

# The SCPD PAC Progressive Patriot

The Newsletter for Progressive Activists in NE Ohio

## WHAT IS SCPD PAC?

Summit County Progressive Democrats PAC is a grass roots organization of dedicated people committed to social justice on the local, state, national, and international levels. We support efforts that better the lives of all citizens by working to promote human rights, equal economic opportunity, responsive government, a safe, sustainable environment, and a society built on compassion. Our goal is to expand grass roots participation in the political process and to return the federal government to the will of the people. SCPD PAC works to support progressive candidates through grassroots activism, contributions coaching candidates, forums and events and the production of literature and sample ballots to educate the electorate. If you are interested in SCPD PAC, contact

Ingrid Kunstel at  
ikunstel@neo.rr.com.

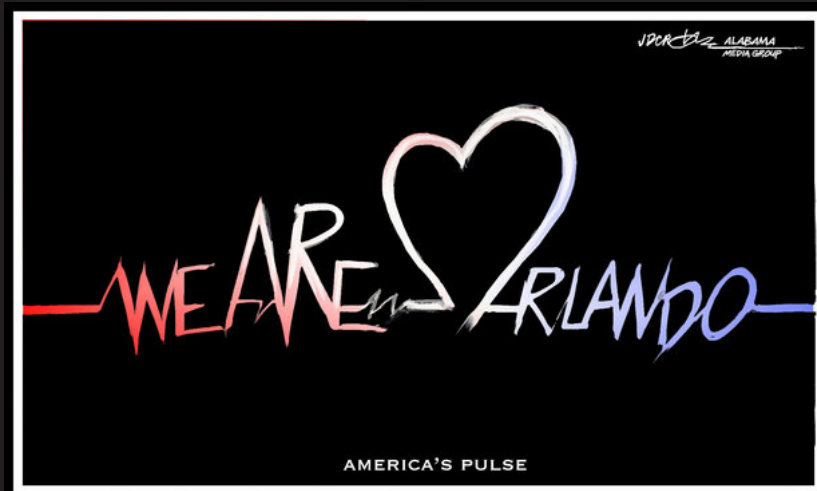
“ Grassroots Action NOW! ”

July 2016

**JOIN US AT OUR NEXT  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP  
MEETING  
JULY 12 AT 6:30 PM  
CANDIDATES SPEAK AT 5:30  
AKRON PUBLIC LIBRARY**



## We Are Orlando



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**There are no words adequate to describe the pain that the community of Orlando and our brothers and sisters in the LGBT\*Q community are feeling. Words like fear, anger, pain, agony, despair, are pale and insufficient descriptions of the trauma that these communities experienced in the early morning hours of Sunday, June 11th, and are still experiencing at this moment.**

**Do not let this terrible crime sap your strength, your heart, your spirit, or your love . . . and should you find yourselves short of these things, know that we give you ours.**

# SCPD Annual Celebration & Fundraiser

By Sherrie Weitzenhof

Our May 5 annual celebration and fundraiser was a great success in enjoyment, inspiration and outcomes. The large crowd enjoyed the program, the food and being among other progressives.

The evening started with a special reception for our speaker, Cecile Richards, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood USA, attended by sponsors who contributed \$300 or more. Thanks to member Mickey Stefanik for taking pictures of the guests with Ms. Richards. And thanks to Senator Sherrod Brown and Connie Schultz for reaching out to Ms. Richards to be our speaker.

The fundraiser featured a silent auction, with items donated by local businesses and members/ friends of SCPD, as well as a wine lotto featuring some high end wines and a 50/50 raffle. Frank Kunstel, our program emcee, did a wonderful job of framing the evening and keeping the program running on time.

Cecile Richards was inspirational, reminding us about how hard we have to fight for the rights of women and all our citizens. She shared her history of growing up in a family of progressive activists, her role in helping Planned Parenthood employees through their grief and terror caused by the attacks on Planned Parenthood clinics and the progress toward improving women's health options through the Affordable Care Act.

President Bob Gippin and Executive Vice President Thomas Townsend presented the annual member awards to Mike

Wheeler, Progressive Patriot; Tom Schmida, Committee member; and Eddie Rice, Unsung Hero.

The event attendance was higher than ever, with 163 attending, due in great part to people coming to hear and support Cecile Richards. Planned Parenthood members and staff came from Summit County and Columbus, including Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio President, Iris Harvey. SCPD netted over \$19,000, which will be used to support progressive candidates and issues in 2016.

The success of this event is due to the hard work of the SCPD Fundraiser event committee - the "Fundies": Sherrie Weitzenhof, chair, Ingrid Kunstel, co-chair, Kathy Arthur, Adele Blazey, Linda Bunyan, Nancy Clem, Gail Frangos, Bob Gippin, Eileen Goldman, Mary Louise McMahon, Laura Monroe, Maureen Paulett, David Siegal, Sally Taylor, Mike Wheeler and Amber Young. Special thanks go to Mike Wheeler and Paul Beargie who designed and implemented our electronic check-in/ data collection system; to Mike Wheeler for donating all the printing; and to Amber Young for graphic designs. SCPD Treasurer, Pete Zeigler has to be commended for overcoming the problems caused by the bank credit card reader that didn't work.

We encourage members to join the "Fundies", as we start to organize for 2017. Please contact Sherrie Weitzenhof, [sweitzenho@aol.com](mailto:sweitzenho@aol.com), 330-666-2627, if you are interested in joining this fun group.





# SCPD Annual Celebration & Fundraiser



## The President's Corner

### A Promising But Terrifying Year

By Bob Gippin, President of SCPD PAC

2016 offers Progressives the promise of increased momentum towards positive change in America. Hillary Clinton can build on the accomplishments of Barack Obama, especially with a Democratic Senate and – dare we hope – a Democratic House. That should be what happens. And it will be what happens if the country votes at least as progressively as it did in the last two elections.

To make that happen, we will need to deliver another strong effort here at Ground Zero in Summit County, Ohio. We know we're capable of doing that, with everyone putting a shoulder to the wheel.

That very hopeful prospect ought to be enough to motivate us. But 2016 – shockingly – also carries the terrifying possibility of a literal fascist becoming President. Make no mistake about Trump: that is exactly what he is, an American version of Mussolini or even worse. The Grand Wizard of the Klan in the Oval Office. And we know from history that fascists make quick work of institutional checks and balances once they gain power. Trump has made it clear that is exactly what he will do.

We must act on the assumption that Trump will win unless we do our utmost to stop him. It is easy to think that the American people will not elect such a monster. The polls may soon show Hillary with a clear lead again, as Bernie's supporters largely rally behind her. But we know that accurate polling is increasingly hard to do, since many will not respond. And Trump's supporters who do respond may not be truthful, either out of embarrassment or the malicious desire to throw a stone at the establishment that way.

SCPD's efforts against Trump will begin with our Republican National Convention activities. These have been closely planned for months and will include vigorous efforts to offer our local Progressive message to the media and careful participation in the demonstrations in Cleveland. We will need the help of as many of our members as are willing and able to spend some time during the week of July 18-23 and in the preparations before then. Please join in with that if you can.

After that, we will be prepared to offer assistance to Hillary's campaign, directly and indirectly. Much of that indirect help will be by assisting other campaigns and efforts whose success will support the entire ticket. That will include Ted Strickland's

campaign for Senate and also vital local elections, such as that of Ron Cable for Domestic Relations Judge. We will be working with other organizations to promote voter registration and turnout by those folks who are likely to vote Democratic.



We have no intention of halting our Issues efforts during these coming months, but frankly I will urge our entire membership – especially those who don't generally participate in Feet on the Street campaign work – to give as much time and effort as possible to the essential work of electing Hillary Clinton and the other priority candidates we identify who are necessary for the Progressive agenda to move forward. It is one of those years where no Progressive dare sit on her hands.

Our Campaign Support Committee has years of skill and experience, with a great record of success. It has the leadership and infrastructure in place to make it easy – dare I say fun – for everyone to be able to contribute campaign effort productively, regardless of your previous experience level. And there is more than enough of many kinds of work that needs to be done, your Feet don't literally need to be on the Street if sedentary is more your current style!

Finally, I need to say something about Bernie Sanders. Full disclosure, I've been for Hillary since Day One, as have many others within SCPD. She will be an effective President and progressive enough. I wasn't confident enough about Bernie's ability to do the job of Chief Executive. But I have nothing but the greatest admiration for Bernie. His campaign was a modern marvel of grassroots Progressive activism, not least his small-contribution fundraising and mobilization of young people.

Most important, Bernie brought the Progressive agenda to center stage under the spotlight and unquestionably has caused Hillary to sign on to far better policy commitments than she might have done otherwise. He deserves our great praise. We believe that we can use the voter contact technology that the Democratic Party makes available to us to identify and reach out to his local supporters, the young ones in particular. We intend to do that, hopefully to draw them into SCPD.

So we must campaign as hard as we can this year, both hopefully and scared. It's that important. Please, please join in.



## SCPD Campaign Work Already Underway

By Frank Kunstel

Campaign season has already started. While most of our SCPD activity will gear up later in the summer, some of our members are already volunteering their skills to some candidates. Here is a quick rundown to give you a flavor of what's been happening.

–Eddie Rice and Pete Zeigler have been a big help to Ron Cable in his race for Domestic Relations Judge. They are helping with speech writing, public speaking coaching, and political consulting services.

–Mike Wheeler is managing Judith Lynn Lee's campaign for the Ohio House. He is coordinating with the help of a very active committee, event participation, fundraisers, media and speeches. It is nearly a full time gig and will become so as we get closer to September. He is also helping Keith Mundy in his race for Congress, Vernon Sykes for the Ohio Senate, David Hamilton for County Council and Bobby McDowell for the Ohio House with graphic arts, print and mail projects.

–Sarah Rubens has been working the reception/sign-in tables at fundraisers for numerous candidates and it's hard to go to one and not see her there.

–Frank Kunstel and Eddie Rice will be providing video speaker training and coaching for candidates for their stump speeches. This year they are adding some practice in handling the endorsement interviews that various newspapers conduct prior to making their public endorsements.

–Thomas Townsend is working on the campaign of Sandra Kurt for Summit County Clerk of Courts and Bobby McDowell's campaign for the Ohio House.

–Frank Kunstel is researching and providing to all the challenger Democratic Congressional candidates in Ohio the voting records on key votes of their Republican incumbent opponents.

As the campaign season heats up in the summer and early fall, SCPD members will be able to volunteer through our "Feet On the Street" program. Candidates place a high value on volunteer work; each hour is worth hundreds of dollars to them. If a significant number of our members each volunteers just a few hours per month, we can make a big difference to our priority candidates.



## The Definition of Selflessness

By Ingrid Kunstel

If you were to look in a dictionary for the definition of the word selflessness you would find Pete Zeigler's picture. This man has devoted his life to helping people get elected and promoting progressive values and issues.

Pete was born in Pittsburgh to a nurse mother and a policeman father. He says that his parents were apolitical. However, their son paid attention to what was going on around him. At a very young age -7 years old to be exact- Pete paid attention to the Mondale/Reagan presidential race. With Pittsburgh being a very Democratic city and a union city there was a lot to see and learn.

Pete says that he thinks he related to the Democratic philosophy of helping the least amongst us, the outsiders, because he has always been an outsider. In pre-school and kindergarten he was the only non-Jewish child. In elementary school he was the only non-Catholic student. He then went to Shady Side Academy and was the among the minority of students not from an upper class family. So Pete has sympathy for people who are not in the mainstream.

At Penn State Pete majored in Political Science with the intention of becoming a professor. And then moved to Toronto where earned an MA in Political Science, and realized that he did not want to spend five or more years to get a PhD. After 9/11, he returned to Pittsburgh and got a degree in accounting. However the economy had tanked and jobs were difficult to find, so he moved back to his parents' house and began volunteering for the Democratic Party. While working on a successful campaign he made many important contacts.

One year later Pete became interested in a congressional race PA-3. He thought that he would volunteer but was asked to come to Erie, PA to interview. Pete had been studying and talking to people and so was becoming more knowledgeable

about campaigns. The campaign offered him the position of campaign manager. It was a tough district and the campaign failed.. A number of other campaigns followed, from School board to US Senate.

In 2005 Pete got a call from a guy working on Capri Cafaro's campaign. They needed more staff and so Pete moved to Mahoning Valley where he also did free-lance writing and consulting. Then on to Medina County, where he was hired by ODP to work on the 2008 Bocchieri race.

Finally Pete decided to go to law school. His first semester, he was diagnosed with brain cancer. He underwent chemo and steroids while going to school. The treatment did not work and so he left school for a semester and had surgery. When he



returned to school he thought that he was done with politics. But then he met Bill Rich. Pete had made a comment during class about politics and Bill pulled him aside after class. Bill got him involved with SCPD. And he is a great gift to our organization.

Prior to his surgery Pete was very musical. He sang in the Penn State glee club and other choruses and played guitar and bass. The surgery destroyed his ability to do any of these things, which was and is a painful loss. He is now a tournament Scrabble player. He is also an avid sports fan of the

Pittsburgh Steelers, Pirates and Penguins.

SCPD has provided Pete with many good friends. He loves the direction that SCPD is going. His goal is to see Summit County turn deep blue with him in the role of helping truly progressive candidates win. He is exactly the kind of man that we need in our organization. Take some time to get to know him. You'll be glad that you did.



**Donald Trump is Coming To Town!****By Joanne Dolinar**

The Republican National Convention in Cleveland (July 18 to 21) will anoint Donald Trump, who has taken demagogic control of an enfeebled and compliant Republican party, as their presidential nominee. Trump has targeted Ohio as a must-win state, so it's possible we will put him over the top in the election. Or, we can defeat him here in a way that will also win a lot of down ballot elections for Democrats.

That's why it seems particularly important, when media from all over the world will be in our backyard, that we make it very clear that Ohio doesn't want Trump.

Chairman Frank Kunstel and SCPD members of the Republican Convention Committee have begun doing just that through media messaging for the Convention. They are contacting dozens of national, state and local reporters to let them know that when the media are in Cleveland, SCPD can help them capture "the voices of real people from Ohio, giving local color and perspective to their RNC coverage and present a progressive counterpoint to the Republican viewpoint."

The committee has lined up interviewees, including some SCPD members, to talk from a personal point of view about issues that are important to us. For example:

- What unease does an Akron high school girl—who is Muslim—feel when she hears Donald Trump vow to close America's borders to Muslims?
- How do two young female Ohio state legislators—Greta Johnson and Emilia Sykes—respond to GOP attacks on women's rights here in Ohio, where women's access to healthcare has been severely restricted by a Republican legislature?

- How does a local minister and gun control activist, Rob Grow, cope with living in a state with permissive gun laws, after meeting with families of shooting victims?

The Committee believes these human interest stories will grab reporters' attention and help us make a case against Trump as well as give visibility to SCPD.

SCPD members also have an opportunity to protest Trump at a march and rally, partnering with Stand Together Against Trump, a Cleveland group organized by young doctors in the area, who are dedicated to peaceful protest.

The march and rally will take place as a windup to the convention on the last day, July 21 at 4 pm at a location to be announced. SCPD signs and tee shirts reading "DEFEAT TRUMP IN OHIO Summit County Progressive Democrats" will be available for protesters. (Even if you don't join the march, you can order a tee shirt. E-mail [ingridkunstel@gmail.com](mailto:ingridkunstel@gmail.com) for price and to order.)

**What we need:**

**SCPD volunteers to transport interviewees and protesters.**

**More protesters!**

Cleveland groups are looking for church basements in which out of town protesters can sleep. (They must sign a pledge not to drink or take drugs or do other bad things.)

# **STOP TRUMP IN OHIO**

**What: Rally and March Against Trump**

**When: Thursday, July 21 at 4 pm**

**Place: Republican National Convention  
Cleveland, OH, site to be determined**

**Transportation will be provided. Get on our e-mail list and keep up to date with all developments!**

**Contact: [jodol100@aol.com](mailto:jodol100@aol.com)**

## **SCPD PAC Executive Committee**

President - Robert Gippin  
Executive Vice President - Thomas Townsend  
Administrative Vice President - Sherrie Weitzenhof  
Executive Secretary – Eddie Rice  
Recording Secretary – Guy Marentette  
Treasurer – Pete Ziegler  
Assistant Treasurer – Ellen Lander Nischt

Members-At-Large – Linda Omobien, Pete Nischt, Tom Schmida  
Chair of Communications – Ingrid Kunstel  
Chair of Issues & Education – Richard Bardoulas  
Chair of Outreach – David Hamilton  
Chair of Fundraising – Mike Wheeler  
Chair of Candidate Support – Sarah Rubens