



Senate District 54 DFL Newsletter

September 2009
Vol. 18 No. 2

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

What's New in SD54

Associate Chair Ivor Matz

SD54 Annual Picnic. The district's annual picnic took place July 16, 2009, at Roseville Central Park. The picnic was well attended by nearly 80 local DFLers and friends, even though the weather was a cold and rainy March day in July. Although the weather didn't cooperate, everyone seemed to have a good time. We enjoyed a wide variety of great dishes, gracious company, and the opportunity to catch up with friends and associates, which prompted attendees to stay and continue visiting well after closing time. We'd like to offer a great big DFL thanks to the organizers of the event, Sarah Lehman and Hallie Finucane, as well as to all the volunteers who worked to make it all happen so well. Thanks to Benjamin Lehman and John Treadwell who did a spectacular job on grill duty and to everyone who contributed hot dishes, salads, and treats for the enjoyment of others. Thanks also to Paul Lareau for providing free books from his Book Crossings.

Guest speakers included our elected officials. Senator John Marty, Representative Mindy Greiling, and Representative Bev Scalze presented analysis of the 2009 legislative session including the difficult work they did in helping to author a balanced budget and the governor's subsequent vetoes and unallotment plans. Then later we heard from a number of both announced and unannounced candidates for governor, or their representatives, including (in order of appearance) Betsy O'Berry for Matt Entenza, Scott Anderson for Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, Steve Kelly, Senator John Marty, Ramsey County Attorney Susan Gaertner, and Karen Olsen-Thissen for Representative Paul Thissen. We also heard from John Choi and Dave Pinto, who are running for Ramsey County Attorney. Margaret Smith provided comments from Secretary of State Mark Ritchie.

State Fair Donut Booth. SD54 DFLers again stepped up smartly to volunteer for the State Fair Donut Booth, our major fundraising event for the senate district. Volunteer teams worked three shifts of six hours each on August 28, August 31, and September 4. Thanks to all the volunteers who made this event happen and helped refill the SD54 war

chest which will support our candidates, senate district, and DFL party in the forthcoming elections.

4CD Bruce Vento Dinner. The annual dinner honoring Congressman Bruce Vento will take place on Saturday, October 4, 2009, at the Prom Center in Oakdale. This is Fourth Congressional District's (4CD's) major annual fundraising event. This year SD54 has committed to sponsoring one table and will provide one basket for the silent auction. In past years, we have sponsored four or more tables at the dinner, but due to support of candidates and our commitments for the upcoming caucuses and conventions, we need to conserve on funds. However, *this does not mean we are limited to one table for the event*; we can reserve as many tables for SD54 as we have participants. If you are interested in attending the dinner, please contact Bob Venters, SD54 treasurer, at (651) 523-0993 to reserve your seats and submit your payment to him. Each table seats eight. We will need to close on the final number of tables we're supporting based on reservations made and fees received, so get your reservations in early! After that, you can still reserve remaining seating by contacting 4CD directly. The cost is \$35 per individual and \$60 per couple. Seniors and student tickets are \$25 for one, \$44 for two. (For further details, see the announcement on page 6.)

4CD also is looking for volunteers to help organize the dinner and for donations for the silent auction, which traditionally includes a series of themed baskets. If you are interested in volunteering for the dinner, e-mail cd4ventodinner@gmail.com, or contact Alissa Harrington at (651) 400-0264. If you are interested in donating a themed basket, this year's slogan is "Celebration of Our Heritage." Jewelry, political memorabilia, and personal services are also welcome.

SD54 Central Committee Meeting. The next meeting of the Central Committee will take place Thursday, September 17, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. in the Basswood Room, Roseville Fire Station No. 1 at the city hall campus. There will be a special presentation on VAN (Voter Acquisition Network): what it is, how long it has been in use, where

the voter information comes from, and how secure it is. *SD54 is looking for volunteers to help with voter data entry after the 2010 caucus and convention.* If you are interested in helping with data entry, your first step should be to attend this meeting and learn about VAN. (See Forum announcement on back page.)

Picnic Food Shelf Donation. Thanks to the generosity of everyone at the July picnic, SD54 donated 60 pounds of food to Keystone Community Services, a food shelf in the Fairview Community Center in Roseville. Its coordinator said that food shelf usage has increased by 45 percent in the last year. They can use every bit of the food they receive, and they were very grateful for our donations. Hallie Finucane and Sarah Lehman, SD54 Community Events Co-chairs, say thanks to everyone who donated food and ask that we keep in mind SD54’s food drive this fall and start stocking up while grocery shopping this summer and fall.

SD54 Newsletter Distribution Change. The SD54 budget requires that we change the distribution system for our newsletter. This September issue will be limited to 200 paper copies sent out by the State DFL via the U.S. Postal Service. E-mail copies will be sent out through the State DFL VAN system. The November and future issues of the newsletter will be sent via e-mail only. To request a paper copy, contact Michele Courneya, (651) 484-3717 or Andi Moffitt (651) 917-3579, We post a PDF digital copy of each newsletter on the SD54 website at www.sd54df.org where you can retrieve and read it online or print it. We will have a small number of paper copies of current issues at our monthly meetings.

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 and space restrictions.

Newsletter Committee

Norm Hanson, chair	(651) 484-8926
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Mary Jo Rourke	Charlie Quick
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Layout editor: Antona Richardson

—In Recognition of Tschida Printing—

Norm Hanson, chair, Newsletter Committee
On behalf of the SD54 Newsletter Committee, co-chair Julianne Johnston and I want to thank Tschida Printing for the fine service, professionalism, and accommodations that Kirk and Bob and others have provided to SD54 over the past 15+ years. While our printing requirements have always been of a small-job nature, Tschida Printing has always gone out of its way to accommodate us in so many ways with regard to the receipt of the print-ready copy, working our small jobs into its busy shop printing schedules, and setting out the finished copies for us to facilitate easy pickup.

Response from Kirk, Tschida Printing

Thank you. We are living through more changes than ever before, not only in our corner of the world but globally. Considering fifteen years ago there used to be over a thousand printing companies in the metropolitan area, today they are in the five hundreds. Office copiers, office computers with programs, office printers, and of course the Internet have truly changed the face of the printing and publishing industry all the way from newspapers to the corner print shop. And it’s OK, it’s called change. Even the wagon-wheel industry was huge at one time. Printing will not go away but it will never be what it was.

I enjoy reading the newspaper and holding something nostalgic in my hands; my nephews who are in their late twenties receive 100 percent of their news from the Internet and have never bought a newspaper in their lives. Buying and reading newspapers is truly generational, I am not sure when it happened but sometime in the past few years technology started passing me by. I can’t thank you enough for the trust you have had in Tschida Printing over these many years. It has truly been a friendship in business. If I can be of assistance in the future, please do not hesitate to drop me a line. The very best to everybody.

Kirk R. Thomas C.E.O., Tschida Printing

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The Health Care Reform Debate: *Was Pogo Right?*

Norm Hanson and Julianne Johnston

The long-retired but famous philosopher, Pogo, once said that “we have met the enemy and he is us.” In terms of the current debate, discussion, and yelling and shouting about health care reform, it appears that Pogo was indeed correct in his conclusion. Arguments, banners, and fists are raised against President Obama’s health care plan, even though he has only proposed a set of principles to facilitate the public policy debate on this important issue. Others calmly yell that they don’t want government telling them which doctor they can see or which treatments they can receive or which hospital they can use for needed medical care. Of course, the fact that seems to be missed is that citizens enrolled in health plans that utilize managed care principles must already use a provider network of insurer-approved physicians, facilities, and other providers in order to receive necessary medical care at the lowest possible cost. Granted, with many plans enrollees can see physicians and other providers outside of the network, but their coverage will decrease for the services received from those providers, and their out-of-pocket costs will increase as well. Further, they ask “where is the beef” stating that they are happy with the health care coverage they have, so why is the president trying to change things? They don’t see the matter of health care reform as a crisis situation, so why the rush to make changes? Others maintain that they should be able to go to any physician, provider, or facility that they want to in order to receive the “highest quality care” possible. For many of our fellow citizens, that means that they should be able to go to the Mayo Clinic for their health care needs and not be required to go to any of the providers in their plan’s network. They are often surprised when they find their visits to Mayo covered at a much lower benefit, if at all, when their plan tells them to “hold the Mayo.” Yet, still others see the current debate in terms of civil rights. That is, expanding access to medically-necessary health care is similar to an expansion of the affirmative action program. Some take a more individualized approach, stating essentially that “I have mine and why should I have to pay for coverage for someone else?”

It seems to us that the basic issue is whether access to medically-necessary health care—no, make that access to high-quality medically-necessary health care—is a right of all citizens or is a privilege based upon a direct or subsidized ability to pay. The arguments heard for and against health care reform seem to flow directly from these two different perspectives. Most of the countries in the Western World and many elsewhere as well consider access to medically-necessary health care a right held by all of their citizens even though their national plans and approaches differ in various ways.

Depending upon whether one views access to medically-necessary health care as a right of all citizens or as a privilege based upon the direct or subsidized ability to pay, is the basis for who one sees as the bad guys. Those who see access to medically-necessary health care a right tend to see the bad guys as the health plans, health plan executives, physicians, pharmaceutical companies, high tech equipment providers, and health care facilities. Those who believe access to medically-necessary care is a privilege that one enjoys based upon his/her financial success in life see the bad guys as the citizens whose health care coverage they have to subsidize (including illegal immigrants); the government that is trying to get too involved in their lives; and those darn liberals who, in their view, are promoting socialism; and so on.

We recognize that the loud and messy debates that are currently raging in the land regarding health care reform are just democracy at work. You know the old cliché about democracy not being pretty but it generally works, especially if the participants are determined to address and resolve a major public policy issue such as health care reform. On the other hand, given all of the different opinions regarding what has to be done, the health care reform debate will clearly be a significant challenge for all, given that many appear to have taken positions from which they will not compromise. Of course, assuming that civility prevails and a compromise agreement is reached on how to reform the current health care system (a big assumption), then we can focus on how to define high-quality health care as well as medically-necessary health care before moving on to the next big public policy debate.

Pogo was absolutely correct! The enemy is indeed us!

Did you know?

SD54 legislators received prestigious awards in 2009

Representative SD54A Mindy Greiling

MASE Distinguished Service Award 2009, Minnesota Administrator's for Special Education. This award honors the recipient for positive history/association with Minnesota public education on a statewide basis.

Minnesota School Boards Association—Legislator of the Year

Minnesota Women's Consortium—Excellence in Education Award

Roseville Review—Best Local Politician, 2008 and 2009

Association of Metropolitan School Districts—Friend of Public Education Award

Schools for Educational Equity—Friend of Equity Award for authoring and championing the New Minnesota Miracle legislation

Champion for Racial Justice Award —The Organizing Apprenticeship Project, which works to advance racial, cultural, social, and economic justice in Minnesota through organizer and leadership training, policy research, and strategic convening work.

Representative SD54B Bev Scalze

League of Minnesota Cities Legislator of Distinction Award—This honor recognizes legislators for specific actions that aided efforts of Minnesota cities during the 2009 Legislative Session. Her work was instrumental in helping cities identify contaminated storm water ponds. Additionally, she authored a bill (HF1016) to reduce potential confusion on property tax statements for Market Value Homestead Credit.

Senator SD54 John Marty

Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities (CPCSM) 2009 Bishop Gumbleton Peace and Justice Award for inspiring commitment to justice and tireless advocacy on behalf of all citizens of Minnesota. "John Marty has enriched lives, strengthened communities, and modeled selfless service and authentic leadership."

The Green Scene

Peter Berglund

Yard Waste: Start with leaves, straw, non-woody plant clippings, twigs, branches, logs, and chips. Branches, logs, and twigs greater than one-half inch in diameter and more than eight inches in length should be put through a wood shredder/chipper first.

Compost your own mulch

Grass clippings can be left on the lawn if you use a mulching lawn mower. To use grass clippings in your compost heap, mix them with leaves, straw, or wood chips to increase air space, reduce compacting, and aid in decomposition

Make your garden smile

Kitchen Waste: Use vegetables scraps, fruit waste, coffee grounds, and egg shells. Some cities have ordinances that prohibit the use of food scraps in compost heaps. Check with your city hall to see if there are any restrictions where you live.

Save the planet

Don't add cat or dog waste, which could spread disease to your compost heap. Send these with your household garbage to the regular landfill.

Don't add meat, bones, grease, whole eggs, or dairy products. These could invite unwelcome rodents to your yard.

Visit the following website and click on "Soils and Composting" for information on composting methods and containers to hold the compost while the materials decompose. This website includes a variety of information about other topics related to composting.

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG3296.html>

—SD54 Legislators Report—

Bev Scalze, Minnesota Representative SD54
It is a non-campaign year, and some constituents assume that we are “off” because we don’t have a legislative session in process. So here is a taste of what many of us are doing this summer and fall.

In District 54B, there have been four community celebrations that I have attended so that it’s easy for people to give me their opinions and questions about state government. Aside from the daily e-mails and mail that we receive and answer and the assistance we provide to constituents having problems with state bureaucracy, there are many meetings to attend to prepare for the session which opens in February, 2010.

Senator Marty, Representative Greiling, and I prepared and conducted a “Capitol Open House” which drew a good crowd asking questions about their particular interests. That’s a great way to welcome constituents to the Capitol, many of whom don’t often get a chance to look around that beautiful building and visit with their legislators.

A group of government officials has been meeting regularly regarding the future of the Rice Street bridge over Highway 36. We have applied for federal funds and are making plans for the future replacement of that 73-year-old bridge, which was recently inspected and now has a sufficiency rating of 49.7 out of 100.

I have been attending meetings of the Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation Forum to give input and make the northeast metro region visible as MNDOT works on plans for future commuter rail plans. Many representatives attend from the affected counties, the city of Rochester, and other communities. It is essential that the northeast suburbs are at the table to look out for our interests as well. The Eastern Transportation Alliance also meets regularly to plan for future transit plans for our area. I have been appointed by the speaker to the bipartisan “Jobs Task Force” which will begin meeting in September. We will focus on economic development, capital investments, and tax policies aimed at creating significant job growth for Minnesotans.

Since I am the vice-chair of the Capital Investment Committee, this fall will be very busy with trips all over the state visiting with local officials and looking at possible projects for the 2010 bonding bill. We begin in September

with a two-day trip to the Red River Valley to learn about the flood mitigation projects that we funded in 2009 and hear about possible future construction that needs state and federal funding. We will really get busy in October and November with a three-day trip to northeast Minnesota, a two-day trip to southeast areas, and a three-day trip to central and southwest locations. We will also spend two days reviewing state projects and higher education building requests. Then we will begin our process of working through what we have learned to prepare for the 2010 Capital Investment bill. In 2008 we had \$4 billion of requests for a \$1 billion bonding bill. This year will probably be much of the same.

This non-campaign legislative year has been very busy, very interesting, and a lot of fun as we prepare for the next session which begins in February, 2010. It is truly an honor to represent you at the State Capitol, and I truly enjoy working for you. I look forward to hearing from many of you, so don’t hesitate to call me, or send a letter by e-mail or the U.S. Postal Service.

Senator John Marty

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Remembering Bruce Vento

Julianne Johnston and Norm Hanson

At the age of 36, Bruce Vento, a junior high school science and social studies teacher, made his first bid for Congress. Born and raised in east St. Paul, he had already been in the Minnesota State Legislature for six years. Bruce brought with him a concern for environmental issues, education, and advocacy for homeless people. Schools have been named for him; a park has been created to honor him (Bruce Vento Regional Trail in Vadnais Heights, Gem Lake, Maplewood, and St. Paul); and an act to support the homeless, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, was passed with bipartisan support. He had a special commitment to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and championed the legislation which has preserved the area from logging, mining, snow mobiles, and motor boats. He also passed legislation that allowed Hmong veterans of the Vietnam War and their families to become citizens of the U.S. by allowing them to take the citizenship examination with interpreters, in recognition and appreciation for their contribution to the U.S. effort in the Vietnam War.

Bruce served as a U.S. Representative from 1977 until his death in 2000. A strong DFLer, some considered him a “party hack,” but fellow legislators soon learned that he was a passionate supporter of his constituents and a tireless advocate for the causes that he held dear, and he earned

respect on both sides of the aisle. It has been said that he was very straightforward—said what he thought and believed in—and had no hidden agendas.

“I often thought he took care of the birds in the air, but he also took care of the people on the street. He had a great knack of showing respect for people regardless of their economic condition,” said Monsignor Boxleitner, of Catholic Charities, an old friend and confidant.

In his early years, when Bruce worked as laborer, he came into contact with asbestos. Prior to his death, he developed mesothelioma, a form of lung cancer directly related to exposure to asbestos. Those of us who came to know him watched his painful decline as he continued to try to keep up with his work even as he went through surgery, chemotherapy, and finally resignation to his inevitable death in 2000. We remember attending, with other DFLers, a dinner in his honor which he could not attend because of his illness. (He died shortly after this event.) The Prom Ballroom reception hall was filled to capacity with people who represented all walks of life and all of the concerns that he held so dear.

On October 4, we will again fill the Prom Ballroom to celebrate the legacy of Bruce Vento who passed the torch to us to represent the environment, education, and those less fortunate than ourselves. It was a privilege the first time and will be again. Please join us at the dinner.

Annual Bruce Vento Spaghetti Dinner

Sunday October 4, 2009

Prom Center, 484 Inwood Avenue, Oakdale

Theme: *Celebrating our Heritage*

Speakers: Congresswoman Betty McCollum, Senators Al Franken and Amy Klobuchar

Entertainment: Meloria Improv Comedy Troupe and Surprise Guests

4:00 p.m. —Silent Auction

5:00 p.m. —Dinner

6:00-6:30 p.m.—Live Auction

6:30 p.m.—Program

Donations The committee is looking for donations to fill the baskets going up for auction. Anything is welcome (e.g. jewelry, political memorabilia, and services).

Volunteers are needed before the event and especially the day of the event to set-up, assist with the auction, and clean-up after the event. If you can participate in

any way, contact Alissa Harrington at (651) 400-0264 or cd4ventodinner@gmail.com.

Campaign financing requirements We ask SD54 to register for the event with Bob Venters, SD54 Treasurer. Please make your check out to SD54 DFL. This also applies to those who donate baskets or items for the silent auction. Bob can be reached at (651) 523-0993 or bobventers@yahoo.com.

Cost

Adults \$35 or 2 for \$60

Seniors and Student Tickets \$25 or 2 for \$44

SD54 Calendar—September 2009

Sept 17	Thursday	SD54 Central Committee, Basswood Room of Roseville Fire Station No. 1, Roseville City Hall complex, 6:30 p.m. All are welcome. Contact Michele Courneya (651) 484-3717. PLEASE NOTE TIME CHANGE
Sept 21	Monday	4CD Central Committee Meeting, Rice Street Library, 1011 Rice Street, 7:00 p.m.
Sept 26	Saturday	DFL State Central Committee Meeting. Metro area location to be announced.
Sept 26	Saturday	Founders Day Dinner – more details on DFL website.
Oct 1	Thursday	Newsletter Planning Committee Meeting, Georgiana Sobola's home, 1961 Hamline Ave. N. Roseville, 7:00 p.m. Contact: Norm Hanson (651) 484-8926
Oct 4	Sunday	Bruce Vento Dinner, Prom Center, 484 Inwood Avenue, Oakdale. Silent auction at 4:00 p.m., dinner at 5:00 p.m. Live auction at 6:00 p.m., program at 6:30 p.m.
Oct 15	Thursday	SD54 Executive Committee, Basswood Room of Roseville Fire Station No. 1, Roseville City Hall complex, 6:30 p.m. All are welcome. Contact Michele Courneya (651) 484-3717. PLEASE NOTE TIME CHANGE
Nov 19	Thursday	Annual Pre-Holiday Pot Luck Party,* Roseville Skating Center/Oval, 6:00 p.m.
Feb 2, 2010	Tuesday	Precinct caucuses for election of delegates to SD54 Convention and submission of resolutions. Mark your calendar and find out where your caucus convenes.

***SD54 Holiday Party November 19, 2009**

Everyone is invited to the SD54 Holiday Party that will be held on Thursday, November 19, starting at 6:00 p.m. We have chosen a new location this year. The party will be in the Fireside Room in the banquet facility of the Skating Center/Oval in Roseville. It will be a potluck with a twist – a hot dish, chili, and bars cook-off and bake-off. More details to follow in the November newsletter.

—Attention Readers—

The Newsletter Committee needs new members who are willing to learn how the newsletter is produced and to keep this valuable district asset going. We are looking for people in all positions. Contact Norm Hanson (651) 484-8926 or Julianne Johnston (651) 486-7120 to find out how you can become more involved. No experience necessary, just a willingness to be involved.

The November and future issues of the newsletter will be sent by e-mail. To provide us with your e-mail address, or if necessary to request a paper copy, contact Michele Courneya (651) 484-3717 or Andi Moffitt (651) 917-3579.

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SENATE DISTRICT 54
1964 Fairview Ave. N.
ROSEVILLE, MN 55113



Dated Material—Please Rush

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

SD54 Central Committee Forum

September 17, 2009, 6:30 p.m.

Roseville Fire Station No. 1, 2701 Lexington Avenue

Planning for the 2010 caucuses and conventions

Special Speaker: Warren Claffin, State DFL

He will also discuss the use of VAN (voter profile data base) in SD54

All are welcome to attend

City of Roseville buildings are handicapped accessible