



The Benzie Kicker

Newsletter of the Benzie County Democratic Party

Vol. 20, No. 3, Fall 2016

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

Much is at stake on Tues. Nov. 8

From the Chair...

The clock is running out on this year's November 8 Presidential Election. Locally, we Democrats still have work to do before then. We need to: make phone calls, put packaged candidate information in bags on door knobs, nag our friends to vote, more importantly "VOTE OURSELVES A STRAIGHT DEMOCRATIC TICKET." Despite Republican efforts to outlaw straight-ticket voting, it can still be done due to a Supreme Court decision.

How important is it to vote for the Clinton Ticket? How about the Supreme Court, Affordable Care Act, the clean energy future, comprehensive immigration reform, taking care of the student debt problem, women's issue, criminal justice reform, livable wages, job creation, and finally, rebuilding a failing infrastructure in the U.S. Supporting and making sure that Hillary Clinton and Lon Johnson will be in Washington (along with a Senate majority that we can win in November) will ensure a better chance for America's future.

In Michigan, change is desperately needed. By electing Dan Scripps, we will ensure the representative for Northwest Michigan is a person with vision, energy and the desire to listen to all people in our 101st District. To win, Dan needs every possible vote. This is our chance to challenge Republican dominance in Lansing and address from a different perspective such issues as clean energy and water, schools, general funds for local counties, and infrastructure.

Locally, we need a Benzie County that can progress beyond just being good enough to survive from budget year to budget year, and this requires infusion of new County Commissioners—Tim Harry Bannister and Don

Smeltzer, who seek to join the seasoned and talented County Commissioner Coury Carland. They will bring new ideas and help support a future that improves on our tax base. Thus, roads, broadband, and other infrastructure can be improved to create local jobs and keep our young people in our county.

So there is a lot at stake in this year's election. We as Democrats can make a difference, each one of us, by voting ourselves and encouraging others to vote. Remember that when we vote for Democratic candidates, we are also promoting Democratic values that can strengthen our communities and our state in many ways.

Ray Nichols, Chair
Benzie County Democratic Party



Benzie Dem candidates at our fund raising event for Dan Scripps (far right rear), our candidate for the State House of Representatives.

Photo by Aubry Ann Parker

Our Democratic Slate • Vote Nov. 8 • 7 am–8 pm

National Candidates

HILLARY CLINTON / TIM KAINE
President / Vice President

LON JOHNSON
1st District U.S. Congress

State of Michigan

DAN SCRIPPS
State Representative, 101st District

Michigan State Board of Education
Ish Ahmed / John Austin

University of Michigan Board of Regents
Laurence Deitch / Denise Illitch

Michigan State Univ. Board of Trustees Dianne
Byrum / Diann Woodard

Wayne State Univ. Board of Governors Yvette
McElroy Anderson / Mark Gaffney

Michigan Supreme Court Justice
FRANK SZYMANSKI, 8-Year Term

DEBORAH A. THOMAS
Partial term ending 01/2019

Benzie County Candidates

County Commissioner

COURY CARLAND, Dist. 4, Benzonia Twp.

HARRY (TIM) BANNISTER, Dist. 3
City of Frankfort/Crystal Lake Twp.

DONALD C. SMELTZER, Dist. 7
Blaine, Gilmore, Joyfield, Weldon Twps.

County Road Commissioner
CHARLES BROZOFSKY

Drain Commissioner
ED HOOGTERP

Township Office Candidates

Almira

Treasurer: MANDY GRAY RINEER

Benzonia

Supervisor: JASON BARNARD

Trustee: JAMES SHEETS

Colfax

Clerk: DEANN MOSHER

Treasurer: LAURA DRAEGER

Trustee, TOM BESEY

Crystal Lake

Supervisor: AMY FERRIS

Gilmore

Supervisor: CARL NOFFSINGER

Clerk: SHANNON SPENCELY

Treasurer: LAURA MANVILLE

Trustee: RONALD BEYETTE

Trustee: DOUGLAS HOLMES

Homestead

Supervisor: JESSICA WOOTEN

Trustee: PATRICIA DeLORME

Inland

Supervisor: PAUL BEECHCRAFT

Platte

Trustee: JULIE MOUNTZ

Early Voting: It's convenient and works well

You are receiving this electronic version of the "Kicker" in time to request an absentee ballot and vote before Nov. 8. It's a good idea to do so.

As a registered voter, you may obtain an absent voter ballot if you are:

- age 60 years old or older
- unable to vote without assistance at the polls
- expecting to be out of town on election day
- in jail awaiting arraignment or trial

• unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons

• appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of your precinct of residence.

By 2 p.m. Nov. 5, voters who wish to receive an absent voter ballot for the Nov. general election by mail must submit absent voter ballot applications.

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“The world is run by those who show up,” and so is our party: your involvement is needed!

Benzie County precinct delegates elected in Aug. 2016 will meet Nov. 15 to select a new executive board. The meeting is 6:30 p.m. at our party headquarters in Honor.

The executive board will then form a nominating committee to create a slate of officers that the new executive board will vote on. Officers may or may not come from the new executive board, but once elected will become board members. This process should be complete by the new year.

The executive board is the “master mind” that runs the local democratic party. It meets 10 times a year for about two

hours each time. At meetings business is conducted, ideas discussed, and decisions made. Most board members also work on a committee or are active precinct delegates and bring reports of these activities to the board’s attention.

We’re looking for new members who are interested in serving on the executive board or as an officer. We need YOU! Really we do.

Mary Robling is working on gathering names of interested persons so please call her at 231-399-0365 or email at marylottie@gmail.com to discuss your interest.



Thanks to all...for all you do!

Thanks to organizers and participants in our events of the summer, including parades, the July reception for Dan Scripps, the “Big Push” event to support our election efforts, and the “meet and greet” event to support local candidates. Thanks to the Bayview Grille for providing a venue for two events. Special thanks to our members who’ve given their time and care to provide such good food for these occasions!

Much appreciation on those of you who have been working as neighborhood canvassers (door knocking and driving) and to those who will be staffing the “Get Out

the Vote” effort.

Thanks also to those who donate funds to provide our headquarters facility, and to those who have been staffing it. We are putting the space to good use.

Thanks to Aubry Ann Parker Photography. Aubry has photographed many of our events and candidates. Her website is at aubreyannparker.com.

Last and most: thanks to our current officers, board, and committee chairs for their service, and to those who will step up to the plate!

Meet the Candidate:

Donald C. Smeltzer is running for Benzie County Commissioner for District Seven, which is comprised of four southwestern townships -- Gilmore, Blaine, Joyfield, and Weldon -- as well as the western half of Thompsonville. (The seat is currently held by Republican Commissioner Gary Sauer of Blaine Township.)

Don's family has been in Benzie County for four generations before him. For three decades, Don farmed with his father, Percy J. Smeltzer, and his uncle, Clinton W. Smeltzer. Don currently lives and works on the family farm where he grew up, which sits on 125 acres just across the road from Upper Herring Lake. (Now it's his daughter, Kristin, who is helping him with work on the farm until her classes resume at Michigan State University.) The farm's main crops are apples and cherries, although Don is now beginning to dabble in grapes, as well. Though Blackbird Farm is not certified organic, Don said that they use organic practices because he is worried that too many chemicals are being used on farms these days.

A 1975 graduate of Frankfort High School, Don went on to the University of Michigan Ross School of Business where he earned a Bachelor's degree in 1979 in business administration with an emphasis on accounting. While at U of M, Don played trumpet in the The University of Michigan Marching Band; he got to play at the Orange Bowl once and the Rose Bowl twice!

Continuing his love of music into adulthood, Don is now the piano accompanist for services at St. Ann Catholic Church in Frankfort, where his wife, Kristin Leffew Smeltzer, is the music director. (She also helps him on the farm.) Together they have five children, all of whom are now young adults: Erin 'Mosher' Skiff (Frankfort 1996), Evelyn 'Acklin' Ripple (Frankfort 2000), Thomas James (Northwest High School in Jackson 2003), Andrew Smeltzer (Frankfort 2009), and Kristin Smeltzer (Frankfort 2013).

With plenty of experience in public



Donald C. Smeltzer

Interviews and Photography by Aubry Ann Parker

office, Don is very qualified for the task at hand: for instance, he was Blaine Township's supervisor for 16 years, as well as Township Assessor, and he was the County Commissioner for District Seven for 2.5 years back in 2006-2008. As Blaine Township Supervisor, Don played an important role in establishing the Benzie Shores District Library.

Starting in 2007, while he was serving as County Commissioner, Don joined the Community Mental Health/Centra Wellness Network Board, and he continues on that board today. He also currently serves on the Blaine Township Zoning Board of Appeals, and is the president of the Upper Herring Lake Association. Don has plenty of experience with real estate issues, as well as helping people with their problems at the township and county levels.

A BIG CHANGE: Back when Don Smeltzer was County Commissioner before, he was running for office and serving under a Republican ticket. Don Tanner took the District Seven seat from Smeltzer in 2008, but funny enough, it was Tanner who first approached Smeltzer to run for the seat again in the upcoming election this fall—only this time as a Democrat instead of a

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Republican. "I don't feel like I've shifted politically," he said. "I feel like they [the Republican party] are the ones who shifted on me."

The platforms that Don is most interested in: he thinks that we need to diversify our local economy and find ways to increase year-round employment so that we are not as dependent upon tourism. He wants to see more economic development, and he fears that a lack of housing for low- and middle-income households is holding Benzie County back. "We will never be able to develop if nobody has a place to live," Don said. "Low-income people have to have a place to live, or you can't have a real community. It can't just be about summer housing."

There seems to be a changing mindset in Benzie County when it comes to many issues, and Don likes what he is seeing and wants to help promote these new ideas.

"I feel some people don't want anything to change in Benzie County," he said. "But this approach is not realistic and is unfair to future generations. As your Benzie County Commissioner, I will work in the best interest of all our citizens."

Meet the Candidate:

Coury Carland, 34, is running for Benzie County Commissioner for District Four, which covers all of Benzonia Township and the Village of Benzonia and Beulah. Coury is an incumbent who has held this seat since he was elected in 2014.

As a fifth generation resident, Coury has a strong connection to Benzie County. Coury's great-great-grandfather, Major John Carland, settled in Frankfort in 1888 after retiring from the United States Army as a veteran of the American Civil War (he served as Captain of H Company in the 23rd Michigan Infantry.) Coury's great-grandfather, Custer Carland, built, owned, and operated The Garden Theater in Frankfort during the early 20th century.



County Commissioner Coury Carland

Coury's grandfather, Custer "Ted" Carland, was a Michigan State Trooper during Prohibition and the Great Depression, serving at State Police posts in L'anse, St. Ignace, and Detroit. Ted also worked for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) during World War II, and he was appointed undersheriff of Benzie County when he returned to Frankfort in 1945.

During the 1960s, Ted worked closely with U.S. Senator Phil Hart to create the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Coury's mother, Mary Carland, has operated a small business (Mary's Paints & Supply) in Benzie County for almost three decades. Now it is Coury who is making his contribution to Benzie County, after the long line of Carlands before him.

A 2000 graduate of Frankfort High School, Coury went on to Central Michigan University where he earned a Bachelor's degree in political science with a double major in history and economics. He also holds a Master's degree in international relations and comparative politics from CMU.

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For eight years following his education, Coury taught as an adjunct professor of political science. At Saginaw Valley State University he taught a variety of courses, including The American Political System, Introduction to Political Science, and World Politics. At Mid Michigan Community College, he taught political science, history, and sociology. During that time, Coury said that he developed the ability to communicate complex subject matter.

"I realized early on that listening is one of the keys to teaching," he said.

Coury returned full time to Benzie County in 2013. During that time, he worked at Eco-Building Products, an internet-based retailer of environmentally friendly building materials that is based in Elberta.

Coury is an active member of the Frankfort Lions Club, which organizes and plans fundraising events to benefit those in need. With more than 1.3 million members, Lions Clubs International is the largest service organization in the world. It is nonpartisan and nondenominational, focusing primarily on assisting the visually impaired. Every year, the Frankfort Lions award a scholarship to a graduating Frankfort High School senior.

Coury was elected as Benzie County Commissioner for District IV in 2014. With two years of public office under his belt, Coury possess a unique combination of education, work, and life experiences that make him well qualified to continue on as county commissioner.

During his first term, Coury experienced a steep learning curve.

"It's been sort of like drinking from a fire hose," he said.

His list of commissioner assignments is extensive: he is a member of the county Finance Committee, Human Resources Committee, Buildings and Grounds Committee, and he is chair of the Technology Committee. Coury is also a member of the Benzie-Manistee Joint Court Committee. He is in charge of the board of the Frankfort City Airport Authority.

He is a board member at Centra Wellness Network, formerly known as Benzie-Manistee Community Mental Health. He represents Benzie County on the board at Networks Northwest, formerly known as the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. He is a member of the Benzie County Planning Commission and the Benzie County Economic Development Corporation. He is a member of the Local Emergency Planning Team, and he serves on the EMS Advisory Board. Coury also regularly attends monthly meetings in the villages of Benzonia and Beulah, as well as Benzonia Township.

Coury admits that it can be intense at times, but he keeps things in perspective by focusing on his reasons for running: to position the county on a more sound financial footing; to promote year-round employment through expanded digital communications infrastructure; and to protect the natural beauty that makes Benzie County a great place to live, work, and play.

"My family and friends live here," he said. "I have a vested interest in ensuring that this is a quality place to live and a beautiful place to visit."

Check out Coury's campaign page at [Vote Carland](#).



4th of July: Ray Nichols (right) with Benzie Dem and Uncle Sam.

Please contact us!

Thanks to Dick Robb and the volunteers working with him, our headquarters has been staffed on a regular basis, and the hours through Nov. 8 are:

Tuesday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Wednesday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Thursday, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Saturday, 9 a.m. - noon

Phone: 231-227-1112 If there's no answer, please leave a message and someone will get back to you.

Our street address is: 9330 Honor Hwy. (US-31); office is east of the Cherry Bowl Drive-in.

Our website is benziedemocrats.com

Email: benziedemocrats@outlook.com

Mailing address: P.O. Box 403, Beulah, MI 49617.

If you have any questions or can volunteer, please contact us.

Calendar

Oct. 11: General election regis. deadline

Oct. 15: Regular Meeting, 10 a.m. HDQ

Nov. 8: General Election

Nov. 15: Precinct Delegate convention, 6:30 p.m., party HDQ in Honor.

Nov. 19: Regular Meeting, 10 a.m. HDQ

Dec. Holiday Party, TBD

No regular meeting in December.

Regular meetings begin at 10 a.m. on the 3rd Saturday of the month at our headquarters on U.S. 31 in Honor unless otherwise announced. No meetings in July and December.

What's your opinion?

We always need people to submit Letters-to-the-Editor to local newspapers. Submit letters independently, or contact Mike Ross at (231) 651-0604 or at mike.ross0919@gmail.com for more information.

Early Voting, *continued from page 2*

An [absentee ballot application](#) can be obtained from your township or county clerk, or downloaded from the Michigan secretary of State website: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/sos/AVApp_535884_7.pdf

Up to 4 p.m., Nov. 7 voters qualified to obtain an absent voter ballot for the Nov. general election may vote in person in clerk's office.

Up to 4 p.m. Nov. 8, Emergency absentee voting is allowed for the Nov. general election.



Benzie Dems Officers

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The Kicker is published and paid for by the Benzie County Democratic Party; is not authorized by any candidate or candidate committee. Editor: Doreen Fitzgerald (231-352-7876)