



Election Judge News

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The average person is really mean. (think about it!)

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February 16, 2023

Happy February everyone! In this issue, we have some trivia about Valentine's Day to share, but first, our "Ask the Election Experts" segment.

Ask the Election Experts

Some of you asked us to talk about the Ballot Marking Device (BMD), so we'll address that in this issue.

If you have a question you would like addressed in a future newsletter, send it to the editor, Barry Jackson.

Some questions we hear about the BMD are:

"Does it store or record votes?" or

"Is it connected to the internet?"

A good rule of thumb to remember when discussing our electronic voting equipment is that Maryland has a paper ballot-based system.

Every voter casts a paper ballot, whether it's in person or by mail.

This also includes when the voter is using the BMD.

Remember that the question the Ballot Distribution Judge asks each voter is "You have two ways to mark your ballot: either by hand or with the electronic device. Which do you prefer?"

Note that we underlined the word "mark." That's an important distinction from

casting a ballot.

We like to say that the BMD is just a big electronic pen, because the voter at the BMD is doing the same thing with their paper ballot as a voter at the voting booth; marking it.

When the voter is finished marking their ballot with the BMD, they print off the ballot and take it to the Scanning Unit to cast it.

No votes or any other information is recorded or stored on the BMD. In fact, once the voter prints off their ballot, all selections the voter made on the BMD are cleared and the BMD is ready to receive another voter to mark their ballot.

We had an issue during Early Voting where a voter received her printed ballot from the BMD, then folded it up, put it in her purse, and walked out! It turns out she thought she cast her ballot on the BMD and the printout was a record of her vote for her to keep. We explained the situation to her, and she came back and voted a provisional ballot.

The BMD is also not connected to the internet, nor does it have the capability to do so. There is no network adapter loaded on the BMD.

So the BMD cannot be hacked into remotely, and even if it could be hacked, there would be nothing to hack, because there is no data stored on the BMD.

Legislative Update

The Maryland General Assembly is back in session, and there are many election related bills that we are tracking. Here are a few:

House Bill 35/Senate Bill 567—would require voters to show proof of identification at Early Voting and the polling place on Election Day.

House Bill 41—would allow curbside voting at Early Voting and the polling place on Election Day, limited to disabled or unable to enter polling place. Election judges would have to bring the ballot out to their car and allow them to mark it, then take the ballot inside to cast it at the Scanning Unit.

Senate Bill 379/House Bill 535—allow local boards to open and process mail in ballots before Election Day.

House Bill 616/House Bill 1092—competing bills, both reducing the number of Early Voting days: HB616 has Early Voting days from Sunday to Thursday, HB1092 has Early Voting days from Monday to Thursday.

House Bill 1200—sets a minimum amount of \$250 at which election judges can be paid for Early Voting and Election Day and a minimum amount of \$50 for election judge training. I'm sure you all will be following this one closely!

All bills have just recently had their hearings in committee. We should know more about each by next newsletter.



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Election Judge News

Lost and Found

We have had folks claim some of the items in the below picture, but they are still located at our office. If they are yours, feel free to come get them!



Training Center

Excerpts from Chapter 2—Security Rules and Awareness from the Election Judge Training Manual.

2.3 Chain of Custody

Chain of custody refers to the time-based record, or paper trail, of all the voting equipment and materials. The paper trail will show the custody, control, and transfer of voting equipment, memory sticks, voted and unvoted ballots, reports, forms, and other equipment and supplies.

It is important to make sure the voting materials are secure. If you are transporting memory sticks, keys, compact flash cards, ballot activation cards, and ballots, you must record the chain of custody, which means who had the material and when they had it. It is also important to maintain physical security control over the voting equipment. All reports and documentation must be completed and signed appropriately.

Chief judges from each precinct are responsible for the compact flash cards from each pollbook. The compact flash cards are sealed in the pollbooks at the time of delivery to the polling place. When the polls close, the chief judges are responsible for removing the compact flash cards and adapters from all the pollbooks and placing them inside the forms folder for each precinct. Chief judges from each precinct are responsible for the memory sticks from the scanning units. Memory sticks are in the scanning unit at the time of delivery to the polling place. When the polls close, the chief judges are responsible for removing the memory sticks from all scanning units and placing them inside the forms folder for the precinct. All memory sticks, compact flash cards, and voted ballots, along with all election supplies, including the electronic pollbooks, are to be returned to the Washington County Board of Elections by the two chief judges immediately after the polls close. Two local board members will check in the compact flash cards and adapters, memory sticks and issue a receipt to the chief judges.

Manual Audit

The manual audit was a huge success! We had 6 bipartisan teams of two manually counting over 1,100 ballots from Early Voting, Election Day, Mail In Ballots, and Provisional Ballots.

The entire process took less than an hour, and the audit turned up no variances with the Scanning Unit results!

So now, the last official act of the 2022 election has taken place and we can now focus on 2024!

Candidacy Filing

Speaking of 2024, candidacy filing for the 2024 elections has begun! It opened on January 19th, 2023 and closes at 9:00pm on January 19, 2024.

The only local races we will be seeing filings for in our office are City of Hagerstown (Mayor and City Council) and Board of Education.

There are four Board of Ed seats up for election in 2024, and we have to have 9 candidates filed in order for the race to be on the Primary ballot. If not, all the candidates will automatically move on to the General Election.

Valentine's Day

We've addressed Valentine's Day in other February issues of the newsletter, but here are some interesting facts we found from GoodHousekeeping.com about the holiday.

The tradition of giving flowers dates back to the 17th century when King Charles II of Sweden learned of the "language of flowers" (red-love, pink-happiness, white-sympathy, etc.) on a trip to Persia. He brought the tradition back to Europe, and by the Victorian era, giving flowers on Valentine's Day became a staple.

The first heart-shaped box of chocolates was introduced in 1861 by Richard Cadbury, son of Cadbury founder John Cadbury.

Where did Cupid come from? Eros is the Greek god of love, dating back to 700B.C. In the 4th century B.C, the Romans adopted Eros into the image of a cute little boy with a bow and arrow, naming him "Cupid." By the turn of the 19th century, Cupid had become linked to Valentine's Day due to his love-matching powers.

Now you know some of the traditions of Valentine's Day!

Trivia Question

As we think of sweets for Valentine's Day, what is Maryland's official state dessert?

Answer below: