



Blue Tiger Democrats Hunger Moon Project Raises \$12,350

Our community service arm, the Blue Tiger Democrats, launched something new that truly took off in a big way in February, raising over \$12,000 for one of Kalamazoo's agencies that feed the hungry — Loaves and Fishes.

The brainchild of Janet Graham, co-chair of the Blue Tiger Democrats for Kalamazoo County, the project was named for February's full moon — a time of food scarcity and threatening starvation in Native American lore.

Many KCDP members opened their homes to friends and neighbors for soup parties to benefit local people in need. The initiative paid off greatly, raising over \$7,000 and meeting a \$5,000 challenge from an anonymous Democrat.

Congratulations to everyone who participated in this important project. What else can we do this year to serve our community? To join the Blue Tigers, or for more information, contact Janet Graham at 226-2187.

Don't be Misled About the Employee Free Choice Act

It is clear that the opposition is trying to mislead the public about the intent and the function of The Employee Free Choice Act. The many corporate front groups opposing the act say that what's at stake if this act is passed is the "sanctity of the secret ballot"* by taking away an employee's right to vote by secret ballot. This is not true. Employees may still vote by secret ballot when voting to organize a union if they choose. It does also allow for workers to sign cards attesting that they choose to form a union and, if a majority so choose, the NLRB must recognize that this "card-check election" does reflect the will of the majority of employees. This works well in Canada and by some US corporations such as AT&T and Kaiser Permanente. Further, corporations often coerce employees by having mandatory closed-door meeting against unions and holding one-on-one sessions with supervisors. The act provides penalties for coercion.

The NLRB has been weakened over the past many years. Under the weakened rules union organizers are not allowed to enter the workplace to talk with employees. Nor are they given a contact list so they have no way to reach employees to present the union's side. We need unions more than ever now to maintain our middle class. Workers have dramatically increased their productivity and clearly generated more national wealth, but have been rewarded with falling wages, plummeting purchasing power, decreased health care benefits and often cancellation of pensions. There are at least six corporate sponsored groups now leading the fight against the free-choice act. John Engler (you've heard of him!), now the head of the National Association of Manufacturers, has spoken out strongly against the act. Read John's words and a short summary of the issue in *The Hightower Lowdown* and on the Kalamazoo Democratic web site (kzoodems.com).

This article is abstracted from the March 2009 issue of the Hightower Lowdown.

Be the Change You Want to Happen!

Join the KCDP and together we will work for positive change.

Barack Obama is our President and is working hard for all of us. But this is no time to sit back contemplating the nonsense of Rush Limbaugh and just waiting for the 2010 election. Join the Democratic Party to help support your Kalamazoo County Party and work for the change you want to happen now!

Did you know? KCDP memberships also include membership in the Michigan Democratic Party. And if you renew or join through KCDP rather than directly through the State party more of your money will support our county party, its initiatives and local/regional candidates. That is, if you renew or join through the MDP our county party receives less money than by renewing your membership locally.

So, are there benefits to being a member? You betcha! (*See list at right.*)

Join or renew now. Go online to kzoodems.com, call 342-4217 or stop by KCDP headquarters at 3254 S. Westnedge (*See page 2 for hours.*)

Benefits of Membership

- **Opportunities to meet and interact** with local, state, and national candidates like Senator Carl Levin who in late February talked briefly at our Third Thursday meeting and then spent 45 minutes answering question ranging from the stimulus package to Iraq.
- **Monthly programs** which range from "Buy Local" to candidate forums. Our Third Thursday programs are held monthly at 7 p.m. at Theo and Stacy's Restaurant on Portage Rd.
- **Volunteer activities** to promote local community initiatives through the Blue Tiger Democrats, such as tutoring and our recent Hunger Moon Soup Kitchen fundraiser for Loaves and Fishes (*see article above*).
- **Our regular newsletter** will be going to many people only four times a year now. But we are developing a shorter, more frequent newsletter which will go to members only to help keep you informed.
- **Social events** such as picnics, golf outings, dinners and parties. Meet like-minded people.



ObamaZoo News

ObamaZoo-Kalamazoo for Change sponsored a "What's Next?" town hall meeting at the downtown Kalamazoo Public Library on January 27 — one week after President Obama's inauguration. More than 70 area residents, including city and county officials and three state representatives, attended and shared their opinions about how to effect change in our communities.

The previous week, about 50 ObamaZoo volunteers supported Loaves and Fishes and other service projects during the city's MLK National Day of Service. ObamaZoo also supported the successful Blue Tiger Democrats' effort to raise more than \$12,000 for Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes.

During March, ObamaZoo volunteers are staffing five nights of phone banking to support Citizens for Community Transportation and reinstatement of a 0.45 countywide millage for Metro Transit.

The group also held a BYObama Brunch on Saturday, March 21 at Poor Richard's Cafe, 1105 E. Crosstown Parkway in Kalamazoo. They met with ObamaZoo leaders to network and brainstorm about future actions and activities.

To contact ObamaZoo, write to kalamazooforchange@gmail.com.

— Thom Myers

What in the World Does A Member of the Electoral College Do?

We all know that the President is officially elected by members of the Electoral College. But how many of us know what this group of people do or how they do it? Or even who they are?

The Electoral College meets on the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December following the November Presidential election, according to law. That date was set to give electors time to get to their respective state capitals (by horse of course).

Randy Wolcott from Gobles was nominated as the representative for the Sixth Congressional District. His name was submitted to the Michigan Secretary of State who then certified that he was one of 17 Michigan Electors. Randy reports that the whole process is very ceremonial.

He was able to invite friends to watch the ceremony from the gallery of the State Senate Chambers where the vote took place. Accompanying him were his wife Diane, Bill and Mary Jones from Allegan and Barbara Maddox-Rose and her husband Geoffrey from Covert, all good Democrats.

Randy explained the process — which certainly is a ceremony. As he came into the chamber he was shown a specific desk



Randy Wolcott

where he was to sit. The assembled group was then sworn in by the Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court Marilyn Kelly. One at a time each elector went to the front where they signed six ballots for president. The distribution is indeed interesting — one goes to the Vice President, one to a federal judge, two to the Michigan Secretary of State and two to the National Archives. After each elector had voted they repeated the process for Vice President. After all are seated the ballots were put in to an envelope and each Elector then returns and signs the envelope.

Randy says that the most memorable moment of his time on the senate floor was to look up into the gallery and see the huge smile on the face of Barbara Maddox-Rose after he signed the ballot for Barack Obama for President.

Thanks for representing all of us, Randy, and congratulations for being a part of history.

Women's Hall of Fame Includes Two Special Kalamazoo Democrats

March was National Women's History month and Kalamazoo is noted for having extraordinary women of achievement. Among those from Kalamazoo inducted into the Michigan Women's Historical center and Hall of Fame are Jo Jacobs and Mary Brown, both active Democrats.

Mary's leadership in the League of Women Voters led to her election to the Michigan House of Representatives where she served with distinction for 18 years. Her unique legislative skills secured significant gains for women. As chair of the Constitutional Revision and Women's Rights Committee, Mary became the first

legislator to hold hearings on key women's issues such as pay equity and domestic violence.

Mary was also co-chair of the Michigan Women's Assembly, a coalition of major women's organizations in the state that developed a common women's agenda and made recommendations for public and private sector action on the economy, health care, families, education, international relations and criminal law.

Jo Jacob's tireless efforts against sex discrimination brought about the first thorough studies of sex bias in education. She was the first person to be selected as

Coordinator of the Michigan Department of Education's Office for Sex Equity. All of her work became a model for other schools to consider gender equity in education.

Aside from education, Jo has worked in groups concerned with child care, minority female dropouts, teen pregnancy, women in poverty, domestic assault, sexual harassment pay equity, and advocating women's appointments to public committees and boards.

Both women remain active in social justice issues as well as other human service activities.

— JoAnn Betz



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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Kathleen Garland-Rike

Volunteers are the heart of our Party. They keep things running effectively not only during the campaign seasons but during the slower times as well. Our volunteer spotlight this month is on Kathleen Garland-Rike, who not only worked incredibly hard during the fall campaign but is one of our hardest working and most loyal volunteers in this slower time. You will see her working behind the office reception desk on Fridays, but she spends many more hours at the office and in meetings as the KCDP Membership chair.

Kathleen arrived in Kalamazoo in 1995 after a fascinating career as a public school teacher and a university professor. Kathleen has a BA in Education and a PhD in Information Retrieval Systems. After teaching fifth grade in a Cleveland suburb and working on her graduate degree at Case Western in Ohio, she began her university career at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

Kathleen moved to Ball State where the program for which she was hired folded in five months. But it wasn't all a loss in Indiana as she met her husband, Galen, there. Kathleen soon moved on to the State University New York at Buffalo to a job she loved: working with and supervising students. However, in order to be closer to Galen who was still at Ball State, Kathleen took a teaching job at U of M, and Galen became a department chair at Waldo Library, WMU. Kathleen gave up her university career after years of a commuting marriage and moved to Kalamazoo. Kathleen authored over 30 refereed journal articles as a university professor.

Once in Kalamazoo she found a job in the Kelloggsville School District as a Media/Technology Specialist at the high school, which was named one of the top 100 high schools for technology in its size range during her tenure there. Kathleen says she also loved that job but got tired of the 100 mile a day drive. So, she moved on to another phase of her fascinating life, full time volunteering.

When asked what prompted her to become a full time volunteer she said that initially she could find nothing in the Kalamazoo area in her field that she wanted to do and that she had always liked volunteering — which she had done wherever she was. As a volunteer she says she can choose exactly what she is interested in and can do something for the greater good. Kathleen says that there certainly is



Kathleen Garland-Rike

self interest in volunteering as it helps you feel you are doing things for others and giving something back to society. Kathleen chose the Democratic party because she wanted to do something that would make a difference. She was on the Oshtemo Planning Commission for six years while she was working but realized when she went to the booth to vote there was only one choice. The Democrats needed a voice and she needed someone to vote for. So, at her forceful urging, Libby Heiny-Cogswell ran for Oshtemo Supervisor and won. Being her campaign chair was another experience that Kathleen loved. Walking three or four times each week, writing press releases and designing advertising were exciting volunteer experiences for her — and she will do it again.

The KCDP is not Kathleen's only volunteer job. She also is committed to the ISAAC Housing initiative and just returned from a four day Gamaliel training in Detroit. One of her trainers was Mike Krugelich who also was Barack Obama's trainer when he was being trained as a community organizer by Gamaliel and who had a tenth row seat at the inauguration. Think what might happen if you're a Democratic volunteer!

Kathleen's words for all of us are "Go for it." The Democrats have lots of interesting jobs so "pick something you are interested in and go for it."

Why I am A Democrat

Some time ago, I was asked, "Why are you a Democrat?" I replied, "I'm not. As far as I've thought about, I'm not." I oppose big business. I appreciate social freedoms and affirmative action. I believe that government should play a roll in fighting poverty. I believe in women's rights, reproductive rights, and LGBT rights.

However, in the fall of 2000, my 17-year-old self stared helplessly at the television screen as the Presidential election results came in. Over the next couple of days, as the drama unfolded before me, I became acutely aware of what this election meant for our country. I was too young to vote, but I knew that George Bush's policies did not line up with my beliefs. All the issues in which I believed so strongly were threatened.

As George Bush took office, I realized that progressive change does not come about simply by willing it so. Progressive change comes with the right people in office able to influence governmental policy that directly affects our everyday lives.

This is when I truly became a Democrat. Democrats question many big business practices. Democrats believe that government should play a roll in fighting poverty. Democrats believe in women's rights, reproductive rights, and LGBT rights. I do not believe in these issues because I am a Democrat. I am a Democrat because I believe in these issues. The Democrats more closely align with my personal beliefs than any other party and have the ability to enact change on a grand scale.

Today, I am a Democrat.

— *Amber Colgrove*
KCDP Recording Secretary

Howard Dean Coming to Kalamazoo

Howard Dean, a onetime front-running presidential candidate who is credited with sowing the seed that sprouted into the 2008 election of Barack Obama, will keynote the KVCC Foundation's fifth annual Opportunities for Education (OFE) fundraiser banquet at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, May 20.

Tickets for the banquet and Howard Dean are \$125 per person. For tickets contact Steve Doherty at sdoherty@kvcc.edu or (269) 488-4442 or Denise Baker at dbaker@kvcc.edu or (269) 488-4442. For more information contact Tom Thinnes at (269) 488-4280.

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This newsletter is brought to you by the members of the KCDP. When you join the party, your dues help support the outreach work of the KCDP newsletter.

Mark Your Calendar for these Upcoming Events!

Annual Golf Outing

Saturday, May 9 at Ridgeview Golf Course. We need you! Play Golf and support the Democrats. Coffee, donuts and fruit at 8 a.m. Shotgun start at 8:45 a.m. Get a group of 4 together and sign up now. \$60 includes cart and lunch. If you don't have a group of 4 we will place you with friendly people. If you don't want to play, join us for lunch at about 12:30 for \$15. For reservations, please call us at 342-4217 and leave a message. We'll get back with you.

Third Thursday Topics

April: School Board Candidates Forum
All Kalamazoo and Portage candidates have been invited.

May: ISAAC Housing Initiative

This is the session that was postponed from the February meeting when Senator Levin spoke to us.

June: Lt. Governor John Cherry

has been invited to speak with us and take questions.

Community Food Projects Forum

April 22 (Earth Day), 6 p.m. at Democratic Headquarters. The forum will focus on the Farm-to-School initiative. This program is part of the federal student lunch program designed to bring more locally grown food into our school cafeterias. All Kalamazoo County schools are eligible but none are involved as yet and we are trying to initiate the program. A full discussion is on our web site (kzoodems.com). Several speakers are invited. Janet Graham will speak about the community garden project. Amy DeShon will talk about combining local food and local economic growth. Call Laurie Terlesky at 271-5217 for more.

Dinner to Go! Just \$5!

April 29, 5-7 p.m. Let KCDP volunteers make you Dinner To Go. We will prepare homemade dinners for pickup on the last Wednesday of the month starting in April. All you have to do is pick it up at 3254 S. Westnedge between 5 and 7 p.m. The menu for April is homemade veggie or meat lasagna, mixed greens and bread. Call 342-4217 email kcdpvc@gmail.com by Monday, April 27 to place your order.

Cinco De Mayo Party

May 5, 5:30 to 9 p.m. at KCDP HQ
Visit kzoodems.com/events for details.
Email kcdpvc@gmail.com to volunteer.

Brown-Todd-Wolpe Dinner

The biannual Brown-Todd-Wolpe dinner will be held next fall — late September or early October. This is the premier event of the year for Democrats. We will be holding the banquet in a new, more central location this year. Stay tuned.

www.kzoodems.com

Our web site is getting better and better. Go to it regularly and keep up to date on the events, activities and important information. We will post issue and position papers on the site as they are written and approved.

Wish List

The office badly needs a **vacuum sweeper**. If you can donate one, please bring it in. We'll even pick it up! Also needed are an electric "OPEN" sign, a PC, Excel and Word, a keyboard, and an automatic mail machine to put bar codes on our mailings.

**Vote May 5 for the
Transportation Millage!**