

# 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! ”

February 2017

**JOIN US AT OUR NEXT  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP  
MEETING  
FEBRUARY 14th AT 6:30 PM  
AKRON PUBLIC LIBRARY**



## Thank You, President Obama!



A Sincere Thank You  
To President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, and their families, for your Grace, Poise, Humor, Honesty, and, above all else, Dedication to the People of the United States.

Thank You from SCPD PAC!



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## The Aftermath- The Crisis of January 20th

By Tom Schmida

This past November 8th I stood for 6 hours passing out Democratic sample ballots at my local polling station in my purple community. I became more and more discouraged as the day wore on. The discontent was palpable in the eyes of the steady stream of voters who refused to accept a "D" sample ballot. After four years of Republican control of all 3 branches of government in Ohio, clearly the discontent was misdirected. Nonetheless, the reality in front of us now is a reconfigured political landscape that I believe will be detrimental not only to Progressives and like-minded citizens, but to the fundamental tenets of democracy as well. So there is much work to be done to appeal to those who have lost faith in progressive ideals, and whose fears were expressed in their votes.

A little over a month later, on December 13th, while many of us remained in a state of shock and denial, representatives of the Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) joined our SCPD membership meeting, and led a session that was, in part, a post-mortem on the election followed by a feedback session with the over 150 people in attendance. True, there have been numerous analyses of what went wrong for Democrats or who's to blame for the dismal election results. Although what those of us in attendance learned that night was troubling, the statistics and trends presented were nonetheless instructive.

Some of the specifics:

- Rural and exurban voters in Ohio grew in numbers by over 400,000 since the 2012 election and were likely Trump voters.
- Overlap and duplication in voter registration efforts
- Lack of coordination in the field campaign.
- Inaccurate and dated voter contact information affected door knocking and phone calling.
- Vapid, uninspiring messaging.



In addition, several of the activists at this ODP session shared their own personal experiences and frustrations with the Democratic campaign. The larger issues facing us now are how to energize progressive thinking citizens and how to reclaim those who were ambivalent, or worse, switched allegiances and supported Republican candidates.

So what do we do now in the face of the relentless attacks on our progressive values that are sure to come? We organize; we talk to those outside of our own bubble; we build coalitions that are sustained, not temporary during campaign season; we

lobby our representatives and senators; we recruit candidates; we run for elected office.

Inspiring rhetoric I suppose, but actions speak louder.

SCPD is taking action. One specific example involves our Candidate Development Extended Committee (CDExCom) which works in conjunction with the Campaign Support Committee (CSC). Looking ahead to November, 2017, the CDExCom is recruiting candidates for local elected offices and planning

a candidates' and campaign managers' training session for March of this year. The training sessions will cover every aspect of planning and conducting a campaign. Our goal is to help build a progressive "bench" of candidates who will not only win elected offices at the local level, but will be prepared to run for offices at the state level or even in federal elections down the road.

If you are thinking about running for office, or managing a campaign, or know of progressive-minded individuals who are thinking about running, please send an email to [tom.schmida@gmail.com](mailto:tom.schmida@gmail.com).

I think it is true that in a time of major crisis like-minded citizens will come together, will rise up, and act. That crisis arrived on January 20th.

## Expectations in a Trump Presidency

By Valerie McKittrick



## Have Your Say

As I write this, Barack Obama is still my president, but Mr. Trump's inauguration is only days away. As I reflect on the past eight years and wonder, wincing, about the next four, I am caught in a maelstrom of emotions. For eight years I have had a president who was steadfast, forthright, intelligent, educated, articulate, and with whom a scandal was never associated. President (sigh) Trump is none of these.

What should we expect? What will happen to a country and its citizens who have made strides in some of the areas that SCPD espouses most dearly? Twenty million people who otherwise had no healthcare have it thanks to the ACA. Marriage is open to couples ready to commit their lives to each other regardless of their gender. Climate change mandates have been enacted to help curb catastrophic environmental events. Nuclear weapons bans have been put into place through diplomacy, not military action. Development of renewable energies has been undertaken as both an environmental issue and an economic one. The list goes on.

So what indeed! We are faced with a president who ignores decades of campaign and diplomatic protocol, who points fingers and resorts to name calling when faced with anything that paints him in a negative light, who denigrates any person and/or any organization he feels has committed an affront, whose mercurial nature flips and flops on matters of worldwide significance, who engages in sophomoric tweets with little regard for his office or this country's reputation in the rest of the world, who has a relationship with a leader of a country hostile to the US, and who has nominated for his cabinet people who are heretics to progressives.

Now what? I'll tell you what. We ACT! We can no longer sit back and relax because we saw some changes we had been

waiting for. We cannot throw up our hands in defeat because we don't like the President or the Republican-dominated Congress. We stop whining and we work. We work tirelessly to keep from going backward. No matter how small the action, be it sending a 34¢ postcard to an officeholder or staging a rally in Washington, D.C., there is something that every single one of us can do. And do it we must!

Stay informed: read a variety of publications and/or websites; keep current with what is happening so that the action you take is timely. Attend meetings and encourage friends to attend meetings. Talk about SCPD and progressive values to anyone who will listen. Remember, the bigger the group, the louder the voice. Now more than ever, we need to present a united front—not just democrats or progressives or feminists or Black Lives Matter members or civil libertarians—all of us who want to keep the progress we've made but know how much more we have to do, we all need to work toward our common goal of social justice.

Whether your passion is the election process and voters' rights or education or violence prevention or inclusivity or any of the myriad progressive issues, the time has come to act. And while Barack Obama is still President of the United States, I will leave you with words from his inaugural address on January 20, 2009, that seem prophetic and applicable now more than ever:

*Starting today, we must pick ourselves up,  
dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of  
remaking America.*

### Let Your Voice Be Heard

**Are you itching to see your views in print? Do you think you have an issue that needs more attention from SCPD PAC? Well, here is your opportunity. Send your ideas, letters, thoughts to Ingrid Kunstel, Chair of Communications @ [ingridkunstel@gmail.com](mailto:ingridkunstel@gmail.com). The committee will review the entries and select one for the next edition of the Progressive Patriot.**

## Our March On Washington

By Barb Medlock Liston

Reflecting on the Women's March I have two very vivid impressions: being overwhelmed by the size of the march and feeling the incredible solidarity, cooperation and kindness of everyone we encountered later confirmed by the fact that the only calls police had during the whole event were for medical problems. Unbelievable.

Early Saturday morning an alert that our Amtrak train from Manassas was delayed 3 hours made it clear the march was going to be much more than a gathering of 200,000 women. As an alternative to our Amtrak reservation, we embarked on an hours-long adventure making our way from the hotel into the District using the Metro. Among the highlights were a parking space so small that my daughter had to climb out of the parked car through the trunk and our decision to follow the advice of a wise Metro employee to ride an empty train heading away from D.C. that would turn back around at the next stop instead of waiting for space that wasn't available on the jam-packed trains heading in,

Getting off the train into the crowds at L'Enfant Plaza station we became part of a sea of women in "pussy hats", men, families with strollers and one wonderful sign after another. There were so many examples of unity as we made our way to the rally. We watched a security guard for a private office suite use his key card to usher group after group of marchers into the office rest rooms which we were sure wasn't in the rulebook. We saw police high-fiving marchers, on top of trucks encouraging the crowd's chants and one who was wearing a "pussy hat". Despite the size of the crowds, throughout the entire day we experienced nothing but kind, polite and helpful marchers and non-marchers.

We found space near one of the many video screens to see and hear the rally speakers. We heard from activists expressing righteous anger, sharing inspiring stories and

calling us to action. I was glad the organizers worked to make the event more inclusive than originally planned. It made for a very diverse panel of speakers and so many perspectives represented. Unfortunately, the crowd itself was not as diverse as I would have hoped and is something we need to pay attention to. When 6 year old activist Sophie Cruz, first in English then in Spanish, told children not to be afraid because they are not alone and that many people have their hearts filled with love, for me, her words seemed to perfectly capture the stark contrast between the crowd's shared hope and humanity and the hateful divisiveness of the new guard.

As the speakers continued beyond the scheduled time, we could feel the crowd's impatience and start to hear the chants of "March! March! March!" Rumors were spreading that the march itself was canceled because of the crowd size but we finally heard from the organizers that the march was on. After some confusion about the march route for the thousands of us near the back of the crowd the police got us marching. There is nothing like the exhilaration of this kind of group action and it was all that and more. Unfortunately, we had to catch a train so weren't able to stay long enough for our huge stream of marchers to merge with the others but we learned later that more than one route had to be used. On our trek to Union Station we navigated street after street filled with marchers making their way to the White House. Despite sketchy cell service, we were starting to hear the estimates of crowd size as it inched toward a million and the remarkable way the marches played out in cities across the country and around the world. As high as those numbers were, we thought about all the kindred spirits unable to participate that each marcher, including us, represented. The quiet train ride back to the hotel was spent reflecting on this historic event and our gratitude for being able to be part of it. I couldn't help but channel Jed Bartlett in being anxious for "What's next?"

## And Meanwhile...

By Ingrid Kunstel

Meanwhile, back in Ohio, there were numerous marches around the state. In Cleveland, 15,000 people gathered to listen to speakers and to march with wonderful signs. There were people in wheelchairs; a 5 week-old baby; a baby being nursed while her mama was walking in the parade; white, black, brown and yellow skins of the protesters and men, women, Muslims, Christians, Born Agains and many more all there to say "enough is enough."

The tone of the crowd was one of kindness, love, fear of what lies ahead, determination and strength. Strong, feminist

women and men coming together is a powerful sight to see.

And meanwhile, the world had our backs! There were marches in support of the U.S. and its' women everywhere. Canada, Finland, Spain, England Guam, Ghana, Sweden, Greece, Mexico, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, Italy Russia, Hawaii, Iraq, Israel, Africa, Buenos Aires, France, Nairobi, Antarctica, Brazil as well as many, many states in the U.S. all demonstrated in support of our cause.

Please enjoy the pictures.

## 2017 Women's March on Washington...and Beyond!

**This Women's March on Washington was INCREDIBLE, Powerful everyday women, children, and men who are committed to fairness, justice and the American way all gathered together. The organizers urged all attendees to text their contact information to the March to start organizing the resistance.**

**-Sandra Kurt, at the Washington march**



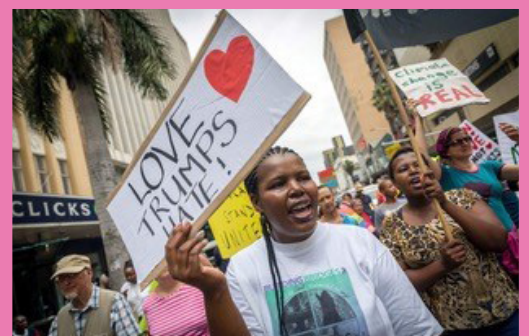
**I have never in my long life experienced anything like this! The crowd was polite, considerate, and accommodating. When the streets were so full that we could not March, people solved the problem and broke off into several smaller marches. They were advocating for gun safety laws, women's rights and environmental controls. It was overwhelming and uplifting. It gave me hope and encouragement and let me know I am not alone and must keep fighting.**

**-Kathy Arthur, at the Washington march**



**What I loved most were the high spirits and the feeling of camaraderie, particularly after the downer of the inauguration. Seeing the range of people, young to old, all the different representative groups, and all the men who came out to support women was a real joy. The wonderful signs that people carried; many serious, many plaintive, and many just outrageously funny just added to the overall excitement. My wish is that the energy and excitement created here today will lead to focused resistance to any anti-women legislation that comes out of this administration.**

**-Marie Anderson Miller, at the Cleveland march**



## The President's Corner

### Channel the Energy

By Bob Gippin, President of SCPD PAC

Progressives owe a great debt of gratitude to Donald Trump. He has managed to stir our less-involved friends out of their complacency and lethargy. He's even spurred those of us who have been deeply involved into doing even more. Agent of change, indeed. Nothing like fear and anger to motivate action – on our side as much as on theirs.

SCPD is a natural vehicle for people who want to do something now. And there are lots of them, you hear it everywhere you go. SCPD has already seen a substantial membership boost and a number of other progressive groups are becoming active in the community, with greater or lesser levels of organization and focus.

Our great advantage is that we have an existing structure for people to take action. We also have lots of experience and momentum. That lets new efforts take flight much more easily than starting from scratch. What we need to do is to broadcast our availability so that progressives will know we're here as a first-class, effective channel for their energy.

We also need to let our long-standing but less active members know how they can do more. That is through our Committees. Even though they report at nearly every meeting and I try to talk about each of them in these Newsletter articles, I find that even our own folks don't know enough about them. So here's the lineup:

**Issues** – This year our most important Committee. Progressives tend to be focused on specific policy concerns. They want to take action on things that are under threat that they care about, from the Environment to Civil Rights to Health to Education, the list is unfortunately endless. Plus progressives recognize more than ever that Social and Economic Justice for everyone needs to be a priority if we are to prevent any further right-wing government take-overs and begin to win back the confidence of a stronger majority of voters – especially in Ohio.

Under the new leadership of Val McKittrick, Issues is already taking new initiatives on all of these matters of concern. If a progressive friend says "What can I do?" there is a very good chance that working on Issues will be just what they're looking for. And of course we have the structure and tools for immediate and effective Issues work.

**Communications** – It is vital that we let the public know about us and what we're doing. You hear nearly every progressive say that

we don't have a message, we can't compete with Trump. That's nonsense, we do have a message and we can compete and win, but it's very true that SCPD needs to do much more. And it can.



Even though social media can make that much easier, it still takes a great deal of human effort to create effective messages and get them out in the world. Frankly, Communications needs much more help, especially from folks who know how to use social media. They're out there, in our own organization and in the community. Ingrid Kunstel Chairs.

**Campaign Support/Candidate Development** – I'm combining the two for this purpose because both are doing very active political work to identify, train and support the excellent progressive candidates we need to win the coming elections. For those who want to apply their energy to grassroots progressive political action, SCPD offers the very best way to do that. We're great at what we do, with much success of our candidates locally even last year, despite the national and state catastrophe. New folks will find we don't have to re-invent the campaign wheel. Sarah Rubens and Tom Schmida Chair.

**Outreach** – It is vital that we be in constant working alliances with other organizations that advance the progressive agenda. That includes Labor, Youth, the many Issues organizations, those devoted to race and gender equality, other progressive organizations and Democratic groups. Outreach means liaisons, that requires people to represent us. Particularly for progressives already involved with other groups, doing SCPD Outreach will quickly multiply everyone's efforts. Edna Borders is Chair.

**Fundraising** – There is no limit to the amount of money we can spend usefully. There is no better investment than SCPD, we are frugal and leverage our money very effectively. For those who love contact with people – not to say putting on a good party – the Fundies are the right outlet. Mike Wheeler Chairs, with Sherrie Weitzenhof chairing the Fundraiser itself.

So please, please let your progressive friends know that SCPD will give them an immediate, effective way to do the work that needs to be done to save what we have and then resume the march towards a Progressive Ohio and America. And get more active yourselves.

Hate to say it, but now we may really need to make America great again. But we will!

## The Message About Trump is WRONG

By Frank Kunstel

The immediate landscape for us Democrats looks bleak. How did we lose the Obama voters and what do we do about it?

First, a few facts about the Presidential race. Hillary performed worse than Obama did among white non-college men, among Asians and blacks and Hispanics ([here](#)). And among white women without a college degree, 62% voted for Trump ([here](#)).

And Democrats also took a beating in union households. In 2012, Obama beat Romney in union households by 18 points; in 2016 Hillary only won those households by 8 points, the smallest margin for a Democrat since 1984 ([here](#)). In Ohio, in 2012 Obama won union households by 23 points, while in 2016 Hillary lost those households by 9 points ([here](#)).

But it wasn't just in the Presidential race that Democrats suffered loss. A "trifecta" is when one party controls both chambers of the state legislature and the governor's chair. In 2009, Democrats held the trifecta in 16 states and Republicans in 10. Now Democrats hold 5 and Republicans hold 25 ([here](#)). Over-all, Republicans hold 56% of all state legislative seats and Democrats hold 43% ([here](#)).

There are many plausible reasons for all this—Camey, deleted emails, Russian hacking, Dems don't turn out, DNC bias, sexism, racism, etc.. And Democrats could do something about some of these—like turnout and the DNC.

In addition, a case is once again being made about poor messaging. SCPD has devoted attention to messaging for the past many years, focusing on George Lakoff's "framing" concepts. Lakoff even addressed the House Dem caucus once, but felt he was pretty much ignored.

Now, regarding messaging, a columnist from the Washington Post points out that progressives are acting like Republican voters—acting against their own self-interest. He notes that we get apoplectic about Trump's behavior, rather than his actual policies (some of which are not very Republican at all). And when we do this rather than talk about what we stand for, we just reinforce what Trump supporters like about him—that he is irreverent and disruptive, that he upsets the status quo ([here](#)).

Lakoff himself makes a more comprehensive case. He states that Democrats think that by presenting "the facts", issue by issue, the voters will see where their interests lie. But they don't, because the voters' moral world view is stronger than their attachment to the facts. They see Trump, and the Republicans for that matter, as presenting an attitude, a moral world view that resonates with their own. Democrats could counter that by presenting their own moral world view, but instead they spend their messaging on repeating what Trump says, and much of that just reinforces the frame Trump presents ([here](#)).

Basically, Trump hollered, "I'm going to shake things up," and Dems hollered, "He's going to shake things up." And the voters got the same message from both sides.

Instead, Lakoff says we need to make the case that government and public resources have been crucial to the nation's prosperity and we need to perpetuate that. Stop complaining about Trump's behavior and start talking about the moral good (not the details) of our policies. Lakoff lays all this out [here](#). More progressives should try it.



## SCPD By The Numbers

By Eddie Rice & Dick Bardoulas

# SCPD

## By the numbers

"My father once told me that American democracy is a people's democracy at heart, and that it therefore can be as great as the American people, or as fallible. It depends on all of us. But our system is more fragile than we know. To sustain it, we must always cherish the ideals on which it was founded, remain vigilant against the dark forces that threaten it, and actively engage in the process of making it work."

— George Takei

### DONATED

SCPD made donations of

**\$20,000+**

to a mix of local, state, federal candidates, and the county party.

### FOTS

For candidates given volunteer priority status:

**1 out of 3**

won their race.

### VOLUNTEERS

SCPD asked members to track their hours.

**29%**

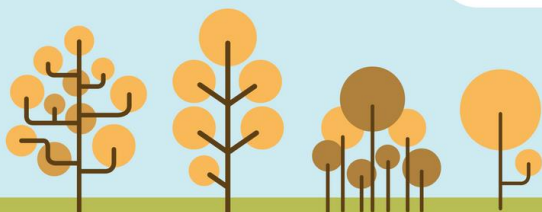
reported volunteering for local endorsed candidates or HRC

### RACES WON

Of those endorsed by SCPD

**51%**

won their race.



Information Source:  
SCPD Board and CSC Minutes

SUMMIT COUNTY  
PROGRESSIVE  
DEMOCRATS

## Save The Date!



Our Annual Fundraiser and Awards Celebration will be held on April 27th at 5:30 p.m. at Greystone Hall in Akron, Ohio.

Our keynote speaker will be Chris Link, Executive Director of the Ohio ACLU.

There will also be a customized video from Harold Schaitberger, General President of the International Association of Fire Fighters.

The topics are crucial and relevant to the political climate under the Trump Administration.





## Who Is David?

By Ingrid Kunstel

He sits at the front table near the podium. He volunteers for phone banking and letter writing. He is present at most of our meetings and all of our social events. Why is this remarkable in a room full of progressive activists? It is because David Siegel was born with cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

David embodies a living example of his core belief that people with disabilities should be noted not for their disabilities, but for their abilities.

David was born in 1945. Because of his physical problems, his mother pretty much disappeared from his life. While his dad was around he didn't care much for David and mistreated him.

David lived with his dad for a while, with his grandmother and Aunt Phyllis and Aunt Ann.

Life was very confusing for this young child. He was sent to the Bellfair orphanage in Shaker Heights and then in 1954 to the Stewart Home School in Frankfurt Kentucky, which was a private school for disabled children.

David says that he was mistreated at both of these institutions. He eventually went back to live with his grandmother until she died in 1966.

So at the age of 21 David was on his own. For a while he lived with his stepmom, Florence, in Euclid. She was very loving and gave David his one true experience of what a family should be like. He held a variety of jobs including shoe salesman, Pinkerton Guard, host in restaurants, worker in Goodwill stores and many fast food restaurants. During his working years he met with discrimination due to his disabilities and lost out on jobs he wanted.



David says he has had a lot of unique experiences in his younger years. He was a volunteer for the Muscular Dystrophy Association and walked from the East side of Cleveland to the West to raise money. He was also a volunteer for the MS Society and raised \$1,100 for a march, which was the second highest amount out of 500 people. And back in 1980 he bowled with Jack Coleman's bowling team called the Knock Outs. He bowled a 300 game.

He quit working about 20 years ago. He can no longer work because he is in a nursing home. David recently moved into a new home, which is called Heritage of Hudson. David loves it there and is quickly adjusting and making friends.

So in lieu of working, David is politically active. He went to D.C. with other disabled people to talk with Senators and Congressmen about the needs of people with disabilities. He and his good friend, James Field, have gone to Cleveland State University where David met Barack Obama and Joe Biden. President Obama sent David a letter in response to one that he had written. He has also met Sherrod Brown, John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Betty Sutton, and Ronald Reagan. His message is consistent. Do not look down on people with disabilities. See them for who they are, rather than what they are not able to do.

David is very glad he is part of Summit County Progressive Democrats. He feels useful and he knows that he is helping to fight for progressive issues. He has worked hard with Rob Grow on the anti-gun violence protests. He also calls his Senators and Congressmen to advance progressive issues.

Take some time to get to know this exceptional man.

## SCPD PAC Executive Committee

President - Robert Gippin  
 Executive Vice President - Thomas Townsend  
 Administrative Vice President - Sherrie Weitzenhof  
 Executive Secretary – Eddie Rice  
 Recording Secretary – Shamus Hamalik  
 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 – Val McKitrick  
 Chair of Outreach – Edna Borders  
 Chair of Fundraising – Mike Wheeler  
 Chair of Candidate Support – Sarah Rubens