

Frederick Uncut- Bridging the Political Divide.mp3

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SPEAKERS

Jim Carpenter, Katryna Parrera, Allen Etzler, Natalie Abbas, Heather Mongilio

-  **Heather Mongilio** 00:09
Politics, that thing you hear about on the news every day, that thing you are not supposed to bring up at a dinner party. But what if you could talk about politics in a civil way? That's the goal of better angels, led by a democrat from Frederick and our republican admirers bill. They help teach people to converse about divisive topics and an empathetic and understanding why. They joined editor Alan esler now to show how people can have conversations about politics in a respectful manner.
-  **Allen Etzler** 00:36
Thanks, Heather. Jim and Natalie Abbas Jim carpenter. Welcome to the Frederick uncut podcast. Thank you for joining us. We're going to talk a little bit about better angels. And I guess first I want to get into kind of a background of the group and how it got started. So again, guys, tell me a little bit about how it started and what it is what you guys hope to accomplish. Well, it started after the 2016 election and which there was obviously a lot of polarization and the United States, and it's the couple of
-  **Jim Carpenter** 01:11

professors in a family counselor got together and wrote out some guidelines or for a workshop for getting people from opposite sides to work together. So the first one was held in a barn in Ohio and they had about 10 Republicans and Democrats and that was such a huge success that it was celebrated by some popular country singers and did it from them and they really expanded it caught on and now it's pretty much in all the states and they have had two national conventions. And, and the work is grown from that flagship workshop to a lot of different types. of products or services, I would call them.

N

Natalie Abbas 02:04

So just to follow up on what you said, Jim, I looked at the schedule today and over the last year 2018 and 2019. We've got over 400 events scheduled going into the next year. So I'm really excited. They're cropping up everywhere. I noticed that Ellicott City, Columbia, even Hagerstown had some organizations starting to crop up. So I'm looking forward to seeing what what happens there.

J

Jim Carpenter 02:36

That's great. And I want to get into a little bit to kind of how we talk to each other because that was a big reason for this organization to start, how we how we talk to each other about politics. What do you guys think of where we're at in terms of the political discourse that takes place today? I'll start with you, Natalie.

N

Natalie Abbas 02:54

Well, we're at opposite ends of the spectrum, and it's you can't say anything to anyone, even family members are having issues. So that's kind of what got me involved was just the way people were talking to one another. And so many relationships were falling apart. And it's like, why are we having these knee jerk reactions to all of this?

J

Jim Carpenter 03:17

Yeah, so I'm sure all of us have experienced some really difficult conversations over politics. But I have some good news. There's a lot of work going on in the United States today, since particularly since that 2016 election. Bridge line study us lyst 99 organizations doing similar work than what we're doing in 10 categories. And there's another organization called listen first project which has 250 partners as organizational partners in in that project, so there's a lot of work and they say that 70% of Americans want to be able to and find it necessary. Want to be able to talk across the political divide. So that's a really encouraging statistic. I don't know the source of that statistic. Besides that

website. I don't know anything. I'm a statistician I like, I like to look at the source of the data. But everyone I'd meet, has congratulated me on this work and wants to take the workshop. I live in a retirement community and I walked through the lodge lobby this morning, and everybody was just congratulating me and so forth. There's a lot of lot of support for this work. It's really tremendous seconds. Hope yet. How many compliments Have you got today?

N

Natalie Abbas 04:50

Oh, geez. I mean, I even have people email me, emailing me and sending me Facebook messages that don't even know our article was in the Frederick news post yesterday. And it's just it's been overwhelming. So they're excited for this work. There's a lot to be done. And I think, you know, sometimes it begs the question, we've got to look at other things that are contributing to it. And and try to, you know, see what we can do there.

J

Jim Carpenter 05:17

There's another part of the good news and that this is not all that hard to have a good difficult conversation. It takes some skill and some some understanding of how to communicate. And that's what the the workshops go besides the full day workshop, we have some skills workshop, so that they're, they're designed for people that are not necessarily even divided, but it just teaches them skills of conversation for to have difficult conversations. So that's really good. So let's say I want to show up to a workshop. I show up. What happens, what do I do? What do we talk about?

N

Natalie Abbas 06:00

Well, I think it depends on what you've signed up for. There's different workshops Of course, you've got like a three hour workshop. You've got a half a day. You've got an all day. I'm doing the all day.

J

Jim Carpenter 06:11

All day, the flagship.

N

Natalie Abbas 06:13

Yeah, the flagship. So Jim, you've kind of been part of that.

J

Jim Carpenter 06:17

Yeah, I've attended my first one up in Pennsylvania live one and then I've seen the videos of others. I don't want to blow Blow blow description. There's actually four exercises or Yeah, let's do this. Let's do the exercises. Okay. Okay. So the first one is called the stereotypes exercise. So and they began by separating the two Okay, so you have equal numbers seven to nine Republicans, seven are conservatives and seven and nine progressives. Okay, so you began in the same room but then you separating into different rooms. And you challenge you ask them to list the stereotypes that they're called, you know, that names or whatever. And then pick the top four. And then and then describe what the true picture is, you know, behind this stereotype. So what they really believe that's being missed and so forth. And also what the nugget of truth is. They said I need stereotype there's generally some, some example that you don't like, and that that that you get labeled by okay. So that's a new come out of that and both come back and then they share those observations. In the when they're in the separate rooms, they find out that they really, there's really more of a variety of opinions on each of the issues they go through. And and that some some cases they've they find that they don't really know much That's kind of what they observe among themselves and when they come back and then they share those experience this, this two sides are already beginning to feel more safe in a conversation. And then the second exercise is called the fishbowl exercise. And it again separates the two, one in the center of the circle, and then the other surrounding them as observers. And they're asked, the ones in the center are asked two questions and I don't remember exactly the questions but and the outside the opposing circle just observes. And then there are two other that takes up the morning and then afternoon, there's some more exercises that tend to tend to emphasize certain skills. Okay, yeah. Natalie, when we when we talk about politics, Much of the worst of it of these discussions happens online or in the Frederick news post comments section. How important is that face to face element of making political discourse better?

N

Natalie Abbas 09:15

Well, I think, you know, everybody has to come in with the opportunity that things are going to be better and kind of put your listening skills on before you get there and realize that transformation is possible. And if everybody's working together, I would think and hope that people walking into are not coming to arm the group but disarm the conversations and really learn about Okay, what am I going to learn today that's going to help me talk to my sister, help me talk to my dad helped me talk to my you know, my, my neighbor, you know, and help us to find common ground. Where we can work together, and hey, we both value safety in school, let's be able to talk about just safety for our children, you know, something, you know, you've really got to start kind of pulling back the onion and dealing with the core values of one another.



Jim Carpenter 10:18

I want to get into that I want to get to the good stuff. So let's do it. I'm going to read off a statement, and it's going to be about the most polarizing issues happening in society. And I want you guys, one, I'll start with one person, and then the other person can kind of rebuttal, but just give us your thoughts and they can be as nuanced or as black and white as possible. Okay,



Natalie Abbas 10:39

that sounds great. But having said that, I want to take a step back and say, you know, you can't really do anything unless the media is all going to follow along. Oh, I agree and really help out. Because if you look at the media, are they helping or hurting? Are they contributing or not? Right? And sometimes we just need to learn to turn the channel. Until, you know, the rhetoric is a little bit less. In addition to that, I think there's part of the fairness doctrine that could be reenacted since it's been out of the, you know, Federal Register since 2011. So I think that would contribute to I'm really sad, I deleted my question about trust of mass media.



Jim Carpenter 11:19

I've a slightly different view on the media. I think once you learn how to listen and understand another person, and see that person's universe up close what the values they have, why is that this issue matters to them. And really understand it that doesn't change my view of the universe of the world. But at least I understand that now we can talk and address both values at the same time and a lot of times they're not conflicting, right. Sometimes they are sometimes you have to make a decision of which value to to sacrifice, you know, or to compromise. Alright, I think compromise is something no one's willing to do today. So the first statement, Frederick County Sheriff's Office should participate in the 287 g program, which allows the sheriff's office to inquire about immigration status of someone who was detained for committing a crime. I'll start with Natalie.



Natalie Abbas 12:18

So, I mean, that's a that's a huge issue right now. And I'm going to respect he knows how to do his job. He knows what he's faced with. I'm not you know, I'm able to sleep at night because he does his job. So I'm not here to say, Okay, what you're doing is wrong or right. I think we need to find out the facts, find out what he is doing, and where the conversation Okay, if I tweak this, will you be happy, you know, red or blue? And if I don't tweak that, is

it going to be so upsetting that you're not going to be able to live with it? So what can we put on the ballot box next year? Or maybe enact a law or create some policy, how am I going to be happy and you're going to be happy? What can we do to make that happen? I'm not necessarily here to change your mind. I'm just here to find out which core values are so that we can work together to make sure we we both have those covered. Jim.

J

Jim Carpenter 13:22

Okay, so there's two aspects to this. One is the general immigration issue, which I really feel there's more overlap of of consensus of how you know how this thing should be handled. If we sit down to the table. I've talked to a lot of Republicans and we both came to that conclusion. But as far as the 27 G. contract, realize what it is, it's a contract between a federal agency whose task is immigration with a local sheriff whose task is law enforcement. But look at what the effects of this contract is doing. It's creating a fear in a sizable portion of the Frederick Community. And these, the this community then is afraid, essentially afraid of the law enforcement. They don't report the incidents because of themselves, their friends, you know what? It just balloons out of control. So we have a community which we don't know what's happening with respect to crime. It could affect us an invitation to all sorts of criminal elements, including spousal abuse and gangs and, you know, you name it. Why would you create a contract between a federal agency and a local sheriff with two different missions that creates this environment and men's the of our community. I could give an example of a thought process. I'm sure people will find holes in this. But suppose the IRS made a contract with the sheriff's department. You know, so the process was someone was arrested for anything. So they process them through the database and they find out, you know, if they wanted for any taxes or whatever. That's a thought process. Just think about it. Great question too. Okay. So never did you want me to respond. I don't go ahead. You don't respond if you like. Um, I.

A

Allen Etzler 15:45

I think possibly, if I were the sheriff, my argument would be there is a section of this immigrant community that he feels is not keeping the community safe. And so that makes this contract that makes this little bit of fear justifiable. That would be his argument. I would think I don't wanna speak for him, just playing that that seat.

J

Jim Carpenter 16:13

So he's making a judgment about the community about which are to be treated like criminals, essentially, our success suspected, right, with the basis of them already alleging that they committed a crime. Oh, so this is in the context of an arrest. Right. Right. Right.

- A Allen Etzler 16:37
So they've already been arrested. He's deciding to engage in this process with ice
- J Jim Carpenter 16:43
and Okay, so that happens. Yeah. So what do you do? I don't know. I'm, I'm not sure. So I'm not arguing that he's actually doing anything wrong, that the Latino community thinks that they're being pulled over more Because of ice, and that's one argument. I don't know that the data on that, right, but I know that you can't blame that totally on ice because that's happening and sheriff's departments all over the nation that blacks and Latinos are being discriminated against. So you can't really blame it on to 87 GF heard that argument by white liberals. And see, the crux of the matter goes back to this contract and what it's CREATING THE EFFECT it's having on our community.
- A Allen Etzler 17:33
Right. Question two. Okay.
- J Jim Carpenter 17:37
I'll ask Jim, you can start and then now the government should be responsible for health care. You know, I debated this in the 11th grade in 1964, and makes my question sound soft, more resolved that the federal government should provide essential health care for all citizens at public expense. That was the topic Yeah, you're asking my personal your personal personal view. Okay, so my personal I tend to be a gradualist. So I worked for 30 years collecting economic data, statistics and I got brother at a high level of metadata and, you know, modeling and so forth, but my mind was going in two directions. So repeat the question.
- A Allen Etzler 18:34
Government should be responsible for health right financially responsible for healthcare.
- J Jim Carpenter 18:38
Okay, so I'm a gradualist. I think we have a program that works fairly well, you know, Medicaid, Medicare or whatever. My wife is more of an expert on that. And that should be expanded. And I think I tend to look at healthcare as more of a of a right and necessity nowadays. What I'm really afraid of shocking the system with elaborate changes in the

system. Natalie, that's my opinion.

N

Natalie Abbas 19:15

So my personal view after being a life and health agent for many years, I see the need for a lot of healthcare out there. We do have Medicare and Medicaid. It's picking up a lot of the slack. There's a lot of companies out there that can certainly help. I believe that you could champion a lot of the bigger companies like Amazon, and let's say we have a mom that's, you know, taking care of four children at home. She's going to be on Medicaid or medical Medicare. And she's going to be able to take care of her children. They're going to be able to have dental and health care, and maybe some vision after you know, a few years and so I think everything is coming. If they are not covered, you know, let's find a system that works that is like an earning type of environment rather than just, you know, I think it's, it should be not only a privilege but a right to have free health care as long as it's earned and reciprocated, you know, maybe you can contribute to the pool after you find a job and you know, contribution is great, but I can't see just providing it out of everybody else's pocket to pay for the people that don't want to work.

J

Jim Carpenter 20:37

Right. Okay. Yeah, so this is just, this is not an illustration of better angels. Really. This is just the how're we differ on, on on issues?

A

Allen Etzler 20:50

I just wanted to illustrate a good way to talk about

J

Jim Carpenter 20:52

Yeah, right. Okay. Right. So, she, I told her what I thought she told me what she thought and I have a lot of questions in my head that really need a follow up so that I really understand where she's coming from. Let's dig

A

Allen Etzler 21:06

in on health care.

J

Jim Carpenter 21:07

Oh boy, that's my least favorite topic.



Allen Etzler 21:10

All right, well, what so what questions did you want to follow?



Jim Carpenter 21:15

Oh, boy, I'm not sure where to start. I basically have a repeat that argument and then asked questions that were I don't understand what, what what what's the what first of all? I'm not sure what, what is your picture of a good health care system.



Natalie Abbas 21:41

So I would say with all the diverse characters that we have in our community, I would expect that someone can go to mission of mercy they can go to health care facility they can go to let's say they want natural natural Pathak Someone that needs CB oil because they have aches or joint pain or something out I think that it has to be a tapping into the resources that are Eastern Western and very a variety of resources that they could utilize. So that, you know, everybody's not going to need what I need or the way I want it. I would rather have my doctor tell me you know, don't go on a diet don't eat this stuff, but you need to lose weight and you need to exercise Okay, so don't take these pills but go exercise.



Jim Carpenter 22:42

So I'm beginning to understand that particular worldview at least I think I am. So you want free choice of different treatments and doctors and so far that's an important value to you.



Natalie Abbas 22:56

Yes. Yeah.



Jim Carpenter 22:58

Okay. And, okay, so there's I, I would agree that I would I value that too, but I don't place that as a higher above reducing certain, or I don't place that above and improving the health of our of our country. You know, I mean, I mean the, the, the access to the resources the equal access to to the services, okay. Yeah. So you're, you're talking about free choice of a number of different options of products and services. And I'm talking about availability. My value is availability to people are different strata just will access.

- N** Natalie Abbas 23:57
Yeah, you're talking about x.
- J** Jim Carpenter 23:58
Yeah. And I'm I'm more concerned about the access to the bottom economic level because obviously,
- N** Natalie Abbas 24:10
I think that's important. I think that's like a good place to start. But look at the veterans, they need it too. So having access to the various modalities of treatment is important. Because I think oh, yeah, Graham pies and going to need the same thing as the teenager.
- J** Jim Carpenter 24:27
Right? So don't have to be I agree with you that I for that free choice of, of doctors and services and who's
- N** Natalie Abbas 24:35
going to pay for
- J** Jim Carpenter 24:36
it. Okay, so that's another issue. So. So that's a separate issue. So we have these two values you like this free choice and I like availability to, quote, more or less equal, not absolute availability, because they're always going to be tough people at the top of the hierarchy can afford equitable, equitable, not not equal, but equity. Remember equitable, sort of, you know, I didn't saying there always be people at the top of the riches hierarchy that will be able to afford all the health care they'd want maybe, you know, preserve their life for 200 years and so forth. But there should be a certain standard that is available to all
- N** Natalie Abbas 25:19
agree with that. Okay. That's

A Allen Etzler 25:21
how it's done, I think,

J Jim Carpenter 25:24
Oh, no. She said, How do you pay for it? That's how do I pay for it? How do we pay for it? Yeah, that's that's a good question as a 30 years of the Bureau of Labor, statistics, tracking data, you know, prices and so forth. I am very sensitive to those issues of how you pay for it and our tax increases justifiable expense. In my view, it depends on how you do it. The devils in the details, I think if you do a wise tax and a wife system would actually Not only increase the level of health in the US, but would generate more jobs for everyone and reduce the cost of individual procedures across the board.

N Natalie Abbas 26:17
Well, that's one way to do it. I don't know, I think I'd taxed the cigarettes and the things that are bad for you, so that we're pulling the resources from what's contributing to the lack of health throughout our nation. Okay.

A Allen Etzler 26:35
I want to do the exercise briefly where we talked about stereotypes. Oh, and let's have that conversation. There's there are a lot of stereotypes that are going around now for both sides of the political aisle. So let's just pick one on each side. And I'll let you guys pick it and then we can kind of go from there how you guys would do it at better angels. Is that cool? Sure. All right. Natalie, what is the stereotype you feel is more Commonly labeled on conservatives. And how do you feel about that? And then Jim, you're going to be asked the same question. Okay.

N Natalie Abbas 27:09
Maybe that we're weak and we don't stand up for ourselves and we don't know how to fight. And perhaps I'm not on the other side. So I don't always, you know, but

J Jim Carpenter 27:24
course. Now see, that's why we're not in the same room at this point. Because I would jump in my natural instinct would be to jump in and jump in. Well, no, but that's not the point. Oh, the point is,

N Natalie Abbas 27:40
you're talking today. Yeah.

J Jim Carpenter 27:40
Oh, if I were Republican,

N Natalie Abbas 27:42
so if you were Republican, what would you say?

J Jim Carpenter 27:47
Oh, the stereotypes knuckle dragger, knuckle draggers. That's the last one I heard today. P
I don't think so. Well, you know, they're there. I'd never heard that. Okay, stereotypes,
they're on it educated. They don't believe in science. You know, they're, they believe in
creationism that dinosaurs were created 6000 years ago or 7000 years ago. That sort of
thing. knuckle draggers, okay. That's a stereotype. Okay, right. Now, so if I were to
Republic and I would list that, OK. And then so what's the real and the next thing is what's
the real story behind this? What what's the well I think we're gonna say that say the
knuckle dragger stereotype.

N Natalie Abbas 28:38
So if we Okay, so we're being called the knuckle dragger stereotype. What's the truth in
that nugget?

J Jim Carpenter 28:44
No, no, what's the real story?

N Natalie Abbas 28:47
So what's the real story? Yeah.

J Jim Carpenter 28:49
How do you look at yourself as far as science and

N Natalie Abbas 28:52
I believe we believe in science. I believe we believe that nature is very important. We want the ocean just as clean today. Tomorrow, every day, we're going to have our kids in the ocean. So we believe in, you know, natural resources, being able to go hunting, being able to utilize our resources. And I mean, I do love science. I'm a paralegal by trade. So I do love the process. I do believe in creation. I think we're not that we're all religious, but I think we have the values of being able to understand the other side and realize that we come at it from maybe a more Christian side of pinion. Let's say you

J Jim Carpenter 29:45
start by still a Republican.

N Natalie Abbas 29:48
Yes, you're still Republican. Uh,

J Jim Carpenter 29:52
well, we're going to move on to liberals and don't worry, okay, boy, Okay, so notice that as a Democrat, I could have jumped in on all those statements. But as a Republican, I could either agree or disagree and and it would be safe. That's the point. You're putting him in a safe environment with their own and they're talking about stereotypes. And in this case, you know, she, she's, she's actually believes in science and, you know, the others would say, agree or disagree, and they would come to a conclusion, well, you know, we believe in science and education and so forth. So, so as a Republican, I would cite all of the people I know that are highly education and republicans and so forth. And it just doesn't seem in my experience, that it's, it's true, you know, I, I don't have the data. So all I can speak is from my experience, the republicans i know are not knuckle draggers.

A Allen Etzler 30:55
Let's go to liberal now, Jim, what are some of the stereotypes You're here and then I want to hear from from Natalie as well. And then we'll talk about those two, Sarah.

J Jim Carpenter 31:03
Okay. snowflakes I guess. That's a big one. All right. Well, yeah, we're that it's not so popular anymore. I remember when Tea Party was going strong. We were labeled as snow

snowflakes where we're out in La La Land, you know, with sort of with visions of spending money on government, you know? Yeah, no.

N

Natalie Abbas 31:34

Well, they like to have a build is your and, you know, spending money is something they loved. I like to conserve money. I like little government. He likes big battery speaking as a Democrat. I'm speaking as a Democrat.

J

Jim Carpenter 31:52

Let's see, we're in this first exercise. So you have to be a Democrat. You got to be a democrat

N

Natalie Abbas 31:59

boy, That's a tough so say for ci a Democrat. Well, we like to, you know, not make a point but sometimes talk to make a point. We basically talked to create havoc. We are inflamed by any rhetoric we here. And we're just we're just going to go off on our own agenda and not really care about what anybody else wants.

A

Allen Etzler 32:32

Let's go with inflamed by any rhetoric because that's similar to snowflake. Yeah, so let's talk about that one. Yeah. Okay. Do you Is that something that you hear and what is what's the real story there? Oh.

J

Jim Carpenter 32:44

Okay, so how inflamed or radical are we? Oh, yeah, well, what is it? The Democratic people cover a wide range. range. And so there are a lot of people that are inflammatory. I talked to some of my democratic, ultra liberal, radical friends and watch them get inflamed, you know. So there's a nugget of truth behind that. So what's the real story? I think the real story is there's a broad spectrum. And you can pick out examples on any part of the spread spectrum.

N

Natalie Abbas 33:32

I think for me, it's it's not just the rhetoric, but kind of how they characterize things. Oh, I've seen you trolling my page. I see you, you know, it's just, you're in my restaurant, you need

to get out of my throat. It's it's inflaming and almost combative. Yeah. Okay. And so the combativeness is like that knee jerk reaction. And so I think a lot of times You know, it just takes our breath away. And people don't know how to deal with that.

J Jim Carpenter 34:10

Well, the real story is that that's not necessarily a democratic trait. You hear that on both sides that that there is this broad spectrum and

N Natalie Abbas 34:24

well it does. Okay. So the characterization of kind of my actions or reactions are inflamed to the point where then I get upset and do my knee jerk reaction. So that's where it starts to escalate. So how do we disarm that with better angels?

J Jim Carpenter 34:46

So we're that let's go back to the to the stereotyping. Okay, so you're so the stereotype is flame thrower. You know, you you're out there protesting throwing rocks and things like that that's a stereotype that we're agreeing on. Okay. I come from a I'm a Quaker and there are the main thing is peace. And I don't see those people. I think Democrats are fundamentally that. So the true story is that Democrats are fundamentally a peace loving people. And I think that their issues on from the local level to the global level or in cooperation and, and equal opportunity.

A Allen Etzler 35:44

Great. So that wasn't so bad. I have one last question. Thanksgivings coming up. I've got this crazy uncle. He just wants to talk politics every time we sit down for this Thanksgiving. This is just a hypothetical. This for me Listen, you as a crazy uncle. Can he bring it when he brings it up at Thanksgiving? any political discourse? What do we do? How should we handle it? What is the one tip you would give people to having these conversations?

N Natalie Abbas 36:15

Well, I think I would focus on kind of disarming it. And, oh, we're not going to talk about politics today. Let's all enjoy each other's company because we've come from afar. We don't get together very often. And let's just, you know, for anybody that wants to talk politics, there's the jar and you have to pay \$5 for every minute that you talk politics. good tip,

- J** Jim Carpenter 36:41
get rich. Okay, so how would I treat this uncle, which I don't have one word listen. Listen to comprehend his worldview. What? Why does this issue matter to him? What's at stake for him personally? What's his values? Just listen for his understanding so that you can get a clear view of his world, whether you agree with it or not. And then once you're able to state that, in his terms, that he will agree that that is his world. He's then willing to listen to me to describe my world. Okay? It's that simple. Very beautiful. Oh, thank you. I've been working on this for years.
- A** Allen Etzler 37:46
I don't even want to say anything because it just won't measure up. So we're just gonna go ahead and throw it back. Back to Heather. All right. Thank you guys so much for coming on the show. Thank you.
- N** Natalie Abbas 37:55
Okay, we're having our event December 7 at the Trinity Church.
- A** Allen Etzler 38:00
Seventh at Trinity, that was my church for a time. Thank you guys.
- H** Heather Mongilio 38:05
Food reporter Katrina Pereira now joins us in the studio to talk about her latest food review. All right, Katrina. So where did you go to eat this week?
- K** Katryna Parrera 38:13
So this week, I went to Cinco de Mayo, which is a Mexican restaurant. They have locations in Middletown and Urbana.
- H** Heather Mongilio 38:21
All right, and your first thoughts
- K** Katryna Parrera 38:24

um, my first thoughts when I walked in,

H

Heather Mongilio 38:27

or my first thought was in the food, I guess when you walked in, and then we'll get to the food.

38:33

Okay, um, the decor of the restaurant is pretty typical of most Mexican restaurants, you know, it's bright, it's has a lot of color in there. There are in the middle, I'm sorry. In their banner location, there's a picture of Frida Kahlo on the wall. You know, looks like kind of your typical Mexican place.

H

Heather Mongilio 38:51

All right, so your predecessor came masters had a kind of thing against a lot of Cantina, the Mexican food that was served here in Frederick So, maybe not on the cape mastery scale. But in terms of the amount of restaurants that we have here in Frederick that do serve Mexican food. Where does this one fall?

39:11

I would say it falls pretty low on the list to be honest. I tried a bunch of their dishes and was pretty upset across the board.

H

Heather Mongilio 39:22

All right, so I haven't seen you give a bad review yet. Yes. It's kind of surprising. So what about it made it not so great. Um,

39:31

so my whole thing with Mexican food is that it's very, very common in the United States, right. I mean, it's one of the most common cuisines that you can find. You can go to the middle of nowhere in this country and probably find some sort of Mexican food. You know, even restaurants that aren't Mexican restaurants serve tacos, they serve, burritos, all of that. So because of that, there is a standard I feel that has to be met. And if you're a

Mexican restaurant that are Your website boasts we're going to give you home cooked traditional Mexican food, then yeah, there's a level of quality that I expect when I go to eat there. And they really, really did not hit the mark.

H

Heather Mongilio 40:15

So what about it just didn't hit that mark. So,



40:19

okay, for example, my biggest disappointment was with the carne asada that I had. carne asada literally translates into grilled meat, and it's one of the most traditional Mexican dishes. It's typically like a flank steak that's cooked medium, I would say, you know, I mean, some people prefer their steaks, who's a little bit more well done, but when I've had it, it's traditionally been cooked medium. And the thing is, is that the flavor of the meat comes from an open flame grill, and it's supposed to be this like really juicy grilled steak that you're served with kind of rice and beans on the side. My car Is that I was served at Cinco de Mayo was probably the thinnest steak I've ever had in my life. And it was clearly not grilled. It kind of looked like it had been pan fried with a little bit of oil, and it was just really, really lacking in flavor. The other thing that kind of confused me it was that it was served with rice and beans, but then also with pico de Gaia lettuce, sour cream, cheese and tortillas. And I was a little confused as to why I was getting that because you don't eat it as a fajita you eat it as a steak with your sides. So that really threw me off and it was just kind of it was just really disappointed. It was totally well done. It was rubbery, it was tough. And I was served two steaks and I couldn't even touch the second one. That's how bad it was.

H

Heather Mongilio 41:48

Alright, so a little bit known secret. I also went on one of these reviews with you and on the way we were kind of talking about how quickly this restaurant had expanded from the first location and right Middletown to Urbana. So are you kind of surprised that they were able to expand with the way the food is?



42:05

Um, I know, just because I think restaurant expansion. I mean, they already have a lot of locations regionally. They have one in Martinsburg. They have one in Colombia. So I don't think it's a matter of issues with expansion. I mean, both locations where they opened up

in Middleton in Urbana are new. They're coming into locations that are under development and are coming up like the Urbana spot. It's brand I mean, it's it's brand new, there are a bunch of whole new shops, it's come up probably within the last year to couple years, so it's not surprising that they were able to find a spot to come into, and I just don't think that the community has had enough time to try it out yet. And kind of realize, you know,



Heather Mongilio 42:57

pilot letter going somewhere else, right. So Between the two locations, was the food any better at the Urbana location versus the Middletown location?



Katryna Parrera 43:05

No.



Heather Mongilio 43:06

Okay, so it wasn't. So it's well known between the companies, not just necessarily but behind that,



43:11

and you know, I have heard from people who have gone to like the Martin's work location that they like it. So, you know, maybe other locations are better maybe, because it's both locations here are fairly new that they're still kind of working out their kinks. But it was kind of shocking to go to both and have the same bad quality of food.



Heather Mongilio 43:31

I think one of the things I was kind of surprised by with having its I had chicken tacos, which is kind of standard meal you can get, it just seemed like there was a lack of seasoning, which is kind of surprising, especially for a place that is supposed to serve home. cooked. Yeah, Mexican food that's seasonings. pretty important.



43:48

Yeah, I mean, I think when you think of Mexican food, you think of like biting into a taco and just having that burst of flavor in your mouth and that was not present in any of the

dishes. I



Heather Mongilio 44:00

will say if you're looking for a meal with a lot of food, this is a restaurant for it though, because I believe we've both commented on just about how much food they give you.



44:09

Absolutely. I mean, when we went I have the chicken to put label which they said was their most popular. And it was huge. I mean, I could not even finish it and your tacos were filled to the brim with chicken. But again, you're it's quantity versus quality here right. So you know,



Heather Mongilio 44:29

and what about Margarita because that is another staple? At least are people looking on it Friday night? Did they have good margaritas? Yeah, so the margaritas are as big as your head.



44:41

quite large. I mean, definitely one glasses enough for two people. I had just a classic line Margarita and it was fine. You know, nothing incredible, but just kind of your standard Margarita. The thing that did surprise me though, was that I had to ask the waitress if the class if like a classic line Margarita was even available because it wasn't listed on their menu, which I thought was really odd and they had all these other variations of Margarita is they have like a margarita with a Corona bottle in it. They had a margarita with a splash of Malibu rum. They had like a blue Margaret, like every single variation of a margarita you could possibly think of is listed on that menu. Except the classic on the rocks, my Margarita, which, okay, everybody knows that. But I think it was kind of lazy to not put it on the menu.



Heather Mongilio 45:33

Yeah, and especially because you might not think about it like you always ask. So and I think we had so we had chip since a clock as well. And those were pretty good. This also is pretty good. So maybe this is a place that you go with some of your friends late at night to get a margarita.



45:47

Yeah, after trying it. I definitely came to the conclusion that this is more of a happy hour appetizer type place because both appetizers I tried were actually quite good. And I will say the the best thing actually turned out to be the chips and salsa that they give you on the table. So if you're in the mood for drinks and like a quick bite, maybe, maybe



Heather Mongilio 46:12

this is that otherwise you probably can find one of the other many locations. That's restaurants that serve good Mexican food here now. Absolutely. All right, perfect. Well, unfortunately, that you had a bad review, but it's good to let people know. And maybe it will get better if,



Katryna Parrera 46:30

right. I mean, you know, in a year maybe. That's right.



Heather Mongilio 46:35

All right. Well, Katrina, thank you so much for coming. Thank you. Frederick. uncut is produced by me Heather Mongilio and edited by Graham Cullen. We'll see you next week.