

## Kirksville community reacts to election

Steve Taylor, Maxwell's owner

Thank you to the Index for asking me for my thoughts. As a point of conscious decision I will not waste one word telling you why I did not want Hillary Clinton elected, but rather will focus all my time and energy on explaining why I am thrilled Donald Trump did prevail. I am a veteran, proud of my service and as proud of my commitment to serve this country. I am writing to express my profound gladness at the election results but not in a way many readers might think. This is not crowing or fist-pumping, not the one-sided elation of a person who “got their way” at the cost of another’s contentment. Rather, this is a letter of reconciliation to everyone who was for and against Donald Trump.

I am writing because I truly am optimistic about the future and about the coming presidency. So much has been written or said to foster the negativity in the country. I would like to stand to say we must come together as Americans. I truly believe Trump’s stance on trade and immigration will make our country better than it has been for a long time. As a serial entrepreneur, I believe his pro-business, pro-growth and limited government will help our economy recover the strength it has been lacking. I was very dismayed that so many people took his slogan “Make America Great Again” as some derisive slur that we aren’t great — we are — but there are so many issues in this country that need a leader with his eye on the future, and I believe Mr. Trump does.

In closing, my true intention is for everyone to welcome our president-elect with an open mind. We all might have different opinions, but the one thing for sure is we are all Americans and all need to be united. I got into some controversy for having a Trump flag at my business this summer. What struck me the most was the comprehension by some people that because I was expressing my opinion I was somehow trying to negate theirs. I was disheartened that so many people were adamantly upset by my stance and surprised at the perception of Trump supporters. The one thing I took away from this experience was the lesson that people need to realize voicing one’s opinion should never be a source of anger or derision. We need, now more than ever, to have dialogue and be respectful of each other so we can all move forward together. I wanted to write this as one of Trump’s strongest proponents to illustrate that the win was not viewed by many Americans as a celebration of us over them, as I feel many opponents viewed it, but rather request that we all view this new presidency with an open mind. It is the least we can do for America.

Junior Jacob Brooke

In her concession speech on Nov. 9, Hillary Clinton asked us to be open-minded and to give the president-elect the opportunity to lead. It is a challenge to understate the disappointment and shock Clinton’s request was for millions of supporters. For most voters, this result was simply shocking, but for many this was a resounding defeat of the inclusive values which once told them they had a place in American life.

A campaign of divisive rhetoric with too many insults and outrageous statements to list lead our next president to the Oval Office. Donald Trump is now the leader, not only of a movement against the liberal norms of politically correct culture but of millions who feel his campaign represented the lowest point in American history. Trump’s remarkable reversal on a number of his most crowd-pleasing, impossible campaign promises has been as sudden and shocking as his victory. Trump has demurred on his threats to jail his political opponent, to build a border wall and make Mexico pay for it, to completely repeal Obamacare and to ban all Muslims from entering the United States. This seems to offer hope to Americans for whom these promises were nothing less than an all-out assault on American values and the Constitution.

It has now become easier to give the president-elect the benefit of the doubt. As he tells reporters, he will continue to seek advice and counsel from President Barack Obama and back down on his bigoted, hateful and demeaning rhetoric. It almost seems possible to think that the weight of the presidency and the Republican establishment might simply crush him into submission.

While it seems possible that Trump will quickly abandon his supporters and their hopes, it is far too early for the #ImWithHer camp to rejoice over Trump’s come-to-Jesus moment.

Trump’s presidency still poses major threats to American values to an unprecedented degree. His post-victory pause in spewing hatred and filth might be fleeting, and nothing should excuse the racism, xenophobia and sexism he attempted to normalize during his campaign. He has still appointed a white supremacist and alleged domestic abuser to serve as a chief advisor. He continues to ignore science by denying climate change and remains in opposition to the right of women to control their bodies.

To the liberals and Hillary supporters who have begun to take heart in Trump’s reversals — do not be encouraged by the words of a man whose only consistency has been inconsistency. Do not hope that a man who has lied repeatedly and boldly and demeaned women his entire life will suddenly feel the importance of the White House and straighten up like a naughty

schoolboy. Trump remains a threat to years of progress towards inclusivity, tolerance and hopefulness.

Marc Becker, history professor

Trump’s election is a direct result of the failures of capitalism. Capitalism promises us efficiency and productivity that is supposed to deliver us better products at lower prices. Instead, it takes resources away from marginalized people who have little and delivers them instead to the rich and powerful who never seem to have enough.

Trump effectively played into the class resentments resulting from this upward redistribution of wealth to win the election. But his victory is a classic example of the fox raiding the hen house. Trump is a member of the capitalist class who has excelled at depriving workers of their fair wages and decent working conditions. If someone is to blame for the economic crisis we face, it is those of Trump’s kind. Far from creating decent and well-paying jobs, or having an interest in the working class, Trump greedily grabs as much wealth as he can to line his own golden lair.

Rather than accurately analyzing the structural roots of the pain workers feel, Trump effectively deflects anger toward even more marginalized members of society — immigrants, people of color, members of the LGBT community, etc. He divides and conquers. If all of us who have been ravaged by the scourge of capitalism turn our attacks against each other, it allows capitalists to continue to injure all of us.

The vast majority of Trump’s supporters do not and will not benefit from Republican policy initiatives. Republicans pledge to cut corporate and top income bracket tax rates while slashing social spending and services. These policies benefit Trump but hurt workers. The Republican Party has historically been the party of the wealthy and propertied class, and that has not changed.

What we are missing in this country is a working-class party — one that represents those of us who have been harmed with the upward redistributive policies of the capitalist class. Such a socialist approach would create a truly democratic society. Under our current system, we chose between two candidates who rule in the interests of the top 1 or 0.1 percent of the income holders.

We need to organize an inclusive and participatory system that works to provide decent and well-paying jobs, universal healthcare, free education, a clean environment and nutritious food for all of us. Neither the leaders of the Republican or Democratic parties are interested in such policies because they do not serve their class interests. We can only make such dreams a reality when we put aside politics of fear and repression and work together in our common interests.

## Resist the Dakota Access Pipeline



Ben Wallis

Protests against construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, or DAPL, have been underway for seven months now. The controversial 3.7 billion dollar, 1,200-mile project — which will link oil production sites in North Dakota and Illinois — enjoyed a brief respite from attention last week because Donald Trump unexpectedly won the national presidential election. The North Dakota protest camps remain active, however, and it appears the Standing Rock Sioux and thousands of other environmental activists are prepared to extend their fight indefinitely — no matter who the president is. Indeed, DAPL takes part in a long bipartisan tradition of settler-colonial violence against the indigenous peoples of America. It is no accident the pipeline threatens the Standing Rock tribe — environmental hazards are often thrust onto people of color. In an era of accelerating environmental decay, we must be vigilant to these incidences of environmental racism and oppose them wherever they might occur.

The DAPL protests are centered around an area a few miles north of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation, where the pipeline is set to cut under the Missouri River. This area — while not an official part of the tribe’s territory — is home to many sacred burial and cultural grounds,

according to a Nov. 2016 Business Insider article. The river is also the Reservation’s major source of drinking water, raising concerns over potential oil spills. Between 2013 and 2015, an average of 121 oil accidents occurred each year, according to the same article. The Standing Rock tribe is vehemently opposed to the project and all its risks, spearheading the long campaign of protests that has seen hundreds of arrests and countless outbreaks of violence. In late October soldiers and police in riot gear led raids on protest camps with armored vehicles, pepper spray and sound cannons. In an interview with the LA Times a detainee described protestors having numbers written on their arms and being kept in cages like dog kennels, without bedding or furniture.

This campaign of state violence is conducted in violation of Standing Rock’s tribal sovereignty — preceding colonization and formally guaranteed by treaty. DAPL would effectively undermine the tribe’s right to self-determination by forcing it to accept enormous health and environmental risks. But construction looks set to continue anyway. The company that owns the pipeline — Energy Transfer Partners — was reported by the Seattle Times to be marshaling its equipment last Thursday in expectation of a go-ahead from the Obama administration. The Standing Rock tribe, then, like other communities of color, will disproportionately bear the weight of environmental ruin. An early proposal for DAPL planned for it to cross the Missouri River eleven miles north of Bismarck, the capital of North Dakota, according to an August article by the Bismarck Tribune. The proposal was rejected because of dangers posed to Bismarck’s water supply. Incidentally, Bismarck also has a population that is more than 90 percent white.

Standing Rock joins other prominent news stories — like lead-poisoned Flint, Michigan — as being a case of environmental racism. A 2016 study by researchers

at the Universities of Michigan and Montana found “a consistent pattern of placing hazardous waste facilities in neighborhoods where poor people and people of color live.” Minority communities represent a “path of least resistance” for such projects, as they generally have less political influence to reject them. The move of DAPLs river-crossing from Bismarck to Standing Rock reflects the role of race and class in deciding who will suffer the consequences should it. Standing Rock’s tribal sovereignty, the health and well-being of its people and the integrity of its burial and cultural grounds are all treated as unfortunate — but necessary — casualties of corporations’ profit-seeking. In any enterprise of DAPLs size there will be losers. But such losers are not decided randomly — they are, in most cases, those least able to bear the loss.

The Standing Rock Sioux’s struggle against DAPL not only opposes environmental degradation, but racism and colonial oppression. If construction on the pipeline is allowed to proceed, it will signal America’s continued contempt for indigenous communities’ well-being and self-determination. That the past election season saw neither presidential candidate condemn the project, nor the vicious campaign of state violence assembled to ensure its completion, exposes the indifference of the major political parties to these issues. We cannot, in all fairness, expect them to thwart the interests of their major donors. Instead, we should put our faith in the direct action of the Standing Rock tribe and the thousands that have joined them. They deserve our solidarity and assistance. In a world driven by ecological collapse, we should resist all efforts to place the effects of the crisis on people of color. Now, DAPL can succeed on the basis of our division. Against unity, it is doomed.

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