

MINNESOTA DFL SENIOR CAUCUS

MAKING A BETTER WORLD FOR OUR CHILDREN,
OUR GRANDCHILDREN, AND OURSELVES

Senior News

Official Publication of the
DFL Senior Caucus.



April 2021 Volume 15 Number 1



As I would not be a slave, so I
would not be a master. This
expresses my idea of democracy.
Whatever differs from this, to
the extent of the difference, is
no democracy.

----- Abraham Lincoln -----

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Executive Committee

Chair: Don Bye;
Vice Chair: Karla Sand
Secretary: Jim Reed
Treasurer: John Larva
Membership Director:
Position Vacant
DFL Executive Committee
member: Kay Hendrikson

Board of Directors

Earl Bower
Julianne Johnston
Dwayne King
Joe Mullery
Georgiana Ruzich
Tony Scallon
Don Slaten
Josey Warren

Chapter Chairs

Mel Aanerud
Mary Bliesner
Lyn Burton
Roger Gehrke
Norm Hanson
Kay Hendrikson
Bonnie Lokenvitz
Pat Mann
Kenneth Vreeland
Gary Westorff

Notes from the Editor: Norm Hanson



Norm Hanson

Welcome to the April issue of your Senior News with important news and features for your review. Senior Caucus Chair Don Bye provides you with an astute commentary regarding the *Senior News*.

Mel Aanerud, chair of the newly formed Chapter Chairs Committee, reports on its activities. Linda Hopkins provides an overview of some of Trump's abuse of expected traditional rules of behavior by the former POTUS (President of the United States). We added the definitional summary of the behaviors of narcissistic people. Just think of the harm that someone with these personality traits could do if he/she were elected to be the POTUS!

Public health nurse, retired, Julianne Johnston provides another COVID-19 update for you as we pass the one-year anniversary of the initial shutdowns. There is information regarding the next session of the Senior Caucus Book Club as well.

Meet Roger Gehrke, long-time member of the Senior Caucus and chair of the South Metro Senior Caucus Chapter. Note his history with making maple syrup.

What is democracy? It is understood by most, but unfortunately not by all, of our citizens. There are those who seem to favor a more authoritarian type of government. What was the view of democracy apparent at the nation's capital building on January 6, 2021? Hope you enjoy singing the attached song about democracy with the rest of us!

Senior Caucus Secretary Jim Reed provides a summary of some of our Board of Directors activities and decisions. Joe Mullery and Karla Sand provide important information about the purpose and work of the Political Involvement Committee (PIC).

The DFL has been losing the support of many of the residents living in the rural areas of the state despite having similar public policy concerns as those living in the urban areas. Read the article regarding the issues and concerns of our friends living in rural Minnesota and see if you agree with them and also recognize some important issues and concerns that we did not cover.

Chapter contact information and the calendar of pending events appear at the end of this issue.

The Senior Caucus is making plans for the 2021 Annual Meeting sometime around May or June. All board positions will be open and we encourage you to sign up as a candidate by contacting Don Slaten at (651)246-7520 or slatencd1@gmail.com.

Finally, this is the last issue of the *Senior News* that Julianne Johnston and I will be publishing for the Senior Caucus. We have published the *Senior News* on a quarterly basis for eight years with several state fair special outreach editions as well. It is time to pass the torch to someone else and/or for the Senior Caucus to help keep folks, including policy makers across the state, aware of Senior Caucus activities using some other vehicle. We close out this issue with "Thank You All" for the many folks who helped us along during "our" time as editors.





Don Bye

From the Chair

A TRIBUTE TO A PARADOXICAL PAIR

We got the bad news at the conclusion of January's board meeting that our newsletter editors are quitting!

Just like you can't fire a volunteer, we can't keep them on board by withholding their non-existent paychecks. We can only wish they'd change their minds and stick around a while longer or tamp down from 4-5 issues a year to maybe 3-4 or 2-3 or even 1.

"Stormin" Norman and Julianne make a positive progressive pair—a delightful dynamic duo. They do the newsletter for the Senior Caucus, the *Senior News*, but also have done a number of other functions for the SC (particularly Julianne), in excellent fashion, with their collective awareness and sense of humor showing through.

It seems like I've known Norm forever. We started from "Scandahoovian" heritages and small dairy farm beginnings.

We both have quite strong opinions on most everything. It's just that he is a bit more expressive.

Norm moved away from 8th CD politics about a half century ago, probably about the same time I moved into it, but we both carry the old 8th focus.

Somehow, over those many opinionated years of controversy, we've found a lot more to agree upon, than not.

Julianne, the calm reflective half of their team belies her bombastic "Raancher" background, tempering her writing partner a small bit.

I believe that a major reason that our Senior Caucus has maintained and progressed over the past decade is the existence of our newsletter. There have been stops and starts over the years, with the efforts of Dick Bernard and Judy Berglund and, for several years, Jim Poradek. As with any publication, the product is very much open to sporadic criticism and a lot of second guessing. Norm and Julianne have weathered all that very well.

We've become accustomed to their product's professional appearance, print accuracy and interesting, informative copy.

They will be very, very hard to replace.

The New Senior Caucus Chapter Chairs Committee



Aanerud

Mel Aanerud, chair of the Anoka County Chapter of the DFL Senior Caucus, was asked by the former Membership Chair to contact all chapter chairs and establish a communications network among the Senior Caucus Chapter Chairs with the purpose of :

- learning from each other,
- sharing best practices,
- helping each other in recruiting and maintaining membership, and
- promoting the Minnesota DFL Senior Caucus goals, objectives and procedures.

Bonnie Lokenvitz of the East Central Chapter agreed to be the vice chair.

The Committee began by working with the Senior Caucus Treasurer John Larva in developing a protocol for membership dues payments and keeping Senior Caucus membership information current.

The Committee is working on problems like:

- How will local chapters report their activities to the Senior Caucus Board?
- Can the chapters set up a state-wide place where chapters can find information on available speakers?
- What kind of communications tools do chapters want from the Senior Caucus? How much independence can chapters have to make endorsement and take positions on local issues?
- Is there a need for changes to the Senior Caucus Charter since chapters were not originally considered a major item in the original charter
- How can the Senior Caucus use the DFL data base for recruitment?

The Chapter Chairs Committee will share, develop, and consider additional concerns and opportunities as they continue to meet monthly via Zoom.

Trump's Informal Amendments

Linda K. Hopkins



Linda Hopkins

For decades now, the three branches of our federal government functioned, just barely, by recognizing informal rules of behavior. For example, the Office of the President negotiated with Congress over what materials to release to congressional investigative committees. Candidates for the Presidency would, until Trump, release their tax filings. Senators appeared to take their roles in impeachment hearings seriously. Most Presidential appointees were efficiently reviewed and accepted by the Senate. House of Representatives budgets limited Presidential ambitions through their Constitutional Tax and Spend Authority. Presidents did not threaten state election officials.

Other examples of informal accepted ways of behavior included a limit of two terms for Presidents, because of George Washington's belief that no person should serve for longer than that. This norm was so embedded in our country's thinking, that after Franklin D. Roosevelt broke it by getting elected for four terms, it was written into the formal Constitution. Abraham Lincoln ruled out secession. If the House requested evidence from the White House in an investigation, the White House responded. In 1803, the Supreme Court granted itself the power to review laws and overturn them (*Marbury v. Madison*).

Not one of those processes was inscribed on parchment or envisioned by the Founders, but today we cannot imagine our constitutional system without them. Informal processes have existed since the beginning of our country.

Speaking on politics over the years, I wondered when the "Gentlemen's Agreement" arrangement would break down. Both Democrats and Republicans have increasingly ignored these norms with the polarization of party members. In the past, public opinion controlled some of the more blatant fissures of conciliation. But in the 1980s, the GOP decided that it would focus entirely on what was good for the Party. They were less open to compromise or even "horse-trading." The Obama Administration found itself frustrated by congressional slow walking their cabinet appointments. Then, the GOP refused to allow hearings for President Obama's U. S. Supreme Court candidate, Merrick Garland. The Democrats were understandably outraged at this refusal.

I have spoken out on Trump's unending encroachment of the unwritten constraints existing in Washington. Writer Jonathan Rauch also wrote an instructive essay on "The 5 Trump Amendments to the Constitution," in the Atlantic magazine.

The 45th president profoundly altered our system of government. The five informal "amendments" he acted on include: No president shall be removed from office for treason, bribery, or any other crime or misdemeanor, no matter how high, should a partisan minority of the Senate choose to protect him.

The second informal amendment was that oversight by Congress shall be optional. No Congressional subpoena or demand for testimony or documents would bind a president who chooses to ignore it.

The third informal amendment is Congressional Appropriations shall be "suggestions." The president may choose whether or not to comply with congressional spending laws, and Congress shall have no recourse should a president declare that his own priorities would supersede Congress's instructions.

Number four is that the president shall have authority to make appointments as he sees fit, without the advice and consent of the Senate, provided he deems his appointees to be acting, temporary, or otherwise exempt from the ordinary confirmation process.

Number five asserts that the president shall have unconstrained authority to dangle and issue pardons for the purpose of obstructing justice, tampering with witnesses, and forestalling investigations.

The unfulfilled informal amendment number six was that the president may ignore or violate court orders, or otherwise meddle in judicial decisions.

For more development of each of these informal amendments, please go to my Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/understandConstitution>.

President Donald Trump has substantially altered the Constitution. His changes were not formal, of course. But his informal amendments are important. If left to stand, they threaten to make Congress an advisory body and give carte blanche to rogue presidents.

Although he is no constitutional scholar, Trump has a theory of the Constitution: "I have an Article II, where I have the right to do whatever I want as president." Before he was elected, that theory was plainly wrong. But after his one term in office, the Trump amendments have brought his theory to the brink of realization.



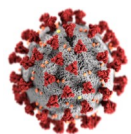
The Golden Trump Idol

Editor's Note: Please note the following information from *The Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* and *The Journal of Personality and Social Disorders*

Narcissists: They regard People as Tools

In line with trust, **narcissists like to control the people in their lives**. They need to be dominant in a relationship because they are afraid to expose their vulnerabilities. So, they constantly have an angle or an agenda in order to sustain this dominance. Because of their drive for control, they end up manipulating others.

- **They will lie**, cover up, or exaggerate details to distort the facts in their favor.
- They will always **want to feel superior** by bragging or taking credit but they will rarely admit their mistakes or flaws.



COVID-19 Update

Julianne Johnston PHN, retired

The COVID-19 disease is not political. It is opportunist and affects people of all races and political persuasions. President

Biden has promised that by the end of May (possibly June) there will be enough COVID-19 vaccine to immunize every adult in the United States and scientists are in the process of developing a vaccine for children which may be ready soon and is currently being tested.

It has been more than a year since this battle against the virus has affected the world. If you have completed the vaccine doses required, wait the two weeks for your immune system to respond to become fully vaccinated. That means you are protected from serious results from exposure to the virus. Does this mean you can make your way like the old days without fear of spreading the virus? **The answer is no, not yet!**

- Narcissists are affected by criticism and may use tactics like the **silent treatment** or **passive-aggression** to manipulate the situation.
- They enjoy **bending the rules** and getting away with it but they will find someone to blame (other than themselves) if ever they are caught.
- **They refuse to recognize accountability.**

They have a problem with anyone who will reject them because they have:

- Fragile egos
- A penchant for using people
- Habits of manipulating people
- Lack of empathy for others
- Inflated sense of self-importance
- Domineering personality

You could become infected and get sick but are not likely to be hospitalized. Although the vaccine will reduce the amount of virus coming from your nose and mouth you might still transmit the disease to others who are not protected. Vaccinated people can meet privately with other vaccinated people after two weeks. **Continue to wear a mask, wash your hands and social distance when in public.**

Family and friends can form “bubbles” of fully immunized people in which they can interact freely. However until everyone is immunized worldwide, the virus will continue to mutate (change) and mutations can be much more infective and dangerous. **Pay close attention to the public health experts** for their advice in handling this dangerous disease and protect yourself and others as well. New information is being released almost daily as we learn more about this deadly virus.

DFL Senior Caucus Book Club Zoom Meeting

Republic, Lost: How Money Corrupts Congress - and a Plan to Stop It

By Lawrence Lessig

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86446648933>

Or call in: +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

11:00 – 1:00 Monday, April 19, 2021

Contact:

Cindy Spellman (651 728 0575 rooskie0825@gmail.com)

www.dflseniors.com

Next meeting: May 17, 2021

China Rx: Exposing the Risks of America's Dependence on China for Medicine by Rosemary Gibson



Farmer, Environmentalist, Marine, Chapter Chair and More

Norm Hanson and Julianne Johnston

Born and raised in Wausau, Wisconsin, Roger Gehrke lived on a family dairy farm along with his parents and one brother. The family had 40 Holsteins, 4 horses, 18 cats and 1 dog. He started milking cows by hand at age six and then the family switched to milking machines when he was ten. The farm harvested maple syrup from 800 trees. Roger still owns a portion of the maple tree acreage and rents that land out but receives a portion of the maple harvest. He continues to render his own maple syrup along with harvesting raspberries and growing pumpkins in his garden. Gehrke still is a farmer at heart and a strong environmentalist!



Roger Gehrke

Roger attended a one-room schoolhouse until high school and graduated from the Wausau High School. He engaged in sports including boxing and cross country track. After high school graduation in 1953, he joined the Marines and was sent to South Korea. Following the truce and before the armistice on July 27 of that year, he served for ten months as a corporal in the Marines and was a forward observer in a bunker serving near the DMZ. He returned to the United States and completed his active duty obligation at Camp Pendleton in California. He was qualified as an expert marksman with an M-1 at 500 yards. Using the GI Bill of Rights, he entered the University of Wisconsin for two years and transferred to the University of Denver in Colorado. He graduated with a degree in transportation and logistics. He worked with Yellow Freight of Omaha and then spent 21 years with Control Data in logistics and transportation. He became an International Commerce Commission (ICC) Practitioner on interstate transportation and oversaw trucking line issues after passing a difficult test to acquire that credential. He did consider becoming a lawyer however he was already doing that kind of work. He also worked as an ICC Practitioner for Montgomery Wards and for the United States Postal Service where he joined the Teamsters.

He has been married for 62 years and he and his wife have raised a son and a daughter. Their children were involved in sports including figure skating, soccer and hockey. While they were growing up, he coached a championship girls-under-age-16 soccer team and also youth softball and hockey teams.

Roger has been a life-long deer hunter since his father gave him his first single-shot shotgun when he fourteen. He still hunts on the family property that he owns in Wisconsin and hopes to be able continue to do that as long as he can. While he enjoys successful hunts, he most enjoys just being out in the woods observing and becoming part the nature around him.

Roger became in favor of unions as a senior in high school when he learned how unions were sympathetic to workers' needs. He knew he was a democrat when his

father returned from a Farmers Union convention and announced, "We are Democrats!" His dad said farmers were abused by retailers and farmers wanted a "fair price for what they produced. "Parity" was the word used by the Farmer's Union.

He was too busy raising his family to be involved in politics but was aware of what was going on. While working at Control Data he became involved in his congressional district making phone calls and working on candidate development while also supporting important issues – and he continues supporting important issues that specifically affect seniors.

Roger noted that the two highlights of his political involvement was being a delegate to the 2012 Democratic National Convention and serving as an elector in the 2016 election.

After retirement, he started a group of with three other people who would get together over lunch and talk about political issues and concerns. They asked their congressional district to share their list of members who were seniors who might be interested in joining their group. The group expanded dramatically and thirteen years ago the group joined the DFL Senior Caucus as the South Metro Chapter with Roger as the chair. He developed a management team and has continued as chair ever since. However, he said, this is his last year as chair. When elections are held in April, he will step down and let younger people take on these responsibilities. He believes that being in the Senior Caucus enhances the efforts of the seniors by bringing better programs and speakers and affording them better name recognition and influence. He would like to see every Congressional District have a Senior Caucus Chapter with an active board of directors.

Chapters can provide support and outreach to candidates for office and provide many votes. Democrats need this support to continue control the national House and Senate and the state House and Senate. Seniors provide votes and candidates need all the votes they can get.

The Senior Caucus should develop issues that affect them including Social Security, protection of Medicare, drug prices, transportation, quality nursing home care, adequate health care resources, and assistance in aging at home for as long as possible.

Roger has provided trained therapy-dog services to hospital patients with his German Shepherds dogs of which he has had four. His current dog is Annie, who he says, is the smartest dog he has ever had. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, they can no longer make visits to patients in the hospital.

Roger says the process of aging has allowed him the time to really enjoy the environment much more than he was able to do before. He is very adamant that we must not destroy our world's environment. Reducing pollution is important not only for ourselves but also for the animals and plants that we share space in this world.

Democracy

Norm Hanson and Julianne Johnston

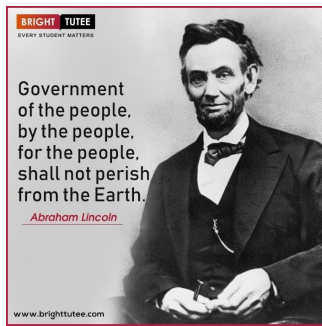
January 6, 2021, saw a serious effort to overthrow the Constitution of United States, facilitated in no small part, by the POTUS (President of the United States), who did not want to accept the vote of 80 million or so American voters. Essentially, the POTUS attempted to facilitate a coup in an effort to overturn the results of the 2020 election by not letting the final results from the Electoral College be confirmed by the Congress. That effort by the POTUS to remain in power on the claim that the election was “stolen” from him, without a shred of evidence to support that claim, was a very serious assault on democracy in America. This assault was against the Constitution that the POTUS had taken a sworn oath to protect! The same POTUS, who as their Commander-in-Chief, characterized all men and women who had served in the military services of the United States of America, especially those who had been wounded, killed or captured, like Senator John McCain, as suckers and losers. The former president put American democracy and our system of laws at severe risk making it very clear that he had absolutely no respect for our democracy.

Democracy is fragile as the former POTUS frequently confirmed for all of us during his four-years in office. As such, we must always remember that we cannot take our democracy and our form of government for granted but must always be vigilant and determined to protect it from those who would want to overturn it in favor of a authoritarian type of government as the former POTUS seemed to clearly favor.

It is informative to reflect on some of the offerings of many others regarding the fragility as well as the strength of democracy especially in these times when the concept, let alone its practice, is clearly under attack from within.

Aristotle: “Liberty and equality...will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost.!”

JFK chimed in with: "The ignorance of one voter in a



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democracy impairs the security of all.”

Richard Niebuhr adds: “Man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man’s inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.”

Winston Churchill: “Democracy is the worst form of government. Except for all the others.”

Barak Obama: “Democracy works, but we gotta want it – not just during an election year, but all the days in between.”

Abraham Lincoln: “America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.”

Lincoln’s concerns, regarding a country divided by a civil war, apply in many ways to the divided country we are experiencing today as a result of many long-perceived grievances, changing times, and a former POTUS who exploited the fears and concerns of so many Americans.

Abraham Lincoln again at Gettysburg:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal"

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate -- we cannot consecrate -- we cannot hallow, this ground-- The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; while it can never forget what they did here.

It is rather for us, the living, we here be dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that, from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Please sing along with us:

“That’s Democracy”



Why can't people all agree?

Because they see things differently.

That's democracy.

How special are all those interests we see?

They're very special, since they include you and me.

That's democracy.

Do legislators we elect care a rap about their constituency?

You better believe they do--otherwise they're history.

That's democracy.

Why doesn't the legislature cut out the fuss and fight?

The problem is that different people think they're right.

That's democracy.

But it takes so long to get things done.

That's because you need 50% plus one.

That's democracy.

The system isn't perfect, and it never will be.

It's messy, it's human, but it works remarkably.

It's democracy.'

That's Democracy: Lyrics by Alan Rosenthal,

Adapted by Ginger Gold Schnitzer

Senior Caucus Board Summary

Jim Reed, Secretary

Guest speaker Steve Regenstreif, Chair of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) Seniors Council, spoke about the issues that the Council is addressing. The Seniors Council is a "council" instead of a "caucus" because councils can include supporting organizations. It is made up only of members from the 450 members of the DNC. The council works to mobilize seniors in support of these programs, to educate seniors on the issues, and train seniors on actions they can take. Social Security and Medicare are at the top of the list. The Council is lobbying for the legislation that raises the Social Security tax cap. The Council also reviews the results of elections; what campaign ideas worked and did not work, and how the council influenced results.

The Senior Caucus Board approved the endorsement slate for Minneapolis city council and Minneapolis offices proposed by the Minneapolis chapter and reviewed by the Political Involvement Committee. It also approved the list of five bills at the Minnesota legislature to be supported by the Senior Caucus. Supported bills are HF106/SF798, HF492/SF78, HF41/SF331, HF586/SF748, and HF14/SF22. The SC Board also approved forming a task force/committee to review the future of the newsletter and make recommendations as to how to continue.

Kay Hendrikson reported the following:

DFL State Executive Committee

Community Caucus subcommittee is reviewing the reports of Community Outreach Organizations and Community Caucuses. DFL continues to have new training opportunities. Go to the DFL website to read more about this.

Senior Caucus Technology Committee

DFL approved our logo! We will have to determine soon what email blast system we should use. We need to consider a paid email blast system. Our technology infrastructure is working well: Facebook (many thanks to Linda Hopkins and Bonnie Lokenvitz), Act Blue, email blast/MailChimp, Website (thank you Earl Bower).

Ad Hoc Task Force on Chapters was approved by the Senior Caucus Board. The objective of the Task Force is to develop guidelines which will identify the roles and parameters for Senior Caucus Chapters to follow. Results expected: to develop/create a modified organizational structure of the state Senior Caucus in order to be able to manage many chapters statewide.

Director Norm Hanson reported that development of the April newsletter, the last to be edited by Norm and Julianne Johnston, was underway.

Director Bonnie Lokenvitz suggested that the caucus review issues of importance to rural seniors as many have moved away from the DFL. Perhaps the caucus could canvas those seniors.

The Board meets every third Thursday at 11 am currently by Zoom. Contact Karla Sand for more information.

WHAT IS PIC AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Joe Mullery and Karla Sand

PIC is the Political Involvement Committee of the DFL Senior Caucus. It was created to 1) educate and inform seniors about political issues; 2) encourage feedback from seniors on their issues; 3) help seniors become more involved in the political process; and 4) lead an effort to persuade government officials to pass and fund legislation important to seniors.

Getting involved in PIC is easy

Activities include researching senior issues, involving others in Caucus work, informing people about specifics through speakers and articles, working with senior groups such as the AARP and unions, promulgating precinct caucus resolutions, and contacting government officials to advance Senior Caucus positions.

Presentations by political leaders and experts are popular PIC activities. Recently PIC did a zoom meeting with former US Senator Dodd of Connecticut. He explained the inner workings of passing Obamacare and Financial Protection, as well as vignettes about Minnesota DFLers in DC. PIC will continue zoom meetings on seniors' issues and is recording them and placing them on Facebook. Every year PIC has conducted a popular "Day on the Hill" with expert speakers including Governor Dayton, Attorneys General Swanson and Ellison, Congressman Oberstar, presidents of AFLCIO and Farmers Union, and current and retired legislators.

PIC educates elected officials and government staff. PIC holds large meetings, sets up one-on-one conversations, sends letters to decision makers, and discusses issues during our endorsement screenings.

PIC is always looking for input. Committees are established around important issues. Factors considered are: how many are affected; whether our Caucus can influence it; is it a major issue in senior lives; whether it is a federal, state or local issue; whether there are also coalitions on it; how much time Caucus members are willing to work on it; whether Caucus reputation is advanced or hindered by a position; whether addressing it will recruit members; cost to government and estimate of benefit to seniors; what can be done without government action; and chance for success. PIC reports its issues to the board. Then, PIC advances the

board's issues.

PIC directs new efforts to rural issues. PIC realizes seniors are an important voting bloc in rural districts and seeks input on rural issues and ways to advance such initiatives and elect Democrats. So, PIC listed rural broadband and transportation as its most important issues for the legislative session.

Current members include: Joe Mullery, Jim Reed, Janet Dieterich, Tony Scallon, Earl Bower, Roger Gehrke, Don Slaten, Linda Hopkins, and Karla Sand. PIC meetings are scheduled on zoom. Third Thursday of each month. 10:30-11:30

To become involved or learn more contact:

Karla Sand at karlaviolets@hotmail.com

Joe Mullery joemullery@gmail.com.



Important Notice for the DFL Senior Caucus Annual Meeting 2021

The Nomination Committee for the Senior Caucus Annual Meeting in 2021 is in the process of contacting potential candidates for the five executive committee members including chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer and membership director and 5 board members (Chapter Chairs are automatic members of the board). A questionnaire is being developed for potential candidates. If you are interested in being selected by the Nominations Committee slate of officers and directors, please contact Don Slaten, (651) 246-7520 or slatencd1@gmail.com or Karla Sand karlaviolets@hotmail.com or 651-739-7397. You can also run for any of these offices by nominating yourself at the annual meeting.

In addition to election of officers, the Senior Caucus Board is considering several Charter changes that would be presented at the meeting. Senior Caucus members will be sent a written notice and an email notification of the date, time and place where the Annual Meeting will be held, probably some time in May or June. Members considered to be "in good standing" by the Charter will be eligible to hold office and vote in these elections and Charter changes.

For more information, contact any current board member or Karla Sand or Don Slaten.

What are the issues and concerns in the rural areas of Minnesota?

Norm and Julianne



Interesting how many of us in the DFL Senior Caucus have come from rural areas. We were raised on farms or in the mining areas of the Iron Range. Our families encouraged education and we, and many of our classmates, friends, and family, migrated to the metro areas having earned, through training or college degrees in many areas - but not in farming. We left our childhood homes and the areas we came from but still retain memories of life as it “used to be” when we were young. And we are still Democrats like our parents and many of our former neighbors.

Since then, Minnesota has become increasingly a “red state” as the 2016, 2018 and 2020 elections have proven, with the State Senate securely in the hands of the Republicans and with the State House nearly so. The DFL lost seats in the state House 2020 election reducing its majority to six.

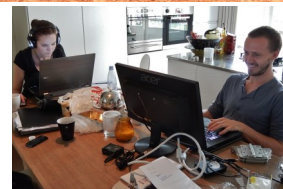
Why has the DFL lost so much support in the rural areas of Minnesota including the loss by Congressman Colin Peterson in 2020? Why would the chair of the powerful House Agriculture Committee be so easily defeated when he was such a powerful spokesman in Washington for the agriculture interests of the Congressional District 7? Are there other issues and concerns more important to rural voters?

Research into these questions finds that many of the issues and concerns of Minnesotans living in the vast rural areas of the state are similar to those living in the urban areas. There is strong support for public education and public schools existing in both areas with many thinking that public schools are the backbone of democracy. Concerns about the environment, including safe drinking water, appropriate utilization of fertilizers, protection of forests and of the flora and fauna that live all around us, seem to be similar amongst both rural and urban residents. Concerns about safe streets and highways and adequate transportation for seniors and those with

disabilities also seems to be similar.

Universal access to broadband and high-speed internet is high on the list of priority issues for many people living in the rural areas of the state while it is generally available to the residents of the large urban areas. In some areas, local farmers are concerned about how to remain on family farms in the face of the increase in large corporate farms with herds of milk cows of more than 100. These large herds will affect the ability of farms with fewer cows to survive. Some farmers believe that the “Right to Repair” legislation, if passed, would benefit farmers and that the “Buffer Zone” legislation will help the environment.

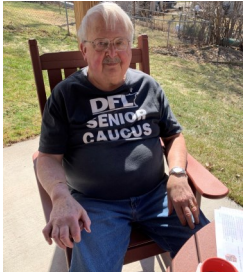
So, given the many similarities between the issues and concerns of the rural and urban residents of Minnesota and the general support for those issues and concerns by the DFL, why are the rural areas becoming increasingly “red”? It should be acknowledged that these are changing times in the rural areas of the state because of the migration of many “city folks” to rural areas in search of lower housing costs as well as the proximity to many of the natural amenities that are important to them facilitated in large part to the expansion of broadband high speed internet. Many of these folks have found life in the large metro areas to be unsatisfactory and are looking for a return to the life that they remember enjoying when growing up. The dynamics in the rural areas of the state are changing and making things a bit more complicated than just providing support for family farming and rural Minnesota.



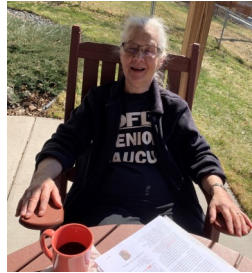
Senior News

Official Publication of the
DFL Senior Caucus
Thank You All

Norm and Julianne social distancing while working on the Senior News 3/29/21



At the January 2021 Senior Caucus Board meeting, Julianne Johnston and I submitted our resignation as



editors for the *Senior News*. We indicated that the April 2021 issue would be our last. The board is charged with finding a way to replace this newsletter with some means of communicating with the Senior Caucus membership.

This April issue of the *Senior News* will also mark the end of publishing such newsletters for 28 years, eight years with the *Senior News* and 20 years prior to that with the old Senate District 54 newsletter.

It has been a wonderful opportunity to produce newsletters for so many years in spite of some of the challenges that we have faced in getting the newsletters on their way during that time.

More importantly, the newsletter has provided us with many opportunities to meet many of our readers across the state, enjoy and report on so many Senior Caucus and related events, and to be able to communicate with our readers and decision makers across the state regarding the activities of the Senior Caucus.

There are so many people to thank for their help in making the newsletters possible including John Larva and Earl Bower who have helped with the electronic distribution of the *Senior News* and with the development of the text-only version sent to seniors without broadband internet. Thanks to the many regular contributors to the *Senior News* including Chair, Don Bye, Jim Reed, Linda Larson, Josey Warren, Earl Bower, Kay Hendrikson and also to Sandy Hanson for editing assistance. And especially to the late Antona Richardson (Tony) for her patience with us and for what she taught us as a professional copyeditor for many years before helping us.

Thank you also to all of the contributors to the Capitol

April 2021

Corner including Senator Tina Smith, then Congressman Tim Walz, DFL Party Chair Ken Martin, Speaker Melissa Hortman, Senator John Marty, Ambassador to Morocco Sam Kaplan and his wife Sylvia and so many more. In addition, thanks go to all of those who sat for interviews for the *Senior News* including many members of the Senior Caucus Board of Directors, former state DFL party chairs and former Vice-President, Walter Mondale.

We thank our families for their patience and understanding especially at “crunch-time” when we were busy trying complete an issue and send it out the door to live on its own.

Norm Hanson and Julianne Johnston former editors of the *Senior News*



Norm Hanson and Julianne Johnston Publishing History:

Current:

- ♦ 32-quarterly issues over eight-years plus text only revisions of each issue for folks without high speed internet
 - ♦ Six state fair special/outreach edition issues
- Total: $32+6 = 38$ issues.

Previous:

- ♦ Senate district 54:
 - ♦ Published six-times per year for twenty years
- Total: 120 issues

Overall total: $38 + 120 = 158$ -issues



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Position open

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Senior News

The DFL *Senior News* was published at least four times a year by the DFL Senior Caucus, 255 E. Plato Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55107.

JOIN THE SENIOR CAUCUS

Membership dues (donations) are \$10 annually. Join online or
Send your check made out to
DFL Senior Caucus and send to:

John Larva, Treasurer
DFL Senior Caucus
1424 Woodhill Drive
Burnsville, MN 55337

For waiver of dues please contact
Vice chair Karla Sand

DFL Senior Caucus Chapters January 2021

Note: Chapter meetings are being held as Zoom Meetings.
Persons without computers or cell phones can join with a landline phone. Contact the chair to get further information about joining a meeting

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Chair Mel Aanerud 763-434-3809 Aanerud4@comcast.net

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East Metro Chapter — Maplewood and east

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Kanabec County areas

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Editors: Norm Hanson, newsletter editor,
Julianne Johnston, design and layout editor,

Columnists: Norm Hanson, Julianne Johnston, Linda Hopkins,
Joe Mullery, Karla Sand

Photographs: Julianne Johnston

Reviewer: Sandy Hanson

DFL Senior News

255 East Plato Blvd.

Saint Paul, MN 55107

All Meetings at this time will be
conducted via

Zoom

Contact the chair or contact person of
the meeting for more information

First Class



DFL Senior Caucus. Calendar 2021 Events

All Events are Handicapped Accessible

Social Luncheon - Zoom meetings—announcements will be sent by email regarding time and dates.

Senior Caucus. Board Meeting - Meetings will be held via Zoom on third Thursday of the month from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. **Contact Vice chair Karla Sand** 651-739-7397 or karlaviolets@hotmail.com

Senior Caucus Book Club - Meetings are being held via Zoom on the third Monday of each month. For more information contact **Cindy Spellman** (651 728 0575 or rooskie0825@gmail.com) Also see notice inside this issue.

Senior Caucus Annual Meeting: This meeting is being planned for possibly sometime in May or June. All offices will be open including chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, membership director and board directors. More information coming soon by mail and email.

Contacts for the Senior Caucus.:

Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/DFLSeniorCaucus>

Email: dflseniors@gmail.com

Website: <http://dflseniors.org> Check out the calendar on the website for meetings and events as they are scheduled through out each month.

Standard: The *Senior News* has had the luxury that every newsletter would like to have and that is having more information submitted and ready than can be published in a ten to twelve page newsletter. It has been a challenge as we decided which articles and photos to include in each issue, and which ones to defer until the next issue and which ones that we have to save for a later issue. We thank all of our readers for their support for this newsletter and the luxury as well as the challenges that this has provided.