



Senate District 54 DFL Newsletter

May 2007
Vol. 15, No. 6

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

At the End of our Fifteenth Year—*Surprises*

Norm Hanson and Julianne Johnston

We decided, as the last of our articles on our fifteenth year of publication, that we would reminisce about the past and consider our common ideals and goals and expectations for the future. Surprise! We found that our responses to some basic questions were decidedly different. Certainly we have had some “discussions” in regard to what went into each issue as our expert compilation editors, Tony Richardson and before her, Beth Lareau, can attest. Sometimes, as the newsletter was being put into its final form, there were intense arguments. This is referred to by Norm as the time for arm wrestling. He insists that Julianne always won. Not so. Sometimes we had to take a vote, and Tony or Beth held the all-important decision-making vote. One of us has had to accept defeat with some humility, but not necessarily grace.

When we first began to write this newsletter in July, 1992, Norm, who had previous experience with the 4th CD newsletter, had some specific goals related to informing the readers of required notices and keeping the membership alerted to upcoming DFL business events such as our central and executive committee meetings, caucuses, and conventions. He had some idea about production process and wanted to be sure we had a union printer. Norm was and still is focused on the details and process. Julianne, on the other hand, left all that detail work to Norm, and expected that this newsletter would be the voice of the membership giving DFL-elected officials and members an opportunity to explore ideas, provide insights and create challenges. Two different goals that have, over time, complemented each other but each of us has remained as tenacious now as we were then as to the intent and purpose of the publication.

Norm points out with well-deserved pride, that we have kept our readers informed on important events. For example, for several years, when the precinct caucuses were being held in multiple locations, we printed precinct maps to locate each location. Julianne remembers the interviews with individuals who had/have provided leadership in the district including Hortense O’Neil, Jerry Hughes, Clair

Healy, Norm Hanson and Beth Lareau. We have provided step-by-step instructions for precinct caucus participants and the vote tally on resolutions passed at the caucuses. In 1997 we focused one entire issue on women’s issues with contributions from Mindy Greiling, John Marty, and Bob Waterman. And of course, we highlighted the donut booth, the source of our financial stability, its origin and originators and annual volunteer opportunities.

District chairs wrote occasional columns beginning with “From the Chair” in 1994. In May 1997, “What’s News in SD54” became a regular feature, now written by both the chair and the associate chair, bringing the actions and activities of the executive and central committees to everyone. And recently, “Asking the Tough Questions” became a regular feature and has explored current issues and concerns, including separation of church and state, health care, and analysis of election results from 2006.

What we both agree on is that this is an exciting endeavor. We both believe that the newsletter bonds the district together, enhances the election and impact of our elected officials in the district, and keeps our membership informed. We are looking forward to the development of the new SD54 website that will also attract and inform interested DFLers. However, we believe that because this newsletter comes directly to all interested parties on a regular basis whether they have internet access or not, its impact is significantly enhanced for all of our readers. Our efforts have been recognized by the State DFL both by the request to put on a state-wide forum at the State Central Committee and by being highlighted and presented to the State Central Committee members on its Yahoo website.

As we look forward, we must admit that producing an issue is somewhat like birthing a baby. We experience much anticipation, worry, pain, and then marvel that we, and all the volunteers who contribute in so many ways, have once again provided to our readers something of value. We hope you feel that way too.

What's News in SD54

Charlie Quick, SD54 Associate Chair

Summer finally seems to be approaching and with it many of our summer activities:

Parade Schedule

June 24th – Float assembly at Norm Hanson's - time to be announced

June 25th - the Roseville Parade starting at 6:15 p.m.
Line-up one hour before

July 28th – the Shoreview Parade—time to be announced

Annual SD54 Picnic for all friends and family

July 19th - the Annual Picnic is scheduled at Roseville Central Park starting at 6 p.m. (*Note:* time was incorrect in the last issue.) Brats, hot dogs and refreshments will be provided. Bring a salad or dessert to share.

State Fair Donut Booth Schedule

August 25th Saturday

August 29th Wednesday

September 3rd Monday

Senate District 54

www.dfl54.org

Chair: Michele Courneya

651-484-3717 courneya05@comcast.net

Associate Chair: Charlie Quick

651-483-3623 charlierquick@comcast.net

4th Congressional District DFL

Chair: J.P. Barone, 651-426-1836, var630@aol.com

Minnesota State DFL Party

www.dfl.org

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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| Tim Krinke | Mary JoRourke |
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We have shifts from 7:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., noon to 6:30 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. to midnight. Be sure to sign up early for your shift. The contact person for this activity is Andi Moffitt at (651) 917-3579. This is our annual fundraiser for Senate District 54 so we need your help to make it another well-staffed project for another smooth year.

SD54 newsletter commendations

The SD54 newsletter is making news. Brain Melendez, the State DFL chair, has named the SD54 newsletter as one of the best in the state. He has requested that we place it on the State DFL website as a reference for other senate districts. "Asking the Tough Questions," a column introduced by Norm Hanson, has been getting rave reviews.

SD54 Executive Committee April 19th Meeting Summary

The Audit Committee reported that the financial records for SD54 DFL for 2005 and 2006 were in order and supported appropriately. Recommendations for improvement of future accounting processes and procedures are as follows:

- "1. Any donations to SD54 must include the donor's name, address, occupation and employer. This is to comply with federal law for all individuals whose contributions aggregate in excess of \$200 per election cycle.
- "2. When cash is collected, there must be documentation of the amount received and counted, with sign off by at least two persons for reconciliation with the actual deposit.
- "3. When an expense is paid, it must be supported by proper documentation, i.e., the actual receipt and/or an expense form and/or a comparable supporting document. If any expense is approved at an Executive Committee meeting or any other meeting, it must be documented in the minutes and by an expense form signed by the Chair or Associate Chair."

SD54 Website

SD54 will be updating the website with the assistance of a new webmaster. SD54 will apply for its own credit card so that the website can be registered to the organization rather than an individual.

(Please note the report on the March 14 SD54 Central Committee Forum on the Greening of Shoreview on page 6, and the report on the State Central Committee Meeting on April 21, 2007, on page 3, in this issue.)

Note: Due to the extensive research required to cover the subject, *Asking the Tough Questions* about the Medicare and Medical Assistance programs will appear in a future issue.

State DFL Central Committee Meeting

Norm Hanson

State Chair Brian Melandez gaveled the State DFL Central Committee meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., April 21, 2007, at the beautiful Lakes and Plains Regional Council of Carpenters building in St. Paul. This meeting was preceded by meetings of the Latino, Disability and Veteran's DFL Party caucuses, and a meeting of all the DFL Party caucuses. In addition to the three caucuses noted above, the latter included the African American, Asian/Pacific, Seniors, Progressive, Stonewall, Feminist, and People of Faith caucuses. The purpose of this joint meeting of all DFL Party caucuses was to discuss issues that unify them and how caucuses can join together in their support.

Elected officials who greeted and spoke to the assembled delegates and alternates included U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, State Attorney General Lori Swanson, 5th Congressional District Representative Keith Ellison and State Representative John Lesch, who welcomed the attendees to District 66, part of which he represents in the legislature. Candidates for the U.S. Senate, including Al Franken, Bob Olson, and Jim Cohen addressed those assembled as did Mark Dayton on behalf of Hillary Clinton. Former state representative and current state president of the Minnesota Farmers Union, Doug Peterson, also addressed the group, emphasizing the important relationships between agricultural producers and consumers.

Sixteen men and women with years of involvement in the Minnesota DFL were elected to the Hall of Distinguished Service. Those elected were: Lorraine Cecil, Joseph L. Donovan, George Farr, Gerald Heaney, Ray Hemenway, Orville L. Freeman, Dorothy Jacobson, Betty Kane, Joe Karth, Coya Knutson, Michael McGrath, Janis Ray, Sue Rockne, Karl Rolvaag, Warren Spannaus, and Harold Windingstad.

While some of these names are probably more familiar than others, all these individuals have provided years of excellent service to and support for the DFL in Minnesota. Those elected on Saturday join 38 other distinguished DFLers already in the Hall, including Hubert Humphrey, Paul Wellstone, Bruce Vento, Roy Wilkins, Joan Growe, and Arvonne Fraser.

Delegates also adopted the Minnesota Delegate Selection Plan to be used when electing the 88 delegates and 12 alternates to the 2008 National Democratic Convention. The plan adopted sets ambitious goals for the inclusion of representatives of many under-represented groups in the state delegation. The adopted plan was required to be, and is, consistent with the goals and objectives of those of the Democratic National Committee.

Budgeting by Constitutional Amendment

Senator John Marty

Inadequate state funding for natural resources and environmental protection has driven environmental advocates and conservation groups to propose a constitutional amendment to increase the sales tax and dedicate the money to natural resource protection. More recently arts organizations, also facing budget cuts, have joined in the effort.

But during the last few years, while conservation groups have been focusing their attention on this constitutional amendment, state appropriations for natural resources have been reduced even further. Four years ago, when the state faced a big budget deficit, Governor Pawlenty made deep cuts in environmental funding—and he made many of the cuts permanent. Then the governor turned around and convinced some conservation advocates that he is their ally by pushing the constitutional amendment as a solution to the lack of environmental funding.

It seems hypocritical for the governor to cut funding for programs, and then complain about the lack of funding for

them and suggest a constitutional solution to a problem he helped cause.

Setting budgets by constitutional amendment is bad public policy. The constitution is an enduring document, intended to provide the framework for our state government and protect the rights of Minnesotans, not to allocate portions of the state budget. Yes, most of the gas tax is already constitutionally dedicated to funding for roads. But should we repeat this mistake?

If we are to budget through the constitution, how do we determine which programs should be included? Why not constitutionally dedicate education funding, or housing, or crime-prevention programs? And how does one address changing needs—do we re-amend the constitution?

As a strong proponent of additional environmental funding, I am willing to support significant increases in funds to preserve open space, to protect habitat, to clean up our

(Continued on page 5)

Representatives report on the 2007 Legislative Session

54A Representative Mindy Greiling

It was a thrill and great honor to reel in my very first omnibus bill last week. It was a very big catch—the house E-12 Education Finance bill. I worked closely with Rep. Carlos Mariani from St. Paul who chairs the Education Policy Committee and Rep. Nora Slawik, Maplewood, who chairs the Early Childhood Committee, and our committee members. Many say it is the most fair and well-funded bill put forward by the house in a couple of decades.

The bill provides \$13.947 billion in funding over the next two years, or 9.4 percent over the previous biennium. It gives a three percent formula increase in each year of the biennium, and funds for voluntary all-day kindergarten, special education, technology, innovation, and reform proposals (including world languages), gifted and talented programs, career and technical opportunities, and libraries. Also funded are: Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), Head Start, School Readiness, Adult Basic Education, school support personnel (counselors, social workers, nurses, psychologists, and chemical dependency staff), Limited English Proficiency services, after-school programs, summer school, and early literacy skills and intervention, teacher development, and more.

The bill also includes significant property tax relief through better state funding of the education levies. Reinstating the income tax fourth tier pays for this. I am proud to have had a hand in persuading our caucus to take this important step.

At this writing, we are heading into the week of conference committees. I have never chaired one, so wish me luck. Our students depend on it. I am excited and looking forward to the process. I am glad that Senator John Marty is on the Tax

Conference Committee, because we will have to coordinate taxes and education finance.

I am elated that major portions of the Marty/Greiling mental health bill are included in the house Health and Human Services Omnibus Finance bill and some parts are salted into four other omnibus finance bills. It is wonderful to be back in the majority!

There are many other great bills coming out of the house, including the Environment bill that Bev Scalze worked on. She did us all proud with her floor debate on that important bill.

Now if we just had a governor who would consider these bills. Please contact him. So many people depend on his compromising, and I really hate to think of him throwing my first big fish back in the sea.

54B Representative Bev Scalze

As I write this letter, the legislature has returned from its Easter/Passover break. All finance bills have passed out of committee and are ready to be taken up on the house floor. About halfway through the session, the legislature has made great progress on a number of issues important to Minnesotans. We are currently ahead of schedule and ready to achieve good things. While a lot has been accomplished, there is still a lot to do in the coming month. I encourage you to continue contacting me with any questions, suggestions, or concerns you may have regarding any bill or issue of importance to you. Your input will continue to help me make informed decisions for the benefit of our community and this state. I look forward to hearing from you. (See Directory for contact information)

Predatory Lending bill (HF1004)

passed in the house by a vote of 129-6. This bill cracks down on predatory lending practices in our state. It regulates the mortgage lenders that make the loans and the mortgage brokers that arrange them so as to protect homebuyers from being taken advantage of. It also establishes the policy that loans will be granted only to those who have the ability to meet the payments and caps total lending fees at five percent.

Transportation bill (HF 946)

passed in the house by a vote of 83-46. It provides \$4.4 billion in additional state revenue for transportation needs statewide. This additional revenue will be supplemented by matching federal funds, giving the state almost \$9 billion

Directory of SD54 Legislators

State Senator John Marty
328 State Capitol, St Paul, MN 55155
jmarty@senate.mn
(651)296-5645
www.senate.mn/senatormarty

State Representative Mindy Greiling
381 State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155
(651)296-5387
rep.mindy.greiling@house.mn

State Representative Bev Scalze
357 State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155
(651)296-7153.
rep.bev.scalze@house.mn

for transportation needs. The bill establishes a ten-cent gas tax increase phased in over the next two years to be used exclusively for roads. It also gives counties in the metro area authority to institute a half-cent sales tax for regional transit projects. Additionally the bill removes the cap on license tab fees. Similar legislation was passed in the senate by a vote of 42 to 24. The bill will be considered in conference committee before a final vote on the floor of both bodies. It will then be sent to the governor.

Property Tax Relief bill (HF3)

Since 2003, property taxes have increased by \$1.7 billion and are projected to go up by a record \$603 million next year if nothing is done to address the problem. The house unveiled its proposal for statewide permanent property tax relief recently. If passed, HF3 would provide \$543 million in significant and permanent relief for Minnesota homeowners, to be financed by creating a new income tax bracket for the state's highest earners (\$400,000 for married couples; \$226,000 for individuals) who currently pay a lower percentage of their income than do the state's low- and middle-income earners. Eighty percent of those affected by this new bracket would be the state's millionaires. All revenue collected from this new tax bracket would go exclusively to property tax relief. The centerpiece of the bill is the Homestead Credit State Refund that would provide \$223 million in direct property tax relief to Minnesota homeowners. Refunds would vary based on income and home value. This is a much more moderate proposal than the senate's plan that would raise income taxes significantly for those earning over \$250,000 and property taxes for small businesses.

If HF3 is signed into law, residents of Little Canada, Shoreview, Gem Lake, Roseville, and Vadnais Heights would gain the following benefits:

- Personal refunds for homeowners based on the ability to pay
- School District levy relief for Roseville District 623, \$800,000; for White Bear District 624, \$925,000; for Mounds View District 621, \$1.1 million
- \$1.2 million in increased county aid for Ramsey County

The bill will be taken up on the floor in the coming weeks. I encourage you to let me know how you feel about this legislation. In the meantime, you may be eligible for a property tax refund based on your 2006 financial situation, as reported on your 2006 income tax return. To apply for the refund, complete and by August 15 mail form M1PR, which is available through public libraries and other locations where state tax forms are distributed.

Budgeting...

(Continued from page 3)

lakes and streams and to protect the environment for future generations. And, significantly, I am willing to vote for the taxes to pay for this.

I respect the people who are pushing the constitutional amendment to fund natural resources and the arts, and let me restate that I agree with them about the need for more funding. However, I am becoming increasingly leery of amending the constitution for setting budgets.

Citizens and organizations concerned about the lack of funding would be wise to use the political system to pressure the governor and legislature to address these needs. Those politicians who support tax cuts and then make pledges not to raise taxes, ought to be held accountable for the cuts they make in much-needed programs.

—Stay Informed—

- Read the legislature's non-partisan magazines online
Session Weekly, the house publication, at:
www.house.mn/hinfo/swmain.asp
Senate Briefly, the senate publication, at:
www.senate.mn/briefly/
- Watch the televised house floor sessions at:
www.house.mn/htv/schedule.asp
- Sign up for email updates on specific bills at:
www.house.mn/leg/billslogin.asp
- Sign up for email updates on specific committees at:
www.house.mn/maillist/maillinglist.asp

SD54 Book Group to take nostalgia trip

At its next meeting the SD54 Book Group will take a trip down nostalgia lane and discuss George Orwell's 1949 classic, *1984*.

So, search through your high school or college book collections (or buy a vintage copy on the Internet) and meet at Bev Erickson's, 2240 Midland Grove Road, Tuesday, May 15 at 7:00 p.m.

We had a good turnout for the last meeting and hope for the same again! Questions? karenjhanson@comcast.net.

The Greening of Shoreview

Georgiana Sobola

The next time you drive past Shoreview's welcome sign on Highway 96, you can mentally add "A Green Community" to its name. Many of our DFL members are helping to make Shoreview green!

The Shoreview **Green Community Campaign** began in 2005 as an outreach effort by the Northstar Chapter of the Sierra Club. It now has about 50 members, including public officials. Our member, Sue Rengstorf, is the overall chair.

The kickoff event was a Green Community report, presented to the public to discuss how Shoreview was doing and to determine what its priorities are. These proved to be Transportation, Clean Water, and Efficient Resource Use.

Peter Berglund, co-chair with Erick Westgard, represented the Transportation Group. It has developed an ambitious plan for limiting motor vehicle miles by developing bikeways for the northern suburban Ramsey area. Their outreach program includes a public survey, presence at city council meetings, and letters to the editors.

The focus of the Efficient Resources Use Group, chaired by Sue Rengstorf, is wind energy as a substitute for coal-powered plants. They are working with Xcel Energy to encourage more use of power from wind energy sources. An outreach effort was their sponsorship of *An Inconvenient Truth* showing attended by 150 people.

Matthew Sworra, chair of the Clean Water Group, described himself as a lay person, one of the ordinary people involved in the Green movement. The focus of his group is non-point water pollution, i.e., water from non-specific sources, mainly rain water. He identified a number of methods—rain gardens, water practice management, shoreline buffering –to keep non-point water from flowing into lakes, streams, and rivers. As an outreach project, the group had a booth at the Slice of Shoreview fete, featuring rain gardens. Teachers have not escaped this group's notice. They have developed projects local educators can use with children.

There have been many opportunities for community involvement, projects, and education. Public forums to determine community interest and focus have yielded priorities. A buckthorn removal project, with the help of the Shoreview Garden Club, was a big event last fall. All three groups had booths at Slice of Shoreview. There have been forums and presentations at local events and for local organizations.

The Ramsey-Washington District's new office in Little Canada was cited as an example of non-point water management.

To an audience question of Xcel's sincerity on use of windsource energy, the consensus was that it is doing a good job.

Ideas tossed out for this organization to work on included how to involve condos and other types of multiple family dwellings in the green movement; use of natural lawn products; lack of bike parking at shopping centers; and walkable ways to get to shopping centers.

Contacts

Margaret Levin of the Sierra Club was present at the meeting. She described the Shoreview Green Community Campaign as a way to involve Sierra Club members in taking action in their communities. They are one of three that she is working with. Contact her at Sierra Club Northstar Chapter, 612-269-9124 or <http://northstar.sierraclub/shoreview>.

It's all about . . .Clean Water

Shoreview Green Community Awards

What we do every day affects the quality of our water. In Shoreview we love our water. We swim in it, boat in it, shower with it and, of course, drink it. But runoff from our roofs, roads, driveways, and lawns contaminates our water. That's why a new Shoreview program is searching for good examples of practices that protect and improve water quality. This summer, Shoreview Green Community Awards will recognize local property owners who use the best water-friendly management practices. We invite you to apply for an award if you have done one or more of the following

1. Created a shoreline buffer (adjacent to a lake, stream or wetland).
2. Established a rain garden or native plant garden.
3. Landscaped for wildlife.
4. Planted native habitat.
5. Constructed permeable surfaces (e.g., driveway or patio).
6. Used other practices that filter storm water runoff.

If your neighbors are managing their properties to improve water quality, please encourage them to apply, as well.

How the program works

Residents may obtain an application now, for submission by May 15. Judging will take place in June and July, and a free, self-guided tour of the winning properties will be held

SD54 Calendar of Events — May to October 2007

Mark your calendars now!!

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| May 17 | Thursday | SD54 Central Committee meeting, Fairview Community, 7:00 p.m. |
| May 21 | Monday | 4CD Central Committee meeting, Rice Street Library, 1011 N. Rice Street, 7:00 p.m. |
| June 19 | Tuesday | 4CD Executive Committee Meeting, Rice Street Library, 1011 N. Rice Street 7:00 p.m. |
| June 21 | Thursday | SD54 Executive Committee Meeting Fairview Community Center, 7:00 p.m. |
| June 25 | Monday | Roseville Parade, line up at 5:15 pm, parade at 6:15 p.m. volunteers call Andi Moffitt - (651) 917-3579 |
| July 16 | Monday | 4CD Central Committee meeting, Rice Street Library, 1011 N. Rice Street, 7:00 p.m. |
| July 19 | Thursday | SD54 Central Committee meeting/Annual Picnic, Roseville Central Park, 6:00 p.m. |
| July 28 | Saturday | Shoreview Parade, volunteers call Andi Moffitt - (651) 917-3579 |
| August 25 August 29 September 3 | Saturday) Wednesday) Monday) | SD54 days at State Fair Donut Booth—volunteers call Andi Moffitt - (651) 917-3579 |
| August 16 | Thursday | SD54 Executive Committee Meeting, Fairview Community Center |
| September 20 | Thursday | SD54 Central Committee meeting, Fairview Community Center |
| October 7 | Sunday | 2007 Bruce Vento Dinner, Prom Center 484 Inwood Avenue, Oakdale |

August 4 and 5. Winning property owners will receive an attractive award sign for their shoreline or yard, a framed photo of their property, a gift certificate for native plants, and recognition in the Clean Water education booth at Slice of Shoreview.

Sponsors of the Shoreview Green Community Awards
City of Shoreview Environmental Quality Committee
Shoreview Green Community Campaign of the Sierra Club
North Star Chapter

In Memory of Beverly Oien

Beverly Oien, who was involved in the original planning meetings and implementation of the Donut Booth, died on February 21. Bev and her husband, Gus, were active members of the then 10th Ward DFL before moving to Florida twenty five years ago and returned to the Twin Cities recently. Gus is now a resident at Sunrise of Minnetonka nursing home. Some of our older DFL members will remember their significant contributions to the DFL

Why use native plants?

Native plants help filter dirty storm water from streets, driveways and rooftops before it contaminates our lakes, ponds, streams and wetlands. Native plants:

- Have deep roots—up to 16 feet—to recharge runoff and reduce shoreline erosion.
- Tolerate tough winters and dry spells, so you need to water less often.
- Require no fertilizer, pesticides or mowing.
- Attract more birds, butterflies, and moths.

For more information on landscaping for clean water

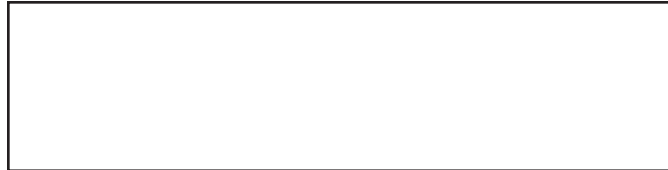
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
<http://www.cleanwatermn.org>
Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District
<http://www.rwmwd.org>
Rice Creek Watershed District
<http://ricecreek.org/outreach/oss>
Lake Superior Duluth Streams
www.duluthstreams.org/stormwater/toolkit/tools.org
Metro WaterShed Partners
<http://www.cleanwatermn.org>

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Dated Material—Please Rush

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

SD54 Central Committee Meeting
May 17, 2007, 7:00 p.m

featuring

Jeanne Massey, executive director of FairVote Minnesota

speaking on

Instant Runoff Voting

with special emphasis on the recent successful effort in Minneapolis
and the current campaign in St. Paul

Fairview Community Center (County Road B west of Fairview)

Fairview Community Center is handicapped accessible