfully."

This is an extraordinary step for a U.S. Attorney to take. My former U.S. Attorney colleague from Michigan and #SistersInLaw podcast cohost Barb McQuade characterized it like this, "Prosecutors did nothing wrong in bringing obstruction cases just because the Supreme Court subsequently interpreted the statute to require a connection to documents, despite no such limitation in the text. Besides, Martin has all the public records he needs to determine who participated in these good faith prosecutions. By assigning supervisors to conduct an internal investigation, he creates an impression of misconduct. Trump and his allies often complain about witch hunts. This is what a witch hunt really looks like." These cases were indicted by grand juries. Judges accepted guilty pleas in open court or juries convicted the defendants. Some of the cases were affirmed on appeal. Going back to revisit them now is politics in a place where it doesn't belong, the Justice Department.

There are ways to assess and punish misconduct by prosecutors. The Office of Professional Responsibility investigates allegations of professional misconduct involving Department attorneys. DOJ's inspector general has jurisdiction to look at violations of fraud, abuse, and integrity laws that govern DOJ employees, and their investigations can lead to criminal

Cont'd next page

## Where Is This Leading? (cont'd)

prosecution or civil or administrative action in appropriate cases. Those offices intervene in cases where they see reason to open an investigation. But political appointees in a new administration don't have the authority to fire prosecutors just because they worked on cases they were assigned to. It's an abrupt capture of the Justice Department by the White House and deeply alarming. As with the inspectors general, Trump is violating the law to test just how far he can go before there is opposition.

Past history suggests Trump backs down when challenged forcefully. The question in this critical moment is whether the people with the power to do so, largely on Capitol Hill and in the courts, will stand in his way. The rule of law is meant to be a shield for democracy in moments like this. But Iowa Republican Chuck Grassley, a member of the Senate's inspector general caucus, offered this weak tea: "There may be good reason the IGs were fired. We need to know that if so. I'd like further explanation from President Trump. Regardless, the 30 day detailed notice of removal that the law demands was not provided to Congress." Grassley, who proudly announced he had joined the Senate's IG caucus, saying, "Inspectors General play an essential role in protecting taxpayer dollars and rooting out waste, fraud and abuse in the executive branch. I rely heavily on these independent watchdogs when carrying out my constitutional responsibility of oversight, and I'm glad to join Senator Ernst's effort to support their invaluable work," didn't announce any intent to support them now that push has come to shove.

Tonight I had intended to write more about Trump's pardon of the January 6 defendants, and these new developments highlight the point I wanted to make: the outrage here is the attack on democracy.

Much of the initial outburst following the pardons came from people in law enforcement and others who were upset that the pardons meant there were no consequences for assaulting police officers. That was certainly one impact of the pardons, and deeply disturbing. But it shouldn't obscure the fact that Trump pardoned people who deliberately attacked democracy itself and that they did so on his behalf. The goal of January 6 was to keep Trump, who had lost the election, in power. He rewarded the people who attacked democracy with pardons. The lawlessness is front and center in the pardons, as it is in firing the IGs and in firing DOJ employees. It's all about loyalty to Trump, and you can't have that and a functional democracy living in the same room.

The Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), which supported Trump in [2016](#), [2020](#), and [2024 criticized](#) him because the pardons included violent rioters who attacked police officers. "Crimes against law enforcement are not just attacks on individuals or public safety," the FOP's joint statement with the International Association of Police Chiefs [said](#). "They are

Cont'd next page

## Where Is This Leading? (cont'd)

attacks on society and undermine the rule of law ... When perpetrators of crimes, especially serious crimes, are not held fully accountable, it sends a dangerous message that the consequences for attacking law enforcement are not severe, potentially emboldening others to commit similar acts of violence.”

The point about police is well-taken. And even more so when we're talking about an attack on democracy.

Trump did an interview last week with Sean Hannity on Fox News. He explained the pardons like this: “They were in there for three and a half years ... treated like nobody's ever been treated. So badly. Treated like the worst criminals in history ... The other thing is this: some of those people with the police, true. But they were very minor incidents. They get built up by a couple of fake guys who are on CNN all the time.” The whole narrative at that point was about police and pardons; democracy had been forgotten.

We cannot allow Trump, or even well-intentioned concerns about attacks on police, to obscure what these crimes and these pardons were really about. Motive is not an element the government has to prove for most federal crimes, but here, the motive was apparent throughout. We understood it when [Trump told the Proud Boys](#) to stand back and stand by, when he summoned his followers to Washington, D.C., on January 6, [tweeting](#), “will be wild,” and when he spoke to them at the rally on the Ellipse, claiming the election had been stolen from him and [telling them](#), “We fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore.”

That same level of lawlessness and disregard for democracy is back. It's happening in front of us again. In 2020 the voters went to work, and the courts held. Trump is trying to ensure that doesn't happen again.

What can you do? Don't be quiet. Talk with people about why it isn't okay for a president to routinely operate by breaking the laws. And know it for what it is: Trump could have fired the IGs by giving Congress 30 days notice of his reasons, and he could have transferred prosecutors into minor roles like prosecuting misdemeanors in the District of Columbia. Instead he chose to proceed lawlessly, threatening anyone to tell him he can't. And, it's not just the outright lawlessness. We're seeing the fallout from executive orders now, and we know that it's as widespread as stopping treatment for cancer patients and canceling job offers made to people who wanted to become public servants. It's time for Americans, even the ones who supported Trump, to raise their voices and say they didn't vote for any of this, before their voices don't matter at all. For us here, we can provoke those conversations, and of course, we have to write to our elected officials and make sure they know we're watching what they're doing at this critical moment.

Cont'd next page

## Where Is This Leading? (cont'd)



Aaron Rugar ✓

2h ...

Trump to House Republicans at his Doral club: "I've raised a lot of money for the next race that I assume I can't use for myself, but I'm not 100 percent sure. I think I'm not allowed to run again. I'm not sure."



42 9 8

[This video, posted by Aaron Rugar, is from today.](#) Trump, again, is contemplating whether he can run a third time. It's not a joke; it is clearly something that stays on his mind. The Senate abdicated its constitutional obligation to engage in advise and consent and confirmed Pete Hegseth. Now, Trump is violating laws regarding who he can fire from government service and how he can do so. If there is no push back, where does it all end? Where is this leading? I think we know the answer.

We're in this together,

Joyce

# How to Survive in '25

 The  
Borowitz  
Report



By Andy Borowitz

Jan 1

[How to Survive in '25 - by Andy Borowitz](#)

There's no way around it: it's 2025. And that means we're just days away from Elon Musk's presidency.

If you're feeling anxious about the U.S. government being run by a man whose rockets regularly explode on the launching pad, I understand.

I want to help keep you sane this year—and the next four.

## How to Survive in '25 (cont'd)

I'm not recommending that you disengage from the world, swallow fistfuls of gummies, or go on a four-year hot yoga retreat. I'm offering advice to make you calmer and stronger—and better equipped to do the important work ahead.

A few weeks ago, I published an essay called [In Search of Sanity](#), in which I recommended, among other things, the Serenity Prayer:

*God give me the serenity to accept things which cannot be changed; Give me courage to change things which must be changed; And the wisdom to distinguish one from the other.*

TBR community members contributed many insightful responses to my essay. Here are some of them:

---

The Serenity Prayer is really a recap of Stoic thinking (sorry, Christians).

Epictetus: "There is only one way to happiness and that is to cease worrying about things which are beyond the power of our will."

Old Epi (as his friends were wont to call him) was keen on the notion of "what is up to us, and what is not up to us." Sweat the stuff that you can do something about; getting overwrought about the rest of the nonsense is futile. Do you really think your worrying is going to change Trump suddenly from unhinged to "hinged"?

Figuring out the difference is not all that hard, but it takes some work, for sure.

---

I'd only add to your serenity recipe some of the prescriptions from Timothy Snyder in his pocket-sized book, *On Tyranny: "Stand Out. Be Careful With Language & Listen for Dangerous Words. Investigate. Get Outside. Make New Friends and March With Them. Be As Courageous as You Can."* And—support institutions that count, whether they be journalistic, non-profits, local government or whatever makes sense. We can't afford to sit back. Ever.

---

Cont'd next page

## How to Survive in '25 (cont'd)

I have a suggestion which I'm trying to get myself to take a little more often: instead of listening to NPR on your earbuds or your home radio, put on MUSIC. Do you remember music? It's wonderful! Try it sometime.

---

I would add that, in the end, we have as individuals more power over and access to change than we often realize. Look how South Korea just dealt with the martial law situation! Mika and Joe now defend their trip to grovel at Trump's feet with "That's our job!" I leave it up to MSNBC and the network to accept that as a proper validation of their FL trip (love your note that their show is "Fox for vegans"). The viewers took flight and if they stay away the ad dollars will follow suit. This type of action/reaction goes for any well thought out strategy to "defend" our rights, our liberty and our Democracy. It just takes a little bit more thinking and a proactive rather than passive (as in victim) attitude!

---

I'm 66, and have a lifetime of anxiety and depression behind me with lots of trauma. Along with many years of therapy, you don't want to know how many, I started mindfulness meditation training with the Headspace app three years ago. And the main point if mindfulness, is that all we have is right now. The past is gone, and the future never arrives. None of us know what's going to happen, we absolutely do need to focus on the micro, and do what we can to change our small corner every day. For me that means being kind, helping others when I can, and doing my best to live in the moment. Simple, but not easy.

---

I've been trying to tell my mourning friends that they're mourning before the body's dead. I believe Trump will cause great damage, and hurt a lot of people, but I have hope that the midterms will dull the pain, and in four years the Trump era will slowly start to diminish. I don't think Vance or certainly not DJ Jr. have the personal charisma to keep his rabid followers as riled up. I could be wrong, but history shows us that most political movements reach a peak, then subside. Hell, even the Berlin wall fell.

Cont'd next page

## How to Survive in '25 (cont'd)

How about Epictetus? Basic premise:

There are only two things in life that matter:

First: Figure out in any situation what is the best thing to do.

Second: Do it.

---

And if none of that helps, perhaps this photo of my handsome friend Cookie will:

Happy New Year, my friends! We're going to get through this. Together.

Love,

Andy



[https://www.borowitzreport.com/p/how-to-survive-25?utm\\_campaign=email-half-](https://www.borowitzreport.com/p/how-to-survive-25?utm_campaign=email-half-)

## Coming Events (cont'd)

### **Understanding Our Democracy**

**Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> @ 10am**

**Cultural Center Education Room**

**The State of American Democracy:**

**Panel Discussion: Joint “Understanding Our Democracy” session co-sponsored by “Racism Awareness Group” (RAG) and LGBTQ+ group.**

Join Public Education Advocates of Lancaster (PEAL) as they moderate a discussion with panelists from Etown Common Sense, Support Hempfield Schools, and Warwick United about the impact the Independence Law Center and PA Family Institute have had on districts across the county. They'll talk about who the ILC is, what they do, and the divisions caused by their policies on LGBTQ+ students, library materials, and more.

### **Join our General Meeting**

**on Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup> 2025**

**1 PM Cultural Center Education Room**

**for our first meeting of the year.**

# Meeting Minutes

## Democratic Club of Willow Valley General Meeting January 28, 2025

### Attendance: 62

President Jen Porter opened the meeting at 1 p.m. and welcomed attendees. She then gave an overview of the State of the Club 2024 including accomplishments, finances, communications with members and non-members, membership increase, political involvement, plans for further education and speaker topics, involvement in community actions, and a reorganizing and rebranding of the Club. She also explained that the Club is in the process with the IRS to have an official name change to “Democratic Club of Willow Valley”. Until the Club receives approval from the IRS for the change, membership campaign efforts are on hold. The complete content of President Porter’s presentation is attached.

### Advocacy:

“**Jimmy Carter 2025**” President Porter has planned a monthly focus on the achievements of our late President Jimmy Carter. Each month members will receive information about concrete actions they may take to carry forth the work President Carter accomplished during his term and in his later life.

Advocacy Chair Bonanno asked attendees to contact their legislators about concerns over the Trump administration moves in the early days of his term. She has available contact information.

### New Website:

Vice-President Ross Fairweather offered a slide presentation of the new Club website: [www.DemsWVC.com](http://www.DemsWVC.com). The site is online now but needs further work to enable the membership application to work smoothly. Two avenues exist: (1) contact an experienced website creator in the area (2) contact GoDaddy, for further assistance.

Ross presented the proposed cost of further assistance from GoDaddy with a breakdown.

\$275 Premium Store Design Services – one year

\$2,799.99 Premium Store Build Fee package – one year of unlimited services

\$1,115.88 Marketing Services Basic – one year

Total \$4,191.75 with a credit for prorated purchase cost of website in October (\$1,334.97, leaving a total cost for 2025, including PA sales tax, of **\$3,028.17**

**Motion:** The Democratic Club of Willow Valley move forward with the funding of the website as presented. (Babcock/Kaufman). **Motion carried.**

Cont’d next page

# Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

## Speakers and Topics:

In July 2024 members received a questionnaire asking for ideas for topics and speakers for future meetings and *Understanding Our Democracy* sessions. **Below** is a list of the most addressed topics and the plan for meetings at which they will be presented. Topics include those covering political, educational, and other issues.

January - Understanding Our Democracy:

What happens if Trump wins? Losses? Civil War?

Democratic Policies & Strategies // How to Strengthen our Democracy

What is "Democracy?" How do we not lose it?

February - General Meeting (speaker Lissa Holland)

Public Library

March - General Meeting (speaker Jamie Arroyo, candidate for City mayor)

Local issues, local politics, local candidates

Official speaking on bills and current issues

March - Understanding Our Democracy

Role of Senate verses Executive Branch

Discussion on "Electoral College"

Supreme Court abuse

April – General Meeting

Regulations on/for PA voters

Listing of accomplishments of Local Democrats

State Issues

TBD – Understanding Our Democracy

Demographic analysis of local & State registered voters – Dems/Rep/Ind.

New WVC Club – Climate Change; see their programs via Insider

Conduct meetings via Zoom: unable to do this in the Education Room or the Ballroom

Cont'd next page

# Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

## Update to Bylaws:

A copy of the current bylaws was presented with a copy of proposed changes to be voted on in the next General Meeting in February. Changes to be voted on appear as follows in bold print:

**Name** change from “Willow Valley Democrats +” to Democratic Club of Willow Valley”

**Article II: Mission** to replace **Purpose**:

“Our mission is to tackle bread-and-butter issues while protecting and lifting up our vulnerable populations via:

Offering educational programs aimed at widespread issues;

Providing guest speakers who keep us informed;

Endorsing local Democratic candidates and providing financial support;

Offering a scholarship to local high-school students;

Keeping our constituents informed through monthly newsletters;

Promoting more progressive legislation and government at all levels.

**Article III: Membership**: to read “All eligible voters of party affiliation, who support the purpose of the Club, **who are Residents of Willow Valley or SmartLife members,** **and** who reside in the **Lakes or Locust precincts** are qualified for membership. Interested parties may request membership in the Club by making an annual, voluntary contribution. Any contribution is welcome, but a suggested amount will be determined by the Executive Board. Membership in the Club entitles **paid-up** members to vote on officers and vote on changes to these bylaws.

**Article IV: Officers/Executive Board**: Bullet point #2: The Vice President shall assist the President in program planning **and execution** and fulfilling the duties of the President when the President is unavailable. The Vice President may approve expenditures.

**Article V: Elections**: Officers shall be members of the Club **serving two-year terms**.

They are normally elected at the first meeting of the calendar year. The President and Secretary shall be elected in even-numbered years; the Vice President and Treasurer shall be elected in odd-numbered years. The Executive Board will nominate a slate of candidates that will be distributed by email to the membership at least two weeks prior to the election. At the meeting at which any election takes place nominations from the floor will be entertained. Officers may serve multiple terms. In the event that a vacancy does occur, the officer chosen to fill that position shall **be appointed by the President and will** serve for the remainder of that term.

Cont'd next page

# Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

These candidates will be voted on at the February 25 General Meeting.

Steve Wright – Treasurer

Ross Fairweather – Vice President

These candidates will be voted on at the February 25 General Meeting.

## **Suggestions from members attending:**

Terry Webb suggested a bus trip of members to legislators, local and U.S., to put forth our views as a group.

Barbara Bonanno urged members to contact Lloyd Smucker, Dave McCormick, and Ryan Aument (McCormick's State Director) to express their views.

**Upcoming Events:** all meetings in Education Room of Cultural Center

## ***Understanding Our Democracy:***

Tuesday, February 18, 10 a.m.: Panel discussion: joint *Understanding our Democracy* session with Racism Awareness Group and LGBTQ+

Tuesday, March 18, 10 a.m.: Minority Rule: How Our Constitution Imperils Our Democracy and how to address it.

## **General Meeting:**

Tuesday, February 25, 1 p.m. with speaker Lissa Holland, Executive Director of the Lancaster Public Library to speak on issues of censorship and acquisition.

Lucy Painter, Secretary

Cont'd next page

# Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

## State of our Club

### Overview

We supported candidates nationally as well as on the state level.

We continued our outreach efforts to increase voter turnout.

We have made great progress in educating our Willow Valley Residents.

2024 also saw the separation of Willow Valley Democrats Plus from the Lampeter-Strasburg Democratic Committee.

Willow Valley Democrats Plus has reason to celebrate some successes, but 2025 is showing that we have some challenging work ahead.

### Membership

Our membership as of December 2024 was 284.

Our membership at the close of 2023 was 181.

That increase of 103 members is due to the excellent work of Julia Powers.

She encouraged the completion of a project to call all Democrats in Willow Valley, asking them to consider club membership.

Julia and volunteers in the club made around 600 phone calls.

### Treasury

- Our beginning balance for 2024 was \$3,373.51.
- Our ending balance was \$4,934.67 (\$ 1,500 difference).
- Our 2024 expenses were \$13,481.18.
- Our members were very generous with donations of \$ 8,035.07 which facilitated our outreach efforts and candidate support.

Cont'd next page

# Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

## Donation highlights:

- May 27<sup>th</sup>: \$1000 each to our three local L-S candidates Bob Rudy State House, Trex Proffitt State Senate, Jim Atkinson US Congress.
- July 9<sup>th</sup>: \$1000 Scholarship to Bethany Helms.
- August 29<sup>th</sup>: \$500 to Water Street Mission.
- October 7<sup>th</sup>: \$2,000 Jim Atkinson, \$1,000 Trex Proffitt, \$1,000 Bob Rudy
- November 24<sup>th</sup>: Bob Rudy returned \$350 of our donation.

## Communications

- Lucy's excellent minutes of club meetings made the task of writing this address easier.
- Ross has published and distributed 11 electronic monthly club newsletters. She has also produced our slide presentations for our monthly club meetings and is currently developing our club website.

Jerry hosted his monthly *Understanding Our Democracy Series*.

Barbara coordinated postcard efforts for getting out the vote.

Seniors Taking Action

Moms Rising GOTV

Grandmothers for a Brighter Future

Fair Funding PA Schools.

We also mailed postcards to L-S voters who had not returned their mail-in ballots or had not requested their mail-in ballots.

- **202 volunteers completed 5,371 postcards.**

Julia surveyed club members in May asking for suggestions. 95 questionnaires were returned and tabulated by Julia which was quite a task. This compilation has given our club guidelines for 2025 and beyond.

Cont'd next page

# Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

## Greeters

Greeters make a huge difference at the polls. Democrats at our tables hand out sample ballots, answer questions and SMILE, giving a positive lift to voters.

- LOCUST: 28 at the Primary Election, 14 at the General Election.
- LAKES: There were 28 greeters at both our Primary Election and our General Election.

In November, Lakes and Locust greeters were sent to four precincts outside of Willow Valley (Lyndon, Lampeter, Willow Street, and Strasburg).

## Political Involvement

- We collected petition signatures to support Trex Proffitt, our write-in candidate for our State Senate seat.
- We collected signatures for our Democratic candidates on the Primary 2024 ballot.
- We mailed postcards to encourage L-S voter turnout and to support Bob Casey.

We had members who canvassed throughout the Lampeter-Strasburg district.

***Kamala Harris won the Lakes precinct by 169 votes. Harris won Locust by 31 votes.***

## Guest Speakers

- Chris Wakeley, Pennsylvania House Education Committee
- Lauren Kuntz, Willow Street Precinct
- Eugene DePasquale, Candidate for PA Attorney General
- Keith Shetter, Water Street Mission
- Mary Lou Alsentzer, Lampeter-Strasburg District Leader
- Danene Sorace, Mayor Lancaster City
- Alice Yoder, Lancaster County Commissioner
- Izzy Smith-Wade-El, Candidate for PA State House 49<sup>th</sup> District
- Bob Rudy, Candidate for PA State House 97<sup>th</sup> District
- Trex Proffitt, Candidate for PA State Senate 13<sup>th</sup> District
- Jim Atkinson, Candidate for US Congress 11<sup>th</sup> District

Cont'd next page

# Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

## Education Topics

- January - America's Working Class
- February – CAP of Lancaster County
- March - Discrimination in Healthcare
- April - Christian Nationalism
- May - K-12 Public Education Funding in PA
- June - Lead Poisoning
- August - Project 2025: A View From The States
- August - Project 2025: The Far-Reaching Consequences
- September - Project 2025: Overall Themes and Key Elements
- September - How Trauma Shapes How We Handle Divisive Subjects With Others
- October - *God & Country: A Film On Christian Nationalism*
- October - Character and Fitness for Office Matter!
- November - 2024 Election: Preliminary Review

## Community Outreach

- Our L-SHS Scholarship for Community Service was awarded in May for the 15th year in a row.
- Our club scheduled a field trip in July 2024 to Water Street Mission; sign-ups were so good we had to book a second trip in August.
- Annabelle Simpson coordinated 29 volunteers for the West Lampeter Community Fair.

## Reorganization & Rebranding

- New name and logo, mission and vision statements, business cards, stationery and banners (three horizontal, one retractable). Materials were first used at the 2025 Club Expo.
- A membership chair will be added in 2025, offloading the Treasurer.

Our board deserves our support, and we thank them for their hard work.

President	Jen Porter
Vice President	Ross Fairweather
Secretary	Lucy Painter
Treasurer	Julia Powers
Advocacy Chair	Barbara Bonanno
Education Chair	Jerry Henige

Cont'd next page

## Meeting Minutes (cont'd)

For the Record ....

- o The IRS is holding up the official change of our name due to staffing shortages.
- o This means we can't change banks (to one more affordable).
- o Our membership campaign efforts will be on hold.
- o But we can and will proceed with using our new name moving forward.

