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GI Dems Newsletter

December/ 2022



From our Chairman

Dear Democrats,

We've come to the end of yet another year, and I think you will agree with me that 2022 was one for the books. On November 8th our good friend Kathy Hochul became the first woman to ever be elected governor of the State of New York. We worked hard here in Grand Island and in Western New York to make that happen, beginning with the June primary and continuing on through to an unforgettable hometown rally held for Kathy at the Statler on Election Eve.

Despite the many headwinds faced by Democrats going into the general election, we swept all our local state delegation contests in the face of vigorous Republican opposition, and nationally Joe Biden became

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As we enter the holiday season, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate our state Senator, Sean Ryan, who will be representing us once again in Albany, as well Congressman Brian Higgins, whose work has transformed our local economy and who will continue to be our champion in the nation's capital.

None of these successes would be possible without all of you, the public; and I am grateful for the hard working, dedicated and determined members of the Grand Island Democratic Committee.

After the holidays and once the New Year begins, I will be calling on all of you again as this is going to be a critically important election cycle. Locally we have races for our town board, which includes town clerk, town justice, supervisor and two councilmen.

We also have important races for the County Executive's office and our Democratic County Legislature majority on the ballot. That will include newly appointed District 3 Legislator Mike Kooshoian, who filled the vacancy left by Lisa Chimera when she took on the task of Deputy County Executive. Welcome to Mike!

We will begin by circulating nominating petitions for these candidates, which will likely begin in late February and extend through March. This will be challenging, as it's a year-round effort taking us door to door in winter weather, well in advance of the June primary date, so be prepared to meet the members of your GI Democratic Committee as they come knocking on your doors.

I would like to say, there are many larger committees in Erie County, but none more committed than ours. I'm proud that we remain a strong voice of loyal and constructive opposition, and give our community a choice of qualified leaders, which is so important to the democratic process.

Happy Holidays from the Democratic Party of Grand Island

Happy Holidays everyone! If you wonder why most of us Dems say Happy Holidays a lot instead of Merry Christmas it's because we tend to be much more inclusive than the other major party.

That doesn't mean we don't say Merry Christmas. It means that when we meet someone we don't know and don't know what they celebrate we respect their right to believe and celebrate something different than we might.

Did you know that from November through February there are roughly 29 holidays observed by 7 religions?

Have a great holiday season no matter what you celebrate from the Grand Island Democratic Committee!

2022 Election Recap

We along with all the Erie County Democrats celebrated significant midterm election victories last month. Democratic wins included Brian Higgins (26th Congressional Dist.), Letitia James (Attorney General), Chuck Schumer (US Senator), Thomas DiNapoli (Comptroller), Monica Wallace (143rd Dist. Assembly), Pat Burke (142nd Dist. Assembly), Karen McMahon (143rd Dist. Assembly), Sean Ryan (State Senator), and Kathy Hochul for Governor (our first NY governor from Buffalo in 140 years!). Outside of NY, even more recent cause for celebration was the clinching of a 51st Senate seat for the Democrats with Raphael Warnock's win in the Georgia special run-off election. Onward now to 2023 Grand Island town elections!

Election Season 2023

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(Frentzel) and Town Justice (Frentzel).

Petitions will be circulated in late March for June primaries so the process of finding and vetting candidates that represent our Democratic values will need to start now.

If you are interested in running for office or if you know someone that would be good for Grand Island to fill one of the spots, please contact anyone on the Committee or email info@grandislanddems.org. You'll need to submit a cover letter and resume by January 5.

Advisory Board / Town updates

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Update: The Grand Island Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) continues to actively promote the development and usage of parks and recreational resources on Grand Island (GI).

Most recently, the PRAB has been involved in an effort to redesign and revitalize the Town Commons surrounding the GI Town Hall. The revitalization of the Town Commons will be guided by a design study and plan conducted by Barton & Loguidice a landscape architecture firm. The revitalized Town Commons will include American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant pathways and an environmentally sensitive and aesthetically appealing revitalization of the Town Commons creek.

The PRAB has also been overseeing and coordinating efforts to enhance our trail system on GI. This past year the Town opened the Nike Base Trail. The Nike Base Trail system consists of over 3 miles of marked trails. The trailhead is at Nike Base which allows access to ample parking. The trail network connects the West River Shoreline Trail to WNY Land Conservancy's Margery Gallogly Nature Preserve. Use the attached link to access a map of the Nike Base Trail <https://www.grandislandny.us/DocumentCenter/View/272> or go to the GI Town website to access a map of all the Town trails on GI.

The PRAB is a vital competent of GI Town government and plays a significant role in the quality of life for GI residents. We are currently looking for citizens who wish to be on the Board and help make GI a truly special place to enjoy parks and recreation. Contact Dave Pratt, PRAB Chairperson if you are interested in being a Board member.

Grand Island's Community Relations Committee: You may not be aware, but Grand Island has a "Community Relations Committee" (CRC). The purpose of the CRC is to bring citizen concerns and opinions to the Grand Island Town Board. The CRC is headed by the GI Supervisor, John Whitney, and also includes a Town Council member (currently Mike Maddigan), as well as three citizen Members At Large appointed by the Town Supervisor. The current Members At Large are: Stephanie Cowart, Robin Pulliam and David Pratt.

In 2022, the CRC completed the GI Police Reform Plan which was required by the New York State Governor. The GI Police Reform Plan included a number of important reforms to reduce the potential for racial bias in policing. For example, candidates for the GI Police force are no longer required to have a minimum of five years of police experience as this had a negative impact on recruitment of minority candidates. Based on the Reform Plan, eligible candidates must be certified by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice with full time experience "preferred". To improve collaboration and transparency between the GI Police force and GI residents, the Reform Plan also required an annual town hall meeting between the GI Police force and the community as well as a survey of constituent satisfaction with the GI Police force. In addition, a quarterly analysis of GI Police data is being conducted to assess the type and quality of GI Police interventions.

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contact any of the CRC Members At large for further information regarding the CRC or if you have a specific concern that you'd like to share with the Committee.

Guest Editorial

It's puzzling to me why Joe Biden's approval rating is below 50%. He's probably accomplished more in his first two years in office than any president since L.B.J. or maybe even F.D.R. His 1.2 trillion dollar "Infrastructure Bill" repairing bridges, roads, airports, waterways, energy systems and extending internet broadband has been desperately needed for over 40 years. Fifteen Nobel Prize winning economists have backed the bill. Biden's "Covid Relief Bill" saved millions of businesses and individuals from bankruptcy and provided covid vaccinations for millions more.

The "Inflation Reduction Act" reinforced our commitment to climate change and for the first time Medicare will be able to negotiate drug prices and there will be a ceiling on yearly drug costs for individuals saving millions for Seniors. Corporations will finally be required to pay a 16% minimum tax. Unemployment under Biden was reduced to levels not seen since 1969 and wages have risen 2.4%. He has supported funding to aid veterans injured from explosions returning from war zones.

The Biden administration has avoided a possible disaster by investing in the domestic manufacture of computer chips critical not only for national security but for everything from cell phones to automobiles which were formerly only made in Taiwan. His administration has reduced the Federal deficit by 350 billion dollars after the Trump administration had increased the deficit with its tax cuts for the rich. He is a strong defender of women's rights. He's also strengthened NATO and opposed Russian tyranny in Ukraine.

Adversaries blame Biden unfairly for the high inflation rate but he can do little to reduce it. International supply problems caused by China, the war in Ukraine and the covid epidemic have caused rising prices internationally.

But Joe Biden's greatest achievement must be that he has rescued democracy itself by defeating Donald Trump and the "big lie" not only in 2020 but also in 2022!

John W. Kowalski

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