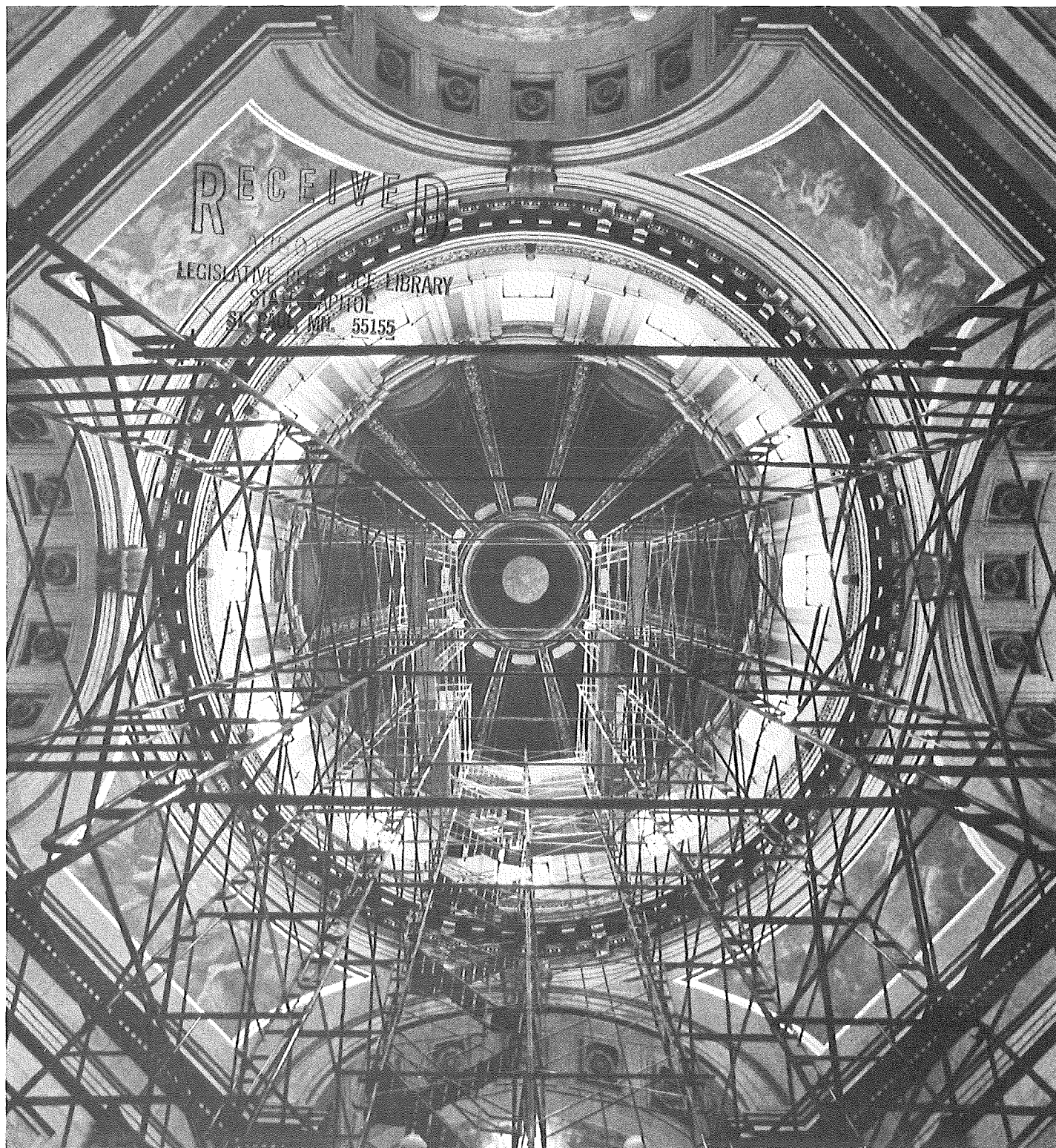


P88

88, January

# Perspectives

A Publication about the Minnesota State Senate Vol. 14, No. 1



Session '88: A look ahead



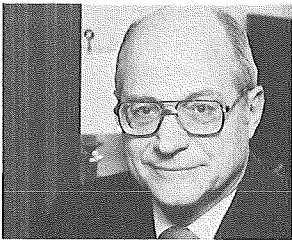
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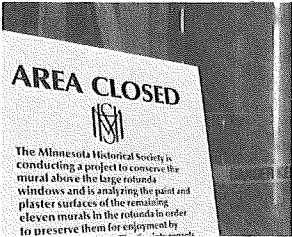
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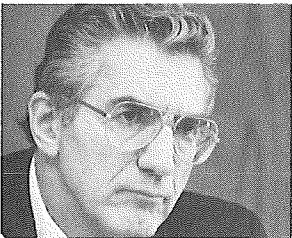
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## **Perspectives**

This issue of Perspectives provides a look at what is ahead for the 1988 Legislative Session. Committee chairs outline the issues likely to be before their committees this year. In addition, this issue provides an introduction to two new committee chairs and the new Senator from District 4, Bob Decker. A photo feature examines the renovation and restoration work being done throughout the Capitol. Finally, this issue contains a report on a questionnaire

sent to Senators about the plusses and minuses of public service.

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### **On the cover:**

Scaffolding built to repair the dome and one of the murals in the rotunda forms a kaleidoscope effect when photographed from below. Photograph by David J. Oakes.



# Issues '88: A look ahead

by Susan Burbidge

Although the 1988 Legislative Session will be a short one, there will be no shortage of challenges facing legislators; they will confront many important new issues, as well as issues returning from previous years.

Senators' opinions varied on the session's most important topics, but one consideration continually resurfaced: the budget.

The session's degree of difficulty will depend upon the revenue projections, according to Senate Majority Leader Roger Moe. If forecasts indicate a strong state economy, solutions for legislative problems will be easier. Moe said he believes that projections will be favorable and legislators will be able to make allocations adding to those made last session.

Property tax reform, transportation funding, education funding, restoration of the renters' credit, a bonding bill, an environmental trust fund and funding for

the Greater Minnesota Corporation will be some of the session's main topics affecting the budget, Moe said.

The 1987 property tax reform bill did not confront two major issues: the local government aid formula and the commercial and industrial classification of property, Moe said. Legislators will be discussing these areas this session, Moe said, because "I think both of them have to be addressed."

Because of the delay and then repeal of the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) transfer legislation, transportation funding will also be a major issue, Moe said. The solution to the funding problem lies in a coupling of an increased gas tax and a MVET transfer; the question will be how much to raise the gas tax and how much money to transfer from MVET, he said.

Another fairly significant item will be education funding. Enrollment for grades K-12 increased beyond projections, possibly due mainly to an unexpected transfer of students from private schools, Moe said.

Regarding post-secondary institutions, the State University System is also dealing with an enrollment overburden, Moe said, and representatives will be requesting more funds. University of Minnesota officials will also request funds. In addition, legislators will discuss repealing a law requiring some post-secondary institutions to pay a sales tax because it has proved inconsistent and unfair, he said.

Other important topics affecting the budget include changing the nursing home reimbursement formula, a bonding bill, the environmental trust fund and funding for the Greater Minnesota Corporation, Moe said.

Because 1988 is an election year, legislators will again be considering various constitutional amendments, including the lottery, the consolidation of constitutional officers, the right to bear arms and the Equal Rights Amendment, Moe said. A bill making additional reforms to the workers' compensation laws may also be discussed.

## Agriculture

This session's Agriculture Committee members will be examining a variety of issues, including corporate ownership of agricultural land and programs for beginning farmers and agricultural land preservation, said committee chair Senator Charles Davis.

Basically, the question of corporate ownership vs. family farms is a philosophical one, committee staff members pointed out. Davis said that committee members will look at how much of Minnesota's agricultural land is in the hand of outside investors and how much is held by family farmers. Then senators can assess what changes in the statutes should be made, Davis said.

Also under discussion in the committee may be programs for the beginning farmer and agricultural land preservation. The program for beginning farmers provides assistance for first-time farm owners, similar to the assistance given to first-time home owners, Davis said. The program regarding agricultural land preservation involves an agreement between a county and a farmer which gives the farmer a tax break in exchange for keeping the land agricultural. Legislators will examine the results from pilot counties in the program, Davis said.

## Commerce

Three major issues confronting members of the 1988 Commerce Committee will be interstate banking, "lemon" legislation for used cars and the omnibus insurance bill, according to committee chair Senator Sam Solon.

Interstate banking legislation passed two years ago allows banks within a five-state area to cross state lines to establish or acquire banks; however, legislators of each participating state must pass enabling legislation. Solon said that senators this session may look at expanding beyond the approved five-state area. The area includes Minnesota, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Iowa and South Dakota.

A "lemon" law regarding used cars may again be under consideration this session, Solon said. Previous attempts at legislation have required disclosure of a car's defects; however, senate staff members said that this year's legislation may require a warranty for some used cars, based upon the sale price of the car, its age and mileage.

Solon said that Commerce Committee members will also discuss an omnibus insurance bill. Adjustment of the collision damage waiver and coverage for flood damage will probably be included in the bill.

An attempt may be made to begin regulating mortgage lenders, who are currently basically unregulated in Minnesota, staff members said.

## Economic Development and Housing

Members of the Economic Development and Housing Committee will review Minnesota's past legislation regarding both economic development and housing concerns and assess future goals, according to committee chair Senator Don Frank.

Committee members will discuss the resources available for economic development, what types of economic development have been funded in the past, and how many jobs have been created, Frank said. Reviewing past efforts will help legislators decide a future direction for the state's economic development, he said.

Minnesota also has a shortage of low-income housing, Frank said, and committee members will be discussing ways to alleviate the problem. Federal funding for low-income housing has been reduced in recent years, and state funding has not increased proportionally, he said.

## Education

Measuring school effectiveness in Minnesota will be one topic Education Committee members will be evaluating this session, according to committee chair Senator James Pehler. Standardized testing only gives a quick snapshot of learning, rather than a multi-dimensional one, Pehler said.

A variety of tools can be used to assess learning, Pehler said, including tests and observation of students' behavior and ability to communicate. In addition, committee

members will be considering reorganization of minimum and maximum curricula requirements, Pehler said.

Committee members will also discuss the governance of the Technical Institute System, he said. Currently the system is governed differently than the Community College System, the State University System and the University of Minnesota, Pehler said.

## Education Aids

The Education Aids Division of the Education Committee will have a fairly limited agenda this session, said division chair Senator Randolph Peterson. However, members will be examining the question of Minnesota's legal and social responsibilities regarding desegregation, Peterson said.

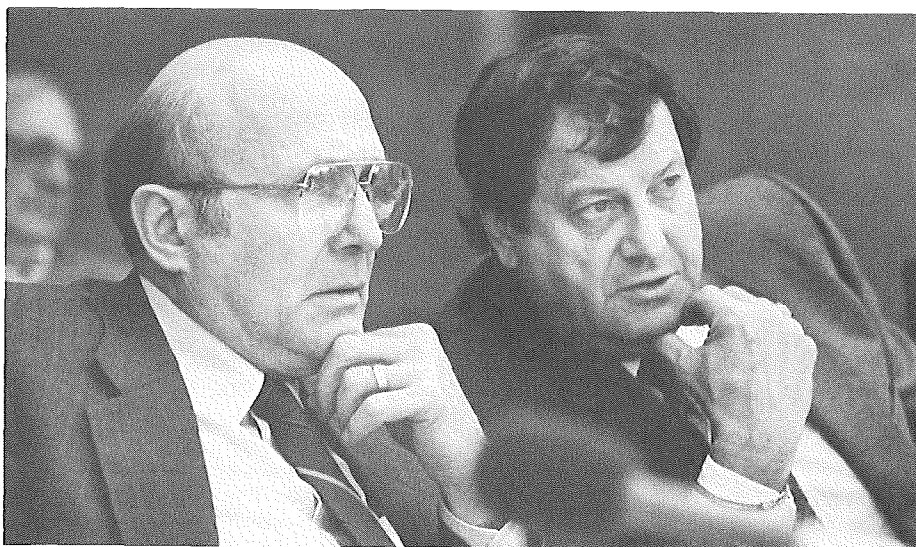
There is no question that Minnesota school districts must be within certain percentages to meet desegregation requirements, Peterson said, and division members will be discussing guidelines and limits, as well as statistics from desegregation programs in other states.

Also coming before the division will be the question of funding a deficiency in the appropriation for special education, Peterson said.

## Elections and Ethics

Senator Jerome Hughes, chair of the Senate Ethics and Elections Committee, said that he intends for the committee to discuss some general ideas about ethics. Although it is a prominent issue in our society, Hughes said he's not sure that legislation is currently the best answer to ethical considerations.

It's difficult to regulate ethics, Hughes said, because they are learned at a very young age and are composed more of tradition



**Senators John Bernhagen and Mel Frederick**

and expectations. All elected officials and staff members should be concerned about ethical conduct, in part because it effects the credibility of the Legislature, Hughes said.

## Employment

A major issue Employment Committee members will examine this session is obtaining more financial support for the Workers' Compensation State Fund, said Employment Committee Chair Florian Chmielewski. The fund, authorized in 1983, sells insurance to some small businesses that had encountered problems obtaining coverage from insurance companies.

The fund has been extremely successful, Chmielewski said, and has been repaying its original \$4 million loan on schedule. If legislators authorize an additional loan, the fund could be expanded to insure more small businesses. "There's a lot of small businesses that are not even being offered a policy," he said.

The Employment Committee will also be looking at a report exploring issues of litigation, return-to-work incentives, and other areas affecting workers' compensation, Chmielewski said. The report will be composed of a series of studies done by consultants and will make specific recommendations concerning the workers' compensation laws.

A fund to help train or re-train displaced workers is another item committee members will discuss, Chmielewski said. Employers and employees would both pay into this fund.

## Environment and Natural Resources

The major issues that Environment and Natural Resource Committee members expect to face are the environmental trust fund, recycling, groundwater contamination, environmental lien and automobile testing, according to committee chair Senator Bob Lessard.

Committee members will be examining the possibilities of an environmental trust fund to preserve and enhance Minnesota's natural resources, Lessard said. It's important that the state have some means of long-term funding to protect state lands and resources for future generations, Lessard said. Committee members will explore ways to finance the trust fund, including designating part of any future state lottery proceeds.

Recycling will again be an issue this session, Lessard said. Committee members expect to take a more comprehensive look at



**Senators John Brandl and LeRoy Stumpf**

recycling, he said, including the problems of landfills and the possibility of funding efforts to promote recycling. Although the controversial container deposit issue will probably be a part of any recycling bill the committee discusses, Lessard emphasized that legislators must compromise on the issue.

Another issue that committee members will discuss is an expanded testing program for groundwater contamination, Lessard said. The program currently is not large enough to accommodate some of the smaller communities in Minnesota.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently told Minnesota officials that the state is not in compliance with standards of air quality due to vehicle emissions. Failure to correct the problem could lead to a state loss of federal funds, according to Lessard.

Committee members will discuss vehicle inspections as a way of alleviating the problem, Lessard said.

Lessard said that another issue likely to resurface this session is the environmental lien bill. The bill would benefit both the buyer and seller of a piece of property because it would allow the state to determine if the land met contamination standards, Lessard said. A lien would allow the state to collect some of the costs of clean-up, he said.

## Finance

Clearly, there are more funding expectations than capabilities this year, according to Finance Committee Chair Senator Gene

Merriam. Committee members will be examining many different areas that need funding and legislators will need to make some tough trade-offs, he said.

Some possible funding considerations include the restoration of renters' credit, state transportation needs and the Greater Minnesota Corporation. However, there are myriad issues to weigh, Merriam said, and appropriations will be influenced by the revenue forecast.

## General Legislation and Public Gaming

Although legislators don't know the fate of the constitutional amendment addressing the lottery, members of the General Legislation and Public Gaming Committee will this session look at different ways of implementing the lottery, according to committee chair Senator Marilyn Lantry.

Lantry said that the enacting legislation could then take effect immediately if the voters approve a state lottery in the November election—provided, of course, that the lottery question appears on the ballot at all.

Another question committee members may tackle is the best direction for the zoo to take, Lantry said. Last session the Legislature approved some changes to the zoo's structure that improved its ability to obtain private donations. Senators may consider whether they want the zoo to become a private organization, Lantry said.

The issue of charitable gambling may also arise this session, according to Lantry. The



law is very vague, she said, and legislators might want to define "charity" more completely.

Lantry indicated that other possible areas of discussion include vicious dog legislation, the right to bear arms amendment and the taxes and purse structures affecting Canterbury Downs.

## Governmental Operations

Senator Donald Moe, chair of the Senate Governmental Operations Committee, said committee members will this session be considering pension legislation, ethics legislation and a merger involving the Departments of Finance and State Planning and possibly the Department of Administration.

Senators will look at strengthening the laws governing pension fund trustees, Moe said. Pension fund trustees have the responsibility of administering pension plans and investing money, Moe said. Creating a Bureau of Pensions in the executive branch to formulate and regulate the pension system will also be discussed.

Moe said that the committee will consider possibilities for providing an overall structure relating to ethics in government and other professions regulated by state statute. Goals of the structure would include educating people regarding ethical issues and devising a more uniform approach to the topic, Moe said.

Committee members will also discuss a

possible merger of the Departments of Finance and State Planning, Moe said. The merger might also involve areas of the Department of Administration.

## Health and Human Services

Under consideration in the Health and Human Services Committee will be a number of issues, some of which have arisen recently and some of which are returning from previous sessions, said committee chair Senator Linda Berglin.

Last year's welfare reform bill included provisions to ask the federal government for several waivers, Berglin said. A waiver request requiring that some minor parents finish high school has been approved, so legislation implementing the provision will be debated.

Children's mental health may also be an issue this session, Berglin said. Children born with mental illnesses, and the families of those children, may need help in identifying the problem and dealing with it, Berglin said. The difficulty in children's mental health legislation stems from striking a balance between helping children who need it and avoiding labeling every child with a behavior problem as mentally ill, she said.

Scope of practice legislation will probably also be discussed, Berglin said. A number of groups—such as pharmacists and nurse-midwives—want to expand the scope of their programs so that they may legally provide more services to consumers.

The committee members may consider legislation improving the commitment system for the mentally ill, Berglin said. Legislation is needed which would deal with people who are not actually a danger to anyone, but who do not take care of themselves, Berglin said. Such legislation would have to balance the issues of a society's right to protect its members and a person's right to refuse medical treatment, she said.

Committee members will also be looking at Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) and continuing coverage, and possible changes in the reimbursement systems for Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded (ICFMRs) and nursing homes.

## Judiciary

Judiciary Committee members will be encountering a number of issues this session, including surrogate mothering, tort liability and "hate" crimes legislation, said committee chair Senator Allan Spear.

Discussion of surrogate mothering will run the gamut from regulating it to making it virtually illegal, Spear said.

One area of tort liability which committee members will discuss is the formula used to determine payment for future damages, Spear said; some trial lawyers believe that the formula has unconscionably reduced awards.

Senators will also consider joint and several liability issues and the collateral source rule, Spear said. Joint and several liability deals with cases in which more than one party is liable.

Spear said committee members will also examine some legislation regarding "hate" crimes—crimes against people because of their race, religion, ethnic background, or other categories generally covered in human rights legislation. The legislation is basically a response to violent extremism, Spear said.

## Local and Urban Government

Local and Urban Government Committee members will again examine the problem of airport noise, according to committee chair Senator Robert Schmitz. Committee members and staff will be collecting information from other states that have dealt with similar problems, he said.

Input from a wider variety of sources might help Minnesota legislators arrive at some possible ways to alleviate the problem, he said. However, Schmitz pointed out the



Senate committee hearings allow Senators to gather information from experts and the general public in order to make informed decisions.

innate difficulty in the issue: the airport can't be closed, but airplane noise does bother residents in certain areas of the Twin Cities. "We need to look at it more carefully," he said.

The committee members will also examine ways to recodify the current planning and zoning laws regarding land use, Schmitz said. Because the issue affects many people and many local governments, Schmitz said hearings about the laws would be extensive.

Most of the problems with land use involve the infrastructures—such as sewer and water systems and parks and recreation—of cities, counties and townships, he said. Questions arise over the boundaries between the local governments, he said.

Home rule charter government may again be an issue this session. The 1987 Legislature passed legislation enabling Ramsey County to try the new governance system, but Local and Urban Government Committee members may this year examine expanding that legislation to include other counties, Schmitz said.

Home rule charter essentially gives the county government more authority in establishing its rules of governance, Schmitz explained. For example, county government officials could change the number of people serving on a board without going through the Legislature.

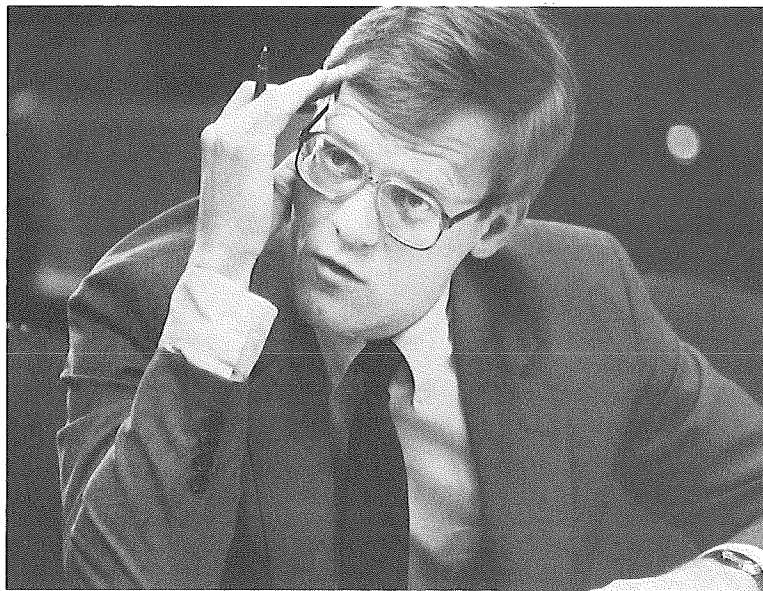
State mandates may again be a topic for discussion this session, Schmitz said. Problems arise when the Legislature mandates action by local units of government but does not fund it.

## Public Utilities and Energy

Because the 1988 session will be a short one, members of the Public Utilities and Energy Committee probably won't tackle anything major, according to committee chair Senator Ronald Dicklich.

A topic legislators may discuss is modifications in last session's legislation regarding deregulation of phone services, Dicklich said. Last year's legislation made it possible for some companies providing phone services to change rates more quickly, allowing them to be more competitive.

Senators will probably also consider disbursement of the stripper oil well overcharge funds, Dicklich said. The funds are from a group of smaller oil companies that had overcharged their customers. Since it was impossible for the money to be returned to each individual customer, the state was given responsibility to use the funds for energy projects.



**Senator Randolph Peterson**

## Taxes and Tax Laws

The first priority of the 1988 Taxes and Tax Laws Committee will be the restoration of the 1987 renters' credit, according to committee chair Senator Douglas Johnson. However, a great deal depends on the revenue projections for this fiscal year and the next biennium, Johnson said.

Members will be examining continuing property tax reform efforts, Johnson said. Reform efforts will include a reduction in commercial and industrial property taxes without raising home and farm taxes.

Members may also examine changing the elderly tax credit and the Individual Retirement Account (IRA) deduction.

Portions of the MVET were scheduled to be transferred to dedicated highway funding each biennium beginning with the 1983-84 biennium, Purfeerst said. However, other legislative concerns were given priority, and the scheduled amount was not transferred in the bienniums beginning in 1985 or 1987.

In addition, committee members will examine raising the gas tax to help fund road and bridge projects, he said.

Senators will also discuss funding for transit systems in Minnesota. Many citizens have expressed concern about reduced services from transit systems, Purfeerst said. The systems are especially important because many people who use them have no alternative means of transportation, he said.

## Transportation

The Transportation Committee members will focus on developing a complete transportation funding package during the upcoming session, according to committee chair Senator Clarence Purfeerst. The funding is needed for repair and maintenance work on the state's transportation network, Purfeerst said, and to support transit systems in both the metropolitan area and Greater Minnesota.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation has had to postpone many bridge and highway projects because scheduled transfers from the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (MVET) to dedicated highway funds have not taken place, Purfeerst said.

Everyone wants the Minnesota highway system in good condition; business people and farmers know that good roads affect business and schools and private individuals are concerned about safety, he said.

## Veterans

The most crucial item facing this session's Veterans Committee is the full return of control of the Veterans Homes to the Veterans Administration, according to committee chair Senator Joe Bertram.

Governor Rudy Perpich last summer transferred control of the Minneapolis and Hastings Veterans Homes to the Department of Human Services because of health violation citations.

The problem, Bertram said, is that insufficient funds were appropriated to run the homes. This year the Veterans Committee members will be discussing funding for the Veterans Homes and health care for veterans, as well as the possibility of a Veterans Home in rural Minnesota, Bertram said.

Another issue will be a special license plate for veterans, Bertram said.

# Changes and challenges for '88

by Steve Senyk

Gerald Willet—a 17-year DFL member of the Minnesota State Senate—resigned this fall following his appointment as Director of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. His departure resulted in a special election, which was won by Independent-Republican candidate Bob Decker. Decker, a former agricultural economics instructor and university administrator, now has the responsibility of representing Senate District 4, which consists mainly of Hubbard County and includes the cities of Bemidji, Park Rapids, Leech Lake and Walker.

Willet's resignation also caused changes within the Minnesota Senate. Senator Robert Lessard, who has served in the Senate for the past 12 years, will head the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, formerly chaired by Willet. Replacing Lessard as chair of the General Legislation and Public Gaming Committee is Senator Marilyn Lantry, who was first elected to the Senate in 1980.

In addition to heading the General Legislation Committee for the past five years, Lessard served on the Natural Resources Committee and during that time helped establish the state's Reinvest in Minnesota Program—enacted to enhance Minnesota's fish, wildlife, soil and water resources. Lessard said he has always been concerned about the environment and

availability of natural resources and feels his new position will enable him to make a significant contribution in that area. "My background has always been closely associated with many of the issues that come before this committee," Lessard said when explaining why he wanted to become chairman. "I want to do anything I can to promote legislation that gives impetus to enhancing our natural resources and maintaining a clean environment for future generations," he explained.

One of the main challenges in his new position, Lessard said, will be convincing lawmakers that investing in the natural resources and protecting the environment should be among their top priorities. "I am absolutely convinced that the state is grossly under-funding its natural resources. I would hope that this committee will give leadership on this issue in order to preserve these resources for future generations," he said.

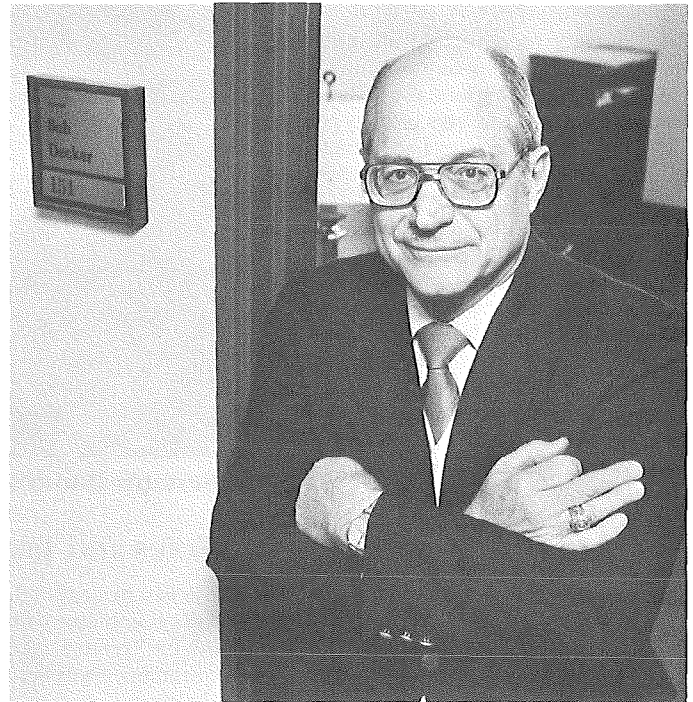
Lessard said his strongest attribute as chairman will be "using plain, ordinary, common horse-sense in arriving at solutions to the various problems." He further stressed the importance of leading the committee in carefully studying all sides of an issue before taking action.

"Given all the other issues before the Legislature, funding the state's natural resources is as important, if not more

important," Lessard concluded. "Our natural resources are important to all of us. We cannot expect our hunting and fishing license fees to adequately fund what it's going to take for us to leave a legacy for future generations. The Legislature must address this problem. That is why I wanted this position. I wanted to play a role in making the protection of our natural resources and environment a top priority," he said.

Playing a role in shaping the state's charitable gambling laws is what motivated Senator Marilyn Lantry to take the helm of the General Legislation and Public Gaming Committee. "I'm really interested in the lottery, Canterbury Downs' issues and the whole charitable gambling area. A lot of important decisions are going to be made, and I would like to take part in making them," she said.

As chair, Lantry will be steering the committee through several controversial issues, such as changing the state's pari-mutuel tax for Canterbury Downs, establishing a state lottery and proposing a constitutional amendment declaring the right to bear arms. In that role, Lantry said she will rely on her strongest skills—being fair and objective. "I want to probe a little deeper" into the issues before the committee while maintaining the committee's tradition of being open and accessible to the public, she said.



Senator Bob Decker



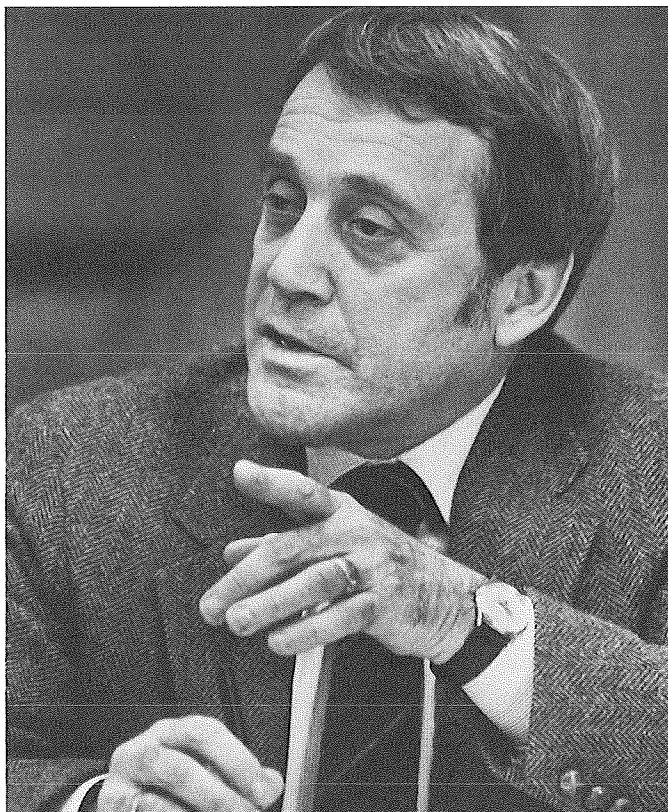
According to Lantry, reviewing Canterbury Downs taxation and financial status will be among the major challenges facing her as committee chair. "I want to get a lot more information on Canterbury Downs and their problems to members of the committee so they can make a more valid assessment (of the issue)," she said. Another possible future challenge, Lantry explained, will be guiding legislation regulating a state lottery through the process. However, before the state can establish a lottery, Minnesota voters would have to approve a constitutional amendment removing the current prohibition.

Lantry said that during the coming sessions the committee will be forced to examine the state's charitable gambling laws. "I think we are really going to have to look at the charitable gambling laws. They have only been in existence for a few years, and I think there are some changes that have to be made." Areas that need to be examined, she explained, include the roles of the Charitable Gambling Commission and the Racing Commissions. Overall, Lantry said, "This is an exciting time for the committee. We will be dealing with a lot of hard issues during the next few years."

While both Lantry and Lessard have the opportunity to expand on their legislative experience, Senator Bob Decker will begin his legislative career this session. Decker holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics, taught agricultural economic courses at the college level and vocational agriculture in high school before working in college and university administration.



**Senator Marilyn Lantry**



**Senator Bob Lessard**

"The reason I ran for public office is that I have been in public service, one way or another, all my life—in terms of the military, in terms of teaching and in terms of college and university administration," Decker said. "I feel that Minnesota has been exceptionally good to me and I wanted to continue in public service for the state," he added.

Because of his background, Decker has been assigned to the committees on agriculture, education—including the higher education division—and governmental operations. In those new positions, Decker said his major challenge as a freshman Senator will be learning the legislative process. "As a President of Bemidji State University and acting Chancellor to the Minnesota State College System, I have testified before a number of legislative committees. But on the other hand, there is a whole lot about the workings of the Legislature that I don't know, and this is why I will be depending upon my colleagues to help me out. I feel very fortunate that Senator Roger Moe, the majority leader, and Senator Duane Benson, the minority leader, collaborated to ensure that I received some good committee assignments."

In citing his legislative goals, Decker said, "I would like to see us do some things in the area of workers' compensation. I'd like to see us make it a better business climate for business people so that workers compensation doesn't cost them as much."

Decker also said that the Legislature should look at making the business climate conducive for agriculture. "Much of what has to be done for agriculture has to be done by the national government rather than the state government, in terms of marketing agreements and marketing arrangements," he said. "We may be able to do some things (on the state level) for agriculture in the area of making credit more readily available," added Decker.

Other topics of concern, Decker said, include returning the dedication of revenue from the motor vehicle excise tax to highway improvements, stabilizing the state's tax and fiscal structure and helping welfare recipients become self-supporting. Another priority, Decker explained, is helping the state universities handle increased enrollments. "One of the priority items that we have to be concerned with is looking at what we can do to help out higher education. Right now the state universities are carrying a greater number of students than provided for in the funding appropriation," he said.

Each of these state legislators will contribute to the legislative process by using their expertise in reviewing and forming proposals. Exemplary of how the Legislature operates, legislative leaders will provide these and other members the opportunity to guide the Senate in making sound future state policy.

A worker completes the detail painting after repair of the third floor interior arches.



## Minnesota's Capitol: A renovation report

by Karen L. Clark

The glimmering gold of the quadriga and the glistening white dome of the State Capitol symbolize the very word "Minnesota" for many Minnesotans. The Capitol is arguably the most concrete representation of government for many of the state's citizenry. Yet, because of the ravages of time, of weather, and of the demands of continuous usage, the building has suffered serious damage. Legislators, administration officials and private citizens have been concerned about the fate of the building for some time and several years ago began a program of preservation, conservation and renovation that will insure the buildings continued prominence as the heart of Minnesota government.

The building is both a functional and architectural landmark. Designed by Cass Gilbert and built in 1905, the Minnesota State Capitol is the seat of government as well as an artistic masterpiece. The work of

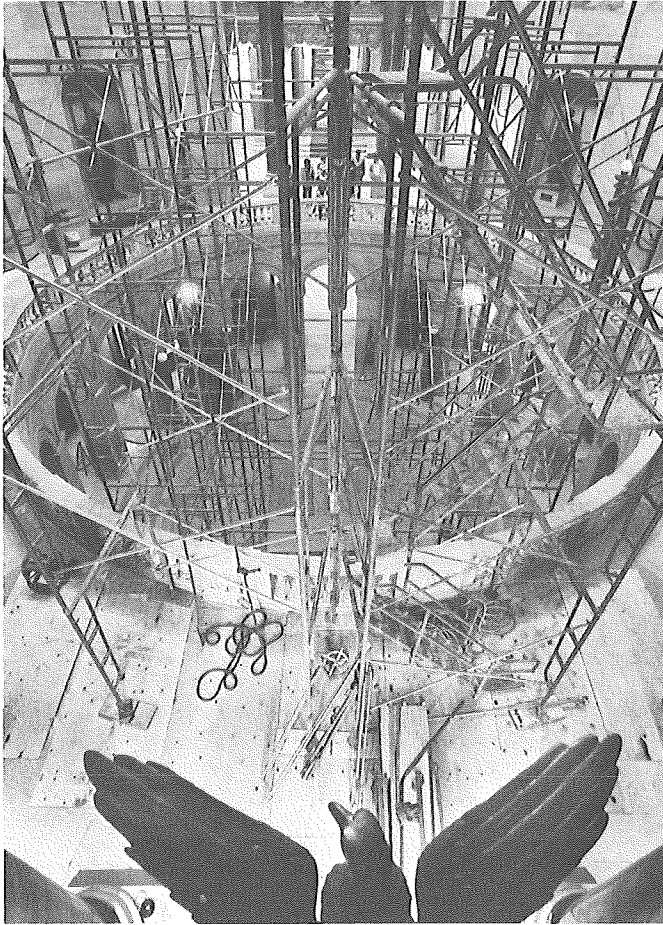
preserving the building, conserving the artworks contained in the building and maintaining the functional utility of the building has been divided among several entities. The Department of Administration, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Legislature and the Capitol Area Architectural Planning Board have all had a role in developing the current plans for building preservation and renovation.

Recent activity has included work on the interior dome and murals, remodeling of the ground and first floor east wing, opening up the great hall public space in the west wing of the ground floor, exterior repair of the north steps and work on the third floor interior archways. In addition, paint samples have been taken from various sites around the building in an attempt to analyze paint colors and composition for restoration purposes. After the 1988 Legislative Session, work on the Senate Chamber and Retiring Room will commence. In late fall of 1988, according to Gary Grefenberg, executive director of the

Capitol Area Architectural Planning Board, more exterior work on the building is scheduled. One of the most crucial projects has been repairing the damage caused by water leakage, Grefenberg said. He attributed the damage primarily to the age of the building and the harsh climate. "The dome is critical because of possible future damage to the art works," he said. Grefenberg went on to say that when the current phase of construction is completed the roof will be 90 percent waterproof. "We will, though, have to ask for an appropriation to complete the work," Grefenberg added. Included in the overall plan for the building is the upgrading of the mechanical, electrical and ventilation systems, he said.

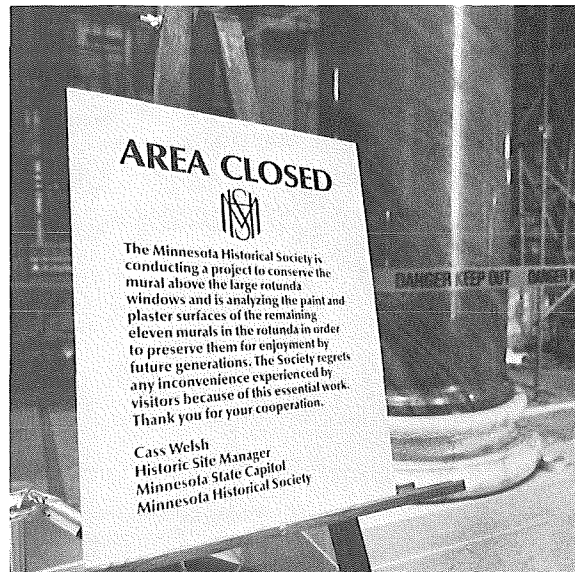
Senator Don Moe, chair of the Rules and Administration Subcommittee on Space and Restoration, said that from the Senate perspective, work on the building breaks down into three basic areas: improving and remodeling offices for Senators and staff, improving and remodeling the public





Scaffolding built to repair the capitol dome and adjacent mural.

photos by David J. Oakes



A notice by the Historical Society informs visitors of the work being done.

hearing rooms, and restoring the Senate Chamber, Retiring Room and Gallery as part of the overall restoration of the entire building.

Moe stressed the importance of planning in the repair and restoration process. "We have been preparing for the Senate Chamber restoration for four years; it is badly in need of work," he said. Under current plans, the chamber will be restored to the original colors, murals will be cleaned and restored, the skylights will be uncovered, and the furniture, lights, and fixtures will be restored. "When work is completed the Chamber will look much as it did in 1905," Moe said.

Dr. Cass Welsh, of the Minnesota Historical Society, is the historic site manager for the building. She explained that the Historical Society is concerned with the art, furnishings and the public spaces in the building. For instance, the Historical Society has provided the research for insuring accuracy in the restoration of the Senate

Chambers to the original color scheme, carpeting and furniture. According to Welsh, "the Historical Society has a dual role with respect to the Capitol—to preserve and conserve the art work in the building and to encourage public education and enthusiasm about the State Capitol."

In addition, the Historical Society is vitally concerned with the repair projects because of the potential for damage to the art works in the building. She noted that work is progressing in response to emergency situations and that part of the process is assessing what is structurally dangerous or damaging.

Grefenberg pointed out that Gilbert designed the building to be flexible, to change as government changed and that the restoration efforts are designed to reflect that flexibility. "The Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board was created to provide a flexible framework in the spirit of the original design for work on the building and the surrounding capitol

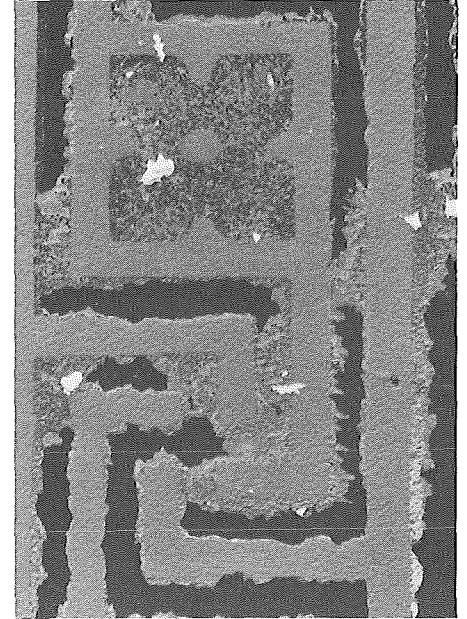
complex," he said. For instance, Grefenberg remarked that the original design had few provisions for public hearing rooms or women's restrooms. He added, "We don't want the building to become a museum. . . it must function and we believe that it can while still adhering to Gilbert's design."

As envisioned by members of the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, the preservation, renovation and restoration efforts have been broken down into several steps. The first was an inventory of historic materials. Second was an architectural analysis with appropriate recommendations. Then came structural analysis, mechanical system analysis, electrical system analysis and paint film analysis with appropriate recommendations. The implementation of the final plan divides the work into six phases some of which run concurrently. Phase I was substantially completed in the 1984-85 biennium and the last phase is scheduled for the 1993-94 biennium.

Welsh went on to say that the overall



Top left: Exterior dome repair is crucial to prevent further water damage. Bottom left: Plastic covers protect furniture prior to office and hearing room renovation. Below: Samples of paint were taken to ensure accuracy in replicating colors in Senate Chamber restoration.



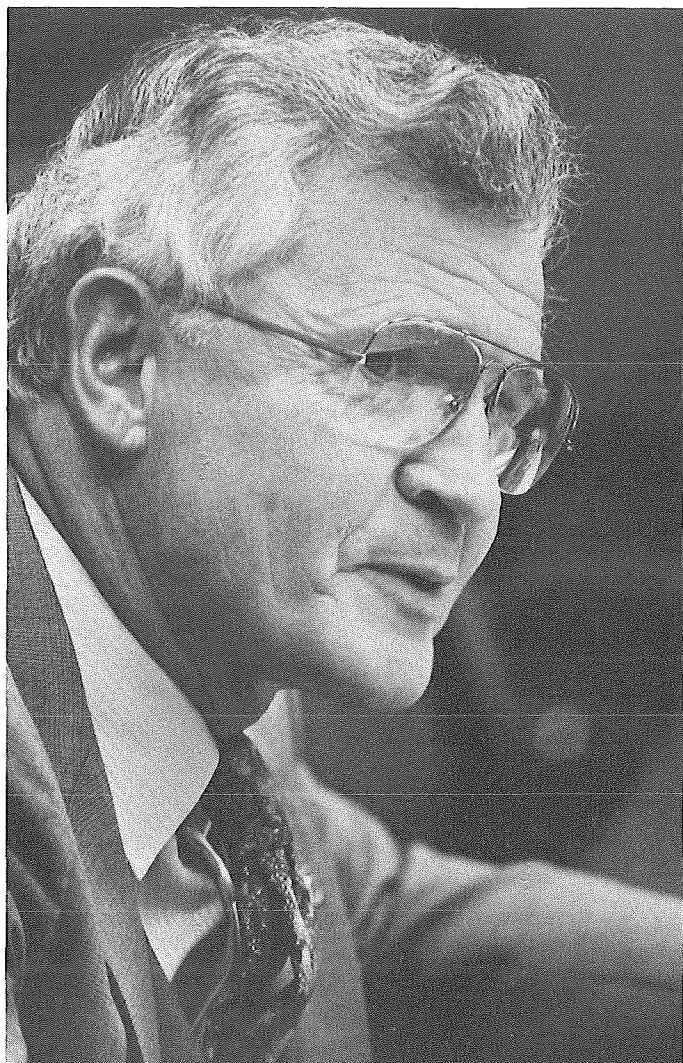
response to the work on the building has been extremely positive. "The legislature must be responsive to budgetary concerns," she said, "but they have also been very responsive to critical situations." She also said that the Legislature and the Administration have a commitment to the building and its history that is the envy of other states working toward similar ends. In addition, Welsh said, "Public response to the building is so positive that building maintenance is viewed as a priority." Moe agreed saying that there has been a strong cooperative effort in the restoration project. "The public supports this kind of restoration," he said. Moe also mentioned the support of the legislature and administration in the project. "We must preserve for the public this magnificent building," Moe said.



Welsh and Grefenberg also stressed that the building belongs to the public. Welsh pointed out that the original cost of the building was supported by a special tax. "It really is the people's building," she said, "and from the beginning there has been that awareness. It is even portrayed through the use of symbols and art work throughout the building."

"It is possible to walk around the building and see that it is meant for the public to flow through and to interact with the space," Grefenberg added. "The terraces and lobbies are designed for use and for conversation," he said.





“Being available and accessible is, I believe, one of the key elements of the office.”

—Senator  
William Belanger

## Perspectives on public service

by Karen L. Clark

The role of citizen legislator occupies a unique place in Minnesota's history of responsible, good government. Yet many people are unaware of the many facets of that role. Therefore, in the hope of gaining some insight into the varied aspects of the job, we devised a questionnaire asking Senators to express their thoughts and feelings about being a Minnesota State Senator. Over a third of the questionnaires were returned and the answers provide some illumination into the complex nature of public service. The result is not a statistical analysis but rather an impressionistic portrayal of the general response themes.

First of all, we asked “What gives you the greatest personal satisfaction in being a state senator?”. Two major themes emerged in the responses given by the Senators. The first and most frequently mentioned source of satisfaction was the opportunity to help constituents on a personal level. Senator

Dean Johnson sounded a common theme when he answered, “Being in a position to cut through bureaucratic red tape in helping people” brought the greatest personal satisfaction. Senator Glen Taylor echoed that response, saying, “I thoroughly enjoy solving problems that constituents bring to me . . . to be able to get a constituent the correct information, the right state office, or the real decision-maker who can help is very satisfying.”

A second theme to emerge from the responses was the satisfaction derived from being in a position to “make a difference in state policy and work for the long range good of the state.” Taylor went on to say that “I am challenged by the larger questions of state policy—the quality of our education, funding for higher education, child care, state spending and taxes and economic growth that will produce the jobs we want for Minnesotans. To help shape these policies in committee and improve them on the floor of the Senate is fulfilling.” Senator

John Brandl also said that the source of greatest personal satisfaction for him was “taking on the broad challenge of envisioning a better future for the state, devising an agenda to take us there, and passing legislation that moves in that direction.”

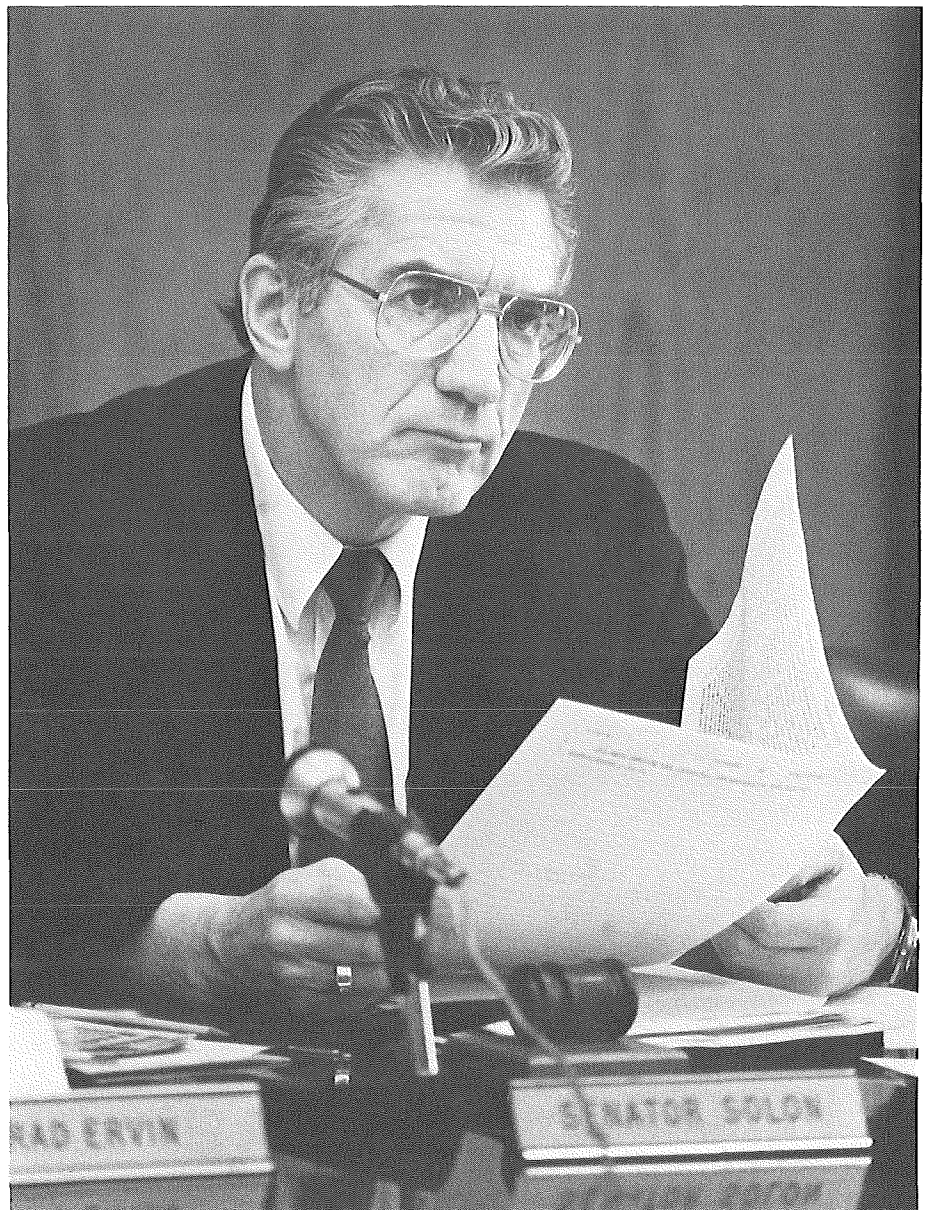
The second question posed to the Senators asked “What is the most enjoyable part of the job?”. Again, the most frequently mentioned response was enjoyment derived from helping constituents. A second frequent theme was simply meeting and working with a variety of people through the legislative process. Senator Joe Bertram's response demonstrates the general trend of the responses: “It is particularly rewarding to offer assistance that restores the confidence of people who have lost hope and show them that government can work for the people.” Senator Steven Novak touched on the theme of meeting and working with a variety of people and

mentioned a third frequent response, the challenge of working with a variety of issues. Senator Tracy Beckman also stressed "working with people and the variety of learning experiences as new issues are debated each day," as the most enjoyable part of the job. Senator Phyllis McQuaid also pointed out that "being a part of the total legislative process" added to the pleasure of the job. McQuaid went on to say, "I don't always like the process but I am very impressed with the way it works. Whether I vote for or against these bills, it does make you feel good to know you were helping to make these decisions."

The third question on the survey attempted to find out if senators felt there was a downside to the position. The question asked "What do you most dislike about being a state senator?" Responses again fell into some broad categories. Perhaps the most frequently mentioned factor was the time commitment—both during and outside of session. That comment tied in with the second most disliked factor, the time away from family. Senator Gary DeCramer summed it up when he said "having my calendar run my life" was the thing he liked least about being a senator. A third related factor was the frustration of hours spent without concrete result. Senator Gene Waldorf said, "the inability to deal adequately with complex problems in the limited time available" was chief among the things he disliked about being a state senator. Senator William Luther cited "the frustration of communicating to our constituents the complexity of the issues we face. Issues are often portrayed in black and white but most of our decisions amount to shades in between those two extremes."

Other factors mentioned were the frustration of seeing the defeat of a good bill, the frustration of negative stereotypes associated with the word "politician," partisan bickering, trying to communicate the complexity of legislative issues, pressures brought about by special interest groups and not being able to help a constituent.

The fourth question also focused on the negative aspects of the job of being a state senator. We asked "What is the least enjoyable part of the job?" Again, time demands topped the list of responses. Senator William Belanger said, "If I am going to have a positive impact, I feel the need to learn everything I can about those issues with which I deal, and this places heavy demands upon my time, both in and out of session. Being available and accessible is, I believe, one of the key elements of the office." Senator Michael Freeman also mentioned the time demands when he cited the frustration stemming from "the inability to deal thoughtfully with all the issues in a session."



**Senator Sam Solon**

A second factor that several Senators found unenjoyable about the job was the feeling that they are misunderstood by constituents. Other aspects of the job that Senators found least enjoyable included seeing good legislation defeated, activities such as campaigning and attending parades and fairs, internal politics, having to say no to worthy projects, not being able to help a constituent, traveling to and from the district and the time crunch of dealing with numerous issues in a limited time.

The fifth question asked Senators was "What do you feel is the most important aspect of the job?". The major theme among the responses concerned the long term interest of the state. Senator Jerome Hughes' answer exemplified several others: "Working with and for four million people to make Minnesota a quality place to live." Senator Sam Solon also stressed the long term,

saying that the most important aspect of being a state senator was "Realizing the awesome responsibility of the job. What we do impacts the entire state and its people, in some cases for generations to come. To do what is best for the majority of the people and to maintain the highest level of integrity."

A second general trend that developed among the responses was that several senators felt that their duties and responsibilities as senators were important aspects of the job. Senator A.W. "Bill" Diessner felt that "taking the time to understand issues so intelligent votes are made" was the most important aspect of the job. Senator Bob Lessard echoed the thought by answering "using a balanced approach when addressing an issue and listening to as many sides as possible before making a decision on that issue." Senator



Marilyn Lantry cited "Retaining the accountability and integrity of the office of state senator" as the most important aspect of the job.

The sixth question asked "If you could change any one thing about the Legislature or the legislative process, what would it be?". Changing the time demands and lessening the end-of-session crunch again led the list of responses. Senator Duane Benson typifies several senators' answers when he advised "Shorten the time away from business and family that it takes to serve. As for the legislative process—stricter adherence to one subject per bill." Senator Allan Spear said, "I would try to find some way to better allocated our time. The last minute crunch, particularly in conference committee, produces legislation that we often have reason to regret."

Other areas that Senators would change include conference committees, placing limitations on the number of bills, encouraging less partisanship, educating the public more, altering campaign funding,

involving the other branches of government and changing the size of the Legislature or the length of terms.

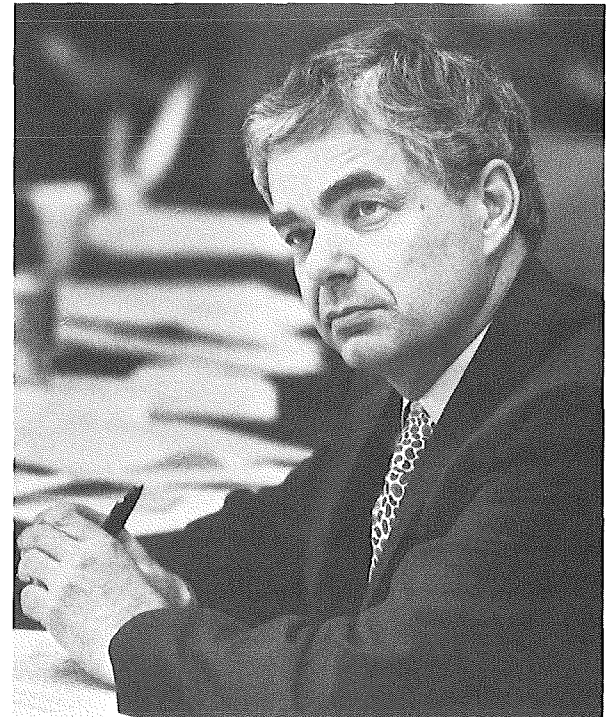
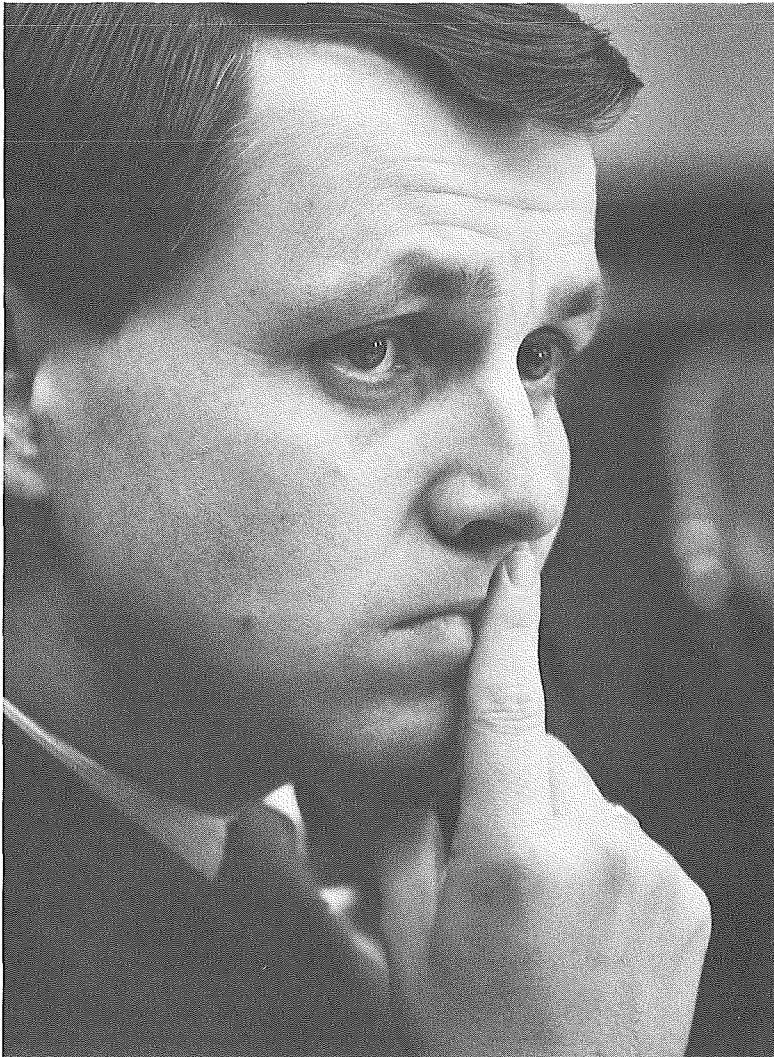
The next to last question asked "What do you like most about the Legislature and the legislative process?". The response given most often concerned respect for the process itself. Senator Florian Chmielewski found that "the Legislature is quite an open book—lots of public input which results in the best possible legislative product." Senator Robert Schmitz also said, "the fact that the Legislature is highly responsive to the public" was one of the things he liked most about the legislative process. Senator LeRoy Stumpf liked the "honesty of the process; the politicians are not to be bought off."

The diversity of people and the opportunity for service were two other themes that emerged from the responses. Senator Richard Cohen cited "the opportunity to get a sense of people and issues throughout the state of Minnesota . . . being in the Legislature has given me a sense of the

entire state that I did not have previously." Senator Pat Piper said, "the opportunity to serve and to participate in the process" was what she liked most about the Legislature.

The committee process was also mentioned favorably. Senator Don Anderson said that he liked "participating in the committee process. It's here members have the most direct effect on a bill." Finally, a number of Senators mentioned working with other members of the Legislature and staff as the factor they most liked about the Legislature.

The last question, "What advice would you give someone considering running for public office?" elicited a variety of responses. Perhaps the most frequent answer involved awareness of the responsibility and commitment to the job. A second theme among the answers amounted to cautions about the amount of time involved and the necessity of making the decision to run a family decision. However, the third theme was enthusiastic encouragement to do it and prepare to have a fascinating and memorable experience.



**Senator Glen Taylor**

**Senator Dean Johnson**

# MINNESOTA STATE SENATE

## Senate Members — 1988 Session

PARTY	PHONE	SENATOR	ROOM*	DIST.	PARTY	PHONE	SENATOR	ROOM*	DIST.
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DFL	5640	Frederickson, David J.	G-24 Cap.	20	IR	4125	Renneke, Earl W.	117 SOB	35
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DFL	4183	Hughes, Jerome M.	328 Cap.	54	DFL	4191	Spear, Allan H.	G-27 Cap.	59
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DFL	4248	Jude, Tad	G-28 Cap.	48	IR	9457	Taylor, Glen	103 SOB	24
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DFL	3205	Langseth, Keith	G-24 Cap.	9					
DFL	8017	Lantry, Marilyn M.	328 Cap.	67					

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