Warm Weather Will Return to the Bluff

By Karin DuPaul

Glen Leroy Blomgren, Sr. age 64 died from complications of cancer on February 1, 2008 at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis.

Glen graduated from Humboldt high school in 1961. He served in the U.S. Army as an MP for two years where he married Colleen and they honeymooned in Europe. Glen graduated from the University of Minnesota where he studied English literature, philosophy, history and the classics. He is survived by his wife, Colleen; son, Glen “Bug” and daughter, Becky “Pee Wee”; and many other relatives; Karl’s Klucks members; and many other friends.

The celebration of his life was held in the lodge at Thompson Park with over two hundred friends and relatives attending. Many stories about his life were shared. Our deepest sympathies go out to his family. Glen will be missed by the Dayton’s Bluff community.

Former Forum Editor Glen Leroy Blomgren, Sr. Dies

Glen was a player, manager, and was the monarch of Karl’s Klucks softball team for 35 years. He once pitched 107 consecutive innings without giving up a walk.

He is survived by his wife, Colleen; son, Glen “Bug” and daughter, Becky “Pee Wee”; and many other relatives; Karl’s Klucks members; and many other friends.

The celebration of his life was held in the lodge at Thompson Park with over two hundred friends and relatives attending. Many stories about his life were shared. Our deepest sympathies go out to his family. Glen will be missed by the Dayton’s Bluff community.

Surprised to Get the Forum in the Mail? Don’t Panic!

In order to deliver the Dayton’s Bluff District Forum to as many Dayton’s Bluff residents and businesses as possible, it is necessary to mail it to some areas outside of our boundaries. This is due to the fact that several U.S. Postal Service delivery routes include parts of District 1 to the east of Highway 61 as well as portions of District 4 (Dayton’s Bluff) to the west. So don’t worry if you aren’t a Dayton’s Bluff resident but are receiving this paper in the mail. Please enjoy the Forum and feel free to send us your comments. Just make sure you don’t put your recycling out on the wrong day. It might not be every Tuesday as it is in the Bluff.
Dayton’s Bluff Community Meeting

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

The Dayton’s Bluff Community Council holds its Community Meeting on the 1st Thursday of each month. The purpose is to work with block clubs and neighborhood residents on problem properties, criminal and nuisance behavior between development issues and any other neighborhood issues, concerns, or new ideas for improvement in Dayton’s Bluff.

If you would like, you can email or call me with addresses of problems before the meeting. That way, I can get them to the police and DSI (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.

The April Community Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 3.

Meet With The Police

On Friday, March 21 the Eastern District Police will host their monthly meeting for community members. The meeting is intended as a time to listen to and 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.

Be Your Own Boss

The Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Microentrepreneur Class is starting on Thursday, March 26, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the meeting room at the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council at 798 East 7th Street.

This program helps start-up and young businesses on the East Side. All East Side entrepreneurs are welcome.

Classroom training lasts 8 weeks and includes topics such as operations management, marketing, financial management, creating a successful business, and preparing a business plan. There’s also 8 hours of one-on-one time with the instructor to work on your business concept. Those who successfully complete the course, and locate their businesses in target neighborhoods, are eligible for ongoing business support services.

Examples of businesses started by people who have taken this course include real estate, insurance, cleaning services, childcare, health services, art, and food service, restoration of wood furniture and works of art, custom floral design and weddings and events, and exterior and interior painting. The course is sponsored by the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council and the Neighborhood Development Center. There is a registration fee, based on a sliding fee scale. Class size is limited, so do not wait to apply. For an application, call Karin at 651-772-2075 or email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org.

Dayton’s Bluff Community Plan

Dayton’s Bluff District Plan. He works on whatever project comes up, such as park and Neighborhood Clean Ups. Jacob spearheaded the Mounds Park Neighborhood Residential Buckthorn Removal Project and maintains the Mounds Park Neighborhood email group.

Juanita Westman – Parkway League volunteer who helps with everything including daily food prep and distribution, singing the National Anthem, money management and kitchen detail cleanup, not to mention her generosity and thoughtfulness to serve her community, her country and our children with such commitment. If you have any suggestions for next year of people who have been outstanding volunteers in Dayton’s Bluff, email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or call Karin at 651-772-2075.

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

By Nick Duncan

These days it seems like you can’t pick up a newspaper without it being filled with a breaking story about another family’s home being foreclosed on. Drive down any street in the city and you’ll see a home or two, maybe more in some of the less affluent neighborhoods, with the lights off and the driveway unshovedled. In Dayton’s Bluff alone there are over 300 registered vacant homes. In this election year we’ve heard politicians from both ends of the political spectrum and all political parties trying to get the public to think about how they are going to be the one who tackles the sub prime mortgage crisis. We all hope one of these candidates is right, that one of them does have a magic bullet that can solve this problem once and for all, but in the meantime, hundreds of perfectly good homes sit vacant.

The Dayton’s Bluff Vacant Building Committee (DBVBC) is not waiting for election results to attack the issue of vacant housing. The DBVBC is organizing a Dayton’s Bluff Vacant Home Tour to complement the annual Mpls St Paul City Living Tour. The DBVBC will identify some of the vacant homes in our neighborhood and, hopefully, find buyers for these properties.

The DBVBC was formed last year just as the early fallout from the sub prime crisis began to emerge. Initially, the group’s goal was to provide neighborhood input on the city’s decisions when to (or when not to) demolish vacant properties in the city. The DBVBC’s main goal is to keep the city from tearing down vacant properties just because they were vacant. The DBVBC wanted to safeguard the city from tearing down historically significant or rehabilitable structures. This was a very noble goal but many members felt it wasn’t enough to just fight against the city tearing down buildings. The DBVBC needed to provide alternatives.

The DBVBC is hoping the Dayton’s Bluff Vacant Home Tour will be the alternative to vacant house demolition. There are a huge number of historical Victorian era homes in our neighborhood. Many of these homes are some in move-in condition in need of a lot of work. The DBVBC wants to showcase a wide range of these homes. They want people to see the options available with these homes.

Rehabbing old homes in the city provides so many positive benefits, not only to the property owners but also to the entire community. As a buyer, imagine how low the mortgage payments are on a $500,000 home? Imagine, the time you save commuting and from work with no suburban traffic gridlock? Imagine, living in a diverse community only a stone’s throw from some of the most cinematic cultural attractions in the metro area? Imagine, the peace of mind you get from knowing that, while others may be recycling cans and bottles, you’re recycling a whole house. You’re not adding to suburban sprawl or destroying natural resources to build your home. Talk about reuse.

Our calendar: The Vacant Home Tour will be the first weekend in May, Saturday May 3rd and Sunday May 4th, only a few weeks after the Minneapolis/Saint Paul and Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Tours.

Anyone who would like to help out with the upcoming tours or get involved with Dayton’s Bluff Vacant Home Committee is welcome to join. We need your help. Please contact Karin DuPaul, the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council board member at Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or call Karin at 651-772-2075.
March at the Mounds

“The Sign in Sidney Brustein’s Window” is the last play by Lorraine Hansberry, the writer of “A Raisin in the Sun.” This poignant and unforgettable story set against a stormy political campaign tells of a failed entrepreneur, his wife, and their colorful friends and family searching for meaningful lives during a turbulent era in American history.

This play contains profanity and adult situations. It may not be suitable for children.

Performances:
February 22 - March 16, 2008

Tickets:
Tickets are $18 general
$16 students and seniors.
$10 for high school students.

Mounds Theatre Hosts Dream Camps

The Mounds Theatre, Home of the Portage for Youth, hosted two Kidventure Dream Camps during January 21 & 22 for youth ages 7-12 in celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Kidventure Camps are developed and offered through the East Side Education Collaborative as part of St. Paul Mayor Coleman’s Second Shift Initiative offered on out of school days.

Classes at the Mounds/Portage included students participating in theatre and dance movement, creative writing and poetry, digital video and creating Dream Lace! Students learned about Martin Luther King Jr. themes of brotherhood, friendship, equality, freedom and peace as a large group, then rotated into other classes.

The Minnesota Sinfonia will perform "The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba" from Solomon by George Frideric Handel; Symphony #6 in g minor, opus 32 by Niels Gade; and Violin Concerto in e minor, opus 64 by Felix Mendelssohn, featuring violinist Leonid Polonsky.

Concert seating is first come, first served. For special accommodations call Disability Services at 651-793-1500.

Welcome to the City of Saint Paul, “Access Saint Paul Corner” by Angela Burkhalter

The Department of Planning and Economic Development’s mission is to actively create opportunities and encourage investment for the benefit of Saint Paul residents and businesses, which preserve, sustain, and grow the city’s diverse neighborhoods, for more information, please visit our website at: wwwstpaul.gov/depts/ed or call: 651-266-6700.

The Doorway College and Career Resource Centers Grand Opening Dayton’s Bluff Rec Center

Tuesday, February 12th the Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood celebrated the grand opening of the Doorway: College and Career Resource Centers, located at Dayton’s Bluff Rec Center and Sun Ray Library.

The development of these centers was born out of the College Presidents’ Roundtable discussions. A planning group as well as Youth Commissioners worked for a year to create a “Center Framework” and create the partnerships necessary to launch these centers. The Youth Commissioners named the centers “The Doorway: College and Career Resource Centers.” This is a call to all youth to use the centers to make your dreams come true.

The event celebrates both centers, the Doorway at Dayton’s Bluff Recreation Center and Sun Ray Library.

New VISTA member, Fatima Fisher, will provide coordination support for both centers—including recruiting and volunteer for the centers, scheduling college speakers, outreach, etc.

The Centers will be open 3 nights a week and 1 Saturday each month and will have a staff person dedicated to the center, who will help youth plan for college and life after high school. Goodwill Easter Seals staff will be at the center once a month to provide career exploration, GED prep, and help finding internships.

Special thanks to our partners: Second Shift Youth Commissioners, College presidents and their service-learning departments, Superintendent Carstarphen and her district staff, Saint Paul Public Libraries, Parks & Recreation, Minnesota Office of Higher Education, Minnesota Computers for Schools, Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota.

Metropolitan State Hosts Free Concert

Metropolitan State University presents “Great Winter Festival IV - A Moscow Virtuoso” as this season’s fifth and final free concert of the Minnesota Sinfonia conducted by Jay Fishman, on Friday, March 14, at 7 p.m. in the university’s Auditorium, 700 East Seventh Street, Saint Paul.

The concert is free and open to the public.

The Minnesota Sinfonia will perform “The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba” from Solomon by George Frideric Handel; Symphony #6 in g minor, opus 32 by Niels Gade; and Violin Concerto in e minor, opus 64 by Felix Mendelssohn, featuring violinist Leonid Polonsky.

Concert seating is first come, first served. For special accommodations call Disability Services at 651-793-1500 (TTY).

The free performances at Metropolitan State University are thanks to a grant from the Anna and Mel Haeberle Foundation.

Metropolitan State University, a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, provides high-quality, affordable education programs for adults seeking baccalaureate and master’s degrees. It is the only state university in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Dayton’s Bluff Home Tour

The 2008 Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood 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. It is part of the Minneapolis – St. Paul Home Tour sponsored by the Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. The Home Tour is free of charge and open to the public.

Want to help the environment and beautify your yard? Join us for a free hands-on workshop! There will be two Rain Garden Workshops. One is Wednesday, March 19, 2008 at 1st Lutheran Church at 6:30 p.m. The second one is Thursday, March 20, 2008 at Metropolitan State University room 1122 in Founders Hall from noon to 1:30 p.m. You are welcome to bring your lunch. All Dayton’s Bluff and Metro State people are welcome. To register or for more information email Karl@DaytonsBluff.org or call Karl at 651-772-2075.

Mayor Christopher B. Coleman and Second Shift Youth Commissioners cutting ribbon.

The Youth Commissioners named the centers “The Doorway: College and Career Resource Centers.” This is a call to all youth to use the centers to make your dreams come true.

YOU HAVE TRUSTED HOME OWNERSHIP TOOLS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS? CONTACT YOUR SAINT PAUL HOME LOAN FUND FOR: MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE PREVENTION, REHAB, FIRST TIME HOME OWNER PROGRAMS, AND MUCH MORE! SIMPLY CALL: 651-266-6626

Dayton’s Bluff Recycling

Every Tuesday. Have your recycling on the curb by 7 a.m.

Contact Karl for more info at 651-772-2075.
By Steve Trimble

Over the last year or two I’ve written a series of articles that went chronologically through the history of the district. Here’s some new material that I’ve come across. It’s been established that the four coun-

tries have made impossible the grading of the streets or construction of sidewalks. Few lights are provided for the streets,” the article continued.

The road held court yesterday. The yard does not form an inviting retreat for the easy wayfarers of the road. Water, too, stands in one end of the cave, and big weeds grow in front of the cave. It still holds "initiats and curious markes carved in the sandstone" that recalled the "presence of… familiar characters who peopled it a decade ago. They are smoke blacked cans, too, but the cave is deserted."

According to the newspaper, there were over 5,000 unemployed men in St. Paul at the time and many others on the road. "In the old days, Hoboes’ Cave attracted large numbers… of people. Some times as many as 100 men would assemble here. Occasionally the police would raid the cave, bringing in several patrol wagon loads. But in a short time, the cave would be full again, as if by some subterranean storm," the hoboes commented.

As times changed, the location of the transient camps shifted slightly. "1921 hoboes have a new cave. Oddly enough, perhaps, the make their home in the tunnels once used by a brewery at the foot of the bluff." the Hobo Home"

There were other inhabitants-even if you were not a transient under the bluff and an unexpected article appeared as I was looking for information on a 1920’s raccoon driver from St. Paul. It’s quite timely because of the current concerns over homelessness and the recent developments that have brought us the Bruce Vento Nature area. The 1921 story in the Daily News was preceded by another of those familiar hobo haunts: "Abandoned Brewery Replaces Boes’ Cave as Home of Knights of Road."

There have been several small references to the fact that some of the road often stayed in camps along the rail-}

roads track east of downtown in years past, but this fairly lengthy story adds something else, I ran across Dayton’s Bluff material. That’s the good part about surfing around in old newspapers. The bad part is the extra work that it takes to find it.

Dayton’s Bluff and Statehood

While looking at the 1858 issues of the Pioneer and Democrat to see what was going on during Minnesota’s first year of statehood, I ran across an article describing a new neighborhood being grown even in these early times. “A meeting was held on Thursday evening, by the citizens in Dayton’s Bluff, to devise ways and means of extending the erection in that neighborhood of a suitable school edifice,” the newspaper stated. It said that “the meeting was largely attended, and resolutions were passed in favor of erecting a school-house, and for the purchase of a building, and in the meantime a teacher will be employed to assume the charge of a number of scholars, and will commence the term on Monday next.”

This fragment shows that like today, residents did get together to try to improve the community, but it also leads to other questions. Did their resolutions lead to other questions. Did their resolutions lead to the swift erection of a building? If so, where was it located? The area must have been口袋ed up in the past, but this fairly lengthy story adds

Some are very young, others much older, that many people have helped “Build the Bluff,” and others are doing so every day. These “Bluff Riders” help us recognize a-drying in the sun, for even a hobo could seat 1,500."

We want a recent photo of the person being profiled. Concerning past Bluffers, we have not only an old black and white photograph, but also a snapshot of them when they were residents of the Bluff. This was work on the temporary building that would be serving twenty-five to thirty patients and as soon as possible a new building would take its place.

So what does this have to do with finding things by accident? Right next to the hospital piece was a large photograph of the first building that had just been finished for Sacred Heart Church. It was one I had never before seen. The caption for the image explained that Father Valerius North took position in a building that would be in charge of around 400 children.

The new facility was opening on Mon-

day, September 11th. The frame struc-

ture adjourned the church at Sixth and Arc
die and in addition to the classroom-

rooms there was an assembly hall that could seat 1,500.

So there you have it. Discovering the history of a neighborhood takes a lot of careful research. However, and then, if you let your focus wander a bit and let your eyes look around while reading microfilmed newspapers at the Minnesota Historical Society, something unexpected, interesting information.

Looking for Bluff Riders

“Bluff Riders” is a series of occasional articles in the Forum about persons who presently live or work in Dayton’s Bluff, or did so in the past, published when we get news of a recent award or recognition they have received. The award or recognition may be for a specific achievement or career, an educational achievement, a hobby, or some student activity. Our profile will briefly review their accomplishments and who they are and their connection to the Bluff. We want a recent photo of the person being profiled. Concerning past Bluffers, we have not only an old black and white photograph, but also a snapshot of them when they were residents of the Bluff. These “Bluff Riders” help us recognize that many people have helped “Build the Bluff,” and others are doing so every day.

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Welcome Bags are Available

The Dayton’s Bluff welcome bags are designed for new Dayton’s Bluff residents and businesses. If you are new to Dayton’s Bluff, or have a new neighbor, stop by the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council office and pick up a welcome bag.

In 2006 ten Dayton’s Bluff residents and staff members attended the Neighborworks Community Leadership Institute “Peak Performance: Building Residents’ Skills to Add Community Value” conference in Nashville, Tennessee. The Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service sponsored the Dayton’s Bluff residents at the four-day conference.

Workshops at the conference included: Reaching Out to the Emerging Populations, Resident Led Neighborhood Revitalization, Marketing to the Young Professional, Your Neighborhood, and Working in Diverse Communities.

At the end of the conference each neighborhood group chose a project to work on back home. Dayton’s Bluff attendees decided to work on updating the “Welcome to Dayton’s Bluff” packet for new residents. Nancy Larson, a graphic arts designer, redrew a number of the original brochure illustrations. Diane May designed the logo for the bags.

The tote bags arrived from the printer and the group had a celebratory ribbon cutting. With the brochure information into the bags, Charlie Golden is working on collecting information from Dayton’s Bluff businesses for the tote bags. Deanna Layer and Paul Broderson are working on collecting coupons from businesses to go in the bags.

The welcome bags are available to new residents at the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council office at 798 East 7th Street. For information email Karin@daytonsbluff.org or call her at 651-772-2075 to get the form and get listed.

Letter to the Editor

3M is Leaving - So What Do We Do About It?

I see that 3M has finally decided to leave and sell all of its land in Dayton’s Bluff. Even though it came as no big surprise, it was surprising to see how little has been said about the re-use of the land. I remember when the Ford plant announced they were going to stop production. There was a great cry from the politicians about the need to plan what would take the automaker’s place.

A big committee was set up with representatives from a variety of groups, including the police departments for years now, including the Minneapolis Community Revitalization, Marketing to the Young Professional, Your Neighborhood, and Working in Diverse Communities.

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The Strip Club – It’s Not What You Think

By Danilla Bell

The Strip Club in Dayton’s Bluff.

However, the actual dishes have sophistication... 

The atmosphere of The Strip Club contributes... 

The Strip Club offers a menu that features a small plate selection with an iron spiral staircase leading to a second floor loft. The lighting is low with lots of red velvet and Victorian English pub decor - fireplace mantles and faux floral arrangements.

The Strip Club’s French Fries, which are perfectly done, Duck Confit, which is melt-in-your-mouth, Winter Tomato, lightly roasted and stuffed with shaved horse radish, Northern Lights blue cheese, and Grilled Meat on a Stick, which changes daily and is a perfect little anticipa... 

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Greetings from the Council President

By Wally Waranka, President, Dayton’s Bluff Community Council

I am sure that those of you who have followed my writings in the paper see that I am a big believer in our neighborhood.

There are many things I see happening every day around us; some feel negative, yet many are very positive. This forum is a wonderful way for me to express my thoughts and feelings about the community. But, I want to hear from you. What do you think about the neighborhood we call home, where we work, or choose to do business?

What I would like to do this year, as President of the Community Council, is to invite you to write me about what it is that brought you here or what keeps you staying.

Positive or negative, anonymous or signed, I don’t mind at all.

For reasons stated in previous articles, I continue to be proud of Dayton’s Bluff and will continue my work to let others know what a great place this is to live in.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Joins Together with Hmong Community

By Erin Sobuski

Bethlehem Church, at 655 Forest St., has been a traditional German Lutheran Church since 1887. But in the late 1990s a Hmong Ministry was established to support the growing Hmong community in the Twin Cities. Through the years they have integrated the American and Hmong cultures. So now instead of the focus being on various family clans, Bethlehem is shifting the focus to the “we’re all Christians” clan, according to Pastor Robert Krueger, who has served at the church for more than 20 years.

The church has an English service at 9 a.m. and a Hmong service at 11:15 a.m. In between services there is an integrated Sunday school and English and Hmong Bible study group. The classes have been successful according to church member Mani Heu. “The biggest challenges are parent involvement and lack of Hmong Sunday school teachers,” he says. “There are a lot of opportunities there.”

Also, every fifth Sunday and on special holidays (e.g., Easter, Christmas) there is one combined service, where the gospel is in English and the sermon given in English. In fact, the choir is phonetically learning Hmong and German. At last year’s Christmas Eve sunlight service, verses of songs were sung alternately in English, Hmong and German.

Tacking it one step further, Associate Pastor Nathan Raddatz recently started a Hmong-language class at the University of Minnesota. The majority of students in the class are younger Hmong who are trying to stay in touch with their culture. Because there has never been a Hmong pastor at Bethlehem for more than three years, they believe Raddatz learning the language is a great step forward in communicating the church’s spiritual and physical (food, shelter, etc.) offerings.

According to Pastor Krueger “Hmong in Christ,” a women’s club headed by Heu. Traditional Hmong religious women’s clubs are called “Nam Takh,” which translates to “mom of the house.” This denotes that women must be married to join. Knowing this would exclude many women, Heu challenged the group to be more inclusive, which resulted in the vision behind Sisters in Christ.

There are currently 25 members whose focus is to reach out to the community to strengthen faith and fellowship. One of the recent activities of the group was an outing to Feed My Starving Children, an organization that relies on volunteers to hand pack nutritious meals that are then distributed to starving children around the world.

According to Krueger, Bethlehem’s Hmong Ministry is estimated at 100-120 lives mostly in the suburbs. Typically Hmong churches are in the city, so obviously suburbs are welcome. But Krueger, Raddatz and Heu would all like to see increased involvement from the Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood. As Heu noted, “We have found a nice, welcoming home here at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.” For more information, please call the church at 651-776-4737.

Bao Vang is HAP’s New Executive Director

By Ed Lambert, Executive Director, Dayton’s Bluff Community Council

The Hmong American Partnership (HAP) was founded some 17 years ago and has a fine facility on the Eastside at 1075 Arcade St. (built about 2 years ago). HAP is an Eastside institution, and provides various social services to Hmong residents of the Eastside and throughout the metro area. The organization is in the midst of some major changes, however, as it adapts to the rapidly changing needs of the Hmong community, and the communities where they have established facilities to serve their clients.

Those changes, and HAP’s carefully organized process of figuring out how to adapt to them, led the Board of Directors to select a change in leadership last summer. Thus, William Yang, HAP’s Executive Director for some 12 years has moved on, and a former Dayton’s Bluff homeowner, who still owns business property in Dayton’s Bluff, was selected as HAP’s new Executive Director last August.

I met with Bao Vang at her office to try to learn her and learn more about HAP and the changes that brought Bao in to serve as its Executive Director for the next phase of its development.

It is a substantial “re-visioning” approach that was formed to focus this process, and was already in place before Bao was hired in August of last year. The process focuses on entering into a broad Community Engagement with the communities in which HAP facilities are located, as well as with its stakeholders (including funders, clients, staff, the Hmong community, and the residents and businesses of the Eastside and Frogtown). She sees Dayton’s Bluff as an important area for their focus on the Eastside.

Key parts of the engagement involve retreats (including extensive staff reflection experiences), community listening sessions; and several, more structured, focus groups organized around getting answers to some compelling questions about HAP’s purpose and future. Some 12-24 listening sessions and focus groups are being held between September 2007, when they kicked off the process, to the end of February 2008 when they hope to have the “input” phase largely completed. Board action on ideas emerging from the process may take place during this period, but this spring is the target for defining a new vision for HAP’s purpose and future direction.

Bao Vang has a BA in Accounting and Management from St. Kate’s college in Saint Paul and won a Bush Fellowship in 2005. She Fellowships enabled her to complete a Masters Degree in Public Administration and Management at Hamline University. She has been a resident of the Saint Paul area since her family emigrated here from Laos (via Hawaii) in late 1980 when she was only 10. Bao has held a number of government and non-profit management and accounting positions, including serving as a Human Services Manager for Ramsey County just before she joined HAP.

Bao presently lives in Frogtown with her husband and 3 children. They still own property in Dayton’s Bluff, however, having built a new duplex near the music school of Reaney and Cyprus, which serves as an assisted living facility for Hmong Elders. She is also President of the Community School of Excellence near Blaisdell and Snelling in Saint Paul. That’s a K-6 Charter school focused on Academic Excellence, and on Hmong cultural preservation. A major ongoing activity of the school is connecting Hmong people around the world with each other, and their cultural history. The student body is mostly Hmong, but not entirely as the school is open to all kids interested in its mission and activities.

Somewhere in her future, however, is a time when she hopes to start a K-12 school for girls in Laos. It’s her long time personal passion, and interesting, a way to establish a it in the not too distant future.

HAP has historically served Hmong families and individuals in refugee resettlement service. Their current programs are grouped into four areas: Youth and Family Services, Education (adult learning and ESL), Employment services (including resume help and actual job development), and the Elders Program (daily event that combines physical and mental healthy living in this climate, etc.). They have an office in Frogtown on the corner of University and Western since 2002, and they plan to build a full blown facility in Dayton’s Bluff, to replace their current to their headquarters and main facility on Arcade.

The Board, as well as the larger Hmong community, hopes that HAP’s functions had not changed much since the beginning days and it was probably time to update and re-visualize what their current purpose and mission should be. The current dynamic is to take a more proactive approach to assessing and making needs in the larger community, as well as in the larger community in which the Hmong live.

With that said that HAP wants to take on a more involved and engaged role in working, as a community partner, with the Eastside and Frogtown to help improve the quality of life for all in their traditional clients. The will also continue some of their traditional social services, but open up enrollment to community residents who are not Hmong, as well. Help for refugees will also continue as an important program interest, but would likely include ethnic groups other than Hmong, such as the “Karen” people of Burma/Myanmar, and the Somali, among others. The main focus, however, is a broader role in beyond community social services and refugee resettlement, to include overall community improvement efforts that benefit everyone.

The team sees outside their “comfort zone” and reaching for creative and innovative approaches for using their resources, to be more coming more effective by building strong partnerships and collaborations on the Eastside and to become more flexible and adaptive as an organization. HAP is inviting everyone who has ideas for them to consider, or wants to participate in the re-visioning process, to contact Mike Yang at miking@hmgpartners.org. You can also call her at 651-495-1529 for more information, and/or to explore participation in this exciting and challenging new journey that HAP and the Hmong have set for themselves.
Think Globally Sew Locally

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The Gentle Art of Moving

Gentle Transitions is a unique company committed to helping older adults not only with the logistical and physical aspects of moving, but also with the emotional component that can be ever present when one is leaving a home of many years. Since 1990, they have moved thousands of older adults and are leaders nationally and locally in the expanding move management industry. In the past months, Gentle Transitions has offered a number of educational seminars on preparing for a move for Kiddahl Park Point, the new senior cooperative opening this month. As a result, Gentle Transitions is working with numerous Northside residents and their upcoming moves.

Moving for older adults often involves downsizing, leaving a home of many years, making many decisions and pulling together numerous details. “We take the stress out of the move for our clients, so they can sit back, relax and rest assured that every detail will be handled with tender loving care. The key to our service is not what we do, it’s how we do it—compassion and understanding are paramount,” explains Bjoerkm. “But if we can find a new home for those items that the client finds emotionally satisfying, it becomes a win-win. We recognize the fact that those "treasures" hold memories and respect the feelings that go along with that.”

Gentle Transitions coordinates getting rid of the items that do not go with the client through a variety of methods, such as shipping them to children, coordinating an estate sale, getting them to charitable organizations, mentions, putting them on consignment, embay, etc. In a period of 4-6 hours a Gentle Transitions team carefully packs the entire home. They arrange for and supervise a moving company and then unpack and totally resettle their clients within the same time frame. The frosting on the cake is preparing the new residence. From picture hanging, making the beds, setting up stereo, television and computer, setting clocks and stocking the kitchen, it’s an immediate feeling of “Welcome Home!”

Gentle Transitions would like to work with seniors in Dayton’s Bluff. Call 952-944-1028/651-224-0335 or visit www.gentletransitions.com.

Remember to Spring Ahead when Daylight Saving Time begins on March 9th even though it won’t be Spring yet.

Get Your Free EXTRA

The Bluff’s NEW email newsletter, The DBDF EXTRA, is now available by visiting www.daytonsbuff.org and signing up on our home page. It’s free, interesting, and keeps you informed about happenings in Dayton’s Bluff between issues of this newspaper. Unsubscribing is easy anytime, just by clicking on the unsubscribe link in every issue of the free EXTRA. It’s your quick and easy connection to Dayton’s Bluff.

The Dayton’s Bluff District Forum’s April Fool’s Day issue is coming next month. Be afraid. Be very afraid. Tasteful articles, photos and cartoons are welcome. Call Karin 651-772-2075 for more information.

“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.

“Power Hour” at St. John Lutheran School

St. John Lutheran School presents the free “Power Hour” every Thursday, now 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. St. John Lutheran School, 771 Margaret St., 651-776-2763.

Dayton’s Bluff District Forum

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