

Dayton's Bluff DISTRICT FORUM

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Dayton's Bluff Celebrated and Recognized



Photo by Lou "The Photo Guy" Michaels

L to r: Avinash Viswanathan, president, Dayton's Bluff Community Council, Jim Erchul, executive director, Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service, Fred Kaphingst, Mounds Theatre volunteer, Steve Randall, recreation leader at Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center, and Ed Lambert, executive director, Dayton's Bluff Community Council. Fred and Steve were given awards for their many years of work in Dayton's Bluff. Jim accepted the Remarkable Community-Building Organization award on behalf of the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service.



Photo by Greg Cosimini

There was plenty of food at the dinner provided by the Dari-ette Drive-In on Minnehaha. It included several types of pasta, Caesar salad and Italian bread.



Photo by Lou "The Photo Guy" Michaels

These are five of the members of East Side Voice, a group of local teenagers who gave a presentation concerning their work in Dayton's Bluff and then performed a short skit about their future lives.

Over 150 people attended the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Celebration and Recognition Dinner on May 15th. It was organized by the Dayton's Bluff Community Council to recognize people and organizations that have had a positive and lasting impact on the quality of life in Dayton's Bluff.

The event, which was held in the St. John's Catholic Church hall, began with some welcoming remarks by Ed Lambert, executive director of the Community Council. He was followed by St. Paul City Council President and Ward 7 Councilperson Kathy Lantry who spoke about Celebrating Dayton's Bluff.

After a buffet dinner provided by the Dari-ette Drive-In on Minnehaha, with purchased and homemade desserts from community members, door prizes from Rainbow Foods and the Downtowner Car Wash were raffled off and won by four lucky attendees.

Next came a presentation by members of East Side Voice, a group of local teenagers, which has been working in and around Dayton's Bluff gathering information about the area and calling attention to what makes it great and what still needs to be done. Several of the teens

then presented a skit about what their lives could be like in the future.

Community Council president Avinash Viswanathan then presented the Recognition Awards.

First up was the Positive Force for Youth Award given to Steve Randall. Steve has been a Recreation Leader at the Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center for 15 years, and volunteered there two years before that.

Second, the Dedicated Community Volunteer Award went to Fred Kaphingst, a retired St. Paul Police officer who has put in thousands of volunteer hours at the Historic Mounds Theatre.

Finally, Jim Erchul accepted the Remarkable Community-Building Organization Award on behalf of Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service, a nonprofit company that has been engaged with the housing needs of Dayton's Bluff for over 25 years. Jim Erchul has been executive director of DBNHS for 18 of those years.

The evening wrapped up with a few words of thanks and an ovation by the crowd.

The food was good, the company was great and the speeches were short. It was a perfect evening and fun for everyone.



Photo by Lou "The Photo Guy" Michaels

Over 150 people attended the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Celebration and Recognition Dinner that was held in the St. John's Catholic Church hall on May 15th.

Dayton's Bluff Community Meeting

The next Community Meeting is **Thursday, June 4** 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 Dayton's Bluff Community Council holds its Community Meeting on the 1st Thursday of each month. The purpose of the meeting is to work with block clubs and neighborhood residents on problem properties, criminal and nuisance behavior, code enforcement issues and any other neighborhood issues, concerns, and/or new ideas for improvement in Dayton's Bluff.

If you can get me the addresses of problems ahead of time I can get them to the police and code enforcement. Then they can bring information about the problems to the meeting. All Dayton's Bluff residents are welcome to attend. If you need more information email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or call Karin at 651-772-2075.

Meet with the police

The Eastern District Police host their monthly meetings for community members at 722 Payne on the corner of Payne and Minnehaha Avenues. One is on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. and the other on the third Friday of each month at 9:30 a.m. **In June the meetings are on the 17th and 19th.**

The meetings are intended as a time to listen to and address people's concerns about crime and other issues on the East Side.

Take a Hike

Dayton's Bluff Take a Hike occurs on the first Saturday of most months. The next hike is on Saturday, **June 6**. We meet at 10:30 a.m. in Indian Mounds Park at Earl St. and Mounds Blvd.

We'll hike from Mounds Park to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and then walk along the Bruce Vento Recreational Trail through Swede Hollow Park to the new East Side Heritage Park. Along the way we will share stories and learn some local history of the area. The hike is about four miles long with some moderately rough terrain. Transportation will be available to return to Mounds Park, if needed.

Join us and explore some of our parks and the regional trail. For more information contact Karin at 651-772-2075 or Karin@DaytonsBluff.org.

Get rid of a junk car

Budget Towing of Minnesota, Minnesota's largest towing company, is owned by Roy Carlson, an active Dayton's Bluff Community Council board member.

Budget Towing will remove any junk car or truck—located anywhere in Saint Paul—and dispose of it at no charge to the vehicle owner or the property owner where it is located. The vehicle owner will receive paperwork for a tax donation, and Roy will also make a small donation to the Community Council for each car he tows.

Just call Karin at 651-772-2075 to find out how you can get a junk car out of the way—and help clean up Dayton's Bluff.

2009 Neighborhood Home Tour



Home owners and volunteers waiting for the Home Tour to start on Saturday morning. L to r: Bob Parker, Karin DuPaul, Gary Caldwell, LeeAnn and Stefan Pomrenke and Kathryn Zurcher

The 2009 Home Tour was a great success. Hundreds of people toured the six sites in Dayton's Bluff. The weather made it a perfect weekend for the Home Tour.

Visitors came from all over the Metro area and even a few people from out of state. There is a group from one of the western suburbs that comes every year to the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Tour because they enjoy seeing Dayton's Bluff and all of the wonderful homes.

Some visitors were heard saying they had no idea what a wonderful neighborhood Dayton's Bluff is, and how they loved the beautiful homes and the picturesque views.

The tour featured a variety of house sizes and styles. Four of the houses had been vacant and now have new owners living in them who have fixed up their new homes. Two of the homes were totally renovated down to the studs. Others were restored. The homes featured beautiful woodwork, period built-in sideboards, leaded glass and other period features.

Some of the homes had over five hundred visitors. We had thirty-six volunteers help with the Home Tour. Without them the tour would not have gone so smoothly. It was a very good Home Tour this year. Now we are starting to plan for next year.

National Night Out Kick Off Picnic

Date: **Wednesday, June 3, 2009**

Location: Midway Picnic Pavilion/Como Park (Across from Como Park Pool)

Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m..

* Receive information on the August 4, 2009, National Night Out planning process: Permits to close streets off, registration forms, how to request Police, and Fire Department Personnel to attend National Night Out in your neighborhood. * **FREE** hot dogs, chips, cookies, and beverages (while supplies last!). You are welcome to bring a picnic dinner for yourself if you prefer (no alcohol allowed in city parks).

* Register for door prizes at picnic site! Door prize drawing will take place during the picnic and all winners must be present at time of drawing!

* Join us for this exciting event and plan a National Night Out event in your neighborhood

* Directions to the picnic area: I-94W to Lexington Ave.. Go north approximately 1 1/2 mile, to Horton Ave.. (the Street Car Museum is on the N.E. corner of the intersection) go west 1 long block to Midway Pkwy. Picnic Pavilions are on the right, just past the ball fields. Parking is at the adjacent lot, on the street or across street at the Como Park swimming pool lot.

* The city bus nearest to the picnic area is #3A which stops at Lexington & Horton. Metro Transit Info line is 612-372-3333.

* For more information call Karin at the Dayton's Bluff Community Council, 651-772-2075 or Pam McCreary at the Saint Paul Police Crime Prevention Unit, 651-266-5455.

June 14th is Flag Day

**If you have a flag,
fly it proudly!**

Dayton's Bluff Recycling

Pick-up in our area is every
**Tuesday. Please have your
recycling at the curb by 7am.**



Need bins? Stop by the Council office
at 798 E 7th St or call 651-772-2075.

Don't Litter!

Curfew Law

The City of Saint Paul
enforces the following
curfew law for youth:

- Age 15 or younger: Home by 10pm
- Age 16–17: Home by 12 midnight

St. Paul Police Department
Juvenile Unit

Dayton's Bluff business class

The next Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Microentrepreneur Class is starting in September 2009. This program helps start-up and young businesses on the East Side. All East Side entrepreneurs are welcome.

Class training lasts 8 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, plus 8 hours of one on one time with the instructor. Those who successfully complete the course and locate their businesses in target neighborhoods are eligible for ongoing business support services.

Some examples of businesses started by people who have previously taken this course include graphics, landscaping, 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 2009 and class size is limited.

Please call Karin at 651-772-2075 or email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org for an application.

Block club meetings

* Wilson Avenue Block Club meets on the **second Wednesday of each month** at Mounds Park United Methodist Church, at Earl and Euclid, at 6:30 p.m.

* Lower Dayton's Bluff Block Club Kickball meets on the **second to the last Tuesday of each month** at Dayton's Bluff Rec Center at 800 Conway at 6:30 p.m. Kids and parents are welcome. Kids play, parents talk.

* Margaret Rec Center Block Club meets on the **second Thursday of each month** at the Margaret Rec Center, at Margaret and Frank, at 6:30 p.m.

* Beech/Margaret 654 Block Club meets on the **last Thursday of each month** at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church at Margaret and Forest at 6:30 pm. This block club covers the area Minnehaha, Beech Margaret, 6th, 5th, and 4th between Cypress and Arcade.

* Frank Street Block Club meets on the **third Wednesday of each month** at Immanuel City of Refuge Healing Temple at 815 Frank Street at 6 p.m. This block club encompasses 7th, Ross, Bush, Reaney, and Minnehaha between Earl and Johnson Parkway.

If you wish to have your block club listed, or need information about starting your own block club, please contact Karin at 651-772-2075 or Karin@DaytonsBluff.org.

At the Mounds Theatre in June

Man with a Movie Camera

Director Dziga Vertov's classic silent movie film *Man with a Movie Camera* will be showing at the Mounds Theatre on June 5th and 6th at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$6 at the door.

Shot in many cities throughout the Soviet Union in the late 1920s and released in 1929, *Man with a Movie Camera* is a landmark of Soviet constructionist film and to this day still astounds film theorists, critics and general audiences. There are no actors in the film, only real people going about their lives, be they exhilarating, tragic, or both.

The Nothing, The Inexplicable, and The Mind

This is not your normal theatrical experience. The Nothing, The Inexplicable and The Mind is part of The W.O.R.D. Series from The Trance~Formation Project created by Shaman, Mystic, Wizard Hanakia Zedek. W.O.R.D. When Ordinary Reality Disappears is a Series of Word Design or Poetic Verse designed to lift the veil of everyday reality. The Trance~Formation Project was designed to create a pathway to the depth of human experience through formatting deep trance and altered states that

allow for the transformation of the participant ergo Trance~Formation/Transformation.

The Nothing, The Inexplicable, and The Mind comes in a timely fashion; while we as a species are in the midst of a paradigm shift. People are moving out of the prescribed stories and mythology and coming to understand our true cosmology from inside/insight out. Everything must be questioned which brings us to Nothing. This Piece is an exploration into the depths of Nothing as a way of understanding everything.

The audience enters the theater and chooses their seating. There may be some sound design or absolute silence. After the audience is seated the show is presented with no intermission in three segments of poetic verse: The Nothing, The Inexplicable, and then The Mind. Audience is encouraged to relax, close their eyes if they wish.

So, please join us at the Historic Mounds Theatre on June 13, 2009 at 7:30 pm. Admission is \$20. For more info on the show or The Philosophy of Nothing contact Hanakia Zedek 1-612-205-SEER (7337) or hanakia@hanakiazedek.org.

The Mounds Theatre is located at 1029 Hudson Road, Saint Paul, MN 55106. Tel: (651) 772-2253, website: www.MoundsTheatre.org.

Portage for Youth summer camps

The Portage for Youth will be holding classes in Theatre Arts and Dance this summer at the Historic Mounds Theatre, 1029 Hudson Road, Saint Paul, MN 55106. The classes are for children ages 8 to 13.

Camps will be held during the weeks of July 6, July 13, July 20, July 27, August 3 and August 10. Sessions run Monday through Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Dance will be in the morning from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. followed by lunch from 12:30 to 1:00 and Theatre from 1:00 to 3:00. All students must be picked up by 3:30 p.m.

Each child must bring his or her own bagged lunch and a drink, and have transportation to and from classes. The Dayton's Bluff Circulator bus will be running this summer and makes stops at the Mounds Theatre.

Dance and Theatre Arts tap participants' instincts to explore who they truly are and can be. Theatre, dance and movement help participants grow by encouraging creativity, cooperation with others in achieving a joint goal, self-exploration and development of moral and spiritual values. In addition, movement and dance combines athleticism, creativity and builds students' artistic abilities.

There is no fee for the camps but participants must register by June 22, 2009. Sign up for one week or all weeks.

Please call Raeann Ruth at the Portage for Youth to register at 651-772-8674 or visit the Mounds Theatre website at www.moundstheatre.org for more information and to download a registration form.

Summer Vacation Bible School

God's always doing great, exciting things at *Gadget's Garage*. Join us at Bethlehem Lutheran Church from June 15th-18th from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm. Kids ages 3-12 meet friends, explore Bible stories, do fun activities, sing great songs, make crafts, play games, and eat lunch. We expect a great response, so enroll your child today. It is free!! To register call (651) 776-4737 or stop in to the church office, located at 655 Forest Street, St. Paul, MN. 55106

**Sidewalks are meant for walking.
Streets are made for driving.
It's not that complicated.**

Basketball Camp

Hone your basketball skills, make new friends and learn lessons for life at the Path To Victory Basketball Camp.

The camp is for boys and girls entering grades 1-8. The girls camp will be held June 18-20 and the boys camp is June 26-28. Times for the camp are 6-8 p.m. Cost for the camp is \$10.

The camps are sponsored by St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church. For more information call 651-771-6406 or visit stjohnev.net.

Advertise in the Dayton's Bluff District Forum

**Call Karin at
651-772-2075**

Auditions in June for Murder at the Prom

Auditions for the Young Artists Initiatives' (YAI) interactive murder mystery MURDER AT THE PROM are coming up quick! Auditions are June 1 and 2 from 6:00PM-9:00PM at our headquarters located within First Lutheran Church, 463 Maria Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55106-4428 (next to Metro State University). Rehearsals are 6:00PM-9:00PM, Sundays through Thursdays from June 7 to July 22.

MURDER AT THE PROM is part of our Teen Show Program. These are shows that often tackle more challenging issues or texts and cater to older youth actors, typically ages 12-18. This particular production takes place in high school with high school age characters. Those auditioning must be 12-18. Auditioners will need to prepare a 30 second comedic monologue (a speech from a play or movie.) It MUST be memorized and well rehearsed. Please note that a large portion of this show is also improvised which means actors who are asked to attend call backs will be expected to do improvisation.

Please direct audition questions to Jefferson@youngartistsmn.org

Performance date and /times for MURDER AT THE PROM:

Thursday, July 23rd at 7:30PM

Friday, July 24th at 7:30PM

Saturday, July 25th at 7:30PM

Thursday, July 30th at 7:30PM

Friday, July 31st at 7:30PM

Saturday, August 1st at 7:30PM

Subterranean Twin Cities book reading

Author Greg Brick will read from and discuss his new book, *Subterranean Twin Cities*, on Tuesday, June 2. This free event will begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Dayton's Bluff Community Council offices, 798 East 7th St.

In the book, urban speleologist Brick takes us on a tour under the streets and into the many caves, tunnels and industrial spaces that make up the Twin Cities' vast underground landscape.

It is particularly appropriate that author Brick is making an appearance here in Dayton's Bluff because the neighborhood is home to many of the places he discusses in his book. A few fearless, perhaps foolhardy, Bluff residents have explored these secret places. And given the smells, dampness and bugs involved in the exploration, many of us will prefer the virtual tour over the reality.

We were reminded last month that there is a dark side to these expeditions as well. An urban explorer died this April when the tunnel he was exploring filled with rainwater and he was swept into the river. Brick will talk about why safety and security concerns have cut off public access to these areas that remain important historical artifacts in the area.

Copies of *Subterranean Twin Cities*, published by the University of Minnesota press, will be for sale at the reading and the author will be available to sign individual copies. For more information call the Dayton's Bluff Community Council office at 651 772-2075. This event is sponsored by the Dayton's Bluff Arts and Culture Committee.

Selling your home or just make the neighborhood look better

Easy Steps To Increase Interest

Curb appeal plays a major role in creating a favorable first impression and getting your home sold.

Traditionally, spring is the most popular home buying season of the year. This means, with spring just around the corner, now is the time to think about sprucing up your house and putting it on the market.

If you are thinking about selling your house, it's important that you take advantage of the spring season by getting your home ready for open houses as soon as possible.

It's true that the housing industry is in a slump right now, but people are still buying homes. In fact, a lot of people are buying homes. Your goal is to make sure that your home stands out from the crowd.

Should you invest in large makeovers and major updates? That depends on the condition of your house. If you are unsure, it might be a good idea to consult with a real estate agency or two. The challenge is to choose home improvement projects that will not only add value to your home, but will also make it stand out in the crowd.

Brad Staggs, HGTVPro.com and DIY show producer and host, and a licensed contractor, suggested these tips for homeowners preparing to sell their home:

"The most important thing is to update the most visible areas, common gathering rooms like the den and kitchen," he recommended.

"But don't forget the front and back yard! Prime home-buying season coincides with spring and summer, and that first impression, your home's curb appeal can make all the difference."

Other tips from Staggs:

1. Molding: icing on the cake.

"It's amazing the difference a little bit of decorative wood molding can make," noted Staggs. "Frame out a picture window, add deep crown molding to a high ceiling, even a simple chair rail in a guest bathroom changes the entire look of a room."

2. Front porch first impression.

Your front porch is often the first thing a potential homebuyer will see. According to Staggs, it should be in perfect shape. "Add a fresh coat of paint to brighten the front of your house," he said. "Nice wooden Adirondack-style chairs are welcoming, especially when enhanced by bright flowers in colorful pots. You want your porch to signal the start of something wonderful!"

3. Look behind you.

Don't neglect the backyard. Outdoor living spaces grow in popularity each year. Impress potential homebuyers with a backyard to die for—overflowing garden boxes, some nice wooden outdoor furniture, a charming gazebo, or perhaps a new deck. "Spend a few weekends dressing up your backyard before everything blooms," suggested Staggs.

"Curb appeal" continued on page 5

Memories from 652 Mclean - The (airplane) crash of 1929

By Johannes R. Allert

St. Paul was a bustling city in the 1920s. Located along the banks of the Mississippi River, as the center for state government, it was also a beehive of activity for commerce and transportation. Looking from the heights of the Mounds Park neighborhood, it provided a panoramic view and a perfect backdrop to the residents who lived up there. In the 1920s, the Mounds Park neighborhood consisted of white, middle-class workers who lived in fairly large houses. Most were first or second generation Americans of German, Irish or Scandinavian descent.

Directly below the heights and across the river from Mounds Park lay the St Paul Airport (later named Holman Field) where fledgling Northwest Airways was in the middle of its third year of service, offering flights to and from the Twin Cities to Chicago using the Ford Tri-motor to transport its customers. Up until that time, they had flown over one million miles without fatalities.

Air travel was still considered a novel idea in the summer of 1929. Just 2 years before, Charles Lindbergh had made his solo trip across the Atlantic from New York to Paris, which helped opened the door for air travel. The creation of larger and better engines led to larger aircraft. The Ford Tri-motor became one of the first workhorses in civil aviation. Among other new inventions came the development of radio in 1920 which vastly improved communications in the air and on the ground. Beacons also sprang up across the countryside to assist in navigation. All helped in the growth of air transportation. But despite these improvements, accidents could and still did happen.

Late on the afternoon of June 24, 1929 a Northwest Airways Ford Tri-motor NC7416 ship #30 was preparing to take off. Piloted by Edwin Middagh (who had 4,000 hours of flying time under his belt), the aircraft contained six passengers and 18-year-old steward, Robert Johnston. The weather that day was clear and warm with light winds. The plane taxied down the runway, then lifted off on its final leg to Minneapolis.

Just as the aircraft cleared the field and gained altitude, something went terribly wrong. The right engine sputtered then suddenly came to a stop, followed in quick succession by the center and then the left engine. In a desperate attempt to save his passengers and crew, Edwin Middagh swung his Tri-motor back towards the St. Paul Airport to land his aircraft. Unfortunately, his Tri-motor had neither the power nor the lift to make it back to the field. The aircraft came down hard, clipping two houses on River Street. Upon impact, the aircraft broke into three pieces and came to rest on the corner of River Street and Mounds Boulevard.

The first one out of the aircraft was the steward, Robert Johnston, who managed to kick open one of the windows and crawl out. After assisting the passengers, he went to help the



This Ford Tri-motor crashed at the corner of River (now Wilshire) Street and Mounds Boulevard on June 24, 1929 shortly after take-off from Holman Field.

pilot, but it was too late. Edwin Middagh was knocked unconscious upon impact and as the steward went to extract him from the wreckage, the cockpit caught fire, and the pilot burned to death. All passengers on board suffered injuries and were taken to local hospitals for treatment. Four local residents were injured by burns they received while trying to assist with the rescue efforts when the aircraft caught fire. Another resident was slightly injured when the plane crashed, its wing taking out the front porch where the person was sitting.

My father, Charles H. Allert, (9 years old at the time), was outside playing with his younger brother Wm. Donald Allert and their friends by their home on 652 Mclean when they saw the aircraft go down and heard the crash. My father stated that they were the first on the scene. News quickly spread throughout the neighborhood and the surrounding community of the accident, and it was not long before the whole area was clogged with traffic and bystanders.

Once the fire was put out, some onlookers stormed the wreckage looking for souvenirs, pulling out anything that wasn't nailed down. Local neighborhood kids sold pieces of the wreckage to the crowds of people coming to see the crash. Complaints were officially lodged by the residents

of the neighborhood because of all the damage done to their property by outsiders who, in their zeal to get to the crash site, tore down fences as well as trampled over their shrubbery and flower gardens.

Police and Fire Fighters as well as a recovery team from Northwest Airlines found it virtually impossible to rope off the area let alone get to the site and eventually requested assistance from the 109th Aero Squadron based near Ft. Snelling, to help with crowd control. Even with the additional manpower, the area still remained clogged with people and traffic well into the evening.

By the following day, a joint investigation by F. H. Longeway, aircraft inspector for the U.S. Department of Commerce and Charles "Speed" Holman, Operations Manager of Northwest Airways confirmed that the air crash was due to engine failure and their report was quickly sent to Washington D.C.

Exactly 80 years have passed since that tragic day in June. Shortly before my father's death in February, I showed him the photographs taken the day of the crash. Even at that late stage he perked up and was interested in the photos that I had located, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society online web site. He had told me of the story a couple of times as I was



The crash attracted large numbers of people who hampered recovery efforts and caused even more damage to the neighborhood as they gawked and collected souvenirs.

growing up, and had even taken me to the location once long ago.

In the photo, there are clusters of youth around the perimeter of the crash site. I can't help but wonder if my dad, his younger brother, and their friends are among the crowd. After his passing I wanted to go back to his old neighborhood and attempt to locate the site and see what the area was like now. Before I could do that, I had to lay the groundwork and do some research. My lifelong friend, Ken Hornby, came along for the ride and to assist in whatever way he could. Our first stop was to the Minnesota History Center where they not only provided courteous assistance, but valuable information as well. I found most of accounts in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* to be well written and they helped shed light on the event, as well as the reaction and problems encountered by the emergency response teams of that era.

After making copies of the *Pioneer Press*, we headed off to Mounds Park. In 2009 the homes in the neighborhood look older, and the population diverse. As we drove around, we saw a number of homes undergoing renovation. Dad's old home at 652 Mclean looked familiar, but the color has changed and the greenhouse where his mother would start her plants and flowers for the growing season had been replaced by a wooden deck.

Our biggest problem we encountered was that we could not find the elusive River Street. Ken Hornby spotted an older gentleman sitting on his front porch enjoying the spring day and suggested we pull over and ask him for directions. It turned out to be a good suggestion because the gentleman turned out to be Mr. Steve Trimble, the area's unofficial historian and history columnist of the neighborhood newspaper. Mr. Trimble informed us that, for whatever reason, River Street had now been changed to Wilshire Street, and that it was a mere 2 blocks away.

Upon arriving at the site of the former accident, neighbors living there pointed to the exact location of the accident as well to where the original black & white photos were taken which was from the second floor of the home across the street.

The lot where the Tri-motor crashed is now occupied by a stucco and brick home that was built in 1939. All in all a good visit, and it was nice to know that through the years the new people in the neighborhood were aware of some of the history of long ago. My advice to anyone is that if you are interested in something, put on your "History Detective Hat" and do some sleuthing!

References:

Photos courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society
St. Paul Pioneer Press - Vol. 76 Issue 176 & 177
 Mr. Steve Trimble
 Mr. Charles H. Allert - R.I.P.
 (Thanks Dad!)

Letters to the Editor

Say good bye to more local elementary schools

It's been a while since I sent in a letter, but it seemed time to make a few comments. I see in the paper that the Superintendent of Schools is proposing eliminating Sheridan Elementary School. The School Board, which usually does whatever they are told, will probably end up agreeing.

Remember when this happened with Parkway Elementary School? It was scuttled without any public hearing or any statements from school board members. If you recall, they thought they were clever by stating that they weren't closing the school, but only "repurposing the building."

Something like that will likely be said again. They already told the newspaper that Sheridan would no longer be used for elementary instruction.

I realize that this is outside of Dayton's Bluff but it was one of the schools that the ousted Parkway students were directed towards. It is also another East Side institution that has been or might be on the chopping block.

If you look at the area south of Seventh Street and north of the freeway and from Mounds Boulevard to the eastern city limits, Dayton's Bluff will be the only neighborhood (non-magnet) public elementary school to still exist in that huge area.

There have been rumors that the city may be considering closing Margaret Recreation Center and "changes" in the use of the Ross Street Fire Station. Please keep your eyes and ears open and get ready to fight to save what remains.

Your old neighbor,
G. B. LeRoy

Dayton's Bluff will lose yet another part of its heritage when the school year ends. It was announced in March that Trinity Catholic School will close permanently this spring. Trinity was the last Catholic grade school in Dayton's Bluff as well as most of the Eastside. Trinity was formed through the consolidation of St. John's, Sacred Heart, St. Casimir's and St. Patrick's Schools

As is becoming so common, this was done with no advanced notification of the neighborhood. There was no chance to launch a "Save Trinity" campaign. Well over a century of tradition is being lost and we will be poorer for it.

Joseph Gregori
Dayton's Bluff resident

Clothesline Art Show needs young artists

Calling all young artists, art appreciators and history buffs! There will be a Clothesline Art Show at the historic Ard Godfrey House, Minneapolis' oldest surviving wood frame house, on Saturday, June 20, 2009 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. (Rain date: Sunday, June 21, 1:00-4:00 p.m.). The Ard Godfrey House is located at University & Central Aves. SE, in Chute Square, Minneapolis

The subject of the drawings/paintings to be exhibited will be "Ox Carts and Oxen", in celebration of ox carts that traveled from the Red River Settlements to St. Paul in the 1800s, during the time Ard & Harriet Godfrey lived near St. Anthony Falls.

There is no entrance fee for young artists to submit ox cart illustrations. Write child's name, age, medium used and title on back of piece. Submit drawing or painting on 11" x 14" poster board or white construction paper, vertical or horizontal orientation, by June 6, 2009 to: The Woman's Club of Minneapolis, 410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis, MN 55403

Entries will be on display at the Godfrey House during the event, and may be picked up the two weekends after the event during regular hours.

Free Godfrey buttons for all participants. Subway gift certificates, good at 12 SE 4th Street location, as well as other prizes, will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in the following categories: Age 6 or younger; Ages 7-11; Ages 12-16; Age 17 and older

During the event, tour the charming, historic yellow Ard Godfrey House, with hostesses dressed in 1850s period costume.

The regular tour schedule at the Ard Godfrey House is May 30 – Aug. 30, Saturdays and Sundays, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. No admission fee is charged, but donations are welcome. Special group tours may be arranged year 'round by calling The Woman's Club of Minneapolis, at 612-813-5300. For directions and other information, call 612-813-5319 or visit www.ardgodfreyhouse.org. The Ard Godfrey House is a project of The Woman's Club of Minneapolis.

**Father's Day is Sunday,
June 21st**

**Happy Father's Day to
all the dads out there.**

World Culture Magnet Spring Culture Fair



See Yang and Bryan Lopez were part of the musical presentation at the Spring Fair.

By Diane May

On May 14th, World Cultures Magnet School (WCMS) celebrated their Spring Culture Fair with a day filled with fun. Not only did the school celebrate the cultures of North, Central, and South America, but students and staff also managed to have a special visit from St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, give an update on their Solar Oven Project, recognize their Global Citizens Program participants, hold a grilled hot dog picnic, feature both their World Cultures African Drum and Hmong Dance Group, and dedicate their playground all on the same day!

The whole school as well as staff, parents, and volunteers heard St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman's kind words about how young students today have the power to change our world. He cited WCMS as an example for answering President Obama's "Call to Service" by being the first school in the nation to partner with the Solar Oven Society to help bring solar ovens to impoverished countries.

The WCMS Student Council oversaw the entire school's collection of aluminum cans to raise funds for the purchase of three solar ovens which will be sent to needy countries such as Haiti or Somalia. Earlier in the year, members of the Student Council took a field trip to the Solar Oven Society facilities. There the students learned how many people in poor countries still use wood for building fires to cook their food; finding wood for the day's cooking is not easy in these needy countries. Many children around the world do not get a proper education because much of their day is spent finding wood to be used in cooking.

Members of WCMS Student Council learned how acquiring a solar oven can drastically improve a family's quality of life in these impoverished countries. The students also learned how these durable yet inexpensive solar ovens are built and the science behind how they work. One solar oven was even brought back to the school so others could appreciate them. It was on display during the Spring Culture Fair.

After the update on the solar ovens, the Global Citizens Program participants were recognized. The Global Citizens Program at WCMS is open to 3rd through 6th grade students, but the learning extends to all students. These students have stepped up to the

challenge of bettering themselves and the world around themselves. They have voluntarily taken leadership positions in a variety of areas and are our future leaders.

After a musical presentation featuring WCMS kindergarten students, teachers invited parents and family back to the classrooms to see the students' handiwork from the America's unit. Later, there was 100% participation in the outdoor picnic and even more sunshine was enjoyed while the African Drum Group performed, closely followed by the graceful Hmong Dance Group.

School and community volunteers were appreciated and the 2nd anniversary of building the playground was celebrated. (A few newer playground pieces such as the community favorite- the spider climber- were added just last year.) And then the kids were set free to play on that new playground. Principal Mary Weyandt, other staff, and parents looked down on the joyful playground scene from the parking area and basked in the enthusiasm of their students.

World Cultures Magnet School is located in the beautiful, old brick Harding High School building at 1075 E. Third Street. For more information about WCMS or volunteering opportunities, please call principal Mary Weyandt at 651-778-3200 or go to their website worldcultures.spps.org. For more information about the Solar Oven Society, please go to sos@solarovens.org or call (612) 623-4700.

Continued from page 3

"Curb appeal"

4. Floor them.

Nothing says, "welcome home" like the feel of smooth real wood floors or a plush thick carpet. If your flooring is worn or "blah," consider something new underfoot in the entry, living room and/or kitchen. This does not have to be an expensive undertaking. Check out the flooring options at a floor, carpet or home store, and you will be impressed with the range of choices.

5. Add a visual surprise.

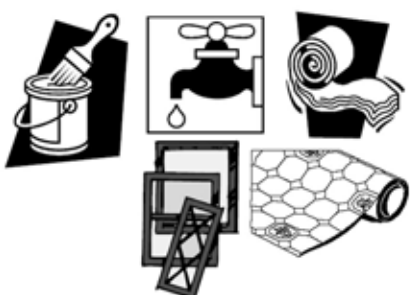
"Find something cool to add to a room in your home, a little visual pop no one will expect," recommended Staggs. "Like adding bead-board panels to a kitchen island, then painting it a funky accent color."

Staggs also recommended that homeowners select "green" building materials for any project.

"As a consumer, the most important thing you can do is buy sustainable," he said. "Choose natural building products, those that truly fit the definition of 'green'."

Article source: *Metro Creative Graphics* (Printed with permission)

Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services



Not sure where to begin?

We are a non-profit agency eager to help you accomplish your home repairs using the latest green rehab techniques that may lower your energy costs.

There is no cost assistance for eligible homebuyers. We offer payback loans with low interest rates (3-9%) and several special programs that do not require payments. Call 651.774.6995 to see if you qualify.

Yog koj xav nrog Hmoob tham, hu 651.774.9064

Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services
823 7th Street East
St. Paul, MN 55106
651.774.6995-office www.dbnhs.org



DAYTON'S BLUFF SPRING VACANT HOME TOUR

The Dayton's Bluff Spring Vacant Home Tour was held May 17th. People met at 798 E. 7th St. to pick up a tour map and board a vintage Twin Cities Line bus that took them to the ten houses on the tour. All photos courtesy of Lou "The Photo Guy" Michaels unless otherwise noted.



Karin DuPaul (front) and other volunteers greet visitors at 798 E. 7th St.



Volunteers travel to their posts courtesy of a restored Twin Cities Line bus.



Bus driver Phil Epstein



Wooden staircase in one of the houses.



Photo by Karin DuPaul

This vintage bus was provided by the Minnesota Transportation Museum.

This space sponsored by Metro Liquor Warehouse, 854 E. 7th St. Saint Paul, MN 55106 651-774-6033

Indian Mounds Park needs friends

By Steve Trimble

There has been talk for some time about creating a group to look after and improve Indian Mounds Park, the regional park that graces our community. Such an organization is now in its early stages of formation and is looking for as many members as possible. A fun and productive meeting of around thirty people was held April 23.

Some of the recent things that have probably sparked interest in such a group include the tearing down of a WPA era wall, the overnight elimination of the fire pits and the re-routing of Mounds Boulevard intersection with Burns Avenue. All of these were done with little or no notice to the community. It appears that, unlike all the other large parks, there is no long-range plan for this park.

In addition to the physical changes that have occurred, participants raised concerns about crime and suspicious activity in the park. Several park users have complained about drug activity near the playground area. Others felt that the infrastructure had not been properly maintained.

One overarching problem is that this is the only regional park that does not have a recent comprehensive plan, the last one having been developed some twenty-five years ago, and since then, as one person put it "there have been some seemingly uninformed things that have happened."

The group also reviewed an organizational logo that's been created by a graphic designer. People liked the overall design, but asked whether it could be changed slightly to indicate "Indian Mounds Park" rather than just "Mounds Park." There is a concern that calling the association "Friends of Mounds Park" (FOMP) may make people think that the focus is on all of the neighborhood rather than on just Indian Mounds Park itself.

Council member Kathy Lantry attended the meeting and agreed that developing a master plan was a good idea. "What you want to do is keep random things from being done," she commented. "If you want it to be neighborhood driven, you need to control the process"

Don Ganje of the St. Paul Parks Department was also present and agreed that the park's maintenance had been deferred in the past and if there is a plan "the neighborhood voice is listened to and you can control your own destiny." He concluded saying, "the more interest there is, the better the job we can get done."

There has been a recent meeting with Michael Hahm, St. Paul's Director of Parks. While he did not feel he could make a commitment at this time to prioritize a long-range plan for the

park, it's generally felt that continued citizen participation and engagement might change that priority.

So what needs to be done? Obviously, more people need to get involved, and there is plenty of room for more participants. One next step would be to join a committee. Three of them were set up and will be meeting sometime in June. If you are interested, contact the people below or call Karin DuPaul at the Dayton's Bluff Community Council at 772-2075 and she can help you get in contact.

Membership and Organization Committee: Some of the ideas to be discussed include what it means to be a member. Can anyone join? Should there be a monetary or volunteer component as is the case with some other "friends groups?" What kind of structure should be set up, what budget should be established and what goals would be developed? Julie Gugin will lead this committee. Her e-mail is juliejean1@comcast.net

Events and Communication Committee: While people from all over use the area, what kinds of events can be hosted to help meet the goals of a vital, inclusive, engaging and fun park that will bring neighbors together? What activities will encourage preservation of the park and engagement of the broader community? What kind of events do you want to see in the future? Stephanie Harr will head up this committee. Her e-mail is stephanieharr1@hotmail.com

Volunteer Committee: It is obvious that a structured volunteer program can help sustain the park. What would it look like and how can volunteers help us achieve the overall goals? What volunteer activities does the organization want to plan and coordinate? Jacob Dorer will chair this committee. Contact him by email at dorer@macalester.edu

The group has started fundraising both for mailings and larger goals, such as the creation of a master plan. The Community Council has agreed to be the fiscal agent so that donations will be tax deductible. An application to the CIB committee for planning funds has already been turned in, but the outcome won't be known for a while.

Committees will be meeting in June, with another larger meeting anticipated for July. All meetings will be open to the public. Anyone is welcome to join a committee, attend meetings, offer suggestions and help make decisions. The times and places will be published in the *Forum*, so if you are interested in joining the effort be sure to read the next papers carefully. If you can't show up, forward your comments to someone so your ideas will be included.

<p>Support your friendly neighborhood newspaper. Advertise in the <i>Dayton's Bluff District Forum</i> Call 651-772-2075</p>	<p><i>Paul's Lounge</i> : MOUND LIQUORS</p>	
	<p>Karaoke Fridays 8:30p-12:30a</p>	<p>Weekly Specials M-Th 10a-8p F-Sat 10a-10p</p>
	<p>Weekday Happy Hour 10a-12p and 3-5p</p>	
	<p>Ask about our monthly drawings!</p>	
<p>1045 Hudson Rd • 651-774-1099</p>		<p>1047 Hudson Rd • 651-774-WET1</p>

Our Youth. Our Community.

Highlighting the youth of Dayton's Bluff



Keeping our youth engaged

Summer is near and you can almost hear the collective sighs of exasperation from parents about what to do with the kids. For many in our neighborhood, transportation is a main deterrent for getting youth to and from myriad activities available in the community. That's one of the reasons the East Side Circulator was developed.

The East Side Circulator is designed to safely and effectively transport youth in Dayton's Bluff and Payne Phalen to and from youth programming. It is one important piece in creating a neighborhood infrastructure that supports youth learning. The Circulator encourages and enables our young people to learn in many different locations throughout their neighborhood. It also helps youth expand their number of positive relationships and gives them a sense that their community is a place where they have many opportunities to grow.

Who can ride?

Any registered youth age 7–18 can ride. Those under 7 years old can ride if accompanied by an adult or family member over 13 years of age. A parent or guardian must complete and sign a registration form for each youth wishing to ride the Circulator. Forms are available at your local recreation center.

SUMMER SCHEDULE

The summer Circulator route operates from June 22–August 28, Monday–Friday, 10am–6pm. The Dayton's Bluff schedule is shown at the right. For a full schedule, including Payne Phalen, pick up an *East Side Youth Guide* at your rec center.

The East Side Circulators are organized through the East Side Learning Collaborative, with support from the Minnesota Department of Education After School Community Learning program.

1 Mounds Park

On Earl at the corner of Earl & Suburban
10:17, 10:48, 11:19, 11:50, 12:21, 1:02, 1:33, 2:04, 3:05,
3:36, 4:07, 4:48, 5:19, 5:50

2 East Side Community Center/Harding HS

On Barclay near the corner of 6th St
10:23, 10:54, 11:25, 11:56, 12:27, 1:08, 1:39, 2:10, 3:11, 3:42, 4:13, 4:54, 5:25, 5:56

3 Margaret Rec Center

On Margaret near the corner of Hancock
10:27, 10:58, 11:29, 12:00, 12:31, 1:12, 1:43, 2:14, 3:15, 3:46, 4:17, 4:58, 5:29, 6:00

4 YMCA/J. Johnson Elementary School

Transfer to Payne-Phalen route
In YMCA parking lot near entrance to the building
10:00; 10:31; 11:02; 11:33; 12:04; 12:34; 1:16; 1:47; 2:18; 3:19; 3:50; 4:42; 5:02; 5:33

5 Dayton's Bluff Library/Young Artists Initiative/Community Design Center

On Maria Av in front of the greenhouse north of 7th
10:04, 10:35, 11:06, 11:37, 12:08, 12:49, 1:20, 1:51, 2:52, 3:23, 3:54, 4:35, 5:06, 5:37

6 Dayton's Bluff Rec Center

On Conway St in front of the parking lot
10:08, 10:39, 11:10, 11:41, 12:12, 12:53, 1:24, 1:55, 2:56, 3:27, 3:58, 4:39, 5:10, 5:41

7 American Indian Magnet & World Cultures School

At the corner of 3rd St and Tell
10:11, 10:42, 11:13, 11:44, 12:15, 12:56, 1:27, 1:58, 2:59, 3:30, 4:01, 4:42, 5:13, 5:44

8 Mounds Park United Methodist Church

On Earl at the corner of Earl and Euclid
10:13, 10:44, 11:15, 11:46, 12:17, 12:58, 1:29, 2:00, 3:01, 3:32, 4:03, 4:44, 5:15, 5:46

9 Mounds Theatre

On Hudson Rd in front of the theatre
10:15, 10:46, 11:17, 11:48, 12:19, 1:00, 1:31, 2:02, 3:03, 3:34, 4:05, 4:46, 5:17, 5:48

Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center | 800 Conway Street | 651-793-3885

Local "merchant of hope" Kathie Tope retires from ECFE

By Meg Gronau

My two small children and I started attending Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) at Dayton's Bluff in September 2007. We joined for something to do weekday mornings, and because it was affordable.

It never occurred to me that ECFE might count as preschool. I didn't even know that ECFE had actual teachers... for the parents as well as the kids.

But boy, is ECFE preschool all right.

And boy, does ECFE have teachers.

Kathie Tope is one of the very best preschool teachers there is. She's retiring this year, after 34 years of service to Dayton's Bluff ECFE.

"Merchant of hope" is the phrase used by author and educator Crystal Kuykendall, to describe the power and privilege of working with young people and families. It captures Tope beautifully.

In the fall of 1975, while earning her teaching degree from the University of Minnesota, Tope interned at the Dayton's Bluff ECFE. That spring she was hired as an aide and, after graduation, spent 8 years teaching in the "birth-to-three-years" room at the site. She then switched to the "three-to-five-years" room and has taught there for the last 26 years.

Mary Ann Cogelow, Tope's teaching counterpart in the parents' room for the last three decades, describes Tope as "head and shoulders above the crowd" of preschool teachers.

"Her inner child is still alive and well," Cogelow says.

Cogelow, who mostly retired from Dayton's Bluff ECFE last year, made sure we parents know exactly how lucky our children are to get to play with Tope a few hours per week.

Because "play" is what Tope does with her students, who (thank goodness!) have no idea they're on the cutting edge of early education. Current research shows that young children desperately need to play — with blocks, balls, dolls, dishes, plants, animals, food, books, sand, soap (just to name a few!), not to mention with other children and with caring adults — in order to develop their full potential. So that's what Tope does with them. She allows each child to explore at his or her own pace, to his or her own individual level of interest.

In the last few months alone, I've been privileged (because parent volunteers are an essential part of the ECFE program) to help Tope's students build birdhouses, dissect owl pellets (don't ask), assemble piles of "junk" into sculptures, play the violin (a first for me, too), and bake pizzas and pretzels. Her curriculum is fun but it also broadens the horizons of young and old alike, in very meaningful ways.

After seeing Tope (and the other ECFE teachers) in action for the past two years, I am no longer surprised when a child is allowed to stick with a single activity for the entire class period. In fact, I'm grateful, especially when that child is my own daughter,

who was going through a "magic-marker-writing" phase at the same time her younger brother happened to be going through a "magic-marker-eating" phase. We had several long months of No Markers at home, and I'm so relieved the teachers just let her enjoy the precious ECFE markers.

Tope's patience knows no bounds. I have never seen teachers — and it seems that all the teachers and aides at Dayton's Bluff ECFE personify this trait — remain so gentle, even when negotiating with nine separate classes of small children throughout the week. That model of kindness has influenced innumerable parents throughout the years. When I get frustrated with my children (every day), I ask myself, "What would Kathie do?" and the answer never involves shaming or hollering — always love and affirmation.

"They're still growing and developing," Tope says of our young charges. "Give 'em love, patience, and time — you'll be surprised."

A considerable part of Tope's deft way with children stems from Tope's own experience as a young girl.

"I was a challenging child," Tope says, "Feisty, outspoken, with a mind of my own."

"Kathie is proof you can be a trying child and grow up okay," Cogelow said.

Tope, in agreement, quotes author Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach: "He who cannot remember clearly his own childhood is a poor educator."

Tope's tenor singing voice and hearty belly-laugh will be missed in the ECFE classrooms. She plans to spend her newfound free time gardening, quilting, and (hooray!) volunteering at Dayton's Bluff ECFE.

"What a gift it's been to me to work with the staff and parents," Tope says. "I've really enjoyed getting to know people from other cultures."

A couple months ago, as class was breaking up for the day, a little 4-year-old girl ran up to Kathie and gave her a giant hug. "Kathie," said the girl with an enormous grin, "I'll never forget you."

Kathie, we'll never forget you, either.

A retirement open-house party for Kathie Tope is planned for June 11, from 6 - 9 p.m., at the Bell Museum of Natural History on the U of M campus in Minneapolis. A light dessert will be served; donations will be accepted to help defray costs. Call Dayton's Bluff ECFE office at 651-293-5343 for more information.

National Night Out is Tuesday August 4th
Start planning your event now. Attend the National
Night Out Kick Off Picnic at Como Park on June 3rd.
See page 2 for details

Talking with young children about their art - Part III in a series about children's art

By Mary Ann Cogelow

Pablo Picasso said, "Adults should not teach children to draw; they should learn from them." I argued in the *Forum* in April and May that art has the potential to contribute powerfully to child development and that adults can support children in their use of art activities in a number of ways. Some of these are by providing materials and opportunities and by honoring the developmental process which unfolds as children explore and experiment. Adults also support children's art by paying real attention, and by remembering that children (the artists) are the experts, both on their processes and products (if there are any). Adults can also enrich art activities in children's lives by talking thoughtfully with them about their art. Unfortunately, many of us have learned to do some things which are well intentioned, but get in the way of children's healthiest art development.

One of these mistakes is over praising children's creations. Adults comments which judge kid art as "beautiful," "great," "wonderful" and the like are intended by adults to support, but this kind of feedback makes the adult the expert and disempowers the child as creator and evaluator. When we are busy sharing our opinions we often forget that children are the ultimate experts on their own art and deserve to have confidence in their own opinions about it. We can and should talk with children about our reactions to art of many kinds - their art, fine art, book illustrations and more.

Sometimes sharing our reaction to a child's creation is supportive. I'm sure Benjamin (whom I introduced in the April article,) knew that I thought his paintings were fabulous though my reaction likely had little to do with his persistence in his work. I once told my daughter Annie that she had drawn the best crawling baby I had ever seen because it was simply the truth. But we have no business implying to children that our esthetic judgments are more important than theirs - especially about their own work.

Around the same time Benjamin was teaching me, a green-as-grass nursery school teacher, about the value of art, Jamie, one of his classmates, taught me something about the shortcomings of too much praise. Jamie's mother was the parent helper for the day. Jamie painted at the easel for many minutes. He was focused and deliberate with his choice of colors and placement of brush strokes. He seemed satisfied with the painting he produced.

Removing it from the easel, he took it over to his mother, who was involved in conversation with the assistant teacher. In response to his, "Mommy, look!" she glanced at his painting and gushed, "Oh, Jamie, it's just beautiful!" Jamie studied the painting thoughtfully as if to discover what led his mother to make her comment, then gave it to me to hang to dry.

He returned to the easel where he painted a second painting which took him about two and a half minutes to complete. He was still engaged and thoughtful in his work. Again he took the painting to his mother. Again she told him it was "beautiful" and he examined it thoughtfully. I hung that painting to dry and Jamie returned to the easel.

His third painting seemed slapdash compared to the two that had preceded it and he worked on it for less than a minute. But once again he took it to his mother for her reaction: "Beautiful." He looked at it briefly and gave it to me, before returning to the easel for the fourth time. He painted his last painting of the day - two horizontal slashes, and took it to his mom who pronounced it "Just beautiful."

Without looking at it, Jamie handed it to me and drifted off to another activity.

Jamie's mother thought she was being encouraging and supportive. I saw a different picture. Jamie wasn't encouraged. Moreover, I think he set up a test for his mother which she failed. Out of good intentions, she had undermined his trust in the meaningfulness of her feedback and missed an opportunity to really see him and value his process.

A different mistake adults sometimes make in responding to children's art is in expecting products. For toddlers and many preschoolers, it is the "doing" of art, which is of interest, not the "making" of a product. Adults too often need children to make "something" long before the child is developmentally ready to do so. They ask the question, "What is it?" which implies that art must be "something" to be valuable. This is unhelpful to most children. A wise child responded to an adult's query, "What are you making?" by responding, "How do I know until I'm finished?"

The adult's focus on product may also lead to some practices which undermine children's self-confidence. One of these is making simple (for grown-ups) models for children to copy. Research on grade school children has shown a surprisingly persistent reduction of children's creativity for many months after they were instructed "how" to draw. The impact of demonstrating stick figure people and the like to very young children is probably even more disruptive.

We similarly have no right to "improve" children's creations by insisting cows can not be purple, that people's legs do not come out of their heads, or changing the placement of marks on the paper. (Rhoda Kellogg, the eminent authority on children's art, identified 17 different placement patterns in children's scribbling.)

I remember watching a toddler painting at the easel. Each time she called her mother over to enjoy her work with her, her mother pointed out another blank area on the paper and instructed her to paint it. I think the mom was trying to teach a lesson about not wasting paper, a lesson with which I agree heartily, but in this circumstance, it was the wrong lesson. If mom had seen her daughter as making an esthetic decision in leaving some unpainted areas in her painting, perhaps she might have been more able to respect and support her daughter's vision.

Even when children have reached the stage of pictorial art and clearly intend to draw "something," adults may find themselves in trouble when they name the child's product. I was watching a four year old at the Dayton's Bluff Early Childhood and Family Education Program at the easel. A scheduled satellite launch at Cape Canaveral had been much in the news for several days, and I thought perhaps she was depicting the launch. I could clearly see a nose cone, a vapor trail, and other features I thought a child might draw on a rocket. I was wrong.

Fortunately, instead of saying, "Erica, you've painted a rocket," I drew upon the advice I have been giving parents for many years and said, "Erica, tell me about your picture." It's my house," she said enthusiastically. "This is the sidewalk. There is a window here and a window here. This is the door." I immediately saw her house and the identified features. Fortunately, I hadn't insulted her or undermined her confidence and pride by mislabeling it.

"Tell me about your picture" turns out to be one useful way of expressing interest in and appreciation of a child's art. The drawing illustrating this article was drawn by my Anne at 5-1/2 years. Her



When children are developmentally ready to describe their pictures, an interested adult can help them make an important connection to reading and writing.

description identified it as "the witch's cottage found by Hansel and Gretel." She added that it had "four jelly beans on the roof - two light and two dark, candy spiders, a candy hat, sugar windows, and a candy cane door."

Sometimes the response to this request for information is brief. One of my favorite terse answers was that of a three year old describing her dense, wooly, brown scribble: "It's a brown picture."

Anytime a child describes a work of art to someone else, the experience becomes an even richer developmental experience by involving language. If the other person is someone who offers to write down what the child says about the work, a meaningful connection with reading and writing is demonstrated.

You don't have to have a conversation about every creation. Sometimes art expresses feelings and ideas that surpass the child's ability to verbalize them. I doubt that Benjamin would have been able to tell me very much about any of the "B paintings." What he was doing for himself in those paintings surpassed his four-year-old verbal capacity to describe it. And sometimes children will choose not to tell you about their work. That is also the artist's prerogative.

When children ask for your reaction to their art, there are literally hundreds of things you can respectfully notice. Look at the art and chose something in it that you can describe. You can name and

count the colors used, comment on how they are mixed together or carefully separated, name the shapes you see.

You can express your perception of the child's involvement in the process - how long or how intently the child worked. You can reflect your understanding of their feelings about what they did. "You seem really satisfied with your painting" or "Are you frustrated that the paint was so runny?" Making these kinds of remarks has the added advantage of encouraging you to really observe and think about what the child is doing and experiencing. Your attention is a potent way of expressing appreciation.

One of the articles I reviewed in writing this series was called *The Child's Right to the Creative Arts*. Art is so valuable to the young child that, if its only benefits were creative and emotional, it would fully deserve to be seen as a "right". But like everything else in a child's life, art impacts and is in turn influenced by physical, social, cognitive and spiritual development. In the cognitive area alone, expert after expert asserts that creative art in children's lives helps them to be better readers, writers, and mathematicians, as they grow older.

All parents and other adults have the ability to ensure that kids benefit from art in their lives. It takes energy, some thoughtfulness and some openness. Kids (and art) are worth it. And the adult's life will be richer, too.

Dayton's Bluff District Forum

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Board of Directors: Greg Cosimini, Karin DuPaul and Steve Trimble
Editor & Layout: Greg Cosimini.

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