

The Voice of Benton County Democrats
THE DEMOCRATIC REPORTER



December 2008

WWW.BENCODEMS.ORG

HOTLINE 585-7682

Officers

Chair	Bob Parazin	chair@bencodems.org 946 6363
Vice Chair	Regina Speer	vicechair@bencodems.org 946 5744
Treasurer	[pending]	treasurer@bencodems.org
Secretary	Gloria Cummins	secretary@bencodems.org 430 8718
Editor	Steven Link	newsletter@bencodems.org 948-0054
SCW	Mimi Latta	scw@bencodems.org 627 2679
SCM	John Latta	scm@bencodems.org 627 2679

From the Chair

ALL THINGS BEING EQUAL At least for now, here in Benton County, candidates for partisan public office, all things being equal, a Democrat doesn't have much of a chance to get elected. The Democrat has to be a better campaigner than their Republican counterpart. They have to have a better skill set, better local name recognition, better volunteer support, more political experience, a more relevant public service record, better issue positions, better financing, a better response to opponent's allegations, better church affiliation, etc. etc. The point is a Democratic candidate has to be measurably better in as many of these areas as possible not to appeal to their party base, but to be so exceptional that they can attract votes from Independents, Moderate Republicans and Disinterested/Apathetic voters. At least for now that is.

The question we have to ask ourselves is how can the local Democratic Party change Benton County voters so that the playing field can be leveled and more welcoming to Democratic candidates. National and State Democratic campaigns had surprisingly little if any effect on Benton County results. In spite of the

hours and hours of media ads over TV, 100s of hours of radio ads, 10s of mailings to local voters, and 1000s of phone calls Benton County voters did NOT elect ONE Democrat!

There never can be a substitute for a good qualified candidate that is serious in serving and willing to make the sacrifices so necessary to be successful. But it has to be more than that; a well-qualified candidate and campaigner and a good campaign, a victory does not make. Truly we had remarkable candidates.

The challenge of incumbency in an area where the incumbents' party is in a decidedly 2 to 1 majority is a most formidable obstacle. And even a non-incumbent with a similar party affiliation, is a formidable obstacle as we learned with Pos 1, 8th LD. Voter qualities of party loyalty, perceived self-interest, laziness and indifference all work against the Democratic challenger. Those are the voter qualities we have to focus on if we have any hope in leveling the playing field. And understand that leveling the playing field can only help a good candidate and not in itself, assure victory. But a level political playing field in Benton County will assuredly make the political climate more encouraging to strong Democratic candidates considering public office, both partisan and non-partisan. And ONLY with STRONG CANDIDATES can victory be within our grasp.

So how do we deal with issues of voter loyalty, self-interest and political indifference? The knowledge base on such issues is undoubtedly vast and well studied. The question really becomes, how do we apply it in Benton County; to 1) dismantle Republican loyalty, 2) dismantle Republicans' perceived self-interest in the business, municipalities, professional, and wage-earning communities, 3) attack voter apathy, and 4) community indifference toward important local and regional issues? What goals, strategies and tactics can we establish and work towards such that after some 20+ years, Benton County Democrats can again

stand on that level playing field, where elections will no longer be forgone conclusions based on party affiliation.

We welcome your suggestions and more importantly your support, to help level the playing field in 2009 and beyond! Happy Holidays!

Re-Organization Meeting

Mark Saturday, January 10th from 12 pm to 4 pm, MCL Union Street Library, 16th and S. Union. This will be the Benton County and 8th Legislative District reorganization meeting where we elect our Officers for the 08/09 period. We'll begin with the County Party positions, Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, State Committeeman, and State Committee Woman. We'll then change leadership and move to the 8th Legislative District with the LD positions of Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, State Committeeman and State Committee Woman.

We'll post descriptions of these various positions on our website in late December. Voting will be open to both Elected and Appointed PCOs as of December 1st, 2008. Those elected PCOs that didn't receive 10% of the vote of the most successful Democratic candidate in their Precinct have been automatically appointed as discussed at our November Central Committee meeting.

It is our belief that the issue of elected PCOs and compliance with the 10% rule will not be addressed any further in 2009 unless a partisan County position is vacated [we have only 1] and we'll be required by law to submit a field of THREE Democratic candidates with a recommended preference for the vacated partisan position. Our elected PCOs would be called upon to vote for these candidates. The County Commissioners actually SELECT the candidate from a field of three submitted by the Party and are not bound by the recommended party candidate.

Storage of Benton County Party Inventory

We now have a month-to-month contract with Watts and Sons for the use of a 20'x 10' storage unit. We are splitting the cost of the unit with another party at a cost to us of approximately \$40/month. HOWEVER, we are still interested in securing alternate storage without any monthly cost. We've considered the purchase of a

12' by 36' storage container but we'd need an accessible site in a central and secure Tri-City location to handle the container. If you have any suggestions or recommendations on how we could obtain storage at a nominal cost, please let us know.

Commentary On Our Headquarters

The doors of our 2008 Headquarters on George Washington Way were finally closed on November 20th. Cindi Laws, Fearing's Campaign Manager believes that the furniture, equipment and accessories that were loaned to the Fearing Campaign, have been returned. But we did find that some tables were returned to the wrong party for example. Nearly ALL of the items that were left were not labeled or marked by their owners. If you loaned something to the Fearing Campaign that hasn't been returned, please let us know by calling 946 6363.

The furnishings and equipment left, along with a number of odds and ends were donated to various charities through Cindi. Some items such as the floor vacuum and other miscellaneous have been retained by the BCDCC [in storage] until we make a determination of their future usefulness. We suspect that most of these items will be disposed of or donated.

At one time we had FOUR on-going campaigns sharing the facility and our phone bank. I'm certain we distributed thousands of dollars of campaign materials to our supporters, to 1000s of walk-ins and phone-ins and surprisingly, many from across the River! The weekly Obama meetings in the facility drew quite a diverse group from throughout County and Pasco as well. And many commented that they didn't realize that there WAS a functioning Democratic Party in the Tri-Cities! Surprise!

Without the support of the Fearing Campaign and their willingness to let us share their facility, I seriously doubt that we would have had the ability to reach out to our Democratic base as we did. Thank You George and Mimi.

Holiday Party and/or Inauguration Party

We're still working on finalizing our plans. I had hoped that we'd be able to tell you by press-time what are plans are, but this remains a voluntary organization. With the commitments so many of us made to the

November election we're finding that things are slow in coming together. If we DO have a Holiday Party, it will be announced on our HOTLINE 585-7682 and our website, www.bencodems.org. Look for Saturday, December 13 as our target date, but December 20 is also a possibility.

Regarding an Inauguration Party, our Drinking Liberally contingent tells us that a room will be reserved at the Shilo Inn where their weekly Drinking Liberally event will be combined and morphed into an Inauguration Party, Tuesday, January 20th. More details will be available in our January Newsletter, Website and HOTLINE.

Teamsters Continue to Strike Oak Harbor Trucking

We've offered our support to our local Teamsters in their struggle to maintain their wage and benefit package with Oak Harbor Trucking. The strike has been ongoing for a few months now. In conversations with Teamster representatives We've offered our support in any way they see appropriate; i.e. picketing, solidarity event, visibility event, etc. We'll keep you apprised of any planned events through our HOTLINE and Website.

Where do we go from here?

Kendall M Miller, 8th LD Chair

Despite the Democratic successes in the last general election statewide and nationwide, Benton County has once again proven to be a bastion of Republican support. The county overwhelmingly went for John McCain, Dino Rossi, and Richard Hastings. And we were surprised by the win of the weak Republican candidate for the 8th Legislative District, Brad whatever-his-name-is over the bipartisan-supported Carol Moser. It has been made painfully clear that Benton County is the highest in the state in the production of Republican votes. Naturally this has generated a certain amount of soul-searching by the local party members. We need to face this fact head-on.

In the next few months you can expect to see some intense discussion in the local party of how best to change this. Given our statistical starting point, just getting close enough to the Republicans to make it an

interesting race seems like an unattainable goal. That puts everything on the table. Every possible idea needs to be considered. All of our assumptions need to be challenged. And we need to do this by ourselves. All the well-meaning help from our west side colleagues has been to no avail because, frankly, their experience just doesn't seem to translate to our peculiar region. We need to express ourselves in terms that resonate with eastside voters. That is going to take some careful thought on our part. I hope we are never guilty of sacrificing genuine Democratic principles on the altar of election pandering. Yet we need to find those kernels of our principles that can appeal to our local folks. For example, I think everyone knows someone who is a single-issue anti-abortion voter. But I think both sides of the question want to do what it takes to reduce the number of abortions to the lowest possible level. A candidate with that kind of conviction might be able to win the support of that single-issue voter regardless of any other policy position he or she may have.

The work in Benton County is not going to be easy in the next two years but we do have some opportunities before us. One thing to our advantage is the recent Republican success. We have an opportunity to capitalize on their complacency. They see Benton County as a secure area. Another thing is that our legislative delegation is pure Republican. There will be plenty of examples in the next legislative session where that affiliation will be a liability and the needs of Benton County residents will not be well-served by our representatives. Furthermore, from what I've seen our local Democrats have not shown a scurry-off-and-hide attitude. We are energized and motivated. Because if we can win the hearts and minds of voters here, we can do it anywhere.



HOTLINE 585-7682

Website www.bencodems.org

December

December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 *Drink Liberally Shilo/O'Callahans 7pm every Tuesday	3	4	5 NO Tri-City Democrats Mtg.	6
7	8	9 * Drink Liberally	10	11 Executive Board Mtg, 6:30 pm, RCC	12	13 Check HOTLINE, Date reserved for Holiday Party
14	15	16* Drink Liberally	17 Central Committee Mtg. IBEW77	18	19	20
21	22	23* Drink Liberally	24	25	26	27
28	29	30* Drink Liberally	31	27	28	29

* **Drinking Liberally** - Every Tuesday at the Shilo/O'Callahan's in Richland - 7 pm soft drinks and water are always available
RCC -- Richland Community Center, **IBEW77** -- 2626 W. Clearwater, Kenn