



Senate District 54 DFL Newsletter

May 2008
Vol. 16, No. 6

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

What's News in SD54

Recollections of the past two years—I would like to thank all the active DFLers in SD54 for making this a great two years. I would also like to welcome and thank the new caucus attendees. I hope these recollections give you a summary of all the SD54 activities.

Andi Moffat activated the volunteers during the summer of 2006 and gave the district a presence at all of the local parades. What a great way to get involved and have fun at the same time. Although we didn't make every local parade in 2007, we did have a great response for the parades in which we participated.

SD54 had a full delegation at the 2006 DFL State Convention held in Rochester. I recommend working for a position as a state delegate. It's well worth the effort. The State Convention exposes us to the real political process.

Many took the opportunity to attend the July picnics. This is a great time to get better acquainted with others from our SD54. We usually get updates from our own Senator John Marty, Representative Mindy Greiling and Representative Bev Scalze. The picnics are well attended by other candidates as well.

And what better way to wrap up the summer than the State Fair and all those delicious mini donuts from the DFL-run donut booth. A big thank you to all the volunteers that help staff the booth every year.

The Bruce Vento Dinner in October is a 4CD function which is always well attended by SD54. This function mixes fun with some fund-raising. Guest speakers are the highlights and at the 2006 dinner it was Al Franken. Garrison Keilor was the guest speaker for 2007.

The November post-election potluck party recognizes some of our own great people and their accomplishments. We hear from our elected officials, but no campaigning is allowed. Thanks to everyone who brings food to share.

2006 Elections

Senator John Marty, Representative Mindy Greiling, and Representative Bev Scalze all won their re-elections by a healthy margin. We are fortunate to have such excellent representation at the capitol.

House Majority

The senate increased its DFL majority in the 2006 elections. With 85 DFL members elected to the house, the DFL now has a majority. This has opened up opportunities for our DFL representatives in the last two legislative sessions.

Health Care Bill—Senator John E. Marty

John moved from chair of the Senate Environment Committee to chair of the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee. As the chair, John has been working on a new health care plan for all of Minnesota. This is the Minnesota Health Care Act SF2324/HF2522. This is a simple plan that will cover everyone.

Education Finance—Representative Mindy Greiling

Mindy has been delighted with the 2006 election results. With the house majority, Mindy received a long-coveted position as chair of the K-12 Education Finance Committee. Mindy is working hard to get adequate funding for education.

Environmental Concerns—Representative Bev Scalze

Passionate about the environment, Bev started her second term serving on two environmental committees.

Remember we all need to support our elected officials. Let them know you appreciate what they have done.

2008 Caucus

Credit goes to Georgiana Sobola, our space manager, for procuring the Roseville Area High School for the caucus in 2008. We had logistical issues when the caucuses were moved from March to February.

We anticipated a turnout of about 2,500 for the 2008 caucuses, which would have been double the number

of participants in 2006. The turnout of over 4,000 well-exceeded our expectations. Though we were delighted with the attendance, there were inconveniences. We sincerely apologize for any difficulties encountered by those who participated.

Congressional and Presidential Campaigns

Both the U.S. Senate and presidential campaigns have been in full swing. Our state convention delegates will be deciding which senate candidate is on the DFL ballot in November.

We have spirited and interesting campaigns ahead, but those stories are yet to be written

Transit Improvements Coming Our Way

Karen Schaffer

Five metro area county boards have taken up the legislature's proposal that an optional 0.25 percent sales tax be imposed to generate revenue dedicated to transit improvements, park and ride lots, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. The county boards of Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties each voted to impose the sales tax in their respective counties, effective July 1, 2008. The sales tax revenues generated by this local sales tax will be collected by the Minnesota Department of Revenue and distributed to a new board consisting of 10 county commissioners (two from each of the five counties) and the chair of the Metropolitan Council. The new board (Counties Transit Improvement Board) will award grants and issue bonds for transit projects. The sales tax will be a penny on a \$4 purchase.

What's the big deal? This is the first time in Minnesota

that we will have an on-going revenue source for transit improvements (as opposed to the ad hoc process of biennial legislative appropriations). How much revenue will be raised? Revenues are estimated at \$85 to \$110 million per year. What will the revenue be used for? Eligible uses include capital and operating costs for transit-ways; construction and operation of park and ride lots; and capital and operating costs of pedestrian and bicycle programs and pathways (within specified dollar limits).

Will these revenues be siphoned off to pay for the Metro Transit bus system? The revenues must be spent on transit-ways (light rail transit, commuter rail transit, bus rapid transit) not for regular route transit provided by Metro Transit. There is a one-time appropriation of \$30+ million to the Metropolitan Council, however.

Who decides which transit-way projects will be funded? The new board will make the decisions, but the legislation requires that projects funded with this revenue be consistent with the Metro Council's Transportation Policy Plan. Will the funds be spent on capital or operating costs? Both are eligible.

Are the projected revenues enough to build and operate a metropolitan-area transit-way system? No. The legislature will have to continue to fund Metro Council's share of transit-way costs, and local governments seeking to build and operate transit-ways will have to contribute local funds, too. Projects receiving federal funding are to be favored. It will take all sources to gradually build and operate a system. Fare box revenues will be helpful but will never cover all operating costs.

What about repairing our roads and bridges? Sales tax proceeds cannot be used for road and bridge repair. That's the purpose of the increase in the gas tax (among other sources of funds).

Which transit-ways might be funded? Hiawatha LRT, Northstar Commuter Rail, Central Corridor; Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit, 35W Bus Rapid Transit, Southwest Corridor, and Bottineau Corridor, to name a few. The full story on current and potential transit-ways can be found at the Metro Council website.

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
Julianne Johnston, vice-chair	(651)486-7120
Joan Cooper	Grace Dyrud
Keith Dyrud	Karen Hanson
Sandy Hanson	Beth Lareau
Mary JoRourke	Charlie Quick
Karen Schaffer	Georgiana Sobola
John Treadwell	

Copy editor: Anne Frenchick
Layout editor: Antona Richardson

Senate District 54

www.sd54dfll.org

Chair: Michele Courneya

651-484-3717 courneya05@comcast.net

Associate Chair: Ivor Matz

612-789-0296, ivorm@metrommp.com

4th Congressional District DFL

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

Minnesota State DFL Party

www.dfl.org

Asking the Tough Questions: Why Do We Vote As We Do?

“I vote for

- candidates based upon their stands on issues important to me.
- candidates based upon their understanding of and support for policies that are in my best economic interest.
- women candidates since they are more likely to support programs important for children.
- the candidate that I consider the best regardless of race or gender.
- whomever the polls indicate to be the front runner as I want to vote for the winner.”

Are There Other Assumptions Better than Any of the Above?

These assumptions are often heard during election season as explanations of why citizens vote as they do. Further, candidates and parties often base their campaign literature and other voter information upon these assumptions being true. Are these assumptions valid? That is, do the voters really make their voting booth selections based on one of the assumptions stated above? We don't know the answer to that question but we do offer the following observations regarding each of these assumptions for your consideration.

Issues are the key to my vote

Karl Rove appeared to have disagreed with these assumptions, assuming instead that many voters are more likely to vote based upon fears and concerns relating to social issues, such as gay marriage, abortion, and keeping enemies out of the United States. Based upon his understanding of the importance of fears, concerns, and uncertainties over social issues, Rove successfully developed campaigns leading to the election and re-election of George Bush. While Gore and Kerry focused on issues and their concerns regarding them, Rove elected not to waste time on such things focusing instead on enhancing fears and concerns of the electorate. He was very successful, in spite of the fact that most of the voters influenced by the Rove strategy would likely never be affected by any of the social issues raised.

My own economic interests dictate how I will vote

Many observers and commentators have noted that many citizens voted against their own economic self-interests due to fears and concerns regarding social issues including those noted above. Why? Why do so many voters often vote against their own economic interests in favor of a candidate who plays upon their fears over issues that they will likely never encounter? Do they fear retaliation or rejection from their peer group? If it is true that many voters vote against their own economic self-interest, why do we spend so much time trying to convince them that our programs will be more consistent with their economic interests than will programs of the Republicans? Why has it been so hard to override Governor Pawlenty's vetoes on major public funding policy issues when property taxes are rising so rapidly in large part due to many of his vetoes?

Candidates who are women will be more supportive of programs and polices benefiting children

In her scholarly review of the assumption that women elected to office would be more supportive of programs benefiting children than would men, Grace Dyrud found that not to be an overall valid assumption. That is, she found that women lawmakers, especially Republican women lawmakers, were frequently no more supportive of such programs than were men lawmakers and sometimes even less supportive of them than were men. However, elected women who are Democrats appear to support such programs more than elected women who are Republicans. (*Ed. Note: See her article, which follows.*)

Neither race nor gender is a consideration affecting how I vote

Polls have indicated on many occasions that the race or gender of a candidate will not be a factor in personal voting booth decisions. Some observers suggest that such responses to the pollster are a result of the *Bradley effect*, where those polled did not want to indicate that they would not support long-time black mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley, in his run for governor, based solely on his race. In fact, they probably did so in the privacy of the voting booth, leading Bradley to twice lose his race for governor despite his lead in the polls. Political scientists have referred to the social desirability affect when those polled indicate for reasons of political correctness that they could vote for a woman but then chose not to do so in the privacy of the voting booth.

I vote for the candidates that the polls indicate will win

Political scientists sometimes refer to this as the bandwagon effect for obvious reasons. Is that true? Jesse Ventura was behind in all of the polls until just before the election, yet he won by a good margin over the candidates of the two major parties. Were the polls just dead wrong? Did the voters ignore the polls? Did the voters, many of them voting for the first time, vote for Jesse as a lark or vote against the established parties on the assumption that he wouldn't win? Do people lie to the pollsters as suggested in the race and gender section above?

As we noted earlier, we don't know the answers to these questions or whether any of the assumptions are valid. On the other hand, there seems to be a preponderance of evidence that they are not. That is, the assumptions often have little to do with the levers that voters push when in the privacy of the voting booth. Are we wasting valuable campaign resources, including our time, by operating as though the assumptions are valid when they don't prove to be so? When push comes to shove, when we get into the voting booth, as an astute observer indicated, do folks choose to vote for someone that they would feel comfortable going for a beer with or inviting to their barbecue, or someone who looks like s/he would probably just be fun to be close to?

Norm Hanson and Julianne Johnston

Think Voting for Women Gets Something for Children? Think Again

Grace B. Dyrud, Ph.D

Yes, if the woman legislator is a Democrat, No if she is a Republican. Have you heard the statement "Wait until more women get in, then we will get action on women's and children's issues?" How are we doing? The Children's Defense League (CDL) rates Minnesota legislator's votes on children's issues (bills involving wages, education, child care, human services, clean air, and concealed guns). An analysis of these ratings from the 2004, 2005, and 2007 legislatures showed that political party is more important than gender. (The 2006 legislature had a limited agenda.) Republican women in the legislature often received a zero rating from the Children's Defense League. In fact through the 2007 ratings, the only women who received zero ratings for CDL were Republican. Republican women's ratings which were above zero were still lower than the DFL women's ratings. Any gender difference is accounted for by the DFL women and gender difference within political parties is insignificant. Democrats had significantly higher ratings for CDL than Republicans regarding children's issues.

Is this what voters expect from women legislators on these issues? Maybe we have achieved such gender equality in expectations that voters don't expect women to vote differently from men? Voting age students at Augsburg College were asked about their expectations for women legislators. Both men and women students expected women legislators to vote for children's interests. (With a ten a perfect stereotypical score, women legislators were expected to vote for eight of the issues). The voters gave men more latitude. (They expected men to vote for four of the ten issues.)

Why do expectations of legislator votes and their actual votes matter? Traditional stereotypes of women's issues seem to still prevail among the voting public. These stereotypes mean that traditional expectations can be exploited by conservative groups to gain support for a woman candidate on the assumption that she supports children's issues. This effect can be especially powerful in low-information elections. Voting for a woman does not guarantee increasing support of children's issues.

Dyrud, a professor in the Department of Psychology, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, is a licensed psychologist. She teaches behavior analysis, industrial/organizational psychology, environmental psychology, and other specialized topics including political psychology. Political research and activism are among her research interests.

SD54 Legislators

Senator John Marty

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

54A Representative Mindy Greiling

381 State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155
(651)296-5387
rep.mindy.greiling@house.mn
www.mindygreiling.org

54B Representative Bev Scalze

357 State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155
(651)296-7153 or 483-1055 (home)
rep.bev.scalze@house.mn

Resolutions Solutions

Georgiana Sobola

What happened to all of those resolutions that we actually found time to pass at the caucuses on February 5? No, they were not left to moulder on a shelf. The committed volunteers on the Resolutions Committee immediately took them in hand and prepared them for presentation at the SD54 Central Committee meeting on March 20.

Chair Michele Courneya introduced Paul Lareau, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, to approximately 40 attendees. Paul then explained that the purpose of the meeting was to process the approximately 110 resolutions which were passed at the caucuses on February 5.

All of the resolutions had been reviewed by the Resolutions Committee. Those already existing in the party platform or action agenda were set aside. Similar resolutions were lumped together and new wording was worked out to preserve the intent of the originals. Some resolutions were divided if they contained ideas which would benefit by being considered separately. This winnowing process resulted in 84 surviving resolutions. The senate district is entitled to forward 40 resolutions on to the State DFL Convention.

All of the 84 resolutions were posted on a long solarium wall under their specific categories. Paul then explained the process for selecting resolutions to pass on to the State DFL Convention.

Each person attending was given the option of selecting 20 resolutions, which he/she considered important, to be part of the party platform or as an action item. Then, armed with a pen or pencil, we were set free to put a slash (vote) in front of our 20 personal favorites.

At the conclusion of the selection period the number of slashes each resolution received was posted and the meeting was opened to accepting or rejecting all resolutions which had received at least one vote, to reach the final total of 40. Resolutions which had received no committee votes were not considered. Of the remainder, there was strong unanimous support for many. Others were debated and amended before being accepted. The assembly was perfectly willing to send several, on which no agreement could be reached, to the State DFL Convention for a final solution.

For lack of space we cannot reproduce all of the winning resolutions here. However, the following are the top 14 choices which emerged at the meeting. They are among the 40 passed on to the State DFL Convention:

1. In first place, with 20 slashes (votes): Recognition of civil unions
2. Three resolutions tied for second place with 17 slashes each:
 - Single payer health care system
 - Rescind the Patriot Act
 - Ban torture and extraordinary rendition
3. Two resolutions tied for third place with 16 slashes each:
 - Presidential signing documents; three restrictions
 - Freedom of Information Act; return to prior guidance as under Janet Reno, former U.S. Attorney General
4. In fourth place with 15 slashes: Power grid connections for wind and solar
5. Three resolutions tied for fifth place:
 - Election paper trail; a verifiable paper trail in state and federal elections
 - Iraq troop withdrawal, three provisions for withdrawal by January 1, 2009
 - Funding for transit and trails
6. Receiving 11 slashes for sixth place: non-partisan election of judges
7. Three resolutions tied for seventh place with 10 slashes each:
 - Abolish electoral college
 - Instant run-off voting for state and local elections
 - Global warming; explore solutions, especially renewable energy.

All 40 winning resolutions were posted on April 5 at the SD54 Convention at the Roseville Area High School.

Note: Before the adoption several cycles ago of this system of resolution processing, all of the resolutions from the caucuses were debated at the Senate District convention, resulting in a very long day for the delegates. Because of this new and tested process, the 2008 Senate District Convention was able to move along expeditiously, adjourning shortly after 4:00 p.m.

2008 Donut Booth dates
for SD54
at the Minnesota State Fair

August 21, Thursday
August 24, Sunday
August 28, Thursday

All shifts open for the three days
To volunteer, contact Andi Moffitt
(651) 917-3579

District Convention Report

Karen Schaffer

By all accounts, the DFL Senate District 54 Convention on April 5, 2008, at Roseville Area High School was a great success. While nearly half of the delegates were first-time delegates, the convention went quite smoothly and finished business well before the 4:00 p.m. guesstimate made by Convention Chair Beth Lareau.

The convention opened at 10:00 a.m. with the presentation of the flag by members of Rosetown American Legion Post 542 and Roseville VFW Post 7555, Paul Longen commanding. This group of veterans presented the flag at our three previous conventions as well. They also present military honors one full day each week at Fort Snelling, year 'round, as well as at Roseville Memorial Chapel and Roselawn Cemetery. As busy as they are honoring veterans, they were able to help us start our convention on an appropriate note.

SD54 was honored to be addressed by many DFL candidates and office holders. These included Al Franken, Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, Mayor R.T. Rybak, Congressmen Keith Ellison and Betty McCollum, and JP Barone from the 4th CD DFL. Minnesota State Representatives Mindy Greiling and Bev Scalze, who were endorsed by Senate Districts 54 A and B, also addressed the convention.

Beth Lareau was elected convention chair and led the delegates through the conduct of its business. Beth's experience and leadership doubtless are the major reasons the convention proceeded so efficiently despite the presence of so many first-time delegates.

SD54 party officers were elected: Chair Michele Courneya; Associate Chair Ivor Matz; Secretary Andi Moffat; Treasurer Bob Venters; Affirmative Action Chair Kami Miller. All but Michele are new SD54 party officers. SD54 is fortunate to be able to attract such an outstanding team. After all, as JP Barone reminded us, these jobs are unpaid! We thank them for volunteering to serve.

Additionally, 22 individuals stepped up to serve as elected SD54 directors. This group includes experienced as well as first-time directors, who will work with the officers between Central Committee meetings to keep SD54 and its committees humming. Thanks and congratulations to our new directors: April Alfuth, Marsha Cressy, Christopher Doyle, Jason Etten, Hallie Finucane, Gary Grefenberg, Mark Haider, John Hanna, Julianne Johnston, Kevin Kautzman, Sarah Lehman, John Lund, Anita Mayfield, Patricia Orcutt-Baker, Matt Pollari, Charlie Quick, Susan

Rengsdorf, Greg Simbeck, Georgiana Sobola, Andrea Stephens, Rayna Washpun, and Gaylynn Wyant.

The portion of SD54 within 4CD subcaucused to elect 18 delegates to the 4th CD and State DFL conventions. Thirty-four subcaucuses were nominated – not a record, perhaps, but a lot nonetheless. In the end, nine subcaucuses for Al Franken, Hillary Clinton, Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, Barack Obama, and Uncommitted elected 18 delegates to the State DFL Convention. Important subcaucus issues were the environment, renewable energy, global warming, single-payer health plan, universal health care, ending the war, education, labor and beating Norm Coleman. The portion of SD54 within 5CD elected two delegates to the State Convention.

Many thanks to all those who worked on the convention committees. Successful events, as that was, don't just happen; they take time, work and a lot of effort! Delegates appreciated being seated precinct by precinct, and the caterer received excellent reviews as well.

Save the Planet: Save \$115 on a Home Energy Audit

Peter Berglund

An Xcel Energy program offers home energy audits for \$35. The audit has a value of \$150. If you qualify as low income, you may get the audit for free! The audit can help you assess how much energy your own home uses and identify low-cost steps to make improvements. Your air conditioner, furnace, and household appliances will be checked, and your energy bills analyzed. You'll get your own written report. An SD54 member had his home audited and would recommend it to anyone. Although his home is fairly new (1999), it was worth doing. This information is based on the April 2008 edition of Xcel's *Energy Update* newsletter and a phone call to Xcel on 4/19/08. For more information, contact Xcel Energy at 1-800-895-4999 or visit www.xcelenergy.com.

Campaign Contact Information Mindy Greiling

Door Knocking with Mindy

Stephanie DeBenedet (651/483-1006), j.debenedet@comcast.net
Mary Ann Palmer (651/633-8140), palmerojma@comcast.net

Literature drops

Ruth Ellen Luehr
612/328-3942
ruthellen@markfausner.com

Prepare mailings

Kelly Wolfe
651/486-2765
kfwolfe1@hotmail.com

Bev Scalze

Bev Scalze Volunteer Committee

969 Beam Avenue, Little Canada, MN 55109
(651/483-1055, bscalze@aol.com)
Treasurer: Bob Scalze (same address)

—SD54 Calendar May 2008—

Note: Mark your calendars now!!! Due to circumstances beyond our control, the U.S. Post Office may not deliver the *Newsletter* in advance of the events scheduled.

**FOR SPEEDY E-MAIL DELIVERY, PLEASE CONTACT US AT 651-484-8926 OR 651-486-7120
AND REQUEST TO BE PUT ON OUR E-MAIL LIST.**

May 15, Thursday: SD54 Central Committee meeting, Fairview Community Center, 7:00 p.m.

May 29, Thursday: Mindy Greiling Campaign Kick Off, Mona & Tom Dougherty's home, 3076 Hamline Ave. N., Roseville, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

May 31, Saturday: DFL Women's Hall of Fame Luncheon, 11:30 a.m.

(For information: dflwomen'shalloffame@yahoo.com)

June 5, Thursday, SD54 Newsletter Planning Committee meeting, Georgiana Sobola's home, 1961 Hamline Ave. N., Roseville, 7:00 p.m.

June 6-8: DFL 2008 State Convention, Rochester

June 19, Thursday: SD54 Executive Committee meeting, Fairview Community Center, 7:00 p.m.

June 23, Monday: Rosefest Parade, SD54 float. Mindy Greiling & Bev Scalze supporters, line up at 6:00 p.m. at Roseville Area High School

July 17, Thursday: SD54 Annual Pot Luck Picnic, Central Park in Roseville, 6:00 p.m.

August 3, Sunday: Canadian Days Grand Parade, 12:30 p.m., Little Canada Road to Spooner Park (1.1 miles), Bev Scalze supporters

August 25-28, Monday-Thursday: Democratic 200 National Convention, Denver, Colorado

August 17, Sunday: Heritage Days, Vadnais Heights, Bev Scalze supporters

SD54 days at the Donut Booth, Minnesota State Fair

3 shifts per day 7:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; 12:00p.m.-6:30 p.m.; 6:00 p.m.-midnight
August 21, Thursday August 24, Sunday August 28, Thursday

August 21, Thursday: SD54 Executive Committee meeting, Fairview Community Center 7:00 p.m.

August 25-28, Monday-Thursday, Democratic National Convention, Denver, Colorado

Campaign activities for Bev Scalze

August 23, Saturday: Sign Day

October 4, Saturday: literature drop

October 11, Saturday: literature drop

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Dated Material—Please Rush

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Senate District 54 101

This meeting is for all SD54 DFLers

We will be talking about volunteer opportunities, launching the campaign season, setting up SD54 committees for the next two years, and reviewing the two-year calendar of events.

Join us as we meet and get to know each other and the work of SD54 for 2008 to 2010.
If the coming elections are important to you, it is important that you attend this meeting.
All are welcome.

Thursday, May 15, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.
Fairview Community Center
Roseville, MN

Fairview Community Center is handicapped accessible.