

# **TROY DEMOCRATIC CLUB**

## **☞ TDC NEWSLETTER ☞**

**for June 2009**

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*Put together by volunteer labor working at home in our “spare” time*

## COMING EVENTS

### TDC Executive Board to Meet June 10 at 7:00 PM in TCC Rm 504

The Troy Dems Executive Board will meet from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 10, in Room 504 of the Troy Community Center at 3179 Livernois (north of Big Beaver). All Troy Dems members are welcome to attend to help plan the Club's 2009 activities.

### TDC-Birmingham/Bloomfield Joint Program on Wednesday June 17 at 7:00 PM

Hear about fighting for fair elections, and join in a discussion about President Obama's First 5 Months in Office. Our speakers are Wayne State University Assistant Professor of Law Jocelyn Benson, who is a candidate for Secretary of State, and University of Detroit-Mercy Professor of Management and Labor Relations Mike Whitty.

Meeting at 7-9 PM  
Troy Community Center, Room 304  
3179 Livernois Rd, Troy 48083  
(north of Big Beaver/16 Mile,  
east of I-75)

Admission is free

Open to the Public

We are asking for donations of nonperishable food for the Salvation Army

*Their talks are a continuation of our "Neighbors Working Together" series. In which our invited guests share with us about their views on regional cooperation.*

**Join our discussion about how we can collaborate to improve the quality of life for all communities.**

### Bowling For Rhinos



# Blue Tigers

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**Bowling for Rhinos June 6, 2009**

7:00pm Fairlanes Bowl  
29600 Stevenson Hwy North of 12 Mile  
(12 Mile & I-75)  
Madison Heights, MI 48071

***Bowling for Rhinos? What in the world are they talking about?***

**Returning to Oakland County after many years in Wayne County. Last year, they earned over \$28,000 in Wayne Co!**

“Rhinos have lived on earth for over 50 million years, but whether they survive even 50 years more is open to speculation. Only 5 rhino species exist today, when once there were over 100 species.” AAZK Detroit

More than 40 chapters of the American Association of Zookeepers (AAZK) raise over \$200,000 annually to provide support for endangered animals in Africa and Indonesia. ALL of the money raised is dedicated to funding animal preserves in these two countries. The Detroit chapter of AAZK has been extremely dedicated to this project over the past ten years and raised over \$145,000! Several times Detroit AAZK has won this national effort! **Detroit AAZK Bowling for Rhinos** main event is in Oakland County this year. We MUST show AAZK & Wayne County that **we** can gather plenty of support as well!

**OCDP has endorsed this as a Blue Tiger Project. What can TDC members do to support the Detroit Chapter of AAZK?**

- ***Donate money*** to help sponsor the TDC Team (We'll collect at the May 20 TDC meeting or you can send it directly to:  
*Bowling for Rhinos*  
*AAZK Detroit Chapter*  
*8450 West Ten Mile*  
*Royal Oak, MI 48067*
- ***Collect & donate items*** for the Silent Auction on June 6<sup>th</sup>
- ***Come & participate in the Silent Auction & 50/50 Raffle*** on June 6 at Fairlanes Bowl
- ***Buy a Bowling for Rhinos T-Shirt*** available at the June 6 event or contact Kathy Martin at **248-879-7077**, **248-990-0029** or [events@troydemocrats.org](mailto:events@troydemocrats.org)

## **TDC COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Member ship**

**The Troy Dems welcome as the newest members of the Club:**

*Welcome to new member Rev. Rich Peacock*

*We've crossed over the 90 mark, so please help us reach that wonderful 100!*

If you have any questions on membership, please contact Kathy Martin at [membership@Troydemocrats.org](mailto:membership@Troydemocrats.org)

## **Events (See Coming Events for the schedule)**

We have many activities coming up in June & beyond and definitely need some volunteer support! Please contact Ed Spillers at [bluetiger@troydemocrats.org](mailto:bluetiger@troydemocrats.org) or Kathy Martin at [events@troydemocrats.org](mailto:events@troydemocrats.org). See also the “Community Connections” on the TDC website

## **Campaign**

The Campaign Committee has begun discussing action items for the 2009 campaign. See their “Campaign Connections” on the TDC website. If you have any questions, please contact Terry Merriweather at [campaign@troydemocrats.org](mailto:campaign@troydemocrats.org).

## **RECAP OF PAST EVENTS**

### **John Freeman & Sen. Glenn Anderson Spoke to TDC on Wednesday May 17 at 7:00 PM**

John Freeman, Democratic candidate for governor, spoke on “Organizing for Quality, Affordable Health Care.” Health care is a constitutional, primary right. He is Michigan State Director of Health Care for America Now, an organization formed to pressure Congress for national health care legislation. It is made up of groups around the United States. Why is health care reform needed?

- For personal health – there are 46 million uninsured in the U.S. It is a moral right to have access to quality health care
- To create an level economic playing field so the U.S. can better compete in a world economy. It will help employers and workers, and strengthen the economy

The 3 goals of this campaign are to:

- Educate people about the health care crisis
- Organize people to generate pressure on members of Congress to support and move legislation
- Generate media coverage to support this campaign in reforming health care

The group is working with all the Michigan Democratic members of Congress and the 4 Republicans who voted for the SCHIP legislation. Freeman wants everyone in America to have access to health care, and that this insurance is affordable and high quality. The plan must include a public option. There must be competition. This is not the single payer option.

In 2010 Michigan will elect all new leadership – governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general. Michigan will lose a House seat, and it is important that Democrats be in charge in redrawing districts. Health care will be a primary issue.

John also added several reasons to consider voting for him:

1. We need new leadership in the state and must change the way we govern. Democrats must engage the people of Michigan and use the expertise of the private sector. Michigan people do not understand what state government does.
2. We must build a new pattern of economic growth. We must prioritize education, including higher education as well as K-12. We must enable all kids to go to college because that is the future. Part of this is relooking at the organization and structure of the university system. Businesses want this. Michigan is blessed with a wonderful environment; we must protect and nurture it as a reason for business and people to come to Michigan. The state must raise and restructure the gas tax to support a strong infrastructure, which is important for business. Michigan must support health care. We must build a sense of community among the diverse peoples of the state; people want to live where they see everyone respected.

Freeman has served in the Michigan House and run a minimum wage campaign.

Sen. Glenn Anderson, "Redistricting Reform and the Fight for Jobs."

Current problems in Michigan are:

- Insurance companies use credit scores for insurance pricing
- Michigan workers must have first chance at jobs in road construction, etc.
- Mortgage foreclosure bills need to be passed; a problem is that the Senate has 21 Republicans and 16 Democrats
- Redistricting – need Democratic control over this. Anderson suggests an independent redistricting commission, made up of members who have not held elective office in a set number of years and have minimal participation in partisan politics. This would give Michigan voters more power

### **GOV. TIM KAINE (D-VA): ORGANIZING FOR AMERICA & THE DNC**

On Monday May 18, there was a local reception for Governor Tim Kaine (D-Virginia), Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Governor Kaine has been travelling the country the past few months meeting with local Democratic supporters discussing Organizing for America and the DNC.

The event was held at Barbara Rom's home in Birmingham and was attended by approximately fifty guests, including Troy Demos Corresponding Secretary Ken Zook. After an hour of mingling with the guests, Governor Kaine was formally introduced by Ms. Rom.

He had several main points in his speech. He spoke of the urgency of supporting the President. Where once we were the opposition party, now we must become the party of Presidential support. The party is reshaping itself to mirror the agencies of the Federal government that it will be interfacing

with to support the President's goals.

He also spoke of the way that the party will be interacting with the people and its membership. As Obama had his start and greatest successes as a community organizer, that will be his model for success in the future. Half of the DNC budget will be directed to paying organizers in every state to support programs and goals important to the President's agenda.

After he spoke he opened the floor to questions, although in Ken's opinion he may not have expected the type of questions he received. The auto industry dominated the questions.

What was the Democratic Party planning to do to support the industry and the region? The questioner accused the DNC of supporting "east and west coast democrats" at the expense of Middle America Democrats and union members who have helped elect the President. Gov. Kaine answered that President Obama's programs will retrain displaced workers for new green industries. Another questioner asked that if General Motors is forced into bankruptcy where would the hearing be held. "It would be wherever GM chose to file." Gov. Kaine responded. "Just like GM chose to have Wagoner step down!" was the reply from the questioner, "It should be in Detroit where the people who are familiar with the industry are located." The questions were soon brought to a close and Chairman Kaine greeted people on a one on one basis answering more questions. Just that day he had visited four other gatherings.

It was Ken's observation that the individuals who spoke up to question him made very good points. Even if the government retrains displaced workers how will they survive in the meantime with bills, mortgages, and families to support. Also if a 48 year old auto worker goes back to school to learn a new trade he may be 52 before finishing school and competing with young college graduates for jobs that are still going to be scarce.

See [www.democrats.org](http://www.democrats.org) for the DNC homepage, including information on

- Blog
- Our Party
- Action
- Agenda
- Organizing for America
- Press
- Local Events
- Party-Builder

## **9th Congressional District Democratic Party**

Unless otherwise noted, meetings of the 9th Congressional District Democratic Club Executive Committee will occur the first Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Oakland County Board of Commissioners Auditorium in the courthouse complex of the Oakland County Service Center, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac, 48341.

## **NEWS FROM OTHER DEMOCRATIC AND ALLIED GROUPS**

### **BLUE TIGER DEMOCRATS: see Bowling for Rhinos article above**

The TDC members have been involved with the Michigan Blue Tiger Projects for years.



Michigan Blue Tiger Democrats is a project of the Michigan Democratic Party and a movement dedicated to civic engagement and community service by Democrats. By demonstrating our commitment to the neighborhoods, individuals and ideals that make our Party great, we believe we can engage people year-round in volunteer activities that help people, and in-turn, strengthen the Party from our grassroots base.

Troy Dems participated strongly in the *Blue Tiger Community Service* project to donate personal toiletry items for wounded veterans in Southeast Michigan VA hospitals and clinics.

Over \$1000 worth of items were donated!

Special thanks to the four businesses that were drop-off locations

- Mr. Pita, 1977 South Blvd. Troy, 48098
- Baskin-Robbins 2979 E. Big Beaver Troy, 48083
- Premier Travel 155 Eton Birmingham, 48009
- Benito's Pizza 4960 John R Troy, 48085

And to 920 On the Park apartment building for both donating and being a drop-off location,

and to Dr. Thomas Hopcian, D.D.S. for donating dental supplies, and to the Troy-Somerset Gazette for donating space for an ad.

Our military protects our freedom and way of life. This donation drive was intended to let those service men and women who have been injured in battle know that we stand by them.

With the generous support of people in the community, we will be able to help many of these brave Military Veterans with the little things of everyday life. I am sure will let them know their neighbors stand with them and honor them for their service.

As a Club, we are dedicated to the community we serve and value the efforts and support of every Troy resident, no matter your social or political views.

We recognize the hard work of Ed Spillers and Sandy Burgess in organizing this project and seeing it through to its successful conclusion.

### **Calendar of Dems' Coming Events in 2009**

Saturday, June 6 - River Days

Saturday, June 6 - Bowling for Rhinos

Saturday, June 6 – 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day invasion of France.



*Not all the young men came home.*

Wednesday, June 17 – Joint Program with Birmingham/Bloomfield Club

Wednesday, June 24 – An Evening on Main Street, with Tim Burns & guests  
Andy Meisner & Jessical Cooper. Tavern on the Main, 235 S. Main  
Street, Clawson. Join Tim for an evening of food & fun, \$50 ticket.

Saturday, July 4—Clawson July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade, with Tim Burns & other  
candidates

Saturday, July 18 – TDC Picnic at Raintree Park, 12-5 pm. (save the date--  
details to come)

Saturday, August 1 – Big Brothers and Big Sisters Picnic, Raintree Park.

### **Congressman-elect Gary Peters**

Gary Peters, U.S. Congressman in Michigan's 9<sup>th</sup> District, is busy in Washington taking care of business. His district office is in Troy at 560 Kirts Boulevard, #105. Please contact him via that office if you have issues and concerns that he might help you with. Phone: (248) 273-4227 Fax: (248) 273-4704. Our own Kevin Hrit is on the staff at this office.

On June 1, he had a very successful open house at his office. It was a chance for attendees to talk informally about local issues and federal legislative priorities for the rest of the session.

## **Tim Burns: County Commissioner**

*Despite rainy and chilly weather, nearly 100 people joined Oakland County Commissioner Tim Burns on Saturday, May 9 for his annual community litter pick-up day of Clawson and Troy. Participating from Troy Dems were Larry Libbrecht, Will Molnar, Marilyn Thomas, Ed Spillers, LaLeatha Spillers, Harry Philo and Susan Wright*

## **New Polling Feature Added to Web Site**

Oakland County Commissioner Tim Burns' web site, [www.timothyburns.org](http://www.timothyburns.org), is testing a new polling feature. Try it out by going to his website

## **Golf Season Has Officially Begun**

Swing on over – the Oakland County Parks golf courses are now open.. [www.golfoakland.us](http://www.golfoakland.us)

**And don't forget to partake of the food and fun at An Evening on Main Street Event with Tim Burns, Andy Meissner, and Jessica Cooper See above calendar event for details.**

**TIM BURNS  
COUNTY COMMISSIONER  
19TH DISTRICT [Clawson and Troy]  
[www.timothyburns.org](http://www.timothyburns.org)**

## **State House Democratic Caucus**

*This was included in the latest Michigan House Democratic Dispatch*

In a welcome move for Michigan families struggling to make ends meet in the global economic downturn, the Governor has signed legislation originally proposed by House Democrats that extends a 90-day lifeline for homeowners at risk of foreclosure who seek help. The plan was held up in the Republican-controlled Senate until negotiations between the two chambers enabled a deal to be reached.

"When a family loses their home, we all suffer," said State Representative [Andy Coulouris](#) (Saginaw), a sponsor of the plan. "Michigan homeowners who have worked hard and played by the rules have borne the brunt of this recession, and we should stand by them in these tough times. The housing crisis has been at the head of our economic crisis, and we must address this problem in order to get Michigan back on its feet."

The legislation creates a 90-day reprieve for homeowners at risk of foreclosure, as long as they commit to working with their lender and a housing counselor. This extra time will allow residents to find a solution to their situation. Housing counselors will be available

from the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA), and will work to help educate homeowners about options available that they may not be aware of.

More than 33,000 properties in Michigan were in foreclosure in the first quarter of 2009, ranking the state sixth in the nation. This follows a grim 2008 which saw more than 145,000 properties across the state file for foreclosure.

"Foreclosures have torn apart the fabric of our communities and hurt our urban areas tremendously," said State Representative Shanelle Jackson (Detroit), also a plan sponsor. "Our economic recovery depends on keeping our families in their homes. This new option is great news for Michigan."

## Regional News

### **EDITORIALS:**

#### **1. OUTSOURCE?**

I think there has been a myth perpetrated for the past few decades that outsourcing community services is cost effective & efficient. I disagree and time has proven me right. I can't speak to specifics as regards Troy's schools efforts to outsource services but I can address the issue from a philosophical perspective. It is ludicrous to think that business can do everything better than government. If you want to buy a pair of shoes, a new suit or a pizza – I agree wholeheartedly – buy from a business. I don't want government selling me a lawn mower. But when it comes to services for the 'commons' – that is we the people, then you need to be served by a government agency that is accountable to the public. Outsourcing to a 'for profit' enterprise pits the needs of the commons against the needs for a company to make a profit. Was it not but in the last few decades we heard the term "cost overruns"? The \$2000 dollar toilet? Contracts are a tricky business and in reality are hard to police – hard to break – and hard to enforce. It leaves the community in too much vulnerability as to getting what you paid for. And as an aside, one of the shortcomings of outsourcing is the inherent need to bid low for a contract, which often necessitates cheap labor, cheap materials, cutting corners – all to achieve a profit. Civil service is a career path for many people and it is not looked upon as a temporary job until something better comes along. You have better motivation, better incentives and better accountability with 'in house' services. It means that your municipal government is directly held accountable for services to its citizens.

I bet many of you can cite some case in which the actual cost of services far exceeds the original bid or contract award. I'm not saying that

outsourcing is bad in every case, but I am saying that outsourcing in most cases is bad. If you start with the mindset that 'private enterprise' can do it better, then you are already setting your community up for failure. I have spent nearly 40 years as a "public servant". It was a career – not a job. Would you outsource your police to say Blackwater? Of course not! There is an intangible that is often ignored or overlooked – motivation. I submit that the motivation of any career public servant is miles ahead of any worker in the same arena. Profit is not their incentive – doing the best they can is. There is a host of concerns that any community should look at, and far too often we are seduced by a cheap offer to provide services that end up neither cheap, nor efficient or dependable.

*Mike Smith*

## 2. HOW LONG HAS MICHIGAN HAD A DYSFUNCTIONAL POLITICAL D SYSTEM?

I suppose most Democrats would answer, "*Ever since Engler*", and most Republicans would answer, "*Ever since Jeniffer*". Both are wrong. Michigan has had a dysfunctional political culture for at least FIFTY Years! I had occasion to be given a copy of Newsweek Magazine for May 11, 1959. I read the article on page 35 (see copy following this article) and wondered if this old journal was somehow reporting today's news out of Lansing. The auto industry was booming. The state's citizens were awash in jobs and money. Times were good. Yet the Democrats and the Republicans could not agree on either the structure of the state's taxes nor on the amount to be levied. The result of their long impasse? The wealthy State of Michigan was broke, busted, out of cash, and couldn't pay its bills. The only thing that saved it was the voluntary pre-payment of state taxes by General Motors and other state industries.

The spectacle of a wealthy state going broke back then was the result of a long term disagreement between the two political parties as to how best to raise the state's revenue: the Dems wanted to introduce a state income tax and the GOP wanted to increase the state sales tax. Their stubborn animosity prevented the adoption of any tax plan at all, and the resulting failure to act led to the writing of that Newsweek article.

Today, 50 years later, there is no more wealth in the state, the unemployment rate is now 12.8% and slated to go as high as 18%. The state is broke and the Dems and GOP are still arguing as to how best to solve the financial mess. Only this time, the state's savior of yesteryear, General Motors, will not be able to bail out the state because of the awkward fact that GM has just declared bankruptcy and joined Chrysler in the debtor's box.

Yet the two parties are still squabbling with each other over the best way to save the state. Cooperation is not on the agenda because the advancement of individual careers takes precedence over the common good (a consequence of term limits).

I am reminded of an old Bill Mauldin cartoon in which two men are standing, one at each end, of a rowboat floating in a large lake. Each man has a drill in his hand and each has drilled a hole in the hull of the rowboat. As the water pours into the boat and it sinks lower into the lake, each man yells at the other, "It is my duty to sink your end of the rowboat".

For fifty years, we were able to get by despite having a dysfunctional political system because there was enough money in Michigan to somehow buy our way out of trouble. But today the money has gone. The twin bankruptcies of GM and Chrysler are letting water pour into our leaky boat such that we are in serious danger of becoming the poorest state in the Union. The new Mississippi, as it were. I don't know about the other passengers in this boat, but my feet are getting too darn wet already. It is time to work for the common good.

And perhaps the best place to start is at home, in Troy, where an important election for City Council will take place this November. Next month we will focus on the rowboat we call Troy.

*Bob Arking*

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS



Short: \$140 million

### Empty Public Purses

Not since the dark days of the depression have so many states been in such dire financial straits. Michigan cannot pay its legislators, and its state university cannot pay its bills. Minnesota—which already has one of the stiffest income taxes in the nation—is considering pushing the rates still higher to cover its deficits; Ohio wants to put a sales tax on purchases as low as 10 cents. State after state is finding that its most pressing and critical problem today is the answer to the question: Where is the money coming from? And as state after state faces up to this critical problem, one central fact is emerging clearly: Across the nation, spending has created a tax crisis of unprecedented proportions. For the very same voters who have forced spending up are balking at paying the bill their demands for services have run up.



Short: \$41.5 million



Short: \$166 million

## THE STATES IN A MESS

In the marbled central corridor of the glittering white Capitol at Frankfort, Ky., one day last week, a weary state official remarked sourly:

"What this state ought to do is secede from the union and then apply for foreign aid."

At almost the same moment, a legislator in Des Moines, Iowa, was saying:

"I feel sorry for the next governor. He'll be like Mother Hubbard when he takes a look in the cupboard, because it's really going to be bare."

The story was the same in other capitols from Sacramento to Boston.

The story written in red ink for the taxpayers to read was that more than half the states in the nation—29—are in serious financial troubles. Some are in shakier shape than they have been in more than 25 years and at least one of them—Michigan—is desperate.

In Michigan last week, John Hannah, president of the state university, announced that the school was suspending payment of its bills—it did not have the money. Gov. G. Mennen (Soapy) Williams and the Michigan Administrative Board ordered a halt on all payments from the state's general fund—which meant no pay for the state's 28,000-odd employes (including 144 state legislators).

The specter that faces all the states

is the same. They built up whacking surpluses during World War II and the Korean war—when the taxes kept rolling in and there was a limit on how much could be spent for public improvements, and relief rolls were at a minimum. In the past five or six years, this picture has been completely reversed. A booming economy and a zooming population have created an insatiable demand for new roads, new schools, new hospitals—new everything.

**The Cupboard Is Bare:** To almost every State Legislature the answer how to finance these improvements has been clear: Spend the surplus. Today's dilemma is just as clear: The surpluses are spent.

Michigan is the perfect case history. Williams, the nation's only six-term governor, took office in 1949 with a surplus of some \$25 million, a budget of \$529 million, and a population of 6.2 million.

Today, Michigan is \$76 million in the red; its budget is about \$1 billion; its population is 7.9 million. Its mental-health budget, during the decade, has gone from \$33 million to \$68 million; its aid to school districts from \$128 million to \$248 million; aid to higher education from \$34 million to \$91 million. Only two months ago, Michigan industry, headed by General Motors,

made advance tax payments of \$35.5 million to stave off financial disaster (*Newsweek*, March 2).

As if all its immediate problems weren't bad enough, Michigan is expected to be \$110 million in the red by June 30, the end of the fiscal year; and the \$1.1 billion budget for next year is now \$140 million short of being balanced.

Economies would help some, but not enough. Michigan also must raise taxes.

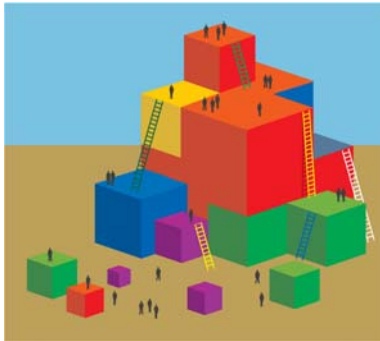
To the average legislator, a cure like this is almost as bad as the disease. In Michigan, it is further complicated by the fact that Williams is a Democrat and his legislature is Republican. By and large, the Republicans want to increase the state's present 3 per cent sales tax to 4 per cent; the Democrats want to introduce a state income tax.

This has prevented the adoption of any tax plan at all.

Minnesota is another case in point. Its regular legislative session ended some ten days ago, with the legislators in an almost hopeless tangle as to where to get an additional \$83 million to balance the two-year budget (or \$41.5 million this year)—and Gov. Orville L. Freeman immediately ordered a special session to sit until the problem is solved.

Freeman's own recommendations were

**YES WE CAN...**



**... BUILD OUR COMMUNITY ONE PERSON &  
ONE BRICK AT A TIME – TOGETHER!**

*Harry Philo, Bea Smits, Ed Spillers, Mike Smith, &  
Bob Arking contributed to this Newsletter.*

*Your Name Can Also Go Here - Just Share Your  
Words With Us.*