



**Manistee County
Democratic Party**

Digital Newsletter



Dining with the Dems

**Break Bread, Discuss the Issues of the Day, and Take a Spin Through
Vintage Pinball Machines at Dining With Dems Event**

Bring the whole family down to The Outsider restaurant in Manistee on Friday, Feb. 16 at 5pm, for Dining With Dems, an event hosted by [the Manistee County Democratic Party](#). This unique night out is designed to bring progressively minded people together in a friendly atmosphere for food, fun, and conversation.

Open to all ages, participants will buy their own meals and will be able to sit and chat with members of the county party. The idea is not to engage in heated

debates, but rather to relax, share common ground, make new connections, build camaraderie during an intense presidential campaign year and, most importantly, have a good time! The Outsider's delicious menu and selection of games, including an entire room full of vintage pinball machines, should make having fun an easy task. The festivities begin at 5pm and the restaurant is located at 457 River St. downtown. 916-826-8244.



COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR John Helge

In honor of the new year, the Manistee County Democratic Party would like to share some of our resolutions for 2024. Here's to health, wealth, hope, and happiness for us all!

1. Our monthly columns will not be history lessons. We will make every effort to focus on the future and what this county, state, and country needs from those we choose to represent us in the challenging work of governing. We must learn from past mistakes but also be willing to take bold, progressive action to move Michigan forward and meet the needs and expectations of all people, not just those who fund campaigns and expect special treatment in return.
2. The Manistee County Democratic Party will ask all our members to be more engaged in the political process in 2024. The number of people who have made a personal commitment to join this local community organization has grown steadily as more folks in Manistee County are proud to be "out loud" Democrats who work for social, economic, and environmental justice for all. The 2024 election cycle will require all hands-on deck to overcome the misinformation, chaos, and fear being

spread by the hard-right media ecosystem and social media propagandists.

3. We will actively listen to and empathize with any resident of Manistee County who feels they are not being heard by their elected representatives at all levels. We may not have a quick fix for any specific issue, but we are committed to hearing you and will try to help you find a solution.
4. We will help make it easier for you to vote in 2024. Everyone can now vote using an absentee ballot. All you must do is request an absentee ballot application from your City or Township Clerk. You will also be able to “skip the line” by heading to your Clerk’s office and taking advantage of in-person early voting, which begins approximately two weeks before election day – and this applies to the February and August primaries, as well as the general election in November.
5. We want you to vote for the local or regional candidate that you feel will best represent you, your family, and your neighbors, so please take the time to become an informed voter. Challenge yourself to read up on all candidates to determine if they are worthy of your vote. (The nonpartisan [League of Women Voters](#) collects and distributes candidate information to the public before each election.) The Manistee County Democratic Party will also expect all candidates from any political party affiliation to actively participate in town hall candidate forums and debates prior to the election.
6. We continue to advocate for changing the current antiquated, unfair Electoral College system of selecting the President and Vice President of the United States to a system in which the candidate with the most votes wins. The cold, hard fact is that third-party candidates have zero chance of winning a presidential election under the current system. If you’re hoping a third-party vote is a good way to protest the lack of a presidential candidate that speaks to your issues, it sadly is NOT. With that in mind and knowing 2024 is an election year that is critical to the future of this country, we urge you to avoid wasting your vote on a third-party candidate who is already doomed to lose.
7. We will challenge you to vote in the November election, even if you think voting doesn’t matter and nothing ever changes. Elections can have

dire consequences (the elimination of reproductive rights granted under *Roe v. Wade* comes to mind), so things do, in fact, change. It's also not hyperbole to say there's a leading 2024 presidential candidate who believes they have the power to prevent any future free and fair elections. Your decision to sit out the 2024 election may help put unqualified fringe candidates in office who are not willing to do the hard work of governing for the greater good of all their constituents.

8. The Manistee County Democratic Party will hold monthly informational meetings that are open to the public. These meetings will feature speakers who have specific, factual information to share on issues that are important to people living in Manistee County. Our goal is to reduce the amount of misinformation and rumors that are spread when difficult issues arise.
9. And finally, the Manistee County Democratic Party leadership is committed to listening to the concerns, needs, issues, or new ideas of all residents. We welcome your active engagement in the political process and value your opinions on how we can do a better job connecting with voters in Manistee County. Do not hesitate to reach out by using the contact information on our website at <https://www.manisteecountydemocrats.us/>.



**Manistee Dems on
the Move!**



Attendees at January's information meeting that featured the award-winning documentary "One Water for Life". We were fortunate to have the producers of the video, Ziggy Kozicky and Stephanie Baiyasi, with us to answer questions after the video was shown.

2024 Strategic Planning Meeting Recap

24 engaged MCDP members gathered at the WSCC building for the 2024 Strategic Planning Meeting. It was a great turnout considering the wintery weather! We held spirited, and had positive discussions focused on developing the strategy for the MCDP in 2024. We reached mutual agreements on strategic goals and received good feedback on the tactics necessary to successfully achieve these goals. Key input was a strong desire to provide more training for members to enable them to be better prepared and more confident in engaging in civil conversations with prospective voters in Manistee County.

The quarterly goals listed below outline the tactical actions we will undertake to comply with the \$500 quarterly grant from Contest Every Race. The quarterly actions all align very well with the strategic goals we have agreed to at the meeting.

Quarter 1 Goals: Define our path forward, find 3 commissioner candidates and 16 township trustee candidates, fully staff the 2024 campaign office to enable it to be open 7 days/week while in operation.

Quarter 2 Goals: Register at least 200 new voters in Manistee County, conduct 2 "Dining with the Dems" and "Weekly Coffee and Conversation" events, Get at least one LTE per week.

Quarter 3 Goals: Have conversations with at least 100 Manistee County voters who identify as strong Dems who are not currently engaged with the MCDP, hold pop-up offices throughout Manistee County once per week from August through election day, get 100% of all strong and leaning Dems in Manistee county to request AV ballots.

Quarter 4 Goals: Get 100% of strong and leaning Dem AV ballots returned, Document voter performance in Manistee County to the precinct level, continue to work with the Feeding America Food Truck every month.



Consider Running for Local Office

If you haven't before, take a moment to consider running for an elected office. Manistee County needs more citizens involved in local government. We also need younger, more diverse voices to serve on township and county boards. Everyone over 18 years old and a resident of their county and township is eligible.

Candidate Interest Meetings will continue monthly starting in January 2024. If you are interested in running for any township or county office and would like to find out how to do so, please contact Judy Cunningham at 231-794-0005

or jpc4466@gmail.com.

Contest Every Race

The greatest change is often created at the local level, but we need to be on the ballot. The Manistee County Democratic Party is in partnership with the Rural Power Lab whose “Contest Every Race” supports county parties to set goals for recruiting and training candidates for local races. Our goal is to make sure every race is contested with a Democratic candidate. Contact John Helge, chair, for more information: johnmhelge@gmail.com.



Democrats strive to “Contest Every Race”

Did you know that 75% of partisan races in the United States go uncontested? In Manistee County, out of the 80 partisan positions up for grabs, only 24 are currently held by Democrats.

“Contest Every Race”, a pro-Democratic organization, wants to change that statistic for rural counties in Michigan. The Manistee County Democratic Party is working with “Contest Every Race” to obtain training and funding to support our efforts in recruiting enough candidates to put a D on the ballot across from every R.

It has been shown that having local Democratic **candidates on the ballot increases voter turnout** and holds the Republican incumbent accountable. And there are so many more advantages...like getting your message out, making a difference in your community and serving your constituents.

Last week at a meeting in Kaleva John Makinen, an 87-year-old resident and strong Democrat, stepped up to run for Trustee on the Maple Grove Township Board. His friends Ken and Ellen Kuuttila told me that John is very active in his community. I hope this story inspires you. Whether you want to be a name on a ballot or run a full campaign, we need your engagement and will support your candidacy.

To that end, we are holding **Candidate Interest meetings** to meet with anyone wanting to explore a possible run for **Township or County elected offices**. Find out what positions are available, what duties these positions entail, how to file and how the party can support you.

The 2024 election will be fraught with peril like no other, and **Michigan is a crucial swing state that will decide the Presidency**. We must maximize the Democratic vote. Now is the time for YOU to step up!!!

February

* Thursday, February 15 at 10 am at Pleasant Valley Community Center, Arcadia

* Thursday, February 22 at 5:30 pm at West Shore Community College, Manistee Campus

March

*Saturday, March 16 at 1:00 pm at Annie's Kozy Kitchen, on 16938 M-55 in Wellston

*Thursday, March 21 at 5:30 pm at West Shore Community College, Manistee Campus

NOTE: If you know of someone you think will make a great candidate, please let us know and we will follow up. Call Judy Cunningham at 231-794-0005 or email at jpc4466@gmail.com.



A big welcome to Sarah Stevenson as the new MCDP Secretary. Sarah was elected to that position by the MCDP County Committee at their annual meeting in January. The County Committee also elected Bill Shryer as a new member of the MCDP County Committee as a delegate member. Bill is a relative newcomer to Manistee County having recently moved here from the San Francisco area.



We have a new Membership Program on our [website](#). Most previous members have already been entered, but a password has not been assigned. To access the system,

1. Click on [Join the MCDP](#) and then *Member Sign-In*.
2. Enter your email address. It will prompt you for a password.
3. Since you have not signed in before, you will have to *Request Password*.
4. Check your email for the new password.
5. Return to the *Member Sign-in* Screen and enter the password.

You are now a signed in member of the MCDP and can explore the options that are available. Remember to note your password and save it in a secure location.

In the event section, you will see that we have a number of upcoming events that you can attend. Some of those have specific *Volunteer Opportunities*. To see the dates and times click on the *Volunteer Sign-Ups* option.

In the *Join A Committee* option, you can volunteer to help in specific areas. Remember, we are a totally volunteer organization and depend on you to make things work. The more people involved, the less the burden is on individuals. Many hands make light work.

This is new program for us so please let us know about any problems that you encounter or any comments that you think might be helpful.

Note that for your protection, certain areas are only available to registered members of the local party so that the ability to stalk or to troll is minimized.



Our mailing address is:

P. O. Box 65
Manistee, MI 49660

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

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To Email the Group: manisteedems@googlegroups.com

Website <http://www.manisteecountydemocrats.us>

facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1711070132463223/>

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