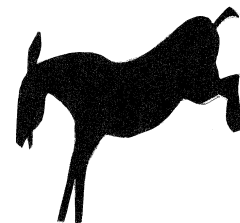


The *Benzie Kicker*

The Benzie County Democratic Newsletter



The Benzie County Democratic Party is a dynamic part of the community working inclusively and creatively for the betterment of all

Spring - 2006

Volume 10 Issue 2

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An Interview with Kimon Kotos Candidate for Congress 2nd District

By Jerry Solanics

I interviewed candidate Kimon Kotos (that's Greek) at the A&W in Manistee. Fast food and lots of information to chew on. Kimon is well informed on nearly every topic we touched on. Here is some of what we talked about. [The complete interview can be found at BenzieDemocrats.com.](http://BenzieDemocrats.com)

Kicker: Is your campaign going to differ from '04?

Kotos: I plan on being more assertive—especially toward Hoekstra's (U.S. Rep Peter Hoekstra) record. He has failed to promote investment in the area. My priority will be making decisions on the economy and West Michigan's future. We need to build coalitions of labor and the community. To work on health care and education. My campaign will involve both the young and the elderly working together. It will be locally oriented.

Kicker: What do you think areas such as Benzie County need the most? How would you help?

Kotos: Benzie needs support for small business investment, health care and Medicare supports. Veteran's services should be locally available. Let's avoid privatizing so that funds stay in the community. Presently \$19 million is spent on healthcare in Benzie County.

Kicker: How can you get all the counties in the district to work together?

Kotos: Each county needs to be organized. Benzie's organization is favorably viewed. Have dialogues with districts about state level initiatives, such as the minimum wage effort. We also need to find unity in what happens at the federal level and how it affects districts locally.

Kicker: What will your priorities be as a congressman?

Kotos: Adequate funding for healthcare and education. Balancing the budget. Protecting civil liberties. I would like to serve on either an education, agriculture or a small business committee. I want spending to shift to inside the U.S. Let's take care of ourselves first.

Kicker: Where do you feel Hoekstra has not served the area well?

Kotos: He's no friend of labor. He admits No Child Left Behind is not fully funded enough to succeed. He would rather pursue testing rather than supporting school systems' needs for teacher support and materials. He is now pushing the Republican agenda rather than serving local needs. Environmentally, he favors doing away with the present Endangered Species Act. I'm against privatizing Social Security; he is for it. Hoekstra has become an inside player for the Republican agenda. His support for the war undermines our civil liberties. He is one of those who received money from Abramoff, connected to the proposed Gunn Lake Casino south of Grand Rapids.

Kicker: How do your views on the environment differ from Hoekstra's?

Kotos: The environment has always been a priority for me. I'm opposed to the large controlled animal feeding agri-businesses. They put the small farmer out of business. The Water Legacy Act fails to address water as a marketable commodity. We need to fight companies like Monsanto, which genetically alter seeds so that the plant will be sterile and farmers will need to purchase more seeds from the corporation for next year's crops. We need to promote renewable energy and enact laws that restrict products that endanger the environment.

News from the Chair

Time For Action!!

By Ray Nichols



The election cycle for 2006 is approaching quickly, and there is a lot of work to be done by Benzie Democrats to assure success at the county, state and national level.

It is important for every Democrat in Benzie County to find a way to make a difference in this election year and help change the direction of this country at every level of government. We need to elect Democrats to office to help provide a better check and balance system of government.

The Benzie Democratic Party has a lot of ways that you can be of help this election year. You can get out and attend the fundraising events, the Honoree Dinner on May 6, 2006 and the Chicken Bar-B-Que which will be held on July 1st. We also will be raising money by having house parties. If you would like to host a house party for your friends to raise money for the local party, please let me know. All of these events will help us raise money to support our candidates and help to cover the cost of running a campaign in November, 2006.

The local party also needs your help during the election time to answer phones, make phone calls, put signs on your lawn, buy bumper stickers and help people get to the polls. These are just some of the things you can do to help us this year.

Please take the time and think about the future you want for our county, state and nation. If you want to help or have some good ideas call me or members of the Executive Committee listed on the front page of this newsletter.

We need items and services for our Silent Auction at the Honoree Dinner. The dinner is not a fundraiser, but the auction at it is and we need support from all of you to make it work. Please call the Chair of the Silent Auction Dewey Blocksma at 882-9039 if you have any items to donate or questions. See you at the upcoming fundraisers!

Honoree Dinner

Our biannual Honoree Dinner will be held on Saturday May 6th at the Sail Inn Restaurant, Benzonia.

Cash bar and silent auction will begin at 5:30 p.m. and dinner will be at 6:30 p.m., followed by the program.

With the theme "All That Glitters Is Not Gold" we proudly announce this year's honorees:

Will Wolfe who because of his love of trout fishing has accepted stewardship of our land as his life's passion.

Virginia Sorenson has been widely recognized for her work in conservation education, and was the first woman in Michigan to be honored as the State Conservationist of the year.

Virginia Griffith has devoted her life to raising her family and helping others through her church and organizations such as Benzie Area Christian Neighbors

We also will be honoring the senior class essay winners from Frankfort and Benzie Central High Schools, who are writing an essay on "Ask not what your community can do for you, but, what you can do for your community." The winners will be announced in a few weeks.

Reservations are required, those attending have an entrée choice of prime rib or whitefish. Tickets are \$35.00 or \$60.00 for a couple. Call Carroll at 325-6692 with names and entrée choice of e-mail at mcvolpe@centurytel.net or mail to: Carroll Volpe, P.O. Box 63, Honor, MI 49640. Reservation deadline is April 28th.

The Silent Auction will again be chaired by Dewey Blocksma and Sandy Hulst and we are seeking items and services for the auction. Please call Dewey at 882-9039 if you have any items or questions.

**Join the Granholm Team at
www.granholmforgov.com**

Visit ur new Web Site at:
www.benziedemocrats.com

Benzie Democrats Platform:

No Foolin': We Nailed It Down

On Saturday, April Fools Day, Benzie Dems gathered at the Benzonia Township Hall and approved our brand-new, official, from-the-grassroots-up Benzie County Democratic Party Platform.

Like a good platform should be, it is both broad and specific. The platform says Democrats are no fools; they want local governments around here to start working very closely together to improve our local, year-round economy and, at the same time, protect our environment. What it takes is political leadership that doesn't accept the status quo, reaches out to small businesses in creative and effective ways, and makes sure people who want to work can find the training, transportation, and other community services necessary for building a great workforce.

You really should check out the whole platform, which is actually a pretty quick read. It's at www.benziedemocrats.com, a site we hope you'll visit every week or so. A short breakdown follows. Watch for our workshop (to be announced) that will give a lot more information.

Community Investments:

- Financial accountability of government
- Professionalism and openness in law enforcement
- Partnership between government, business and residents

Economic Investments:

- Tourism
- Agriculture
- Arts
- Implementation of County master plan

Human Investments:

- Workforce training
- Targeted assistance
- Public transit
- Housing
- Health care

Visit our new Web Site at:
www.benziedemocrats.com

Michigan Needs A Raise

Michigan Gets a Raise!

Well, we could mourn the fact that Republican lawmakers, faced with the unnerving prospect of lots of new faces streaming to the polls in November to vote themselves a raise, succeeded in taking away a campaign issue and powerful voter motor from our fall campaign. Or, instead, we can be proud of forcing the GOP's hand after their years of indifference to the full-time working poor.

Yes, the Give Michigan a Raise drive is officially over; minimum-wage workers will get their first raise in years just a month before the election; and those very same workers—many of them living in Benzie County--will still have plenty of other good reasons to vote Democratic this fall.



Wanted

- **Visible location for Campaign Headquarters. Call Ray Nichols at 882-4790**
- ♦ **Precinct Delegates for Almira, Blaine, Colfax, Inland, & Homestead Townships and the City of Frankfort. Call Jerry Solanics at 882-5173 for information.**
- ♦ **Silent Auction Items for Honoree Dinner. Call Dewey at 882-9039**

Benzie Democrats' Core Values

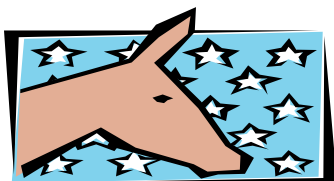
Integrity: *We believe that government, as well as the Benzie Democratic Party, must operate with transparency.*

Stewardship: *We are responsible for caring for and nurturing our human and natural resources.*

Tolerance: *We believe respecting differing points of view and the dignity of others are strengths.*

BENZIE COUNTY DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE
P O BOX 63
HONOR MI 49640

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BENZIE DEMS DATEBOOK

April 19, 6-9 p.m.: Candidate & Committee Training, Benzonia Twp. Hall, Pizza will be served

May 6, 9 a.m.: Regular Meeting, Benzonia Twp. Hall

May 6, 5:30 p.m.: **Honoree Dinner,*** Sail Inn, Benzonia

June 3, 9 a.m.: Regular Meeting, Benzonia Twp. Hall

July 1, noon: **Chicken Bar-B-Que,*** Maley Park, Honor

August 5, 9 a.m.: Regular Meeting, Benzonia Twp. Hall

August 8: Primary Election

August 26-27: State Convention—Detroit

August 26, 2 p.m.: Coho Parade, Honor. **Grand Opening of Campaign Office immediately following Parade**

September 2, 9 a.m.: Regular Meeting, Campaign Office

October 7, 9 a.m.: Regular Meeting, Campaign Office

November 4, 9 a.m.: Regular Meeting, Campaign Office

November 7: Election Day

November 11, 9 a.m.: Close Campaign Office

• *Designates fundraiser*

Everyone is welcome to attend meetings - to be on the agenda, please call Ray Nichols prior to the meeting .

Stop Complaining, Start Clicking!

Enclosed in this newsletter is a bumper sticker for **BenzieDemocrats.com** - please place it on your vehicle and drive around a lot (or park in a visible area) to help us get the word out about our new Web site.

If you cannot use the sticker, please share it with someone who can. Please visit our new site often to stay informed. Share your thoughts on the blog, meet your neighbors and visit the links to other sites.

We intend to keep the site changing with something new all the time. Many thanks to Patty and Dick Haan for the lovely slide show pictures of

The Benzie Kicker Newsletter Staff

Jim Dulzo - Jerry Solanics - Carroll Volpe
We have had quite a few good comments about our new format, we hope you like it; please let us know! Call Carroll at 325-6692 or e-mail her at mcvolpe@centurytel.net. If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter send a note.