

Dayton's Bluff DISTRICT FORUM

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www.daytonsbluff.org

November 2009

Inside This Issue

Neighborhood MeetingsPage 2
 Swede Hollow newsPage 2
 Fundraising pizza partyPage 2
 Bethlehem Lutheran events ..Page 2
 St. Paul City newsPage 3
 Mounds Theatre eventsPage 3
 Budget decorating ideasPage 3
 Online history researchPage 4
 Mound Park SchoolPage 5
 Al Johnson retiresPage 5
 Letter to the EditorPage 5
 Phoenix Market interview ...Page 6
 CLUES hosts job fairPage 6
 Our Youth. Our Community ...Page 7
 Metro State NewsPage 7
 Let's talk about it, parents ..Page 8

Thank you to all who worked so hard this year



Clockwise from upper left: Community Design Center workers and sidewalk flower pots; Metro State volunteers working in Skidmore Park; buckthorn removal by FOSH volunteers in Swede Hollow; and Metro State volunteers planting flowers in Swede Hollow Park.

November Events

Sunday November 1
Daylight Saving Time Ends

Tuesday November 3
Election Day

Thursday November 5
Community Meeting

Saturday November 7
Take A Hike

Wednesday November 11
Veterans Day

November 18 & 20
Eastern District Police Meetings

Thursday November 26
Thanksgiving Day

Seniors looking for help find it here

By Executive Director Maryann Chowen
 September marked the second anniversary of the Dayton's Bluff Seniors Living at Home/Block nurse program (LAH/BNP), housed in the First Lutheran School at 8th St. and Maria Avenue.



Our mission is to keep aging Dayton's Bluff residents living independently and remaining in their own homes as long as possible. Some of the ways the program helps elders is through preventing falls, and supporting the family and care providers.

Referrals come from family members, clinics, clients, and community service providers such as Senior Linkage and Merrick Services. The next step is the outreach call or home visit to determine the individual and family needs and complete a request of service.

Last year with two part time staff and a working team of twenty volunteers, the program was able to support 42 Dayton's Bluff elders to remain safe in their homes.

With the partnership of the University of Minnesota and Parkways Gardens management, Dayton's Bluff Seniors is running a wellness clinic each Wednesday from 1 - 3 p.m. servicing a diverse population of approximately twenty-five people. The students, under the supervision of Maryann Chowen PHN, teach chronic disease management, and link formal and informal health care services.

Another program that was developed was the neighborhood watch, a volunteer program where the residents hang a sign on their door each morning and evening. If the sign is not changed, then a volunteer will check on the individual.

Next year we are planning to increase our volunteer driver base so that we can reach out to more senior residents in Dayton's Bluff.

We need volunteer and donor support from the Eastside community. If you are interested in assisting us, or know of a senior who needs help, please call Maryann Chowen at 651-776-7210 ext 303, or visit www.daytonsbluffseniors.org.

Looking for Neighborhood Honor Roll Candidates

The Dayton's Bluff District 4 Community Council is looking for three people in Dayton's Bluff to add to the honor roll this year. If you know of someone who has done an outstanding job of volunteer work in Dayton's Bluff, call Karin at 772-2075 or email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org for more information.

The Saint Paul Neighborhood Honor Roll started in the 1980s and is a listing of Saint Paul citizens who have done outstanding service in their neighborhoods over a long period of time. Each year all 17 District Councils can add three names to the honor roll. Past honor roll inductees volunteered for years at a church or a school, served on their community council board of directors, were block club leaders, led projects like buckthorn removal or spearheaded a community event.

Last year the Dayton's Bluff District 4 Community Council added Diane May, Matt Mazanec, and Beth Hyser for their years of service in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood.

The Saint Paul Neighborhood Honor Roll is located in the hallway on the third floor of Saint Paul City Hall. The quality and amount of volunteer time that make our communities better is amazing in Saint Paul.

**Dayton's Bluff District 4
 Community Council
 798 East 7th Street
 Saint Paul, MN 55106**

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**Daylight Saving Time ends on
 November 1st. Remember to
 set your clocks back one hour.**

Dayton's Bluff Community Meeting

The next Community Meeting is **Thursday, November 5th** 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 most months. 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 November the meetings are on the 18th and 20th.**

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, **November 7th**. 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.

Chilly Swede Hollow Work Day



Friends of Swede Hollow volunteers fortify themselves before heading out to remove Buckthorn from Swede Hollow Park on a cold and snowy October morning.

The ground was white with snow as volunteers started dragging Buckthorn out of the woods in Swede Hollow on the October 10th Work Day. Friends of Swede Hollow (FOSH) volunteers helped remove a huge amount of Buckthorn from Swede Hollow. The day started with coffee and rolls at Water and Oil Gallery, and then everyone worked in the park until about noon.

The pizza and salad lunch was going to be in the parking lot, but due to the cold weather lunch was served at Water and Oil Gallery instead. Everyone had a very enjoyable time looking at the art on the walls, chatting and eating lunch. A special thank you to Yarruso's Restaurant for the salad and to Pepsi for the pop and water for the volunteers.

Because of the cold weather the number of people that showed up was less than expected. Even with the lesser amount of volunteers much work was completed. The people who worked on this project were Mike Grealish, Linda Arnesen, Jim & Sue Davidson, Brad Griffith, Kristin Bauer, Mary Wise, Jamie McCarthy, and Angela and Karin DuPaul. For more information about FOSH email SwedeHollow@gmail.com or call Karin at 651-772-2075.

Fundraising pizza party

By Tabitha Benci DeRango

Dayton's Bluff held its first fundraiser through Davanni's restaurant on September 26th. When I received the E-mail about the fundraiser my mind started to wonder how I could help it gain some momentum, get the neighborhood folks to remember the date and to participate in this worthy cause. AHA! I immediately started making phone calls to anyone I knew who might be interested in a pizza party. Emails came next and then a stroll around the neighborhood to see who was out and about. "How about joining in a pizza party at my house on Wednesday night?"

By Tuesday the calls were pouring in for pizza orders. I called Davanni's with a warning that I would be placing a large order for the Dayton's Bluff fundraiser and asked them when would they like me to call it in. Wednesday early afternoon was the time and they were so very efficient with all the different orders from pizzas to hoagies. Wednesday night at 5:40 I showed up at Davanni's with my big truck, loaded up a whole lot of food and then delivered it to my house where the party was already hopping. 40 people, kids and adults, took part in this wonderful night of fun, picnics, chatting and pizza. What a wonderful way to build community.

Who will you invite to the next Davanni's night?

They saw the glow

All of a sudden the sky cleared and the sun began to shine as the people gathered near Swede Hollow Henge in Swede Hollow Park September 25th. The glow was bright as stories of working at Hamm's Brewery and living in Swede Hollow were told.

Some of the people only see each other each year at the "Watch the Glow" event. Several former Swede Hollow residents took others on memory walks telling stories and pointing out locations from the old days.

"Watch the Glow of the Setting Sun on the Red Brick Brewery" is an annual event that started in 1995. It is an opportunity for everyone to join Friends of Swede Hollow to see the beautiful red/orange glow of the brick as the setting sun shines on the buildings. The celebration picnic followed the sun setting.

The evening was filled with great Hamm's Brewery and Swede Hollow stories, and music courtesy of Joe Sanchelli.

The event was a great success with lots of great conversions and good food thanks to Morelli's, Culver's on Old Hudson Road, Rainbow on Arcade, Cub on Clarence, Pepsi and Mike Grealish. Friends of Swede Hollow is already planning next year's "Watch the Glow" on Friday, September 24, 2010.

For more information about FOSH visit www.swedehollow.org.

Upcoming Bethlehem Lutheran events

The Rev. James Fandrey will be the guest preacher for the first ever Joint Metro Reformation Service at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 655 Forest St.. The Rev. James Fandrey is the executive director at The Lutheran Heritage Foundation in Macomb, Michigan. He is also a native of St. Paul. The service will be

held on **Sunday November 1** at 4:00 p.m. at the church.

Bethlehem Lutheran will hold its second annual Holiday Boutique on **Saturday, November 21st**, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If you would like to participate in the event by having a table, call the church office at 651.776.4737 as soon as possible.

BCMS begins tutoring program

Battle Creek Middle School (BCMS) is looking for volunteer tutors to give an hour a week to make a difference in the lives of their students. The students at Battle Creek are wonderful, energetic, caring and hopeful kids and some of them need a little extra attention and guidance to help them achieve their full potential.

BCMS is a diverse and promising school. Many of the students have several risk factors, like poverty and English not as their primary language, that can lead to these kids slipping through the cracks. The staff and administration at BCMS are marvelous and they try their best to give these children every tool they need for success, but due to budget and time restraints they are not always able to provide the intimate attention that some children need to help them gain basic literacy and math skills.

Tutoring has been shown through research and experience to be one of the best ways to reach children that need that little extra hour or two of personal attention to understand their lessons. Many of these children may not have a parent that can read to them in English or help them with their math problems and that's where tutors can make a world of difference. Tutors don't just help students understand and master their school work but, more importantly act as role models that the children can look up to and be inspired by. Tutoring not only affects the students positively, but will give the tutor a feeling of greater self-worth and connection to the students and the community.

These students are an integral part of the community and they deserve to have every opportunity to succeed that the community can provide. If you would like to know more about tutoring visit www.spps.foundation.org. If you would like to volunteer an hour a week and make a difference for your community, yourself and a student in need, email Robb Nelson at robb.nelson@spps.org or call him at (651) 293-8960 ext 1991.

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.

* 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.

Dayton's Bluff Recycling
Pick-up in our area is every
Tuesday. Please have your
recycling at the curb by 7am.



Welcome to the City of Saint Paul, "Business and Community Development" an initiative of the Minority Business Development and Retention, Division of Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity (HREEO) and the Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED)

Bald Eagle Erectors, Sowles Construction and Target Field among those honored at the Construction Partnering Program's (CPP) Award Reception.

The fifth annual Construction Partnering Program Award Reception recognizes construction companies and projects for their successful participation in the Construction Partnering Program (CPP) and the effort to include minority and women in the projects. This year's reception was held at Regions Hospital (2008 large project of the year) over 80 attended included many major construction contractors and participants in the CPP.

Over the past decade, the CPP has matched general contractors with emerging woman-and minority-owned firms with the intent of mentoring and building the capacity of both the owners and the businesses. The City of St. Paul's Minority Business Development and Retention Division, provides partial funding to support the program which is managed and facilitated by MEDA and the Association of Women Contractors.

This year's CPP award winners include:

CPP PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR - Bald Eagle Erectors and Sowles Construction

In the last 4 years, Bald Eagle's sales doubled from \$3.3 million to \$6.5 million in 2008 and employs 45.

LARGE PROJECT OF THE YEAR - Target Field

The general contractor is Mortenson, and as of mid-September, Mortenson reported aggregate Small/Woman/Minority Enterprise (S/W/MBE) participation of 32% against a goal of 30%. Of the \$307 million procured, \$99 million have



been spent with 121 different S/W/MBE firms with 90% of these firms locally owned.

CPP partnerships which were used on Target Field include Mortenson/Thor Construction, Mtec Electric/Parsons Electric, Gunnar Electric/Gephart Electric, Bald Eagle Erectors/Sowles Construction that worked on the pedestrian bridge.

SMALL PROJECT OF THE YEAR - United Family Practice

On the United Family Practice project, 17.1% went to women owned businesses, and 15.5% went to minority owned businesses for a total of 32.6% or about \$1.9 million of a total available dollars of about \$6 million.

CPP PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR - Bald Eagle Erectors and Sowles Construction. In the last 4 years, Bald Eagle's sales doubled from \$3.3 million to \$6.5 million in 2008 and employs 45.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR - Shaw-Lundquist Associates This is awarded to a General Contractor that has shown a commitment to the CPP program. One of its projects, the Winnipeg Apartments, also used a CPP partner-Grand Building Supply/Twin Cities Hardware to provide all the doors and frames. Shaw-Lundquist Associates, located in Saint Paul, is one of the largest minority-owned construction businesses in the nation.

SHINING STAR OF EXCELLENCE - UNIVERSITY of Minnesota

A special award was given this year to a participant that has demonstrated an unwavering support of the CPP and the inclusion of minority and women owned businesses in its projects.

Upcoming Events:

- * MAICC Dinner & Silent Auction - Nov 5 <http://maicc.org>
- * MEDA Gala - Nov. 14 <http://medagala.com>
- * AWC Holiday Celebration Event - Nov. 19 <http://awcmn.org>
- * AGC Holiday Event - Dec. 1 <http://www.agcmn.org>
- * NAMC-UM Annual Dinner & Gala - Dec. 4 <http://www.namc-um.org>

"Business and Community Development" questions or comments, contact: 651-266-8900 or 651-266-8966

Or angela.burkhalter@ci.stpaul.mn.us, www.stpaul.gov

Coming up at the Mounds Theatre

"The Nerd" pays a visit in November

Starting Gate Productions eighth season begins with "The Nerd" written by Larry Shue. Willum Gilbert has it all - a promising career, devoted friends, even maybe a serious girlfriend. Then Rick Steadman, the ultimate social misfit, comes to visit and puts everything in peril. "The Nerd" is a madcap farce by the author of "The Foreigner."

The play is directed by Richard Jackson and features the talents of Jane Froiland, Archie Gallivan, Dwight Gunderson, Daniel Ian Joeck, Corby Kelly, Gail Ottmar and Luke Weber

When: November 6-29, 2009; Fridays - Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m. "Pay what you can" night is Monday, November 16, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. All performances take place at the Historic Mounds Theatre.

Tickets: \$18 general, \$16 students and seniors. \$10 for high school students. Call 651-645-3503 for tickets or visit <http://www.startinggate.org>.

Coming in January, Starting Gate's second production of their three-play season is "Light Up the Sky" by Moss Hart. It will run January 8-31, 2010. This classic 1948 comedy about the cast of a Broadway-bound show that may or may not have a hit on their hands is a wickedly comic valentine to the theater. This play is from the pen of the co-author of "You Can't Take It With You."

"A Christmas Story" returns in December

The classic film "A Christmas Story" is brought to life on stage for the sixth year at the Mounds Theatre. Humorist Jean Shepherd's memoir of growing up in the Midwest in the 1940's follows 9-year old Ralphie Parker in his quest to get a genuine Red Ryder BB gun under the tree for Christmas. Ralphie pleads his case before his mother, his teacher and even Santa Claus himself, with the same and always consistent response: "You'll Shoot Your Eye Out, Kid."

All the elements from the beloved motion picture are here, including the family's temperamental exploding furnace; Scut Farkas, the school bully; the boys' experiment with a wet tongue on a cold flagpole; the Little Orphan Annie decoder pin; Ralphie's father winning a lamp shaped like a woman's leg in a net stocking as a major award, Ralphie's fantasy scenarios, and more.

"A Christmas Story" has become a theatrical holiday perennial for hundreds of Mounds Theatre goers.

When: December 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19 - 7:00 p.m. Matinee Shows - December 6, 13, 20 - 2:00 p.m.

Tickets: To order tickets in advance please call the Mounds Theatre box office at 651-772-2253 or order your tickets online at www.moundstheatre.org. Gift ticket packages are available for those "hard to please" folks on your Christmas list. Purchase your tickets early, as they sell out very quickly.

The Mounds Theatre is located in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood just east of downtown Saint Paul at 1029 Hudson Road, St. Paul, MN 55106.

Budget decorating ideas can change the look of your home without breaking the bank

Printed with permission from HomeStagingRedesign.com

Knowing how so many people are budgeting and saving now, and many people are just scraping by or under water in the short term, it seems appropriate to include some tips in this issue that are really low cost ideas so you can still spruce up your home or give it a fresh look without breaking the bank.

So let's kind of start at the beginning with the basics - like buying a new color of paint and doing some major painting around the house. Dramatic and bold are inexpensive too.

Next let's anchor your room with one or two fairly large pieces of furniture to act as the "hub" and perhaps even a focal point. In many cases this will be a sofa or perhaps a bed. Too often people buy small items, small furniture because it is often cheaper. Then they are not happy with the results. A room needs to have a good mixture of large, medium and small items to look and feel right. I know that sounds expensive, but you can pick up good quality furniture at garage sales, estate sales and discount stores. Have at least one major piece of furniture in the room.

Next we want good lighting. Naturally you want to take advantage of any natural light coming into the room, blocking it out during the hottest times of the day, but allowing it to fill the room the rest of the time. Think in terms of triangulation - you should have good lighting spread out in the

room that forms, at the very least, a triangular coverage of the room. Purchase low wattage bulbs to save money.

Look for fabrics in the remnants department at your favorite stores. You can save a lot by buying remnants instead of yardage from the regular stock. Make a throw. Cover some pillows. Bingo, instant changes.

Use a lot of greenery, whether it is live or artificial. You can easily fill a room up with greenery. It hides unsightly areas, is great filler, and it just softens the room oh so much. Buy small plants and place in larger containers and wait for them to grow if money is really tight. Or just stick to artificial green, which will never die.

Maximize your storage. Look for furniture that doubles as storage: chests instead of tables. Buy tall bookshelves and cabinets to take advantage of your room's vertical height. Shop at your library for books they are disposing of at huge discounts. Shop at second hand bookstores. Interperse your greenery, books and family photos around the room for that personalized, designer look.

Use fake architectural elements in the room for that finishing touch. You can get inexpensive elements at your hardware store or even buy lumber remnants and get creative.

If your budget is tight, don't despair. Get creative. You can still make a huge difference in the way your home looks and feels for very little money.

Dayton's Bluff history: Online historic newspaper research



1886 Dayton's Bluff Winter Carnival toboggan slide and ice tower from a drawing found online in the Wednesday morning February 3, 1886 *St. Paul Daily Globe*.

By Steve Trimble

Online historic newspaper research. When I was in graduate school many, many years ago there was no such thing. You were lucky to find an old paper that was even partially indexed. But times have changed, and I don't just mean the New York daily.

The Library of Congress (LOC) has been creating a digitized newspaper project. I've known about it for some time, but hadn't gotten around to using it until recently. I decided to see how helpful it would be for finding information about Dayton's Bluff history. It's been an interesting experience.

A person can search newspapers from all over the country, but I decided to stay with the only one from this city - the old *St. Paul Globe*. So I typed in Dayton's Bluff and there was an overabundance of possibilities—several thousand listings. That's because the real estate advertisements that mentioned the neighborhood name were included.

Still, even these can reveal some interesting information. The July 25, 1886 issue had more than a dozen real estate listings for this community. Here's the agent's pitch for one group: "Dayton's Bluff. The coming boom—With the building of the Third Street bridge and exten-

sion of the horse car lines...there will surely be an advance in prices in that vicinity. It is the cheapest property in the city at present prices, and any investment will pay good profits. We have a large list of bluff property and can give some good bargains."

It was a boom time and urban real estate made more than one local person wealthy—at least until the crash that came with the 1893 depression. This particular company then listed lots on Pacific, McLean, Suburban, Maple, Plum, Beech and Minnehaha. In another place he assured that the value would surely increase, adding the fact that "as the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad improvements will raise values in this locality." Notice that then, as now, transportation played an important role in marketing.

Other frequently occurring on-line hits for Dayton's Bluff items were the society pages. Here is a sampling from the *Globe* on April 1, 1894. And unlike the spurious April Fool's articles that are said to appear in April issues of the *Forum*, these appear to be genuine. It was revealing to see how many different groups and clubs were active in only one community before the days of automobiles, radio and television.

Mrs. John Seeger of Maple Street, for instance, had entertained the Ladies' Euchre Club and prizes were won by Mrs. Bohn and Mrs. Haas. The Bates Avenue M. E. church ladies were giving a concert to celebrate the silver anniversary of the organization. Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Smith of East Fourth were hosting a meeting of the Dayton's Bluff Reading Circle. A Miss Coggshell of River Falls spent a week as the guest of Mrs. H. T. Eachus of East Fourth. Miss Frances Kennedy of Bates Avenue spent her Easter vacation with friends in Minneapolis. And—finally a man—"Master Gilbert Henry of Bates Avenue, spent the past week with his relatives in Waverly, Minnesota."

There were some larger articles that popped up during the search and I had never seen the information before. One of them, found in the November 5, 1903 *Globe*, had a large headline that read "The City's Most Picturesque Section" with a lengthy sub-heading that stated "Second Ward may Safely Claim this Distinction, and Residents are being Brought to Appreciation of the Natural Attractiveness of their Locality and the Possibilities of Beautification."

Mention was made of Indian Mounds Park as well as other lookouts in the area with commanding views. Residents who do not appreciate the area's "picturesque possibilities" were becoming a small minority because of the force of education and public sentiment, according to the newspaper.

"There has always been a little band of public-spirited citizens who have fully recognized the value of the natural advantages which they possess, and who have been keen to improve them," the article continued.

Around 1900 these citizens formed an organization "the chief object of which would be the care of Dayton's Bluff interests." They called themselves the Second Ward Improvement Association. Their first meeting was small, with only ten people attending, but the group grew, bylaws were written and its members became active.

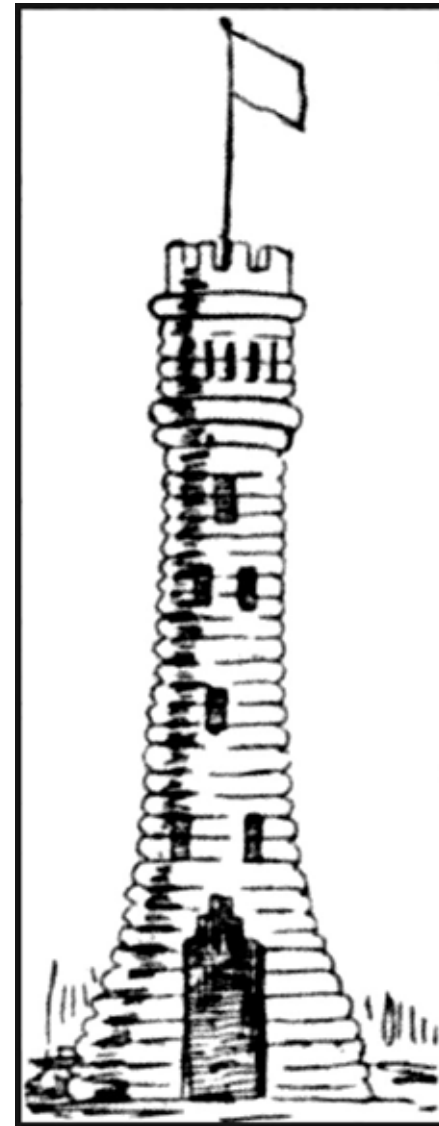
One of the first projects was raising money to buy land so that the State Fish Hatchery could expand rather than leave. The convinced the city to add to their collections and they were successful. They were only partially successful in the attempt to raise money to build a new Third Street bridge to replace a somewhat rickety structure built in the 1870s. They were only able to do some improvements.

They were also somewhat involved in a court case. Some of their members were trying to stop a local resident from quarrying limestone on Hudson Road.

Many articles revolved around the neighborhood's participation in the 1886 Winter Carnival, the first time the event was held in St. Paul. On February third of that year, the *Globe* reported a serenade and reception for the opening of the Dayton's Bluff toboggan slide.

Although the carnival authorities had announced the suspension of the ceremony because of "the inclemency of the weather," the newspapers own toboggan club with 55 men and 10 women ventured out that night to formally open the slide. All of them carried a colored light which they carried to a reception at the nearby home of prominent resident P. H. Kelly.

There were musical numbers from a band, the club cheers were given and then the host made a welcoming speech. Kelly said that "the good people of Dayton's Bluff ... have shown their pluck, energy and enterprise in furnishing the necessary funds to erect the tower and slide which you have seen this evening." After two



A closer view of the 54 ft. high ice tower.

hours of music in the mansion, the group returned for some festive tobogganing.

The official closing of the toboggan slide was reported in some detail in the *Globe* on February 21, 1886. Like the opening, it was a gala affair. According to the article, Chinese lanterns were strung along several blocks and "were suspended close together on a line above the swiftly-gliding toboggans." A band was stationed at the head of the slide and entertained the crowds. The Ladies Auxiliary "did a brisk business" serving refreshment in colorfully decorated quarters.

In the crowd the reporter noted the uniforms of many different toboggan clubs. The attendance was so great that a person was lucky to get the chance to make two slides an hour.

Some of the most beautiful features of the landscape were the structures themselves. "The ice tower was illuminated and a brilliant display of red fire, rockets, roman candles and bombs touched off in front of the tower gave that structure the appearance of being ablaze, to one looking toward the bluff from a distance."

It is amazing how many neighborhood groups and activities were occurring in the 1880s and 1890s. There might still be time for some of the current residents "with pluck and energy" to get together and arrange for a renewal of the toboggan slide tradition for the 2010 Winter Carnival. Or maybe something less elaborate, but at least some sort of event in Dayton's Bluff in the forthcoming St. Paul celebration.

For those interested in doing some local history research of their own, the Library of Congress website is easy to find, although a little confusing to use. Just type in the full name into Google or another search engine and up pops their page. It has a button to click on that says digitized collections which then allows people to search newspaper pages. Papers from all over the country are available, but the only St. Paul paper currently included is the *Globe*. I have had the best luck putting key words into the "exact phrase" space. Good luck and be sure to let the *Forum* know what you find.

Re-Elect DFL & Labor Endorsed

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Saint Paul School Board

- Out Front for Equality
- Dedicated to Excellence
- Proven Leadership in Education

"I'll be a steady advocate for the promise of education and the future of our children - listening, encouraging & protecting the progress our teachers and schools have achieved. Every child, every day, ready to learn!" - Elona Street-Stewart



Endorsed by the Saint Paul DFL, Stonewall DFL Caucus, SEIU, MN Women's Political Caucus Education Council, the Latino DFL Caucus, womenwinning & the Saint Paul Building and Construction Trades Council

VOTE November 3

Paid for by Friends of Elona, 844 Kenneth St., St. Paul, MN 55116

Kathy Lantry Reminds You To Vote Tuesday November 3, 2009



Kathy Lantry
7th Ward Council Member
City Council President

On the Ballot

**City Office
Mayor**

**School District Offices
3 School Board Members (four-year term)
1 School Board Member (two-year term)**

**Charter Amendment
Instant Runoff Voting**

You can vote Election Day if you:

- are at least 18 years old
- are a citizen of the United States
- are a Minnesota resident for 20 days immediately preceding Election Day
- are a resident of Ramsey County and the precinct in which you wish to vote

Register to Vote

You may register before Election Day, or on Election Day at your polling place.

All polling places will be open from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Paid for by the Lantry Volunteer Committee, Jacob Lantry, Chair, 25 East Sandra Lee Drive, St. Paul, MN 55119.

More memories from the Mound Park Grade School class of 1959

By Kathy Whitney and Dave Petrie

On Saturday, August 22, 2009, the 1959 8th grade class of Mound Park Grade School celebrated the 50th anniversary of their graduation with a picnic in historic Indian Mounds Park. Last month they shared some of their memories from Mound Park School and Dayton's Bluff. Here are more of them.

Mounds Theatre: One of our destinations, when crossing the [Cypress St. bridge over Hudson Road], was the Mounds Theatre. Our mothers and fathers had gone to "the Mounds" when they were in grade school like us. We spent many a happy Saturday or Sunday afternoon at "the Mounds" watching Heckle & Jeckle cartoons, Tarzan, Roy Rogers, "Hoppy" Cassidy, Gabby Hayes, Gene Autry, Abbot & Costello, Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis, Francis the talking mule or the Three Stooges.

School Police: Since most Mound Park students walked to and from school twice a day, it was important that they be supervised to insure their safety when crossing main streets near the school. This was the job of the school police – normally 7th and 8th grade students. School police had permanently assigned intersections referred to as their "Corners." We all had to wait in our "Lines" until told to cross the street. Today school police all have crossing flags but at Mound Park we had hand-held yellow and black octagonal stop signs on wooden handles. These were eighth inch thick heavy metal. After years of use, many of the edges had been honed on stone-walls making the signs rather lethal weapons. During the winter, they also made nifty implements for chopping ice.

Mound Park Funfests: Another annual event remembered fondly is the "Fun Fest," put on as a fundraiser by the Mound Park Parent Teacher Association. The gymnasium was transformed into a carnival atmosphere with the mat room turned into a fishpond and the gym stage transformed into an elevated cakewalk.

Mounds Park – Old Tennis Courts: The old Mounds Park tennis courts were just south

of the former dead end turn-around at the end of Thorn Street. We grew up on the old Mounds Park tennis courts playing from grade school to college and in weather from 40 degrees to 100 degrees. The courts were made of rolled gravel dating back to the 1920s. Resurfacing consisted of just dumping more fine chalk gravel on the courts and rolling it to pack it down. Of course, there is no way to paint lines on loose gravel so the lines consisted of heavy cloth ribbons.

Bluff Playground: Unknown to younger generations is the old brick building that once sat right where the Mounds Boulevard exit off I-94 is today. To our parents, it was known as "Tuxedo Recreation Center" but to us it was just "the Bluff." We played our youth sports for "the Bluff" against other St. Paul recreation center teams.

There were Bluff teams for football in fall, hockey and basketball in winter, baseball and softball in summer. There were times when we had to stack eight year old "pee-wee" football players in full football equipment like cordwood in a parent's station-wagon. Sometimes the starting team had to go first and the parents had to come back to transport the rest of the team. In addition to sports, there were craft classes at "the Bluff."

"The Bluff" also offered social events. Some at the reunion remembered the junior high dances held at Bluff Playgrounds. For the guys it was a place to stand against the wall and eventually work up the courage to ask a girl to dance one of the "slow ones." For the girls it was fun to show off those special new blouses, skirts and saddle shoes, dance to the "fast ones" with their girlfriends, and whisper amongst themselves about which boys they hoped would ask them to dance the "slow ones."

The directors at Bluff Playgrounds were looked up to and respected. It was generally agreed that the ideal recreation center would have Chet Petrie running the athletic programs and Belle Searle running the social activities. No other recreation center in the city would be able to come close to that combination.

Al Johnson retires after a long career

By June Bennett

Mexico, now that sounds nice and warm. Well Mr. Al Johnson of Johnson Accounting Service 699 Arcade has started building his new home in Bruno, Mexico. It is going to be a winter home and he will be going there in December 2009. Mr. Johnson has retired as of the first of July, after forty years in the accounting business.

Born in Little Falls, Minnesota in October of 1940, he lost his father when he was only 18 months old. His mother remarried a young man whose last name was Johnsen but since her name and Al's name were already Johnson, the step-father adopted their last name.

Mr. Johnson graduated from Humboldt High School and then went into the Marine Corp for four years. During that time his family had moved to the Eastside. After getting out of the service Al worked for H.L Green in management, then the 7-Up Bottling Company as a route salesman, and after getting married went to MTC to work as a bus driver.

Al later joined the Veteran Administration as an agency paymaster so he attended St. Paul Vocational for a quick class in bookkeeping. He found out he enjoyed it, so he continued on to get his degree in accounting and graduated from Century Community College, formerly known as Lakewood Community College. After completing college he opened his own business. Al started on Jenks and Arcade and was there for nine years before moving to 780 E. 7th St. where he stayed for nine more years. For the last thirteen years he has been at 699 Arcade St.

Al has four children and 5 grandchildren. In addition, there is one grandchild due in November and his first great grandchild was due in October. Al has clients from seventeen other states, which add up to about 500 clients. In the meantime he has found a young woman and her husband, Dustin and Gwendolyn Roman, to take over the business. They started on July 1, 2009. We want to say con-

gratulations to them for that and their new daughter.

One of the things Al hated was seeing 3M leave and watching other small businesses come and go. Al stated, "That when you lose a business like that it affects all the other businesses." He is hoping for something nice to come out of the 3M buildings in the future.

Al is not ready to give up living yet. He will continue to do what he can for the community and would like to fix up old houses. He has plans to open another business in Mexico. So thank you Mr. Johnson for being part of the Dayton's Bluff Community for all these years.

Letter to the Editor

Thank you, Mary Ann

I have been reading with deep interest and appreciation the regular articles on child development that have been appearing in Dayton's Bluff District Forum. Their author, Mary Ann Cogelow, has been presenting useful and pointed information about how we can better understand the children in our lives. Her insistence on the emotional and intellectual complexity of children is refreshing. And her insights into their behavior and development and our own as parents and caregivers are deeper than one would expect to find in a neighborhood newspaper.

I know Mary Ann from her days as an educator at the Dayton's Bluff Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program. I was a parent in the program and under her persistent and patient tutelage I learned how to more carefully observe my own children (and other children too). I learned too how to stop and reflect on what I observed before acting too quickly or impatiently.

I still have a long way to go with developing greater patience and understanding with my children. I suspect I am not the only parent who needs the kind of intelligent reminders that the Forum is providing with Mary Ann's articles. Thank you for publishing them.

Sincerely,
Becca Barniskis

A talk with Phoenix Market manager Tarig Mohamed

By Kyle Burns

When did you begin working with Ali for the Phoenix?

It was 1998.

How did you become a part of Phoenix? How did you know Ali?

Actually I came here for a friend of mine. I used to live in California. I don't like big cities. At that time there were many crimes in Oakland. A good friend of mine here, he said, "Come over." He said it is the best, with nice people. The only thing, he said the weather is bad here. As you know, we came from a hot country. I came here and I worked for somebody who had a store in Saint Paul. I worked for him one year, two years...something like that. I drove a taxi at the airport, too. Then the owner at that grocery, he knew Ali, the owner of this store, at that time I became a friend of Ali, too. At that time, he said, "Come work for me." I told him, "Yes" and I have worked for him since that day.

So when you started it was in the current building and location?

Yeah. When I came, Ali was still going through surgeries and stuff. I visited him, because we Sudanese have a good relationship here in the Twin Cities. We used to live in the same apartment building.

How is the Phoenix different from when you first started?

Now the economy is down. That's why Ali thought about doing a deli here. The life was so easy then; I came in 1997. Life was better than now, I don't know why. Maybe the people have been changed. I don't know. At that time I was like, "Oh I found the place where I should live." Because it was nice, the people are so nice. I never had problems before 2003 or 2002. But now the economy is getting bad, like you see today. People stole newspapers. One of them was white and the other was black. That means now the community is getting worse.

Why do you think people might do that? Adults do that too, of course.

I don't want to say it is all economics. I believe the way they have been treated when they were a child. If they see their parent do something like that, I bet you they are going to raise their own that way. For me, I never smoked in my whole life. I had a teenager who came for cigarettes, I told him, "We don't sell to minors. You have to have ID." After a while I see his mom come and buy them for him. That is why I don't want to say the problem is only economic. It is the family.

What kind of role do you think the Phoenix plays in the neighborhood? There are some things you do not sell.

We don't sell alcohol, which is actually against our religion. Our belief is that we have to have a good community. Some-

times there are children around us here who come to clean the streets around the neighborhood. We help them. I tell them, "Every time you come around here to do this good thing, come over and I'll give you something free. I get permission from Ali and he says, "Oh yeah, do that because we have to be part of the good community here, you know?"

Do you live around here?

I live in the East Side by Sun Ray. I have lived there all the time I am in Minnesota. I like it and now I do have a family there, too. I have three children and I love them. They love me, I believe. (laughs) Most the people here know me. People can't say my name correctly so they call me, "Tally." I like that.

How do you feel Dayton's Bluff has changed over the years?

In the past we used to have a lot of people who hang around the store, selling drugs outside. If we see stuff like that, we have to stop it. We can't stop it always, but have to do our best. I believe the community has improved. I believe Metro State does a good job there too with education and working with the police department... that helps a lot. I don't see many crimes like it used to be. The only thing I see is stealing.

How has your relationship with the police been over the years?

Good. I always call them if I need some help, and they always help us. We've never had a big problem here, to tell you the truth.

Why do you think that is? Just luck or something else?

Maybe luck but Ali, when he had that explosion and he was inside, I believe he saved some kids and the community likes him. We came here and we didn't have any problems with the customers around us.

What is the Phoenix's relationship with the community garden?

We let them use our water. We let them use the bathroom. Any help I can do for them, I do it for them, no doubt. As I told you before, Ali also tells me to help them, and if he didn't tell me I would do it by myself, but it's not my store so I have to respect the owner, but he told me to do it so... Something I must tell you...my people, Sudanese people, they are so kind. If you go to Sudan, they are so kind. Like yesterday, we had a big party with my kids and Ali's kids and so on. We're stuck to each

other. You know what I mean? Ali says to do anything to help the community.

Have you always worked here?

Yes, but I used to work here in the morning and drive a taxi in the afternoon. Now I have to spend a lot of time with my kids. If the economy stays like this, I bet I will have to have another job, too, if I could find one.

Do you have family back in Sudan still? Do you keep contact?

My mom, she lives in Sudan, in Khartoum. I was born in Khartoum, the capital. I was in Sudan from birth to seventeen years old.

What was your childhood like?

In Sudan, it was marvelous. For real. Yes it is a poor country but the life was so nice.

Just playing soccer all day?

(Laughs) Yeah, we do love soccer. We watch on the laptop. Me and Ali are at war in soccer. Most of the world, except here loves soccer.

When I spoke with Ali he mentioned his first encounter with snow. What was yours like?

I was shocked. I heard of snow, but I had no idea what it looked like. I knew it was white. My dad used to live here in America, in California. He did graduate study there; he has two PhD's. He is so smart; I wish I was like him.

Did you go to college?

Yeah, but I am not done yet, maybe one day. I went in India for four years.

What do you think is in store for the future of the Phoenix?

I hope the economy goes up, first of all. That's why Ali wanted to do the deli. Today we haven't had many customers. Some come in and buy cigarettes; we get no profit from cigarettes. Ali has employees besides me who work here and his family he wants to support. I hope the economy goes up for everybody. That's what we like. We like everybody to be in a good way, healthy, and happy. I won't say that money brings happiness; that comes from inside, but money helps.

Anything else?

Thank you for this interview. I would like to tell the people in Dayton's Bluff we have to work together to keep our community away from bad habits. We have to be together and help each other.

CLUES hosts 2009 Job Fair & Community Resource Expo

In a blaze of suits and ties, a bevy of job seekers flocked to the Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES) Job Fair and Community Resource Expo on Wednesday, September 30th at the Saint Paul RiverCentre in Downtown Saint Paul in order to search for jobs, benefits, and explore career growth.

The Mexican Consulate of St. Paul in Minnesota was a partner of the Expo, and BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota and Medica generously sponsored the CLUES-hosted event. The Job Fair and Community Resource Expo allowed over 500 diverse jobseekers to learn about the hiring process of many major companies, financial institutions and businesses headquartered or with offices in Minnesota by meeting face-to-face with recruiters looking to diversify their workforce.

Attendees also had the opportunity to connect with organizations and community resources showcasing their services. Indeed, agency exhibitors answered questions about childcare, financial counseling, food support, health care, and transportation, among other things.

Before job seekers crossed the threshold of the exhibition hall, exhibitors participated in a networking breakfast in which CLUES President Jesse Bethke Gomez opened the day by welcoming all of the honored exhibitors and thanking them for their thoughtful support and participation in the Expo. He then broached several talking points, including the importance of cultural diversity in the workplace and how it utilizes our country's skills to the fullest; how diversity brings cultural sensitivity and awareness of the fastest growing market segment in the nation; how a more multicultural workforce benefits companies by offering diverse opinions and views; and finally, how increasing diversity helps to reflect the customer base. Mr. Bethke Gomez soon after introduced three speakers from within the Latino community in Minnesota, who highlighted how building up a diverse workforce allows companies to provide new perspectives to the community, giving them a competitive advantage in the globalized marketplace. Presenters included Keynote Speaker Honorable Head Consul of Mexico in St. Paul, Ana Luisa Fajer Flores; Luz Maria Frias, Director of Human Rights and Equal Economic Opportunity Department of the City of St. Paul, and formerly External Affairs Director for St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman; and Adriana Martinez, Airlines Consultant for Unisys Corporation, and Licensed Real Estate agent with Coldwell Banker Burnett.

In the late morning and early afternoon, job seekers also had the opportunity to participate in a workshop entitled, Change Your Stripes!™ Stand out from the Herd!, which was hosted by Catherine Byers Breet. Ms. Byers Breet, Job Coach Specialist of ARBEZ™, taught job seekers three simple tricks they can use to make a great first impression, and get the job they want in a faster and easier manner. Following the Expo, the Latino Roundtable sponsored a Latino networking event in a nearby room at the Saint Paul RiverCentre.


Hillary Van Wyngereen, Job Developer of CLUES, stated, "The Expo provides companies, agencies, and job seekers a single place to discover what opportunities are available, as well as talk to people who are actually hiring and offering community resources. This event has proven to be a success in years past, and continues to be so today."

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~~Britain~~ America Saint Paul's Got Talent!

In September, the Dayton's Bluff Rec Center (DBRC) invited all of Saint Paul's youth to showcase their talents and become a star. About 20 individuals and groups went through the audition process, with 11 acts performing at the finals on October 1. Judging was done a la "American Idol," with performances based on stage presence and professionalism, technical ability, appearance/costume, and creativity. More than 200 people came to cheer on the youth!

In the **singing/rapping category**, 8-year-old Rico Woods, a.k.a. "Sko," took top honors. Rico is in the third grade at Franklin Elementary School, is from the East Side, and has been rapping since he was five years old. Rico said he was a little nervous getting up in front of the audience, but by just getting out there and trying it he overcame any nerves. What did winning the talent show mean to him? "It meant I was a star and made me feel very good, happy and excited. I would love to perform more and become a star!!"



▲ Rico Woods shows off his "Sko" (Smart Kids Organization) CD.



▲ The Unique Technique Crew "felt alive" being on stage and performing.

In the **dance category** two groups tied for first place: the Harding Dance Team and the Unique Technique Crew from Margaret Rec Center. The Unique Technique Crew consists of Xai Yang Xiong, Leng Fang, Seng Yang, Wa Meng Thao, Na Lee and Xoua Lee, who all attend Johnson High School. The group has only been together for four months and this was their first competition.

To overcome their nerves, they stopped thinking about the audience and focused on the rhythm and beats. "The stage was the battle ground; the music became our shield; and our techniques became our swords," explained one member. The win has spurred them on to keep practicing and improving. "We want to be the next 'America's Best Dance Crew'!"

According to Gina Stokes, Assistant Director of the DBRC, she was impressed with all the kids who auditioned and performed. But she was even more impressed with the fact more than 200 people were in the audience and there were no fights or animosity. Everyone cheered for everyone. Take that Simon Cowell.

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Metropolitan State Univ. performs research benefiting the community

Dayton's Bluff residents have long admired the stately trees gracing Swede Hollow Park. Now, thanks to research conducted by two Metropolitan State University students, residents can access facts and figures that further enhance their appreciation for the park.

Earlier this year the students conducted a detailed census of the park's oaks and other large trees. They followed up with a PowerPoint presentation to Friends of Swede Hollow, a nonprofit group that helps maintain and beautify the park and fashion future plans for it.

The initiative by the students—Amanda Swanson and Andrew Merryman, both seniors majoring in biology—is an example of community-based research performed by Metropolitan State. The research is intended to benefit the community while offering an alternative educational opportunity for faculty and students.

"The university has a commitment to improve the welfare of individuals, not just in academia but out in the community," said August Hoffman, associate professor in psychology and facilitator of the university's Community Circle Based Research. "We have a responsibility to work more cooperatively with each other to improve the overall living conditions for society in general."

The students' efforts were an outgrowth of an ecology class that Virginia Card, associate professor of natural science, has been teaching for a decade. Supporting the students' field research was an American Democracy Project grant obtained by the university's Center for Community-Based Learning.

Their initiative produced revealing information: 169 oak trees in the park, with burr oaks dominating. Some of the four species of oaks—burr, white, pin and northern red—have survived for more than 150 years. In fact, photos taken a century ago show the same oaks thriving today. While the oaks command attention, the largest trees are cottonwoods; one was 220 feet tall. Other large trees included elm, basswood, ash and box elders.

"The students' work will help Friends of Swede Hollow and other community residents better understand what exactly is in the park, how valuable it is and its natural history," said Card. "Over the years the community has paid a lot of attention to the park, and the students' research will help people continue to make good decisions in caring for it."

Karin DuPaul, president of the Friends of Swede Hollow, concurs. "The students' information will help us decide, for example, how many and what kind of trees to add to the park," said DuPaul, a community organizer for the Dayton's Bluff District 4 Community Council.

For their part, students Swanson and Merryman enjoyed the hands-on learning outside the classroom. "I learned a lot more doing that than just listening to a lecture," said Swanson. "I also enjoyed learning about the history of the park and the surrounding neighborhood."

Said Merryman, "We had a lot more flexibility in doing this work. It became an exercise in time management."

And what about the fact the students' research benefited the community? "That," said Merryman, "was a very nice bonus. I was happy to be part of it."



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Let's talk about it - Parent discussion groups

By Mary Ann Cogelow

I ended my last article for the *Forum* with a plea for all of us who are part of the village raising children to become more informed so we can do a better job. I was absolutely sincere in this plea. I cannot imagine how much poorer my understanding of children would be without the many, many books, articles, lectures, etc. from which I have benefited. Nonetheless, I want to use this space this time to say more about the enormous benefits of participating in an on-going discussion group focused on child raising.

There is a flood of information and opinion about children circulating in today's world. Parenting experts sometimes bemoan this abundance of information claiming that it makes raising children more difficult, not easier. In fact, available material runs the gamut from brilliant and helpful to absolutely terrible. I know of one best selling parenting book which resulted in a warning from the pediatric division of the American Medical Association because a significant number of infants whose parents followed its advice ended up diagnosed as having failure to thrive, a serious pediatric diagnosis. This is why thoughtful evaluation of information about parenting is crucial. It is also why, on further reflection, I want to encourage parents, those who are *most* influential in their children's lives, to join Early Childhood Family Education with their babies, toddlers, and preschoolers.

One of the goals of Minnesota Early Childhood Family Education is to help every parent develop a sound personal philosophy of parenting. A discussion group is one of the three main components of the Program. Each discussion group offers the expertise of a professional parent educator and the collective wisdom and experience of a dozen or more parents. Participation in such a group offers broader support for building a solid individual philosophy of parenting than other avenues of gaining information, immensely valuable as they may be, cannot offer.

Each of us does have a philosophy of parenting based to a large degree upon our own experiences as babies and children. We do not often think in these terms, but part of the challenge of parenting our own children is to evaluate the ways in which we were parented, both by our real parents but also by other members of the village who influenced our lives. We need to decide which parts of this philosophy we want to keep, which parts we want to modify, and which parts we want to discard altogether.

This can be tricky business. A good group provides a safe place for parents to thoroughly consider assumptions made very early in life when they believed their parents to be all powerful and all knowing. Parents can come to understand that they can remain loyal to their own parents while building a philosophy which is different in small or big ways. The multitude of personalities and experience in the group demonstrate that there is no single "recipe" for raising children. People can disagree with each others' opinions while yet affirming each other as immensely valuable human beings.

A group offers opportunities for members to ask for clarification or further explanation

when they have questions. (When I write, I sorely miss this aspect of working in a group.) As conversations bounce back and forth, issues are expanded upon, examples are provided, and problems are shared.

Finally groups offer more complete communication than do print or any of the media which send an active message to a comparatively passive audience. Experts say that a comparatively small part of communication is carried in words. Other important parts are in body language, tone of voice, facial expression and eye contact, forms of communication which can potently enhance learning. Daniel Goleman, Ph.D., author of *Emotional Intelligence*, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, *The New Science of Social Relationships*, and *Ecological Intelligence* describes emotional intelligence ("EQ") as including such qualities as empathy, social competence, self-motivation, and impulse control. He has also claimed that the amount of "EQ" demonstrated in our society is declining. I wonder if part of this decrease is attributable to over dependence on forms of communication which deprive us of the kinds of feedback which groups provide in rich abundance. Face to face we see and hear and learn from all the ways in which people communicate.

Parenting well depends upon emotional intelligence. A group offers its members the support of emotional intelligence while also encouraging every member to more fully develop their own "EQs." People frequently meet in a group as strangers, but over time they learn to know each other and often find friends. Coming to know each other helps individuals feel supported and better able to use the information they gain.

During the years when I was both parenting my own dependent daughters and leading groups at Dayton's Bluff Early Childhood Family Education my knowledge of children continued to expand due to learning from many sources not the least of which was the groups which I "led." However, I was acutely aware that the actual job I did as a mother on a day to day basis fluctuated more based on how I felt than it did on what I knew. When I felt supported, understood, valued I did a better job than I did when I felt discouraged, overwhelmed, or alone. The most common theme in the thousands of parents' evaluations of Dayton's Bluff Early Childhood Family Education I read over 30 plus years was, "I learned I was not alone." Groups do real work. Sometime it's painful, but often it's exciting, and rewarding, satisfying. Frequently it's a lot of fun.

I am persuaded that the discussion groups in MN ECFE offer parents of children from birth to school entrance an opportunity to grow and learn which is not replicated in any other format. But this wonderful program also offers two additional components which increase its value. One of these is a developmentally appropriate classroom for children planned and staffed by early childhood professionals. The other component is parent child time together to learn and play. These components offer parents important additional ways of learning more about kids and helpful ways of interacting with them. The benefits to kids are enormous. But that is a subject for a different article.

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