

**MEMBERS
ISSUE**

Caucus Members' Voices; 2012 Accomplishments; 2013 Plans



Don Bye

Dear Fellow Members,

Introducing this review of 2012 activities and accomplishments of Senior Caucus members is an exciting task for me. We are celebrating these accomplishments, the joy that members have in participating, and the strengths our members bring to their friends, neighbors, communities, and our state. It gives in the words of your fellow members an expression of their work, their hopes, their joys. It is a celebration of who we are as a Caucus and what we did toward a banner year for the DFL and the Democratic Party. It is our thanks to you.

2012 was indeed a banner year with the DFL taking back the Minnesota House and Senate and re-electing Amy Klobuchar to the US Senate. Members from all over the state worked to elect Rick Nolan to take back the Eighth Congressional District.

Members of the Senior Caucus were involved in phone banking and door knocking in every district. They were involved on committees to plan and present events, promote our causes, and educate our members. Greater Minnesota members joined to form new Senior Caucus chapters and have local meetings that gave seniors a place to affect politics in their own communities, to influence their friends and neighbors, and to meet with seniors working for a better Minnesota and America. Our committees and chapters are the foundation for success of the Caucus and places where members contribute their wisdom and bold ideas.

In a society so in need of senior wisdom and guidance, we members of the Caucus can do much and contribute much. What we as a Caucus accomplish is what individuals like you accomplish; what we do in the future is what you can make happen. Celebrating our strengths is part of the process.

Please join your fellow members as we work to make 2013 a successful year.

Don Bye , Chair, DFL SeniorCaucus

Our Mission

The Caucus works to involve seniors throughout Minnesota in the political process, to provide, a vehicle for their active participation in the DFL Party and to promote programs and legislation that protect and enhance the lives of seniors and their children and grandchildren.

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Members' Voices

Why do members become part of the DFL Senior Caucus? What is important to them?



Patricia Taylor, Finland. "Back in 2004, I was still trying to correlate all the 2000 census data as far as my rural county (Lake) was concerned. How our fastest growing age demographic was 65+. Seeing our fixed costs going up (electricity, property taxes, etc.). How the subdued talk was of how each of us were

cutting back. The first thing I noticed was the Campbell Soup label program for schools. The "normal" donation each month from our

(Patricia Taylor continued on next page.)



Joel Clemmer, St. Paul. "In politics **nothing is done by individuals acting alone**. It is important to feel my concerns are shared by others and I find in Caucus members this

sharing of my dedication to make Minnesota a better place for all."

Members' Voices continued on next page.

Members' Voices - (Continued from previous page)

(Patricia Taylor, Finland, continued from previous page.)

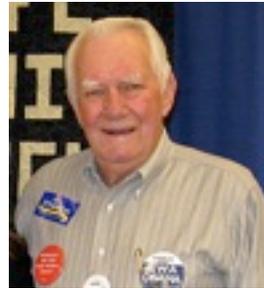


organization of 40-50 labels a month dropped to 2 or 3. Why? The members of my group, mostly seniors started buying house brands instead of name brands as we began to see our savings disappearing to take care of everyday costs.

I really don't recall how I first found out about the Senior Caucus. I know there was an email from Linda Feist. I remember the first time I had a table at a DFL event was for the old SD 6, now SD 3, at the 2004 convention where I got Representative Mary Murphy signed up. A fellow Lake County DFL Board of Directors member and myself worked at the CD8 convention that year. I got acquainted with Bill Cortez when he was still the SD7 Chair. We kept trying to get an event going in Duluth.

I am busy organizing campaign events in our remote area and working at County, CD and SD conventions. Here, the greatest value of the Senior Caucus is the exchange of ideas. For us, far upstate, we find most of the membership is urban as are the events, out of reach both financially and logistically from the rural members. Nor is our rural technology nearly as efficient as in the urban areas. This is improving; but will many of us be able to afford it? Still, I want some place where seniors statewide can exchange ideas and get new ones.

Every convention I attend I get questions from young workers about why we seniors work so hard. The Senior Caucus is important in teaching this younger generation of the battles we fought as the "Forgotten Generation" and, now, the "Boomers." Think of it, we've all heard of our parents' or grandparents' generation - the "Greatest." What about those of us that remember the Depression, the responsibilities we took on as grade schoolers during WWII, then on high school graduation we had our own war, Korea, known as the "Forgotten War". Many of us sacrificed our childhoods for our country, fought in wars or went to the Milwaukee Road Depot with babies in our arms to see our husbands off, fought hard for women's rights, the union movement, a fair Minnesota for everyone. As long as we are able, we have to keep working for our ideals."



Charlie Rike, Pine City. "I'm a long time union man, starting with the Order of Railroad Telegraphers before becoming an active member of the Communications Workers of America. I was a union steward and CWA Local 7200 Local officer. My Union activities

made it very apparent to me that the Democratic Party and the DFL were always on the side of working people; and much more fair than the Big Business supported Republican Party. I have taken part in many DFL precinct caucuses over the years and been delegate to state conventions. Serving on the MN AFL-CIO Retiree Council I met Mary Anne Beneke and have her to thank for inviting me to join the Senior Caucus. It's just like union work - working with good people for good causes. Recently I was made Chair of the newly formed East Central Minnesota DFL Senior Caucus Chapter working with Vice Chair Lila Skramstad of Mora, Secretary Patty Thompson of Mora and Treasurer Patrice Winfield of Markville and others. If you know of anyone in that area that wants to work with us, give one of us a call."



Norm Hanson, Roseville. "I grew up in a political family that was active in the DFL in the Eighth Congressional District. I attended many DFL Bean Feeds and conventions. I helped my dad with his state senate campaigns when he served from

1954 to 1972. I have always had a deep interest in current events and public policy. My involvement in the Senior Caucus is simply a continuation of what I have done in and for the DFL for as long as I can remember. Senior Caucus members are well informed about and interested in the public policy issues that affect seniors and, as importantly, in issues that affect their children, grandchildren and their communities, state and nation. It provides me with the opportunity to spend time with others discussing public policy issues of importance to them as well."

(Members' Voices continued on next page.)

Members' Voices - (Continued from previous page)



Bob Hines, Richfield. "I enjoy the comradery, the efforts and the activism found with this group of bright, concerned seniors. The lunches provide an opportunity to discuss important issues and hear different thoughts and ideas.

This can be a valuable learning experience. Advocacy work on issues is fun, exciting and rewarding. And activism, whether working on campaigns or being a citizen lobbyist/advocate at the legislature is important and can help make a difference. The DFL Senior Caucus can be a vital force in the political process especially during these difficult and trying times."



Julianne Johnston, Roseville. "I joined the Senior Caucus shortly after I retired because I thought it would be a good way to expand my interest in politics when I had more time. I was particularly interested in becoming more informed on the issues that concerned me including health care,

all aspects that affect families including those of my own children and grandchildren. I have found the members of the Senior Caucus to be well informed, fun to be with, and involved in many organizations as well as this one. They share their experience and expertise with a common goal of making life better for all of us. This is a great organization!"

DFL Senior Caucus CONTACTS

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Dick Bernard, Woodbury. "I've always been moderately active politically, always DFL, but not until I was introduced to DFL Senior Caucus a few years ago did I get more actively engaged. It isn't that senior issues are any more important than any other issues; rather, I found in the

Senior Caucus a certain amount of energy and enthusiasm that I had not seen earlier. We are a bunch of diverse opinions, and I like that. And, in our own ways we reflect the diversity of both senior citizens and the DFL party. I'm glad I'm an active part of the DFL Senior Caucus."



Elizabeth Young, Minneapolis.

"What attracted me to the Senior Caucus was the people I met there. They shared my beliefs and values and were at my age level. I met a member at a convention and I signed up. I have not been disappointed, and I am proud to wear my Senior Caucus T-shirt. I also enjoy the activities: the booth at the State Fair, the annual picnic, with great food and scenery, and the November Gala at the Eagles Club. I chair the Education Committee and write articles for the Caucus newsletter. It is a great organization."



Joanne Fieldseth, Baudette, with Roger Erickson, freshman Representative for District 2A. "I joined the Senior Caucus at the 7th District

Convention because I feel strongly about senior issues. I had become active again when the redistricting was more appropriate for Lake of the Woods County. When a family friend, Roger Erickson was endorsed, he asked me to be his campaign treasurer so I became very involved. Roger was elected to represent District 2A in the House on his initial try with the help from many seniors."

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Senior Caucus Committees in Action

“Our committees and chapters are the foundation for success of the Caucus and places where members contribute their wisdom and bold ideas.”

The work of the Senior Caucus is accomplished through its Committees. They answer these questions: What is important? How to work for the best possible outcome?

Joining a Senior Caucus committee, either as a sitting member or contributor, adds your voice, values and energy to that of other seniors. We often say, “Together we can make a difference.” Our committees are a way to make that difference. Much was accomplished in 2012; yet there is much to do in 2013 and beyond. Here is a list of the active 2012-2013 committees and what they are about. Find one or more areas where you can make a difference and go to the Contacts on page 3 to see how you can find out more or join with others.

Political Involvement Committee



Karla Sand, Maplewood. “I joined the Political Involvement Committee because I believe it is at the heart of Senior Caucus political activism. Along with fellow committee members and contributors we monitor legislation, attend legislative hearings and research issues to provide information to Caucus members. Our committee issues advocacy alerts through email blasts on pieces of legislation crucial to seniors. We post analyses of important legislative and election issues on the website and write articles for the newsletter. Currently we are focused on the MN budget because it has such a great effect on so many of our issues. In 2012 we concentrated on the Voter Suppression Amendment.

We also participate in media question and answer sessions, State Fair panel discussions on senior issues and Day on the Hill to get out the Senior Caucus message. We screen candidates for Caucus endorsement.



John Martin, St. Louis Park, oversees and promotes the successful Seniors-Calling-Seniors program that links hundreds of Caucus members to campaign calling programs. He also works with the Coordinated Campaign on our Senior Residence project.

If you are looking for a place to make a difference for seniors, this committee will be a good choice.”

Membership Committee



Jim Reed, Champlin. “The Membership Committee is all about a Senior Caucus that represents YOU. We meet once a month to discuss ways to add to our organization seniors and others who are interested in senior issues, people like you. We are present at senate district conventions and at the State DFL convention and talk to people like you letting them know that by working together we can solve senior issues. We listen to you so that we have a newsletter and

website that provides information important to seniors: news regarding Medicare, Social Security, and other topics pertinent to you. We support local Senior Caucus Chapters in all parts of the state where members also address local senior concerns and activities, things right in “your back yard”.

Finally, we give thanks for the contributions of those like you who are current members and look for ways to publicly express that thanks. This edition of the Senior Caucus Newsletter is part of that expression.”

Senior Caucus Committees in Action - continued

Education Committee



Elisabeth Young, Minneapolis and Russ Goodman, St. Paul. “The Education Committee is responsible for planning, developing, and presenting forums, seminars and training events for and about older citizens. In 2012, we joined with forums sponsored by others with similar missions, such as Vital Aging and Congressman Keith Ellison. Our focus for 2013 is on transportation, disability and home foreclosure issues for seniors, senior employment and the effects of climate change.”



Communications Committee



John Larva, Burnsville. “The Communications Committee is the information arm of the Caucus. Its members produce and distributes the materials by which the Caucus provides information to members and other seniors. We work closely with other committees and Caucus members assembling this information. We maintain the Caucus website, online calendar and list serves; we produce a newsletter, e-Newsgram, email blasts and blog posts.

In 2012, this committee produced and distributed four newsletters to about 800 subscribers, sent 44 email blasts to over 750 individuals, made eight mailings to paid members without email and provided flyers and informational material at the State Fair, Caucus events and various DFL meetings. The website at <http://dflsenior.wordpress.com> was redesigned for easier use and to present more Caucus information. In 2012, the site averaged fifteen views per day.”

Events Committee



Mary Ann Beneke, Golden Valley. “The Events Committee plans and coordinates events that promote the interests of the Senior Caucus.

An annual Membership Meeting (*Photo at right*) is specified by the Senior Caucus Constitution. It brings together members from across the state to discuss and vote on caucus business and elect board members. This year it will on May 18.



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Senior Caucus Committees in Action - continued

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The annual picnic (*Photo top right*) was held in July. It is an opportunity for members to meet other members, candidates and elected officials and voice their opinions to a larger audience in an atmosphere enhanced by hot dogs, beans and drinks.

The annual Gala (*Photos lower right*) is held in November of each year. It is an opportunity to talk, laugh, share stories, meet candidates, elected officials, and others from across the greater Minnesota.

Luncheons bring members together monthly. Two long-standing and well-attended luncheons are the Southwest Metro Lunch on the second Wednesday of each month at noon at Godfather's Pizza in Burnsville, usually with a speaker, and the Central Metro lunch on the fourth Wednesday of each month at Riverside Perkins in Minneapolis.”



Members' Voices - *(Continued from page 3)*



Dwayne King, Golden Valley. “The Senior Caucus is reportedly the first or second largest of the DFL’s some 14 or 15 Constituency Caucuses. We have been labeled as the fastest growing as well. I can tell you that we are, for sure, one of the hardest working. We have done a lot of campaign work, particularly with our “Seniors Calling Seniors” program. In 2012, once again, seniors in Minnesota voted for President Obama.

The next point I want to make is that we shouldn't be expected to be doing all the activities that we do without receiving just recognition of Senior Issues. And, as you well know—seniors do have issues. Our top priority is health care, but we are also concerned with senior poverty, senior housing (including and extremely importantly - staying in our own home), and senior transportation,

among other things.

Our charter states that the purpose of the Caucus is to foster senior involvement in the political process; encourage active participation in the DFL; bring focus to senior issues; provide support to DFL candidates and hold them accountable on senior issues; increase senior voter turnout; and ensure appropriate senior representation in DFL party positions.

Now, how are we to accomplish these important purposes? Yes, we are working as a caucus-at-large to elect Democrats at all levels, but then how do we obtain focus on our senior issues? I wholeheartedly believe that the way for us to be really effective for our issues is through the formation of Senior Caucus Chapters all across Minnesota. I have been working with Earl Bower to form chapters of the Senior Caucus around the state of Minnesota.”

Senior Caucus Chapters

“Our committees and chapters are the foundation for success of the Caucus and places where members contribute their wisdom and bold ideas.”



Earl Bower, Apple Valley. “Since the early days of the DFL Senior Caucus, as it grew to a statewide organization, finding ways to get this widely dispersed membership to interact with each other and provide a common force to work for senior causes and candidates was recognized as necessary for the Caucus to reach its potential. Many Caucus members are involved in legislative districts and candidate campaigns, but marshaling these people to make an impact on issues vital to Minnesota seniors was a challenge.

The central board communicates to the members through email, the website and flyers at DFL events, puts on a strong appearance at the State Fair, stages an annual picnic and hold an annual membership meeting. However, most of the communication goes out to the members and the need for interaction, especially local interaction, still was not met. About three years ago, Dwayne King and I began promoting local Senior Caucus Chapters as the way to act locally within the framework of the DFL Senior Constituency Caucus. Today, we have four greater Minnesota Senior Caucus Chapters up and running, two Chapters in the last stages of formation and two chapters in the initial stages.”



Dwayne King, Golden Valley. “As I said earlier, I wholeheartedly believe that the way for the Senior Caucus to be really effective for our issues is through the formation of Senior Caucus Chapters, all across Minnesota. We now have four Chapters with four more being formed. However there are many pockets of Senior Caucus members that need to organize.

How are Chapters started? It’s easy. Just contact Membership Committee Outreach member Earl Bower to set up a date and time and arrangements for an organizational meeting. Earl and I will then travel to your location, bringing a packet of information for you as well as giving a short but comprehensive presentation on what to do to get started.

Once formed, a Chapter can develop local programs to serve the local area’s needs as well as provide local support and implementation of our Caucus-wide purposes.

To be effective in achieving our goals, we need your help. We need chapters formed wherever possible. Please help start a local chapter and/or support those who may be organizing a chapter. With your support we can become a truly effective force across the state for solving senior issues.”

Senior Caucus Chapters and the general areas covered.

- Central Lakes Chapter: Aitkin, Cass, Crow Wing and Morrison Counties. Chapter meets in various cities around Brainerd.
- South East Minnesota Chapter: Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Mower, Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha and Winona counties. Chapter always meets in Rochester.
- Anoka County Chapter: Anoka County. Chapter generally meets in Blaine.
- East Central Chapter: Mora area. Meetings so far are in Mora.

Senior Caucus Chapters being formed or on drawing board.

- South Metro Chapter: Twin Cities metro south of the Minnesota River.
- North Metro Chapter: Northern Twin Cities Suburbs.
- Austin Area Chapter: Central area of Congressional District 1 around Austin and Albert Lea.
- Alexandria: Senate Districts 8, 9, and 12.

For more information on Chapters, You can go to the Senior Caucus website and click the Chapter tab. There is information on existing Chapters and information for starting a new Chapter. Check it out. You can call Earl Bower at 952-432-6928 or send an email to dflseniors@gmail.com if you have an interest in joining a Chapter or starting a local Chapter. Help is only an email or phone call away.

DFL Senior News
255 East Plato Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55107

First Class



Visit the Senior Caucus Website
<http://dflseniors.wordpress.com>
Contact us at dflseniors@gmail.com

Senior Caucus Membership - *Renew or sign up today*

In its seven years as a DFL Constituency Caucus, the **Senior Caucus** has had an impact on the DFL party and platform. We have worked for the election of DFL candidates in national, state and local elections. Our “Seniors-to-Seniors” program has been adopted by campaigns throughout the state and nation. We produce a newsletter four or five times a year that is distributed to over 800 subscribers, have a website that is updated regularly and send email blasts to over 750 senior announcing events, legislative alerts and providing timely information for Minnesota seniors. We put on events both social and educational and distribute flyers. The Senior Caucus is committed to do its part to serve Minnesota seniors and elect DFL candidates. Working together we make a difference.

All this work needs money, not a lot, but with additional funds we could do more. Members’ dues and donations are only used to support Caucus activities and communications.

Please consider being a 2013 paid member. Do it now. Dues are \$10 per person per year to December 31, 2013.

To sign up or renew, make your check out to DFL Senior Caucus.

Please include with your membership check: Name, email and mailing addresses and telephone number.

**Send to: Mary Ann Beneke, Treasurer, DFL Senior Caucus
2412 Parkview Blvd., Golden Valley, MN 55422**