



# The Anderson County Democrat

The Official Voice of the Anderson County Tennessee Democratic Party June 2016 Issue 19

*Only ten more issues of The Democrat until the election!*

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

**Thursday/Friday June 10th-11th**– Secret City Festival (See Page Two)

**Thursday, June 23rd:** Party meeting, Clinton Civic Center 6-8 PM. Pot luck style dinner meeting.

**July Meeting:** Party meeting, Day/time to be announced. We hope it will be at the new party headquarters in Oak Ridge.

### *Dr. Mark Harmon speaks at party meeting.*



The party meeting on March 26th was an interesting one! It was very informative with two speakers giving important talks. The first speaker, Dr. Mark Harmon (pictured above), spoke about media and politics. Dr. Harmon is a professor of journalism and electronic media and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. He also writes for the Knoxville News-Sentinel. His talk was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation. Above, you can see him pointing out that the right-wing myth of a “liberal media” is just that– a myth. All of that red are presidential election years with the red being years a majority of newspapers backed a Republican. Other topics covered were the role of negative ad’s in campaigns, satire TV shows as a source of news, and the reliability of various networks. Did you know that you are four to five times more likely to see an ad about a candidate for office than coverage of local politics? Dr. Harmon then took questions from the audience afterwards.

The next talk was given by Michael Friedman, candidate for US House of Representatives in District Three. Mr. Friedman gave an introduction about himself and what his vision for our district is. He is a native of New York, but moved here after the recession of 2008 with his wife and two children after having fallen in love with Tennessee. Being a talented person, he came to continue his studies at UT Chattanooga (where he still resides) finished a four year program in three.

In his time in the Volunteer State, Mr. Friedman has learned about the needs and issues facing our district. High speed internet has the potential to be a major economic driver for East Tennessee. He is prepared to work to make this a reality.

The fact people are suffering here is a sore point for him. “I’ve found lot’s of people suffering and I want to do something about it”. Clearly our current representative has no plans to help. Regarding Chuck Fleishmann, he said “I’m not afraid of him. I know how to counter him”. Referring to his lack of action in Congress, he said “A 2,000 page document doesn’t scare me”. It apparently scares Representative Fleishmann.

Michael Friedman will be running in the Democratic primary on August 4th against his opponent, Melody Shekari, also of Chattanooga.

*“President’s do not stop working in their final year. Neither should a senator”*  
*President Barrack Obama*

Past issues can be found at:  
[www.andersoncountymocrat.com](http://www.andersoncountymocrat.com)

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## *Political Patronage: A Destructive Factor in Tennessee By Pat Fain*

As a student of government, I have explored for many years why it sometimes works well and why in Tennessee it appears to be nearly totally incompetent at the state level. The problems are mostly institutional and have been maintained because the people making their living in Nashville are a product of a highly flawed and outdated system called *patronage*. Political patronage is the dispensation of favors or rewards such as public office, jobs, contracts, subsidies, prestige or other valued benefits. It was sometimes referred to as *the spoils system*. This system presupposes that the rules, practices and structure of government has created and maintains *patrons*.

In Tennessee the only governmental official who actually runs for office statewide is the Governor. By constitution and statute the governor is given the authority and power to name myriad public officials to office, e.g., Cabinet Officers. The state Attorney General is appointed by the state Supreme Court and the Comptroller is nominated by the senate and voted on by the house of representatives. There are hundreds of such positions available on the public payroll. All of those people are subject to being fired at will as well. Contrast this to Georgia and Florida where all cabinet officers are elected statewide.

A career civil service system was created in 1939 to give some job security to mid and low level government employees and an appeals process was instituted. That system put in place a certain protection for the workers and by creating a system of "bumping." This was created so that those with seniority, if in a position that was eliminated, could bump another person in any another government job with less seniority, who could then bump another worker and so on. Over time the top level of civil service employees became overloaded with expensive "time servers" who may or may not be competent in the job occupied. Job protection became the name of the game. Service was accidental. In order to guarantee competency in key jobs, more and more jobs became classified as exempt from civil service so that inept and problematic individuals could be fired at will.

In 2012, state comptroller, Justin Wilson issued a finding that the civil service program was fatally broken and recommended profound changes in it. Governor Haslam supported the changes Wilson suggested and these changes were enacted into law. <http://www.tennessee.gov/tdfi/article/tdfi-hr-team-act>

What we are now left with, however, is the system of executive level appointees still being the exclusive purview of the Governor, not the people. There is no required competency or performance standards at the upper levels of government. There is no accountability or transparency for the top managerial and executive levels for these public appointees. Governors, both Republican and Democratic have argued that they need the flexibility to achieve their own agenda. This is probably true. The problem is that Gov-

ernors mostly appoint people they know or to whom they owe favors, or who financed their campaign .....and their friends and relatives.

One of the consequences is that the pool of candidates for governor and U.S. Senators is severely limited. When no one else ever runs for office statewide, how does the public become aware of the qualification of anyone? How can anyone become generally known to the voters? They simply cannot without LOTS OF MONEY to buy visibility.

Every wonder why we keep electing former big city mayors as governors? Ever wonder why so many state departments are so poorly run? They are run by the governor's appointees and more often than not, they are there due to large campaign donations, friendships and favors owed rather than actual competence. Ever heard of Cabinet Officers in Tennessee (other than Comptroller) being confirmed by either legislative body? They aren't.

Finally, the consequences are paid out in corruption. In my 21 years in Tennessee, I have watched disgustingly played out corrupt practices between governors and their friends and senior exempt appointees, from no bid contracts to the cover up of felonious acts. The heads of all the possible watchdog agencies are appointees of the Governor. The use of power to avoid playing by the rules seems to be the greatest of the great American sports. It appears to be okay to fix the civil service system, but it is hands-off on the executive prerogatives of the connected.

Tennessee practices cronyism pretty effectively. The executive patronage system is still alive and well in Tennessee. It is an entitlement.

## *Help Wanted at Secret City Festival*

The Secret City Festival is upon us and we're looking for people who are able to assist as at our booth. This is an election year so the stakes are high. We need to become as visible as possible in the community. It isn't often we get a chance to stand out in a large crowd of people advertising who we are, that we exist...that we aren't going away. Who knows how many people we may attract who could be a valuable asset to the party? If I had known there was an Anderson County Democratic Party, I'd have been involved a long time ago.

The Secret City festival is on June 10th and 11th. Please contact Catherine Denenberg at: [cate.denenberg@gmail.com](mailto:cate.denenberg@gmail.com) or Jean Hiser at: [316hiser@comcast.net](mailto:316hiser@comcast.net) if you wish to help. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Light reading for the political junkie

## The latest delegate count

1. We have all heard of gerrymandering. Pat Fain wrote an article on it in issue 18 of the *Democrat*. [This article](#) looks at “prison gerrymandering” and how the Florida Supreme Court ruled it illegal.
2. [This Washington Post article](#) looks at lunacy in high places in regards to Donald Trump. I don’t think many of us need to be convinced of this, but it’s a good read anyway.
3. [The American people are too stupid to see Donald Trump’s tax returns eh?](#) What is it with GOP presidential (in this case assumed) nominees being uncomfortable with showing their tax returns? Didn’t we go through this with Mitt Romney?
4. This article doesn’t surprise me in the least. One would think the Republican Party would learn from their mistakes. [Mitch McConnell has already come out and said they won’t learn a thing from Donald Trump](#). He said so in not so many words. Their failure to learn has cost them two presidential elections. It will hopefully cost them a third.
5. [A short article with a paragraph from Tennessee Democratic Party chairwoman Mary Mancini that’s well put](#). While this article mainly refers to the arrest of Rutherford County Republican Sheriff Robert Arnold, it’s short, true, to the point, and her point could be made across the Volunteer State.
6. Thanks to our radicalized state legislator passing an anti-LGBT bill that permits counselors to discriminate against clients due to religious beliefs, [some jurisdictions are boycotting or limiting travel to Tennessee](#). Thank you Governor Haslam and our “representation” in Nashville. You’ve made a fool of our state again.
7. [An opposing opinion from the Tennessean](#) of why travel to Tennessee shouldn’t be boycotted due to that law.

**Total delegates up for grabs:** 4,763

**Total delegates needed to win:** 2,382

**Hillary Clinton delegates:** 2,312

**Hillary Clinton total pledged delegates:** 1,769

**Hillary Clinton total super delegates:** 543

**Bernie Sanders delegates:** 1,545

**Bernie Sanders total pledged delegates:** 1,501

**Bernie Sanders total super delegates:** 44

**Total primaries remaining:** 9

Facts and figures curtesy of [www.realclearpolitics.com](http://www.realclearpolitics.com) and are accurate as of the date of publication.

## Let’s keep it friendly By Scott Julius

It’s been quite an election hasn’t it? It’s been exhilarating watching two qualified Democratic candidates share their platform for our country. On the Republican side, it’s been laughable and sad at once how low they’ve sunk. Name calling, racist and fearmongering statements winning cheers, and watching people gleefully support a monster like Donald Trump.

I’m happy to say that from within the Anderson County Democratic Party, from my observations, those people who Feel the Bern and are Standing with Hillary get along well. We’ve had lively debates and at the end of the day we are all still Democrats, still on the same side. For this I want to commend us on.

That said, some things I’ve seen out there shock me coming from people who call themselves Democrats. I thought childish name calling, insult hurling, harassing of supporters of the other candidate, and radicalization was the realm of either the schoolyard bully or the Tea Party? We have a presumptive nominee on the Republican side who doesn’t want to show his tax returns, wants to violate the Geneva Conventions, and scrap all progress President Obama has made this past eight years.

This is no time to fight among ourselves or stoop to the level of the Republicans. As Democrats, we’re better than that. I’m not singling out supporters of either candidate. There is plenty of blame to go around on both sides.

So please, I beg you to keep it friendly among us. Otherwise, get ready to hear “Good Morning President Trump”.

