Placeography.org makes preserving the history of places an online adventure for everyone

By Joe Hoover

“I remember driving up to Sears [on Lake Street] and thinking we had reached the Emerald City because of the green neon sign and the building that loomed up to the clouds.” Ruby Rose Wilson was just a child when she first visited the Sears building on Lake Street in the 1960s. Its looming presence is still etched in her memory, but now those memories are available online for others to read.

The new web site Placeography.org, developed and hosted by the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS), is a collaborative web site that allows anyone to create, edit and link to pages devoted to preserving the history of department stores, homes, farms, public lands or any physical place in Minnesota. Once an entry is created, others can add stories and memories, and even pictures. This kind of collaborative web site is called a wiki.

Just launched, Placeography.org already has hundreds of stories and photos posted by users on places across the state. From individual homes to the Sears Building on Lake Street, the goal of Placeography.org is to create a comprehensive historical database that includes both well known and lesser-known locations. Tracey Baker, Assistant Head of Reference, helped create the site and says she expects it to be really popular with individuals as well as organizations, including local historical societies, preservation groups, community councils and neighborhood and city development groups.

To create an entry users follow a series of prompts. A how-to page helps people get started. As much or as little information can be added and users can go back and edit their entry at any time. Those interested in researching building history can get help from the MNHS library, through classes and reference assistance.

Older than the state itself, the Minnesota Historical Society is a non-profit educational and cultural institution established in 1849 to preserve and share Minnesota history. The Society tells the story of Minnesota’s past through museum exhibits, extensive libraries and collections, historic sites, educational programs and book publishing.

During 2008, the Society is commemorating Minnesota’s 150th anniversary of statehood with Sesquicentennial events and programs including “MN150,” the new exhibit featuring 150 people, places, and things that have shaped our state, on display at the Minnesota History Center.

Dayton’s Bluff has a page started on this site www.placeography.org/index.php?title=DB. Watch for more on this in the future. For more information call Karin at 651-772-2075 or email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org.

Dayton’s Bluff Preservation Evening May 8th

Do you want to learn more about repairing and preserving your home? Curious about your house’s history? The Fourth Annual Dayton’s Bluff Preservation Evening is May 8th from 6:30 to 8 p.m. The event will take place in the Ecolab Community Room, third floor of the Metropolitan State University/Dayton’s Bluff Branch Library, just west of the intersection of Seventh and Maria.

Come and hear about historically sympathetic home preservation and repair.

“Preservation” continued on page 2
The next Community Meeting is Thursday, April 3 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.

Several months ago at the December 2007 meeting the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council requested that we invite someone from the Fire Department to come and talk with us. Fire Chief Tim Butler and Deputy Chief Steve Zacard will be coming to our April Meeting. Please come with your questions for them.

The Dayton’s Bluff Community Council holds its Community Meeting on the 1st Thursday of each month. The purpose is to work with block clubs and neighborhood residents on problem properties, criminal and nuisance behavior, code enforcement issues and any other neighborhood issues. This is a time to talk about ideas for improvement in Dayton’s Bluff.

If you can get me the addresses of problems ahead of time I can get them to the police and code enforcement. Then they can bring information about the problems to the meeting. Remember, it’s always on the 1st Thursday of the month. All Dayton’s Bluff residents are welcome to attend. If you need more information email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or call Karin at 651-772-2075.

Meet with the police

On Friday, April 18 the Eastern District Police will host their monthly meeting for community members. The meeting is intended as a time to listen and to address people’s concerns about crime and other issues on the East Side.

The community meetings are held at the Eastern District police office at 722 Payne on the corner of Payne and Minnehaha Avenues on the third Friday of each month at 9:30 a.m.

Take a Hike

Dayton’s Bluff Take a Hike takes place on the first Saturday of every month. Meet at 10:30 a.m. in Indian Mounds Park at Earl Street and Mounds Blvd. We will hike from Mounds Park to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary then walk along the Bruce Vento Recreational Trail through Swede Hollow Park to the new Phalen/Arcaade Park. Along the way we will share stories and learn some local history of the area. The hike is about 4 miles long with some moderately rough terrain. Transportation will be available to return to Mounds Park or you may hike back.

Join us and explore some of our parks and trails! Dayton’s Bluff Take a Hike started in December 1990. Since then hundreds of people have attended these events. For more information, call 651-772-2075 or email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org.

Dayton’s Bluff Recycling

Every Tuesday. Have your recycling on the curb by 7 a.m. Call 651-772-2075 for a bin.

Dayton’s Bluff Community Meeting

The whole family can enjoy Cub Scouts

The Cub Scouts do many things but few are as popular as the Pinewood Derby races.

By Joshua Yurek

This is Joshua Yurek who is back from, well... “Let’s just say I’m back from an overwhelming first half of my high school year. Anyway I’ve finally got that information on the whole Cub Scouts thing I was talking about the last time I wrote. I had a chance to go do the Cub Scout’s Pinewood Derby districts tournament. This is basically where the Cub Scouts do their racing after the race with their individual Troop. Scouts from all over St. Paul come here to race each other and try to win prizes and trophies. They also make really cool looking cars.

For people with kids who are looking for something to do, Cub Scouts is a great option. I’m a former Cub Scout and Boy Scout can say that it is a very good group to participate in. Cub Scouts do things like going camping, having den meetings where they learn skills they may need to know, later, and of course have the Pinewood Derby races every year.

Joining Cub Scouts can also help families grow and give them something to do together. At the Pinewood Derby district tournament, many parents cheered their kids on to victory when their car was racing. Even when they lost they still had a good time.

Larose, who is a dad to two Cub Scouts and was in charge of the districts tournament this year, said, “It’s fun to see what cars the kids can build and race, and its great to see the parents get involved and cheer on their kids”.

As you can see Cub Scouts is a great option for kids and will help them learn in the future. This is Joshua Yurek reporting the “Cub Scouts Story” for the Dayton’s Bluff District Forum, all news for your neighborhood. That was kind of meant to be funny, oh well. See ya in two months!

Dayton’s Bluff Home Tour Apr. 26 & 27

The 2008 Dayton’s Bluff Home Tour will be held on Saturday, April 26th from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday, April 27th from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Home Tour is free of charge and open to the public.

This is the twelfth year that the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council has hosted the Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Home Tour. The tour includes the Dayton’s Bluff homes on the Minneapolis/Saint Paul Home Tour (MSPHT) plus a number of additional Dayton’s Bluff homes.

Jean Comstock, the Community Council’s Outreach Board member, stated, “I look forward to the Home Tour every year. It’s a great opportunity to see what my neighbors in Dayton’s Bluff are doing with their homes—restoring, redesigning, redecorating, everything! It’s especially gratifying when volunteering at a house to hear visitors from other parts of the City compliment the special homes we have here. I think we can all say we know the hard work and commitment of the owners, and comment on the uprising of the area in general.

Best of all, spending a few hours at the Home Tour always makes me look at my own house in different ways, imagining what I could do with it and encouraging me to get started. It’s a great place to see new ideas and get energized to do something with them!”

The following Dayton’s Bluff homes are on the tour this year:

* 705 East 4th Street
* 694 Surrey Street
* 243 Maria Avenue
* 56 Mounds Blvd.
* 966 Burns Avenue
* 699 Frank Street
* 1216 Margaret Street
* 619 Bates – Saturday only – Historic Saint Paul walk starts here on the tour.

Also on the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Home Tour.

Come to the tour and get to know some of the Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhoods.

For information about this event, contact Karin DuPaul at 651-772-2075 or email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or for more information:


Dayton’s Bluff Vacant Home Tour - May 3 & 4

By Nick Duncan

The Dayton’s Bluff Vacant Building Committee (DBBVCC) will be sponsoring a vacant home tour on May 3rd and 4th.

The purpose of the DBBVCC is to work with block clubs and neighborhood residents on problem properties, criminal and nuisance behavior, code enforcement issues and any other neighborhood issues.

Several months ago at the December 2007 meeting the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council requested that we invite someone from the Fire Department to come and talk with us. Fire Chief Tim Butler and Deputy Chief Steve Zacard will be coming to our April Meeting. Please come with your questions for them.

The Dayton’s Bluff Community Council holds its Community Meeting on the 1st Thursday of each month. The purpose is to work with block clubs and neighborhood residents on problem properties, criminal and nuisance behavior, code enforcement issues and any other neighborhood issues. This is a time to talk about ideas for improvement in Dayton’s Bluff.

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Join us and explore some of our parks and trails! Dayton’s Bluff Take a Hike started in December 1990. Since then hundreds of people have attended these events. For more information, call 651-772-2075 or email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org.

Dayton’s Bluff Recycling

Every Tuesday. Have your recycling on the curb by 7 a.m. Call 651-772-2075 for a bin.
The Program is free and open to both boys and girls. Activities will take place at the Historic Mounds Theatre, home of the Portage for Youth, 1029 Hudson Road, Saint Paul, MN 55106. The application deadline is June 1st or until all sessions are filled. For additional information or to request a registration form, email raeann@theportage.com or call 651-772-8674 or register online at www.theportage.org.

**Limited transportation is available to East Side youth through the Circulator (a free bus service).**

**Come join us for a week of summer fun.**

*For those of you who remember the old Portage for Youth logo, we have changed the logo to meld with our new location, the Historic Mounds Theatre—“Building Solid Community Leaders through Arts and Cultural Enrichment”.

**Dayton’s Bluff annual Spring Dinner**

The Dayton’s Bluff Spring Dinner Event will be held on Saturday, May 17, 2008. This event started in 1995 and has been a great opportunity for neighbors to meet and greet. This annual dinner originated as a means for people in the neighborhood to get together, socialize, and just have a good time! Participants are from the Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood area. The more people that participate in the event, the more the event has to offer. Host homes are particularly needed in order for the event to be successful.

If you are interested in receiving a flyer giving more information about the Spring Dinner Event, please contact the event coordinator, Margie Smith, at 651-778-1075. Please note that this event is intended for adults living in the Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood. We look forward to another exciting year of dining together in the neighborhood!

**Greening, garbage, and grade school?**

That’s right, it’s that time of year when the snow begins to melt, the flow- ers start looking skyward, and the garbage rears its ugly head! What can you do to help? How about joining your neighbors at Metropolitan State to help prepare new trash cans donated by Budget Towing, to be painted by fourth graders at Dayton’s Bluff Elementary. The Dayton’s Bluff Greenspace Committee, District 4 Community Council, Metro State University, and Dayton’s Bluff Elementary are joining together to get our streets ready for spring. We need your help on April 19 from 9 – 11 a.m. to help prep these cans. The more people the faster it goes! For more information on how you can help, call Karin at 651-772-2075. or e-mail Karin at karin@daytonsbluff.org.

**Spend the night in a haunted theater**

The Historic Mounds Theatre is billed as one of the most haunted places in the Twin Cities. Maybe it is and maybe it isn’t. Now you can find out for yourself... if you dare.

As a fundraiser for the Portage for Youth, which has it’s home in the Mounds Theatre, two overnight stays on Saturday June 7th and Saturday June 21st are being auctioned off. In addition to spending the night the lucky winners will get to participate in a mini psychic investigation with the Minnesota Ghost Hunters Society.

All bids for the auction must be submitted by May 1. For more details visit www.moundstheatre.org or call 651-772-2253.

**The Dayton’s Bluff District Forum is now mailed monthly to Dayton’s Bluff businesses and households FREE!!**

Your 5” x 4” display ad gets to over 6500 addresses for only 2 cents per address. Other size ads also available. Include the Dayton’s Bluff District Forum in your advertising plans.

Contact Karin@daytonsbluff.org or call 651-772-2075.
New Dayton's Bluff toll road opening soon

April 1, 2008 - Get ready to keep some extra change in your car in the future. You may need it while driving through the neighborhood a year or so from now if a small provision tucked away in the next transportation bill passed over the veto of the Governor. And it is related directly to the East Side.

In a little known paragraph, the Minnesota Department of Transportation was directed to turn East Third Street into a toll road. The conference committee members said that it was done to add some money to the coffers for transit projects around the Metropolitan area.

The Bluffway, as it will be called, will start out at the foot of the Third Street Bridge on the eastern edge of downtown and go through to McKnight with several entrance and exit spots to be determined. The inconvenience that would be caused was a major concern. To make the Bluffway a major four-lane arterial, parking would be eliminated. “We need to get people around the metropolitan area quickly,” a planner said. “So we are hoping residents will see that the greater good will be served.”

The cost of driving through each segment has yet to be determined, but will probably be in the fifty to seventy-five cent range. “These are areas we need to use and have already paid for,” one outraged resident said at a meeting. “It’s not all that much, and we need more money for the state roads and bridges,” a spine said. “Besides, there is a movement that residents and students attending Harding High School will be able to get discounted rates.”

“The Dayton’s Bluff-Blatche Creek toll road is a vital pilot plan,” a city planner said at a meeting. “If it works out as well as we expect it will, the Minnesota Department of Transportation officials told us, many more neighborhood toll roads will be added throughout St. Paul.”

Ghost threatens to leave Mounds Theatre

April 1, 2008 – According to their special consultant, Madam Grimaldi, the ghosts of the Mounds Theatre, purportedly a projectionist, an usher and a little girl, are upset with conditions at the Mounds and are looking for a new place to haunt.

The ghosts are upset about the lack of visits by local residents. “They’ve been residing in the Mounds all these years because they like the neighborhood and the people who live here,” channels Grimaldi. “However, very few neighborhood people attend events at the Mounds and they don’t like those stuck up, late-drinking, high-flying suburbanites who keep showing up. Worse yet, many of them come from Minneapolis and some are even cheezheads from Wisconsin.”

Another complaint is all the noise and disruption to their daily routines caused by plays and other live events. Not surprisingly, the presence of a new theatre called the Players, also named Mounds, is not well received. Dennis, is most nonvocal in expressing his desire to see movies return to the Mounds. Although obviously not a part of the projection business himself, what with being dead and all, he still wants the projectors to be running and the lights dimmed so the sheep-like audience can see their heads reflected in the big silver screen. The usher wants the seats to be full again and the little girl just wants to watch movies. Perhaps if a vision were granted to hear Shirley Temple is no longer making films.

Don’t be alarmed if your home or place of business is visited by one or more nonphysical beings in the near future. The ghosts of the Mounds Theatre may be checking out your place for their next earthly abode.

Does Lyman Dayton haunt Daytona Beach?

April 1, 2008 - By now most readers know that the name Lyman Dayton is just one of many names associated with Dayton’s Bluff. But what is going to happen to the acres and acres of land? A secret memo from the eBay company indicates that this community was recently leaked to the Forum’s crack research staff.

The new owners, a firm called the Iron Range company will sell all the land as well as the mineral rights. When 3M came to the Dayton’s Bluff area in 1910, they made sure they had control of any metals or other valuable extractive material below the surface. They never did any digging themselves, but they retained the ability to do so. Apparently, the future may soon be in control, apparently believes there are enough valuable minerals to strip mine the area of East Seventh Street between Arcade and Forrest. In an email to the Forum, they say that open pit mining would be the only economically viable approach if a few environmental variances would be given by the state.

According to a reporter, a new plan may soon be in control, apparently believes there are enough valuable minerals to strip the area of East Seventh Street between Arcade and Forrest. In an email to the Forum, they say that open pit mining would be the only economically viable approach if a few environmental variances would be given by the state. With that said, a GroundBspin reporter refused to confirm or deny the purchase, but did say that such a project would be of great benefit to the neighborhood, providing much-needed employment.

So what might the future bring? After the disaster on Bay, the town has become a tourist attraction as an urban lake. Another possibility was that it could be used by nearby Valspar as a new test site. According to the secret documents, the sell off of the land and the mineral rights should be finalized some time in May. Because they will have severed any connection to the mining industry, Valspar and Manufacturing heritage, the long-time East Side corporation will soon be known as 2M.

Open pit mining in the neighborhood?

April 1, 2008 - As widely reported by other Twin Cities media outlets that didn’t bother reading the 3M Company’s report, St. Paul’s Bluff area was named Mounds Royale. One local St. Paul Winter Carnival Treasure Hunt meditation was found in Indian Mounds Park. It was turned over to the 3M company staff awoke from its winter hibernation, its drowsy but intrepid reporters managed to find a new slant to the story.

More details to follow in future issues of the Forum.

Mounds Park Treasure Hunt uncovers old stuff

April 1, 2008 – As widely reported by other Twin Cities media outlets that didn’t bother reading the 3M Company’s report, St. Paul Winter Carnival Treasure Hunt meditation was found in Indian Mounds Park. It was turned over to the 3M company staff awoke from its winter hibernation, its drowsy but intrepid reporters managed to find a new slant to the story.

More details to follow in future issues of the Forum.

RARE SNAIL SLOWS HAMM’S REHAB

April 1, 2008 - Recently the Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood has looked with favor upon the big plans being made for a new casino that would replace the Hennepin Theater as their new headquarters. But now something quite small is threatening the progress of the large project—a snail.

Not just any snail—a newly discovered species called “Yeast Mold Snail.” The Community Council has been sponsoring tours of the brewery buildings and, by chance, a Metropolitan State University biology professor went on one and made the astounding discovery. He is planning to name the new species Molluskahammus, in honor of the beer that was responsible for its creation.

It seems that many years ago the snails probably crawled out of the old Phalen Creek, got into the brewery and began living on an unusual yeast mold that grew underneath the brewing vats. Somehow they were able to survive and even to reproduce. What would that result in? It might be a very inhospitable environment.

The Discovery Channel found out about this important find and is planning a television segment. According to them, these hop-yeast-scented species of what is now being labeled “exotemphus”—specie that lives in extremely harsh situations such as deep veins in the ocean.

Meanwhile, the neighborhood is faced with a classic development versus environment dilemma—an East Side version of the old “snail fish” dispute in California. There are ardent supporters on both sides of the argument. Environmental activists have gone to court for an injunction and until the controversy is settled, the DNR has no say in the disposition of the site. Despite that, many people are wondering if the snails might be relocted to another brewery, but none of the ones contacted were interested in another location.

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Another possibility is the dedication of one segment. According to them, these hop-yeast-scented species of what is now being labeled “exotemphus”—specie that lives in extremely harsh situations such as deep veins in the ocean.

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How can the neighborhood win? They will also be experimenting with a new technology they have developed and use the revolving light somewhat like a giant PowerPoint presentation to transmit huge digital advertisements. The looks will be somewhat similar to that in the new lighted segment. According to them, the new technology could be auctioned off for a little money.

And that is exactly what has happened. A sharp-eyed real estate agent realized the true nature of the deed, bought it and then resold it to a firm for a huge profit.

The new owners, AstroAdvertising, have big plans for the beacon. They will be adding signage to the metal structure. They will also be experimenting with a new technology they have developed and use the revolving light somewhat like a giant PowerPoint presentation to transmit huge digital advertisements. The looks will be somewhat similar to that in the new lighted segment. According to them, the new technology could be auctioned off for a little money.
2 Opportunities to Explore the BLUFF! -

2008 DAYTON’S BLUFF NEIGHBORHOOD HOME TOUR

- When: April 26-27 (Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) and (Sunday, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.)
- The Home Tour is free of charge and open to the public.
- Dayton’s Bluff homes on the tour:
  - 705 East 4th Street
  - 634 Surrey Street
  - 243 Maria Avenue
  - 56 Mounds Blvd.
  - 936 Burns Avenue
  - 699 Frank Street
  - 1216 Margaret Street
  - 619 Bates - Saturday only - Historic Saint Paul walk starts here on the hour.

* Also on the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Home Tour

JOIN US FOR THE FIRST EVER VACANT HOMES “POSSIBILITIES TOUR!!!

- When: May 3-4 (Saturday, noon–5 p.m. and Sunday 1–5 p.m.)
- The Home Tour is free of charge and open to the public.
- Free Trolley rides to homes.
- The tour starts at 761 East 3rd Street.
- Come experience the wonderful housing opportunities in Dayton’s Bluff.

With creativity and imagination, “Possibilities” can become reality - Let us show you how! arh

Forum is downsizing

April 1, 2008 – Astute readers have probably already noticed that this issue of the Forum isn’t as large as last month’s. In a move following other nationally known newspapers such as our own Saint Paul Pioneer Press, the board of directors of the Forum decided to reduce its carbon footprint and help save the world from global warming by reducing the amount of newsprint used for each edition.

Starting with this issue and continuing until the end of the year, this paper will be reduced one half inch in both width and height each month. So as to maintain as much content as possible, text size and photos will be reduced proportionally. While this could make the paper more difficult to read, we have been assured by experts that by gradually reducing the amount of newsprint used for each edition, the text size and photos will be reduced month. So as to maintain as much content as possible, text size and photos will be reduced proportionally. While this could make the paper more difficult to read, we have been assured by experts that by gradually reducing the amount of newsprint used for each edition, the text size and photos will be reduced proportionally.

For more information email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or call Karin at 651-772-2075.

Mounds Park to secede from Dayton’s Bluff

April 1, 2008 – The Mounds Park neighborhood of Prestigious Mounds Park as it is now being called, is in the process of disbanding itself from the rest of Dayton’s Bluff. Ever since this part of town was “Rondo’d”, first by the construction of Highway 12 in 1948 and then by 1-94 in the 1970s, Mounds Park has tried to distance itself from the portion of Dayton’s Bluff located north of the freeway.

“What was once a single neighborhood connected by a grid work of streets is now divided into two distinct regions separated by a gaping concrete chasm,” stated a spokesperson for Prestigious Mounds Park. “There is no reason to continue this sham that we have anything in common with those people to the north.”

As soon as all the legal technicalities are worked out Prestigious Mounds Park will become Saint Paul’s first gated community. Gates will be constructed at various locations on Earl St., Burns Ave and Mounds Boulevard. Limited access will be granted for those visiting Indian Mounds Regional Park. The park will open at noon and must be vacated by 7 p.m. each evening. Special holiday hours are being discussed.

Letter to the Editor

G. B. LeRoy is on his soapbox again

April 1, 2008 - Ever wonder why the East Side is never treated as well as the neighborhoods to the west of downtown? [Editor’s note: Because we have less money?] At the risk of being repetitive [Ed. note: Too late!], I have to comment on information in recent Pioneer Press articles regarding the way that the school district is dealing with Homecroft Elementary School, located a bit south of the Highland Park neighborhood. Like our former Parkway School [Ed. note: Here he goes again], Homecroft was faced with academic problems and a declining attendance. However, the Homecroft people were allowed to have some say in what was going to happen. While the school’s eventual outcome is still in doubt one thing is certain—the parents there were treated incredibly better than they were in Dayton’s Bluff. If you remember [Ed. note: You won’t let us forget], there were no public meetings until the one that let the parents know that Parkway was being shut down.

One of the school board members tried to justify the shabby treatment by suggesting that there was no need for a public hearing since the school was “not being shut down,” the building was only “being re-purposed.” Where in the world did they come up with that linguistic run around? [Ed. note: Prolonged exposure to politicians?] As my grandmother used to say, “There’s no use in crying over spilt milk.” [Ed. note: If it feels good, do it!] But I do think this neighborhood should do a little more demanding and try to change the way the East Side is generally treated. Let’s try to keep open the recreation centers and schools still remaining in Dayton’s Bluff. Perhaps someone should make tee shirts that say “Remember Parkway!” [Ed. note: Not quite as catchy as “Remember the Alamo!”]

G. B. LeRoy
[Editor’s note: I’m sorry G.B. Please ignore all previous editor’s notes]

Dayton’s Bluff Resident [Cursing editor] [Ed. note: Oops, I did it again. Sorry!]

Life in Dayton’s Bluff

By Glen Blomgren, Sr.

Editor’s Note: This cartoon by Glen Blomgren, a past editor of the Forum who recently passed away, was first published in April 1990. Not much has changed in 18 years.
A former United States president described volunteers as “points of light.” Dayton’s Bluff Early Childhood Family Education program sparkles with them!

By Meg Gronau

I certainly didn’t set out to “volunteer.” I didn’t reflect upon the goodness welling in my own breast and say, I must share myself with Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE). I didn’t even know ECFE, really — when I’d given birth to each of my kids, I’d received ECFE handouts in the hospital, but as mom with a full-time job and a sizable support network of friends and family, I didn’t think I needed ECFE.

But then I found myself at home with my kids during the day. And we took outings to the Children’s Museum, local parks, Como Zoo, plus date nights with friends. But as the summer of 2007 wore on, I began to wonder if my kids could benefit from some more structured group activities. I spoke with a friend of mine who had been delighted with her own experience in the ECFE program at Randolph Heights, and I thought about trying it.

I chose the Wednesday morning Birth-to-Five Years class at Dayton’s Bluff, and when I heard there was an identical class on Thursday mornings and a need for volunteers, I hatched an idea.

I could attend the Wednesday class and commit to volunteering at the Thursday class. My kids would get to play with “new to them” toys twice a week, in addition to getting some extra socialization, and I wouldn’t have to brainstorm ways to keep them entertained in the morning.

So that’s what I do. I bring my kids to class on Wednesday mornings; we read books and sing songs as a group before the children go to their rooms and we parent the children’s room for our kids and with the other kids. I read books, sing songs, pick up the occasional toy, mediate the occasional conflict, wash eight-to-twelve pairs of hands, and pass out innumerable Graham crackers and goldfish. I get to watch Max interact with other kids in a neutral environment; I get to watch him interact with authority figures who aren’t related to him. I chat with the other teachers in the room, trying to learn as much as I can from them. Ruby, then, gets the true preschool experience of being separated from Mom two mornings a week (at a public school price! This is the best little secret!). She has bonded with the teachers in her room as well as with the other children in her classes — when we’re getting dressed in the morning, she’s always asking what they are wearing and Madeline is saying she’s going to be wearing. I am so happy that she gets to play with her fantastic teachers two mornings a week.

And Max gets, if he wishes, some serious undivided Mom time. As the younger child, his ideas for play are often vetoed at home by Ruby’s strong personality. And I don’t know about you, but playtime at my house is rarely carefree for me — there’s always laundry in various phases of completion, or a meal in various stages of preparation or cleanup. My volunteering time is pure pleasure.

The ECFE teachers are educational counselors and wonderful people. When a child starts crying (and I volunteer in the “birth-to-three-years” room, so it happens a lot), they are very quick to comfort and comforting words. They are authoritative — clearly reiterating the rules and redirecting behavior when necessary — with out being authoritarian or punitive. Their love for children is clear, and their training is right on the cutting edge of early childhood education.

One of the really powerful elements for me is learning about child development and family dynamics in the parent class. I attend on Wednesday, and then seeing that same principle applied in class on Thursday. The consistency of the curriculum and the communication between Cogelow and the classroom teachers is impressive. A few weeks ago in my parent class we were talking about teaching young children in positive terms: telling them what you want them to do, in- stead of saying “don’t” to stop a given behavior. The very next day, a child in my room (if I won’t name names, but it started with a M and ends with an X) began walking up the slide. Instead of saying, “Don’t walk up the slide,” I tried “Remember to go up the steps, please” instead. I felt empowered and educated — and I got the response I needed. As the parent of two under four, any kind of affirmation that I’m doing the right thing is a huge boost to my morale.

And with me as an extra grownup body in the room, there are always plenty of us whenever any child needs some quiet cuddle time in the rocker, or with a book, or in the stroller. Young children, I believe, need immediate attention when they need it. For lots of the children, ECFE is their “Volunteer” continued on page 7

Discovering your home’s history

By Nick Duncan

When Amy Handford agreed to show her home on the Dayton’s Bluff Parade of Homes, we were so happy to have a broad spectrum of the history of her house for tour attendees. But where to begin? Handford was fortunate in that her home had been included in a historical review of the Dayton’s Bluff district done in the early 1980s, so she knew something of its past. When we began to house hunt, we knew the name of the family that had built it and the year it was built, “said Handford.

“The historical review gave us some very good information for getting to know the family. We got that kind of info from a man who was raised in the house. I talked to some family members of the past owner and they gave me some information but I wanted to know more. Like Handford, many of us would love to know more about the history of our homes. When was it built and by whom? How did it get built as it was built? Where were they from? What did your home look like 100 years ago? Was the second floor landings always that way? Did someone ever do some remodeling at some point? Was that back bedroom always a bedroom or it used to be a pantry? Was that garden originally a horse barn or was it built later? Remember, there were no cars 100 years ago. By researching the history of your home it may be possible to answer some of these questions.

Dayton’s Bluff/Neighborhood

Most of the homes in our neighborhood were built on a tract of land originally developed for residential use by land speculator Lyman Dayton in the 1850s and the first owner of Dayton’s Bluff quickly grew from a small colony of well-to-do businessmen, who built large homes along the ridge line overlooking downtown St. Paul, to a mixed income development, ranging from the highest range of styles and sizes stretching well eastward from the river bluffs.

If you live in Dayton’s Bluff chances are your home is older than the later part of the 1800s or early in the 1900s with the oldest homes generally being located on the Bluff itself. In the late 1880s Dayton’s Bluff was considered one of the premier neighborhoods in St. Paul. Many of the city’s wealthiest and most prominent citizens chose Dayton’s Bluff as their home. This included Railroad magnate James J Hill who resided on Dayton’s Bluff in the 1800s while his famous mansion Across the River was being completed. At the same time, the 1880s saw St Paul’s population explode. An influx of people from Germany, Ireland, and Scandinavia flooded into the city. Many of these new Americans also built homes on Dayton’s Bluff, although a much more modest level than their wealthy counter parts.

The diversity in home size and home style family Dayton’s Bluff’s most noticeable architectural characteristic. A quick drive down any street in our neighbor hood and it will quickly become apparent that Dayton’s Bluff is truly a melting pot of architectural style. One notices that on virtually every block there are one or two large Victorian style homes with adjoining row houses in an assortment of architectural styles and characteristics. But, regard less of your home’s style, there is a very good chance that it has a rich and interesting history.

Getting Started

If you are thinking about buying your first home in this history research? There are a variety of resources available right here in St Paul. We talked to some experts and have outlined some resources for beginning your re search.

By Tracey Baker, MNHS Librarian and Resident House Historian. The Ramsey County Historical Society Library is located in the Ramsey County Historical Society Library at 350 St. Peter Street, Suite 330, in downtown St. Paul. Once you have obtained the Building Permit you must order a copy of the City of St. Paul Municipal Code. A complete de-
Long-standing Dayton’s Bluff family-owned business closes its doors after 87 years

By erin sobaski
W.B. Martin Lumber Company is part of Dayton’s Bluff. Its location at the corner of East Seventh Street and Johnson Parkway has been home to the family-owned business since 1921. Serving contractors and do-it-yourselfers alike, the company succeeded due to their personalized service and ability to fulfill special orders that the “big boxes” (large chains such as Menard’s and Home Depot) don’t have.

Unfortunately those “big boxes,” along with the current housing foreclosure crisis, have driven the company to close its doors as of February 1, 2008. Although it was a heart-wrenching decision, third-generation president Richard Hoppe, who grew up on Johnson and Sixth, says, “I’m ready. It’s tougher and tougher to make money.”

History
The W.B. Martin Lumber Co. started in 1921 with one building and one shed, after Wallace B. Martin left the Stanton Lumber Company to start his own business. It grew through the years, even surviving World War II when suppliers carried them along. The company has only known three presidents: W.B. Martin, Howard Nelson (Hoppe’s uncle) and Hoppe, who has been president since 1996—although he has worked there for 57 years. “I’ve seen customers my dad used to wait on,” said Hoppe.

“Family” in the family-owned business, also includes employees. The average tenure for staff is 21 years. Bookkeeper Florence Kulisch, age 77 and long-time Dayton’s Bluff resident, has worked at the lumberyard since 1948 when she graduated from Mechanic Arts High School. It has been her only job and she speaks highly of her employers.

Why leave?
Back around the 1950s, there were 15–20 lumber companies in existence in St. Paul, most of which were family-owned. W.B. Martin was the last independent lumber company to survive. But now they are out, too. According to Hoppe, older patrons rely on high quality and loyalty. But younger consumers simply go by price, so the big conglomerates are more attractive. “Pretty soon,” says Hoppe, “there will be no small businesses around.”

In addition to the Menard’s on Prior Avenue, Hoppe mentioned that an 84 Lumber store might be opening in St. Paul. According to 84 Lumber, there are no plans for a store in Minnesota, although two are scheduled to open in Wisconsin (outside Madison and Green Bay).

What’s next?
The company has a loyal set of customers, mainly general contractors. They are all upset over the closing. One of the main services missed will be the custom mill shop, which was popular with local residents restoring their historic homes.

As for Hoppe, he extends his thanks to all customers and employees for being loyal, and wishes them all well. And what will he do now? “I may go golfing eight days a week.”

“Home history” continued from pg. 6
their ages and occupations,” says Baker. “It’s amazing to discover that a house you consider cozy was once a home to a family of eight children. She adds.

Plat/Insurance Maps
Over the years there has been a number of detailed maps of St Paul. These maps, mostly made by insurance companies like the Sanborn Company, include detailed drawings of every structure within the city. This includes the Dayton’s Bluff area. If you want to see the footprints of your home 100 years ago or if you want to know if the porch was originally open, this is the place to look. Again, these maps are available on microfilm at the MHS Library.

Newspapers
Over the years St Paul has been home to a variety of newspapers. This includes citywide papers along with local community papers. Sazevich points out that included in the pages of many of these newspapers are a variety of articles that can be very helpful in your home history research. Events such as births and deaths are recorded and, in many cases, new buildings and even the doings of certain local architects were reported on. Again, these papers are available on microfilm at the MNHS Library.

Photos
The Minnesota Historical Society has photographs of many houses. To search the collection you can visit the Library or view their Visual Resources Database online (http://collections.mnhs.org/visualresources). The Ramsey County Historical Society also has some photographs of the neighborhood. If at all possible, talk to previous owners, neighbors or long time Dayton’s Bluff residents. There’s a good chance you’re home made the background of at least a couple of pictures in someone’s family photo collection.

This certainly is not a complete list of sources for researching your home’s history but hopefully it will offer a good stepping off point for you to begin your work. Most of these resources are free and open to the public. The Minnesota Historical Society Library is open Tuesday 12-8 and Wednesday thru Saturday 9-4.

“Volunteer” continued from page 6
very first opportunity to be separated from their parents in an organized setting. I’m proud to serve alongside these teachers to make that transition as gentle and comfortable as possible for everybody.

Coggle, who has taught the parent class for 33 years, says, “Without volunteers of many kinds - classroom helpers, writers, fundraisers, computer whizzes, advocates, and much more - this ECFE program would be a ghost of its current self.” Every Thursday, the teachers take a moment to thank me for being there. I feel welcomed and appreciated and positively blessed — so much so that I honestly forget that I’m technically “volunteering.” I’m a more involved and informed parent than I was before I “discovered” ECFE at Dayton’s Bluff. Being able to double my time there, by volunteering, has given me back so much more than I ever expected.
“Got curb appeal?” No? Here’s how to get it!

By a Dayton’s Bluff resident
Have you ever driven by a house and wanted to slam on the brakes? No, not because it looked so bad that you needed to get the house number so you could call it into code enforcement, but because it looked so great! Why did this particular house stop you in your tracks and get your attention? Maybe, your house has been on the market and you’re not getting people to stop by to even look at your house. Maybe you just want your house to just look better. How do you get your house to have “curb appeal”?

Here are a few hints that hopefully will be helpful in your quest for “curb appeal:

*Change the color of your front door; Burgundy, black, white, dark green, burnt orange or deep red are popular. The front door should be the focal point of your house.
*Add shutters or repaint existing ones; Usually the same color as the front door.
*Pressure wash the siding if it’s dirty. Paint the house if needed or at least the trim; Colors chosen should work well with the shingle color.
*Add flowerboxes: Fill with evergreen branches in the winter.
*Add a large doormat by the front door.
*Add low voltage lighting by entrance.
*Add plastic edging around landscaped beds.
*Buy fresh woodchips for landscaped beds. Curved lines usually work best.
*Buy new lighting fixture at door entrance.
*Replace hardware including door handle, kick plate and house numbers.
*Replace torn screens.
*Clean the windows; Make it sparkle.
*Add pots of flowers next to the front door.
*Plant some bushes or flowering shrubs.
*Trim existing shrubs.
*Add a wreath to the front door to welcome people.
*Add flowerboxes: Fill with evergreen branches in the winter.
*Add a large doormat by the front door.
*Add low voltage lighting by entrance.
*Add plastic edging around landscaped beds.
*Buy fresh woodchips for landscaped beds; deep colored chips available.
*Trim the bottom branches from your trees so your house is visible from the street.
*Trim the dead tree limbs or limbs that are close to roof.
*Mow the lawn, get rid of weeds and fill in any bare spots with seeds.
*Buy new lighting fixture at door entrance.
*If you have a front porch, add outdoor furniture such as a table and two chairs.
*Clean the windows; Make it sparkle.

Most of these hints don’t cost a lot of money but they do make a big difference.

Think Globally
Shop Locally

“Preparing Children for a Life of Learning”

ALL children at Concordia Creative Learning Academy will be prepared for success in high school and beyond - without remediation.

An EXTRA connection to Dayton’s Bluff

In addition to the District Forum, we now have a new e-newsletter, the EXTRA. The goal of the EXTRA is to keep you informed of happenings in Dayton’s Bluff between issues of the monthly newspaper. It’s free and easy to sign up. Just visit www.dayton bluff.org and click on the link on our home page. You can unsubscribe at anytime. If you have previously subscribed but haven’t received your issues, be sure to check your “spam” settings and allow our address to come through to your inbox. Sign up today for your EXTRA connection to the Bluffs!

“Power Hour” at St. John Lutheran School

St. John Lutheran School presents the free “Power Hour” every Thursday, day through May. The “Power Hour” is for children 5 years of age or younger, accompanied by an adult. Activities include Bible stories, songs, crafts, etc. For more information, call Debbie at 651-776-0761. Also taking place is “Christian Education Sunday” on April 20. There will be a 9:30 a.m. service, followed by a potluck and entertainment.

Dayton’s Bluff District Forum

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