Vote on November 5!
by Judy Berglund

Talk in political circles has focused primarily on federal issues: impeachment of the president, or our party’s efforts to retain control of the U.S. House and take control of the U.S. Senate in the 2020 election.

But SD66 residents will vote on some important local issues this year. On Nov. 5, St. Paul residents can vote for the entire city council. They also will be electing school board members, as are voters in Districts 623 and 621. Residents of Falcon Heights are voting for a mayor and two city council members. And Ramsey County residents will vote in a special election to replace Commissioner Blake Huffman, who resigned in summer.

Following is a breakdown of races in our district:

Local elections in SD66

Special Election, County Commissioner, District 1
A special election is required to fill the position of Ramsey County Commissioner Blake Huffman, who resigned June 1. The term expires in 2020. As the result of a special primary election in August, candidates are:
- Nicole Joy Frethem
- Randy Jessup

St. Paul City Council—DFL-endorsed candidates
The entire St. Paul City Council will be elected. Twenty-eight candidates are running for seven seats. The DFL has endorsed these candidates:
- Dai Thao, Ward 1
- Rebecca Noecker, Ward 2
- Chris Tolbert, Ward 3
- Mitra Jalali Nelson, Ward 4
- Amy Brendmoen, Ward 5
- Jane Prince, Ward 7

St. Paul School Board—DFL-endorsed candidates
Ten candidates are vying for four positions on the St. Paul School Board. The DFL and the St. Paul Federation of Educators have endorsed three:
- Chairwoman Zuki Ellis, incumbent
- Steve Marchese, incumbent
- Chauntlll Allen

Falcon Heights Mayor, City Council
Ten candidates are vying for four positions on the St. Paul School Board. The DFL and the St. Paul Federation of Educators have endorsed three:
- Mayor Randy Gustafson, appointed by the City Council last spring after Peter Lindstrom resigned to join the Metropolitan Council, is seeking to be elected to the position. Gustafson is being challenged by Dave Thomas.
- Three candidates are seeking two at-large seats on the City Council. They are Kay Andrews, Adam Sychla, and Yakasah Wehyee.

District 623—Roseville Area Schools
- Three candidates are seeking three open positions. They are incumbents Todd Anderson and Mike Boguszewski and newcomer Rose Chu.

District 621—Mounds View Schools
- Five persons have filed for four open positions. They are incumbents Heidi Danielsion, Jonathan Weinlagen, and Sandra Westerman. Others are James DeMay and Derek Whitcomb.

For more information about elections or voting, contact the website of the Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon, sos.state.mn.us
Minnesota House “mini-session” allows lawmakers to hear new statewide perspectives
by Rep. John Lesch

If you’ve been reading the news lately, you’ll have noticed that there is a growing divide between metro and outstate Minnesota. It seems that the rural map is turning red, the metro is blue, and greater Minnesota does not feel that we in the cities understand their concerns. That’s one of the reasons why, this fall, the Minnesota Legislature brought back a tradition that had been dormant for twenty-two years. Between 1987 and 1997, the Minnesota House held fourteen “mini-sessions” all across the state to hear from Minnesotans about their experiences, viewpoints, and expertise. Even for Minnesotans who live within a reasonable distance of the Capitol, attending hearings of the Minnesota State Legislature to provide input can be inconvenient and time-consuming. When you’re facing a multi-hour drive, planning a visit can become extremely difficult. Distance shouldn’t be a barrier to participation in our government.

From October 2 through 4, more than 100 state representatives of both parties descended upon southeastern Minnesota for a mini-session, bringing the State Capitol to Winona, Rochester, Austin, and other surrounding communities. My colleagues and I participated in public hearings and site visits at places including the Mayo Clinic, Hormel, Winona State University, the Mississippi River, city halls, trout streams, and more.

One of the highest priorities for House DFLers is to address the high cost of prescription drugs, including insulin. This past session, we made some progress, including oversight of middlemen known as pharmacy benefit managers, but much more needs to be done to rein in the obscene cost for medication Minnesotans need to live. During the mini-session, the House Health and Human Services Finance Division met at the University of Minnesota’s Rochester campus to tackle this problem impacting too many Minnesotans.

Dr. Vincent Rajkumar, a professor of medicine at Mayo Clinic, gave a broad overview of pharmaceutical drug prices and some reasons why they are so high, including vulnerable populations being willing to pay any price for access to life-saving drugs, pharmaceutical monopolies, lockstep pricing, and the inability for Medicare to negotiate prices. We also heard from Eric Tichy, Mayo’s Vice Chair of Pharmacy Solutions, who discussed Civica Rx, a new nonprofit drug manufacturer of which Mayo is a partner. On the very day of the hearing, Civica delivered its first drug, an injectable antibiotic, to a hospital in Utah. We also heard from an independent pharmacist who outlined the pressures she faces and the challenges customers have in affording their medication.

Clearly, the status quo isn’t working, especially as drugs necessary for life like insulin have tripled in price over the past decade. At the hearing in Rochester, I had the opportunity to present an update on HF 4, my legislation to prohibit unconscionable prescription drug price gouging in Minnesota. The DFL-led House approved the bill this past session, but the Republican-led Senate stood with Big Pharma to block it. I’m committed to keep fighting for this and other solutions to ensure all Minnesotans can afford the medications they need for an excellent quality of life.

In Winona, I convened members of the House Judiciary Committee, which I chair, for a visit to the Winona County Court House. There, we received a tour and heard valuable perspectives about the justice system in southeastern Minnesota. For many individuals charged with drug crimes, treatment is a much more productive alternative to incarceration. We got to hear from a person who was facing his fifth prison sentence. He was instead given the opportunity to divert his sentence to Treatment Court, which provided an alternative to time behind bars if he would fully commit to taking the steps to overcome his addiction. He successfully completed the program and has now been sober more than three years, is holding down steady employment, and has parenting time with his kids. In short, the experience was life-changing. Third Judicial District officials also discussed the multicounty Veterans Court they recently launched. Compared to traditional courts, models like this can more effectively deal with the unique situations facing those who have served our nation, while holding them accountable and ensuring they have resources for drug or alcohol addiction, PTSD, or other mental health conditions.

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All Minnesotans deserve an accessible and responsive government. We can learn a great deal about what's working, as well as about the challenges people face, when we travel the state for events like the mini-session. By taking the legislature on the road, the Minnesota House DFL is delivering on this key value for everybody, no matter where they live. And, with increased dedication to the perspectives of our outstate friends, we can enable Governor Walz's vision of “One Minnesota.”

Building hope in a time of hatred and division: Greta Thunberg overpowers Donald Trump

by Sen. John Marty

In these times when President Trump has been maliciously working to undermine our entire democratic system, spreading hatred, fear, and division across the globe, a sense of despair hits many. Certainly, some asylum-seekers coming to America feel that way, likewise for the Kurdish people who were abandoned by Trump’s abrupt decision to leave them at the mercy of Turkey’s military. Our environmental and consumer protections are stripped away, and our social safety net is being torn apart. This is a difficult time for humanity.

But we do not surrender to the President’s bullying and intimidation. We fight back and work to move society forward. In doing so, it is helpful to seek inspiration from others. There are thousands of reasons for hope. One illustration:

One year ago, Greta Thunberg, a sixteen-year-old Swedish school girl, began a one-person strike, skipping school to protest outside of the Swedish Parliament, demanding action to address the climate crisis. From that small individual action, she built a huge international following, with students from around the world joining her “Fridays for the Future” strike. The Global Climate Strike last month drew more than seven million people in 185 different countries.

Greta spoke bluntly at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit on September 23, saying:

“This is all wrong. I shouldn’t be standing here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to me for hope? How dare you! You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I’m one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction. And all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!”

She explains her terse manner of speaking: “I was diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome, OCD, and selective mutism. That basically means I only speak when I think it’s necessary. Now is one of those moments.”

Not surprisingly, Donald Trump and other right-wing leaders have mocked her. Rather than attempt to rebut her message they make ad hominem attacks on her and her autism.

But Thunberg has not backed down. When Trump tweeted in response to her grim statement at the UN, “She seems like a very happy young girl looking forward to a bright and wonderful future,” she responded by changing her Twitter biography, using Trump’s words, and then questioning “why grown-ups would choose to mock children and teenagers for just communicating and acting on the science when they could do something good instead.”

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Greta Thunberg, a Swedish school girl, is beginning to overpower the President of the United States. We haven’t stopped Trump’s destructive path yet, but when future generations look back at 2019, they will thank Greta for standing up and speaking out for their future. It is amazing how one person with courage can build such support for change. Look at the world of difference one year makes:

(Left) Greta Thunberg sits outside the Swedish parliament building demanding action for climate change, August 2018. (Right) People protest during a Climate Strike march in San Francisco, September 2019. Photos courtesy of Business Insider.

Thank you, Greta! And thank you to each of you who are among the millions who are also speaking out!

With the climate crisis and many other urgent challenges ahead, we need to work aggressively, on an individual and community basis, to address them. We can succeed, especially when we know that we are surrounded by others who will join our efforts.
The last few months here at Ramsey County have been occupied by our 2020-2021 budget process. Vetting the budget is arguably our most important responsibility on the Board of Commissioners, and all of us have been working actively throughout this year to ensure that our priorities and needs are included in the document.

Ramsey County is one of only a few jurisdictions in Minnesota to practice biennial budgeting, which is important because it gives our staff and residents greater stability in knowing our path forward during multiple years, and not simply during the coming year. Every two years, the county manager (a position created in Ramsey County’s unique Home Rule Charter) initiates an extensive process involving department heads from across the organization as well as each of the commissioners individually. The Ramsey County Manager’s Office is responsible for synthesizing the feedback he receives from all of these individuals and departments into priorities and then finally into hard numbers. Once this is complete, the proposed budget is released to the Board of Commissioners at the very same time as it is released to the public, and is subject to several months of hearings and refinement before it is approved.

This year, the county manager worked hard to keep budget increases to a minimum by proactively engaging department heads to identify areas where spending could be cut, reallocated, or consolidated. This helped Ramsey County to set a levy increase of 4.75 percent in 2020 and 4.5 percent in 2021, significantly less than other metro counties (compare to Washington County’s 5.94 percent, or Anoka County’s 4.97 percent). The primary driver of this increase is inflation; although less than half of Ramsey County’s budget comes from the property tax levy, our other sources of funding such as state and federal grants have stayed static or even decreased. This means that inflation, increased health-care costs, and cost-of-living salary increase for our employees must come almost exclusively from the property-tax levy.

The county manager’s proposed budget includes several new initiatives, although they constitute only a small percentage of the county’s budget growth. These include Transforming Systems Together, an effort to apply the lessons of our Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative to other county programs in order to reduce racial disparities in how we do business and deliver services; Residents First, a comprehensive effort to improve our customer experience to emphasize the needs of people receiving services and not internal goals; and Building a 21st Century Parks & Recreation System, which will work to reimagine our county parks system to align with our county’s changing needs and demographics.

I know from the feedback of my constituents and from my own experience that it has been difficult for many of our residents to shoulder the burden of additional property-tax increases. I have been consistent in pushing the county manager to keep these increases as low as is feasible and to seek economies wherever possible. At the same time, I have a responsibility as commissioner to ensure that our services are adequately funded, that our hard-working employees receive the compensation they deserve, and that we continue to work to ensure that we treat everyone in our community fairly and with dignity. Unfortunately, some amount of levy increase will be a reality until the Minnesota State Legislature steps up to the plate with other sources of revenue.

Please reach out to my office with any thoughts or concerns about the proposed budget. We will have a public hearing about the proposal on November 25 at 6:30 p.m. at the Ramsey County Library in Maplewood. If you wish to speak, I encourage you to sign up in advance to ensure that you will have a good spot in line.
Enjoying hummingbirds in Minnesota
by Gwen Willems

One of my favorite bird-watching memories is of hummingbirds at Itasca State Park. We sat on the upper level of the two-story wooden-log deck behind the Douglas Lodge. How idyllic in mid-summer to enjoy warm sunny weather, a view of Lake Itasca, trees, and numerous hummingbirds dipping in and out of multiple bird feeders. We lolled for hours, watching and photographing the hummingbirds, sipping coffee, and tracking our card play on a cribbage board. The Itasca gift shops did a wonderful job of offering something we couldn’t resist—attractive cribbage boards, appropriately shaped as loons and fish.

I’m fascinated with hummingbirds, so small, swift, and beautifully colorful. Their long bills are perfectly shaped to probe into the centers of trumpet-shaped flowers in the red, orange, and bright pink shades they prefer. With their fringed, forked tongues, they actually lick the nectar and draw it up with capillary action. They help the plants, too. As they take nectar, pollen dusts the heads of hummingbirds, and they deposit the pollen on the next blossom they visit. Hummingbirds are the smallest of birds, typically 3 to 5 inches long, in one of the largest groups of birds, the Trochilidae family. They are named for the sound of their beating wings.

Of the more than 300 known species of hummingbirds, the one we see in spring in Minnesota is the ruby-throated hummingbird (Archilocus colubris), which weighs in at 3 grams and has traveled 500 to 600 miles from their winter homes in the Gulf of Mexico. If you notice hummingbirds with iridescent green backs but not the ruby throats, you’ve sighted females. After impregnation, the female is on her own, building a nest, incubating her two eggs, and raising the nestlings.

The sugary nectar of flowers provides up to 90 percent of a hummingbird’s diet. They also need the protein in insects, such as spiders, gnats, fruit flies, and caterpillars. To keep up with their speedy metabolisms, 60 to 80 wing beats per second in direct flight, and adaptable flight (hovering, backward, forward, up, down, and upside down), hummingbirds eat a lot. Intake is half their body weight daily, feeding every 10 to 15 minutes, and visiting 1,000 to 2,000 flowers per day. At night, hummingbirds go into torpor, a deep sleep-like state with lowered body temperature and heart rate.

To attract hummingbirds, just place one or more hummingbird feeders in different parts of your yard, far enough apart so the birds cannot see each other and have one bird dominate others. To make the nectar for feeders, dissolve ¼ cup refined white sugar (not honey) in 1 cup boiling water, cool, and fill the feeder. Extra nectar can be refrigerated. Hang feeders in the shade to avoid fermentation, change the sugar water every two to four days, and clean feeders weekly.

Or a simpler way of luring hummingbirds to your yard is by growing any of a variety of plants in a pesticide-free yard. They especially like:

- Beebalm/bergamot
- Bleeding heart
- Cardinal flower
- Columbine
- Honeysuckle
- Lantana
- Salvia

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More interesting facts about hummingbirds:

- Lightweight hummingbirds have 1,000 to 1,500 feathers, the fewest of any bird species.
- A ruby-throated hummingbird’s heart rate averages 225 beats per minute at rest and can exceed 1,200 beats per minute when flying.
- The typical lifespan is 3 to 5 years, but can be up to 12 years.
- Hummingbirds digest natural sucrose in 20 minutes with 97 percent efficiency converting sugar into energy.
- The eggs of the smaller hummingbirds are only the size of a coffee bean and their nests the size of walnut shells.
- Hummingbirds go about 30 mph in indirect flight and more than 45 mph in courtship dives.
- Scientists think hummingbirds have binocular vision and can see a feeder three-fourths of a mile away.

Gwen is co-chair of the Capitol Region Watershed District Citizen Advisory Committee.
Joint leadership report on SD66 DFL activities
by SD66 Chair Ryan Lee and SD66 Vice Chair Katrina Lee

2020 is shaping up to be an active year in politics, and we now have several challengers in races for the Minnesota House seats 66A and 66B. One of the biggest contentions within our party in 2016 surrounded the perceived favoritism of the party elite toward one presidential candidate over the other. Lower-level units must also avoid any perceived favoritism, and it is imperative that the party itself appear fair during the endorsing and nomination process. To that end, the DFL constitution and bylaws already provide guidance and restrictions on what certain party officers are able to do during the nominating process:

ARTICLE III
GENERAL RULES AND POLICY

Section 7. Party Officer Rules.

Subsection C. Limitations on Activities. The State DFL chair and vice chair and paid employees of the State DFL Party shall refrain from endorsing or promoting the endorsement of candidates prior to their official endorsement by the appropriate party organization. The chair and vice chair of each other party unit shall refrain from endorsing or promoting the endorsement of candidates in their party unit or any lower-level unit prior to the official endorsement by the appropriate party organization. Nothing in this provision shall be interpreted to prohibit recruitment of candidates.

Per the above rules, the SD66 DFL chair and vice chair will remain neutral throughout the campaign until SD66 DFL has endorsed a candidate. The rest of the SD66 Central and Executive Committee members are not bound by the above limitations on activities, except that once a candidate is endorsed, no central or executive committee member can support unendorsed candidates:

ADDITION A: RULE BOOK OF THE MINNESOTA DFL PARTY
GENERAL RULES FOR ALL MEETINGS

Malfeasance—Opposing DFL Endorsed Candidates. Personal endorsement, financial assistance or other support or assistance by a party officer or official to a candidate running in opposition to an endorsed DFL candidate shall constitute malfeasance and shall be cause for removal from office.

Because we also want to be able to recruit candidates and not make them feel like the SD66 DFL or the party is opaque or gatekeeping, our senate district will abide by the following guidelines during the nomination process:

• **We will be welcoming to all interested candidates.** The chair and/or vice chair are happy to meet with prospective candidates seeking the SD66 DFL endorsement in the interest of answering questions and providing an overview of the caucusing/endorsing process, as well as to elaborate on any of these guidelines.

• **We will make opportunities to speak available.** Campaign speeches have their own designated time slot during our central committee meetings. The expectations for speakers at SD66 DFL meetings is documented here: [http://sd66-dfl.org/meetings#speakerexpectations](http://sd66-dfl.org/meetings#speakerexpectations)

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• **Restrictions on in-person or financial support.** The chair and vice chair will not accept invitations to candidates’ campaign events or fundraisers, nor will they contribute money. Central and executive committee members are free to do either.

• **Availability of central and executive committee information.** All campaigns may request contact information for the SD66 DFL Central Committee and Executive Committee. Because we don’t want this information available to bots or bad actors, please contact us to request this information. We will strive to get to your request within a week.

• **Availability of delegate contact information.** Once the caucuses are over and the data has been compiled, the SD66 DFL will make Excel spreadsheets with convention delegate contact information available to all candidates at the same time. *Please make sure that you provide us with your contact information ahead of time; otherwise we will grant your request for this information as soon as the chair or vice chair has the time.* Note that we cannot make any guarantees as to when this information will be available, but we anticipate it being available within two weeks of the caucuses. This should leave campaigns with a month to conduct their own outreach.

• **Restrictions on VAN access.** The SD66 DFL will not phone bank or send out VAN email blasts or mailers on behalf of candidates, nor will the SD66 DFL pull voter information off the VAN for any candidates. (Note that after the endorsement occurs, VAN email blasts on behalf of a candidate constitute an in-kind donation, which must be reported and counts against the total funds a candidate can receive from the DFL Party.) We encourage all candidates to pay for their own VAN account. You can reach out to Deputy Voter File Manager Collin Murray at cmurray@dfl.org or (651) 280-7465 to set up VAN access.

• **Candidate reception rooms.** Limits will be placed on the rooms available to candidates at the endorsing convention. Candidates must all pay a flat fee (TBD) to make use of the room. They will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis, with registration opening on 2/26/20. More details to be available soon.

The above guidelines and additional information (as it becomes available) will be collected on our website at the campaign hub: [http://sd66-dfl.org/run-for-office](http://sd66-dfl.org/run-for-office) We encourage candidates to bookmark that page and check back periodically for updates.

**Social media**

by SD66 Vice Chair Katrina Lee

Social media is a way that many of us can reach out to and connect with people who share our interests but don’t necessarily live in the same neighborhood. It’s a way that I’m able to keep in touch with my parents and siblings on a daily basis, sharing our triumphs and frustrations, our memes and silly (homemade) cat videos. It’s a way that I’ve been able to grow my professional network. And it’s a way that I’ve been able to learn more about the experiences of people who don’t look like me or have an identical background.

Unfortunately, social media can also be abused. Facebook collects our data and looks the other way when third parties misuse that data. Foreign governments try to sway our citizens and sow divisions with false information. Our president uses social media to spout his hatred and gloat over his enemies. And people who are looking for a fight can spread negativity and enflame entire communities with their comments.

Because of the help—and harm—social media can bring to our lives, we felt it was important for the SD66 DFL to have policies governing the organization’s social media use. As of our August meeting, the below policies govern our Facebook page (and our Twitter page, when it’s updated). Groups that want us to boost their message will also need to abide by these policies, which were crafted with help from some of our dedicated volunteers.

SD66 will continue to use Facebook posts and ads to reach our neighbors and promote Get Out the Vote (GOTV) efforts, but we have to be responsible about it and promote civility wherever we can. Thank you for helping to keep the SD66 DFL social media pages a helpful, welcoming, and inclusive space. If you have any comments concerning our social media policy, please email me at katrinajadelee@gmail.com

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SD66 DFL Social Media Usage Guidelines

These policies shall govern the use of our social media outlets by the members of the communications subcommittee.

1. **Promote DFL Values, Events, Candidates, and Representatives**
   
a. Content should primarily revolve around issues supported by the DFL platform, events being put on by SD66 DFL and neighboring DFL party units, municipal/civic informational events, as well as updates and events from DFL-endorsed candidates and elected DFL representatives.

b. Content should never be contrary to the DFL platform.

c. Content should never promote candidates competing against a DFL-endorsed candidate.

2. **Don’t Be Negative**
   
a. Avoid attacking individuals or groups.

b. Avoid engaging with controversy.

3. **Err on the Side of Caution**
   
a. If in doubt, don’t post it.

b. A good way to check and see if Social Media Post X could cause problems is to ask yourself the following question: “If the headline ‘DFL Activist Tweets Social Media Post X’ appeared in the Star Tribune, would that cause problems?” If the answer is yes, best not to tweet the item in question.

4. **Use the DFL Communications Department as a Resource**
   
a. Feel free to reach out to DFL Communications Director Brian Evans if you have any questions. His email address is bevans@dfl.org and his personal cell phone number is (612) 217-4113.

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**Social Media Submission Policies (To be Posted on the Facebook/Website)**

Outside groups and individuals may submit content, events, and other notices for potential publication/distribution on the SD66 DFL social media outlets. Message us on Facebook or use the contact form on our website (sd66-dfl.org/contact). Submitted content must meet the below criteria, but the executive committee reserves the right to decline posting content or events:

1. The content/event must revolve around issues supported by the DFL platform or be of informational importance to SD66 DFL constituents (e.g., voting information, government processes/hearings).

2. Alternatively, the content/event must be organized by a DFL subcommittee or a neighboring DFL party unit, by a municipal government or civic information organization, or by DFL-endorsed candidates and elected DFL representatives.

3. The content/event may not run counter to the DFL platform.

4. The content/event may not promote candidates competing against a DFL-endorsed candidate.
The Senate District 66 DFL Newsletter is published four times a year to inform and educate all interested parties in the activities and issues of SD66 DFLers including elected officials and endorsed candidates. Please contact the editor if you are interested in joining the newsletter committee or submitting an article for publication.

Newsletter committee

Editor: Gwen Willems (651) 646-8854
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