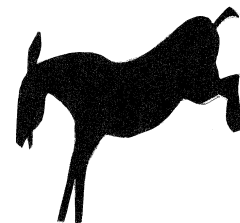


The *Benzie Kicker*

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

Winter—2007

Visit our Web site: www.BenzieDemocrats.com

Volume 11 Issue 1

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Election Celebration:

By: Jerry Solanics

On a snowy, sleety evening on November 10 a crowd of happy, happy Democrats met at Charlotte and Mary Robling's home to imbibe, eat, and socialize. The reason for all this was the incredibly wonderful Democratic gains made statewide in the November elections.

While there were a few disappointments (Dan Scripps' narrow defeat and Kathy Ralston's loss) overall excellent work locally by precinct delegates and other volunteers brought Benzie County into the Democratic column. Everyone was energized to celebrate the results of their hard work.

A group of eleven people were presented with a "special thanks" memento — a key chain in the shape of a donkey, covered with sequins in red, white, and blue. The recipients were Joyce Skinner, Virginia Griffith, Sue Pyne, Ray Nichols, Eric Pyne, Kari Tomashik, Bob Sauer, Kathy Ralston, Anne Damm, Patty Cantrell, and Jerry Solanics.

And then there was Carroll Volpe. Because of her hard work it was felt she deserved thanks that she could spend. A secret collection was taken up and she was to be presented with a check at the party. However, because of the stormy weather, she called to say she would be unable to drive to the party. To the rescue came Sue Brewer and Nancy Kasperzak who volunteered to pick her up and get her to the festivities.

After all the donkeys had been given out and Carroll hadn't been given one, I wondered what might have been going through her mind. Then Mary Robling came to the rescue and explained to the group and to Carroll how grateful we all were to her and handed her the check. Carroll was so overcome that she could hardly get out a "Thank You".

It was a terrific get together matched only by the excitement of getting up Mary's snow filled driveway and commencing a drive home in a foot of snow.

Thanks from Carroll!

I don't know where or how to begin to thank all of you for all the work you have done and your generosity for the money gift. Whether you made phone calls, door knocked, cleaned headquarters, put up signs, manned the office or whatever you have done, please know that it is appreciated and was successful!

News from the Chair



What an exciting election for the Democrats. According to the Detroit Free Press, we are a Blue County.

Thanks to all those who spent many hours working for a victory. On election day we had over 80 volunteers in the field working hard for our candidates.

The results:

In Washington, taking of the House and Senate, re-electing Senator Stabenow.

In Michigan the House of Representatives and the Governor.

In Benzie County, elected County Commissioners—Ann Damm in Benzonia, and Jeff Sandman in Gilmore/Frankfort.

The Democratic turnout in our county was over 60%. We are looking forward again to the next election of County and Township officials and the Presidential election in 2008.

Thanks again from all of the Executive Board and Officers for your support and hard work. Please join us at our Christmas Party to celebrate our victory.

Ray Nichols

Continued from next column

representative (Dan Scripps), up 39 percent; for Base Democratic Vote up 49 percent.

In other words, Mike says, inspired by a huge backlash against George Bush's incompetence, his rubberstamp Congress, obstructionist Republicans in Lansing, and—just as importantly as any of those—*our hard work rebuilding the Party here*, there has been a sea change in Benzie.

For a highly detailed breakdown of these great accomplishments, go to BenzieDemocrats.com. And, if you haven't already, start thinking "2008." A close look at the numbers reveals that we are, at the very least, within striking distance of taking two more county commissioner seats and sending a Democrat to the state house.

It's great so many of us got so involved this year. It's crucial we *stay* involved and coax a few of our reluctant friends to join the party, too! It's a great way to make new people, build on old friendships, and—yup!—even make things better.

Election Results:

Who's In Charge Here?

By: Jim Dulzo

They said it couldn't be done and, boy, were they wrong! Benzie Democrats moved mountains on Nov 7, taking two of the three county commissioner seats we contested, making an impressive showing in the third, and just missing in the state representative race. We also delivered strong winning margins for Governor Jennifer Granholm and U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow. Not bad for what's long been viewed as a Republican stronghold!

Benzie Dem Mike Madden says it's way more than "not bad," though. He says the results indicate that the Democratic Party is now the majority party in Benzie County. If you think he's crazy, read on:

First, he points out, the top two races on the 2006 ballot went decisively Democratic. Governor Granholm and Senator Stabenow each took nearly 54 percent of the vote.

Second, he observes, we won what's called the "Base Democratic Vote," which is measured by the vote for the WSU Board of Governors. It was a squeaker, but our candidates took 50.5 percent of that traditionally quite partisan ballot.

Third, our candidate for state representative, Dan Scripps, lost in Benzie to entrenched incumbent Representative David Palsrok by just 20 votes.

And fourth, most of our county's 13 municipalities are now strongly Democratic: The governor and senator carried 10 of them, while Mr. Scripps carried seven.

Perhaps even more enlightening is how well Benzie Dems did further down the ticket. Thanks to hard work building the local party, and energetic campaigns by all three of our county commissioner candidates, Anne Damm and Jeffery Sandman were victorious in County Districts 3 and 4, while, in District 5, Kathy Ralston lost to Commissioner Walterhouse—a Benzie institution—by just 130 votes. But even in Kathy's district, as well as in District 2, where Republican Commissioner Pitcher ran unopposed, the Base Democratic vote topped 50 percent and the governor and U.S. senator won comfortably.

Why? The answer should warm the cockles of even the most grizzled Benzie Dem hearts: Turnout was sky-high across the county (approaching presidential-year levels, a generally unheard of thing), and they came from Benzie Dems.

Some of this is easy to spot: The Democratic vote for governor was up 42 percent over 2002; for U.S. senator it was up 22 percent. But look what happened in some other races, compared to four years ago. For U.S. Representative (Kimon Kotos), Benzie Dems' vote was up a remarkable 51 percent for state



(Continued in column on left)

Benzie Bus Update

Since Benzie Dems were so instrumental last August in winning approval of a .5 mil transportation tax to fund a countywide bus system, we thought we'd let you know what is going on. Generally, the news is very good as a bunch of folks who've never done such a thing before rush to get service established as soon as possible. Here's what's happening:

The Benzie Transportation Authority, which directs Benzie Bus, is now formally committed to taking over curb-to-curb dial-a-ride service for seniors and handicappers—the service that the Benzie Council on Aging has been providing for the past few years, on January 1. Benzie Buss will expand that service to everyone, and start providing express service to Traverse City and Manistee, as soon as possible. But their first priority is to make sure that those who have depended on the bus see a seamless transition in service.

To that end, according to Ingemar Johansson, the guy who spearheaded the drive to build a countywide bus system and who now sits on the BTA board, the board has hired Sue Miller, a former county resident and director of transportation services for Traverse City Area Public Schools, as director.

Ingemar reports that everyone involved is scrambling to make the January 1 deadline, and that there's much still to be done. The board and Sue are busy leasing an operations center; hiring drivers and administrative assistants; receiving state-purchased buses, communications equipment, and other transit equipment; putting all sorts of policies into place; and installing a computer system. It's quite an overwhelming list.

So, don't look for universal or express service on January 2, but do look for a steady advancement toward those goals throughout the winter. Ingemar promises there will be citizen input sessions as soon as the seniors' and handicappers' service is squared away. We will definitely keep you posted.

Wanted

Yard Sale Items (no clothing)



Blue Tiger Democrats

You may have heard of Yellow Dog Dems and Blue Dog Dems, but what is a Blue TIGER Dem?

Mark Brewer, Chair of the Michigan Democratic Party and Vice-Chair of the Democratic National Committee announced that Michigan will become the first state in the nation to adopt the principles of the Blue Tiger Democrats organization and make it a permanent part of its state organizational structure.

Democratic leader such as Mark have noticed the alienation of many voters to the election process. He wants to reverse the trend of depending on the media and advertising as the main method of informing the public what Democrats stand for.

The Blue Tigers will be involved in local civic organizations and community projects to bring young, idealistic people into the party. Finance reform, greater accountability, and transparency are also Blue Tiger goals.

For more information on this movement within the party go to michigandems.com. Or directly to www.bluetigerdems.com to learn more about the principles of this newly formed group.

Yard Sale Plans:

Plans are underway for this year's Yard Sale that will be held Memorial Day weekend. So plan now to put aside your treasures. Chloe McGehee will again chair this fundraiser and can be contacted at 882-9446.

Benzie Democrats' Core Values

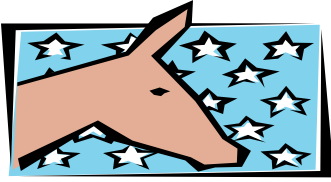
Integrity: *We believe that government, as well as the Benzie Democratic Party, must operate with transparency.*

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
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BENZIE DEMS DATEBOOK

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

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

February 24th : State Convention, Detroit, Cobo Hall

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

Easter April 8th

April 14, 9 a.m.: Regular Meeting, Benzonia Twp. Hall

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

***May 25, 26, 27th—Yard Sale Fundraiser**

June 2, 9 a.m.: Regular Meeting, Benzonia Twp Hall

***June 30, Noon—? Chicken Bar-B-Que, Maley Park**

August 4, 9 a.m.: Regular Meeting, Benzonia Twp Hall

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

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

Note:

All Meetings are on the 1st Saturday, except for April because of Easter, No meetings in July, September, and December

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

Many Thanks for Spa Day

Thank you notes to those who planned this year's Women's Spa Day at the Best Western have all been very complimentary, according to Mary Robling. The theme for the all day program was "Caring for Ourselves as We Care for Others. Over fifty women took part in listening to speakers, watching food and cosmetic demonstrations and getting physical with water aerobics and yoga.

Jan Duremo-Lundy was the keynote speaker and spoke on self-healing. Participants could chose to listen to any one of three speakers or activities per hour. Be sure to look for this event next fall as its success this year insures that next year it will be available again. Many thanks to the committee that did all the organizing: Diane Wilbur, Mary Robling, Luanne Seymour, Rosalie Pelch, Phyllis Crowell, and Chloe McGehee.

A wonderful healthy lunch of soup, salad and breads was served and enjoyed by all that attended.

The Benzie Kicker Newsletter Staff

Jim Dulzo - Jerry Solanics - Carroll Volpe

Please let us know what you think! Send us your comments and suggestions! 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.