



Chandler Eby



Kevin Gudala

## Two Ephrata teens running for office

By Larry Alexander

Fresh from high school and in their first year of college, two young Ephrata men are making their initial foray into running for municipal office.

Kevin Gudala and Chandler Eby, both 19 and both 2020 EHS graduates, are planning to make a run for office in Ephrata Borough's upcoming municipal elections.

Gudala, a lifelong Ephrata resident, is running as a Democrat and hoping to unseat long-

time Mayor Ralph Mowen in the Nov. 2 municipal elections. Gudala is a student at the Pennsylvania College of Health Sciences in Lancaster and is looking at a career in surgical technology. That goal aside, he sees "issues that need to be tackled" in Ephrata that he would like to address as mayor.

His top issue centers around quality of the borough's drinking water.

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# Teens

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The solution to this problem, he feels, is a process called reverse osmosis. This system removes foreign contaminants, solids and minerals from water by using pressure to force it through specialized membranes. While the system initially could be costly, Gudala said, he feels "it'd be a good solution in the long run."

He said the borough lists the contaminants on its website but feels the administration hasn't done enough to lower the amounts.

Another issue he wishes to address is government transparency, particularly in the area of water quality and electrical disconnections for residents whose bills are in arrears. He also feels the website is woefully short of information, including a lack of photographs of council members so the community knows who they are.

"I'd definitely update the website," he said. "I honestly don't know what most of the council members look like because there are no pictures."

Gudala knows that as a Democrat running for office in Ephrata he's swimming against the political tide. Undaunted, though, he says he'd been contemplating his run for office "for a few months."

"I received word at the beginning of this year the mayor's position is up for election, so I figured I might as well go for it," he said. "No one else in my party is running."

While Gudala has gotten a nod of approval from Ephrata's Democratic organization, he has not won their endorsement. The reason for that, said Ginny Dillio, President of the Guy K. Bard Democratic Club, is that "he's so green."

"His lack of experience is the only thing holding him back,"

Dillio said. "We'll definitely put his name out there. We helped him get his signatures so he's all set. So he will be on the ballot."

Dillio said she is "perfectly happy to have a young person on the ticket."

"It'll be wonderful," she said. "God bless him for trying and having the interest."

Chandler Eby, a political science major at American University in Washington, D.C., plans to run in the May 18 primary against Tim Barr for the job of Third Ward councilman.

"I'm really passionate about public service and I've been wanting to run for office," he said.

In researching borough council and their duties, Eby said there've been no races challenged in the last eight years.

"So I thought, well, I'm of age and I'd really be interested in doing this," he said.

On issues, Eby would like to see more emphasis on improving and maintaining the downtown. He favors tax breaks to allow buildings, even those "not in desperate need of repair," that would "allow them to upgrade either the aesthetics or anything they would need in order to get Main Street up and running."

"Look at Litz," he said. "It's really nice. They have a lot of businesses. Unfortunately in Ephrata a lot of businesses keep moving in and out. I'd like to see that constant turn-around stop."

Other things he suggested were perhaps allowing a small business to open inside the library. He feels that the library's proximity to the skateboard park would draw people to the business and some of those funds could help support the library.

Eby also pointed out that a number of lights along the walking trail are either out or flicker, creating a safety issue. He also agrees with Gudala about borough council transparency and updating the website not only with photos of the council mem-

bers, but access to their voting records "to see how they voted on recent things."

Asked about his ability to do the job as a councilman while in school in Washington D.C., Eby said he spoke with councilman Victor Richard who informed him that some council members, as well as citizens, attend meetings virtually.

"If that's a possibility then I will fully make use of that option and still make time to handle calls from my constituents and important matters like that," he said.

He also pledged that if he can't handle his duties sufficiently he would resign his seat.

Eby said some people have questioned his age.

"They say 'You're too young, you're just out of high school,'" Eby said. "I tell them I know a lot about politics. I've been involved with politics since my freshman year of high school. Also I'm majoring in political science at AU."

Eby said he worked the telephones for the Donald Trump campaign in 2016 and for Joe Biden in 2020. In addition he has met with local congressional leaders like Ryan Aument, Lloyd Smucker and, in 2018, Jess King.

"I'm more in touch than the average person because I do care about public service," he said. "I do care about the things that are going on. So I think there's a definite assurance that I know politics and I know what is going on despite my age."

Both Eby and Gudala strongly favor getting young people involved in politics. Eby said it's "the driving force" behind both of their campaigns.

"Even if we lose it's something we really wanted to do, to help get young people involved in the process," he said.

Together they have formed the Ephrata Public Interest Committee — a bipartisan organization that focuses on getting younger people into politics.

"But we don't wanted to focus on Democrats and Republicans," Eby said. "We want to focus on specific issues in Ephrata."

*Larry Alexander is a correspondent for The Ephrata Review*

