



The Benzie Kicker

Newsletter of the Benzie County Democratic Party

Vol. 22, No. 2, Fall 2018

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

Election 2018

Benzie Dems' 10 steps to victory

Yup: most important election in decades. Yup: Dems united around healthcare, jobs, public schools, and fair wages and taxes. And Yup: still lots to do to build that much-rumored wave that none should dare take for granted.

Benzie, Lansing, and Washington on Nov. 7?

Let's Do This!

—Jim Dulzo

Here are 10 things to do—quickly:

1. Call Mike Ross (231-651-0604) or John Chahbazi (810-487-0393) now and volunteer to either canvass or drive canvassers. This is crucial!
2. Reserve Nov. 3 & 4 to help our huge “knock and drop” home delivery project.
3. Take Nov. 6 off to poll-watch, phone-bank, or host our Headquarters Victory Party.
4. Visit BenzieDemocrats.com, find your county commission candidate, email their photo/bio to five neighbors in your district, and urge them to vote for them.
5. Check out our other commission candidates and email their stuff to friends in those districts.
6. Write a letter now to the *Benzie County Record Patriot* for your county commissioner, House candidate Kathy Wiejaczka, state Senate candidate Mike Taillard, or Congressional candidate Matt Morgan (running against Jack Bergman.) Under 300 words, please, with name and phone number.
7. Urge friends to vote the entire Democratic ticket. (Many top Republicans agree, to force their Party to sober up.)
8. Yard signs! If your road's slow, find a friend on a busier one. Offer to pick up signs at HQ, put 'em up, and take 'em down. They're going fast! Headquarters is open M-Th 10 to 7, 'til 4 on Fridays, and Saturdays 9 to noon.
9. Donate to Kathy, Mike, and/or Matt. They need every dime!
10. Ask a young person you know to promise to vote Nov. 6.

Some of this feels uncomfortable, right? Ask yourself: How uncomfortable will you feel if R's still control



Thanks to all of you for all you've been doing and all of the steps you take toward November 6!



“Democracy is not a guarantee. Freedom is not inevitable. All of the myths and heroic tales we've told ourselves about America have been exposed. The mask has been removed. And in the battle for the future of America, there is no guarantee of victory.

Hope alone will not save us. In order to prevail, we need action.”

—Michael Moore

Vote absentee: request your ballot now

Absentee ballots are a convenient, increasingly popular way to vote. The process requires a few steps before election day, but it's a good way to avoid long lines or mobility problems at the poll.

First, you must apply for an absentee ballot. Call your township or city clerk and ask for a ballot application, which they can mail to you—or stop by and pick one up and either take it home or fill it out on the spot. Either way, your completed application must be back to the clerk's office no later than 2 p.m. the Saturday before the election. It's best to submit it right away. There is also a link on our website to download the application form.

The clerk processes your application immediately, checking paperwork and registration, and mails your official paper ballot to any address you choose.

Then, you must either mail or hand-deliver your filled-out ballot to your clerk so that it arrives no later than 8 p.m. election day. You must **sign your return envelope**, and it must match the signature the office has.

So all that's required is some planning ahead.

Who can vote absentee? Any registered voter who's 60 or older, or is unable to vote without assistance at the polls, expects to be out of town on election day (long work commutes included), is in jail awaiting arraignment or trial, or can't attend the polls for religious reasons.

To get this going, visit BenzieDemocrats.com, click on "About Benzie," find your township or city's information, and request the ballot application.

One important exception: If this is your first time voting, you must vote in person, unless you are disabled or 60 years old or older.

Support our County Commission candidates!

For the first time in years, lots of Democrats are running for Benzie County Commission seats—five of the seven seats, in fact, so we now have a shot at winning a board majority. These are races where a little extra time, effort, and money from us can make a big difference. If you live in one of these districts, do contact your good neighbor who's running and ask how you can help *now*. A terrific first step is to have a house party, invite a few people, help make some introductions, and maybe raise a few bucks for your most local candidate. Here's our fine lineup:

GOP war on voters continues

A 2016 law passed by the Republican-controlled Legislature banned straight-ticket voting in Michigan, and a recent court ruling means that straight-ticket voting won't be available as an option in the Nov. 6 general election. That means that instead of making one mark to vote for all Democrats, we will have to make individual marks for each one.

A ruling by a federal judge in Detroit would have struck down the ban, but in early September the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, in a 2-1 decision marked by a sharply worded dissent, blocked that ruling.

The *Detroit Free Press* reports that many local clerks have said that the ban could result in lengthy delays to vote in cities such as Detroit and Flint. That's exactly what Republicans are hoping for, since big cities are Democratic strongholds.

This situation is addressed by ballot Proposal 3, so remember to vote for it and the other two proposals offered on Nov. 6. See page 3.

Coury Carland is a Frankfort High School grad, was a candidate for sheriff in 2012, and won a commissioner seat in 2014. Our lone Dem commissioner richly deserves some like-minded board colleagues. Coury represents Benzonia Township—County District 4. Reach Coury at carland82@gmail.com.

Jeff Sandman, another Frankfort grad, was a commissioner back in 2008, but had to resign when he became the local newspaper editor. He's running in Homestead Township—County District 5. Reach Jeff at jeff.sandman1@gmail.com or [facebook.com/votesandman](https://www.facebook.com/votesandman).

Long-time Benzie grower **Don Smeltzer** is running again. He just missed in 2016, and is very much up for Round 2 in Blaine, Gilmore, Joyfield, and Weldon Townships—County District 7. Reach Don at smeltzerdonald7@gmail.com.

Linda Farrell is a strong candidate with a track record of community service, such as Advocates for Benzie County and Frankfort Tree Board. She's running in Crystal Lake Township and Frankfort—County District 3. Reach Linda at lindafarrellforbenziecounty@gmail.com.

Mark Willette-Green has run his own Up North IT biz for decades and is now ready to run for election. He says 2017 showed it's time to jump in and work for change. He'd represent Lake, Platte, and western Almira Townships—County District 2. Reach Mark at mgreen@vector-computers.com.

Live in a district with no Dem candidate? It's totally kosher to help out the candidate in the district next door. It's all about building a better Benzie and a stronger Benzie County Democratic Party.

BALLOT RECOMMENDATIONS

U.S. Senate: **Senator Debbie Stabenow**

U.S. Congress, District 1: **Matt Morgan**

State Offices

Governor: **Gretchen Whitmer**

Lieutenant Governor: **Garlin Gilchrist**

Michigan Attorney General: **Dana Nessel**

Michigan Secretary of State: **Jocelyn Benson**

State Senate, District 35: **Mike Taillard**

State House, District 101: **Kathy Wiejaczka**

Benzie County Commission

There are seven county commission districts; Dems are running in five. No Dem candidate in districts I and VI.

District II (Lake, Platte and Almira (west of Reynolds Rd.) townships): **Mark Willette-Green**

District III (Crystal Lake Township, City of Frankfort): **Linda Farrell**

District IV (Benzonia Township): **Coury Carland**

District V (Homestead Township): **Jeff Sandman**

District VII (Blaine, Gilmore, Joyfield, and Weldon townships): **Don Smeltzer**

County Road Commission

Charles Brozofsky

Nonpartisan Ballot Section

State Supreme Court:

Sam Bagenstos and **Megan Cavanagh**

Education Boards

State Board of Education:

Judy Pritchett and **Tiffany Tilley**

UM Board of Regents:

Jordan Acker and **Paul Brown**

MSU Board of Trustees:

Brianna Scott and **Kelly Tebay**

WSU Board of Governors:

Bryan Barnhill and **Dr. Anil Kumar**

Benzie Central School Board:

Lori Hill

BALLOT INITIATIVES

The Benzie County Democratic Party endorses the following three proposals appearing on the 2018 ballot.

Proposal 1, Marijuana Legalization Initiative.

A “yes” vote supports legalizing the recreational use and possession of marijuana for persons 21 years of age or older and enacting a tax on marijuana sales. The law would authorize and legalize possession, use, and cultivation of marijuana products by individuals who are at least 21 years old, and the commercial sales of marijuana through state-licensed retailers. This proposal would: (*continued on page 4*)

Proposal 2, The Michigan Independent Redistricting Commission Initiative (Michigan Constitutional Amendment). A “yes” vote supports transferring the power to draw the state’s congressional and legislative districts from the Michigan Legislature to an independent redistricting commission.

Redistricting is the process used to create voting districts from which we elect our U.S. representative and our state legislators. When that process is manipulated to benefit one party it is called gerrymandering. After the last census, and according to law, the districts were drawn by the state Legislature, which Republicans controlled, and boy were they gerrymandered!

Michigan voters are about half Democrats and half Republicans, but due to gerrymandering, Republicans took 64 percent of the seats in the Michigan Legislature. The only way for state government to truly represent Michigan citizenry is to end the manipulation of voting districts. It is so important to pass Proposal 2! Questions? Visit votersnotpoliticians.com, the nonpartisan group that led the stop gerrymandering effort.

Proposal 3, Promote the Vote (Michigan voter regulations; Michigan Constitutional Amendment). A “yes” vote will improve voter access for all **U.S. citizens eligible to vote in Michigan**. Unless the voter declines, she will automatically become registered to vote when applying for, updating, or renewing a driver’s license or state-issued personal identification card. With proof of residency, a voter can simultaneously register to vote and obtain a ballot during the two-week period prior to an election, up to and including Election Day. A voter can obtain an absent voter ballot without providing a reason, and voters would be allowed to cast a straight-ticket vote for all candidates of a particular political party when voting in a partisan general election.

Benzie County Democratic Party
PO Box 403
Beulah, MI 49617

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

INSIDE

Your 10 Steps to Victory! **Ballot Recommendations** **Three Ballot Proposals** **Commission Candidates**

Proposal 1, *continued from page 3*

- Allow individuals 21 and older to purchase, possess and use marijuana and marijuana-infused edibles, and grow up to 12 marijuana plants for personal consumption.
- Impose a 10-ounce limit for marijuana kept at residences and require amounts over 2.5 ounces be secured in locked containers.
- Create a state licensing system for marijuana businesses and allow municipalities to ban or restrict them.
- Permit retail sales of marijuana and edibles subject to a 10 percent tax, dedicated to implementation costs, clinical trials, schools, roads, and municipalities where marijuana businesses are located.
- Change several current violations from crimes to civil infractions.

If you have any questions or concerns about Proposal 1, please contact me at the phone number below anytime. Thank you so much!

—Rev. Steven B. Thompson,
Chapter Director, Benzie County NORML
(231) 882-4496 www.minorml.org

Calendar

Oct 20: Monthly Meeting, 9:30 a.m., HQ.

**Nov 6: ELECTION DAY & VICTORY
PARTY at Headquarters**

Nov 17: Monthly Meeting, 9:30 a.m., HQ.

Dec 1: Holiday Season party and potluck.

No regular meeting in December.

Officer Contact Information

Chair Jim Dulzo: 231.882.1341
jimdulzo@gmail.com

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mcarrollvolpe477@gmail.com

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mike.ross0919@gmail.com

Secretary Jill Kimball: 231.632.5871
sunnyjill@hotmail.com

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chahbazi@gmail.com