

THE GRAND DEMOCRAT

SPRING, 2007



Senator Carl Levin chats with former Grand Traverse County Chair Lynn Larson at a reception held in his honor at the Minervini Group's offices at the GT Commons on January 27. The reception was a great success, raising \$15,000 for Levin's re-election campaign. Senator Debbie Stabenow was also in attendance.



Tim Wiley and Kathie Hudson enjoy the camaraderie of fellow Democrats (and lots of great food and drink) at the Mid-Winter Rally, held January 20 at the UAW Hall in Traverse City. More than 100 of the Party faithful had a wonderful time!

Annual Truman Dinner May 19 at

From silent auction items to a delicious dinner, the Truman Dinner, sponsored by the Grand Traverse County Democratic Party, promises to be an enjoyable evening for all who attend. The event, to be held Saturday, May 19 at the Park Place Dome in Traverse City, attracts nearly 300 attendees annually and raises funds for the organization.

While details are still being finalized, GT Dems Chair Diana Ketola looks forward to another excellent event.

"It will be an exciting evening! Invitations were sent out the last week in April, and we encourage anyone who did not receive one by the end of the month to contact us," said Ketola.

The evening begins at 6 p.m. with a social hour, including appetizers and a cash bar. Dinner will be served at 7 pm, followed by the program. A \$45 donation is requested per ticket.

A popular tradition at the dinner is the silent auction which in the past has included a wide variety of items ranging from gift certificates from area businesses to a film poster autographed by Michael Moore. Anyone interested in donating items for the auction is encouraged to do so by calling Auction Coordinator Dawn Thomas at 938-1034.

Grand Traverse Democratic Headquarters
955 East 8th Street
Traverse City

Office Hours

Tuesday:

11:00 AM - 1:30 PM

4:00 - 6:00 PM

Thursday & Saturday:

11:00 AM - 1:30 PM

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Rectifying An Oversight

In the January, 2007, issue of this newsletter, we thanked the prior officers of the Grand Traverse Democratic Party for their service, but neglected to name them.

Lynn Larson was the Chair of the Party, and Grant Parsons was the Vice-Chair. Both Lynn and Grant served from 2000 through 2006. Leslie Cook was the Treasurer, and Ann Krantz was the Secretary. Ann also edited this newsletter.

The entire party is very appreciative of everything these individuals did to build and promote the Democratic Party. We apologize for the previous oversight.

GT Democrats Gain Leadership Posts

At the State Democratic Convention in Detroit February 24, two Grand Traverse County Democrats were elected to the State Central Committee, the governing board of the state party.

Diana Ketola and Joel Casler were selected as 2 of the 10 full voting members of the 4th Congressional District. There are also 10 alternate members from the 4th.

We congratulate them, and are proud to have Grand Traverse County so well-represented in the state hierarchy!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- May 19 Truman Dinner, Park Place Hotel Dome, Traverse City
 - May 24 State Chair Mark Brewer will address Platform Issues at the Clearwater Township Hall in Rapid City, 7 PM (sponsored by the Antrim Dems)
 - May 25-27 Benzie Dems Yard Sale, Jim Sheets' Barn on Love Road in Benzie County (south of Benzonia)
 - June 23 Leelanau Dems Annual Chicken Barbeque 3 to 6 PM, Johnson Park in Empire
 - July 13 Picnic in the Park - Join GT and Leelanau Dems at Elmwood Township Park, Cherry Bend Road
 - July 14 Governor's Breakfast, Holiday Inn in Traverse City, 7:30 to 10:30 AM
 - July 20-23 National Governor's Conference Grand Traverse Resort in Acme
- Executive Board Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6 PM.
All Democrats are welcome to attend.

Your Email Address

We're trying to update our email database, as many of the email addresses on file of our active Democrats are no longer current. It would be greatly appreciated if you would tell us if you have not been receiving emails from us.

Also, could you let us know if you have interest in receiving the Newsletter electronically instead of by Postal Service? We're trying to gauge how much interest there may be for this. Email us at gtdems@sbcglobal.net.

Citizens for Equity

www.citizensforequity.org
(a non-partisan action group addressing school-funding inequities)

**will host a
community forum
for interested
participants at the
Traverse City
District Library
Wednesday,
May 16**

The Grand Democrat

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Ross Richardson, Editor; Deni Scrudato, Copy Editor

Contributors: Kay Walker, Mike Estes, Rich Powell, Diana Ketola



State Rep Gary McDowell (D-Rudyard), at right, chats with area Democrats on a recent visit to TC. Gary won 54 % of the vote in 2004 and 60% in 2006, in a district with base Republican numbers of 57%.

McDowell encouraged attendees in their efforts to elect Democrats to local office with hard work and financial backing. Gary also fielded questions regarding the current State budget deficit, noting that the Governor’s budget plan was reasonable and responsible, despite the opposition of Republicans in Lansing.

Politics 101: Everything You Wanted to Know About the County Commission But Were Afraid to Ask

During the last election cycle we were fortunate to have several great Democratic candidates run for the County Commission. In an effort to encourage these candidates to run again in 2008 and to possibly recruit new candidates (if the previous candidates decline to run again) we will be doing regular articles in our newsletter to help educate voters about the important role the Commission plays in many facets of our community.

The County Commission has 9 elected representatives from separate districts throughout Grand Traverse County. Currently, all 9 Commissioners are Republicans. All County Commissioners are elected for 2 year terms, and there are no term limits.

The Commission oversee total budgetary funds of \$147 million. Did you know that the County Commission has impact and/or responsibility for the following areas?

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Assessing Property Taxes | Educational Services | Tax Equalization Process |
| Historic Preservation | Setting Property Tax Rate | Parks and Recreation Services |
| Emergency Preparedness | Elections Administration | Animal Control |
| County Clerk | Voter Registration | Emergency Medical Services |
| Emergency Communications | Fire Protection Services | Circuit Courts |
| Social Services Board | District Court System | Services to Veterans |
| Probate Court | Services to the Aging | Jury Commission and Juror Selection |
| Cooperative Extension Service | County Sheriff | County Prosecutor |
| County Library | County Zoning | County Fair |
| Building Code Enforcement | Land Division | Economic Development |
| Municipal Boundary Adjustments | Transportation | Public Works Administration |
| County Social Services | County Health Services | Register of Deeds |
| Planning for Development and Preservation | Water, Environment and Natural Resources | |
| Brownfield Redevelopment Authority | | |

Given the broad range of agencies and services involved with the County Commission, we think it’s important that voters understand what the commission is, how it functions and why we should pay more attention to its decision-making processes. More information will be forthcoming in our next newsletter.

Blue Tiger Leads Way for Community Involvement

By Mark Brewer, Michigan State Democratic Chair

Blue Tiger Democrats believe that civic engagement must be the first and foremost priority of local Democratic and Progressive organizations across the country.

On January 22, 2006, at the Great Hall at Cooper Union in New York City, the principles of Blue Tiger were first presented to the public at a major colloquium to rescue our democracy from the far right.



As President of the Association of State Democratic Chairs, I am proud that Michigan is the nation's

first official Blue Tiger state. Governor Granholm introduced me to Blue Tiger. She is very excited that Michigan is taking a leadership role in this movement and that the Michigan Democratic Party is continuing its history of innovation.

Despite the gains the Democratic Party made in the midterm elections, many people still do not believe either party cares much about them. Our goal is to regain respect for the Democratic Party and for the political process.

By giving Democrats things to do between elections and providing meaningful services, we as Democrats can show citizens that parties want to engage them more than just on election day.

“Civic engagement must be the first and foremost priority of local Democratic organizations”

We advocate channeling the massive volunteerism seen during the 2004 election and recent periods of crisis towards civic engagement just as Democrats did historically from the mid 1800s through World War II.

Our first project was an educational program designed to help urban residents of our state manage the surging cost of their utilities.

The project formed local organizations to educate community members about options and solutions for energy efficiency to cut the cost of utilities. It began in ten of the poorest areas of Detroit and Macomb County.

This project is just the first of many we will launch with Blue Tiger to improve the lives of our people through serious, committed civic engagement. These projects will enable us to put our principles into practice and expand our foundation. In addition, we will develop new generations of political leaders and community activists who are committed to helping our citizens, and experienced in how to do it. In this way, our civic engagement projects will bear fruit for years to come.

Our leadership is committed to keeping Michigan a Blue State and we believe that Civic Engagement is integral to this mission.

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Campaign Reform: Some Musings by Richard Robinson, Executive Director of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network

It is a statistical truth that 95% of the winners of Michigan elections have more money behind them than their opponents.

Consider the following points:

- ◆ Our state ethics laws do not cover the legislative branch.
- ◆ We have needless obstructions to voting, such as the requirement to be registered 30 days before Election Day; and the need to provide an excuse to get an absentee ballot.
- ◆ Michigan lists candidates of the party of the incumbent secretary of state first on the ballot, a quirk that recent research suggests is worth a 2% vote advantage to those listed first.
- ◆ We are one of only three states that doesn't require officeholders to report their personal financial holdings, so there is no way to detect self-dealing at the expense of the public interest.

Visit www.mcfn.org to review a political reform agenda developed with the League of Women Voters and Common Cause.

Political (free) Speech

An odd assortment of comments and musings by our leaders, proving again that even in today's pre-packaged and scripted world, unvarnished nuggets still slip out.

- ◆ “Absolutely not! He’s nasty to everybody.”
Former New York Mayor Ed Koch, when asked if **Rudy Guiliani** was a racist.
- ◆ Grand Traverse County Commissioner **Larry Fleis** dismissed studies linking secondhand smoke to premature death, calling such studies “supposition.” He said a smoking ban was something expected from the former Soviet Union. The County Commission voted down a proposal to study a workplace smoking ban, 5-4. *from the Record-Eagle, 2-21-07*
- ◆ “I’m happy to learn that you’re going to hear from Ann Coulter. That’s a good thing. I think it’s important to get the views of moderates.” **Mitt Romney**, speaking at the Conservative Political Action Conference, right before Coulter called John Edwards a “faggot”.
- ◆ During a debate in the Illinois Legislature over a bill to outlaw smoking in cars containing children, Representative **Dave Winter**, a Republican from Shirland, suggested kids be taught to roll down car windows if they’re bothered by smoke. An example of Republican self-help philosophy at its finest.
- ◆ “Don Sherwood’s seat [in Pennsylvania] would have been overwhelmingly ours, if his mistress hadn’t whined about being throttled.” – **Grover Norquist**, head of Americans for Tax Reform, blaming GOP election defeats on botched campaigns and individual ethical scandals. Asked if there were any lessons from the campaign, Norquist added, “Yes. The lesson should be, don’t throttle mistresses.” Republican incumbent Congressman **Don Sherwood** was defeated last November. He admitted to the adultery, but denied the abuse.



Randy Bond makes his point at the anti-war rally staged on Saturday, March 17 in Traverse City. According to the *Record-Eagle*, more than 200 citizens made themselves heard as they marched down Front Street.

A Call to Action

Citizens of Traverse City and TCAPS: Elections will be held this fall to elect City Commissioners, a Mayor, and members of the governing board for the Traverse City Area Public Schools. We need concerned and dedicated citizens who are willing to commit the time and energy necessary to bring us all good and responsive government. Standing for public office is not an easy task, but our government is only as good as the effort we put into it.

The filing deadline is August 14,

Blue Tiger (continued from pg. 4)

We encourage you to invest a portion of your funds in strengthening the roots of party organizations at the local level through civic engagement.

By performing civic engagement, local party organizations will regain respect in their communities and therefore be able to play a larger role in vetting and grooming new Democratic candidates and workers.

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Grand Traverse County
Democratic Party
P.O. Box 1828
Traverse City MI 49685

Grand Traverse County Democratic Party Membership Form

Last Name _____ First _____ MI _____
Address _____ City, State, ZIP _____
Occupation _____ Business Name _____
Business Address _____
Home Phone _____ Business Phone _____
E-Mail _____

Grand Traverse County Democratic Party Membership levels for calendar year 2007:

- 100 Club** - \$100.00
- Gold Membership** - \$50.00
- Silver Membership** - \$25.00
- Supporter Membership** - \$10.00

Please make checks payable to and mail to:
Grand Traverse County Democratic Party
P.O. Box 1532
Traverse City, MI 49685
Total Membership Fees _____