

BENTON COUNTY DEMOCRATS' WORLD

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EDITOR

Remembering Eileen Rees

BCD and Democratic friends across NW Arkansas saw 2014 end on a sad note as we mourn the loss of Eileen Rees due to an automobile accident on Christmas eve. Eileen was one of the early pioneers in organizing the Benton County Democratic Women's Club. She and a few other hard working Dem women often met around Barbara McCoy's kitchen table where many plans were put together. From that group, about 15 years ago, a monthly newsletter was born. Eileen and her husband, Bill, took on the project and kept us all updated on a monthly basis with happenings within the club and important information on democratic issues. She kept us all on our toes with demanding deadlines and never missed even one.

Although both were in their 90's, Bill and Eileen were also instrumental in helping set up the BCDems web site which debuted in 2010. After Bill's death earlier this year, Eileen bravely continued on her own in getting the newsletter out even just last November. A memorial service is planned for a date, not yet decided, in the spring for both of these dedicated democrats. Until then, God speed Eileen. You will be sorely missed

Both Eileen and Bill helped found and were active members of the Bella Vista recorder consort. The consort meets weekly and play recorders ranging from soprano to the contrabass. The consort plays music from the medieval to the present.

The Bella Vista recorder consort will perform a memorial concert in memory of Bill and Eileen in early summer. For concert information contact their niece Jacquie at Jacquibaron@yahoo.com

From our President

To Benton County Democrats! I am honored that you chose me to serve as president of this organization. I will do everything that I can to fulfill your expectations. As we move into a new year, if any of you have any suggestions of how we can continue the great traditions of this organization, please send me an email at ken@swindlelawfirm.com. I want to hear from you.

Do you remember the 2006 election? That was a great moment. The Democrats increased their seats in the Senate by six, in the House by 31, and we increased the number of Democratic governors by six. President Bush described the election as a “thumping”. I felt like we were coming out of a very bad dream, and that our country had turned a corner with the younger generation rejecting the failed policies of conservatives.

This past election showed how much work that we still have to do. There is no way to get around it. The 2014 election was a “thumping” for us. But, we have to look for the silver lining. Arkansas voters passed a minimum wage increase - 65% to 35%. Of course, the Republicans campaigned against that issue. So, many voters walked into the voting booth and voted for Republicans, and then voted against the Republican position on minimum wage. I think that is significant.

Take a moment and read the platform of the Republican Party. It is online. I would challenge the Republicans to show even one of their positions that is supported by a majority of Arkansans. This may be cold

comfort after the “thumping” that we took, but I do think that it is a starting point. The voters voted their identity, not the issues. We have to find a way to connect issues and voter identity. I don’t claim to have the answers, but I do hope to start a conversation within our group and with our neighbors and friends on the disconnect between party identification and the issues.

One of the issues that our country has long history trying to unravel is the issue of race. January 19 will be Martin Luther King, Jr. observation. The recent disclosure that the majority whip of the Republican Party is, or was, associated with a white supremacist group only serves to emphasize why this holiday continues to be so important and how far we still have to go. The threat of the former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan to expose other connections of that organization with other Republicans if the Republicans did not “lay off” the majority whip, and the ensuing rush by the Republicans to close-ranks in support of the majority whip is even more troubling.

The bottom line is that we are on the correct side of the issues. If we can find a way to connect those issues to the identity of the voters, we will be successful. I am fired up. Let’s get ready to go!

_____ Ken _____

Time to sort out those unwanted treasurers: to help raise money for Benton County Democrats . We are planning a yard sale for May 1st & 2nd. Along with those treasurers, we are looking for volunteers to assist in the sale. Sign up at the Jan. 26th meeting.

OUR NEXT MEETING

January 26, Golden Corral 11:00am-1:00pm

The guest speaker for the January 26th luncheon will be

Myra McKenzie-Harris, an Associate General Counsel in the Employment Division of the Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Legal department in Bentonville. She serves as Third Vice-President of the NWA NAACP.

Ms. McKenzie will speak on The historic importance of the Democratic Party to the advancement of civil rights for all in this country, and the current importance of staying engaged in the political process.

Meet your elected officers

Ken Swindle grew up in Jonesboro, Arkansas. He received a B.A. in political science from Arkansas State University in 1992. He received a J.D. from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock in 1997 and began practicing law that year. After practicing with personal injury law firms, he opened his own practice in Rogers on January 1, 2004 with an emphasis on personal injury and employment law. He has been married to Davia Swindle for 14 years. Davia is originally from Columbia South America. They have 2 children, Jacob 10 and Jordan, 8

Karen Smenner,s life began on a wheat farm in NW Oklahoma. The family moved to Denver, CO in 1954 and moved to Siloam Springs, AR in 1961. After attending Tulsa University Technical College, she moved to Riverside, CA where she worked 15 yrs for Dow Jones & Co/Wall Street Journal as Regional Business Office Mgr. In 1978 she returned to Arkansas. She and Richard have been together 31 yrs. They owned a farm south of Ft. Smith while Rick worked in Personnel at Whirlpool Corp. Karen owned an antique shop

and a stained glass studio. Karen and Rick moved to NW Arkansas in 2001. Rick has 2 sons, one in Dallas and one in Lawton, OK and Karen has 1 son, who lives in Spokane, Wa.

YEAR END REPORT

TOTAL 2014 INCOME ALL FUNDS COMBINED

Blue	
Bowls	\$ 1,504.01
Donations	5,146.79
Membership Dues	1,920.00
Meetings	914.00
Movies	2,822.00
TOTAL	\$12,306.80

TOTAL 2014 EXPENSES ALL FUNDS COMBINED

Campaign Contributions	\$ 11,773.18
Other Contributions	2,250.00
Meetings	1,254.75
Movies	1,395.00
Newsletter	324.96
Postage	39.20
Technology	88.00
Voter Education	454.80
Miscellaneous	56.00
TOTAL	\$ 17,635.89

The BC Dems maintain funds in three accounts: General Operating, Dedicated Democrats (used for voter education and honorariums for speakers), and Campaign Contributions (used for contributions to candidates).

Total balance on hand in all accounts combined on 1/1/2014 was \$8,983.48

Total balance on hand in all accounts combined on 1/1/2015 was \$3,654.39.

Rather than do a monthly for November and December, I thought best to just do a year end report.

Respectfully submitted:

Gaye Bland, Treasurer

Benton County Dems 2014 Christmas Social



December 18th, the BC Dems had a Christmas Social at Copeland's Restaurant in Rogers. This was the first of four socials planned for 2015. The purpose is to reach out to Democrats who are employed and are unable to attend the lunch meetings. Guests ordered food from the main menu and many sat with members they hadn't met before. We gained some new members and contacts and we will add Copeland's to our Democrat friendly businesses. A great evening was had by all and are looking forward to the Spring social in March. Watch for further information in February.

Time to renew, or join new

Just a reminder that our membership runs from Jan to Dec, so it is time to complete the attached application and bring it to the January 26th meeting.. If you are unable to attend, just fill it out and mail it and your check to Benton County Democrats,

P.O. Box 2258, Bentonville, AR 72712

Our 2015 Officers & Board Members

President – Ken Swindle

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Vice President –Karen Smenner

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