

the Lansdowne Leader

November 2023

"Accountable Leadership, Accessible Government"

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WHAT MAKES LANSDOWNE SPECIAL?

We Can't Spell CommUnity without 'YOU'

by Charlotte K. Hummel
Chair, Lansdowne Democratic Committee

When I first moved to Lansdowne, I was not involved in the community at all for the first couple of years. It was not until I attended my first Democratic Committee meeting at the invitation of Bertha Phillips, a long-time Democratic stalwart in a majority Republican town, that I was urged to get involved.

It was then that I learned that local government both here and throughout the County was controlled by one party and had been since the Civil War (Ruling Suburbia: John J. McClure and the Republican Machine in Delaware County, Pennsylvania by John Morrison

McLarnon III). At the Borough level of government, the town had been dominated by members of the GOP since it was established in 1893 – at the time for 105 years!

What I eventually learned was that not only was this one party in control of government, but the same people made decisions about the economic and social life of the town. If you were not registered in the "right" party you were both suspect and excluded. This was around the same time that the Lansdowne Swim Club was sued and found guilty of racial discrimination by the US Justice Department for racial

discrimination (*United States v. Lansdowne Swim Club*, 894 F. 2d 83 (3d Cir. 1990), and volunteers for various clubs and activities were discouraged from joining if they were registered in the "wrong" party.

Most shocking was the level of racial isolation and discrimination in town. Speaking with some of the "old heads" I learned that if anyone was planning on leaving the predominately black area of town (south of the tracks in what was called

"tin town") they made sure to let their neighbors and friends know that they were "going up Lansdowne" which meant that they were taking a risk heading over the bridge north on Lansdowne Avenue. They wanted someone to know where they were going in case they didn't

return in a timely manner. To emphasize just how entrenched racial discrimination in town was, when the Democrats took over after a long battle throughout the 1990's, the new administration found a file in the drawers of the 20th Century Club entitled "Renting to Negros."

Having been in the non-profit world working toward better intergroup relations – race, religion, socio-economics – for most of my life starting in high school, I was shocked to learn that such was the situation in what I thought could be my forever home and community. That is when I saw Lansdowne's potential and that's when I

got deeply involved in changing things.

As part of that process of helping turn Lansdowne around, about thirty years ago the local Democrats founded a newspaper (*The Lansdowne Leader*), reached out to other Democrats and Independents, and stood up at Borough Council meetings to ask questions, confront corruption and state our objections to regular citizens being shut out of the community. For our efforts we were ostracized, criticized, slandered and demeaned both in public and private.

Sacrifices – social, familial and economic – were made. But yet, we persisted knowing that the kind of community we wanted to see was both possible and in reach. It was our responsibility to make it happen.

In the mid 1980's when the William Penn School District was first formed and racial tensions came to the surface, the Lansdowne Democrats elected Joe Stevenson, a black man, to serve on the new board. Joe won by one vote and was

continued on page 7

For over 100 years, local government – both in Lansdowne and throughout Delaware County – was controlled by the Republican party

What is on Your Ballot?

by Colleen Guiney

Abortion rights, voting rights, the right to a fact based education for our children, well run municipal government – and so much more.

Our Courts will be the stopgap to protect access to reproductive health care. Our County Council majority will ensure that the Election Board has adequate resources to conduct free and fair elections. School Board candidates will work to provide inclusive, safe environments for fact based learning. Our municipal governments will strive to make each neighborhood in Delaware County the best it can be. And this is just a taste of what our candidates can do.

Our candidates have been knocking doors all summer, while many of their opponents have been bankrolled by special interests working in the opposite direction.

For example, here's an article about Pennsylvania's richest Billionaire and the Supreme Court: <https://keystonenewsroom.com/story/is-pas-richest-billionaire->

continued on page 7



LOCAL ELECTIONS MATTER

Democratic Leadership for Lansdowne and Delaware County



Lansdowne's female candidates in the center of the photo include from left to right, two dynamic new candidates running for their first time for Borough Council, Molly Connors and Jessica Pointer, with Jennifer Hoff who is running for re-election to William Penn School Board for her 5th term in Region 7 (includes only Lansdowne Precincts 1, 4, 5, 6 & 11). The male candidates flanking the group are incumbent Borough Council members who are also running for Council seats this fall, left and right, Benjamin Hover and William O. Griffin III.



Democratic candidates from left to right: County Council candidates include Elaine Paul Schaefer, Christine Reuther, and Dr. Monica Taylor who are all running for re-election; Rachel Ezzell Berry is candidate for Judge on Court of Common Pleas; and Jack Stollsteimer is running for re-election as District Attorney for Delaware County.



Lawmakers, Guns, and Money

DRIVING HOME THE NEED FOR SAFER AND SANER GUN REGULATIONS

By Suzanne McElroy

Every day in America about 316 people are shot and 110 die from their wounds. Gun violence is now the leading cause of death for American children, a situation not suffered by the children of any other country in the world. Why do we let this happen? The answer might lie in another article in this issue about Dark Money and how it influences our lawmakers.

Why not use the same criteria for gun ownership and operation as we do for automobiles? There are some simple steps that could be taken for gun control that don't involve the government taking anybody's weapons away. Look to the automobile industry for some parallels.

In the early 1900's many states recognized that cars were killing people. They were being hit on the roads, dying when drivers didn't know how to control their vehicles and avoid running into things. (I never had the opportunity to know my own grandfather, as he was killed in 1930 due to an automobile accident, when my father was only 8 years old.)

Lawmakers of most states began to grapple with the serious question of how to protect the public, both car owners and those in danger from the out-of-control cars. The answer that most states came up with, and has now largely been standardized across the US and most of the world, was a very simple and straightforward three-part criterion for car ownership and operation.

1. Establish ownership. In order to be able to manage all the cars coming onto the roads, both as valuable pieces of theft-worthy hardware and to track liability issues, all cars were required to have a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). The VIN was stamped onto the car during manufacture and followed it until the day it was destroyed or decommissioned. Similarly, the owner of that car and its VIN had to present himself or herself to state authorities and sign a title of ownership, which had to be recorded with the state whenever the title was transferred to a new owner.

2. Prove competence. By 1915 automobiles had been responsible for so many fatalities and serious injuries that the states began setting requirements to assure that only people who knew how to handle a car properly were permitted to drive on public roads. This meant defining rules for the road, having people learn those rules, and testing them—both in writing and practically in person—to show that they truly could drive safely. When people passed the tests, they were given a license to drive.

3. Require liability insurance. Because virtually all car accidents were just that – accidents – most people who “caused” accidents were at both financial and legal risk. What came out of this was the development of automobile liability insurance and the establishment of a requirement for it to be carried by all owners/drivers.

These three things that America does for owners of cars are perfect to deal with America's gun problem:

- **Registration and title** – as a requirement rather than an option – would establish a clear chain of custody and responsibility, so that when people behaved irresponsibly with their guns, they could be held to account.
- **Having a shooter's license be conditional** on passing both a written and a shooting-range test. This would demonstrate competence and also insert a trained person into the process who could spot “off kill-

ter” people like the Parkland shooter. Taking a cue from most other countries, America could also require people to prove a need or sporting/safety use for a weapon.

- **Today, if a car had run down mass-shooting victims, their families would be getting millions** from Liberty Mutual, et al. Because a gun killed them, they get nothing. All Americans end up paying the costs of gun violence. The simple solution is to require all gun owners to carry liability insurance, just like all drivers must. The insurance would even be a “free market” solution in that, as with cars, insurers would charge much more (or even refuse coverage) to “high risk” people, such as those with domestic assault convictions.

These three steps are nothing but common sense and don't infringe on the “rights” of gun owners any more than they infringe on the “rights” of car owners. They could even provide a stream of revenue for gun-owners' organizations that chose to train people to prepare for their licensure test and/or offer low-cost liability insurance.

SERVING THE INTERESTS OF THE FEW

Dark Money: The Power of Wealth

By Craig Horle

American voters are certainly well aware that political campaigns at all levels cost money. A Democracy needs to limit contributions in order that the extremely wealthy do not distort policy by buying politicians. Not only should contributions be limited but the sources should be known. Traditionally, political spending involved hard money, where donors must be disclosed, contribution limits apply and organizations are allowed to coordinate their efforts to help elect a candidate. The groups involved include candidate committee, political parties and traditional Political Action Committees, known as PACs.

However, in January 2010 the United States Supreme Court by a 5-4 decision in Citizens United vs Federal Election Commission (Kennedy, Alito, Thomas, Roberts and Scalia in the majority), the court argued that limiting “independent political spending” from corporations and other groups violated their first amendment right to free speech. This dramatically changed the game, reversing century-old campaign finance restrictions, including some from the Supreme Court itself. The Court itself feared unlimited spending could lead to potential corruption. Now corporations and other outside groups can spend unlimited funds on elections and ultimately without identifying donors; this became known as Dark Money. Of course,

As of August 2023, Super PACs have reported total receipts exceeding \$2.7 billion, with nearly \$1.4 billion spent during the 2021-2022 cycle

wealthy donors, corporations and special interest groups have long had an outsized influence on elections, but now expenditures exploded as did lack of donor identification as the goal for the Dark Money contributors was ownership of politicians and policies without the need to lobby. Perhaps most dangerous is the potential for foreign money flooding into our elections without being identified.

The role of Dark Money is extremely complicated, requiring expertise in tax accounting as well as legal matters to understand. Traditional nonprofits formed under 501(c)(3) tax status are prevented from lobbying activities. Politically active nonprofits such as 501(c)(4)s are generally under no legal obligation to disclose their donors even when spending to influence elections. They are prohibited from engaging primarily in political activity, but may engage in unlimited lobbying or issue advocacy for the public good.

While regular PACs have reporting requirements that provide more transparency, Super PACs can raise unlimited amounts of money from corporations, Unions, associations and individuals, then spend unlimited sums to overtly advocate for or against political candidates. Since they are prohibited from giving money directly to candidates, they often spend for TV advertisements and literature attacking candidates and policies they oppose. Citizens who are barraged with such messages may not be in position to consider the credibility and motives of the wealthy corporate or individual funders. So-called pop-up Super PACs are formed shortly before an election. This timing helps them to avoid disclosure deadlines until after voters go to the polls. As of August 2023, Super PACs have reported total receipts exceeding \$2.7 billion, with nearly \$1.4 billion spent in the 2021-2022 cycle.

To sum up, The Brennan Center for Justice states from a report by Daniel J. Weiner, that “a very small group of Americans now wield more power than at any time since Watergate, while many of the rest seem to be disengaging from politics.” He went on to say that “This is, perhaps, the most troubling result of Citizens United: in a time of historic wealth inequality, the decision has helped to reinforce the growing sense that our democracy primarily serves the interests of the wealthy few, and that democratic participation for the vast majority of citizens is of relatively little value.”

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The *Leader* welcomes your letters to the editor. Letters must include your name and a valid phone number in order to be considered for publication. Please address correspondence to:

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LOSS OF REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The Supreme Court in the Bedroom

By Laurie Wolfe

Judges are nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court by the U.S. President and must be approved by the Senate before appointment. Although we as voters have no control over who is nominated, we elect the President and our state’s senators and we should always remember that among their responsibilities is the nomination and confirmation of federal appeals court judges as well as Supreme Court judges, both of which are lifetime appointments.

In a series of decisions, the U.S. Supreme Court has established that a right to privacy exists, which protects personal decisions relating to reproduction. In 1965 in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the Court ruled 7 to 2 that the Constitution of the United States protects the liberty of married couples to buy and use contraceptives. The case involved a Connecticut law that prohibited any person from using "any drug, medicinal article or instrument for the purpose of preventing conception." The court held that the law was unconstitutional, and that its effect was to deny citizens "access to medical assistance and up-to-date information in respect to proper methods of birth control." Although the

In 1965, the Supreme Court ruled 7–2 that the Constitution of the United States protects the liberty of married couples to buy and use contraceptives.

Constitution does not explicitly protect a general right to privacy, various guarantees within the Bill of Rights create zones that establish a right to privacy. The Court invalidated the Connecticut law on the grounds that it violated the "right to marital privacy," establishing the basis for the right to privacy with respect to intimate practices.

In 1973 the Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* (7-2) that the right to privacy implied in the 14th Amendment to the Constitution protected abortion as a fundamental right, with restrictions related to the stage of pregnancy. This decision struck down many abortion laws and led to an ongoing debate in the United States about to what extent abortion should be legal, whether that decision should be

made at the state or the federal level, and what role moral and religious views should play. In 1992 in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the Supreme Court (5-4) upheld the "essential holding" of *Roe*, which was that the 14th Amendment protected a woman's right to have an abortion prior to fetal viability.

However, in 2022 in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, the Supreme Court (6-3) held that the Constitution of the United States does not confer a right to abortion. The court's decision overruled both *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992), returning to individual states the power to regulate abortion.

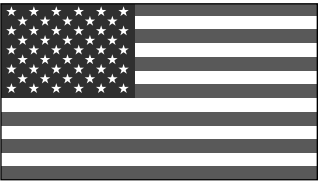
The confirmations of those Supreme Court justices who most recently joined the Court illustrate one of the ways our vote for our elected representatives is vitally important. During his Senate confirmation hearings, Neil Gorsuch said that the *Roe* decision was "precedent" but declined to call it "super precedent," which would indicate a deeply rooted, repeatedly upheld precedent. He also declined to state whether he thought the ruling was correct. Every Republican Senator voted to confirm his appointment to the Supreme Court. Although Brett Kavanaugh refused

to state during his Senate confirmation hearings whether he considered *Roe* as settled law, his previous written statements strongly indicated that he favored overturning that decision. When he was confirmed by the Senate, all but one Republican voted to confirm him. Amy Coney Barret, during her confirmation hearings, was clear about her support for the Catholic Church’s teaching on “the sacredness of life from conception to natural death.” She was noncommittal about whether she might vote to overturn *Roe*. Every Republican Senator voted to confirm her appointment to the Supreme Court.

During the Senate hearings on John Roberts’ nomination, he stated: "*Roe v. Wade* is the settled law of the land. . . . There is nothing in my personal views that would prevent me from fully and faithfully applying that precedent, as well as *Casey*." When he was confirmed by the Senate, all the Republicans voted to confirm him. Since the current majority of the Court no longer feels obliged to uphold previous court decisions, how long before *Griswold v. Connecticut* is overturned and adults in the United States no longer have a right to privacy that extends to the use of contraceptives?

United in Diversity

Lansdowne Democrats always show up in style to march in the annual Independence Day parade.



MAYOR AND COUNCIL RESPOND TO ‘UNACCEPTABLE’ TERMS

Managing the Increased Cost of Ambulance Services

On July 27, 2023 at 7:30pm the Lansdowne Borough Council released the following statement to Representatives of the Press regarding Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

Mayor Magda Byrne and Lansdowne Borough Council announce their commitment to provide the best possible services for the residents of Lansdowne. Our commitment to the health of our neighbors extends to ensuring that the residents of Lansdowne—our neighbors, our friends, our family—have available to them an ambulance service that is available for use in the most extreme of emergencies.

Heretofore, ambulance services for Lansdowne residents were provided through a contract between Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital and the Lansdowne Fire Company, in which Mercy Fitzgerald provided EMTs to staff Lansdowne Fire Company’s ambulances and the two entities split the revenues to subsidize the historic Lansdowne Fire Company.

Last year, Mercy Fitzgerald under the new management of the Trinity Health system announced that their long standing relationship between the Lansdowne Fire Company would change with an expectation that the Lansdowne Fire Company would pay for the first time, resulting in a substantial new financial burden to the Fire

Company if it continued to use Trinity’s EMTs.

In March of 2023, Trinity Health system provided notice to the Lansdowne Fire Company that EMT (author inserted: Emergency Medical Technician) services would end in 180 days if they did not come to terms with a deal that would change the terms from a 50/50 split to a 77/23 split and allow Trinity Health system to take “ownership and management of the BLS (author inserted: Basic Life Support) license”—and would not guarantee even to station EMT’s in Lansdowne. A loss of the ambulance license would mean that Trinity would have full control of the placement of EMT’s and ambulances in the region.

As representatives of Lansdowne Borough, we find this treatment and this final offer unacceptable.

Accordingly, the Fire Company examined all options for staffing its ambulances in the most cost effective manner, and determined that contracting with Narberth Ambulance would be the most responsible choice going forward. In collaboration with the Lansdowne Fire Company, we support the decision of the Lansdowne Fire Company to contract with Narberth Ambulance. Lansdowne Borough Council voted tonight to provide the funding for Lansdowne Fire Company to provide ambulance services for our neighbors in Lansdowne. This funding will allow

the Lansdowne Fire Company to staff its ambulances with Narberth Ambulance EMTs on a 24/7 basis.

We recognize the financial burden that this places on Lansdowne residents and do not make this decision lightly. Furthermore, we call upon our representatives in Delaware County and at the state level in Harrisburg to develop a more permanent, sustainable, and equitable solution for ambulance services in Delaware County

Sincerely,
Mayor and Borough Council Members

The cost for EMS in future years is projected and budgeted at \$300,000 per year (actual cost less anticipated receipt of insurance payments). This new expense for the borough requires careful consideration of all budget items to ensure the best interest of the community are served without undue financial burden to taxpayers. Finance and Administration Committee meetings are hybrid, open to the public and held each month in Borough Hall on the second Tuesday at 5:00 pm. Special budget meetings will be announced and advertised on the Lansdowne Borough website in the Calendar section.

WATCH AND LEARN

Three Classic Films That Serve Justice

by Terry Baraldi

For those of us not in the legal profession, it may be a source of confusion, alarm and annoyance trying to sort out all of the tv noise and talking heads to find the actual facts of how our legal system works, or who it works for, or why we should care at all.

To find at least some foothold in the mountain of facts and how the rule of law applies in the real world, and in a way that I could understand, I turned to the fount of all wisdom: The Google, who bade me go to my other source of all wisdom...my TV; and from there, a homework assignment and a front row seat at the movies. Cue the popcorn.

Twelve Angry Men

The 1975 original. Stark, dark and moody. Does justice lie in black and white?...or somewhere in between? Worth watching for the message and the acting. Enough tension to hold up a bridge.

The Trial of the Chicago Seven

Flashback to the 70's and the war in Vietnam. An unpopular war pits the political status quo against the culture clash that begat the new activist generation. Bobby Seale, Abbie Hoffman, Tom Hayden et al. Still raw. Still relevant. And finally....

Inherit the Wind

A fictional account of a very real event, The Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925. Evolution vs. Genesis. Science vs. that Old Time Religion.

FIND THIS MOVIE AND THE TIME TO WATCH IT!....and if you don't have time for the whole thing, fast forward to just over the 1 hr mark and listen to what Spencer Tracy, channeling Clarence Darrow in 1925, had to say about the wholesale closing of young minds by one group of zealots; the banning of books; the censoring of classroom education and the expansion of the mind into new ideas; the power of the few usurping free will of the mind



and bastardizing the rule of law. It happened then; it's happening now... DeSantis, Trump, the silent Republican Party, Moms for Liberty. Making inroads in local school boards. Happening NOW...our liberty on trial in a kangaroo court.

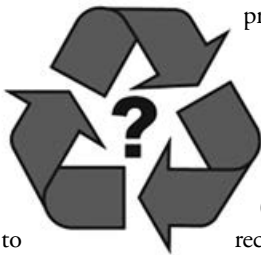
If America today fails to recognize the

demons at the gates, what shall we be left with but the wind? 1925 calling 2023...it wants us to WAKE UP...and STAY WOKE.

Find it. Watch it. Overlook the dated 1960s cinematography and the over-wrought acting, and just take in the message. And then take that to the ballot box.

To Recycle or Not to Recycle

We are so lucky in Lansdowne to have single stream recycling picked up from our homes once a week. Many other municipalities have their residents sorting into different bins, and some rely on residents to drive their recyclables to drop-off locations. Unlike trash service which always costs the borough, recycling can either have a cost or provide revenue to the borough. The primary factors that determine which are 1) the markets for manufacturing with recycled materials and 2) how well the guidelines of acceptable items for



the recycling stream are followed. You can help the recycling marketplace by buying products produced from recycled materials. You can also help by only putting the appropriate things in your recycling can. Plastics seem to be the most volatile in the recycling arena. According to the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), the Borough is only able to recycle Plastics labelled #1, #2 and #5 at this time. This could change over time and you are advised to check the borough website for any updates. All recyclables should be empty, clean and kept dry in your recycling can.

DO RECYCLE THESE:

GLASS

Jars & Bottles from food/beverage (clear, brown & green with lids off)

METAL

Beverage Cans
Food Containers
Aluminum, Steel or Bi-Metal

PAPER, CARDBOARD & PAPERBOARD

Newspapers, Inserts, Junk Mail
Magazines, Catalogs, Envelopes
Corrugated Boxes (flatten & tie together)
Cardboard Boxes (from cereal, crackers, tissue box, etc)
Paper Towel and Toilet Paper Rolls (empty)
Office & School Paper (any color)
Paper Bags
Soft Cover Books

PLASTICS

Containers marked with a recycling triangle and labeled #1, #2 or #5

DO NOT RECYCLE THESE:

GLASS

Broken Glass
Drinking Glasses
Light Bulbs
Windows

PLASTICS

Plastic Bags
Bubble Wrap
Packing Peanuts
Styrofoam
Tableware (i.e. forks & spoons)
Toys
Sporting Goods
Tubs, Cups, Trays
Swimming Pools
Trash Cans
Hoses
Laundry Baskets

METAL

Electronics
Batteries
Mirrors
Scrap Metal
Needles
Car Parts

PAPER

Shredded Paper
Pizza Boxes, if greasy
Wet Paper
Wet Cardboard
Waxy/Coated Cardboard
Tissue Paper or Paper Towels

LANSDOWNE
arts
ON THE AVE
FESTIVAL

Thanks to LEDC employees, volunteers and enthusiasts, another successful Arts on the Avenue Festival took place on Sunday, October 1st in the downtown business district.

Below: Enjoying the big chair are Barb McCann, Suzanne McElroy, and Jayne Young.



OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP:
Front row: L-R: Terry Baraldi, Deborah Brodeur, Mayor Magda Byrne, George Blum and Suzanne McElroy. Back row: Jennifer Hoff and Bill Horton.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM:
Grooving to his own music is DJ DuiJi Mshinda.

VOTE TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7
POLLS OPEN 7:00 AM - 8:00 PM

Lansdowne Borough Elected Officials

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMITTEES - Members are all elected by the voters. * Committee Chair						
BOROUGH MAYOR (Elected) Magdalena Byrne BOROUGH COUNCIL (Elected) MEMBERS: Robert Curry William Griffin Benjamin Hover Tangela James Carol Martsof Sinoe Naji-Taylor Jayne Young OFFICERS (Elected by Members): President: Benjamin Hover Vice President: Sinoe Naji-Taylor PUBLIC MEETINGS: First and Third Wednesdays at 7:00 pm	Community Relations 1st Tues 6:30pm William Griffin* Robert Curry Tangela James	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion 2nd Tues 6pm Robert Curry* Tangela James Carol Martsof	Economic & Community Development 2nd Wed 6pm Benjamin Hover* Sinoe Naji-Taylor Robert Curry	Environment, Parks & Recreation Public Meetings 2nd Mon 6pm Carol Martsof* Jayne Young William Griffin	Finance & Administration 2nd Tues 5pm Tangela James* Sinoe Naji-Taylor Jayne Young	Infrastructure 2nd Mon 7pm Jayne Young* Carol Martsof Sinoe Naji-Taylor
	BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS: Members appointed by Council. Each board or commission reports to the Borough Council Committee above it. Public meeting dates for each board or commission available on the borough website.					
	Library Board	Human Relations Commission	Code Appeals Board	Environmental Advisory Council		Historic Architecture Review Board
	Parks & Rec Board		Planning Commission Redevelopment Authority	Shade Tree Commission		Zoning Hearing Board
						Board of Health Civil Service Commission



Women *for* Lansdowne

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Jessica Pointer and Molly Connors
Candidates for Lansdowne Borough Council

– and –

Jennifer Hoff
Candidate for William Penn School Board

Invite you to a celebration of
WOMEN WHO SERVE LANSDOWNE
*Join us to celebrate women in politics, business
and the non-profit sectors who work to benefit
the Lansdowne community and beyond.*

SPEAKERS TO BE ANNOUNCED
Hors d’Oeuvres • Cash Bar

Friday, October 27, 2023 **ROOM 55**
6:00 – 8:00 PM 55 East Baltimore Ave.
Lansdowne, PA 19050



THIS EVENT IS FREE!
Pre-registration required; please
scan code to RSVP or email
lansdownedems@gmail.com

REEVALUATING THE ROLE OF THE SUPREME COURT

Still the Guardian and Interpreter of the Constitution?

**It's worth asking:
Is the deep partisan
divide among
Supreme Court
Justices suitable for
the highest tribunal
in the nation?**

By Craig Horle

The July 2023 Gallup Poll reported that the United States Supreme Court had an approval rating of 40 percent, the lowest in 50 years of polling, doubtless reflecting a reaction to concerns over the questionable ethical behavior of Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito, the misleading responses of recent conservative appointees when questioned by the United States Senate on the issue of following long-standing precedents like *Roe v Wade* and a number of controversial recent decisions. On the other hand, the court is not required to seek public approval for its decisions, but as stated on its website: “The Court is the highest tribunal in the Nation for all cases and controversies arising under the Constitution or the laws of the United States.” As the final arbiter of the law, the Court is charged with ensuring the American people the promise of equal justice under law and, thereby, also functions as guardian and interpreter of the Constitution.”

Nonetheless, what the Gallup Polling shows is a deep partisan division within the court between the six Republican appointees (Roberts, Alito, Thomas, Barrett, Kavanaugh and Gorsuch) and the three Democratic appointees (Jackson, Kagan, and Sotomayor). This is reflected outside the court as Republicans in the July polling approve of the court with 62 percent, while Democrats approve with only 17 percent. Independents weigh in with 41 percent approval. By ideology, 71 percent of Democrats regard the court as too conservative, as do 46 percent of Independents. In effect, not surprisingly, but there are a number of significant Democratic leaders calling for expanding the size of the court (last done in 1869).

The number of justices on the Supreme Court changed six times since its first assembly in 1790 before settling at the present total of nine in 1869. The first Supreme Court was composed 6 justices. In 1807 the number was increased to seven; then increased to nine in 1837, and to ten in 1863. Following the civil war, in 1866, the number was decreased to seven, then just three years later expanded to our current size of nine justices.

Since the country is divided into twelve federal circuits, that number of justices has been suggested to handle the workload. Other Democrats call for limiting the terms of the justices. Did you know that there are no official qualifications for becoming a Supreme Court justice? Although the Constitution set requirements for the office of the president and members of Congress, including age, citizenship and residency requirements, the Constitution is mute on credentials of justices on the highest court in the land.



Key Supreme Court Decisions in 2023

What follows are 13 of the major Supreme Court decisions in 2023, broken down by conservative majorities (6 to 3 or 5 to 4) and majorities that included some or all conservative and liberal judges. Interestingly, as will be seen, some of these decisions, on affirmative action, student loans and gay rights, created further Democratic alarm about a conservative majority that reminded them of the June 2022 decisions on abortion, guns, religion and climate change, but in this term there were decisions that included the liberal minority in the majority in such important issues as the Voting Rights Act, the role state legislatures play in federal elections, President Biden's immigration shifts, and Native American adoptions. What these decisions portend for the coming year of the Supreme Court is unclear but the Democratic Party needs to retain control of the United States Senate and Presidency to counter the Republican domination of the Supreme Court

CONSERVATIVE MAJORITY:

1. **June 29th: Affirmative Action: 6-3:** The court ruled that race-conscious admissions policies at Harvard, a private institution, and the University of North Carolina, a public one, were unlawful.
2. **June 30th: Student Loans: 6-3:** The court ruled that the Biden administration's plan to wipe out more than \$400 billion in student debt was not authorized by Congress.
3. **June 30th: Religion, Free Speech and Gay Rights: 6-3.** The court ruled that a web designer has a First Amendment right to refuse to create sites for same-sex weddings despite a state law that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation. [This case was particularly upsetting to opponents of the court as the accuser lacked standing as she falsely claimed that she had been approached to create a site for a same-sex wedding]

4. **May 25th: Environmental Protection: 5-4** [Justice Kavanaugh sided with the minority] The court ruled that the Clean Water Act does not allow the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate discharges into wetlands near bodies of water unless they have “a continuous surface connection” to those waters. Four of the justices also voted against the E.P.A., but on narrower grounds.

MAJORITIES INCLUDING LIBERAL JUSTICES

1. **June 27th: State Legislatures and Federal Elections. 6-3** (an extremely important and surprising decision from a Democratic standpoint). (Chief Justice Roberts and Justices Kavanaugh and Barrett joined the liberal justices). The court rejected a legal theory that would have given state legislatures largely unchecked power to set the rules for federal elections.
2. **June 8th: Race and Voting Maps. 5-4.** (Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Kavanaugh joined the liberal justices) Another extremely important and surprising decision from a Democratic standpoint, although Alabama has refused to create a second Black dominated voting district. The court ruled that Alabama had diluted the power of Black voters by drawing a congressional voting map with a single district in which they made up a majority.
3. **June 15th. Tribal Rights. 7-2** (Justices Alito and Thomas dissented). The court upheld the Indian Child Welfare Act, a 1978 law that seeks to keep Native American children with their tribes and preserve their heritage. But the ruling did not resolve the question of whether the law discriminated against non-Native families based on race.
4. **May 11th. Animal Cruelty and Interstate Commerce. 5-4** (Justice Jackson, Chief Justice Roberts, and Justices Kavanaugh and Alito dissented). The court

upheld a California law that sought to address cruelty to animals, saying the state could require pork sold there but produced elsewhere to come from breeding pigs housed in spaces that allow them to move around freely.

5. **June 23rd. Biden Immigration policy: 8-1** (Justice Alito dissent) The court gave President Joe Biden's administration the green light to move ahead with guidelines shifting immigration enforcement toward countering public safety threats, handing him a victory on the politically contentious issue in a legal battle with Texas and Louisiana which the court argued lacked standing with their lawsuits. The decision overturned a judge's ruling last year that had halted Department of Homeland Security (DHS) guidelines narrowing the scope of those who can be targeted by immigration agents for arrest and deportation.

6. **May 18th. Tech Platforms and Terrorism: 9-0.** The court ruled that internet platforms may not be sued for aiding and abetting international terrorism by failing to remove videos supporting the Islamic State.

7. **May 18th. Scope of Tech Platforms' Liability Shield: 9-0.** The court side-stepped ruling on whether a law that protects social media platforms from lawsuits shields YouTube from a suit over videos supporting terrorism.

8. **May 18th. Fair Use of Copyrighted Works: 7-2** (Kagen and Roberts in the minority). The court ruled that Andy Warhol had improperly licensed a prominent photographer's portrait of Prince (the late singer) for an image of the musician that his estate licensed to a magazine.

9. **June 29th. Religious Employees: 9-0.** The court broadened accommodations that employers must make for workers' religious practices, siding with a postal worker who was disciplined for refusing to work on Sundays for religious reasons.

WE'RE SAFER, STRONGER, AND ALTOGETHER BETTER OFF

A Look at President Biden’s Accomplishments

By Heather Giardinelli-Cronan

We are three years into President Biden’s first term and the residents of Lansdowne are much better off under this administration. With nearly 11 million jobs created, we have just experienced the strongest two years of job growth in American history. Unemployment is at a 50-year low with Black and Hispanic Americans experiencing a near record low unemployment. For federal employees and contractors, the minimum wage increase to \$15 per hour means 67,000 Americans will see an increase in their paychecks. Low unemployment coupled with the historic Inflation Reduction Act means Lansdowne residents are keeping more money in their pockets. For the first time, Medicare is now able to negotiate the price of high-cost drugs. This has resulted in the cost for a month’s supply of insulin capped now at \$35. Medicare beneficiaries now pay \$0 out of pocket for recommended vaccines and seniors out of pocket pharmacy costs are capped at \$2,000 per year. As fuel prices rose, in large part due to Russia’s war on Ukraine, the President released 180 million barrels of oil helping to bring gas prices down more than \$1.60 from their summer 2022 peak.

President Biden boldly took action to reduce the cost of healthcare for millions of Americans with the rate of uninsured Americans now at an all-time low of 8%. In fact, over 16 million Americans have signed up for insurance coverage using Healthcare.gov, the highest number ever produced in an open enrollment period! In August 2022, this administration passed The PACT-Act, the most significant expansion of benefits and services for toxic exposed veterans in more than 30 years. And, when

President Biden took office American deaths from COVID-19 was at a shameful 400,000 with millions more waiting for their turn to receive the lifesaving vaccine. Today, under Biden’s leadership, more than 79% of Americans are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Biden promised the American people that he would bring aggressive climate action and he's delivering results. Under his leadership, we rejoined the Paris Climate Agreement and passed historic infrastructure investments for the next generation of clean energy projects. And clean energy makes good jobs. In 2021 over 3 million Americans were employed in clean energy jobs and in the process earning 25% over the national average. President Biden worked with EU counterparts to bring more than 100 countries together to form the Global Methane Pledge. By joining the Pledge, countries commit to work together to collectively reduce methane emissions by at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030.

In response to Russia’s unprovoked war on Ukraine, President Biden has rallied the world and worked tirelessly with partners and Allies to support the people of Ukraine, coordinate and impose unprecedented economic sanctions against Russia and Putin directly and secure vigorous bipartisan support at home to deliver critical military, economic and humanitarian assistance for Ukraine. As a

result of Putin’s war, President Biden moved quickly to strengthen NATO and provide reassurance to our Allies.

In the Indo-Pacific, President Biden has deepened our security and economic partnerships. All across the world, President Biden is building the strongest possible coalition of nations that positions the United States as the leader of the free world.

Finally, to address the problem of gun violence, President Biden brought Democrats and Republicans together to pass the first major piece of gun safety legislation in three decades, the Safer Communities Act. This law will save lives by making gun trafficking and straw purchases distinct federal crimes, narrowing the “boyfriend loophole” to keep guns out of the hands of convicted dating partners as well as requiring young people aged 18 to 21 to undergo

enhanced background checks. Additionally, this law makes significant investments in addressing the mental health crisis in America including funding crisis intervention and extreme risk protection orders, or “red flag” laws.

It is clear that Americans, and the residents of Lansdowne, are safer, stronger and altogether better off under the leadership of President Biden. For these reasons we need to reelect President Biden for a second term so that he can finish the good work he has begun. A Republican president will quickly try to undo much of the good that President Biden has created. It is vital that every Democrat gets out and votes!

COMMUNITY
continued from page 1

elected by the other board members to serve as Vice President.

Lansdowne Democrats recruited, campaigned for and elected Ann Hill, the first black woman to Borough Council in the early 2000’s and she was soon followed by Sharon Coleman, the first black woman President, and members Eric Aubrey, Tangela James, Wardell Holt, Sinoe Naji Taylor and Robert Curry. Desmondé Pringle served and William Griffin is now serving as an interim appointment to Council following resignations. Jamese Kwele was elected to the William Penn School Board and Jan Tong was appointed to replace her when she relocated and resigned. Jerome Fletcher is the first black man elected to the position of constable. Those relatively new comers to local public office had the courage to lead the way and opened the path to a more diverse government including increased minority membership on citizens’ boards and commissions.

The local Democratic organization has also worked hard to be more diverse, equitable and inclusive. More than half of the elected and appointed members of the Lansdowne Democratic Committee are people of color or members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Now, when I hear “Lansdowne is such a diverse, welcoming, walkable, tight knit community” as if it has always been that way, I want to say “Thank you on behalf of all of us who fought for decades to make it that way.” And then, when I hear complaints about why this or that is happening or how this or that should or shouldn’t be done as if it is a crisis, I want to say – “Wait, slow down. What are YOU doing about the issue besides venting on line or wringing your hands or contemplating moving?”

I feel entitled to this strong response because what makes Lansdowne a better community, a place to call home and a place to set your roots, is YOU.

Citizens in Lansdowne are responsible for three things when it comes to community building and maintenance – getting involved in local government, participating in our economy, and getting involved in our civic society. Lansdowne RUNS on volunteering at all levels.

While some people are not able to carve out much time to participate, and some people just don’t want to, those of us who can and want to can find all kinds of things to get involved in; simple things like voting, shopping locally, picking up litter, and obeying traffic laws. Or more time consuming things like attending council meetings, promoting local business (or supporting the Lansdowne Business and Professional Association activities) or

organizing neighborhood clean ups and reaching out to new neighbors.

For those who have more time and talent to share, run for local office or join a citizens’ commission or board; open a small bricks and mortar or home based business here; get involved in a major volunteer project like the Farmers Market, Arts on the Avenue, Allied Youth Council or Friends of the Library.

Lansdowne was not always welcoming to new people, progressive people, people of color or any other difference. After a long, hard fought battle, it is now becoming just that, and in a way that has meaning and depth, not just token representation. The people who are part of the community are encouraged to use their voices especially if their life experience is different from what was once the majority.

If you want Lansdowne to continue in that direction, if you want more diversity and more inclusion, then it will take more than expressing an opinion on social media or criticizing what is wrong. It will take opening up to different experiences, new voices and other ways of looking at the world. It will take effort, commitment and dedication. After all, communities are not things you live in, they are things you create and re-create for as long as you want them to last.

Now that you know, ask yourself: How long do I want this to last? What work am I willing to do next? Where do I see myself in CommUnity?

WHAT’S ON YOUR BALLOT?
continued from page 1

trying-to-buy-a-state-supreme-court-seat/ We are not going to let anyone buy control of our Supreme Court!

The other side has essentially limitless money, but here in Delco, we have dedicated voters, some of whom may need a gentle reminder of the stakes in the election, logistical help with Vote by Mail ballots, or answers to other questions to prepare for Election Day.

We would love to see you at one of the many events...which will support campaign efforts across the County, and protect our community from Big money and special interests.

In partnership,

Colleen Guiney (she/her)
Chair
Delaware County Democratic Committee

PUBLIC SERVICE
ANNOUNCEMENTS

BAKE OFF OCTOBER 28

Baking competition at the Lansdowne Farmers Market on October 28th. For more details visit the Manager’s Tent at the Market on Saturday.

DISCOUNTED INTERNET

Services for low-income households. The Affordable Connectivity Program can help you afford internet in your home. Call 1-877-384-2575 to see if you qualify or visit [AffordableConnectivity.gov](#)

HAZARDOUS WASTE DISPOSAL OCT. 14

Saturday, October 14 at Upper Chichester Municipal Building, 8500 Furey Rd, Upper Chichester. Registration required to get appointment. Go to [delcohhw.eventbrite.com](#)

PROPERTY TAXES

Save on property taxes under the Homestead Exclusion Act. Request an application from the Business Manager’s office at William Penn School District by email (jshaiko@wpsd.k12.pa.us) or by calling 610-284-8038. They will send you an application which is uniquely bar-coded for your property. Open enrollment period occurs every December 15th through March 1st of the following year. There is no application fee.

SCAM ALERT

Ever receive a message that your computer is infected? Report scams to the Federal Trade Commission 1-877-382-4357. Pass it on to ftc.gov/PassItOn. Share what you know to stop the scams!

UTILITY SCAMMERS

Scammers are also targeting current PECO customers with various types of phone calls. Peco will never demand immediate payment, your account or banking information. Report to PECO directly at 800-494-4000.

VOTING INFORMATION

call your local Democratic committee person (contact info in this issue) or utilize PA Voter Services. Call 1-877-868-3772 or visit [VotesPa.com](#)

HOW TO REFORM EDUCATIONAL FUNDING IN PENNSYLVANIA

Our Kids Deserve It: Equitable School Funding for All

By Katie Mertens

In February 2023, our school district won a school funding lawsuit against the PA Department of Education. The lawsuit alleged the state has been short-changing students in low-wealth school districts. The court agreed with our school district’s claim and this decision has the potential to create wide-ranging changes in Pennsylvania education funding.

Currently, the state provides about 35% of the funding for Pennsylvania schools. Pennsylvania schools are funded primarily through local real-estate taxes. Under our funding system, an area with higher property values has higher real-estate tax revenue, meaning more money for the school district, and greater resources for students.

As residents of the William Penn School District (WPSD), which educates students from Lansdowne, East Lansdowne, Yeadon, Colwyn, and Darby, our school taxes fund education for students in our community. According to the Education Law Center, WPSD is significantly underfunded compared to what the state should spend for each child to receive a high-quality education.

One way to measure the funding disparities is to look at the “per-pupil expenditure”, meaning how much a school district spends on average per student for resources including textbooks and teacher salaries. According to PA Schools Work, Lower Merion School District’s per pupil expenditure is approximately \$29,035 while WPSD’s per pupil expenditure is \$19,055. Underfunding has serious and immediate consequences for students. Systemic underfunding means fewer teachers and staff, larger class sizes, and less access to updated curriculum, among other disparities. But underfunding is not just an issue in WPSD. According to an estimate by the Education Law Center, 86% of Pennsylvania students attend schools that do not receive adequate funding.

Inequitable school funding not only impacts our kids’ education, it impacts every household’s bottom line. Homeowners in lower-wealth districts make up the difference in funding our schools. Often, property-tax payers in lower-income school districts pay higher tax rates than those in higher-wealth districts.

In 1848, American educational reformer Horace Mann referred to education as “the great equalizer of the conditions of men”. When we view Mann’s quote through the lens of two historical court cases and this year’s lawsuit,

we need to ask if education can provide all students with equal opportunity if the way that Pennsylvania has historically funded our schools is inherently inequitable. To consider this question, we need to follow a through-line from *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) to *Brown v. Board* (1954) to *William Penn School District v. PA Department of Education* (2023).

In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the US Supreme Court ruled that “separate but equal” facilities for White and Black people were constitutionally-protected, because while the 14th Amendment guaranteed legal equality, it did not guarantee social equality. While this ruling stemmed from a case regarding segregated railroad cars, it established legal grounds for various facilities to continue segregation, including schools. The ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* would influence Jim Crow Laws and segregated facilities for the next six decades.

In 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* challenged the legality of segregated schools, with the plaintiffs stating that schools for Black children were not equal in quality to schools for White children. Because these schools were not equal in quality, plaintiffs argued the segregated schools violated the 14th Amendment’s equal protection clause. The case went to the Kansas Supreme Court, which acknowledged that segregated public schools were unequal, but managed to determine that segregation was still acceptable - using the ruling from *Plessy v. Ferguson* as precedent.

This case went to the US Supreme Court, where the court determined that “separate but equal” facilities for racial minorities were unequal and denied students from particular racial backgrounds equal protection under the law. In the decision, Chief Justice Earl Warren emphasized the value of education and the need for equal access: “In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education.” *Brown v. Board* determined that equal access to education is necessary to have productive and participatory citizens. This argument forms one of the bases for this year’s lawsuit that took place in Pennsylvania,

involving WPSD. This lawsuit asks if an inequitable school funding system, like the one in place in Pennsylvania, constitutes unequal access to education,

Starting in 2014, William Penn SD, several other school districts, the NAACP of PA, and the PA Association of Rural and Small Schools filed a lawsuit against the PA Department of Education and state officials, contending that PA’s system of school funding was unconstitutional.

The PA constitution states the “General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education.” The plaintiffs argued that the current state funding system does not provide equal opportunity for every student in Pennsylvania to receive a quality education. Therefore, the current funding system is not thorough or efficient. In this case, the plaintiffs were asking for a more equitable system of school funding, so that school districts did not have to depend on local taxes for the majority of their budget.

On February 7, 2023, in a historic decision, the court found that the current system is unconstitutional and disproportionately harms students in low-wealth districts. The court also identified specific disparities students in lower-wealth communities, such as reduced access to highly qualified teachers, a rigorous curriculum, safe facilities, and textbooks and supplies. The ruling in this case requires the state to change the way that schools are funded to ensure that students receive equitable education funding regardless of the community in which they live.

It’s worth noting that the judge’s ruling has determined that the current system of school funding is unconstitutional and asks lawmakers to remedy it, but it does not give a direct roadmap for how to reform school funding. Therefore, all stakeholders (including residents without children or residents with children in non-public schools) in WPSD must stay informed about this case and encourage our lawmakers to ensure that students in WPSD and across the state receive adequate education funding. Our kids deserve it.



RESTAURANT REVIEWS

Leo’s Breakfast and Lunch

Two recent reviews from local customers:

Leo makes everything from fresh ingredients! She also tries to make adjustments in response to feedback from customers and reviews. One morning I made a special order of French toast and eggs, which I enjoyed very much. The very next time I came in, I noticed that she had added that combination to her newly revised menu. There’s only one area where she stands firm. When told that she had better raise prices as her food was so inexpensive, she just laughed and said, “I want it to be affordable for everyone.”

– Bill Horton

Lansdownians: If you have not heard of Leo’s Restaurant or been there yet, you are in for a treat. Make your way quickly to our new breakfast/lunch spot located on Baltimore Ave. across from St. Philomena’s Church. They are inexpensive with really great food, and a friendly clean environment. The hostess/waitress Kimberly is friendly, welcoming, and kind. I definitely give Leo’s 5 stars in all categories. It is also nice to have some authentic Latino cuisine, like homemade empanadas, maduros, and tostones in addition to traditional breakfast foods.

– Yvette Calvin, Spanish Teacher, PWHS

CLASSIFIED ADS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

For Lansdowne’s Boards and Commissions. Vacancies exist in the Civil Service Commission, Environmental Advisory Council, and Parks & Recreation Board. For more information, visit <https://www.lansdowneborough.com/383/Volunteer-for-a-Board-or-Commission>

WALKING WITH PURPOSE

Lansdowne Democrats are looking for some help to deliver the Leader. This newspaper is published 2-4 times a year and hand-delivered to residences throughout the town. Small neighborhood turfs are assigned. Especially looking for apartment dwellers to place in their mailroom or distribute in their building. Email Suzanne at lansdownedems@gmail.com

General Election

TUESDAY
NOV. 7

POLLS OPEN 7 AM - 8 PM

SAVE OUR TREES

The Trouble
with English Ivy

Over 300 million trees are planted annually in the US. This is good news for many reasons. Did you know that shade trees can improve your property value by adding to the aesthetic appeal of a landscape? Mature trees in good condition can add between 7% and 19% to the value of a property! Additionally, trees are a powerful carbon conversion technology built by nature herself, aiding us in combating the negative effects of climate change. But here in Lansdowne, many trees are failing unnecessarily.

On our walks throughout Lansdowne, my husband Mike and I see many trees whose trunks and branches are covered by English Ivy, a non-native, highly invasive species. We are aware that the homeowner may not know that this is a murder in progress. English Ivy not only prevents sunlight from reaching the tree’s leaves, it also robs nutrients and water from the host tree. Left unchecked, ivy weighs down and weakens branches, making them more vulnerable to wind and ice storms. The bark of an encased tree trunk stays moist and, over time, begins to rot. Soon the owner will have a dead tree, requiring thousands of dollars for its removal. The weakened branches and/or dying tree could fall on a house, a car or a person, giving one additional liability. The cost of doing nothing is steep to the homeowner and community, as birds spread the seeds of ivy to other trees vulnerable to infestation.

Not only is English ivy highly invasive, taking over woodlands and choking out native plants, but it can also cause rashes. Just like poison ivy, English ivy (*Hedera helix* and related species) can cause an allergic skin reaction. Even though the two plants aren’t related, allergic reactions have been reported in gardeners after trimming English ivy and in children who played with English ivy or climbed trees covered with it. Itching, rashes, and weepy blisters can occur. Although not everyone will experience a rash, we urge caution in dealing with it in your yard.

It can be fairly straight-forward to stop ivy in its tracks, as long as the process is handled with ‘kid gloves.’ There are



English Ivy not only prevents sunlight from reaching the tree’s leaves, it robs nutrients and water from the host tree and adds excess weight to limbs.

a number of resources online which show you how to do this using simple hand tools (see box below).
We’d like to start a “CSI for Ivy-Choked Trees.” It is but a first step in helping to save our trees and to restore Lansdowne’s good reputation as a Tree City. The commercial areas and parks can be included in the inventory as they are not immune to this aggressive species. Please contact me if you are interested in walking a neighborhood or park and mapping where there are trees in trouble from ivy. Knowing where troubled trees are located is just the first step in helping property owners to save their trees (and save money). Email Suzanne & Mike McElroy at lansdownedems@gmail.com or drop a note addressed to us in the Little Library at 200 Drexel Ave. (Dear trees: help is on the way!)



Online Resources for DIY Removal of English Ivy
• <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/techniques/ivy-removal-home-landscape>
• <https://forthe loveoftrees.com/arborist-advice-remove-english-ivy-from-your-trees>

GUIDING THE SHIFT TO ELECTRONIC VEHICLES

The Chicken or the Egg?

By Dana Robinson

A revolutionary change in transportation is already underway: the shift to all-electric vehicles and plug-in electric-gasoline hybrid vehicles. More than three million of these electric vehicles (EVs) are on US roads, and by one estimate, there are already over 100 EVs in Lansdowne.

Nationally, sales are up, partly boosted by \$7,500 Federal tax credits that make EV costs more competitive, partly by lower costs for energy and repairs, and partly by a new urgency to do something about climate change and air pollution in our era of global warming.

If you are in the market for a new or used car, maybe you too have been thinking about buying an EV. In addition to considering cost and driving range, you need a plan for recharging the battery. If you have a garage or driveway, an extension cord might be all you need (especially if your car trips are mostly short ones). If you want to charge more quickly, you will need an EV charger. For this, a federal tax credit will defray the equipment cost, although an electrician will be needed to install the required line.

Buying an EV is even more complicated if you rent an apartment since you can’t just install an EV charger to meet your needs. Over one third (1,500) of Lansdowne’s housing units are apartments. Public EV chargers could be installed in parking lots or on streets. EV owners wishing to use them would open accounts with for-profit charging networks and pay with credit cards. Lansdowne’s Environmental Advisory Council is looking at several questions that this would raise:

The Chicken or the Egg?

Should the Borough install public EV charging stations NOW, to encourage residents to consider EVs (and to

position Lansdowne as a forward-thinking community), or should we WAIT until the trend toward buying EVs is better established and we know more about who is buying these vehicles?

Equity and Inclusion

Should the Borough install public EV charging stations to level the playing field so that renters can enjoy the tax credits and cost-savings from EV ownership that are available to homeowners?

Funding

Several communities in southeastern PA recently joined a consortium and applied as a group for 80% Federal funding of public EV chargers. (Communities that contract with for-profit networks to operate the EV chargers may escape the 20% matching cost as well.)

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has retooled their rebate program to help more working-class Pennsylvanians enjoy the benefits of zero-emission electric vehicles or low-emission vehicles. The program called Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebate for Consumers will offer at least 500 rebates from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. The maximum household income levels for eligibility have been lowered to assure that these benefit are directed to working-class recipients. Unlike federal tax credits, these rebates mean cash that is refunded directed to the consumer. Additional information is available on the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection website. Visit dep.pa.gov or search for “PA Alternative Fuel Vehicle Rebates” to learn more.

LANSDOWNE
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CLEAN ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Progress Toward a 100% Renewable Energy Future

By Dana Robinson

September marked the fourth anniversary of Borough Council’s commitment of Lansdowne’s municipal, residential, commercial and institutional energy users to move to 100% clean renewable electricity by 2035 and 100% renewable energy for heat and transportation by 2050.

Say what? If you are intrigued by these bold, even audacious, goals, you will find much to think about in the resolution passed unanimously by Borough Council four years ago (just search on the Borough’s website for “2019-13” to access the thinking behind “Ready for 100% Renewable.”)

Ready for 100% Renewable is a campaign of the Sierra Club. Commitments similar to Lansdowne’s have been made by over 40 southeastern Pennsylvania municipalities, including Philadelphia.

What will need to happen in order to move everybody to renewable electricity by 2035 and to electric heating and transportation by 2050? Obviously a lot! Fortunately, the Sierra Club also provided two years of weekly training webinars for Ready for 100% Renewable communities, in which two members of Lansdowne’s Environmental Advisory Council participated. The EAC then drafted a climate action plan.

It was decided to incorporate climate action planning into the revised Comprehensive Plan. If you want to see the result, search “Draft Comp Plan” on the Borough’s website and read the “Natural Features Conservation and

Sustainability Plan” section (pages 26-31).

Like Lansdowne, Narberth, Swarthmore and Media are small Ready for 100% Renewable communities that are finding the transition to clean energy to be a tall order. They have attempted to educate residents about buying their energy from “green” suppliers rather than PECO, but this is a very slow process and “green” suppliers are not able to provide 100% clean electricity.

In 2022, Borough Council members and EAC volunteers in these communities were excited to learn about “Community Choice Aggregation.” Under PA law, boroughs can act as electric companies and choose a “green” supplier to be the default electricity supplier rather than PECO. Ultimately, they could band together to buy electricity for their residents from new solar and wind farms, thus going a long way toward meeting the goal of 100% renewable energy.

Community Choice Aggregation is one option for action by Lansdowne’s Borough Council. Other possible actions include installing electric vehicle charging stations, making sure that new facilities incorporate sustainable features and solar energy, buying electric or plug-in hybrid police cars and reducing fossil fuel use in municipal facilities.

Engaging with residents around the Ready for 100% Renewable goals has been a big focus of Lansdowne’s Environmental Advisory Council. For example, 2023 saw a big push to educate Farmers Market customers about the new Federal IRA tax credits for solar panels, electric vehicles, heat pumps and other energy-efficient appliances. As residents move away from using fossil fuels in



Residential homeowners who install designated solar energy systems may be eligible to receive a tax credit from their federal income taxes.

favor of efficient transportation and heating equipment, powered by renewable electricity, Lansdowne will see progress toward making its Ready for 100% Renewable commitment.

The 2023 worldwide heat wave (100 degree ocean temperatures in Florida!) that brought Lansdowne so much heat, humidity, heavy rain, electrical outages and smokey air was a wake-up call about the need to reduce fossil fuel use.

But life today can be challenging, especially for Lansdowne’s families, and clean energy and climate change are usually not top priorities for Lansdowne’s residents. Lansdowne is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion, and local climate activism needs to be more diverse and inclusive. So, there is much work to be done to engage residents in the Ready for 100% Renewable commitment. Those with suggestions or an interest in volunteering are welcome to email Dana Robinson at fdanarobinson@gmail.com

EVERY VOTE COUNTS

How to Make Sure Your Mail-In Ballot Counts

By Caryl Carpenter

More than 16,000 ballots were discarded in the 2022 November election because of some easily avoided mistakes. If you follow these simple steps, you can be sure your ballot will be counted.

- Completely fill in the circles on the ballot with a blue or black ink pen. Don’t make check marks as they will not be counted.
- Put the ballot in the secrecy envelope marked “official election ballot”. Seal the envelope. Do not make any marks on the secrecy envelope.
- Put the secrecy envelope in the outer envelope and seal the outer envelope.
- Sign the outer envelope
- Date the outer envelope.
- Double check that you have signed and dated the outer envelope.
- Ballots can be returned through the U.S. mail or by Drop-Box.



BY U.S. MAIL:

- Put a first-class stamp on the outer envelope if you use the U.S. mail.
- If you mail the ballot, it must be RECEIVED at the county election board by 8PM on election night.

BY DROP BOX:

- Deposit your completed ballot at an official drop-box. Any official Drop-Box in Delaware County can be used. The Lansdowne Drop-Box is in front of the firehouse on Highland Avenue.
- Each voter must drop off their own ballot.

Delco Democrats – Official Ballot
Lansdowne Democrats Endorsed Candidates

Recommend YES on the retention of Jack Panella (D) for an additional term as Judge of the Superior Court.

OFFICE	CANDIDATE	POSITION
PA Supreme Court	Daniel Caffrey	11
PA Superior Court	Jill Beck	21
(vote for not more than 2)	Timika Lane	22
Commonwealth Court	Matt Wolf	31
Court of Common Pleas	Rachel Ezzell Berry	41
County Council	Monica Taylor	51
(vote for not more than 3)	Elaine Paul Schaefer	52
	Christine A. Reuther	53
District Attorney	Jack Stollsteimer	61
Magisterial Judge	W. Keith Williams II	71
WPSD School Director	Jennifer Hoff	81
Region 7 (Precincts 1,4,5,6 &11)		
Borough Council	Jessica Pointer	181
4-year terms	William O. Griffin III	182
(vote for not more than 3)	Benjamin Hover	183
Borough Council	Molly Connors	191
2-year term (vote for not more than 1)		

LANSDOWNE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (LEDC)

Helping Local Businesses Find and Fulfill Needs

By Susan Corbin

The Lansdowne Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) is the very public face to the successful revitalization and growth of Lansdowne’s Downtown Business District. However, the power behind this throne is just the opposite. Debbie Brodeur, LEDC’s Executive Director for the past ten years, along with her husband, an Executive Chef, lives a very private quiet life away from all social media. The couple has lived in Lansdowne for five years and with their adult children now grown, are empty nesters.

Deborah received a degree in Business and minored in Marketing from Penn State University after first attending Duquesne University for two years. She moved to Delaware County to work for the Community Action Agency of Delaware County (CAADC). As their Director of Development, she was responsible for fundraising and grant writing. The LEDC reached out to the CAADC to write a neighborhood revitalization plan for the south side of Lansdowne. Deborah not only wrote a five year plan but she also wrote the half million dollar grant application. She was hired by the LEDC in 2013 to implement the plan which was named the Lansdowne Yeadon Elm Street Program.

Her next five year plan was concentrated on the downtown area. Some of her goals were to finally get dedicated office space for the LEDC, renovate some of the vacant commercial buildings in the downtown area for occupation and revenue generation and to address the many needs of the growing artist and small business communities for space, loans and business planning.

Presently, Deborah’s goals will be focused on making Lansdowne a beautiful and eye catching place to walk through and also to drive through with a dynamic streetscape initiative. This plan will include an information kiosk which will detail a map of the downtown area along with a list of businesses, banners, planters, trees, public art, sidewalk treatments, bike racks and more to come as Lansdowne continues to position itself for the grand opening of the Lansdowne Theatre.

Deborah is proud of what she and her staff of four (two full-time and two part-time) have accomplished with the creation of the MakerSpace and the Utility Works buildings. She believes that she was able to fulfill her personal motto of “To run a successful business, you must first find a need and then fill it.” They were able to renovate two vacant buildings that now generate a source of stable income for the



LEDC Executive Director
Deborah Brodeur

LEDC and help artists with their careers in addition to helping burgeoning business entrepreneurs.

The MakerSpace and the Co-Working Space are operated by the LEDC in partnership with Penn State Brandywine. Located at 18 N. Lansdowne Avenue they provide the community with low cost access to a wide variety of sophisticated

tools and workspace in addition to a wide array of art, craft and technology classes. The building also houses Penn State Brandywine LaunchBox. This is a series of programs and resources for early stage entrepreneurs, small business owners and innovators. For more information visit utility.works/makerspace or phone: 267-665-8459

The Utility Works Creative Community is operated by the LEDC. The building is located at 32 E. Baltimore Avenue and functions as an art studio building in downtown Lansdowne. It houses 23 art studios, a ceramic studio, a member gallery and a juice bar. Membership options range from communal hotdesks to private studios with large windows and natural light. For more information visit utility.works or phone: 610-745-4013

The Lansdowne Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) is a non-profit corporation that seeks to support, encourage, and promote sustainable economic growth and investment in the Borough of Lansdowne.

They work to recruit and retain businesses, in addition to actively seeking to fill vacant commercial buildings. The LEDC also works with business owners to help them to procure their business permits, licenses and acts as a liaison between them and Borough Hall. You can support the LEDC’s programs and activities such as the Farmers Market, Arts on the Avenue Festival, Juneteenth Celebration, Small Business Saturday, A Bit of the Arts Holiday Sale and more in several ways. You can volunteer your time at one of their many events, you can give a tax deductible donation or you can purchase a sponsorship package for as little as \$100 up to \$5,000.

For more information:
Lansdowne Economic Development Corporation (LEDC)
32 E. Baltimore Avenue,
Lansdowne, PA 19050
Phone: 610-745-4063
LansdownesFuture.org
info@lansdownesFuture.org

Spotlight on Shadeland Avenue

LANSDOWNE’S OTHER BUSINESS DISTRICT HAS PLENTY TO OFFER

By Susan Corbin

Most people know about the main business district in Lansdowne which is located in the Borough’s downtown along Lansdowne Ave. However, everyone may not know about the second. Nestled between Berkley and Drexel Avenues on Shadeland Avenue, is Lansdowne’s second business district. The Shadeland Avenue Business District. Situated on the west side of Lansdowne, these stores provide an array of services to the community.

Step By Step Learning Centers offers childcare for infants to 8th graders, My Old Place Bakery specializes in creating Danish pastries and sticky buns, Travers Food Market has been serving their deliciously fresh homemade fare and party specials for over 30 years, Paul Revere Pizza House, with over 50 years in business, is your one-stop eatery for all foods Italian and much more, and at Ghost Cloud Smoke Shop you will find all of your vaping and smoking paraphernalia.



Step By Step Child Care
sbsLearningCenters.com
Infant and Toddlers:
211 Shadeland Avenue
610-623-8383

Pre to Full Kindergarten:
230 Shadeland Avenue
484-461-3542

Before and After School:
Kindergarten - 8th Grade
3434 Garrett Rd., Drexel Hill
484-461-6229

My Old Place Bakery
Myoldplacebakery.food96.com
Old School Baking
201 Shadeland Avenue
610-259-4000

Travers Food Market
2021 Best of Delco
Deli – Catering – Lottery
199 Shadeland Avenue
610-626-6330

Paul Revere Pizza House
paulreverepizzahouse.com
2022 Best Pork in Delco
Take out, delivery or sit-in
193 Shadeland Avenue
610-259-9214

Ghost Cloud Smoke Shop
Vaping Supplies
191 Shadeland Avenue
484-461-2271

Community Garden Thrives

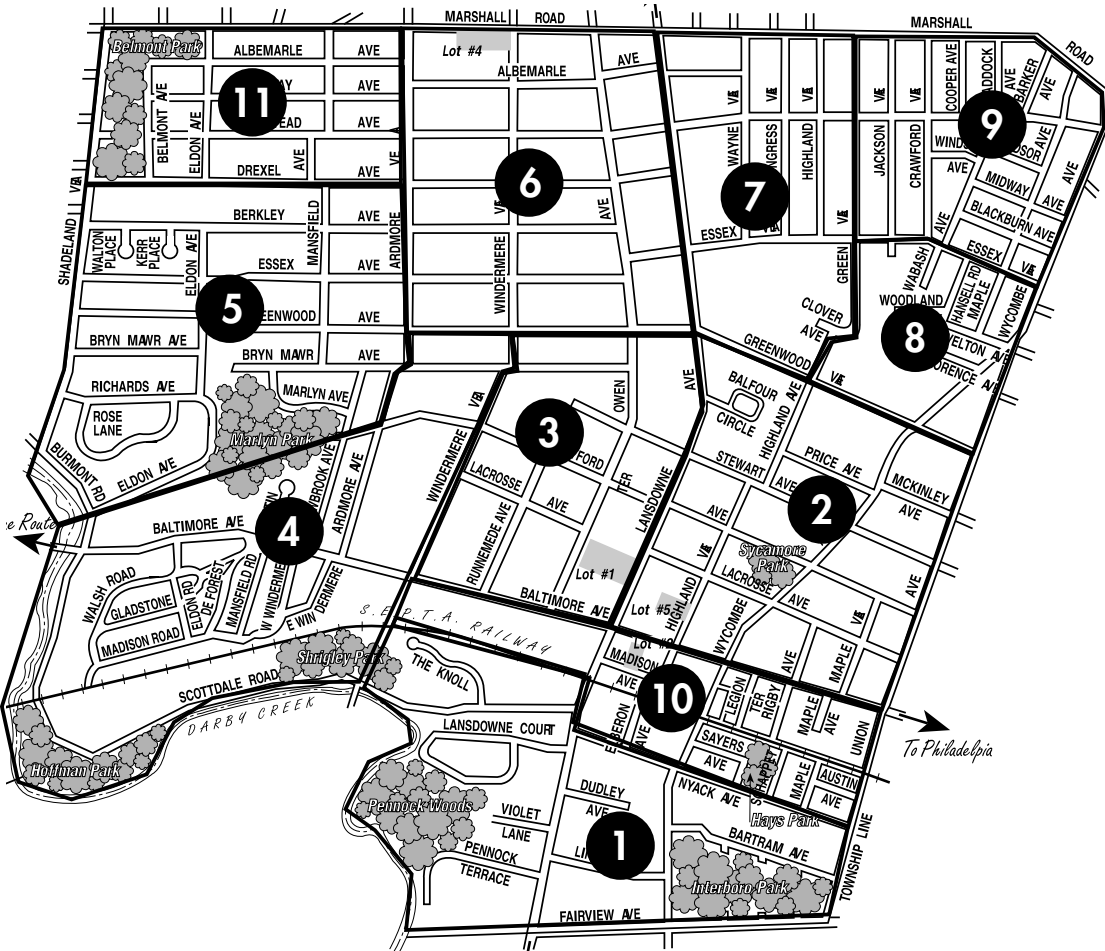
The bountiful community gardens at Lansdowne and Greenwood Avenues has 10 raised beds, as well as a large pollinator garden to help increase native plants for pollinators in our area. To get involved with the gardens, please visit lansdownepresbyterianchurch.com and click on “Community Engagement.”



POLLING LOCATIONS & PRECINCTS

- 1st Precinct: Twentieth Century Club
- 2nd Precinct: Penn Wood High School
- 3rd Precinct: Penn Wood High School
- 4th Precinct: Penn Wood High School
- 5th Precinct: Ardmore Avenue Elementary School
- 6th Precinct: Ardmore Avenue Elementary School
- 7th Precinct: Penn Wood High School
- 8th Precinct: Penn Wood High School
- 9th Precinct: Pepper’s Pharmacy
- 10th Precinct: Twentieth Century Club
- 11th Precinct: Ardmore Avenue Elementary School

DROP BOX FOR
MAIL-IN BALLOTS:
Lansdowne Fire Station
26 N. Highland Avenue



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MONTH OF OCTOBER
OctoB00 Judging by Mayor Magda
for best Halloween house decoration
Awards given out in November

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26 at 7 PM
Lansdowne Folk Club
Lili Anel
Twentieth Century Club
84 S Lansdowne Ave

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27
Halloween Ghost History Walk
Time and Location TBD

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 6 PM – 10 PM
Open Sound Halloween
Twentieth Century Club
84 S Lansdowne Ave

Friday, October 27, 2023
6:00 – 8:00 PM
Women for Lansdowne:
Celebrating women in politics,
business and the non-profit sectors
who work to benefit the Lansdowne
community and beyond.
Room 55, 55 East Baltimore Ave.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
Max Kaplan & The Magics
Vakali Band
32 S Lansdowne Ave

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 11 AM – 1 PM
Halloween Party for Kids
Costumes Encouraged
Trick or Treat with LFM vendors
Lansdowne Landing

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 9 AM - 1 PM
Lansdowne Farmers Market
30 N. Lansdowne Ave.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
The Dukes of Destiny
32 S Lansdowne Ave

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31
Last day to request a mail-in or
absentee ballot

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
Bill Toms and Hard Rain
32 S Lansdowne Ave

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
Stevie and the Bluescasters
32 S Lansdowne Ave

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7
Election Day - Municipal Primary
Polls open from 7 AM - 8 PM

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7
Last day for County Boards of
Elections to receive mail-in and
civilian absentee ballots
Must be received by 8 PM

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
Michael London & Friends
32 S Lansdowne Ave

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
The Gretchen Emery Band
32 S Lansdowne Ave

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16 at 7 PM
Lansdowne Folk Club presents
Beaucoup Blue
Twentieth Century Club
84 S Lansdowne Ave

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
Bees Deluxe
32 S Lansdowne Ave

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18
9 AM – 1 PM
Lansdowne Farmers Market
Thanksgiving Special
30 N. Lansdowne Ave

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
The Gabe Stallman Band
32 S Lansdowne Ave

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24 4 PM–8 PM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25 10 AM–4 PM
A Bit of the Arts 2023
Twentieth Century Club
84 S Lansdowne Ave

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
The Cold Soil Drifters
32 S Lansdowne Ave

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1
Penn Wood Basketball
Season Starts

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
Deni Bonet with Chris Flynn
32 S Lansdowne Ave

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7 at 7 PM
Lansdowne Folk Club
Jeni Englund and Meghan Cary
Twentieth Century Club
84 S Lansdowne Ave

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
Drivetime with Shane Arnold
32 S Lansdowne Ave

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9 at 6 PM
Winter Lights Parade
Meet at Greenwood at Highland
between 5 and 6
Display of lights required to
participate

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
John Nemeth & Blues Dreamers
32 S Lansdowne Ave

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
The Porkroll Project
32 S Lansdowne Ave

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16
10 AM – NOON
Lansdowne Farmers Market
Winter Market
30 N. Lansdowne Ave

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16 at 8 PM
Jamey’s House of Music presents
The Laura Cheadle Band
Christmas Show
32 S Lansdowne Ave

MONTH OF DECEMBER
Jingle Judging by Mayor Magda
for best Holiday house decorations
Awards given out in January