



The Benzie Kicker

Newsletter of the Benzie County Democratic Party

Vol. 21, No. 2, Fall 2017

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

The 2018 vote: big deal in Benzie

So, after 10 months of total Republican rule, how's your Tylenol holding out?

Happily, Tuesday, November 6, 2018 could bring relief. That seems far away, but at Benzie Dems Headquarters it seems right around the corner. Check the Chair's column for what we're already doing to win on that really big day.

How big? In Michigan, all but the Presidency is up for grabs! Here's what's going on:

In Congress, great Democratic Senator Debbie Stabenow faces reelection,

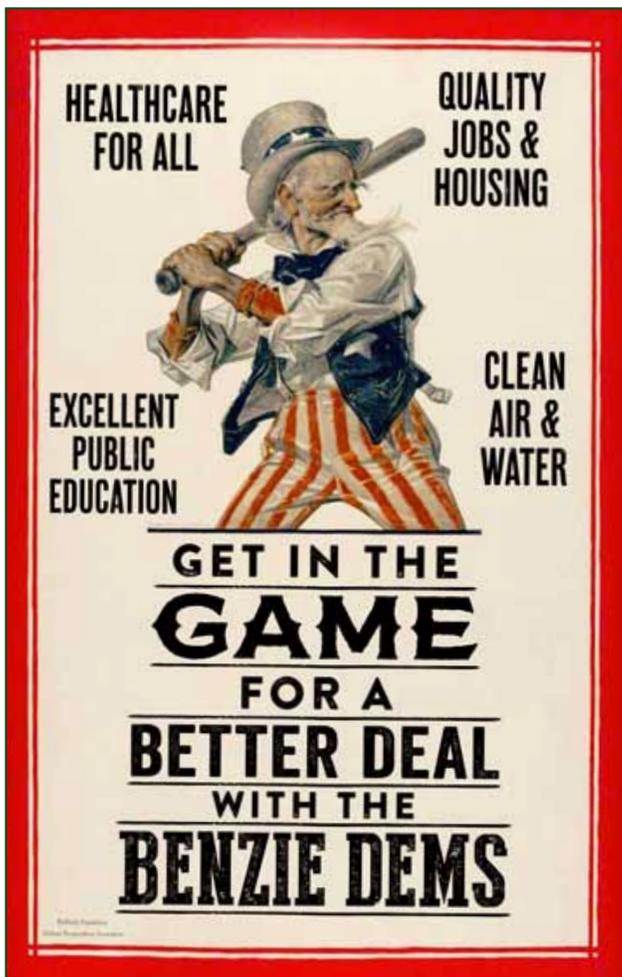
maybe against punky Kid Rock. Take that seriously, OK? And two strong Dems, Dwight Brady and Matt Morgan, who've repeatedly visited Benzie, are vying to unseat Congressman (and dark money toady) Jack Bergman, who voted to harm Obamacare, Healthy Michigan, Medicaid, and Medicare.

Lansing-wise, we've got eight Dems vying for governor! Two Dems running for attorney general, Pat Miles and Dana Nessel, have visited Benzie. The entire Michigan Legislature is up for grabs, so we're recruiting candidates for our 35th Senatorial and the 101st House districts. Thinking about running? Time to put up a hand!

In Benzie, we're aiming for a full slate of County Commission candidates ready to use county powers to help rebuild our community's once-thriving year-round economy. We need more Dems like Commissioner Coury Carland—ready to engage local government in sprawl-free, jobs-rich, transportation-savvy, family-friendly housing and business development that protects our rural beauty.

Each candidate differs somewhat on how to accomplish what Dems stand for: quality health care for all; a high minimum wage; excellent public schools, job training and childcare, properly funded by fairer taxes; responsible gun ownership; bold action on climate change; and resisting Presidential chaos. They know the huuuge wealth gap hurts people and slows the economy.

In 12 months you can vote for fair economics; better healthcare, education, and family services; fair voting; and derailing the Trump Train. Join our local Party if you haven't already; help us out in any of all sorts of ways; start talking to neighbors. Together we'll send good Dems to Washington, Lansing, and Benzie. How sweet to stow the Tylenol!



JOIN US TODAY!

If you're not yet an official Benzie County Democrat, do join us today! Our membership rolls are near an all-time high, and we're on the move, but we must do better if we're to take back our government from complete Republican control. New memberships are good through 2018.

The bigger our county's party, the stronger we are: More of us around Benzie able to say "I'm a Benzie Dem!" More folks to call on for envelope-stuffing, movie night hosting, staffing candidate parties and non-profit fundraisers. And fundraising for the party, too.

Our mission is plain: Find, promote, and elect good Democrats who know government can and should be a force to improve our community, protect and help struggling families, promote a fair and stronger economy, and so much more. Join us and meet more like-minded neighbors, influence more friends, and help change our county, state, and country from red to blue.

You know what we believe—you believe it, too! So make it official. You'll find that working with others on something you believe in puts smiles on formerly discouraged faces. Do Join Us at **benziedemocrats.com!**

We've got work to do!



We want to build a Democratic community in Benzie that not only helps elect fellow Dems, but also builds a better Benzie. The more we all join in (everyone can do at least some small task) the stronger our community will be. So we're looking for volunteers for all sorts of things—from bureaucratic basics to old-fashioned fun. Check out the list on page 9.

So...there's real basic party stuff like Precinct Delegate. Carroll Volpe is organizing that task—staying in touch with nearby Dems, so that they know what's up.

There's maintaining the VAN (Voter Activation Network) database, which includes excellent training from Chris Kitzman; and juicing our social media by doggedly posting pictures, blogs, and Likes, Shares, and Tags.

For community service, check Mike Ross' piece on our Blue Tigers. And then there's doing stuff just because it's fun and gets us out of our winter hovels--movies, cards, game nights, chili cook-offs, happy hours, book clubs, and more, mostly at Headquarters.

We're getting ready for some serious fun throughout 2018—don't miss it! Please fill out our our signup checklist on **page 9**. Tear out, fold, seal, and mail it back to us.



Honorees Chloe McGehee (left) and Nancy VanderLinde

Benzie Democrats honor VanderLinde, McGehee

One hundred people gathered on Sept. 17 at Fallen Timbers, in Honor, to praise Benzie neighbors Nancy VanderLinde and Chloe McGehee. The event, the Charlotte Robling Honoree Dinner, is a Benzie County Democratic Party tradition that recognizes people for their contributions to the community and the party.

Dan Scripps, a guest speaker and former state representative, lauded both women for their positive values and longtime commitment to helping others, which he said is a welcome antidote to the current gloomy atmosphere.

"We need to reflect on how we rise above the cynicism and despair the news of national politics breeds," said Scripps, adding that he shares Martin Luther King Jr.'s belief that "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

"We have to create, inspire, articulate a vision, and then go out and do the work," Scripps said. "The result of our work may be beyond our control; people do the work not knowing how it's going to turn out. That takes passion and commitment, and that is the antidote to the cynicism of today. Thank you, Chloe and Nancy. Your work gives me hope and optimism that things are going to get better."

Both McGehee and VanderLinde have

participated in many efforts, both partisan and non-partisan, to strengthen the Benzie community. "When I ask, people are always willing to help out," said McGehee, who also thanked her spouse, Keith McGehee, for his support.

McGehee is a retired social worker, and VanderLinde was a middle school teacher. VanderLinde said she felt she's never done any major project for the local Democrats, but allowed that small things do matter: "to paraphrase Mother Teresa, you can do small things with great love."

Traverse City Mayor Jim Carruthers also spoke, reviewing his city's ongoing renewable energy efforts and recent re-commitments by more than 400 mayors nationwide to stick with the policies in the 2015 Paris Climate Accord, signed by virtually every nation in the world, but recently rejected by President Donald Trump. Paris Accord participants are adopting clean energy sources, cutting down on climate-changing emissions, and working to limit the rise of global temperatures. They are also working to cope with the growing impacts of global warming, seen recently in the unprecedented damage caused by recent Category 5 Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

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Dan Scripps

What we've been up to



Benzie Dems were on the move this spring and summer—with a successful movie night at the Garden Theater, marching in the Beulah and Frankfort 4th of July Parades and, in August, in Honor's Coho Parade (above).

Honorees

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Carruthers also talked about the importance of re-electing U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow next fall. "She will work for funding that protects the Great Lakes," he said, "and she believes that health care is a human right. She supports 'reinventing Michigan,' bringing technical jobs here, and training young adults." Carruthers noted that as ranking member of the Senate Agricultural Committee, she has an important role in supporting Michigan farmers and farmers nationwide.

Susan Koenig introduced and praised VanderLinde, while Judy Baker did the same for McGehee. Party chair and emcee Jim Dulzo introduced local elected officials, including County Commissioner Coury Carland, Benzonia Township Supervisor Jason Barnard and Trustee Jim Sheets, as well as two candidates for the 2018 primary: Retired Marine Lt. Col. Matt Morgan, running for Jack Bergman's 1st Congressional seat, and former federal prosecutor Pat Miles, who resigned on January 20 and is running for Michigan Attorney General. Dulzo talked about what's new at the Democratic Party headquarters, in Honor, and introduced the organization's membership drive.



Mike Ross, Jim Dulzo and David Green work one of our Adopt-A-Highway sections. Photo by another highway worker, Katherine Ross.

2018 Candidates visit Benzie Dems

Congressman Jack Bergman rode a big wave of dark money into office last November, and he's no friend of anyone in Benzie who needs healthcare. So it's good news that our 1st Congressional District now has two excellent candidates vying to unseat him next November. Both candidates—Matt Morgan and Dwight Brady—are regularly visiting our county, including speaking to us at our own Benzie Dems meetings. Other contenders for top state offices have visited us, as well—including gubernatorial contestant Gretchen Whitmer.

Matt Morgan is a retired Marine Corps lieutenant colonel. He lives with his wife and two young sons in Traverse City. Morgan grew up in a working class family in a rural farming community in central Illinois. The son of a highway construction foreman and a public school teacher, he served as an infantryman and public affairs officer in the Marine Corps before retiring as a lieutenant colonel. Learn more about Matt Morgan at mattmorganformichigan.com.

Dwight Brady, who teaches at Northern Michigan University, holds a master's degree in telecommunication management from Michigan State and a doctorate in communications from the University of Tennessee. He was raised in the Upper Peninsula, where he and his wife now live with their four children. Learn more about Dwight Brady at bradyforcongress.org

There was standing room only at Benzonia Township Hall when Gretchen Whitmer arrived in September to speak to Benzie Dems. Gretchen is a former county prosecutor who has served in both the state house of representatives and the state senate. She was raised in Grand Rapids and East Lansing, where she now lives now lives with her husband, two daughters, and three stepsons. Whitmer holds a BA in Communications from Michigan State University (1993) and a JD from Detroit College of Law at Michigan State University (1998). Her website is at gretchenwhitmer.com.

Several other statewide candidates have visited, including Pat Miles and Dana Nessel, who are competing for the nomination for state attorney general. Pat is from Grand Rapids, where he was U.S. Attorney for Western Michigan until resigning on Inauguration Day. Visit him at milesformichigan.com. Dana is a prominent Detroit lawyer who played a key role in the court case that legalized same-sex marriages. Her site is dana2018.com

Our party traditionally stays out of primaries, so we will not endorse any of these candidates. However, all of these dedicated public servants would welcome your support and active participation, so if there's one you really like, give 'em a shout and get involved!

Coordinator strengthens 1st Congressional District Effort

Good news! The Michigan Democratic Party has assigned a terrific person to lead us toward a victory in the 1st Congressional District; her name is Hannah King. King serves the Lower Peninsula county parties, and she has already hosted a meeting for all of them at Gaylord.

We heard a lot of good ideas there, suggested a few ourselves, and used what we learned to help shape our mail-in volunteer form on page 5.

King has been assisting all the counties with canvassing and phone banks. Because SHE is from the area, she knows how rural campaigns like ours actually work. She will also be helping us with training candidates, delegates, and volunteers wherever we need it.

Both candidates Dwight Brady and Matt Morgan spoke and the Gaylord event.

From the Chair...

It was a shell-shocked bunch of Dems who showed up at our first post-election meeting, in January. But we shook off the paralysis and started rebuilding our nerve—and our local party. I'm proud to tell you we've done a lot to get ready for next November.

We've transformed headquarters, next to the Cherry Bowl, from a lonely-feeling room into an inviting, teched-up space with good phones, fast 'n' stable wi-fi and computer, digital projection, comfortable furniture, warm lighting, and, thanks to Elizabeth Guzman-Shrake and brush'n'roll expert Bob Scholl, a fine decoration and paint job that people love! We're SO ready for meet-ups, webinars, social gatherings, phone banks, movie nights, canvassing, candidate nights, and more. And we're sharing our cool spot with other local organizations. Talk to an officer if you're group's interested.

We're drawing boffo crowds! Big turnouts at June's movie night, September's Honoree Dinner, and our monthly meetings, which are mostly fun, starting at

9:30 a.m. with coffee-klatchin', quality breakfast treats, and paw-pumpin' with friends old and new. At 10 it's community announcements, a wee bit o' speechifyin' from a budding candidate, and official business. Come early, leave early if you want, but do drop in and enjoy staying/getting in touch with like-minded neighbors.

Our membership is at a near-record peak, thanks to Mary Scholl's quiet work. We're sharpening our communications—thanks to Dodie Fitzgerald, who's revived our Web site, Aubrey Parker, who keeps our Facebook thang hot, and Chris Kitzman, who's training us up on data management. Thanks to 1st Congressional District coordinator Hannah King, we're already calling on folks to hear their druthers on local politics and policies. And we're making plans to fill our 2018 calendar with community service, fun and/or fund raising events, and candidate support work.

Next steps? That's up to you. Benzie Dems need you to keep growing. Do join us! — *Jim Dulzo*

Blue Tiger Dems: a great service opportunity

Shortly after I became active in the Benzie Democrats, about 12 years ago, I became aware of a group known as the Blue Tiger Democrats. This is the community service arm of the National Democratic Party. While a small group of us have been active for many years, we have not been very visible or well publicized. This needs to change. The projects that we have been involved in, I believe, are both fun and beneficial to the well-being of our Benzie County community.

We have adopted two state highway sections to keep free of the litter and trash: M-115 east of Crystal Mountain and M-22 near Crystal Lake and the entrance of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

Volunteering for this project involves walking two miles of highway in late April, mid-July, and late September. The MDOT provides supplies and will pick up bags of trash left during a 10 day window. We often begin with breakfast or finish at a local watering hole. It's a wonderful chance to meet new friends or walk and talk with old ones.

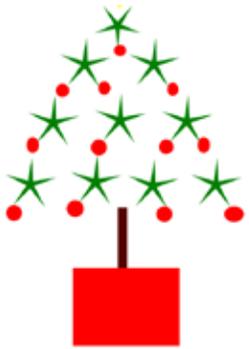
Every year, our Blue Tigerrrs support two projects in the village of Thompsonville. Summerfest is always on the third Monday of June, and features music, free food, children's games, and a chance to learn about a variety of community services available to the public. Benzie Democrats always have an information booth there.

Our role is to assist with set up and tear down of a large canopy, set up and take down tables and chairs, etc. On the first Sunday in December, we support a Christmas party for the children of Thompsonville. We have a small budget for this event to shop for and bag candy that Santa passes out at the Thompsonville Village Hall. Again, we help with set up for the party and clean up.

We have in the past sponsored community food drives with teams of volunteers at grocery stores in Benzonia, Frankfort, Honor, and Copemish. This year, we are planning a food drive for **Saturday, November 11**, which is Veterans Day. We would also like to have a food drive around Valentine's Day in February. Each date requires approximately 16 to 24 volunteers to work a shift at one of the four locations. All food collected would be distributed to three local food banks.

We are considering new projects for the Blue Tiger group, including possible free tutoring for students. There are obviously many other opportunities for us as a party to positively affect our Benzie community. Please feel free to contact Jim Dulzo or myself (Mike Ross) with your ideas.

Join us for our Dec. Holiday Gathering



Our winter holiday party will be Saturday, December 9, 5:30 p.m. at the Grow Benzie facility on Highway 115 between Benzonia and Frankfort. Good food, socializing, and music will be the order of the evening. The event is a

potluck with some meat and nonalcoholic beverages provided by the Benzie Dems. Please bring a dish to pass and table service. You're welcome to bring your own beverage, alcoholic or nonalcoholic. Under the tree we'll once again collect gifts for the Benzie Baby Pantry, which serves families with infants and young children in Benzie and northern Manistee counties. Items needed range from diapers and baby food to clothing (up to age 5) and equipment. The pantry most often is required to purchase and especially needs: formula, diapers, shampoo, lotion, baby wash and wipes. If you don't want to shop, but want to contribute, you can make a donation by cash or check at the holiday party. We look forward to seeing you!



Grassroots movement to end partisan redistricting

Today, citizens across Michigan are working to change the way we draw voting districts—right now it's a highly partisan process that fails to guarantee equal representation for all voters. It's a significant problem in Michigan, and you can help.

The statewide group Voters Not Politicians is working to bring the power back to the people of Michigan through a citizen-led ballot initiative. The main idea is: ***Voters should choose their politicians, not the other way around.*** Voters Not Politicians' vision is to establish an Independent Citizen Redistricting Commission through a state constitutional amendment. This would take redistricting out of the hands of politicians, replacing the current secretive process with one that is transparent and open to public participation. More than 400,000 signatures are needed to get the amendment on the ballot. Watch for opportunities to sign at public events and in **November** near these locations:

- Mondays:** 11-1, Lake Ann Post Office
- Tuesdays:** 10-11:30, Frankfort. Benzie Shores District Library
- Tuesdays:** 12-1, in front of Beulah Darcy Library
- Wednesdays:** 11-12:30, Beulah near East Shore Market
- Wed. Nov 8 & 15:** 12-1, at Thompsonville Library
- Thur/Fri Nov 9 & 10:** 4:30-6, Honor Plaza
- Saturdays:** 11-12, outside at Benzonia Library
- Sat. Nov. 11:** 12-1, Thompsonville Library

Frankfort parade, July 4



Jim Dulzo (left), redecorating organizer Elizabeth Shrake and Bob Scholl at work on our project to make the headquarters more user-friendly. A couch, comfortable chairs, and artwork have been added.



Calendar

Nov 18: General Meeting
(All members welcome to participate & vote.)

Dec 9: Holiday Gathering

No meeting in December

Jan 20: Regular Meeting

Winter Film: TBD

Feb 17: Regular Meeting

March 17: Regular Meeting

We meet every 3rd Saturday at our Honor Headquarters, with coffee and breakfast treats at 9:30, and our meeting at 10 a.m. Member or not, please join us...and bring a friend!

No meeting in Dec.

Keep in touch!

Our HDQ is regularly staffed on Tuesdays, noon-4 p.m. At any time you can call and leave a voice mail and someone will get back to you.

Phone: 231-325-0008

9330 Honor Hwy. (US-31) east of the Cherry Bowl Drive-in.

Mail: P.O. Box 403

Beulah, MI 49617.

Website: benziedemocrats.com

Visit us on Facebook!

Officer Contact Information

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Treasurer John Chahbazi: 810.487.0393 chahbazi@gmail.com

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

Mail-in Volunteer Information Form

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP US WIN 2018?

We'll be doing some of the things we've always done to help win local, state, and federal elections, but we might try some new things, too. Please tell us which of these you'd like to help us with. (It's okay to check way more than one!) Tear out, fold, seal, and mail to us. Our address is on the back of this page.

Write at least three letters to local papers over the next year about our Democratic values, local issues, and voting next November. (We'll help you write them!)

Staff tables at event to hand out our stuff, including our new membership forms.

Help create and staff Party events, like a euchre or movie night at headquarters, a picnic in a local park, a fund raising potluck or supporting events for our local candidates.

Attend or help organize events targeting Jack Bergman's lousy votes.

Participate in community-minded events like a Party food or clothing drive.

Staff the office for a few hours on a every-other-week basis.

Learn about ACA, Healthy Michigan, Medicaid/Medicare to answer office queries.

Help promote our events, like movies at The Garden, by posting or hand out flyers.

Be part of a phone tree that reminds Party members of our upcoming events.

Help with bulk mailings and/or handwritten letters to current/potential members.

Providing dishes for potluck or fund raising events.

Call strong Democrats in our county to ask them what issues they care about.

Visit strong Democrats in our county to ask them what issues they care about.

Run for a local office with strong support from Benzie Dems.

Help local, state, and federal candidates campaign in Benzie County.

Always "Share," "Like," and "Tag" what we post on our Facebook page.

I'd also like to do this: _____

Your Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Address _____

**THANKS A LOT! PLEASE MAIL THIS TO US AT PO BOX 403, BEULAH 49617,
WE'LL BE IN CONTACT AGAIN SOON!**

From:

To:

**Benzie County Democratic Party
P.O. Box 403
Beulah, MI 49617.**