

Reviews

The Thief, the Senator, and the Knight of the Bleeding Heart
By Paul Green

—reviewed by Jon Megerian

In Yanceyville, the seat of Caswell County, North Carolina, shortly after the Civil War, things had changed dramatically for those who were held in slavery, and for those who had enslaved them. The State of North Carolina had seceded, albeit somewhat reluctantly, from the Union with the rest of the Southern Confederacy, lost a bloody war of rebellion, and been occupied by the conquering United States Army. Congress had passed a series of statutes implementing the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution; they had put an end to the enslavement of Black people by White people, and made citizens of Blacks, who just a few years before had been described by the Supreme Court of the United States as persons who “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect,” as the Dred Scott decision put it. Dred Scott, 60 U.S. at 451 (1857).

This book tells the story of the murder of a Black legislator by members of the Ku Klux Klan. The killing, astonishingly, occurred inside the Caswell County Courthouse, during a public meeting. The book investigates how this murder came about, and how it was that no one was ever held to account for this brutal act of terrorism. It explores the brief window of opportunity afforded the State of North Carolina to free the State from the oppression of slavery, bigotry, and hatred, and of how that window slammed shut, and remained closed for a hundred years afterwards.

In the interest of full disclosure, the reviewer should admit that he and the author of this book have argued many death penalty appeals together as co-counsel in the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, and that the reviewer is very much an admirer, in equal amounts, of the author’s dedication to justice and his gifts as a writer.

The Christian Century book reviews
—recommended by Bob Williams

In the November 2023 issue of *The Christian Century*, an article entitled “Fake News at Church” by Stephen Healey reviewed three books. Two of these were obtained through the intra-library loan program at Asheboro’s public library. The first is *QAnon, Chaos, and the Cross*, is a 24-essay collection edited by Michael W. Austin and Gregory L. Bock, and published by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. It includes a Careful Reasoning Guide and essays about conspiracy theories, political trust, and Christian witness. The other book, *Christianity and Critical Race Theory, A Faithful and Constructive Conversation*, by Robert Chao Romano and Jeff M. Liou and published by Baker, includes a glossary of terms and discussions about the “the beloved community,” community cultural wealth, “glory and honor of the nations” and Revelations 7:9.



Answer to the Asheboro City Schools Board of Education Candidate Quiz on page 2: **1. E, 2. C, 3. D, 4. B, and 5. A.**

Text Messaging List

Because sign ups for our text message list have been low, we will be creating a list of the cell numbers of our newsletter subscribers. We hope to use our bulk texting program to reach our supporters more quickly than the newsletter or email can. We promise not to spam you like other political organizations. We just want to make sure you all are as informed as possible. If you do not want to be on the texting list, when you receive the first message, simply reply with STOP and you will be removed from the list automatically. Thank you!



CALENDAR

(Meetings will be conducted in person unless otherwise noted or announced.)

December 2, 2023, Saturday, 9:30 am: Monthly Breakfast and Executive Committee Meeting at Democratic HQ, 114 Sunset Ave., Asheboro.

All Democrats and like-minded unaffiliateds are welcome! Bring a breakfast item to share. RSVP here: randolphcountydems.org/rsvp/

January 6, Saturday, 9:30 am: Monthly Breakfast Meeting at HQ

January 15: February/March Newsletter deadline

February 17, Saturday: Precinct Meetings. All precincts will meet on February 17th at the GWCC at 9:30am for a breakfast potluck.

February 24, Saturday: Winter SEC Meeting

March 16, Saturday: County Conventions

April 20, Saturday: District Conventions

August 19 - August 22: Democratic National Convention

Check our Facebook page (facebook.com/RandolphCountyDemocraticParty) and website (randolphcountydems.org) often for information and updates. We have many opportunities to make a difference in Randolph County in the coming months.

Randolph County Democratic Party

RanDem News

DECEMBER 2023/JANUARY 2024, Issue No. 29



Democrats are a Resilient Bunch

by Diane Hubbard, Chair, Randolph County Democratic Party

The 2023 municipal elections are now in our rearview mirror. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the Democratic candidates in Randolph County, regardless of the outcomes of your races. Your willingness to step forward and represent your values is commendable. The good news is, several Democrats were elected or reelected in municipalities around the county.

Thank you to Harry Okeke for running for Asheboro City Council. This was Harry’s first foray into running for office. I hope he’ll stick around and run for something again. He is smart, enthusiastic, and wants to do good work for his community.

The highest profile and probably the most disappointing race this year was for Asheboro City School Board. Todd Dulaney and Gwen Williams were exemplary school board candidates. Todd and Gwen both embody the values and character that so many say they want to see in elected officials. Gwen Williams, in particular, leaves a void on the ACS Board that will be deeply felt. Her contributions were invaluable, and we owe her a debt of gratitude for her service. It’s never easy to come up short in an election, particularly when the principles you stand for seem at odds with the prevailing sentiment. We’ll see what happens when the rubber meets the road on the school board. My guess is there will be some buyers’ remorse.

While I’ve got you here, I want to say a bit about Democratic turnout in the Asheboro elections this year. The one word I’ve heard from numerous people, was *abysmal*. I don’t know why

Democrats didn’t turn out, but we didn’t. Now the Asheboro City School Board will be dominated by right-wing reactionary Moms for Liberty sympathizers, even more so than it already was. They’ve already begun the process of removing things like the ability of teachers to discuss sexual abuse with students below 5th grade. They have also balked at the use of the word “equity” in reference to helping students achieve success. What kind of person doesn’t want an equitable education for our kids?

Most people agree that municipal elections are not sexy and exciting. That said, municipals can affect our lives in much more direct ways than a lot of us realize. Our candidates could have won their races if our voters had come to the polls. We had 2 ½ weeks of early voting and 13 hours on Election Day, not to mention the ability to request and mail in an absentee ballot. **There is no excuse for not voting.**

Anyway, if you think this is going to make us go away, have I got some news for you. We’re Randolph Democrats. We are some of the most resilient people I know. We’ll be back again next year for the Presidential election and all the lower offices that are up for grabs, too. Thank you to everyone who voted for our candidates. It means more than you can imagine. I urge everyone to check out the calendar for next year and see where you can volunteer with us. We are going to need lots of help, so dust off your walking shoes and let’s get down to it. See you in 2024!

Statement of Purpose



We are a diverse, inclusive community of resilient, respectful local citizens who are open-minded, compassionate, and courageous.

We are focused on facts, truth, accountability, justice, and the common good.

We work to promote democratic ideals.

We fight for the preservation of democracy, fair representation and governance, social justice, a healthy environment, economic opportunity, and a better future for all.

We encourage our community to be informed and involved and to elect Democrats who stand for these ideals.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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To receive the Newsletter: randolphcountydems.org/randem-news/

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Social media/contact info in one place: linktr.ee/randolphncdemocrats

Address: Democratic Headquarters, 114 Sunset Ave., Asheboro, NC 27203 (henceforth referred to as HQ)

Mailing address: Randolph County Democratic Party, P.O. Box 4814, Asheboro, NC 27204

HQ is currently open. Call for hours.

(Paid for by the Randolph County Democratic Executive Committee and not authorized by any candidate or candidate’s committee. c2023)

Asheboro City School Board Quiz

by Susie Scott

The 2023 Municipal elections are over, but our local results were disappointing. Because we believe this election will continue to be a topic of discussion in the weeks and months to come, we created the following short quiz so you can learn more about the people who ran for Asheboro City Schools Board of Education. All five candidates are listed with one description each. Answers are printed on the last page of the newsletter. How did you do?

Match these candidates to their background

- A) **Melissa Calloway**
- B) **Todd Dulaney**
- C) **Gidget Kidd**
- D) **Ryan Patton**
- E) **Gwen Williams**

Backgrounds

1)_____ This candidate has 42 years of experience in education (13 of which were at Asheboro City Schools). She has taught locally and overseas, and she retired as the Principal of South Asheboro Middle School. After retirement, she returned to Asheboro City Schools as a Parent Outreach Coordinator. She was elected to the ACS Board of Education in 2017. In August 2021, during the second Covid wave, she voted for mandating masks at Asheboro City Schools to keep students in school while protecting students, teachers, and the community. She stood by that choice in subsequent votes continuing to protect the community while the epidemic was taking a toll in Randolph County. She is currently on the Board of the Randolph County Partnership for Children.

2)_____ This candidate has a degree in elementary education and taught for nine years after graduation. She followed that as the director of a preschool for nine years, but currently works as an office branch administrator at Edward Jones where her husband is a financial advisor. She is married to a Randolph County Commissioner who's also a former Randolph County Republican Party Chair. She's served on the UNC Wilmington Board of Trustees since 2013. She has been on the ACS Board of Education since 2005 and served as Chair during part of that time. In August 2021 during the second Covid outbreak, she voted against mandating masks at Asheboro City Schools instead supporting extremist groups like Reopen NC and Free the Smiles. She maintained that position on subsequent votes during the pandemic despite the risks to students, teachers, staff, and the community as the death toll from the disease continued to grow in Randolph County.

3)_____ This candidate taught at South Asheboro Middle School while coaching at Asheboro High School for five years before switching to a career in sales in 2007. He's served on the ACS Board of Education since 2019. In August 2021 during the second Covid outbreak, he voted against mandating masks at Asheboro City Schools along with two of his fellow Board members. After pushback from the community, he changed his position in the months that followed and voted for masks during the worst of the outbreak. His wife is the Assistant Principal at McCrary Elementary.

4)_____ This candidate has a background in journalism, including reporting on school board meetings when he worked for one newspaper. He is currently the Executive Editor for *Our State Magazine*, and has a daughter in Asheboro City Schools as well as an older daughter at UNC Chapel Hill. Although not a Board member, he has been attending ACS Board meetings and reporting on what happened on his facebook page. Since our board has no audio or video recordings and newspaper coverage of the meetings has been spotty at best, his page has been a reliable source of public information about the issues before the board. During the Covid epidemic, he reported on the masking votes and public comments for the meetings. He continues to report on the meetings, volunteer on education committees, and reach out to various communities within our school system.

5)_____ This candidate graduated from Asheboro City Schools, but chose to send her children to private school at Wesleyan Christian Academy in High Point. She is a realtor and also owns George's Carryout along with her husband. Under their ownership, George's Carryout came under fire on social media in 2020 for refusing to require their employees to wear masks while at work during the Covid outbreak.

Holiday Binge Watch: Churchill

by Becky Megerian

A good binge watch for Democrats this season is four Winston Churchill portrayals by four fabulous actors – Richard Burton, Robert Hardy, Albert Finney, and Gary Oldman. The subject of all four of these dramas is Churchill's time out of power between the wars. During this lull in his career, while the British government was allowing its military to dissipate, Churchill was gathering evidence of the German rearmament and intent to conquer Western Europe. The 1974 *Gathering Storm* stars Richard Burton and is an old Hallmark Hall of Fame production. Richard Burton is Richard Burton playing Richard Burton playing Churchill, but the film is well worth watching on You Tube. Patrick Stewart is a fine Clement Attlee. Robert Hardy (*All Creatures Great and Small*) makes an appearance as von Ribbentrop but stars in the next, 1981 Churchill offering – *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years*. This 8-episode TV drama also stars Sian Phillips (*Livia, I Claudius*) as Clementine Churchill and Nigel Havers (*Chariots of Fire*) as Randolph Churchill. These three leads play beautifully off each other. The series can be found on Amazon. Also on Amazon is Albert Finney's 2002 film *The Gathering Storm*. Vanessa Redgrave is Finney's Clementine. Derek Jacobi is Stanley Baldwin. This film was, of course, widely acclaimed. Last is the great Gary Oldman's Churchill in the 2017 movie *The Darkest Hour*, available on Netflix and Apple. Oldman's Churchill is the edgiest of these portrayals and shows more of Churchill's dark side. Oldman's female counterpart from *Slow Horses* (also worth binge watching), Kristin Scott Thomas, is a Clementine who has the arduous task of keeping the great man under control. As we face our own dark times, it is good to be reminded through Churchill's example that if we persevere, we may triumph.

Quality, not Quantity

by Todd Dulaney

Saying "It's not the quantity of the votes it's the quality of the votes" probably sounds like sweet lemons coming from me, an Asheboro City School Board candidate who lost last month by a 2-1 margin to the top vote getter.

And it's true that I would have liked to have earned a few more than the 650 votes I ended up with. But while hundreds more people voted for the ticket presented to them on the GOP's "yellow ballots," I'm confident that each of the people who voted for me did so intentionally. And I am sincerely thankful for every one of those votes. They believed that I stood for what they, what you, believe in when it comes to public school education — that ALL children deserve an equitable education free from extremist right-wing meddling.

Ironically, one misstep I probably made, from a political perspective, is openly and proudly defining what "ALL" means to me. Other candidates used similar rhetoric, including candidates on that "yellow ballot," but I took it further.

I touted my endorsement by EqualityNC for my support of LGBTQ+ students and teachers. I engaged with our Latinx communities. I stood behind my membership and participation in the NAACP. And when asked by voters where I stood politically, I held my head high and said that I am a Democrat.

In hindsight, maybe I should have taken advice from folks who are more savvy than myself and just said, "I want what is best for Asheboro City Schools and, in this non-partisan race, I am running to help our students and teachers continue to improve. Blah, blah, blah." To win, or even contend, I probably should have just shook hands and smiled and let proxies sling mud on my behalf.

But that's not me.

I wanted students, parents, and teachers who are on the fringes of our community — queer, Black, Latino, underprivileged — to know that they would have an ally in me. Granted, that probably motivated more active voters in our community to vote against me than for me, but again, for me, it's the quality of the vote that counts.

Attention Young Democrats!

Are you a young and enthusiastic person eager to make a positive impact on your community? The Randolph County Democratic Party is calling on you to be part of a movement that believes in progress, equality, and the power of collective action. This is your opportunity to be at the forefront of change, to help shape the future of our community, our state, and our nation. As young voters, you are poised to be the ones who usher our party into an even more forward thinking, progressive position. I encourage you to volunteer with the Randolph County Democratic Party today and be part of a movement that strives for a better tomorrow for all. Together, we can create an America that is stronger, freer and works for everyone, regardless of their circumstances. If you are between the ages of 18 and 35 and would like to help start a Young Dems chapter in Randolph County, please email rdcp.countychair@gmail.com to get started. We look forward to working with you!

What Liberals Believe

from Heather Cox Richardson newsletter

On November 21, Heather Cox Richardson, historian, author and educator wrote: "Once again, liberal democracy is under attack, but it is notable — to me, anyway, as I watch to see how the public conversation is changing — that more and more people are stepping up to defend it. In the *New York Times* today, legal scholar Cass Sunstein warned that '[o]n the left, some people insist that liberalism is exhausted and dying, and unable to handle the problems posed by entrenched inequalities, corporate power and environmental degradation. On the right, some people think that liberalism is responsible for the collapse of traditional values, rampant criminality, disrespect for authority and widespread immorality.'

Sunstein went on to defend liberalism in a 34-point description, but his first point was the most important: **'Liberals believe in six things,' he wrote: 'freedom, human rights, pluralism, security, the rule of law and democracy,' including fact-based debate and accountability of elected officials to the people.'**"



Share a Review or an Opinion

Send your review/opinion piece to: rdcp.newsletter@gmail.com. There is a 50 word limit for reviews, and a 300 word limit for opinions. We will publish as many as space allows. Please be aware that articles will be edited if necessary for space and clarity. Thank you.

Top 12 Newsletters (plus RanDem News!)

According to Democracy Labs Newsletter (thedemlabs.org) here are the **12 Top Newsletters on the Fight for American Democracy:**

Letters From An American - Heather Cox Richardson
Abortion, Every Day - Jessica Valenti
Prevail - Greg Olear
Whistleblower News - Rebekah Jones
K-12 Shootings - David Riedman
Democracy Labs - Deepak Puri
Today's Edition Newsletter - Robert Hubbell
Lucid - Ruth Ben-Ghiat
Understand Disinformation - Rand Waltzman
Civil Discourse - Joyce Vance
The Hartmann Report - Thom Hartmann
Democracy Docket - Marc Elias