



Senate District 54 DFL Newsletter

Gem Lake . Lauderdale . Little Canada . Roseville . Shoreview . St. Anthony . Vadnais Heights

What's News in SD54

Karen Hanson, Associate Chair

Pre-holiday Party

The 2005 SD54 DFL pre-holiday party helped close the year with another great event. Approximately 80 people came to Cedarholm Golf Course in Roseville on November 17 to share great food and conversation. The highlight of the potluck table was the "Thanksgiving turkey" made from frosted cupcakes brought by Laurel Cederberg and her children Linnea and Gabe. Todd and I would also like to thank Ruth Ellen Luehr and Sue Rengstdorf for their assistance in planning the party and providing door prizes.

SD54 legislators, John Marty, Mindy Greiling, and Bev Scalze, shared a few of their thoughts about the past and upcoming legislative sessions. Two newly-elected Roseville city council members, Amy Ihlán and Tammy Pust, were present and congratulated on their victories. A special guest was Roberta Reverts, program manager of the Keystone Services food program. Chair Todd Anderson recognized volunteers for their extra contributions to SD54 DFL in 2005. Special thanks went to April Alfuth, Kent Bergh, and Jane Lanctot who worked double shifts at the state fair donut booth to ensure that all of our shifts were covered. April also recruited all the volunteers for the donut booth. Julianne Johnston mailed the state fair tickets and instructions to all the donut booth volunteers. SD54 DFL was represented in the local parades this summer, thanks to Karen Schaffer contributing her vehicle and her time. Georgiana Sobola continues to make sure we have facilities for our meetings and events. Thanks to all the volunteers who contribute their valuable time to SD54 activities.

December Executive Committee

The Executive Committee considered several recommendations from the Finance Committee at its December 15 meeting. The committee proposed that SD54 exclude charitable contributions from its budget, as that is not in line with the purpose of the organization. After some discussion, the Executive Committee voted in favor of the recommendation. An ad hoc committee will be formed, however, to discuss a policy for giving to political candidates outside of SD54 when funds allow.

As reported in the last newsletter, SD54 donated to the Keystone food shelf in September and reported this in a press release to local newspapers. Although none carried the story, the *Roseville Review* recently did a feature story on the plight of local food shelves after the Katrina disaster, which included the Keystone operation.

The Executive Committee voted to sponsor up to three people from SD54 to the next Camp Wellstone in January and to sponsor Samantha Vandervort in the Youth in Government program, through our candidate development efforts.

Election Year 2006

The real start of the election year is, of course, the precinct caucuses, which will be held on Tuesday, March 7 at Roseville Area High School. Let's try to duplicate the tremendous turnout in 2004—encourage your family, friends and neighbors to attend their caucuses and help to elect a DFL governor and U.S. senator, as well as keep our SD54 DFL legislators in office. SD54 will once again be providing training for caucus attendees and particularly for caucus conveners. Beth Lareau and

Julianne Johnston will conduct a training for directors at the February 16, 2006, Executive Committee meeting. On Saturday, February 25, they will lead another training session for anyone who wants to learn about the caucus procedures or who intends to be a convener, responsible for opening the caucus and ensuring that attendees are properly registered. The training will be held at Roseville Middle School, see article on page 4. Further details about the caucuses will appear in the late February/early March issue of the newsletter.

Diversity Training Opportunity

Finally, here's a suggestion to increase our awareness of the diversity of SD54 and to welcome new people to the DFL. The Roseville Community Education program is offering a class called *Building Bridges: The Hmong in Our Community*. It's one session only, on Monday, February 6 at Fairview Community Center in Roseville, from 6-9 p.m. Register online at www.ISD623.org/commed/adult and receive \$5 off the class fee of \$25.

The Senate District 54 Newsletter is published six times a year to inform and educate interested parties of the happenings within SD54 DFL. The Newsletter provides opportunities for readers to submit articles for publication on various subjects of interest to this audience. The Newsletter Committee reserves the right to edit articles as appropriate to meet these goals.

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Prospective for the 2006 Legislature

Mindy Greiling, SD54A Representative

The November state budget forecast a Happy New Year for schools. According to state law, the projected \$701 million surplus funds must be used to eliminate accounting gimmicks, i.e., to pay back money borrowed from schools by paying them late, and to rebuild reserve funds. Some school districts incur expensive short-term borrowing when their needed funds are tardy; Minnesota lost a top bond rating due to this tactic.

The forecast was good news, but in order to fully pay back our schools, we need another \$94 million. Therefore, I am perplexed that many elected officials are off to the races hyping what else to do with the money.

Funding education

Governor Tim Pawlenty and his party like to brag about the \$800 million granted to schools last year. The trouble is that when funding for special education and building maintenance is accounted for, and inflation factored in, that increase amounts to one-and-one-half percent. (Despite the fact that inflation was recently legislated away, it does rear up.) This below-inflationary amount is added on to the first-ever real cut in education funding in the history of our state last session. We have not kept up with inflation in funding our students' education for the past decade.

Five additional weeks in the school year have been suggested. That would cost \$750 million dollars. The governor says he thinks this is a good idea. So do I, but it is hard to say that this could happen when we still owe money to the schools, many important education programs have been cut and not fully restored last year (such as early childhood), and many of the increases that did accrue to students last year were only accomplished through school boards increasing property taxes. Whatever happened to the state taking over school funding in order to bring funding equity to districts, regardless of property wealth? The sad truth is the legislature only passed two-thirds of Governor Jesse Ventura's plan, omitting its sales tax portion and

setting the stage for the following year's first-ever school funding cut.

We must continue making the strong case for education being our state's top priority, along with health care, the environment, and transportation. We must put our money where our mouths are. That is what next year's elections should be all about.

Editor's Note: Due to newsletter deadlines, the representative's articles were written before the Ramsey County District Court struck down the Minnesota Cigarette Health Impact fee, enacted in 2005.

2006 Session Priorities

Bev Scalze, SD54B Representative

The priorities for the Democrats in the 2006 session will be the same issues that we raise over and over again: education, health care, transportation, and clean water and air. Since these past few weeks, we have heard about the \$701 million "surplus" (which is required by law to be paid back to the schools from which it was borrowed) there may be a debate about paying it back because legislators can change the law. Also, the \$337 million positive balance, which has been deposited in the Tax Relief Account, will be contentious because local governments have had their aids and credits cut to balance the state budget. When the state held its "Truth in Taxation" hearings last year, citizens told it loudly and clearly that property taxes are too high for many people to afford. I believe the Democrats will again attempt to pass a "Renewable Energy Standard" and we will work to promote Minnesota's energy independence.

Of course 2006 is a bonding year and the focus will be on the capital investment bill, which will contain transit funding (central corridor). This bill will also be a "jobs" bill, which is another focus for Democrats. There will be many local projects included, and since this is an election year, we can expect a lot of wrangling for dollars that legislators can "bring home." Some of the projects include a Shakespeare Festival for Winona, water towers, a public works garage, and a fire station. Hopefully, those projects won't make the cut for statewide taxpayer funding.

There are other issues left over from 2005.

The governor and the legislature have yet to determine the funding mechanism for the Clean Water Legacy Act, which would clean up our lakes and rivers in accordance with the Federal mandates of the Clean Water Act. The state hasn't decided on the best proposal for electronics recycling. Last year was a long session, and since these items didn't get decided, it seems improbable that with the short 2006 session, there will be enough time to debate them fully and fairly.

However, since 2006 is an election year, we can expect to see some "wedge" issues on the House majority agenda. We have already watched immigration "cost" highlighted, and *eminent domain* correction is the focus of Representative Jeff Johnson, the Republican candidate for attorney general. Hopefully that won't be decided along party lines. We will again face stadium funding issues and annexation issues, which also could have been addressed and voted upon in 2005. And of course, other issues may come from left field which, depending upon the leadership, may divide us yet again—which is the goal for some.

I'm sure the 2006 legislative session, starting on March 1, will be fast and crazy, because legislators and the governor will want to begin campaigning for the fall elections. Stay tuned.

Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Insurance

The new Medicare prescription drug benefit, effective January 1, 2006, is a voluntary program requiring beneficiaries to enroll in a plan offered by insurance companies, not a government agency. In Minnesota, 17 companies offer 42 different prescription drug plan options! How do you decide which plan is best for you? Here are some resources:

Senior LinkAge® Line: 1-800-333-2433

MN Senior Federation: 651-645-0261

www.accesstobenefits.org

www.tcaging.org—provides dates

and times of presentations and enrollment assistance at some Metro area public libraries, Metro area community and senior centers, government centers, and service organizations such as the DARTS, and CAP Agencies.

Now is the time for all SD54 DFLers to come to the aid of their party!!!

Julianne Johnston

Yes, the time is now. Beth Lareau and Julianne Johnston, precinct trainers, invite any and all in SD54 to attend our precinct training. If you attended the last precinct caucuses and had questions about how caucuses work or if you didn't attend and have questions about why we have precinct caucuses, this training session is for *you*. SD54 will provide this precinct training for all interested persons to get a head start on the process. If you have agreed to be a precinct convener, this is a *must attend* session. In 2002 we trained over 60 people in the precinct process and that made it possible for us to be surrounded by knowledgeable folks in every precinct. The training session will be held on February 25, 2006, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, in the cafeteria of Roseville Middle School, at 15 East County Road B-2.

At the training you will learn everything from signing in to how to get resolutions presented, and how resolutions get to the State DFL Convention and beyond. Attendees, including all precinct conveners, will preview the latest agenda and process presented in the State DFL Call (there are changes every year). Attendees will become skilled in how to be elected as a delegate to the SD54 Convention, the 4th Congressional District convention and the State Convention. Become comfortable with the process by attending the training on February 25, and then plan to attend the precinct caucuses on March 7, at the Roseville High School beginning at 7 p.m. Mark your calendar now; we look forward to seeing you there. If you have questions, please contact Julianne at 651-486-7120 or Juliannetj@msn.com

—SENATE DISTRICT 54 DFL CALENDAR OF EVENTS—

What _____	Where _____	When
SD54 CC	Fairview Community Center	January 19, 7 p.m.
DFL State CC	Kenwood Trail Middle School, Lakeville, MN	January 21
4 th CD CC	TBA	January 23, 7 p.m.
2006 Minnesota Straw Poll	Local 879 UAW Hall 2191 Ford Pkwy, St. Paul	January 28, 7-11 p.m.
SD54 Newsletter Committee	TBA	February 1, 7 p.m.
SD54 Executive Committee	Fairview Community Center	February 16, 7 p.m.
4th CD Executive Committee	TBA	February 21, 7 p.m.
SD54 Caucus Training	Roseville Area Middle School	February 25, 10-12 noon
SD54 Precinct Caucuses	Roseville Area High School	March 7, 7 p.m.
SD54 Convention	TBA	TBA
4th CD Convention	TBA	April 22, 9 a.m.
2006 DFL State Convention	Rochester, MN	June 9-11

CC=Central Committee CD=Congressional District

Please check the Calendar of Events on the DFL web site www.dfl.org

The SD54 Book Group –

Karen Hanson

Our First Year

Freethinkers, by Susan Jacoby

Moral Politics, by George Lakoff

Don't Think of an Elephant, by George Lakoff

Reason, by Robert Reich

Start Making Sense: Turning the Lessons of Election 2004 Into Winning Progressive

Politics, by Don Hazen

What Would Jefferson Do, by Thom Hartman

Stimulating conversation with intelligent people, being able to speak freely among passionate, like-minded people, reading about what our nation's founders actually said and wrote, exploring why we're Democrats—why do we believe in Democratic values. These are the reasons, besides the love of reading books, which bring us together every six weeks or so to discuss, rant, laugh, grumble, praise, and learn. We've gone from history to theory to practical lessons to make sense of the current political mess. We also try to apply what we learn to our involvement in local politics through SD54. The biggest challenge is deciding what to read next. As Democrats, we don't have any established rules or procedures, so it's majority vote or whoever has a recommendation.

Current participants include: Karen Schaffer, Jane Lanctot, Bev Erickson, Gary Grefenberg, Donette Smolik, Linda Hopkins, Gunilla Montgomery, Gwen Willems, Paul Schroeder, Amy Ihlan, Mary Jo Rourke, and Karen Hanson.

Our next meeting is Tuesday, January 31 at Bev Erickson's home, 2240 Midland Grove Road, Roseville, MN. Call or email Karen Hanson at 651-415-1503 for more information. We will be discussing *The Smartest Guys in the Room: The Amazing Rise and Scandalous Fall of Enron* by Bethany McLean and Peter Elkind

“Liberalism is trust of the people tempered by prudence. Conservatism is distrust of the people tempered by fear.”

William E. Gladstone

“No government can be long secure without a formidable opposition.”

Benjamin Disrael

Big Brother is watching—

It took 21 years longer than expected, but the future finally arrived.

And we don't like it, not one bit.

We are fighting a war with no end to create a peace with no defined victory.

We occupy a foreign land that doesn't want us, while at home our civil liberties are discounted.

We are told that it's better not to know what our government is doing in our name, for security purposes. Meanwhile, our government is becoming omnipresent, spying on us whenever it deems necessary.

War is peace. Freedom is slavery. Ignorance is strength.

George Orwell was right after all.

Placer Co., CA Democratic Central Committee

The 2006 Minnesota Straw Poll

Norm Hanson

It is nearly 40 degrees above as I write this and just a few days ago, I risked freezing my nose when stepping quickly outside for the morning newspaper. By the time that you read this, your noses will probably be facing that same risk. In any event, after the activity-packed and stress-filled holidays have passed and some degree of normalcy has returned to our lives, the winter cabin-fever-blues may begin to settle in. Come late January, assuming that those juices haven't frozen, you may be ready to do something different and fun, like going to a straw poll party. Well, how about that? There will be such a party for you and your friends.

The details include: January 28, 2006 from 7-11 p.m., at the Local 879 UAW Hall, 2191 Ford Parkway, St. Paul. Admission to the fun event will be \$10 and a cash bar will be available. Most of the federal and state candidates will be there to make a pitch for your straw. After hearing from all the candidates in attendance, you will then be able to cast your straw to the wind for the candidates of your choice. The results, that is, who got the most straws, will be announced around 10 p.m. or so. Music for your listening and dancing pleasure will be provided by the Trailer Trash band. Hope to see you there.

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Dated Material—Please Rush

**Prepared and Distributed by the Minnesota DFL
State Central Committee**

SD54 members, friends, and interested parties will engage in an interactive
participating session on

BREAKING THE SILENCE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

January 19, 2006, 7:00 p.m.

Fairview Community Center, Roseville

presented by the

ISIAH Domestic Violence Task Force

Speakers include Gwen Gmeinder, Noreen Farrell, Mary Jo Rourke

Participants will learn that “one size does not fit all.” There are several types of domestic assault but the most dangerous is that perpetrated by someone who engages in intentional, deliberate and sustained behavior designed to *control* the behavior of another human being. The group will explore the dynamics of domestic violence and how this *desire to exert power and control* manipulates the financial, spiritual, psychological, and societal environment in which victims and children live.