

NEXT KCDW MEETING FEB. 24TH: Yacht Club Broiler – No host lunch – 11:30 am; Meeting – 12:30 pm. Martha Lynn-Johnson will discuss sexual harassment issues in the military. NO RSVP required.

FLINT AS A HARBINGER

by Jo Fox Burr

I enjoyed my early adventures overseas, but one thing I looked forward to when returning home was knowing I could count on access to safe clean drinking water out of the tap. Over the years, that confidence has waned some, though not to the point of thinking tap water could seriously sicken me. I have just come to feel that drinking filtered water is a healthier choice.

What happened to Flint's water when its source was switched without putting in place necessary treatment to control the corrosion of pipes from the new source destroys my previous sense of security about our drinking water. I've known about problems with water near fracking sites and mines for a while, but evidently there are other communities, mostly low income and/or minority, across this country with questionable drinking water, particularly in the South. Given the politics of both Michigan and the South, I'm wondering if one should be particularly careful about tap water in GOP controlled territory.

The Flint story tears me apart, though. The permanent lead poisoning damage done to Flint children is unconscionable. It is nice Governor Snyder is taking responsibility, but I can only think he is doing this because he got caught. I do have a vague sense the full impact of what he and his cohorts have done has affected him. He looks a bit like a deer caught in the headlights these days. Though like such a deer, he may be more worried about what is going to happen to his own skin.

When researching who is to blame, I found many culprits for this horrendous crime. And it is a crime. It heartens me the FBI is investigating. Some culprits seem more culpable than others. There was a definite cover-up by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), which has to be criminal. While perhaps less criminal, but certainly slipshod and unethical, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services kept looking for ways to dispute obviously concerning findings by outside sources. One EPA staffer did repeatedly try to get MDEQ to act, but unfortunately his boss did not take his warnings seriously and even apologized for him to the state. That was really bad judgement on her part. It is good she resigned. Certainly the Emergency Manager Snyder appointed to take over managing the city, relegating the elected officials powerless, bares serious blame. However, I suspect he was so focused on saving money in the short term, he just did not pay attention to the harm he could be doing. It is ironic, to say the least, that this shortsightedness will ultimately cost the state millions, proving him to be a very bad manager. The elected city council and Mayor at the time, though powerless, did sanction the switch initially. I'm thinking this was mostly to do with them not being well informed. The good news here is that there is a new Mayor in town and she is proving to be a real life hero. Even Snyder has recognized that she should be given back her powers, while the new emergency manager will be relegated to following her orders.

As for Governor Snyder, how can you not blame him? The eternal question, 'what did he know and when did he know it?', may never be fully revealed. He might be too well protected. Given how permeated this corruption is throughout his administration, though, you have to consider the climate he put in place as a major cause for this crime. He must go, if not imprisoned, he should be ejected by the people of Michigan.

Who do I blame most though? Well it has to be the selfish greedy shortsighted financially conservative Republicans, whose primary purpose is to cut taxes for the rich. Who don't care if this means less funding for basic human resources and, in this case, for infrastructure maintenance and replacement

when systems fail. Who don't care that shorting these funds sets the stage for more horrific man-made catastrophes.

Flint is a harbinger. But will it be a harbinger that portends future disasters because of continued lack of funding for infrastructure or will it be one we – the people – see as the final straw that wakes us up to take sufficient action to get these kind of criminals out of power?

OTHER UPCOMING DEMOCRATIC MEETINGS AND EVENTS: (*GM designates a general membership meeting)

Kitsap Co. Dem. Central Com: GM* Feb 16th (Tuesday); 6:30 pm Desserts; 7 pm meeting; Eagles Nest

23rd Leg. District Democrats: GM* Mar 15th (Tuesday); 6:30 pm social time; 7 pm meeting; Poulsbo Library

26th Leg. District Democrats: GM* Mar 3rd (Thursday); 7-9 pm; Kitsap Rm, Givens Ctr 1026 Sidney Rd, Port Orchard

35th Leg. District Democrats: GM* TBA. Check <http://35thdemocrats.org/calendar/> [1] for more information on this.

"This [the Flint water crisis] is the consequence of putting ideology ahead of human beings and their needs and their welfare. The difference in political philosophy matters. Political choices have consequences and Flint is the most dramatic in our generation... I do lay this at the doorstep of those who share that philosophy." Rep. Gerald Connolly; D-Virginia, 11th District, at the House hearing on the Flint Water Crisis.

**DON'T FORGET, THAT IT IS NEVER TOO EARLY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE
BAKELESS BAKE SALE!!!**

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[1] <http://35thdemocrats.org/calendar/>

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