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Dayton’s Bluff Celebrated and Recognized

Over 150 people attended the Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Celebration and Recognition Dinner on May 15th. It was organized by the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council to recognize people and organizations that have had a positive and lasting impact on the quality of life in Dayton’s Bluff.

The event, which was held in the St. John’s Catholic Church hall, began with some welcoming remarks by Ed Lambert, executive director of the Community Council. He was followed by St. Paul City Council President and Ward 7 Councilperson Kathy Lantry who spoke about Celebrating Dayton’s Bluff.

After a buffet dinner provided by the Dari-ette Drive-In on Minnehaha, with purchased and homemade desserts from community members, door prizes from Rainbow Foods and the Downtowner Car Wash were raffled off and won by four lucky attendees.

Next came a presentation by members of East Side Voice, a group of local teenagers who gave a presentation concerning their work in Dayton’s Bluff and then performed a short skit about what their lives could be like in the future. Community Council president Avinash Viswanathan then presented the Recognition Awards.

First up was the Positive Force for Youth Award given to Steve Randall. Steve has been a Recreation Leader at the Dayton’s Bluff Recreation Center for 15 years, and volunteered there two years before that.

Second, the Dedicated Community Volunteer Award went to Fred Kaphingst, a retired St. Paul Police officer who has put in thousands of volunteer hours at the Historic Mounds Theatre.

Finally, Jim Erchul accepted the Remarkable Community-Building Organization Award on behalf of Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Housing Service, a nonprofit company that has been engaged with the housing needs of Dayton’s Bluff for over 25 years. Jim Erchul has been executive director of DBNHS for 18 of those years.

The evening wrapped up with a few words of thanks and an ovation by the crowd.

The food was good, the company was great and the speeches were short. It was a perfect evening and fun for everyone.

Over 150 people attended the Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Celebration and Recognition Dinner that was held in the St. John’s Catholic Church hall on May 15th.

Dayton’s Bluff Celebrated and Recognized

There was plenty of food at the dinner provided by the Dari-ette Drive-In on Minnehaha. It included several types of pasta, Caesar salad and Italian bread.
Meet with the police
The Eastern District Police host their monthly meetings for community members at 722 Payne on the corner of Payne and Minnehaha Avenues. One is on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. and the other on the third Friday of each month at 9:30 a.m. In June the meetings are on the 17th and 19th.

The meetings are intended as a time to listen to and address people’s concerns about crime and other issues on the East Side.

Take a Hike
Dayton’s Bluff Take a Hike occurs on the first Saturday of most months. The next hike is on Saturday, June 6. We meet at 10:30 a.m. in Indian Mounds Park at Earl St. and Mounds Blvd.

We’ll hike from Mounds Park to the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and then walk along the Bruce Vento Recreational Trail through Swede Hollow Park to the new East Side Heritage Park. Along the way we will share stories and learn local history of the area. The hike is about four miles long with some moderately rough terrain. Transportation will be available to return to Mounds Park, if needed.

Join us and explore some of our parks and learn about the trail. For more information contact Karin at 651-772-2075 or Karin@DaytonsBluff.org.

Get rid of a junk car
Budget Towing of Minnesota, Minnesota’s largest towing company, is owned by Roy Carlson, an active Dayton’s Bluff Community Council board member.

Budget Towing will remove any junk car or truck—located anywhere in Saint Paul—and dispose of it at no charge to the vehicle owner or the property owner where it is located. The vehicle owner will receive paperwork for a tax donation, and Roy will also make a small donation to the Community Council for each car he tows.

Just call Karin at 651-772-2075 to find out how you can get a junk car out of the way—and help clean up Dayton’s Bluff.

2009 Neighborhood Home Tour

The next Community Meeting is Thursday, June 4 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 The Dayton’s Bluff Community Council holds its Community Meeting on the 1st Thursday of each month. The purpose of the meeting is to work with block clubs and neighborhood residents on problem properties, criminal and nuisance behavior, code enforcement issues and any other neighborhood issues, concerns, and/or new 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. All Dayton’s Bluff residents are welcome to attend. If you want more information email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or call Karin at 651-772-2075.

Dayton’s Bluff business class
The next Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Microentrepreneur Class is starting in September 2009. This program helps start-up and young businesses on the East Side. All East Side entrepreneurs are welcome.

Class training lasts 8 weeks and includes topics such as operations management, marketing, financial management, one to one assistance with creating a successful business, and preparing a business plan, plus 8 hours of one on one time with the instructor. Those who successfully complete the course and locate their businesses in target neighborhoods are eligible for ongoing business support services.

Some examples of businesses started by people who have previously taken this course include graphics, landscaping, photography, food service, restoration of wood furniture and works of art, custom floral design for 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 small registration fee based on a sliding fee scale. The next session will start in September 2009 and class size is limited.

Please call Karin at 651-772-2075 or email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org for an application.

Block club meetings
• Wilson Avenue Block Club meets on the second Wednesday of each month at Mounds Park United Methodist Church, at Earl and Euclid, at 6:30 p.m.
• Lower Dayton’s Bluff Block Club Kickball meets on the second to the last Tuesday of each month at Dayton’s Bluff Rec Center at 800 Conway at 6:30 p.m. Kids and parents are welcome. Kids play, parents talk.
• Margaret Rec Center Block Club meets on the second Thursday of each month at the Margaret Rec Center, at Margaret and Frank, at 6:30 p.m.
• Beech/Margaret 654 Block Club meets on the last Thursday of each month at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church at Margaret and Forest at 6:30 p.m. This block club covers the area Minnehaha, Beech Margaret, 6th, 5th, and 4th between Cypress and Arcade.
• Frank Street Block Club meets on the third Wednesday of each month at Immanuel City of Refuge Healing Temple at 815 Frank Street at 6:30 p.m. This block club covers the area Minnehaha, Beech Margaret, 6th, 5th, and 4th between Cypress and Arcade.
At the Mounds

Man with a Movie Camera

Director Driga Vertov's classic silent film Man with a Movie Camera will be showing at the Mounds Theatre on June 5th and 6th at 7 p.m. Tickets are $5 at the door.

Shot in many cities throughout the Soviet Union in the late 1920s and released in 1929, Man with a Movie Camera is a landmark of Soviet constructivist film and to this day still astounds film theorists, critics and general audiences. There are no actors in the film, only real people going about their lives, be they exhilarating, tragic, or both.

The Nothing, The Inexplicable, and The Mind

This is not your normal theatrical experience. The Nothing, The Inexplicable, and The Mind will be showing from June 13-16 at 7:30 p.m. The Nothing, The Inexplicable, and The Mind is a work of art that invites you to experience the inexplicable and the nothingness of existence.

The Nothing is a metaphor for the void, the emptiness, and the absence of meaning. The Inexplicable is the unknown, the mysterious, and the beyond understanding. The Mind is the capacity for thought, perception, and consciousness.

These concepts are explored through performances, music, and multimedia elements. The audience is encouraged to engage with the work and to think about the nature of existence and the meaning of life.

Summer Vacation Bible School

The camps are sponsored by St. Paul Lutheran Church and are designed to give children grades 1-8. The girls camp will be held from June 15-18 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The boys camp will be held from June 19-22 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Both camps will feature Bible stories, fun activities, and lunch. Information can be found at www.moundstreath.org.

Auditions in June for Murder at the Prom

Auditions for the Young Artists Initiatives’ (YAI) interactive murder mystery, MURDER AT THE PROM, are coming up quick! Auditions are June 1 and 2 from 6:00PM-9:00PM at our headquarters located within First Lutheran Church, 463 Maria Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55106-4428 (next to Metro State University). Rehearsals are 6:00PM-9:00PM, Sundays through Thursdays from June 7 to July 22.

MURDER AT THE PROM is part of the Young Haven Summer Theatre. There are shows that often tackle more challenging issues or texts and cater to older youth actors, typically ages 12-18. This particular production takes place in the summer with high school age characters. Those auditioning must be 12-18. Auditioners will need to prepare a 30 second comedic monologue (a speech from a play or movie) as given by the script director. Please note that a large portion of this show is also improvised which means actors who are asked to attend call backs will be expected to decide on the spot. Please direct audition questions to Jefferson@youngartistismsmn.org.

Performance date and times for MURDER AT THE PROM are as follows.

Thursday, July 23rd at 7:30PM
Friday, July 24th at 7:30PM
Saturday, July 25th at 7:30PM
Thursday, July 30th at 7:30PM
Friday, July 31st at 7:30PM
Saturday, August 1st at 7:30PM

Subterranean Twin Cities book reading

Author Greg Brick will read from and discuss his new book, Subterranean Twin Cities, on Tuesday, June 2. This free event will begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Dayton's Bluff Community Council offices, 799 East 7th St.

In the book, urban spelunker Brick takes us on a tour under the streets and into the many caves, tunnels, and other underground spaces that make up the Twin Cities' vast underground landscape. It is particularly appropriate that author Brick is making an appearance in Brick's own neighborhood. In downtown St. Paul, the neighborhood is home to many of the places he discusses in his book. A few favorites, perhaps foolishly, Brick residents have explored these secret places and given them names, dangers, and even nicknames.

The environment is as various as the Twin Cities' vast underground landscape. It is particularly appropriate that author Brick is making a reading and discussion appearance in Brick's own neighborhood. In downtown St. Paul, the neighborhood is home to many of the places he discusses in his book. A few favorites, perhaps foolishly, Brick residents have explored these secret places and given them names, dangers, and even nicknames.

Please call Racenn Ruth at the Por
tage for Youth to register at 651-772-8674 or visit the Mounds Theatre website at www.moundstreath.org for more information and to download a registration form.

Basketball Camp

Hone your basketball skills, make new friends and learn lessons for life at the Path To Victory Basketball Camp.

The camp is for boys and girls entering grades 1-8. The camp will be held June 18-20 and the boys camp is June 26-28. Times for the camp are 6-8 p.m. Cost for the camp is $10.

The camps are sponsored by St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church. For more information call 651-771-6406 or visit stjohnnev.org.

Selling your home or just make the neighbor- borhood look better

Easy Steps To Increase Interest

Curb appeal plays a major role in creating a favorable first impression and getting your home sold.

Traditionally, spring is the most popular home buying season of the year. This means, with spring just around the corner, the now is the time to think about sprucing up your house and putting it on the market.

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tage for Youth to register at 651-772-8674 or visit the Mounds Theatre website at www.moundstreath.org for more information and to download a registration form.
By Johannes R. Allert  

St. Paul was a bustling city in the 1920s. Located along the banks of the Mississippi River, as the center for state government, it was also a beehive of activity for commerce and transportation. Looking from the heights of the Mounds Park neighborhood, it provided a panoramic view and a perfect backdrop to the residents who lived up there. In the 1920s, the Mounds Park neighborhood consisted of white, middle-class workers who lived in fairly large houses. Most were first or second generation Americans of German, Irish or Scandinavian descent.

Directly below the heights and across the river from Mounds Park lay the St. Paul Airport (later named Holman Field) where flying North-west Airways was in the middle of its third year of service, offering flights to and from the Twin Cities to Chicago using the Ford Tri-motor to transport its customers. Up until that time, they had flown over one million miles without fatalities.

Air travel was still considered a novelty, even more so in the summer of 1929. Just 2 years before, Charles Lindbergh had made his solo trip across the Atlantic from New York to Paris, which helped opened the door for air travel. The creation of larger and better engines led to larger aircraft. The Ford Tri-motor became one of the first workhorses in civil aviation. Among other new inventions came the development of radio in 1920 which vastly improved communications in the air and on the ground. Beacons also sprang up across the countryside to assist in navigation. All helped in the growth of air travel. The creation of larger and better engines opened the door for air travel. The first one out of the aircraft was Donald Allert and his friends by their home on 652 Mclean when they saw the aircraft go down and heard the crash. My father stated that they were the first on the scene. News quickly spread throughout the neighborhood of the accident, and it was not long before the whole area was clogged with traffic and bystanders.

Once the fire was put out, some onlookers stoked the wreckage looking for souvenirs, pulling out anything that wasn’t nailed down. Local neighborhood kids sold pieces of the wreckage to the crowds of people coming to see the crash. Complaints were officially lodged by the residents of the neighborhood because of all the damage done to their property by outsiders who, in their zeal to get to the crash site, tore down fences as well as trampled over their shrubbery and flower gardens.

By the following day, a joint investigation by F. H. Longeway, aircraft inspector for the U.S. Department of Commerce and Charles “Speed” Holman, Operations Manager of Northwest Airways confirmed that the air crash was due to engine failure and their report was quickly sent to Washington D.C. Exactly 80 years have passed since that tragic day in June. Shortly before my father’s death in February, I showed him the photographs taken the day of the crash. Even at that late stage he perked up and was interested in the photos that I had located, courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society online web site. He had told me of the story a couple of times as he was growing up, and had even taken me to the location once long ago.

In the photo, there are clusters of youth around the perimeter of the crash site. I can’t help but wonder if my dad, his younger brother, and their friends are among the crowd. After his passing I wanted to go back to his old neighborhood and attempt to locate the site and see what the area was like now. Before I could do that, I had to lay the groundwork and do some research. My lifelong friend, Ken Hornby, came along for the ride and to assist in whatever way he could. Our first stop was to the Minnesota History Center where they not only provided courteous assistance, but valuable information as well. I found most of accounts in the St. Paul Pioneer Press to be well written and they helped shed light on the event, as well as the reaction and problems encountered by the emergency response teams.

After making copies of the Pioneer Press, we headed off to Mounds Park. In 2009 the homes in the neighborhood look older, and the population diverse. As we drove another number of homes undergoing renovation. Dad’s old home at 652 Mclean looked familiar, but the color has changed and the greenhouse where his mother would start her plants and flowers for the growing season had been replaced by a wooden deck.

Our biggest problem we encountered was that we could not find the elusive River Street. By the time we spotted an older gentleman sitting on his front porch enjoying the spring day and suggested we pull over and ask him for directions. It turned out to be a good suggestion because the gentleman turned out to be Mr. Steve Trimble, the area’s unofficial historian and history columnist of the neighborhood newspaper. Mr. Trimble informed us that River Street had now been changed to Wilshire Street, and that it was a mere 2 blocks away.

Upon arriving at the site of the former accident, neighbors living there pointed to the exact location of the accident as well to where the original black & white photos were taken which was from the second floor of the home across the street.

The lot where the Tri-motor crashed is now occupied by a stucco and brick home that was built in 1939. All in all a good visit, and it was nice to know that through the years the new people in the neighborhood were aware of some of the history of long ago. My advice to anyone is that if you are interested in something, put on your “History Detective Hat” and do some sleuthing!

References:  
Photos courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society  
St. Paul Pioneer Press - Vol. 76 Issue 176 & 177  
Mr. Steve Trimble  
Mr. Charles H. Allert – R.I.P. (Thanks Dad!)
Dayton’s Bluff will lose yet another part of its heritage when the school year ends. It was announced in March that Trinity Catholic School will close permanently this spring. Trinity was the last Catholic grade school in Dayton’s Bluff as well as most of the Eastside. Trinity was formed through the consolidation of St. John’s, Sacred Heart, St. Casimir’s and St. Patrick’s Schools. As is becoming so common, this was done with no advanced notification of the neighborhood. There was no chance to launch a “Save Trinity” campaign. Well over a century of tradition is being lost and we will be poorer for it.

Joseph Gregori
Dayton’s Bluff resident

**Letters to the Editor**

**Say good bye to more local elementary schools**

It’s been a while since I sent in a letter, but it seemed time to make a few comments. I see in the paper that the school board of St. Paul Schools is proposing eliminating Sheridan Elementary School. The School Board, which usually does whatever they are told, will probably end up agreeing.

Remember when this happened with Parkway Elementary School? It was scuttled without any public hear- ing or any statements from school board members. If you recall, they thought they were clever by stating that they weren’t closing the school, but only “repurposing the building.” Something like that will likely be said again. They already told the newspaper that Sheridan would no longer be used for elementary instruction.

I realize that this is outside of Dayton’s Bluff but it was one of the schools that the ousted Parkway stu- dents were directed towards. It is also another East Side institution that has been or might be on the chopping block.

If you look at the area south of Seventh Street and north of the freeway and from Mounds Boulevard to the eastern city limits, Dayton’s Bluff will be the only neighborhood (non-magnet) public elementary school to still exist in that large area. There have been rumors that the city may be considering closing Margaret Recreation Center and “changes” in the use of the Ross Street Fire Station. Please keep your eyes and ears open and get ready to fight to save what remains.

Your old neighbor,

G. B. LeRoy

**Clothesline Art Show needs young artists**

Calling all young artists, art appreci- ators and history buffs! There will be a Clothesline Art Show at the his- toric Ard Godfrey House, Minneapo- lis’ oldest surviving wood frame house, on Saturday, June 20, 2009 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. (Rain date: Sunday, June 21, 1:00-4:00 p.m.). The Ard Godfrey House is located at University & Central Aves. SE, in Chute Square, Min- neapolis.

The subject of the drawings/paintings to be exhibited will be “Cars and Oxen,” in celebration of ox carts that traveled from the Red River Settlements to St. Paul in the 1800s, during the time Ard & Harriet Godfrey lived near St. Anthony Falls.

There is no entrance fee for young artists to submit ox cart illustrations. Write child’s name, age, medium used and title on back of piece. Submit drawings/paintings on 11” x 14” poster board or white construction paper, vertical or horizontal orientation, by June 6, 2009 to: The Woman’s Club of Minneapolis, 410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis, 55407.

Entries will be on display at the Godfrey House during the event, and may be picked up the two weekends after the event during regular hours.

Free Godfrey buttons for all particip- ants. Subway gift certificates, good at 12 SE 4th Street location, as well as other prizes, will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners in the following categories: Age 6 or younger; Ages 7-11; Ages 12-16; Age 17 and older.

During the event, tour the charm- ing, historic yellow Ard Godfrey House, with hostesses dressed in 1850s period costume.

The regular tour schedule at the Ard Godfrey House is May 30 – Aug. 30, Saturdays and Sundays, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. No admission fee is charged, but donations are welcome. Special group tours may be arranged year-round. For directions and other information, call 612-813-5319 or visit www.ardgodfreyhouse.org. The Ard Godfrey House is a project of The Woman’s Club of Minneapolis.

**World Culture Magnet Spring Culture Fair**

By Diane May

On May 14th, World Cultures Mag- net School (WCMS) celebrated their Spring Culture Fair with a day filled with fun. Not only did the school cele- brate the cultures in Haiti, Central, and South America, but students and staff also managed to have a special visit from St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, give an update on their So- lar Oven Project, and create a Global Citizens Program participants, hold a grilled hot dog picnic, feature both their World Cultures African Drum and Hmong Dance Group, and dedi- cate their playground all on the same day!

The whole school as well as staff, parents, and volunteers heard St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman’s kind words about how young students today have the power to change our world. He cited WCMS as an example for an- swarding President Obama’s “Call to Service” by being the first school in the nation to partner with the Solar Oven Society to help bring solar ovens to impoverished countries.

The WCMS Student Council over- saw the entire school’s collection of aluminum cans to raise funds for the purchase of three solar ovens which will be sent to needy countries such as Haiti or Somalia. Earlier in the year, members of the Student Council took a field trip to the Solar Oven Society facilities. There the students learned how many people in poor countries still use wood for building fires to cook their food; finding wood for the day’s cooking is not easy in these needy countries. Many children around the world do not get a proper education because much of their day is spent finding wood to be used in cooking.

Members of WCMS Student Coun- cil learned how acquiring a solar oven can drastically improve a family’s quality of life in these impoverished countries. The students also learned how these durable yet inexpensive solar ovens are built and the science behind how they work. One solar oven was even brought back to the school so others could appreciate them. It was on display during the Spring Culture Fair.

After the update on the solar ovens, the Global Citizens Program par- ticipants were recognized. The Glo- bal Citizens Program at WCMS is open to 3rd through 6th grade students, but the learning extends to all students. These students have stepped up to the challenge of bettering themselves and the world around themselves. They have voluntarily taken leadership po- sitions in a variety of areas and are our future leaders.

After a musical presentation featuring WCMS kindergarten students, teachers invited parents and family back to the classrooms to see the students’ handi- work from the America’s unit. Later, there was 100% participation in the outdoor picnic and even more sunshine was en- joyed while the African Drum Group per- formed, closely followed by the graceful Hmong Dance Group.

School and community volunteers were appreciated and the 2nd anniversary of building the playground was celebrated. (A few new playground pieces such as the community favorite- the spider climber—were added just last year.) And then the kids were set free to play on that new playground. Principal Mary Weisnadt, other staff, and parents looked down on the joyful playground scene from the parking area and basked in the enthusiasm of their students.

World Cultures Magnet School is lo- cated in the beautiful, old brick Harding High School building at 1075 E. Third Street. For more information about WCMS volunteering opportunities, please call principal Mary Weisnadt at 651- 778-3200 or go to their website worldcultures.spps.org. For more infor- mation about the Solar Oven Society, please go to sovs@solarovens.org or call (612)623-4700.

Continued from page 3

**“Curb appeal”**

**4. Floor them.**

Nothing says, “welcome home” like the feel of smooth real wood floors or a plush thick carpet. If your flooring is worn or “blah,” consider something new under- foot in the entry, living room and/or kitchen. This does not have to be an ex- pensive undertaking. Check out the floor- ing options at a carpet, floor or home store, and you will be impressed with the range of choices.

**5. Add a visual surprise.**

“Find something cool to add to a room in your home, a little visual pop no one will expect,” recommended Stagg. “Like adding bead-board panels to a kitchen island, then painting it a funky accent color.”

Staggs also recommended that homeowners select “green” building ma- terials for any project.

“As a consumer, the most important thing you can do is buy sustainably,” he said. “Choose natural building products, those that truly fit the definition of ‘green.”’

**Article source:** Metro Creative Graph- ics (Printed with permission)
Indian Mounds Park needs friend.

By Steve Trumble

There has been talk for some time about creating a group to look after and improve Indian Mounds Park, the regional park that graces our community. Such an organization is now in its early stages of formation and is looking for as many members as possible. A fun and productive meeting of around thirty people was held April 23.

Some of the recent things that have probably sparked interest in such a group include the tearing down of a WPA era wall, the overnight elimination of the fire pits and the re-routing of Mounds Boulevard intersection with Burns Avenue. All of these were done with little or no notice to the community. It appears that, unlike all the other large parks, there is no long-range plan for this park.

In addition to the physical changes that have occurred, participants raised concerns about crime and suspicious activity in the park. Several park users have complained about drug activity near the playground area. Others felt that the infrastructure had not been properly maintained.

One overarching problem is that this is the only regional park that does not have a recent comprehensive plan, the last one having been developed some twenty-five years ago, and since then, as one person put it “there have been some seemingly uninformed things that have happened.”

The group also reviewed an organizational logo that’s been created by a graphic designer. People liked the overall design, but asked whether it could be changed slightly to indicate “Indian Mounds Park” rather than just “Mounds Park.” There is a concern that calling the association “Friends of Mounds Park” (FOMP) may make people think that the focus is on all of the neighborhood rather than just Indian Mounds Park itself.

Council member Kathy Lantry attended the meeting and agreed that developing a master plan was a good idea. “What you want to do is keep random things from being done,” she commented. “If you want it to be neighborhood driven, you need to control the process.”

Don Ganje of the St. Paul Parks Department was also present and agreed that the park’s maintenance had been deferred in the past and if there is a plan “the neighborhood voice can control your own destiny.” He concluded saying, “the more interest there is, the better the job we can get done.”

There has been a recent meeting with Michael Hahm, St. Paul’s Director of Parks. While he did not feel he could make a commitment at this time to prioritize a long-range plan for the park, it’s generally felt that continued citizen participation and engagement might change that priority.

So what needs to be done? Obviously, more people need to get involved, and there is plenty of room for more participants. One next step would be to join a committee. Three of them were set up and will be meeting sometime in June. If you are interested, contact the people below or call Karin DuPaul at the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council at 672-2075 and she can help you get in contact.

Membership and Organization Committee: Some of the ideas to be discussed include what it means to be a member. Can anyone join? Should there be a quarterly volunteer component as is the case with some other “friends groups”? What kind of structure should be set up, what budget should be established and what goals would be developed? Julie Gugin will lead this committee. Her e-mail is juliejean1@comcast.net

Events and Communication Committee: While people from all over the area, what kinds of events can be hosted to help meet the goals of a vital, inclusive, engaging and fun park that will bring neighbors together? What activities will encourage preservation of the park and engagement of the broader community? What kind of events do you want to see in the future? Stephanie Harr will head up this committee. Her e-mail is stephanieharr1@hotmail.com

Volunteer Committee: It is obvious that a structured volunteer program can help sustain the park. What would it look like and how can volunteers help us achieve the overall goals? What volunteer activities does the organization want to plan and coordinate? Jacob Dorer will chair this committee. Contact him by email at dorero@macalester.edu

The group has started fundraising both for mailings and larger goals, such as the creation of a master plan. The Community Council has been working with another larger meeting anticipated for July. All meetings will be open to the public. Anyone is welcome to join a committee, attend meetings, offer suggestions and help make decisions. The times and places will be published in the Forum, so if you are interested in joining the effort be sure to read the next papers carefully. If you can’t show up, forward your comments to someone so your ideas will be included.

Support your friendly neighborhood newspaper.
Advertise in the Dayton’s Bluff District Forum
Call 651-772-2075
Local “merchant of hope” Kathie Tope retires from ECFE

By Meg Gronau

My two small children and I started attending Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) at Dayton’s Bluff in September 2007. We joined for something to do weekday mornings, and because it was affordable.

It occurred to me that ECFE might count as preschool. I didn’t even know that ECFE had actual teachers… for the parents as well as the kids.

But boy, is ECFE preschool all right. It never occurred to me that ECFE had actual teachers. It captures Tope beautifully.

“Her inner child is still alive and well,” Cogelow says. Cogelow, who mostly retired from Dayton’s Bluff ECFE last year, made sure we parents know exactly how lucky our children are to get to play with Tope a few hours per week.

“Play” is what Tope does with her students, who (thank goodness!) have no idea they’re on the cutting edge of early education. Current research shows that young children desperately need to play — with blocks, balls, dolls, dishes, plants, animals, food, books, sand, soap (just to name a few!), not to mention with other children and with caring adults in order to develop their full potential. So that’s what Tope does with them. She allows each child to explore and the answer never involves shame or hollering — always love and affirmation.

Kathie Tope is one of the very best preschool teachers there is. She’s retiring this year, after 34 years of service to Dayton’s Bluff ECFE.

“Merchant of hope” is the phrase used by author and educator Crystal Kuykendall, to describe the power and influence that ECFE teachers (or “ECFE professionals”) have.

“Kathie is proof you can be a trying child and grow up okay,” Cogelow said.

In the fall of 1975, while earning her teaching degree from the University of Minnesota, Tope interned at the Dayton’s Bluff ECFE. That spring she was hired as an aide and, after graduating and (hooray!) volunteering at Dayton’s Bluff ECFE.

“Kathie’s tenor singing voice and heartfelt belly-laugh will be missed in the ECFE classrooms. She plans to spend her newfound free time gardening, quilting, and (hooray!) volunteering at Dayton’s Bluff ECFE.”

A retirement open-house party for Kathie Tope is planned for June 11, from 6 - 9 p.m., at the Bell Museum of Natural History on the U of M campus in Minneapolis. A light dessert will be served; donations will be accepted to help defray costs. Call Dayton’s Bluff ECFE office at 651-293-5343 for more information.

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They’re still growing and developing, says Tope of our young charges. “GIVE’em love, patience, and — you’ll be surprised.”

A considerable part of Tope’s debt way with children stems from Tope’s own experience as a young girl.

“Kathie, said the girl with an enormous grin, ‘I’ll never forget you.’”

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Talking with young children about their art - Part III in a series about children's art

By Mary Ann Cogelow

"Adults should not teach children to draw; they should learn from them." I argued in the Forum in April and May that art has the potential to contribute to children's development and that adults can support children in their use of art activities in a number of ways by providing materials and opportunities and by honoring the developmental process which unfolds as children explore and experience art. Adults also support children's art by paying real attention, and by remembering that children (the artists) are the experts, both on their processes and products. Adults can also enrich art activities in children's lives by talking thoughtfully with them about their art. Unfortunately, many of us have learned to do some things which are well intentioned, but get in the way of children's healthiest art development.

One simple mistake is in praising children's creations. Adults comments which judge kid art as "beautiful," "great," "wonderful" and the like are in tension with the idea that we support, but chance kind of feedback makes the adult the expert and disempowers the child as creator and evaluator. When we are busy sharing our opinions we often forget that children are the ultimate experts on their own art and deserve to have confidence in their own opinions about it. We can and should talk with children about their reactions to art of many kinds - their art, fine art, book illustrations and more. Sometimes sharing our reaction to a child's creation is supportive. I'm sure Benjamin (who I introduced in the April and May Forum) thought his painting was fabulous though my reaction likely had little to do with his persistence in his work. I once told my daughter Annie that she should draw a castle - just for fun. I had ever seen because it was simply the truth. But we have no business implying to children that our esthetic judgments are the only ones they should listen to - especially about their own work.

Around the same time Benjamin was teaching me, a green-as-grass nursery school teacher, about the value of art, Jamie, one of his classmates, taught me something about the shortcomings of too much. When we are busy sharing our opinions we often forget that children are the ultimate experts on their own art and deserve to have confidence in their own opinions about it. We can and should talk with children about their reactions to art of many kinds - their art, fine art, book illustrations and more. Sometimes sharing our reaction to a child's creation is supportive. I think Benjamin (who I introduced in the April and May Forum) thought his painting was fabulous though my reaction likely had little to do with his persistence in his work. I once told my daughter Annie that she should draw a castle - just for fun. I had ever seen because it was simply the truth. But we have no business implying to children that our esthetic judgments are the only ones they should listen to - especially about their own work.

A different mistake adults sometimes make in responding to children's art is in expecting products. For toddlers and many preschoolers, it is the "doing" of art, which is of interest, not the "making" of a product. Adults too often need children to make "something" long before the child is developmentally ready to do so. They ask the question, "What is it?" which implies that art must be "something" to be valuable. This is unhelpful to most children. A wise child responded to an adult's query, "What are you making?" by responding, "How do I know until I'm finished?"

The adult's focus on product may also lead to some practices which undermine children's self-confidence. One of these is making simple (for grown-ups) models for children to copy. Research on grade school children has shown a surprisingly persistent reduction of children's creativity for many months after they were instructed "how to draw." The impact of demonstrating stick figure people and the like to young children is probably even more disastrous.

We similarly have no right to "improve" children's creations by insisting cows can not be purple, that people's legs do not belong out of their pants, or changing the placement of marks on the paper. (Rhoda Kellogg, the eminent authority on children's art, identified 17 different placement patterns in children's scribbling.)

I remember watching a toddler painting at the easel. Each time she called her mother over to enjoy her work with her, her mother pointed out another blank area on the paper and instructed her to paint it. I think the mom was trying to teach a lesson about not filling up a page, a lesson with which I agree heartily, but in this circumstance, it was the wrong lesson. If mom had seen her daughter as making an expressive decision by leaving some unpainted areas in her painting, perhaps she might have been more able to respect and support her daughter's vision.

Even when children have reached the stage of pictorial art and can clearly "draw" something, adults may find themselves in trouble when they name the child's product. I was watching a four year old at the Dayton's Bluff Early Childhood and Family Education Program at the easel. A scheduled satellite launch at Cape Canaveral had been much in the news for several days, and I thought perhaps she was painting the lift off. I could clearly see a nose cone, a vapor trail, and other features I thought a child might draw on a rocket. I was wrong. Fortunately, instead of saying, "Erica, you've painted a rocket, I drew upon the advice I have been giving parents for many years. I asked her, "What are you making, Erica, tell me about your picture." It's my house," she said enthusiastically. "This is the sidewalk. There is a window here and a window here. This is the door. I remembered the candy house and the identified features. Fortunately, I hadn't insulted her or undermined her confidence and pride by mislabeling it.

"Tell me about your picture" turns out to be one useful way of expressing interest in and the celebration of a child's art.

When children are developmentally ready to describe their pictures, an interested adult can help them make an important connection to reading and writing.

The Child's Right to the Creative Arts

Art is so valuable to the young child that, if its only benefit was to develop the child's creative and emotional, it would fully deserve to be seen as a "right." But like anything else in a child's life, art impacts and in turn influences physical, social, cognitive and spiritual development. In the cognitive area alone, expert after expert asserts that creative art in children's lives helps them to be better readers, writers, and mathematicians, as they grow older.

All parents and other adults have the ability to ensure that kids benefit from art in their lives. It takes energy, some thoughtfulness and some openness. Kids (and art) are worthy of it. And the adult's life will be richer, too.