

# 63rd District DFL

During an election year, it's easy to envision what you can do to help the DFL. Certainly, we all hope that you will continue to show your support by volunteering for campaigns, declaring your support publicly with lawn signs, assisting with doorknocks, or even hosting them yourself. We also hope that you contribute what you can financially, never forgetting that Minnesota's refund program makes your first \$50 free. All of these are important ways to help DFL candidates and to craft a better Minnesota for all.

We want to remind you that your continuing support, even in the off-year, is absolutely crucial. As members of the party that cares for all Minnesotans, we cannot wait for election time to rally behind our beliefs and let our voices be heard. We must maintain our networks and build our resources for the coming fight for a better Minnesota.

Many Minnesotans who share our concern for the future of our state do not yet realize how important they can be in ensuring that success; they work, they vote, they hope that is enough...in uncertain economic times, that is often all they have energy to do. It is to these people that we have to appeal. All of you, as good Democrats, must serve as ambassadors for our cause.

Talk to your friends about the good work that the DFL wants to do on behalf of Minnesotans. Spread the word about the atrocities the Republicans are committing in the name of fiscal responsibility. Ask your neighbors whether they would rather have a few more dollars in their pockets or have a better standard of living throughout our great state. Persuade them that there already exists a better vision for the future of Minnesota, and that the DFL is its champion.

We need to bring the public a greater awareness of both local issues and national priorities, and we need to be united. One step along the way is to join with other DFLers and forge stronger bonds so that we can act as a community. This year's Wellstone Memorial Bean Feed is one opportunity to come together, and I hope that all of you can be there. You'll find details on the back page of this newsletter.

I encourage all of you to keep in touch with what's going on both within SD63 and throughout the state. One easy way to keep informed is to come to **Second Saturdays**, hosted monthly (on the second Saturday, of course) at the Mayflower Congregational Church, from 9:30 to 11:30 in the morning. You can gather to hear from those who serve you in the Minnesota legislature, and have a chance to let them hear your concerns. We will also try to keep everyone abreast of upcoming Town Meetings hosted by your legislators.

Another way to keep informed of events in the district is to visit our web site:

<http://www.sd63.dfl.org>

As always, you can also just give me a call to find out the latest news. I'm proud to serve this district, and I am glad to answer any questions you have. Thanks for all of your efforts to make Minnesota a great place to live.

David Weinlick  
Chair, SD63 DFL  
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## Representative Dan Larson

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## ENERGY POLICY FAILS MINNESOTA

The 2003 Legislature moved Minnesota several steps backward in terms of a cost effective, reliable and environmentally sound energy policy by authorizing additional nuclear storage at Prairie Island. With the East Coast blackout and the energy problems that have plagued California, we must be bold in developing reliable energy technologies and strategies that will focus on conversion to alternative sources of energy so that we don't continue to rely on nuclear and coal-fired power that will be harmful and toxic for generations to come.

Instead, we must increase our reliance on renewable energy, and move away from nuclear-generated and coal-generated power that is so damaging to our environment. While the original agreement included provisions requiring Xcel (then NSP) to develop additional wind power and biomass power sources, there are many who would question if enough has been done in that regard. Minnesota is in an excellent position to use both of those types of alternative energy, and to develop others as well.

The original 1994 legislation was clear, that allowing the 17 casks was to permit the plant to continue to operate only until 2001, and that if no permanent federal nuclear waste repository was ready, the plant would then have to close. Later, re-racking of the storage pool extended that capacity to 2007. It was no accident that requirements for alternative energy development were incorporated into that law. Unfortunately, Xcel Energy has succeeded in their efforts to authorize more nuclear waste storage.

We must continue to advocate for the use of alternatives that include increasing wind power, biomass and be open to emerging technologies that will provide clean, affordable and reliable energy. As a member of both the Regulated Industries Committee and the Environment Policy Committee, I will continue to work toward increasing alternative sources to create a cleaner and safer energy future for Minnesota.

## Representative Paul Thissen

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Dave Watson — an active and committed DFLer and neighbor — recently loaned me Robert La Follette's Autobiography. La Follette was a Governor of Wisconsin and a national leader of the Progressive movement around the turn of the last century. Dave thought that I could learn something about today's politics by reading about La Follette's career. (We'll overlook the fact that La Follette was a Republican.) He was right.

America in the last decades of the 1800s confronted challenges that strongly parallel those we face today: ever increasing power in the hands of large corporations, a political agenda driven in substantial part by media (newspapers then; radio and TV now) that favored partisan rhetoric over fact, a country characterized by what La Follette called "political lethargy." La Follette recognized that those trends posed a great threat to our politics and society. He framed the question before Americans in stark terms: "Which shall rule — wealth or man; which shall lead — money or intellect?"

Due to LaFollette's efforts — and the work of thousands of others — Americans in the first decades of the 20th century rose to the challenge of that question. Corporate power was checked, progressive taxes were instituted, legislation protecting the right to join unions was enacted, fundamental consumer and health regulations were put in place, investments were made in public schools and universities. The country moved closer to fulfilling the promise of an inclusive and fair America for everyone.

The stakes for ordinary Minnesotans are just as high today as they were in La Follette's time. Once again, the power of narrow private interests are in the ascendancy at the expense of a broad-based commitment to the common good. In these first years of the 21st century, the victories won at the beginning of the last century are again in jeopardy.

The 2003 legislative session was marked by the stubborn refusal of the Governor and House Republicans to even consider new taxes as one part of a budget deficit solution, attacks on collective bargaining, attempts (some successful and some not) to roll back environmental and health protections, reductions in support for public schools and institutions of higher learning and deep cuts to health coverage, job retraining and child care supports that assist thousands of Minnesotans to work and move up the ladder of prosperity.

Of course, I am only repeating a litany that all of you know. The important thing is that there is hope. As La Follette's successes show, we've been here before and prevailed. La Follette should serve as an inspiration — but only if we learn the lessons of his career:

1. **The Battle is Long:** La Follette was doggedly persistent in pursuit of his fight against "encroachments of the powerful few upon the rights of the many." He battled for a decade and more with the bosses that dominated Wisconsin's politics for the benefit of railroad and other powerful interests before he prevailed. His fights at the national level were just as protracted. La Follette understood that victory was impossible without the willingness of "common men and women . . . to fight for their ideals, to take defeat if necessary and still go on fighting." Despair is our greatest enemy.

2. **Broad-based Organizing is Critical:** La Follette knew how to organize — particularly among those groups alienated from the political process — and he campaigned tirelessly to win elections. Our district has traditionally been better organized than most — but we can do better. If all the Democrats in District 63 would commit to contributing \$25 and doing 10 hours of campaign work next summer and fall — phone calls, doorknocking, dropping literature, hosting gatherings — we would not only overwhelm the Republicans in District 63, but also help take our message out to the surrounding suburbs. Always keep in mind: The DFL is only about 5000 votes from taking back the majority in the state House of Representatives.

3. **Keep the Faith:** The sweep of history is on our side. The rightness of the fundamental ideals the Democratic party has fought for over the last several decades — an ever-broadening scope of civil and human rights, basic fairness and increasing economic security for all — are accepted by the majority of Americans (if not always by those in power). We should take pride and comfort in that. But we cannot be complacent. La Follette's words of a century ago should resonate with all of us today and spur us to action:

"We have long rested comfortably in this country upon the assumption that because our form of government was democratic, it was therefore automatically producing democratic results... [But] tyranny and oppression are just as possible under democratic forms as under any other. We are slow to realize that democracy is a life; and involves continual struggle. It is only as those of every generation who love democracy resist with all their might the encroachments of its enemies that the ideals of representative government can even be nearly approximated."

Thank you again for the honor of letting me serve you. Please visit my website — **thissenformn.com**. We have tried to make it as informative as possible with Session Summaries and lists of other resources.

Learn more about what is happening in the  
Minnesota Legislature, and let your voice be heard...

come to **Second Saturdays**

a monthly forum hosted by Senator Jane Ranum,  
Representative Paul Thissen, and Representative Jean Wagenius

Mayflower Congregational Church  
(35W and Diamond Lake Road)  
9:30am - 11:30am

## Senator Jane Ranum

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Even though it has been more than 3 months since the 2003 session and special sessions ended, it is still extremely difficult for me to accept the overwhelmingly negative results. When the Minnesota Legislature finally adjourned in June 2003, public policy priorities in Minnesota had taken a sharp radically right turn and Minnesota Nice was no where to be found.

As soon as the November elections were over, I knew that the election of Tim Pawlenty as governor and the wide margin of control by the right wing Republicans in the Minnesota House of Representatives spelled very serious threats to Minnesota's progressive quality of life. While our DFL caucus maintained control of the Minnesota Senate, we did so with only a one vote margin and we had lost some outstanding progressive leaders like Jane Krentz, Len Price, Twyla Ring, and Deanna Wiener.

The Senate Republican caucus no longer had any moderates and the Republicans who had defeated our progressive DFLers were extreme social and fiscal conservatives.

In my 13 years in the Minnesota Senate, I have never experienced anything like the 2003 session. It will be forever remembered for its extreme partisanship, greed, mean-spiritedness and domination by "big money" interests. Without a doubt, Governor Pawlenty and both House and Senate Republicans were adamant that the budget deficit would be addressed with "No New Taxes." Governor Pawlenty was determined to do that even if it meant a government shutdown!

In the end:

- Tens of thousands of Minnesotans lost their health care, including many children
- Class sizes in schools throughout Minnesota dramatically increased and hundreds of young teachers lost their jobs
- Minnesota went from having one of the most restrictive gun laws to having perhaps the most permissive Conceal and Carry law in the country
- Minnesota allowed nuclear power plants to remain open for 30 more years and maintained only a modest commitment to exploring clean and renewable alternatives like wind
- Significant cuts were made to child welfare, mental health and educational programs and to all parts of the criminal justice system including the courts, public defense, prison and county probation services, and the Gang Strike Force
- Property Taxes will definitely increase at the same time basic services that are delivered at the local level like police and fire are being cut

If we Democrats do not want Minnesota to become "a cold Sunbelt state", each of us must recommit ourselves to engaging our families, friends, co-workers, neighbors, churches and synagogues, etc in understanding what is really at stake in the 2004 elections.

Lastly, Dan, Paul and I all enjoyed the June potluck at Woodlake Lutheran Church. For those of you who were unable to attend, please know we had a great turnout, delicious, food and a lively DFL discussion.

# Confirmations and Contributions

Please detach this form and use it with the envelope provided.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I will be attending the Bean Feed  
# of adults attending \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10 each  
# of children under 10 \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$5 each

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I cannot attend, but I would like to  
make a contribution to Senate District 63 DFL.

Enclosed is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

(e-mail will be used only by the DFL for purposes  
of communicating DFL business)

SD63 DFL, 5940 Upton Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55410

Address Correction Requested

http://www.sd63.dfl.org/

email: chair@sd63.dfl.org

phone: 612-928-4837

Minneapolis, MN 55410  
5941 Sheridan Avenue South  
DFL Senate District 63  
David Weirick, Chair



## 2002 Flower Sale a Great Success

This year, Senate District 63 had a very successful flower sale with a profit of over \$1669.

I want to thank Dan Larson and Mikkel Beckmen for letting us use their garages for the flower sale pick up points. Next year it would be nice to have one location in Richfield to handle all three cities, so if you have a two-stall garage, and you would like to host next years sale, please let me know.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who worked so hard. You're a great bunch of troopers!! A special thank you to Eileen Somers, who after the sale kept the unclaimed flowers at her house for a week, and gave them love and water until their owners came to get them.

If you would like to help at next year's flower sale, or if you would like to add a different flower to the list, please let me know.

Dottie Gilkeson  
Associate Chair, SD63 DFL  
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dottie@mn.rr.com

**Don't forget your \$50 free donation!  
Send us a check for \$50 (or \$100 for a  
married couple), and we'll send you the  
form so the state can reimburse you.  
Don't miss out on this year's opportunity!**

## Senate District 63 DFL

### Wellstone Memorial Bean Feed

Saturday, October 11, 2003  
1:30-5:30 p.m.

Veterans Memorial Park  
Picnic Shelter  
64th and Portland  
Richfield



Enjoy all-you-can-eat brats, beans, veggie dogs, chips, veggies, brownies, and more. The cost is only \$10 for adults or \$5 for kids, and any profits support DFL initiatives. Join DFL leaders and elected officials from SD63 and beyond. Each of the Presidential campaigns has been invited to come and help you to learn more about the candidates.

To reserve tickets in advance, use the form in this newsletter and send it to the following address:

5940 Upton Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55410