

# 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](mailto:ikunstel@neo.rr.com)**.

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**" Grassroots Action NOW! "**

**October 2016**

**JOIN US AT OUR NEXT  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP  
MEETING  
OCTOBER 11 AT 6:30 PM  
AKRON PUBLIC LIBRARY**



## Remembering 9/11

**I wonder... I wonder, if there in your mind,  
Do you still remember that moment behind?  
That singular second; that instant of then;  
When everything stopped, and the world changed again?**

**I wonder... I wonder, if there in your dreams,  
Is everything different or still as it seems?  
Do you ever pause to consider the Earth?  
Do you ever ask what security's worth?**

**I wonder... I wonder, if there in your world,  
Has empathy, wisdom, or hatred uncurled?  
Are you more distrustful, or do you recall:  
United we stand, but divided we fall?**

**Remember, whatever your future may be,  
I hope that it's happy and healthy and free.  
Remember to love, and to laugh, and to give.**

**Remember September 11th, and *live*.**

**Author Unknown**

## The Republican National Convention as Experienced by SCPD Activists

By Ingrid Kunstel

About 8 months ago, SCPD President, Bob Gippin, tasked the Communications Committee with developing a plan for SCPD to have a prominent presence outside the Republican National Convention. Our committee members were few with Jean Mankemyer, Joanne Dolinar, Ralph Hunt, Frank Kunstel, Guy Marentette and Sherry Weitzenhof scrambling to figure out how we could stand out in the masses of people who would descend on Cleveland for the convention. In addition, there was great anxiety about the safeness of being there because Donald Trump had been stirring up hatred, racism, and violence amongst his followers.

It was finally decided that we would try contacting as many media outlets as we could find to let them know that we would be bringing people up to Cleveland who had personal stories of how the Trump platform was effecting people's lives. We had drivers who brought the speakers to Cleveland where we met them and then picked them up at the end of the day.

Two downtown attorneys said we could use their conference rooms for the press conferences. As it turned out, no one showed up for the conferences but Mall C and Public Square were loaded with media people searching for stories. So our headquarters became those two areas.

The first day we had a young Muslim, high school student who wore a hijab. She wanted to talk about the fear and anxiety that she, her parents and friends feel with the anti-Muslim rhetoric that Trump has been spewing. She was soft spoken and very articulate. She was like a magnet for the press. Her hijab and our signs drew one after another journalists as well as many people who gave us thumbs up or wanted to have their pictures taken with us and our signs.

During the course of three days we had an environmentalist, an anti-gun violence advocate, an advocate for the homeless talking about voter suppression, an educator who talked about charter schools. In addition three of us were there to talk about SCPD and what we are working for, and to provide a contrast to the bigotry, hatred, racism and misogyny that the Republicans were demonstrating in their convention.

Interestingly the reporters, who came from all over the world, said they were relieved to talk to us because when inside the convention center everyone was saying the same Trump rhetoric. So even though we might not have been quoted every time, we provided a larger context for the world.

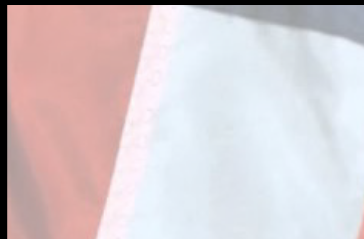
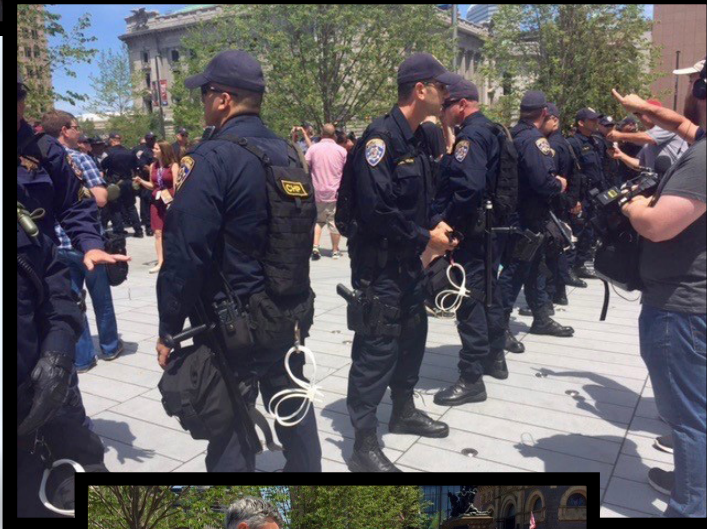
We did over 75 interviews in those three days with journalists from all over the world. During those interviews the technology was fascinating. Sure, there were journalists and photographers with standard gear but many of them did the interviews using their cell phones to live stream the interviews or using little cameras that attached to their shoulders to film.

Our fourth and final day we took part in a protest with a group called STAT, which was started by a group of doctors. STAT stood for Stand Together Against Trump. All was peaceful for the demonstration with the police performing masterfully with crowd control. All of the police were friendly, respectful and effective. For the most part the crowd was friendly and peaceful. There was never a moment when we felt fear of violence.

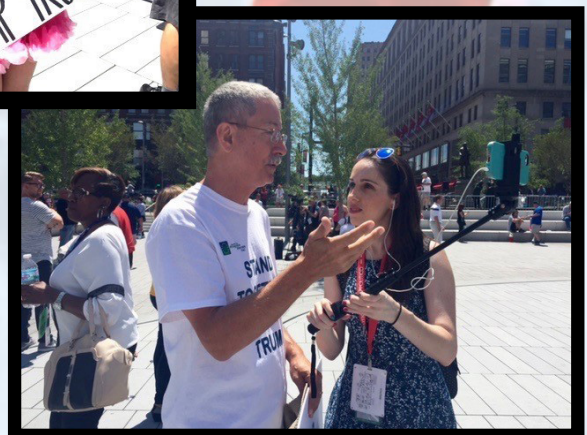
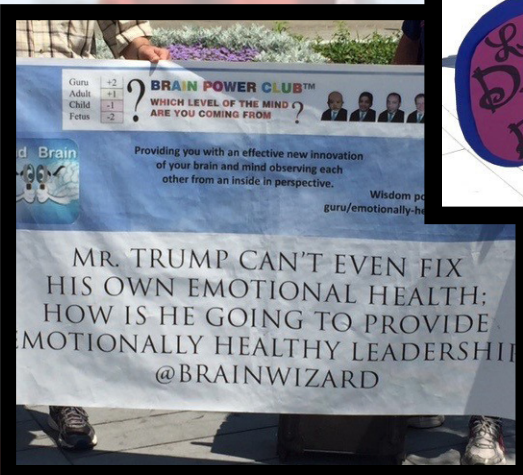
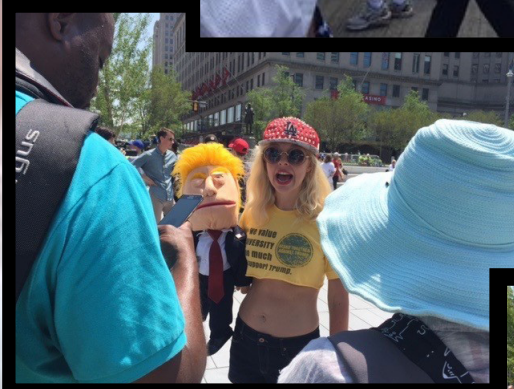
Thank you to the committee, the drivers, the speakers and the protesters. You all made this mission a huge success.



The Republican National Convention as Experienced by SCPD Activists



The Republican National Convention as Experienced by SCPD Activists



**Election and Voting Tips**      **By Ohio State Representative Kathleen Clyde**

The Secretary of State has been purging the voting files. It is crucial that you make sure you are not one of the people whose names have been removed.

Go to the Secretary of State's website to check if you are registered to vote. The website may be reached by typing [www.sos.state.oh.us](http://www.sos.state.oh.us). Once on the website scroll down to boxes entitled For Ohio Voters and click on [MyOhioVote.com](http://MyOhioVote.com). Go to My Responsibilities and click on Check My Voter Registration. A map of Ohio will appear with all of the counties drawn and labelled. Click on your county and the next screen will ask for your last and first name, which will then take you to a screen that shows whether or not you are registered. If your name has been purged from the voting records register to vote immediately. The deadline for registration is October 11.

While the Secretary of State has said that he will send absentee ballot request forms to all citizens in Ohio, it turns out that

1 in 7 Ohioans will not receive that form. So it is important that you go on-line and type in how to get an absentee ballot which will take you to an on-line form. Once you receive your absentee ballot fill it out very carefully, making sure that you provide all of the required information in order to ensure that your ballot will be counted.

Be sure to mail in your absentee ballot as early as possible. There have been problems with the postal system not getting the ballots to the Board of Elections by 10 days after the election and not having a postmark that indicates the ballot was mailed the day before election day and before 7:30 p.m. If you choose to deliver your absentee ballot it must be delivered to the Board of Elections no later that close of the polls on Election Day by 7:30 p.m.

**Early voting begins on October 12.**



**Remembering Russ Pry**

**Russell M. Pry  
1958-2016**

Summit County Executive, Russell M. Pry died on July 31, 2016 following a short, courageous battle with cancer.

Russ was born on May 30, 1958 to Helen Lucille (Morris) and Donald Pry. He grew up in Mogadore, Ohio. His maternal grandmother, Elsie Morris, played a major roll in his upbringing and her strong union and democratic influence molded Russ' values and lifelong desire to help people.

Russ will be remembered as being a successful attorney, two-time Mogadore Village Councilmember, Chair of the Summit County Democratic Party and Summit County Executive. But those are only titles. This man was a leader, an advocate, a conciliator, and a friend. Those who were privileged to know him were touched by his kindness, loyalty and gentleness. Summit County is a better place for his having been here.

He will be greatly missed.

(excerpted from the Akron Beacon Journal obituary)

## Remembering Russ Pry

Rusty nearly every Saturday morning would walk from his apartment in Highland Square to the bank there, to get his “walking around money” for the weekend. I spend most Saturdays with my grandkids (now 8 and 5). They live near the Square too and Mary Coyle’s is a frequent destination. So we would often run into Rusty. He couldn’t have been more perfect with them, treating them as real people and patiently answering their questions about what a County Executive (and the County Government) is and does. And those kids can ask unexpected and pretty penetrating questions. There are any number of stories about how genuine and human Rusty was, this one is the one that I (and hopefully the kids) will remember in particular.

Bob Gippin



I met Russ when I became the first president of Summit County Progressive Democrats. The Democratic Party was very leery of this ragtag group of activists that emerged out of the 2004 Kerry Campaign. However, Russ spent time and energy getting to know us and our goals. He was welcoming and kind. He paved the way with the Summit County Democratic Party and with then Mayor, Don Plusquellic to develop productive working relations that have benefited candidates, citizens and our community. He was one of the good guys.

Ingrid Kunstel



My father, Barry Rubens passed away in July of 2011. About a week afterwards I received a call on my cell phone from a number I didn’t recognize right away. I answered and it was Russ Pry. I was an active volunteer for the Summit County Democratic Party, but I certainly was no where near the top of the totem pole. He took the time out of his busy schedule to personally call me to express his condolences and to encourage me to stay active in the party, even though it would be difficult working with so many of my Father’s former co-workers (he worked for the City of Akron’s Planning Department for over 35 years). He told me that the party needed me and that he was proud of me. Russ cared so deeply about so many people, and was such an inspiration to many Summit County Young Democrats, myself included. Russ always went the extra mile to make sure that you knew he appreciated you. I consider myself to be incredibly fortunate to have known Russ. Summit County would not be as strong and prosperous as it is today without his consistent, strong, and dedicated leadership. We have truly lost a once in a lifetime friend and leader. May his memory always be of a blessing to all who love him.

Sarah Rubens



## Remembering Russ Pry

For 16 years, I worked next to Russ and saw the integrity, passion and intelligence that he brought to the practice of law, his leadership positions in the local Democratic party and the office of Summit County Executive. He was a person that we could all lean on and turn to when times got tough and we needed his valuable insight. And unlike a lot of people, Russ was always willing to set aside what he was doing in order to give his time and attention to those who needed it. During the time I worked with him, Russ may have done that more for me than anyone else. He spent countless hours teaching and mentoring me on how to be a better lawyer, Democrat and person.

We will all miss Russ, and the community will miss his leadership in a countless number of ways. But, like many of you, what I will miss most is his friendship and guidance.

Jason Dodson



During the nine years that Russ and I worked together at the County, we succeeded in bringing stability to the government, keeping and creating jobs in the County and navigating the County through the Great Recession. Russ and I were always philosophically aligned when it came to policy and operating the County, although at times we would take different paths to get to the same place. Russ always respected that others looked at situations differently and he was always willing to listen for better ways to address a problem. Before Russ passed, I had the opportunity to talk to him and hear from him that he wanted me to succeed him as County Executive. And now that I am in that position, it will always be important to me to remember his legacy and to build upon the important work that he gave this community.

I will never replace Russ- no one will be able to do that- but I will work every day to bring the same level of passion and concern for the citizens of Summit County to the office of the Summit County Executive.

Ilene Shapiro



## The President's Corner

### All Hands on Deck!

By Bob Gippin, President of SCPD PAC

This is going to be a very short President's Corner: Every member of SCPD needs to do as much campaign work as possible. That means everyone, very much including folks who are more focused on issues and don't ordinarily do campaigning.

That shouldn't need an explanation, but I'll provide it anyway, for every level of the ballot. I'll start locally and go to that Top of the Ballot Race:

Judges are critically important in general and also to furthering progressive values. There is an enormous difference between our endorsed judicial candidates and their opponents in every way that counts. We have prioritized Ron Cable for Domestic Relations Court and Tom Teodosio for Court of Appeals. Both are running strong campaigns. Ron in particular needs campaign volunteers in Summit County.

Likewise, it is vital to have strong progressives on County Council. We have prioritized our active member Liz Walters, who is in a fight to keep the seat to which she was appointed.

For years we have given priority help in State Legislative races, not always successfully. A very pleasant surprise this year is the strong candidacy of Casey Weinstein in Northeast Summit County. He has shown an excellent chance of winning and so we have prioritized his well-run campaign.

And then there's the Top. The fate of America and perhaps more depends on electing Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump. No exaggeration. As we're seeing, Ohio is very much in the

balance, including Summit County. Every bit of effort has to be spent to engage voters personally who are undecided – some of them undecided whether to vote at all.



Fortunately, the joint campaign for Hillary and the Ohio Democratic Party (primarily for Ted Strickland for Senate) is well organized, but its volunteer needs are in practice endless.

You can go door-to-door, call, send letters and messages, or help support the campaign offices and efforts. Every one of us can and must do something, indeed as much as possible. Calling, letters and messages can be done from home.

You have been getting information about the help the campaigns need by an SCPD email every week and that will continue. We will also be calling each of you to urge you to help and to assist you in doing that if you need it.

Finally, making a strong campaign effort is vital for SCPD itself. We are not just about campaigns, but our reputation as a strong volunteer source is essential to maintaining our influence on the issues we care about. We've slipped in recent years. This year above all we need to get back to and actually surpass what we did years ago to build that reputation.

We plan to celebrate on November 15. But that will take every bit of work we have in us between now and November 8. Be sure you've done your part to earn the victory!



## Trump May Be Right

By Frank Kunstel

Yes, the election may be rigged, as Donald claims. But not in the way he says it is. Rather, there may be so many people disenfranchised, especially black people, that Republicans have rigged it so that Democratic constituencies have been reduced in size. In other words, one way to win an election is to keep your opponents from voting.

Many Republican legislators and local elected officials have a long list of ways to dilute the black vote. These include reducing the number of voting locations, reducing early voting days, using at-large districts to reduce the impact of black votes, and purging voter rolls in a way that targets black people. To this list should be added felony disenfranchisement.

You might think it's acceptable that people in prison aren't allowed to vote. But why is that? Does it rehabilitate someone by preventing them from voting? Does it even serve as a deterrent to crime? Maine and Vermont allow incarcerated people to vote. Some states don't even allow ex-felons to vote once they are released from prison. Ohio does allow ex-felons to vote, but 10 states don't and many more don't allow ex-felons on parole to vote.

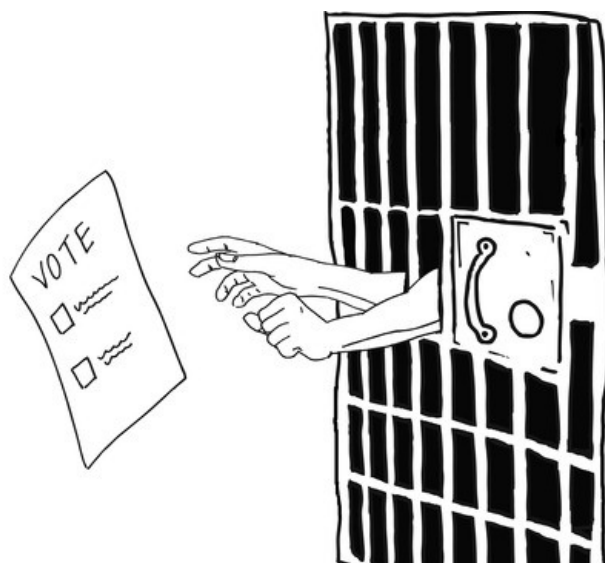
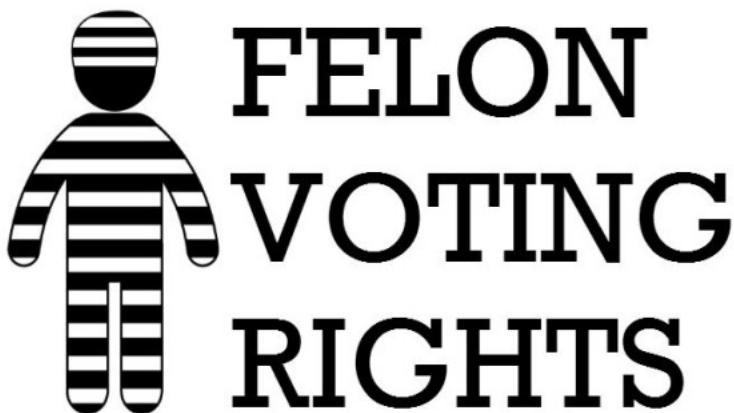
So, in Florida over 1.5 million people are disenfranchised due to felony convictions—that's over 10% of the Florida electorate. In Mississippi it's 189,000 people that represent over 8% of the electorate ([here](#)). Those kinds of percentages often are the difference between victory and defeat in an election.

And, just as incarcerated people are mostly black (over 60% of all prisoners are people of color), the rate of disenfranchisement of black people is way higher than for whites. One of every 13 black adults is disenfranchised, while for whites that number is 1 of every 55. It is estimated that soon one out of every three black men will be disenfranchised at some point in their life. (See [here](#) for some easy-to-read numbers and an analysis of the impact on minorities.)

Michelle Alexander in her book "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness", lays out the argument that black people don't commit crimes at a higher rate than whites. Rather the criminal justice system targets black people at all its stages in such a way that there is great disparity in how many blacks become incarcerated.

The Democratic Party should not presume that any particular racial or ethnic group will vote Democratic based on those characteristics. Democrats should earn those votes. But it's tough to earn them if the people can't cast a ballot due to discrimination.

More states are starting to consider that ex-felons should be allowed more rights as part of facilitating successful re-entry into society. Voting is one right that can help people get reintegrated into their civic communities. Until this actually changes, then, yes, the election is rigged.



Annual Dinner



Remember to make reservations for our Annual November Election Celebration Dinner

We will be holding our Annual Election Celebration Dinner on Tuesday, November 15, at Papa Joe's Restaurant in the Merriman Valley at 6:30 p.m.

You must make a reservation with Sherrie Weitzenhof (email at [SWeitzenho@aol.com](mailto:SWeitzenho@aol.com)) and indicate if you would like the meat option or the vegetarian option. The meals will cost \$20 which does not include alcoholic beverages.

Each person will pay for their own in cash or check only.

If you have never attended one of these dinners, expect to have a great time. It is relaxing and gives us all a chance to visit and enjoy one another's company. Many politicians and elected officials often attend this event. We hope to see all of you there.

Did You Know? Gun Buyback Program



At their September monthly meeting, Summit County Progressive Democrats approved a \$500 donation to an Akron guns buyback program – Piece for Peace – to be held later this year. According to Summit County Public Health, homicides and suicides, by firearms, are among the top five causes of death in Summit County for age groups between 1-45 years.

Per Robert Grow, SCPD's Gun Violence Prevention Issues Chairperson, gun buyback programs, while not as effective as such reforms as Universal Background Checks, can save lives. "If we can prevent even one child from finding a gun and shooting himself or others, this donation is well worth it," Rob said.

Other parties interested in supporting the buyback program may send checks to: Summit County Crimestoppers, c/o Treasurer/Chief Michael Mier, 1280 Sunset Drive, Copley OH 44321

SCPD PAC Executive Committee

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- Administrative Vice President - Sherrie Weitzenhof
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