



Catoctin News

Newsletter of the Catoctin Group serving
Carroll and Frederick Counties

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VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!

By Jane Ladner

Local governments determine what happens in our neighborhoods and our schools. Where will the next big housing development be allowed? Where will the next school be built? Who is responsible for the quality of our water? These and many, many more issues that effect our daily lives are determined by the individuals we elect to the local, and state positions.

Voting in the primary election matters. The candidates who share your concerns need to make it to the November election so they can be elected.

In 2022 there will be a Gubernatorial Election in Maryland. State-wide elections include the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, and State Comptroller. These are important, but so are the down-ballot elections. Due to the new census results and the subsequently altered election maps, some of the state congressional districts and the Maryland General Assembly Districts are altered. Due to challenges of the redistricting, the filing date for candidates was changed from February 22 to March 22. The dates for the Democratic and Republican primaries have been changed to July 19.

As a registered voter, I have received an application for a mail-in ballot for the 2022 election from the Maryland State Board of Elections. The

request form includes a spot where you can indicate that you would like to receive a mail-in ballot for all future federal and state elections. This seems like progress to me. If you need help or more specific information, start at these sites:

Carroll County

<https://elections.carrollcountymd.gov/Default2.aspx>

Frederick County

<https://frederickcountymd.gov/8181/2022-Gubernatorial-Election>

Your polling places and perhaps also your district may have changed with the redistricting. The above web sites can guide you.

If you want Sierra Club views on elections and policies, start with <https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/maryland-sierra-club-political-program>.

If you are already a committed voter, help get out the vote in your local community, write letters/postcards in nationwide voting campaigns, talk to your family and friends.

Make your voice heard!

VOTE!

Gubernatorial Primary

June 28 Deadline to change name, address or party affiliation

June 28 Deadline to register to vote in July 19 primary

July 7 - July 14 Early in-person voting at any voting center in your county

July 12 Mail-in ballot request must be received by election board

July 19 Gubernatorial Primary
7 AM - 8 PM

Gubernatorial Election

Oct. 18 Deadline to change name, address or party affiliation

Oct. 18 Deadline to register to vote in general election

Oct. 27- Nov. 3 Early in-person voting 7 AM - 8 PM

Nov. 1 Deadline to request mail-in ballot by mail or fax for primary

Nov. 4 Deadline to request mail-in ballot by email

Nov. 8 Gubernatorial Election
In-person voting 7 AM - 8 PM

Thinking about Our Thinking

Robert Ladner

The brain is not selected to tell the owner the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

We humans are proud of our thinking, logic, and expression of ideas. Many of us think about our brain work as the most important thing we do. In some ways, it defines us. But we need to be careful and avoid hubris.

We evolved from tiny furry mammals that lived as much as 500 million years ago. For all of our ancestors, their most important accomplishment was to survive long enough to propagate their genes to the next generation. These ancestors all had brains that coordinated vision, touch, and the other senses to protect the owner. The brains of modern animals are really good at protecting the owner; seeing to it that they get enough to eat, do not get eaten, and don't fall off a cliff. The brain is not selected to tell the owner the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Heuristics

Brains use mechanisms called heuristics that provide quick decisions when time might be short: "there is ripe fruit just above you, eat it quickly", "there is a tiger just below you, don't fall", etc. Heuristics need not be perfect, they only need to increase the probability of survival.

Heuristics have been studied in academia intensely for several decades. Nudging has been presented as a way to get people to do good things without coercion. Employers allow new employees to opt out of a pension scheme, making it more likely they will start saving toward retirement.

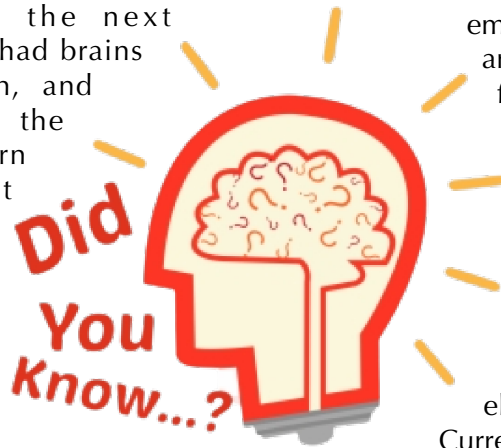
Snap Judgements

One observation I have encountered several times is that, "many decisions start as emotional decisions, but the mind dresses it up in reason." Sometimes, our strongest reactions to ideas are based on fear, aversion, or attachment, but we talk about the reasons that our brains provide. Sometimes others use our emotions to steer us into doing what they want, often not to our benefit. These emotional snap judgements, however, are often correct and can be the basis for the most decent and uplifting of human actions. But they can also trap us in error.

Rethinking Nuclear Power

As a species, our existence is threatened by climate change. Much of the world is addicted to electric power which we need 24/7. Currently we do not yet have technology to store large amounts of electric power economically. Hydroelectric power is at, or beyond, its capacity. Nuclear power (NP) could provide power 24/7 while (with new technology) producing very little dangerous waste.

If we reject NP, then we will continue burning coal, oil, and methane. I fully understand rejecting the NP of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. But the world changes every day and NP technology has changed. We need to have an open discussion about whether any form of NP could be acceptable. We cannot let our brains hobble us by relying on heuristics selected to save us from snakes and tigers. We need the right decision, not the one that feels warm and fuzzy right away.



*"Progress is impossible without change,
and those who cannot change their minds
cannot change anything."*

—George Bernard Shaw

Greetings!

Jane Ladner

I am the new volunteer editor for *Catoctin News*, the quarterly newsletter of the Sierra Club Catoctin Group. I encourage members to submit articles for upcoming newsletters, the guidance for which was written by our previous editor Lewis Sherman, and can be found at:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/catoctin-group-newsletters>.

You also will find previous copies of the newsletter and more information on this site.

Share your knowledge. Tell us about your encounters with nature.

The newsletter is published at the end of March, June, September, and December.

The deadline for articles is the 10th of the month of publication.

Articles should be sent to: **ladnerjane@gmail.com**.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Opportunities

— Envision Frederick Spring Courses —

April 30 - Heat and Tree Canopy Needs: Impacts & Solutions for Low-Income Homeowners

May 21 - Food Insecurity ... and Food Waste? How Can This Be ...

Details at **<https://envisionfrederickcounty.org>**

— Green Fests —

April 9 - Thurmont Green Fest at Thurmont Regional Library 10 AM - 2 PM

April 23 - Middletown Green Expo at Memorial Park in Middletown 10AM - 2PM

— StreamLink Tree Plantings —

April 2, April 16, April 23, May 7

More info at **<https://www.streamlinkededucation.org/volunteer>**

Officers/Committee Chairs

Chairperson Patti Fredericks

Secretary Kerri Hesley

Treasurer Betty Law

Membership Steve Luke

Executive Committee Patti Fredericks, Vanessa Gress, Kerri Hesley,
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Further Information

<http://www.sierraclub.org/maryland/catoctin-group>