

## Electing Members of the Board of Education

To the Editor:

When it comes to voting for members of the Board of Education there usually is a low vote count. Many people do not know who they are voting for and yet these seven elected officials control almost half of Montgomery's county operating budget of \$5.3 billion and the education of our children and the future impact that has on each student, our community, and society as a whole.

### LETTER

In the at-large election the choice is between Phil Kauffmann, the incumbent, and Jeanette Dixon. One of Jeanette Dixon's priorities, right after her first priority of "providing a world class education for all of our students" is "operating the Board of Education (BOE) and Montgomery County School System (MCPS) in total transparency and responsiveness including the listing of the names of people who serve on all MCPS committees and interview panels and their affiliations.

That language alone should tell you Jeanette Dixon knows how the MCPS system "really works." She knows this because she has been a teacher in the MCPS, an assistant principal and principal in a middle school and high school for the last 16 years of her career. She has a long list of students she has taught and people she has hired who have gone on to become and still are school principals. See her resume at her website: [www.jeanettedixon.org](http://www.jeanettedixon.org) for names and details. One of those principals is the principal of the school two of my grandchildren attend.

But the priority that energized me more than any other is her mention of a culture of fear existing in the MCPS. In her words, "(I will) work with the new superintendent on a transformative change in the MCPS culture so that staff members are not afraid to speak up for fear of losing their jobs." As a student of W. Edwards Deming and college professor for 25 years, I taught the 14 principles of his management philosophy. One of which states: Drive fear from the organization. As a manager and executive for 25 years, I know firsthand that any organization operating in a culture of fear will never achieve its optimum output and effectiveness. Fear drives out creativity, the joy

of learning, and blocks communication to the top of the organization that is required for change. Jeannette Dixon is no shrinking violet and has a reputation for speaking truth to power.

The current leadership does not understand this and is controlled by the old guard who hold the most powerful positions on the BOE, e.g. the Policy Committee.

I, along with many others, campaigned for and this community supported Jill Ortman-Fouse who is now one of the brightest and forward-thinking members on the board. Electing Jeanette Dixon will provide Jill an ally in dealing with the labyrinth of the MCPS system and the cabal that has controlled it for at least the last decade.

As you can see from Jeanette's literature, in the primary election this past spring, Jeanette garnered the most votes among all the candidates including the incumbent, Phil Kauffmann.

As she states, "On April 26, 2016 primary voters sent a clear message that they would like to see change on the Board of Education. I bested the eight-year incumbent by over 6,000 votes to finish first. Another way of looking at this is that 125,000 voters voted for someone other than the incumbent." The election results they were as follows:

Jeanette Dixon: 57,756, 31.48%  
 Mike Ibanez: 19,851, 10.82%  
 Sebastian Johnson: 32,735, 17.84%  
 Phil Kauffman: 51,386, 28.01%  
 Gwendolyn Kimbrough: 21,751, 11.85%

Not only primary voters demurred from voting for Phil Kauffmann, so did the teachers of MCPS during the primary. The Parents Coalition of Montgomery County stated: "Tom Israel, executive director of the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA), confirmed the union's representative assembly of about 130 members discussed a possible endorsement Wednesday night. The MCEA requires at least a 58 percent majority vote for any one candidate in order to provide that candidate with an endorsement.

The non-endorsement could be seen as a setback for incumbent Phil Kauffman, the two-term at-large member from Olney who gar-

nered the MCEA's endorsement in his 2012 primary run.

Moreover you will not find a list of "endorsements" on her website because she has not asked any elected politicians/officials for their endorsement. She believes it is inappropriate for them to dictate who will serve on the School Board in a non-partisan election. Instead you will find on her website testimonials entitled "Voices" from those who have worked with her and know her well. Look closely at what she has actually done in her 30-year career in education as this will be a good predictor of her service on the board. I have interviewed her at length and believe her only interest is serving on the Board of Education to provide real solutions to all of the challenges we face and to do what is best for all of our students. That is her only agenda. The same agenda that Jack Smith, the new Superintendent of MCPS articulated on the radio and discussions.

The corollary is that our County Executive, Ike Leggett, has endorsed Mr. Kauffmann. Potomac residents might remember the lack of transparency that led to this headline: "County Council President Berliner Reveals Leggett Made Secret Deal for Brickyard Land," although before the judge was to rule the County Executive turned the land back to the BOE. As usual the establishment has circled the wagons to maintain their positions of power. There are many more such statements which can be seen on the Brickyard Coalition website.

Jeanette Dixon has integrity and her word is her bond. And for those worried that another untenable scheme for the Brickyard School site is proposed, she has pledged to preserve this land only for the education of MCPS students. She understands the extraordinary educational value and opportunity this 20 acres of organic soil presents. "She believes using this site as a learning opportunity would be a noble endeavor and gift to our children..."

I am voting for a better cutting edge school system, I am voting for Jeanette Dixon. I hope you do too.

**Edward J. Guss**  
 Potomac

### BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to [almanac@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:almanac@connectionnewspapers.com). Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

#### SOBER-RIDE FOR HALLOWEEN

**Free Cab Rides.** Saturday, Oct. 29, 10 p.m. through Sunday, Oct. 30, 6 a.m. Area residents, 21 and older, celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free SoberRide phone number 1-800-200-TAXI (8294) and receive a free (up to a \$30 fare) safe way home. AT&T wireless customers can dial #WRAP for the same service. Visit [www.soberride.com](http://www.soberride.com).

#### VOLUNTEERS WANTED

**AARP Foundation Tax-Aide** is seeking volunteers to participate in a

free, non-profit program, offered in conjunction with the IRS, that provides tax filing assistance to people of low- and middle-income, with special attention paid to those aged 60-plus. Training will be available in December and January to help taxpayers Feb. 1-April 18, 2017. Visit [www.aarp.org/taxaide](http://www.aarp.org/taxaide).

#### FRIDAY-SUNDAY/OCT. 28-30

**Camp Erin** is one of the largest national bereavement programs for youth grieving the death of a significant person in their lives. Hospice Caring is joining a network of 46 Camp Erin locations enabling the organization to serve a larger number of campers in a wider age-range. This session is exclusive to teens (ages 13-17). The program is free and the application is available at [www.hospicecaring.org/camp-erin.html](http://www.hospicecaring.org/camp-erin.html).

#### TUESDAY/NOV. 1

##### Senior Health and Wellness Expo.

1-4 p.m. at Holiday Park Senior Center 3950 Ferrera Drive, Wheaton. Leadership Montgomery is presents its first Senior Health and Wellness Expo. The event will include an expert panel discussion from 1-3 p.m. followed by a vendor fair. Free for members, current Core, EL and Senior participants. \$20 for graduates and guests. Visit [www.leadershipmontgomerymd.org/event/senior-health-wellness-expo](http://www.leadershipmontgomerymd.org/event/senior-health-wellness-expo) for more.

#### WEDNESDAY/NOV. 2

**Application Deadline.** Montgomery County Public Libraries is recruiting high school students for its Teen Advisory Group (TAG). Teens, ages 14-18, who want their voices heard when it comes to teen library services are

encouraged to apply. TAG influences library services, programs, and collections and is a valuable asset to Libraries. Those who are accepted in the program will serve from December 2016 to May 2017 and will meet monthly, plus work independently or in small groups as needed. More details are available by emailing [teensite@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:teensite@montgomerycountymd.gov).

#### BEGINS NOV. 7

**Job Search Training for Seniors.** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. JCA's Career Gateway Program can help hone a resume, polish networking and interviewing skills, use Internet job search resources more effectively, and turn age and experience to an advantage. Each session of the Career Gateway features 30 hours of small-group classroom instruction over five days, comprehensive take-home materials, SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

## POTOMAC ALMANAC

[www.PotomacAlmanac.com](http://www.PotomacAlmanac.com)

Newspaper of Potomac  
 A Connection Newspaper

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

1606 King Street  
 Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to [connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe](http://connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe)

#### PUBLISHER

Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
 @MaryKimm

#### EDITORIAL

PHONE: 703-778-9415

#### E-MAIL:

[almanac@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:almanac@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### EDITOR

Steven Mauren, 703-778-9415  
[smauren@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:smauren@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Susan Belford, Carole Dell,  
 Cissy Finley Grant, Carole Fungler,  
 Colleen Healy, Kenny Lourie,  
 Ken Moore

#### Contributing Photographers

Harvey Levine, Deborah Stevens

#### Art/Design:

Laurence Foong, John Heinly  
**Production Manager**  
 Geovani Flores

#### ADVERTISING

For advertising information  
[sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)  
 703-778-9431

#### ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Display Advertising:  
**Kenny Lourie** 301-325-1398  
[klourie@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:klourie@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### Andrea Smith 703-778-9411

Classified Advertising  
[asmith@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:asmith@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### Debbie Funk

National Sales & real Estate  
 703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### David Griffin

Marketing Assistant  
 703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### Jerry Vernon

Executive Vice President  
 703-549-0004  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

**CIRCULATION: 703-778-9427**  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)

**Potomac Almanac is published by Local Media Connection LLC**

#### Five Time First Place Award-Winner

**Public Service**  
 MDDC Press Association

#### Four Time Newspaper of the Year

An Award-winning Newspaper in Writing, Photography, Editing, Graphics and Design