



The Anderson County Democrat

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Spring may have sprung, but it's time to get ready for Fall!

Upcoming Events... From the Anderson County Democratic Party Chair

April 21st: Party meeting, 3rd Floor of Clinton Courthouse, Judge Elledge's courtroom at 6 PM

May 26th: Party meeting at ATLC in Oak Ridge, 109 Viking Road at 6 PM.

Don't let voting become a vague memory. By Scott Julius

I was two weeks into my trip to Egypt, not long before president Hosni Mubarak was forced from office. During a van ride across the Sinai desert from Cairo to Dahab on the Red Sea coast, I chatted with a local on board. He was about my age and by Egyptian standards fairly affluent. As we were talking about politics (President Obama came to Cairo four days after I left Egypt) he told me how frustrating it was in Egypt. Yes, they have "elections" but they're always rigged. He told me *"Egypt is a false democracy. We have voting and elections here true, but what's the point in voting? The same people and party always win. Few people see a point in even making an effort to make it to the polls."* As that conversation was in a small van in the middle of nowhere, I'm sure he felt safe to speak up. I doubt he would've said that out in public. That conversation really had an impact on me.

When I look at what the Republicans have been up to the past several years I can't help but think back on that long van ride. They're always looking for some way to keep those they don't want voting away from the polls. Whether it be minorities, college students, or any other demographic they don't like certain people voting. So what is the solution? Is it trying to appeal to these voters? Make their party more friendly and inclusive? NO! They simply make it as hard as possible for them to vote so they can maintain their ideological extremism that whisks them into power and keeps them there. We wouldn't want them to have to pay attention to those who aren't millionaires that bankroll their campaign wouldn't we?

They use many tactics to ensure elections are unfair and rigged. The most common forms have been the use of voter ID laws (my blood boils at the polls when asked for ID) and gerrymandering. Voter ID laws throw roadblocks up to make it difficult for those without ID to vote. To ensure getting the ID needed is as hard as possible, in Alabama they closed drivers license offices in primarily African-American counties. How convenient.

As for gerrymandering, that takes care of those large pesky populations of voters the Republican Party doesn't appeal to. To them, poli-



ticians should choose their voters, not vice-versa. All that's needed is to dilute their voting power so they pose no threat to them and thus can ignore their plight with no repercussions. On this front, there have been some small victories such as the *Arizona State Legislator vs Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission* Supreme Court case last summer. More work needs to be done.

Let's not let voting become a vague memory. If you don't go to the polls and help others do the same that's what it could become here. As much as I enjoyed Egypt, I wouldn't want their voting system they had at the time. It's a shame their system is what the Republicans dream of. It is not too late to stop them, but we must act now. We must never forsake our democracy to the ambitions of anti-democratic Republicans. Now, let us act....

Past issues can be found at:
www.andersoncountymocrat.com

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Anderson County Democratic Party: Respect...Inclusion...Equality

Delegate selection on March 19th

What did they say?



"Anderson County historically has been represented by Democrats. They're known for their excellent public schools. Republicans have been gutting public schools. So Anderson County should be ground zero for getting Democrats back in office." Representative Mike Stewart to *The Democrat*.

"Our politicians are blind to our problems. Being from an immigrant family, we need to be sure everyone has the chance at a better life." Melody Shekari in a brief speech to the attendees. She's running against Representative Chuck Fleishmann.

"I'm really excited to go! I'm a strong Democrat and Bernie supporter." Dale Dwarak, elected delegate for Bernie Sanders.

"Thank you to those who voted for me! This is a life dream." Dennis Patrick, elected delegate for Hillary Clinton.

On March 19th, Democrats from across the Third Congressional District gathered at Roane State in Harriman for the delegate selection convention. The purpose of this convention was to select those Democrats who would be representing our district at the national convention in Philadelphia this summer. Per the rules set by the DNC, we selected two delegates for Bernie Sanders, one male and female. For Hillary Clinton, three delegates were chosen, two males and one female.

The Sanders and Clinton supporters split into their caucuses to choose who to send. Each delegate running (after talking with the voters) gave a short speech introducing themselves and explained why they should be chosen. The votes were cast by standing when that person's name was called. Three people were present to count the votes and compare numbers.

The convention concluded with State Representative Mike Stewart (pictured above in the middle between the Sanders delegates (left) and the Clinton ones) giving a speech. He talked about the horrible Republican bills in the legislator. When talking about the rights of others, in reference to Representative John Ragan, Rep. Stewart said *"You can't win by keeping other people out"*. The importance of getting Democrats into office in Nashville was highlighted when he told us *"All it takes is having one good Democrat to help kill a horrible bill"*.

We thank Representative Stewart for his tireless service for the people of Tennessee and best of luck to the Third District delegates. Next stop Philadelphia!

Editorial: Einstein had it right. By Pat Fain

Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is insanity. President Obama is the ultimate politician. He understands both the strategic and tactical aspects of successful governance and has played the Republicans to a standstill. McConnell, Bayner and Ryan have, individually and collectively played the same hand over and over and over and have still had to stand by and watch Obama succeed anyway. Their absolute rage has only resulted in their escalation of intransigence and in the President's adjustment of tactics.

It has been a 7 year demonstration of circus clowns trying to bring down an NBA star. It is the explanation for McConnell's knee jerk announcement of refusal to hold hearings on the Supreme Court nomination. Unlike the three of them the American people are not total idiots. The "big three" have succeeded only in creating the fertile field that has nurtured Donald "Frankenstein" Trump; the insurgency of a "democratic socialist"; and the very real possibility of the first female president. It still remains to be seen if the results are a dead-in-the-water Republican party or simply the end of the Republican party.

It's a dangerous time for Democrats. There is no time to gloat. They did it to themselves, mostly out of racism and a sense of the white man's entitlement. Democrats have to stick to core values and not overplay the hand given to us by Obama. Reread how we treated the Germans and the Japanese after WWII. We helped the people survive and flourish. We were flexible and humanitarian. We needed a peaceful world then and today we need a functional political establishment at home. Let the grown-ups take back our representative democracy. The world is too dangerous otherwise. And Trump could still win.

Oak Ridge Police Chief Akagi speaks to party meeting on March 24th

The party meeting on March 24th was an eventful one! We got to hear a speech by ORPD Chief Akagi who gave us some interesting information about safety in Oak Ridge. A native of Lawrence, Kansas he has been with the ORPD for five years. After having served various roles, including with the federal government, he's glad to be back in local law enforcement. The chief enjoys local level work and says his five years here have been a fun ride. He told us about the close working relationship they have with the Department of Energy and the good communications they have with them. On a scarier note, Chief Akagi shared with us his biggest fear, an active shooter situation. It has been in the news tragically often, something not lost on him when he said, "What my biggest nightmare is, what keeps me and other ORPD officers up at night is worrying about active shooter situations". Training with the Department of Energy, schools, churches, and business in the city, as well as county for these situations are ongoing.

After Chief Akagi spoke, Melody Shekari gave a brief introduction of herself and aims to the meeting. She looks forward to running against Chuck Fleishmann and bring leadership back to the Third District once more. Representative Fleishmann isn't being held accountable she said with his unfinished projects that waste taxpayer

money. "We have a blind Congress." Ms. Shekari told us, but "This is the year we take the House back".

The meeting concluded with some party business. Party chairwoman Catherine bought us up to speed on the Anderson County Charter petition. It has enough signatures to get on the ballot in August. If this goes through, it will lay the groundwork for a charter government for Anderson County. This is being championed by our infamous county mayor Terry Frank. If it gets voted for, then a committee with a minimum of nine delegates will be selected to write the charter government. Please check out the website for this charter at <http://andersoncharter.com/>. Try to overlook the spelling and grammar errors. Also, be warned— it is misleading in how it's worded.

Finally, we nominated and elected a new secretary for the party! *The Anderson County Democrat's* own Scott Julius was nominated for the post. He accepted the role and was elected to it. "I look forward to this opportunity and will do the best I can" he says.

Thanks you to Chief Akagi and Melody Shekari for speaking as well as to all of you who came to this meeting!

Cinco de Mayo fiesta in the works...stay tuned!

Remember the fun we had at last year's Cinco de Mayo fiesta? All the good Mexican food, music with a catchy beat, and company with fellow Democrats? Well, since that went so well we are looking into doing an encore of this fiesta this year! We haven't set an exact date yet, nor do we have down exactly what we shall be doing there (maybe an auction) but this is something in the works. It looks like this will be held on an evening late in May. So stay tuned and watch this space for details!



Light Reading for the Political Junkie

1. Political Spending in this country is sky high, but disclosure of the [origins of this money is fuzzy](#)
2. The truth about the Affordable care act. [It really did get a lot of people insured!](#)
3. See something that looks odd on social media? Sounds too good/bad/far fetched to be true? [Look here](#) for clues of how to determine fact from fiction.
4. [The Republican Party debate](#) on March 29th didn't fail to embarrass this country.
5. Want to know how the rest of the world views the 2016 election? [Read this CNN article to learn more.](#)
6. [An interesting article](#) that looks at who the typical Donald Trump supporter really is. Prepare for a surprise.
7. [The Senate thinks the NRA chooses the next Supreme Court justice.](#) I never saw that in the constitution.