Welcome to the January 2020 issue of your Senior News. Are you concerned about high drug prices? Retired pharmacist Kent Peterson breaks down the realities of drug pricing.

Don’t miss the information regarding the next meeting of the DFL Senior Caucus Book Club and three other books recommended by your fellow readers.

Meet Don Bye based on the interview that Julianne Johnston and I recently had with him. Don provides us with some history regarding how his early upbringings influenced his life-long involvement in the DFL.

Be reminded of all the reasons that make it important that you participate in the 2020 Decennial Census.

If you were unable to attend the annual Senior Caucus Gala held in Eagan in October, you can find out what you missed including the presentation by the keynote speaker Professor Coggins on page 6.

Representative Jamie Becker-Finn, Senate District 42B, comments in the Capitol Corner about the hard work that she is doing on our behalf to protect the environment including the threat of CWD to our hunting heritage enjoyed by many of our readers who hunt deer like Senior Caucus members Don Bye, Roger Gehrke and Norm Hanson.

Take time to catch up on the activities of the many important Senior Caucus committees including Membership, Technology, Documents (newly reactivated), and Political Involvement. These active committees are working hard on issues and concerns that affect all of us.

Do you know that voters in Minnesota will be going to the polls on Super Tuesday on March 3, 2020, along with the voters in thirteen other states? Learn how the presidential nomination primary is different from a regular state primary and how this creature of the four major political parties is also similar.

Representative Lyndon Carlson, a long-time and enthusiastic supporter of the Senior Caucus, will retire at the end of his twenty-fourth term in the state house. He has represented his district well.

Conclude your review by reading about the recent activities of your board of directors and the contact information for the ten active chapters around the state. Catch the calendar of pending events including the annual Day-on-the-Hill at the state capitol on February 19, 2020. You are welcome to attend and hear from our legislators and others on the work at the Capitol.
What Can Be Done about the High Cost of Drugs?

Kent Peterson has a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of Iowa and Master of Public Health from the University of Minnesota. He was a pharmacist in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, health care program manager at the Minnesota Department of Health for 29 years and a retail pharmacist at Cub Pharmacies for 13 years.

It’s easy to blame “Big Pharma”* for the high cost of drugs. However, we need to explore the reasons for these high costs to determine what can be done about it. Are there legislative and regulatory solutions?

Brand name drugs* are extremely expensive. Most of the high expense associated with prescription drugs is due to a relatively small number of extremely high cost brand name drugs. Brand name drugs have protective patents, and each is sold by just one pharmaceutical manufacturer. When the federal patent expires after a designated time period, the drug is available as a generic alternative at a much lower price. For example, the most frequently used brand name drug in 2005 was Lipitor, a cholesterol lowering statin. In 2005, the cost for Lipitor was about $150 to $300 per month. Today, the generic alternative is $10 to $15 per month.

Brand name drugs currently account for only ten percent of all prescriptions dispensed in the U.S., yet they comprise nearly eighty percent of total drug spending according to 2018 data from the National Institutes of Health. This proportion of brand name to generic drugs dispensed has changed dramatically since 2005 when forty percent of the prescriptions were brand name drugs and accounted for about fifty percent of total drug spending. With the exception of insulin products, the most frequently prescribed drugs in 2005 have all become generic. The most frequently prescribed brand name drug is now Humira, used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, which costs about $3,180 per month. Besides other drugs for rheumatoid arthritis, top brand name drugs now include insulin medications and specialty drugs for cancer immunotherapy and treatment of hepatitis. It is not unusual for these brand name drugs to cost over $100,000 per year.

High drug prices are resulting in both bankruptcies and adverse patient outcomes. Various studies have shown ten to twenty-five percent of patients either delay, abandon or compromise treatments when faced with high out-of-pocket drug costs. The problem is increasing due to more health plans with high deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums.

So, what can be done? The largest, most immediate cost reduction may be obvious: allow our federal government to negotiate the price of drugs like most other countries in the world. If the United States Congress and the President were to support negotiations that would allow “reference pricing” to the average price of those drugs in the eight wealthiest countries, it has been estimated that the government spending on those drugs would be reduced by fifty percent.

We should acknowledge that drug discovery and development by drug companies has created new therapies that have enhanced and improved health outcomes and life expectancy. However, research and development costs are not the largest expense for drug companies. According to their own reports, brand name drug companies only spend about fifteen to twenty percent of expenses on research and development. Many consumer groups estimate the percentage to be much less and point out that advertising expenses and profit frequently exceed research expenses. Hence, there is need for negotiation to create a fair pricing system.

Senator Amy Klobuchar was the early author of legislation that would allow Medicare to negotiate for the best possible price for all prescription drugs. Her early bill was supported by thirty-four Senators with a bipartisan companion bill in the House. Even President Trump supported the idea of drug price negotiation. Then he flipped to opposing it in May 2019. But no surprise there!

More recently, in September 2019, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi unveiled her drug pricing bill that would allow the federal government to negotiate the prices of up to 250 brand-name drugs in Medicare with severe financial penalties if drugs companies fail to come to an agreement. The negotiated prices would be available to all purchasers, not just Medicare. The bill also places a cap on seniors’ out-of-pocket prescription drug costs at $2,000 a year.

In contrast, the 2019 Republican bill for drug pricing reduction sponsored by Senate Finance Committee Chair Chuck Grassley would penalize drug companies if the price rises faster than inflation and adds an out-of-pocket maximum for beneficiaries at $3,100 starting in 2022. There are also some disclosure and reporting requirements for drug companies. While slowing the rate of increase, this bill would not reduce excessive prices that already exist or solve the problem for patients.

In December of 2019 there has been movement toward including some modest drug pricing changes in the year-end spending bill. While both Democrats and Republicans see the high priority of this issue to

January 2020
inspections in most of the world. Worldwide international agreement with 52 countries to conduct worldwide, 61% outside of the U.S. There were only that there were 4,676 drug manufacturing sites generic prices as well. In 2018, the FDA* indicated Government negotiation will be needed to hold down costs, and manufacturing deficiencies that have resulted in closure of some generic manufacturers. Every time Congress tries to take on drug prices, it runs into the pharmaceutical lobby’s timeworn objection: lowering prices would reduce drug innovation, slow progress in finding cures to key diseases, and dim hopes of desperate patients. This argument has worked for decades. This time, will the public and Congress resist the fear? Even while we struggle with policies to control prices for the most expensive brand drugs, the lower cost, generic market is becoming less competitive because of mergers and acquisitions, raw material costs, and manufacturing deficiencies that have resulted in closure of some generic manufacturers. Government negotiation will be needed to hold down generic prices as well. In 2018, the FDA* indicated that there were 4,676 drug manufacturing sites worldwide, 61% outside of the U.S. There were only 1,365 onsite inspections by FDA. We depend upon an international agreement with 52 countries to conduct inspections in most of the world. Worldwide inspection of generic drug manufacturing must be strengthened!

Effective negotiation for high priced drugs with robust inspections can substantially reduce prescription drug costs. But remember that since retail prescription drugs account for only ten percent of total health care costs (2018 data from Center for Medicare Services), even a fifty percent price reduction would only reduce premiums by about five percent. More importantly, drug price negotiation and a cap on out-of-pocket costs would mean a sizeable cost reduction for the patients who pay exorbitant prices and place their lives at risk when they discontinue prescriptions drugs because of high drug prices.

**“Big Pharma”:** global pharmaceutical companies (such as Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer and Novartis) that have the largest distribution of brand name drugs.

**Brand Name Drug:** A drug sold by a drug company under a specific name or trademark and that is protected by a patent for seventeen years

**Generic Drug:** A generic drug that contains the same chemical substance as a drug that was originally protected by chemical patent and tested to be equivalent in performance.

**FDA:** Federal Drug Administration: Government department responsible for the approval and regulatory oversight of drug manufacturing that it determines to have solid evidence of safety and effectiveness for public use or consumption.

---

**DFL Senior Caucus Book Club** January 21, 2020

**A Well Regulated Militia: The Founding Fathers and the Origin of Gun Control** By Saul Cornell

Davanni’s Party Room South of University of St. Thomas on 41Cleveland Ave S, St Paul

11:00 am to 1:00 pm  Contact: Karla Sand(651) 690-4848 karlaviolets@hotmail.com

---

**Other Books Recommended for DFL Seniors**

**Professor Berman: The Last lecture of Minnesota’s Greatest Public Historian** by Hy Berman and Jay Weiner. Professor Hy Berman was, by most accounts, the face of public history in Minnesota for decades as a popular university professor, political observer, and familiar presence on PBS’s *Almanac*. Readers encounter Berman telling stories that audiences and students loved that are a close-up view of Minnesota history and a conversational self-portrait of a man often in the middle of that history. “A community without a knowledge of its past is like a person with amnesia.”

**Shadow Wars: The Secret Struggle for the Middle East** by Christopher Davidson: The secret struggle of the Middle East. This is the best and most informative book yet on the struggle for power with the U.S. and Europe, versus the Arab autocratic regimes, and their countries’ impoverished masses

**The CIA's Fight Against Terrorism—From Al Qa'ida to Isis** by Michael Morell: This book covers the three plus decades of his work with the CIA through several White House administrations, both Republican and Democrat.

**The Back Channel** by William J. Burns: The author gives the reader an incredible front row seat to the last thirty plus years of American diplomacy (and sometimes the lack of diplomacy). Through the author’s respectful and thought provoking critique of the past five presidential administrations, we are able to see where our foreign policy has served us well.
Meet DFL Chair Don Bye
Norm Hanson and Julianne Johnston

“I never wanted to be just an attender but always wanted to be an active participant and a leader in any political or community group where I believed my involvement would be important.” So said Don Bye, Senior Caucus Chair, when asked about his long-time involvement in the DFL and in community groups. Bye served in many leadership roles in the DFL including as the long-time chair of the Eighth Congressional District and his long-time service on the DFL Party’s State Central Committee and the DFL Party’s Executive Committee. He remains an active member of both of those important DFL committees and has been granted Emeritus Status. He was elected to the DFL Party of Minnesota Hall of Distinguished Service by the State Central Committee in 2016.

Don has held almost all positions in the DFL from precinct chair to the longest serving member of the DFL State Central Committee and longest serving Congressional Chair in the state. He has attended every National Democratic Convention since 1968.

Much of his drive to be significantly involved in leadership roles in whatever group he joined resulted from his experiences growing up in a small community and his employment in a wide range of jobs that exposed him to a variety of working conditions both good and bad. Don Bye grew up in Cass County on a 120-acre dairy farm that had been previously homesteaded by his grandparents. His grandparents raised dairy cattle and sold the milk, and the chickens and eggs that his mother raised to support the family. When his father died, Don bought his share of the farm from his mother and later his deceased brother’s share. His parents usually voted for Democrats and Don followed their lead by being involved in the DFL for all of his adult life.

Bye noted that he loved to go deer hunting with his dad when they would spend a week or so living in a tent camp with other hunters. He took his first deer as a teenager. He has continued as a hunter taking a deer almost every year in the Cass County area where he grew up. He also spends time in the fall hunting ducks in North Dakota.

He went to school in a one-room schoolhouse and quickly passed from grade to grade. Following high school graduation at the age of 15. Tough he was and he was small and light of stature, he worked multiple union-dominated trades in construction including as a carpenter and a “bundle pitcher.” He moved about from the Dakotas to Illinois and even Sitka, Alaska. He preferred to live “out of the cities” and so worked and lived in small towns and returned to Cass Lake whenever work became available.

On the suggestion of a friend, he enrolled, at the age of 16, in junior college and discovered that he really liked college. He accumulated some funds from the variety of part-time jobs that he had allowing him to go to college while he continued to hold down part-time jobs. He enjoyed engaging in intramural sports as often as he could. He transferred to and graduated from the University of Minnesota. Although he really did not intend to practice law, he chose to go on for a law degree at the University because he heard it was the “hardest degree” to get. He considered that a “significant challenge”. He was told that having a degree in law would be a good background for many opportunities in a variety of occupational areas. Don told us that he was hired by attorney Gerald Heaney, who eventually became Judge Heaney, who encouraged Don’s involvement in politics somewhat to the chagrin of some of the members of his firm who were Republicans. Bye spent his professional life as a lawyer representing union members who were public sector employees and worked on labor decisions that affected all workers.

When asked to tell us about his most memorable case in his fifty-years as a practicing attorney in labor law, he noted that there were so many, it was hard to single one or two out. Upon further reflection, however, Bye remembered when he represented a group of very independent pulp cutters who believed that they had been cheated out of a fair price for the pulp that they had cut and delivered to the Mando Paper Company in International Falls. Don said that that they were so independent and “rough and tumble,” they were not used to working and pulling together until Don took their case. Don said his work on the development of the public employee sector law that allowed public employees to have union representation and the right to strike as something that he was very proud of his long legal career.

Don served as a Rolvaag delegate during the very contentious state convention when Sandy Keith battled Rolvaag for the DFL endorsement. Bye was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968 where significant rioting occurred in Grant Park involving the McCarthy supporters. The riot was made so much worse because of the actions of Mayor Daley and his police department.

He began his activity in DFL politics supporting Minneapolis Mayor Don Fraser and increased his...
2020 Census: Stand up and be Counted
Norm Hanson

Please respond to the Decennial Census on-line at your computer or by mail or by landline or cell phone or, if necessary, by opening your front door to the census taker when he/she comes by.

The U.S. Census Bureau is the federal government’s largest statistical agency that is committed to providing current facts about American people, places and economy. The Census is a focused update of who and what Americans are, and is required by the Constitution to be taken every decade (ten years). Federal law protects the confidentiality of all individual responses the Census Bureau collects.

In addition to the data collected being the basis for the distribution of $675 billion in federal funds each year by federal agencies, the data also is used to determine how many representatives each state gets in Congress and to redraw congressional and senate district boundaries. Census data is also used to determine locations for new roads and other public infrastructure including schools and emergency services. That is, without good demographic data, how do we know when a community needs or does not need another school? How do we determine where roads are necessary?

Apportionment counts will be sent to the President by December 31, 2020. AND, redistricting counts will be sent to the states by March 31, 2021.

The Decennial Census is a very important activity of the federal government that generates results that not only could but will affect us all.

Do not let anyone try to convince you that participation in the Census is not important no matter why they claim that it is not or why they do not want to participate because of a fear or obstinence.

interest supporting Governor Rudy Perpich and, in the meantime, working on the implementation of the Share Food Drive and the Kids Voting USA programs. In 1983, working his way through the loss of his daughter to leukemia, he went door-to-door asking for donation for the food collection drive which became the forerunner of many food shelves that now exist throughout our state. Bye solicited support, involvement and funding from many union groups including the Teamsters to get the food drive off the ground.

One of his favorite stories is when he met Georgiana Ruzich at a DFL State Convention and she asked him for eight dollars. He reached into his pocket and gave the money to her. She congratulated him for having just joined the Senior Caucus! He attended the next Annual Meeting of the DFL Senior Caucus primarily to hear the keynote speech by his friend George Latimer. He was not seeking to be elected to any office of that organization especially to the position of chair. Never-the-less, he left that meeting as the new chair of the DFL Senior Caucus and has continued to serve in that capacity ever since.

Message for the Senior Caucus:
The group is “pretty good” but could be better organized and more effective in senior issues. He would like to see an increase in chapter development in the northern and western part of the state where chapters have struggled to keep up. He has been working in those areas with the Membership Director, Josey Warren, to re-instate those areas into chapters again.

In the 2020 election, he feels that it is very important that Democrats get behind whoever is endorsed regardless of who they may have originally preferred. Voters must not split off because their candidate was not chosen. Obama had magnetism that would be difficult to duplicate this time around. The candidate must campaign wisely and not leave any groups behind.
The DFL Senior Caucus Annual Gala
October 20, 2019

Norm Hanson

Eighty-plus DFL Senior Caucus members and their friends, plus many state legislators and legislative candidates for local office enjoyed a special evening of socializing, music and a fine Italian buffet at the Royal Cliff Center in Eagan on October 20, 2019. The annual DFL Senior Caucus celebratory event was planned by the Senior Caucus Events Committee and hosted once again by the South Metro Chapter of the DFL Senior Caucus—a very large and active chapter serving the Eagan and Apple Valley area.

Following registration and a social hour which began at 3 p.m., Sue Moravec, emcee for the evening activities, was introduced by South Metro Chapter Chair Roger Gehrke. Moravec invited Senior Caucus Vice-chair Karla Sand to the podium for the welcome to those in attendance. Chair Don Bye was unable to attend. Karla extended an invitation to all to get involved in the many activities and committees sponsored by the Senior Caucus.

Moravec introduced the main speaker for the event, Professor Jay Coggins, professor of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota. Coggins began his presentation by addressing the matter of climate change and its effect on our planet and our individual lives. Those problems will be very expensive, in the amount of trillions of dollars, but less expensive than doing nothing. Renewable energy sources are becoming increasingly utilized by utility companies and individuals.

The 2007 Next Generation Energy Act passed in Minnesota and other efforts have targeted an 80 percent reliance on the use of renewables including the use of electricity in homes and cars. Coggins noted that the costs of producing energy using wind and solar have come down significantly and will continue to be less expensive the more they are utilized.

Minnesota State Auditor Julie Blaha stated that she is enjoying her work as the state auditor and provided an overview of the responsibilities of her office. She emphasized the importance of everyone working hard to try to elect a DFL controlled Minnesota State Senate and the continued DFL control of the State House in 2020.

House Majority Leader Ryan Winkler stated that, of the 73 DFL members of the House, half of them are in their first term and 60% of them are either in their first or second term. Winkler then cited many of the bills that were passed by the House including protection against wage theft, family/medical leave, public option for health care coverage, affordable emergency insulin, mental health care for public school students however many of those efforts were not adopted by the Senate including the bi-partisan emergency-insulin coverage bill.

Karla Sand introduced the chapter chairs that were present and encouraged attendees to attend and to join chapter meetings in their areas. Roger Gehrke, on behalf of the Gala Planning and Implementation Committee recognized and thanked the committee and the Senior Caucus.

NOTE: Because there is a problem with multiple robo calls on a daily basis on both landline and cell phones, please be sure to leave a message when you call a Senior Caucus member. Some phones have Caller ID that displays the source of the call but many do not. Seniors have been advised to not pick up a phone call if they do not recognize the caller. Please leave a message so that you can get a response.
Hello DFL Seniors! As a member of the Outdoor Heritage Council and Vice Chair of the Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee, I wanted to share some thoughts with you about environmental policy legislation this coming 2020 session.

As Minnesotans, we value our great outdoors and our hunting and fishing heritage. Our State Constitution even guarantees our rights to hunt and fish! In addition, Minnesota voters have approved important funding mechanisms aimed at conservation, the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Legacy Fund. These funds are unique and an important part of keeping our state such a great place to live.

Looking ahead to 2020, we will need to do more than focus on funding. We need to act now to enact smart public policy that will protect our natural resources now and into the future. Many of the upcoming policy proposals will be driven by our changing climate and renewed attention on the long-term effects of pollution on our health, economy and way of life. Last session, we passed important DFL-led legislation regarding chronic wasting disease, aquatic invasive species, toxic flame retardants, and getting more kids outdoors. These issues are not "one and done" bills but steps in the right direction as we continue to work towards a better Minnesota for all of us.

Water. In addition to ongoing challenges in protecting our water from various kinds of pollution, many areas of the state are also struggling with unprecedented water management issues. Whether it is crops that cannot be harvested or suburban flooding, these problems can’t wait. Instead of arguing over whether climate change is real, I am hopeful we can focus on actionable solutions based on science and reality.

Pollution. The ongoing public attention on the Water Gremlin Company has highlighted serious problems in the way our environmental protection system currently functions. Protection of people and health needs to take a higher precedence than maximizing corporate profits. Improved funding and oversight is needed for companies who choose to use toxic chemicals, including phasing out the use of some chemicals like TCE (trichloroethylene) and lead altogether.

In addition, we as individuals can make choices to purchase products that are less dangerous to our own health and our planet. Examples include purchasing non-toxic fishing tackle and hunting ammunition and decreasing the use of single-use plastic products that cannot be easily reused, broken down or recycled.

Hunting and Fishing. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is an always-fatal neurological disease, like mad cow disease, caused by misfolded proteins. The disease impacts deer, elk, and other cervidae (hoofed ruminant mammals). We were able to take the first steps in passing legislation last session to address this threat to our hunting heritage in Minnesota, but challenges continue. CWD is not just a threat to nearly half a million hunters statewide, it threatens our ecosystem and economy as well.

Aquatic invasive species and the impacts of climate change are harming the health of fish populations in our beloved 10,000 plus lakes. We will continue to work on solutions to the current problems in addition to playing defense to protect this resource from new threats.

Thank you for reading! Each person can be a part of this important work by paying attention, staying informed and supporting the work that many of us do each day at the Capitol.
Membership Matters

Josey Warren, Membership Director
joseywwaren@gmail.com 763-786-3591

I wish everyone great celebrations this time of year. Today I am asking all of you who enjoy reading the DFL Senior Caucus newsletter, The Senior News, to become a paid member. We are a voice for you! We would like to add your voice to ours. You know that numbers matter. The larger the group the bigger the voice. We could use your voice when we advocate for seniors.

The DFL Senior Caucus takes seriously its role to advocate for seniors. We are active in voicing the needs of seniors to our state legislators and if need be to our U.S. Congress. We keep in contact with legislators when they are in session and when they are not. The DFL Senior Caucus cares about all senior issues.

We are currently focusing on health insurance coverage, accessible health care, drug costs, vulnerable adult abuse, accessible transportation, aging in place, and affordable housing. Please join us for our $10 annual membership dues. Membership gives you voting privileges and therefore a bigger voice. Join us!!!!

Josie Warren
DFL Senior Caucus Technology Committee
Kay Hendrikson, Chair
dflseniors@gmail.com
Remember to check your spam folders! The Senior Caucus emails might be going to them. Make sure you mark Senior Caucus emails as safe emails you wish to receive. If you are not getting emails from the Senior Caucus, email: dflseniors@gmail.com right away.

We can now receive donations and dues via online.

DFL Senior Caucus Documents Committee
Russell Warren, Chair 763-786-3591
russellawarren@gmail.com

A new committee of the Senior Caucus is the Documents Committee. Actually, it is the latest reiteration and continuation of that committee. The committee is composed of Earl Bower, Karla Sands, Julianne Johnston, Josey Warren and Russ Warren with Russ serving as chair of this committee in his first assignment as a new Board Member.

The purpose of the committee is to review all documents whether printed, internet or otherwise provided to ensure that the message being conveyed is in the approved DFL Senior Caucus version and language. A daunting task given that all seniors have an opinion, right?

We held our first meeting in November. We have begun to define our mission statement. The we will determine the difference between public and “inhouse” documents and the requirements for each.

PIC (Political Involvement Committee)

Joe Mullery
612-521-4921
joemullery@gmail.com

The PIC has been hard at work preparing resolutions for approval at the Precinct Caucuses. There are five subcommittees including Health/Drugs/Social Security/Medicare, End of Life Options, Elder Abuse, Living at Home, and Specialized Transportation. They are working on about twelve or more resolutions being proposed for approval by the Board. Printable resolutions will be available on the Senior Caucus Website in mid-January. The Technology Committee will send out Mail Chimp and VAN notices when the resolutions are available. The sixth subcommittee is working out the procedure for endorsing DFL candidates by the Board of Directors. Members of the PIC Committee include Chair Joe Mullery, Tony Scallon, Janet Diederich, Judy Corro, Karla Sand, Joel Clemmer, Earl Bower, Jackie Lindholm, and Roger Gehrke. The PIC holds open meetings and any interested person is welcome to attend.
Super Tuesday in Minnesota

March 3, 2020!

Read this Information Carefully !!!!!

Norm Hanson and Julianne Johnston

Minnesota will be involved in Super Tuesday on March 3, 2020 along with thirteen other states. The results of this vote will have a significant impact on the 2020 presidential race especially for the Democratic Party. The results will help narrow the current field of the many candidates on the Democratic Party side who will remain viable and able to seek the “Golden Ring” in Milwaukee this summer in order to become the standard bearer for our party.

This will be the fifth presidential nomination primary held in Minnesota in the past 104 years going back to 1916 when Wilson won the Democratic Primary, Cummins won the Republican Primary and Sulzer won the Prohibition Primary. Favorite son, Hubert H. Humphrey, won the DFL primary in 1952 and Dwight D. Eisenhower prevailed in the Republican Primary. In 1956, Estes Kefauver with his coon skin hat bested Adlai E. Stevenson with the famous hole in the bottom of his shoe in the DFL Primary while Eisenhower again won the Republican Primary. In 1992, Bill Clinton won the DFL Primary while George H.W. Bush won the Republican Primary.

Presidential primaries are organized and run by the major political parties and not by the state although the voting mechanisms are similar in terms of where folks vote, and the election judges. The chairs of the major political parties decide who should be on the ballot for their party. The chair of the Minnesota Republican Party has decided to limit the ballot of his party to one name only - Donald Trump - and it is consistent with his authority to do that. The chairs of the major parties have to provide their list of candidates that will be named on their party’s ballot to the Secretary of State by December 31, 2019.

Chapter 8215. One significant difference from the “regular” primaries operated and controlled by the state is that voters are required to state their party preference before receiving their ballots. Voters also have to sign a statement saying that “I am in general agreement with the principles of the party for whose candidate I intend to vote.” If you are not comfortable saying that out loud, you may want to bring a note with you to hand to the election judge when you pick up your ballot to indicate the major party that you intend to vote for.

Absentee balloting will be available beginning January 17, 2020, and will also require the same statements and signing as noted above. The decision as to whether to leave space on the ballot for writing in the name of a candidate not listed is left up to the discretion of the party chair, that is, the law does not require that space for write-ins be provided on the ballot. Remember, the presidential primary is a creature of the major political parties and not of the normal state election apparatus.

Another difference between the state sponsored elections and the major party sponsored presidential primary is that voters have to be age 18 on or before March 3, 2020 as opposed to age 18 on or before election day in November.

It must be noted that the election officials will not make your party preferences public, however, the law requires the state to share your party preference with the chairs of the major political parties. That information is typically used to build voter contact lists for campaign purposes. How you voted will NOT be public information and will NOT be shared with party chairs.

Precinct caucuses will be held as usual on February 25, 2020 beginning at 7:00 p.m. and will not be eliminated by the matter of having a presidential primary a week or so later.

The regular primary for the 2020 election year will be held on August 11, 2020 with early voting beginning in June.
Lyndon Carlson set to retire after 47 years in the Minnesota House

Norm Hanson

The long-time representative, who missed only one of the DFL Senior Caucus picnics going back to the beginning of that annual event, has announced his plans to retire after forty-seven years in the State House. Given all the demographic and other changes as well as three or four redistricting changes that have occurred since Lyndon Carlson was first elected, forty-seven years in office is absolutely amazing!

While much of our “universe” includes many people with strong interests in the political process both at the party level as well as the community, state and national levels, most folks don't give much thought about the party processes. The precinct caucuses that that can be so important to so many within our party can mean little or nothing to most citizens let alone to most voters who wonder why on earth anyone would spend a night at a precinct caucus or a day at a district convention or even want to be a delegate to a state or national convention. Most citizens including voters would ask us why do we do that?

The small turnout at caucuses in terms of the percentage of voters who show up just confirms that lack of interest in the political process. Granted, attendance does swell on occasion in response to an issue or candidate who has some folks excited enough to participate, perhaps all the way through to the state convention, but then they are never to be seen again!

Some will even seek to be delegates to the next level with the claim as their main qualification that they have been inactive but lifelong DFLer or at least since they registered and signed in for the caucus or the convention.

So, in that context, it is absolutely amazing that Carlson was able to serve 24-terms, including being re-elected 23-times with all the demographic changes that have occurred during that time.

Obviously, Carlson did things right and kept his time in crossfires regarding hot issues to a minimum to keep getting re-elected. He must have also survived a challenge or two from the always predictable position of “It is time for a change—Carlson is good but he has been in there too long and it is time to give someone else a chance” or words to the that effect.

That kind of challenge is not always successful, but it has appeal for many of the folks who could not care less about the political process and/or what a legislator has been able to accomplish during his or her time in office.

As every legislator quickly comes to understand, there will be constituents who have always supported them on ninety-five per cent or more of their votes and positions of problems that affect them. However, the fact that their legislator did not vote a certain way on another issue of importance to them may well be enough for them to vote against their legislator the next time he or she runs for re-election or even openly support their opponent in the next election. "I have always supported “Bunghouser” but I can no longer do so because of his vote on a specific problem."

Given how fickle voters can be, it is absolutely amazing that Carlson has served as a state legislator for twenty-four terms!

Senior Caucus Board Activities October—December 2019

The board meets monthly except during the holiday season when the November and December meetings are combined. Reports are received from the Executive Committee including the Chair, Vice-chair, Secretary/approval of minutes, Treasurer/Financial, and Membership Director. Reports are also presented by the committee chairs including the Technology, Documents, Education, and PIC committees. and Chapter Chairs in attendance. The Senior Caucus DFL Executive Committee Representative Kay Hendrikson provides a summary of DFL issues. The Senior News Editor, reviews past and future editions of the Senior News.

Recent actions of the board included:

• Recommendations to the PIC Committee for developing resolutions and procedures for endorsement by the Senior Caucus.
• Preparations for the Day on the Hill.
• Recommendations for getting information about the Senior Caucus on Facebook, website, Mailchimp and VAN blasts, public meetings, use of new business cards, use of Senior Caucus logo on public documents and T-shirts. For more information contact Earl Bower, Website Administrator earlbower@gmail.com or Karla Sand, Vice-chair at karlaviolets@hotmail.com.
DFL SENIOR CAUCUS
255 E. Plato Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55107

CONTACTS
Email-dflseniors@gmail.com
Website-http://www.dfl.org/seniors/

Board
Don Bye Chair 218-568-5530
byelawoffice@hotmail.com
Karla Sand vice-chair 651-739-7397
karlaviolets@hotmail.com

Committees
Documents
Russell Warren, Chair 763-786-3591
russellawarren@gmail.com

Events
Chair Roger Gehrke, 952-412-7171, rogergehrke@yahoo.com

Membership
Josey Warren 763-786-3591
joseywwaren@gmail.com

Political Involvement (PIC)
Joe Mullery (612) 521-4921
joemullery@gmail.com

Technology Committee
Kay Hendrikson
dflseniors@gmail.com

SENIOR NEWS
The DFL Senior News is published at least four times a year by the DFL Senior Caucus, 255 E. Plato Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55107, to provide news items of DFL Senior Caucus events and other items of interest to Minnesota seniors. Readers are encouraged to submit articles for publication on subjects of interest to Minnesota DFL seniors. Accepted articles may be edited to meet these goals and space requirements. Submit articles and comments to:
Norm Hanson, Editor 651-484-8926
norsan45@hotmail.com
or Julianne Johnston at 651-486-7120
julianmetj@msn.com

JOIN THE SENIOR CAUCUS
Membership dues are $10 annually
Send your check made out to:
John Larva, Treasurer
DFL Senior Caucus
1424 Woodhill Drive
Burnsville, MN 55337

For waiver of dues please contact
Josey Warren, Membership Director at joseywwaren@gmail.com or call 763-786-3591 and leave a message and she will call you back.

---

DFL Senior Caucus Chapters January 2020

Anoka Chapter
Chair Mel Aanerud, 763-434-3809, aanerud4@comcast.net
Second Wednesday of every month at 1:00 p.m.
Perkins Restaurant in Blaine

East Central Chapter
Chair Bonnie Lokenvitz, 320-679-8202, blokenvitz@gmail.com
Second Thursday, odd-numbered months at 1:00 p.m.
Crystal Bar & Grill, 39 S Union St, Mora

East Metro Chapter
Chair Kay Hendrikson, 651-739-1080 dfleastmetrocaucus@gmail.com
Second Thursday of every month at 11:30 a.m.
Sgt. Pepper’s Bar and Grill, 930 Helena Avenue, North Oakdale

Mankato Area Chapter
Chair Richard Chambers, 507-420-4030, gdthdr@aol.com,
or Vice-chair Mary Bliesmer, 507-380-4308, mary.bliesmer@mnsu.edu
First Monday of every month at 11:30 a.m.
Happy Chef, 2100 Hwy 169, North Mankato

Minneapolis Area Chapter
Chair Kenneth Vreeland, 612-722-8017, borderlord_one@yahoo.com Tony Scallon, 612 20204814, tscallon@msn.com
Second Saturday of every month at various sites, except in Summer

North East MN Chapter (Duluth)
Chair Gary Westoff, 612-709-5342, nemndflsrs@yahoo.com
Second Tuesday of every month at 4:30 p.m.
Clyde Iron Works, 2920 W Michigan St, Duluth.

North Metro Chapter
Chair Norm Hanson, 651-484-8926, norsan45@hotmail.com
Second Tuesday of every month at 11:30 a.m.
Little Venetian Inn, 2900 Rice St # 240, Little Canada

South East MN Chapter
Chair Patricia Mann 507-398-6670, mannpa1@charter.net
Second Tuesday of every month at 1:00 p.m. DFL Office, 1500 1st Street NE, Rochester. “Coffee Talk” Fourth Tuesday 10 a.m. same location

South Metro Chapter
Chair Roger Gehrke, 952-412-7171, rogergehrke@yahoo.com,
Second Wednesday, every month at noon
Apple Valley Pizza Ranch, 15662 Pilot Knob Road, Apple Valley

Tri-County Chapter
Chair Sandra Trudeau, wmsandy@comcast.net
First Tuesday of every month at 12:30 p.m.
Vannelli’s By The Lake, 55 South Lake Street, Forest Lake

Editors:
Norm Hanson, newsletter editor,
norsan45@hotmail.com, 651-484-8926
Julianne Johnston, design and layout editor
julianmetj@msn.com, 651-486-7120

Columnists: Jamie Becker-Finn, Norm Hanson, Kay Hendrickson, Julianne Johnston, Josey Warren, Russell Warren

Photographs: Julianne Johnston,
Reviewer: Sandy Hanson
Senior Caucus Day on the Hill
February 19, 2020
State Capitol Building
Watch for more information to be sent to your email and your chapter chair!!!

First Class

DFL Senior Caucus Calendar 2020 Events
All Events are Handicapped Accessible

Social Luncheon - The Egg and I, 2550 University Avenue West, St. Paul, Monthly at 12:30 p.m. fourth Wednesday. Contact Karla Sand, Vice-chair, 651-739-7397, karlaviolets@hotmail.com

Senior Caucus Board Meeting - Fourth Thursday of every month at 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. All welcome to attend. DFL Office, 255 East Plato Blvd., St. Paul, MN. Contact Vice-chair Karla Sand 651-739-7397 or karlaviolets@hotmail.com

Senior Caucus Book Club - Every third Monday from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at the Davanni's Restaurant, 41 Cleveland Avenue South, St Paul. Contact information: Karla Sand 651-739-7397. See January book study on page 3 of this issue. Become an educated senior—read a book and discuss with other DFLers.

Senior Caucus Day on the Hill - February 19, 2020, State Capitol Building. Details to follow.

Precinct Caucuses in Minnesota on February 25, 2020
Minnesota Political Presidential Primary on Tuesday March 3, 2020
DFL State Convention on May 31, 2020
State Primary Election: August 11, 2020
National Democratic Convention on July 13, 2020
National Election Day on November 3, 2020

Follow us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/groups/DFLSeniorCaucus/ (Recently updated)
Email: dflseniors@gmail.com or Website: /www.dfl.org/seniors/ (Recently revised - check it out)

Standard: The Senior News has 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 is a challenge as we have to decide which articles and photos to include in each issue, 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 continued support for their newsletter and the luxury as well as the challenges that this gives to us. However, we always welcome more articles from our readers to be sure we cover all the interests and concerns of DFL seniors.