

# Dayton's Bluff District Forum

Volume 40, No. 3

April 2026

"The Voice of the Community"

## Join the Payne & Arcade Clean-Up

Jessy Rehmman

Show your East Side pride for Earth Day! There's no better time to clean our beloved streets alongside neighbors, hand-in-hand... with gloves, of course.

The fourth-annual Payne & Arcade Spring Clean-Up will take place on **Saturday, April 25**.

The day will begin at 8:30 a.m. with free coffee and donuts at Caydence Records & Coffee. Groups will collect trash and recyclables off the streets from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., then gather for a lunch provided by neighborhood restaurants.

This clean-up is a true community-led effort. The initiative is organized by East Side Area Business Association (ESA-BA), Payne Arcade Business Association (PABA), East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC) and many local businesses.

"We're not waiting for anyone to come and clean our corridor," said Ky'Mari Love, the economic development specialist at ESNDC. "We'll take initiative first to say that, 'This is the standard that we wanna set for the community which we live in, and this is the way that we want to give back to ensure that we're fostering a safe, thriving East Side neighborhood.'"

All the area organizations sponsoring this event work year-round to improve the quality of life on the East Side. For ESNDC, this means connecting residents with affordable housing resources, and helping businesses with opportunities for economic growth.

In the spirit of Earth Day, ESNDC is bringing in two of its eco-friendly partners as sponsors for the clean-up. BizRecycling provides East Side businesses with technical assistance and grants for

waste and recycling options. Energy-Smart helps businesses with affordable energy options.

Love said the clean-up wouldn't be possible without East Side businesses who are donating supplies, food and time to make the initiative a success. Kendall's ACE Hardware, Brunson's Pub, Seed & Sesh, East Side Pizzeria, Chance's, Saint Paul Brewing and Voliere Spirits are just some of the businesses dedicated to cleaning up the East Side.

"We're willing to get down and pick up trash, recycle, just to support and ensure that our corridor is beautiful," Love said. "And when people drive down the street and kids get off the bus, they can see a beautiful East Side that they too can have pride in."

To join the clean-up, you can register at [esaba.org](http://esaba.org). Click the "Events" tab, find "Payne Arcade Clean-Up" and click "Sign-Up Here". Registration will close on April 20th to estimate the amount needed supplies, but Love said folks are welcome to join day-of as well.

"If you see us along Payne Avenue and Arcade, ask for some gloves and a bag," Love said. "We'll welcome you to the Spring Clean-Up."

*Jessy Rehmman is a Hammstown correspondent from Eclective Creative Collective, the company behind Saint Paul Brewing, Wonder Studio, Dark Horse Bar & Eatery, Can Can Wonderland and Martha's Gardens.*

Photo in the upper right provided by St. Paul Parks and Rec



## How the Dayton's Bluff District Forum Began

Steve Trimble

The first time we started a newspaper was in October 1982. It was a work of many neighborhood people. There was already a local paper, but it was in the grips of an old group. Our newspaper was started by people who were new arrivals and they invited me to join them.

Kay Woitas was the editor for many years. Kay and others, along with me, would work in Kay's house and put the newspaper together by hand. We had to take our own photos and glue the photos and articles together on paper pages.

The pages were then sent to a printer. We had to check back with the printer. We hand-delivered the printed paper to houses. For a time, we did things that way. Then we took it to a different printer and the paper generated enough money to be delivered by mail. The paper had eight pages with a local photo on the front page and a piece of art by a local artist on page eight.

We decided to include delivery to apartments so more people were able to receive the paper. The first funding came from local politicians running for office. Then we began to include advertising which expanded the paper to 16 pages. Most of the ads came from larger local stores. We covered local events and sometimes people sent in small donations to support our work. Almost every issue had one history article that I usually wrote. Readers would sometimes send photos from their vacation homes or spots during the winter.



## METRO Bronze Line BRT Project

Metro Transit

The Metropolitan Council, Ramsey County, and the cities of Maplewood and St. Paul announced in December 2025 the METRO Bronze Line bus rapid transit (BRT) project, a re-imagined version of the former Purple Line BRT project.

The METRO Bronze Line is a planned bus rapid transit line that will provide faster and more reliable transit service to the cities of Saint Paul and Maplewood and will connect with existing and future light rail and bus rapid transit services of the METRO system, including direct connections to the Green Line, Gold Line, B Line, G Line, and H Line, as well as local and express bus routes.

The line will run from Union Depot in downtown Saint Paul to Maplewood Mall Transit Center, generally along Robert Street and Phalen Boulevard south of Maryland Avenue. The line will replace Route 54 along White Bear Avenue and a portion of Maryland Avenue with enhanced service and facilities. The line

will increase accessibility to jobs, housing, and services, improving the appeal and competitiveness of the east metro area.

In St. Paul, the project includes: A new BRT and multi-use trail bridge over Johnson Parkway (between Cook Station and Maryland Avenue) and buses will operate in side-running bus lanes on Maryland and White Bear Avenues south of Larpen-teur Avenue that allows general traffic to make right turns onto local streets or into driveways.

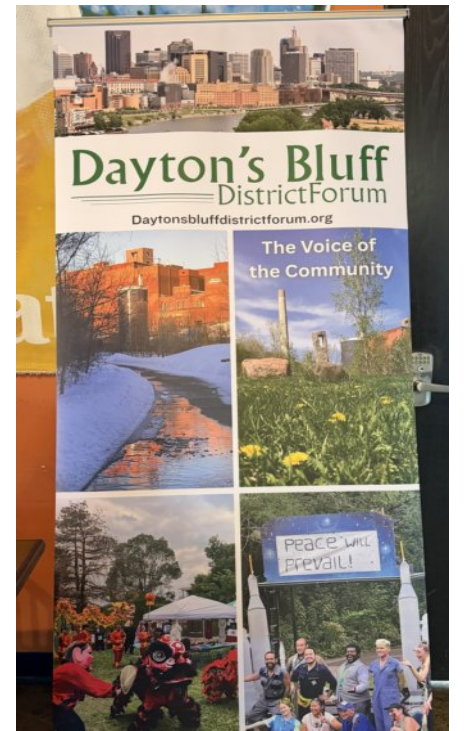
Additional improvements in St. Paul include: Dedicated left-turn lanes and new medians, pedestrian ramps and signals, and traffic signal transit priority modifications

Stations will have these enhanced amenities: Comfortable waiting space, NexTrip real-time departure signs and maps, heating, lighting, bike racks and added security with cameras and emergency telephones.

The schedule for the project's design, construction, and opening is under development. More information about the project schedule will be shared once available. Construction is not anticipated before 2028.



Read the paper online at [daytonsbuffdistrictforum.org](http://daytonsbuffdistrictforum.org)



**Thank You**

Thank you to everyone who came to our fundraising event at St. Paul Brewing in March. We appreciate all the generous donations and talking to everyone interested in our newspaper.

Thank you to all the businesses and East Siders that gave a donation for our silent auction, and St. Paul Brewing for allowing us to use their space.

Follow us on Facebook to hear about more fundraising events in the future.

### Friends of Swede Hollow

If you have a passion for history and preserving nature, please join us for our monthly meeting on the third Tuesday of every month.

For the most accurate information on the next meeting, email Michel or follow us on Facebook.

Meetings are an excellent resource for park updates and events. For more updates email [taylor672@comcast.net](mailto:taylor672@comcast.net) or call Michel at 651-442-3366.

### Dayton's Bluff District Forum Board Meeting

The *Forum* is seeking writers and help with online content, idea generation, and ad sales — join us at our next meeting on **Friday, April 3 at 11 a.m.**

If you'd like to attend, email [daytonsbuffdistrictforum@gmail.com](mailto:daytonsbuffdistrictforum@gmail.com) for more information.

We are currently meeting at the Dayton's Bluff Library.

### Need Groceries?

If you are 60 or older, you may be eligible to receive a box of nutritious food every month from Second Harvest.

This box is part of a program called NAPS, and we can help you apply!

Give us a call at 651-683-2326, and someone will assist you with your application.

Help the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging provide one-on-one counseling to Medicare beneficiaries at community partner sites.

Make a difference in your community by becoming a State Health Insurance Assistance Program certified Medicare Counselor. Help people understand their Medicare options.

Visit [Metroaging.org/volunteer](http://Metroaging.org/volunteer).

### Police Community Meetings

The Eastern District Saint Paul Police hosts their monthly meetings for community members at the Eastern District Police Office at 722 Payne Avenue, on the corner of Payne and Minnehaha Avenues.

The meetings are intended as a time to learn, listen, and address people's concerns about crime and other issues on the East Side. Police meetings are held at **9 a.m. and 6 p.m.** on the third Tuesday of each month. Bring your neighbors!

Call Robyn Brewin at 651-266-5580 or email [RobynBrewin@StPaul.gov](mailto:RobynBrewin@StPaul.gov) to ensure the meetings have not been canceled.

### New National Suicide Prevention Hotline Number

988 has been designated as the new three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Text or Dial. 988 was recently launched as an alternative to calling 911.

### Xcel Phone Numbers

Gas Leak: 800-895-2999. Power Outage: 800-895-1999.

Call 811 before you dig: Before starting that roto-tiller or heaving that shovel into the ground for *anything*, call 811.

At no charge, Xcel will have a trained technician check the area on your property or on the boulevard to make sure there

are no wires, pipes, or other hidden surprises in the designated digging area. Usually, someone checks within a day, marking



the 'no-dig' area with painted lines, and everyone is safe!

at 1029 Hudson Road, St. Paul, MN 55106; 651-772-2253; [historicismoundstheatre@gmail.com](mailto:historicismoundstheatre@gmail.com).

### Dayton's Bluff Community Council Board of Directors Meeting

The Dayton's Bluff Community Council is inviting everyone to attend the meeting on **Monday, April 20 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.** at the East Side Enterprise Center at 804 Margaret Street.

Come meet your neighbors, share your ideas, hear from others, and elect board members. Your voice matters!

Welcome address from the Board President, remarks from other local officials, and open discussion with your neighbors and board members are on the schedule. Looking forward to seeing you and serving your neighborhood needs. All are welcome.

### Free Legal Services for Low-Income People

Call Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services at 1-888-575-2954 or go to [smrls.org](http://smrls.org) to see if you qualify for free legal assistance with: family law, government benefits, housing, education, seniors, and more. You can also call if you're behind on your bills, having problems with credit or creditors, or have other civil legal issues, etc. If an interpreter is needed, SMRLS will provide one.

Hours: **Monday through Friday, 9 to 11:45 a.m.; 1 to 3 p.m.**



Visit [moundstheatre.org](http://moundstheatre.org) for more information and to purchase tickets. The Historic Mounds Theatre is located

### Chess Club

Come join us at Karibu Grocery and Deli, located at 719 Payne Ave. in St. Paul for a weekly game of chess. All levels are welcome. We play every **Wednesday from 6-9 p.m.**



### Apply for Homestead Classification Online

Ramsey County's new online homestead application portal is now open. Property owners can easily apply for homestead classification through the county's Smart-File system at [RamseyCountyMN.gov/homestead](http://RamseyCountyMN.gov/homestead).

Homestead classification may provide a property tax reduction for residents who own and occupy their home as their primary residence. Applicants can create an account to complete the online application, upload required documents, and receive updates about their submission.

Residents should be prepared to provide proof of ownership and occupancy as part of the process. Processing times may vary based on application volume.

For questions or assistance, contact the Assessor's Office at 651-266-2040 or [askhomesteads@ramseycounty.us](mailto:askhomesteads@ramseycounty.us).



# My Family's Journey from Latvia to America

Gaida Quinn

In January 1952, seven years after the end of World War II, my parents, two younger brothers, and I boarded the *General Taylor*. The ship had been converted from a troop carrier into an immigration and refugee ship. It was departing from Bremerhaven, Germany, going to New York City in America. We were finally leaving our displaced persons camp in Fulda, Germany, where we had waited over four years after applying for resettlement. The delays were caused by intense security screening, slowed because my father had lost his vision toward the end of the war, and resulting in questions concerning his employability.

My parents had fled Latvia along with 170,000 fellow Latvians as the Russians were invading their country. They were among the many who ended up in West Germany post-World War II. For millions of Eastern European refugees who lost family, safety, and their homelands, they had experienced chaos, destruction, and despair.

Three hundred and seventy Displaced Persons Camps were set up in the British, French, and American zones of western Germany for those who could not return to their homes. We were in the American sector. The children that were born in these DP Camps, like my brothers and I, were well received and celebrated. Perhaps hope and new life brought some joy into this community devastated by loss and war.

The camp was well managed by an elected Latvian Council aided by United States relief services. There were enough children so we could have a school, with teachers who lived in the camp. I remember our putting on plays and having Latvian songfests. People seemed to manage despite the shortage of housing, clothing, and food.

CARE packages from the United States were always cherished and met with excitement and anticipation. One shipment contained boxes full of discarded baseballs, and it was discovered that the balls were filled with wool yarn. After washing out the glue and soaking the wool, the yarn from each ball measured 150 yards. Everyone had mittens and sweaters for the winter. I experienced little hardship in that DP camp but was aware of my parents and the other adults being deeply sad at times. I saw my parents and their friends cry and comfort each other.

It was a relief to finally receive our sponsorship papers to Saint John's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and be assured that my father had employment. In accordance with the 1948 Displaced Persons Act, everyone needed sponsorship with a commitment that guaranteed each family housing and financial support.

I was fearful at boarding the ship that

was to take us to America and started to worry about our safety. The camp had become a haven and home. The huge ship with its 700 passengers was noisy and crowded on that dark January morning. Initially, my father was told he had to stay with the men on board as men and women were separated. I began to cry, and my mother insisted he stay with her because of his blindness. And so my father remained with us.

Lifeboat drills were terrible. My father had to stay on deck with the men while the women and children sat in the lifeboats. I couldn't take my eyes off him during those drills. While he always stood tall and confident, I was afraid of a sudden pitch of the ship from winter's high waves in the North Sea. We stayed in our cabin most of the time because many of the passengers were sick and nauseated. When we ventured up on the deck, I always held my mother's hand.

My mother had her hands full, caring for three children under the age of five along with a blind husband. I worried she wouldn't hold up, but she did. Finally, our voyage was coming to a close. All the passengers were invited to the main deck where we lined up along the rail as we slowly passed the Statue of Liberty. An interpreter read the poem on the pedestal. All eyes were on the statue, many along the rail crying and holding on to each other. I still think about the final goodbye to Latvia. Then, we stepped off the ship. We were in America.

On our train ride from New York to Minneapolis, all of us were exhausted, especially my mother. The train went straight through, and we slept much of the time. My mother had set aside special outfits for all of us, anticipating meeting the church members who were waiting to greet our family. As we approached Union Station, we were spit-shined and well-dressed. We felt we looked more like the Romanovs than the downcast poor peasants some may have expected.

Mother had practiced a bit of English. After she and my father thanked our hosts, she said, "And now bed and bath and supper for the children, please." We were met with such kindness, and it was a great relief to rest and be comfortable. Our family settled in with the help of the church, learned English, worked hard, and enjoyed our community and friends. Years later, my sister Marie was born. She was the first of our family to be born in America.

This is one of millions of stories about families and people coming to America. All arrive with their gifts and wounds. Each story speaks to the core of what it means to survive loss, to be challenged to adjust, to seek meaning and love in the human experience, and to enrich our country with multiple cultures. My parents are gone now, but I will always honor their story and let it guide me to what is good and just.

*Photos to the right provided by Gaida Quinn*

**For anyone who'd like to submit their immigration story, please submit it to: [daytonsbuffdistrictforum@gmail.com](mailto:daytonsbuffdistrictforum@gmail.com)**



My father and me on a trip to Latvia in 1999 where my father visited his mother's grave.



The whole family in 1952 after arrival. The Bankovics family John, Ingrid, Gaida, Peter, and Gunnar.



My parents taken before leaving Europe.



Myself and my parents.



# April is National Poetry Month!

Dayton's Bluff Library

April is not just spring, it's also National Poetry Month. Dayton's Bluff Library is partnering with Metro State to give you all sorts of poetry related events to celebrate.

"Launched by the Academy of American Poets in April 1996, National Poetry Month is a special occasion that celebrates poets' integral role in our culture and that poetry matters." To celebrate, we've created **SPPL Poetry Trading Cards** for the fifth year in a row! There are 27 new poems to choose from that can be picked up at any Saint Paul Public Library location. Take one for yourself and give one to a friend, poetry is better when shared!

The **Dayton's Bluff Book Club** will finish our 2025-26 season on April 22<sup>nd</sup> by reading *Raised by Wolves: Fifty Poets on Fifty Poems*. Raised by Wolves is a unique and vibrant gathering of poems from Graywolf Press's fifty years. The anthology is conceived as a community document: fifty Graywolf poets have selected fifty poems by Graywolf poets, offering insightful prose reflections on their selections.

Dayton's Bluff Book Club is a great fit for folks who love reading diverse books by local authors and discussing them with a group of dedicated readers. We meet once a month on a Wednesday in the months of October, November, December, February, March, and April at 6 p.m.

The Dayton's Bluff Book Club is a collaboration of the Metropolitan State University Library and the Dayton's Bluff Branch of Saint Paul Public Library whose members live, work or attend classes on the East Side. We prioritize our selection of titles to those written by Minnesota authors, that have a local setting, or that are written by people of color and other diverse authors. Book discussions usually include issues related to social justice, equity, and anti-racism. We encourage book club members to use both the university and public libraries in pursuit of lifelong learning and the joy of reading. Discussions are frequently facilitated by authors, Metropolitan State fac-

ulty, or other guests from the community. Email [DaytonsBluff.Programs@met-rostate.edu](mailto:DaytonsBluff.Programs@met-rostate.edu)

**Teen Writers' Guild will host NAMI Creative MindSets** on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 6 – 8 p.m. Write Your Feels – a series of writing exercises to process feelings and reflect through journaling. The facilitator guide for this activity walks you through different prompts, like creating a personification poem, practicing meditative writing through haikus, or free-writing using a series of prompts that encourage expression, gratitude, and self-knowledge. In a personification poem, students will pick an emotion they are feeling and imagine it as a person or creature – then write about what it might say, do, or look like. Haikus are short, tightly structured poems that can be about anything, and often encourage mindfulness through observation and reflection.

Facilitator: Danielle is a public health professional with experience in community-based research and programs. As a Community Health Education Coordinator at NAMI Minnesota, she supports community education and prevention efforts focused on mental health. Danielle holds a B.S. in Public Health and a Master's degree in Global Public Health.

**NAMI MN:** NAMI Minnesota is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults with mental illnesses and their families.

**NAMI Creative MindSets** is a set of ready-to-use activities designed to help middle and high school students (grades 6–12) explore their thoughts, feelings, and identities through creativity. These hands-on experiences blend art, mindfulness, and self-expression to support student mental wellness. NAMI Creative MindSets offers students a creative and personal way to reflect, express themselves, and build self-awareness

**Teen Writers' Guild (TWG)** is a group for teens to encourage each other in their writing, learn the craft of writing, and grow as writers. We'll also occasionally host guest authors and we always have snacks and hot drinks. Meetings are safe spaces.

TWG meets once a month on the 4th Tuesday at Dayton's Bluff Library from 6:30-8 p.m.

For teens 12-18. Visit [sppl.org/twg/](http://sppl.org/twg/) to sign up.

Visit [sppl.org/events](http://sppl.org/events) for more fun things to do at the library.



Dayton's Bluff Library

Community members selecting seeds to plant during the Spring Seed Sowing.



Dayton's Bluff Library

Eastside Seed Library moved but not far. It's now next to the desk at the Dayton's Bluff Library.

## The Forum is Online at the Minnesota Historical Society

Greg Cosimini

The Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub is a free searchable website from the Minnesota Historical Society that makes millions of pages of Minnesota newspapers available online. The Hub contains geographically and culturally diverse newspapers published between 1849 and

today, with new content added regularly. Due to potential copyright restrictions, most issues published after 1977 can only be accessed from the Gale Family Library at the Minnesota History Center.

However, this is not a problem for the *Dayton's Bluff District Forum*. In its latest update, the Hub now contains all issues of the newest incarnation of the *Forum* from August 2000 through December 2025.

The Minnesota Historical Society's free online Minnesota Digital Newspaper Hub can be found at:

[newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/browse.jsp](http://newspapers.mnhs.org/jsp/browse.jsp)

**You got somethin' to say? Say it here!**

The Dayton's Bluff District Forum welcomes all opinions and neighborhood anecdotes — send yours to:

**[daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com](mailto:daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com)**

Want to write about something that interests you? We want to hear it! Submit your stories and articles to the email above.

Opinions expressed in contributed articles may not represent the views of the *Forum*.

**Deadline for the May issue of the *Forum* April 10**



# View From My Porch:

## Can You Name the Responsibilities of a Ramsey County Commissioner?

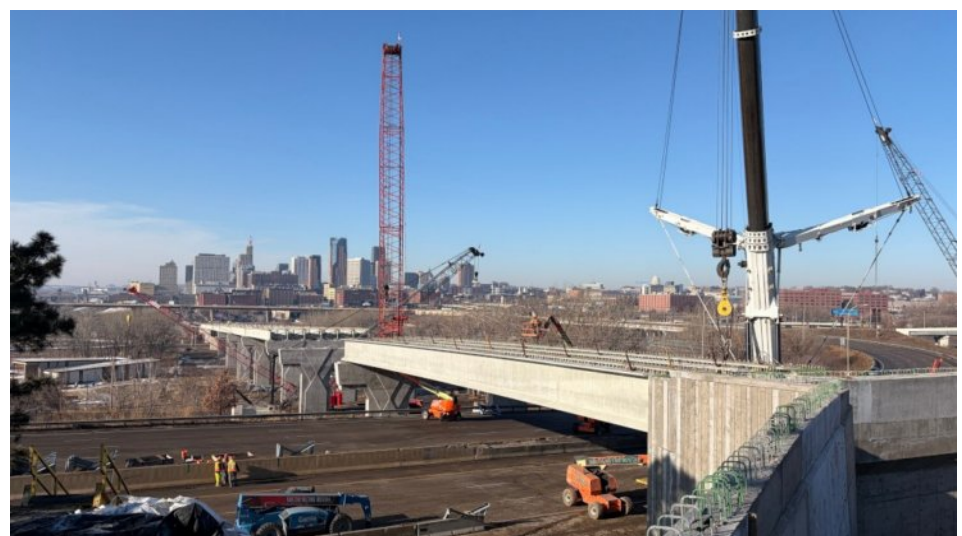
Sage Holben

Can you name the various responsibilities of a Ramsey County Commissioner? According to the appropriate website, here are a few: Budget & Finance, Policy & Governance. Strategic Priorities, and Representation. As with so many elected positions, the public often holds the idea that the pay is too high and the elected party does very little. However, consider the fact that the position is structured as part-time, but the demands are full-time; more in fact than a standard full-time job.

Do you know who the Ramsey County District 5 commissioner represents? They are the residents, businesses, and public services of the following areas: Highland Park, Macalester Groveland, West 7th, West Side, and Dayton's Bluff.


Do you know that you, as a resident, have (I have found this to be true from personal experience) easy access to the office of your county commissioner?

Have you ever thought of how a public school, a park, a hospital, a juvenile detention center, or a Saint Paul city street may each be under the auspices of the City of Saint Paul, the State of Minnesota AND the County? I have been remiss in much of this; taking for granted that the City, State, and County work together and keep in close touch with each other to ensure the highest quality in every circumstance. We have an election coming up for a new District 5 Ramsey County Commissioner. Let's all do our homework on the candidates, the work they have done in current and past positions of representing their constituents and their communication skills.




City of St. Paul

The installation of beams for the new Kellogg-Third Street Bridge is a major operation. For example, the beams installed over I-94 in February are the second-longest prestressed concrete beams ever installed in Minnesota. They are nearly 200 feet long, 8 feet tall, 3 feet wide, and weigh approximately 250,000 pounds each. They had to be individually transported by truck from Elk River where they were manufactured. Specialized equipment was needed to install them on the piers, including a self-propelled mobile transport and two large cranes. The next major task will be three large concrete decking pours that will take place this summer and fall. The new bridge will open in 2027.



**Cumulative impacts:  
Clinic for effective public comments**

Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 5-7 p.m.  
Metro State University Library, room 302  
St. Paul, MN



# Dayton's Bluff District Forum

**Subscribe to the Forum.**

Interested in keeping up with hot news? Send your email address to [daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com](mailto:daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com) and request to subscribe to the *Forum* every month.

## Dayton's Bluff District Forum

1368 Minnehaha Ave. E., St. Paul, MN 55106  
E-mail: [daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com](mailto:daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com)

While we are not currently printing, the paper is always available online at [daytonsbluffdistrictforum.org](http://daytonsbluffdistrictforum.org). This publication of Hopewell Communications, Inc., is intended to provide a forum for the ideas and opinions of its readers and to be an instrument for developing community awareness and pride. Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the *Forum*. Material from this paper may be republished if it is attributed to the *Dayton's Bluff District Forum* and to the author, if any. Articles and letters to the editor are welcome and may be emailed to [daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com](mailto:daytonsbluffdistrictforum@gmail.com), or mailed to the address above. The *Dayton's Bluff District Forum* is delivered to businesses in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood when the budget permits. To find out where you can pick up a printed issue, send an email to the address above.

Board of Directors: Greg Cosimini, Karin DuPaul, Sage Holben, Steve Trimble  
Editor/layout: Allison Lund-Zalewski; Editorial Associate: Mark Gallagher  
Staff: Mandy Okonek

Next issue: **May. Deadline for content April 10.**



## Yin Yoga at the East Side Eagles Club 33

Mandy Okonek

I really wanted to call this article "Dive Bar Yoga," but it was so much more than that.

I found myself lying flat on the floor the first Saturday of spring. I'd fully expected the floor to be sticky. I even joked about it with my neighbor when I asked if she wanted to join me for pay-what-you-can yoga at a bar. While this wasn't what I imagined, it was everything I needed.

I was greeted at the door by a friendly face in a pink tie-dye shirt. She had her yoga mat tucked under her left arm and waited for me to walk in with her. That was my introduction to Kristin, a super volunteer, social media and website manager, and Eagles Club member whose post about Saturday yoga had caught my eye. There's so much more going on at the Eagles Club than Saturday yoga sessions (we'll get to that), but let's roll out our mats first.

Every other Saturday from 10 to 11 a.m. the floor is yours. Upcoming dates are April 4 and April 18. Instructor Mike D's teaching style centers on breathwork, meditation, and holding poses for four to five minutes. Yin yoga is mellow and restorative, not the one-breath-one-movement style you find at the Y. Breaking a sweat has its place, but on a Saturday morning, Yin wins on all fronts.

Class began in corpse pose (or shavasana if you want to be technical) but I prefer the more

visceral idea of final resting pose. Interestingly, this is how most yoga classes end. Mike led us through a guided meditation using images of light and stories of place. He shared that the building was constructed in 1915 as the Deluxe Theatre and invited us to think about not only the people who originally built it, but what their conversations might have sounded like, post-WWI, full of community, hopes, dreams ... you get the idea. It was a cool thing to sit with.



Through the next hour, we moved gently and focused on our breath: in for four counts, out for four counts, hold for four counts. That's called box breathing, and it's a powerful grounding technique. After a week of nonstop going, it was exactly what I needed. The neighbors who attended were friendly and already talking about coming back and bringing friends.

If lying on the floor of a bar and recalibrating your mind and body connection isn't your thing, fair enough. The Eagles Club has plenty of other reasons to walk through the door. Board Game Night lands on April 2, a Kentucky Derby party with hat prizes is coming May 2, swing dancing lessons

start May 16, and yes, there is an actual adult prom on May 30 with an "Enchantment Under the Sea" theme. And they are just getting started.

The regular programming is just as good. Karaoke on Fridays, casual Saturday daytime karaoke with Tammy, and the Wednesday steak dinner, a full steak with a bread roll and salad for \$10, with live music to boot. Our very own Sage Holben was right that it cannot be beat. A burger swap is available if that's more your speed.

If you want to know why the Eagles Club feels different these days, start with Stephanie Harr, Eagles Club 33 secretary and booker. She found the Eagles Club the way a lot of people do. "Steak night," she told me. "It's the gateway drug." She made friends, saw the potential, and never really left. When she joined there were 46 members. Now there are 120 and people are excited.

Stephanie has been intentional about how the programming comes together. Rather than trying to do everything themselves, the volunteers reach out to groups that already gather people and invite them to do it in their space. Silent Book Club, yoga, live music, swing

dancing. If it sounds fun, it has a shot. She has thought about this a lot: "We get to decide what happens here. And it's up to us to make it happen."

Stephanie has lived in the neighborhood since 1998 and knows firsthand what has been missing. Fraternal organizations have been declining for decades, and third spaces, the kind of places where you can just show up and belong, are increasingly rare outside of higher income communities. The decline of places for people to be in community is a real loss, and Stephanie feels that personally. When I asked who she most wanted to get through the door, she laughed. "A million-dollar sugar daddy? Just kidding. Anyone who is looking for community."

Eagles Club 33 runs as a non-profit built on two things: people helping people and bringing the art. Community groups and bands are welcome to perform and gather here. Reach out to Stephanie directly at harr.stephanie@gmail.com to make it happen.

The Eagles Club is located at 287 Maria Avenue in St. Paul and is open to the public. Membership is open to anyone 18 and older for \$35 a year and members get a say in where the club goes. There is also a secret initiation. That is all I am allowed to tell you.

As class wrapped up, Mike left us with something that has stayed with him since he was 18 and in treatment: "You can only keep what you have by giving it away." It feels like the Eagles Club has figured that out too. They are giving away space, time, and a place to belong, and the neighborhood is better for it. It started as a theater, became a bar, and somewhere along the way became exactly the community space this neighborhood needed.

## Friends of the Forum 2026

Make a donation today!

John Vaughn

Sofia Santana

Richard and Georgette Kleinbaum

Diane May

Kristenza Nelson

Kathy Sidles

### Friends of the Forum

Dear Reader,

**The Dayton's Bluff District Forum has been a volunteer-run newspaper since the 1980s and has always operated on a minimal budget. Each issue costs around \$1,000 to produce per month. We have found a new printer and have adjusted the cost to print each month.**

For the past three years we have been soliciting donations through our Friends of the *Forum* program. Thanks to the donations from readers like you, we have been able to keep the paper up and running. If you value this community source of information, please consider filling out the form below. Any amount is appreciated; you may also make memorial donations, or include the *Forum* in your legacy planning. If you have been our Friend in the past, please consider making a tax-deductible donation in 2026. Our goal for 2026 is \$2,500; will you help us reach our goal?

Yes, I will become a Friend of the *Forum*. My tax-deductible check is enclosed, for:

\$100 \$50 \$25 Another amount \_\_\_\_\_

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Make checks payable to: Dayton's Bluff District Forum and mail to 1368 Minnehaha Ave. E., St. Paul, MN 55106. For more information, [daytonsbuffdistrictforum@gmail.com](mailto:daytonsbuffdistrictforum@gmail.com).

Thank you for your support!