

# Dayton's Bluff DISTRICT FORUM

Volume 19, No. 5

www.daytonsbluff.org

July 2006

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These are some of the 10 local residents who recently attended the Neighborworks Community Leadership Institute in Nashville, Tennessee. Standing (l to r): Deanna Layer, Charlie Golden-Black, June Bennett, and Nancy Larson. Sitting (l to r): Jen Pringle, Bob Parker, Jim Erchul, and Karin DuPaul.

## National Night Out

Celebrate National Night Out on August 1, 2006 with your neighbors and friends. Neighborhood groups and block clubs are planning to have events like a neighborhood barbecue, a potluck, an ice cream social, a band playing music, a volleyball game and other activities that a group of neighbors can do together.

Plan to spend the evening getting to know your neighbors. National Night Out is designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, generate support for and participation in local anti-crime programs, strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships, and send a message to criminals, letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back. Join 30 million other people in more than 9,000 communities nation-wide in a variety of events and activities. Let's make this year even bigger!

Here is a preliminary list of some of the Dayton's Bluff National Night Out events:

- \* 5th Street East between Mounds Blvd and Maria
- \* Bethlehem Lutheran Church Margaret and Forest
- \* Mounds Park United Methodist Church Earl and Euclid
- \* Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Johnson Parkway and Margaret
- \* Margaret Recreation Center 1109 Margaret
- \* Reaney between Forest and Cypress

## Ten Local Residents Attend Community Leadership Conference in Nashville

By Karin DuPaul

Peak Performance: Building Residents' Skills to Add Community Value is the name of the Neighborworks Community Leadership Institute that was held in Nashville, Tennessee in May. The Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service sent ten Dayton's Bluff residents to the four-day conference.

Workshops included: Reaching Out to the Emerging Populations, Resident Led Neighborhood Revitalization, Dealing with Absentee Landlords, Predatory Lending: "Not in My Neighborhood", Marketing Your Neighborhood, and Working in Diverse Communities.

Attendees also went on tours of the city and visited the Ryman Auditorium and other entertainment centers and eateries. One person went to the Grand Ole Opry. Everyone met community activists from other parts of the country and exchanged information about their communities.

As a conference project back at home the attendees decided to work

\* Swede Hollow Park Greenbrier and Margaret

Watch for more events in the August issue of the *Forum* and at [www.daytonsbluff.org](http://www.daytonsbluff.org). If you are interested in having a National Night Out event in your neighborhood call Karin at 651-772-2075.



Outside the Renaissance Hotel where the conference was held. Back row: Charlie Golden-Black, Diane May, June Bennett, Deanna Layer. Front row: Nancy Larson, Karin DuPaul and two unidentified shrubs.

on updating the Welcome to Dayton's Bluff packet for new residents.

Dayton's Bluff residents and staff who attended the conference were Paul Broderson, Jen Pringle, June

Bennett, Charlie Golden-Black, Todd John, Nancy Larson, Deanna Layer, Diane May, Bob Parker, Karin DuPaul and Jim Erchul.

## National Night Out is August 1

Attend a neighborhood event or plan one of your own. There is still plenty of time. For more information call Karin at 651-772-2075

## Dayton's Bluff Community Meeting

The next Community Meeting is Thursday, July 13, 2006 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the meeting room at the Dayton's Bluff Community Council, 798 East 7th Street at the corner of 7th and Margaret.

The agenda will include: a report on some properties that have code issues, an update from the Dayton's Bluff Beat Officer on a number of issues that he has been working on, and an update on the new Walk and Clean up initiative.

The Dayton's Bluff Community Council holds the Community Meeting each month. It is designed to work with block clubs and neighborhood residents on problem properties, including criminal, nuisance behavior and code enforcement issues as well as other neighborhood issues, concerns, and improvements.

All Dayton's Bluff residents are welcome. If you need more information call Karin at 651-772-2075.

## Calling All Girls

By Raeann Ruth, Executive Director, The Portage for Youth

When you get home from school, what do you do for fun? Do you watch TV or sit and play mindless video games?

If these are two of your major activities and you are bored, why not join us at the Portage for Youth, an after school and summer program for young women ages 8 to 15. The Portage has been working with young women in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood for the past 11 years. We offer classes in mask making, music, theater, computer and much, much more.

The classes meet between 4 and 6 p.m. daily at the Mounds Theatre, located at 1029 Hudson Road in Saint Paul and they are free. To participate you just have to be within walking distance of the theatre or have a ride to and from classes.

If this is of interest to you and you're "bored senseless" with your normal after school routine, please give us a call at the Portage at 651-772-8674 to register for classes.

If you would like to find out more about the Portage for Youth as well as the Mounds Theatre, please visit our websites at [www.moundstheatre.org](http://www.moundstheatre.org) or [www.theportage.org](http://www.theportage.org).

### Volunteers Needed for this Newspaper

Writers, photographers, ad salesperson, cartoonist

Call Karin @ 651-772-2075

## Be Your Own Boss



**Instructor Dale White with families and graduates of the Dayton's Bluff Entrepreneur Training class in the spring of 2004**

Have you ever wanted to start your own business? Or, have you started one and are realizing that you need more education to make it successful? If so, sign up for the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Entrepreneur Training and Support Program. This program helps start-up and young businesses on the East Side. All East Side entrepreneurs are welcome.

Class training lasts approximately 16 weeks and includes topics such as operations management, marketing, financial management, one to one assistance with creating a successful business, and preparing a business plan. Those who successfully complete the course and locate their businesses in target neighborhoods are eligible for ongoing business support services.

Some of the businesses that people who took the course have started include graphics, photography, food service, restoration of wood furniture and works of art, custom floral design for weddings and events, and exterior and interior painting.

The course is sponsored by the Dayton's Bluff Community Council and the Neighborhood Development Center. There is a small registration fee based on a sliding fee scale. The next session will start in September and class size is limited. Please call Karin at 772-2075 for application.

## Neighborhood Sale Was a Big Success and a Lot of Fun



**Above: Dee Scott displays some of her merchandise at the Dayton's Bluff Annual Neighborhood Sale held on June 10th at Hamm Park. Below: Kathy Schumacker and her son Derrick were also participants.**



## Grand Slam Gala

By Raeann Ruth, Executive Director, The Portage for Youth

Baseball season is in full swing! And Minnesota Twins catcher Joe Mauer and Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman would like to invite you to attend a baseball game for the benefit of a great cause - the at-risk youth served by The Portage for Youth.

The event is the Portage for Youth's "Grand Slam Gala" held in conjunction with the July 17, 2006 Minnesota Twins game against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays. We'll begin at 4:30 p.m. with food, live entertainment, free t-shirts and special guests at the picnic area outside the Metrodome then continue inside the Dome with more festivities and (we hope) a win for the home team.

One lucky gala attendee will even be throwing out the first pitch! First pitch honors will be determined through a drawing among gala ticket buyers. Drawing will be limited to the first 500 people. Odds of being selected to throw out the first pitch are 1-in-500.

The Portage for Youth, located in the Mounds Theatre in Dayton's Bluff, is an after school and summer enrichment program for girls ages 8-15 in Saint Paul. The Portage provides academic support, educational, and personal development programs for at-risk girls as an alternative to gang involvement, drug use, teenage pregnancy and crime and violence prevalent among youth in the neighborhood.

Tickets make a great gift, family outing, or performance award for your business employees. You'll be helping youth, hanging out with friends and family, and having a great time!

Right now 500 tickets for lower reserved seats are available. Buy one at \$45 and get one free. For more information or to register yourself, your family, or your employees - call the Portage at (651) 772-8764, email [grandslam@theportage.org](mailto:grandslam@theportage.org), or visit the Portage's website at [www.theportage.org](http://www.theportage.org).

This event is made possible through the generosity of the Pohlad Family Foundation and the Minnesota Twins.

## Dayton's Bluff Garden Tour

Greening Dayton's Bluff is planning a number of walking garden tours in Dayton's Bluff this summer. There will be two tours in July in the 5th and Forest area and one in the 6th and Maple area. We will look at a number of beautiful gardens. Call Karin at 651-772-2075 to register and get the location of the starting point.

Generally ten to fifteen Dayton's Bluff people go on the tours, looking at the beautiful gardens and getting new ideas for their own gardens. If you would like to have your garden on a tour or have one of these tours in your area, call Karin at 651-772-2075.

# Preventing Home Break-ins

By Sean Fetterman

When my partner and I moved to the east side of St. Paul, our friends and family thought we were crazy. They had heard it was a dangerous place to live due to crime, people's property being stolen, and homes being burglarized. We shook it off and said that they were being paranoid. A part of me WAS starting to think that they were right.

About a month ago, our house was almost broken into at night. I cannot tell you what horrible thoughts went through my head thinking about what would have happened if someone had entered our home. Luckily, the criminal(s) were unable to get into the house because of our security system and dogs.

This did not scare me. This made me ANGRY! I felt violated. I had this overwhelming sense of anxiety. Not because of the potential break-in, but because I want this person or these people to get caught! The criminal(s) that attempted to break-in to our home are NOT SMART! They left very good fingerprints behind that were dusted and lifted by the police. The officer that was at my home said that a VERY HIGH percentage of these criminals are caught and sentenced. I can't wait for that because I will be in the courtroom to look at them and say, "You are getting what you deserve!"

I am writing this, not just to tell you how to protect yourself and your homes, but to send a message to the criminals in our neighborhood.

## Dear Criminal,

**You are not going to intimidate or scare the people in the Dayton's Bluff area! We love this area and you are NOT going to take it over. We are upstanding and honest people that respect our neighbors and enjoy where we live.**

**You are not wanted here and need to get out! We will win this war on crime because we are fighting back! We have block clubs and neighborhood watches; we are forming alliances with the police; and we are walking the**

**neighborhoods to take back our side of town.**

**When you attempt to break into our homes or steal our property, we will be there in court watching you being sentenced for your low-life lifestyle that makes you TAKE from others rather than WORK to buy your own. There are local Workforce Centers, hundreds of temporary staffing agencies and two major metropolitan newspapers full of employment opportunities. Why don't you try to find gainful employment rather than falling down yet another rung of society's ladder in your criminal career?**

**Get a job! Get a life! Move out of our area because we are NOT going to take it anymore!**

**Yours truly,**

**Concerned neighbors in Dayton's Bluff**

Below are 10 tips for all of you that want to keep your home and personal items safe:

1. Get to know your neighbors. Neighbors watch out for each other.
2. Walk the neighborhood
3. Form a Block Club
4. Form a Neighborhood Watch
5. Get a security system. They are not as expensive as you think.
6. Be visible in your area as much as possible. Criminals don't hang out where people are active.
7. Call the police if you see someone suspicious.
8. Form alliances with the police department. Ask them to talk to you about safety on your own property.
9. Keep bushes and shrubs near your home's entrance and walkway well trimmed. Overgrown shrubs provide easy camouflage for burglars.
10. Install motion lights on the front, back and sides of your house.

Remember.....be visible, make your presence known and get involved in your neighborhood Block Club!

For more information on Block Clubs or other Dayton's Bluff information, contact Karin DuPaul at (651) 772-2025. She is a great community resource!

Be safe and secure!

# Alien Invasion at Mounds Theatre this August

The Mounds Theatre is hosting its first annual science fiction movie fest August 18-20. The schedule of films include some of the greatest science fiction movies ever made.

The tentative line up is: Metropolis (1926) – one the first science fiction movies; the original War of the Worlds (1953); Forbidden Planet (1956); the original Planet of the Apes (1968); and the mother of all alien movies, Alien (1979).

No matter how many times you've seen these motion pictures on video


on a TV screen, you haven't really seen them until you've viewed them in their original 35mm film formats on a 25-foot movie screen.

There could also be some other surprises at the Mounds this summer so be sure to keep checking the Mounds Theatre website at [www.moundstheatre.org](http://www.moundstheatre.org) or call 651-772-2253 for updates and more information.



The Mounds Theatre is located at 1029 Hudson Road, St. Paul, MN 55106.

"I've got a new pedometer on my belt and I'm ready to count my steps. How about you?"

-Officer Jamie Sipes, St. Paul Police



**Pick up your free step counter at Dayton's Bluff Branch Library and get walking!**

## Young Artists Initiative Brings the Arts to Every Child

Do you have any young artists in your house that need a place to express themselves and perform? Well, there is a great resource right here in East Saint Paul that is always looking for new students — the Young Artists Initiative (YAI).

Currently, YAI students are rehearsing nightly for a late June production of the musical *Godspell* which will be performed outdoors at Bay Lake Camp in Deerwood, Minnesota. Students originally meet in the evenings at First Lutheran Church and then will spend their final week at Bay Lake finishing up rehearsals, taking arts classes and participating in general camp activities. Camp concludes with public performances of the beloved musical.

Coming up later this summer, YAI is looking for cast members for their production of *James and the Giant Peach*. This is a five-week commitment that includes rehearsing for the show and workshops in dance, acting, stage make-up, voice and improvisation. The experience ends with two weekends of performances at the brand-new Neighborhood House Theater at the Paul and Sheila Wellstone Community Center (179 Robie Street East). The theater is a 270-seat state-of-the-art proscenium stage with raked seating. Final

performances run August 18-20 and August 25-27.

The Young Artists Initiative believes that the arts should be accessible to all young people regardless of their race, beliefs or economic status. Too often young artists have been unable to participate in arts training because of the high tuition asked by other arts groups. Therefore, the YAI aims to provide quality programs and affordable prices. This is achieved through a large volunteer base of community members and professional artists.

Future programming includes filmmaking, poetry, painting, photography, creative writing, music, dance and the formation of an all-youth choir. The organization provides programs both during the summer months and during weekends during the school year.

The YAI is housed in First Lutheran Church (63 Maria Avenue) which provides classroom and rehearsal space. Although the organization is housed within a church, activities are open to all youth, regardless of their religious backgrounds and faiths.

To find out more about the Young Artists Initiative or to volunteer, visit their website at [www.youngartistsmn.org](http://www.youngartistsmn.org) or call their offices at 651-776-7210.

**Advertise in the Dayton's Bluff District Forum or sell ads for the Dayton's Bluff District Forum or at least read the ads and visit our advertisers. It all helps to support your friendly neighborhood newspaper. Call 651-772-2075.**

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

## Chapter #17: Into the Twenty First Century

One of the constants in the history of this neighborhood has been continual change. Ever since its birth, the community has seen people arrive and depart, buildings erected and torn down, hopes realized and dreams deferred. While the fact that things have changed is not unusual, the development during the last two decades seem to have arrived with an increasing speed.

A drive down East Seventh Street can illustrate the historic comings and goings of the community. There are stores that have been on the thoroughfare for decades including Carbone's, the HealthEast nursing home (now called Cerenity and once known as the "Home for the Friendless") and Roger's Print Shop. Near Johnson Parkway, Martin Lumber Company and Mueller Mortuary have carried on their business for many years.

Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing (a.k.a. 3M) is still on the street they came to in 1910. Though the workforce has been reduced and little manufacturing remains, it is still a prominent fixture on the street. The bar now named Erick's, like a few others that have now disappeared, was located near 3M to serve three shifts after work.

But within the last few years there have been many new additions that reflect the changing times, economic situations, and a rapidly increasing diversity. The check cashing company, Deals N' Thrills and the Animal Ark thrift store speak to the depressed income levels of many residents.

The same avenue also contains institutions designed to raise the financial conditions of area residents. Metropolitan State University offers higher education in a neighborhood that traditionally had few college graduates. The new CLUES building, home to the Mexican Consulate, works to improve the health, education and job skills of the East Side's growing Latino population.

Food can tell a lot about a community and Dayton's Bluff is no exception. The Swede Hollow Café, 725 East 7<sup>th</sup> St., proves that coffee houses can make it here. The old streetcar strip is not covered with chain restaurants, except for a Burger King, but there are many small restaurants and groceries. Several blocks east a person can find Pastor Hamilton's barbecue, with a tasty selection of soul food.

A look at the intersection of Seventh and Arcade provides clues to many of the recent alterations. Where Swanson's Drug store used to be is Centromex Supermercado, which has a surprisingly large selection of Mexican food, including a fresh meat counter. On the northeast corner is Taqueria Los Paisanos, with a variety of Mexican food. Just east of Seventh and Arcade is Manana, which has

food featuring a variety of cultural offerings, and is one of the few places to serve dishes from El Salvador.

The growing Asian presence in the community is shown by Hmong Toj Siab, a grocery and gift shop that has been on Seventh for a decade. A Hmong-owned used car sales lot is next to Testa's Barber Shop and a block or two further west is Koe Realty. The Chadang Building houses two pioneer professionals. It is named for the father of Dr. Thao, the first Hmong MD in history who practices there along with his wife See Vang, one of the first Hmong women to ever graduate from law school.

Some of these recent changes can be explained by looking at the data found in the 2000 census. According to it, around 18,000 people were living in the neighborhood, up fifteen per cent from the previous decade. The overall population had become younger, the families larger and the number of children has greatly increased. Home ownership has declined as the number of rental units has risen to 42%.

The community's ethnic and racial composition was also altered. Between 1990 and 2000, the White population decreased from 83% to a little over half. The Asian population grew from 7% to 19%. The number of African American residents went up from 5% to 12% and Latino presence went from 4% to 11%. The Native American population, though small, doubled to around 2% of the total. 4% of our residents described themselves as multiracial, the first time the category had been included in the census figures.

The local schools have been strongly impacted by the demographic shifts. According to the census, 76% of public school students in this neighborhood were children of color. 79% qualified for free or reduced-price school lunch, compared to 65% in Saint Paul as a whole. Many of the students spoke a language other than English at home.

While many people see old houses as a liability for a neighborhood, the Dayton's Bluff Community Council decided to embrace them as an opportunity. Starting in earnest around 1990, there were meetings to explore the formation of a new St. Paul historic district. Research was done, forms were filled out and various staff and office holders lobbied.

The Dayton's Bluff Historic District became a reality in August 1992 when it was approved by the St. Paul City Council. It recognizes the architectural significance of this early neighborhood and provides guidelines for historically proper exterior remodeling in hopes of making the lower bluff, with its older homes, a draw for new residents and a spur for revitalizing the area.

However, the Historic District was not universally accepted. Some people worried that they had to go through a lot of hoops to remodel their homes. Landlords feared that adhering to

historic standards could cut into their bottom line. Some critics said that such an approach would "gentrify" the neighborhood and others weren't clear what the guidelines meant or just didn't like change.

In April 1993, Carol Carey, a neighborhood activist, felt the need to lend her support to the Historic District, which she said "can maintain a neighborhood that will be able to encourage public and private investment and remain a viable and livable urban community." She was somewhat "discouraged by the recent negative comments from isolated parties regarding preservation efforts in the community. The logic behind the preservation approach to neighborhood renewal is simple: Dayton's Bluff has a lot of old houses that need a lot of work, and preservation districts attract people who want to work on and live in old houses."

The debate over historic renovation came to a head when state money was available for a project at Third and Maria. In the fall of 1993, a task force of residents was appointed to suggest reuse possibilities. They wanted to keep much of the area as open space and to use the money for restoration of older houses. Other groups wanted to construct new housing.

There were contentious meetings, angry letters to the local newspaper and disputes over the vision for Third and Maria. At the end of 1994, the money for the lower bluff revitalization was transferred-without a public hearing- to support construction of several new houses between Mounds Boulevard and Bates. One of the only concessions to the Historic District guidelines was the use of wooden siding, instead of wrapping the structures in aluminum.

Another dispute during the era centered on the long awaited trail through Swede Hollow, which was finally funded in 1993. A city master plan described its importance as follows: "The strategic location of the... corridor as it passes through densely populated areas... will place thousands of people within walking and biking distance of a vast regional system of existing and proposed trail corridors, linking thousands of acres of city, county and regional parks and recreational lands."

Within a year or so there was a familiar dispute over land use. Supporters feared that the Phalen Boulevard project could have a negative impact on the trail since one plan had it going through part of Swede Hollow. They were not convinced that there was room for both routes. The plans were altered somewhat and, at least for now, it seems that both the trail and the boulevard are compatible.

The community connection with Metropolitan State University continued to develop in these years. The institution had been operating for several years in the old St. John's Hospital structures, but there were plans for further remodeling and new

construction. Ground was broken in 1991 for a new thirteen million dollar headquarters that was put up where the original hospital had been. It officially opened in 1994.

As hoped, the school has had a positive effect on the neighborhood. The university developed an innovative student literacy corps program. In the 1990s, over two hundred college students were trained and participated in a reading improvement project at Dayton's Bluff Elementary. Metropolitan State was again linked with the neighborhood in 2004 when its new university library was co-located with a long-awaited St. Paul Dayton's Bluff branch.

The Dayton's Bluff Community Council did its usual job of looking at zoning and other ongoing local issues, but it also undertook a variety of special projects during the last two decades. Block clubs were organized to help fight crime and National Night Out events, designed to help people get to know their neighbors, started being held every August.

Community cleanups are frequently held as well as an annual home tour that draws many people from throughout the city. Some Council activities were small but interesting, such as the June 1994 placing of a headstone on the previously unmarked grave of Lyman Dayton in Oakland Cemetery.

"The Greening of Dayton's Bluff," grew out of Council code enforcement meetings. One of its projects, started in 1991, was to put attractive plantings along East Seventh. As one resident jokingly put it, "we wanted to see the avenue lined with flower pots rather than pot heads." Other efforts have included working with the Upper Swede Hollow Association to install area rain gardens and other community beautification efforts such as plant sales and swaps, and neighborhood garden tours.

Some new group experiences were initiated in the late 1990s. People started an occasional gathering called "Take a Hike" in Dayton's Bluff where they do what the name suggests. Then there is a fall event begun by the Friends of Swede Hollow. A group comes together in the evening once each fall at sunset to watch what they call "the glow of the building." It is produced by the last rays of the sun reflecting off the reddish bricks of the old Hamm's Brewery. Perhaps the gathering will become a lasting tradition.

As in the past, churches have continued to be an important part of the neighborhood. With the changing demographics, many have reached out to the new Americans. Several have Asian and Spanish speaking congregations housed with them. A group of Hmong worshipers have purchased the old Asbury Methodist Church and the former Peace United Church building now contains a Spanish-speaking church.

Nonprofit organizations have also made major contributions in the 1990s. The Upper Swede Hollow Neighborhood Association (USHNA) worked on the continuing renewal of the block north and east of Seventh and Bates. The group had purchased the Stutzman Building, a multi unit building that had been poorly managed and was the scene of drug dealing and frequent police calls.

One of the detractors of the site on its western portion was a large billboard. Funds were raised to buy the land to complete the Stutzman Block Initiative by creating a community garden. The work was done by Metropolitan State University students and staff, 3M, the Dayton's Bluff Community Council, USHNA, and many community volunteers.

It was named August Gauger Park in September 1994 to honor the 19th century architect who lived in the neighborhood and did design work on the Stutzman Building and many area homes. Underneath one of the large trees, a stone marker was placed in memory of Metropolitan State University faculty member Bonnie Luke, an avid gardener. Her family and friends brought flowers from her former yard and planted them in the new park.

There were quite a few changes going on within the area schools during the era. There had been concerns about the performance and discipline at Dayton's Bluff Elementary. There was an attempt to turn the school into a Montessori magnet and another to make it a year-round program. The community was successful in fighting off both proposals.

Perhaps the biggest missed opportunity was the refusal of the school board to sell its then empty building at Third and Earl to a group starting a new private institution in the early 1990s. Many community members supported the proposal, believing it would bring new people to the area and the group was willing to offer scholarships and other benefits to the neighborhood. They finally located in the suburbs, but kept the name that reflects where they wanted to launch their highly successful undertaking. That's why they are still called Mounds Park Academy even though they are now situated in the old Hill High School building in Maplewood.

Toward the end of the 1990s, the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation teamed up with St. Paul Public Schools and the City of St. Paul to partner a new unique public-private partnership. Called Achievement Plus, it hoped to form the basis for a broad community outreach in support of public education.

The overriding goal was to improve student academic achievement and the immediate focus of the program was on transforming two inner-city schools, both located on the East Side. Dayton's Bluff Achievement Plus School and Johnson Elementary were designed to be "a standards-based curriculum emphasizing high expectations, student-driven work,



**This community cleanup in September 2003 is one of many organized by the Dayton's Bluff Community Council**

individual and group instruction and extensive professional development for teachers."

One of the more exciting developments as the neighborhood entered the new century was the restoration of the old Mounds Theatre. Located at 1029 Hudson, it was built in 1922 as a venue for silent movies and live entertainment. It continued as a movie house until it was closed in July 1967. It was used as warehouse until 2001, when the owner donated the building to Raeann Ruth's Portage for Youth program.

Renovation began in December of that year. Fortunately, the old theater had not been gutted or remodeled extensively. The seats were still in place as well as the balcony, ticket box office and the projection booth. Even so, there was a huge amount of work that needed to be done to transform it into a new grassroots theater and community landmark. Concrete floors were poured, wiring and plumbing brought up to code, air conditioning and heating installed and the stage area was enlarged.

Modern projection equipment was bought and local artist Amy Handford painted large murals, both inside and out. The Mounds Theatre reopened in October 2003 with a seating capacity of approximately 200. The theater has been used for plays and other types of live entertainment, movies, concerts, weddings and receptions, educational activities, and neighborhood gatherings.

Another major building project recently went up on East Seventh. It was the new headquarters for CLUES, which stands for Chicanos Latinos Unidos En Servicio. They provide assistance in five core services—mental health, chemical health, employment, education and elder wellness. They established a Latino Learning Institute to improve literacy and educational attainment of children.

CLUES decided to locate on the East Side because it was in the heart of a rapidly growing Latino community, whose numbers had more than doubled in the last decade. Construction began in the summer of 2004 and was finished a year later. A little later there was the exciting

decision that the building would also be home to the 46th Consulate of Mexico.

Another major project that fell within the boundaries of Dayton's Bluff was the creation of the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary. In 1997, East Side activists and the Lowertown community, working as the Lower Phalen Area Project joined with the DNR, National Park Service and others to reclaim a twenty-seven acre area in the Mississippi flood plain and develop a landmark that combined restoration riverfront habitat with public access.

In October 2002 the City of Saint Paul adopted the vision of the community project as part of its comprehensive plan. The land was purchased from the railroad in 2003. Extensive clean up and ecological restoration work began. Volunteers removed fifty tons of surface debris that had been dumped in the area for decades. Contaminants were removed from the site and clean soil was used to cover marginal soil areas.

In the summer of 2004, volunteer groups cleared away the invasive buckthorn that choked the landscape and begin the restoration of oak savanna and prairie. Pedestrian paths and bicycle trails have been installed, and a series of three wetlands now capture the land's abundant spring water. On May 21, 2005 the park was opened to the public. The land's ecological features are still being further restored today.

It's obvious by now that Dayton's Bluff has a proud history. It also hopes to have a bright future. To help that happen, the Community Council is working on completing a new strategic plan. It will be based on gathered information and analysis, and will soon be presented as a written plan.

The first step taken was to create an exhaustive survey that was distributed in the local newspaper, and by multi-lingual leaflets as well. There were three neighborhood meetings as well as focus groups with local Dayton's Bluff businesses and institutions.

What you will be reading below may well be altered before the final product is made public. Changes are still being made by a committee led

by Mounds Park resident Jacob Dorer. Any reactions you have or suggestions you want to offer are welcomed and should be sent to the Dayton's Bluff Community Council.

The next paragraphs lay out the first draft of what is currently called the Neighborhood Safety and Livability Vision Statement: "The Dayton's Bluff neighborhood is a vibrant and diverse area and is a safe part of the city in which to live. Emergency services are widely agreed to be excellent and crimes against persons are low."

"This reality needs to be publicized and reinforced by increased police attention to drug and property crimes so that residents feel safer in their homes and on the streets. Public spaces need to be kept clean and well-lit and private areas should be maintained in good condition."

"Dayton's Bluff needs to address the problematic concentrations of sex offenders and social services and group homes. Although much progress has been made, the neighborhood needs to work to diminish the long-term impact of soil, air, noise and nuisance odor pollution in the district. Residents need to know their neighbors so that there is a greater chance of swift and amicable resolution or prevention of conflicts."

Another of the important sections of the Plan will be a vision statement on business. Subject to change, it reads as follows: "The Dayton's Bluff neighborhood requires a revitalized business district with an active business association that will project a more positive image both of and for local businesses. Effort should be focused principally along East 7th St. and other small businesses scattered around the area..."

"The businesses should offer a full range of services. In return the community will strive to provide an environment with low petty crime and will encourage façade and building beautification and training and networking opportunities for local business people."

The hope is that the strategic plan will guide future decisions and lead to an even more livable area. As the sponsoring group puts it in the introduction to its current draft: "The District Council intends for this document to inform the community of the goals which were expressed by the community itself. It should guide the growth and development of the Bluff. The specific goals and vision outlined in this plan should focus the change which is sure to occur in the neighborhood in ways which will be positive for the community."

## **Volunteer Editor Needed!**

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# Rafael Ortega - A Man's Full Life

By Jason Hoelzel

So many times you hear people commenting on what it takes to be a great leader. Some say great character along with a strong family background form a great leader. While others say a leader is born, not made. I believe where a person has been and where their inner-strength has led them navigates their motivation to lead a community and/or a nation.

Rafael Ortega has overcome many obstacles in his life to become a Ramsey County Commissioner. He has remained steadfast through his life by having relied on his family structure and public transportation to become the man, the leader and the father he is now. He has shown the qualities needed to be an effective leader and has been the voice for many voiceless communities. Rafael has worked diligently to help those who may not be able to help themselves. In his quest to free communities of poverty, better the education system and provide public mass transit, one has to only look at where Rafael has been to appreciate what he has become.

Rafael was born on the lower East Side of Manhattan, New York, which is a very destitute part of town with not much hope of anyone becoming someone. He lived in a rundown one-bedroom apartment with his loving family. With not much food or money, the Ortega's remained positive without letting everyday adversities strip away their motivations. "We relied on ourselves, not anyone else to help us through tough times," Rafael says. His father was a merchant marine and his mother a sweatshop seamstress, both Puerto Rican immigrants who sought a better life across the border.

Rafael attended Rice High School in Harlem, where he soon realized that racial obstacles were now an all day and everyday occurrence. After high school, Rafael began working to support his college education. He

relied heavily on public transportation to travel to-and-from work and school. After having graduated from college, he traveled half way across America, with little more than the clothes on his back, to attend graduate school at the University of Minnesota. After years of seeking political positioning in Minnesota, he became the first Latino to serve as a Ramsey County Commissioner.

One of Rafael's passions is mass transit or, for tax purposes, government assisted transportation. "Without public transportation, I would not be in the position I am today," Rafael says. He believes that mass transit will reduce poverty by allowing the unemployed a means of travel to and from work. With a budget of over \$200 million, \$50 million in Federal dollars, the utopia Central Corridor will soon be starting Phase 1. Hopefully, this will narrow the rich-poor gap, and not just be another political "vision" that will get the "we thought that..." comments down the road. But hasn't that been the theory, for decades, behind the MTC system? Rafael remains obsessive about getting the mass transit system's central corridor to St. Paul's University Avenue.

The Central Corridor may be just another tax-thirsty way of reducing crime and poverty. But, then again, statistics in other major cities with the same transit system will support its communally beneficial effects. However you look at it, it will produce various modes of transportation for all.

Rafael diligently pursues each day with an enthusiasm in building stronger communities through opportunities. Heading into another election year, Rafael looks for re-election to fulfill his public transportation dream. Whether you voted for Rafael or not, one has to envy the long hard road he has traveled to become a successful man. Rafael hopes his dreams will foster the dreams of others.



Anita Harmon, co-owner of La Nit's Treats, with her ice cream cart.

## La Nit's Treats – Ice Cream Magnifique Opens on St. Paul's East Side

By Alice Larsson

Just east of POP's Family Café at the corner of Maria and East Sixth Street, you'll spot La Nit's Treats ice cream cart topped by a bright red umbrella – now open and featuring homemade ice cream from the Grand Ole Creamery – a favorite summertime treat. Wrought iron tables and chairs invite customers to sit down at this spontaneous outdoor spot and enjoy their ice cream cone, snow cone and other refreshing treats.

Anita Harmon, co-owner of La Nit's Treats, was born in Chicago and has lived in St. Paul for 10 years. A true renaissance woman, Anita is a wife, mother of 5 children (2 boys, 3 girls) ages 9 to 27, entrepreneur and all around amazing person.

A 2003 graduate of Le Cordon Bleu (French for "blue ribbon"), Anita holds an Associate Degree in Culinary Arts. An international group of cooking schools teaching French cuisine, Le Cordon Bleu originated in Paris. Anita attended the Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts right here in Minneapolis/St. Paul. Her "externship" at Le Cordon Bleu saw her living and working for 4 months in Paris at the famous restaurant Maxim's. La Nit in French is "Anita."

From the time she was a little girl, Anita always wanted to be a chef. She would make up menus and feed her parents her special creations. They would order; she would fix and serve. Through the years, she's cooked and cooked and cooked some more – for restaurants like the Embers, Perkins, Taste of Chicago and at hotels like Sofitel, the Radisson and currently at the Marriott.

After graduating from Le Cordon Bleu, Anita owned a small restaurant called La Nit's, located at University & Lexington in St. Paul. She did everything from the ordering, cooking, clean-up, creating the menu to keeping the records. City Pages praised her "outrageously good chicken wings and catfish strips." She's also catered to special events and celebrations, including weddings – from the reception to the dinner, from decorations to making delicious and beautiful wedding cakes.

When asked how this all came to be, Anita replied, "I just love to cook and I've always wanted to be a chef. Food is an art, and I'm challenged by how creative cooking can be – how many different ways there are to prepare the same ingredients with a twist here and twist there – and out comes a new dish." What's her favorite thing to cook? "Sauces – especially creating cream sauces."

With a growing family and a very busy life, Anita chose to introduce her latest endeavor - La Nit's Treats - this summer at her spot at 686 East Sixth Street (one half block from Metropolitan State University), to showcase her selection of homemade ice creams from the Grand Ole Creamery. On top of EVERY La Nit's Ice Cream Cone, customers will get another scoop of a flavor they choose. Anita explains, "In New Orleans, it's a tradition to add something extra special for customers called 'Lagniappe,' pronounced 'Lon Yop.' Now La Nit's Treats brings the Lagniappe tradition up the Mississippi all the way to St. Paul."

*'La Nit's' continues on page 7*

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## Michoacana, The Bridal Shop

By June Bennett

In a store window in the middle of the block on East 7<sup>th</sup> between Margaret and Arcade, one of the most eye catching dresses you have ever seen for a summer wedding is on display. It is pure white and full length with beaded trim. You must walk by and look at it and the other dresses displayed in the window. The display is set up for that special day in your life. The gowns are beautiful and you can get any color to fit your taste.

Ms. Jovita Cardoza is the owner of the Michoacana Bridal Shop at 806 E. 7<sup>th</sup> St. Her family has been in other businesses such as fruit stands, restaurants and furniture stores so as you can see, business runs in her blood. Ms. Cardoza came to the United States from Mexico in 1972. She started a restaurant in California in 1975 and ran it for 21 years.

A family member invited Ms. Cardoza to visit her in Minnesota. She was here for a week and enjoyed it very much. She went back to California and three weeks later returned to Minnesota permanently. Mr. Cardoza, who had never been out of California, decided to take the same

trip and after his visit he also returned to stay.

She enjoys what she does and she understands what you want for your special day. It is a joy to her to be able to fulfill your wishes. The bridal shop has more to offer than dresses and accessories - they can also do alternations and provide decorations for reception halls and homes. The Michoacana also offers Sigue and Inter-Cambio Express to send money home. Ms. Cardoza plans on expanding in the future.

Ms. Cardoza is a warm person who is interested in the community and would like to get more involved. Ms. Jovita Cardoza states that she is very happy and enjoys her bridal shop and the people that she meets. She is thinking about opening a restaurant on the East Side one day.

The Michoacana is open Monday - Saturday from 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. and on Sunday from 12:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. The address is 806 E 7<sup>th</sup> St, St. Paul, MN 55106 and the phone number is (651) 772-8566. Drop in and browse around. You may never know when that special day may come and you'll already have one foot in the door.

## Business Blogging on the Bluffs - Part 2

By Jerry Cangemi

As I discussed in the previous article, blogs can be a simple, but powerful tool to help build positive relationships with current and potential customers.

You may be thinking, "I thought websites were all the rage. That's all I really need."

You betcha! Websites WERE all the rage, and in many ways they still are. Blogs are an up-and-coming tool. As a small business owner you want to find ways to be flexible, innovative and stand out from the crowd; here are several comparisons:

> Websites: Costly to build. Blogs: Free.

> Websites: Talk "at" the audience. Blogs: Talk "with" the audience.

> Websites: Cut into profits; costly to update. Blogs: free; can be updated daily.

> Websites: Search Engines like them. Blogs: Search Engines love them. Most search engines are programmed to give greater weight to fresh content and links.

You've decided that you want to use a blog to help build your business. A question you'll want to answer is "What is your purpose for having one?" Could it be that you want to:

> Help your customers or clients to learn more about your business?

> Get customers to know you better? (People like to buy from people they know.)

> Test drive new ideas?

> Build a buzz?

By asking these questions, you'll define exactly what everyone will get from the blog. After you have answered these questions, you'll want to know how to get started. That will be the focus of next month's article.

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## Word From the Beat

Greetings from SPPD Eastern District.

Recently a resident e-mailed me with the following question: Do victims of auto theft have to pay for their car being towed to the impound lot and for storage fees that accrue while it is in impound? The answer is yes. In the City of St Paul, when stolen vehicles are recovered they are towed to the city impound lot. The city does not own tow trucks so this service is provided through a private contractor. This contractor has to be paid for the services rendered. The impound lot charges a storage fee to recoup the costs of operating this secured facility.

To help prevent your car from being stolen, remember these basic tips. Do not leave your car engine running. Each year the St Paul Police Auto Theft Unit investigates many cases where the vehicle engine was left running. Not only is this not safe and illegal, it presents an easy opportunity for a criminal. Roll the windows all the way closed and lock the car doors. And finally, park in a well-lit environment when one is available. This will help keep not only your car safe but you as well. Many thefts are crimes of opportunity. Hopefully, by following these basic tips you can keep you and your property safe, ultimately keeping your money in your pockets.

Next, I am happy to announce District 4 has received funding for the Dayton's Bluff Beat Officer phone program. Now as a resident of the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood, you have a direct connection with your beat officer. Your beat officer will be carrying the phone between the hours of 4 p.m. and 2 a.m. daily. If you have a non-emergency issue to discuss, you may feel free to call us at 651-341-7637. Please remember that the beat officer may be on another call assisting a citizen but will make every effort to answer your calls.

Finally, I would like to encourage everyone to get involved in their neighborhood block clubs and get to know your neighbors. National Night Out is Tuesday, August 1st. We should all make an effort to get together this night and celebrate community involvement. If you are planning a National Night Out event or have an upcoming block club meeting, send me an e-mail at:

Jamie.Sipes@ci.stpaul.mn.us. In the meantime, enjoy the weather, meet your neighbors and always remember to treat each other with respect.

Officer J. Sipes  
 East District Tour 3  
 651-341-7637

*'La Nit's' continued from page 6*

How one person can do so much is amazing. And I wondered, does she cook at home too? "No," says Anita, "at home is actually when I relax - without the support of my family - my older girls help so much - I wouldn't be able to do it. Everyone works together as a team and each has their chores." I suggested to Anita, that teaching others to have this kind of family team, could be another business - but for now, just drop by, meet Anita at La Nit's Treats and enjoy a frosty ice cream cone.

La Nit's Treats - Ice Cream Magnifique  
 Monday - Friday 1 pm to 8 pm  
 Saturday 11 am to 8 pm  
 Sunday closed

Alice Larsson is a graphic designer, writer, filmmaker and marketing consultant. She has recently returned to live and work in the Twin Cities permanently after having worked on projects in California, Arizona and Colorado. She can be reached at [alctd@yahoo.com](mailto:alctd@yahoo.com).

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Monthly Circulation: 5,000.

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Board of Directors: Allen Clausen, Greg Cosimini, and Karin DuPaul. Editor & Layouts: Greg Cosimini.

Next issue: August 2006. Deadline for material: July 10.

## POP's Family Café brings new life to historic building



**Chef Larry Noble in his new kitchen at POP's Family Cafe**

By Alice Larsson

### POPs' Family Café

The historic Schoch Building (built in 1885) on the East Side of St. Paul is now home to POP's Family Café. "POP," as he is affectionately called by his children, is Executive Chef Larry Noble. The restaurant opened on April 10th of this year, and with 16 staff members, including Chef Larry, 2 cooks, 7 servers, Mary (Mrs. Noble), dishwashers and part-time employees, POP's is now serving a total of 180 to 200 people daily. Patrons are a blend of families, business people, and neighborhood residents – lots of people from POP's neighbor Metropolitan State University (kitty corner from POP's) and 3M employees.

Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Chef Larry Noble also offers specials for groups of up to 60 people (athletic team awards banquets, anniversaries, reception), who can either order off the menu or work with Larry to create a special menu. Chef Larry welcomes churchgoers in the area to come for POP's after church on Sunday for a delicious lunch/brunch, served from 11 am to 2 pm. Customers can also order anything off the menus as a takeout order. Chef Larry says, "This part of the business continues to grow, and with a minimum order of \$25, we deliver – just give us a call."

During a recent visit to POP's, Chef Larry expressed his deep gratitude to the neighborhood, his business neighbors and friends, Metropolitan State University and everyone who has stopped by for a hearty helping of POP's Family Café's food and friendly atmosphere. Chef Larry believes people "always eat with their eyes first," so be prepared for a visual feast and then enjoy every bite.

### Meet Chef Larry Noble

Born in Nashville, Tennessee, Chef Larry has been in the food service industry for 33 years. With work experience in California, and hotels and casinos in Reno, Nevada, Chef Larry is definitely a "people person," and his self-described "scratch cooking" is the

perfect fit for his customers. Here in Minnesota, Chef Noble served as a Kitchen Manager and General Manager for local established restaurants in Saint Paul, including the Saint Paul Hotel, Café Minnesota, the Cherokee Sirloin Room and the Pig's Eye Grill. Chef Larry was co-owner of Yours Truly Café, Executive Chef of the Rockin' Lobster in downtown Saint Paul, and most recently he was Chef at Three Seasons in Mahtomedi.

Over many years, Chef Larry has successfully worked towards creating his own unique style of delicious dishes such as his lightly battered deep-fried Walleye topped with his own special Lemon Caper Tartar Sauce, his Cajun-style Pork Chops topped with homemade Pineapple Salsa and his scrumptious Old-fashioned Banana Pudding. He has won awards for his lasagna and a first prize for his homemade soup in the 2000 Grand Meander Soup Contest in Saint Paul.

In addition to realizing the dream of having his own family restaurant, Chef Larry wants to form a non-profit he calls D.Y.P. or "Do Your Part." His vision is to work with shelters to train people to be restaurant managers. He wants to help people get started up their own ladder to success.

Chef Larry moved to Saint Paul in 1992 with his wife Mary and their three sons, now eighteen, seventeen and sixteen. A family man and deeply religious, Larry Noble has been involved in the community as a Saint Paul school volunteer for the past nine years and a Little League coach for the West Minnehaha Recreation Center. In the summer, he's often seen on the baseball field as an umpire, and in winter months, Larry referees high school basketball for the Catholic Association.

*Alice Larsson is a graphic designer, writer, filmmaker and marketing consultant. She has recently returned to live and work in the Twin Cities permanently after having worked on projects in California, Arizona and Colorado. She can be reached at [alctd@yahoo.com](mailto:alctd@yahoo.com).*