

# GROSSE POINTE DEMOCRATS

March 2023

Michigan's largest chartered Democratic club

Serving the Grosse Pointes, Harper Woods and Detroit's east side

## Greenspan Award winner Shannon Byrne 'always ready to stand up'

Shannon Byrne, who was awarded the 2022 David Greenspan Award at our fundraiser in November, "has been an enthusiastic and very effective activist in our area," says 1st Vice President Jackie Kalogerakos.

"She is always ready to stand up for the progressive policies that move our community forward. Additionally she can activate a group to move with her.

"The Grosse Pointe Democrats anticipate her contributions — and enthusiasm — for years to come!"

The plaque reads: "This award honors our members for their exemplary service and devotion to the Democratic Party and to the continued success of our club.



From left:  
Treasurer  
Chris Keelean,  
Greenspan  
Award recipient  
Shannon Byrne,  
1st Vice President  
Jackie Kalogerakos  
and President  
Gary Bresnehan.

This award is named after David Greenspan, who has devoted a lifetime of service to the Democratic Party and to our club as a precinct delegate, activist, volunteer and board member

to advance the causes of civil liberties, justice and government that serve all citizens equally."

Greenspan died Oct. 24, 2014, at the age of 100.

## We did it: Michigan goes **BLUE!**

Happy 2023 everyone! And it's especially happy with a new Democratic majority in our state Legislature and our own Rep. Joe Tate as speaker of the House.

We should see significant changes in Lansing this year. The Legislature has already passed repeal of the retirement pension tax passed by Republicans in 2011. This a terrific first step and we can look forward to more progressive items passed this year.

The club had a good year too, culminating with our campaign office partnership with the One Campaign

for Michigan. Thanks to everyone who volunteered or contributed. Our statewide candidates were re-elected and ballot proposals passed. The proposals will enhance the public's ability to participate in elections and improve our state government.

We finished with a great turnout for our fundraiser at Cadieux Cafe in Detroit, that featured Congresswoman



Message from  
the president

Brenda Lawrence as our speaker. Presentation of the Greenspan Award is always a highlight and this year it went to Shannon Byrne. Thanks to Shannon for all her work and for getting out the vote for our candidates.

We have a lot of work to do in 2023. Even though Republicans are in the minority, they will make it difficult. We need to focus on our local governments, and on the new school board majority that is not favorable to our ideals.

The club welcomes our new

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**NEXT MEETING: 6 p.m. March 15 at Wayne County Community College District University Center, 19305 Vernier, Harper Woods**

The meeting will be hybrid so check your emails and Facebook for the Zoom link.

# Conservatives upend school board

After an election where a four-vote margin allowed a conservative majority to take control of the Grosse Pointe School Board, the pace of meetings — and the pace of change — has been overwhelming.

During a Jan. 19 special meeting called with only two days' notice, the new board voted 4-3 to effectively end a previously approved clinic that would have provided the community with free basic health care and mental health care at GP North High School.

The trustees voted this clinic down after nearly two hours of public comment. Most public comment consisted of community members as well as educational and health experts in support of the clinic.

When the trustees voted to halt the clinic, they effectively overturned a prior decision.

In addition, they acted with total disregard for the 25% of GP North students who do not have any form of health insurance. A handful of clinic detractors, who repeated a talking point of “let them go to urgent care,” resembled that historic cry of “let them eat cake.”

The board also vigorously discussed a proposal to retain separate legal

counsel. This is notable because even in our litigious age, school boards rarely hire their own attorneys.

New trustee Sean Cotton, owner of the Grosse Pointe News, compared

in meeting times. While not in violation of the Open Meetings Act, it's clear they are moving in a direction that hampers public oversight and participation.

*The new majority has voted against the planned basic health care and mental care clinic at Grosse Pointe North and vigorously discussed retaining separate legal counsel for the board with arguments refuted by experts. The GP Dems are planning an April 19 town hall at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial to discuss the board and best practices in board governance.*

this situation to corporate boards that retain separate legal counsel. His argument has been refuted by experts who agree that school boards are already represented by a district's legal counsel, and there is no need for a separate firm to represent them.

The board also has established four committees with representatives from the community along with board members: Finance and Facilities, Policy and Contracts, Curriculum, and Community Engagement. A full list of committees and their members is on [gpschools.org](http://gpschools.org).

Since first meeting on Jan. 4, the board is developing a reputation for multiple and somewhat hastily called meetings, as well as a change

It is likely other dramatic decisions by this board will happen between the time of writing this update and its distribution.

The GP Dems are planning an April 19 town hall at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial to discuss our school board and best practices in board governance. Experts in governance and former board members will share best practices and help our community process and understand some of the board's recent actions.

**For more information about school board meetings and tips for supporting our students and teachers, go to [frontporchghpw.com](http://frontporchghpw.com).**

## Great start to the new year

On Jan. 1, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer was sworn in for her second (!) term as Michigan's governor. Also sworn in were Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson and Attorney General Dana Nessel. Voters gave Democrats control of both houses of the Legislature for the first time since the 1980s.







## A whirlwind two weeks!

Halloween was a trip — literally for Jocelyn Benson and Dana Nessel, who were on a bus tour to promote their winning campaigns for secretary of state and attorney general. During a stop at our campaign office they were joined by candidates Joe Tate, our state rep who is speaker of the House, and Kevin Hertel, our new state senator. Thanks to all of them and to Justin Hoehing, our campaign office boss, and all the hard-working folks who knocked doors, made calls and dropped lit. Two weeks later we celebrated together at our Nov. 14 fundraiser at Cadieux Cafe, with guest speaker retiring U.S. Rep. Brenda Lawrence.



Top left: Jocelyn Benson and Joe Tate; near left: Kevin Hertel, Joe Tate and Dana Nessel; above: Jocelyn Benson and Justin Hoehing



Ed Keelean was in great company at the fundraiser at Cadieux Cafe with Rep. Brenda Lawrence, daughter-in-law Karla Keelean and granddaughters Josephine and Bernadette.



## Lots to celebrate but also lots of work ahead

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Congressman Shri Thanedar. We look forward to working with him and the 13th Congressional District, our new district. We intend to be active team players. We will have club members on the board of directors and on the State Central Committee. At the state party convention Feb. 11, we elected the new leadership slate for the 13th.

This year there will be lots of opportunities for you to be involved, including membership meetings in March, May and October; a town hall April 19 on the school board, and events in June and November with featured speakers and topics.

At the March 15 meeting, we will elect the 2023-24 board of directors and officers for two-year terms, pursuant to the amended bylaws. I want to thank

our 2nd Vice President Colton Dale for all his work and contributions, and Rachael Backer for her work co-chairing the membership committee. They will be stepping down but we'll be seeing them at our events. Without the dedication and commitment of our board members, we wouldn't do the great things we have done for our community.

*Gary Bresnehan*



*Treasurer Chris Keelean had reason to smile. Her idea for a silent auction at our fundraiser was a big hit!*

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Silent auction

We had a great fundraiser in November at the Cadieux Cafe. Good food and good company made for a nice evening, and having Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence there in person only made it better. New this year was our silent auction. Thanks to all who donated the variety of fun items and those who bid. We raised \$700! We'll be doing this again so thank you to all who helped make the evening a success.

— Chris Keelean

### Officer, board nominations

We'd like to say "Thanks for your hard work!" to board members who are not returning for the next term: Darlene Anderson, Rachael Backer, Colton Dale and Chris Moyer. You will be missed. A special thanks to Colton for serving as 2nd vice president for three years and for managing the club's communications and social media.

The committee nominated

new board members for the next two years — their names are marked with asterisks in the board list — and has worked on committee assignments that will be announced at the general membership meeting.

Remember, you don't have to be on the board to serve on a committee! Just contact the chair with your interest.

— Chris Keelean and Jackie Kalogerakos

### Membership

Thanks to all who updated your membership in the largest local Democratic club in Michigan! Your support helps this volunteer group promote the ideals and principles of the Democratic Party and continue the necessary work to win important upcoming elections.

You can renew online at [gpdems.com](http://gpdems.com) or use the membership form on Page 5. The year that's listed by your name on the address label is your last paid membership year.

— Laura Kellett

## GROSSE POINTE DEMOCRATIC CLUB officers and executive board

**President** Gary Bresnehan (GP)

**Vice President** Jackie Kalogerakos (HW)

**\*Vice President** Sandra Bucciero (GPW)

**Treasurer** Christan Keelean (GPP)

**Secretary** Jeff Greer (GPP)

### At-large members

Beverly Brown (DET)

Shannon Byrne (GPF)

Francesca Catalfio (GPF)

John Clark (GPS)

Olivia Coleman (DET)\*\*

Emily Everett (GPW)

\*John Kalogerakos (GPF)

Ed Keelean (GPP)

Laura Kellett (GPF)

\*Ernestine Lyons (HW)

Addison Mauck (DET)

Darci McConnell (GPP)

La Vern Rutledge (HW)

Roland Samaroo (GPF)

Aaron Tavalire (GPF)

Rose Tokatlian (GPP)

\*Christine Wujek (GPF)

### Ex-officio members

Tim Killeen (DET)

Valerie Kindle (HW)

Neil Sroka (GPF)

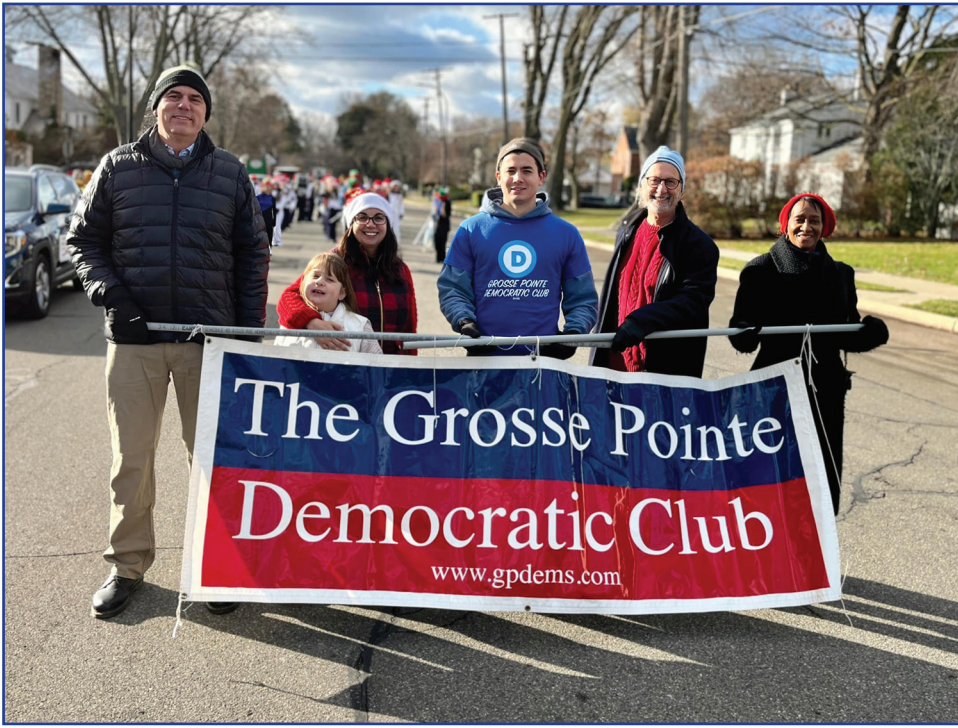
### Past president

Harry Kalogerakos (HW)

\* new member

\*\* campaign finance compliance officer





*The Grosse Pointe Santa Claus Parade is one of the highlights of the year in our community and we are always delighted to participate.*

*Proudly carrying our banner this year were, from left, Jeff Greer, Sandra Bucciero and her daughter Mia, Colton Dale, Harry Kalogerakos and Mildred Sheffield.*

Club membership coincides with the calendar year, and renewing now will carry you through 2023. Check the mailing label for your last paid membership year; it's

on the same line as your name. Renew by check with the form below or online at [gpdems.com](http://gpdems.com). Help us continue to be the largest chartered Democratic club in the state.

## Grosse Pointe Democratic Club • 2023 Membership

P.O. Box 36881, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

- |                                      |                                       |   |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Century Club \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New         | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal      | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash               | <input type="checkbox"/> Check      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card |                                       |   |                                     |

\* Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* Employer \_\_\_\_\_ \*\* Address \_\_\_\_\_ \*\* ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\* Required for club announcements

\*\* Required by Michigan campaign finance law

Donations not tax-deductible

**Grosse Pointe  
DEMOCRATIC CLUB**



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## SPARTAN STRONG

More than 1,000 Michigan State students and supporters joined a sit-in protest at the state Capitol in Lansing, a week after a gunman killed three students and injured five others on Feb. 13. As one student said at the protest: "We're a mass shooting generation. We have generational trauma of where we learned about the ABCs and then we learn about how to run from a gunman." We honor their strength and share in their sadness. ❤️