

Duluth Township Newsletter

Duluth Township web site: www.duluthtownship.org

January 2002

It's a busy Township! The Comprehensive Land Use Plan Steering Committee will have a 2nd Public Information meeting Feb. 21, 6:30 Town Hall. Your response is needed by Feb. 3^d on the enclosed (confidential) annual feedback questionnaire. It's time for kids to sign up for our new North Shore Community School. The last three pages of this newsletter include good news about our community's charter school. Beginning January, the Township Office will be open Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon in addition to its regular Thursday hours. **Recycle!** Our recycling centers now take mixed paper! If you are interested in running for the Town Board of Supervisors, the sign-up deadline is January 15th in the Town Hall.

Thanks to contributors to this issue: Wendy Anderson, Helen Hendrickson, Rich Sill, Todd Lindahl. A special thanks goes to resident **Karen McTavish** for this month's masthead! Call the editor (525-5705 or home 525-0103) if you could volunteer to do the March Newsletter masthead!

Expanded Township Office Hours

The Township office will be open more days: Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon, 12:30-3:30 **plus** the current day, Thursday 9-12 and 4-7

The **correct Town Hall phone number is 525-5705**. A typo was made in the November *Newsletter* insert. Please correct our phone number on the Nov. reference insert.

2001 Resident Feedback Questionnaire

Again this year there is a one-page questionnaire insert that gives you another opportunity to provide feedback, suggestions and opinions about the Township. **Please fill it out, fold, seal and mail it back** (or put it in the NEWS mailbox on the Town Hall porch). This helps in planning. It's confidential. The **deadline is February 3^d**. A summary report will be provided to the Board and anyone interested. It, like last year's report, will be on our web site and a summary will appear in the March *Newsletter*.

North Shore Community School News

www.northshorecommunityschool.org

The last 3 pages of the *Newsletter* have NSCS news. The application for 2001-2 can be found on the school web site or by calling 525-0663. The application deadline is March 1st. For information on charter school progress call Phil Strom (chair) at 525-6200, or Leo Babeu at 834-2247. Meetings are open to the public and held the 3d Tuesday at 6:30pm in the North Shore School.

How To Become Involved & Help Your Township

Attend and participate in:

- *Town Board meetings* (2nd Thu, 7:30pm)
- *Zoning Commission meetings* (4th Thu, 7:30pm)
- *Comprehensive Land Use Plan 2nd Public Information Meeting* (Feb 21 at 6:30pm, Town Hall).
- *North Shore Community School interim Board meetings* (3rd Tues). Help our new charter school.
- *Duluth/North Shore Sanitary District meeting* (1st Wed.)
- *Annual Township election & Town meeting* March 12th.

Volunteer:

- Serve on the *Town Board* (sign up to run by Jan 15th)
- Serve on *Zoning Commission* (openings coming up)
- *First Responder* for medical emergencies.
- *Fire fighter* – our Clifton Volunteer Fire Department (Training provided, meetings twice a month).
- *Web Site manager* for the Township web site.
- *Election Judge* for 2002 elections. Ann Cox 525-5705.
- *Other Township projects* (see Ann Cox).

Contribute to Special Projects.

- Fire Department special equipment fund
- Police Dept vehicle communication equipment (MDS).
- North Shore Community School fund

Provide your ideas and feedback.

- Complete and return the enclosed resident *feedback questionnaire* and send it in by Feb 3^d. It's confidential.
- *Mail or e-mail* questions and comments to Board members or the Town Clerk.

Keep Informed

- Read the *Newsletter* (comes out 6 times a year)
- *Check Township web site* for calendar, events, forms, maps, links, etc. www.duluthtownship.org
- Check Township *official notices* in the News Tribune and posted at the Town Hall, Fire Hall #1, Scenic Cafe

Mailed to 730 Duluth Township families. Extra copies are available at the Town Hall. Please send your comments and suggestions to volunteer newsletter editor Don McTavish at the Town Hall, 6092 Homestead Road, Duluth, MN 55804 or in the **NewsBox** on the Town Hall porch. The Newsletter is printed locally by **BB&K Printing**, and mailed for us by **UDAC**.

Long-time resident **Clarence M. Swensen**, an active, 30+ year volunteer in our Clifton Fire Department, passed away December 18th. He is remembered for his friendship and devotion to our community.

The History Corner

Richard Sill

I had started near the mouth of the French River, walking west along the shoreline of the lake. Such a hike would usually be difficult in winter. However, this had been an unusual December. Unseasonably warm weather and a lack of storms had left the shoreline bare and dry. There would be no crashing waves, snow covered beaches, nor icy boulders to contend with this day. Only a slight, off lake breeze broke the stillness as I walked the narrow strip between clay banks and the rocky shoreline. This wasn't going to be just any hike. I had gotten the call earlier in the day that **Clarence Swensen** had died. Clarence, or "*Marv*" as he was more commonly known, was one of the last commercial fishermen to work our stretch of the shore. He had helped greatly with the commercial fishing section of the "Roots" book and had generously contributed numerous fishing artifacts and memorabilia to North Shore Elementary so students attending there could better understand the important role that commercial fishing played in our community's history. Today's walk was special. I was doing this one for Marv.

The December sun is an impatient sun, ever eager to set. So, by the time I reached the small ravine that marked Marv's fishing spot less than a hand width separated sun from horizon line. Using what light remained I looked over the area. It was hard to imagine someone had spent nearly all their adult life launching and landing a boat here. Though over fifty years of fishing had gone on at this site there was little evidence left to suggest such activities had ever taken place. Within the last year Marv had dutifully removed and/or burned nearly all vestiges of his small commercial fishing operation. Marv wasn't planning on retiring and he certainly had no desire to pull out of fishing. The removal, in fact, wasn't Marv's idea at all. Rather, it was done by order of the City of Duluth. Apparently having his small boat pulled up on shore and a few buoys and nets in its vicinity had, for whatever reason, suddenly become a problem. To at least one bureaucrat in the halls of Duluth city government Marv's operation was in violation of the Congdon Trust agreement and it was determined, after a half century of fishing, his boat and equipment would have to go.

It didn't seem to matter that Marv had lived nearly all his adult life not more than a few hundred feet across the road from where he stored his fishing equipment. It also didn't seem to matter that Marv was just a couple years short of 80 when the letter arrived telling him he must give up his life's work. To most people it may have seemed more sensible to commend, rather than harass, someone still so filled with the desire and stamina to pull nets and pick fish hand-over-hand. But somehow that view didn't surface; much less resonate, in the minds of those at city hall. Marv fought for a while. After all, having someone tell him he didn't belong on that lake had flared up Marv's feisty side. But when the threat of fines began to reach into the

thousands of dollars he knew his days of fishing were over.

As I walked around the isolated site it was difficult for me to understand how Marv's small operation could have offended many people. My guess is that most of us who drove along that stretch of the Scenic Highway didn't even know it was there. Several years ago, shortly after getting to know Marv, I told him that I would like to stop down and see where he was located on the lake. Problem was, I couldn't find it. The next time I ran into Marv I told him what had happened. He looked at me, paused for a moment, and then after carefully considering how he could better explain something that, in his mind, was all ready about as obvious as it could be, said, "Well, you just need to look for the biggest old dead pine tree on the shore, park your car when you do, look for the path and follow it down to the lake, that's where you'll find my spot." I turned now and gazed up towards that path. Alongside it the lifeless and weathered trunk of the old pine still stood, still reaching its uppermost branches to mark its spot in the sky.

It was getting late, but before heading back to the car I went to the edge of the lake, knelt down, and put my hands in the cold water. To the east I could see the long sliver of Wisconsin shore, a pencil-line of darkness that marked the separation between water and sky. I thought of Marv's hands and how many thousands upon thousands of times they had dipped into this lake. Thick and strong, they were hands made to pull nets and pick fish and I can't help but believe that somewhere those hands are still busy at work.

Update on our Land Use Planning Process

The last citizen Steering Committee met Dec. 6th to provide views of where various land uses might be located. A 2nd draft of a vision statement for 20 years hence was reviewed. It includes a summary of resident hopes for natural resources, housing, commercial/industrial, tourism, recreation/open space, infrastructure, and community life. Copies are available in the Town Hall and on the Township web site.

To contact someone about the planning process, call:
Wayne Dahlberg, our Zoning Administrator, **728-4293**, 6022 Bergquist Road, Duluth, MN 55804, or
Dianne Desotelle, *Project Manager*, Desotelle Consulting **728-1228**, PO 3220 Duluth, MN 55803, or
Jean Coleman, Biko Associates, Inc. **612-588-4904** 2634 Vincent Avenue North, Minneapolis, MN 55411.

The Homesteaders

Helen Hendrickson

The Homesteader's will meet Wednesday, **January 2nd at 12:30 at the Duluth Town Hall** on Homestead Road.

Following the New Year's Potluck lunch, the group will hear *Pamela Franklin* explain the Parish Nurse program. Everyone is invited.

Our **February meeting** will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 6th at 12:30pm. *If you have questions, call Helen Hendrickson, 525-4154.*

Summary of Town Board Meetings

(Official minutes are available at the Town Hall)

Oct 11th meeting. The Board approved the agenda, minutes and treasurer's report (balance \$104,939.18 after expenses of \$29,279.18 and \$281.36 income). Chief Richard Erlander's letter of intent to retire was received. After reviewing correspondence the Board turned to a hearing on Rowray's request that a "paper" road in the Pine Park subdivision be vacated. This was approved pending receipt of signed agreements from affected landowners to release the Township from liability. Department reports were presented. An inquiry will be made to see if District 381 has located the deed so progress can be made on acquiring the NSE school property. A number of Township residents have offered to help seek grants for Township projects (Cindy Hale, Mary Ann Sironen, Ellen O'Neil, Steve Dahl, George Sundstrom). Bob Abrahamson reported on recycling hours and Hall floor maintenance. Supervisors have acted on our behalf on a number of key issues in important committees and regularly represent.

Nov 8th meeting. After comments by Marty Shultz (ARDC) about updating the North Shore Management Plan, the Board approved \$500 as our share in this process. Department reports were presented. The Fire Department presented a report noting declining volunteers and aging equipment and asked for a Board member to meet to discuss these issues. Denise Connolly provided information on updating cemetery records. Grave opening costs were raised \$50, the first raise in 20 years! Winter burial charge is a minimum of \$1050. Board members will review material proposing that a computer for e-mail connection be acquired for the Town Hall. Another inquiry will be sent to School District 381 to try to move along the acquisition of the school property.

Next Town Board meetings: (2nd Thurs) Jan. 10th and Feb. 14th at 7:30pm in the Town Hall.

Summary of Planning Commission Meetings

(Official minutes are available at the Town Hall)

Sept 27th meeting. Four members were present with a small audience and the zoning administrator. After approving the minutes, the Sept 20th public meeting of our land use plan Steering Committee was discussed.

Attending were 18 Steering Committee members and 32 residents. Goals for the next Steering Committee meeting were discussed. The Rowray request for vacating a "paper" road was discussed and the Commission moved to recommend vacating to the Town Board. The Township's stance on gravel pits was discussed (we have private, County and State pits). No action was taken.

Oct 25th meeting. All members were present. Mary Ann Sironen reported on the sewer project. Two organizations and one individual have requested the longer EIS review. A letter is being sought indicating Township intent to address environmental quality issues in its land use planning process. A public hearing was held on Barb Wiemann's request for a road centerline setback for a garage. After discussion the variance was approved.

Next Planning Commission meetings: Jan. 24th and February 28th at 7:30pm, (4th Thursday), Town Hall.

Township Calendar

See updates on www.duluthtownship.org.

- Jan 2, Wed, 12:30 **Homesteader's** meeting TownHall
 Jan 8, Tue, 7-9am **Duluth/North Shore Sanitary District** meeting, French River Lutheran Church
 Jan 9, Wed, 7:00pm **Volunteer Fire Dept** business meeting, Fire Hall #1, Ryan Road
Jan 10, Thu, 7:30pm **TOWN BOARD**, Town Hall
 Jan 15, Tue, **Deadline** for filing to run for Town Board.
 Jan 15, Tue, 6:30pm at NSE School, **North Shore Community School Board** meeting.
 Jan 16, Wed, 7:00pm **Volunteer Fire Dept** work meeting
 Jan 17, Thu, 6:30 Comprehensive Land Use Planning **Steering Committee** meeting, Town Hall
Jan 24, Thu, 7:30pm **Planning Commission**, Town Hall
 Feb 5, Tue, 7-9am **Duluth/North Shore Sanitary District** meeting, French River Lutheran Church
 Feb 6, Wed, 12:30 **Homesteader's** meeting TownHall
 Feb 6, Wed, 7:00pm **Volunteer Fire Dept** business meeting, Fire Hall #1, Ryan Road.
 Feb 8, Fri, Absentee Ballots for Town Election ready.
Feb 14, Thu, 7:30pm **TOWN BOARD**, Town Hall
Feb 19, Tue, 6:30pm at NSE School, **North Shore Community School Board** meeting.
 Feb 20, Wed, 7:00pm **Volunteer Fire Dept** work night
Feb 21, **Thu, 6:30-9:00 Public Information Meeting** on Comprehensive Land Use Planning, Town Hall. *Select/modify land use goals, alternatives, and implementation priorities to make plan a reality.*
 Feb 23, **Deadline** for news for the March Newsletter
Feb 28, Thu, 7:30pm **Planning Commission**, Town Hall
 Mar 1, Fri, **deadline** for application for attending North Shore Community School.
 Mar 5, Tue, 7-9am **Duluth/North Shore Sanitary District** meeting, French River Lutheran Church
 Mar 6, Wed, 12:30 **Homesteader's** meeting TownHall
 Mar 6, Wed, 7:00pm **Volunteer Fire Dept** business meeting, Fire Hall #1, Ryan Road
 Mar 9, Sat, 10am-noon, Town Hall open, **absentee voting**
Mar 12, Tue, noon to 8pm **Township Election** & School District #381 Referendum, Town Hall
Mar 12, Tue, 8:15pm **Annual Town Meeting**, Town Hall
Mar 14, Thu, 7:30pm **TOWN BOARD**, Town Hall

Township Tax Levy for 2002

You may have noticed that your upcoming property tax bill went down more than you might have expected. This is because the Legislature enacted *Taconite School Replacement Aid* intended to offset the elimination of "taconite aid" that is received by Townships in the taconite relief area. The good news is that the usual "taconite aid" that was to be eliminated has *not yet* been eliminated! The result is that our Township tax levy for 2002 has been reduced below what it would normally be -- townships in the taconite relief area get a double reduction! This is good news *this year* but the Legislature may eliminate one of the taconite aids next year. That would make the tax levy go back up a bit even if the Township made no budget changes when it acts on the 2003 budget this coming March. So, enjoy any reduction in taxes but don't be surprised if we lose the double benefit in 2003!

Duluth/North Shore Sanitary District
Mary Ann Sironen, D/NSSD Secretary

The D/NSSD is awaiting action on its Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). A copy of the EAW is available at the Town Hall or on the MPCA website at: www.pca.state.mn.us/news/eaw/duluthnorthshore-eaw.pdf

Further information on these and other activities of the Board are posted on the website. www.D/NSSD.org Meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month at 7am In the French River Lutheran Church (the January meeting will be held on the 8th). The public is always welcome.

Clifton Volunteer Fire Department News

Chimney Fires – If you use a wood stove, be sure to check it for creosote build-up. An annual check by a qualified chimney cleaning company is recommended (see the Yellow Pages in the phone book). The Fire Department can provide you with a chemical you can use to help put out a chimney fire. Chimney fires can cause serious damage to the chimney and cause house fires.

911 calls – If you call 911 for fire, medical or police emergencies, they need to know how to find you.

- 1) Be sure your driveway **“fire number”** red plate is up and visible at the road end of your driveway! *The Town Hall has many fire number plates that haven't been picked up.* There is no charge for the plate but a replacement charge is made if you need to replace yours. Posting your house number prominently on your mailbox also helps in an emergency.
- 2) If you call 911, give clear directions to your location, perhaps landmarks that emergency personnel would be likely to know.

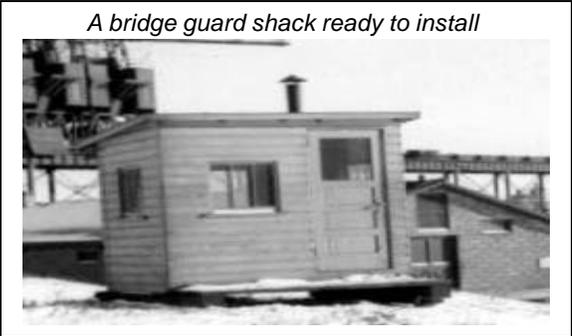
Do you have a locked gate on your driveway? If you do and if you chain or lock it, you should know that emergency personnel are not obligated to cut the lock. They *may* have bolt cutters with them but volunteers who get there first are unlikely to carry those items in their private vehicle. Ambulances and fire trucks also may not have bolt cutters. Even then, getting in may be delayed. It's your decision, but there is a potential conflict between your desire for locked-gate security and access for 911 medical, fire or police emergency personnel.

The DM&IR Bridge Guards
Todd Lindahl

(editor note: At a recent meeting discussing the proposed Scenic Byway designation of Highway 61, Todd Lindahl, who lives in Two Harbors, presented information about historic sites and events along the shore. He agreed to write up some of these for the Newsletter. Rich Sill indicated that Todd had contributed to our community history book: [Roots in the Past, Seeds for the Future.](#))

In the November issue of the *Duluth Township newsletter* Rich Sill referred to the bridge guards who protected all of the DM&IR trestles. I would like to expand upon what Rich has mentioned. Indeed the Lake Division between Two Harbors and Duluth was not quite as vital to national security as the mainline to the iron range. It was however important in it's own right and required special protection as well. How vital was this railroad to national security? J. Edgar Hoover personally wrote a thirteen-page letter to the president of the DM&IR detailing security measures

that should be immediately put into place. The letter was hand-delivered to C. E. Carlson by two agents only twelve days after Pearl Harbor. Included within it were instructions for protecting the trestles. Guards were to be on duty 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. They were to check on top as well as below the bridge regularly. Telephones were to be installed for communications just in case problems arose. A Winchester rifle and ammunition was provided by the railroad and each man was responsible for his weapon. Small shacks were built in the car shop at Two Harbors and loaded on flatcars for transporting to each bridge location. At the bridge site a



crane lifted the building off of the flatcar and set it out beside the grade. This provided shelter in bad weather and a place to stay warm or eat a lunch. At bridges that were built of wood, the guards were issued fire-fighting equipment and instructed to check the trestle after every train that passed. A stockpile of extra bridge timbers was kept on hand to hasten replacement should a fire occur. So was all of this really necessary? Consider this then; Six months after the war started two Nazi submarines landed two parties of saboteurs given the job of blowing up American railroads. Luckily all were apprehended before any of those plots could be carried out. Railroads in the U.S. carried 97% of the military personnel, 95% of the freight, and 90% of the passengers at that period in time. It is easy to see why they were such a tempting target. But how about the DM&IR? Then consider this also; one day the bridge guard at the trestle over the little Stewart River at Waldo had walked a short distance down the tracks to the west. Looking down he noticed a curious yellow wire sticking up through the track ballast. Pulling the wire up, he found that it was connected to several sticks of dynamite buried beneath a crossover switch. He quickly disconnected the charge, and then followed the wire back to a battery box in the woods. A pile of cigarette butts and flattened grass showed that the saboteur had been waiting for a train to arrive. The bridge guard by being alert had foiled the diabolical plan. Clearly the added precautions that had been taken had paid off. The DM&IR and the steel industry played a huge role in the war effort, and in a large part, helped the nation achieve victory. We owe a special thanks to those forgotten bridge guards who did their part to keep the trains safe

If you are interested in being an **election judge** for 2002, please contact the Town Clerk by Jan 10th, 525-5705.

Do Your Part – Volunteer!!

DULUTH TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2002

Inside this Issue:

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- "The History Corner"
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- Upcoming events and issues

Duluth Township Newsletter
6092 Homestead Road
Duluth, MN 55804

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If your name and address are in error or you know of someone who is not receiving a Newsletter, please send a note to the Newsletter Editor at the Town Hall (News box on the Town Hall porch). Extra copies are also available in the Town Hall.

Duluth Township Information for 2002

Duluth Town Hall, 6092 Homestead Road, Duluth, MN 55804
Phone (218) 525-5705 (voice message), fax (218) 525-3845,
web site: www.duluthtownship.org

Town Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30-3:30
Wednesday 12:30-3:30
Thursday 9:00-12:00 and 4:30-7:30

Supervisors:

Bruce Aho 525-4033 (roads)
Jeff Cook 525-4010 (chair, outside meetings)
Stephen Dahl 525-4679 (Town Hall, police, zoning)
George Sundstrom 525-5665 or email:
georgesundstrom@juno.com (cemetery, zoning,
outside meetings)
Corlis West 525-7719 (Fire Dept, outside meetings)

Clerk: **Ann Cox** 525-5705 (Town Hall)
Treasurer: **Janet Johansen** 525-5705 (Town Hall)
Attorney: **Tim Strom** 722-4766 (office)
Cemetery: **Denise Connolly** 525-7161
Planning and Zoning Administrator: **Wayne Dahlberg**
728-4293 (office)

Planning and Zoning Secretary: **Carolyn Marino**
Planning and Zoning Committee: **Regina Bourgeois,**
John Bowen, David Edblom, Toni Fladmark,
Wendy Gustafson, Sue Lawson, Janet McTavish
Peace Officers: **Chief Shawn Padden, Paul Johnson**
Fire Department: **Chief Jerry Simmons,**
Assistant Chief Bill Cox

Recycle! It's important!

Our two recycling centers now accept mixed paper in addition to corrugated cardboard, plastic, glass and newspapers. Mixed paper includes paper and pasteboard from:

Letters	cereal boxes	cracker boxes
Computer paper	pasta boxes	newsletters
Tablets	tissue boxes	phone books
Junk mail	magazines	bound books

Township Recycling Centers

North site – Town Hall, **Bob Abrahamson** will staff the center Tuesday 2-6pm and Saturday 8-12noon.
South site – McQuade & Scenic Hwy, **Caroline Marino** staffs the center Tues 7:00-11:00, Thurs 3:00-7:00, and Sat 8:00-noon (phone: 525-4592).
(Leave items only when the Recycling Centers are open.)

Upcoming Township Events and Issues

Public Information Meeting on our *Comprehensive Land Use Plan*, **Feb 21, Thurs, 6:30pm at the Town Hall.**
Be sure to attend for information and your input.
North Shore Community School. See the news update in this Newsletter. Its time for kids to sign up for Fall 2002. An application form is inserted in the *Newsletter*.
Annual Township Election and Town Meeting is on March 12th. Voting noon to 8pm, Meeting at 8:15pm.
Sign up to run for Town Supervisor, deadline Jan 15th
Deadline for the March Newsletter is February 23rd. If you have an announcement of broad interest to Township residents, send it to the editor or put it in the *NewsBox*.