

THE GRAND DEMOCRAT

WINTER, 2007

VOL VII, NO. 1

Diana Ketola: Letter from the Chair

I'd like to start off by thanking the past officers for their many years of service to our county party. We've experienced a lot of growth and success over the past six years and I'm looking forward to working as a team with the other new officers: Ross Richardson, Vice Chair; Dean Sheldon, Treasurer, and June Thaden, Recording Secretary, as well as the members of the Executive Board to continue building upon that success in the future.

I'd also like to thank the candidates and their families for the sacrifices they made to run for public office. It takes a tremendous commitment of time and energy to be a candidate and we need to recognize and appreciate their efforts.

We had a record-breaking number of Democratic candidates in the 2006 election cycle and I know we surprised the opposition party by the strong showing of Democrats on the ticket.

To continue our record of success we need to continue building our party in 2007. Often times we assume that there isn't much to do in an "off" election year but nothing could be further

from the truth. The effort we put forth in 2007 will go a long way towards assisting 2008 candidates and their respective campaigns.

Listed below are some of the activities that we need to continue and to increase:

- Voter Identification**
- Membership Building**
- Volunteer Recruitment**
- Fundraising**
- Campaign Analysis**
- Candidate Recruitment**
- Voter Registration**

Continued on page 2 ...



New officers June Thaden, Secretary; Dean Sheldon, Treasurer; Diana Ketola, Chair; Ross Richardson, Vice-Chair

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Governor Granholm
at Elmwood Park Rally
November 1, 2006

Dems Rally January 20 — Celebrate With Us!

The Grand Traverse County Democratic Party will hold its 7th annual Mid-Winter Rally Saturday, January 20 at 6:00 p.m. at the UAW Hall, corner of Rose and Hannah in Traverse City. All Democrats are invited to attend and celebrate our status as the party of the progressive man and woman!

The January 20th event will include a buffet dinner and drinks and will feature a tribute to the party's retiring officers. Tickets are available at the door, and a \$10 donation is suggested. For more information, please contact the Grand Traverse County Democratic Party at (231) 946-5555.

**Northern Michigan 2008
KICK-OFF
RECEPTION
for
United States Senator
CARL LEVIN**

**Saturday, January 27, 2007
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

**The Minervini Group
Offices**
830 Cottageview Drive
Suite 1011
Traverse City
*Located in Building 50
in the Grand Traverse Commons
(above Trattoria Stella)*

Host \$300

Sponsor \$100

Guest \$50

(All Hosts and Sponsors will be listed at the Reception)

Hosts

Michael & Teckla Dettmer

T. Michael & Joan Jackson

Ray & Marsha Minervini

Grant & Paulette Parsons

Robert & Kathy Garvey

Lynn Larson

Bill & Carin Northway

P. David & Barbara Vinocur

Diana Ketola

Thompson, O'Neil & VanderVeen

Walton, Smith, Phillips & Dixon

For further information or to RSVP call 517-999-3420 or email

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- January 20 Mid-Winter Rally. UAW Hall, Rose & Hannah in Traverse City, 6 PM
- January 27 Reception for Senator Carl Levin, 10 AM to Noon, Minervini Group Offices, 830 Cottage Drive, Suite 1011 (Building 50 of the Grand Traverse Commons)
- February 10 Democratic County Convention, 10 AM at Grand Traverse County Headquarters
- February 24 Democratic State Convention, Cobo Center, Detroit, MI
- May 19 Truman Dinner, Park Place Hotel Dome, Traverse City
- Executive Board Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6 PM. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Letter from the Chair ... continued from pg 1

A top priority for the 2007 has to be voter identification. It's amazing how few voters are identified by party affiliation. By identifying voters by party affiliation or issues we can help campaigns/candidates efficiently and effectively contact voters via mail, phone or direct canvassing. It's a slow process but the ultimate payoff for future campaigns is invaluable in both time and money. A special thanks to those volunteers in Traverse City Precinct 1, Precinct 8, Precinct 9 and the Grucz campaign for taking the time to canvass their areas. If anyone else has a completed walk sheet from their respective area please be sure to drop it off at the office so it can be incorporated into our data base.

2006 was a great election year for Democrats and I'm already excited about our potential for 2008 especially with Senator Levin planning to run again. I look forward to working with all of you to expand the "blue" of Traverse City proper to the rest of the county. If we all work together we can make 2008 another banner year for Democrats.

The Grand Democrat

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Ross Richardson, Interim Editor; Dan Solano, Layout Editor; Deni Scudato, Copy Editor; Contributors: Eartha Melzer, Dan Solano, Ross Richardson

Election Results: Who's in Charge Here?

By Jim Dulzo (reprinted from the Benzie County Democratic Newsletter)

They said it couldn't be done and boy, were they wrong! Benzie Democrats moved mountains on Nov 7, taking two of the three county commissioner seats we contested, making an impressive showing in the third, and just missing in the state representative race. We also delivered strong winning margins for Governor Jennifer Granholm and US Senator Debbie Stabenow. Not bad for what's long been viewed as a Republican stronghold!

Benzie Dem Mike Madden says it's way more than "not bad," though. He says the results indicate that the Democratic Party is now the majority party in Benzie County. If you think he's crazy, read on.

First, he points out, the top two races on the 2006 ballot went decisively Democratic. Governor Granholm and Senator Stabenow each took nearly 54% of the vote.

Second, he observes, we won what's called the "Base Democratic Vote," which is measured by the vote for the WSU Board of Governors. It was a squeaker, but our candidates took 50.5% of that traditionally quite partisan ballot.

Third, our candidate for state representative, Dan Scripps, lost in Benzie to incumbent Representative David Palsrok by just 20 votes.

And fourth, most of our county's municipalities are now strongly Democratic. The governor and senator carried 10 of them, while Mr. Scripps carried 7.

Perhaps even more enlightening is how well Benzie Dems did further down the ticket. Thanks to hard work building the local party, and energetic campaigns by all three of our county commissioner candidates, Anne Damm and Jeffrey Sandman were victorious in County Districts 3 and 4, while in

District 5, Kathy Ralston lost to Commissioner Walterhouse—a Benzie institution—by just 130 votes. But even in Kathy's district, as well as in District 2, where Republican Commissioner Pitcher ran unopposed, the Base Democratic vote topped 50% and the governor and US senator won comfortably.

Why? The answer should warm the cockles of even the most grizzled Benzie Dem hearts: Turnout was sky-high across the county (approaching presidential-year levels, a generally unheard of thing), and they came from Benzie Dems.

Some of this is easy to spot: The Democratic vote for governor was up 42% over 2002; for US senator it was up 22%. But look what happened in some other races, compared to four years ago. For US Representative (Kimon Kotos), Benzie Dems' vote was up a remarkable 51%, for state representative (Dan Scripps), up 39%; for Base Democratic vote up 49%.

In other words, Mike says, inspired by a huge backlash against George Bush's incompetence, his rubberstamp Congress, obstructionist Republicans in Lansing, and—just as importantly as any of those—*our hard work rebuilding the Party here*, there has been a sea change in Benzie.

Continued on page 6

Elections in 2007

The four election dates set for 2007 are February 27, May 8, August 7, and November 6.

Two special elections are currently scheduled for February 27. Blair Township is filling vacancies for Township Supervisor and Township Treasurer caused by recalls last November. In Acme Township, the Township Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer and all 4 Trustees are subjected to a recall election, in the ongoing dispute over how development in Acme will take shape.

There are no elections currently scheduled for May 8 or August 7. August 7 would have been the Primary for the Traverse City Commission, but voters eliminated it this past election.

November 6 will be the election for the Traverse City Commission and the Traverse City School Board. The Mayor is decided every 2 years, and 3 of the Commissioners will be up for 4-year terms. In addition, because of the resignation of Rick Csapo, the two years remaining in his term will also be up for election. The filing date for Mayor and the 4 Commission seats is August 14, by 4 PM. This is the same filing date for School Board candidates.

As other issues arise during the year, such as recalls or special referendums, they will be added to the election calendar, but such elections will fall on one of these four dates.

Exit Iraq

By Dan Solano, retired police officer and ex-Marine

A loud and clear message was sent by voters November 7, 2006. Voters have tired of the Iraq war, record deficits, and Republican scandals. With a majority in both houses of Congress, Democrats have been given the opportunity to repair the mess created by a misguided Republican leadership.

Voters want a conclusion to the War in Iraq, a war that has left us with 3000 dead American troops and more than 24000 wounded and billions of dollars of debt. Our wounded will require long term treatment and extensive therapy to maintain their quality of life. A large number of our troops are maimed by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDS), those crude deadly weapons easily concealed and difficult to detect. The December 2006 National Geographic Magazine has a sobering story on our wounded troops; the article demonstrates the stark reality they face.

Public support for the war is at an all time low. The false information used by the Republican leadership to attack Iraq has infuriated the American public. Countless mothers and fathers will breath a sigh of relief

when their loved ones are withdrawn from this ill- conceived war. Thus far George Bush has turned a deaf ear to ending the war, and the political cost to the Republicans has been high. Their political loss will be short-lived, however, if Democrats fail to bring our troops home in a timely manner.

Democrats have demonstrated that you can support the troops and oppose the war and we must remain steadfast in our opposition. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi has made ending the Iraq war a top priority. She will not sit idle while our troops needlessly die. In a candid interview on NPR's All Things Considered (01-09-07) she expressed her opposition to the war and made it clear that "The president's policy in Iraq is a failure." Her interview gives hope that there will be meaningful efforts to disengage from Iraq. Here at home we can do our part by contacting our elected reps and writing letters to the editors stating our opposition to the Iraq war. Through our combined efforts we can give our troops the flight they deserve, a flight home alive and well.

Semper fi!



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Talk to the Voters ... cont. from pg. 7

And so it's back to voter identification and knocking on doors. Nothing is harder, or slower, than door-to-door canvassing. But I also believe nothing is more rewarding, both personally and politically. I have found that even the supporters of the opposition party respect the fact that someone is taking the time to **talk to the voters**. And so this has become my personal political slogan, and one I hope the entire party will adopt. We can talk to ourselves until we're blue in the face, but only by expanding the discussion to the voters at large will we see ourselves turning Grand Traverse County blue.

County Commission Races (cont)

District 9	Don Dierkes	Sonny Wheelock
Grant 1	172	270
Green Lake 2	605	662
Long Lake 1	417	661
Long Lake 3	456	906
Totals	1478	2229

Democrats Gain in November Balloting

The Democratic vote in Grand Traverse County increased in the 2006 elections, continuing the trend of recent years. Voter turnout also increased significantly over the mid-term elections of 2002, creating gains in both Democratic raw vote and the percentage of the electorate voting for the Dems.

Although none of the local or legislative candidates in the county won, we had more candidates contesting election, with strong candidates for both the 104th House and the 37th Senate, and 5 out of the 9 County Commission seats contested.

Governor Jennifer Granholm led the ticket, garnering 47.4% of the vote county-wide, and 59.8% in Traverse City. This compares with 53.6% in Traverse City in 2002. Of more interest Granholm's raw vote in TC went from 2227 in 2002 to 3819 in 2006, an increase of 71.5%!

State Senate candidate Sharon Unger received 40.8% of the vote across the 8-county District, and got 42.5% in Grand Traverse County, a good showing considering she was running against an incumbent in his home county.

Roman Grucz, running for the 104th House seat, was the first Democrat to run an active contest against Howard Walker, who was elected to his 3rd and final term. Roman drew basically the same

percentage (41.6%) in the 2 counties making up the 104th, Grand Traverse & Kalkaska.

We need to take heart from the performance of our local candidates. Roman Grucz is the first serious Democratic opposition Howard Walker has faced in 3 runs for the State House seat. Grucz polled about 6% better than what was considered the benchmark for a Democrat. Sharon Unger improved over the results of 4 years ago, running against a heavily-financed, entrenched incumbent.

Selected Townships	Granholm Raw Vote	Granholm %	Stabenow Raw Vote	Stabenow %
Traverse City	2984	59.6%	2852	57.5%
Garfield	2981	46.6%	2902	45.8%
East Bay	2075	45.1%	2078	45.4%
Peninsula	1617	47.0%	1487	43.4%
Long Lake	1749	44.4%	1684	43.1%
Blair	1082	42.0%	1149	44.9%
County Totals	17415	47.4%	16988	46.6%

Selected Townships	Grucz Raw Vote	Grucz Percentage	Unger Raw Vote	Unger Percentage
Traverse City	2616	54.2%	2663	54.5%
Garfield	2500	40.4%	2635	42.1%
East Bay	1734	39.2%	1831	40.6%
Peninsula	1010	31.9%	1397	41.1%
Long Lake	1435	37.9%	1474	38.3%
Blair	1002	40.5%	1000	39.6%
County Totals	14690	41.4%	15258	42.4%

Election Snapshot

- Total election turnout 59%
- Best Granholm Precinct **Traverse City 8** – 65.2%
- Best showing by local candidate **Donna Hornberger, East Bay 1**, 51.3% (Granholm got 50.2% in the precinct)
- Most Democratic precincts outside of Traverse City -- **Garfield 3 and Union 1**
- Best **Mike Huckleberry** precinct **Traverse City 3** (56.4%)
- Worst precinct for Jennifer Granholm – **Acme 2**, 37.9%
- Best precinct for **Roman Grucz** **Traverse City 3**, 59.1%
- Worst precinct for **Jason Allen** **Traverse City 3**, 40.7%
- Highest vote total for a 3rd party candidate – **Green Party Secretary of State nominee, Lynn Meadows, 75 votes in Traverse City 1**

Bzdok Appointment Signals TC Change

By Eartha Melzer



Chris Bzdok,
City Commissioner

With a nod to a growing progressive movement in Traverse City, on January 4th the Traverse City Commission appointed environmental lawyer Christopher Bzdok to the commission seat vacated by Rick Csapo following his conviction on domestic violence charges. Bzdok's term will run until the November election.

Bzdok's appointment represents a shift on the commission. Csapo, a retired sheriff's deputy, was perceived as a Republican yes-man by commission watchers. Bzdok, 35, describes himself as an outsider, who has not been deeply involved in city politics. "I vote Democrat more often than I vote Republican," Bzdok said when asked about his political affiliation.

During his interview with

the TC Commissioners Bzdok emphasized his professional background in reconciling environmental and business interests. One of his first visits as a commissioner was to the monthly meeting of the Grand Traverse Green Party.

Many observers, including Bzdok, expressed surprise that the commission chose him over long time local activist Jim Carruthers, whose candidacy for the appointment sparked a grassroots campaign in which 461 registered city voters issued a statement endorsing him.

Carruthers is a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission and a regular fixture at commission meetings. Last year he spearheaded an effort to bring the commission's plan for a publicly funded parking deck to a referendum. 71 per cent of city voters rejected the deck.

Consequently, Carruthers has had a strained relationship with some current Commissioners.

Carruthers said his constituents are under-represented on the commission and promised to run for a seat on the city commission in the November election.

Mayor Linda Smyka, whose vote was key in

selecting Bzdok over Carruthers, acknowledged that support for Carruthers will carry into the next election cycle.

Ten people – the largest group in recent history – volunteered to fill the open commission seat. The other applicants were: Rick Buckhalter, Mary Bevans Gillett, Joseph Kau-Be-Naw, Gary Keyes, Tom Mair, Todd McCall, Scott Sieffert and Fred Wilmeth.

Developing new business districts, attracting young families, protecting the environment, and expanding park use are among the important issues facing Traverse City, according to these candidates.

Though the city commission is a non-partisan race, there is a sense that downtown business and Republican interests have been over-represented. In recent months city voters have vetoed a major commission plan, voted Democratic in the fall election, and organized dynamic support for a progressive candidate. This November, when voters fill 5 of the 7 commission seats, Democrats and Independents may find a much larger role in city politics.



Jim Carruthers,
Community Activist

Benzie Blue ... cont. from pg. 3

For a highly detailed breakdown of these great accomplishments, go to BenzieDemocrats.com. And, if you haven't already, start thinking "2008." A close look at the numbers reveals that we are, at the very least, within striking distance of taking 2 more county commissioner seats and sending a Democrat to the state house.

It's great so many of us got involved this year. It's crucial we stay involved and coax a few of our reluctant friends to join the party, too! It's a great way to meet new people, build on old friendships, and—yup—even make things better.

Talk to the Voters

By Ross Richardson, Vice-Chair

As the new officers and executive board of the Grand Traverse Democratic Party take office this January, we need to take a moment and reflect on how far the previous leadership has brought us.

This is a red county, and yet we have a strong and active membership of over 500 individuals, a permanent headquarters, and we are financially solvent. All of this has been accomplished in a very short time frame. The next step is establishing the local Democratic Party as a political force that is competitive at the polls.

This is a process that has already begun. We have had success in school board races, Deni Scrudato sits on the City Commission, and this last election we had the largest number of county commission candidates in recent history. Roman Grucz ran hard for the 104th House seat, the first time Howard Walker has faced an opponent.

Of course, Grucz, Sharon Unger, and the five county candidates all lost. Yet we owe them all a huge debt of gratitude. These individuals are the pathfinders, leading us out of the electoral desert in which we find ourselves. Simply by contesting elections, to expose themselves to the arduous demands of a campaign, they have made the way easier for everyone who follows.

The quick answer has always been that "it's all Republican" here, and that's true if you look at the overall results. The picture changes dramatically when you examine returns based on townships and precincts. Everyone is aware by now that Traverse City proper is "blue." The November election exhibited

not only Democratic strength, but **growing** Democratic strength..

Donna Hornberger, our County Commission candidate on the Old Mission Peninsula, earned my "Best Showing by a Local Candidate" award by not only being competitive in a very Republican district (she polled 46.6%), but by actually leading Governor Granholm in East Bay Precinct 1, 51.3% to 50.2%.

Donna said she really enjoyed running for office, meeting voters, discussing the issues, the daily hub-bub of campaigning.

"It was very frightening facing the editorial board of the Record-Eagle," Donna commented, but she won that endorsement. "Mostly I hated that all my opponent had to do to win was be Republican."

Donna's final take on the election is that the Democrats need to organize, need to work the precincts. I couldn't agree with her more, and Diana Ketola makes the same pitch on the front page of this newsletter when she discusses the need for voter identification.

A brief discussion about turnout is appropriate. Overall, Grand Traverse County had a 59% turnout last November, but that number varied greatly, from 74% in Peninsula Township to 48% in Blair Township. Turnout in Traverse City, the bed-rock of the Democratic vote, varied between 50% and 67%. TC 9, the most Republican of the 6 TC precincts, had the highest turnout.

Turnout is the key to successful campaigns. Finding and identifying your supporters, and then making sure they vote on Election Day, is how elections are won.

continued on pg. 4

County Commission Races

District 1	Donna Hornbertger	Bruce Hooper
East Bay 1	401	380
Peninsula 1	715	930
Peninsula 2	730	923
Trav City 9	471	422
Totals	2317	2655

District 2	Robynn James	Larry Inman
Acme 1	478	917
Acme 2	187	554
Fife Lake 1	226	338
Union 1	87	84
Whitewater 1	369	760
Totals	891	1809

District 7	John Nelson	Chris Maxbauer
Garfield 5	314	641
Trav City 1	726	618
Trav City 3	613	532
Trav City 10	325	335
Totals	1978	2126

District 8	Phil Scott	Larry Fleis
Blair 2	287	564
Blair 3	193	380
Mayfield 1	251	311
Paradise 1	355	487
Paradise 2	262	402
Totals	1348	2144

**Grand Traverse
County
Democratic Party**
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Traverse City MI 49685

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