**Dayton’s Bluff**

*District Forum*

Volume 23, No. 4                                                         www.daytonsbluff.org                                         June 2010

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*Greenspace Committee 6:00 pm
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Dayton’s Bluff

**Dayton’s Bluff District 4**

Community Council
798 East 7th Street
Saint Paul, MN 55106

EPRWSS
Postal Customer

**Business association blooming**

by Ed Lambert
District Council Executive Director

The new Dayton’s Bluff Business Association, formed just last January, will have membership materials ready soon, and plans to have its web portal up this summer as well.

Some 20 local business people are working on the formative stages and are planning a Dayton’s Bluff business fair for Tuesday, September 14, from 4:00 to 8:00 pm, at the Mounds Theatre near Earl Street and Hudson Road. Colleen Mikesh, the event chairperson, encourages local businesses to contact her to learn more about this exciting event called “Keys to the Community.” The overall goal of the fair is to introduce and re-introduce local businesses to the community.

Colleen, a longtime business owner in Dayton’s Bluff, has owned Colleen’s Flower Cellar (www.colleensflowercellar.com) on Clarence Street for 25 years. You can reach her at 651-793-6966.

**Invest Saint Paul Dayton’s Bluff**

At 619 North Street, owner Katie Kalkman shows her home’s imposing fireplace to two participants on the home tour

**Neighborhood Home Tour**

by Angela duPaul

The 2010 Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Home Tour, held on April 24 and 25, was a great success with over 500 people participating. One house, at 723 Margaret Street, sold within the first four hours of the tour on Saturday.

A home near Mounds Park displayed the creativity of its owner, Robert Marino, an artist skilled in painting and carpentry. Each room has been transformed with a different paint effect. The master bedroom features a mural of the Italian countryside on all four walls. Marino is available to help other homeowners turn their own walls into unique works of art. See some of his work at www.robert-marino.com.

A fourplex near Swede Hollow is owned by a young woman who lives in one of the upper units. Her space demonstrates how a fresh and contemporary interior can be created in a Victorian house. Another home, at 1002 3rd Street, was visited by the family that formerly lived there. They were impressed with the changes the new owners had made.

A house on Maple Street survived years of abuse as a rental property to become a lovingly restored family home today. Natural woodwork is present throughout. On Bates Avenue, a home has been resurrected from a recent fire. It is once again a colorful, cozy family home, retaining much of its Victorian charm. And a house on East 3rd street’s remodeled kitchen and hot tub in the back yard.

The Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Home Tour is an event that is enjoyed by residents, visitors, and volunteers. Thank you to everyone who made it a great success.

See page 7 for information on the stories behind 619 North Street and other neighborhood historic homes.

Dayton’s Bluff

“Best undiscovered neighborhood—2010”

Dayton’s Bluff ranks high on City Pages’ annual “best of” ratings, taking first place in the “best undiscovered neighborhood” category.

The Strip Club restaurant on Maria Avenue is the winner in two categories—St. Paul restaurant and best bartender. Dan Oskey is the “ever-gracious man behind the bar.” Be sure to check out the video on the City Pages website where he shows off his handmade tonics and mixers.

The other winners are Swede Hollow Park (“best urban hike”) and the Animal Ark thrift store (“best thrift store”), both on East 7th Street. And not to be forgotten are Mafauna Salvadoran restaurant (reviewed on page 3) and the Dari-ette drive-in, both of which took top honors in 2009. See all the categories at http://www.citypages.com/bestof.

**City Pages says:**

“As places like the Strip Club and Swede Hollow Café bring patrons to the other side of downtown St. Paul, people are getting exposed to the history, beauty, diversity, and culture of the neighborhood. Sitting high on land that overlooks the Mississippi River, Dayton’s Bluff is full of gorgeous historic properties—Queen Anne Victorians, brownstones, and brick mansions—available at a fraction of the price of many other city neighborhoods.

“The area is within walking distance of the St. Paul Farmers’ Market and Mears Park, and is home to Swede Hollow Park, Indian Mounds Park, and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and Regional Trails. The Bluff also has a wealth of food culture. Italian, Salvadoran, Mexican, Hmong, Vietnamese, and Thai restaurants and markets, along with several incredible taco trucks, make the area a food-geek paradise. The neighborhood is also known for the intense community involvement of residents, evidenced by the multitude of programs promoting neighborhood improvement in the arts, housing, employment, and education.”

**Dayton’s Bluff**
Gordon Parks art gallery and exhibition at Metropolitan State University

Metropolitan State University will soon house The Gordon Parks Gallery, an art gallery honoring the life and artistic legacy of past St. Paul resident Gordon Parks. A prolific photojournalist, writer, filmmaker and composer, Parks was best known for his photos illuminating poverty and powerlessness, including “American Gothic,” an image of an African-American cleaning woman.

The university dedicated the new name of the gallery on May 21 with a major exhibition and retrospective of Parks’ work. The exhibition will run through July 2010. “I believe Gordon Parks would be proud to have his works on display at Metropolitan State University,” said Erica Rasmussen, associate professor and gallery director. “As the most ethnically diverse four-year college in Minnesota, Metropolitan State shares Parks’ focus on multiculturalism.”

The youngest of 15 children, Parks used his skills as a photojournalist to tell powerful stories, especially during the 1960s Black Power movement. He became the first African-American photographer for Life magazine, where he worked for 24 years. He authored several books and became the first African American to direct a major Hollywood film. While he directed five films, his most famous was “Shaft.” He also wrote novels, poetry, a ballet and films, his most famous was “Shaft.”

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The Gordon Parks Gallery at Metropolitan State University will be located on the third floor of the university’s current library, now simply called the Third Floor Gallery. The university has launched a campaign to raise $250,000 for ongoing programs in support of the gallery. Some of the money will also support community outreach, including ties with several public schools in the Twin Cities.

“Some people are under the assumption that the state provides funding for university programs such as this,” said Robert Heuermann, University Advancement vice president and Foundation executive director. “In reality, the state of Minnesota only provides 38 percent of our funding. We rely on alumni, community leaders and concerned citizens for the vast majority of our financial support.” The fundraising campaign will support the school outreach program, gallery promotion and six annual exhibitions by a diverse group of established and emerging artists.

Corporations, foundations and individuals wishing to contribute to the Gordon Parks Gallery at Metropolitan State University can do so online at www.metrostate.edu/foundation or by calling Rob Larson at 651-793-1813.

Metropolitan State University (www.metrostate.edu), a member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, provides high-quality, affordable academic and professional degree programs at the bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate levels. It is the only state university in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Please show support for this newspaper

Times are tough and you probably have already been solicited to give to pledge drives for non-profits, to sponsor people walking for a cause or to buy raffle tickets for school or churches. There are a lot of good causes out there. And the Dayton’s Bluff District Forum hopes you think of the paper as a good cause and might be able to make a contribution to help keep the presses rolling.

This newspaper needs your help to continue to cover what is going on in our neighborhood. The cost of printing has gone up and the postage for mailing has soared. In addition, we do not have a strong advertising base to count on. There is currently enough money to publish through the early fall, but after that it’s hard to tell.

So if you value having a local newspaper and you can afford it, please consider writing a check. All donations are tax-deductible. You might consider buying a gift subscription for someone who used to live here and who might enjoy reading about the old home area. Maybe you can talk an area business into taking out advertising.

Any amount will be appreciated and, unless you want to remain anonymous, your name will be included in a future issue of the paper. Please make any checks out to the District Forum and mail them to Dayton’s Bluff Community Council at 798 East 7th Street, St. Paul 55106.

As a special premium, anyone who donates at least $25.00 will receive a set of 12 collectable Dayton’s Bluff postcards—a ten-dollar value—as long as the supply lasts. For information about gift subscriptions or advertising rates, call Karin DuPaul at 651-772-2075. Thanks.

Looking for East Side “Greatest Generation” history information by Steve Trimble

This fall, Ramsey County History magazine will publish an article on the 1940s and 1950s in Dayton’s Bluff, Railroad Island and lower Payne Avenue. The editors are looking for memories, photos, letters and the like to help draw an accurate picture of the life in those neighborhoods. Stories of working at Hamm’s Brewery, 3M, Seeger’s/Whirlpool, St. John’s Hospital and other businesses are welcome. Information about social and cultural life—family celebrations, events at recreation centers and Christ Child Center, the importance of schools, churches, unions and other institutions is also sought.

The article will focus on the home front during World War II, so dig out your diaries, letters, photos and tales of scrap drives and rationing.

There will be a look at the post-war era and the changes it brought. Then there are the 1950s with good jobs and industrial expansion along with more automobiles, drive-ins and television shows that need to be discovered.

If you have personal memories, family stories, photos or other items about the 1940s and 1950s in the neighborhoods along East 7th Street and Payne Avenue, please contact this writer at 651-774-2096 or at steve.trimble@gmail.com
Remodeled building offers “smart” addition to Metropolitan State University campus

by Harvey Meyer

East Siders heading toward downtown St. Paul on East Seventh Street may have their curiosity piqued by a flurry of construction activity at Metropolitan State University this summer. So-called “smart classrooms” are being added on campus.

A remodeled 16,500-square-foot space that once housed the university’s bookstore will be outfitted with sophisticated instructional technology, offering students a high-quality learning environment. This advanced equipment—computers, digital cameras, digital VCR players, digital projectors and more—will be integrated into instructor stations in four first-floor classrooms. The second floor will feature a large conference room, three seminar spaces and 18 new offices.

“We’ve got this technology elsewhere in about half of the classrooms on campus,” said Dan Hambrock, the university’s associate vice president of capital planning and campus services. “Since these classrooms are much sought after by faculty and students, the building will really be appreciated by the users.”

The $5.86 million project cost was approved by the Minnesota Legislature in March. Demolition and reconstruction of the existing two-story building, including linkage with the library skyway, is scheduled to begin in June. Construction is expected to be substantially completed one year later, with classrooms ready for fall semester 2011.

“When the construction is done, the exterior of the building will be architecturally pleasing,” says Hambrock. It will offer a more uniform look for the campus, which was once the site of the old Saint John Hospital. “It will be a real asset to the university and the Dayton’s Bluff community.”

Metropolitan State first sought remodeling funds for the 90-year-old building in the early 1990s. The basement, housing the campus’ heating, electrical and cooling plant, is in good shape, but the rest of the facility was plagued with a leaking roof, failing windows and required substantial asbestos removal. Since 1996, governors have vetoed remodeling money for the facility three times. Significantly, the building, representing an extension of Saint John’s Hall, will provide much-needed additional classrooms and academic offices. The campus has been squeezed for space for years, and rising enrollment has compounded that situation.

“We’ve got academic programs bursting at the seams, because they need more space, and we have faculty doubting up on offices,” said Hambrock. “Once completed, the building will be heavily utilized and a welcome addition to our campus.”

Harvey Meyer is an Academic Writer/Editor at Metropolitan State.

Mañana Pupusería y Restaurante

How many times have you driven down a street, noticed a name on a building and wondered what kind of enterprise is in that building? Well I have, and I finally got to see what was in the Mañana (means “tomorrow”) Restaurant located at 828 East 7th Street. The restaurant has been there for five years and has acquired a great reputation for their good food.

It is a family-run restaurant that started with Rosario Diaz 25 years ago when she began making pupusas from her home. Morice Páiz, her son, is now the owner of their two restaurants, the other located in Shakopee. Morice is also looking to expand into the downtown Minneapolis area to serve their customers who come from Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Burnsville, Minneapolis and of course, Wisconsin and Chicago.

The restaurant built its reputation by word of mouth and from articles in City Pages, on the radio, and in Spanish language publications. Morice indicated that when 3M closed it did not affect the restaurant but the recent recession did. Because of the economy he had to let some staff go and now relies on family members to help out, but he still wants to create jobs for local residents.

Moric and the family are from El Salvador and he is a graduate of Arizona State University. He initially moved to Arizona because of his daughter’s asthma. His daughter Lyla was born here in Minnesota but due to her health, Moric and his wife Candle had to move. They returned when Lyla “outgrew” her asthma problem so they could help with the restaurant.

The food is home made and Hispanic customers often say that it reminds them of home. Morice says, “If I have competition, that makes me want to do better and fulfill the needs of my customers.”

The Mañana restaurant is open seven days a week. Breakfast is served from 8:00 to 11:00 am, lunch from 12:00 to 6:00 pm and dinner from 6:00 to 9:00 pm. On Saturdays and Sundays, the restaurant also serves a variety of soups. They have a website to get more information, call 651-793-8482.

Editor’s note: And what, you might ask, is a pupusa? It seems that Salvadorans and Hondurans vie over who makes the best pupusas. Whatever the fine points of difference between them may be, a pupusa generally consists of a thick, made-to-order tortilla filled with a variety of flavorful concoctions that are rolled up inside the raw dough. They are flattened out and grilled on a “comal” or griddle, then served with a spicy cabbage salad and hot sauce. If you’ve only tried tacos and burritos, you’ll find that once you’ve had a pupusa, you’ll never want to go back, Muy delicioso!

Free Junk Car Removal

Budget Towing of Minnesota will remove any junk car or truck and dispose of it at no charge to the owner. The vehicle owner will receive paperwork for a tax donation, and the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council will receive a donation for each car towed. Just contact Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or 651-772-2075 to get the eyesore removed.
Tidbits from Van Buren School's History
by Steve Trimble

St. Paul schools have been in the newspapers a lot recently. Some buildings have been closed, there are financial problems and numerous discussions of what should be taught and the importance of testing as a way to determine the quality of instruction. So I thought it might be interesting to take a look at what was going on a century or so ago in our neighborhood educational institutions.

I am returning to the St. Paul Daily Globe that is online at the Library of Congress website. I put the key words “Van Buren” in the search engine. For those who don’t already know, Van Buren was one of the local schools that was located at Conway and Maple. The site is now occupied by Dayton’s Bluff Elementary which was formed by a merger of Van Buren and Mounds Park Elementary in the 1970s.

I also put in the name “Laura Hand,” since she was often mentioned by old-timers as a much-revered principal of Van Buren. I hope what I found will be interesting and will show how many things have changed and the way that the educational issues of yesteryear are still being discussed.

Unlike today, there was no need to shut down programs in the 1880s and 1890s. A major building boom was occurring and student populations were soaring. Even though additions had been made to several schools, more rooms were needed. The Globe for October 1887 stated that there were 1,200 more students than in the preceding year.

“The crowded condition of affairs” of the Van Buren, Gorman and Cleveland schools “has made it necessary to hold half day sessions” for over a thousand attendees, the paper said. This was presented as a great disadvantage to the schools, since it breaks into the regular work of the schools and prevents equal progress in the different departments.

Still, there were many success stories in the local area. In January 1888, for example, a Globe article listed a large number of students who had passed “the proper examinations.” People did not automatically enter high school, but had to take specific course work and do well on examinations.

Among the 119 who would be admitted to St. Paul High School—there was only one at the time—were some historically-familiar names from Van Buren: Marie Scheffer, Charles Winquist, Lenora Commick, Edwin Middleton, Fanny Dodd, Rudolph Bjure and Fred Craig. Maybe one of you readers could Google up the names and see what might be found about their later lives.

The search did bring up some information about another Van Buren student a few years later. At the end of the school year in 1895, the Globe printed a large article on students from ten of the best schools. Those chosen were all in the eighth grade and all were going to “try for the high” as the paper put it, referring to their plans to go to high school.

Here’s who the paper highlighted from Van Buren School. “Among over a thousand pupils and in a class of nine, one of the most promising is Miss Marie Stohm.” She was 15 and had started in a private school, but had been in the neighborhood school for five years. According to the paper, she was “practical and void of foolish romance, so common in young girls.”

Instead, the writer said “she sings for nothing but quotas, years not save for trial divisors, and she dreams but of heroes who can add three columns simultaneously.” Stating the obvious, the paper added: “Briefly, she adores arithmetic. Arithmetical fervor has not paled her rosy cheeks and it is needless to add, she too is a blue-eyed girl.”

But back Miss Laura Hand. She was the principal of Sibley School when the head of Van Buren school died in December 1893 and she would take over the helm a few weeks later. Not all welcomed the idea of a woman principal and at least one letter was sent, asking the superintendent to appoint another male. Things turned out all right and it was a position Miss Hand held until her own death in 1917. She was always remembered as a highly successful administrator and educator.

Almost all of the data on Miss Hand in the Globe concerned her duties at the school. However, there were a few scattered comments about her personal life. In May 1894, she was elected second vice-president of the Teachers’ Association at the group’s annual meeting at St. Paul High School. Then in June 1894, it was noted that Miss Laura Hand and Miss Darragh of the teachers’ training school were living at a White Bear cottage until the end of the term when they were expected to take a trip to California.

It looks like today’s concern about school safety is nothing new. The community had its problems around the turn of the century. It was reported in 1896 that St. Paul’s Superintendent of schools had added an officer for special duty at the Van Buren School “to look after a gang of young toughs who have been in the habit of hanging around the building and annoying the young women attending the sessions.”

It was apparently not the first time that the “masher element” reared its “ogley” head at Van Buren. Superintendent Gilbert assured people that “the custom will be stamped out if it takes its special officer to stop each school every night during the remainder of the term.”

But problems still popped up now and then. Under the headline “Boys Make War on Janitor,” the September 24, 1903, issue of the Globe covered the struggle over general public use of school playgrounds and an alteration that subsequently arose at Van Buren Elementary School. The school board had seemed to favor the suggestion but had not made any decision and many people had the impression that the new approach had already been implemented.

Laura Hand, the principal, said she feared the injury of her employee “from the boys of the neighborhood, who have caused a great deal of trouble . . . and who deny the right of the janitor to order them away from the school property.”

It was reported that when they were accosting the janitor, a nearby police officer did nothing to stop the altercation. In addition, there were “a letter carrier and some fire men looking on and enjoying the janitors discomfort, and that some women stood by actually encouraging the boys.”

But let’s not end this month’s column on the dark side. The Globe also covered a September 1902 reception at which, as a sub headline put it, “Van Buren Pupils Show Astonishing Collection.” The article informed readers that a large number of visitors were there to see art that now belonged to the school.

“In the lower hall of the school building were exhibited about 200 pictures,” it stated, “including a fine collection of English and French prints, photographs, a few original water colors and some samples of pottery and brass.”

Under the direction of teachers, the pupils gave a number of events to raise money for “the entertainment fund” which was then used to procure the works of art. The actual purchases were made by Miss Hand during some of her summer European trips.

It’s obvious that at the turn of the century the neighborhood school valued art appreciation. It’s hard to argue with the newspaper’s assertion that the reception showed the “results that can be accomplished by wise teachers and interested pupils.”

A few years ago there was a big to-do over the curriculum in Minnesota. More than a hundred years ago the same thing was happening. The debate then tells a little about how information about our “founding fathers” were highly valued at one time. The debate was over whether or not enough class time was being given to American history.

Miss Hand was quoted as saying that “the lower order, first to second grade, the kindergarten up, the nation’s heritage was featured. Stories of Washington and Lincoln “are told and afterward reproduced by the children.” In the third grade stories of men like Hennepin were given, along with general Minnesota history. All the seventh grade was spent on American history and in the eighth English history was the focus. According to her, there had been a vote among the principals on whether or not to take any Latin history and replace it with more about America. They preferred to have things remain the same.

It appears that Van Buren School was serious about its desire to have the students know the story of “the father of our country.” One 1893 issue of the Globe in February—the month of our first president’s birthday—had a headline “Quaint Entertainment in Honor of George Washington at Van Buren.”

It seems that children of the eighth grade were involved in several recitations, essays and songs during the first portion of the program. In addition to portraying George and Martha, a cluster of costumed students “in old-fashioned state” joined in to perform a “stately minuet.” There was mention in the article of a cherry tree.

So there’s another glimpse of Dayton’s Bluff history that can be found in the online issues of the St. Paul Globe. How do you think things compare today? Celebrating Washington’s birthday appears to be gone, having been absorbed into a “Presidential’s Day” holiday. Are there still security issues at our local schools? What are students today learning? What will people a hundred years in the future think of our schools today?

Photographs are courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society; sketch is from the St. Paul Daily Globe.
What’s happening at District Council board meetings?

Highlights of the April 19, 2010, nonprofit board meeting

The board approved the following action: Write a letter to the city stating the board’s approval and support of the art project (an inside mural) proposed for the Dayton’s Bluff Rec Center by members of the Youth in Action program.

Highlights of the May 10, 2010, housing, environment, and economic development meeting

The board approved the following actions:

1. Write a letter to the city of St. Paul supporting the Mounds Park Magnet School’s application for a variance to increase the height and overall square footage of their new building.

2. Write a letter supporting the Upper Swede Hollow neighborhood’s request that the board recommend the STAR Board deny #10-122 Swede Hollow Flats grant proposal from Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota to build multiunit housing and office buildings on their property. The first building to be constructed would contain 34 housing units plus office space and the Headstart program currently located across the street. In the second phase, the building currently housing the Headstart program would be demolished and replaced by two additional residential buildings. In total, the three buildings are expected to have 100 units.

Neighbors expressed the following concerns:

- Lack of adequate communication with neighbors near the site.
- Problems created by increasing the population density in the small area.
- Concerns about the visual size, materials, and design of the proposed building in a historic neighborhood.
- Negative impact on efforts to preserve the historic nature of Upper Swede Hollow and Dayton’s Bluff.
- Concerned about neighborhood children because of clients who use drugs and alcohol in the neighborhood.

Monthly community meeting

The next Dayton’s Bluff Community Meeting is Thursday, June 3, from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council, 798 East 7th Street. The council holds a community meeting on the first Thursday of most months. The object is to work with block clubs and neighborhood residents on problem properties, criminal and nuisance behavior, code enforcement issues and any other issues of concern or new ideas for improving Dayton’s Bluff.

If addresses of property problems are submitted before the meeting, they will be sent to police and code enforcement officers who will research the properties and bring relevant information to the meeting. All Dayton’s Bluff residents are welcome to attend.

Police community meetings

The Eastern District Police hosts its monthly meetings for community members at 722 Payne Avenue at the corner of Minnehaha Avenue. The next meetings are on Wednesday, June 16, at 6:30 pm, and Friday, June 18, at 9:30 am. The meetings are intended to listen to and address concerns about crime and other issues on the East Side.

Block club meetings

Wilson Avenue Block Club meets at 6:30 pm on the second Wednesday of each month at Mounds Park United Methodist Church, at Earl and Euclid.

Margaret Rec Center Block Club meets at 6:30 pm on the second Thursday of each month at the Margaret Recreation Center, at Margaret and Frank Street. This block club encompases 7th, Ross, Bush, and Reaney streets and Minnehaha Avenue.

Beech/Margaret 654 Block Club meets at 6:30 pm on the last Thursday of each month at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church at Margaret and Forest. This block club covers Minnehaha, Beech, Margaret, 6th, 5th and 4th between Cypress and Arcade.

Frank Street Block Club meets at 6:30 pm on the third Wednesday of each month at Immanuel City of Refuge Healing Temple, at 815 Frank Street. This block club encompasses 7th, Ross, Bush, and Reaney streets and Minnehaha Avenue between Earl and Johnson Parkway.

Lower Dayton’s Bluff Block Club meets monthly in the summer. This block club is bounded by 3rd and Maple streets and I-94. Contact Sherry Johnson at sherryjohnson@gmail.com for the time and place of the next meeting.

Gardens: tours and boulevards

The first of the annual Dayton’s Bluff garden tours is scheduled for Monday, June 28. It starts at 6:30 pm at 324 Bates Avenue and will meander at a leisurely pace through nearby gardens. More tours will be scheduled throughout the summer. Check the Forum or www.daytonsofbluff.org for locations.

Interested in a boulevard garden? It’s been reported that “up-front” gardens help to build community and even reduce crime.

Contact the council office if you would like to schedule a tour in your neighborhood or would like more information about boulevard gardening.

For more information on any of the preceding articles, contact karin@dailystarbluff.org or call 651-772-2075.

Church Directory

Amazing Grace Assembly of God
1237 Earl Street
651-778-1768

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
655 Forest Street
651-776-4737
www.bethlehem-eaststpaul.org

Church of Acts
100 Reaney Avenue
651-771-1261

Ethiopian Evangelical Church
770 E. 7th Street
651-772-7204
www.eccem1.org

First Lutheran Church ELCA
463 Maria Avenue
651-776-7210
www.lovegrowshare.net

House of Jacob
284 Bates Avenue
651-776-7023

Immanuel City of Refuge Healing Temple
815 Frank Street
651-771-0047

Mounds Park United Methodist
1649 Euclid Street
651-774-8736
www.moundsparkumc.org

Our Saviour’s Lutheran
674 Johnson Parkway
651-774-2396
www.oursaviourslutheran.org

Peace United Church of Christ
940 Reaney Avenue
651-771-8207

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Iglesia Sagrado Corazon
840 E. 6th Street
651-776-2741

St. John of Saint Paul Catholic Church
977 E. 7th Street
651-771-3690
www.stjstjp.org

St. John’s Outreach Ministry
1154 E. 7th Street
651-771-7639

St. John Evangelical Lutheran
765 Margaret Street
651-771-6406
www.stjohnev.net

St Paul Eastside Seventh-day Adventist Church
1052 Minnehaha
651-771-2872
www.stpauleastside22.adventistchurch.org
connect.org

Take-a-Hike on June 5

Take-a-Hike occurs on the first Saturday of most months. The next hike will be Saturday, June 5. Hikers meet at 10:30 am at Indian Mounds Park at Earl Street and Mounds Boulevard. The route winds through local parks and trails to end up at the new East Side Heritage Park. Along the way hikers will share stories and learn some of the local history. The hike is about four miles long with some moderately rough terrain. Transportation will be available to return to Indian Mounds Park, if needed.

A rainy day constructing a rain garden at Twin Cities Academy Middle School

Dayton’s Bluff District Forum
June 2010
WHERE ARE WE GOING WITH THE HUMAN RACE?

As a consequence of writing for the Dayton’s Bluff District Forum, I find myself reflecting on the statements I’ve made and the resources I’ve consulted.

Last month I argued that the use of competition as a motivator serves us poorly in doing the best possible job of educating children. For the past month, Alfie Kohn’s assertion that competition teaches children to “regard other people as potential obstacles to their own success,” as adversaries to be overcome, has been echoing in my mind. An inadequate understanding of winning and losing too easily leads to the dehumanization of the competitor, the other, the enemy, and ultimately to a potential loss of the victor’s humanity, for none of us can be fully human when we fail to affirm the full humanity of all others.

The relative merits of competition as compared to cooperation have provided a backdrop for my thinking as history unfolds. On the national and local level, three events have had me pondering upon skills which have much more to depend upon and continue to depend with the capacity of people to rise upon skills which have much more to depend upon and continue to depend.

The web of causality leading up to each of these events is complex beyond my knowledge or understanding. It is inconceivable that, among many other strands, there are not threads both of cooperation and competition in each of these stories. However, I know enough about international corporations to imagine at least a thread of competition playing a role in the oil disaster.

The attempted car bombing in New York and the savagery unleashed in St. Paul immediately conjure up the witches’ brew of poor self-esteem, envy, alienation, aggression and poor relationships which Kohn attributes to the unwise reliance on competition, rampant in our society and schools. It is difficult if not impossible to imagine that Faisal Shahzad, Jason J. Jones, or Joshua M. Martin valued the full humanity either of their victims or of themselves.

What seems clear, however, is that the responses to these events depended upon and continue to depend upon skills which have much more to do with the capacity of people to rise to the occasion using their knowledge and skills to work together solving problems which threaten all of us more or less directly than they have to do with competition.

All of this may seem like a big leap from the questions of how to best educate kids, but it really isn’t. How we educate or fail to educate our children has real consequences. The problems which we confront on our shrinking globe are complex and urgent and defy the possibility of solution through competition in the unexamined ways we have practiced it. It is both morally imperative and in our enlightened self-interest that we do our very best to ensure that every child reaches his full potential as a contributing citizen.

How then to do this? It seems to me that the question we need to answer first is, “Who do we want our children to be?” and the questions which follow from it include others such as “How do they become these people?” What do they need to learn to be these people?

Interestingly, as I think back over much of discussion I’ve read or heard in the last decade or so, these big picture questions are given little time as the focus shifts almost immediately to the details of smaller pictures: “What do they need to know to pass the test?” Despite my willingness to bite off more that I can easily chew, I’m not going to answer this question because I think it is appropriately a question for communities. I do want to be a part of the discussion and as part of it I would argue that its answer has to include a deep understanding of child development, profound appreciation for individual differences, and an insistence that human beings of all ages come “whole” and that education therefore has to consider their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions and the constant interactions among them. I would also argue that education takes place at home, at school, and in the community and that all of us need to see ourselves as teachers and work continually to improve our skills.

(to be continued in the July issue of the District Forum)

Mary Ann Cogelow was a parent educator at the St. Paul Public Schools Early Childhood Family Education Program at Dayton’s Bluff from 1975 to 2008. She continues to write on parenting issues.
Mounds Theatre/Portage for Youth Summer Camp
The Portage for Youth summer camp will run for six weeks, from June 21 to July 30. Registration is now open for kids ages 8 to 12 and is free for all.
Schedules classes include:
Dance: 10:30 am–12:30 pm
Lunch: 12:30 pm–1:00 pm
Theater: 1:00 pm–3:00 pm
Dance students gain a basic understanding of creative movement and will learn to create performance pieces that reflect their personal expressions and incorporate physical movements, increasing flexibility.
Theater students will study acting, singing, movement and set design and will read from scripts to build literacy skills and gain self-confidence in performing and speaking in front of groups and individuals.
Transportation and lunches are the participant’s responsibility and summer camp students are asked to bring a bag lunch/drink and snack. Students must be picked up from the theater by 3:00 pm.
The camp is at the Historic Mounds Theatre, 1029 Hudson Road. Please call 651-772-8674 for an application or go online at www.moundtheatre.org for a printed form.

Youth Guide for East Side available
The East Side Youth Guide, put out by the St. Paul Parks and Recreation department, lists a wealth of activities for the long hot summer ahead.
Aimed at Payne-Phalen and Dayton’s Bluff youth, the guide has athletics, day camps, arts and crafts and family activities.
At least one of the activities should spark the interest of even the most jaded teen-ager. Check out, for example, a “Sister Circle” at the East YMCA, “Introduction to Stage Combat” hosted by the Young Artists Initiative, “The Great Wild East Side: a Nature walk on St. Paul’s East Side,” “Hmong Youth Pride” and canoeing and kayaking at Lake Phalen.
Many of the activities are free or at reduced cost.
The guide also has a map and registration materials for the free Circulator Bus. Available for kids from 7 to 18, the route stops at most of the activity sites in Payne-Phalen and Dayton’s Bluff. It will run from June 21 to August 20, Monday through Friday, 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.
Pick up a guide at the District Council office at 798 East 7th Street or call the St. Paul Parks and Recreation department at 651-266-6422.

Lynx visits Dayton’s Bluff Recreation Center
Rashanda McCants, professional women’s basketball player for the Minnesota Lynx, visited the Dayton’s Bluff Recreation Center on May 13. The 6’1” forward forward talked to the assembled youth about the importance of working hard in school and having dreams to keep them motivated. The University of North Carolina graduate was taken as the fifteenth overall choice in the 2009 draft.
McCants spent time answering questions from the kids, ranging from when she started playing basketball to how much she made and her thoughts about the upcoming season for her team.
She said she has hopes of winning it all next season and that it was great to “get paid for doing something I really like.” Number 8 for the Lynx, who played in all 34 games last year, then demonstrated some three-point shooting, re-emphasized the need to practice and to stay in school and sat down in front of a long line to sign autographs.

Dayton’s Bluff architectural hikes

Dayton’s Bluff District Forum June 2010
As a person who can be deeply moved by everyday experiences, something happened to me that had a profound impact on my perceptions of the citizens of the Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood.

I have been going to school at Metropolitan State University for two years and have rarely allowed myself to walk outside the safety of the campus bubble and take in the surrounding neighborhood. The homes and apartments spider out from the shining windows and protected walkways of our beautiful University. Some of the homes are lovely and well maintained, with bikes and toys cluttering porches and yards. Others sit vacant or abandoned, ragged or disused or misuse.

I don’t often walk through the neighborhood as there has never been a reason. This is where I go to school, not where I live, and these are not my people. But then I started meeting some of the people who live here and I realized that this community has a wealth of knowledge and experience that should be taken in and respected as part of my education.

You can find me in the library at least one day a week and many weeks more. Come spring and summer I will be up the hill in the community garden tending vegetables. There is good energy and I work well in the library. I like the feel of the tables and the view from the windows. I also like the diversity of the people, and the lovely melody of the different languages I hear in hushed conversations. People from all over the world are here with me in this tiny pocket of St. Paul to get an education. I want to know their stories too, but that would be rude, so I smile. I look up and greet people as we pass one another. I do so because I just never know when someone might say “hello.”

Many of the people I study with at the library aren’t students either, they are community members. Some are poor, some are homeless, and some struggle with mental illness. Many live with the threat of all these factors. For many, this library is their sanctuary.

One afternoon after I had settled myself at a first floor table to study, I left my books to find another resource and when I came back I found I was sharing the space with two gentlemen. They sat facing one another with books open but their focus was not on the books, they were there for each other. I wanted to afford them privacy but did not want them to think that their presence offended or annoyed me, so I sat back down and continued with my reading.

They spoke to each other quietly but they did not whisper. It quickly became evident that the man beside me was in crisis and the man across from him was acting as his mentor and confidant. In the words exchanged were remorse, confusion, grief, anger, and hopelessness. After a few minutes of confession and counsel the young man beside me began to weep.

Without looking up I saw his tears splat onto the pages of the book before him; he wiped his face on his sleeve to catch the flow. His counselor did not catch the flow. His counselor did not interfere; he sat silently, patiently as the older man began to weep. He told me that I was surprised. He was much younger than his story conveyed. He was good looking, clean shaven. He wore a heavy sweatshirt but no heavy coat. I was expecting the eyes of a man who had seen years of trouble but what I saw was a frightened boy. I told him I was sorry he was having such a rough time. He just shook his head and said he was all right and thank you.

The man across from me did not fit my expectation either. He was a disheveled white man in his late fifties, heavy with no front teeth. He wore an ill-fitting jacket over a stained T-shirt. As soon as I smiled at him the triangle was complete and for the first time since I sat down, we were all visible to one another. The older man started talking to me as soon as he realized I was open to listen. He told me of his own sadness and misery. His words tumbled over one another as they told bits and pieces of stories I could not fit together. I just listened. The young man beside me sat quietly, tired from his own disclosure.

I listened as long as I could, but I said I had to leave to take a test. The older gentleman responded by wishing me luck and that he hoped I passed the test. I told him that I was hoping for an “A.” He shrugged and repeated his wish for a passing grade. I think his reservations of hopefulness spoke of his own acceptance that sometimes the most we can hope for is surviving the experience.

So, why did this have such a profound effect on me and change the way I look at my role and that of my University within this neighborhood?

This experience gave me a glimpse of the interconnected relationships and the interdependence of the people living here. I don’t know all their whole stories but I want for them the chance to hope, dream and aspire to live as full a life as I am.

I stopped me in my tracks when I realized this young man was already preparing himself just to get by. His only counsel was from a man who needed a helping hand himself. It made me want to be part of a solution or at least part of the hope and the hand that helps. Isn’t there some way we here at Metropolitan State University can be that hand?

I bring an extra lunch every day, because sometimes a smile isn’t enough.

Susan Johnson is a graduating senior at Metro State.

Council president to run for Senate seat

Dayton’s Bluff District Council president Awinash Viswanathan resigned from the council’s board of directors at its May 17 meeting.

Viswanathan announced his intention to run for the Minnesota Senate seat opened up by Senator Mee Moua’s resignation at the end of the 2010 legislative session. Viswanathan is on the staff of U.S. Senator Al Franken.

The District council bylaws prohibit a member of the board of directors from concurrently running for public office.

His resignation leaves a vacancy on the board of directors in Dayton’s Bluff subdistrict D which includes the Mounds Park area and the portion of the district east of Johnson Parkway (see map at www.dayton bluff.org). A resident of subdistrict D who is interested in filling the vacancy should contact the council at 651-772-2075.

Dayton’s Bluff: Where we all belong

As a member of the Dayton’s Bluff District Council, I find myself in a unique position to lend a voice to the needs of the citizens of the Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood. The council is composed of members who represent different districts within the neighborhood and are elected by the residents of those districts.

The council serves as a liaison between the residents and the city of St. Paul, and as a forum for discussing and addressing the needs of the neighborhood.

Dayton’s Bluff is a place where we all belong, and it is important that we work together to ensure that our community thrives.

The council works to foster a sense of community awareness and pride. No material contained in this paper may be reprinted without consent of the editor. Articles and letters to the editor are welcome and may be emailed to CarlaRiehle@fastmail.us or faxed to 651-774-3510. The Dayton’s Bluff District Forum is delivered to every home and business in the Dayton’s Bluff Area. Outside this area, subscriptions cost $12.00 and may be arranged by calling 651-772-2075.

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Editor and Layout: Carla Riehle

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Skidmore Park Community Garden

May 1, community gardeners gather to prepare beds for planting. May 14, planting has begun.

Skidmore Park is located at 1085 East 4th Street between Earl and Hancock streets.

Photo by Bob Wicklund

Nate Johnson and Eric Wickstrom with a Conservation Corps team at Swee Hollow May 8

Dayton’s Bluff District Forum

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