repeal of the pig-greasing and turkey scramble statutes several years ago, arguing contests involving live animals are just as inhumane today as they were when the laws were originally adopted.

And there are venerable laws that likely will remain in force forever. They’re written to forbid acts so despicable, so heinous, so un-Minnesotan that anyone calling for its repeal could well be accused of high state treason.

Hold a circus or other public celebration anywhere in the state in August that competes with the Minnesota State Fair, and you’re asking for trouble. Not even a pardon from the governor will save you.

— Dave Price

Sound basis behind laws

Although some antiquated laws may appear odd to us today, there is often a very good rationale behind them.

Take, for example, a 1923 law banning the wearing of masks in public. It may seem the Legislature didn’t want anyone to have any fun. In fact, it was a law directed at the Ku Klux Klan, whose members hid beneath hoods during their rallies.

Minneapolis Rep. Myrtle Cain proposed the law, and it was clearly in the public interest.

But revelers take heart. A provision in the anti-mask law still permits the wearing of masks “in good faith for the purposes of amusement or entertainment.”

Legislature natural step for Richfield’s Garcia

It seems only natural that Edwina Garcia should represent the city of Richfield in the Minnesota Legislature. In the 20 years since she first made that city her home, she has done just about everything else.

Rep. Garcia (DFL-Richfield) served as commissioner of the Richfield Housing and Redevelopment Authority and was a Richfield City Council member from 1986 to 1990. She was the council’s representative to the Metropolitan Airport Sound Abatement Council (MASAC) and also served on Richfield’s Community Services Commission, Charter Commission, and Human Rights Commission. And she also has been a member of a variety of school and youth organizations.

Garcia’s activity began shortly after moving to Richfield from Clovis, New Mexico, with her husband and daughter in 1971. Since then, she has made a little bit of Minnesota history.

Garcia is the first minority woman to serve in the Minnesota Legislature. But she adds that she doesn’t feel she is serving to undertake any special agenda for minorities.

“The first constituent that I will always have on my mind and definitely in my heart will be the Richfield constituency,” she says. Among those concerns is transportation, an issue, says Garcia, that played a big role in her upset win over three-term incumbent representative Chris Tjornhom.

Because Richfield is “landlocked” by highways and the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport, Garcia says she learned a lot about transportation from her tenure on the city council and with the sound abatement council.

So she says she was pleased to be named to the Transportation Committee. Garcia also serves on the Redistricting Committee and was named chair of the Education Committee’s Joint Subcommittee on Libraries.

Because Richfield is an “aging community,” Garcia says senior citizen issues are a big concern; ones that she intends to focus on.

Garcia works at the University of Minnesota’s Chicano-Latino Resource Center as an advisor for Hispanic students and holds no illusions about becoming a full-time legislator.

“If you’re privileged to be elected, it’s still not your seat,” she says. “That seat always belongs to the people. And if you keep that in mind, if you serve at their pleasure, that’s always going to keep you focused on who your boss really is.”

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