

The DFL Senate District Convention
Saturday, April 23, 2022

Personal comment relating to the 2022 Election. We in the U.S. pride ourselves as being a showpiece for a Democratic Republic. January 6, 2021, was the crisis: the “tip of the iceberg” facing us. We cannot pretend otherwise. Democracy is Politics, and Politics is People. Period. We get exactly what we deserve in who we elect. Information on registering to vote in any state can be found here <https://www.usa.gov/register-to-vote>

Following:

1. My impressions from Saturdays meeting pp 1,2 & 5
2. Additional personal observations from myself (p. 3) and friend Jim Klein (pp 3&4).

I attended my local political party convention on Saturday in suburban St. Paul. My first such gathering was 1972. Such gatherings convene every two years. I have attended them in many places. They have always been worth my time. I would not call them ‘fun’; on the other hand, they are democracy in action.

I was very pleased with the manner in which my own local convention was conducted on Saturday. Now the work for the November election begins.

We tend to overlook the immense amount of effort expended by volunteers to have group gatherings of any kind. I’m grateful for those seen and unseen, named and not, who planned and carried out the convention. Civil society is built and maintained by people who show up. THANK YOU ALL!

My particular high point this year was the three young women vying for endorsement in my House district. They are pictured on page 5. They represented everything positive I hoped to see at this convention: my hope for our future; representing our diversity.

Minnesota Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan and others also spoke during the Convention.

A speaker at the convention reminded us that April 23 was 198 days till the 2022 election.

The comment about the election reminded me of another comment years ago, at a polling place at the nearby high school. I had voted, and an angry old guy was coming out of a nearby booth and loudly exclaimed to his wife, “I voted. That gives me the right to complain.” I have no other context, but my guess is that old guy had and has lots of company, people who spend their time “bitching and complaining”, about their pet issue, and then vote against rather than for, someone or something, secret ballot of course. That’s Democracy, imperfect, for sure, but far better than alternatives like autocracy, dictatorship, anarchy, libertarian, on and on. To have a democratic republic is hard work, requiring working together, seeking common ground. We are a diverse country, not a collection of individual free agents.

Saturday, in addition to the usual procedural and organizational votes, we heard from and ultimately endorsed our preferred candidates for State Senator and Representative.

Earlier, we had the opportunity to vote for up to 40 resolutions delegates had submitted at caucus time. These will be transmitted to the next level.

Near the end of our 7 hours in Convention, 143 of us gathered in the school gym, dividing into what are called "walking sub-caucus" to select 18 delegates and alternates to the Congressional and State political conventions, upcoming in May. To qualify to vote, each person had to participate in the earlier precinct caucus, which this year was on-line, rather than in-person. (There was an option to appear in person.) 4-23-2022 was the first fully in-person convention in four years, and the first in the new Senatorial Districts resulting from the 2020 census.

At the earlier caucus, 550 citizens had expressed an interest in attending the District Convention as delegates, but only 143 were in the gym (not counting a few delegates from a couple of precincts moved into another Senatorial District as a result of the census, who convened in another room). The turnout seemed lower than usual. Personally, I wasn't concerned. The residual impact of the Pandemic, and the general and understandable problems connected with redistricting all contributed. The absences were, likely, mostly elective. Everyone had equal opportunity to participate.

To the uninitiated, these meetings may seem chaotic but they make sense, even if time consuming and exhausting, particularly at the end of an already long day. I'm guessing there were perhaps more than 10 viable sub-caucuses (each qualifying for at least one delegate and alternate). These represented a variety of issues and candidates. The subcaucus I joined ultimately qualified for two delegates and alternates, which we selected internally and informally. This process is similar all over the state – citizen participation in Democracy. (Every state has its own convention process and rules.)

We delegates, Saturday, and hundreds of others, later, will make final decisions on political party resolutions and endorsement of other candidates, for the upcoming election. The next round, Congressional level, endorsement all Congressional seats (mine is CD 4, among 8), will be debated. At the state level, candidates for the offices of Governor and Lt. Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State and Auditor will be considered. In each of these subsequent conventions, the 18 persons elected at our convention will be our voting representatives. (You can see a list of all the Congressional and state candidates here: <https://www.minnpost.com/elections/2022/02/whos-running-in-minnesota-in-2022/>)

Some general data: Minnesota has 67 Senatorial Districts, each divided into two Representative Districts (134). The average Senate District has a population of about 84,000. Of course, not all citizens are eligible to vote (primarily, those less than age 18 year). Of course, not all are of one political party. Regardless, each elected Representative represents a large number of citizens. Here is access to the district maps <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/election-administration-campaigns/data-maps/minnesota-legislative-maps/>. In the end, citizens have to decide the direction, and one hopes that everyone will not only vote, but vote in a very well informed manner for all offices up for election on their ballot.

2. Some Personal Thoughts

Dick Bernard April 22. The May 2022 issue of The Atlantic has a long article I would class as 'must read'. I have read it. The article is very long, but worth your time. The author is

Johnathan Haidt and I think the article is titled "True Babel" or similar. It is about social media. Tiny 'snips" from the article: 8% of Americans are "*progressive activists*", farther to the left; 6% are "*devoted conservatives*". (I would consider these two ideologies as different sides of the same coin - their only difference is their ideology). "*Most Americans... are members of the "exhausted majority", ...tired of fighting, and is willing to listen to the other side and compromise.*". I agree with this assessment.

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[Re Ukraine] I have been thinking about the relative comparison of Russia and the United States in a geographic sense:

Source of data: <https://www.worlddata.info>

The three largest countries in the world are Russia, Canada and the U.S.

In land area, Russia is nearly twice as large as the U.S. They're first, we're third. Canada and U.S. separately are nearly identical in size and together, together larger than Russia.

The U.S. is more than double Russia's population, 330 million vs 144 million..

75% of Russia's population is urban; 83% of the U.S.; 82% of Canada's.

The U.S. is four times as densely populated as Russia, 11 times more densely populated than Canada.

Geographically, overall Russia is more similar to Canada than it is to the U.S.

The Ukraine is quite similar to the Dakotas and Saskatchewan in geographic position, etc..

The United States and Canada are isolated, small and young compared to the countries of the immense land mass that is Europe and Asia. Eurasia is encrusted with lots of not always pleasant history, going back centuries.

The U.S. remains extraordinary in its wealth, with about 5% of the people, over 20% of the total wealth.

I have spent more or less half of my life in both very rural and big city environments. There is a difference; but in both we are all people who must figure out how to work together. Alone or fragmented we are condemned to mediocrity, at best.

Rural people cannot live in a world without Big City and vice versa. This is true in a national sense and in an international sense as well. We figure out how to live together or we die.

James Klein April 22. I have a not-brief comment regarding your snippets from the upcoming Haidt piece. (Jim lives in Minneapolis, this is shared with his permission).

The other 86% of us HAVE to fight. Most especially, those of us in the 30% or so just to the inside of each of the 6% and the 8% have to keep fighting. It's sad, BUT TRUE, that, for each group, the utmost imperative is to fight the single-digit sliver ON OUR OWN SIDE(S). I say this with the wisdom gained from an adult lifetime in political campaigning, and lived experience - For us, the 8% is far more dangerous than the 30% or so nearest the 6%. The converse is also true for "them". Good and reasonable people HAVE to stand up and ensure that the choice is not always ONLY between the dangers of the 6% and the dangers of the 8%, because neither of them has much worthwhile to sell.

The 8% and the 6% cannot be stopped, the one by the other, nor either by the 30% on the opposite side. Only the pragmatic conservatives can stop their crazies, and only the pragmatic progressives can stop our crazies. We don't get to vote in each others' primaries. It's as simple as that.

I will probably never become a Republican, never work for a Republican. That could change, but as things are now... no. However, I am now almost a decade in to an era in which I have on occasion voted for a Republican. If the choice is among one of our 8%ers and a member of their 30%, the choice for me is crystal clear. Vote for the person who is actually interested in doing the job they are running for, competently and effectively. Even if the short-term results may not be what I would optimally desire.

The long-term danger of putting any unit of government in the hands of the extremists is painfully clear, and, in more than a few cases, we're already living with the short-term consequences of having done so for bodies like the Minneapolis School Board. and Parks Board. It ain't pretty, but it sure is dysfunctional... And a series of non-radical Mayors is all that has kept the Minneapolis. City Council in check... Just way too many people on all of these bodies that are members of the 8%, and rather than wanting to do the jobs they were elected to, they want to solve all the world's problems from those seats, employing radical ideologies.

Just one relatively trivial but fresh example: Just this week, there was an op-ed in the Minneapolis Star Tribune from one of our Park Board members, regarding a current hot-button Minneapolis Parks issue. I'll spare you the details. The point is that her ENTIRE argument for her position (there are 8%ers on EACH side on this issue) centered on global climate change. A realization of the duties, and the messy details, of actually running a park system for the good of the public were entirely absent from her analysis. She wants to solve global climate change from her Minneapolis Park Board seat. And she does not even consider what may or may not serve the people of the city in terms of parks and recreational opportunities. Don't get me wrong - One can easily argue "her side" of the issue in question in terms of what is best for parks and rec. I've seen it done. The point is that SHE DOESN'T - she argues only from the perspective of climate change dogma. I found it breathtaking in its utter irrelevance to the issue... She even went out of her way to dismiss in a few sentences the arguments being made by advocates of the other side, as not pertinent, because they did nothing to address climate change. She didn't argue their merits, she just dismissed them. Because... y'know... climate change is ALL that matters to her. Apparently.

So we have to fight. And that means we - Democrats and Republicans alike, have to do a better job of really listening to and hearing what the more reasonable voices on the other side are saying. Do a better job of understanding that their lived experience may differ from ours, and that their positions may actually make SENSE from their life perspectives. And we must do a better job of truly hearing what our own side's most radical elements are saying, and NOT even paying lip service to those things when they make no sense. Remember the Powderhorn Park "Defund-the-Police Fest"!!! And stop DOING things like that...

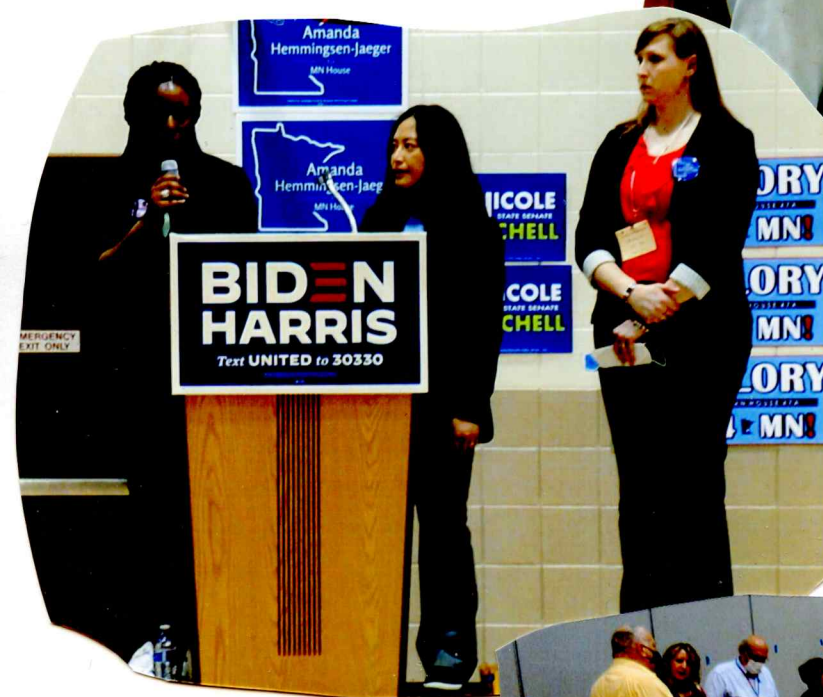
The majority of the City Council Members who stood on that infamous platform are already gone - several of them (including my own) almost completely because of that afternoon ALONE. And yet, every Dem running this November, NATION WIDE, has to deal with the aftermath and the fact that the GOP will (tactically, correctly, in my opinion) try to "paint" them with that foolish and dangerous pledge.



Candidate Glory's son introduces his Mom. Glory is in center below.



Above: Nicole, endorsed for Senate
at left: 3 candidates for House seat answered questions - Amanda in red ultimately was endorsed.



In the walking subcommittee, near 5 p.m. Yes, we were tired, and yes, it can be boring, but yes, it is very important.

