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Bloomington winters can be brutally cold, but if it weren't for the cold, we wouldn't have these amazing photos. Resident Steve Haugesag captured these ice formations while walking along Nine Mile Creek. Resident Heather Starks discovered a sundog on her way to her son's preschool. What beauties have you discovered this winter? Visit the City's website to submit your photos.

FORMER CITY COUNCILMEMBERS REFLECT ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Former councilmembers Steve Peterson, Karen Nordstrom, Vern Wilcox and Tom Hulting, whose terms ended in December 2013, share their thoughts on community service.

SERVING A NEW COMMUNITY

Vern Wilcox began serving on the City Council in District IV in 1993. Wilcox said he considers his greatest accomplishments to be the renovations to the Old Town Hall and Bloomington Family Aquatic Center.

"I will miss not being part of the action anymore, but I plan on staying active during my retirement."

Wilcox is building a house in northern Wisconsin, where he plans to serve on the town board.

FOCUSING ON HIS DAY JOB

Steve Peterson began serving as a councilmember for District I in 2000. Prior to that, he served on the Planning Commission. Peterson decided not to run for reelection in order to focus more of his time and energy on his day job at Microsoft.

Peterson said he has difficulty identifying one item that he's most proud of accomplishing during his tenure.

"We've made so many important decisions during the past

14 years, it's hard to pick just one," he said.

Peterson is confident that the new City Council is a good mix of seasoned and new leaders for Bloomington.

TAKING TIME FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Karen Nordstrom was elected to serve as Councilmember At Large in 2006. Nordstrom is most proud of her work to expand smoke-free areas in Bloomington and prevent youth smoking. She said she decided not to run for reelection in order to give someone else an opportunity to serve.

"I believe the City Council needs new energy and new thinking and I feel good about those elected this past fall."

Nordstrom said she plans on spending more time with her grandchildren.

SAYING GOODBYE

Tom Hulting served on the City Council in District II for four years. Hulting said he sought election to the City Council because he wanted to reduce taxes in Bloomington. According to Hulting, he is most proud of the fact that during the first two years of his tenure the City Council kept the City's levy steady.

"We did not increase our levies each of my first two years," Hulting said.



Vern Wilcox



Karen Nordstrom



Steve Peterson



Tom Hulting

The *Briefing*, published bimonthly by the City of Bloomington, is mailed to our residents and businesses. Direct comments and requests for Braille, larger print or computer disk to Communications Administrator Janine Hill, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3027; PH 952-563-8819; TTY: 952-563-8740; FAX 952-563-8715; E-mail: jhill@BloomingtonMN.gov
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The City of Bloomington complies with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs, or activities. Upon request, accommodation will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Bloomington services, programs, and activities. The City has designated coordinators to facilitate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and to coordinate compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations. For more information, contact the Human Services Division, City of Bloomington, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington, MN 55431-3027; 952-563-8733 (Voice); 952-563-8740 (TTY).

Upon request, this information can be available in Braille, large print, audio tape and/or electronic format.

MAYOR'S MEMO
PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BUILD COMMUNITY

By Mayor Gene Winstead



Bloomington residents rank public safety services very highly. In a 2013 Bloomington resident survey conducted by the National Research Center of Boulder, Colorado, 95 percent of residents rated Bloomington as excellent or good when it comes to quality of life, and 84 percent responded that they felt very or somewhat safe from violent crime. Public safety and crime prevention programs ranked #3 in the survey's comparison of Bloomington to 21 high-performing cities that are similar to Bloomington in size, demographics and employment base. This comes as no surprise considering the efforts put forth by the Bloomington Police Department (which just celebrated its 60th anniversary), Fire Department, Fire Prevention and Public Works.



The BPD has a number of outreach programs and initiatives it successfully employs. Through the Multicultural Advisory Committee and other programs such as National Night Out, the BPD encourages partnerships with diverse community groups, businesses and schools. In December, the department hosted its first annual Holiday Helpers in Blue event that treated 10 lucky kids to a shopping day at Target, lunch with police officers and Mall of America ride passes. The program helps kids in need by partnering with local retailers such as Target to buy holiday gifts for kids and their families using donated funds. The program is just one way the BPD builds lasting connections in the community.

The Fire Department holds an open house each year during National Fire Prevention Week to give residents an opportunity to meet its local firefighters and learn about Fire Department activities. Police and Public Works also participate in the annual event.



New addition to the family? The Fire Department and Police host a monthly car seat inspection clinic at Fire Station 1 to check car seats for proper installation. Need a smoke detector tested? The Fire Department will install smoke detectors with batteries as well as check and change smoke detector batteries free of charge to qualifying Bloomington residents.

In addition to conducting regular inspections of commercial, industrial and multifamily residential structures and investigating fires, Fire Prevention presents fire prevention programs to Bloomington schools, clubs and organizations.

Public Works keeps Bloomington streets safe for motorists and pedestrians all year long through the services it provides such as snow plowing, street sweeping, seal coating, pothole repair and traffic management.

Keeping neighborhoods safe is a community-wide effort. The next time you see a police officer, firefighter, fire inspector or snowplow operator, be sure to thank them for keeping Bloomington safe.



2014 HOME IMPROVEMENT FAIR

The City of Bloomington and the HRA will host the 2014 Home Improvement Fair, **Saturday, February 22, 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**, at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. If you're thinking of making home improvements, you won't want to miss this free event. Fairgoers will be able to visit more than 60 exhibits, attend a variety of how-to seminars, ask questions and get ideas for remodeling projects. Exhibitors will represent a multitude of trades. There will also be kids activities, including a project table hosted by Home Depot and a presentation by Dakota Wild Animals.

For more information, call HRA Program Manager Bryan Hartman at 952-563-8943 or e-mail bhartman@BloomingtonMN.gov.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: HOME FAIR.



REACH YOUR SMALL BUSINESS GOALS

Shane Korman was looking for just the right business opportunity to accommodate his lifestyle when he learned about a convenience store for sale across the street from Mall of America. With his hospitality industry experience and accounting background, the store seemed like a good fit, but he needed help with financing and wanted an objective opinion about the business opportunity. Bloomington's Open to Business program provided a free business consultation and arranged for financing that helped Korman purchase his new Under the Boardwalk store.

"Open to Business made a big difference for me," Korman said. "I received good advice and a loan that I could not have gotten at a local bank."

Sponsored by the City of Bloomington Port Authority and

Hennepin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, the program promotes economic development, creates and retains jobs and cultivates small businesses in Hennepin County. The nonprofit organization Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) provides free one-on-one technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs. The services offered include business plan development, feasibility studies, cash flow and financing projections, marketing, preparing loan requests and advocacy with lending institutions.

How to get started

An MCCD business advisor has office hours at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, the fourth Wednesday of each month from 1 - 4 p.m. To schedule an appointment, contact Rob Smolund at 612-789-7337, ext. 260 or e-mail info@opentobusinessmn.org.

QUALITY SERVICES AT AN AFFORDABLE PRICE CONTINUING A TRADITION OF FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The City Council, in adopting its property tax levy of \$48,049,784, achieved its 2014 budget objective of keeping the monthly property tax supported cost for the median value home of \$188,000 at \$67.82, essentially the same level since 2010. See graph at right. This continued a long City tradition of fiscal responsibility.

In Minnesota, local governments set a total property tax dollar amount instead of a tax rate as done in other states. This is based on state law, prorated to each property based on the property's value. Based on this property tax levy, the City's portion of 2014 total residential property taxes is 30 cents out of every tax dollar paid. Other tax dollars go to Hennepin County, the school district and other taxing districts.



SINGLE-FAMILY HOME MONTHLY PROPERTY TAX COST FOR CITY SERVICES					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Median value home	\$67.82	\$67.82	\$67.82	\$66.24	\$67.82
Average value home	\$78.17	\$79.73	\$78.79	\$77.44	\$80.83

2014 Median value home - \$188,000; 2014 Average value home - \$214,400.

median-valued property decreased 3.3 percent in market value for taxes payable in 2014, if your property maintained its value better, your share of the tax levy may show an increase."

Since 1990, the City's property tax levy has averaged 2.22 percent on existing properties – below both the Urban National and Minneapolis Consumer Price

Indexes (CPI) as well as the Social Security Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA). See graph above left. The levy impact also remained the lowest for

the median value home for Hennepin County communities with populations over 20,000, and why the citizen survey indicated residents found the value of services for taxes paid much above Bloomington's nationwide peers.

Prorated 2012 home sales reflected the end of the housing downturn and are the basis for the 2013 assessment for taxes payable in 2014. Home sales in 2013 reflected a significant improvement and will be the basis for the 2014 assessment for taxes payable in 2015.

For more information, contact Lori Economy-Scholler at 952-563-8791 or leconomy@BloomingtonMN.gov.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: 2014 BUDGET.

HISTORICAL TRENDS 1990 - 2013			
CPI-URBAN NATIONAL AVERAGE	CPI-URBAN MINNEAPOLIS AVERAGE	SOCIAL SECURITY COLA	CITY PROPERTY TAX LEVY EXISTING PROPERTY AVERAGE
2.42%	2.61%	2.45%	2.22%

"A homeowner's tax bill is a factor of how all other city properties change in value," Chief Financial Officer Lori Economy-Scholler said. "While the

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

CROSSING KILLEBREW DRIVE

Don't risk your safety or the hassle of a ticket by crossing Killebrew Drive on the street level. The pedestrian bridge that connects Mall of America (MOA) to the south side of Killebrew Drive was created to improve pedestrian safety. The bridge, completed last fall, replaced the at-grade crosswalks of the six-lane road.

Killebrew Drive currently accommodates more than 18,000 vehicles per day. That number is expected to increase to 39,000 vehicles per day by 2030.

Why should you use the pedestrian bridge?

- Safety. The pedestrian bridge was designed to be safer and faster than crossing on the street.
- Easy access. There are elevators and stairs on the south side of the street.
- Weather-resistance. The bridge is covered and heated in colder weather.
- Convenience. The pedestrian path goes through the MOA parking ramp located below the Radisson Blu hotel and along the lobby to connect to the MOA.
- Your wallet. It's a ticketable offense if caught illegally crossing the street where signs are posted for no pedestrians.

For more information, visit the City's website.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE.



CITIZEN ALERT

SIGN UP FOR CITIZEN ALERTS

If your street were being evacuated or a public health or environmental crisis were taking place, how would you want to be alerted? Public safety officials in Bloomington now have a new way to send time-sensitive emergency notifications directly to home phones, cell phones via voice and text alerts, and e-mail. Visit the City's website to create an account. Creating an account allows you to choose your notification preferences. Once you enter your preferences for notifications you will receive timely emergency notifications when alerts are issued. Who should sign up to receive these alerts? Everyone. For more information, visit the City's website.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: CITIZEN ALERTS.



NEW YEAR, NEW WEB ADDRESS!

Sometimes less is more. This is especially true when it comes to online communication. That's why on January 1, 2014, the City of Bloomington changed its domain name used for its external website and e-mail to BloomingtonMN.gov.

Why the change? Think of the websites you visit. Chances are most have domain names that are one or two syllables long and are easy to remember and type. To learn more about the change, visit the City's website at BloomingtonMN.gov.

The City is in the process of redesigning its website, which was last updated in 2006. Look for more information in the April Briefing.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: NEW URL.

DID YOU KNOW?

The City Clerk's Office processed a record 236 passport applications in November. The monthly average in 2013 was 119.



Photo courtesy of Bigstockphoto.com.

NEED A PASSPORT?

The City Clerk's Office at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road, processes passport applications and provides passport photo services, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Be sure to plan ahead. Have a family of four? The average passport processing time for a family of four is one hour.

Tips to expedite the process:

- Complete your application ahead of time by visiting www.travel.state.gov.
- Submit completed application, proof of US citizenship, picture ID, and required payment by check or money order payable to the U.S. Department of State, by 3:30 p.m. All parties involved must be present.
- Avoid the busiest times: after 1 p.m. each day, days immediately preceding or following holidays and school breaks.

For more information, call the City Clerk's Office at 952-563-4923.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: PASSPORT.



2014 CITYWIDE CURBSIDE CLEANUP

The Citywide Curbside Cleanup will be here in April. Be sure you're prepared by setting your materials at the curb before 7 a.m. on your pickup day.

Seniors and disabled residents should contact their Neighborhood Watch block captains or call Human Services, 952-563-8733, TTY 952-563-8740, for assistance.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: [CLEANUP](#).

2014 CLEANUP SCHEDULE

West of Normandale	April 19
Normandale to France	April 26
France to Penn	May 3
Penn to Portland	May 10
East of Portland	May 17

Wow!

On average, the City collects 1,758 tons (that's 3,516,436 pounds) of trash per year during the Curbside Cleanup.

RAMP UP YOUR RECYCLING

Businesses generate more than half of the total waste in Hennepin County and nearly two-thirds of waste created at businesses is recyclable. Helping businesses improve their recycling is an important strategy toward meeting Hennepin County's goal of recycling at least half of the waste generated in the county by 2015.

Recycling grants of up to \$50,000 are now available for businesses to start or improve programs to divert recyclables and organics from the trash. These grants can help with the purchase of recycling containers, equipment, hauling services and minor improvements to loading docks and waste enclosures.

For more information, visit the [City's website](#) or call 612-543-1316.



EARTH ACTION HEROES GREEN CONGREGATION COALITION

Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (MVUUF), 10715 Zenith Avenue, recycles more than 80 percent of the waste it creates. Congregation member Sally Mills said that although MVUUF has recycled for many years, it wasn't until March 2012 when church members started a Zero Waste project, that the congregation's recycling efforts moved to the next level.

MVUUF is a founding member of the Green Congregations Coalition, a Bloomington-based network of faith communities concerned about sustainability and the environment. According to Mills, it all started with some pizza boxes.

"We had a pizza dinner at Oak Grove Presbyterian for our Green Congregations Coalition kick-off meeting," she said. "The MVUUF delegation caused quite a commotion when we volunteered to take the pizza boxes back to our church and compost them. People were really pleased the boxes did not end up in the trash."

The Zero Waste project is very much a group effort.

"The entire congregation is involved in sorting food scraps, paper towels and food-soiled paper for composting, but truly, our congregation has been environmentally aware and active for such a long time that it's part of our culture."

In 2008, MVUUF joined other Unitarian Universalist congregations from around the country by becoming accredited as a Green Sanctuary Congregation.



As a green sanctuary, the congregation's efforts go beyond recycling and include:

- Using only green cleaning products.
- Forgoing bottled water and Styrofoam.
- Cultivating natural landscaping.
- Using electricity from wind power.
- Changing over to LED lighting.
- Replacing aging equipment and appliances with Energy Star-certified products.
- Installing saver switches on air conditioning units.

"Through our work with the Green Congregations Coalition and as a Green Sanctuary Congregation, we hope to continue to move closer to zero waste and encourage our members to do more at home, expanding the composting and recycling initiative outside the church," Mills said.

For information on how to ramp up your recycling efforts, see the Recycling Guide below or visit the City's website.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: [RECYCLING](#).

RECYCLING GUIDE



PAPER

- Mail, office and school papers
- Magazines and catalogs
- Newspapers and inserts
- Phone books
- Shredded paper in closed paper bags



BOXES

- Cardboard
- Cereal and cracker boxes
- Shoe boxes, gift boxes and electronics boxes
- Toothpaste, medication and other toiletry boxes



CARTONS

- Milk cartons
- Juice boxes
- Soup, broth and wine cartons



GLASS

- Food and beverage bottles and jars



PLASTIC

BOTTLES AND JUGS

- Water, soda and juice bottles
- Milk and juice jugs
- Ketchup and salad dressing bottles
- Shampoo, soap and lotion bottles
- Dishwashing liquid bottles and detergent jugs



CUPS AND CONTAINERS

- Yogurt, pudding and fruit cups
- Disposable cups and bowls
- Produce, deli and take-out containers
- Margarine, cottage cheese and other containers

PACKAGING

- Clear packaging from toys and electronics

METAL

- Food and beverage bottles and jars



DON'T RECYCLE: Styrofoam™, plastic wrap, microwaveable food trays, paper soiled with food, paper plates and towels, drinking glasses, dishes, mirrors or containers that held hazardous products.



CREATING A SAFER COMMUNITY



BEWARE THE SILENT KILLER

In 2003, the Bloomington Fire Department responded to 16 carbon monoxide-related calls. Carbon monoxide (CO), also known as the “silent killer” is an invisible, odorless and colorless gas that can accumulate inside your home from a variety of sources, including furnaces and water heaters, gas ranges and ovens, gas dryers and fireplaces. Exposure to low levels of CO can cause nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, weakness,

intense headaches and shortness of breath. High levels of exposure to CO could result in death.

Protect yourself and your family with the following tips:

- Install CO alarms within 10 feet of all sleeping areas.
- Check the battery if your CO alarm sounds. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, get outside and call 9-1-1. Stay outside until emergency personnel arrive.
- Remove your vehicle from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if your garage doors are open.
- Make sure the exhaust pipe of your vehicle is free of snow and ice.
- Check furnace, dryer and other vents to be sure that they are clear of snow and ice after a snowstorm.



For more information, visit the City's website.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: FIRE PREVENTION.



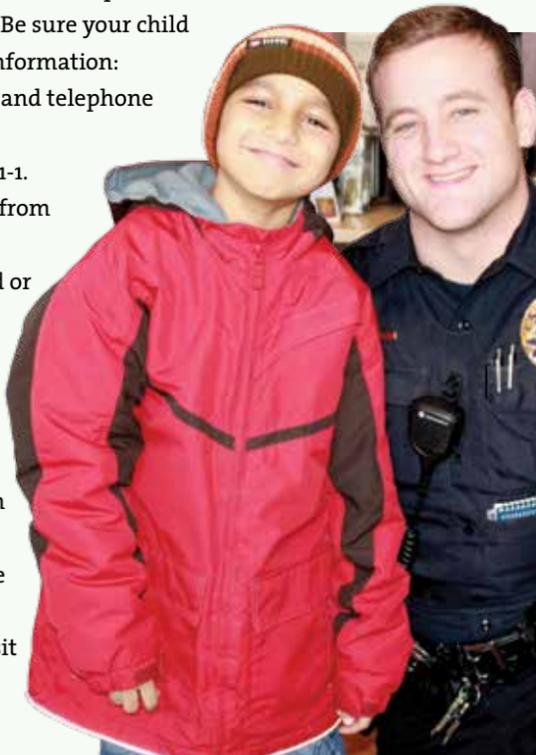
ON PATROL PROTECTING OUR KIDS

Does your child know his or her address? What about important phone numbers or how to call the police? Children need to know how to stay safe and protect themselves. Be sure your child knows the following important information:

- His or her full name, address and telephone number, including area code.
- How to use a phone to call 9-1-1.
- Never to accept rides or gifts from people they do not know.
- To find a clerk, security guard or police officer if they get lost in a mall, store or on the street.
- How to run, scream and get away if someone tries to take them.
- How to use the buddy system when out in the neighborhood.
- To check with a parent before going anywhere alone.

For more child safety tips, visit the City's website.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: CHILD SAFETY.



IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO GET VACCINATED

MYTH: It's too late in the season to get a flu vaccination.

FACT: Flu seasons are unpredictable. They can begin early in the fall and last late into the spring. As long as flu season isn't over, it's not too late to get vaccinated, even late in winter. Getting a flu shot is the best way to protect yourself and your family. If you missed getting your flu vaccine in the fall, get your flu vaccine now for protection all season long.



OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO HEALTHY EATING

This past fall, the cities of Bloomington, Richfield and Edina completed a community food assessment. The assessment analyzed data from more than 150 individuals, agencies and organizations in order to discover ways to help people, especially low income families, gain access to healthy foods. The assessment report revealed cost to be the largest barrier to obtaining healthy foods for low-income residents. The report also found that transportation issues were a barrier, particularly for senior residents.

Many of the people and organizations involved in the assessment were also involved in creating recommendations to make healthy food easier to obtain. Upcoming community information sessions will present these recommendations. To access the community food assessment executive report, visit the City's website. The assessment was funded by the Statewide Health Improvement Program.

For more information, contact Bloomington Public Health Specialist Maria Regan Gonzalez at 952-563-8995 or mregangonzalez@BloomingtonMN.gov.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: HEALTHY EATING.



GROW SOME GREEN ANNUAL TREE SALE ADDS HUNDREDS OF TREES TO LANDSCAPE

Each year, the City plants trees in parks and other public areas to ensure that Bloomington's urban forest continues to grow. The City has planted more than 1,000 trees over the last few years. To increase the number of trees on private properties, Park Maintenance holds an annual public tree sale. Based on last year's sales, 300 trees will be available for purchase this spring.

TREE ORDER FORM

Bloomington residents only. All trees are bare-root, one-and-a-quarter to one-and-a-half inches in diameter and cost \$50 each. *Trees are not guaranteed.*

Name _____
Phone _____
Address _____

Fill in number of each tree type desired. Maximum 5 trees total per household, \$50 each. Check must accompany order.

_____ Autumn Blaze red maple	_____ American sentry linden
_____ Hackberry	_____ Imperial honeylocust
_____ Northwood red maple	_____ Prairie Fire crab apple
_____ River birch	_____ Snowdrift crab apple

Total trees X \$50 ea. = \$ Total cost

Pick up trees at 1800 West Old Shakopee Road on **Saturday, May 3, 9 - 11 a.m.**
Send check and form to City of Bloomington, Park Maintenance,
1800 West Old Shakopee Road, Bloomington MN 55431-3027.

COMMUNITY GARDENING

Do you want to garden in the company of your friends and neighbors? Community gardens are growing in Bloomington. Garden plots are available for public use at Smith Park, 8155 Park Avenue South and Harrison Park, 1701 West 100th Street. Standard, in-ground plots are 10 by 15 feet and are available **April 26 - October 26** for \$37 per plot. Harrison Park has raised beds available for people with limited mobility. For more information, call Parks and Recreation at 952-563-8882 or visit the City's website.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: GARDEN PLOTS.

START THINKING SPRING!

It's never too early to start thinking about spring and summer outdoor activities. For more information on the programs below, call Parks and Recreation at 952-563-8877 or visit the City's website.

SIGN UP FOR YOUTH PROGRAMS

Register for youth programs. Summer registration kicks off online and at the Parks and Recreation counter at Bloomington Civic Plaza, **Tuesday, March 18, 8 a.m.** For more information, call Parks and Recreation.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: SUMMER SPECTRUM.

STAY COOL AT THE POOL

Don't miss out. Buy your Bloomington Family Aquatic Center (BFAC) resident season pass before April 18 to receive \$2 off or prior to June 13 to receive \$1 off. Passes are sold at the Parks and Recreation counter at Bloomington Civic Plaza from March 10 through June 11. Beginning on June 11, passes will be available daily, 4 - 7 p.m., at the BFAC, 301 East 90th Street. BFAC is open June 14 - August 17 and the final two weekends before Labor Day.

JOIN THE BORN AGAIN JOCKS

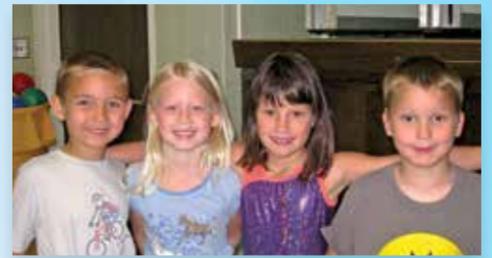
The Born Again Jocks volleyball league welcomes men 55 years and older of all skill levels. Games are held Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 9 a.m., at Kennedy High School, 9701 Nicollet Avenue. For more information, call Don Wilkie at 952-884-2146 or Don Wagner at 952-831-4460.



GET MOVING WITH L'IL FLIPSTERS

L'il Flipsters Gymnastics is designed especially for children ages 30 months to kindergarten. This mobile gymnastics organization provides gymnastics training and motor skill development in a nurturing environment. New sessions begin every month through May 2014. Classes are held at Bloomington Ice Garden, 3600 West 98th Street, Tuesday and Friday mornings and Tuesday afternoons. Classes are \$30 per three-week session, \$40 for a four-week session and \$50 for a five-week session.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: FLIPSTERS.



BEST EGG HUNT IN BLOOMINGTON

Don't miss this annual family event for kids ages eight and younger, sponsored by Bloomington Parks and Recreation and the Bloomington Breakfast Optimist Club. While you're there, check out the family fun walk, information booths and musical entertainment.

When: Saturday, April 19, 9:30 - 11 a.m.

Time: Hunt begins at 11 a.m.

Where: Normandale Lake Bandshell, 5901 West 84th Street.



TEEN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Are you 13 or older and looking for something fun to do this summer? Look no further than Bloomington Parks and Recreation. There are plenty of leadership positions available at Camp Kota, as a playground volunteer or as an adaptive softball coach. Visit the City's website for details and an application. The application deadline is March 14.



CENTER FOR THE ARTS

AMERICA'S FAVORITE GAME IS BACK

Registrations are now being accepted for summer adult softball leagues, including men's, women's and co-rec. Leagues are hosted at Dred Scott, 10820 Bloomington Ferry Road, and Valley View, 9000 Portland Avenue South, playfields. Leagues are for adults ages 18 and older. Single-game leagues play 10 games a season, and doubleheader leagues play 20 games a season. All teams are sanctioned in the ASA and USSSA.

When: Monday - Friday, beginning April 25.
Cost: Single Game Leagues: \$555 + tax, per team. Double Header Leagues: \$795 + tax, per team.
Deadline: February 21 for returning teams and March 3 for new teams.

Located in Bloomington Civic Plaza at the corner of West 98th Street and Old Shakopee Road, the Center for the Arts is a first-class facility housing seven arts organizations. For facility information, call 952-563-8889. For exhibit information and events, visit www.btacmn.org or call 952-563-8575.

GALLERY HOURS

Hours: M - F 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
 Sa 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
 Su 1 - 10 p.m.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: CENTER FOR THE ARTS.

INEZ GREENBERG GALLERY

TRANSITORY PATTERNS

Artists Eleanor McGough and Claudia Poser present *Transitory Patterns*, through February 14.



ART IN THE HOME

The biannual *Art in the Home* exhibition runs **February 20 - April 4**. An opening reception will be held Thursday, February 20, 6 - 8 p.m. The exhibition coincides with the Home Improvement Fair at Bloomington Civic Plaza on February 22.

THE ATRIUM GALLERY

UPSTREAM

Upstream Arts presents *Upstream*, through **March 2**. The exhibition offers unsentimental portraits of young adults with disabilities by New York photographer Dirk Anschutz. Upstream Arts is a Minneapolis-based non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of adults and youth with disabilities through arts education.

VETERAN SURPRISED TO SEE HIS FACE IN THE BRIEFING

World War II veteran and 60-year Bloomington resident George Christensen was reading the October *Briefing* when he came



across a story about Human Services' Visit with Veterans Breakfast. Just above the article he noticed a familiar face – his own, 68



years younger, in a group photo of the Army National Guard 2nd Battalion 134th Infantry Division.

(Christensen is pictured far right.) Christensen's son Gene contacted the City to say how surprised, pleased and grateful his father, who is now 93, was to see his image in the City's newsletter. The *Briefing* photo prompted Gene Christensen to visit the City and submit a number of historical photos of his family. The story and photos led to a Bloomington Today interview with George Christensen that is currently posted on the City's YouTube channel. Watch the video by visiting the City's website or clicking on the QR code at right.



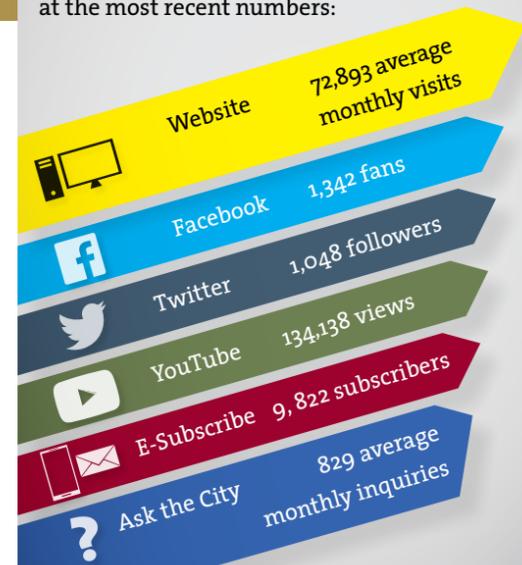
FOUND ON FACEBOOK HOLIDAY TREE STORY LIGHTS UP CITY'S FACEBOOK PAGE

A December post about a Bloomington Today story featuring Bob and Julie Little's "glowing tree" overlooking TH 77 currently holds the record for most likes (116), comments (14) and shares (112) on the City's Facebook page.

BY THE NUMBERS

ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS

The City's online communication tools get a lot of use. Here is a look at the most recent numbers:



HUMAN SERVICES MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

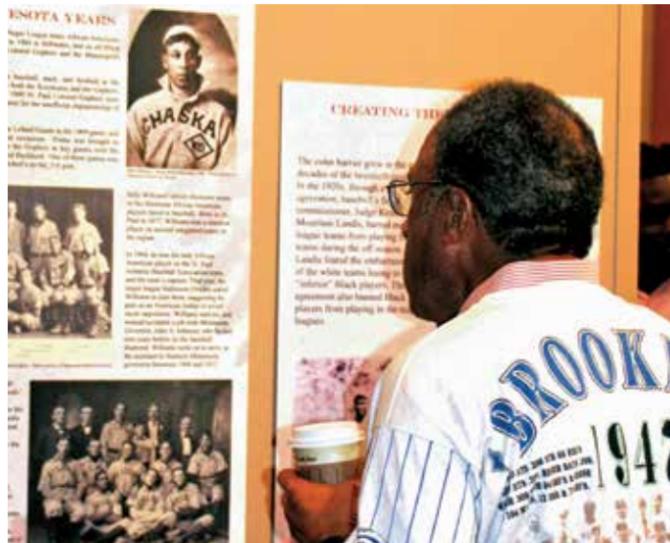


Photo courtesy of Ramsey County Historical Society.

LEGACY OF MINNESOTA BLACK BASEBALL AND THE MINNESOTA TWINS

Join the Bloomington Human Rights Commission for a special Black History Month celebration, **Thursday, February 27, 6:30 p.m.**, at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. The Minnesota Twins will share highlights from the Minneapolis Millers (1956 - 1960) to the arrival of Minnesota Twins in 1961. To register for this free event, call 952-563-4944 or e-mail reservations@BloomingtonMN.gov. The Minnesota Black Baseball History Exhibit will be on display at Bloomington Civic Plaza through February 28.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: BLACK HISTORY.

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

Coffee talks are offered each month at Creekside Community Center from 10 - 11 a.m. and include a speaker, light refreshments and a chance to learn something new:

- Join certified laugh leader Stacy Berglund on **Tuesday, February 11**, to learn why laughter is the best medicine.
- On **Wednesday, February 12**, Jody Buell, moderator for Romancescams.org, will discuss how to avoid becoming the victim of a romance scam.
- Learn how to create your own photo memory album on **Thursday, March 20**. Photo albums will be provided for free. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own photos.

To register for any of the above Coffee Talks, call 952-563-4944, e-mail reservations@BloomingtonMN.gov or visit Creekside Community Center.



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

Human Services hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Lunch at Creekside Community Center in December to honor volunteers and the invaluable services they provide. In 2013, Human Services received help from more than 300 volunteers providing 25,710 hours of service. The added value of this service is \$563,306. To learn more about Human Services volunteer opportunities, contact Human Services at 952-563-4944 or visit the City's website.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: VOLUNTEER.



FREE TAX PREPARATION SERVICES

Need help with your taxes? Tax assistance will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis to individuals who meet income-qualifying guidelines. AccountAbility Minnesota and AARP will be available to prepare your taxes during the following dates and times.

AccountAbility Minnesota

- Income-qualifying guidelines: \$30,000 or less for individuals and \$53,000 or less for families.
- Tuesdays and Thursdays through April 15, 5:45 - 9:30 p.m., and Saturdays through April 12, 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (March hours are: 8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.)

AARP Tax-Aide

- AARP Tax-Aide serves low-to-moderate income taxpayers.
- Mondays and Tuesdays through April 15, 9 a.m. - noon. Taxpayers with complex tax returns are advised to seek paid tax assistance. Human Services is partnering with AccountAbility Minnesota and AARP Tax-Aide to make these programs available. For more information, call 952-563-4944 or 952-563-4933 TTY.

PRODUCE YOUR OWN SHOW ON BCAT

Did you know you can produce your own TV show on Bloomington Community Access Television (BCAT)? Annual membership fees are \$45 for individuals, \$15 for students and \$125 for organizations. For more information, call BCAT Production Specialist Gina Simmons at 952-563-4980 or e-mail gsimmons@BloomingtonMN.gov.

WEBSITE KEYWORD: BCAT.

BCAT

WRITERS' FESTIVAL AND BOOK FAIR

The 11th annual Writers' Festival and Book Fair takes place **Saturday, March 22**, at Bloomington Civic Plaza, 1800 West Old Shakopee Road. This year's festival features award-winning children's author and illustrator Nancy Carlson, author readings, book signings and more than 20 workshops and panels.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: WRITERS FESTIVAL.

BLOOMINGTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

2014 PERFORMANCE SERIES

The Bloomington Center for the Arts Performance Series includes awe-inspiring theater, band, chorale and jazz concerts. Performances are held in the Schneider or Black Box theaters, located in the Bloomington Center for the Arts at the corner of 98th Street and West Old Shakopee Road.



CHECK OUT THIS AMAZING LINEUP OF SHOWS



Arne Fogel and Maud Hixson

Hollywood's Favorite Movie Songs

"The envelope, please..." These words have thrilled moviegoers for decades, as they anticipate the winners in the annual Hollywood award sweepstakes. Join Maud Hixson and Arne Fogel as they celebrate the nominees, both winners and losers, and sing a panorama of songs associated with the golden age of cinema.

Saturday, February 22, 7:30 p.m.
Adults \$25, Seniors \$22, 25 and under \$18



Angelica Cantanti Youth Choirs

Rita Docter Scholarship Benefit Concert

The young Angelica singers and alumni present a special concert event to support the scholarship fund established in honor of longtime director Rita Docter. Come hear the beautiful singing voices and support this outstanding youth choir program. Ticket includes dessert reception.

Sunday, February 23, 3 p.m.
Adults \$25, Seniors \$25, 25 and under \$25



The Jack Brass Band

The History of New Orleans Brass Bands

This concert will cover material spanning more than 100 years of New Orleans brass band history. It will include narration about the origins of the music and the social role that brass bands play at community events. Cosponsored by the Twin Cities Jazz Society.

Friday, February 28, 7:30 p.m.
Adults \$22, Seniors \$19, 25 and under \$18



Agnes of God

Bloomington Theatre and Art Center

A court-appointed psychiatrist is summoned to a convent to assess the sanity of a young nun accused of murdering her newborn. The Mother Superior keeps Agnes from the doctor, arousing suspicions further.

February 28 - March 23
Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays 7:30 p.m.
Sundays 2 p.m.
Adults \$22, Seniors \$20, 25 and under \$17



Girl Singers of the Hit Parade

Salute to the Female Vocalists of the 50s

This revue features the music of Rosemary Clooney, Patti Page, Connie Francis, Doris Day and Peggy Lee as performed by Colleen Raye, Jennifer Grimm, Debra O'Keefe and Sophie Grimm under the direction of Norton Lawellin. You'll enjoy hit after hit and a "true to the era" sound.

Saturday, March 1, 7:30 p.m.
Adults \$25, Seniors \$22, 25 and under \$18



Medalist Concert Band

Moods and Memories

This concert presents so-called character pieces: compositions that portray specific moods, ideas, events, people and so on. The works in this musical genre express a wide range of emotions and are written in a variety of styles and forms. A tribute to well-known American composer Leroy Anderson is featured.

Sunday, March 2, 4 p.m.
Adults \$12, Seniors \$10, 25 and under \$10



Medalist Concert Band

Coast to Coast

Join the Band in a musical journey across the United States. This program focuses on compositions about places. Take in the energy of Manhattan, the calm of the Shenandoah, the history of the Alamo, the majesty of the Grand Canyon, the coolness of the northern pines – and still be back in time for dinner!

Sunday, March 30, 4 p.m.
Adults \$12, Seniors \$10, 25 and under \$10



Bloomington Chorale

A Salute to Our Veterans

The Chorale will be honoring our veterans from all wars in this patriotic musical salute. The music will reflect the eras surrounding the wars and conflicts this nation has experienced. The concert will end with a medley recognizing each branch of the Armed Services – A Salute to the Armed Forces.

Saturday, April 5, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 6, 4 p.m.
Adults \$15, Seniors \$11, 25 and under \$11
(Add \$1 to ticket price at door)



Charmin & Shapira

Harlem to Rio: Bebop meets Bossa

Hear tunes from the Bossa/Brazilian songbook and the Bebop era intermixed with arrangements that juxtapose rhythms within the songs. Fronting the band is Charmin Michelle, a great modern jazz vocalist who can cross the lines between genres with the utmost confidence. Cosponsored by the Twin Cities Jazz Society.

Saturday, April 5, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 6, 2 p.m.
Adults \$19, Seniors \$17, 25 and under \$15



The Odd Couple

Bloomington Theatre and Art Center

When recently failed marriages force slovenly Oscar and fastidious Felix to share an apartment, their relationship begins to resemble the patterns of their own disastrous marriages. As the audience enjoys the nonstop hilarity, Oscar and Felix realize they are both better people as a result of their friendship.

May 16 – June 8
Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 7:30 p.m.
Sundays, 2 p.m.
Adults \$22, Seniors \$20, 25 and under \$17



Barbary Coast

Dixieland Show Band

Together since 1967, Bloomington's own Barbary Coast take their authentic Dixieland jazz around the world and bring it back home again! The joy they experience playing their music and being among friends is infectious.

Saturday, May 31, 7:30 p.m.
Adults \$25, Seniors \$22, 25 and under \$18



NOTE-able Singers

Let's Go to the Movies

Let's go see the stars! Sitting in the darkness with popcorn on your knee, let the Note-able Singers transport you to the movies as they perform Hollywood's best movie music. Hum along to the catchy tunes and enjoy the lively choreography. Let's go to the movies!

Sunday, June 1, 2 p.m.
Tuesday, June 3, 7:30 p.m.
Adults \$15, Seniors \$12, 5 and under free

BOX OFFICE

Order tickets by phone: Call 952-563-8575 • Online: Go to www.centerstageticketing.com/sites/bloomington

In person: Office hours vary. Call 952-563-8575 for current hours.

Programs, artists and prices subject to change. Orders received less than 7 days prior to the performance will be held for pick up at the box office. All ticket sales are final. No refunds or exchanges.