

# Dayton's Bluff District Forum

"The Voice of the Community"

Photo by Robert Johnstone

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## Inside This Issue:

- Exhibition at Metro State....Page 2
- Rec Center meetings.....Page 2
- A busy season.....Page 3
- Hauser Dance Company.....Page 3
- History of Dayton's Bluff..Page 4
- Hat Lady of Marian.....Page 5
- Poet Victoria Vang.....Page 5
- The Clothes Line.....Page 6
- Mounds Ghost Story.....Page 6
- ECFE says "hello".....Page 7
- Women befriend mothers....Page 7

## Dayton's Bluff Community Council Election Results

**At large representatives:** Donavan Cummings and Walter Waranka  
**Subdistrict A:** no new representatives

**Subdistrict B:** Jean Comstock and Erin Stojan

**Subdistrict C:** Pamela Yang and Paul Godfread

**Subdistrict D:** David Murphy and Linda LaBarre

They will serve with:

**Subdistrict A:** Roy Carlson

**Subdistrict B:** Sharon McCrea and Kristine Butler Karlson

**Subdistrict C:** Carrie Dimmick and Chee Vang

**Subdistrict D:** Jacob Dorer and Barry White

In November the board will choose executive officers for the next year.

To learn more about the Community Council call Executive Director Nachee Lee or Community Organizer Karin DuPaul at 651-772-2075.

## Several changes to recycling program begin in November

### Plastic now picked up

Starting November 2, Dayton's Bluff recyclers should sort their materials into two categories: all PAPERS & CARDBOARD go together in one bin or paper bag and all BOTTLES & CANS (glass, aluminum, steel and plastic bottles) go in another bin or paper bag. This sorting system makes it possible to collect plastic bottles affordably.

There are many challenges to making plastic bottle recycling affordable, and recyclers must do their part to make it work. The success of this addition relies on you doing these four things:

1. ONLY plastic BOTTLES marked with a 1 or a 2 in the triangle on the bottom! Anything you try to "slip in" with your bottles, like those yogurt tubs, must be sorted out and disposed of at a cost.
2. Flatten it! Driving around light and bulky plastic bottles full of air is expensive and wastes fuel.
3. Don't use plastic bags! Bags are not the same plastic as bottles and cannot be recycled in this program. Recycling in plastic bags will not be collected, except clothes and linens.
4. No needles! Do not put plastic bottles that have been used to dispose of needles with recycling. Throw them in the trash!

Need additional blue bins? Please call the Dayton's Bluff District 4 Community Council at 651-772-2075. Any other questions? Call Eureka Recycling at (651) 222-7678.

## Metropolitan State Library and Learning Center had a great Grand Opening



Above: Dr. Wilson G. Bradshaw (left), President of Metropolitan State University and St. Paul Mayor Randy Kelly (center) at the ribbon-cutting in front of the largest book you've ever seen.

Below: Dr. James McCormick, Chancellor of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, was one of a number of guest speakers at the Grand Opening Celebration. Hundreds of people were on hand for the opening events and visited the beautiful new library. Photos by Rich DuPaul



Photo by Rich DuPaul

Above: Visitors watch three flash pots blow off large fireballs from the skyway connecting New Main to the new Library and Learning Center. The heat could be felt by visitors in the library parking lot.

Left: Deb Vos, Metropolitan State University Grand Opening Planning Committee Chair, checks that everything is ready before the big celebration begins.



Photo by Karin DuPaul

## Metropolitan State University announces a new exhibition

In honor of Day of the Dead, the Third Floor Gallery, Metropolitan State University, is pleased to present a new exhibition entitled *El Día de los Muertos: Amor Eterno*.

The exhibit opens **Monday, Nov. 1** with a reception from 5-8 p.m. Live music will be provided by Mariachi Estrella from 5 to 6 p.m. **The exhibit continues Tuesday, Nov. 2 through Sunday, Nov. 7.** Gallery hours are Tuesday - Thursday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m.- 5 p.m.; and Sunday, 1-5 p.m. The gallery is located in the Library and Learning Center, 645 East Seventh Street, Saint Paul.

A screening of "The Frescoes of Diego Rivera" will be from noon to 1 p.m. on Nov. 2 in the Ecolab Community Room (adjacent to the gallery). The video features the life and work of the celebrated 20th-century Mexican muralist.

El Día de los Muertos, the Day of the Dead, is an annual Mexican celebration for which families create ofrendas or altars in dedication to the spirits of their deceased loved ones.

Nov. 1 is designated for the remembrance of small children referred to as "angelitos" (little angels). Nov. 2 is set aside for adults. The altars vary from simple to intricately artistic creations. It is believed the souls of the departed return on these special days and are reunited with their families. Family members welcome them by including their favorite food, drink and other objects as part of the ofrenda, according to Rosa Rodriguez, interim associate vice president for student affairs, and Santos Martinez, Chicano-Latino student services director.

In addition to the contributions of Rodriguez and Martinez, other contributing Metropolitan State staff members to the exhibition include Lupe Sanchez, equal opportunity and diversity office staff, and Eduardo Gutierrez, admissions counselor.

For more information, contact Erica Rasmussen, gallery director, at 651-999-5942 or via e-mail at: [erica.rasmussen@metrostate.edu](mailto:erica.rasmussen@metrostate.edu).

## Another landmark disappears



Photo by Karin DuPaul

At the Old Hamm's Brewery, the Rathskeller in the Sky building is coming down because the tanks inside were sold. The building, Stock House #4, was built in 1948 around the storage tanks inside. The Rathskeller was built on the top of Stock House #4 in 1965 with a lobby/gift shop on the first floor and a glass elevator that took visitors to the Rathskeller. Many community meetings and other events were held in the Rathskeller and, of course, the brewery tours ended in the Rathskeller.

## Drive for Kids at Mounds Park



Photo by Greg Cosimini

Over 100 classic and modern autos like this red Chevy gathered at Mounds Park on Oct. 10 to begin the second annual Drive for Kids. More car photos on page 7.

## Banned play coming to the Mounds Theatre

The play that was too hot for Hopkins. The play that was banned in the 'burbs last year. The play that was discussed on local talk radio. Come to the Mounds Theatre and decide for yourself if this holiday play is suitable for you and your family.

What is this terrible show, you ask? It is the play based on that scandalous movie, "A Christmas Story." Yes, Jean Shepherd's tale of little Ralphie and his quest for a Red Ryder BB gun was too much for the politically correct people of the suburbs.

However, the Mounds Theatre is betting that the citizens of Dayton's Bluff and the rest of the East Metro area can somehow overlook the violence (BB guns and bullies) and sex (remember the Leg Lamp?) of this cherished Yuletide classic and once again experience the joys and fears of a young boy at Christmas.

Watch for "A Christmas Story" coming to the Mounds Theatre this December. For more information, call 651-772-2253 or visit our website at: [www.moundstheatre.org](http://www.moundstheatre.org).

## Recreation Centers community meetings

The Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department wants to hear from YOU. Please join us at one of the three community meetings in your area to discuss recreation programs, services, and facilities. We value input from the community and look forward to your participation. Three meetings have been scheduled in the Dayton's Bluff/Payne Neighborhoods. You may attend one or all three.

**Tuesday, November 9** at Margaret Recreation Center, 1109 Margaret St., 298-5719

**Tuesday, November 16** at Wilder Recreation Center, 958 Jesse St, 298-5727

**Thursday November 18** at Phalen Recreation Center, 1000 E. Wheelock Parkway, 793-6600

All meetings are scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. Your comments and suggestions are important. We are counting on you to help us improve. For more information, please contact any of the recreation centers listed above, call 651-266-6400, or visit our website at <http://spnet.ci.stpaul.mn.us/depts/parks>.

## Junk cars? Free towing!

If you have a junk car that you'd like to get rid of, we'll pick it up for free!

A tax-deductible donation is a good way to be rid of that junk car. Your donation benefits the community as a whole. Please call the Dayton's Bluff District 4 Community Council at 651-772-2075 to get more information and to schedule towing. Towing provided by Budget Tire and Towing, 846 Earl Street.

## Dayton's Bluff Take a Hike

Dayton's Bluff Take a Hike meets on the first Saturday of every month at 10:30 a.m. in Indian Mounds Park at Earl Street and Mounds Blvd. Join us on **November 6** for the next hike.

We hike from Mounds Park through Swede Hollow Park and then walk the length of the Bruce Vento Recreational Trail to its end, near Phalen Park.

A Grocery Give-Away will take place on **Saturday, November 20** from 10:30 to noon at Mounds Park United Methodist Church, Euclid and Earl.

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Board of Directors: Allen Clausen, Greg Cosimini, Robert Johnstone, Debra Vos, and Karin DuPaul. Editor: Greg Cosimini. Layout by Greg Cosimini.  
Next issue: December 2004. Deadline for material: November 10, 2004.

## Church Directory

### First Lutheran Church

463 Maria Ave.  
St. Paul, MN 55106  
651-776-7210

Located one block north of Metropolitan State University  
**Sunday Services:**

8 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.  
9:00 a.m. Christian Education for children and adults  
9:45 a.m. Fellowship  
Supervised Nursery  
9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

**All are welcome!**



To place your church in the Forum directory, call 651 772-2253

## GREGORY W. LE MAY

FOR  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE



**PLEASE VOTE ON NOVEMBER 2ND...**

**...IT'S YOUR "CHOICE" AND YOUR "RIGHT"!**

[www.citizensforlemay.org](http://www.citizensforlemay.org)

Prepared and Paid for by Citizens for Le May 215 McKnight Rd. S. St. Paul, MN 55119

## Autumn - A busy season, again

By Mary Petrie

People who know me well will roll their eyes and toss this paper after reading the following statement: I can be the *tiniest* bit compulsive in habit, goal and tone. This is old news to my next-door neighbors, family and friends who bear witness to the whirlwind of activities such Type A tendencies set off: school and neighborhood committees; endless house projects; writing endeavors; and the occasional ambitious social justice cause.

Indeed, I recall standing up at a West Side District Council meeting and proclaiming that we, our little band, would convince Xcel Energy to convert from coal to natural gas. In the thick of my impromptu speech, nobody was a more fervent believer in this particular cause than I. A corporate giant with zillions of dollars to toss at a handful of activists? David should have had it so easy. Give me a long weekend and a telephone. As usual, reality and my vision bore no resemblance: we (a group called Clean Energy Now) spent nearly a year of hard, unpaid labor that built on the twenty years of activism that others had done before.

But this article isn't about Xcel or activism or the Met Council and airport noise or anything else so lofty. This month, my Type A physiology is wound up tight over something more mundane: the work that the change of season requires.

Do I hear a collective sigh, oh readers? Can we dish?

In our household, some variation of the following ensues each spring and fall. I make long lists of chores, thoughtfully dividing them into 'high priority', 'on-going' or 'wishful thinking' categories. I revise this list every couple of days, because nothing has been accomplished and I am now more anxious about finding the mittens than I am about dividing and replanting the coneflowers, or visa versa. I despair over the endless nature of The List: repot indoor plants; trim and move perennials (this alone is a massive task and list item that includes sub-divisions and recommended readings in order to even distinguish perennials from weeds); seed new grass; trim trees; fix broken window in shed; find shovels; get rid of ladders in backyard before snow falls; pull and compost weeds by alley; repair pillars on front porch (this item gets moved List to List every season); prepare van for winter; sort children's summer clothes into various give-away piles and put rest in basement; sort children's winter clothes into what fits and what

doesn't and put rest in basement; clean up clothing mess in basement; find my own winter clothes; figure out how to most cheaply squeeze children's bodies into close-to-correct size boots, mittens, hats, and coats.

This is the 'high priority' portion of the list. The rest is all daydream, I now realize. Yes, it would be nice to look out of freshly washed windows all winter, but our vista will have an overlay of gray summer dirt, I'm afraid.

On my worst days, I envision setting out that last wool sweater with a small sigh of competency (mission completed! We're winterized, we're ready!), only to realize that people are already counting the days till Christmas. Thanksgiving? That's tomorrow, folks. So I got those mums moved from back garden to front just in time to start the List of holiday toil? Bring back the days of Clean Energy Now! I'd rather put up yard signs and smile at lobbyists than spend one more moment at Target trying to remember which child needed long underwear and which child required boots while clerks assemble their displays of holiday cheer. We Type A's simply can't handle such multi-seasonal pressure. Let me finish my fall cleaning!

Thank goodness I don't battle these demons alone. I'm in the game with a wise partner, an able player who has seen this drama play out each October, every March. When I panic, John shoves aside the piles of unmatched socks on the couch so we can have the following semi-annual exchange.

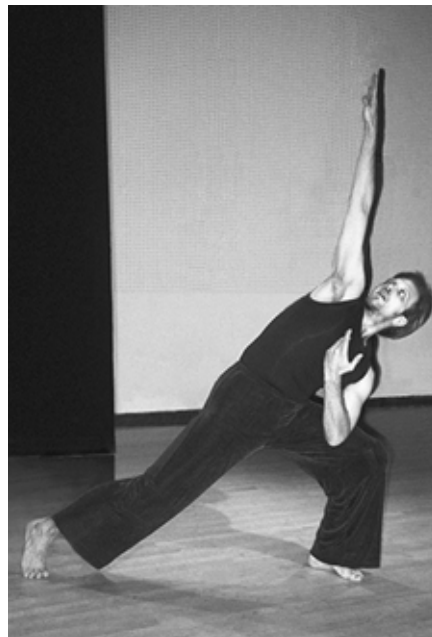
I fret: I have so much to do! The dogs track in so much spring/fall mud! The children have spring/fall colds! Nobody has adequate outerwear! Where will I find the time to attend to the garden? Do you mind eating one minute, microwave macaroni and cheese for a month?

John soothes: Every child in Minnesota has a spring/fall cold this week. It's impossible to have adequate outerwear in this state. The garden grows without your immediate supervision. Dogs are always dirty; you just notice it now. I put the pizza place on the speed dial and can pledge to good Thai take-out once a week. Forget the cardboard macaroni. We'll be fine.

Just what every Type A Sagittarius needs: a good, solid Taurus for grounding. But that sort of astrological matchmaking must be saved for another day. I have to get my tulip bulbs in, pronto.

*Mary Petrie is a Mounds Park neighborhood resident who will be writing about life in the neighborhood and ways to improve the quality of family life.*

## Hauser Dance Company coming to Dayton's Bluff Community Recreation Center



### Hauser Dance Residency

November 8 - 19, 2004  
Dayton's Bluff Community Center  
800 Conway Street  
651-793-3885

- CHILDREN'S CREATIVE DANCE INTENSIVE
- STORM DANCE FOR TEENS
- PARENT / CHILD DANCE
- DANCE CONCERT

Hauser Dance is excited to be offering scholarships to children and teens for community workshops taught by Heidi Jasmin and Jane Kahan. Those students will also perform a short piece in the company concerts.

For registration information call Jodi Griffin: 651-793-3885.

### "Hmong Tapestry" at the Mounds Theatre

CHAT is proud to announce the upcoming stage production of the original full-length play "*Hmong Tapestry: Voices from the Cloth*" – a collage of Hmong history, fanciful folk tales and real life stories detailing the refugee experience and historical facts about the war in Indochina. It will be playing at the Mounds Theatre, 1029 Hudson Rd, from October 30 – November 27.

Ten years ago, Hmong Tapestry touched the hearts and souls of audience members across Minnesota and Wisconsin. To commemorate CHAT's 10th anniversary and its achievements, CHAT is bringing back the original 2-hour full version of the play. The timing could not be better! Hmong Tapestry is the perfect opportunity for both Hmong and non-Hmong communities to come together. This engaging play narrates the odyssey and assimilation of the Hmong from Laos to America using traditional Hmong music and native costumes. Utilizing a combination of myths, songs and personal accounts, Hmong Tapestry teaches audiences about Hmong identity and heritage. Each show ends with a 15-minute talk back.

#### Schedule:

Monday-Friday: 9 am; Monday-Wednesday: 12 pm (or 1pm, depending on students' lunch schedule) - Must call and reserve seats! Call Kang Vang at 651-644-6969 or email kang@aboutchat.org. Thursday-Saturday: 7 pm; Sunday: 2:00 pm.

#### Cost:

\$5/student for K-12 Students (groups of 30+) and children under 12  
\$10/student for K-12 Students (Groups less than 30)  
\$12/Adult (Regular Admission)  
\$10 (Discount Admission for 10+ groups of College Students, seniors)

### Hauser Dance in Concert

**Where:** Dayton's Bluff Community Center Theater; 800 Conway St. 651-793-3385

**When:** Thursday Nov. 18; 3:30 pm matinee (ASL interpreter will be available); Friday Nov. 19; 7:00 pm

**Tickets:** General admission: \$5.00; Children and seniors: free

#### Reservations:

Phone: (612) 871-9077

E-mail: nhdc@tcinternet.net

Hauser Dance in Concert will include artistic director Heidi Jasmin's humorous work *Tongues*, a wild trio to the raw and gutsy sounds of Screamin' Jay Hawkins and an eerie and dramatic solo created for dancer John Agurkis, titled *Framed*. Ms. Jasmin has also choreographed *Suite Byrd*, as a tribute to her friend Charlie Byrd, performed to his jazzy and lyrical guitar music.

Children and adults from the Dayton's Bluff and East Side community will perform a structured improvisation titled *Storm Dance* with Hauser Dance Company members. Diversity and imagination are emphasized in the Hauser aesthetic bringing contrast and variety to their programs. Ms. Jasmin will offer a lively pre-show talk about viewing modern dance, and there will be an after-show opportunity to meet with the dancers.

# A Short History of Dayton's Bluff *By Steve Trimble*

## Chapter 4: The 1850s - The Birth of a Neighborhood

*"Dayton's Bluff. This is a high and commanding situation below St. Paul, overlooking it and the surrounding country for upwards of thirty miles, and is one of the pleasantest situations for private residences within the city limits. The celebrated Carver's Cave is at the foot of this bluff.... Visitors to the Territory should not fail to pay a visit to these mounds and the cave."*

A.D. Munson, *The Minnesota Messenger* 1855

When Minnesota became a Territory in 1849, there was a population boom and Dayton's Bluff entered another stage of development. Even though it was quite a way from downtown, the western part of today's neighborhood was within walking distance and was officially included in St. Paul. By the end of the 1850s, the city limits had been expanded and enveloped nearly all of today's neighborhood.

Early farms were being sold off to developers. Even though most of the area was very sparsely settled, by the late 1850s Dayton's Bluff was being mentioned as a residential community. In September of 1857, the *Daily Minnesotian* suggested that people take a stroll at daybreak and view the river from above. The paper said the area had "probably the most beautiful view near the city" and it will well reward the stranger or even the resident to take a morning stroll to this well-known locality.... One can obtain thus, a better idea of the extent of the city than from any other point."

It is interesting that even at that time, when the city was in its early stage, people were using the term suburb. The article continued, saying that Dayton's Bluff was the site of "many fine suburban residences," including those of Dr. Borup, Captain Davidson, B.F. Hoyt, and Major McLean. "All have elegant mansions [on] this hill," the article continued, "besides many neat and tasteful cottages, that seem the centre of comfort and happiness. The occupants all do business in the city. There seems to be a growing rage for country residences among our citizens. Whichever way one drives from the city, he notices them."

So who were these early neighborhood residents and why had they come to St. Paul? In most cases they had lived in urban areas in other states and came to help build what they felt would become a major city on the upper Mississippi. The story of their involvements also tells the story of our early community settlement or what urban studies scholars call "initial development" in what they have dubbed "the stage theory of neighborhoods."

### Truman Smith

One of the earliest to settle in this area was Truman Smith. He began his career as a banker and was once among the richer men in the city. In 1850 Smith built a house high on a hill—today's Mounds Park Rest

## Barnitz on the Bluff: An 1860 trip

"I even went so far... as to take Sunday drives with an affable and persuasive real estate magnate, one Lyman Dayton by name—a man of distinguished presence and native vigor, who had with commendable foresight invested his capital in the slightly eminence since known as Dayton's Bluff. His impressive dignity was enhanced by a battered silk hat—an unusual evidence of gentility on the frontier—and the ponderous fob chain with prodigious seals, which dangled at his thigh....

"He drove a good horse, attached to a rickety, non-descript vehicle, with rattling spokes and notwithstanding the seeming momentary liability to accident, got me around through the burr oaks and underbrush, and from knoll to knoll on the commanding bluff which dominated the river below the town....

"When we had gained a favoring summit he pointed out to me the site of avenues-to-be, and discoursed with prophetic fervor of the coming greatness of St. Paul, and of the assured development, which would presently transform the scrubby thickets through which we had forced our way into tasteful lawns, adorned with the residences of cultured people, proud of the opulence of their favored city and of the incomparable site so wisely chosen for their homes....

"While he spoke the wild geese, feeding among the sedges at the base of the bluff, screaming in seeming derision, and then rising by the thousands... darkened the sky overhead... and furtively returned to their accustomed haunt dropping down in silence on the surface of the river, or amid the wild rice which grew in shallow water along its shores.

"My guide and counselor on this occasion offered me a tract of fourteen acres on which I had somewhat set my heart for a price very considerably adjusted to the meagerness of my resources.... He wanted me for a neighbor he said...."

*Albert Barnitz, a visitor to St. Paul, writing about a November 1860 trip to Dayton's Bluff in an issue of the Cleveland Leader.*

Home—with a commanding view of the Mississippi River. He had a love of gardening and his home site was adorned with a variety of flowers.

Along with many others, Smith was wiped out in the 1857 financial panic. His house went on the auction block and his career as a banker was over. To survive, Smith turned his green thumb into a livelihood and was soon a major garden farmer. The 1860's papers often included advertisements for Truman Smith's "Fruit Garden" on Dayton's Bluff. He put out a catalog that listed a wide selection of small fruits and other plants for sale.

In the late summer of 1870 a reporter from the *St Paul Weekly Press* made a visit to the Dayton's Bluff landmark. "The great feature of Mr. Smith's place is his vineyard that is comprised of five thousand well trained vines," the paper said. "He was one of the first to ever grow raspberries for the St. Paul market."

The next year another paper told of a "Fruit party" that was held at Truman Smith's place. Twenty leading St. Paul citizens came in the large bandwagon of the Omnibus Company. Smith displayed ten varieties of pears, thirty different apples and nearly forty types of grapes. "After partaking freely of the ripe luscious fruit in the vineyard, the party repaired by invitation to Mr. Smith's residence, where they were regaled with cake and native wine." The gathering ended with a toast from local poet Ossian Euclid Dodge:

"For the fruit that is sparkling  
And free from all pith,  
Give us that from the garden  
Of Truman M. Smith."

Euclid Street is named after the multi-talented Mr. Dodge.

### Davidson, Hoyt and Borup

William F. Davidson eventually bought Truman Smith's former home. He had come to Minnesota in 1855 and the next year began a career of steam boating on the Mississippi. He ended up with quite a fleet and was from that time on known as "Commodore" Davidson. One of the reasons he wanted the house on the crest of the hill was because it had a view of the River from a cupola that was built on the roof.

Benjamin F. Hoyt lived in several states before coming to St Paul in 1848. From the start he was an active citizen, a founding member of the St. Paul Sons of Temperance and on the board of the Oakland Cemetery Association. He was also elected to various offices, including director of one of the districts of the public school system, and one of five trustees in the first town election.

He was a strong Methodist and though not an ordained minister, he agreed to head up a local Methodist congregation. Because of his deep religious beliefs, he was often called "Father Hoyt." He was a key player in the founding of Hamline University. Hoyt made a living in real estate and constructed several buildings in downtown and on Dayton's Bluff.

Charles W. Borup was a medical doctor, but did not practice while in Minnesota. He had earlier worked for the American Fur Company in the Lake Superior region, and lived in Wisconsin before coming to Minnesota around 1848. Once in St. Paul he made his living in banking, as a merchant and through numerous investments.

### Nathaniel McLean

Nathaniel McLean was another early pioneer in the Dayton's Bluff area and, as you probably guessed, the street is named after him. Where it crosses Mound Street is very near the site where his former home once stood. He was born in New Jersey where he learned journalism and the printing business. McLean was a pioneer in two different states. He left his home as a young man to go to Ohio, where he was elected to the state legislature in 1810.

He became interested in going to Minnesota when he was sixty years old. In the spring of 1849 he met with a man who was planning to come to Minnesota territory to publish a newspaper. But when the man got "California fever," McLean bought him out and came to the state to publish the *Chronicle and Register*.

According to one article, "on his arrival at St. Paul he purchased several acres of land on Dayton's Bluff... just outside the city limits and in what came to be named McLean Township." Its value increased rapidly and provided him a great deal of income. McLean served as county commissioner and was later appointed Sioux agent at Ft. Snelling, a post he held for four years.

### Transportation and Economic Development

Like today, early neighborhood residents were concerned with transportation and jobs. The first was very important, as Dayton's Bluff was isolated from the rest of the city because of its elevation, two substantial streams and the wetlands that accompanied them. In the late 1850s, the local alderman submitted a petition to the Common Council asking the city "to have Seventh Street graded and bridged." Property owners even agreed to "enter into bonds to pay their assessments... so as to relieve the city treasury from any responsibility."

By the mid-1850s, a Territorial Road linked Dayton's Bluff with points east. It was built to facilitate travel between the junction of the St. Croix and the Mississippi and Fort Ripley in the western part of the state. When it reached a spot near today's Highway 61 and Warner Road, it ran across the area in a northwesterly direction to downtown. Head west from Obb's Bar on Point Douglas Road and you will be on one of the remnants of the old Territorial Road.

While the creeks were an impediment to easy travel, they were also a valuable source of waterpower in frontier Minnesota.

An 1855 publication mentioned the fact that William Ames and Benjamin Hoyt had a sawmill along Phalen Creek. This "most important institution," the writer said, "is situated upon Lyman Dayton's addition at the foot of the bluff which bears his name." It had only recently opened, but was already producing between seventy five and a hundred thousand dollars worth of lumber

## The Hat Lady at Marian of Saint Paul



Photo by Robert Johnstone

There is a reason Bernie Lester is called the Hat Lady. Can you guess why from this photograph? Her collection of hats once numbered 89.

*"A woman's hat is close to her heart, though she wears it on her head. It is her way of saying to the world: See this is what I am like—or this is what I would like to be."* Lilly Dache

Bernie Lester, 91-years young and one of the fashion setters of the HealthEast - Marian of Saint Paul Independent Living Apartments, wears her hats with the confidence and panache of this Lilly Dache quote. Bernie has hats to match her wardrobe for Mass and outings; hats for her daily walks on the Mounds Parkway paths along the Mississippi; hats for the lake, including one worn on a July, '04 jet ski ride on Big Sandy Lake in MacGregor, MN.

According to Bernie, her love of hats go back to Easter Sunday when she was five years old and wore a blue hat with flowers and ribbons, purchased in Fargo, ND, to her hometown church in Barnesville, MN. The song Easter Parade was and is one of her favorites celebrating as it does the "Easter bonnet with all the frills upon it." Bernie's love of hats seems to be genetic. Her mother nurtured and shared Bernie's love of hats during her own life, buying her last two hats at Dottie Dunn's just two weeks before she died. Bernie wore hats; mostly what she called "bonnets", all through her high school years at Barnesville High School. She continued to dress up her outfits with fine examples of millinery during her years at the College of St. Catherine where she majored in history and physical

education and graduated in 1935. For many years after Bernie has continued to attend lectures and teas at St. Kate's wearing lovely outfits with matching hats. At one of those lectures, she and the famous hat-wearing Bella Abzug chatted about their mutual love of hats.

Bernie's husband, Earl, was from England where hats are part of haute couture. He encouraged Bernie to wear hats all during their life together until his death in 1981. After his death, Bernie became involved in volunteer work in the Marian Park Area. In 1983 she was elected President of the Council of Catholic Women. Bernie tells the story of being so nervous getting ready to chair her first meeting that she *forgot to wear her hat*. Only to find on entering the room that every one of the other women at the meeting was wearing a hat!

At one time, Bernie was the proud owner of 89 hats, but when she had to move and sell her home, she gave three hats to each of her friends. Still, Bernie has a wide variety of hats. And there are rules for which hat to wear when: the felt hats are worn from Labor Day to Memorial Day after which one changes to straw hats. And, of course, the collection of fishing hats is for the lake.

Bernie Lester's claim that hats give her confidence has obviously been proven true in her life. She is a woman of class, spirit, conviction and goodness to all around. May she continue to be the charming, best-dressed hat woman of Marian, USA!

### BLUFF HISTORY (continued from page 4)

annually, "as well as lath, pickets and other wood products. The mill," the article concluded, "should help the shortage of lumber that has held up construction a bit lately."

Other businesses developed along or near the waterway. One of the earliest breweries in St. Paul was located under the bluff along what is now Commercial Street. Owned by local residents Drewery and Scotten, the venture was launched in 1855. The foundations of the two 50 by 75 feet buildings have recently been uncovered by an archaeological dig.

The kiln for drying grain held 120 bushels and there was a small malt house and cellars that had been constructed at a cost of many thousands of dollars. According to a newspaper, the ale cellars were "cut into the sand rock from a series of galleries connecting the basements of the several buildings and give a large storage room, with an equitable temperature the year round." The owners were said to be selling their product as far away as Chicago and Milwaukee

## Victoria Vang - A poet against domestic abuse

By J. Wittenberg

"Does your paper ever write about domestic abuse?" was the first question fired at me by Victoria Vang, a hardworking poet, activist, and fairly recent transplant to Dayton's Bluff by way of Milwaukee and Minneapolis.

I could not recollect when if ever our fine paper had expounded on any such topic, whereby I reminded her that I am but a humble writer, featuring creative stars of our burgeoning community.

"Any paper worth reading ought to be an advocate for women in one way or another," Ms. Vang said with a smile, which seemed to me a sound and reasonable philosophy.

This was my second attempt at meeting this 27-year-old writer. The first time it seems I got lost in her date-book. Happily found, I walked with her down the new skyway connecting our own library and dear Metropolitan State University. Ms. Vang spoke of the former as a glowing resource in which we may all be proud.

"I hope it will be a place where poets and writers of all kinds can come and read," Ms. Vang declared.

This former teen beauty pageant winner and student of the martial arts is very thoughtful about the state of the arts, and with the exception of Metropolitan State, she believes the amount of literary events in Dayton's Bluff is more than wanting. For her part, Ms. Vang has published a chapbook of her poetry, and has been included in anthologies as far west as the Golden Bear State. Victoria plans on getting her most recent poems published, and perhaps she will be reading from her work at our own library in the future near. In the past, she has read at the old Coffeehouse in Minneapolis, where she told me copies of her chapbook sold briskly.

"Writing poetry is a solitary venture, and one I feel, which needs steady experimentation. We all get stuck in our ruts and blocks, and must push our work where it hasn't been before," Ms. Vang said, before doing me the honor of reading me a dozen or so of her shorter poems; all of which I found very accomplished.

Ms. Vang has often felt far from family, but says she is optimistic for a happy life in Dayton's Bluff. She hopes more literary events are in the works, not unlike those that I described to her, which Metropolitan State offered so generously this last spring, commemorating Women's History month.

"As an Asian-American," Ms. Vang declared, "I see a younger culture so caught up in materialism and violent music. I see a moving away from spirituality, and a culture of hushed domestic abuse. Women are marginalized. It's wrong, and in the long run it brings all of us down, and darkens our future."

Much of Ms. Vang's poetry concerns domestic violence, whether implied or otherwise.

A fragment of her poetry reads:

*The threat came with a look  
A kind of daggered intent,  
I see venom in your eyes,  
Now our future is forfeit.*

"When it comes to men, I don't take any of their guff. Many men are trained to be aggressive, and those who are, need to be cured of that. If incurable, they should be removed from society," Ms Vang said.

"How about tarring and feathering them?" I suggested, at which she laughed heartily.

Ms. Vang then spoke of men's faces, and how she can often read them. As if on cue, as we walked out of the library below gray skies, we saw a man of average height, perhaps in his forties, carrying two black boxes. He scowled at another man and mumbled something audibly because the man in the car made him wait one second longer to cross.

"You see," she said, "that man was ugly to me, because he has this certain feeling inside of him, like the world owes him, and he's intolerant. And even if a man is outwardly handsome, which this man was not, he cannot help but be ugly."

I agreed that the man had no redeeming physical quality, but I asked, what if he was having a bad day, and did not act so petulantly all the time.

"If so," she said, "then tomorrow we may see something kind and good in this man...but not today."

Besides expressing her views of domestic abuse in her poetry, Ms. Vang also has volunteered in women's domestic shelters, and it is plain that this is a passionate pursuit for this poet. "Listen," she said, "women are being abused at a terrible rate. Not just in the Asian-American community, but everywhere. I just wish our congresswomen would make it a greater priority. For my part, I want to make a difference in women's lives, and by volunteering perhaps I can help turn the tide. Women are being attacked and brutalized in their own homes. No one wants to speak of this. I guess awareness is a first step. I want women and girls to know they can call places like the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women at 651- 646-0994, or Women's Advocates, Inc. at 227-8284, both of which are 24 hour crisis lines. Some can make this change on their own, but others may need this invaluable support to get a violent man out of their lives."

When asked how the Dayton's Bluff artistic community could be strengthened, she said, "Vote this November. And vote for women, unless they're Republican. All they do is cut programs for women, end of story."

Look for Ms. Vang to read at Kieran's Irish pub. May she continue to strengthen her cause of bringing more awareness to domestic abuse. I believe she will no doubt make a difference. She is a warrior who I would want on my side, and no doubt poets like Ms. Vang make our community, and the world, a better place.

## The Clothes Line --

*Be true to your school*



Minnesota Historical Society Photo

**This first grade class at St. John's Catholic School, 945 East Fifth Street, circa 1943, demonstrates that school uniforms are not a new idea.**

By Sarah Ryan

The conventional wisdom among school uniform proponents says "start 'em young." And there may be something to that. Although there is little conclusive research to support the arguments of those who favor school uniforms or the objections of those who oppose them, studies have consistently shown that younger students are the ones most likely to comply with school uniform policies.

According to Donald's, the East Side retail institution and "Official Uniform Store since 1952," school uniform programs are best begun in the lower grades "to let the policy grow with the students into the higher grades." My personal experience confirms their advice. I didn't begin wearing a uniform until I was a freshman at a Catholic high school. Before that, I had gone to public schools that didn't require uniforms. From day one at the Marian Academy for Girls, I resented the very idea of uniforms although most of my classmates, who had been wearing uniforms since grade school, didn't seem to mind them at all.

Barb Williamson, an employee of Donald's Apparel and Uniform on Payne Avenue, told me that Mr. Donald Laughlin started selling boys uniform pants and shirts 52 years ago to St. Francis School on West 7th. The store was established to serve schools that hoped to create an atmosphere of "uniformity, pride, loyalty and equality" among their students. His customers also wanted girls uniforms, so Donald's contracted with the Solmes Company, also located on St. Paul's East Side. Other East Side Catholic schools including St. John's, formerly located on the corner of 5th and Forest in Dayton's Bluff, were among Donald's early customers. Today, Donald's supplies uniforms for public, private, and charter schools throughout the upper Midwest.

The school uniform industry has grown as religious schools have maintained traditional styles and public schools locally and nationwide have begun to adopt uniform and dress code policies. Between 1998 and 2000, sales of uniforms by retail chains like Sears and K-Mart grew by 22 per cent and grossed over a billion dollars. Name brands like Dickies, Bugle Boy, and Levis are now incorporated into some school uniform policies. Target stores offer a "Hilary Duff backpack" as part of their school uniform line. The pink carry-all features a close-up black and white image of the pop star's smiling face against a background of what looks like hay.

Since the late 1980s, a growing number of public school boards across the country and in the state have implemented school

uniform and dress code policies to address problems ranging from truancy, lack of school pride, and academic underachievement to gang violence, theft of designer apparel, and clique-induced low self-esteem. Minnesota state law now authorizes local school boards to adopt uniform policies to supplement the minimum public school dress code: "Students have the right to choose their manner of dress and personal grooming unless it presents a clear danger to the students health and safety, causes an interference with work, or creates classroom or school disorder." The jury is still out on whether school uniform policies make a difference, but Donald's is right when they say that "as more and more public school systems adopt the school uniform process, the debate will increase as to whether uniforms are productive or passive" in terms of student learning capabilities.

That debate came to dramatic light again this fall. As public school students in France got dressed for their first day of class, they faced more than the usual pressures from family and friends to dress a certain way. In March, the French parliament adopted a national policy that forbids students from wearing overtly religious dress in public schools. The ban includes items such as headscarves worn by Muslim girls, skullcaps worn by Jewish boys, and large Christian crosses. By the time classes resumed in September, two French journalists had been kidnapped in Iraq. Their ransom: repeal of the headscarf ban.

Despite the divisiveness of the national debate in France over the dress code, news of the kidnappings turned out widespread support for the policy and against the bullying tactics of the kidnappers. Still, diplomatic efforts launched by French Muslim groups and the French government to secure the journalists' safe return have been unsuccessful.

Back at the Marian Academy, girls used to wear their skirts pretty short. Bomb threats were a perennial accompaniment to warm spring days. As we filed out onto Military Drive, carloads of boys would drive by honking. I hated that. But the drills were a nice break, and eventually I learned to appreciate the advantages of the perma-pressed skirt and blouse ensemble. To save time getting ready for school in the morning, I occasionally slept in my uniform.

*Sarah Ryan lives in Dayton's Bluff. You can reach her by e-mail at sr@lakecast.com or send mail to the Dayton's Bluff District Forum office, 798 E. 7th Street, 55106*

*A Mounds Theatre Ghost Story*

## The man in the projection booth

By RAR

In my first story concerning the ghosts at the Mounds Theatre I introduced two of our three famous entities. The first one was the little girl who plays ball on the stage. In that particular story I also gave you a glimpse into the man who inhabits the projection booth. He is the only one that we feel could possibly harm us. He hasn't as yet, but one never knows.

On one chilly October day, four of us decided to see for ourselves who the "man in the projection booth" was and why he always appeared to be in such a "huff".

We entered the building just as the sun was going down. Again, the first order of business was to find the light switch in the ticket office and turn off the silent alarm. After accomplishing this, we stood in the lobby for a few minutes gathering up our courage and then silently made our way up the left stairwell that led to the balcony.

At the top of the stairs we eased our way over to the existing railing that overlooked the main auditorium. We peered out into the darkness, listening for any sounds that might appear to be out of the ordinary. Today there were none, just the normal clanking of the pipes that we had learned to identify in our numerous visits to the old theatre.

After getting ourselves used to the musty smells and the eerie lighting in the theatre, we made our way to the projection booth. This was a place that nobody usually entered unless another person accompanied them and sometimes even then nobody wanted to cross the threshold.

I myself reached gingerly into the room to turn on the lights. After flicking the switch, two or three times I found that there was no lighting whatsoever in the booth. The one light bulb that usually illuminated the room in a ghastly glow had burned out. The question now was, should we turn back and mount our investigation another day? It was decided that we should press on.

My stomach was churning and my mind leaped back in time to recall my encounter with the little girl on stage that I had been introduced to on a previous visit to the theater. That day was unsettling to me, but the apparition of the young women posed no real threat. She appeared happy but very lonely. With this in mind I pressed the button on my small flashlight and crossed the threshold behind the other three. The heavy metal door to the projection booth slammed shut behind me, leaving our group in total darkness.

Once inside the room the flashlights cast an ominous glow on the old arc projectors, which had stood guard over the projection booth for over 70 years. They were large black machines that appeared to gaze out over the main auditorium through small glass portholes, remembering a previous era when the now tattered movie screen was whole and the audience was made up of the living.

Moving around the room we examined the outdated remnants of days gone by. On one wall a large metal case with small doors appeared to have held movie reels. We opened each door in succession to see if possibly any films had been left behind...we found nothing. On yet another wall, an old metal film rewriter lay dormant, along with assorted movie handbills that contained the time and movie that was playing on a particular day.

In a small room that held the electrical boxes for the theater, we noticed a small, flat object laying face down on the floor. We knelt down to further examine it, wiping away the dust that had accumulated on its surface over the past 30 or 40 years. In the first sweep of a hand we could see that what we were holding was a Ouija board. This was not just an ordinary Ouija board made by Mattel or Parker Brothers. Rather, the label revealed that it had been made in Salem, Massachusetts. In unison, our minds traveled back to the Salem Witch Trials and we immediately dropped the board, stepped back and closed the door. It was then I remembered researching Ouija boards. It was said that they could be used to summon up the spirits of the dead so they might walk among us again in the world of the living. I said a small prayer and rejoined my group.

We then moved across the room to the far west wall where a metal partition had been placed. Expecting to find a dead body or two we peered around the corner only to be greeted by an ancient porcelain toilet that had been overturned on the floor and an old sink, hanging loosely on the wall.

At this point there appeared to be nothing to worry about. So we gathered our chairs, settled in for the night and extinguished our flashlights. Without the benefit of any light source the room was extremely black. In the inky darkness the room slowly began closing in on me.

My senses heightened, offsetting the fact that I could not see, not even the person sitting next to me. The stale air floated into my nostrils and the temperature in the room seemed to drop 20 degrees. Even though the room had taken on an icy chill, I was sweating profusely. My hair was now damp and I was wiping the sweat out of my eyes; my palms were clammy. For what seemed to be an eternity we sat there silently in the dark, pondering what secrets this room had or still held.

All at once the four of us heard a noise emanating from behind the metal partition that we had previously examined. The noise appeared to be a man crying. In between the sobbing we could hear him cursing in a most vile manner. I peered through the darkness and in a swirling cloud of mist my eyes fell on a man slumped in the corner behind the partition. At this point his sobbing seemed to cease. He slowly lifted his head from off his knees that he had been tightly

## Women befriend single mothers – pass along wisdom, support and hope

Women who care about young, single mothers are invited to be a part of Befrienders, a unique collaborative program of Children's Home Society & Family Services (CHSFS) and Health Start. Through Befrienders, young mothers receive support from and build a unique friendship with older women who have committed to a yearlong relationship. On-going support is provided through group and individual consultation. A 17-hour training session for new Befrienders is scheduled for Friday, November 12, 12:30 - 9 p.m., and Saturday, November 13, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., at Children's Home Society and Family Services, 2230 Como Avenue, St. Paul. Applications to become a Befriender are now being accepted by CHSFS Volunteer Services. Contact them at 651-255-2323 or befriender@chsm.com.

The Befriender program was created in 1989. Research shows the program helps participants grow in self-confidence, become better parents, and take greater control of their own lives. Young mothers feel hopeful and increase their desire to plan for the future. The benefits to volunteers include training, reimbursement of expenses, and the satisfaction of participating in a program that builds strong families.

Children's Home Society & Family Services is the result of merging Children's Home Society of Minnesota and Family Services, Inc., in 2003. The statewide, private, non-profit agency has a more than 100-year history of providing social services to children and families, including programs in adoption, child development, employee assistance, crisis nurseries and family services. Health Start is a program of West Side Community Health Services, which provides extensive school-based services, prenatal care, community health education and parenting support programs.

### Letter to the Editor

#### Signs that won't go away

Don't you get fed up with the way some of the people put up dozens of signs on telephone poles and streetlights, or tape them up to whatever empty space they feel like using? I enjoy going to a good garage sale now and then, so I can live with a little temporary visual pollution. But what I really can't stand is the fact that a few people leave them long after the event is over.

The worst is when the sign just says something like "Big Sale Today!" You show up and they say, "Oh, that was last week." Maybe there could be a city ordinance requiring all signs to be dated and, at risk of a small fine, be taken down within a day or two after the sale. Try keeping a list of where they were put up for goodness sakes!  
G. B. LeRoy

## Our hands at ECFE say "hello" in many languages



Every fall at Dayton's Bluff Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) Program, parents and children sing a song called "My Hand Says Hello". The three greetings used most frequently are "hello", "na xiong" (Hmong), and "hola" (Spanish), languages spoken by many St. Paul families. This year, however, other languages have entered the song to honor the languages spoken in children's homes.

Parents in the ECFE Program participated in a map project to help them get to know each other and our community better. Each parent was asked to put a map pin on a map to show where she or he was from. They were also asked to place a red "heart" pin anywhere in the world that represented a strong emotional attachment for them. To facilitate this mapping there were maps of the Twin Cities, Minnesota, Mexico, and the world.

As expected, most of the pins designating people's childhood homes

were in St. Paul with others located in other cities in Minnesota and the five state area. But parents in the program also come from Chicago, Detroit, New York, Atlanta. They also come from places as diverse as Bulgaria, China, Mexico, India, Brazil, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Argentina, and Uganda.

The "heart" connections are similarly wide spread. The connections represent many ways participants feel bound to a place where they did not originate. They have adopted or been adopted from another country. They lived or went to school there. They have close relatives there. They have served or had a relative serve in the military in other countries. Red "heart" pins dot the maps in Haiti, Liberia, Vietnam, the Bahamas, Sweden, India, Egypt, Chile, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Israel, China, Ireland, and the United States.

Preschoolers are curious about their immediate families and close relatives; "Where was Papa born?" "Where does Aunt Sue live now?" The maps are largely interesting to them in terms of these smaller families. But seeing the connections adults at Dayton's Bluff have around the world and across cultures reminds us of a bigger family on the "big blue marble."

This year "hello" might be "Nih Hao" (Mandarin Chinese), "Shalom" (Hebrew), "Namaste" (Hindi), "Kohomada" (Sinhala), "Annyoung Hasimnikka" (Korean), "Chao" (Vietnamese), "Habari" (Swahili), "Oli otya" (Lugandan), "Zdrasty" (Bulgarian) "Vanakkam" (Tamil), or "Oi" (Portuguese). Children's faces light up when they hear their native language in a song. The waving hands greet friends in any language.

## Pavilion in the park party

Even though there was a smaller than hoped for turn-out, the second event sponsored by the newly formed Dayton's Bluff Heritage and Happiness Committee went off as planned on October 12. While there is still restoration work to be done, various people commented on how glad they were that the historic structure was not torn down, as had been suggested by some city staff.

The pavilion, built just before the First World War, is an excellent example of prairie style architecture and it would have been a shame to see it razed. That's what the party in the park was all about. You should have been there.

Given the weather, this is the last Heritage and Happiness Committee outdoor event until the spring. But there are many indoor sites that could serve as a location for future get togethers. Do any of you readers have suggestions on places or events to be celebrated? If so, please call Karin at the Dayton's Bluff Council Office, 772-2075.



Photos by Greg Cosimini



Seven more of the classic automobiles that were on display at Mounds Park before the Drive for Kids road rally to Red Wing.



## GHOSTS

(continued from page 6)

clutching, raised his head and stared directly into my eyes. A fear came over me that shook the foundation of my soul. His eyes were black, glittering in their swollen sockets. I could feel his anger welling up inside of him and I knew I was not welcome in the projection booth, nor were the rest of the people sitting beside me.

It was obvious now that others in the room had also seen the same apparition, as I was aware that people were now shifting nervously in their chairs. They too were experiencing the coldness that had set into the room and were aware of the ghostly presence that now was slowing moving towards us.

We needed to end this session now before it was too late. I grabbed for my flashlight only to have it fall from my lap and roll across the floor away from my grasp. Suddenly I heard the click of a button and the room was again illuminated in a pale, yellowish light. I now saw the people who had been sitting inches away from me in the dark. I looked into their eyes and immediately knew that they had heard and felt something that was not of this world.


We all silently arose from our chairs and moved towards the door, closing it behind us as we descended the stairs to the lower level. Without so much as uttering a word we went directly to the box office, flipped off the light, set the alarm and rapidly exited the building.

Outside we all exhaled a sigh of relief and proceeded to share with one another the experiences of our time in the projection booth. Oddly enough, we all had seen and felt the same thing, some to a greater degree than others. After this experience none of us ever wandered into the projection booth alone, or at all for that matter.

Sometimes I can stand in the main auditorium facing the projection booth and still see the form of a slender man staring down at me, his shoulders slumped to his sides. His eyes are still swollen and glittering in the dark as they were on my last visit. I can only imagine what events led up to his being here. Does he even know that he is dead, or has he committed such heinous crimes that he has been forced to walk in the shadows of the theatre forever to atone for his unthinkable acts? We will probably never know the truth.



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vote on November 2?**

**A.) YES!**

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- ★ Bring your driver's license or Minnesota ID card showing your present address to the polls, or
- ★ A person already registered in your precinct may vouch for you.
- ★ Be prepared to provide the last four digits of your Social Security number.
- ★ You must be at least 18 years old as of Tuesday, November 2, 2004.
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- ★ You must be a United States citizen.
- ★ To find out the location of your polling place, call Ramsey County Elections at 651-266-2171 or go to this website: [www.co.ramsey.mn.us/elections](http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/elections)
- ★ Polls are open from 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.

**State Representative  
Sheldon Johnson**



[rep.sheldon.johnson@house.mn](mailto:rep.sheldon.johnson@house.mn), 243 State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155, 651-296-4201 or [www.sheldonjohnson.com](http://www.sheldonjohnson.com)

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