

MSCF Minute



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Embarrassed and Angry

by Kevin Lindstrom, MSCF president

I'm embarrassed and I'm angry. A lot of both. I'm not exactly sure what to do with these emotions, but I know I've got to say something to somebody. For the better or worse, I've got this forum, so I'm going to use it. I appreciate your patience and understanding as I let it out.

On Monday afternoon my wife and I hosted a door-knocking event for Education Minnesota endorsed candidates for state Senate and House positions in our neighborhood. The weather was great, we had plenty of food and drink, and a number of folks from the MSCF and Education Minnesota offices showed up to volunteer their time for a good cause. It had all the makings of a great afternoon. Then it went all to hell.

I probably should tell you a bit about our neighborhood. We live in Brooklyn Park, a second-ring suburb on the northwest side of the Twin Cities. It is a fairly diverse, mostly middle class suburb.

We live in what I would describe as a nice, but not overly affluent, part of town. Most of the families in our neighborhood are dual income professional families.

I've always known that my political ideology is different than a majority of my neighbors, at least to the extent lawn signs are an indicator. I got a vivid illustration of just how different my views are from my neighbor's during the marriage amendment movement a few years ago. The "Vote No" sign in my yard was one of only two I saw within a couple mile radius of our house. There were lots of signs in the neighborhood encouraging people to vote "yes." Despite the differences, I've never hesitated to fill my yard with signs in support of candidates and causes I believe in.

As I mentioned earlier, on Monday afternoon a number of folks stopped by to support some of those candidates whose signs are in my yard.

The volunteers went out mostly in pairs to knock on doors in the neighborhood, with arms full of campaign literature. Seeing volunteers making the rounds in our neighborhood during this campaign season is by no means an unusual sight.

When everyone got done, they returned to our house for food and refreshments. At that point, one of the women who had been door-knocking asked, "Are we the only pair that got stopped by the police?" It turns out someone had called the police and reported "suspicious individuals" in the neighborhood. Other groups quickly replied they hadn't had such an experience.

So, why did this one pair get singled out? What made this pair distinct from the other pairs? The answer is plain and simple. The pair that got singled out was the pair with the black guy in it.

I apologized to the targeted individual for the experience

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he had while a guest of mine. He responded in a calm and polite manner, one that clearly indicated to me that this wasn't the first time something like this had happened to him. Even if he did handle it in a calm way, and even if something like this has happened to him before, what happened isn't okay, not in the least. It's atrocious.

My wife insisted something needed to be done about what happened. I agreed. So, I've decided to do two things. First, I'm going to call attention to what happened and make it abundantly clear that I have no tolerance for it, both as an individual and as the President of MSCF. Second, I'm going to vote on November 8. When I do, I'll be voting against candidates who spew racist rhetoric and against those who fail to stand up against racism. I encourage you to vote on November 8, too. And when you do, I encourage you to make your choices with this event in mind.

New Government Relations Chair

Mark Grant, Dakota County Technical College faculty member, will be the new MSCF Government Relations Chair, replacing Rick Nelson who is returning to the classroom full-time next year. Mark will work with Rick during the upcoming legislative session. We welcome Mark to the office and thank Rick for his many years of outstanding service.

Welcome New Members!

Hannah Asfaw, Inver Hills

Melissa Hintermeister, M State - Moorhead

