

Dayton's Bluff District Forum

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"The Voice of the Community"

Q & A with Senator-elect Fong Hawj

by Brad Griffith
special to the Forum

On Tuesday, November 6, 2012, the citizens of Minnesota Senate District 67 elected Fong Hawj to represent their interests at the State Capital.

29,853 voted in this race, with Mr. Hawj securing 72.46% of the vote.

As an ongoing effort to connect Dayton's Bluff residents with elected officials, the following questions were submitted to Senator-elect Fong Hawj.

Avi Viswanathan

Dayton's Bluff Resident:

The Twin Cities Metro is home to the largest black/white unemployment disparities in the entire country, with black workers being more than three times more likely to be unemployed than white workers. The East Side is home to growing communities of color, including a strong African American community. How do you plan on addressing this dire issue for our communities as our representative in the State Senate?

Hawj:

I will work with other East Side elected officials, local non-profit organizations and business leaders to attract companies and small businesses to our district. Our goal is to increase local hiring by developing job training programs and counseling to allow local workers to be part of the workforce. In addition, I will push hard to restore LGA (Local Government Aid) to our city to ensure funds reach our neighborhood development organizations and district councils to assist local businesses to increase job creation.

Sage Holben

Dayton's Bluff Resident:

Housing and Health Care are two primary issues in your platform. I have long been concerned about the adjective 'affordable' often attached to each word; I would like to see someone re-evaluate the reality of 'affordable' in terms of housing and healthcare. Government guidelines, I believe, use household income as a basis to define 'affordable.' However, with soaring costs of living and lower (or no) in-

crease in wages, expenses increasingly suffocate income and 'affordable' is becoming a moot point. As senator, with a comprehensive social and business background, what can you suggest so that health care and housing actually are affordable to the working-class wage earner?

Hawj:

I will do whatever I can to ensure that Minnesota implements the Affordable Care Act, including the healthcare exchange promised for 2014. I will support the expansion of Medicaid and Medicare to make sure that the most needy members of our community are not left without health care coverage. For housing, I will seek partnership with other stakeholders or agencies like ISAI-AH and Habitat for Humanity as well as involving city and county leaders to revitalize our neighborhood. I will also work hard on comprehensive tax and budget reform that will shift some of the tax burden to the more affluent taxpayers and away from local property taxes. As for the use of the word 'affordable,' it is indeed a very flexible term.

Stefan Pomrenke, MD, MPH, MATS
Dayton's Bluff Resident:

Many of my patients are Hmong and live in our district. Like many other Americans, they have acquired diseases related to consumption and sedentary lifestyle such as diabetes, hypertension and gout. How can you as Senator-elect organize the Hmong 18 Council and other Hmong leaders on the East side to meet to discuss the importance of healthful choices in diet and exercise? How can we engage the eating and wellness customs of all of our varied ethnic homelands to engage wellness?

Hawj:

Outside of the legislature, I will be happy to join any community function to learn and advocate for healthy living. I believe empowerment must be from within, so I see that the initiative of the community food co-op (Gateway) has the potential for such education, not only for our Hmong-American citizens (See "Fong Hawj," continued on page 4.)

Getting a charge out of Halloween

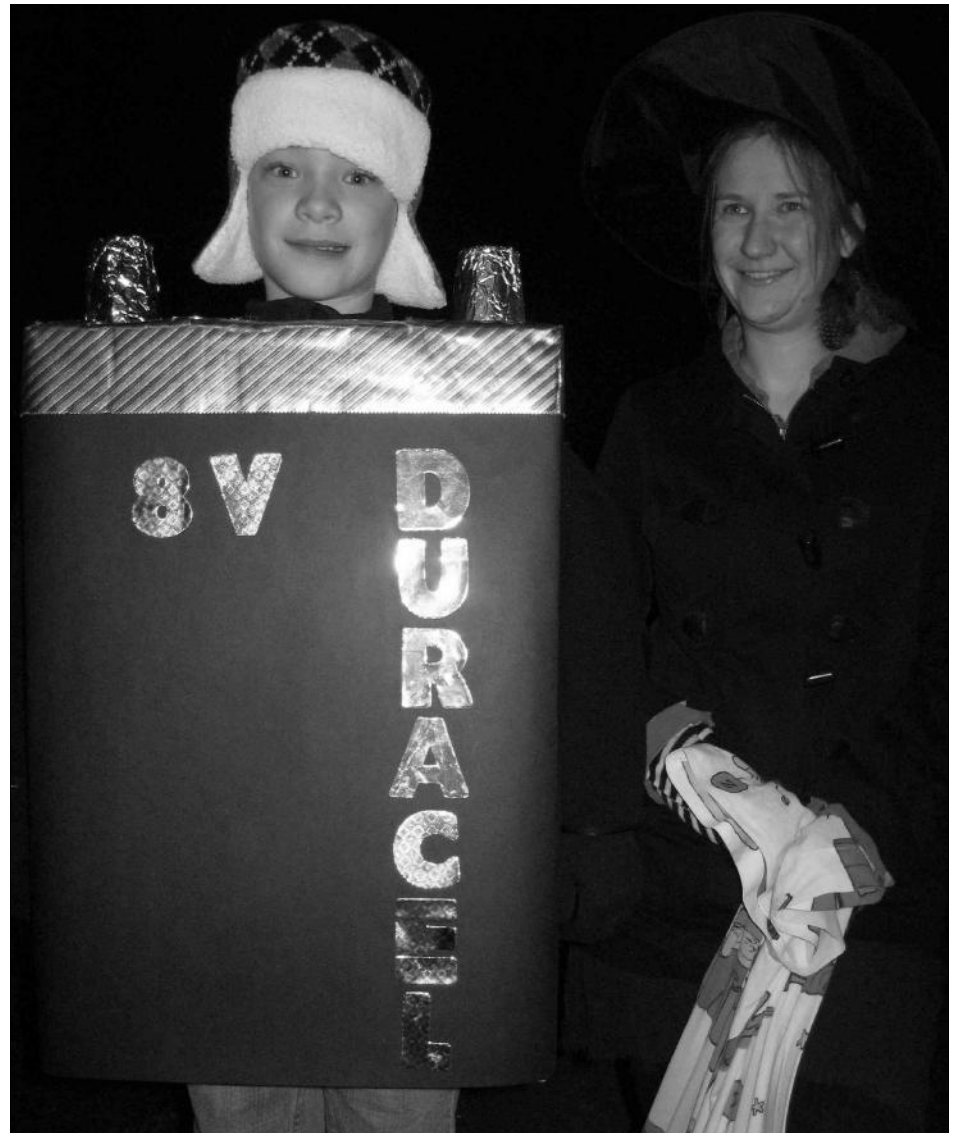


Photo by Steve Trimble

This young Dayton's Bluff resident had quite a spark of an idea for an electrifying Halloween costume. The warm weather made for ideal trick-or-treating conditions.

How do we stop the shootings?

by Greg Cosimini

Longtime Dayton's Bluff resident

November's Forum contained an article about two more shootings in Dayton's Bluff; an anonymous writer asked how to stop them. I don't have the whole solution, but I'd like to suggest where to begin.

Let's first make sure we understand the situation. The St. Paul Police Department issues weekly crime statistics. These are prepared for the District Councils and are available on the SPPD website and via e-mail from our community organizer Karin DuPaul. They are also published in the *East Side Review*. These statistics are incomplete, sanitized, and difficult to interpret, but they are better than nothing.

I've been reading the crime statistics each week, but it wasn't until I started to compile data for this article that I realized how serious the gun situation is here. From January 1 to November 5 of this year, there have been 94 reports of gunshots, 30 reports of someone getting shot, 11 armed street robberies, one armed convenience store robbery, and two homicides. The numbers were similar in 2011, with one less murder. It should be noted that gunshot reports don't reveal how many shots were actually fired. It is often more than one.

Contrary to what some people might believe, these gun-related crimes don't happen only late at night to "bad" people in certain parts of the neighborhood. It's true that some of these gun crimes are concentrated in very specific areas but they certainly aren't confined to just a few places.

Many of these gun-related crimes, in-
(See "Stop the shootings," continued on page 6.)



Photo by Greg Cosimini

A memorial was created on the corner of Wakefield and Cypress in late October to commemorate the birthday of Aung Thu Bo, who was murdered by a "Craigslist" killer on August 10.

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Community meeting

The next Dayton's Bluff community meeting is **Thursday, December 6, from 6:30-8:00 pm** at the Dayton's Bluff Community Council office, 798 East 7th Street. The object is to work on community-building, as well as criminal and nuisance behavior, code enforcement issues and any other concerns or good things in the Bluff.

Please submit addresses of any problem properties to karin@daytonsbluff.org or 651-772-2075 before the meeting. All Dayton's Bluff residents are welcome to attend.

Dayton's Bluff Beat Phone

The Police Beat Phone, 651-341-7637, is available for residents' calls. It is not answered on officers' days off, when they are having special training, or on vacations. Call about ongoing neighborhood problems; concerns about people in vacant buildings after 10:00 pm; police-related questions, etc. **If you need police right away or see a crime in progress, call 911 or 651-291-1111.**

Take-a-Hike December 1

Take-a-Hike occurs on the first Saturday of most months. The next hike will be **Saturday, December 1**. Hikers meet at **10:30 am** in Mounds Park at Earl Street and Mounds Boulevard, and walk to East Side Heritage Park. The hike is about two hours (four miles) with some moderately rough terrain. Share stories about recent and distant history of Dayton's Bluff. Transportation to Indian Mounds Park is available, if required. All are welcome.

Donate your junk car

Budget Towing of Minnesota will remove your junker and dispose of it at no charge to you. The vehicle owner receives a tax deduction, and the Dayton's Bluff Community Council will receive a donation. Call 651-772-2075 or email june@daytonsbluff.org.

Friends of Swede Hollow

Meetings are on the second Wednesday of the month. Please call to confirm the location. The next monthly meeting is on **Wednesday, December 12 at 6:30 pm** at 622 Beaumont Street. For more information, email swedehollow@gmail.com or call 651-776-0550.

Meet the police

The Eastern District Police hosts its monthly meeting for community members at 722 Payne Avenue, at the corner of Minnehaha Avenue. The next meetings are **Friday, December 21, at 9:30 am, and Wednesday, December 19, at 6:30 pm**. The meetings are intended to listen to and address concerns about crime and other issues on the East Side.

Small business class begins in April 2013

All East Side entrepreneurs are welcome to apply for the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Microentrepreneur Program. The next 10-week session will begin in April and includes topics such as operations management, marketing, financial management, and how to prepare a business plan.

December events at

Mounds Park United Methodist Church

- December 1:** UMW Christmas Concert and dessert buffet
- December 8:** Caroling, 4:00-6:00 pm (call 651-774-8736 if interested)
- December 15:** Glorious Grocery Giveaway, 10:00 am (open to everyone)
- December 15:** Children's Christmas Pageant rehearsal, 5:00 pm (open to all)
- December 16:** Children's Christmas Pageant, 10:30 am
- December 22:** Christmas service, 10:30 am; brunch to follow (open to all)
- December 24:** Christmas Eve services, 4:00 pm and 11:00 pm

Every Sunday morning: Sunday school for all ages, 9:15 am; Service at 10:30 am; fellowship to follow. Please contact Mounds Park United Methodist Church at 651-774-6780 or visit www.moundsparkumc.org for more information.

2013 Home Tour wants your home, or your neighbors'

A celebration of city living

by Karin DuPaul, Forum staff

Who in your neighborhood recently remodeled their home and might like to show it off? Or be a host with the most, in a classic home? The 2013 Minneapolis & Saint Paul Home Tour is already looking for homeowners and home improvement professionals to feature on the late-April tour. Nominations/applications are due **Tuesday, January 15**, and early submissions are encouraged. It's the Tour's twenty-sixth year, and it will be held **April 27 and 28, 2013**.

"People attending the tour are looking for ideas on how to remodel rooms or expand their homes," said Tour coordinator Margo Ashmore. They like to visit areas where they can see a handful of homes close to each other and enjoy talking with homeowners. "Homeowners on the tour enjoy feedback and find it's also a great promotion for their neighborhoods." It is not necessary to have remodeled the whole house.

Home improvement professionals often help staff the homes, and homeowners ask family, friends and neighborhood advocates to contribute time to host. "A good support network makes it fun," Ashmore said. "It's a great incentive to finish up the last few little projects, recruit help at fall and winter gatherings, and identify clusters of homes to call special attention to."

The tour encourages homeowners to improve existing homes, and to complement the neighborhood if they build new. For more information, call Tour Coordinator Margo Ashmore at 612-867-4874 or email mfashmore@aol.com. The application can be downloaded from www.MSPHomeTour.com under "submit a home." Or for more information email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or call Karin at 651-772-2075.

Upcoming opportunities at... **Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center**

- **Our teen room is being remodeled!** Teens will be repainting the walls and adding a mural. Thank you to the Dayton's Bluff Community Council.
- **Basketball season is starting!** Registration is open and continues until all teams fill.
- Check out our "Dinner with Santa" in December!
- **High School open gym** Every Tuesday, 6:00-8:00 pm
- **FREE ARTS** every Thursday evening from 6:00-7:00 pm.
- **Open Gym for age 13 and under** Mondays & Wednesdays, 6:00-7:45 pm
- **Rec Check FREE** after-school program, Monday through Friday, 3:00-6:00 pm. Limited space available
- **Girls' Group**, ages 12-17, every Thursday, 6:00-7:00 pm
- **Judo Class** every Monday, 6:00-8:00 pm, \$12 per month
- **Free Zumba class** on Thursday nights from 6:00-7:00 pm in the Dayton's Bluff Rec Center dance room
- **Cheer America** every Monday, 6:00-7:00 pm, \$6 per class
- **Basketball Basic Skills** for ages 6-14, every Thursday from 6:00-7:30 pm
- **Karate class** every Wednesday, 6:00-8:00 pm, \$6 per class
- **Parent & Tot time** every Wednesday and Friday in the gym, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
- **Messy Fingers Art** for kids 5 & under every Friday, 10:00-11:00 am, \$38 for 6-week session
- We also have a studio and a host of other activities for kids.



The Dayton's Bluff Rec Center is located at 800 Conway Street.

We are open Monday through Thursday, 3:00-8:00 pm; Friday 3:00-6:00 pm.

Questions?

Call us at 651-793-3885

Stop by and check us out!



“A Christmas Carol” returns to the Historic Mounds Theatre

by Raeann Ruth, Executive Director, Mounds Theatre

“A Christmas Carol – Radio Broadcast Show” – live on stage – is back for its second year at the Historic Mounds Theatre.

Back before television, a holiday season tradition in America was listening to “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens as performed on radio by Lionel Barrymore and narrated by Orson Welles with the Mercury Theatre group. The music was composed and conducted by the legendary Bernard Herrmann.

Few actors ever gave more meaning to the character of miserly Ebenezer Scrooge than Lionel Barrymore, who first took on the radio role in 1934.

Originally aired live on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1939, this radio broadcast will live for a lifetime in the memories of those who heard it. If you remember listening, and want to recapture those magical days of your childhood Christmas, or have never heard it, but want to experience the magic of live radio theatre and create new memories for you and your family, don't miss this production. It will become a treasured part of your holiday listening enjoyment for years to come.

Dates: December 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22 - 7:00 pm and December 9, 16, 23 - 2:00 pm

Tickets: \$15 (adults); \$10 (students & seniors); \$6 (children under 12)

Tickets will be on sale soon on our website at www.moundstheatre.org. Purchase your tickets early, as they sell out fast. Also, consider purchasing tickets for those “hard to please” folks on your Christmas list.

The Historic Mounds Theatre is located at 1029 Hudson Road, St. Paul, MN 55106; 651-772-2253; www.moundstheatre.org.

Friends of Mounds Park

By Steve Trimble, Forum staff

The Friends of Mounds Park had their annual meeting on October 24. This year it was in the downstairs banquet room of Obb's and was attended by a dozen or so people.

There was a recap of the last year's events, including a members' wine and cheese party and participation in the National Night Out and St. Paul Parks Clean up.

The work on the park improvements by the city have also begun, including a new interpretive kiosk and some repair of the Pavilion at Earl and Mounds. Other good news was the announcement that city parks employee Kathleen Angelo would be assigned as planner for the park.

In the future, the group, whose membership is around 45, is looking forward to work to improve the playground and planning a possible amphitheater that could host small music and theater productions. They are also looking for more



Photo by Steve Trimble

members. For more information, you can contact the group on Facebook or on their web site at www.friendsofmoundspark.org.

Efforts build to open a food cooperative

by Tracy Sides
Gateway Committee

Grass-roots community organizing efforts that began last fall to establish a cooperative grocery store on the East Side of St. Paul are gaining momentum. More than 100 residents attended a community meeting in October 2011, from which a steering committee formed. The organization eventually established the Gateway Food Cooperative and, in April, began recruiting member-owners. To date, nearly 130 households have purchased a share in the cooperative or “co-op,” which could open as a retail food store in two to four years.

“Educating people about what a co-op is and is not and what it can mean to the East Side, is an important aspect of our organizing work,” says Sarah Geving, co-chair of the Gateway Steering Committee. According to Geving, “That the community, rather than an individual or a remote corporation, owns and benefits from the profits of the business, are reasons many have joined. Others really want better access to healthy food.”

A co-op is a business which can range in size from a small store-front to a large, Fortune 500 company. In many ways, co-ops are like any other business; but in several important ways they are different. Co-ops are owned and democratically controlled by their members – the people who use the co-op's services or buy its goods – not by outside investors; their boards of directors are elected from within the membership.

Other unique features of the co-op business model include the way surplus revenues are returned to members, and the emphasis on serving the members' needs, rather than just seeking to generate profits. Some co-ops are exclus-

ively for the use of members. In the case of Gateway, and most Twin Cities' food co-ops, you will not need to be a member in order to shop there.

“We really want to see this as a community-owned business that is representative of and benefits the whole community,” says Tracy Sides, Chair of Gateway's Membership and Outreach Subcommittee. She continues, “greater access to healthy foods, more jobs, more locally-sourced products, and more money staying in our local economy all contribute to improved health and wealth for the East Side.”

When asked about how they plan to accomplish this goal of inclusion, Sides said that the Steering

Cooperative Initiative (FCI), a national non-profit organization that works with community groups across the United States to help them organize new retail food co-ops as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Another characteristic of Gateway's situation that FCI noted as unique among food co-op start-ups, is the interest of Mississippi Market Natural Foods Co-op, an established St. Paul co-op with two existing locations and 12% sales growth in 2011, in opening a retail location on the East Side. Mississippi Market responded to the City of St. Paul's request for interest in developing the old Hospital Linen Site at East 7th Street and Bates Avenue.



Photo courtesy of Tracy Sides

The Gateway Steering Committee, following a recent meeting.

Committee is building relationships with community organizations that serve residents of different ethnic groups, for example, by participating in the East Side Prosperity Campaign, an organization that fosters collaboration across cultures and communities on the East Side.

She said they are also reaching out through the social connections of existing members and volunteers and in 2013 intend to collaboratively develop an East Side cookbook that features healthy renditions of traditional ethnic dishes.

Gateway's effort to reach out to diverse groups during the organizing phase of co-op development is unique among modern food co-op start-ups. In fact, this was one of the reasons the Gateway Food Cooperative was awarded a \$10,000 grant in September from the Food

The Gateway Steering Committee welcomes the possibility of a Mississippi Market at the Hospital Linen Site for two main reasons, according to Geving. “Mississippi Market building a store would get the doors open about 2 years earlier than we could, because they are already established.” And second, “Our understanding is that the more member-owners we can recruit, the stronger our voice would be in helping create a third Mississippi Market location that is uniquely ‘East Side,’” she says. Regardless of Mississippi Market's plans, Geving says Gateway is aiming to have 300 member-owners by June 1, 2013.

For more information, you may contact the Gateway Food Cooperative at eastcoop@gmail.com or visit their website: www.gatewaytofood.org.

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The deadline is January 10, 2013.

Foung Hawj

(continued from page 1)

but everyone. As for the Hmong 18 Council, it's a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to build community, resolve cultural conflicts, and increase community resources. My predecessor Sen. John Harrington has been on the board since the early part of its inception and may still be serving at some capacity. Anyone can ask to be on the agenda for their monthly meeting. The Hmong Professional Healthcare Coalition should be a part of a health and wellness symposium in a leading capacity. Most of its members work for clinics or public health agencies, hoping to better the health of the community.

Steve Trimble Dayton's Bluff Resident

Have you done any thinking about what Senate committees you might ask to be on that would best reflect your interests and the needs of your district?

Hawj:

I hope to serve on the Energy, Utilities and Telecommunication Committee, Jobs and Economic Growth Committee, and Environment and Natural Resources Committee, to find ways to foster local growth.

Tim Herman Dayton's Bluff Resident

Executive Director, East Side Area Business Association

What can you do to help small businesses get the funding, training and resources needed to grow their business?

Hawj:

I will help restore LGA to the city so that we can support the growth of our local entrepreneurs and small businesses. I will also work to make sure that some of economic development funds are directed to provide training for local workers and local business owners.

Read the rest of the community Q and A with State Senator-elect Foung Hawj in the February issue of the Dayton's Bluff District Forum, which will be available at the end of January, 2013.

Reflective Garden offers place for peace, wisdom, calm

by Sage Holben
Arts and Cultures Committee
Dayton's Bluff Community Council

Peace. Green and white signs in Dayton's Bluff remind people to "Be Peaceful." A small group of residents gathers at Mounds Boulevard and 6th Street to encourage peace, not war. How appropriate that a *Circle of Peace*TM labyrinth has recently become a part of the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood. Tragedies are not uncommon on the greater East Side, but people who live and work here are stronger than any hardships they face. Most are, I believe, people of peace and people who look out for one another and for the good in others.

On November 7, Metropolitan State University and community members celebrated the installation of the first phase of the David Barton Reflective Garden and Community Labyrinth. David Barton was the first Dean of Metropolitan State University Library & Learning Center. David died of brain cancer on June 14 of this year. With the completion of the reflective garden and paths, a formal reception will be held in the spring.

The Circle of PeaceTM labyrinth was designed by Lisa Moriarity of

Stillwater. Ms. Moriarity worked with David Barton's widow, Marjorie Savage, and University staff in designing the project to reflect David's passion for gardens. Dayton's Bluff residents attest to

are always open. This labyrinth offers a safe walking path, a peaceful oasis for reflection and relaxation. And it's a place where neighbors of all ages, students, staff, and faculty can come together. In time, it will be surrounded by gardens and picnic tables. All in memory of David Barton, who championed the innovative partnership with the St. Paul Public Library to provide my community with its very first library branch."

The labyrinth is located in the grove of trees on the west side of the library, east of the Swede Hollow bluff. It is at the "T" intersection where Mounds Blvd intersects with 7th Street East. Though paths won't be added until spring, the public is welcome to use the labyrinth anytime.

Note: Funding of the Reflective Garden comes from individual contributions. Bagshaw-Reasoner encourages donations of all sizes, noting that \$3 or \$5 can purchase beautiful flowers just as \$50 or \$500 can for this very visible and accessible community space. A library endowment funds the labyrinth itself. The endowment enables the Library & Learning Center to continue its commitment to community outreach.



Photo by Abdul Elmi

David's appreciation and respect for the neighborhood and its people. The Reflective Garden and Community Labyrinth keep that connection alive. Nancy Bagshaw-Reasoner, Facilities Director at Metropolitan State University (and 28-year Dayton's Bluff resident), reflected on its meaning to her:

"This project is a dream come true for me. The university is mindful of our neighbors and its doors

Nutrition Corner – Easy ways to add fruits and veggies

by Abbey Mike, Diane O'Brien,
Lindsey Russo & Laura Swanson
Student Nurses

Healthy diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases, while improving your overall health. It is recommended to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Here

are some easy ways to add fruit and veggies:

At breakfast, top your cereal, oatmeal or pancakes with a banana or berries.

For lunch, order a side salad or fruit yogurt instead of french fries.

Find ways to add fruits and vegetables to your evening meal. Grab a can of corn and put some in a burrito.

Chop up onions and green peppers and add them to pasta sauce. Add peas or green beans to a hot dish or stew.

Eat fruit for dessert. Make your own fruit salad with oranges, pineapple, apples, grapes and cantaloupe. Have fresh fruit with whipped cream. Bake apples with cinnamon.

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Refugees from Bhutan make Dayton's Bluff home

by Eura Chang, Intern
Minnesota Literacy
Council, Arlington Hills
Learning Center

Bhutan, a landlocked country in South Asia, is home to the eastern Himalayas, forests filled with remarkable primates, and one of the most recently-established democracies in the world. What Bhutan does lack, however, is doughnuts. Damanti Biswa, who moved from a refugee camp in Nepal to Dayton's Bluff in 2010, laughed when asked what she found the most different in the United States from home. "No doughnuts or cookies in Bhutan. I like the flour doughnuts!"

The Kingdom of Bhutan has recently gained positive recognition for its unconventional method of measuring the well-being of its citizens through something they call "gross national happiness," or GNH. Rather than simply evaluating the country's economic output, GNH attempts to quantify the nation's success by considering its people's psychological state and physical health, along with their social progress, and the political stability they live under. Although Bhutan claims that its GNH is quite high, at least one

group of its residents – the 30 percent with Nepalese (rather than Bhutanese) heritage – are facing tougher times.

In an effort to homogenize Bhutan's population, the government has implemented legislation that discriminates against people with Nepalese background. Even though ethnic Nepalese have lived and worked in Bhutan for many generations, they are still denied citizenship. Because of this, close to 120,000 Bhutanese have been living in refugee camps in India or Nepal, and neither country will accept them as citizens.

Born in Bhutan, Damanti, now age 44, lived with her family in a refugee camp in Nepal for almost 20 years. Living in the camps was hard because there were so few ways to make money. "I remember it's not good," she says. "There is no job in the camp and I miss Bhutan."

While in the camp, Damanti passed time by weaving things such as scarves, and visiting with friends. Now that she lives in Minnesota,

Damanti does not weave anymore, but spends a lot of time taking care of household things, like laundry and cleaning, and raising her children. "I don't have time anymore!" she laughs.

When she found out that she would be moving to America in 2010, Damanti remembers feeling excited



Photo by Jessica Jones

and nervous, particularly about learning a new language. Now, she is thankful. "Everything is good! Good people, good schools, and good teachers. I like things I can't describe in English!" Just like any new inhabitant to Minnesota, however, there is one thing that she has yet to fall in love with: winter. "I no like the snow. One time I fell down! It is very windy and my face gets very hot

and cold!"

Damanti is one of about a half-dozen ethnic Nepalese students enrolled at the Minnesota Literacy Council's learning center at Arlington Hills Lutheran Church near Payne and Maryland Avenues. Her favorite subjects are English and U.S. history. She also enjoys practicing speaking her adopted language with other students from around the world. She currently lives in Dayton's Bluff with her husband and six children; however, she still has family in the camps. "My husband's mother and father and my sister's family are in Nepal. I want them to come to the U.S., to Minnesota."

When asked about her goals, Damanti speaks of what she wants for her children. "I want them to graduate...and go to a good job." One day, she wishes to return to her home country of Bhutan, but Damanti is very happy with her life in Minnesota. "There is lots of help, lots of security," she says, "I like the state of Minnesota. Everything I see, I like!"

This article is part of a series of stories about recent immigrants to Dayton's Bluff, written by teachers and volunteers at the Minnesota Literacy Council.

Invasion of the Trash Trolls



Photo by Karin DuPaul

Don't miss your chance to discover the art of building Trash Trolls out of discarded trash. The idea, developed by Dayton's Bluff artist Rose Marie Felsheim, is to get neighbors together pick up trash in the neighborhood, then create a Trash Troll. They can be small or very large.

Trolls can be painted with old house paint, or remain unpainted like the ones pictured above.

Completed trolls can be put in the messiest yards as a "warning" from the "Trash Police," or, if they are really cute, a troll's creator may want to keep it as yard art. For more information on an introductory class, email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or call 651-772.2075.

Congratulations to the new Board Members



**And thank you to the
Dayton's Bluff Community
Council for all the good
work in Dayton's Bluff.**

The newly-elected board members are Elizabeth Matakis, Lorri Barnett, Darrell Mammenga, Daniel Stahley, Rafael Espinosa, Tong Thao, Jesse Ferden, Jacob Dorer, and Ashlee Olds.

They will join the current board members: Sage Holben, Stefan Pomrenke, Angela DuPaul, Kelly Lundeen, Alan Swearingen, Colin Wilkinson, Alex Bajwa, and Deborah Martin.



Remaking Margaret into a safe place for everyone

by Jennifer Herman, special to the Forum

Long-time neighbors can tell some wonderful stories about the “glory days” of Margaret Rec Center: winter skating, basketball teams, wood shop classes, and parent volunteers aplenty. Current neighbors can tell some stories too, but they aren't too pleasant: a roof that leaks, a musty and probably moldy interior, a playground area covered in broken glass and trash, a lack of programming, and teens whose frustration spews forth on and around the playground, making it unwelcoming for families with small children. It's not hard to long for a return to those glory days! Though we can't rewind time, it is quite possible for our community and the city to work together on creating a hopeful new future at Margaret.

The honest reality is that the Margaret Rec Center building is not safe, healthy, or practical for serving our community's present day needs. A few years ago, the city decided to seek a partner to take over programming at Margaret, but it was difficult to find a partner who could even make use of the current building. Since then, the condition of the building has only de-

teriorated. In December 2010, the city of St. Paul issued the Parks and Recreation System Plan which called for the eventual removal of the Margaret Rec Center building.

The partnership with Hmong Youth Education Services has ended and the building has been vacated. Funding has been secured for the demolition of the building and the demolition is slated to happen before the end of 2012. While this is a sad ending, it is also a first step toward an exciting new beginning. The City can't afford to build and staff a new Rec Center at the Margaret site. But over the next few years it will be possible to secure funding to make improvements and transform the area into a beautiful park and outdoor recreation space with opportunities for all community members. The dreaming about possibilities has already begun: perhaps a walking path, picnic pavilion, community gardens, basketball, or volleyball. No firm plans are in place, so there is plenty of time to give your input about what amenities would best serve our neighborhood.

Come to an informational meeting about the future of Margaret Rec Center and Park.

Parks and Rec staff will be there to talk about the demolition and redevelopment process. Bring your questions and ideas!

December 4, 2012, at 6:30 pm

Dayton's Bluff Community Council Offices
798 East 7th Street (corner of Margaret and 7th)

Farewell to historic Margaret playground

by Steve Trimble, Forum history specialist

Two months ago, I wrote about the heritage and demise of historical 3M Building #1. Now the neglected Margaret Recreation Center will be razed. Isn't it too bad that local authorities almost always choose the East Side as the area to lose its institutions?

The least that can be done is to review how important this center has been to our neighborhood. Margaret Rec Center has been part of Dayton's Bluff for over a century, and is one of the oldest playgrounds in St. Paul. It was started as local response to the national “playground movement.”

The idea was that play spaces for youth recreation were a crucial need in rapidly-expanding urban areas. Neighborhood parks would “permit retaining the characteristic features of natural scenery” in the city.

Playground professionals at the time wanted to get cooperation from key older youth “to direct the thoughts and actions of these leaders,” hoping they would “eventually sway the entire group into some honorable form of recreation.” They believed that fewer young people from “playground districts” ended up in juvenile court.

Margaret Rec Center's story began in 1907, when the city bought land behind Sibley School. The Margaret Maroons won a municipal baseball championship in 1909, before there was even a building on the site.

The first shelter was built in 1910 and Margaret Playground was gradually improved. New additions included play equipment, tennis courts, furniture for the clubroom and a small kindergarten program.

The Margaret Boosters were organized in November, 1920. One early volunteer said: “We used to go down to the playground and find three or four kids ganged up on the director. It was getting so bad you couldn't keep a director more than a few months. We decided to do something about it.” It seems that tough kids hanging out a recreation centers is nothing new.

The boosters went around “signing up new members and holding dances, bingo games, playground festivals,” and “mooching money from local merchants to buy equipment.”

By 1924, Margaret continued to break attendance records. Daily activities were horseshoes, tennis, kittenball

(softball), track and efficiency tests and tennis. 18 men participated in horseshoe pitching contest, and 35 girls enrolled in basketry, which met three times a week.

At the Center's tenth annual Summer Festival in 1930, hundreds of people came to see decorated doll buggies and music played by an area orchestra. In one year, 1,000 people were involved in frequent club and classroom work and another 1,000 had occasional contact at the center. There was fencing, dramatics, puppetry, drawing and dancing classes, and dozens of social clubs with up to 100 members.

During World War Two, the Drum and Bugle Corps' 35 musicians practiced at the facility. When the Margaret Men's Boosters were told that the playground budget had been cut by \$6,000, the group raised money for lumber and built a hockey arena themselves.

A new center was built into the hill in 1982 in an eco-friendly manner with solar energy. Unfortunately, the design was later found to be problematic. To benefit young families, the tennis court was removed and a small tot playground was added in the spring of 2006, but general maintenance was constantly deferred, and deterioration continued.

Even so, in 2007 The Margaret Recreation Center hosted the largest National Night out event in the city, with door prizes, picnic food and desserts, as well as field games. As late as 2009, the city seemed to be looking for money to renovate or replace the facility. Instead, they opted to “re-partner” (a fancy name for ending all city programming) with Hmong YES (Youth Education Services) – a good program, but one with limited resources. The facilities declined even further.

That brings us to the present. When the building comes tumbling down – like so many other historic structures on the East Side – what happens to the land is still a concern. At least the open space should remain available to children and their families.

I hope today's policy-makers will agree with the playground official who, a century ago, said: “a civilized community must provide playgrounds for the children, recreation grounds and playgrounds for the large working-class body of citizens.”

Stop the shootings (continued from page 1)

cluding the two homicides, took place in the middle of the day. One of them, the so-called “Craiglist” murder near Wakefield and Cypress, occurred in what I thought was a fairly safe area, approximately 800 feet from my front door. After looking through the police reports, I discovered how wrong I was. There have been many shots fired, armed robberies, and actual shootings within walking distance of my house. I knew about most of them, but the sheer number hadn't registered with me.

Here is an example of one shooting of which I have firsthand knowledge. The police report merely stated that gunshots had been fired on March 27 at 11:05 am near 5th and Forest Streets. But there are more details. This incident happened on a Tuesday morning in front of St. John's Catholic Church. I was inside at the time, attending the funeral Mass of one of our former pastors. The Archbishop was celebrating Mass and the church was nearly full. At least four gunshots were clearly heard inside the church.

Had this happened a half hour later, the street would have been full of people. As is, one of the parishioners later found the back window of his car shot out. Two schools were in session within two blocks of where the shots were fired. And yet there was never a word of this reported anywhere in the media.

Why don't we get more information about crime in the neighborhood? It may be an effort to keep the “bad stuff” hidden so Dayton's Bluff doesn't get a bad reputation. Well, it's too late. The secret is out. I can personally attest to the fact that people know it and stay away.

Even in this communication age, it's not easy to get the word out. There was a time when any shooting was big news because it was a rare event. That is not the case today. The news media isn't interested unless there is a murder. The *Pioneer Press* no longer has dedicated crime reporters. It barely covers any local news. TV and radio stations don't have the airtime to do much even if they were so inclined.

The Internet, with its nearly infinite capacity, is no better. The main media websites have no more information than their print or broadcast counterparts. Individual blogs, discussion groups, Facebook pages, etc. frequently deal with drivel. Perhaps we need a good, coordinated online source of crime information.

So we need to get the word out about what's really happening in Dayton's Bluff. But we can't stop the shootings ourselves. I hate to say it, but memorials, ribbons on trees, block club meetings, National Night Out events, home and garden tours, and community meetings aren't going to do the trick. These are very worthwhile activities but they've been going on for years, and gun-related crime is steadily increasing.

So what to we do? We ask for help. We pay taxes and we elect people to represent us. They have access to law enforcement organizations at the city, county, state and national level that have been dealing with problems like these since the days of the Wild West. But for

some reason they aren't doing much around here. Why? I'm not sure but from the people I've contacted I can tell you they have plenty of excuses. We should not accept them.

I want to make it clear I am not referring to the police officers on the streets. They are doing a great job under very dangerous conditions as the tragic events of October 23 illustrated. That was the day one officer was shot and the police killed two criminals on the east side of St. Paul. My only complaint is that there aren't more police out there.

In summary: If we want to stop the gun violence in Dayton's Bluff, we must acknowledge the magnitude of the problem, make sure it's not kept a secret, and appeal for help to those designated by society to handle such problems. If we are ignored or just fed a bunch of lame excuses we'll have to try harder. And then when the shootings have been stopped we'll tackle the rest of the crime in Dayton's Bluff.

Response to “What a shame”

by Jennifer Herman
Greenspace Committee

In the November *Forum*, the article “What a shame” (p. 8) extolled the virtues of Dr. Hoffman. But there is another side to this story. Dr. Hoffman did approach the Community Council Greenspace Committee in March of 2011 to share his Community Service Gardening project idea with Metropolitan State University students and to seek recommendations for public sites which might be available for planting fruit and nut trees. Sites were recommended, but Dr. Hoffman was cautioned that cutting through the red tape to get permission to plant in a public space can take time (years) which he might not have in the scope of his project (months).

Dr. Hoffman returned to the May 2011 Greenspace meeting to report that he was indeed encountering challenges in securing a planting site – some sites were unavailable, and some were contaminated. Additional sites were recommended, but Dr. Hoffman did not return to offer

any further updates to the Greenspace Committee.

At the July 2011 Greenspace meeting, it was noted that apple trees had been planted at the corner of Plum Street and Mounds Boulevard. The committee had many questions: Did Dr. Hoffman plant these trees? Who “owns” that site and how was approval for planting granted so quickly? Community engagement was a stated goal of Hoffman's project, but committee members living in the area of the new orchard had no knowledge about how the orchard came to be. Fruit trees need much tending to produce a healthy crop. Who would be responsible to water, prune, feed the trees, and address pest and disease issues? Who would oversee the harvesting process?

Greenspace Committee members soon received an invitation to the grand opening of Dr. Hoffman's new orchard. A committee member approached Dr. Hoffman at the orchard grand opening, seeking some answers to the committee's questions. Not only did Dr. Hoffman not answer the

questions, he became extremely defensive and verbally attacked the community member at this public event!

Dr. Hoffman billed his project as a collaborative effort between students and community members yet didn't maintain engagement with a key community group (the Greenspace Committee), didn't widely engage the community in the area of the project, and publicly rebuffed a community member who tried to engage with him – this is the real shame.

It should be noted that the Greenspace Committee did not make a request to anyone to have the trees removed, nor did Committee members remove any trees. There has been no communication with the Committee about the ongoing activity at the “orchard” site.

Collaborative efforts take time and must be carefully nurtured. Ongoing, respectful communication is a key to reaping benefits for all parties involved and for the community.

Questioning the planning and vision of the Gateway Commission

by Sherry Johnson
special to the Forum

The Gateway Commission is tasked with finding the main east-west transportation route and mode into and out of St. Paul. Some believe that “transit corridors” like this are only meant to serve suburbanites as they travel to and from their jobs. But in order to get political and capital support from Ramsey County and the federal government, any corridor must demonstrate that its route benefits folks who live within the city.

With expensive transport modes like light rail and bus rapid transit, urban cores often look to benefit from the increased foot traffic and property-value stabilization that transit-oriented development can provide.

After a long series of community meetings, the Gateway Commission has chosen two “locally preferred alternatives” as the routes to move forward into the Environmental Impact Study phase. Both connect Hudson to downtown St. Paul on routes that hug Interstate 94, mostly using the shoulder, MNDOT land, and Hudson Road.

Gone are any plans to take this route down East 7th Street. Gone, too, are likely business development and streetscape improvements that go along with dedicated routes like this. Most tragic is the lack of people-moving vision for the now-empty lots that 3M left behind - the Beacon Bluff development.

Haven't even heard of this project? Blame overly targeted community engagement efforts and a lack of citizen debate. Oversim-

plified and highly dramatized write-ups appeared in local news. The Gateway Commission held poorly-publicized, highly-technical meetings, which drew two kinds of folks: on one side of the city limits were excited suburbanites looking to cash in on transit-oriented development and enjoy lower commute times; and on the other, nervous homeowners along the formerly proposed

meetings, with elected officials shying away from transit-oriented development. Kathy Lanry seemed to focus her efforts on saving houses in Districts 2 and 5, rather than stimulating District 4's local economy. I didn't see County Commissioner Rafael Ortega. The lone visionary in the process has been County Commissioner Jim McDonough, who bravely asserted the importance of transit infrastructure for the future.

Overall, I'm concerned about the political ramifications of using Ramsey County, state, and federal money to fund a project that may fail to benefit East Siders. While the Met Council and City of St. Paul are considering plans to add 7th Street bus rapid transit or even streetcars, I'm concerned that the proximity of the Gateway line will have used up our East Side political capital and funding streams.

While it's likely too late to change the route, many more decisions need to be made about station stops, streetscape improvements, re-zoning around stations, and more. I certainly hope that we as a community can step up and make this transit line work for us, rather than insisting that it will never happen, or won't happen for decades. I've heard plans to begin construction as early as 2018.

Sherry Johnson is a 10-year resident of Dayton's Bluff who has worked with Dayton's Bluff Community Council and East Side Prosperity Campaign's Engage Eastside initiative, which advocates for East Side transit users.



This map is a small segment of the proposed rail line along Hudson Road in Dayton's Bluff. Visit http://thegatewaycorridor.com/html/alternative_analysis.php for a full map.

routes of White Bear Avenue and 7th Street.

After following this “locally preferred alternative” process, I believe the Hudson Road routes were chosen primarily for expediency and to win federal funding, rather than building comprehensive and lasting benefits for the East Side. Current federal criteria for awarding funds give higher scores for serving low-income and transit-dependent riders, as well as economic development potential. While any East 7th route would have met all three criteria, the Hudson Road route meets only the first two.

All told, there was a failure of leadership during Gateway “locally preferred alternative” citizen

Letters to the editor

Reader reactions to violent crimes in Dayton's Bluff

I received the November issue of the *Forum* in the mail yesterday. I read “Musings from a neighbor” (p. 1), and I couldn't agree more. I'm tired of it. I have lived in my house for 12 years and I've lived in Dayton's Bluff most of my life. There have been rough times with the crime here and there, but the last two years I've endured vandalism on my property, my vehicles broken into, harassment from tenants at a Section 8 property across the alley, and gunshots fired on a regular basis. The crimes that have made it into the news are just the tip of the iceberg, and they have been steadily escalating. I fear for my property when I'm at work. I'm afraid to go out for a walk at night when I get home, and I can't even spend quiet time in my yard without something going on. I had always planned on eventually buying a bigger house in the neighborhood, but I'm not feeling safe here anymore. I love living in Dayton's Bluff, and most of my neighbors are the kind of people I want for neighbors. It saddens me to say that I want to move out of here, but I'm tired of being walked on by a few people who think that laws don't apply to them. I'm going to spend this winter getting my house ready to go on the market, because it's getting to be too much stress to even live here anymore. I'm just too exhausted to deal with it.

*Jeremy Yff
Dayton's Bluff*

I am disgusted by the shootings. I am also scared for myself and loved ones. I live nearby where the shootings occurred, as does my brother's family with their young children. I fear a stray bullet could hit one of us for simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I suppose it is the same way people living in North Minneapolis feel. Senseless acts of violence seem to be increasing to the point where I do not even want to turn on my TV or read a newspaper article any more. I applaud you for writing about it. The violence has to stop!

*Dianne Black
Dayton's Bluff*

Where have all the buildings gone?

Seeing the empty spaces in Dayton's Bluff where buildings once stood gets very depressing. I can spot two newly-vacant lots just by looking out my windows at home. A short walk in any direction brings me to other missing buildings or boarded-up ones waiting their turn to meet the jaws of death.

I had come to the conclusion that the incompetent dolts populating all levels of government had abandoned our neighborhood. They didn't care what happened to us and had no plan to help us.

But then, on Election Day, I had an epiphany. As I approached my polling place I noticed yet another house being razed right across the street. Suddenly a light bulb (an environmentally friendly one, of course) came on and I saw the truth. I had been wrong all along. In the patriotic frenzy of Election Day, my endorphin-enhanced brain realized those dolts did have a plan to save Dayton's Bluff.

It was a plan that has stood the test of time. It has been used since biblical times and reached its peak during the Vietnam War. It's so simple: Dayton's Bluff must be destroyed in order to save it.

When the last building has been demolished, when trees and prairie grass once again cover the land, when the deer and antelope play and a maybe a few buffalo roam, it will be only then that developers will swoop in, remove all that natural stuff, and start building again.

I get all tingly just thinking about it. Who knows what will be torn down next? I now go around the neighborhood looking for signs of our salvation. Each dumpster full of rubble brings us one step closer to our rebirth. Dayton's Bluff will rise again!

*Joseph Gregory
Dayton's Bluff resident*

Annual dinner and election a success

By Karin DuPaul
Forum staff

The Dayton's Bluff Community Council held their Annual Dinner and Board Election with well over 100 people attending and everyone enjoyed it. Dayton's Bluff residents attended from all areas of the Bluff and a number of people from other areas and public officials were also in attendance. One attendee said, "this is the best event I go to each year."

City Council President Kathy Lantry gave her yearly State of Dayton's Bluff address, which featured a lot of positive progress in Dayton's Bluff in the past year, such as *Make it Happen on East 7th Street*, new businesses in the old Hamm's Brewery, and the East Side Health Clinic

building on the old 3M site.

The 2012 Roger Tetu Award was given to Dale Harbour, who for many years has kept up the garden on the Maria Avenue Triangle at Maria and McLean, picking up trash in the neighborhood and Mounds Park, plus a ton of other helpful activities.

The council board candidates introduced themselves to the audience; at 7:00 pm, the voting was completed and the result announced. The newly elected members are Elizabeth Matakis, Lorri Barnett, Darrell Mammenga, Daniel Stahley, Rafael Espinosa, Tong Thao, Jesse Ferden, Jacob Dorer, and Ashlee Olds. They will join the current board members: Sage Holben, Stefan Pomrenke, Angela DuPaul, Kelly Lundeen, Alan Swearingen, Colin Wilkin-

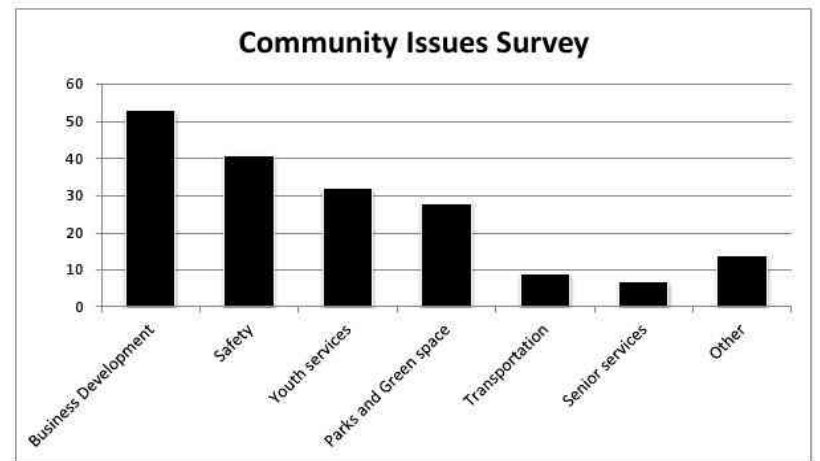
son, Alex Bajwa, and Deborah Martin.

One of the new board members is a small business owner, another is an alumnus of the Community Design Center of Minnesota's youth program, and a number of the new board members purchased and live in formerly-vacant homes in Dayton's Bluff.

A number of the new board members are members of Eastside Neighbors Helping Neighbors, a group that does neighborhood projects like raking yards for seniors and picking up trash in the neighborhoods. Check out Eastside Neighbors Helping Neighbors on Facebook.

For more information about the Dayton's Bluff Community Council email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or call 651-772-2075.

Dayton's Bluff Community Council listens



By Tabitha Benci DeRango, Program Coordinator

Those of you who attended the Annual Meeting, Dinner, and Voting Event this past month were given the opportunity to vote for your top 3 Community topics. The chart above shows the results of this poll.

Some of the comments mentioned concerns about absentee landlords, housing falling into disrepair, and requests for affordable housing and more home ownership in Dayton's Bluff. Others were unsure of the Gateway Corridor plans, wanted more parking in business districts, and more local jobs. There were requests for additional coffee shops and a general plea for working together toward peace in our neighborhoods.

We want to hear from you, the people of Dayton's Bluff! What are your hopes, dreams, and concerns for this community? Currently the council has staff, interns and volunteers out surveying local residents to give more people a chance to voice their opinions. Or, you can write a letter to editor@daytonsbluff.org, or call the Dayton's Bluff Community Council office and talk with us at 651-772-2075 or 651-332-9069.

Thank you so much to the over 100 people who attended the Annual Meeting and participated in electing Community Council members, and for the honest input on ways to strengthen our community.

Are you receiving the Forum?

This monthly publication is meant to be delivered to most households in Dayton's Bluff. If you are not receiving it, please speak with your mail carrier. If you ARE receiving the *Forum*, please thank your mail carrier from us!

Breaking ground for better health

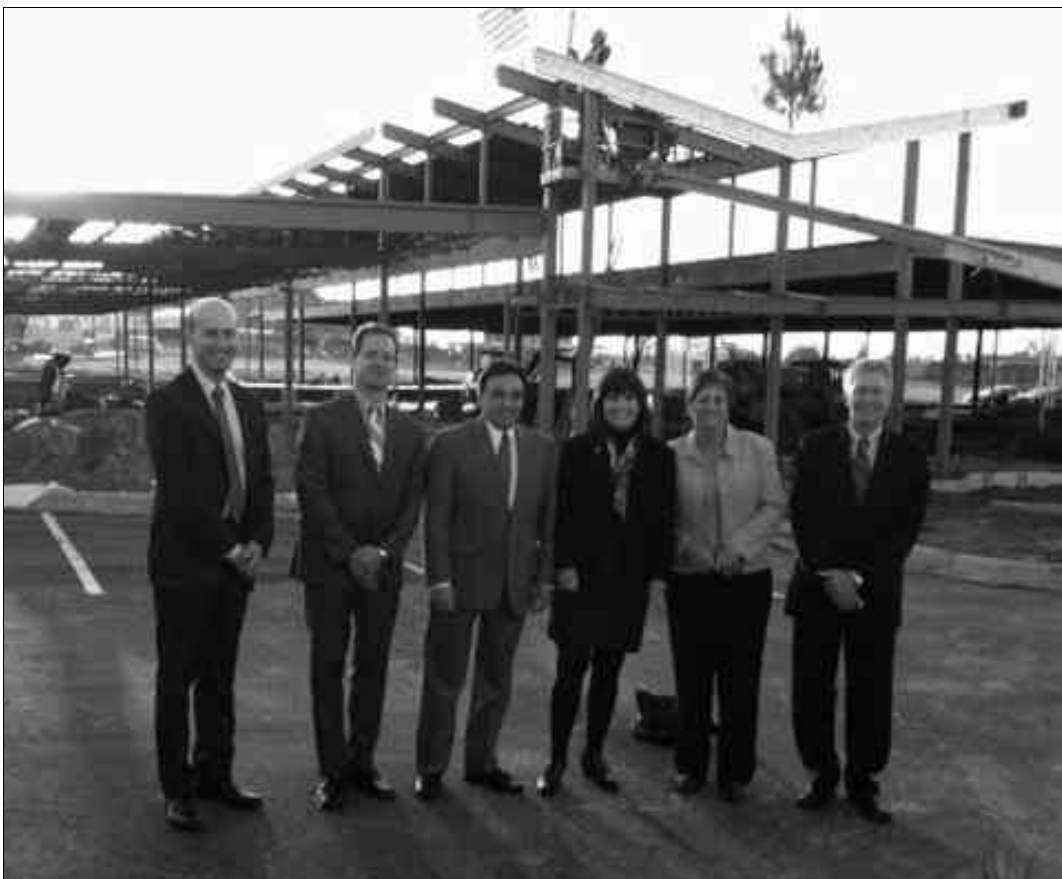


Photo courtesy of Marsha Milgrom

Community leaders join staff, funders and partners at a "Topping Off" ceremony on November 8 at 895 East 7th Street, the site of the new East Side Family Clinic. More than 100 people signed a painted beam, which was then raised and topped with a tree branch, symbolizing growth and luck.

Dayton's Bluff District Forum

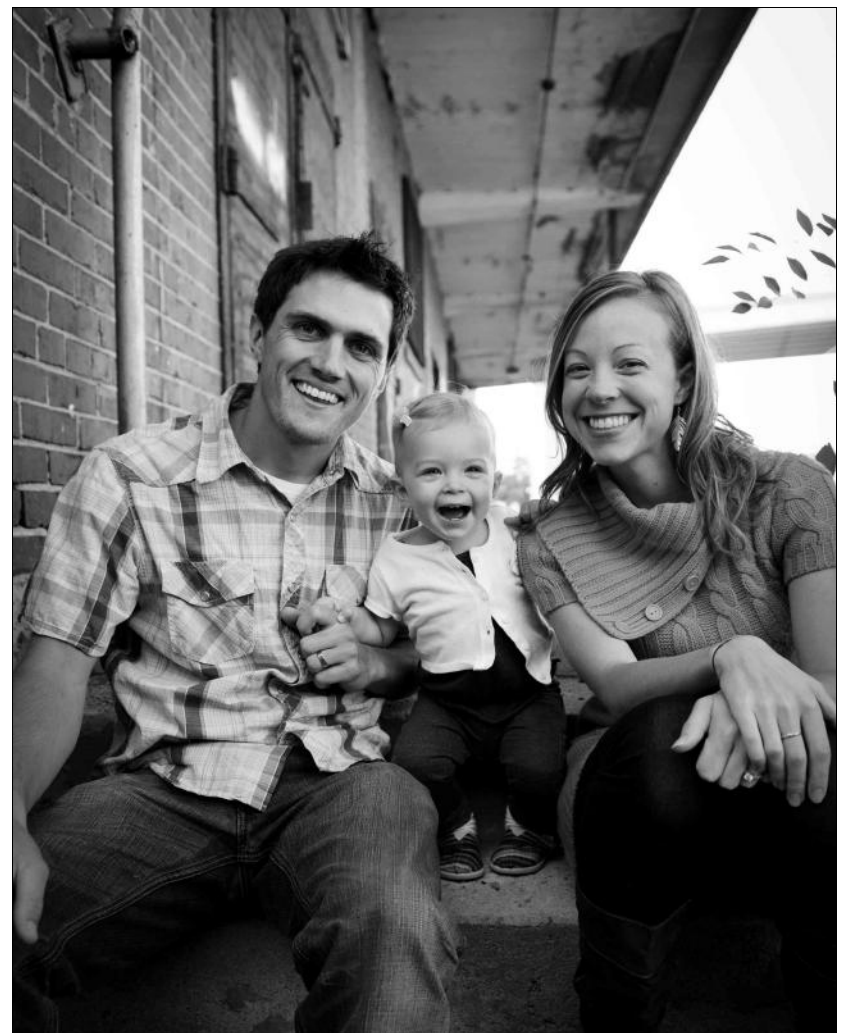
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Board of Directors: Greg Cosimini, Karin DuPaul, Carla Riehle, Steve Trimble
Editor and Layout: Meg Gronau Proofreading Intern: Mark Gallagher

Next issue: February 2013. Deadline for material: January 10, 2013.

Welcome, Olsen family!



The Olsens are some of our new neighbors. They bought a house in the Mounds Park area. In the photo is Ben, a maintenance man and Century College student, Adalie, who recently turned one year old, and Jeni, who is a part-time doula (someone who assists women before and after they give birth). Bonus points if you correctly identify the local landmark pictured here!