



# The Benzie Kicker

Newsletter of the Benzie County Democratic Party

Vol. 21, No. 1, Spring 2017

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

## Get engaged and stay engaged

**Now** is the time to respond, resist, push back and engage all your elected representatives in dialogue. Please do not let the proposals of the radical conservatives go unanswered and unchecked. To that end, several efforts are underway among our Benzie County supporters: the Benzie Watchers, the “Indivisible” project (active under that name in Traverse City), individual communications, and letters to the editor. Across the nation, over 5800 local groups (at least two in every congressional district) are using the *Indivisible Guide* to hold their members of Congress accountable (<https://www.indivisibleguide.com/>).

In February, 25 local women met to go through the first three of six steps of the Women’s March “huddle” agenda. At a second meeting, Benzie Dems co-chair Jim Dulzo explained the organization of Benzie Watchers, a group that will use Indivisible tactics to keep the public informed about health care legislation and what Representative Jack Bergman (R), and State Rep. Curt VanderWall (R) are doing on this and other issues. For more on the Watchers, see page two. At a meeting facilitated by Aubrey Ann Parker and Hannah Rodriguez, four action areas received the most support:

1. **Build** a base of support related to accountability and community engagement: develop expertise on issues and the protocols for letters to editor, phone calls, public events; and, foster personal and group communication.
2. **Create** events related to accountability and community engagement; host events, town halls, and community discussion on issues; create comfortable situations for talking about issues.
3. **Protect** and promote human rights.
4. **Show up!** Maintain active engagement.

Our newsletter goes to about 1400 people. We urge all of you to start contacting our elected officials about current issues and legislation that



you care about. That’s democracy!

### Who’s who and how to contact

Representative Jack Bergman (R)

DC Phone: 202-225-4735

TC Phone: 231-944-7633

Email: <http://bit.ly/2l1I2jx>

Sign up emails: <http://bit.ly/2l1I2jx>

Facebook: Rep. Jack Bergman

<http://bit.ly/2liB4XW>

Senator Debbie Stabenow (D)

DC Phone: 202-224-4822

TC Phone: 231-929-1031

Email: <http://bit.ly/2Kx4yKH>

Sign up for emails: <http://bit.ly/2lqCHSB>

Facebook: Debbie Stabenow

<http://bit.ly/2mj3rVG>

Senator Gary Peters (D)

DC Phone: 202-224-6221

TC Phone: 231-947-7773

Email: <http://bit.ly/2kRodYB>

Sign up for emails: <http://bit.ly/2kxbxdk>

Facebook: Senator Gary Peters

<http://bit.ly/2meDjuM>

State Representative Curt VanderWall (R)

Lansing Phone: 517-373-0825

Email: [CurtVanderwall@house.mi.gov](mailto:CurtVanderwall@house.mi.gov)

Sign up for emails: <http://bit.ly/2kxdBC5>

Facebook: Curt VanderWall

<http://bit.ly/2lxR9V4>

State Senator Darwin Booher (R)

Lansing Phone: (517) 373-1725

Email: [SenDBooher@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:SenDBooher@senate.michigan.gov)

Sign up for emails: <http://bit.ly/2m2Y21d>

Facebook: Darwin Booher

<http://bit.ly/2mevcya>

*Benzie Dems joined more than 1,500 people in Traverse City (left) and close to 1 million in Washington D.C., as part of the worldwide January 21 Women’s March held to protest the new president’s policies and attitude towards women.*

—Photo by Mike Ross

# Eyes on our lawmakers



What would our Washington and Lansing lawmakers do if almost all Benzie folks—not just political peeps—knew exactly what they were doing about our health care and public schools?

Well, they just might start backing laws that actually help us—say, by improving Medicare, Medicaid, Healthy Michigan, and the ACA, and by boosting funding for our struggling public schools.

That's why this winter we began creating the Benzie Watchers—people and a web site that, thanks to an Executive Committee grant, will soon be tracking what Congressman Bergman and state Rep. VanderWall say and do about Medicare, Medicaid, and those issues that are so vital to all of us and our friends and neighbors in Benzie County.

Soon you'll see ads inviting you to the Watchers' site, where you'll find videos, testimonials, voting records, letters, and bills that document exactly what our reps are or are not doing to make Benzie healthier and better educated. And if for some reason people don't like what they learn—they will have that in mind when they vote in 2018.

So watch out for the Benzie Watchers! Our elected officials can run, but they sure won't be able to hide.

—Jim Dulzo

## Our new leadership lineup

Benzie County precinct delegates elected in Aug. 2016 met Nov. 15 to select a new executive board. The executive board then met and elected officers.

Former chair and secretary Jill Kimball continues to serve as secretary. Mike Ross, former vice chair, continues as co-chair, joined by new co-chair Jim Dulzo. John Chabazi is our new treasurer.

Jim moved to Benzie from his hometown Detroit in 2002 to work in Beulah, first as the Michigan Land Use Institute's managing editor, then as its anti-coal plant ring-leader and clean energy expert. He's a University of Michigan (UM) alum who's been a freelance journalist, Metro Times editor, and jazz and blues columnist, radio host, and festival producer. (That's why his cats—KoKo, B.B., and Bobby—are named after legendary blues singers.) Last fall Jim and his girlfriend, Ilene Wolff, celebrated 22 years together—and Jim's retirement—by rafting through Grand Canyon. He is a big cross-country skiing fan who enjoys winter as much as most people around here enjoy summer.

John moved to Honor in 2015 after a second



*A “We are watching” message seen by the photographer, Mike Ross, at the January March in Traverse City.*

“retirement” to join wife Marda, who's been teaching Spanish at Frankfort HS since 2014. Raised in Kalamazoo, he graduated from UM in 1978 and UM Medical School in 1983. He served 13 years in the U.S. Navy after training to be a family physician at Naval Hospital Charleston. Duty stations included South Carolina, Guantanamo, Cuba, and Guam, M.I., along with some wartime service in the Persian Gulf aboard the *USS Nassau*. His second career was teaching family medicine at McLaren Flint.

John reports that throughout his medical career he taught finance to others. “I learned everything *important* about my current treasurer's job as a business person: age 13-17, *Kalamazoo Gazette* independent contractor!” he said. “I'm also establishing myself as renewable energy consultant and ‘death trainer’ (hospice, home funeral, green burial) on the side. Please talk with me about those things rather than money whenever possible.”

## Officer Contact Information

Co-chair Mike Ross: 231.651.0604  
mike.ross0919@gmail.com

Co-chair Jim Dulzo: 231.882.1341  
jimdulzo@gmail.com

Secretary Jill Kimball: 231.632.5871  
sunnyjill@hotmail.com

Treasurer John Chahbazi: 810.487.0393  
chahbazi@gmail.com

# *A note of gratitude to Benzie Dems volunteers – Mike Ross, co-chair*

Friends... Spring has sprung and, once again, the sun stands higher in the sky...a welcome change from what was for me a very bleak winter. My depression had little to do with the cold, cloudy weather, but was a result of our increasingly repugnant political climate. In addition to the rise of the Trump, I was devastated by losses at county, state, and national levels. Obviously, nominating vastly superior candidates with compassionate ideals supported by intelligent legislation, and backed by incredibly hard-working volunteers, wasn't enough in this election. Apparently, the GOP platform of fear, lies, and deception has taken over a large segment of the American political psyche. We must fight against this. The first step was taken the day after the Inauguration with the incredible uprising of resistance displayed all over our country and very impressively in Traverse City. I'm sure many of you were there that day, and are committed to winning back our endangered democracy.

In 2016, the Benzie County Democrats had a banner year in terms of volunteer participation and I only expect that energy to continue and grow in the months leading up to the 2018 November election. We, the Benzie Democrat executive committee and officers, extend a heartfelt thank

you to all who offered their time, energy, financial support, and unique skills during the 2016 election cycle. You wonderful people mobilized our efforts in areas like communication, data entry, phone calling, fundraising, door to door canvassing, the incredible GOTV effort, poll challenging, and staffing the office. Beginning in May, our volunteers participated in over 30 door-to-door canvassing efforts for Dan Scripps and other local candidates. From September through the election, our headquarters was a daily beehive of activity. Our volunteers numbered at least 120, with many working several times a week in multiple capacities...a truly incredible showing of civic responsibility!

The executive committee decided not to publish a winter newsletter, so recognition of your great contributions may seem a bit tardy. We apologize for that and plan to do a better job in this area in the future. Thanks again. Know that your efforts are truly appreciated. The Benzie County Democratic Party looks forward to your continued support as we work toward a turnaround in the 2018 November election. United we stand, divided we fall!

## **"Building a better Benzie" effort moves forward**

Hats off to Advocates for Benzie County, who in their first year held 11 forums to identify problems and possible solutions that will move the county forward and improve the lives of its people. Subjects included housing, employment, education, infrastructure, and health care. The forums incorporated knowledgeable panelists on the interrelated issues that affect the overall economic health of the people. To date task forces have been formed to address solutions to workforce housing, childcare, and reactivation of the building trades program in Benzie County schools.

The nonpartisan project, begun by five people, now includes 140 individual and institutional members. At an April annual meeting, progress was reviewed by Chairperson Rick Robb. "We started out with individual members, but realized the importance of bringing in businesses, governments, churches, not-for-profits, social service organizations, and other institutions to accomplish our goals," said Robb, who was reelected as chairperson. Vice Chair John Parkin, Secretary Harry (Tim) Bannister, and Treasurer Kay Bond were also reelected. Bannister is standing chairperson of the Housing Task Force and Bond chairs of the Child-care Task Force. Bob McNabb and Dick Lutz co-chair the task force building trades programs curriculum.

The Advocates' goals are: to identify problems and solutions by involving the broadest possible cross section of our

community; be a true nonpartisan, nonprofit, ground-level community advocacy group rather than a charity; to focus on housing, employment, education and health care issues and their underlying infrastructure; and, to facilitate bringing Benzie citizens together with governmental, business, religious, education, community, and nonprofit organizations to solve local issues.

The Advocates have made presentations to many groups, including the University of Michigan Poverty Reduction Program, where they learned that they are the only known organization in the state addressing rural poverty.

The Advocates have begun efforts to coordinate programs and promote collaboration. "...But we need more person power to move these ideas into action. If we have enough people interested in solutions, we will prosper." Robb said.

A **May 17** forum will revisit employment, workforce housing and childcare support and the role of employers. A **June 21** forum will address educational problems and a building trades curriculum. Both forums are 4–6 p.m. at the Benzie County Government Center.

Advocates has attained nonprofit status with the state and has filed with the federal government for an IRS 501c3 not-for-profit status (approval Pending).

# June 7 Film event: Radical Grace



*Exhilarating...good people putting their beliefs into action in ways that transcend all ideological boundaries.* — RogerEbert.com

Please join us on **June 7** at the Garden Theater in Frankfort for an inspiring film and important fund-raising event for the Benzie Dems. “Radical Grace” tells the story of American nuns and their work for social justice, sometimes in defiance of their religious institutions.

A social hour with wine and appetizers is 6 - 7 p.m., followed by the film (7-8:15) and an 8:15-9 Skype discussion with Rebecca Parrish, director, cinematographer, and author of the screen play.

Free will donations will be collected at the door, where nonperishable food item also will be collected for the local food pantry. At a later date, Mary Robling will facilitate a group discussion of this award-winning documentary.

*“Love is blind, obedience shouldn’t be.”*

## Working together on immigration concerns

[Special to the Kicker by Keira Duvernoy and Chris Kitzman]

The Trump administration has inspired fear in the migrant community. Our growers are worried that they will not be able to find workers to harvest crops; our schools are worried that their students’ families may be torn apart. Our communities are less safe because when people fear the police, they don’t report crimes. And then there is the inhumanity of it all!

The ACLU asked for volunteers around the country to host a March 11 event called People Power. A group of 23 people attended at the Darcy library in Beulah to watch a livestream where ACLU lawyers and advocates spoke about issues of civil rights, focusing on immigration concerns. Among the crowd were people with links to other progressive community groups.

Participants were asked to meet with law enforcement officials in their cities and counties to encourage support for, or adoption of the People Power-driven “Freedom Cities” policies—a set of nine “model” state and local law enforcement policies to ensure the safety of undocumented people unless they commit violent crimes.

Four members of the local group—renamed Concerned Citizens of Benzie County (CCBC)—met with Sheriff Ted Schendel who, it turns out, is not in agreement with the Freedom City policies. So, mark your calendars for May 23! To educate the community and garner support for the idea of enlisting those policies across Benzie County, the CCBC is hosting a panel to highlight the challenges and concerns that local migrants face. Sheriff Schendel has agreed to be one of the panelists. Other speakers will present the issues from legal, advocacy, childcare and local growers perspectives.

There will be ample Q&A time. We of the CCBC appeal to all citizens to attend this free panel to consider the safety and economic needs of our county.

There are many other ways that we can hope to influence our law enforcement, including contacting our county commissioners and educating them on this issue, and letting our state and federal representatives know we do not want nonviolent immigrants detained and deported. When calling, we can emphasize the ways that this current atmosphere disrupts our communities and our economy.

Come to our panel and encourage your neighbors to do the same. We’ll be glad to see you. (Flier on page 7.)

## Local candidate recruitment

Historically Benzie County Democrats don’t run for seats at the village, city, township, and county levels. We can’t win if we don’t have candidates! That’s why we’re getting started early to recruit for 2018. We’ll begin by identifying seats that are up in 2018, what the duties are, and what the compensation is. Then we’ll start contacting Democrats throughout the county and encouraging them to run. If you or someone you know has ever considered running for local office, you can save us a lot of work and time by having them contact the Candidate Recruitment Committee. The Benzie Dems will be there to support candidates by contributing to their campaigns and arranging fundraisers, meet and greets, events, and help with door-to-door. Members of the Candidate Recruitment Committee are: Mike Ross, Ray Nichols, Mary Scholl, Anton Przekaza, and Marcia Stobie, chair. Marcia’s contact info is: [tmstobie@yahoo.com](mailto:tmstobie@yahoo.com); (231) 352-6121 home/office; (231) 651-0917 mobile.

# 2017 Membership Drive is now!

Memberships are vital to our ongoing efforts in the county; they are valid for the calendar year in which your donation was made. Please take time to fill out the form below and mail it with a donation that is appropriate for your circumstances. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Scholl, the county party's membership committee chair: 231-342-3364, email: mascholl@icloud.com.

Please Note: The State Campaign Finance Act requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, employer and employer's address of all donors (occupation not necessary). Contributions are not tax deductible for federal income tax purposes. Local membership efforts are paid for by the Benzie County Democratic Committee and not authorized by any federal candidate or candidate's committee. The Benzie County Democratic Party is part of the Michigan State Democratic Party. Membership in the state party is required if you want to vote on party matters at the state and local levels (download a form at [www.michigandems.com](http://www.michigandems.com) or write: Michigan Democratic Party, 606 Townsend, Lansing, MI 48933).

(Please circle one): Miss / Ms. / Mrs. / Mr. / Dr.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are joining as a couple with the same address, please fill out the information for the second person:

(Please circle one): Miss / Ms. / Mrs. / Mr. / Dr.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

For environmental and cost reasons, we would prefer to communicate via e-mail, Facebook, and website. If you can make do with an e-mail newsletter you can print out at home, **please check here** \_\_\_\_\_.

Everyone with a valid email address will also receive timely e-mail notices of coming events and activities.

Delivery of The Kicker by mail will continue for those who don't have email or prefer not to print out their copy.

**Your membership is valid for the calendar year in which your dues were paid.**

Membership Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to receive communications but can't donate at this time.

Please mail this form and donation to:

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

Also welcome are donations specifically designated for the rental and operation of our headquarters on U.S. 31 in Honor. The party has made good use of this space since acquiring it, which was made possible by the generosity of our members. If you can, please help us continue having a physical presence in the county and a space to organize and launch our community service and campaign efforts.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am enclosing a donation designated for the Benzie Dems

Headquarters. Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_.



## Keep in touch!

Currently our headquarters is regularly staffed only on Tuesdays, noon - 4 p.m. More hours will be added soon. At any time you can call and leave a voice mail and someone will get back to you. Phone: 231-325-0008

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

Email: [benziedemocrats@outlook.com](mailto:benziedemocrats@outlook.com)

Mail: P.O. Box 403, Beulah, MI 49617.

Our website is [benziedemocrats.com](http://benziedemocrats.com)

Visit us on Facebook!



*Girls in Bangalore, India, receiving Days for Girls kits from the Benzie County project.*

## Days for Girls: direct action

Menstruation is of course experienced by girls and women worldwide, but how it affects their lives is vastly different, depending on their circumstances. For some, lack of menstrual hygiene leads to illness; for others, it means they must stay at home during menstruation, missing school or work. An Oxford review of studies in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia found at least half of the girls in the populations sampled did not have adequate access to hygiene solutions ([daysforgirls.org](http://daysforgirls.org)). You might wonder what you can do about it. The answer is that we now have a Days for Girls project here in Benzie County that is contributing to a sustainable solution.

Since last October, Days for Girls Team Leaders Kathy and Mike Ross have worked with more than 20 volunteers to sew, pack, and ship 385 washable feminine hygiene kits to girls in Haiti, India, Kenya, and Malawi.

We are off to a great start; for more information about Days for Girls International see [daysforgirls.org](http://daysforgirls.org). To follow Days for Girls Benzie and see what's going on locally, see us on Facebook at Days for Girls Benzie County Mi Team. The project is located at the sewing studio of Grow Benzie on Frankfort Hwy. (M-115).



*Folks at one of the local meetings held to brainstorm about responding to and resisting the Trump administration agenda. — Photo courtesy of by Aubrey Ann Parker Photography*

## What's your opinion?

We need volunteers 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](mailto:mike.ross0919@gmail.com) for more information.

## Calendar

**May 17: Advocates forum, county government center 4-6 p.m.**

**May 20: Regular Meeting, 10 a.m. HDQ**

**June 7: Film Event (see story)**

**June 17: Regular Meeting, 10 a.m. HDQ**

**June TBD: Health Care Forum**

**June 19: Thompsonville Summerfest, 6-9 p.m.**

**June 21: Advocates forum, county government center 4-6 p.m.**

**July: No regular meeting**

**Aug. 19: Regular Meeting, 10 a.m. HDQ**

Regular meetings: 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 Dec.

*The Kicker is published and paid for by the Benzie County Democratic Party. It is not authorized by any candidate or candidate committee.*

# Immigration Concerns in Benzie County

Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6:30 p.m.  
at Grow Benzie



Exploring the new immigration climate and its effects  
on our **community**, our **families**, our **schools** and our  
**economy**.

A panel discussion with  
Sheriff Ted Schendel  
Immigration lawyer, Marcelo Betti  
Local grower, Don Smeltzer  
Father Wayne Dziekan from JPAC  
Migrant Family Services specialist, Carolina Tabora

**FREE**  
**ALL WELCOME**

Sponsored by Concerned Citizens of Benzie County