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Gem Lake News

Gretchen Artig-Swomley, Newsletter Editor

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- A Brief History of the Ramsey County Fair

Upcoming Recycling Dates:

- July 10
- July 24
- August 7
- August 21

Fire Safety is Mike Turnbull's Goal

Thanks in part to Mike Turnbull's efforts, there hasn't been a residential fire death in the White Bear area in decades.

He is the first to admit, it's a group effort. The entire White Bear Fire Department, led by Fire Chief Tim Vadnais, is committed to fire safety, through education and prevention efforts.

The results are impressive. Over 500 elementary students gets fire training each year, every business in White Bear, Gem Lake and other contract cities, get an annual fire inspection, hundreds of free smoke detectors and stove top fire suppression units have been distributed, and many home fire safety audits have been conducted in Gem Lake and the surrounding communities.

For most Gem Lake residents, Mike is the face of fire safety. If you are very lucky, he is the only fire fighter who has ever been in your driveway in a professional sense.



(continued on page 2)

City Audit Called "Unremarkable", Thank Goodness...

Gem Lake's 2012 audit is now complete and the results are pretty boring. Nothing had to be corrected, reclassified, reassigned, adjusted or removed from underneath someone's mattress. No one had to be issued with an arrest warrant, pulled from the local casino or located at their tropical hide-out. City Council Members were given a complete presentation of the results at the June 18th City Council Meeting.

The audit was conducted by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, who also did the 2011 audit. According to CliftonLarsonAllen, the result was what is called an unqualified report, which is good. Auditors found that the financial statements of the city presented fairly in all material respects the true financial position of the city.



Fire Safety a Huge Priority for Mike Turnbull (continued from page 1)

Mike has been with the White Bear Lake Fire Department since 1978 and has been acting as the fire inspector for about 24 years. He is also a paramedic and worked as a fire fighter until 2007.

When Mike joined the fire department, Chief Vadnais was fairly new in his post. Early on, Tim worked closely with the White Bear City Council to create the position of full time fire inspector, in about 1988.

"Mike is a dedicated advocate for the safety and welfare of the people in the White Bear area," says Ron Hawkins, EMS Quality Assurance, paramedic and firefighter for the White Bear Fire Department. "He's a committed fire inspector, a thorough fire investigator and a highly skilled paramedic. I really enjoy working with him."

Mike performs home fire inspections upon request and distributes numerous smoke detectors each year, all free of charge. "It's something easy and very effective that we can help people get into their homes properly." He often finds that existing smoke detectors are too old to work right or they are installed in less than ideal locations.

The same holds true about carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers. They work best if they are installed in the correct spots and if they are less than ten years old.

One problem with older detectors, for instance, is that household fumes and dust build up on the components over the years, making them less effective. "It's okay to take the upholstery brush from your vacuum cleaner and clean off the outside of your detectors once in a while."

Mike says it's important to know that small fires in your home can double in size ever minute. That means the little kitchen fire can go from a small problem to an engulfing catastrophe very quickly. These facts make it clear that fire prevention efforts, coupled with education and inspections are crucial to keeping residential fire deaths a thing of the past. The results speak for themselves. There hasn't been a residential fire death in the area in 27 years. In the 20 years preceding this, on average two people died every three years.



Mike's Tips for Preventing a House Fire or Getting Out Alive if One Happens:

1. If the smoke detector is old and yellowing, its needs to be thrown away and replaced with one that has a ten year battery. If you can't afford to do this, the fire department will supply them for free.
2. Learn to use a fire extinguisher properly, and keep a small fire from getting out of hand.
3. Don't run the dryer if you are not going to be home.
4. Consider using the dishwasher only when you are going to be at home.
5. Clear out the areas around your furnace and water heater.
6. Make sure you have enough fire extinguishers and that they are mounted or located in highly visible areas.

Mike has devoted his career to fire safety. If you have any questions or concerns, or would like a home inspection, contact him at 651-429-8568.

Ramsey County Fair Celebrates 100 Years of Fun

This year the Ramsey County Fair celebrates its 100th anniversary. The fair began in White Bear, near the location where Central Middle School stands today on Bloom Avenue, and was intended as a way for local farmers to exhibit their produce and to learn new agricultural methods that would enhance their output.

St. Paul was a thriving city and the Ramsey County farmers occupied a unique location where they could deliver their produce to the city with minimal transportation costs. Increasing farm output would help both farmer and urban consumer.

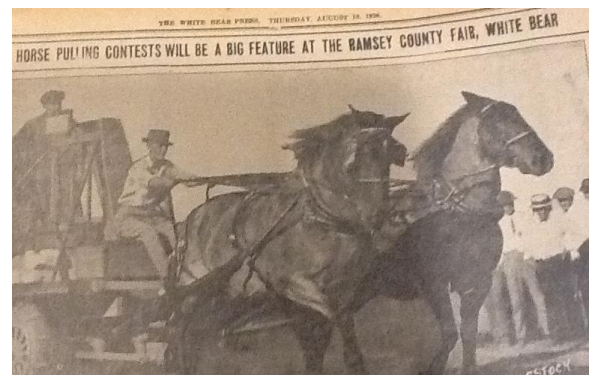
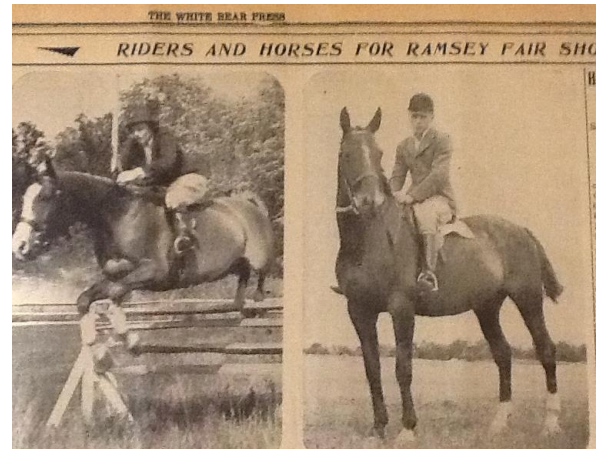
The first fair opened in August 1913 after months of planning and preparations by White Bear residents. Adolph Eberhart, Minnesota's then governor, welcomed fairgoers, and there were agricultural demonstrations, 4-H exhibits, crafts, and even a baseball tournament.

Subsequent fairs drew such dignitaries as railroad builder James J. Hill, who was also an avid agriculturalist.

The fair continued to thrive in White Bear until the local school board determined the land was needed to expand the nearby high school. In 1953 the fair moved to its current location on White Bear Avenue at the site of the former Ramsey County Poor Farm. The iconic barn still greets modern fairgoers.

Over the years the dynamic of the fair changed as Ramsey County's population changed. Farms gave way to suburbs, and farmers were replaced by the baby boom generation as the main target audience for fair activities.

Livestock disappeared from the fair but there still remains an agricultural entertainment aspect as city kids can be farmer for a day and attend a petting zoo. Bingo and talent shows, carnival rides and live music now highlight the fair's schedule.



The top photo highlights the horse show at the 1938 Ramsey County Fair. The participants pictured are Gem Lake residents Eileen Bigelow (left) and John Daniels (right). Bottom photo shows a 1926 horse pulling competition at the fair when it was still held in White Bear.

The fair remains a free admission event to encourage kids of all ages to attend. This year fairgoers can purchase a booklet for a nominal charge on the history of the fair written by Gem Lake resident Jim Lindner in conjunction with the fair's centennial commemorative committee. The fair runs from July 10-14 at 2020 White Bear Avenue. Call 651-770-2626 or visit <http://www.ramseycountyfair.com/> for more information.

Story and photos from City Council Member Jim Lindner

City News Page

Now Open!! Black Sea Restaurant

Stop in at our newest Gem Lake business! The Black Sea Restaurant is now open on County Road E near Enterprise Rental Car. The popular Turkish restaurant named the Black Sea recently open its second branch in our city.

The restaurant has been a fixture for many years at 737 N. Snelling Avenue in St. Paul. That site opened in the year 2000 as a family run business.

Due to the quality of the food, the Black Sea developed a loyal customer base, according to owner and manager, Tolga Ata. Mr. Ata has run the Snelling Avenue restaurant for four years, which was originally run by his Uncle.

According to their web-site, Black Sea is the first and only Turkish restaurant in Minnesota, with an array of authentic fare. (They say they have the best spinach pie in town.) Check it out!

The small but cozy place serves authentic Turkish food such as falafel, kebabs, hummus and other Mediterranean fare. The Gem Lake restaurant is located at 1581 E. County Road E, next to Vera Auto Sales.

MS-4 Report Ready to Be Reviewed By Public

A state mandated report on storm water management, called the MS-4 Report has been completed by council member Jim Lindner and submitted to the State of Minnesota. Jim spent countless volunteer hours trudging all over Gem Lake to document and photograph inflows and outflows in our city, as required by the report. The document is now on display at Heritage Hall for anyone who wants to read it.

As mandated by law, it will be on display for 30 days to allow for the expected throngs. Just in case you don't get a chance to stop by, we are holding a public hearing on it, also required by state law. The public hearing will be held August 20, during the August City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Heritage Hall. Our thanks to Jim Lindner for taking on the task of completing this very detailed report.

Garden Overlay Permit Issued

Gem Lake's second Garden Overlay District permit was issued to land-owner Bryan Hansen at the June 18 City Council Meeting.

The Garden Overlay Ordinance allows land to be leased for gardening as a temporary permitted use on sections of land that are not zoned for agriculture.

This permit allows for community gardening on the Hansen land on a year by year basis. This land is located on County Road E, across from the Vadnais Heights Sports Arena. The first permit was issued last year to Tom Hansen, who owns the adjacent parcel, also on County Road E.

The ordinance was designed to redirect open parcels of land into useful purposes while the real estate market continues to recover, eventually allowing for development.

Phalen Wildflower Walk—July 24th

The annual Phalen Wildflower Walk will be held on **Wednesday, July 24th from 6:30-8:30 pm**. Learn about the history of the shoreline restoration from district natural resources specialist and restoration project manager Bill Bartodziej. Then walk along the wet meadow, one of the loveliest stretches of the shoreline project, identifying the many summer flora that grace this edge of the lake. Meet at the beach house on Phalen Drive at the southwest end of the lake at 6:30 pm. Please register by calling Shelly at the Watershed District at 651-792-7965.

Road and Sewer Repairs Contemplated for Hoffman Road

Much needed repairs to the sewer system on Hoffman Road in Gem Lake's business district were discussed at the June 18 City Council Meeting.

City Engineer Justin Gese from SEH Engineering presented a report listing various options for relining the sewer pipes to insure years of additional service.

The relining of the sewer would be paid for out of money that currently exist in Gem Lake's Sewer Fund. A portion of all sewer charges that Gem Lake residents pay go into a restricted fund to be used for future repairs. In this case, repairs are projected to cost about \$40,000. The project will be discussed again at the July 16 City Council Meeting.



Where there's smoke, there's ire

Keep backyard campfires and chimeneas from smoking you and your neighbors out. The smoke is not just a nuisance—it can be toxic and harmful to people.

- Limit backyard fires in the city.
- Never start backyard fires during an air pollution alert.
- In the Twin Cities it's illegal to burn any waste in a fire.



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Learn more at www.livinggreen.org/fire

National Night Out

This year's National Night Out is scheduled for Tuesday, August 6. The purpose of this annual event is to promote community crime prevention efforts by getting neighbors to meet each other, form neighborhood watch groups and learn about simple ways they can make their communities safer. The national event started in 1984 as way to promote police-community partnerships.

For several years, the City of Gem Lake has sponsored an event at Heritage Hall in the hopes that neighborhood events would begin to blossom. They have. Last year several citizens sponsored their own picnics and parties and asked their neighbors to join in. The need for another event at Heritage Hall has declined and the attendance at last year's National Night Out showed this. The food was great but there were a lot of leftovers. With this in mind, the city council decided to forego a separate event at Heritage Hall. Please think about getting out and meeting your neighbors on August 6.

The City of Gem Lake

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MN.US

To report incidents for the
Neighborhood Watch program
or for information on that
program contact Block Captain
Chuck Watson
651-653-8319;
Charles.Watson@bdk.com

We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.gemlakemn.org

Meetings: May and June 2013

The following Gem Lake
Meetings will be held at
Heritage Hall for the next
few months:

July 16, 2013

City Council Meeting at
7:00 p.m.

August 6, 2013

Planning Commission
Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

August 12, 2013

City Council Workshop at
7:00 p.m.

August 20, 2013

City Council Meeting at
7:00 p.m.

Your Gem Lake City Council

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For more information on
meetings, city ordinances,
recent events, permit
procedures, etc. please
consult the Gem Lake
web-site. The address is
www.gemlakemn.org

Each Gem Lake
Newsletter is also posted
on the web-site under the

news section.

Please email your ideas,
comments and
suggestions. See box at
left for detailed contact
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