

Republican National Convention Aftermath 2010:
Elections for Ramsey County Sheriff and Attorney

<http://larrymcdonough.homestead.com/Elections2010.html>

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Pictures are posted with my September 2008 blog at

<http://larrymcdonough.homestead.com/RNC.html>

Note: A short version of this blog was published in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, on line Saturday October 30 and in the paper Sunday October 31.

St. Paul Pioneer Press:

http://www.twincities.com/letters/ci_16471884?nclick_check=1

On this website:

<http://larrymcdonough.homestead.com/RespondeduringtheRNC.html>

October 2010

I am disappointed that there has not been more of a discussion in the races for Ramsey County Sheriff and Attorney about the law enforcement response to the Republican National Convention and the protests it sparked in 2008. Sheriff Fletcher was in office then, as was County Attorney Candidate John Choi as the St. Paul City Attorney at the time.

As an attorney, I worked as a legal observer and photographer during the RNC. I observed thousands of peaceful protesters and a few acts of peaceful civil disobedience. I saw no violence on the part of protesters, and saw evidence of just a handful of acts of property destruction. On the other hand, I witnessed countless acts of police violence against peaceful protesters, and arrests of bystanders, observers and reporters. I carried no weapons and no signs, did not engage in any protests, and followed all police orders. All I had was a camera and bag with lens'. Still, I was threatened with arrest several times.

I saw a young thin man who peacefully stood in the way of the police, pinned to the ground by several larger officers for at least 10 minutes, even though he showed no signs of resisting, and when they picked him up, he was scratched and bruised, drooling, and incoherent. He waited 20 minutes for a medical team. The prior weekend, I observed a raid on Iglehart Avenue where the handcuff detention and search of a house full of independent journalists led to no criminal activity.

Another night, my neighbors called at 2:00 am to say police were outside their house, where they

were hosting some young marchers from Iowa. The family and their guests are pacifists. The police called in the bomb squad, leading them to block off the street and briefly evacuate some houses. After searching a marcher's car and breaking the window and finding no criminal evidence, the police impounded the man's grandfather's car because of the broken window. My neighbor's daughter was arrested at the protests and prosecuted, only to be acquitted months later by a jury.

The last day of the convention, I worked at the standoff on John Ireland Blvd. I saw Sheriff Fletcher joking with his friends. The police and deputies began shooting compression bombs and gas, which broke up most of the crowd. They selected some marchers to chase down and arrest, one of which I photographed when he was pinned to the ground. Then they cornered remaining marchers on the Marian Street bridge, and brought in busses to take them to jail.

This was quite a week. I think the sheriff and police could have avoided most of the confrontations by being more liberal in granting march permits, and picking battles over control more rationally. The overwhelming majority of marchers stayed completely within the law. A smaller number of marchers did not, but still engaged in nothing more than peaceful civil disobedience by not following all of the rules set by the city and directives of the police. They had much in common with the lunch counter sit-ins and civil rights marchers in the 1960s segregated South.

The city and county attorneys should have been more thoughtful in deciding which cases to prosecute and what to charge. While those who committed crimes of violence should expect arrest and prosecution, those who did not should not. I have been in Downtown St. Paul on St. Patrick's Day, and I have witnessed more illegal activity than I witnessed during the RNC marches. The city and county attorneys also should have investigated claims of law enforcement excesses.

Now that it all is over, after all of the violent treatment of residents, arrests detentions, and prosecutions, all of the dismissals and dropped charges, and the tiny number of sentences, most for minor offenses, voters should ask whether the County and City prepared and responded appropriately, and whether all of the money spent on both was a good value for the tax payers and good image for St. Paul. With these thoughts in mind, I am voting for Matt Bostrom for Sheriff and David Schultz for County Attorney.

<http://www.mattbostrom.org/>

<http://schultzforcountyattorney.com/>

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In other elections, I am voting for:

Mark Ireland
Ramsey County District Court Judge
<http://voteireland.com>

William H. Leary
Ramsey County District Court Judge
<http://www.judgewilliamleary.com>

Helen Meyer
State Supreme Court Justice
<http://helenmeyer.org/>

Alan C. Page
State Supreme Court Justice
<http://alanpageforjustice.org/>

Larry Stauber Jr.
State Court of Appeals Judge
<http://electjudgelarrystauber.com/>

Randolph W. Peterson
State Court of Appeals Judge
<http://mncampaignreport.com/diary/7286/minnesota-judicial-elections-2010>
(Not a campaign website)

Natalie E. Hudson
State Court of Appeals Judge
<http://www.judgenataliehudson.org/>

David Minge
State Court of Appeals Judge
<http://www.minge.org/>

Wilhelmina (Mimi) Wright
State Court of Appeals Judge
<http://www.reelectjudgewright.com/>

Francis Connolly
State Court of Appeals Judge

Michael Paymar
House of Representatives, St. Paul
<http://www.paymarcampaign.com/>

Richard Cohen
Senate, St. Paul

Betty McCollum
US Congress
<http://www.mccollumforcongress.com/>

Mark Dayton
Governor
<http://markdayton.org>

Rebecca Otto
Auditor
<http://www.rebeccaotto.com/>

Mark Ritchie
Secretary of State
<http://www.markritchie2010.net>

Lori Swanson
Attorney General
<http://loriswanson.com>

Rafael Ortega
Ramsey County Commissioner

Carrie Wasley
Ramsey County Soil and Water Board

Janelle Anderson
Ramsey County Soil and Water Board

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