

Dayton's Bluff DISTRICT FORUM

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Signs in yards and on fences on Maria between East 3rd Street and Hudson Road were designed and painted by neighborhood youth at the Dayton's Bluff Recreation Center.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES ON LOWER BLUFF

Anyone who ventured down on Maria Avenue during the month of May could tell something was going on. A majority of the homes between East Third and the I-94 sound barrier sported a homemade sign in their yard—some had two. What was going on?

It was "Sign Campaign 2006", the brainchild of area resident Diane May, co-founder of the Lower Dayton's Bluff Block Club. She had noticed how when spring comes, the snow melts revealing a winter's worth of trash and the arrival cop cars. Perhaps something else more positive could bloom in the neighborhood.

A creative person, she said she "just made up the idea" of putting up signs along the street. The highly visual effort was a collaboration between the block club and an often untapped resource in our community—the kids.

Diane called up the Dayton's Bluff recreation Center and found that

there was a teen group that had been focusing on crime issues. It turned out to be a good match.

The kids were enlisted to make the signs themselves—with a little advice. Diane knew that getting them printed might have produced a more professional look; however she felt strongly that hand made ones would give the young artists a sense of ownership and the messages would get across better if they made them up.

When Diane May talked to the teen group at the Recreation Center, she stressed that everything boils down to a need for respect. Here are some of the points Diane made while talking to the teens during the planning stage of Sign Campaign 2006"

RESPECT YOURSELF: Don't do illegal drugs. You shouldn't put garbage into the body that you will need for the bigger and better things you are going to do for the world.

Many of the kids also created slogans against smoking and getting drunk.

RESPECT OTHERS: Don't use racial slurs or call another person other hurtful names. Everyone has good in them and it is up to each of us to take the time to see it. Do not lump someone in a category because of skin color. Remember that racism comes from all different types of people and toward all different types of people.

RESPECT PROPERTY: Don't damage other people's stuff. You wouldn't like it if someone destroyed your things. A lot of kids in our neighborhood do not realize when they remove things take rocks (a.k.a. landscape material) out of another person's yard or ride their bikes over a neighbor's grass that they are ruining property.

So how did the project go? "After

'Signs' continues on page 2



Up to their knees in green. Dayton's Bluff residents swap shrubbery and stories at this year's "Plant Swap." Photo by Christopher Newton



Who have we here? Take a bus trip back in time on page 4.

Bus Stop Robberies

By Jamie L. Smith

The St. Paul Police Department recently issued an alert to Dayton's Bluff residents about a recent string of robberies. Over a six-week period of time, there were six robberies reported in the area from East 7th Street to Hudson Road and Earl Street to Mendota Street.

Dubbed the "Bus Stop Robberies" because most of these incidents took

'Robberies' continues on page 8

MN Mercury Laws Will Lead Nation

By State Rep. Sheldon Johnson, District 67B

It's not every day that we have good news to report from the State Capitol on the environment, but recently the Legislature passed and the Governor signed the best mercury reduction law in the country in percent reduction and the number of facilities affected.

I am as proud as anyone to help lead our state in this major first step. It has taken tireless persistence to broker an agreement between utilities, environmental advocates, the Governor, and House and Senate

leadership, but we have succeeded in passing legislation unanimously in the House to reduce mercury emissions from the four major coal-burning power plants in Minnesota by 90% before 2014. This bill should reduce overall mercury emissions in Minnesota by one-third.

It is critical that Minnesota take the lead on mercury emissions reductions. Minnesotans love to fish – just watch the line of trailers and canoes heading North for the fishing opener and people fishing on the banks of Lake Phalen or the fishing piers on the

'Mercury' continues on page 7

Dayton's Bluff Community Meeting

The next Community Meeting is Thursday, June 1, 2006 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. in the meeting room at the Dayton's Bluff Community Council, 798 East 7th Street at the corner of 7th and Margaret.

Bob Kessler Director of Neighborhood Housing and Property Improvement (NHPI) and Licensing, Inspections, and Environment Protection (LIEP), will be back to tell us more about the properties that were seen during the Dayton's Bluff Walk, Talk&Take Action tour in May.

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

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

Home Tour Successful

The weather was great and hundreds of people visited Dayton's Bluff during the 2006 Home Tour. People from all over the Metro area and even a few people from out of state visited Dayton's Bluff, and marveled at the beautiful homes and great people in our neighborhood..

Homeowners mentioned that they were very happy about meeting neighbors who they did not know before the Home Tour.

The Minneapolis - St. Paul Home Tour is a project of the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) and the City of Saint Paul. We were very happy to be able to be part of the home tour again this year. Thanks to everyone who helped make the Home Tour a great success.

We are looking for homes to be on the tour next year. If you have any ideas call Karin at 651-772-2075.

Grand Slam Gala

By Raeann Ruth, Executive Director, The Portage for Youth

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

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

One lucky gala attendee will even be throwing out the first pitch! First pitch honors will be determined through a drawing among gala ticket buyers who sign up by June 15th. Drawing will be limited to the first 500 people. Odds of being selected to throw out the first pitch are 1-in-500.

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

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

Right now 500 tickets for lower reserved seats are available at \$45 apiece but they are going fast! For more information or to register yourself, your family, or your employees - call the Portage at (651) 772-8764, email grandslam@theportage.org, or visit the Portage's website at www.theportage.org.

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

Dayton's Bluff Garden Tour

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

Neighborhood Sale

The Dayton's Bluff Community Council will be holding a Neighborhood Sale on Saturday, June 10. The Neighborhood Sale is from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Hamm Park, located at East 7th Street and Greenbrier. This is an open event. Each participating family with something to sell is asked for a \$10 donation to help cover advertising and other expenses. For those who are selling items, set up in Hamm Park at East 7th and Greenbrier is at 8:00 a.m. on the 10th.

Or if you have items you want to get rid of and do not want to spend the day selling, donate them to the Dayton's Bluff Community Council and they will sell them as part of their fundraiser.

The Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Sale will feature many great items for the home and family. This is a great way to clear out clutter and find new treasures. Come meet your neighbors! Call the Dayton's Bluff Community Council at 651-772-2075 for more information.

Calling All Girls

By Raeann Ruth

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

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

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

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

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

'Signs' continued from page 1

a rocky start which included a lot of shouting they managed to get down to business and draw out plans for what they wanted to paint," said May. She found a lot of humor in one of the earliest shouting matches, which she said went something like this...

"SHUT-UP, SHE'S TRYING TO TALK."

"YOU SHUT-UP. I CAN'T HEAR HER BECAUSE YOU'RE YELLING."

"SHUT-UP BOTH OF YOU!"

Diane insists that none of the above exchange came from her. "I didn't lose my cool until the second day of work up at the Rec Center. About 12 kids were vying for my attention at the same time. Paint was everywhere. The staff from the Center had to step in and help maintain some order."

She also said it was difficult getting the kids to think on a more social level. However, they talked about respect and times that they had been disrespectful to others. "I heard a lot of stories from school and home, but I wanted them to think more socially. I asked them to come up with pithy slogans to get their messages of respect across."

One of them came up with "Do Good Work In School" and she suggested he change it to the more inclusive "Do Good Work." That way

Hamm Woodland Garden Work Day

A work day is planned at the Hamm Woodland Gardens. It is located near the parking lot in Swede Hollow Park at Greenbrier and Margaret. Friends of Swede Hollow are looking for volunteers to help with weeding, planting and clean up in the garden on Saturday, June 3rd starting at noon.

The woodland garden started about ten years ago when Friends of Swede Hollow began removing tons of Buckthorn from the site. The garden was mapped out and over two thousand dollars worth of native plants have been planted in the gardens.

The garden is on the site of the Hamm family home at 671 Greenbrier, which was destroyed by fire in 1954. The Hamm family operated the Hamm's Brewery from 1865 to 1956 in the red brick buildings at the bottom of the bluff.

If you are interested in helping please call Karin at 651-776-0550.

Teacher Retires After 40 Years

Patti Jilk, who has taught kindergarten for 39 years, and has taught for Saint Paul Public Schools for 40 years, is retiring this June. I'm sure many of your readers may have had Mrs. Jilk as a kindergarten teacher. We are looking for stories about her from students and families who had her for a teacher. Contact Karin at 651-772-2075 with your stories.



City Council President Kathy Lantry and the Park Volunteer of the Year, Cliff Carey at Saint Paul Parks Clean Up Volunteer celebration at the Mounds Park.

it include people who don't go to school and their messages would reach a broader audience.

A lot of spectators have commented on the attitude that came with the messages: "Racism- Don't Think So" and "Pick yo' trash upppppppp." There are also the brutally honest slogans like "No Knives, No Guns" and "Drugs= Death."

These kids seemed to know exactly what they wanted to say to the neighborhood. They came up with "Slow Down" with a picture of a speeding car and "Keep your noise down".

Recreation Center director Jody Griffin, who helped out with the project, agreed that the youth in Dayton's Bluff know what's going on in their neighborhood. "These kids have seen so much," and "have been put into less than ideal situations in their young lives."

When given an opportunity to express their wants, needs, concerns and comments Jody feels the kids "are eager to have people listen and know they have a voice to make a difference. She wants them "to take pride and ownership in the Recreation Center."

"I would definitely volunteer again," said Diane May, "but I would definitely do things differently like paint outside and have another adult

with me. Yep, messages of respect are something that cannot be emphasized too much."

Diane also wanted to say "thank-you" to the people that made this possible: the workers at the Ramsey County Household Hazardous Waste Site for all the paint; Tom Kaysen who generously donated time and materials to make the sandwich board signs in front of the Eagle's Club and the Children's Safety Center; Steve Trimble for providing most of the sign boards; Sheldon Johnson and Kathy Lantry for loaning their rebar to put up the signs; Karen and Les Suzukamo for loaning painting brushes and, of course, Mike May for transporting materials and copying the "Code of Conduct" forms.

A final note from Diane: "And THE BIGGEST thank you of all goes to the Recreation Center staff for all the cleaning up they had to do. Thanks and sorry the arts and crafts room was such a mess. Things will be done differently next time."

Diane also proved that doing something like "Signs Campaign 2006" doesn't need to have a large financial backing to be undertaken. Her total out-of-pocket cost for the campaign was twenty five dollars. Can you think of a better use for twenty five dollars?



June at the Mounds Theatre

Starting Gate Productions finishes up its first season at the Mounds Theatre in June with the final performances of their production of *The Boys in the Band* written by Mark Crowley and directed by K. Jason Bryan.

Arguably the most significant gay play written, this groundbreaking, searing comedy-drama brought "homos" out of the closet and placed them center stage in the 1960s.

This play features the talents of Nickalaus Early, Andrew Fafoutakis, William Grier, Michael Jurenek, Mark L. Mattison, Derek Miller, Scot Moore, Matthew Vire, and Clarence

Wethern, with set design by Michael Hoover, light design by Mark Webb, props by Greg Johnson, sound design by David Schliep, costumes by Kat Pepmiller, choreography by Rik Kutcher, and fight choreography by Zach Curtis.

The Boys in the Band runs from May 19 - June 10, 2006 with evening performances Thursdays - Saturdays at 7:30 p.m, and Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m.

Tickets are \$18 general, \$16 students and seniors. Call 651-645-3503 for tickets or visit www.startinggate.org.

Pow Wow

American Indian Magnet School
Pow Wow
Friday, June 2, 2006
1 pm to 9 pm
East 3rd and Earl
Everyone is welcome

Volunteer Editor Needed!

Pagemaker experience a +.
Call Karin @ 651-772-2075.

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

-Officer Jamie Sipes, St. Paul Police



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



Neighborhood residents at the May Dayton's Bluff Community Meeting following the "Walk, Talk, Take Action" hike in the Lower Bluff.

A Short History of Dayton's Bluff by Steve Trimble

Chapter 16: The 1970's and 80's

Powerful and influential people did not stop the building of the highway. It was the little people and because they were waging a righteous struggle to save their home from the bulldozers. It was the first successful opposition by a neighborhood to stop construction of a highway under the new highway act.

—Ed Krahmer

As urban historians point out—and as most people already know—neighborhoods are continually in flux. While some of the characteristics of residents may remain the same, individuals leave and new people take their place. Blue collar workers or a particular ethnic group may be the primary group in an area over several decades, but different individuals will cycle through the neighborhood.

Many national developments, such as economics, building cycles and transportation impact local communities. What shapes the history of a particular neighborhood is its response to these external forces. What follows is the way in which Dayton's Bluff dealt with the situations that faced many St. Paul communities in the 1970's and 80's.

Like many other urban neighborhoods in the 1970's and 80's, Dayton's Bluff was going through what some planners have called "deindustrialization." The loss of manufacturing jobs began to hit St. Paul and the East Side in the 1970s and picked up force in 1985 when the neighborhood's Whirlpool plant shut down. This was followed quickly by the closing of Stroh's Brewery and by cutbacks at 3M. There was a 46-percent decline in the value of industrial property in the area from 1979 to 1985 and increased vacancy rates for commercial properties

According to the 1986 *Dayton's Bluff District Plan*, the community was aging. With children leaving for the suburbs, the population was estimated to have declined 20% between 1970 and 1985. Through the two decades the number of minority residents was less than ten per cent.

At the same time, the income levels were dropping and the housing stock was aging and often deteriorating. The number of families living in poverty was rising and student turnover, especially in the elementary schools, was very high. The number of two, three and four unit buildings had increased 28% and the crime rate was 20% higher than the rest of the city.

The automobile as a growing means of transportation was the external force behind one major challenge the neighborhood faced in the early 1970's. The state revealed a plan to extend put a Highway 212 and put a major section through Dayton's Bluff. It would have run from Hope to Johnson Parkway, south of East Seventh Street. The proposed sweep through the neighborhood would have destroyed several hundred homes.

According to several people, the fledgling community council was not willing to take a position on the issue. As activist Ed Krahmer put it later: "the community council waffled on the big issue, with the result that certain citizens... brought into being the East

Side Citizens Civic Council." It included members from several different neighborhoods.

The statement of purpose of the East Side Citizen's Civic Council was broader than the single issue it faced: "The purpose of this organization shall be to study and act on matters of government at all levels, to secure and disseminate information on existing and pending legislation and issues; to evaluate and

transferred to the Dayton's Bluff Council. During this time, the Council acted primarily as a protest organization that reacted to proposals thought to be threatening.

In 1974, for instance, a California developer wanted to build an upscale restaurant that would have required removal of several neighborhood homes. People were called to a special meeting of the council and around two hundred

Around two hundred people attended the gathering. Some by laws were approved, but a second meeting was needed. And on June 4, 1976, the constitution was approved. Both meetings had arguments some of the leaders were seen as too manipulative.

The city accepted the plan and the Dayton's Bluff District Four Community Council was born. The new bylaws of the remodeled organization allowed the group to engage areas earlier and to become more proactive. Using a combination of federal and city funds, and a permanent office was established and Ron Wagner was hired as the first community organizer.

While planning and other efforts would come, but the older protest mode was still important. For instance, in 1975, Project Newgate announced a plan for a halfway house for former offenders at the old Giesen Mansion at 827 Mound Street. There were some supporters, but most of the neighborhood felt there were already too many group homes in the area. One group filed a lawsuit on their own and were upset that the council wouldn't pay for the legal costs. The proposal was eventually withdrawn.

To deal with the increasing problems and needs in the community, there was soon a proposal for a Dayton's Bluff multi service center similar to those in other areas. A task force was established and the argument over the project continued for several months

One person was angry that the pastors were not consulted. He said: "The social problems of a society are best handled like they were meant to be through a concerned individual, a congregation or synagogue... A troubled person or family is best helped by trust in God—not by facing government-disciplined social programs."

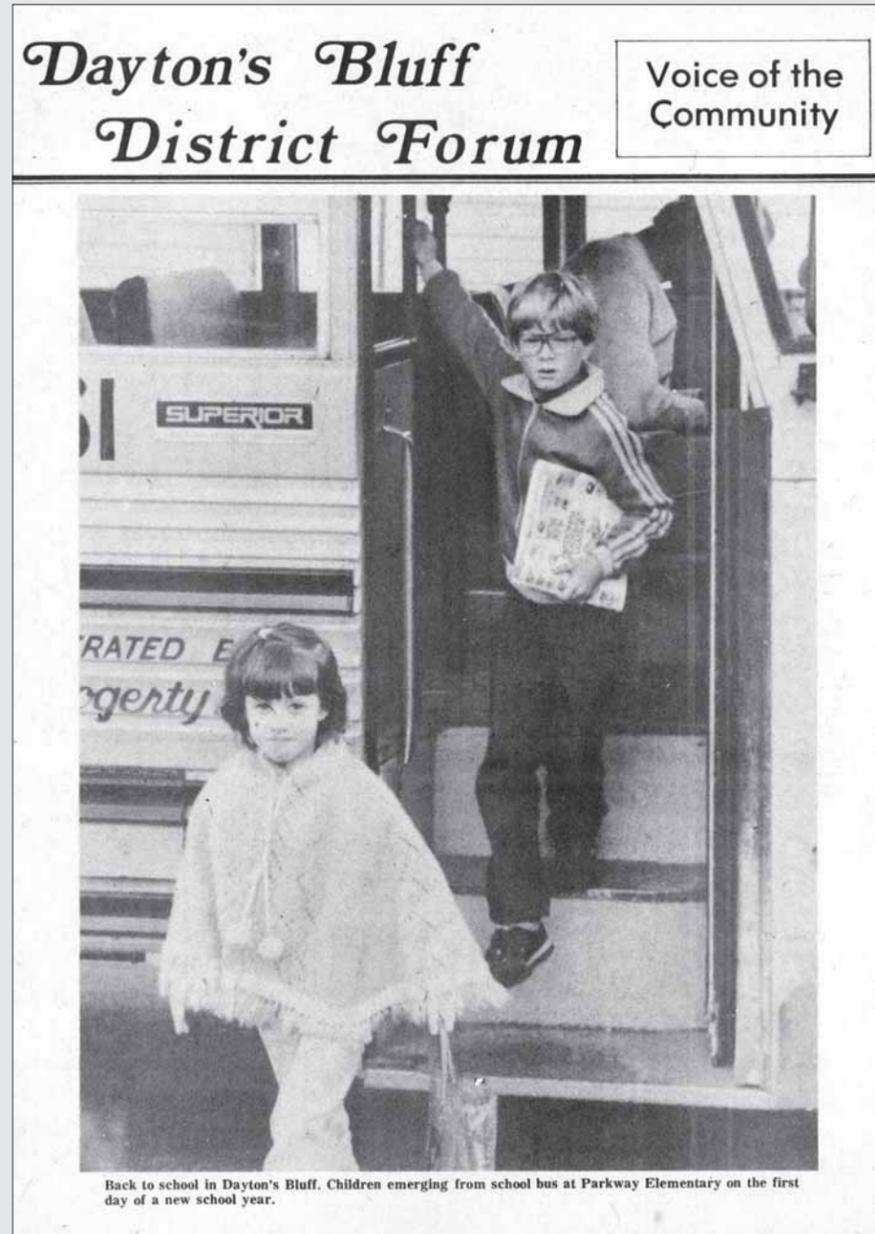
Other people felt that a center could bring needed coordination of current programs and allow additional providers to have a convenient meeting place. It was eventually decided not to go after the money that would have allowed the designing for a center.

In a 1978 interview, Ed Krahmer said that although the new community council system had some problems, he was generally pleased with the approach. "City personnel listen to people, and have given citizen participation a big push," he said, "and in return we hope they have received some degree of satisfaction to the extent that the citizens do recognize and appreciate their assistance and expertise."

During the two decades some non-profit organizations decided to work in Dayton's Bluff. One of them was the Community Design Center of Minnesota (CDC). Starting as a group for planning assistance and physical improvements, it changed focus when it came to Dayton's Bluff.

In the late 1980's, CDC started operating youth programs on the East Side of St. Paul. They are aimed at engaging them in the civic life of their community as well as providing them with experiences that enrich their lives and develop skills. The group is now headquartered on East Seventh Street.

Another organization that came into the area was the Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service (NHS). Patterned after other similar groups, its goal was to help people of moderate means get advice on rehabbing property and helping provide low-interest loans for residential and commercial properties. It



Cover of the first issue of the Dayton's Bluff District Forum, published in October of 1982.

inform citizens about such matters as may affect their interests; to promote, encourage and develop leadership necessary for the betterment of this state and nation, to restore the concept of government by consent of the governed, and to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States."

The Association quickly protested the plan that, they pointed out, would "make an island of our business community. They were not against progress, they stated, for they had always "been consistent in our efforts to maintain our part of town and to support total city improvements," but they intended to block this particular plan.

State officials and city hall were surprised when, after months of debate, leafleting, petitions and meetings, the local folks were able to stop the project. "We had no high-powered legal experts—only our residents ourselves with their determination to save their homes as a righteous cause," Krahmer recalled along with "the support of City Commissioner Rosalie Butler who rendered invaluable assistance at crucial moments of our crusade."

After the Highway 212 issue was settled the East Side Citizens Civic Council was disbanded and remaining funds

showed up. They agreed that the proposal serve the area needs and the idea was soon abandoned.

In another case the city council had given preliminary approval to let a business called "The Poodle Dog Bar" to relocate to a building near East Sixth and Mendota. Citing its "unsavory character," the community organization 350 signatures and the city council reversed its decision. This particular protest may have set the precedent for today's requirement that all residents within 300 feet be notified of possible zoning changes.

In 1975, St. Paul recognized the need for officially recognized community councils and approved seventeen that covered the city. A planning committee was established in Dayton's Bluff and on May 18, 1976 a "community convention:" was held to set up what was described a "broad based organization." The neighborhood newspaper described the importance of the event:

"At stake is the decision-making authority at the community level on such items as the expenditure of \$18 million in community development funds, the setting of goals and objectives for each community... and a general advisory power to the city council on all matters that affect neighborhoods."

has also acted as a development agency. It was incorporated in 1980 and is currently located at the corner of East Seventh and Arcade.

A resident-generated non-profit was the Upper Swede Hollow Neighborhood Association (USHNA), which began as a block club in 1981. It was an



Scene from the July 1979 "Festival on the Bluff" in Mounds Park.

organization of neighborhood residents actively improving the quality of life of the neighborhoods near Swede Hollow.

Its members feel that despite the challenges of a stressed inner city neighborhood, the Lower Bluff community has resources and attributes that can be drawn on to encourage revitalization activities and long term stabilization. USHNA has steadily increased its scope of neighborhood improvement activities including community gardening, neighborhood and park clean-ups, crime watch, home improvement projects, and community education and outreach.

The schools of the area saw some changes. Dayton's Bluff Elementary School opened in 1974 at Conway and Bates. Its modernistic building replaced two pioneer schools, Mounds Park, and Van Buren. Sibley Elementary's aging structure was closed and merged with an expanded Deane school site to become Parkway Elementary.

One important neighborhood achievement of the era was the creation of the *Dayton's Bluff District Forum*, which printed its first issue in October 1982. Neighborhood people had been talking about the need for a new community newspaper for some time, feeling that the existing one was not meeting the needs of the community council or the area residents. "Voice of the Community" was the mission. The "Voice of the Community" as it called itself, was a venue for the residents people to voice their concerns.

Mounds Park resident Kay Woitas agreed to be the unpaid and overworked editor. Then as now, everything for the monthly was done by volunteers-reporting, writing, typing, doing lay out, taking photos and ad sales. The board members and other community residents delivered the paper door to door for the first few years.

There was an upsurge of community cultural activities. One accomplishment was the launching of an annual celebration named "The Festival on the Bluff," started in July of 1979. Once again, Kay Woitas was also a key player, along with Linda Hirte and many other hard

working residents. It lasted for several years and was one of the first neighborhood festivals in St. Paul.

COMPAS, a city-wide arts organization, helped fund cultural workers in the neighborhood who did murals, wrote and performed plays and produced, among other things, a series of

linoleum art prints of local points of interest. For four years there was also a highly regarded Dayton's Bluff History Calendar that hung on many a kitchen wall.

The community does not have a lot of open space, to the creation of a new park in 1973 was a major accomplishment. The old Hamm mansion site at Margaret and Greenbrier site was saved from would-be developers and through the



Linoleum block print of Muench House by artist Gary Eggar.

efforts of Karin DuPaul and others. Helped by the Community Design Center and the St. Paul Garden Club, it became a designated city "passive park."

Toward the end of the 1980's a major problem was turned into an exciting opportunity. After many years of speculation, St. John's Hospital finally said they were moving to the suburbs. Beside the loss of jobs, there was a fear that finding a good reuse of the site might be impossible.

Newly elected State Representative Steve Trimble came up with an idea that would eventually reap great benefits for the neighborhood—the reuse of the hospital site for a higher education facility. The credit for this initial idea has been confirmed more than once by former

Mayor Randy Kelly, whose efforts were vital in making the dream a reality.

As reported in the *Dayton's Bluff District Forum* for October, 1987, Trimble said: "As a part-time faculty member at Metro State and serving on the higher education committee in the Legislature, I knew that the school was looking for a new facility. At a meeting in Mayor Latimer's office, with Randy Kelly and officials of Health East, I suggested that we consider using the St. John's site for Metro State. The idea caught on and the Mayor agreed to begin work on the project."

The site committee had already done most of its work and rumor had it that a Midway site was the leading contender. The school needed to be convinced to add the St. John's site to the mix. The effort of many other people -including Senator Marilyn Lantry, activist Karl Neid, Council member Tom Dimond, members of the Port Authority, to name a few- were needed to convince the University to come to the East Side.

Thanks to a series of community efforts, including meetings, letter writing and other activities, the Dayton's Bluff site was added to the list. After more shows of enthusiasm from residents and eventually chosen as the new location and is now an important asset for the community and the entire Twin Cities.

Like many other neighborhoods, Dayton's Bluff went through many changes in the 1970's and 1980's. Some of them good, some not so good. But the residents were building the capacity not only to respond to problems, but to plan ahead, establish priorities and develop proposals.

In a 1978 report on Dayton's Bluff, The Association of St. Paul Communities made the general statement that "apathy and ignorance are often a problem when citizen participation is required. It is difficult to develop strong community development when so much time and energy are necessary."

Sometimes there were disputes over the direction in which the community was heading. The specific characteristic response of this community to the pressure of external forces may be best described by George Hrynewych, president of the local representative neighborhood group in the late 1970's. As he put it: "With the Dayton's Bluff Community Council, there is no action without friction."



BATTER UP!

Dozens of uniformed kids were arranged on the fields off Third Street, just east of Earl. The stands were filled with proud parents and family members. It was a beautiful Saturday in May. The ceremony celebrated the fifty-second opening day for Parkway Little League.

Before the games began, there were a few announcements by Ken Sabota; this year's president. He reminded parents that the program is "for the kids." The goal is "not just winning, but learning the fundamentals of the game and improving skills of everyone."

One of the big announcements was that the land to the East of Field #3 had finally been purchased thanks to the fundraising efforts of many people. It will provide more room for parking, one of the biggest needs for Parkway. The concession area and the infields have also been greatly improved since last year.

Mention was made of the early efforts of Harold Dahlquist in getting the organization started. While no documentation is available, it is estimated that over 8,000 boys and girls have played in the system. Last year alone there were 195 players and this year 215 signed up so far. In 2006 there will be four T-ball groups, seven minor league and six Little League teams. For the first time ever there was a 13-year-old group made up of former little league members.

All of the team members and their coaches were named over a loudspeaker at the ceremony. There were two special awards presented to adult volunteers.

One of them, Carrie Dimmick, is the group's current vice president and has been a longtime volunteer at the concession stand. Connie Hecht, the other honoree, had anchored the concession stand for many years. She had also played ball on one of the teams "a long time ago."

As always, prominent folks were invited to address the gathering. City Council member Kathy Lantry said she was "happy to be here today," and was "so honored to be invited to speak at this event." She described Parkway as "an important asset for the East Side." Incidentally, Kathy also lost one of her favorite earrings somewhere on the grounds. So if you found something round and gold...

The special guest this year was Nick Punto, a Minnesota Twins infielder who made his major league debut in 2001. He told the players how he had started out in California, with little league baseball just like them, with the "same hopes and dreams that many of them had that day."

He advised the kids to "play hard as you can" but also "make sure you are having fun." After his short talk, he stayed around to chat and sign autographs.

After the ceremonies, as might be expected, there were several hard-fought games. So if you like to hear the cry of "Batter up!" and want to get out to a local outdoor stadium this summer, drop by the fields. Every weekday evening there will be six games and two practices going on. Admission is free, but you might want to help Parkway by buying a hot dog or two.



Obbs – A Diamond in the Rough

By Jason Hoelzel

"Never judge a book by its cover," my mother has always said. This was the case when I ventured out to the East Side in search of fine, well as fine as I could afford, dining. I had gone in search of an establishment that not only epitomizes the very essence of the East Side, but also one that has been talked about for decades. As I aimlessly drove around the East Side, I suddenly remembered my grandmother often spoke of Obbs Sports Bar & Grill. So I had to go and, at the very least, pay homage to my grandmother's spirit. Obbs, which was established in 1919 by the Johnsen family, is an East Side icon located at 1347 Burns Ave. As I pulled up to the bar, which is older than some cathedrals, I had thoughts of toothless patrons still clinging to the Hamm's days and slumping bar flies watching their lives pass them by on TV.

As I entered Obbs and sat down, the bar's owner Jim Johnsen invited me in and handed me a menu. As soon as I opened the nicely formatted menu, my mouth started to water and my stomach was no match for my eyes. At this point, I knew this was not your typical bar-food establishment. They had an extensive menu with every tantalizing entrée ranging from your typical right-of-passage bar-burger to an upper-scale top-sirloin steak dinner. They even had a section of homemade dinners for the traditionalists.

After a long indecisive process, I ordered the California burger. I felt I needed to order a meal that typified the common-era bar. While I impatiently waited for the burger to come, I could not help but notice the comforting motif that surrounded me. The wood-grain bar, the pictures of Albert Obbs and the up-to-date video games were all amenities that added to a great ambience. There was also a nice dining area where a family could come and enjoy a quiet dinner. While I had been sitting at the bar writing some prep notes, people had begun to peer over and wonder why I had a pen in one hand and a pad of paper in the

other. I did not have much of a formal agenda, so I started making small talk with owner Jim and bartender Casie. After a short stint of fill-in small talk, the conversation turned to the recent smoking ban. So I asked Jim if he has seen any loss in business since the ban's inception.

"I've seen a 10-15% decrease in business since the ban," Jim said. Although he feels it is too early to tell if the ban has made for a significant reallocation of funds. Jim remains hopeful that a nice patio deck and a weather-friendly summer will be conducive to bringing back some lost business. The conversation quickly turned back to odds-and-ends questions that were being batted across the bar, like a form of conversation tennis. After a few volleys, I went back to taking notes and wondering when my burger was coming.

My burger finally arrived. As I looked down at the centerfold-quality hamburger, my taste buds started to tap dance on my conscious. I picked up the healthy-sized burger and took a rather large bite. As soon as the buttery-soft-beef-patty formally introduced itself to my taste buds, it was love at first bite. I devoured the burger like a wild dingo on the Serengeti. I have never tasted a burger so fresh and flavorful; I had found burger Nirvana. Visions of ordering one-of-everything on the menu were starting to haunt me, but my wallet said otherwise. It was either pay the electric bill or eat another couple of meals; I chose electricity.

As I placed my napkin on the plate, I turned to Jim and told him how much I had enjoyed the meal and our dialogue. Obbs is much more than I had thought; it's a place where hopes come to drink and souls stay for the music. As I got up to leave, Jim shouted, "Hey, good luck in whatever you do." That sentence is why so many people love the Obbs atmosphere. Everyone from the owner to the cook truly does care where you have been, where you are at, and where you are going in life.



A four-year-old plays a quarter size violin as part of the "Sound Factory" at Kinder Konzert.

ECFE Goes to Kinder Konzert

By Irene Saponara-Gottwalt

On Friday, March 17, the Dayton's Bluff Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) Program parents and children went on a fieldtrip to the Minnesota Orchestra to see and hear "The Bremen Town Musicians." All program four-year-olds and their parents were invited to the fieldtrip. Our teachers prepared us for our visit to the orchestra by teaching us about how to be good audience members and what high and low sounds sound like. We even heard the music played in our ECFE classes before our field trip.

At Orchestra Hall, we first learned about some of the instruments we would hear later. Then we played some instruments. We played the drum and a violin just our size. Did you know that bottom of the bow for a violin is called a frog? The four-year-olds got to use streamers to dance to some music. Next, we went into the hallway that connects the lobby to the concert hall. Did you know that the walls there are covered with carpeting? The carpeting on the walls helps keep the noise out of the hall

when the orchestra is playing. We got to touch the carpeting.

Our excitement continued to rise as we got to sit on the actual stage of the concert hall! The storyteller introduced each instrument and the person who played it. The instrumentalists wore hats that told us which animal they played in the story of the musicians from Bremen. Some of the instrumentalists played a short song for us. One even played the song from Sesame Street and a song from Barney. Finally, the narrator read the story and the instruments played. What a funny story it is. The music was beautiful. We saw all the instruments up close and learned their names. Finally, we got a bus ride home. What an exciting day!

ECFE takes several fieldtrips a year: One of the many great things ECFE does is give parents and their children access to many fieldtrips and experiences. This year we got to go to a farm, to an apple orchard where we picked apples, and the Children's Museum. If you are interested in learning more about this program, call the Dayton's Bluff ECFE at 651-293-5343.

Letter From the Editor:

Dear Dayton's Bluff,

I regret to write that I will be leaving the position of Editor at the Dayton's Bluff District Forum after July's issue to focus on my business: Blue Leaf Cheesecake. Working on the paper has been an often-rewarding job bringing this paper to you each month, and also nerve-wracking. I encourage everyone who reads the paper to help make it the best it can be. Contribute in whatever way you can: make a small donation of money, write an article or two (is it really that muc to ask?), or apply to take over as the paper's Editor. Contact Karin at 651-772-2075 for more information on any of the above. If nothing else, let us here at the Dayton's Bluff District Forum know that what we're doing means something to you. Write or email now and then with your thoughts.

Sincerely,
Gabriel Garbow

Walk, Talk, Take Action

On May 3rd around 30 people walked around the Lower Bluff of Dayton's Bluff. The group included Mayor Coleman, City Council President Kathy Lantry, and city officials including people from both code and licensing inspections, public works, planning and economic development, and the city attorney's offices. The group looked at the good things happening in Dayton's Bluff and some of the beautiful homes we have here, talked with many of the neighbors and also investigated some of the issues facing Dayton's Bluff. Our visitors were impressed with the positive things happening here.

At the June 1st Dayton's Bluff Community Meeting city officials will give us an update on some of the issues that they are working on.



City officials and neighborhood people on the "Walk, Talk, and Take Action" hike walking along Maria.

Walking Along the River with Bob

By J. Wittenberg

By persistent popular demand, I've once again taken up my typewriter at the *Dayton's Bluff District Forum*, hoping to do my humble part in featuring talented, unique citizens and artistic events of our fair neighborhood. I have emerged from my long winter's nap a more robust figure, with a slightly longer beard. Have no fear loyal readers, though I am unaccustomed now to working the beat, I shall do my utmost to find those nuggets of gold hiding in our midst.

Speaking of treasure hunting, I found myself one early morning down by the banks of the mighty Miss., whereby I had the fine fortune of attracting the attention of a gentleman, who was taken with my buggy, which never fails to turn the heads of young and old alike. After exchanging the typical Dayton's Bluff pleasantries, I learned this man, named Bob, has lived in these parts for over ten years. He claims to be a mystic, a palm reader, and something of a magician. I also discovered my newfound acquaintance was homeless, so to speak, in that he didn't have an address per se.

We walked along the river for a time, and he claimed it was dying. He told me of large Asian fish that are destroying the natural stock of the river. He claimed all the fish are full of toxic chemicals and mercury, though he said the squirrels around here are fine.

He enjoys living down by the river, just south of Lowertown. He claims to know many of the engineers who pass in their trains. He said those horns we hear from time to time are on his behalf. Bob went on to share his concerns about global warming, and said that those who don't believe it, probably still believe the world is flat.

"Now that it's spring, I'm just thankful to know I'll wake up

tomorrow morning, and not find myself frozen to the ground," Bob said.

His coat did look very warm, and he said his scarf was made in China: a fact that seemed to give him a certain amount of pride.

After a time, we came upon a half open bag of trash, which Bob inspected briefly, before saying, "Nobody cares about littering anymore. There should be a law."

Bob went on to predict that this dark political time may get worse before it gets better, but he believes people's better nature will finally win the day. Truly, we need more optimists like Bob. It's too bad more people in power don't think the way he does. He believes "we need to be humane to all."

At the end of the walkway was a bench, whereby Bob offered to read my palm for a dollar. Curious to know how my days will unfold, I opened my leather bag of coins.

With some relief on his face, he smiled in looking upon my palm. He assured me of good health, and other milestones, which I am reluctant to share, lest I nullify them. In all, Bob assured himself of a good tip, promising as he did such a picture of my future prosperity.

In departing, I tipped my hat to Bob and he did the same for me. Just then a tugboat went by, which tooted, no doubt, in honor of my newfound friend. Bob waved to the distant man on the boat as if waving to his old friend, and who's to say he wasn't? Bob does seem a popular man. Perhaps he will reach a point where he can perform magic tricks for children again, and visit schools or nursing homes. He's a wise and talented man, and I predict for him a rich life; a life perhaps not bound in material gains, but heaped with more of the riches he already so obviously has.

Business Blogging on the Bluffs

By: Jerry Cangemi

Have you heard the term "Interruption Marketing"? It was in a book I was reading about 'Blogging for small businesses'. It describes how marketers and advertisers have treated consumers for 50+ years. The definition: "unanticipated, impersonal and irrelevant ads hurled at involuntary audiences." Sounds rather negative.

These days, people are overwhelmed and tend to ignore advertisements. What's a business to do? One idea is 'tap into the power of Blogs'.

I'm sure most of you are asking, "What's a Blog?" Basically, it is a website with content updated frequently, although, they can be much more.

Blogs allow you to have 'conversations' with others. For businesses, "others" are customers and potential customers. Customers can even have 'conversations' with each other. This is where "the power of the

Blog" comes into play.

A Blog allows your customers to post comments on your site. Wouldn't you agree that our friends have a huge influence in our buying decisions? Movies, clothes, cars, etc. - who better to extol the virtues of your business than happy customers? Also, Blogs can let you know if something could have been better.

They can help you find ways to better serve customers. Do you have the products/services they want? What about service they got from employees? Parking lot clean? Remember, little things mean a lot.

To view some blogs go to: www.blogspot.com and/or www.blogarama.com and search for a subject that interests you. Because they're updated frequently, Blogs attract Google more than websites.

Blogs are used for a variety of reasons but this column will be about helping small businesses build profits. A Blog is simply a tool. In the future, I'll discuss developing business Blogs.



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'Mercury' continued from page 1

Mississippi River. We pride ourselves on the beauty of our over 10,000 lakes. It's who we are as a state and key to our tourism economy.

But the reality is that right now, much of the fish we catch in our lakes is unsafe to eat because of mercury contamination. Mercury is a potent nerve toxin that causes learning and developmental disabilities in young children. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reported that more than 600,000 babies born each year in the U.S. are at risk of developing learning and behavioral disorders due to mercury exposure. Low-income people and others who rely on fishing as an affordable or culturally important source of nutrition are especially at risk.

Coal-fired power plants are the biggest man-made source of mercury emissions. For years, utilities and some business groups have resisted capping mercury emissions from coal plants, arguing that only 8 or 9% of mercury contamination in Minnesota originates here. But brand-new scientific studies directly contradict this claim.

A recent Environmental Protection Agency study in the Ohio River Valley found that 70% of the mercury pollution there comes from local or regional coal-fired power plants. The state of Massachusetts implemented mercury controls on incinerators seven years ago. A state study released last month showed a 32% drop in mercury levels of fish in lakes near a cluster of incinerators.

It has become clear that Minnesota cannot wait for the federal government to meaningfully address mercury pollution. The power of our federalist system is that state legislatures can pass progressive legislation when the federal government refuses to act. We have seen that when Minnesota leads, the nation follows, as it did with acid rain protection and removing phosphorus from laundry detergent. My hope is that this legislation will become a model for consensus building that pushes our state to the forefront of environmental protection.

Word From the Beat

Greetings from SPPD Eastern District. This month I want to share with you two programs we are working on which may help you.

The first is a new report system called Tele-serve Reporting. When citizens call the police communications center, their call is prioritized based on the incident and circumstances. With the number of calls for service always increasing, citizens will sometimes wait up to two hours to make a report. To alleviate some of this waiting, our department has started a telephone based reporting system called Tele-serve. If you call to make a report, you may be transferred to the Tele-serve officer. A police officer will be assigned to this desk to take your reports and answer your questions 24 hours a day.

The second program is the Dayton's Bluff Beat Officer phone program. We are working on establishing a system where you the citizen can call the beat officer directly. In non-emergency situations you can call the beat officer to ask general questions or have us stop by your home or business. We hope to have this program started by June 1st and I will keep you posted in next month's *Dayton's Bluff District Forum*.

Finally, summer is here so let's enjoy it. I encourage everyone to get out and meet your neighbors. By knowing our neighbors we will all build a stronger and safer community. If you are planning a block club meeting or neighborhood picnic, let me know and I will try and stop by to say "Hi." You can always e-mail me at Jamie.Sipes@ci.stpaul.mn.us. For now, take care and always treat each other with respect.
 Officer J. Sipes

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Pagemaker experience a +.
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"Robberies" continued from page 1:

place at or near Metro Transit bus stops, they have been a particular concern to police because the victims have primarily been women who were walking alone and carrying a purse or bag with them. The victims reported that the suspects came to them from behind, knocked them down and stole their purses and bags. In some cases, the suspects even took jewelry right off the victims. According to the reports, no weapons have been seen by the victims, but one victim was injured by a cutting instrument during one of the incidents.

In all cases, the victims reported that there were at least two suspects involved. Another common thread between the cases is that in all instances the suspects reportedly wore hooded sweatshirts that concealed their faces. The victims were unable to give more detailed descriptions to police other than the suspects are black males approximately sixteen to twenty-five years old.

According to Eastern District Police Commander Tina McNamara, the robberies occurred between 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. as the victims made their way to or from home before or after a trip to work, the store or church.

The St. Paul Police Department has taken these incidents very seriously and has engaged in an ongoing investigation. Commander McNamara reported that officers immediately notified the Metro Transit Police Department. In response, Metro Transit has increased patrols from their police department and has notified drivers to be more alert when picking up and dropping off customers in the area. Commander

McNamara also reported that the police have been conducting robbery details with decoys and unmarked squad cars and monitoring bus stops.

Commander McNamara noted that these types of crimes of opportunity usually increase as the weather becomes more decent and more people spend time outside. Since warmer weather is in the forecast for the next several months, it's a good idea to review some things that everyone can do to survive the long, hot summer.

By following some basic personal safety suggestions, you can prevent such a crime by not providing an opportunity to a suspect looking for a target. Here are some tips provided by the St. Paul Police Department:

- Tell someone where you are going, the route you are taking to get there and what time you expect to arrive.
- If possible, don't walk alone.
- Call the police for help or an escort if you need it. Call 651-291-1111 to make arrangements for an escort.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Keep your head up and look at the people who are around you.
- Know the area you are in.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash, credit cards, ATM cards, or your checkbook if you are not planning to use it.
- Do not display jewelry or electronics.
- Keep an inventory of your property including make, model and serial number.
- Report suspicious activity.
- Report a crime promptly with as much information as possible.

The writer is a four-year resident of Dayton's Bluff. You may reach her at stpaulgirl76@yahoo.com.



Jeff Abrahamson tells Dayton's Bluff Preservation Evening participants about the restoration of his Arcade St. home.



Dayton's Bluff Preservation Evening where residents shared stories and photos of home improvements projects.

Dayton's Bluff District Forum
798 East 7th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55106
Phone: 651-772-2075
FAX: 651-774-3510
E-mail: karindupaul@comcast.net
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