Q & A with Senator-elect Foung Hawj

by Brad Griffith special to the Forum

On Tuesday, November 6, 2012, the citizens of Minnesota Senate District 67 elected Foung Hawj to represent their interests at the State Capitol. 29,853 voted in this race, with Mr. Hawj securing 72.46% of the vote.

As an ongoing effort to connect Dayton's Bluff residents with elected officials, the following questions were submitted to Senator-elect Foung Hawj.

Avi Viswanathan
Dayton's Bluff Resident:
The Twin Cities Metro is home to the largest black/white unemployment disparities in the entire country, with black workers being more than three times more likely to be unemployed than white workers. The East Side is home to growing communities of color, including a strong African American community. How do you plan on addressing this dire issue for our communities as our representative in the State Senate?

Hawj:
I will work with other East Side elected officials, local non-profit organizations and business leaders to attract companies and small businesses to our district. Our goal is to increase local hiring by developing job training programs and counseling to allow local workers to be part of the workforce. In addition, I will push hard to restore LGA (Local Government Aid) to our city to ensure funds reach our neighborhood development organizations and district councils to assist local businesses to increase job creation.

Sage Holben
Dayton’s Bluff Resident:
Housing and Health Care are two primary issues in your platform. I have long been concerned about the adjective ‘affordable’ often attached to each word. I would like to see someone re-evaluate the reality of ‘affordable’ in terms of housing and healthcare. Government guidelines, I believe, use household income as a basis to define ‘affordable.’ However, with soaring costs of living and lower (or no) increase in wages, expenses increasingly squeeze income and ‘affordable’ is becoming a moot point. As senator, with a comprehensive social and business background, what can you suggest so that health care and housing actually are affordable to the working-class wage earner?

Hawj:
I will do whatever I can to ensure that Minnesota implements the Affordable Care Act, including the healthcare exchange promised for 2014. I will support the expansion of Medicaid and Medicare to make sure that the most needy members of our community are not left without health care coverage. For housing, I will seek partnership with other stakeholders or agencies like ISAL-AHI and Habitat for Humanity as well as involving city and county leaders to revitalize our neighborhood. I will also work hard on comprehensive tax and budget reform that will shift some of the tax burden to the more affluent taxpayers and away from local property taxes. As for the use of the word ‘affordable,’ it is indeed a very flexible term.

Stefan Pomrenze, MD, MPH, MATS
Dayton’s Bluff Resident:
Many of my patients are Hmong and live in our district. Like many other Americans, they have acquired diseases related to consumption and sedentary lifestyle such as diabetes, hypertension and gout. How can you as Senator-elect organize the Hmong 18 Council and other Hmong leaders on the East side to meet to discuss the importance of healthy choices in diet and exercise? How can we engage the eating and wellness customs of all of our varied ethnic homeland communities to engage wellness?

Hawj:
Outside of the legislature, I will be happy to join any community function to learn and advocate for healthy living. I believe empowerment must be from within, so I see that the initiative of the community food co-op (Gateway) has the potential for such education, not only for our Hmong-American citizens (See “Foung Hawj,” continued on page 4.)

How do we stop the shootings?

by Greg Cosimini

Contrary to what some people might believe, these gun-related crimes don’t happen only late at night to “bad” people in certain parts of the neighborhood. It’s true that some of these gun crimes are concentrated in very specific areas but they certainly aren’t confined to just a few places.

Many of these gun-related crimes, in (See “Stop the shootings,” continued on page 6.)
Community meeting
The next Dayton’s Bluff community meeting is Thursday, December 6, from 6:30-8:00 pm at the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council office, 798 East 7th Street. The object is to work on community-building, as well as criminal and nuisance behavior, code enforcement issues and any other concerns or good things in the Bluff. Please submit addresses of any problem properties to karin@daytons bluff.org or 651-772-2075 before the meeting. All Dayton’s Bluff residents are welcome to attend.

Dayton’s Bluff Beat Phone
The Police Beat Phone, 651-341-7637, is available for residents’ calls. It is not answered on officers’ days off, when they are having special training, or on vacations. Call about ongoing neighborhood problems; concerns about people in vacant buildings after 10:00 pm; police-related questions, etc. If you need police right away or see a crime in progress, call 911 or 651-291-1111.

Take-a-Hike December 1
Take-a-Hike occurs on the first Sat- urday of most months. The next hike will be Saturday, December 1. Hikers meet at 10:30 am in Mounds Park at Earl Street and Mounds Boulevard, and walk to East Side Heritage Park. The hike is about two hours (four miles) with some moderately rough terrain. Share stories about recent and distant history of Dayton’s Bluff. Transportation to Indian Mounds Park is available, if required. All are welcome.

Meet the police
The Eastern District Police hosts its monthly meeting for community members at 722 Payne Avenue, at the corner of Minnehaha Avenue. The next meet- ings are Friday, December 21, at 9:30 am, and Wednesday, December 19, at 6:30 pm. The meetings are intended to listen to and address concerns about crime and other issues on the East Side.

Small business class begins in April 2013
All East Side entrepreneurs are wel- come to apply for the Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Microentrepreneur Program. The next 10-week session will be- gin in April and includes topics such as operations management, marketing, fin- ancial management, and how to prepare a business plan.

Donate your junk car
Budget Towing of Minnesota will re- move your junker and dispose of it at no charge to you. The vehicle owner re- ceives a tax deduction, and the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council will receive a donation. Call 615-772-2075 or email june@daytonsbluff.org.

Friends of Swede Hollow
Meetings are on the second Wednes- day of the month. Please call to confirm the location. The next monthly meeting is on Wednesday, December 12 at 6:30 pm at 622 Beaumont Street. For more information, email swedehollow@gmail.com or call 651-776-0550.

Basketball season is starting! Registration is open and continues until all teams fill.

FREE ARTS every Thursday evening from 6:00-7:00 pm.

Recreation Check FREE after-school program, Monday through Friday, 5:00-6:00 pm. Limited space available

Judo Class every Monday, 6:00-8:00 pm, $12 per month

Cheer America every Monday, 6:00-7:00 pm, $6 per class

Karate class every Wednesday, 6:00-8:00 pm, $6 per class

Parent & Tot time every Wednesday and Friday in the gym, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon

Messy Fingers Art for kids 5 & under every Friday, 10:00-11:00 am, $38 for 6-week session

We also have a studio and a host of other activities for kids.

Questions?
Call us at 651-793-3885
Stop by and check us out!

2013 Home Tour wants your home, or your neighbors’
A celebration of city living
by Karin DuPaul, Forum staff
Who in your neighborhood recently remodeled their home and might like to show it off? Or be a host with the most, in a classic home? The 2013 Minneapolis & Saint Paul Home Tour is already looking for homeowners and home improve- ment professionals to feature on the late-April tour. Nominations/applications are due Tuesday, January 15, and early submissions are encouraged. It’s the Tour’s twenty-sixth year, and it will be held April 27 and 28, 2013.

“People attending the tour are looking for ideas on how to remodel rooms or ex- pand their homes,” said Tour coordinator Margo Ashmore. They like to visit areas where they can see a handful of homes close to each other and enjoy talking with homeowners. “Homeowners on the tour enjoy feedback and find it’s also a great promotion for their neighborhoods.” It is not necessary to have remodeled the whole house.

Home improvement professionals often help staff the homes, and homeowners ask family, friends and neighborhood advocates to contribute time to host. “A good support network makes it fun,” Ashmore said. “It’s a great incentive to finish up the last few little projects, recruit help at fall and winter gatherings, and identify clusters of homes to call special attention to.”

The tour encourages homeowners to improve existing homes, and to comple- ment the neighborhood if they build new. For more information, call Tour Coordin- ator Margo Ashmore at 612-867-4874 or email mfsahmore@aol.com. The application can be downloaded from www.MSPHomeTour.com under “submit a home.” Or for more information email Karinn@DaytonsBluff.org or call Karin at 651-772-2075.

December events at
Mounds Park United Methodist Church
December 1: UMW Christmas Concert and dessert buffet
December 8: Caroling, 4:00-6:00 pm (call 651-774-8736 if interested)
December 15: Glorious Grocer Giveaway, 10:00 am (open to everyone)
December 15: Children’s Christmas Pageant rehearsal, 5:00 pm (open to all)
December 16: Children’s Christmas Pageant, 10:30 am
December 22: Christmas service, 10:30 am; brunch to follow (open to all)
December 24: Christmas Eve services, 4:00 pm and 11:00 pm

Every Sunday morning: Sunday school for all ages, 9:15 am; Service at 10:30 am; fellowship to follow. Please contact Mounds Park United Methodist Church at 651-774-6780 or visit www.moundsparkumc.org for more information.

December events at
Dayton’s Bluff Recreation Center

Questions?
Call us at 651-793-3885
Stop by and check us out!

The Dayton’s Bluff Rec Center is located at 800 Conway Street.

We are open Monday through Thursday, 3:00-8:00 pm; Friday 3:00-6:00 pm.

[Image of a child's drawing of a kite flying with the text: “Glorious Grocery Giveaway, 10:00 am (open to everyone)”]
“A Christmas Carol” returns to the Historic Mounds Theatre

“Christmas Carol” – Radio Broadcast Show – live on stage – is back for its second year at the Historic Mounds Theatre. Back before television, a holiday season tradition in America was listening to “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens as performed on radio by Lionel Barrymore and narrated by Orson Welles with the Mercury Theatre group. The music was composed and conducted by the legendary Bernard Hermann.

Few actors ever gave more meaning to the character of miserly Ebenezer Scrooge than Lionel Barrymore, who first took on the role in 1934. Originally aired live on Christmas Eve, December 24, 1939, this radio broadcast will live for a lifetime in the memories of those who heard it. If you remember listening, and want to recapture those magical days of your childhood Christmas, or have never heard it, but want to experience the magic of live radio theatre and create new memories for you and your family, don’t miss this production. It will become a treasured part of your holiday listening enjoyment for years to come.

Dates: December 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22 - 7:00 pm and December 9, 16, 23 - 2:00 pm
Tickets: $15 (adults); $10 (students & seniors); $6 (children under 12)
Tickets will be on sale soon on our website at www.moundstheatre.org. Purchase your tickets early, as they sell out fast. Also, consider purchasing tickets for those “hard to please” folks on your Christmas list.

The Historic Mounds Theatre is located at 1029 Hudson Road, St. Paul, MN 55106; 651-772-2253; www.moundstheatre.org.

Friends of Mounds Park

By Steve Trimble, Forum staff

The Friends of Mounds Park had their annual meeting on October 24. This year it was in the downstairs banquet room of 60b’s and was attended by a dozen or so people.

There was a recap of the last year’s events, including a members’ wine and cheese party and participation in the National Night Out and St. Paul Parks Clean up.

The work on the park improvements by the city have also begun, including a new interpretive kiosk and some repair of the Pavilion at Earl and Mounds. Other good news was the announcement that city parks employee Kathleen Angelo would be assigned as planner for the park.

In the future, the group, whose membership is around 45, is looking forward to work to improve the playground and planning a possible amphitheater that could host small music and theater productions. They are also looking for more members. For more information, you can contact the group on Facebook or on their web site at www.friendsofmoundspark.org.

Efforts build to open a food cooperative

by Tracy Sides

Gateway Committee Grass-roots community organizing efforts that began last fall to establish a cooperative grocery store on the East Side of St. Paul are gaining momentum. More than 100 residents attended a community meeting in October 2011, from which a steering committee formed. The organizing eventually established the Gateway Food Cooperative, and, in April, began recruiting member-owners. To date, nearly 130 households have purchased a share in the cooperative or “co-op,” which could open as a retail food store in two to three years.

“Educating people about what a co-op is and what it can mean to the East Side, is an important aspect of our organizing work,” says Sarah Geving, co-chair of the Gateway Steering Committee. According to Geving, that the community, rather than an individual or a revenue generating corporation, owns and benefits from the profits of the business, are reasons many have joined. Others really want better access to healthy food.

A co-op is a business which can range in size from a small store-front to a large, Fortune 500 company. In many ways, co-ops are like any other business, but in several important ways they are different. Co-ops are owned and democratically controlled by the members — the people who use the co-op’s services or buy its goods — not by outsiders; their boards of directors are elected from within the membership.

Other unique features of the co-op business model include the way surplus returns are returned to members, and the emphasis on the members’ needs, rather than just seeking to generate profits. Some co-ops are exclusively for the use of members. In the case of Gateway, and most Twin Cities’ food co-ops, you will not need to be a member in order to shop there.

“We really want to see this as a community-owned business that is representative of and benefits the whole community,” says Tracy Sides, Chair of Gateway’s Membership and Outreach Subcommittee. She continues, “greater access to healthy foods, more jobs, more locally-sourced products, and more money staying in our local economy all contribute to improved health and wealth for the East Side.

When asked about how they plan to accomplish this goal of inclusion, Sides said that the Steering Committee is building relationships with community organizations that serve residents of different ethnic groups, for example, by participating in the East Side Prosperity Campaign, an organization that fosters collaboration across cultures and communities on the East Side.

She said they are also reaching out through the social connections of existing members and volunteers and in 2013 intend to collaboratively develop an East Side cookbook that features healthy renditions of traditional ethnic dishes. Gateway’s effort to reach out to diverse groups during the organizing phase of co-op development is unique among modern food co-op start-ups. In fact, this was one of the reasons the Gateway Food Cooperative was awarded a $10,000 grant in September from the Food Cooperative Initiative (FCI), a national non-profit organization that works with communities around the country, across the United States to help them organize new retail food co-ops as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Another characteristic of Gateway’s situation that FCI noted as unique among food co-op start-ups, is the interest of Mississippi Market Natural Foods Co-op, an established St. Paul co-op with two existing locations and 12% sales growth in 2011, in opening a retail location on the East Side. Mississippi Market responded to the City of St. Paul’s request for information in developing the Hospital Linen Site at East 7th Street and Bates Avenue.

The Gateway Steering Committee welcomes the possibility of a Mississippi Market to the Hospital Linen Site for two main reasons, according to Geving. “Mississippi Market building a store would get the doors open about two years earlier than we could, because they are already established.” And second, “Our understanding is that the more member-owners we can recruit, the stronger our voice would be in helping create a third Mississippi Market location that is uniquely ‘East Side.’” She says. Regardless of Mississippi Market’s plans, Geving says Gateway is aiming to have 300 member-owners by June 1, 2013.

For more information, you may contact the Gateway Food Cooperative at eastcoop@gmail.com or visit their website: www.gatewayfood.org.

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Page 3
Nutrition Corner – Easy ways to add fruits and veggies

by Abbey Mike, Diane O’Brien, Lindsey Russo & Laura Swanson

Healthy diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases, while improving your overall health. It is recommended to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Here are some easy ways to add fruit and veggies:

For lunch, order a side salad or fruit salad with oranges, pineapple, apples, grapes and cantaloupe. Have fresh fruit with yogurt instead of french fries. Find ways to add fruits and vegetables to your evening meal. Grab a banana or berries. For breakfast, have a fresh fruit smoothie with yogurt instead of French toast. Bake apples with cinnamon.

Chop up onions and green peppers and add them to pasta sauces. Add peas or green beans to a hot dish or steamed eggs. Eat fruit for dessert. Make your own fruit salad with oranges, pineapple, apples, grapes and cantaloupe. Have fresh fruit with yogurt. Bake apples with cinnamon.

Call Spangler and de Stefano, PLLP at 651-776-2900 for your family law needs.

Are you aware that if your child is endangered by Juvenile, the other parent, that you can petition the court to modify custody and request that custody be awarded solely to you? Call Spangler and de Stefano, PLLP at 651-776-2900 for your family law needs.

Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services
825 7th Street East
St. Paul, MN 55105
651.774.6999 office
www.dbnhs.org

Fix your home now!

We are a non-profit agency eager to help you accomplish your home repairs using the latest green rehabilitation techniques that may lower your energy costs.

There is no cost assistance for eligible homeowners. We offer payback loans with low interest rates (3-5%) that qualified applicants do not have to repay. Call 651.774.6999 to see if you qualify.

Nonprofit agencies, hoping to better the health of the community, make a request for the city to consider creating a Health and Wellness Center. Most Coalition should be a part of a health and wellness symposium in a leading capacity.}

Dayton’s Bluff District Forum
December 2012

Founq Hawj
(continued from page 1)

but everyone. As for the Hmong 18 Council, it’s a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to build community, resolve cultural conflicts, and increase community resources. My predecessor Sen. John Harrington has been on the board since the early part of its inception and may still be serving at some capacity. Anyone can ask to be on the agenda for their monthly meeting. The Hmong Professional Healthcare Coalition should be a part of a health and wellness symposium in a leading capacity. Most of its members work for clinics or public health agencies, hoping to better the health of the community.

Steve Trinkle
Dayton’s Bluff Resident

Have you done any thinking about what Senate committees you might ask to be on that would best reflect your interests and the needs of your district?

Hawj:
I will help restore LGA to the city so that we can support the growth of our local entrepreneurs grow their business?

the funding, training and resources needed to foster local growth.

Natural Resources Committee, to find ways to Telecommunication Committee, Jobs and Eco

committees you might ask to be on that would community.

agencies, hoping to better the health of the community.

Wellness symposium in a leading capacity. Most Coalition should be a part of a health and wellness symposium in a leading capacity. Most

are always open. This labyrinth offers a safe walking path, a peaceful oasis for reflection and relaxation. And it’s a place where neighbors of all ages, students, staff, and faculty can come together. In time, it will be surrounded by gardens and picnic tables. All in memory of David Barton, who championed the innovative partnership with the St. Paul Public Library to provide my community with its very first library branch.”

The labyrinth is located in the grove of trees on the west side of the library, east of the Swede Hollow bluff. It is at the T intersection where Mounds Blvd intersects with 7th Street East. Though paths won’t be added until spring, the public is welcome to use the labyrinth anytime.

Note: Funding of the Reflective Garden comes from individual contributions. Bagshaw-Reasoner encourages donations of all sizes, noting that $3 or $5 can purchase beautiful flowers just as $50 or $500 can for this very visible and accessible community space. A library endowment funds the labyrinth itself. The endowment enables the Library & Learning Center to continue its commitment to community outreach.

Reflective Garden offers place for peace, wisdom, calm

by Sage Holben
Arts and Cultures Committee Dayton’s Bluff Community Council

Peace. Green and white signs in Dayton’s Bluff remind people to “Be Peaceful.” A small group of residents gathers at Mounds Boulevard and 14th Street to encourage peace, not war. How appropriate that a Circle of Peace™ labyrinth has recently become a part of the Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood. Trougeryes are not uncommon on the greater East Side, but people who live and work here are stronger than any hardships they face. Most are, I believe, people of peace and peace, who look out for one another and for the good in others.

On November 7, Metropolitan State University and community members celebrated the installation of the first phase of the David Barton Reflective Garden and Community Labyrinth. David Barton was the first Dean of Metropolitan State University Library & Learning Center. David died of brain cancer on June 14 of this year. With the completion of the reflective garden and paths, a formal reception will be held in the spring.

The Circle of Peace™ labyrinth was designed by Lisa Moriarity of Stillwater. Ms. Moriarity worked with David Barton’s widow, Marjorie Savage, and University staff in designing the project to reflect David’s passion for gardens. Dayton’s Bluff residents attest to David’s appreciation and respect for the neighborhood and its people. The Reflective Garden and Community Labyrinth keep that connection alive. Nancy Bagshaw-Reasoner, Facilities Director at Metropolitan State University (and 28-year Dayton’s Bluff resident), reflected on its meaning to her: “This project is a dream come true for me. The university is mindful of our neighbors and its doors are open all year. This labyrinth offers a safe walking path, a peaceful oasis for reflection and relaxation. And it’s a place where neighbors of all ages, students, staff, and faculty can come together. In time, it will be surrounded by gardens and picnic tables. All in memory of David Barton, who championed the innovative partnership with the St. Paul Public Library to provide my community with its very first library branch.”

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Read the rest of the community Q and A with the community Labyrinth keep that connection alive. Nancy Bagshaw-Reasoner, Facilities Director at Metropolitan State University (and 28-year Dayton’s Bluff resident), reflected on its meaning to her: “This project is a dream come true for me. The university is mindful of our neighbors and its doors are open all year. This labyrinth offers a safe walking path, a peaceful oasis for reflection and relaxation. And it’s a place where neighbors of all ages, students, staff, and faculty can come together. In time, it will be surrounded by gardens and picnic tables. All in memory of David Barton, who championed the innovative partnership with the St. Paul Public Library to provide my community with its very first library branch.”

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Nutrition Corner – Easy ways to add fruits and veggies

by Abbey Mike, Diane O’Brien, Lindsey Russo & Laura Swanson

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For lunch, order a side salad or fruit salad with oranges, pineapple, apples, grapes and cantaloupe. Have fresh fruit with yogurt instead of french fries. Find ways to add fruits and vegetables to your evening meal. Grab a can of corn and put some in a burrito.
Refugees from Bhutan make Dayton’s Bluff home

by Eura Chang, Intern
Minnesota Literacy Council, Arlington Hills Learning Center

Bhutan, a landlocked country in South Asia, is home to the eastern Himalayas, forests filled with remarkable primates, and one of the most recently-established democracies in the world. What Bhutan does lack, however, is doughnuts. Damanti Biowa, who moved from a refugee camp in Nepal to Dayton's Bluff in 2010, laughed when asked what she found the most different about Minnesota. "No doughnuts or cookies in Bhutan. I like the flour doughnuts!"

The Kingdom of Bhutan has recently gained positive recognition for its unconventional method of measuring the well-being of its citizens through something they call "gross national happiness," or GNH. Rather than simply evaluating the country’s economic output, GNH attempts to quantify the nation’s success by considering its citizens.

In an effort to homogenize Bhutan’s population, the government has implemented legislation that discriminates against people with Nepalese background. Even though ethnic Nepalese have lived and worked in Bhutan for many generations, they are still denied citizenship. Because of this, close to 120,000 Bhutaneses have been living in refugee camps in India or Nepal, and neither country will accept them as citizens. Born in Bhutan, Damanti, now age 44, lived with her family in a refugee camp in Nepal for almost 20 years. Living in the camps was hard because there were so few ways to make money. "I remember it’s not good," she says. "There is no job in the camp and I miss Bhutan."

While in the camp, Damanti passed time by weaving things such as scarves, and visiting with friends. Now that she lives in Minnesota, Damanti does not weave anymore, but spends a lot of time taking care of household things, like laundry and cleaning, and raising her children. "I don’t have time anymore!" she laughs. When she found out that she would be moving to America in 2010, Damanti remembers feeling excited and cold!" Damanti is one of about a half-dozen ethnic Nepalese students enrolled at the Minnesota Literacy Council’s learning center at Arlington Hills Lutheran Church near Payne and Maryland Avenues. Her favorite subjects are English and U.S. history. She also enjoys practicing speaking her adopted language with other students from around the world. She currently lives in Dayton’s Bluff with her husband and six children; however, she still has family in the camps. "My husband's mother and father and my sister's family are in Nepal. I want them to come to the U.S., to Minnesota."

When asked about her goals, Damanti speaks of what she wants for her children. "I want them to graduate...and go to a good job." One day, she wishes to return to her home country of Bhutan, but Damanti is very happy with her life in Minnesota. "There is lots of help, lots of security," she says, "I like the state of Minnesota. Everything I see, I like!

This article is part of a series of stories about recent immigrants to Dayton’s Bluff written by teachers and volunteers at the Minnesota Literacy Council.

Invasion of the Trash Trolls

Don’t miss your chance to discover the art of building Trash Trolls out of discarded trash. The idea, developed by Dayton’s Bluff artist Rose Marie Felsheim, is to get neighbors together pick up trash in the neighborhood, then create a Trash Troll. They can be small or very large. Trolls can be painted with old house paint, or remain unpainted like the ones pictured above.

Completed trolls can be put in the messiest yards as a “warning” from the “Trash Police,” or, if they are really cute, a troll’s creator may want to keep it as yard art. For more information on an introductory class, email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or call 651-772-2075.

Congratulations to the new Board Members

And thank you to the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council for all the good work in Dayton’s Bluff.

The newly-elected board members are Elizabeth Matakis, Lorri Barnett, Darrell Mammenga, Daniel Stahley, Rafael Espinosa, Tong Thao, Jesse Ferden, Jacob Dorer, and Ashlee Olds.

They will join the current board members: Sage Holben, Stefan Pomrenke, Angela DuPaul, Kelly Lundeen, Alan Swearingen, Colin Wilkinson, Alex Bajwa, and Deborah Martin.

Paid for by the Lantry for Council Volunteer Committee, 25 E. Sandalee Lane, Saint Paul, MN, 55119
Farewell to historic Margaret playground

by Steve Trumble, Forum history specialist

Two months ago, I wrote about the heritage and demise of historical 3M Building #1. Now the neglected Margaret Rec Center building will be razed. Isn’t it too bad that local authorities almost always choose the East Side as the place to lose important buildings? 

The least that can be done is to review how important this center has been to our neighborhood. Margaret Rec Center has been a part of Dayton’s Bluff for over a century, and is one of the oldest playgrounds in St. Paul. It was started as local response to the national playground movement.

The idea was that places for youth recreation were a crucial need in rapidly-expanding urban areas. Neighborhood parks would permit retaining the characteristic features of natural scenery in the city. Playground professionals at the time wanted to get cooperation from key older youth “to do the thoughts and actions of these leaders,” hoping they would “eventually carry the entire group into some honorable form of recreation.” They believed that fewer young people from “playground districts” ended up in juvenile court.

Margaret Rec Center’s story began in 1907, when the city bought land behind Sibley School. The Margaret Maroons won a municipal baseball championship in 1909, before there was even a building on the site. The first shelter was built in 1910 and Margaret Playground was gradually improved. New additions included play equipment, tennis courts, furniture for the clubroom and a small kindergarten program.

The Margaret Boosters were organized in November, 1920. One early volunteer said: “We want to go down the playground and find three or four kids ganged up on the director. It was getting so bad you couldn’t keep a director more than a few months. We decided to do something about it.” It seems that tough kids hanging out a recreation center was a new thing.

The boosters went around “signing up new members and holding dances, bingo games, playground festivals,” and “showing off our facility to local merchants to buy equipment.”

By 1924, Margaret continued to break attendance records. Daily activities were horseshoes, tennis, kittenball (softball), track and efficiency tests and tennis. 18 men participated in horse-shoe pitching contest, and 35 girls entered the hopscotch, which met three times a week.

At the Center’s tenth annual Summer Festival, on August 1930, hundreds came to see decorated doll buggies and music played by an area orchestra. In one year, 1,000 people were involved in various events. Some years, another 1,000 had occasional contact at the Center. There was fencing, dramatics, puppetry, drawing and dancing contests.

Sadly, the Margaret Rec Center’s story did not end with its demise. In 2007, the Margaret Recreation Center hosted the largest National Night out event in the city, with door prizes, picnic food and dances, as well as field games. As late as 2009, the city seemed to be looking for money to renovate or replace the facility. Instead, the City decided to “re-partner” (a fancy name for ending all city programming) with Hamong YES (Youth Education Services) — a good program, but one that did not have the resources. The facilities declined even further.

That brings us to the present. When the building comes tumbling down, it will be a loss for the area. Like so many other historic structures on the East Side — what happens to the land is still a concern. A least the open space and community parks will provide playgrounds for the children, recreation grounds and playgrounds for the large working-class body of citizens. 

Long-time neighbors can tell some wonderful stories about Margaret Rec Center: winter skating, basketball teams, wood shop classes, and parent volunteers aplenty. Current neighbors can tell some stories too, but they aren't too pleasant: a roof that leaks, a musty and probably moldy interior, a playground area covered in broken glass and trash, a lack of programming, and teens whose frustration spews forth on and around the playground, making it unapproachable for families with small children. It’s not hard to long for a return to those glory days! Though we can’t rewrite time, it is quite possible for our community and the city to work together on creating a hopeful new future at Margaret.

The honest reality is that the Margaret Rec Center building is not safe, healthy, or practical for serving our community’s present day needs. A few years ago, the city decided to seek a partner to take over programming at Margaret, but it was difficult to find a partner who could even make use of the current building. The condition of the building has only deteriorated.

In December 2010, the city of St. Paul issued the Parks and Recreation System Plan which called for the eventual removal of the Margaret Rec Center building.

The partnership with Hamong Youth Education Services has ended and the building has been vacated. Funding has been secured for the demolition of the building and the demolition is slated to happen before the end of 2012. While this is a sad ending, it is also a first step toward an exciting new beginning. The City can’t afford to build and staff a new Rec Center at the Margaret site. But over the next few years it will be possible to secure the funds to make improvements and transform the area into a beautiful park and outdoor recreation space with opportunities for all community members. The dreaming about possibilities has already begun: perhaps a walking path, picnic pavilion, community gardens, basketball, or volleyball. No firm plans are in place, so there is plenty of time to give your input about what amenities would best serve our neighborhood.

Stop the shootings (continued from page 1)

includ[ing] the two homicides, took place in the middle of the day. One of them, the so-called “Craigslist” murder near Wakefield and Cypress, occurred in what I thought was a fairly safe area, approximately 800 feet from my front door. After looking through the police reports, I discovered how wrong I was. There have been many shots fired, armed robberies, and actual shootings within walking distance of my house. I knew about most of them, but the sheer number hadn’t registered with me.

Here is an example of one shooting of which I have firsthand knowledge. The police report merely stated that gunshots had been fired on Margaret at 11:05 am near 5th and Forest Streets. But there are more details. This incident happened on a Tuesday morning in front of St. John’s Catholic Church. I was inside at the time, attending the funeral Mass of one of our former pastors. The Archbishop was celebrating Mass and the church was nearly full. At least four gunshots were clearly heard inside the church.

Had this happened a half hour later, the street would have been full of people. As is, one of the parishioners later found the back window of his car shot out. Two schools were in session within two blocks of where the shots were fired. And yet there was never a word of this reported anywhere in the media.

Why don’t we get more information about crime in the neighborhood? It may be an effort to keep the “bad stuff” hidden so Dayton’s Bluff doesn’t get a bad reputation. Well, it’s too late. The secret is out. I can personally attest to the fact that people know it and stay away.

Even in this communication age, it’s not easy to get the word out to make a move on improving and transform the area into a beautiful park and outdoor recreation space with opportunities for all community members. The dreaming about possibilities has already begun: perhaps a walking path, picnic pavilion, community gardens, basketball, or volleyball. No firm plans are in place, so there is plenty of time to give your input about what amenities would best serve our neighborhood.

In December 4, 2012, at 6:30 pm
Dayton’s Bluff Community Council Offices
798 East 7th Street (corner of Margaret and 7th)

Come to an informational meeting about the future of Margaret Rec Center and Park.

Parks and Rec staff will be there to talk about the demolition and redevelopment process. Bring your questions and ideas!
Response to “What a shame” by Jennifer Herman
GreenSpace Committee

In the November Forum, the article “What a shame” (p. 8) ex-
tolled the virtues of Dr. Hoff-
man and his work on the other side to this story. Dr. Hoffman did
approach the Community Council GreenSpace Committee in March of
2011 to share his Community
Service Gardening project idea with Metropolitan State Univer-
sity students and to seek recom-
endations for public sites which
might be available for planting
fruit and nut trees. Sites were
recommended, but Dr. Hoffman
was cautioned that cut-
ing through the red tape to get
permission to plant in a public space
can take time (years) which he
might not have in the scope of his project (months). Dr. Hoffman
recommends a public meeting
in May 2011 GreenSpace meeting
to report that he was indeed en-
countering challenges in secur-
ing a planting site – some sites
were unavailable, and some
were contaminated. Additional
sites were recommended, but Dr.
Hoffman did not return to offer
any further updates to the Green-
space Committee.

At the July 2011 Greenspace
meeting, it was noted that apple
trees had been planted at the
corner of Plum Street and
Mounts Boulevard. The Commis-
sion had many questions: Did Dr.
Hoffman plant these trees? Who
“owns” that site and how was ap-
proval for planting granted so
quickly? Community engage-
ment was a stated goal of Hoff-
man’s project, but committee
members living in the area of the
new orchard had no knowledge
about how the orchard came to be.
Fruit trees need much tandem to
produce a healthy crop. Who
would be responsible to water,
prune, feed the trees, and address
diseases and pest issues? Who
would oversee the harvesting
process?

Greenspace Committee mem-
bers soon received an invitation
to the grand opening of Dr.
Hoffman’s new orchard. A commit-
tee member approached Dr. Hoff--
man at the orchard grand open-
ing, seeking some answers to the
committee’s questions. Not only
did Dr. Hoffman not answer the
questions, he became extremely
defensive and verbally attacked
the community member at this
public event!

Dr. Hoffman billed his project
as a collaborative effort between
students and community mem-
bers yet didn’t maintain engage-
ment with a key community
member from the GreenSpace Commis-
tee), didn’t widely engage the community
in the area of the project, and
publicly rebuffed a long-time member who tried to
engage with him – this is the real
shame.

It should be noted that the
Gateway Commission did not
make a request to anyone to have
the trees removed, nor did Com-
mmittee members remove the
trees. There has been no commu-
nication with the Committee
about the ongoing activity at the
“orchard” site.

Collaborative efforts take time
and must be carefully nurtured.
Ongoing, respectful communica-
tions are the key to reaping benefits
for all parties involved and for
the community.

by Sherry Johnson
special to the Forum

The Gateway Commission is tasked with finding the main east-
west transportation route and
made into and out of St. Paul.
Some believe that “transit cor-
rridors” like this are only meant to
serve suburbanites as they travel
to and from their jobs. But in or-
der to get political and capital
support from Ramsey County and
the federal government, any
corridor must demonstrate that
its route benefits folks who
live in the city.

With expensive transport
modes like light rail and bus
rapid transit, urban cores
often look to benefit from the in-
creased foot traffic and proper-
ty-value stabilization that
transit-oriented development
can provide.

After a long series of com-
munity meetings, the Gateway Commission
identified two “locally preferred alternatives” as the
routes to move forward within the
Environmental Impact Study
phase of the project. One of
these routes is the 7th Street
route along Dayton Road in Dayton’s Bluff.

Gone are any plans to take this
down East 7th Street. Gone, too,
are any plans to move the
transit development and
streetscape improvements
that go along with dedicated
routes like this. Most tragi-
de is the lack of people mov-
ing vision for the now-empty
lots that 3M left behind - the Beacon Bluff
development.

Haven’t even heard of this
proj-
et? Blame overly targeted
community engagement efforts
and a lack of citizen debate.
Oversim-
plified and highly dramatized white-
ups have appeared in our
news. The Gateway Commission held
poorly-publicized, highly-techni-
cal meetings, which drew two
kinds of folks on one side of the
city limits were excited suburban-
ites looking to cash in on trans-
port-oriented development and
enjoy lower commute times; and
on the other, nervous homeowner-
s along the formerly proposed
routes of White Bear Avenue and
7th Street.

After following this “locally preferred alternative” process, I
believe the Hudson Road routes
were chosen primarily for expedi-
ency and to win federal funding,
rather than building comprehensiv-
e and lasting benefits for the
East Side. Current federal criteria
for awarding funds give higher
scores to proposals serving low-income
and transit-dependent riders, as
well as economic development
potential. While any 7th Street
route would meet all three criteria,
the Hudson Road route meets
only the first two.

All told, there was a failure of leadership during Gateway “loc-
ally preferred alternative”
citizen
meetings, with elected officials
ignoring input from those in-
dered development.

Kathy Lantry

The lone visionary in the
process has been County Com-
missioner Jim McDonough, who
bravely asserted the importance of a
new transit line for the city.

Overall, I’m concerned
about the political ramifica-
cess of a Ramsey County-
state, and federal money to
fund a project that may fail to
benefit East Siders. While the Met
Council and City of St.
Paul are considering plans to
add 7th Street bus rapid transit
or even streetcars, I’m con-
cerned that the proximity of the
Gateway line will have
used up our East Side political
capital and funding streams.

It’s likely too late to
change the route, many more
decisions need to be made about sta-
cions, streetscape im-
provements, re-zoning around sta-
tions, and more. I certainly hope
that we as a community can
step up and have a voice in this
process, rather than insisting that it
will never happen, or won’t hap-
pen for decades. I’ve heard plans
to begin construction as early as
2018.

Sherry Johnston
is a 10-year
resident of Dayton’s Bluff who
has worked with Dayton’s Bluff
Community Council and East
Side Prosperity Campaign’s En-
gage Eastside initiative, which
advocates for East Side transit
users.

Letters to the editor
Reader reactions to violent
crimes in Dayton’s Bluff

I received the November issue of the Forum in the
mail yesterday. I read “Musings from a neighbor” (p. 1),
and I couldn’t agree more. I’m tired of it. I have lived
in my house for 12 years and I’ve lived in
Dayton’s Bluff the most of my life. There have been rough times
with the crime here and there, but the last two years I’ve endured
vandalism on my property, my vehicles broken into, har-
assment from tenants at a Section 8 property in
South Dell and guns fired on a regular basis. The crimes
that have made it into the news are just the tip of the
iceberg, and they have been steadily escalating. I fear for
my property when I’m at work. I’m afraid to go out for
a walk at night when I get home, and I can’t spend
quiet time in my yard without something going on. I
had always planned on eventually buying a bigger house
in the neighborhood, but I’m not feeling safe anywhere.
I love living in Dayton’s Bluff, and most of my neigh-

bors are the kind of people I want for neighbors. It ad-
drenalin to say that I’m scared, but I’m
fearing of being walked on by a few people who think that
don’t apply to them. I’m going to spend this winter
getting my house ready to go on the market, because it’s
going to be too much stress to ever live here anymore. I’m
just too exhausted to deal with it.

Jeremy Yf
Dayton’s Bluff

I am disgusted by the shootings. I am scared for myself and
the family of friends I have nearby in the shoot-
occurred, as does my brother’s family with their
young children. I fear a stray bullet could hit one of us
for simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I
suppose it is the same way people living in North Min-
apolis feel. Senseless acts of violence seem to be in-
creasing to the point where I do not even want to turn
on my TV or read a newspaper article any more. I
applaud you for writing about the violence. The violence has
never been so prevalent.

Dianne Black
Dayton’s Bluff

Where have all the
buildings gone?

Seeing the empty spaces in Dayton’s Bluff where
buildings once stood gets very depressing. I can spot
two newly-vacant lots just by looking out my windows
at home. A short walk in any direction brings me to oth-
er missing buildings or boarded-up ones waiting their
turn to meet the jaws of death.

I had come to the conclusion that the incompetent
dolts populating all levels of government had abandoned
our neighborhood. They didn’t care what happened to us and
had no plan to help us.

But then, on Election Day, I had an epiphany. As I ap-
proached my polling place I noticed yet another
boarded-up building being razed right across the street. Suddenly a light bulb
(an environmentally friendly one, of course) came on and
I saw the truth. I had been wrong all along. In the
patrician election of Election Day, my endorphin-en-
hanced brain realized those dolts did have a plan to save
Dayton’s Bluff.

It was a plan that has stood the test of time. It has
been used since biblical times and reached its peak dur-
ing the Vietnam War. It’s so simple: Dayton’s Bluff must be
destroyed in order to save it.

When the last building has been demolished, when
trees and prairie grass once cover the land, when the
deer and antelope play and a maybe a few buffalo roam, it will be only then that developers will swoop in,
turn to meet the jaws of death.

I get all tingly just thinking about it. Who knows what
will be torn down next? I now go around the neighbor-
hood looking for signs of our salvation. Each dumfuter full of rubble brings us one step closer to our
rebirth. Dayton’s Bluff will rise again!

Joseph Gregory
Dayton’s Bluff resident
Annual dinner and election a success

By Karin DuPaul
Forum staff

The Dayton’s Bluff Community Council held their Annual Dinner and Board Election with well over 100 people attending and everyone enjoyed it. Dayton’s Bluff residents attended from all areas of the Bluff and a number of people from other areas and public officials were also in attendance. One attendee said, “this is the best event I go to each year.”

City Council President Kathy Lantry gave her yearly State of Dayton’s Bluff address, which featured a lot of positive progress in Dayton’s Bluff in the past year, such as Make it Happen on East 7th Street, new businesses in the old Hamm’s Brewery, and the building on the old 3M site. The 2012 Roger Tetu Award was given to Dale Harbour, who for many years has kept up the garden on the Maria Avenue Triangle at Maria and McLean, picking up trash in the neighborhood and Mounds Park, plus a ton of other helpful activities.

The council board candidates introduced themselves to the audience; at 7:00 pm, the voting was completed and the result announced. The newly elected members are Elizabeth Matakas, Lorri Barnett, Darrell Mammona, Daniel Stahley, Rafael Espinoza, Tong Thao, Jesse Ferden, Jacob Dorer, and Ashlee Olds. They will join the current board members: Sage Holben, Stefan Pomerene, Angela DuPaul, Kelly Lundeen, Alan Swearingen, Colin Wilkin-son, Alex Bajwa, and Deborah Martin.

One of the new board members is a small business owner, another is an alumnus of the Community Design Center of Minnesota’s youth program, and a number of the new board members purchased and live in formerly-vacant homes in Dayton’s Bluff. A number of the new board members are members of Eastside Neighbors Helping Neighbors, a group that does neighborhood projects like raking yards for seniors and picking up trash in the neighborhoods. Check out Eastside Neighbors Helping Neighbors on Facebook.

For more information about the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council email Karin@DaytonsBluff.org or call 651-772-2075.

Breaking ground for better health

By Tabitha Benci DeRango, Program Coordinator

Those of you who attended the Annual Meeting, Dinner, and Voting Event this past month were given the opportunity to vote for your top 3 Community topics. The chart above shows the results of this poll.

Some of the comments mentioned concerns about homeless landlords, housing falling into disrepair, and requests for affordable housing and more home ownership in Dayton’s Bluff. Others were unsure of the Gateway Corridor plans, wanted more parking in business districts, and more local jobs. There were requests for additional coffee shops and a general plea for working together toward peace in our neighborhoods.

We want to hear from you, the people of Dayton’s Bluff! What are your hopes, dreams, and concerns for this community? Currently the council has staff, interns and volunteers out surveying local residents to give more people a chance to voice their opinions. Or, you can write a letter to editor@daytonsbluff.org, or call the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council office and talk with us at 651-772-2075 or 651-332-9069.

Thank you so much to the over 100 people who attended the Annual Meeting and participated in electing Community Council members, and for the honest input on ways to strengthen our community.