

BC Dems

October 2022

# *Benton County Dems' World*



David Bernstein, Editor

## Hybrid General Meeting

### BC Dems General Meeting

Date & Time: October 24, 2022, 12:00 PM Central

Join us in person at...

#### Golden Corral

2605 W Pleasant Crossing Dr,  
Rogers, AR 72758

11:00 AM – 12:00 Social Time & Lunch

12:00 – 1:00 PM Meeting and Speaker presentation

Via Zoom...

Meeting ID: 875 3282 8495

Passcode: 285 057

[Join the Live Meeting Here](#)

## Our Speakers This Month

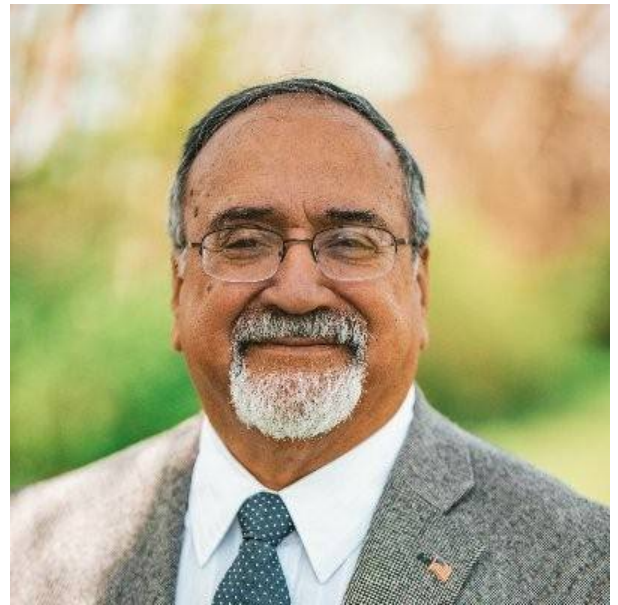
### Rey Hernandez

Candidate for Arkansas State House District 11

"Today, I am asking you to vote for me to represent you in the Arkansas House of Representatives. As an Arkansan since 1969 and a neighbor of yours in northwest Arkansas since 1989, I feel qualified to take your concerns to Little Rock and give them a voice. I have seen firsthand how hard you work to provide for your family, grow your business, and care for your loved ones. It's time you had someone in the state legislature who truly knows your culture, your struggles, and even your joys. It's time you had someone willing to fight for your

concerns when laws are being proposed.

My life is about service. I learned that from my mother who always helped others find work and study for citizenship. At age 17 I joined the Marine Corps and served for 20-years until I retired as a Master Sergeant. My wife, also a Marine, was from Arkansas so we settled in northwest Arkansas in 1989. Along with my jobs and work I also found time to volunteer with area non-profits and area chambers of commerce. I was called on by two Arkansas Governors and an Arkansas Attorney General to serve on advisory committees about Hispanic issues.



Don't let anyone convince you that your vote will not matter. Now, more than ever, we have a chance to make history in Arkansas by electing candidates who reflect the diversity of our beautiful state. If you don't vote to choose your candidate, others are waiting to impose their candidate on you. Your vote is your voice."

Check out Rey's campaign website for additional information or to donate at <https://www.hernandezforarkansas.com/>

## Stephanie Zamarron

### Candidate for Benton County JP District 3



My leadership and skills from my 10 years of military service along with my years of teaching and coaching youth make me the ideal candidate for the future of Benton County. We are a military family that has been stationed all over the United States for the past 30 years.

Of all our duty station locations, we selected Rogers, Arkansas for our final home. In the past 5 years my love for the area has grown, and every day I know we made the right decision to retire to Benton County.

The number one issue in Benton County is jail overcrowding. The current Quorum Court has not done everything in its power to solve jail overcrowding before resorting to jail expansion and tax increases for generations to come. There are other options:

- Improve the education system – more funding, tech programs, affordability
- Address income inequality and poverty in our county
- Take measures to lower drug use and provide more rehab options for recovery."

Check out Stephanie's campaign website for additional information or to donate at <https://zamarron.org/>

# The President's Memo

*If you recognize this message from the previous month, there is a pretty obvious reason.*

## Time to lead or lead again.

As of today, we still have no one interested in helping our nominating committee.

These are the positions that need to be filled:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

If you have any interest but just can't commit to it full time, it is possible to job share almost any position. No one has to do all the heavy lifting alone!

If we cannot find a slate of candidates for our board, our only **alternative is to dissolve the BC Dems organization**. It is as simple as that. And if the majority of the membership feels that would be acceptable, so be it.

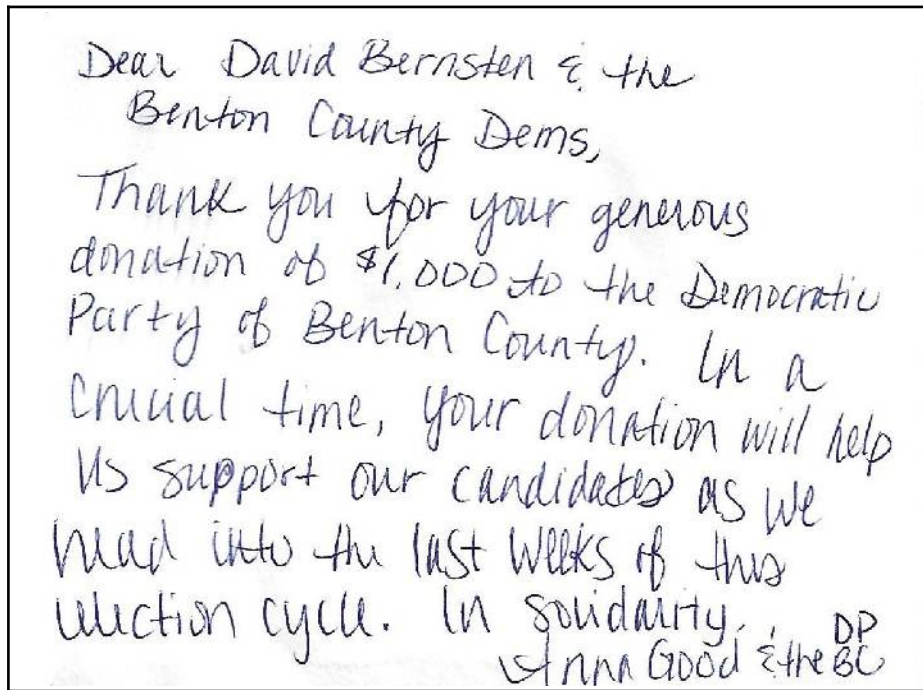
Please reach out to me if you have any questions or ideas about this situation.

Stay Well, Keep Laughing and we'll all get through this together.  
David Bernstein, President



# Acknowledgment Received

I am delighted to report that we received this card acknowledging our donation of \$1,000 to the Democratic Party of Benton County.



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## BLUE BOWLS



Here's your chance. Stuff a few dollars into the virtual blue bowl.

Believe it or not, your dollars are used to support the work of your BC Dems which in turn supports Democratic candidates for office within Arkansas.

We only ask for a contribution of \$5 or more to offset those unavoidable transaction fees.

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The Minutes for the August and September General Meetings were separately emailed as a newsletter supplement.

# Benton County Dems General Meeting Minutes

**August 22, 2022, Golden Corral, Rogers, AR**

President David Bernstein called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon. There were 15 present. Two more joined via Zoom.

Vice President Anna Knecht introduced the speaker for the day, Christian May, candidate for Benton County Justice of the Peace, District 5.

May began by giving a little background. He moved to the area in 2020 to attend the University of Arkansas where he is pursuing a bachelor's degree in sociology with a minor in political science.

May pointed out that Benton County has been designated as the fastest growing community in the United States. Consequently, electing Quorum Court members who can deal with this rapid growth is a must. He is especially concerned about current Quorum Court members who are supporting the proposed jail expansion. He believes other methods to deal with jail overcrowding would be just as effective with a fraction of the cost to taxpayers. He specifically referred to pre-trial services which would significantly reduce the number of people required to be housed in the jail. He also questioned the \$20 million proposed cost of the project, saying he felt it will actually end up costing many more taxpayer dollars.

May ended by appealing for help for his campaign. Those wishing to make a donation or volunteer their time should go his website, [mayforbentoncounty.com](http://mayforbentoncounty.com).

At the conclusion of the program, Knecht announced that the speaker for September will be Kate Schaffer, candidate for Arkansas House District 10. Jon Comstock has also asked to speak about prison reform.

President Bernstein opened the business meeting with a discussion about a discrepancy in prior meeting minutes about contribution amounts to DPA and DP of BC, and a vote to amend what was thought to be an error in those minutes was approved. [After the General Meeting ended, It was realized that the apparent inconsistency was that the July 18 Board minutes gave the approved amounts as \$500 and \$1500, and the amounts reported by David to the General Meeting and recorded for July 25 listed the amounts as \$500 and \$1000. The motion at the August General Meeting was to correct the amounts to \$500 and \$1000, but that would be a change to the Board Minutes, Only the Board has the authority to review, amend, or approve Board Minutes, so the action at the General Meeting to amend was invalid and has no effect. At this point only contributions of \$500 and \$1000 have been paid, and the Board will resolve the discrepancy in understanding at a Board meeting in a manner consistent with the view expressed at the General Meeting.]

The treasurer's report was emailed to the membership prior to the meeting. Bill Beck moved the report be accepted as submitted. Joel Ewing seconded the motion, and it carried.

Bill Beck announced the Central Committee will host the Little Flock picnic September 18 from 4:00-7:00 at the Little Flock Park. The tickets will be on sale for \$35.00.

President Bernstein announced the formation of a nominating committee and asked for volunteers. John Shasteen volunteered and will chair the committee. Two more committee members will be recruited to serve.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:54 p.m.

Diana Kolman, Secretary

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# Benton County Dems September 26 General Meeting Minutes

12:06pm: Vice President Anna Knecht called the meeting at the Golden Corral to order in the absence of the President. There were 23 present in person. Because of technical problems it was not possible to start the Zoom simulcast of the meeting, so none were in attendance by Zoom -- that should be resolved at the next meeting. Kate Schaffer ended up with a scheduling conflict that prevented her participation, so Jon Comstock was the only speaker and was introduced by Anna Knecht.

Jon Comstock discussed the Benton County Jail overcrowding and the two proposed sales tax issues to support the Benton County Jail Expansion placed on the November Ballot by the Benton County Quorum Count -- one tax being permanent and the other only for the duration of bonds to finance the expansion.

Jon advocated voting no on both sales tax issues for the following reasons:

- If the jail overcrowding problem is an emergency as described by the tax proponents, a jail expansion that will not be available for at least two years will not solve the immediate problem.
- More than half the occupants of the Benton County Jail are people who have not been convicted but are jailed only because they cannot afford a bail bond, or because of failure to appear for a court proceeding. Those who are financially stressed are the primary victims of the current system. A reform of the bail-bond system and a support system to help those who lack the means to get to court would have immediate impact to eliminate the Jail overcrowding and would be much better and cheaper solution than a \$200M jail expansion.
- The estimated \$200M cost of the jail expansion is most likely an underestimate, because construction costs in Benton County have increased.
- Adding more beds to the jail will become an incentive to incarcerate more defendants who are not a threat to society, or to utilize the Benton County Jail as a prison-for-hire for prisoners from other localities.
- Unnecessary jailing of those who are already living paycheck-to-paycheck has other bad implications for society, likely causing those individuals to lose whatever job they have and as a result also lose their residence.
- The Quorum Count did not seriously consider any jail overcrowding solution other the jail expansion. Failure of these sales tax proposals will force them to consider better alternatives.

After his presentation Jon responded to a number of questions from the audience.

12:45: The business portion of the meeting was started. In that portion of the meeting, we did not approve the August General Meeting Minutes because they weren't published in the September Newsletter. Members were directed to the Newsletter for the August Treasurer's Report.

Democratic candidates Stephanie Zamarron (Benton County JP#3) and Rey Hernandez (AR State House #11) were introduced.

An appeal was made for additional members to serve on the Nominating Committee, with no volunteers. An appeal was also made for candidates for any officer positions. Joel Ewing volunteered to be nominated for Treasurer.

12:56 A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved.

By Donna Patrick, Publicity Chair & Joel Ewing, Social Media Chair

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# Treasurer's Summary

## September 2022

by Joel Ewing & Treasurer Committee

<b>Beginning Balance:</b>	<b>\$1,942.89</b>		
<b><u>INCOME:</u></b>		<b><u>EXPENSES:</u></b>	
Dues	\$60.00		
Blue Bowls	\$134.17		
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>\$194.17</b>	<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Ending Balance:</b>	<b>\$2,137.06</b>		

## 2022 Benton County Dems Officers & Committee Chairs

<b><u>Position</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>
President	David Bernstein
Vice President	Anna Knecht
Membership Chair	<i>vacant</i>
Secretary	Diana Kolman
Treasurer	<i>vacant</i>
Publicity Chair	Donna Patrick
Social Media Chair	Joel Ewing
Immediate Past President	Julia K Bailey