



March 2010, Vol.18, No. 5

Senate District 54 DFL Newsletter

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

What's News in SD54

Outgoing Chair Michele Courneya

Thank you!
to the hundreds of SD54 volunteers
working
thousands of hours

- organizing events • convening caucuses • calling conventions • attending meetings • door knocking
- donut making • marching in parades • rallying
- phone banking • lit dropping • exchanging ideas
- making policy • managing data • managing the website
- producing the newsletter • fundraising
- paying the bills
- attending to the grassroots and helping them grow

We are all better for your service, more than you know.

Michele

Editors Note: With the March 13, 2010 SD54 Convention, the leadership of the SD will change. Michele Courneya has been our chair for the past four years. During that time, with support by Associate Chair Charlie Quick for the first two years, and Ivor Matz for the last two, Michele has led the district through many challenges and changes.

In 2008, the SD caucus hosted 4000 plus attendees as people expressed their interest in change for the nation. All attendees were entered into the State DFL VAN (the state data base). The *SD54 DFL Newsletter* completed its 100th issue and 17th year of six times a year continuous publication. This newsletter is distributed by email to more than 1200 individuals. The PCR (Political Contribution Refund) program brought the district significant financial contributions until it was “unallotted” by our current governor. The district continued its participation in the State Fair Donut Booth, community parades, annual picnics and parties and provided campaign support for our legislative candidates. Michele has provided the leadership for two successful SD54 conventions. On behalf of Senate District 54, we thank Michele, Charlie, and Ivor for their service.

The U.S. Census begins in March, 2010

“The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of 10 years, in such manner as they shall by Law direct.” ARTICLE I, SECTION 2 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

The 2010 Census form is just 10 questions, including: the name of person completing the form; sex, age, date of birth, Hispanic origin, and race of those living in the household; household relationship; and ownership/rental status of the home.

The census ***DOES NOT*** ask about the legal status of respondents or their Social Security numbers. Any personal data provided is protected under federal law.

Census information affects the number of seats a state occupies in the U.S. House of Representatives. People from many walks of life use census data to advocate for apportioning seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and deciding how more than \$400 billion per year is allocated for projects such as new hospitals and schools.

Of importance to Minnesota is the potential loss of one seat in the House of Representatives based on the population reported by the 2010 Census. It is imperative that everyone is counted!! For more information, see <http://2010.census.gov>.

—Inside this issue—

SD54

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What happened to your resolutions?

Georgiana Sobola

The SD54 Central Committee met on February 18, 2010 to select the resolutions from the precinct caucuses that will be submitted to the State DFL Resolutions Committee for the State Convention. All interested persons were invited to attend and there were about 25 persons in attendance at the Fairview Community Center for this important process. Their task was to choose a maximum of 38 resolutions to submit for the State Convention. There were 54 resolutions received from the caucuses on February 2 and each was posted on a wall in the meeting room. Each attendee was asked to select the 20 resolutions they considered priorities.

Resolutions Committee Chair Paul Lareau then led the discussion, beginning with the resolutions that received the most votes. Many resolutions received a unanimous vote. Others generated a lively debate and some resolutions were amended before being approved. By nine o'clock, 32 resolutions were approved as printed or amended—two resolutions were combined into one. Eighteen resolutions either failed to pass or received no votes. The number of caucuses that had passed a resolution was considered.

The following resolutions were all approved for the *Action Agenda* (AA) positions on specific public-policies which, if adopted, would support enactment of the DFL Party Platform.

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

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Business

The DFL Party supports an amendment to the Minnesota and U.S. Constitutions which define a “Legal Person” exclusively as an individual citizen for purposes of protecting the right to political free speech and the expenditure of funds meant to affect the outcome of elections. (AA)

Civil Rights

The DFL Party supports an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution to include gender equity. (AA)

The DFL Party supports equality in marriage. (AA)

Consumer Issues

The DFL Party supports enactment of comprehensive media reform requiring news organizations operating in the state to offer honest, informative content, and to be required to follow journalistic standards once they meet a certain level of reader/viewer listenership. (AA)

Education

The DFL Party urges reform of early childhood education through high school education funding to ensure a thorough, efficient, and uniform system of public schools to all students regardless of the wealth of the community in which they live. (AA)

The DFL Party supports the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) at 67% of instructional service costs to include inflation, improvements, and academic access to all by making legislation binding. (AA)

Energy

The DFL Party urges state lawmakers to maintain the current moratorium on new nuclear power plants in Minnesota, unless and until there is an environmentally sound methodology for storage/disposal of high-level nuclear waste. (AA)

Senate District 54 DFL

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The DFL Party supports building codes that require use of clean energy technology and improve energy efficiency.(AA)

Environment

The DFL Party urges the Minnesota Legislature to examine and strengthen our state's financial assurance regulations to ensure that mining companies fulfill their obligations to fund mine clean-up activities even in the event of bankruptcy or other unforeseen events. (AA)

The DFL Party urges that Minnesota make further efforts to reduce its negative human impact on the environment and to work with the U.S. and other members of the world community to do so globally. (AA)

The DFL Party supports strong climate change policies that are designated to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide at no more than 350 ppm. (AA)

Government

The DFL Party endorses adoption of Instant Runoff Voting for state and local elections. (AA)

The DFL Party supports adoption of public funding as the only source of campaign spending for all elections. (AA)

The DFL Party urges that Minnesota should mount a nationwide campaign for providing a paper audit trail to safeguard our national election process. (AA)

The DFL Party urges the reinstatement of the political contribution refund (PCR) to promote public participation in politics and candidate support. (AA)

The DFL Party calls on President Obama to appoint an independent non-partisan commission to examine and report publicly on torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of detainees in the period since September 11, 2001, and to hold accountable all U.S. officials regardless of rank or position who authorized, implemented, or failed in their duty to prevent torture and ill treatment of prisoners in the period since September 11, 2001. (AA)

The DFL Party urges that government documents and records should be stored in open formats with full free implementations to allow full, free and continuing access to public data. (AA)

Health

The DFL Party supports and works to enact a universal single-payer health care plan on the federal level, and the single-payer Minnesota Health Act at the state level. (AA)

The DFL Party supports the reinstatement of full funding at FY 2008 levels for the GAMC fund. (AA)

The DFL Party urges that previous cuts to Minnesota Care be restored, including both eligibility, and funding, until such time that another program covers these patients in a comparable manner. (AA)

Labor

The DFL Party takes the position that all construction projects funded in whole or in part by state or local tax dollars carry the requirement that all construction workers be paid the prevailing wage and supports enforcement provisions necessary to ensure compliance. (AA)

The DFL Party strongly urges that job creation be a top legislative priority for Democrats in the 2010 legislative session at both the state and national levels. (AA)

Taxes and Budget

The DFL Party supports a balanced and fair tax policy that increases revenue through a progressive tax system and protects key features of state government including public education, public safety, and health care safety. (AA)

The DFL Party supports amending the unallotment laws to prevent the governor from unilaterally cutting the budget without legislative consent or appeal. (AA)

Transportation

The DFL Party supports statewide and local Complete Streets policies to ensure that roads are planned and designed to fully consider safety and access for all users and maximize the long-term benefits from our transportation investments by also considering affordability, local needs, public health, traffic congestion, and the environment. (AA)

Veterans

The DFL Party encourages local and state governments to establish programs to assist unemployed veterans to find jobs. (AA)

Yes, we have health care, but.....

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development report states that the United States ranks near the bottom in life expectancy among wealthy nations despite spending more than double per person on health care than the industrialized world's average. Life expectancy at birth in the U.S. was 78.1 in 2007 and puts us just ahead of the Czech Republic, Poland, and Mexico and below the average of 79.1.

SD54 DFL 2010 Precinct Caucus Report

Attendance – 512

SD54 was in the top 10 for attendance for DFL Senate Districts and County Units

Donations to SD54 - \$420

Approximately \$290 directly to us and \$130 as our one-half of donations shared with the state DFL

Convention delegates elected

Delegates 362 Alternates 0

Straw Poll Results

SD54: 1. Marty 195 2. Rybak 87 3. Anderson-Kelliher 62

Statewide: 1. Rybak 2. Anderson-Kelliher 3. Uncommitted

54A – Parkview Center – Mindy Greiling’s District

Precinct	L-1	R-1	R-2	R-5	R-6	R-7	R-8	R-9	R-10	StA-1	StA-2	Total
Bakk	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	8
Entenza	1	2	0	1	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	12
Gaertner	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	7
Kelley	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	8
A-Kelliher	1	2	4	4	5	3	10	5	3	3	3	43
Marty	13	19	11	25	6	7	7	12	8	8	11	127
Montez	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rukavina	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Rybak	3	4	2	4	4	5	2	8	7	3	7	49
Savior	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thissen	0	1	1	0	3	2	0	2	2	0	2	13
Uncommitted	5	3	2	1	2	5	5	6	0	0	3	32

54B – Roseville Area Middle School – Bev Scalze’s District

Precinct	G1	LC1	LC2	LC3	R3	R4	SV1	SV2	SV3	VH1	VH2	VH3	VH4	Total
Bakk	0	0	0	2	0	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	1	10
Entenza	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Gaertner	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	7
Kelley	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	4
A-Kelliher	0	5	1	0	6	0	0	1	1	3	0	1	1	19
Marty	0	12	4	2	7	4	3	8	9	2	7	7	3	68
Montez	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rukavina	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Rybak	0	6	1	0	5	2	10	3	3	5	3	0	0	38
Savior	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thissen	0	0	2	0	0	1	5	0	3	2	1	0	0	14
Uncommitted	0	3	4	0	7	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	19

—SD54 Legislators Report—

Senator John Marty

Thanks to all of you who came out for the February precinct caucuses!

The 2010 legislative session is well underway, and we are working hard to do the best we can in this difficult budget period. It remains a privilege to work with Bev Scalze and Mindy Greiling on issues ranging from the environment and consumer protection to education and health care reform.

The situation looks grim. Governor Pawlenty's recent budget proposal provides some big tax cuts in corporate taxes, despite the budget crisis. Unfortunately his budget would cause even more harm to the sickest and poorest people in the state. Hundreds of Minnesotans currently die from a lack of access to health care, and the governor's cuts will make the problem far worse. For example, Governor Pawlenty wants to eliminate the General Assistance program and replace it with an unspecified temporary program. In addition to the cuts in General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC) which take away the health coverage for 31,000 very poor, very sick people, he is now proposing to remove 21,500 working people from Minnesota Care. He is also proposing deep cuts in childcare to low income workers, and he cuts higher education as deeply as he is able.

Pawlenty's proposed budget will not only cause great pain for the state's most vulnerable people, it will also weaken the state's future and cost taxpayers far more in the long run. He apparently believes that a mean-spirited budget like this will help him score political points with right-wing Republican activists around the country.

There is an alternative to this harsh approach. We can build a humane, caring society, where we help people succeed

Senator John Marty

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and we all look out for each other. This would be a society where all young children get the care and support they need and all students have an opportunity to get affordable higher education. We can build such a society where health care for everyone is a reality, and where working people earn a living wage so they can afford to pay for food, housing, and other basic needs.

As we struggle through the last painful year of the Pawlenty administration, it is time to start envisioning the future we need and want. Investing in the future of Minnesota is not only an economic imperative; it is a moral one as well.

Thanks for all that you have done and will do to help us build that bright future.

An election, not an auction

November 2, 2010 is supposed to be an election. Unfortunately, it is beginning to look like an auction, with government for sale to the highest bidders. Powerful interest groups buy favors with big campaign contributions.

Special interest money is a dominant force in determining who wins elections and even who runs for office. Once elections are over, special interest money influences whoever chairs legislative committees, whoever has the ear of powerful lawmakers, which bills receive a hearing, and ultimately what laws are passed. One congressional staffer, after observing the clout of interest groups said, "If this was NASCAR, members of congress would have the corporate logos of their sponsors sewn to their jackets."

It's an insidious process in which wealthy interests buy elections and gain access and goodwill through campaign contributions. Most public officials are honorable people who would never "sell their vote." But this system has a very real, albeit subconscious, impact even on well-meaning public officials.

We can change this and we must change it. In the Minnesota Senate, I have authored campaign finance reform legislation to drive special interest money out. Politicians understandably want the money, because campaigns are expensive. Without this special interest money, they feel they cannot win. That's why reforms that put in public financing and limit spending are essential. With reform, politicians can still win elections without taking the special interest money.

Let me give three examples of the problem. Special interest money is: destroying our environment, crushing health care reform, and buying big taxpayer subsidies.

Special interest money is destroying our environment. It is the reason we cannot pass basic environmental protection legislation in Minnesota, even though DFLers have a two-to-one margin in the Senate and almost the same in the House. The powerful interests fighting environmental legislation make generous contributions to both Republican and DFL legislative caucuses. It is no surprise that legislative leaders appoint committee chairs and structure committees in a manner that won't upset those donors too much.

The same applies to health care reform. Even with all the talk about "universal" health care in Washington, there is not a single proposal under consideration to provide universal care. Even before the legislative compromising began, the Obama proposal with the public option was estimated to cover only 94 percent of the public, leaving 6 percent with no care, and many more whose insurance doesn't cover the care they need. That is not universal.

So why isn't universal health care on the table? Senator Max Baucus, the chair of the committee that wrote the Senate legislation, refused to consider it. Is it any surprise that Baucus wants to require people to buy insurance, instead of providing universal health care when he has received hundreds of thousands of dollars from the health insurance lobby? Not surprisingly, the insurance lobby's money goes to all the key lawmakers involved in the health reform debate.

Special interests are brazenly buying taxpayer subsidies. Four years ago, Zygi Wilf and his family, the owners of the Minnesota Vikings, gave \$20,000 to both the Minnesota Republican Party and the DFL Party. They gave \$10,000 to the DFL legislative caucuses and \$12,000 to the Republican legislative caucuses. They also gave \$5000 to both Republican Governor Tim Pawlenty and to his DFL challenger.

Why would they give massive amounts to both parties? They want as much as \$700 million in public money to subsidize a new stadium. They haven't won yet, but their proposal is getting a lot of attention at the capitol this year despite the worst budget crisis in memory.

Political insiders are so accustomed to lobbyists and interest groups bearing contributions that many have been desensitized to this influence peddling. Picture what would happen if the Wilf family made similar contributions to NFL officials before the next Vikings game. A referee taking the money wouldn't be saluted as a successful participant by either the NFL or its fans. He would be thrown out of his job. The conflict of interest is obvious.

But in politics, unlike football, the special interests who give the most aren't thrown out in disgrace. They are actually admired for their clout. Candidates accepting their contributions are seen as major players because of the amounts they can raise. This isn't acceptable. Isn't fair treatment from our government as important as fair officiating in our football games?

Do we value our democracy so little that we are willing to turn it over to special interests?

It doesn't have to be this way. Replacing special interest money with publicly funded campaigns would cost a fraction of what taxpayers pay in subsidies, tax loopholes and other "give-aways" that special interests buy. The benefits of a clean environment and a health care system that works for everyone are priceless.

Representative Mindy Greiling, District 54A
Grim budget reality harms Minnesota's future even after Pawlenty. Our state's economic outlook dims more each year under Governor Tim Pawlenty's misguided values and scorched earth policies. This is the worst budget cycle in state history. Our state budget has been out of balance since the 1999 tax decrease that Sen. John Marty and I did not vote for. (Rep. Bev Scalze was not yet in the legislature.) Pawlenty's reliance on tax cuts, gimmicks, and borrowing have exacerbated the problem, and the national economy has made it worse.

Moody's Investors Service recently lowered its Minnesota rating from stable to negative, citing our state's ongoing and growing General Fund budget shortfall and economic weakness. Moody's noted our government's depletion of reserves and heavy reliance on one-time resources to balance the budget. Minnesota is second only to Alaska among states that relied on one-time fixes in which neither taxes were raised nor programs cut to close budget gaps. Minnesota's credit rating was lowered previously in 2003, Pawlenty's first year in office. A lower rating means higher interest rates, and taxpayers pay more.

This year, legislators must resolve a \$1.2 billion shortfall caused mainly by lost wages. In previous hard times, Minnesota rode the waves better than other states, due to our smart investments, for example in people and infrastructure. Year after year, our State Economist Tom Stinson tells us to invest in human capital, the education and health of our people. He goes unheeded by Governor Pawlenty, so we are bleeding jobs right along with other states. After this year's deficit is closed, elected officials must work on a \$6.4 billion deficit in the next biennium. If the governor's harmful unallotments are reversed by the court, the deficit

will grow even further to over \$8 billion. Based on projected shortfalls as a percentage of each state's budget, Minnesota ranks eighth among states facing the worst prospects.

Budget solutions will be debated all the way until Election Day and beyond. When we finally get a new governor who is not a *No New Taxes* slave, it will take years to dig out of this mess and return to a bright state economy. While solving the deficit with cuts alone would stun Minnesotans, no DFL gubernatorial candidate is proposing to solve the problem only with tax increases either. Rolling tax rates back to 1998 levels, before the tax cuts, would bring in \$806 million per year. Adding a dollar tax for every pack of cigarettes adds \$143 million. A sales tax on clothing yields \$280 million. The three together reap only \$1.22 billion a year.

Reality dictates that the next governor is going to have to reshape Minnesota over the long haul. There has never been a more important time to participate in selecting that person.

Representative Bev Scalze, District 54B
Capital Investment – 2010. There's a lot of buzz this year about the "bonding bill." I've been vice-chair of the House Capital Investment Committee for four years, and it's been a great honor to be able to provide input into the state's infrastructure bill.

Most of the bonding bill goes toward maintenance projects for state buildings and also buildings on the campuses of our state colleges and universities. We fund replacements of roofs, doors, windows, and upgrades in our state buildings. Other large expenditures proposed in the bill this year are flood control structures in the Red River Valley, local bridges, the sex offender treatment center, wastewater infrastructure and drinking water facilities.

Sometimes people confuse the General Fund deficit with Capital Investment bills; however, the two are separate. General Fund expenditures are the daily ongoing business of the state and the bonding bill is passed every two years for "bondable" projects such as publicly owned state property or projects of regional significance and only for "bricks and mortar" or land. To do this, the state sells general obligation bonds on the bond market and pays them off in a specified number of years and the people who enjoy the benefits of these projects pay for them. This year interest rates are low and bids are coming in 20-30 percent below usual, so this is a "bargain" year for projects. The bond rating houses (Standard & Poors, Moody's, and Fitch's) consistently give us good ratings because of our low debt compared to other states. We have the highest national bond rating possible

for capital investments and our low debt per capita is one of the reasons.

This year our focus has been on projects that produce instant jobs. They have to be "shovel ready" and provide work immediately. These jobs are not government jobs but work that can be bid by private companies, and the spin-off jobs for materials and services can hopefully help jump-start our sluggish economy.

The governor has the ability to veto the entire bill or line-item veto those projects with which he disagrees. In 2010 the governor's proposal was for approximately \$685,000, the Senate proposed \$1 billion, and the House proposed a little over \$1 billion—all to be negotiated for a final figure. The governor has indicated that he wants a lower number, even though the two largest bonding bills in recent history were in 2005 (\$885,892) and 2006 (\$948,637) when the Republicans had control of the House. The 2008 bonding bill was \$882,540.

Chair Alice Hausman has reminded the House members that in 1857, even before we were a state, Minnesota's economy "tanked." The state was in the throes of the worst economic depression of the nineteenth century. When the first legislature convened in December of 1857, it immediately passed legislation authorizing the state to let bonds for railroad construction. We should follow that tradition for the economic future of our state.

The PCR's gone, but there's an alternative

Norm Hanson

While it is true that Governor Pawlenty suspended the Political Contribution Refund (PCR) program for this biennium, another contribution option remains available—the State Elections Campaign Fund. The Campaign Fund check-off is right under the address and filing status blocks at the top of the Minnesota state income tax form. Taxpayers can indicate that they want five dollars (\$5) to go to a specific political party (DFL, Independent, Republican, or Green) or to the General Campaign Fund. Note that designating \$5 for a specific party or the General Campaign Fund *does not* increase your tax liability or reduce your refund. As noted above, everyone filing a tax form can designate \$5, including both spouses if filing jointly. Money collected through the Campaign Fund check-off is distributed to candidates based upon a statutory formula related to the number of votes within a senate district in the previous election. We understand that the check-off provided our own legislators with significant amounts of funds in 2009.

So, yes, the PCR is gone for the moment but the Campaign Fund check-off remains in place for all taxpayers to use. Go for it!

A Hitchhiker's Guide—

the DFL caucus and convention process

So, the gavel has come down, and the convention has ended, and I think that I had a good time—maybe even a great time. I did feel kind of overwhelmed by the whole affair but I do know that I want to participate in the process again in two years, maybe even try to become a delegate to the state convention.

It all started when I attended my precinct caucus this year for the first time at the invitation of some of my friends and neighbors. I had been one of those who always found reason to complain about the policies of the government and legislature but never asserted my responsibility to do anything about it. I was convinced by friends of the importance of participating in the caucus process rather than continuing to complain about it.

I arrived early at the appointed time and place only to be told that my precinct was caucusing at another site and I was directed elsewhere. Apparently, the official caucus site location finder was in a big computer somewhere and no one at the caucus site could access the location finder. I headed off to the new site and I was told there that my precinct was actually caucusing where I had tried to sign-in in the first place. So I went back to the site where my precinct was actually caucusing. Once there I was directed to the room where I was finally able to join my friends and neighbors ready for the evening's event.

After we introduced ourselves, we elected a caucus chair, listened to the reading of the Affirmative Action Statement, elected a precinct caucus chair and two vice-chairs, discussed and approved proposed resolutions, voted in a straw poll for governor, and then proceeded to elect delegates to the senate district convention. Actually, "elected" is somewhat of an overstatement since everyone who wanted to be a delegate to the senate district convention was able to go. I definitely wanted to become more involved, so I raised my hand to show my interest and was elected a delegate!

I was very excited about what lay ahead at the convention. When I arrived, there were hundreds of delegates arriving at the convention site, many of them festooned with colorful buttons and other paraphernalia supporting various candidates and causes. In addition, the front doors and walls of the convention site were covered with signs of all sizes. Clearly, I was in the right place and I was eager for the day to begin.

The convention was called to order promptly by the chair and began with an impressive and emotional presentation of the colors. The flag was brought in by a color guard of soldiers, airmen, and seamen solemnly marching in step with rifles on their shoulders that definitely brought forth a patriotic feeling in all of us. This feeling increased as we recited the Pledge of Allegiance together. Someone named Robert was apparently well-known and liked within the senate district and so it was decided to use his rules of order as the guide for conducting the business of the convention. It wasn't really clear to me why we didn't adopt rules developed by Olga, or Ole, or even Jose. After adoption of the rules and the agenda for the convention, we heard from many candidates for governor, congress, and the legislature all eager to tell us why they were the best persons to get the DFL endorsement and to be elected. The adopted rules limited each candidate to three minutes, which was good given the large number of folks wanting to address the convention.

The Nomination Committee presented a slate of candidates for the senate district organization and we elected the folks who would lead the district for the next two years—apparently there is more to this district than the caucuses and the convention. I raised my hand and was successful in being elected a director! The Endorsement Committee recommended legislative candidates and we endorsed the folks currently in office who were there to talk and listen to the rest of us.

The next item on the agenda was the election of 20 delegates to the state DFL endorsing convention. Suddenly some of the attendees became very excited and began gathering in groups with signs and banners. The convention

chair was trying to explain something about walking sub-caucuses to the still-seated delegates. While I am sure that the chair did a great job, I really didn't understand what she was trying to tell us and neither did most of the still-seated delegates around me. As I understood it, the delegates could nominate caucuses based upon a candidate or issue or both. Knowledgeable folks did just that—nominating caucuses such as Olson/Labor; Smith/Education; Undecided/Pro/Life; Undecided/Progressive Issues; Ferraro/Nursing Issues and so on and so on. The folks who nominated the various caucuses were then asked to go to various parts of the convention hall and to hold up a sign regarding the name of their caucus. The secretary wrote the caucus names on a board so we could choose our caucus preference. Delegates were then told that they had 15 minutes to find the sub-caucus with which they agreed. The undecided delegates walked back and forth from sub-caucus to sub-caucus until they found a home.

The chair then said something about the number of folks needed to get one delegate which turned out in this case to be 15. Several sub-caucuses did not have 15 folks so they were not considered to be “viable.” So, those folks began to walk around the hall to try to find a viable caucus to join that they could agree with in hopes of a guarantee of a least one delegate. The convention chair then “froze” the viable sub-caucuses and the members of each surviving caucus began the process of electing delegates and alternates to the state convention. There was also something about remainders and how to apportion another delegate slot or two based upon those remainders. The answer to what was a remainder apparently was also in a big computer somewhere that had to be consulted.

I ended up in the Ferraro/Nursing Issues/Health Care Reform/Education/Green caucus which was large enough to be able to elect five delegates to the state convention. I wasn't interested in trying to become a delegate but I was fascinated by the various strategies used by the many folks who were. One young man claimed that he was new to the party as well as young and that it was important for the party to have folks like him as a delegate. Another appealed for votes as being over sixty five who felt it important for seniors to be represented in the delegation to the convention. One woman stated she had really been a DFLer in spirit all of her adult life although she hadn't really ever been involved in party politics, which she felt was an important reason for being elected a delegate. Still another emphasized the importance of having diversity in the delegation and noted that she was the only Latino seeking delegate status. An interesting appeal was made by a distinguished looking grey-haired gentleman, who differentiated himself from the other possible candidates by noting that he was of 100% Norwegian descent but did not like lutefisk. One candidate made the point that she was from the Iron Range and a nurse and that was reason enough. Unfortunately, she didn't get elected although I thought that she probably would have been a very good representative of our sub-caucus. The most intriguing appeal was made by a person who claimed to have been a lifelong Democrat, that is, at least since he registered for the convention earlier today, and he got elected to one of the delegate slots!

I really enjoyed participating in the senate district convention and learning about the whole process that began with my attendance at my first caucus. I certainly came to appreciate all of the hard work and planning that went into setting up both the caucuses and the convention. Clearly, neither of those important events happened due to magic or the wave of a wand. No, it took committed volunteers who donated their time and energy to make sure that both events came off without a hitch. For myself, I don't want to wait two years until the next caucus and convention cycle begins. I want to get involved in my senate district now. Oh, and I have already begun to practice my walking so I will be ready for the sub-caucuses before the next cycle begins in two years.

Norm Hanson and Julianne Johnston



SD54 Calendar—March 2010

Note: Mark your calendars now!!!

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------|--|
| March 13 | Saturday | Convention, Roseville Areas High School Cafeteria, 1240 County Road B-2 West, Roseville. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m., convention begins at 10:00 a.m. for all delegates and alternates elected at the precinct caucuses. To request accommodation for persons with disabilities contact Michele Courneya at mcourneya@starfieldsmith.com or (651) 484-3717. |
| March 18 | Thursday | SD54 Executive/Committee Meeting, Basswood Room of Fire Station No. 1 near the Roseville Civic Center Complex, 6:30 p.m. |
| March 24 | Wednesday | Social Luncheon for MN DFL Senior Caucus, Riverside Perkins Family Restaurant, I-94 & Riverside Ave., Minneapolis, 12:30-2:00 p.m. (No RSVP required) |
| March 27 | Saturday | 5CD Convention, St Louis Park High School, 6425 W 33rd Street. St. Louis Park, Registration at 11:30 a.m., convention at 1:00 p.m. |
| April 15 | Thursday | Social Luncheon for MN DFL Senior Caucus, Riverside Perkins Family Restaurant, I-94 & Riverside Ave., Minneapolis, 12:30-2:00 p.m. (No RSVP required) |
| April 15 | Thursday | SD54 Executive/Committee Meeting, Basswood Room of Fire Station No. 1 near the Roseville Civic Center Complex, 6:30 p.m. |
| April 17 | Saturday | 4CD and Ramsey County Convention, Roseville Area High School Cafeteria, 1240 County Road B-2 West, Roseville, 9:30 a.m. |
| April 23-25 | | State DFL Endorsing Convention, Duluth Convention Center. |
| May 20 | Thursday | SD 54 Central Committe Meeting, Basswood Room of Fire Station No. 1 near the Roseville Civic Center Complex, 6:30-8:30 p.m. |
| Sept 25 | Saturday | State DFL Central Committee, Metro area, further information TBA |

Check www.sd54df.org for updates and changes. If you have questions or are interested in serving as an SD54 officer or director, contact Michele Courneya at mcourneya@starfieldsmith.com or (651) 484-3717, Andi Moffatt at andiandtom@live.com or (651) 917-3579, or Ivor Matz at ivorm@metrommp.com or (612) 702-7081.

, ATTENTION READERS

he Newsletter Committee is accepting 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 (651) 484-8926 or Julianne (651) 486-7120) to find out how you can become more involved. No experience necessary, just a willingness to be involved.

—The GreenScene—

***Is there an energy-sucking vampire in your home?
Do what you can to eliminate or at least minimize
these freeloading energy users.***

Peter Berglund

Many of our appliances and electronic devices are constantly bleeding us of our electrical energy. Most of us are not aware of this constant energy drain. Stand-by power consumes five percent of all residential energy use in the U.S. (Lawrence Berkeley National Lab). Stand-by power can cost the homeowner hundreds of dollars a year.

Are your computer monitors drawing energy in a standby mode? Is the TV or VCR really “off” if it can come back on instantly without a warm up? (Some older TVs had little heaters in them.) Devices that are turned on with a remote use energy as they wait to be powered on. This includes your garage door opener!

What can you do? You certainly do not want to have to unplug everything at the wall. Here are some tips that you can use to decrease the energy vampire.

Plug as many appliances and electronic devices as you can into power strips or surge protectors that will be easily shut off when you turn off the strip. Purchase Energy Star-rated devices that minimize the amount of energy used in “off” and “standby” modes. Read the product literature and demand more

information at the store. Push government to require better product information and labeling.

If you have devices that have a little black box (which is the transformer) that plugs into the wall for charging, unplug them when the device is fully charged (think cell phones and portable tools). Try touching these little black boxes and feel if they are warm. If so, they are using electricity just sitting there. Sometimes these transformers are used for cordless phones, so you will likely want to leave them plugged in. In this situation, remember to purchase an Energy Star-rated device. See www.energystar.gov

You’ll sleep better tonight if you slay or at least control some of these energy vampires in your home. Your pocketbook will get more rest, too.

Here are some websites for more information:
<http://www.energy.gov/applianceselectronics.htm>
U.S. Department of Energy

<http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/myths/appliances.html>
California Energy Commission, Consumer Energy Center, (data in “watts” used when you least expect it)

<http://standby.lbl.gov/summary-chart.html> Lawrence Berkeley National Lab (“watts” data on energy use in “standby mode”)

<http://blogs.consumerreports.org/home/2007/09/standby-power.html> *Consumer Reports*

Senate District 54 Organizational Meeting Plans for 2010-2012

All are welcome.

Thursday, March 18, 6:30 p.m.
Roseville Fire Station No. 1, 2701 Lexington Avenue
(Entrance and parking is on Lexington Avenue.)

This meeting is for all interested SD54 DFLers.
Join us to meet our new officers and get to know each other
and the work of SD54 for 2010 to 2012.
(launching the campaign season, setting up SD54 committees,
and other short/long term volunteer opportunities)

If the coming elections are important to you, it is important that you attend this meeting.

City of Roseville Complex buildings are handicapped accessible.