

Dayton's Bluff District Forum

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April 2024

"The Voice of the
Community"

Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services

Mark Gallagher

Dayton's Bluff has a nonprofit organization that was established in 1980 as a partnership between the residents of Dayton's Bluff, businesses, government, and financial institutions to improve the housing situation and quality of life in the Dayton's Bluff community.

According to a 2023 written description, the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services (DBNHS), has from its beginning through December 31, 2022, been very involved in the assisted purchase, rehabilitation, and new construction of 3,844 affordable homes (ownership and rental), predominantly in St. Paul's East Side communities, at a cost of \$377,162,713.

"When the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services started in 1980," said Jim Erchul, the Executive Director of the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services, "the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation would come to communities and help set up Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS), and that's what happened here."

"The basic mission of DBNHS," said Erchul, "is to improve the quality of life in Dayton's Bluff and the other East Side neighborhoods we serve. In addition to our ongoing housing work, and in the past few years, we have been working with several arts organizations to help them start new arts projects in the community. We have sponsored Indigenous Roots' mural painting projects and we have been working with TriLingua Cinema to have movie nights outdoors in the summer down at the East Side Sculpture Park at 705 East 7th Street. Now in the winter, TriLingua is doing movie screenings at the East Side Freedom Library."

In partnership with the Neighborhood Development Center, DBNHS also developed and operates the Dayton's Bluff Construction Training Center which is located at 809 East 7th Street. It houses a construction contractor incubator, the City Academy High School's YouthBuild

Program, and La Michoacana Purepecha. In Railroad Island, through another partnership with Urban Roots, DBNHS is helping them develop the Rivoli Bluff Urban Farm. It is overlooked by the new houses DBNHS built and are building in the new Village on Rivoli housing project.

Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services, located at 823 7th Street East in St. Paul, Minnesota, has been delivering housing programs in St. Paul for more than 43 years. Since 1981, they have managed a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), which has been funded from its beginning by the City of St. Paul's Community Development Block Grant Program. DBNHS makes available construction management services and low-interest loans to enhance and upgrade houses owned by low- and moderate-income households.

At the start of the RLF program, only the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood was served, but in 1998, DBNHS was asked to expand its RLF Program into the Payne/Phalen area. Then in 2002, DBNHS once again enlarged its reach to provide RLF and home improvement services to St. Paul's North East and South East neighborhoods.

Since 1996, DBNHS has helped over 1,642 families to become homeowners. Almost all those families had incomes less than 80% of the median income. To assist low-income homebuyers, Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services provides entry cost assistance loans, home purchase financing, home rehabilitation financing, home inspections, and construction management services.

"There are all kinds of things that we can't or won't do," Erchul said, "because there is such a limited amount of money. When you put this into the context of how much things cost, affordable housing funding has come way down over time. Our main activity every year, since we started, has been home-improvement lending. We do low-interest loans with the RFL and we originate loans for the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, but in terms of assistance provided by our staff, there is no charge for that. DBNHS does a lot of direct mailing to inform residents of our services."

See Housing, page 3



Jim Erchul

Jim Erchul, right, talks with Seanne Thomas, the owner of ABC Realty. Seanne and Jim are discussing their plans to feature two houses Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services is building, at 653 And 659 Otsego Street, on the Minneapolis/Saint Paul Home Tour. The tour will be held on April 27 and 28.

Legacy of a Great East Side Educator, Gene Piccolo

Joe Nathan

Long time East Side resident Eugene Piccolo did what all great teachers do. He inspired, encouraged, challenged, and prepared everyone he worked with for independence, for a time when he was not here. Piccolo died unexpectedly on Feb. 6, just two months after he retired from 18 years as executive director of the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS).

But he wasn't just concerned about charter public schools. As Mary Cathryn Ricker, former Minnesota Commissioner of Education, and former American Federation of Teachers executive vice president, told me, "Eugene was a tremendous champion for children."

Piccolo, 70, worked in a variety of settings, as a teacher, principal, and Minnesota Department of Education assistant commissioner.

East Side (Face to Face Academy, on Arcade) charter school director and former MACS board chair Darius Husain, wrote: "While a champion for charter schools, his advocacy did not come without expectation. Eugene challenged leaders to effectively govern and implement the best version of their schools."

Former MDE Commissioner Bob Wedl told me: "In 1996 I asked Eugene to join our leadership team as an assistant commissioner to bring grades 11 and 12 and post-secondary education together...His competent work provided the needed impetus to what is now commonplace."

Peter Wiczorek, director at Northwest Passage High School in Coon Rapids and former MACS board chair, wrote: "I always looked forward to sitting down for a cup of coffee with Eugene because I knew his passion for charter schools and choice would come pouring out and I would leave wiser, more knowledgeable and with a smile on my face."

Jeanne Allen, executive director at Center for Education Reform, based in Wash-

ington, D.C., recalled: "Eugene was a relentless and devoted champion for positive change in education, a guy who never thought about himself and always worked to build new alliances to get the work done, no matter what conventions he broke."

The first several words that come to mind when I think of Piccolo are modesty, relentlessness, effectiveness, and integrity.

Current MDE Commissioner Willie Jett agreed, describing Piccolo as "a champion of charter school standards and accountability." Jett added, "His passion for education has left a positive impact on all who knew him."

Linda Slocum, former Minnesota House member representing Richfield, worked with Eugene to help revise Minnesota charter school laws to increase transparency and accountability. She told me, "I adored Eugene because of his grasp of education law and his willingness to mentor me."

Many people recognized Piccolo's sense of humor and openness. Beth Topoluk, executive director of Friends of Education, wrote that she and Piccolo sometimes disagreed vigorously. Nevertheless, "he always respected others."

He had a big influence throughout the country.

Jed Wallace, former executive director at California Charter School Association and director at Charter Folk, wrote that Piccolo was "a trailblazer in charter school advocacy, both in terms of what he contributed to Minnesota over his decades of service, and in terms of the example that he created for advocates in other states."

Nina Rees, recently retired director of the National Alliance for Public Charters, called him "a dedicated advocate for innovation and equity in public education."

This month I talked with some of Piccolo's nieces and nephews, who praised him for his humor, love, and assistance to them. Nephew Antonino Lombardo, speaking for many, described hours of playing board games with Piccolo, "who offered suggestions for checkers and life, such as looking ahead three moves, not just the next move."

See Piccolo, page 4



Joe Nathan

Eugene Piccolo, center, with former Minnesota State Representative Linda Slocum, and Joe Nathan.

Faith City Gala to be Held May 10

Faith City Church

We invite you to join us for an evening of celebration as we look forward into the life of Faith City Church. Our annual Faith City Gala will be held on Friday, May 10 at 6:30 p.m. at the MN Humanities Center in Saint Paul, Minnesota and we would love for you to join us!

After five years in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood, we have rooted ourselves in the work of not only temporary and immediate nourishment for our neighbors but sustaining and working towards generational change!



As we move into 2024, we look forward to the official launch of our Social Kitchen Fellowship — a paid fellowship with direct employment and self employment opportunities! Our final hurdle is to invest in a food truck. We would love the opportunity to tell you more about what it looks like to create sustainable change through youth culture and design a pathway for young adults to build transferable skills and generational wealth.

Please join us, May 10, for music by local artist America Y Los Sentimientos, a silent auction and a delicious dinner! Come hear more about how you might partner with Faith City Church.

Get your tickets at eventbrite.com/e/faith-city-church-spring-gala-tickets-797990068777.

Metro State University On-Campus Graduate Programs Preview Day

Matty Spillum



Join Metro State on our Saint Paul Dayton's Bluff campus on April 13 for an in-person graduate program showcase where you will:

- Speak with faculty and advisors from programs that interest you.
- Take a tour of campus.
- Hear from current students about their journeys.
- Get the answers you need to find, fund, and select the right graduate program for you.

Metro State offers 4 doctoral programs, 20+ master's degree programs, and 10+ graduate certificates. Visit the graduate students page for our program list: at metrostate.edu/apply/get-started/graduate.

Friends of Swede Hollow

If you have a passion for history and preserving nature, please join us for our monthly meeting on the third Tuesday of every month.

Our meetings are held at the historic William Hamm's mansion, 668 Greenbrier St.

In the spirit of the area's past, we serve Hamm's beer along with other beverages and snacks. The meeting is **April 9** and starts at **6:30 p.m.** and is an excellent resource for park updates and events.

For more updates email taylor672@comcast.net or call Michel at 651-442-3366.

Dayton's Bluff District Forum Board Meeting

The *Forum* is seeking writers and help with online content, idea generation, and ad sales — join us at our next meeting on **Friday, April 5 at 11 a.m.**

If you'd like to attend, call 651-776-0550 or email daytonsbuffdistrictforum@gmail.com for more information.

We are currently meeting at the Dayton's Bluff Library.

Need Groceries?

If you are 60 or older, you may be eligible to receive a box of nutritious food every month from Second Harvest.

This box is part of a program called NAPS, and we can help you apply!

Give us a call at 651-683-2326, and someone will assist you with your application.

Help the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging provide one-on-one counseling to Medicare beneficiaries at community partner sites.

Make a difference in your community by becoming a State Health Insurance Assistance Program certified Medicare Counselor. Help people understand their Medicare options.

Visit Metroaging.org/volunteer.

Police Community Meetings

The Eastern District Saint Paul Police hosts their monthly meetings for community members at the Eastern District Police Office at 722 Payne Avenue, on the corner of Payne and Minnehaha Avenues.

The meetings are intended as a time to learn, listen, and address people's concerns about crime and other issues on the East Side. Policing meetings are held at **9 a.m. and 6 p.m.** on the third Tuesday of each month. Bring your neighbors!

Call or email Robyn at 651-266-5580 or robyn.brewin@ci.stpaul.mn.us to ensure the meetings have not been canceled.

Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program

Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program (FHPAP) funds can help single folks, too.

Here is a list of agencies that help with deposit and/or rent assistance through FHPAP:

Neighborhood House: 651-789-2500
MN Community Care: 651-266-1290
American Indian Family Center: 651-793-3803

CLUES: 612-746-3550,
YMCA: 763-493-3052

Face-to-Face: 651-224-9644

New National Suicide Prevention Hotline Number

988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Text or Dial. 988 was recently launched as an alternative to calling 911.

Mattress and Box Spring Recycling

Saint Paul has partnered with Second Chance Recycling and Ramsey/Wash-

ington Recycling & Energy to offer residential mattress and box spring collection and recycling at no additional cost.

For free curbside pick up, Saint Paul residents must first schedule a pick up time and date with Second Chance.

For more information and scheduling details, visit stpaul.gov/mattressrecycling.

Xcel Phone Numbers

Gas Leak: 800-895-2999. Power Outage: 800-895-1999 .

Call 811 before you dig: Before starting that roto-tiller or heaving that shovel into the ground for *anything*, call 811.

At no charge, Xcel will have a trained technician check the area on your property or on the boulevard to make sure there are no wires, pipes, other hidden surprises in the designated digging area. Usually, someone checks within a day, marking the 'no-dig' area with painted lines...and everyone is safe!

Dayton's Bluff Community Council Board of Directors Meeting

The Dayton's Bluff Community Council is inviting everyone to attend the Annual Meeting on **Monday, April 8 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.** at the East Side Enterprise Center at 804 Margaret Street.

Come meet your neighbors, share your ideas, hear from others, and elect board members. Your voice matters!

Welcome address from the Board President, remarks from other local officials, open discussion with your neighbors, and board members are on the schedule. Looking forward to seeing you and serving your neighborhood needs. All are welcome.

Free Legal Services for Low-Income People

Call Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services at 1-888-575-2954 or go to smrls.org to see if you qualify for free legal assistance with: family law, government

benefits, housing, education, seniors, and more. You can also call if you're behind on your bills, having problems with credit or creditors, or have other civil legal issues, etc. If an interpreter is needed, SMRLS will provide one.

Hours: **Monday through Friday, 9 to 11:45 a.m.; 1 to 3 p.m.**

Visit moundstheatre.org to purchase



tickets and get more information on upcoming events.

The Historic Mounds Theatre is located at 1029 Hudson Road, St. Paul, MN 55106; 651-772-2253; historicmoundstheatre@gmail.com

Chess Club

Come join us at Karibu Grocery and Deli, located at 719 Payne Ave. in St. Paul for a weekly game of chess. All levels are welcome. We play every **Wednesday from 6-9 p.m.**

Community Garden Plots Available

Skidmore Park Community Garden has 24 raised bed plots that are available to the public. Located near Earl Street and 4th Street E. Cost is \$20 per season. Grants are available. For more information or to request an application, email Steve at SkidmoreGarden@gmail.com.

Citywide Spring Cleanup Day

April 27th from 9-11:30 a.m. Friends of Swede Hollow Park will be sponsoring park cleanup and will have supplies and snacks for participants. See you at the top of Drewry Tunnel.



Greg Cosimini

There is a new barbershop in Dayton's Bluff that is for everybody. As a matter of fact, its name is Everybodys Barber. It is located at 367 Earl St., across the street from Leo's Chow Mein. Owner Lance (top photo), along with Reggie and Marie, can handle any sort of haircut for people of all ages. Appointments can be made by calling 651 313-2037 and walk-ins are welcome.

Art in the Hollow 15 Years of Art on the East Side!

Art in the Hollow

Swede Hollow Park is hard to find, but we'll help you out on June 1. Come find this hidden gem of St. Paul's park system, and we'll open the summer by filling the park with local art!

You can park your car at Saint Paul

Brewing and wander through the reimagined ruins of city history en route to the park, winding the path under the shadow of the old Hamm Brewery buildings. You'll find Art, Nature, Food, History, and Community!

Details: **Saturday, June 1, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.** Where: Swede Hollow Park
Parking: Saint Paul Brewing, 688 Minnehaha Ave E, St Paul.

Interested in being an artist or vendor? Information and registration can be found in the link: artinthehollow.org/artists.html.



NOTICE

Moving into the new year, the *Forum* would like all our readers to know that we do not endorse anyone in politics. Just because we are not paid for a politician's ad does not mean we support that person.

We have had two politicians within the last year decide not to pay their outstanding ad invoices. The money that is owed to the *Forum* could pay for a month's worth of printing. This is why ads and donations mean so much to us!

Moving forward, we will require all businesses and anyone wanting to take out an ad in the paper to pay for it in full before going to print.

Ads will also run as they are submitted—whether they have typos, the coloring is off, photos are stretched, etc.

Housing Continued from Page 1

“Jay, our construction specialist, will go out and help people figure out a specific way to do what they want to do to improve their home. At the same time, Jay will do a write up of what the project will require and help the owners get bids from contractors. In 2023, we originated 29 loans. When we first started it was less. We like to do about 40 loans a year, but costs have gone up so much, relative to our funding, that we can't do it anymore. We used to have special programs targeting different parts of the neighborhood that frequently offered grants, but the funds just aren't there to do this anymore. Now we have three primary programs: MHFA fix-up fund, East Side Revolving Loan, and MHFA Rehab Program.”

DBNHS has four full-time staff: An Executive Director and a Construction Specialist, each with more than 40 years of housing development, finance, and construction experience; a Housing Program Coordinator, with a Bachelor of Science degree in housing, who has worked in the housing field for over 17 years; and a Business Manager with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting, a Master of Business Administration degree, and 13 years of work experience. DBNHS also contracts with other professionals to strengthen the full-time staff's workload.

DBNHS gets funding from Neighbor Works America, which is the new name for the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, and they get funding from the City, which is usually federal money. DBNHS also gets money from the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. Those are the three primary places they get funding. Those sources just don't give them the money, they have to go through a process of writing grants.

Beginning in 1988, and with funding from the State of Minnesota's Urban Revitalization Action Program (URAP), DBNHS evolved from being only a housing rehabilitation financing and technical assistance provider to also becoming a housing developer, as they undertook the Lower Bluff Revitalization Program. Through its multi-year timetable, DBNHS produced and utilized a blueprint for an attractive design of East Third Street; rejuvenated commercial, mixed-use, and residential buildings; and procured underutilized properties to bring together land and buildings for redevelopment.

Upon finishing the URAP endeavor, 100% of the mixed-use, residential, and commercial properties comprising a three-block length of Third Street, were upgraded; 10 vacant and/or problem residential properties were acquired by DBNHS, thoroughly restored to move-in condition and sold to first-time homebuyers; and 11 new houses were built by DBNHS and also sold to first-time homebuyers.

Many of the houses rehabilitated by DBNHS were originally painted with interior and/or exterior lead paint. “There is only a handful of contractors that are on our list,” said Erchul, “which is the contractor register. The reason is that they must have a special license for the lead paint, approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It is not the same license every contractor has to have, which is from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It is a process to get both licenses. The contractor has to go to classes, and take a test, and then take refresher courses every year. Not many contractors go through the trouble of taking classes to get both licenses because it's costly, and they don't especially want to take off a day or a week of work.

“Lead paint has basically been banned since 1978,” said Erchul. “Lead helped paint be more durable. Jay has a special piece of equipment to test for lead. It is called an x-ray fluorescent spectrometer. You hold it against a surface and it will tell you if it has been painted with lead paint.

“To mitigate lead paint, the contractor can sheetrock over it, but there is a paint that encapsulates the lead paint. The encapsulation paint is a two-part system. There are different methods to mitigate the lead paint, but it was hard to get all of the paint off. That's when you use encapsulation paint.”

In 2023 DBNHS completed and sold seven new houses in their Village on Rivoli development. They currently have four more new houses under construction and a vacant house rehabilitation project under way in Railroad Island. The vacant house and two of the new houses have accessory dwelling units (small apartments attached to the main house or above the garage). They also made 29 home improvement loans and grants, to existing low-and moderate-income homeowners.

The Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service will continue its housing rehabilitation, lending, and home ownership promotion activities into the future of the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood as they have done since their inception.



On My Terms Offers More Options for Sexual Violence Survivors in Ramsey County

Ramsey County

There are now more options for reporting sexual violence in Ramsey County. Saint Paul–Ramsey County Public Health’s SOS Sexual Violence Services has partnered with the Saint Paul Police Department to give survivors more control on how, when, and to whom their assault is reported through the On My Terms program.

If the crime occurred in Ramsey County and you are over 18 years old, you can now make an initial report directly to an SOS sexual assault advocate who will deliver the report on your behalf. SOS and Saint Paul Police Department now offer three choices through On My Terms on how a sexual assault case can be processed: **Report:** Your sexual assault advocate will provide your case to the police. You can choose not to have a formal investigation. **Report and Review:** After you **Report**, you can speak with an investigator about your case and discuss what next steps may take place. **Report and Investigate:** After you **Report**, your case will be assigned to an investigator for for-

mal investigation.

“On My Terms is an alternative reporting program that enables survivors to get connected up front to help and support services, and fulfill their desire for justice,” said Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health Director Sara Hollie. “It also gives victims more control on how an assault is reported and to make decisions on what’s best for their own healing.”

“It’s important for the community to hold offenders accountable. But it’s equally important that the victim/survivor be supported so their future has the highest chances for recovery and well-being. On My Terms allows for that process to happen with this victim-centered approach,” said Saint Paul Chief Axel Henry. “It connects those in need with advocates immediately to provide them help and support in a manner that works best for them and their situation. Being a victim of a crime is hard enough. We owe it to them to make sure the process or reporting doesn’t make things any worse.”

If you are in immediate danger, please call 911. If you would like to report a sexual assault directly to the police, please contact your local police department.

To connect with an SOS sexual assault advocate from Public Health, call the SOS 24-hour Resource Line: 651-266-1000 or via email asksos@co.ramsey.mn.us

Funding for On My Terms is provided to SOS through a Violence Against Women Act grant administered by the U.S. Department of Justice. Learn more at ramseycounty.us/OnMyTerms.

New Digital Game and Fishing Licensing in 2026

Bahea Manasra

Senator Foug Hawj presented in his Committee on Environment, Climate and Legacy to discuss SF3905, which establishes a new electronic licensing system to support the Department of Natural Resources with accepting electronic game and fishing licenses starting in March 2026. Committee Chair Foug Hawj issued the following statement:

“I’m proud to serve as chief-author of this legislation so we can support the

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in their efforts to modernize our game and fishing licensure application system. We live in a time where technology and environmental preservation serve as economic engines for our state. There are a handful of other states that have implemented an electronic licensing system and I’m happy to see Minnesota soon joining the list. Our new system will create a convenient and efficient method of submitting licensure applications, further removing existing barriers for our hunters and fishers. I’m looking forward to furthering this legislation and continuing to support our hunting and fishing communities.”

The March 5 Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee hearing recording can be found at youtube.com/watch?v=VNd-wtF_1s.

You got somethin' to say? Say it here!

The *Dayton's Bluff District Forum* welcomes all opinions and neighborhood anecdotes – send yours to:

daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com

Want to write about something that interests you? We want to hear it! Submit your stories and articles to the email above.

Opinions expressed in contributed articles may not represent the views of the *Forum*.

Deadline for the May issue of the *Forum* is April 10, 2024.

Piccolo

Continued from page 1

For more reactions, please see this document created by MACS: mailchi.mp/7ec06c91e287/minnesota-charter-news-happy-2061346?e=492b19e361.

Piccolo prepared many people to lead. I agree with Wallace’s conclusion about

Piccolo: “His legacy is tens of thousands of Minnesota students having received better educations than they otherwise would have and a community of schools in Minnesota poised to have even greater impact in the years to come.”

Joe Nathan, Ph.D., is co-director of the Center for School Change. He formerly was a Minnesota public school teacher, administrator, and PTA president. Reactions welcome: joe@centerforschoolchange.org.

Saint Paul Public Library Offers Free Programs for Kids and Teens in April

Saint Paul Public Library (SPPL) invites kids and teens to spend spring break at the library April 5-13. Kids ages 7-11 can have a blast at all library locations with events including Pokémon parties, air-dry clay sculpturing, robotics, and bean art. Teens can level up their gaming skills at one of several Clash of the Controllers gaming tournaments happening at seven locations.

Three library locations on the East Side are hosting Clash of the Controllers gaming tournaments for teens ages 12-18 to show off their gaming skills. Teens can compete for glory, prizes, and bragging rights at Arlington Hills Library, 1200 Payne Avenue, on April 11 from 4-6 p.m.; at Dayton’s Bluff Library, 645 7th Street E., on April 12 from 3-5 p.m.; or at Sun Ray Library, 2105 Wilson Avenue,

on April 5 from 6-8 p.m.

Kids ages 7-11 can explore robotics, design mazes, and create challenges for their creations to complete at Dayton’s Bluff Library on April 6 from 2:30-4 p.m. and at Hayden Heights Library, 1456 White Bear Avenue, on April 11 from 4-5 p.m.

Arlington Hills Library is hosting a Pokémon party on April 10 from 2-3 p.m. where kids can display their creativity at Pokémon-themed crafting stations. On April 10 from 3-5 p.m., kids can make clay sculptures, paint them, and bring them home.

All events are free, and no registration is required. Find additional school break programs happening at libraries around Saint Paul at sppl.org/spring-break.

The fun isn’t over when spring break ends. Saint Paul Public Library and the Saint Paul Conservatory of Music are partnering to offer an intergenerational music program at Arlington Hills Library on April 20 from 1-3 p.m. Son de Cuerdas will present music from North and South America in English and Spanish. The event includes a musical instrument petting zoo and a meal celebration.



View From My Porch

Talking Bad

Sage Holben

"We don't talk bad about people here." Hmm, I thought, taken aback by the meeting chair's chiding. I wasn't maligning; I was merely stating a fact. "The mayor doesn't return my phone calls." I had been sharing in the community meeting about the continuing heaps and overflow of garbage strewn through one block of Fifth Street East, and the lack of our city's response. The chair's comment also triggered some thoughts elicited from author Jess Lourey's *The Quarry Girls*, a book I had recently read for our library book group. The historical fiction is based on a 1970s crime that had taken place in St. Cloud. It held my attention and raised thoughts and questions about the many personal connections in a small town. I've often thought about the neighborhood in which I live and how two square blocks or four-square blocks create a tiny town within a

larger town or city. I've compared this to my having lived in large cities and townships, farming, and urban areas. Unspoken facts, whispered secrets, people cloaking their indiscretions; a "shush" breathed to interrupt someone relating a well-known secret.

We all have secrets — some innocuous, some blood curdling. Many of us will self-reveal in our own choice of time or place, minor indiscretions, or embarrassing moments. What people know or think they know about others — their talk among chosen groups, secrets held and how even unspoken knowledge sometimes affects lives — become a matter of life and death of the soul if not the body.

Around 1991 while I lived in Door County, Wisconsin, two young men burned a wooden cross in a yard a block or two from my home. This happened about a week after an acquaintance of mine experienced a charred cross being thrown into her yard with notes of "Get out of town", "We don't want you here". I called the police to report the burning cross and I later checked back with an officer. "Who and what?" I asked. The officer indicated it was "two kids being stupid". One wore a white hood as he pranced around the burning cross, and the other stood and watched. How old were the "kids" I asked. Early 20s the officer

indicated, nothing serious. I was incensed. I wrote an editorial letter to our local paper; then the *Green Bay Press Gazette* asked me to write a similar letter to them. After which, our police chief called me and asked me not to write anything more about the incidents. Being a tourist area, he told me, we didn't want to discourage people with such incidents. Shhhh.

From racist actions to suicide attempts, pregnancies, drug overdoses to poor grades, marital or financial indiscretion, employment loss; who is placing old carpeting into neighbors' garbage in the middle of the night, or the child leaving his home after dark to sleep on a neighbor's porch, to escape the yelling; the dog-walking neighbor who doesn't pick up their dog poop. Ranging from bad luck, irresponsible, inconsiderate, tragic, crass, sad — some situations could be alleviated with a simple, tactful question i.e. How can I help? Can you explain what you mean? Do you want to say more about that? The answer may lead to much more than a poorly deserved "We don't talk bad..." or otherwise shutting down the speaker without understanding the situation or rectifying the problem.

We keep secrets out of embarrassment or to protect others. Neighbors keep mum, sometimes so mud doesn't come slinging back at them; sometimes in protecting an-

other's ego. So many reasons for the "greater good". In my grandmother's southern Illinois hometown of 200 people, the secret everyone may have known was that a particular woman was unspokenly known as a whore; that the man who hung out in the town square park was labeled the town pervert. Any of this may have been true or not; accompanying details were usually a bit sketchy or non-existent.

Some secrets may serve a unique purpose. Others allow or encourage emotional wounds to fester, to grow out of proportion. Closed mouths sometimes permit assaults, personal injuries, broken relationships, pettiness — I'm thinking of relationships with physical or sexual abuse, whether child or adult. By shutting down a person's comment we may be saying, "I don't want to help you". We may be expressing, "I don't want to know what you think" or "You can't depend on me to help."

Contrarily, filterless sharing or listening lacks wisdom, can spread untruths, or cause misunderstanding. In any of these cases, perhaps we need to be really listening to the speaker. Ask for qualifiers and look for direction — without becoming an interrogator. Allow the speaker to finish a thought whether or not we anticipate agreeing.

Gold Line BRT Construction Update

Compiled from Information Provided by Metro Transit metrotransit.org/gold-line-project

The Metro Gold Line will be a bus rapid transit (BRT) line that operates primarily within bus-only lanes. Gold Line will provide frequent, 10-15 minute, all-day service in both directions, seven days a week. The planned 10-mile route is between St. Paul and Woodbury with bus-only lanes being constructed generally north of and near Interstate 94. It will become operational in 2025.

Upcoming Closures

* Johnson Parkway closure - Starting April 8, Johnson Parkway will close between Wakefield Avenue and Hudson Road underneath Interstate 94 as crews construct a bus-only bridge over Johnson Parkway. Follow posted detour route via 3rd Street, Etna Street, and Burns Avenue. The closure will remain in effect into June 2024. Pedestrian access along Johnson Parkway under I-94 will be maintained.

* White Bear Avenue ramps and road closures - Starting March 18, the westbound I-94 on- and off-ramps close at White Bear Avenue. Starting on April 1 White Bear Avenue over I-94 closes. Crews will construct a bus underpass and

bus lanes at White Bear Avenue. The ramps and road will be closed until fall 2024.

* Old Hudson Road closure at Sun Ray Shopping Center - Starting April 8, a portion of Old Hudson Road will close between Ruth Street and McKnight Road as crews reconstruct the roadway and install underground utilities. The western driveway access on Old Hudson Road to Sun Ray Shopping Center will be closed. Access to Sun Ray Shopping Center will be modified throughout the construction season as activities continue in the area.

Ongoing Construction and Traffic Impacts

* Crews pour concrete for the Mounds Station platform.

* Bridge construction continues at Johnson Parkway as crews construct bridge abutments.

* Crews install noise walls along the future bus-only lanes between Johnson Parkway and Etna Street.

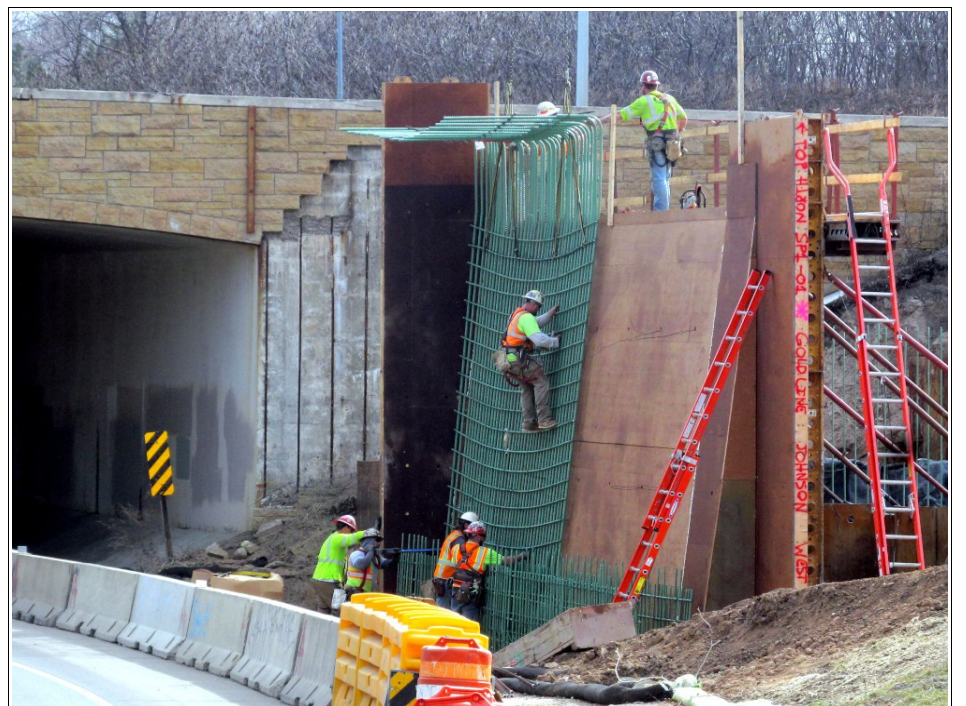
* Maple Street pedestrian bridge remains closed but will reopen in 2024.

* Hudson Road east of Frank Street to Griffith Street remains closed. Access to properties is maintained from the west to Frank Street.

* Concrete lanes on Hudson Road are future bus-only lanes for the Gold Line route. They are closed to regular vehicle traffic.

For updated information on the Gold Line project, questions, comments or concerns visit metrotransit.org/gold-line-project, email goldline@metrotransit.org or call 651-602-1919.

Photo to the right provided by Greg Cosimini



Dayton's Bluff District Forum

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We are currently printing and distributing our newspaper quarterly. The paper is always available online at daytonsbluffdistrictforum.org. This publication of Hopewell Communications, Inc., a nonprofit organization, is intended to provide a forum for the ideas and opinions of its readers and to be an instrument for developing community awareness and pride. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the *Forum*. Material from this paper may be republished if it is attributed to the *Dayton's Bluff District Forum* and to the author, if any. Articles and letters to the editor are welcome and may be emailed to daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com, or mailed to the address above. The *Dayton's Bluff District Forum* is delivered to businesses in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood when the budget permits. To find out where you can pick up a printed issue, send an email to the address above.

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Next issue: May 2024. **Deadline for material: April 10, 2024.**



Some St. Paul Historical Events in April

Steve Trimble

April 7, 1933: A crowd outside the Hamm's Brewery let out a cheer at 12:01 a.m. on this day early in the morning. They had been gathering since the previous evening, prepared to celebrate the end of Prohibition. The breweries had known for around two weeks that this moment was coming and had been ramping up production to be ready for the change. Hamm's set off long, drawn-out blasts from a whistle and long lines of trucks that were piled high with cases and kegs of beer rolled out onto the St. Paul streets.

Within an hour or so, many people were having their first legal sip of their favorite brew in many years. St. Paul never really dried up, using bootleggers and speakeasies and private stills flourished. When Prohibition, with its lucrative illegal sales of liquor ended, the gangs sometimes switched to kidnapping for money.

Like other breweries, Yoerg's, Schmidt's, and Hamm's had struggled to exist after 1929, when the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution banned the manufacturing, sale, and transportation of alcoholic beverages. They survived by making near-beer, industrial alcohol syrups and soft drinks. The company now increased its number of employees as the sales of Hamm's Beer increased and spent money improvements for the brewery.

April 14, 1970: Harry Blackmun was nominated as Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court on this day. His family had moved to St. Paul in 1910 and lived at 847 East Fourth Street in Dayton's Bluff. His father was a businessman who owned nearby groceries at 198 Bates and 376 Maria. Blackmun attended Van Buren Elementary School along with Warren Burger and both were in the same Boy Scout troop.

He graduated from Mechanic Arts High School and won a scholarship to attend Harvard University, and also graduated from the Harvard Law School. Starting in 1950 he was resident counsel for the Mayo Clinic and described the job as "his happiest time" as opposed to later judicial work where, in his words he "performed his duty."

Blackmun was appointed to the Eighth Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals in

1959 and stayed there until he was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1970. Blackmun slowly began siding with the liberal faction of the court. He is probably most remembered for his written opinion on *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 but was also very concerned with First Amendment rights of free press, Sixth Amendment rights of fair trial, and the need to end capital punishment.

April 17, 1968: A sit-in at the office of St. Paul Mayor Thomas Byrne ended on this day. It had been initiated a week earlier, protesting the police's having three AR15 automatic rifles, the civilian version of the M16 rifle. Around 65 people began sitting in the mayor's reception room at 10:15 a.m., including students and a few University of Minnesota faculty with their wives and children. Protesters were concerned these rifles would be used as riot control and to oppress minorities.

Mayor Byrne and the police department held that the rifles were to protect public safety and would only be used in extreme cases, with no plans for use against rioters. Protesters insisted the police should return the weapons, as the city of Minneapolis had done earlier, citing that the guns were inappropriate for police use.

A small group of demonstrators continued to peacefully occupy the room for several days with Mayor Byrne's permission, and he also brought them coffee and donuts. Then the city decided to turn the rifle issue over to the St. Paul Civil and Human Rights commission for review. The conclusions of this commission are unknown, but as of 2011, the police department regularly trains its officers in the use of AR15.

April 19, 1904: There was a meeting of St. Paul Aldermen on this day to review what had become a controversy over a street naming. While most street names are usually a minor thing, there have been some fights over renaming streets, schools, or buildings. And that was the case in 1904. This meeting was reported in the *St. Globe* under a headline reading "Larpenteur Bothers Aldermen."

There had been an earlier public hearing before the street committee of the Assembly where it was decided to change the name of Front Street to Larpenteur. The *Globe* explained that "some time ago Larpenteur sent a letter to the city council in which he said that many of the pioneer citizens of the city had been honored by having streets named after them, but that he had neglected to take advantage of the opportunity heretofore, and hoped that the city council would rectify his oversight."

Larpenteur and William Pitt Murray, a prominent politician and lawyer, appeared

at the second meeting and requested that the earlier decision be overturned. Alderman Hinkins of the Ninth Ward agreed and moved that Minnesota Street be changed to Larpenteur. The motion passed even though at that time it was a distant and not important roadway.

April 22, 1970: St. Paul celebrated the first Earth Day on this date. The event was founded by Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. Senator from Wisconsin, who said that the idea was inspired by the student anti-war movement. With a national coordinator and 85 staff members, he was able to create a movement where twenty million Americans eventually "took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment."

The first St. Paul events were limited and somewhat small the initial year. At Hamline University, a professor of botany gave a lecture on "man and his vanishing environment" and a series of faculty presentations at Norton Field House discussed "poverty, racism and pollution," "the economics of pollution" and "theology of nature." Later there was a mock legislative hearing to prepare a bill on the use of non-returnable bottles and cans.

Macalester College announced an environmental teach-in on pollution problems, a rally where petitions circulated on nuclear waste and use of DDT and a paper recycling project was initiated. Macalester geographer Hildegard Johnson spoke on "Americans and their lands" and the *Mac Weekly* editorialized on clean water and air goals. Mounds Park Junior High students preferred action to lectures and picked up litter in Indian Mounds Park.

April 28, 1948: Pablo Basques was a Latino artist and muralist who was born on this day on the West Side of St. Paul. He attended neighborhood schools, including high school, where he learned about art. He attended the University of Minnesota for three years studying art. He enlisted in the Army and spent a year overseas in Viet Nam.

Basques and Armando Estrella developed into two of the artists on the West Side who helped keep the Latinx culture alive. In the 1970s they were part of the national Canto movement, a national arts approach that coordinated festivals throughout the United States to celebrate Chicano/Latinx artists. The West Side event was called *Midwest Canto al Pueblo* that meant "cry of the village."

For the *Midwest* logo Basques painted a rose with a single drop of blood dropping from the thorn, saying "The rose symbolizes the perfection we all seek to attain as

artists, and the drop of blood symbolizes the struggle and suffering that is connected with that artistic struggle." The image of Aztec warrior Cuauhtémoc appeared repeatedly in the murals both nationally and on the West Side. In 1978 one of them by Basques appeared on the outside of the Concord Drug Store.

April 29, 1882: James J. Hill began construction of a railroad shop complex on a 25-acre site south of St. Paul's Oakland Cemetery on this day. The railroad's 1882 Annual Report stated that the shops were of a capacity "sufficient for the wants of the company for years to come" and were to be "furnished with tools of the most improved, modern description."

They were filled with mechanics, welders and machinists and workers who sewed, dyed cloth, crafted light fixtures and did a range of tasks to keep the Saint Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad running. Locomotives, freight cars, livestock cars, passenger cars and cabooses were built, repaired, and maintained here.

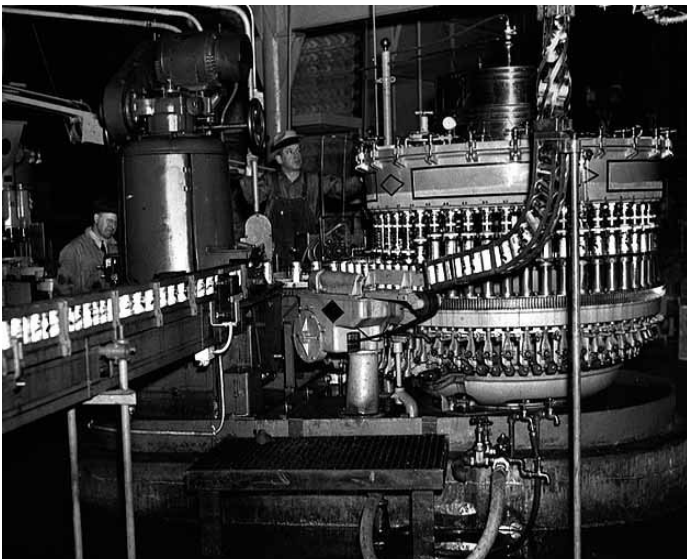
Thousands of area residents worked here over the years, for what eventually became the Great Northern Railway. Three of the Jackson Street Shops' buildings are now part of the Empire Builder Business Park and are part of a local historic district.

April 30, 1897: Lexington Park, home of the St. Paul Saints minor league baseball team, was opened on this day. It was on the southwest corner of today's Lexington Avenue and University Avenue, a mile west of the team's first park that was located on Dale Street. The new structure occupied a lot 600 feet square, large enough to provide for larger field dimensions.

The *Pioneer Press* said it was "a ball ground that is not excelled in the West... there is probably nowhere in the country a superior." The newspaper's praise continued the next day with a description of the first game, when the Saints posted a 10-3 win over Connie Mack's Milwaukee team.

The opening was not without controversy. The St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly boycotted the game because it was selling non-union made cigars, using non-union musicians and advertising non-union businesses on billboards. An agreement was finally reached.

It was the home of the ball team until owner Charles Comiskey moved them to Chicago after the 1899 season. After a year without professional baseball, St. Paul got a team in the Western League in 1901 and then as a charter member of the American Association. The Saints played there until 1957.



MN Historical Society

A canning machine in Hamm's Brewery, 1936.



Wikipedia

Mayor Thomas Byrne.



Wikipedia

Lexington Park, the former Saint Paul Saints stadium.

Fire Destroys House at 981 Wilson Ave.

Greg Cosimini

A fire destroyed a house at 981 Wilson Ave. on March 12. The St. Fire Dept. spent nearly three hours putting out the fire and protecting the two houses on either side of it. What remained of the house was torn down that evening. At the time of this fire the house was unoccupied and boarded up. There had previously been a fire at this house on October 22 and another fire had burned down the garage on November 16.



Happening at Area Rec Centers

Laser Tag

April 4 through 25

@Duluth and Case Rec Center

Tweens & Teens will have fun playing this popular Laser Tag Challenge Game with their friends. We will be play outdoors depending on the weather. If bad weather, we will move indoors.

Ages 11-17

6-7 p.m.

Martial Arts

April 6 through 27

@Battle Creek Rec Center

Students will learn about Martial Mobility, which stems from foundational martial arts movements/structure for discipline and exercises for all ages.

Fee: \$30 for residents; \$45 for non-residents

Ages 7-18

9:30-11:30 a.m.

Simple Cookie Decorating

April 9 and 11

@Duluth and Case Rec Center

Participants will have fun making cookies and decorating them.

Ages 8-15

2-3:30 p.m.

STEM Art

April 12

@Dayton's Bluff Rec Center

Become a natural scientist and create your own STEM ART, it's super Cool!!

Ages 8-14

4:30-6 p.m.

Build Your Own Memory Box

April 15

@Battle Creek Rec Center

Participants will each build a unique box to take home and collect precious memories.

Fee: \$5

6-7:30 p.m.

Yummy Snack and Healthy Treats

April 17 through May 5

@Duluth and Case Rec Center

Youth will be making or cooking a variety of snacks and tasty healthy treats. They will also learn how to plan and follow recipes.

Ages 8-15

5-6:30 p.m.

Practical Life Skills for Teens

April 20

@Battle Creek Rec Center

The activity will teach skills that teens will need as they prepare to leave the home and even while they are at home. The class will cover opening a bank account, balancing a checkbook, making a doctor's appointment, and creating a budget, etc.

Free

Ages 11-17

11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Parent and Child Dance

April 26

@Battle Creek Rec Center

Come have a special magical night with your child! Enjoy a Live DJ and Light Snacks. Each child must be accompanied with a parent or guardian.

Fee: \$5 for residents; \$7.50 for non-residents

Ages 5-13

5:30-7:30 p.m.

Wild Edible Plants

April 29 through May 6

@Battle Creek Rec Center

Join us for a hike through Battle Creek Regional Park, where we will learn about some edible plants. Afterwards we will taste a few foraged recipes.

Free

6-7:15 p.m.

Themed Family Trivia Night

April 30

@Battle Creek Rec Center

Come join us for a Fun Family Fun Night of Trivia!

Free

6:30-8 p.m.

Some History of Dayton's Bluff from Cookbooks

Steve Trimble

Here are two recipes found in Favorite Recipes from First Lutheran Church that was printed in 2004. The church on 463 Maria Street was the first Lutheran Church in Minnesota when it opened in 1854. In an introduction the church said the book had "been prepared in honor of the 150th anniversary of our church. Many of these recipes have been handed down from one generation to another."



Let us know if you use either or both of these recipes. And feel free to send the *Forum* newspaper some of your old family food-ways.

Swedish Meatballs

Kelli Moffat

- 1 1/2 pounds ground meat
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 Cup oatmeal
- 1/2 teaspoons all-spice
- 1/4 Cup finely chopped onion
- 1 egg beaten
- 3/4 teaspoons salt
- 2/3 Cup milk
- 1/4 teaspoons pepper
- 2 to 3 beef bouillon

- cubes
- 1/2 teaspoons ginger, optional
- 2 Cups boiling water
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 Cup flour
- 1/4 teaspoons onion salt
- 1 Cup cold water

Mix the meat, oatmeal, onion, salt, pepper, spices, egg and milk together. Shape into 24 meatballs. Oven bake or pan fry until browned in pan, add bouillon and boiling water. Shape together flour and cold water; add to thicken broth. Serve over rice, noodles, or potato.



My Grandmother's Swedish Pancakes

Marilyn Carlson

- 2 Cups milk
- 1 Cup flour
- 4 Tablespoons butter
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 4 eggs
- 1 teaspoons salt

Head cast-iron frypan. In a separate saucepan, heat the

milk and butter. Let cool slightly. Beat eggs and add with dry ingredients. Pour small amounts of butter into frypan. Roll it around to make it thin. Turn when bubbles appear. Serve with loganberries, syrup, jam, cinnamon, sugar etc.

Serves 4 to 5. I always double the recipe.



East Side Eating Trimble's Taste Trek

Forum contributor Steve Trimble has set out to eat at every locally-owned, sit-down restaurant on the East Side. He hopes to get the word out to Dayton's Bluff about the eating options here on our side of town.

There are more restaurants than there is room for in the monthly paper, but at least 60 may now be found online at daytonsbluffdistrictforum.org: click on "East Side Eating" at the top of the home page. Steve Trimble can be reached at daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com.

Magnolias

1081 Payne Avenue
St Paul, MN 55130
Phone: 651-774-3333
Temporarily Closed
Facebook:
facebook.com/magnoliasrestaurant1081

The iconic Magnolias restaurant on Payne Avenue was partially damaged by a fire in late February 2024.

Fire Department crews were called to the business around 7:30 p.m. for an alarm going off. They saw heavy smoke coming from the roof, but were eventually

able to extinguish the flames. Luckily, no one was inside the building and there were no injuries.

A spokesperson for the St. Paul Fire Department said a large kitchen fire appears to likely be accidental.

Since the fire, there's been an outpouring of support and the post on the Magnolias Facebook page received hundreds of reactions. "People outreaching, calling, stopping by," said general manager Jessica Gerlach. She added that, "Everybody is very sad and heartbroken. They want to see us come back. They don't want to see us go."

I published a review in the September 18, 2015 issue of the *Forum*. Below is an excerpt from the review. To see the entire review, you can read it in the *Dayton's Bluff District Forum* on-line.

In the 1930s, Magnolias was built as a White Castle with its hamburgers. The building was sold in 1959 and was added on to and remodeled. It became the Radar Chef in 1960. They were also a busy and popular stopping place. It had a number of different owners and name changes until January 1984 when the spot became Magnolia's since its location was on Payne and Magnolia.

"We put an ad in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* two weeks after we opened and we have been busy ever since," said Gerlach.

I headed there for breakfast with my next-door-neighbor. We arrived, a bit after 9 a.m. to experience one of the meals said

to be one of the best. Here's how I saw it in 2015:

It's a classic old-style East Side spot with an updated interior sporting several examples of Georgia O'Keefe-style framed art. There are two areas: The front has around eight booths, several tables, and one very long table. Another section was in the back with several tables. The interior décor also included several hanging baskets of plastic flowers in the full windows looking out on Payne Avenue. It was pretty full at 9:30 a.m.

There are a lot of breakfast choices that usually include eggs: "Western Breakfast" and The "Lumberjack Breakfast" with hash browns with cheddar cheese topped with two sides of meat

There are a lot of lunch and dinner entrees. There are T-bones, petite sirloins and a Magnolia burger. And sandwiches galore: Clubhouse, fish sandwich, hot turkey or beef sandwiches with "real mashed potatoes." Their pies are known on the East Side. Some are cream pie, fruit pie and cheesecake.

I had a breakfast with chicken and a blueberry muffin. After all, their slogan about it on the menu says: "If the Colonel had our recipe, he would have been a general."

An online fundraiser has been posted to support the fourteen employees now without work. The good news is that the restaurant plans to reopen in the next six months to a year. See you soon.



A Message from Magnolias Owners

Seeking a Temporary Building to Continue to Serve You

As we are waiting, with the understanding that rebuilding may take some time, we are searching for a space to make a new temporary home for Magnolias.

Does anyone in our community have any places in mind that may be rented or leased for a restaurant?

If so, please let us know through our Facebook page: facebook.com/magnoliasrestaurant1081

Friends of the *Forum*

Dear Reader,

The *Dayton's Bluff District Forum* has been a volunteer-run newspaper since the 1980s and has always operated on a minimal budget. Each issue costs around \$1,000 to produce per month. We have found a new printer and have adjusted the cost to print each month.

For the past three years we have been soliciting donations through our Friends of the *Forum* program. Thanks to the donations from readers like you, we have been able to keep the paper up and running. If you value this community source of information, please consider filling out the form below. Any amount is appreciated; you may also make memorial donations, or include the *Forum* in your legacy planning. **If you have been our Friend in the past, please consider making a donation in 2024. Our goal for 2024 is \$2,500; will you help us reach our goal?**

Yes, I will become a Friend of the *Forum*. My tax-deductible check is enclosed, for:

\$100 \$50 \$25 Another amount _____

Or give online: givemn.org/organization/Hopewell-Communications-Incorporated

Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City, State, ZIP _____

Make checks payable to: *Dayton's Bluff District Forum* and mail to 1368 Minnehaha Ave. E., St. Paul, MN 55106. For more information, contact 651-776-0550 or daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com.

Thank you for your support!

Many thanks to our Friends of the *Forum* 2024 donors:

Stephanie Harr

Sarah Ryan

Donations made in 2022 through Give MN that deserve recognition:

Jean Comstock

Jeanelle Foster

Andrew Barbeau