



# The Benzie Kicker

Newsletter of the Benzie County Democratic Party

Vol. 14, No. 2, Spring 2010

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

*Honoree Dinner coming up: use newsletter insert, our website, or your email invitation to reserve your places now!*



*Left: Volunteers from the Lake precinct discuss election strategy at April 17 county confab. Right: Benzonia precinct volunteers work on their campaign goals. — Photos by Gordy Kells*

## Precinct volunteers meeting focused on 2010 election

BENZONIA—Eighty local Democrats representing all Benzie County precincts kicked off this year's campaign effort on April 17. The Saturday luncheon meeting included review of election goals, recruitment of precinct delegates and volunteers, and group discussions, by precinct, of organizational and campaign activities. Benzie election precincts correspond to county townships, with the exception of the city of Frankfort, which is a separate precinct.

It was agreed that community canvassing will continue this year in an effort to listen to the concerns of all Benzie County voters and identify people who are interested in Democratic Party activities at the local level. As many residents as possible will be canvassed throughout the county during the coming months.

The following volunteers have agreed to act as team leaders for organizing the precincts: Almira, Joyce Skinner; Benzonia, Mike Ross; Crystal Lake, Amy Ferris; Frankfort, Susanne Glynn and Marcia Curran; Gilmore, Marcia Stobie; Homestead, Carroll Volpe; Inland, Craig Serrano; Lake, Mary Scholl; Platte, Kari Tomashik; Joyfield and Blaine, Kay Boyne; Colfax and Weldon, Diane Wilbur. Please contact your local team leader if you can volunteer to help canvass or want to assist the campaign in any capacity. You can also contact Dick Robb at 352-9069.

The meeting was organized by Robb, who is the precinct coordinator, with help from Ray Nichols, former county chair, who is this year's campaign coordinator. Carroll Volpe

is the campaign office coordinator for the coming election. Robb and Nichols also organized a May 1 precinct meeting for 18 additional volunteers who were unable to attend the April 17 event.

The gathering at Mills Community House in Benzonia included a visit from State Representative Dan Scripps, who commented on the development of the local party and on state level issues, including House Bill 5319 on water rights, which has been widely misrepresented. Scripps also commented on the attendance at the meeting and on Benzie Dems support for his and other Democratic candidacies. He said he would be targeted by Republicans for defeat in the coming election and would again count on Benzie Dem support.



*Dick Robb and Ray Nichols fire up the troops for the coming election at the April 17 meeting.*

*— Photos by Gordy Kells*

# From the Chair...



Dear Friends,

I sense energy and excitement from my fellow Benzie Dems as well as from Democrats throughout Michigan as we enter prime campaign season for Election 2010. Read on for recent developments both on the Benzie home front and statewide.

First, I am proud to report that at the May 1 regular meeting of the Benzie Dems, the executive committee voted to officially endorse Fred Johnson of Holland as our choice for United States Representative for Michigan's 2nd Congressional District. This is Mr. Johnson's second run for the congressional seat. Fred is a fine candidate for U.S. Congress with an outstanding resume and a great campaign organization.

If you haven't met Fred yet, visit his website: [fredjohnsonforcongress.com](http://fredjohnsonforcongress.com) to find out more. All are welcome to contact me with any questions on Fred or his candidacy. The 2nd District seat will be open for the 2010 election with the current Republican congressman having announced that he will run for Governor of Michigan, giving our candidate a better chance at victory. The 2nd District is challenging for Democrats, to say the least. It is worth remembering, though, that many things look impossible until someone steps up to the challenge and gets it done and Fred Johnson is the kind of hard working dedicated individual who is prepared to do just that.

Michigan Democrats showed they are fired up for 2010 at the Michigan Democratic Party's (MDP) April 17 endorsement convention held at Cobo Hall in Detroit. Delegates from each of Michigan's 15 U.S. Congressional Districts voted to endorse one candidate each for Secretary of State and Attorney General. The result of the vote was victory for Jocelyn Benson over Janice Winfrey for Secretary of State and for David Leyton over Richard Bernstein for Attorney General. Four Benzie County delegates attended and cast their votes on the convention floor.

MDP party officials decided to take the unprecedented approach of holding the endorsement convention in April for these two high state offices so that the field of candidates would be narrowed earlier in the year. This is a strategy to give the chosen Democratic candidates an advantage in the general election by reducing the amount of time, energy and money expended.

Jocelyn Benson, Wayne State University law professor won over Janice Winfrey, City of Detroit Clerk with over 90% of the vote. Benson's energetic campaign began more than a year ago and shows no signs of slowing down. She has traveled the entire state, including a visit to a Benzie Dems meeting several months back. The Benzie Dems subsequently endorsed Benson as our official pick for Secretary of State. Winfrey came into the race much later and may have been hampered by lack of name recognition and a much lower key approach to campaigning.

The vote for Attorney General was much closer. Richard Bernstein, a well-known and successful attorney from

Oakland County received 47% of the vote. Mr. Bernstein worked hard to reach out to potential delegates in the weeks and months leading up to the convention. He was endorsed by two of the more progressive Democratic Caucuses, the Justice Caucus and the Progressive Caucus. I found him to be an effective and inspirational speaker with a clear progressive message.

David Leyton is a seasoned prosecutor from Genesee County, home of Flint Michigan. Leyton picked up the United Auto Worker's (UAW) union endorsement the night before the convention presumably giving him an advantage. In the end, Mr. Leyton won enough votes from the more rural and union oriented counties throughout the state to counter the votes received by Mr. Bernstein from the much more populated districts in southeast Michigan.

Our own State Representative Dan Scripps continues to gear up for the 2010 election while simultaneously working hard for the citizens of the 101st district in Lansing. The Benzie Dems joined the Manistee Dems in hosting a fundraiser at the Farr Center in Onekama on May 1. Representative Scripps spoke to those in attendance then answered questions on a range of topics concerning including the economy, education and natural resource preservation.

The turnout was great and a good time was had by all. Many thanks go to Rick Schrock, Manistee Dems Chair and all the Manistee Dems for their work in coordinating the event and for including the Benzie Dems. Thanks also go to musicians Tim Joseph, Byron Joseph, Jamey Barnard and Marlene Zylstra.

Keeping Dan Scripps in Lansing as our State Representative is at the top of the Benzie Dems priority list for election 2010. Since becoming our Rep in January 2009, Dan has sponsored or cosponsored legislation to protect the most disadvantaged among us, to stimulate our Michigan economy and to preserve our natural resources. Please make a financial contribution to Dan's campaign if you haven't done so or an additional contribution if you have done so.

Contributions can be sent to:

The Committee to Elect Dan Scripps  
P.O. Box 885  
Northport, MI. 49670  
or online at <http://danscripps.com>



*On May 1 guests from Benzie County joined Manistee Democrats for a Dan Scripps fund raising event in Onekama. Shown here are Manistee Dems chair Rick Schrock, Ray Nichols, and Scripps. —Photo by Kathy Ralston.*

# Call for Candidates

The **May 11 filing deadline** for candidates for the August 3 primary election quickly approaches. This is your chance to become part of the solution in your community by making the commitment to be a candidate yourself. Benzie County needs officials that understand the bigger picture to shape public policy for the good of present and future generations and the community as a whole. Our Democratic county commissioners need company on the county board.

Perhaps you have thought about running for office but need more information. Or perhaps you have a friend or neighbor who you think would be a great public official. Contact Benzie Democrats' Chair Kathy Ralston. She will answer your questions on county government and what it takes to run for County Commissioner.

Our three incumbent commissioners are all up for re-election this year: Don Tanner, representing District 7; Kristin Hollenbeck, representing the city of Frankfort; and Anne Damm, representing District 4.

## *An election year talking point:* Taxes are lowest in 60 years, thanks to Dems and Obama

Participants in a recent CBS News/*New York Times* poll were asked: "In general, do you think the Obama Administration has increased taxes for most Americans, decreased taxes for most Americans or have they kept taxes the same for most Americans?" Twenty-four percent of respondents said that most Americans' taxes increased; 53 percent said taxes were the same; 12 percent said taxes were decreased. In fact, the majority of the tax cuts, passed last year, affected 95 percent of working families. When they took affect, most families saw about \$70 more in take home pay every month. Individual workers saw about \$13 more a week.

Donate Your New & Used Merchandise...  
Help Us Build Homes & Change Lives!

ReUse • ReCycle

Habitat for Humanity of Benzie County is opening a Habitat ReStore in spring 2010. We are seeking donations of new, gently-used and salvaged building materials, furniture, appliances and more (see list at right). Our Benzie County ReStore can provide a tax-deductible alternative for local builders, contractors, businesses and individuals for the disposal of items that may otherwise add to our local landfills.

ReBuild • ReModel • ReHab

Benzie County ReStore will sell these donated products to the general public at bargain prices. The ReStore will offer hundreds of quality products for do-it-yourself home improvement and remodels.

**Habitat for Humanity**  
of Benzie County  
**ReStore**

Donate Items From Your Worksite or Home!  
Free, easy pick-up of donations...  
Call Steve Tebo at 231-645-0430 to schedule

Now Accepting:

*Blue Tiger Dem at Work—Mary Scholl joined other volunteers on May 2 to paint the new Habitat for Humanity ReStore on US 31 in Honor. The store will sell donated appliances, fixtures and other items to raise money for Habitat projects.*

— Photos by Gordy Kells

## Campaign Crew — Volunteers Needed

The campaign crew for the 2010 election has been organized. Thankfully, some experienced campaigners have generously agreed to lead our efforts. Ray Nichols will serve as county campaign coordinator and will be the liaison between all other campaign committee members, working to provide the resources and information they need for success.

Dick Robb is our precinct delegate coordinator. He will provide the needed linkage between the precinct team leaders and delegates and the Benzie Democratic Party officers and executive board. He will provide information to the precincts and follow up to help us meet our countywide goals as directed by the party chair and campaign coordinator.

Carroll Volpe will be the campaign office coordinator and will oversee office operations and training of office personnel. The Benzie Democratic Committee is also looking for a site for a campaign headquarters, which is expected to open around August 1.

Due to the efforts and expertise of those above and many other volunteers, the Benzie Dems have grown in recent years. Along with that growth, our candidates have enjoyed increased success at the polls. This year's goal is to improve and build on the support network for our leadership. This will strengthen and diversify the Benzie Dems, and our need for solid organization and broad participation from our members, neighbors, and friends has never been greater.

This year we will especially need the help of those with "people skills" to help locate our voters by canvassing our precincts and for office staffing. Some other areas where help is needed are door-to-door literature drop-off, database entry, and campaign sign organization. If you can help out, please contact campaign coordinator Ray Nichols (231-882-4790, [raynick@charter.net](mailto:raynick@charter.net)). If you can volunteer to help our local party at any time, consider your special interests and talents, then contact the appropriate committee chair to get in the loop for these activities.



**Benzie County Democratic Committee**  
PO Box 403  
Beulah, MI 49617

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

## Mark your calendar!

Regular meetings of the Benzie Dems are held at the Benzonia Township Hall the first Saturday of the month at 9 a.m. To be placed on the agenda, please call Chair Kathy Ralston at 231-342-2155 before the meeting.

**May 12: Fundraising Committee meeting, 6:30 p.m. at Ray Nichol's house (Honoree Dinner, BBQ, Parades, etc.) RSVP.**

**May 22: Charlotte Robling Memorial Dinner**

**June 5: Regular Meeting**

**June 21: Thompsonville Summerfest  
Contact Mike Ross to volunteer.**

**July 3: No Regular Meeting; Chicken BBQ at Maley Park, Honor**

**July 18: Tentative details; campaign event**

**Aug. 3: Primary Election**

**Aug. 14: County & District Conventions**

**Aug. 28  
-29: State Convention at Cobo**

### **Meet with State Rep Dan Scripps—**

Representative Scripps visits Benzie County the first Monday of each month, 11 a.m.–noon at the Darcy Library of Beulah, 7238 Commercial St, Beulah (231) 882-4037.

You can contact Scripps by toll-free phone: **888-MICH101**;  
E-mail: [danscripps@house.mi.gov](mailto:danscripps@house.mi.gov);  
or through his website: [house.mi.gov/dscripps](http://house.mi.gov/dscripps).



### **Executive Board Officers**

Kathy Ralston, Chair, 342-2155, [kathy@kathyralston.com](mailto:kathy@kathyralston.com)  
Phil Kiteley, 1st Vice Chair, 882-0594, [phillipkiteley@charter.net](mailto:phillipkiteley@charter.net)  
Diane Wilbur, 2nd Vice Chair, 378-4362, [dwilbur46@gmail.com](mailto:dwilbur46@gmail.com)  
Kathy Ross, 3rd Vice Chair, 882-5913, [kjf49617@hotmail.com](mailto:kjf49617@hotmail.com)  
Lori Cota, Secretary, 944-3594, [benziedemsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:benziedemsecretary@gmail.com)  
Sarah Meachum, Treasurer, 360-4184, [smeachum@yahoo.com](mailto:smeachum@yahoo.com)

### **Board Members**

Board members and their contact numbers can be found on the Benzie Dems website ([www.benziedemocrats.com](http://www.benziedemocrats.com)).