Dayton’s Bluff
DISTRICT FORUM
Volume 25, No. 3 www.daytonsbluff.org May 2012

Vacant Home Tour May 6

by Karin DuPaul
Community Organizer, Dayton’s Bluff Community Council

Wouldn’t you love a sneak peek into one of the vacant homes in your neighborhood? Check out the updates; wonder at the opportunities?

The Dayton’s Bluff Vacant Home Tour will be held Sunday, May 6. It will showcase some of the vacant homes in our neighborhood and, it is hoped, find buyers for them. Eight to 10 homes will be featured on the tour.

Pick up the map with the locations of the houses between 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm at 798 East 7th Street at the corner of East 7th and Margaret. Ride on a 1954 Twin Cities Rapid Transit bus or drive your own vehicle to look at the houses. Information about loans and home fix-up, and people to answer questions about Dayton’s Bluff, will be at 798 East 7th Street.

The Vacant Home Tour is a project of the Dayton’s Bluff Vacant Building Committee (DBVBC), which featured five successful tours over the last few years. The tours have brought hundreds of people to look at Dayton’s Bluff and its homes. The home shown in the photo at right was one of the homes on the tour last year that sold.

The DBVBC was formed in 2007 just as the early fallout from the subprime crisis began to emerge. Initially, the group’s goal was to provide neighborhood input on the city’s decisions when to (or when not to) demolish vacant properties in the Dayton’s Bluff area. The idea was to stop the demolition of vacant properties and return them to be homes with people living in them.

The Dayton’s Bluff Vacant Home Tours are an alternative to vacant house demolition. Homes of all sizes — some in move-in shape, and some in need of a lot of work — will be included on the tour. The tour will feature a wide range of homes and opportunities available in our neighborhood.

The Vacant Home Tour will be on Sunday, May 6. Anyone who would like to help out with the tour or get involved with the Dayton’s Bluff Vacant Home Committee is welcome to join. Please contact Karin DuPaul at either 651-772-2075 or karin@daytonsbluff.org. We need your help.

Neighbors unite April 14 for Swede Hollow cleanup

Photo by Karin DuPaul

Dayton’s Bluff Community Council
798 East 7th Street
St. Paul, MN 55106

ECRWSS
Postal Customer

Volume 25, No. 3
www.daytonsbluff.org
May 2012

Inside this Issue

Opportunities
Page 2:
Small business classes
Monthly community meeting: May 3
Donate your junk car
Home tour: April 28, 29
Take-a-Hike: May 5
Meet the police: May 16, 18
Friends of Swede Hollow: May 9
DB Spring Dinner: May 19
Plant Exchange May 12
Dayton’s Bluff Rec Center

Page 3:
Art in the Hollow: June 2
Women of Senate District 67
Home improvement help
MPUMC Urban CROSS: June 10-16

Page 4:
Summer KEYS at Mounds Theatre
Arts & Cultures Committee: May 14
Greenspace committee: May 21
Native American ghosts: May 19

People in your neighborhood
Page 6:
Dayton’s Bluff Community Council profile: Sage Holben
Family news
Metro State’s new trustees

Page 7:
Remembering Hank Gehring
Laos to St. Paul: meet Phonephaly

Page 8:
Bethlehem Lutheran
Laura McCartan from Metro State Quality Career Services senior aid
Letter to the editor: Carver Cave and Bluff Playground

What’s happening
Page 5:
Rainbow Foods’ Easter egg hunt
Letter to the editor: ICE trainings
Clean-Up photograph
East Side senate race begins
Learning from light-rail in Seattle

What can you add to the conversation about Dayton’s Bluff? Contribute at editor@daytonsbluff.org, and find the Dayton’s Bluff District Forum on Facebook.

The Forum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and gladly accepts your monetary donation. Call 651-772-2075, and thank you!
Small business classes
The Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Microentrepreneur Program is taking applications for the spring 2012 class, which will start in May.
The program helps start-up and young businesses; all East Side entre- preneurs are welcome. The Dayton’s Bluff Community Council and the Neighborhood Development Center have been two such hosting microentre- preneur classes each year since 1993.
Classroom training lasts ten weeks and includes topics such as operations management, marketing, financial man- agement, how to create a successful business, and how to prepare a business plan. In addition, each student will have eight hours of one-on-one time with the instructor to work on individual busi- ness concepts. Those who successfully complete the course and locate their businesses in target neighborhoods are eligible for ongoing business support services.
The registration fee is based on a sliding scale. Class size is limited; apply today by emailing karin@daytonsblurf.org or call 651-772-2075.

Monthly community meeting
The next Dayton’s Bluff community meeting is Thursday, May 3, from 6:30 – 8:00 pm at the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council office, 798 E. 7th Street. The council holds a community meeting on the first Thursday of most months. The object is to work on community-building, as well as problem properties, criminal and nuisance behav- ior, code enforcement issues and any other issues, concerns or good things going on in the Bluff. At the May meet- ing, we are planning to have officers from the Police Gang Unit present.
Each month, neighbors and block club members have good discussions with code inspectors and police share good discussion about how to make Dayton’s a better place to live.
If addresses of problem properties 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. Contact karin@daytonsblurf.org; 651-772-2075.

Donate your junk car
Budget Towing of Minnesota will remove your junk and dispose of it at no charge to you. The vehicle own- er receives a tax deduction, and the Dayton’s Bluff Community Council will receive a donation. Call 651-772-2075 or email june@daytonsblurf.org.

Home Tour
The Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Home Tour and the Minneapolis St. Paul Home Tour will take place on Saturday, April 28, from 10:00 am- 5:00 pm, and Sunday, April 29, from 1:00-5:00 pm. For more informa- tion, please contact Karin at 651- 772-2075 or karin@daytonsblurf.org.

Meet the police
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 Friday, May 18, at 9:30 am, and Wednesday, May 16, at 6:30 pm. The meet- ings are intended to listen to and address concerns about crime and other issues on the East Side.

Friends of Swede Hollow
Meetings are on the second Wed- nesday of the month, generally at Wa- ter or Old Gallery, 506 Kenny Road, or at members’ homes. Please call to con- firm the location. The next monthly meeting is on Wednesday, May 9, starting at 6:30 pm. For more informa- tion, email swedeahollow@gmail.com or call 651-776-0550.

Plant Exchange
The ninth annual Greening Dayton’s Bluff Plant Exchange will happen Sat- urday, May 12, 9:00-11:00 am at the corner of East 7th Street and Bates Av- enue in the gardens outside Swede Hollow Cafe. Bring plants you no longer need and receive something new! No orange daylilies, please. For more information, call 651-772-2075 or email karin@daytonsblurf.org.

Stop by and check us out!
Art in the Hollow

Saturday, June 2, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Free to artists and the public

Art in the Hollow, the annual art fest set in lovely Swede Hollow Park, still has room for artists and artisans who would like an opportunity to display and sell their creations. Because the event seeks to showcase the talents of St. Paul’s entire East Side—a community boasting more than 100 ethnic groups—ethnic artists, artisans, and performers are especially urged to apply.

The art fest will present a unique event at 4:00 pm, a new one-act opera by award-winning composer Ann Millikan. Titled “Swede Hollow,” the lively 40-minute opera weaves back and forth through time, spotlighting the Swedish, Italian, and Mexican immigrant groups who resided in the Hollow during the latter 19th century and early 20th century. The opera is produced under the auspices of Friends of Swede Hollow, whose president, Karin DuPaul, spearheaded its development. It is directed and coordinated by Solori Slowiak, who has fostered the St. Paul art scene for many years. To obtain further information, visit the web site, www.artinthehollow.org, or contact Karin DuPaul at 651-776-0550. Do it soon, while there is space available!

The Culture of the Women of Senate District 67

by Stefan Pomrenke, MD

Arts and Culture Committee

A couple of weeks ago, I had the good fortune to meet one of the co-founders of the Women of Senate District 67 (four senate district). Joan Wittman is a pillar of our neighborhood. Back in the 2004 caucus, then-senator Mee Moua and Joan Wittman were thrilled with the large turnout of voters to that event. They wanted to keep the momentum going and so formed the Women of SD 67. The non-partisan group meets the third Tuesday of each month at the Progressive Baptist Church on Burns. The group’s goal is to empower women to be active in the political process.

As a democracy should run, no dues or membership is required to take part. They are organized by a central email list that distributes information on upcoming events. For example, when Mee Moua resigned her senate seat, they co-hosted a forum on the nine candidates hoping to fill her position.

Attendance waxes and wanes based on the topic to be discussed, but 10-25 women are usually present. Our state senator John Harrington, our representative Sheldon Johnson, and our City Council President Kathy Lantry attend meetings on a regular basis. All women living in SD67 are welcome.

My church has several members from Liberia who contributed vitally to ending their civil war by putting their bodies on the line by staging sit-ins amongst the two opposing fighting forces. In 2011 these efforts were celebrated by the international Liberian Peace activist Leymah Gbowee. I realize we aren’t in a civil war, but we can be very thankful that we have these women in our neighborhood informing the community about how we can further engage the government.

Over the past several weeks, the legislature has been meeting at the capitol. Dayton’s Bluff is very lucky to be in such close proximity to where major decisions are made. Many organizations have “Day on Capitol Hill” events. I have been fortunate to attend several of these, including the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, where my wife and I were able to meet Joan. So many opportunities!

Our collective American culture is deeply tied to civic engagement. As Joan Wittman moves out of our neighborhood, we owe a great debt of gratitude to her and the Women of Senate District 67.

Home improvement help

Rebuilding Together Twin Cities is looking for seniors and low-income homeowners who need help with home improvement projects.

The mission is to bring volunteers and communities together to improve the homes and lives of low-income homeowners. We provide no-cost home repairs for homeowners in need, particularly older adults, individuals living with disabilities, and families with children. This service ensures that these homeowners live independently in homes that are safe, warm and dry.

An affiliate of the national Rebuilding Together organization, Rebuilding Together Twin Cities has been preserving and revitalizing homes and communities in the metropolitan area since 1997. Our programs provide opportunities for community involvement. Through sponsors and volunteer efforts, we strive to impact communities and the non-profit places where neighborhood members gather.

For more information call 651-776-4273.
KEYS Project coming to Mounds Theatre

by Raeann Ruth

Celebrate the diversity of our neighborhood with summer programming for youth from grades six through 11.

The KEYS Summer Program at the Historic Mounds Theatre is a five-week theatrical extravaganza that offers experience in all aspects of theatrical production. Students will learn the basics of scene creation, costume, makeup, and sound and light engineering. Sessions run Monday-Thursday from 8:30-1:00 pm.

For $60 your child will be led on an enchanted journey through everything ‘Theatre.’ Your child will also be exploring his/her creativity through improvisation and dance. Scholarships are available. Free breakfast and lunch will be served daily.

Research has shown that students who are involved in the arts are five times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, three times more likely to be elected to class office within their schools, and three times more likely to win an award for school attendance.

Summer is a time for fun! Why not have fun and learn at the same time? Expose and involve in community theatre will strengthen your child's speaking and writing skills and allow your child to have a life long appreciation for the performing arts. So instead of collecting sea shells this summer, encourage your child to come out of his/her shell by being involved in Community Theatre.

The program begins July 9 and runs Mondays-Thursdays until August 9, with a community performance on Saturday, August 11 at 6:00 pm.

Application deadline is Friday, June 22, 2012. To register for summer camp, go to the KEYS website: www.moundstheatre.org/YouthTheatre.html. You may also call for a registration form at 651-772-8674.

Dayton’s Bluff Arts and Cultures Committee
Explores Neighborhood Restaurants

by Kelly Lundeen, committee member

The Dayton’s Bluff Arts and Cultures Committee holds its monthly meetings at local restaurants to get out of the office and into the neighborhood. Recently we have met at several fine establishments including the Beehive Tavern (3rd & Forest Streets), Moonshine Saloon (7th & Daluth Streets), Erick's Bar (7th & Forest Streets), Mañana (7th & Arcade Streets), and Taqueria Los Ocampo (Arcade Street & York Avenue). Our April meeting was held at the St. Paul Saloon.

We had great service and delicious pizza from the Eastside Pizzeria. Join us for our next meeting, when we will continue discussion of Night Out on 7th Street, Art in the Hollow, and the community response to the ICE trainings that occurred in our neighborhood. Meet us on Monday, May 14 at 6:00 pm at Oob’s Bar and Grill at 1347 Burns Avenue.

Explores Neighborhood Restaurants

by Kelly Lundeen, committee member

The Dayton’s Bluff Arts and Cultures Committee holds its monthly meetings at local restaurants to get out of the office and into the neighborhood. Recently we have met at several fine establishments including the Beehive Tavern (3rd & Forest Streets), Moonshine Saloon (7th & Daluth Streets), Erick’s Bar (7th & Forest Streets), Mañana (7th & Arcade Streets), and Taqueria Los Ocampo (Arcade Street & York Avenue). Our April meeting was held at the St. Paul Saloon.

We had great service and delicious pizza from the Eastside Pizzeria. Join us for our next meeting, when we will continue discussion of Night Out on 7th Street, Art in the Hollow, and the community response to the ICE trainings that occurred in our neighborhood. Meet us on Monday, May 14 at 6:00 pm at Oob’s Bar and Grill at 1347 Burns Avenue.

Looking for Fraud Protection?

We should talk Positive Pay

University Bank

A Sunstate Community Bank

If it’s the quick and easy way to protect your business from counterfeiting and fraudulent checks.

Fix up your home now!

We are a non-profit agency eager to help you accomplish your home repairs using the latest green rehab 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%) and special programs that do not require payments. Call 651.774.6995 to see if you qualify.

Yog kcj xav nqg Hmoob tham, hz 651.774.9047

Dayton’s Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services

857 7th Street East

St. Paul, MN 55107

651.774.6995-office

www.dbhhs.org

Ghost Trails & Places

Looking for St. Paul’s Native American footprint

by Forum staff

Indian Mounds Park and the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary will feature prominently in an upcoming exploration of the Native American “ footprint” in St. Paul. It’s part of the annual bus tour led by labor historian Dave Riehle that this year commemorates the 150th anniversary of U.S.-Dakota war of 1862. The Dakota were the earliest inhabitants of the area that is now St. Paul; they were forcibly removed from Minnesota after the war. Very little is recorded about the Dakota within the present confines of the city, but the tour will visit sites, some buried beneath modern roads and landscapes, that tell their story.

The tour is part of the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library’s “Un told Stories” series. The bus will leave at 2:00 pm, on Saturday, May 19, from the Rice Street library at 1011 Rice Street. Call 651-222-3242 to reserve a seat. More information is found on our Facebook page or on the Green Space Committee Calendar at http://tinyurl.com/DBCGreenspaceCalendar. There are lots of things to get engaged in!

Feeling your thumbs getting greener? Come to our next meeting May 21. Meet us online at the Greenspace Committee Facebook page. See you soon! If you don’t come, we will have to resort to our other option of increasing interest: green sequin letter jackets. Consider yourself warned.

Spring into Greenspace!

by Stefan Pomrenke, MD

Greenspace committee chair

Do you like space? Do you like green things? If you do, you will LOVE the work of the Greenspace committee!

The Greenspace folk meet the third Monday of each month at 6:00 pm at the Dayton’s Bluff Council at 798 East 7th Street, the corner of 7th and Margaret Streets. Our main highlight for this next year is to make gardening more available. Interested in which bulbs might sprout up?

Gardening Matters, an amazing program in the Twin Cities, offers ideas for creating a community garden resource hub in the neighborhood. Check out their information at www.gardeningmatters.org.

Another idea will be sprouting in the summer as St. Paul Parks unveil a map of vacant community land for urban farming. There are many urban farming groups in the Twin Cities; perhaps we can make that happen in Dayton’s Bluff?

There will be home garden tours in the spring. In the summer, I would love to see a Dayton’s Bluff Chicken Coop tour! I just renewed my chicken permit; what about you?

We are continuing the great work of our amazing Dayton’s Bluff community garden, Skidmore Park Community Gardens! Check out more information at their facebook page.

The link to our Google calendar – where you can remain updated about future Greenspace activities – is http://tinyurl.com/DBCGreenspaceCalendar. There are lots of things to get engaged in!

Feeling your thumbs getting greener? Come to our next meeting! Meet us online at the Greenspace Committee Facebook page. See you soon! If you don’t come, we will have to resort to our other option of increasing interest: green sequin letter jackets. Consider yourself warned.

MOUNDS PARK BARBER STYLISTS

APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE TUESDAY THROUGH SATURDAY

1043 HUDSON ROAD

SAINT PAUL, MN 55106

651-771-6980

Judy Lee

Help the Forum stay afloat!

Consider a donation to support this paper. Email editor@dayton bluff.org today.
East Side senate race begins

Forum staff report

About 130 people showed up at the Harding High School Auditorium to attend a DFL convention the last day of March. They were there to see if one of the three candidates for the Senate District 67, which contains Dayton’s Bluff, might gain an endorsement for the race in November.

In the spring of 2010, state Senator Mee Moua announced her retirement from office before the end of the term, requiring a special election. The notice was made too late to allow any DFL party gatherings to consider endorsement. However, several candidates put their names forward and ran in the DFL primary election. John Harrington, former St. Paul Chief of Police, was the primary and went on to capture the office.

In 2012, all Minnesota senators must get for re-election. Now there was time to have a DFL convention to consider endorsement. The process started in February with precinct caucuses where people are chosen to go forward to participate in local conventions.

As expected, John Harrington announced that he would seek the DFL endorsement for re-election. What was not expected was that there would be opponents. At the caucuses, meetings, former St. Paul City Council member Hmong activist Tou Vang Ha announced that he would get the party’s support and handed out leaflets. By the time the convention was held, a third candidate, Hmong activist Fong Hawj (pronounced Her) threw his symbolic hat into the ring.

Harrington points to his record, citing projects and laws he has been involved in. Di- mond feels that the incumbent is too conservative on many issues and suggests that he would provide a progressive alternative. Hawj suggested that his experience as a small businessman and activist in diverse communities would make him the best candidate.

A person must get 60% of the convention vote to win endorsement. The first ballot results were: Harrington 38%, Dimond 37.5% and Hawj 23.6%. There was little change on the second vote with Harrington gaining 4 points, Dimond staying the same and Hawj dropping to 16%.

There was a change on number three. Since people had to get at least 20% to stay on the ballot, Hawj’s name was dropped. However, there is always an option to vote “no endorsement” and that is what his supporters did. The split between Harrington stayed the same with 15% voting for endorsement.

Since the rules only called for four ballots, it looked like there would be a stalemate and that is what happened. Very few voters switched and as a result there would be no endorsement at the DFL Senate District convention.

It is likely—but not certain—that all three will now be running in the August primary to see who will be the DFL candidate in November 2012. There could even be more contenders. The final names will not be known until late May and early June, the official nomination time.

It’s time to start checking out the various positions and promises of each person running. After that, get ready to open your mailbox and find political leaflets, go to the door and be greeted by candidates or their workers, answer the phone and be asked who you plan to vote for. And don’t forget to leave the rainbow of lawn signs that will find their away onto East Side lawns and businesses.

Light-rail lessons from the west coast

by Sherry Johnson, special to the Forum

I just got back from Seattle, where we visited my spouse’s West Coast work domain, as well as his stepson Jadi, brother Alex, and soon-to-be sister-in-law rose. I had been planning an errand, a research King County transportation policy, but the rental car was just enough to get the spouse to work and back to ensure reliable traffic.

So instead, I found myself learning about segregation and light rail transit. With regular “I didn’t know how a city like Seattle—concentrated on a narrow strip of land, with so much maritime commerce and large companies like Microsoft—would ever get along without it. They already had the express lanes, the high-occupancy lanes, and an incredible bus system complete with electric bus downtown”, and it just wasn’t enough. People wanted to arrive home at night in time to see their kids, and living close to any major economic hub costs a fortune. Still, every new addition of LRT is fraught with conflict, and the major line extends only between the airport and downtown. Future plans include a northward extension and a university extension.

Which brings us to inequity and the hope for something better.

What I noticed about Seattle is its incredible segregation. Rose’s family lives in a part of town in which local schools are majority low-income, and minority white. The high school is one of the worst in the state, and Seattle just passed a rule that public school students must attend their local school. When Alex first met Rose’s family, he claimed that he had rarely seen a person of color in Seattle, and was surprised at the concentration of marginalized folks in one small area.

One might expect that the LRT would bring gentrification to the areas around the route; that would force out families like Rose’s. But I noticed the still-high concentration of light-industrial and minority-niche shops along the route. A post office and condo sat on a key corner, with empty retail space on its fancy first floor. A local flea market took up a huge warehouse nearby, promising secondhand clothing and DVDs. The local playground was full of non-native English speakers and other people of color. It is likely—but not certain—that all three will now be running in the August primary to see who will be the DFL candidate in November 2012. There could even be more contenders. The final names will not be known until late May and early June, the official nomination time.

It’s time to start checking out the various positions and promises of each person running. After that, get ready to open your mailbox and find political leaflets, go to the door and be greeted by candidates or their workers, answer the phone and be asked who you plan to vote for. And don’t forget to leave the rainbow of lawn signs that will find their way onto East Side lawns and businesses.

Which brings us to inequity and the hope for something better.

What I noticed about Seattle is its incredible segregation. Rose’s family lives in a part of town in which local schools are majority low-income, and minority white. The high school is one of the worst in the state, and Seattle just passed a rule that public school students must attend their local school. When Alex first met Rose’s family, he claimed that he had rarely seen a person of color in Seattle, and was surprised at the concentration of marginalized folks in one small area.

One might expect that the LRT would bring gentrification to the areas around the route; that would force out families like Rose’s. But I noticed the still-high concentration of light-industrial and minority-niche shops along the route. A post office and condo sat on a key corner, with empty retail space on its fancy first floor. A local flea market took up a huge warehouse nearby, promising secondhand clothing and DVDs. The local playground was full of non-native English speakers and other people of color. It is likely—but not certain—that all three will now be running in the August primary to see who will be the DFL candidate in November 2012. There could even be more contenders. The final names will not be known until late May and early June, the official nomination time.

It’s time to start checking out the various positions and promises of each person running. After that, get ready to open your mailbox and find political leaflets, go to the door and be greeted by candidates or their workers, answer the phone and be asked who you plan to vote for. And don’t forget to leave the rainbow of lawn signs that will find their way onto East Side lawns and businesses.

Which brings us to inequity and the hope for something better.

What I noticed about Seattle is its incredible segregation. Rose’s family lives in a part of town in which local schools are majority low-income, and minority white. The high school is one of the worst in the state, and Seattle just passed a rule that public school students must attend their local school. When Alex first met Rose’s family, he claimed that he had rarely seen a person of color in Seattle, and was surprised at the concentration of marginalized folks in one small area.

One might expect that the LRT would bring gentrification to the areas around the route; that would force out families like Rose’s. But I noticed the still-high concentration of light-industrial and minority-niche shops along the route. A post office and condo sat on a key corner, with empty retail space on its fancy first floor. A local flea market took up a huge warehouse nearby, promising secondhand clothing and DVDs. The local playground was full of non-native English speakers and other people of color. It is likely—but not certain—that all three will now be running in the August primary to see who will be the DFL candidate in November 2012. There could even be more contenders. The final names will not be known until late May and early June, the official nomination time.

It’s time to start checking out the various positions and promises of each person running. After that, get ready to open your mailbox and find political leaflets, go to the door and be greeted by candidates or their workers, answer the phone and be asked who you plan to vote for. And don’t forget to leave the rainbow of lawn signs that will find their way onto East Side lawns and businesses.
 Dayton's Bluff is a community rich in history and has a diverse range of residents. Wouldn't it be great to get a glimpse of the Bluff up close and personal? Sage Holben, a member of the Dayton's Bluff Community Council, gave me a personal glimpse into her neighborhood.

Sage first described what she likes about Dayton's Bluff. "Where to start?" she asks. "The history of its setting, the architecture, the magnificence of its setting on the bluff, the city view and proximity to Mississippi. Most of all, the people." Sage goes on to discuss how the immigrants have added to the lives of the citizens of Dayton's Bluff.

Sage also discussed how she decided to reside in Dayton's Bluff. "I was new to Minnesota and, for two weeks, stayed at a Minneapolis hotel because I had a job but no place to live. For the first year and a half I had an apartment in the North End. It was in a residential neighborhood, but there was no apparent connection among residents. Then someone told me of an available apartment in Dayton's Bluff and I took it. I love hearing the many voices and languages (except foul) of people who live around me. I feel privileged in learning about the Hmong and Karen cultures first hand, and my Latino friends have enriched my life more than I could ever express. It's the ongoing conversations that build our relationships. We have the best ingredients for the relationship-building recipe in my neighborhood."

Later Sage explains why she wanted to get on the Dayton's Bluff Community Council. "I've always been interested in how people take root in their communities and the problems of isolation, disenfranchisement; how or why people reach out; and what factors motivate us to reach beyond our comfort zones, as well as why we remain isolated from those who live around us. If we want to truly improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods and not simply benefit our own self-interests, we must speak up for others, whether renters, new immigrants, victims of crime until they find the strength in their own voices. We also must learn how to more effectively reach out and to welcome others in meaningful ways."

Finally Sage states what she would like Dayton's Bluff to look like by 2015 or 2020. She says, "Physically, I would like the historic architecture preserved appropriately and the continued preservation of our natural elements with natural enhancements to our park areas. I would like to see that needs of people who are homeless and those living on the economical and societal edge to be more fully addressed and with stabilizing solutions. I would like to see the Maria Street area between 6th and 5th or 4th Streets become a pedestrian/bike-only walkway area. Small business incubators would be fantastic -- perhaps a way to 'grow' businesses for Maria, 3rd, and 7th Streets."

Sage Holben hopes for more growth of the immigrant population to make Dayton's Bluff richer in culture. She also has many more goals for the neighborhood while she serves on the council. She and many more residents of Dayton's Bluff community cannot wait to see what the future holds for this great place.
Remembering Henry “Hank” Gehring

by Steve Trimble, Forum staff

Last month, when I wrote about Dayton’s Bluff a century ago, there was an item about the death of a local baseball player named Henry Gehring. This article wanted to find out more about the former neighborhood resident. He appears in on-line baseball lists and while they give a lot of statistics, there isn’t much biographical information.

But then I discovered that Rex Hamann, a Minnesota baseball historian, had written an article on Gehring, describing him as “well known for steadiness on the line baseball lists and while they give a lot of statistics, there isn’t much biographical information.

I have borrowed heavily from his work but have organized the season and would like a game with any club whose members are under the age of 14 years... Send all challenges to Henry Gehring, 297 Lawson Street; will play only on Saturdays.”

Hank developed his skills on local amateur clubs. After playing for a St. Paul clothier’s team, Gehring moved to join the Des Moines Champs by mid-July of 1907. In late August, the St. Paul Saints played the Champs at the end of the 1901 season. According to Hamann, the 20-year-old Gehring was known as a “junk-ball spitter pitcher” who was also a fine batter.

He moved around, and played for the Winnipeg Maroons in 1902, compiling a win-loss record of 10-8 and had a 2.96 batting average. Gehring next suited up as an outfielder and pitcher for the Deuth Cardinals in 1904 and ended up with a 13.2 record including a no-hitter.

Henry started showing up in the St. Paul City Directory in 1904 and was listed as a ball player. On February 5, 1903 he married Bertha “Birdie” Horman.

According to the 1904 city directory they lived at the East Lawson home. A little over a year later the St. Paul Globe printed a notice of death of a daughter, Florence, although the paper may have said the couple had a son. Florence was born at home and attended by Mrs. B. Fehr, a midwife.

Henry continued to jump from club to club. In 1905 he was with Wichita and won at least 30 games, which was part of the reason he earned a spot on the Minor League Roll of Honor in 1905. The local boy returned to the Twin Cities in 1906 as part of the Minneapolis Millers where he was a pitcher and outfielder. His record was 12-11 with 20 complete games and three shutouts.

He and his wife also moved their residence a few times. By 1906 they were at 852 East 7th Street. The next year found them at 394 Eichenhain. In 1908 and for several years after, they dwelt at 739 Conway Street. Gehring spent spring training with the Millers in 1907, but switched the Des Moines Champs. Hamann described Gehring as “a high-flyer.”

He had a fine earned run average for the major league team but with little of offensive support, ended up with three wins and seven losses. He had eight complete games and five innings of work, ended up with no wins and one loss. His major-league career was over.

Henry returned home as a member of the St. Paul Saints in 1908 and won 12 battles, losing 14 for a team that had its worst record ever. He was still a threat at the plate, hitting .282. His pitching was in decline this time, slipping in the next year, winning 18 but losing 20. Gehring was his last season for his hometown team as he went across the river to have a somewhat lackluster season in Minneapolis.

The Kansas City Blues picked up Gehring in 1912 and he was active in their spring camp but was not with the traveling squad for a late exhibition game. Then, in April, 1912, Gehring fell ill in a Kansas City hotel. A St. Paul Pioneer Press headline on April 17 read “Death Threatens Him.” A short notice said that he had experienced four convulsions and that his chance for recovery was “very slight.”

The local sports writer described as “While never a flashy player, Hank Gehring had a fascinating career in professional baseball... he made a substantial mark on his profession, the sportman’s class he showed in 11 seasons as a professional ballplayer put him in a distinctive class of his own.”

From Laos to Dayton’s Bluff: meet Phonephaly

by Lillian Ezenagu, Volunteer, Minnesota Literacy Council

In February 2010, a petite Laotian woman named Phonephaly Soundala Khamvan set foot in St. Paul for the first time. She was a young bride... just married to Laotian immigrant-turned-U.S. citizen, Matthew Khamvan, who had lived in St. Paul since 1985. Phonephaly knew little of American culture and very little of the English language.

Today, Phonephaly (pronounced Pohn-pah-lee) has nearly completed her Intermediate English class at the Minnesota Literacy Council’s learning center in the Arlington Hills Lutheran Church on St. Paul’s East Side, where adult students from around the world learn English skills that they need for jobs.

“Like so many new immigrants, Phonephaly takes learning English very seriously—and it shows,” says her teacher (and fellow Dayton’s Bluff resident), Jessica Jones. “In just under two years, she has passed out of three levels of English classes. But she still has a ways to go. Everyone learns languages at their own pace but on average it takes about seven years to become proficient in a second language.”

In addition to progressing well in classes, Phonephaly has made lots of new friends at the school, many of whom are also immigrants or refugees from South Asian countries. Most attend classes Monday through Friday throughout the year.

“When I am not in school, I do like to visit with my many friends from many countries,” says Phonephaly.

“Phonephaly is one of those super friendly people that you just want to be around. She is always appreciative of the help she gets from her friends, neighbors, and teachers,” Jones says.

Phonephaly, age 40, admits to mixed feelings about her immigration experience. Although she settled in the very welcoming Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood with her new husband, she had traveled across the ocean alone without the benefit of any of her brothers or sisters accompanying her for settlement in Minnesota. Phonephaly says she is “blessed” to be a U.S. citizen... I do not like snow,” she says. But then her two stepsons, ages 15 and 20, have become so at home in American culture that they’re happy to engage in winter season sports such as snowboarding and basketball.

Another thing that Phonephaly found difficult to adjust to as part of her assimilation into metropolitan life were the street names and layouts—especially in Dayton’s Bluff where different patterns of street grids overlap in confusing ways.

“When I go to market, I don’t know street names,” she says. “The names are under the age of 14 years... Send all challenges to Henry Gehring, 297 Lawson Street; will play only on Saturdays.”

Photograph courtesy of St. Paul Dispatch, April 18, 1912
A Community Church

Church brings a community neighborhood to life. It can be one of the many backbones of a city or local community. The tie between church and community can be strengthened as the church invests time and energy in the community and considers how it can best serve all the people. This type of bond exists with the Dayton’s Bluff and Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church. It was founded in 1887, but the church was built in 1914 by E. L. Masqueray. This year the church is celebrating its 125th anniversary. Pastor Nathan Raddatz has presided over the congregation since August 4, 2007. “There are many different groups in Dayton’s Bluff,” Raddatz says. “The community is eclectic, close to downtown, and… very friendly. My church and I are committed to Dayton’s Bluff. This neighborhood is the best of all worlds. We are engaging in helping new immigrants. We are also assisting ones who have been here a long time.” He went on to say, “I look forward to how the development of East 7th Street plays out.”

Pastor Raddatz discussed the services his church offers its members. “We offer hope and comfort through God’s Word, especially through the person of Jesus Christ,” he says. “We offer ongoing programs (Kool Klub, Music In The Son of Jesus Christ. We offer ongoing God’s Word, especially through the programs (Kool Klub, Music In The Son of Jesus Christ. We offer ongoing God’s Word, especially through the programs in the church basement (Fellowship Hall).” Pastor Raddatz will continue to offer the best educational program in the community. Any child from any economic, ethnic or cultural background can succeed and thrive. Since the church’s beginning in 1887, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church has touched the lives of many people in the Dayton’s Bluff community. Rev. Raddatz is a firm believer that the bond between Bethlehem and Dayton’s Bluff will continue to improve our facility for the sake of the community and its events, even now as we finish up renovation in the church basement (Fellowship Hall).

JOY Academy will continue to offer the best educational program in the community. Any child from any economic, ethnic or cultural background can succeed and thrive. Since the church’s beginning in 1887, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church has touched the lives of many people in the Dayton’s Bluff community. Rev. Raddatz is a firm believer that the bond between Bethlehem and Dayton’s Bluff will continue to improve our facility for the sake of the community and its events, even now as we finish up renovation in the church basement (Fellowship Hall). Since the church’s beginning in 1887, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church has touched the lives of many people in the Dayton’s Bluff community. Rev. Raddatz is a firm believer that the bond between Bethlehem and Dayton’s Bluff will continue to improve our facility for the sake of the community and its events, even now as we finish up renovation in the church basement (Fellowship Hall).

Since the church’s beginning in 1887, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church has touched the lives of many people in the Dayton’s Bluff community. Rev. Raddatz is a firm believer that the bond between Bethlehem and Dayton’s Bluff will continue to improve our facility for the sake of the community and its events, even now as we finish up renovation in the church basement (Fellowship Hall).

Since the church’s beginning in 1887, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church has touched the lives of many people in the Dayton’s Bluff community. Rev. Raddatz is a firm believer that the bond between Bethlehem and Dayton’s Bluff will continue to improve our facility for the sake of the community and its events, even now as we finish up renovation in the church basement (Fellowship Hall).

Since the church’s beginning in 1887, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church has touched the lives of many people in the Dayton’s Bluff community. Rev. Raddatz is a firm believer that the bond between Bethlehem and Dayton’s Bluff will continue to improve our facility for the sake of the community and its events, even now as we finish up renovation in the church basement (Fellowship Hall).

Since the church’s beginning in 1887, Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church has touched the lives of many people in the Dayton’s Bluff community. Rev. Raddatz is a firm believer that the bond between Bethlehem and Dayton’s Bluff will continue to improve our facility for the sake of the community and its events, even now as we finish up renovation in the church basement (Fellowship Hall).