

The Benzie Kicker

Newsletter of the Benzie County Democratic Party



Volume 13, No. 2
Spring 2009

Benzie County Democrats: working inclusively and creatively for the betterment all

Thanks Carroll!

Carroll Volpe Honored

Carroll Volpe of Honor was recognized April 25 for her 39 years of service to the Michigan Democratic Party, Benzie Democrats, and her community. She was chosen as the precinct worker honoree from the 2nd Congressional District and received the award at the state Democratic Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner in Detroit. The Benzie Dems Executive Board nominated her for the award, and chair Kathy Ralston accompanied her to the dinner.

“For 39 years, she has served ceaselessly, lending her wisdom and experience to untold candidates, volunteers, and activists,” her nomination letter said. “Those of us who have been touched by her guidance and mentorship will be forever grateful.”

Volpe joined the Michigan Democratic Party and the Benzie County Democrats in 1970. She became secretary of the Benzie Dems in the same year and remained in that position until 2008. For eight years she served as the chair of both the 1st and 9th Congressional district committees. For 12 years, she was a delegate to the Michigan Democratic State Central Committee and was a National Convention Delegate in 1984.

Locally, Volpe has continuously been a leader, organizer, and anchor for the Benzie County Democrats. For 39 years she served as campaign office manager, county campaign coordinator, and secretary. She has been both chair and team member for innumerable individual campaign committees.

“It is in large part due to her steadfast dedication to the Democratic cause that Benzie County is now a swing county after 100 years as a Republican stronghold,” her nomination said.

Carroll is also a worker for the union cause. Notably, she co-founded the United Labor Food Bank in 1990. She then served as secretary and treasurer for the food bank for 12 years. She was also secretary and treasurer for the Bakery Confection and Tobacco Local 81 from 1973-1998. She is a general member of the AFL/CIO to the present day and served as a general board member for that organization from 1990-2000. From 1975-2000 she served as secretary and treasurer for Traverse Bay Central Labor Council.

For many years, Carroll has unselfishly contributed her skills and experience to the community through public service in local government. For Benzie County, she has served on the Jury Board from 1982 to the present. For a decade, she was clerk for her home village of Honor, where she has been a lifelong resident.

Volpe continues to serve on the Benzie Dems executive board and currently heads the membership committee.



At the Jefferson-Jackson Day event, Chief Justice Marilyn Kelly of the Michigan Supreme Court visited with Carroll Volpe, the 2nd Congressional District honoree.

Yard sale coming up!

A huge family yard sale to benefit the Benzie Dems will be held at Jim Sheets' pole barn, Friday and Saturday, **May 22 and 23, from 9 am to 4 pm and on Sunday, May 24, from 10 am to 2 pm.**

The Sheets' barn is on Love Road, 1.2 miles east of the Benzonia Shop and Save. That is one-quarter mile from the intersection of Case and Love roads on the north side of the road.

All Benzie Democrats can participate in this major event—as volunteers, donors, and customers. Executive board member Chloe McGehee is organizing the sale, the proceeds of which will be donated to the Benzie Dems.

“We hope you can help,” she said. “We’re looking for donations of good, clean useable household items such as bedding, towels, kitchen items, furniture, antiques, and plants. No clothes, weight benches, skis, old TVs or junk, please. If you don’t have sale items, a dozen cookies or brownies would be helpful or even some small plants. You may price your items before the sale, if you like.”

Donations can be dropped off at the barn on Monday, May 18, and Tuesday, May 19, in the evenings from 4 to 7 pm. There will be a sign up at the barn. Pickup of large items may be arranged from Sunday, May 17 to Wednesday, May 20. Dave Green is the coordinator for pickups. Please phone him at 325-2484.

McGehee said that volunteers are needed to work the sale and clean up. “And don’t forget to stop by and find some bargains for yourself!” she added. For more information or to volunteer, please phone Chloe at 882-9446.



President Barack Obama greets President Lula da Silva of Brazil on Saturday, March 14, 2009 in the Oval Office. (White House Photo/Pete Souza)

Ongoing support needed to achieve Obama agenda

After the 2008 election, President-elect Obama announced **Organizing for America** (barackobama.com), a project that's operating in partnership with the Democratic National Committee (democrats.org) to enlist his campaign volunteers and organization in the continuing effort to achieve reform in Washington and pass Obama agenda legislation. The group is meant to keep activists engaged on the main issues of the Obama agenda. Other progressive groups are organized to promote action on specific legislation and the election of progressive candidates.

Obama's plan to rebuild and renew America includes creating jobs and investing in the three areas most critical to our future: **Energy** — Transforming America's economy to run on clean and renewable energy in order to create new American jobs and industries; **Health care** — Comprehensively reforming health care so that families, businesses, and government are relieved from the crushing costs that impede economic growth and prosperity; **Education** — Reforming and investing in America's education system so that citizens are prepared to compete in a global economy

Supporters were asked to pledge their support for these broad goals as outlined in the Obama budget. Grassroots activists across the country have been conducting an ongoing Pledge Project Canvass, to identify and mobilize support across the country for Obama's economic vision. You can pledge your support and enlist others to do so on line at my.barackobama.com.

Following the 2008 election, more than 500,000 Obama supporters across the country completed surveys making clear their vision for the organization, and more than 4,200 hosted house parties in their communities. A clear

majority believe that organizing in support of Obama's Obama's agenda should be the most important goal for the organization.

After presiding over the Democratic Party's most successful national grassroots mobilizing campaign since the New Deal, Former DNC Chairman Howard Dean has returned to **Democracy for America** (democracyforamerica.com), the organization he founded nearly five years ago. Dean and DFA could play two critical roles in the months ahead: he is a proven fundraiser who can raise money for hiring organizers to work in swing districts and states for universal health care and other progressive measures; unlike the newly formed Organizing for America, and Dean and DFA will not be restricted in targeting the wavering Democrats whose votes are essential to pass such measures as universal health care, the Employee Free Choice Act, and comprehensive immigration reform. Along with enlisting grassroots organizers, the DFA is targeting Democratic office holders, because the "stimulus battle showed that winning progressive measures requires targeted pressure campaigns aimed at swing lawmakers. DFA's network of activist groups across the nation are willing to challenge politicians who defy their constituencies' desire for specific measures.

Other Party and Advocacy Groups

National Democratic Party (democrats.org)

Michigan Democratic Party (michigandems.com)

Michigan Coalition for Progress (miprogresscoalition.org) is an independent group with over 40,000 members dedicated to holding elected political leaders accountable. This positive, issue-based group aims to elect progressive leaders who are committed to bringing needed change to Michigan.

MoveOn (moveon.org). This family of organizations has over 3.2 million members who work on progressive issues. The MoveOn.org Civic Action organization is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit (formerly MoveOn.org), that primarily focuses on education and advocacy on important national issues. MoveOn.org Political Action, is a federal PAC (formerly known as MoveOn PAC) that mobilizes people across the country to fight important battles in Congress and help elect candidates who reflect members values. Both organizations are entirely funded by individuals.

Progressive Majority (progressivemajority.org) is the nation's only political organization dedicated exclusively to electing progressive champions at the state and local level. It's focused on recruiting, training, and electing candidates. Leaders from organized labor, Congress, and progressive donors founded this group to serve as a multi-issue political action committee (PAC) and to enhance the political effectiveness of the progressive movement. Locally led, state-focused programs are now operating in Arizona, California, Colorado, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin. The goal is to operate in all of the top 24 battleground states.

For to many organizations working for various progressive causes, go to **change.org** on the Internet.



Membership drive continues

There are two ways you can help sustain our local Democratic Party effort. When you join the Michigan Democratic Party, Benzie Dems receive a portion of the dues back from the state party. This revenue helps fund our activities. If you haven't already done so, please join today. The Michigan Democratic Party is located at 606 Townsend St., Lansing, MI 48933. Telephone: 517-371-5410; Email: midemparty@michigandems.com. Website: michigandems.com)

Locally, you can directly support the Benzie Democratic Party through a donation, which can be mailed to Benzie County Democratic Committee, PO Box 44, Honor, MI 49640. A donation of just five dollars will help cover the production and distribution costs of the newsletter. A larger donation will provide for party development and our campaign efforts. Please make your affordable contribution now to keep Benzie moving in a positive direction.

The effort to update our local contact information for members and other interested individuals continues. If you volunteer to make phone calls to check information, please contact Carroll Volpe by phone (325-6692) or email (mcvolpe@centurytel.net).

We can save both trees and money if you are able and willing to receive the Kicker via email. To do so, email Doreen Fitzgerald at dodie.fitz@gmail.com.

Thanks for all your support!

Executive Board changes

Vice Chair Brant Downing has resigned because he has accepted a commission in the U.S. Army and is now in officer's training. Because Benzie Dems had three vice chairs (an unusual situation), his position will not be filled.

Treasurer Sally Smeltzer is expected to formally resign at the May 2 meeting and her replacement will be determined at that time. Sara Meachum has expressed interest and willingness to serve in that position.

Kathy Ross has replaced Elara Coleman on the board.

Dems endorse jail millage

The executive board voted on March 7 to endorse the county jail millage renewal, which will be on the **May 5** special election ballot. The endorsement was made after a presentation by county sheriff Rory Heckman. Because the public safety building will be paid for in October, 2009, the millage will be reduced from 1.24 mills (for the construction bond and operations) to .9 mills. County Commission chair Donald Tanner, who is on our board, said that the county's goal is to gradually shift money for jail operations from the separate millage to the county's general fund. County operation of the jail facility is mandatory by state law.

Resolution in state platform

A resolution drafted by Jim Sheets and approved by the Executive Board has been included in the Michigan state party platform. It calls for convening a committee to examine all aspects of Proposal A, the Michigan constitutional amendment that was designed to limit the property tax increase using the Consumer Price Index until the property's ownership is transferred.

Because Proposal A has a major effect on local school funding and other governmental units, the resolution calls for thoroughly examining the amendment after 15 years. Proposal A on property and sales taxes was approved by Michigan voters March 15, 1994. It amended Title IX (Finance and Taxation) of the Michigan Constitution, Sections 3, 5, and 8. The Benzie Democrats' resolution concludes:

"Therefore: it is recommended that the Michigan Democratic Party convene a Blue Ribbon Committee to examine all aspects of Proposal A, and make recommendations to the Michigan Democratic Party, to the Elected Officials of the State of Michigan, and to the electorate of the State of Michigan."

Chicken Bar-B-Que & Flea Market



Saturday, June 27

Flea Market: 8am-4pm

BBQ: noon til the chicken's gone!

This Benzie Dems fundraising event is at Maley Park on US 31 in Honor. Along with the great chicken dinner, the Dems first ever flea-market and arts and crafts sale will be held all day in the park.

Anyone with arts, crafts, or other items to sell can register as a vendor for space in the park. Organizers will purchase timely print ads in local and regional newspapers and will use internet sites and local signage for publicity. This is the same day as the the Honor village yard sale and the same time as the BBQ, so there should be lots of visitors. Vendors may set up the night before (6pm-8pm). There is limited electric access for those wishing to camp out. All spaces must be reserved in advance (first come basis). \$12.00 for a single space or \$20.00 for a double space. All fees waived for approved nonprofit organizations. The 33 spaces will be numbered and assigned in advance. No refunds after June 1.

For more flea market information or to reserve a space, contact:

Susan Lemon, email: LemoNsTwsT@gmail.com or LemoNsTwsT@yahoo.com

phone: 231-325-6692; cell: 616-644-1294

Benzie County Democratic Committee
PO Box 44
Honor, MI 49640

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID PERMIT #15
HONOR, MI 49640

Executive Board Officers

Kathy Ralston, Chair
342-2155, kathy@kathyralston.com
Ted Curran, Vice Chair
352-4159, curranted@hotmail.com
Phil Kiteley, 2nd Vice Chair
882-0594, phillipkiteley@charter.net
Lori Cota, Secretary, 944-3594,
benziedemsecretary@gmail.com
Sara Meachum, Treasurer
360-4184, smeachum@yahoo.com
Records Keeper: vacant

Board Members

Delores Berta, 275-4115
jjames148@centurytel.net
Kay Boyne-Mead, 882-4630
kayboyne@yahoo.com
Anne Damm, 882-9081
annedamm@sbcglobal.net
Valerie DeGroot, 275-3760
Shauna Fite, 651-9244
shaunafite@hotmail.com
Doreen Fitzgerald, 352-7876
dodie.fitz@gmail.com
Virginia Griffith, 882-9738
midnight@chartermi.net
Kristin Hollenbeck, 352-9094
keliseh@yahoo.com

Fred Johnson III
johnson@hope.edu
Jill Kimball, 275-5871
sunnyjill@hotmail.com
Susan Koenig, 882-5722
koenig.esl@gmail.com
Chloe McGehee, 882-9446
kcmgehee@sbcglobal.net
Michael Moorman, 378-4696
pere_marq@hotmail.com
Ray Nichols, 882-4790
raynick@charter.net
Renee Osgood, 352-8050
rosgood1@charter.net
Eric Pyne, 651-4025



Your State Rep—

You can meet with State Rep. Dan Scripps the first Monday of each month, 11 a.m.–Noon at the Beulah Public Library, 7238 Commercial St. in Beulah. (231) 882-4037. Contact him by Toll-free phone: (888) MICH101; E-mail: danscripps@house.mi.gov; or through his website (house.mi.gov/dscripps)

—Photo by Kathy Ralston

ericpyne@yahoo.com
Sue Pyne, 882-5721
supine@charter.net
Dick Robb, 352-9069
jbda17@yahoo.com
Karen Roberts, 352-6579
karen@mandrinfoservices.com
Kathy Ross, kjf49617@hotmail.com
Antoinette Schippers, 775-7977
tiyischippers@hotmail.com
Mary Scholl, 325-0085
mascholl@charter.net

Dan Scripps, 386-7000
danscripps@house.mi.gov
Jim Sheets, 882-4358
sheetsjr@att.net
Joyce Skinner, 275-2553
jaskinner@centurytel.net
Sally Smeltzer, 882-9367
sallysmeltzer@excite.com
Michael L. Smith, 275-7083
mlsatty@aol.com
Don Tanner, 882-7266
M. Carroll Volpe, 325-6692
mconvolpe@centurytel.net
Diane Wilbur, 378-4362
dwilbur46@gmail.com home