



Practical Thinking

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What Maps Can Tell Us

by Lucy Brusic

Carol Urness, at the Internet conference last March, piqued my interest in a new book of which she was an assisting author. The book is *Minnesota on the Map: A Historical Atlas* by David Lanegan (with the assistance of Carol L. Urness) published by the Minnesota Historical Society, 2008. I was particularly anxious to read Urness's contributions which dealt with the earliest maps of Minnesota by explorers such as Samuel de Champlain (1632) and John Carver (1779). (Urness is a professor and curator emeritus at the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota; Lanegan is chair of the Department of Geography at Macalester College.)

But as I read on through the whole book, I realized that Lanegan in his chapter on "Mapping the Developing Twin Cities" had given a broad overview of the growth of cities, which happened to be the topic of this issue of PT.

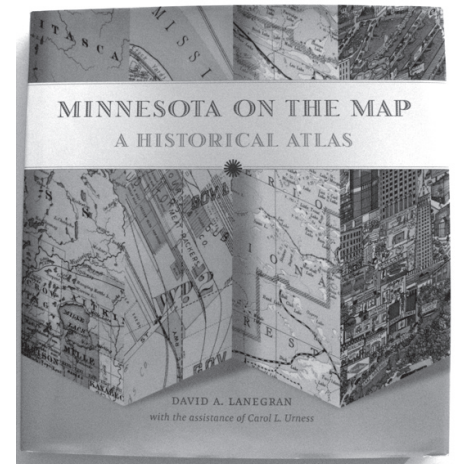
Lanegan describes the growth of cities as a response to developments in transportation and communication. (Whether he means communication as people talking to each other or people moving around is not clear; probably he has both meanings in mind.) As a map

historian, he concentrates his remarks on developments in transportation. He discerns three phases in the development of the Twin Cities. First, a steamboat and walking period in which the cities are small, and crowded close to waterways, in this case the Mississippi River. The second phase is a streetcar and railroad phase, which in the Twin Cities manifested itself in development as a railroad hub and expansion of street car routes from Stillwater to Minnetonka (1892 onward). The third development is an auto and freeway phase, in which freeways permit and encourage expansion of the city well beyond its original layout (1950 onward).

Growth of the Twin Cities

LANEGAN REPRODUCES TWENTY MAPS from 1839 to 1970 to illustrate the growth of the Twin Cities. This progression of maps shows the three phases—river, railroad, freeway—but it also reflects some of the values held by the city in the period in which the map was produced.

The first "city" map (1839) was drawn by a cartographer at Fort Snelling to show



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Mapping, continued from page 1

the area that the fort needed to reserve for a wood supply. While this is not a city map as such, it alludes to part of what makes cities, cities—that they are places where people group to find protection and business contacts.

Another early map (1874) of Saint Paul shows both steamboats and railroads crossing the river in downtown Saint Paul. Of course, Saint Paul was the bigger and more prominent city so long as boat transportation was predominant, but the railroad would change that—so the seeds of Saint Paul’s decline are evident even in this promotional picture from the late nineteenth century.

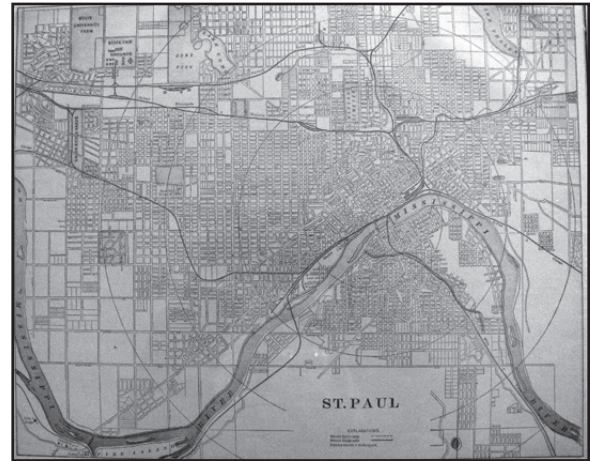
A business map of Minneapolis in 1886 illustrates some of the factors that made the more western of the Twin Cities prosperous even after the lumber mills had shifted over to milling flour: railroads, available land, milling technology and a creative market. The very title of this map, “Leading Business Houses of Minneapolis,” says that business is what makes a city prosperous, viable, and livable.

After the steamboat era ended, railroads and the streetcar system were very important in the life of the Twin Cities. The railroads encouraged growth out toward the west, even though the land was marshy in various places (1901). Streetcars facilitated intercity transportation. At first the two cities had separate street car systems, which helped to maintain distinct city identities, but gradually they grew into a large combined system that facilitated access to lakes and rivers (1909). (A full-sized map showing the extent of these streetcar lines can be seen outside the Atheneum in the Minneapolis Public Library.) The limitation of the streetcar system, however, was that only about 250 square miles were available for living space “within one hour of travel from downtown.” (169),

Gradually the automobile began to take over. A fire map of Lowry Hill in 1912 already shows a marked absence of stables, as people were building garages for their cars. City planning began in earnest in 1910, with a vision of an arterial city resembling Paris or Washington, D.C. According to this plan, downtown would have been linked by a grand boulevard to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; a transportation center would have been built at Gateway Park; and the river front would have been developed. In Saint Paul, however, a zoning map of 1922 seems to imply that everything would continue as it had been.

Nevertheless, the automobile changed everything. When the automobile became the dominant form of transportation (about 1950, even before the freeways) 2000 square miles were available within an hour of downtown. (loc. cit) Freeways, slum clearance, the elimination of streetcars,

and booming suburbs are all marks of the cities of the late 1960s. The suburbs were growing and the problem was planning metropolitan expansion and at the same time, revitalizing the center of the city. In 1967, several smaller entities in the orbit of the Twin Cities area joined to form the Metropolitan Council with “more power to make municipalities conform to regional goals and to regulate



Map of Saint Paul, MN, about 1920. Private collection

the expansion of sewers and transportation facilities” than a local group would have. (171) In 1968 the Metropolitan Council created a projection of what the Twin Cities would look like in 2000 and suggested several possible scenarios: present trends, spread city, multiple centers, or radial corridors. Multiple Centers (Constellation Cities) was chosen as the working model. The Metro Council was responsible for the development of Nicollet Mall and had plans to reclaim the waterfront. However, they found that they could not control the process of development along the river front as they had hoped: the Science Museum and the Orchestra did not move to the waterfront as planned. Instead we have a history museum in a partially destroyed flour mill. (175)

Lanegran’s tour of Twin Cities’ maps gives a visual survey of some of what people go to cities to find: protection, commerce, job opportunities, culture, and amusement.

Maps reflect values

WHAT ELSE CAN WE conclude from this discussion of Lanegran’s *Minnesota on the Map*? I would begin by saying that Lanegran is right that maps reflect the values of their times. The cartographer at Fort Snelling mapped ways in which Fort Snelling could sustain itself. A souvenir map of Saint Paul in 1953 shows that almost everything that a Saint Paulite could need was produced right here in the city. So one value of a map is to show a self-sufficient view of the local world.

Another value that maps seem to project is an idealized view of the future—one that shows that all problems have been rectified (the slums have been cleared, etc.), but that other things (transportation systems) have stayed in place. A St. Paul zoning map of 1922 seems to exemplify this outlook, as do the city planning maps from the 1970s.

As an historian, I would also say that maps tell us where we have been. I enjoyed looking—with a magnifying glass—at the map of Swede Hollow (1892); I was reminded that maps do not tell us everything: Lanegran remarks that however much people looked back with nostalgia on their lives in Swede Hollow, there was still “whooping cough, pneumonia, and undernourishment” there. (144) I also appreciated his description of the meat-packing industry in Saint Paul. This facility and its subsidiaries once employed more than 8000 people; the industry was completely gone by 1979. Maps are valuable as a way of looking back.

As I conclude my reflections on this book (and I have concentrated only on the part of it that deals with the Twin Cities), I find myself wondering what values future historians will ascribe to us when they look at the maps we

make of Minneapolis and Saint Paul. We produce maps that show us the greenways and the bike paths: clearly we value open space and park land as amenities of city life. We create maps of the skyways in downtown Minneapolis: one of the advantages of living in a large city is that we don't have to run outside in extreme heat and cold. Arenas and ball parks are marked on our maps; usually art museums and colleges are too—these are advantages of city living.

But we also have a Twin Cities beltway/bypass: the downside of automobile transportation is that you don't want to drive across a city unless you have to. A detailed map of downtown would show large areas devoted to parking lots and ramps. It will be clear to some future historian that the automobile phase of a city was a headache (if not a nightmare) as it came to an end (?).

One wonders what the next phase of city growth will be and what else a future historian may deduce—rightly or wrongly—about our values from reading our maps?

Lucy Brusic is a historian and a handweaver.

The Minneapolis Sustainable City Project

by David Juncker

The goal of a “safe, healthy, environmentally friendly city” was defined and initiated as a top priority for the city of Minneapolis during the years 2003 through 2005. By 2006, twenty-four “Sustainability Indicators” had been identified along with goals, targets, measurable parameters, and trend analyses for each indicator. Annual reports are required, providing an account of where the city stands with respect to each of the indicators as they relate to the over-all goals of “improving the well-being of area residents, reducing impacts on the environment, and ensuring a healthy community for future generations.” In May of 2008, the third annual report was published; it is available on-line at <www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability>.

The twenty-four indicators of Sustainability are grouped into three categories:

1. A HEALTHY LIFE (6 indicators as follows):
Healthy Families: 1) Healthy Infants, 2) Teen Pregnancy, 3) HIV & Gonorrhea, 4) Healthy Weight
Healthy Homes: 5) Asthma, 6) Lead Poisoning.
2. GREENPRINT (10 indicators as follows):
Energy & Emissions: 1) Climate Change, 2) Renewable Energy, 3) Air Quality
Urban Design & Mobility: 4) Bikeways, 5) Downtown Transportation Alternatives, 6) Airport Noise, 7) Tree Canopy

- Clean Water:* 8) Combined Sewer Overflow, 9) Permeable Surfaces, 10) Water Quality
3. A VITAL COMMUNITY (8 indicators as follows):
Safe Homes: 1) Affordable Housing, 2) Homelessness, 3) Block Clubs, 4) Brownfield Sites, 5) Homicide
Thriving People: 1) Students in the Arts, 2) Graduation Rate, 3) Workers Earning a Living Wage

For example, under the Indicator- “Renewable Energy” (R.E.), the goal is to “Increase the use of Renewable Energy” in city operations. The first target was to have a 10% increase of Renewable Energy in city operations in 2008. By 2015 the goal is to be 10% above state and federal mandates for the use of Renewable Energy. In the report, the goal progress is graphed; installations, management, and regulations are listed. Eight recent city and community activities toward this goal are listed and three web links and resources are published.

The fact that the Minneapolis Sustainability Project is up and running with many observable improvements in place is due in no small part to an early track record of identifying doable and measurable targets and reporting both improvements and setbacks.

David Juncker is a physiologist and a past president of the Scholars' Forum.

Tales of Two (or Maybe Three) Cities

by Joseph Murphy

Berlin 1971

The line of cars ahead was short, but it seemed to take a long time getting to the guard post. We had rented a car for the trip out of free West Berlin into communist East Berlin. We had to cross the barrier known as Check Point Charlie, the comical military designation for an artificial international border.

“An island in a sea of red,” I later heard West Berlin described, distinguishing it from East Berlin and East Germany which surrounded it. The distinction was the artifact of a division of the spoils of war by the victors, two former allies each now paranoid about the other. The paranoia would last four decades and would strike fear into the hearts of half the world. The official name was the Cold War. The West and East each imposed its own form of government and economy on the land it had conquered and now in its own way held captive. We feared the Russians; they feared us. It was an irrational fear, the fear of what was different and unknown, the result of an unwillingness to seek accommodation with a different way of life, of allocating resources, of ownership of capital. The fear led to armies that sapped the economic strength and moral fiber of each side, though that was seldom understood and rarely admitted...

The line of cars didn't move. More vehicles arrived behind us and lengthened the line. I was getting impatient, but realized that I should not show it. Impatience was not something to exhibit before the East German soldier who stood nearby, an automatic rifle slung over his shoulder...

Finally, we reached the inspection point. A small, cheaply built hut with a long counter. Several would-be crossers were lined up inside. The East German officials were checking their documents. The official seemed to be giving one person a hard time.

I asked the man behind me in line in German where there was a good restaurant in East Berlin.

“There are no restaurants in East Berlin,” he replied, an amused look on his face.

I thought he was joking...

[Finally the author and his family arrive at the checkpoint.]

“What is your purpose?” the official asked.

“Tourist,” I replied...

“We must examine your vehicle.”

He ordered me to drive by the hut and park on the far side next to it.

Two officials followed us through. One examined the inside of the vehicle, looking suspiciously at each of us. Then one of the officials produced a long stick with a flat object on the end. At first I could not tell what it was. He passed it under the left side of the car, then the front, the right side, and the back. It was a mystery...

Then I saw what the pole with the flat object was. The flat object was a mirror. They were examining the underside of the car.

The two officials conferred with themselves for a few moments. Then the more senior turned and barked: “Pass.”

We got back in the car. I turned on the key, started the engine, released the clutch, and put on the gas... I turned and headed into what was then East Berlin.

The place had an eerie feeling. Unlike West Berlin, there was little traffic. The streets were wide and nearly empty, except for a few strollers. Perhaps the emptiness reflected the fact that it was Sunday morning. We were in what used to be called the ‘Mitte’ or the middle part of the city. There were the remnants of ancient buildings... Here and there were open spaces with scattered debris and uncut grass, areas that had been bombed out during World War II. Here a quarter century after the event, the ruins remained.

Our plan was to visit the Pergamon, the grand museum which held the wondrous artifacts stolen in the 1920s and 1930s from Egypt and Babylon by German archaeologists. We climbed the high steps to the museum entrance, paid the fee, and entered.

On the way back to Check Point Charlie, we looked for a suitable restaurant for lunch. After going up one street and down the other, we found none. My informant at Check Point Charlie had been correct. There were no restaurants in East Berlin. Then, unexpectedly, we came across a corner restaurant. It was small and rather bleak looking. I parked the car, we crossed the street and entered. The room was rather plain. A few customers sat at wooden tables. A waitress pointed to a table and we sat down. When she was ready, we began to order from the menus that had been given us.

“Unfortunately, not available today,” she said in German

as we mentioned one item after another. Half the items were not available. We asked what was and ordered that: some rhubarb juice and stale cake...

Twenty four years later in 1996...

Berlin had changed since three years ago not long after the walls had been taken down...Every year seemed to bring more change.

I remembered how it was on our first visit to East Berlin after the unification. East Berlin was the site of the Reichstag, the Pergamon, the island of museums, the opera house. The buildings were there, but little else. There were few people, no taxis, no restaurants, or only a few, and many open spaces. The East Germans had restored many of the famous old buildings, building them up block by block from what little was left from the bombing, or from pictures or diagrams. Their rebuilding was a magnificent effort, not like the barren structures I like to call Communist Modern, not at all like those ugly structures, but a recreation of the classical past. Yet there were no people, no one to enjoy the new scenes.

That had been three years ago. Now it was no longer the same. Crowds had gathered, not only to see the wrapping of the Reichstag by Christo—5,000,000 came for that—but to enjoy the new hotels, the new shops, the new restaurants, all rising from the dust of the past. The dreaded Stazi headquarters remained as a reminder of the evil that had been, some Nazi monuments, but that was all. It was a new East Berlin, one resembling more and more the West.

But this marked change was not what struck me most of all. It was the parade, or rather the parades, for there were two on the successive Saturdays that we were there.

The first was the Christopher Day parade.....A week later came the Love parade...where 300,000 came to watch and participate...

“Like the 30s,” one German said. Perhaps so. It reflected a restlessness of the young which might have unforeseen repercussions in the future. This was not the Berlin that I had seen three decades earlier, or even a year before.

Venice

We landed at the Venice airport some twenty minutes from the city...I walked through the terminal... out onto the dock where two water taxis were waiting... [T]he captain of the second waved me aboard. ... I climbed in the back as the captain backed away from the dock, slowly turned about and then headed south between the long line of buoys that marked deeper water.

Soon distant islands came into view—Murano, the glass-

making island where the glass workers were once forbidden to leave for fear their skills might be learned abroad... Later on after we had crossed through Venice itself on a narrow canal—the Giudecca, once the haven of Jews until they were moved to the ghetto; the customs house island with its gleaming marble. Finally I saw the Grand Canal, the Citadella, and the Campenella, the tall tower above the Doges Palace and the Basilica of San Marco, that stood in the Piazza San Marco, the magnificent square that formed the centerpiece of Venice.

On the way, we passed the long yellow water busses, with their wide windows, flat roofs, black bottoms, and open mid decks and sterns, all crammed with people. Then there were the sleek gondolas, black ships, paddled at the stern by gondoliers in white jerseys, their bronzed faces and arms gleaming in the sun. We passed long freighters, low against the water except for the high forecastles, being pushed in by small tug boats. Toward the end we passed a cruise ship from Greece, three decks high, gleaming white with crowded passengers on the open top deck. Venice is a port city...

At first you don't notice that there are no cars, no automobiles, no vans, no trucks, no motorcycles, no motor scooters. Not even bicycles in Venice itself. The city simply has no roads that could accommodate such traffic. The bridges have steps, the canals emerge everywhere, the stone walkways are no more than walkways, sometimes wide, but more often narrow, too narrow to permit even a small automobile to pass. It is a city navigable by foot alone, or boat, or by gondola. Though you hear the growls of sleek taxis, the songs of gondoliers, or the grumble of water busses as they begin to pull away from their floating docks, the sound of automobiles is not to be heard...

Venice is small, no more than three miles long...and two miles wide at its greatest, one mile wide at the narrowest. The island itself looks like a fish with a large S-shaped canal, the Grand Canal, winding down the center. Formed of some 100 smaller islands, Venice has 400 bridges and 3000 streets. The streets are a maze, sometimes twenty feet wide, but more often narrow alley ways, so narrow that you can touch both sides. More often than not, the narrow alleys turn into dead ends. Finding your way is a mystery, among rich shops near San Marco Square, hidden restaurants, small hotels, all beneath the tall five storey walls that loom above. Only in the grand square of San Marco, or along the wide walkway on the southern side of the city, or in one of the other small squares, are you open to the sky.

Joseph Murphy is a travel writer and a former member of the Scholars.

John Sloan's City

by Robert Brusic

During the summer of 2008 two art museums displayed exhibitions that presented two very different pictorial views of America. The Metropolitan Museum in New York City mounted an exhibit called "Nine American Landscapes." Because landscape painting was the dominant mode in nineteenth century American art, such artists as Frederick Church, Jasper Cropsey, and Albert Bierstadt displayed nature with reverential splendor. The signature painting of the exhibit, Thomas Cole's "The Oxbow of the Connecticut" (1836), like all the works in the exhibit, was huge. It gave the impression that the land was inexhaustible and that it was blessed by the Divine for our exploitation (something that proved to be a very mixed blessing in the following century).

The other exhibit presented a vastly different picture of America and its destiny. Ironically, one had to travel to the Smart Museum in Chicago to view "John Sloan's New York." Instead of large pictures of wide open spaces, this exhibit featured smaller and denser paintings that were full of the bustle and energy of New York. These works from the early twentieth century tended to be darker, moodier, and more action-filled than those at the Met. The rural and sylvan had given way to the urban and concrete. Sloan's paintings (along with those of his colleagues from the "Ashcan School") virtually redefined the way Americans viewed themselves and the space they occupied. These works focused not on some ideal of nature; instead, they drew attention to the ordinary, like wet wash hanging on a clothes line or to teeming tenements where huddled masses mixed. These paintings and drawings also contained a vitality and regard for space that, in effect, re-imaged nature and living space for urban Americans.

Crowded cities, by definition, are different entities from lush landscape. John Sloan (1871-1951), in the early twentieth century, was one of the artists that pictured the difference. He captured something new and different that was emerging in American life. Vast open spaces were either very far away or were but a distant memory. Then the land was open and untrammelled; now the land was being paved. Automobiles, tall buildings, and gaudy lights were inexorably altering landscape and living space. People shouldered one another on crowded streets as they went to work or sought recreation. The catalogue to the Sloan exhibition noted that cities are "sites of fragmented

experiences, of momentary impressions, of novelty and change. Defined by their many inhabitants and visitors, urban settings shape the way city dwellers make sense of the world around them. 'John Sloan's New York'... present(s) the artist's coming to grips with the paradoxes and pleasures of life in early twentieth century New York." (17)

A different vision of the city

AN ELDERLY MAN DRINKING a beer in "McSorley's Bar" presents a picture of loneliness and isolation in the city. A print like "Why Don't They All Go the Country for a Vacation?" wryly depicts a crowded street scene, a tenement teeming with life if not hope or opportunity. People work and play in the city too. "Hairdresser's Window" shows a hair stylist busy at work in a shop next to a chop suey joint; and "Movies" depicts a crowd of pleasure seekers going to see "A Romance of the Harem" at a glittering neighborhood cinema. Nature is often off to the side in Sloan's city scapes, but it is not entirely absent. For instance, he paints the city gripped in traffic-slowing snow in a painting like "Snowstorm, Madison Square"; elsewhere he shows the solid yet vulnerable Flatiron Building engulfed in "Dust Storm, Fifth Avenue."

As seen in "John Sloan's New York" the city is the locus of multifaceted human activity. Anyone living in a city today can readily identify the pace and texture of life as Sloan depicted them a hundred years ago. We would like to think that the landscape is open and clean as in the paintings of Cole or Cropsey. As modern sophisticates, we can even experience some of those remaining vacant spaces by traveling to the Boundary Waters or the open spaces of Wyoming—though signs of tourism and the smudge of our carbon footprints have visibly nibbled at the edges of those once pristine scenes. The city, nature's alter ego, however, is where most of us live, work, and recreate. As seen in Sloan's paradigmatic paintings of New York the city was and is a place of beauty, trashiness, crowdedness, entertainment, work, leisure, culture, and opportunity. It continues to be a place that defines and baffles, that grips with paradox and pleasure. A different artist once sang optimistically about the city. Like Sloan he tried to assure us in song that "if you can make it there, you'll make it anywhere...."

Robert Brusic is a Lutheran clergyman who organizes his travel around art exhibits.

A Handbook for Community Organizers

by Shirley Whiting

With the arrival of Barak Obama on the national scene, we learned a new term: “Community Organizer.” Though Republican Vice Presidential candidate, Sarah Palin, denigrated the efforts of community organizers, many of us wondered just what constituted the skills and duties of community organization. This was especially true when we saw how effectively Barak Obama implemented them.

Turns out, we have a nationally known community organizer and activist here in Minnesota in the person of Harry Boyte, senior fellow at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. In his recently published book, *The Citizen Solution: How You Can Make a Difference* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2008) Harry Boyte lays out the framework for developing grass roots citizens movements that avoid the so-called “slash and burn” techniques aimed at winning elections at all costs but leave so much ill-will in their wake that governing becomes increasingly difficult.

Slash and burn techniques break down civic discourse and leave isolated groups feeling disenfranchised. In addition, 24-hour news cycles, the amount of money needed by candidates, and the gradual demise of newspapers all contribute to sour political discourse.

Increasingly, we need to find civic spaces where people can gather and discuss issues of concern. Boyte cites Hubert Humphrey’s autobiographical reference in *The Education of a Public Man*, for much of his, Humphrey’s, education as he witnessed discussions in his father’s drug store in South Dakota. Nowadays, libraries and community centers provide spaces, as do coffee shops and churches, park and recreation centers and settlement houses.

The number of civic spaces in our area is impressive. One of the most effective in the black community is the Phyllis Wheatley Settlement House, which provides a “creative commons” for residents of North Minneapolis. The PowderhornPhillips Cultural Wellness Center provides a setting in that neighborhood for people of diverse backgrounds to mingle and learn from each other. Others are part of a college setting, such as MacCares, the Macalester Conservation and Renewable Energy Society. Still others, like the Isaiah group, are multiracial, nonpartisan, economically diverse and advocate for non-violence, justice for all, and broad-based citizen involvement in the democratic process.

In sections throughout the book called Tips and Tools, Boyte lists many ways that community organization takes place—from how to find people who share your concerns,

to how to map free spaces to hold meetings, to how to focus and evaluate the contributions of attendees.

Boyte also lists Ten Civic Skills useful to implement the ideas of the book:

- 1) One-to-One Interview, an intentional process of getting to know what motivates another person;
- 2) Mapping Power and Interests, i.e. learning the culture, history, networks, and power dynamics of a particular place, and learning how to act in the larger context;
- 3) Holding a House Meeting, to get to know friends and acquaintances and uncover issues that can be addressed by the group;
- 4) Finding Free Spaces in Your Community, to socialize, discuss, learn, and do public work;
- 5) Discover cultural resources, such as the traditions, norms, values, practices, rituals, and symbols that express and sustain relationships;
- 6) Public Evaluation, to help citizen groups learn from experience, expose tensions and conflicts in constructive ways;
- 7) Taking Action, as distinct from activity: Action is thoughtful collective effort informed by understanding difference, self-interests, and power relationships;
- 8) Getting to Know Your Neighborhood, the history, cultures, interests, power dynamics, and institutions of your neighborhood are a foundation for effective action.
- 9) Developing a Citizen Identity, to learn collaborative ways to work together across disciplines;
- 10) Building Partnerships, to avoid looking at leaders as either saviors or enemies, but to establish relationships that allow you to move from protest to governance.

In an Afterward that addresses the Right-Left dichotomy of politics, Boyte stresses the complexity that goes into these terms and the importance of the Ten Civic Skills that build structures to hold the ground for the democratic process. While too complex to synthesize here, if read first, the Afterward would provide compelling reason to take the entire book to heart as a Community Organizer’s Handbook. All the needed information, models, and instructions on how to proceed are in *The Citizen Solution: How You Can Make a Difference*.

For anyone concerned about our political processes today, about the breakdown of civic discourse, and the seeming befuddlement in which we find ourselves, this book is a must read.

Reviewed by Shirley Whiting, former MISF president.

Klein discusses Physician-Assisted Suicide, October 11, 2008

Ken Klein, professor emeritus of philosophy at Valparaiso University spoke to a Scholars meeting on October 11, about Physician-Assisted Suicide (PAS). His main point was that, from a philosophical point of view, there is no reason not to make it legal for doctors to assist hopelessly ill patients provided certain pre-conditions have been met. The Netherlands and the states of Oregon and Washington already have such statutes.

Four responders were on hand to give reactions to Klein's paper: Carol Tauer, Visiting Professor at the Center for Bio-Ethics at the University of Minnesota; Paula Ruddy, a founding member of the Progressive Catholic Voice; Dr. Bob Benjamin, founder of the bioethics department at Methodist Hospital; and David Juncker, physiologist and former president of the Scholars.

Responders

CAROL TAUER MADE FOUR POINTS.

- 1) According to the Bible, suicide is not clearly wrong.
- 2) A Deliberative Democracy conference several years ago showed that people's minds on the subject of PAS are basically closed—they are either for it or against it, with little chance to be argued into change. Therefore, putting PAS on the ballot in Minnesota would polarize people and harm the political process without accomplishing much.
- 3) It does not have to be physicians who administer "lethal" drugs (in fact, to ask physicians to do so is to violate the Hippocratic Oath). It could be pharmacists and chaplains or a team of the above. In that we no longer have "family" physicians, it seems unrealistic to ask family physicians to assume the role of providing PAS.
- 4) There are other ways to end suffering that can be utilized without violating the law.
 - a. Aggressive palliative care: High doses of pain killers will hasten death.
 - b. A patient or their proxy can refuse treatment.
 - c. Palliative sedation, administered by a physician, will put a patient into a coma.
 - d. A patient can voluntarily refuse food and drink. Without water, death will come in two or three days.

Paula Ruddy, who stressed that she is not a representative of the Catholic Church, agreed that extreme suffering can make life unbearable. However, she added a question as

to whether we as a society want the medical profession to assist at death. Although physicians are the only ones who presently have the legal right to prescribe PAS drugs, it seems not only to be a violation of their role as healer, it would also involve physicians in a lot of record-keeping and evaluating patients' competence. It seems that it might be better to have PAS administered by some team of care-givers other than physicians.

Bob Benjamin, as a retired physician, spoke from his experience. He felt that PAS is a right; that people have a right to control their own bodies. Nonetheless, in his experience, PAS is only used in a very small number of cases. Hospice care reduces the need for PAS and leaves the patient in control of his/her life. Benjamin also felt that the use of PAS should be kept confidential and that the fifteen-day waiting period (as recommended by Klein) was too long. "People who have made up their minds are ready to die."

David Juncker, a physiologist who is currently teaching pre-med students, reflected that the medical profession has changed dramatically. People are no longer seeing family physicians, but rather specialists. A person in ICU will see an ICU special team who may be able to keep him/her alive until the patient actually dies from massive system failure, rather than from the disease that brought him/her to the ICU.

Audience reaction

KLEIN, WHO CONTINUED TO ARGUE that a physician ought to be involved at the end of life, suggested that retired physicians could be part of the team that administered PAS to those who requested it. Bob Benjamin concurred, but felt that only a few physicians would be needed—"ten per state."

Audience members contributed other thoughts. A psychologist should be able to determine mental competence to make the decision to end one's life; it would not require a psychiatrist or a doctor. A psychological evaluation is not required in Oregon.

Several people pointed out that we have figured out how to show compassion for dogs, but that we don't extend that same compassion to human beings who are suffering.

Carol Tauer strongly recommended that everyone, and especially young people, establish a proxy for themselves in case a terminal decision is needed. Should it be your

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Celebrating Thoughtful People, a presentation by Peter Shea, June 14, 2008

To celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum a group of over thirty inquiring minds gathered at Maria's Cuban Restaurant in Minneapolis on June 14 to eat and to hear Peter Shea talk about "Celebrating Thoughtful People." Shea began by saying that going to the bathroom during his talk was permissible. In non-linear fashion he spoke for an hour, affirming the notion that thinkers can precipitate intellectual revolutions and save civilization. There is, he affirmed with passion, a need to spread a vital intellectual culture, for we are guardians of ideas, responsible to the community at large and to the next generation.

Throughout his engaging presentation Shea wandered along a number of provocative paths. He noted, for instance, that ideas rarely migrate from a book shelf to the mind. Shakespeare and Dickens are dead letters unless someone—a speaker at the right time—can impart the thoughts and ideas of significant authors. Ideas that are connected to lives go down better. Encounters with lives are inextricably bound to encounters with ideas and vice versa.

These fertile encounters are what he meant by celebrating thoughtful people. Celebrating, in Shea's mind, is to make accessible, to make people think and act. Accessing the lives and ideas of people is important to promote thoughtfulness and action.

Philosophy Camp

SHEA ILLUSTRATED HIS POINT by referring to a course called Philosophy Camp. an experience he coordinates at Shalom Hill Farm. There, in southern Minnesota, people have a chance to "dry out" from the frenetic pace of modern life. In this experience people have the freedom to explore and experiment, to raise the issue of what's worth thinking and talking about. It's a celebratory practice, making minds available and accessible to one another. It is, in short, an experiment in access.

Expanding on his work with young people at Philosophy Camp, Shea noted that we all need a place where we can go and think. Public television, he said, used to provide some of that before it became captive to invasive economic and cultural forces. He likes television and wants to rescue it from its current bondage, hoping that it can once again make people's lives accessible to one another by the healthy and stimulating flow of ideas.

What has this to do with Independent Scholars, which is celebrating its quarter century anniversary? Well, here is a broad public space that has access to ideas and lives across the generations. Shea, an early member of MISF, advocated a forum where the young and the elderly can meet and interact. The youth are the hope of the elderly; and the elderly know what it takes to live life over time. Sharing interests with the next generation is crucial. In that creative forum minds can be opened to science, literature, poetry, and much more. He noted how exciting it is to see how even fifth graders, properly approached, can wake up and interact with intellectual activity.

In listing the options for thoughtful lives, Shea spoke about creative education, the possibilities latent in television, and the role of the church. The latter, he said, has been in a living dialogue with the past for two thousand years; it has a perspective that can be helpful in the larger conversation he advocates. We must keep reminding ourselves and the larger public how big the tent, as a meeting space, is. Meetings as such are boring, he concluded, but ideas are exciting. Shea invited us to put on our thinking caps, join the intellectual revolution that is brewing, and act. There is a lot of unused potential to be harnessed and set in motion.



David Juncker, past president of MISF and Brian Mulhern, archivist of MISF, show off the twenty-fifth anniversary cakes. Photo by Tom Dukich

The Underground Scholar

The density provided by cities creates new sets of human dynamics. Consider the thriving theatrical scene in the Twin Cities; the existence of small, semi-obscure dance companies; the small churches of parochial denominations; the many business networking opportunities; the really good shopping. I once happily counted two dozen cross-country ski trails within a half-hour drive of my home.

One consequence of this density is the existence of an “underground.” Underground, that is, as contrasted with mainstream. It is something—an event, a person, a movement—not commonly talked about or reported on. You must seek it out; it does not come looking for you. The quintessential example of this phenomenon is underground music.

Virtually all musicians start out unknown; some never get beyond that. And some actually prefer that. Punk bands, for example, started underground not just because they were unknown, but also because they were contemptuous of mainstream values. Other musicians are offering up music that appeals to a limited audience, suffering low attendance and low funds. Some may have talent, but with lives busy in other arenas, they simply don't have the time to develop the talent they have. Not a few are just mediocre and will manage to stay underground in spite of themselves. But there are two things that are common to all underground musicians: they are doing music for its own sake, and, for the most part, they are very happy to be doing it.

Before I go any further, I want to point out that “underground,” like most such terms, is slippery. It is more of a non-linear continuum from mainstream to underground, and where any musical style or group falls is subjective. Nonetheless, music that was at one time clearly underground does sometimes become mainstream. Disco, punk, and hip-hop all existed with small audiences before catching on with wide popular support; the Grateful Dead used to sell their CDs from the trunk of their car.

Most independent scholars do not think of themselves as being underground, but I think it can be argued that they—most of them—fit the definition. (We are going to define academia and popular writing on intellectual topics as the mainstream here.) Independent scholars, like underground musicians, have small, perhaps specialized audiences. If you want to find them, you must seek them out; they will not necessarily come to you.

There are other parallels with underground music here,

too. Like the original punk bands, some just don't want to be a part of the mainstream, because of philosophical differences or because they simply want to avoid the pressures and politics of academia. Others are interested in topics with a limited focus that would not ordinarily interest academia, such as local history or sports trivia. Many are simply unqualified, not having the proper credentials. For the most part these scholars are intelligent, capable people with busy lives that don't always allow the time to develop their ideas as they would like. There are some who may never produce a satisfactory intellectual product. But, like underground musicians, they have two things that are common to them all: they are pursuing knowledge for its own sake, and they are very happy to be doing it.

But even for independent scholars, total independence is not desirable. Networking can be useful and an audience is desirable. This is where MISF comes in. In the midst of the city we want to find the independent scholar, including those who don't realize that they are such, and bring them together. Moreover, in the age of the Internet, we can reach beyond the borders of the city to independent scholars who have been traditionally more isolated and include them in our circle. We want to connect independent scholars and help them find an audience and expand their opportunities. We feel that this is one of those cases where the parts add up to more than the whole. We also want to make it possible for the genuinely talented scholar, like the pioneers of disco and hip-hop, to emerge into the mainstream. But mostly we want to be here to pursue our intellectual interests because, after all, it's something we love. And that's reason enough.

Curt Hillstrom

PAS, continued from page 8

parent or your significant other? This issue is important for young people who have not yet married.

Klein raised the question of whether the possibility of PAS would increase pressure on the dying to justify their existence. Both Juncker and Tauer felt that this possibility was fairly remote. Klein noted that it is a felony offense in Oregon to encourage someone to end their life; the decision must be made by the dying person.

About twenty people attended the discussion, which took place at Washburn Library. An on-line copy of Ken Klein's paper is available from the editor of this journal.

Editor's Note

Cities. We could not have picked a more timely topic for this journal if we had had a crystal ball. On the morning that this journal was going to press (which tells you when I usually write editorials) President Obama announced a new White House Office of Urban Affairs.

Fulfilling a campaign promise, Obama says he will give long overdue attention to the urban areas where 80% of Americans live and work. He faces serious challenges.

May 18, 2008, *The New York Times* ran an article titled "As Deaths Outpace Births, Cities Adjust" by Sam Roberts and Sean D. Hamill. This article described the decline of such cities as Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Utica, and Duluth, where industry (especially the steel industry) has moved away; these cities are gradually dying as deaths outpace births. (Incidentally, the same type of statistic haunts Venice—the city that Joseph Murphy describes so eloquently in this issue of *PT*. The underlying cause, however, there is not the steel industry, rather it is the rising cost of living—and rising water—in Venice.)

On February 17, 2009, (also in the *NYT*) an Op Ed piece by David Brooks, casts doubt on the idea that America could willingly emulate Amsterdam—that is, we would ride bicycles, have smaller homes, and use tinier refrigerators. Apparently, new research by the Pew Institute has revealed that most Americans would like to live in the suburbs, in the West, and someplace "new." They also want large garages to store their "stuff." In spite of the fact that my garage is full of "stuff," I was a little dismayed by these findings; I hoped that the gas crunch and the amenities of cities would lure people back to city living. So far seven Letters to the Editor in the *Times* have supported my thoughts, but their number does not outweigh the Pew Institute research.

So it is good to learn that the Minneapolis Sustainability Project described by David Juncker is working to keep Minneapolis livable. (If you want more information go to the very comprehensive website: <www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability>.) Shirley Whiting's review of Harry Boyte's book on community organizing also gives us tools that may help us to sustain the city.

The other articles in this issue on cities are historical. The review of David Lanegran's book shows that maps tell us a lot about cities (and about our values); maps also make clear the continued importance of cities for commerce, business, government, and culture—all things that civilization values. Robert Brusica says that the painter John Sloan, recording city life in the early twentieth century, showed us "the beauty, trashiness, crowdedness, entertainment, work, leisure, culture, and opportunity [of cities]." Curt Hillstrom certainly speaks to the issue of culture and opportunity in his editorial on Underground Scholars.

Other articles describe MISF meetings both past and future. I thank all the writers who shared thoughts for this issue, some of them on a tight deadline.

We always welcome timely articles; I hope to hear from more of you before the next deadline in November.

Lucy Brusica <lucy@brusica.net>

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Deadline for the next issue is Nov. 1, 2009. The material in this journal is copyrighted to the authors. It may not be duplicated in any form without permission.

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MISF now has regular meetings and some great talks

The Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum announces a series of monthly meetings featuring speakers from the local community. These meetings will take place at Hosmer Library, 4th Avenue at 36th Street in Minneapolis. They will begin at 10 A.M., with the talk at 10.30. Admission is free and everyone is welcome.

Saturday, **February 28**, Richard Fuller, retired professor of physics at Gustavus Adolphus College, will speak on “Physics Encounters Consciousness.” He will explain what quantum mechanics can tell us about consciousness.

Saturday, **March 28**, Dr. Glenda Eoyang, a pioneer in human system dynamics and the founding Executive Director of the Human Systems Dynamics Institute, will talk about “Human Systems Dynamics: Complexity and the Pragmatism of Time.” Human systems dynamics draws lessons from chaos theory and can help you recognize complex dynamics in yourself, team, family, neighborhood, and community.

Saturday, **April 25**, Tom Dukich, philosopher-scientist and former world traveler, will talk about “Life After the

Bailout!?: the Transition to Resilience.” Dukich will lead a discussion on our current global crisis: how we got into it and how we might get out of it using “radical” ideas from agriculture, ecology, quality control, and systems theory.

Saturday, **May 30**, Dennis Schapiro, a businessman, education writer, and former Minneapolis school board member, and veteran reporter Scott Russell, will speak on “Children as Pawns in Public Policy: the Minneapolis Experience.” In 2007 the speakers looked at the effectiveness of children’s policy in Minneapolis. They found a history of false starts, missed opportunities, and political opportunism. They’ll share their findings and some recommendations.

The Minnesota Independent Scholars Forum is an organization of people who are interested in learning and research. Membership is open to anyone who shares its goals. Further information about these programs or about the Scholars can be obtained at <www.mnindependentscholars.org> or by phoning Curt Hillstrom at 612-823-5132.

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