

Benton County Democrats' World

Volume 14 Issue 6 June 2015 Ken Swindle, President Hal Spangenberg, Editor

BENTON COUNTY DEMOCRATS MAY MEETING

Monday, June 22nd 2015

11:00 – Lunch/Social time 12:00 – Meeting

Golden Corral, 2605 W Pleasant Crossing, Rogers, AR

Speaker: Lou Tobian, AARP Little Rock

Associate State Director for Outreach & Education

Lou will review AARP, their many programs and their work with legislation for the benefit of senior citizens.



Please make reservations by Friday, June 19. With Connie Williamson at sisterperry@cox.net or 479 531-7985

Presidents Letter

We continue to have fantastic speakers at our meetings. This past meeting, Jim Hall, Executive Director of Community and Government Relations for Northwest Arkansas Community College spoke to our group about the resources and opportunities of the college to our community. Mr. Hall's topic fit well with President Obama's proposal to make all community college education free. Republicans have been dismissive of this idea, but, the fact is, if we spent the money that we are currently spending on war and over-incarceration instead on college, this dream could easily be achieved. It is all a matter of priority.

By now, you have certainly heard that Northwest Arkansas has made national headlines again. This time it is about a reality television show family involved in a scandal and the support they have received from our former governor and now

presidential candidate, Mike Huckabee. Without getting into the details of the scandal, it seems to me that the reality television show family involved does illustrate a fundamental difference in vision for our country. I saw an interview with the patriarch of the family once in which he acknowledged that he does not approve of women getting a higher education. The fact that he is a Republican and former member of the Arkansas House of Representatives makes his position particularly troublesome. The fact that he is representative of a substantial ideology within the Republican Party is even more troublesome.

We have fought hard to make educational opportunities open for all in this country. As Democrats, we continue that proud tradition. We understand that education is not only the key to economic and political equality for our communities, but we also understand that

education is the key to national security. The other party has a vastly different view of education. This is shown in their constant criticism of teachers, the drive for privatization of schools, and many attempts to defund higher education. The other party's hostility toward education is also shown in their rejection of science on matters involving the teaching of evolution, global climate change, and clean energy development just to name a few examples. When you speak with your friends and family about the importance of political involvement, they may tell you that the parties are the same. If they do, I hope that you will encourage them to look at the different vision and values of the parties reflected in how the parties view education. There is a fundamental difference.

Ken Swindle President, Benton County Democrats

Minutes of May Meeting

President Ken Swindle opened the May 18th meeting of the Benton County Democrats at 11:55 AM with a cheer to fire up the members. There were 39 in attendance, three of whom were welcomed as guests, and two as new members: Steve Knudsen and Diane Dolph. Two Veterans present were recognized for their service in the Marines during the Viet Nam war and they led the Pledge. Those with May birthdays were also recognized and Ken reminded people to contribute to the blue bowls and to tip the server generously.

Those on the Nominations Committee tasked with finding nominees for office in 2016 were named and they requested that anyone interested in serving as an officer or on any committee contact them. They are Gaye Bland – 631-9818, Connie Williamson – 531-7985, Marge Boyer – 330-0188, Rick Smenner – 866-9022 and Tony Potochnik – 640-4079.

Karen Smenner reported on the overwhelming success of our "Flea for All" fundraiser and thanked those that donated to and worked for it. The Board praised Karen for her tireless efforts in preparation for the event.

J. R. Jim, Hall, our speaker, helped establish Northwest Arkansas Community College in 1989 and served for many years on its Board of Trustees. He spoke about the implications and ramifications to the school of President Obama's proposal to make junior colleges tuition free. He quoted from

the President about how a junior college education would help lead graduates to life in the middle class.

There is competition among the community colleges in Arkansas as their number has increased from 10 to 22 and Mr. Hall feels that the number could and should be reduced. Jeremy Gillam is the head of a task force in the House to realign education in Arkansas.

Currently the focus of NWACC is all about access: How many can it get in the door? And instead of students taking a hodge-podge of classes with no goal in mind, the school helps them plan a guided pathway to some career or further education. There are now six meta-majors: culinary, retail, business, nursing, computer or graphic design.

Unfortunately state financial support is now at the same level as in 2007 covering only about 25% of costs and having to raise tuition is preventing some from attending. It is suggested that we could model ourselves after the "Tennessee Promise" where the state would step in to cover students' remaining costs after scholarships and loans with, of course, minimum requirements for hours taken and GPA. Greg Leding is the chair of the House Higher Ed Committee and he is open to and willing to talk with citizens.

Tony Potochnik informed us about a national lobbying day in Washington DC on June 23 to urge Congress to pass a Carbon Fee and Dividends plan to reduce air pollution. He asked us to contact our state Representatives and Senators on June 22 urging them to support this plan.

Thurman Metcalf reported on his and Suzanne Jessup's meeting with the State Democratic Central Committee. At this time the group is primarily trying to rebuild and each of those present were challenged to raise \$1,000.00. Thurman is selling car-wash tickets and bumper stickers with the proceeds going to the Benton County Central Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Eunice Van Tuyl, Recording Secretary

IF A FREE SOCIETY CANNOT HELP THE MANY WHO ARE POOR, IT CANNOT SAVE THE FEW WHO ARE RICH.....John F. Kennedy



Dear member,

On June 23, our friends at Citizens' Climate Lobby will be sending 900 volunteers to Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, to lobby for legislation that prices carbon. We can help to make their meetings a success by letting our representatives and senators know that their constituents support congressional action to address climate change.

On, **Monday, June 22**, the day before CCL lobbies on the Hill, we will participate in Climate Message Day, communicating by phone and social media with our members of Congress to register our support for legislation to price carbon.

Please **mark your calendars for June 22** to take this action. It will only take a few minutes, but it will have a huge impact in our efforts to fight climate change. We will send a reminder with more details on Sunday, June 21.

Thanks,

The BC Dems began the month with a total of \$5,108.56 in all accounts.

Income for May was:

\$130.00 from member dues

\$88.75 from the Blue Bowls

\$53 from donations

\$755.56 from the movie fundraiser

\$1,823.94 from the Flea for All fundraiser

Expenses were:

\$17.94 for luncheon expense

\$381.83 for the movie fundraiser

\$110.26 for the Flea for All fundraiser

\$50.95 for office supplies

We ended the month with a total of \$7,398.83 in all accounts.

The net profit from the May 1-2 Flea for All fundraiser was \$1,697.48. Net profit from the May 30 movie was \$373.73.

Submitted by Gaye Bland

Looking ahead, I received the following:

Jack Hilson, BoldProgressives.org
<info@boldprogressives.org>

We just updated our survey about the 2016 presidential race because the landscape has shifted - - again!

With today's announcement, Martin O'Malley is joining Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders on the list of candidates making their presidential aspirations official. This is starting to feel like a real presidential primary!

[Click here to take our short 3-way presidential opinion survey.](#)

Responses to earlier surveys have helped maximize the effectiveness of our organizing up to this point. Your answers today will do the same.

Thanks for being a bold progressive.

Jack Hilson, PCCC Organizer

A reminder:

If your schedule does not allow a 2 hour break between 11 and 1 PM, you are welcome to attend just the meeting, from 12 noon to 1PM, eat during the meeting, or stay and finish your lunch after the meeting closes. We would like you to attend.