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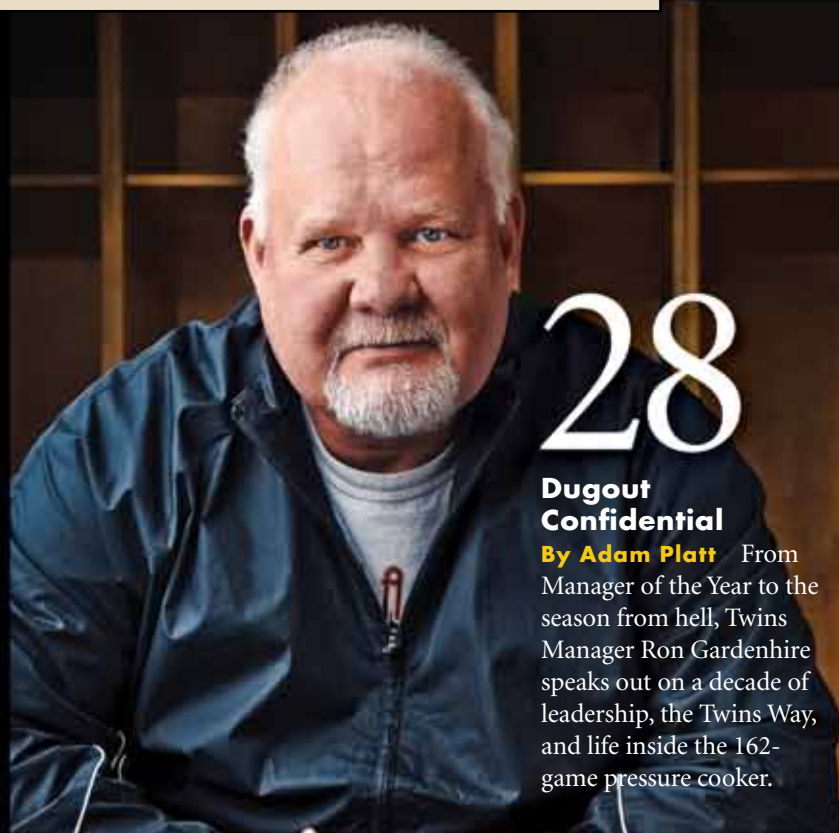




# TwinCities BUSINESS

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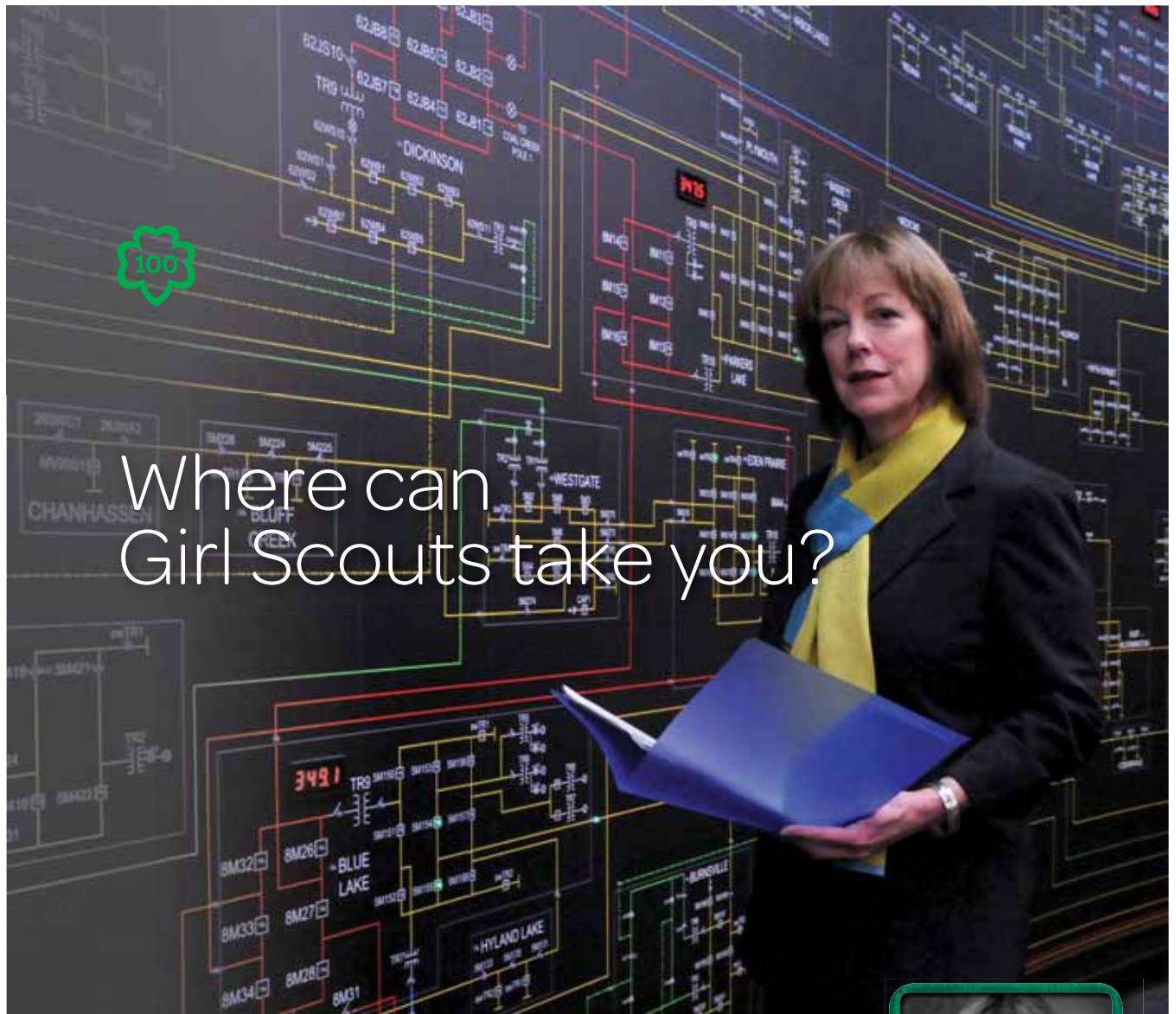


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## editor's note

DALE KURSCHNER | DKURSCHNER@TCBMAG.COM

# Special Treatment?

I grew up on a 20-acre hobby farm complete with a half-acre garden, horses, chickens, a dog, and a half-dozen farm cats. When I wasn't busy there, I would often help (or just hang out) at our neighbor's farm a quarter mile down the road.

Clarence and Ann were good, hard-working people. Ann ran the home, took care of the bills, baked and cooked (including canning, rendering lard, and grinding fresh meat) and did many other chores, from butchering chickens to helping milk the cows every morning and night. Clarence took care of raising and harvesting the crops, managing the cows and pigs, keeping the buildings in good shape, and making sure the equipment ran well.

Farther down the road about a mile were George and Henrietta: older folks, quiet, and stuck in the 1940s in how they dressed and lived. She had never learned to drive and was afraid of machines, which explained the sight we'd all see when it was time for them to bale hay. George would be driving the tractor, pulling the baler and wagon. And Henrietta—in her dress and bonnet—would be on the wagon, stacking bales as soon as they rolled out of the baler.

Farm families were a business in and of themselves, and men and women were great business partners. Sure there were arguments, but what was best for their business drove the final course of action. They worked together and led equally. And it was not often by choice, but rather because it was the best way to move forward.

In my own family, I had an extremely hard-working mom who could accomplish anything that she set her mind to. And later, I gained a stepmother who was great at home, and professionally: She went from being a stay-at-home mother of two to becoming one of only

a few women officers at Cargill at the time of her tenure.

To me, gender equality at work seemed natural. And that's carried over and through my professional life. I work in an industry (communications and publishing) where women and men are perhaps more equal at top leadership levels than in most other industries. Women have made up an equal if not higher percentage of the work force in just about every job I've had since high school (except for landscaping). And the hiring and promotion decisions I've made, and seen by others, have always been based on an individual's professional abilities, period.

So it's with that in mind that I originally thought that it made sense to continue with our magazine's informal policy of staying away from "women in business" stories or events. The thinking was that creating a class of "women in business" would separate them rather than help to further blend genders in business. We didn't want to infer there is a problem when, given our perspective, there isn't, and shouldn't be.

Then I noticed how little things had changed in the last 10 years when it comes to the number of women in CEO positions or on corporate boards of direc-

tors in Minnesota, and nationally. And upon looking into statistics and studies, and talking with a few corporate leaders about this subject, we found there is indeed a need to talk about it.

Women have represented more than 40 percent of the U.S. labor force for nearly 40 years and make up more than

51 percent of all management, professional, and related positions. Studies continue to show that financial results improve the closer an executive team or

past they were attributed to generationally shaped sexism or apathy, today they involve a myriad of complex issues, ranging from how corporate culture in America needs to become more work/life balanced, to preconceived notions that women have about how they may be judged, regardless of what the rules allow or encourage them to do.

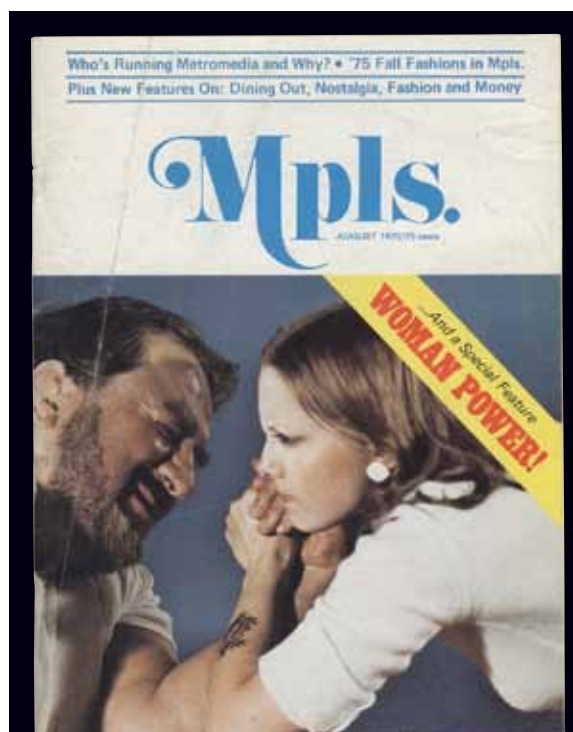
Our story beginning on page 42 explores what area leaders are doing about this important issue. We're also presenting a business luncheon and panel discussion on this subject on March 30, where we'll roll up our sleeves and talk even further about the challenges—and solutions—for businesses that want more women in their executive suits and board seats. Please join us if you can. Event information is available online at <http://bit.ly/At4JS7>.

### Survey Says

Many of you will receive yet another *Twin Cities Business* Quarterly Economic Indicator Survey within the next few days. Thank you for your participation. Your input has helped us to accurately forecast trends in Minnesota since the survey was started last summer.

For example, at the end of September last year, 29 percent of you said that you planned to hire additional full-time employees during the fourth quarter. Five months later, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development reported that full-time hiring in Minnesota increased by approximately 27 percent during the fourth quarter.


Results from our next survey, regarding what business leaders are planning for the second quarter of 2012, will be included in next month's addition. **TCB**



The percentage of women in the U.S. labor force grew rapidly through the 1970s and has remained above 40 percent ever since. Yet the percentage of women in top leadership roles has remained low since this issue of *Mpls.* magazine was published in August 1975.

### ON THE WEB

During the 2011 Minnesota Business Hall of Fame Awards, HealthPartners President and CEO Mary Brainerd and her husband, Dick, talk about what it's like for Mary to be a CEO, wife, and mother: <http://bit.ly/z4ojZu>



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# Starters

news | trends | personalities

## Hotel Today, Gone Tomorrow

Graves Hospitality prepares to cut ties to a NYC hotel it just opened.

**T**he phrase “check-out” brings hotels to mind, but it’s usually spoken in a traveler context. In the New York hotel world, it’s often the case with owner-operators.

Last November, Minneapolis-based

Graves Hospitality, owners of the local Graves 601 Hotel, opened the first of several planned New York City hotel projects—the Hotel Williamsburg—in the trendiest neighborhood of the city’s trendiest borough. Just weeks later, it had been sold.

“We had never intended to sell the property,” says Ben Graves, company president. “But New York is a totally different kind of market; there is just so much money flying around.” Not long after opening, Graves received three successive offers for the Williamsburg complex, which includes a condo residence and separate hotel (with shared amenities). Offer number three was “one we couldn’t pass up. We have partners and we had to do right by them.”

Speculation is the project sold for more than double its \$70 million development cost. The buyer, who at press time had missed a closing date, has not been identified but is believed to be King & Grove, an trendy upstart hotelier

composed of executive castoffs from Ian Schrager’s legendary hospitality empire.

So Graves is operating the property in a state of suspended animation, featuring a closed restaurant, silenced publicists, and minimally functional website. But he is convinced the buyers

“New York is a different kind of market. There is so much money flying around.”

will perform: “There is a lot of earnest money on the table.”

Graves has two other hotels in development in New York City—another in Brooklyn and one on 18th Street in Chelsea—but its next venture to open will be a boutique hotel/villa development in Costa Rica, scheduled for 2013. —Adam Platt



## An Easter Egg A Bunny Could Love

Eco Eggs may look familiar, but don’t expect them to survive 3,000 years in a landfill.

When a client of Christine Lantinen’s wholesale chocolate company challenged her to offer a U.S.-made plastic Easter egg, she decided she could go one better. She developed a plastic egg that’s made in Minnesota, corn-based rather than petroleum-based, and that disintegrates in industrial compost.

Last year, Eco Eggs launched as a division of Maud Borup, a historic Minneapolis-based chocolate company that Lantinen purchased in 2006. She contracted with a Minnesota manufacturer to make the eggs—along

with eco-friendly Easter basket grass that uses the same corn-based material.

“We’re challenging people to bring the business back home,” says Lantinen, whose previous experience includes product sourcing for Target Corporation. “China can’t compete with the plant-based product because most corn is made in the U.S.”

Unlike petroleum-based eggs, which generate more than 1,200 tons of emissions and landfill waste annually, Lantinen’s have a thicker wall, are larger, and have a patent-pending secure-lock

closure that reduces the chance that an egg will break open if dropped.

This is the first Easter that Eco Eggs have been available for purchase. Lantinen, who serves as Eco Eggs’ president, is confident that the product has bounce. The eggs are being used in several large Easter hunts across the country—including





Graves' Hotel Williamsburg features an outdoor swimming pool and deck, a rarity in cramped NYC.

Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo's.

"The packaging, the way they use recycled materials, being from Minnesota—those things spoke to us," says Happi Olson, director of sales and marketing at Creative Kidstuff, which sells 12- and 48-count packages of Eco Eggs for \$6.99 and \$19.99, respectively. "Pricing is higher [than for plastic eggs], but that often isn't a concern for [customers] if the rationale is there."

Lantinen forecasts sales of \$3 million this year and plans a bigger push in the wholesale market next year.

—Christa Meland

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# Making Fans Into Legends

Carmichael Lynch's plan to amp up the Baseball Hall of Fame's appeal is fan-centric to the extreme.

Carmichael Lynch is putting its creative muscle behind a national icon that attracts only a sliver of the global sport's fans, but with approach that may strike that sport's most tradition-bound fans as heresy mixed with modern narcissism.

The goal is boosting the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum by focusing on the role of fans in the history of baseball through a competition called "Fan of Fame."



The campaign was born during a CL staffer's annual trek to Cooperstown, when several agency employees struck up a conversation about marketing the Hall to a broader audience, explains Dave Damman, chief creative officer of the Minneapolis-based ad agency.

"We're in the art of persuasion as advertisers—and when we went there, we decided more people need to see

this," says Damman. "So we thought, how do we persuade more people to go?"

At press time, creative details were being refined, but the campaign centerpiece will be a film designed to "focus the lens back on the fans," says Damman. The agency sifted through mountains of historic baseball footage and digitally excised fans from some of the game's most iconic scenes—imagine Lou Gehrig reading his farewell speech to a empty Yankee Stadium, or Hank Aaron breaking Babe Ruth's record by crushing a homer into vacant bleachers.

The ad, which will likely be shown on ballpark video boards, advertises a website where fans can upload videos to nominate themselves or fellow fans for the competition. Fans will then vote, narrowing the pool of finalists. A panel of judges (to include "celebrities that support the museum") will select several winners to be honored at an event in the famed museum, near their



heroes.

Carmichael Lynch is trying to shift the perception of the Hall away from "a low-priority bucket-list item" to one of the nation's top-tier destinations, says Damman. "It's about making the Hall relevant to future generations." Expect a heavy social

media component for a tech-savvy generation.

Damman describes the campaign as "a labor of love," noting that the agency's baseball devotees are donating much of their time and expertise to make the campaign a reality.

—Jake Anderson

## The Sharks Bite!

Losers in the *Shark Tank*, Sue Kruskopf and Nancy Bush came home to a sea of business.



On January 20, two local businesswomen had their turn on ABC-TV's Friday night business reality show *Shark Tank*. Aspirants appear and pitch their business plan in front of several of the nation's top entrepreneurs, including Mark Cuban and Fubu creator Daymond John. The goal is to come away from the broadcast with funding and a high-profile partner.



The business, My-Wonderful Life.com, is a web-based tool that allows individuals to personalize and even pay for their funeral, wake, cremation, or celebration in advance. "Baby boomers want control of everything," notes Sue Kruskopf, who also owns local ad agency Kruskopf Coontz. "We don't want to go out like our parents."

To the uninitiated, the appearance went badly. "There's no business here," sneered shark Robert Herjavec. Outspoken shark Kevin O'Leary told the duo their business plan "really sucks."

Rather than being on the scrap heap post-prime time, the duo's business is in better shape than ever. "We wanted exposure," says cofounder Nancy Bush. "We got 6.2 million viewers," and they are hoping for reruns.

Kruskopf adds that the show has brought a 50 percent uptick in "mem-



bers," as she calls customers. "We've had contacts from all over. There are people who may invest with us."

As for the Hollywood part, the Labor Day weekend spent in L.A. was "as unglamorous as it gets. You're total cattle. All they did was make you up," says Kruskopf. She says producers edited their 30 minutes with the sharks in a blender so that the sharks appeared to be offering responses to things the duo had actually said at a different time.

"It's entertainment first and business second," Kruskopf notes. But she'd do it again in an instant. —A. P.



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# Meatballs, Meet Mr. Sun

Bloomington's Ikea goes solar this summer.



It's electric! But not enough to power the Mall of America as well.

Say "Ikea," and Allen wrenches and meatballs come to mind. Very soon, the Sweden-based company hopes green energy is on that Pavlov's list. This summer, solar energy panels will be installed on the exterior of the retailer's Bloomington store.

"Our installation will be 142,000 square feet, and consist of a 1,136-kilowatt system built with

approximately 4,834 panels," says Brooke Nelson, a marketing specialist at the Bloomington IKEA.

Opened in 2004, the store sits on 15 acres, though hardly the sunniest acres of the global retailer's array. "We expect it to generate 1,300,700 kilowatts annually,

which is equal to offsetting 989 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>—removing 176 cars from the road or powering 112 homes."

At first, electricity from the solar panels will only be used to power the store itself (natural gas will continue to be used for heating). However, Nelson notes, "We are connected to the local grid, so if the system produces more energy than we can use, we can arrange with Xcel Energy to return the excess to the grid. But at this time, all energy produced will power the store."

Along with the Bloomington, four other IKEA stores (two in the Chicago area, one near Detroit, and the Pittsburgh store) are set to receive solar panels this spring and summer. After this work is completed, most of the company's U.S. locations will have a solar energy presence.

Ikea has hired Chicago-based commercial solar developer SoCore Energy to handle the installation at its Midwest locations.

"SoCore will likely use local subcontractors for some key factors of the installation," says Nelson.

—Jacob Piekarski

## MOM Knows Best

Malt-O-Meal gets maternal on us.

In late February, Minneapolis-based Malt-O-Meal Company announced it was rebranding as MOM Brands to better reflect the wide array of cereal products it sells. Its namesake,



flapper-era hot wheat cereal remains a staple, but will no longer define the company. Instead, MOM's signature will be its bag-only packaging. Noted CEO Chris Neugent: "We're proving that great cereal doesn't have to come in a wasteful and expensive box." Don't tell us you're surprised that MOM doesn't like waste.

—A. P.

# Making An Impression

How local printer Studio on Fire ended up chronicled by a German art-book publisher.

It's tough judging the book *Iron Beasts Make Great Beauty* by its cover. That cover comprises two pieces of heavy-gauge cardboard held together by a strip of Day-Glo book cloth, which also serves as the book's spine. An elegantly elaborate phoenix is embossed on the front.

It's not your traditional book design, but *Iron Beasts* covers a nontraditional topic. "Iron beasts" are letterpress machines; the book is a richly illustrated survey of



the work printed at Studio on Fire, a Northeast Minneapolis shop that crafts modern awesomeness with these massive old creatures for a global clientele. Letterpress fell out of

favor in the printing industry, but artisans have resurrected the technology locally and nationwide.

The book's publisher is Berlin-based Gestalten, which (according to its website) "specializes in developing content for aficionados of cutting-edge visual culture worldwide." How did Gestalten get wind of Studio on Fire? Not surprisingly, via the Internet.



According to Ben Levitz, the letterpress firm's founder, it all began in 2008, when Studio on Fire started its Beast Pieces blog, which provides what Levitz calls a "behind-the-curtain" view of how the studio's letterpress projects are put together. The blog gets more than 2,000 hits a day, in large part because

it posts original content rather than "reposting cool things from other sites," Levitz says. Gestalten discovered Beast Pieces, dug the studio's work, and came to Minneapolis to see that work for itself.

Released last October, *Iron Beasts Make Great Beauty* is available at Amazon and the Walker Art Center's bookstore. —Gene Rebeck



## Wheels on Fire

**Colle+McVoy targets high-end cyclists from its headquarters in America's biking colossus.**

### The Strategy

April brings a different kind of rush hour. Winter-weary Minnesotans clog bike paths as the Twin Cities competes with Portland and Boulder to be the best bike city in America.

This didn't happen by accident. The rise in biking is attributed to many factors, including a desire (or doctor's orders) to get fit, as well as new bike paths and lanes. But it's also due to awareness created by savvy marketers partnering with ad agencies.

### The Creative

One such partnership is between bike-maker Cannondale and Colle+McVoy, the Minneapolis-based agency. C+M, a 205-employee, \$210 million-billing shop, creates print and TV ads for Cannondale. It also produced the template for an old-school media form loved by bicyclists: catalogs. "Catalog work is still

important these days," says Mike Caguin, executive creative director at C+M. "Dealers still find it a good tool; you just don't walk in and buy a bike."

This love of gear works well for Cannondale, which sells high-end bikes but also entry-level models. Print ads feature the implied endorsement of cycling pros, despite the doping scandals that have marred the sport.

But C+M isn't selling to the professional racing circuit. Rather it's selling bikes to amateurs, however fast they may go. "We're trying to target cycling enthusiasts," says Caguin. "People who really are at the forefront of technology and innovation—some have bikes that are worth more than their automobiles."



### The Buy

C+M would not disclose billings, but did buy print ads in enthusiast magazines ("Enthusiasts love reading these magazines cover to cover," Caguin says.), as well as TV spots in U.S. coverage of the Tour de France and Tour de California. And beyond the catalog work, a digital campaign emerged as

well. (Overall, 44 percent of C+M's work is digital.)

But it might be biking infrastructure that drives bike sales more than media. "The more safe pathways we create, the more people will be inclined to get back on two wheels just like when they were kids," concludes Caguin.

He should know. He bikes to C+M year-round.

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## Tube Steak Deluxe

Artisanal sausage is having its moment in the Twin Cities.

At the **Modern Café**, grilled fennel sausage arrives nearly alone on a plate, with a crescent of whole-grain mustard and a dollop of barely sweet onions. Both short, fat links look ready to burst. And when you slide a knife into one—there it is, the *snap!* of a natural casing and a well-made sausage.

Until recently, making sausage in-house was not just old-school, it was positively old-country. The ancient art of finding the perfect blend of fat and meat, of emulsifying the fat so that the interior stays creamy, the deft handling of natural casings to create the coveted snap—all that was the province of heritage joints like **Kramarczuk's** (making more than three dozen types of sausage since 1954) and the Black Forest

Inn (stuffing bratwurst since 1965). Their products are Old World authentic, but none more daring than chicken with sundried tomatoes and basil.

Today, smaller, chef-driven establishments have taken up the craft. While the Modern's sausage relies on the tried and true sweetness of fennel, with just a little heat, chef Matt Paulson of the **Sample Room** is on a quest to push the boundaries of flavor. Having set himself the task of creating 100 wholly unique sausages (look for them on the daily specials menu), he has pressed mole, green curry, wild mushrooms, and Surly 5 (a smoky, funky dark ale) into sausage casings. His sausages are flecked with Colby cheese, kale, chestnuts, celery, and dried cherries. He has also mastered the *snap!*



Sample Room chef Matt Paulson is creating 100 unique sausages this year. They're not your grandpa's bratwurst.

When you slide a knife into one—there it is, the *snap!* of a natural casing and a well-made sausage.

not a link, and it's all about flavor and a meatier texture. Head chef Thom Lowe says he flavors the all-pork patty with nutmeg, chili flakes, and garlic, then slathers it with herb-garlic mayonnaise. This combination has helped make it one of the most popular items on the menu.

If sausage is having a moment right now, it's because it's fun. Chefs get to play with intense flavor combinations and diners get a burst of nostalgia, remembering a childhood hot dog and the joy of that first bite's *snap!*

At **Amsterdam**, St. Paul's new bar and music venue with a Dutch bent, the sausage *broodje*, a mini-sandwich, isn't about the snap at all. It's a patty,

## Where's the Buzz?

In the heart of Minneapolis, a couple beekeepers are imagining a honey empire, 1960s style.

Believe it or not, honeybees are happier in cities, where there is a diversity of flowering plants. "In rural areas, there are miles and miles of one crop and not much food for bees," says beekeeper Corey Sax. "Honey from city bees tastes a lot better."

Last spring, Sax and his wife, Britt, started Northeast Nectars, a tiny honey-producing operation, out of their Northeast Minneapolis backyard,

marketing fresh honey and sweet-smelling lip balms.

Both have day jobs in advertising and marketing and say that their two-hive operation was initially more of a hobby. But when the 55 eight-ounce jars of honey they produced last year sold quickly, they realized demand for locally produced honey was escalating. But Minneapolis only allows two hives per property, so they decided to expand, creatively.

"Some of our neighbors have offered to host hives on their property, so we'll be expanding potentially to eight hives come spring," Britt says.

The honey-production cycle starts in April, when bees start to gather nectar from flowering plants within a two-mile radius. Harvesting occurs from June through September, after which the bees



hibernate for the winter.

Each hive can produce up to 150 pounds of honey per year, although Corey Sax says output is smaller the first year.

The Saxes will manage the hives. Their "hosts" will be paid in honey and a share of profits, co-op style. Next-door neighbor and avid gardener Paul Bramsen says it's a win-win—that his plants have looked much better with the Saxes' bees pollinating them.

The duo is hoping more people will come forward and offer their property for hives. "When we have a more collaborative approach, we can pool our resources and get wholesale prices for equipment and other economic inputs," Corey says. "Also, we can make sure that we are not competing with each other."

Eliminate competition and reduce cost—who said backyard naturalists weren't tough-minded capitalists as well?

—Nataleeya Boss



**Guitarist****Leon Redbone**

In a Top 40-dominated music landscape, Leon Redbone's obsession with music from the early 20th century has earned him a cult following. On more than 15 albums, the singer and guitarist



has performed everything from Tin Pan Alley to jazz, blues, and folk standards. But the real draw is his live shows, which feature comedic antics and prove Redbone is a true vaudevillian. **April 19, 7:30 p.m., \$22-\$25, The Cedar, Mpls., 612-338-2674, [thecedar.org](http://thecedar.org)**

**U.K. Alt-Rockers****Snow Patrol**

Following the release of their sixth record, *Fallen Empires*, Snow Patrol set off on a rare U.S. tour. Adept at crafting the kind of melancholy anthems that get stuck in your head—such as 2006's "Chasing



Cars"—the group offers just enough angst and reminiscences of romantic failure to qualify as the soundtrack to many of our lives. Expect dance beats as well as trademark sensitive rock. **April 25, 7:30 p.m., \$37.50, State Theatre, Mpls., 800-982-2787, [hennepintheatretrust.org](http://hennepintheatretrust.org)**

**Shapiro & Smith Dance**

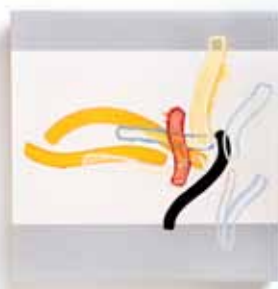
This vibrant dance company celebrates 25 years of singular artistry with its Cowles Center debut. At the heart of the concert is *Voices*, in which Joanie Smith has interwoven phrases choreo-



graphed by five artists to create a physically stunning new work. Also on the program are such repertory favorites as the inferno-like *Burning Air* and the thrilling *Bolero*. **April 6-8, various times, \$24, Cowles Center, Mpls., 612-206-3600, [thecowlescenter.org](http://thecowlescenter.org)**

**Sharon Loudon / Movement and Gesture**

While her sculpture "Merge" continues to spill over walls and across the floors of the Weisman Art Museum with undulating, razor's-edge intensity, Sharon Loudon's been making work for this companion exhibition at the Burnet Gallery. Her animated



videos, paintings, metal compositions, and drawings are equally infused with kinetic energy, as well as vibrant colors. Elegant abstraction has never moved with such engaging subtlety. **Through May 6, Burnet Art Gallery at Chambers, Mpls., 612-767-6824, [burnetgallery.com](http://burnetgallery.com)**

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## Funny Business

How to enliven your work with humor.

By Melinda Nelson

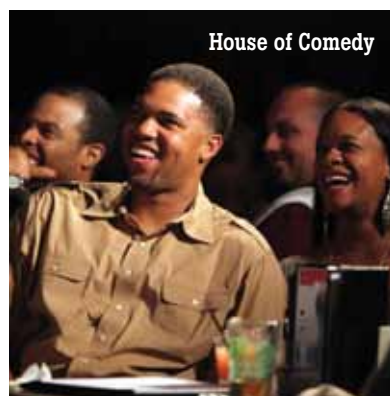
Even without Michael Scott at the helm, *The Office*, now in its fifth season, continues to illustrate just how amusing the workplace environment can be. Humor also correlates with intelligence and creativity, two vital attributes in most organizations. If you have clients who appreciate a good laugh, here are some ways to impress them with your own intelligence and creativity.

### Brave New Workshop

In 1958, former Barnum & Bailey Circus aerialist Dudley Riggs founded his Brave New Workshop in Uptown, which also claims to be the home of the first espresso machine west of the Mississippi River. Five decades later, the workshop, now owned by John Sweeney and Jenni Lilledahl, is the longest-running satirical theater in the country. True to its comedic and political roots, the April calendar features *Occupy Arden Hills* or, *Brother Can You Spare a Dome* and *The Danger Committee Presents: Love and Other Painful Mistakes* with evening shows Wednesday through Saturday, and Late Night Improv on Saturday nights. Sweeney also runs the Brave New Workshop's creative outreach division, which offers improv-based consulting, sales training, workshops, and emcee services and humorous keynote speeches for corporate meetings and events. Minneapolis, 612-377-2582, [bravenewworkshop.com](http://bravenewworkshop.com)

### Rick Bronson's House of Comedy

Six years after comedian Rick Bronson convinced the Ghermezian brothers to let him open a club in their West Edmonton Mall, Bronson opened an American outpost in the Ghermezians' other mall. The slickest of the Twin Cities' comedy clubs, House of Comedy features Leno- and Letterman-level headliners such as Norm McDonald and Kevin Nealon, as well as up-and-coming talent. The April lineup features



House of Comedy

Carlos Alazraqui, Mike Vecchione, Steve Byrne, Tammy Pescatelli, and Iliza Shlesinger. House of Comedy also provides entertainment for meetings, events, and other functions. Mall of America, 952-858-8558, [houseofcomedy.net](http://houseofcomedy.net)

### Acme Comedy Company

A mainstay of the Twin Cities comedy scene since 1991, Acme bills itself as one of the five top comedy clubs in the country. For a Dunder Mifflin-worthy evening, gather a group for dinner (served family style) and a show. The April schedule includes national headliners John Evans, Bobcat Goldthwait, and Joe Wong, as well as open mic night on Monday evenings. If you'd prefer to bring Acme's humor into your workplace, the club will work with you to book a workplace-appropriate comedian for corporate meetings, parties, and other events. Minneapolis, 612-338-6393, [acmecomedycity.com](http://acmecomedycity.com)



A St. Paul Saints game serves up a lot more than baseball, with its fireworks and between-innings shenanigans.



### The St. Paul Saints

If you like your comedy laced with baseball and combined with stadium food, why not have Mudonna, the St. Paul Saints' hot pink porcine mascot, deliver a handful of tickets to your next meeting? On game day, take your place in the Killebrew box seats next to the first- and third-base dugouts, or take over the air-conditioned Sunroom Suite and enjoy an all-American repast of beer, hot dogs, peanuts, and popcorn included in the rental. If your clients have an appetite for the spotlight, make arrangements for them to steal a base, rob a homer, circle the bases in a walk-off grand slam, or throw out the ceremonial last pitch. St. Paul, 651-644-6659, [saintsbasketball.com](http://saintsbasketball.com)

### ComedySportz

If downtown has got you down in the dumps, grab your wittiest clients and colleagues and head to Uptown for a change of scenery. Start at Chino Latino for an infusion of restaurateur Phil Roberts' signature irreverence. After a round of Cuban Bastards made with Don Q Cristal Rum and Fidel's Capitalist Pig Roast (10 person minimum), head over to ComedySportz in Calhoun Square for an evening of proudly clean improvisational comedy. If you and your colleagues are so inspired, hire the ComedySportz team to do improv workshops to improve communication, build teams, and create camaraderie. Minneapolis, 612-870-1230, [comedy-sportz.com](http://comedy-sportz.com)

### Breakfast with Al Franken

If your business travel takes you to Washington, D.C., begin your day with breakfast with Senator Al Franken, former *Saturday Night Live* writer and performer, and longtime political satirist. Once a week, Franken serves up wit and wonkiness, as well as mahnomon porridge made from Mitch Omer's Hell's Kitchen recipe, with wild rice from the White Earth Reservation. Breakfast is served from 8:30-9:30 A.M. every Wednesday that the Senate is in session. Online reservations are required. Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 651-221-1016, [franken.senate.gov](http://franken.senate.gov)



Senator Al Franken



## THE HAIRY LITTLE ISSUE OF FINANCING

In the hospitality industry, non-recourse financing has all but vanished over the past couple of years. But Mortenson Development's long experience in turn-key solutions for the hospitality industry helped us put together a creative deal for the Radisson Blu at the Mall of America, right in the middle of a recession. No matter what hairy little issue your project may have, talk to Mortenson Development.



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# Plugged In

The best opportunities for networking this month.

By Anna Befort

## { April 9 }

### Minnesota Twins Home Opener

Watching the Twins play the Angels might not feel like networking, but it will undoubtedly draw a large number of business and civic leaders. "The Twins opener is a good thing to go to, no matter what," says Archie Givens, president and CEO of Legacy Management & Development Corporation. "You're going to run into people—there's no question about it." Although you're likely to see people you know while taking your seat or getting a brat at Kramarczuk's, if you want the high-level VIP experience, spring for the top-tier tickets behind home plate, which come with access to the exclusive Champions Club dining room and lounge. Another good spot to mingle is the Legends Club, open only to Legends Club ticket holders and guests in the stadium's 54 private suites, most of which are owned by businesses. **3:10 P.M., \$20–\$88, Target Field, Minneapolis, 800-338-9467, minnesota.twins.mlb.com**



## { April 20 }

### CommonBond Communities' GrandeGala

Collaborative community support for CommonBond—its board includes St. Paul's chief of police, a pastor, executives from Target and Best Buy, and a sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet—has helped make it one of the biggest nonprofit providers of affordable housing in the Upper Midwest. That support is on display at the GrandeGala, which welcomes 900 people ranging from business executives and government officials to philanthropists and young professionals. **6 P.M., \$200, Saint Paul RiverCentre, 651-288-8693, commonbond.org/grandegala**



GREG HELGESON

## { April 21 }

### Page Education Foundation Spring Gala

Pro football player turned state Supreme Court justice Alan Page has a unique network of well-wishers, and his foundation's gala reflects that mix. Guests represent politics and sports, as well as business and legal spheres. The 1,000 attendees celebrate the foundation's Page Scholars—promising students of color who receive scholarships to continue their postsecondary studies. **7 P.M., \$125, Target Field's Metropolitan Club, Minneapolis, 612-332-0406, page-ed.org**



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## { April 26 and 28 }

### SCPO Presents Mendelssohn's Reformation Symphony

The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra's concerts are always a good occasion to run into involved Twin Citians. These two late-April concerts are particularly noteworthy as the SPCO and artistic partner Roberto Abbado kick off a three-week celebration of Felix Mendelssohn that will take the German composer's works across the metro to area churches. For the initial concerts at the Ordway, the SPCO will perform two of Mendelssohn's five symphonies: Symphony No. 1 and *Reformation* Symphony. **7:30**

**P.M. on April 26, 8 P.M. on April 28, \$10-\$40, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, St. Paul, 651-291-1144, thespco.org/programs/upcoming**



Roberto Abbado

## { April 25 }

### MIA's Art in Bloom Gala Preview Party

Art in Bloom is one of the quintessential local events that signals spring has arrived. For 29 years, the festival has been combining artist-created floral arrangements with the fine art that inspired them, featuring speakers and demonstrations.



COURTESY OF MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

Greg Kurowski, president and CEO of Periscope, calls it one of the "must events" in April—and a good place to run into other local creatives. "My experience at MIA events in general has been a really solid mix of businesspeople—particularly those involved in the creative or creative services industry," he says. For more formal mingling, get a ticket for the Wednesday-night kickoff party, which includes a cocktail hour, floral preview, sit-down dinner, and silent auction, all benefiting the Friends of the Institute's programs. **6 P.M., \$150, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 612-870-3045, artsmia.org/art-in-bloom**

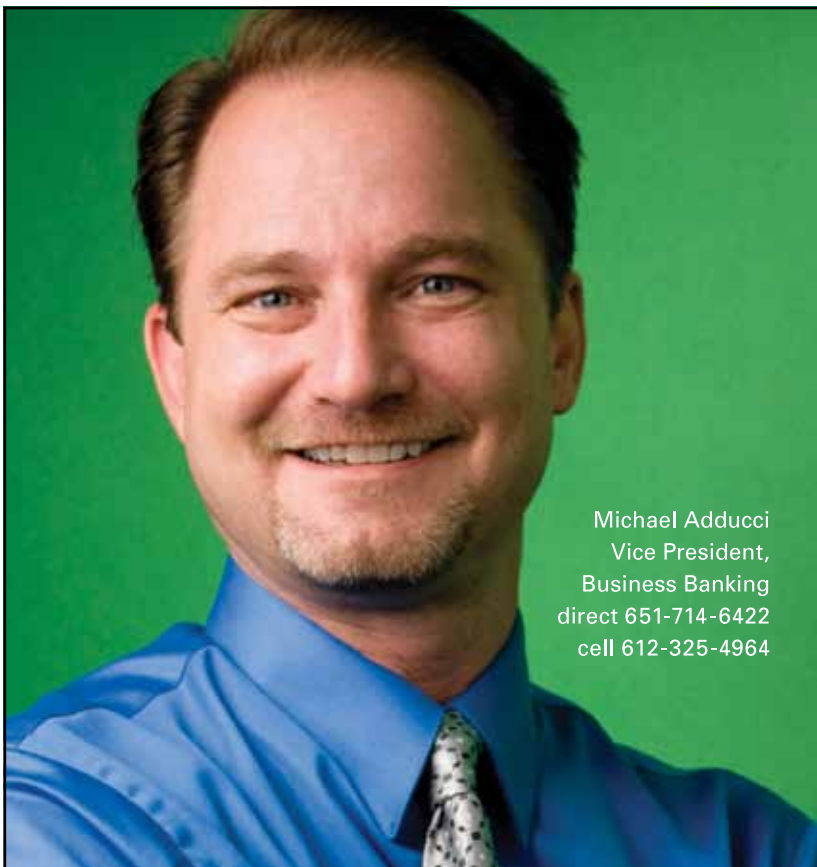
## { April 24 }

### Hubert H. Humphrey Public Leadership Awards

The U of M's Humphrey School of Public Affairs has alumni in all types of public service, and it's a good network to tap into. One way is through its annual public leadership awards, which attract a diverse cross-section of the school's extended family, from prominent legislators and judges to CEOs and students. "[It draws] top policymakers, a variety of shakers and movers," says Peg Birk, president and CEO of Interim Solutions. For optimum mingling, get there early for social hour, which is followed by dinner and the awards program. A feel-good bonus: The awards raise money for the school's scholarship program, thereby empowering the state's future leaders. **5:30 P.M., \$150, McNamara Alumni Center, Minneapolis, 612-626-8571, minnesotaalumni.org/hhhpladinner**



(From left) Jack Tunheim, Tim Penny, and Governor Bill Richardson



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## Vinyl Decision

**With CD sales softening, music production house Noiseland Industries found a surprising new revenue source.**

**V**inyl LPs might sound like an old, gray music format. But for Andrew Volna, they're gold records. Also scarlet red. And translucent white.

Volna is the founder of Noiseland Industries, a Northeast Minneapolis company that functions something like



**Noiseland founder Andrew Volna:** "Vinyl has more than made up for any decline in our CD revenue."

a general contractor for independent music labels and artists across the country. Noiseland doesn't operate a recording studio or manufacture CDs; instead, the five-person firm manages the process of getting the music formatted and packaged.

Paradoxically, Volna began to

hear the tune change for his company in 2006, Noiseland's strongest year. That year, "we made more CDs than we ever had before," Volna recalls. "But it was also the first year when people started calling asking for vinyl." He didn't pay too much attention at first, because his company was so busy and didn't have expertise in this allegedly outdated format.

But after 2006, Noiseland saw CD sales starting to slide. At the same time, "the frequency of those calls [for vinyl LPs] just kept increasing to the point that by 2009, it just became apparent that we couldn't ignore it," Volna says. "If we were going to remain relevant to our customers, we were going to have to come up with a solution for them." He saw that Noiseland's "traditional business was changing, but there were still enormous opportunities, we sensed—I think correctly—in vinyl." In fact, Volna adds, "vinyl has more than made up for any decline in our CD revenue."

*Billboard* reported 40 percent growth for sales of vinyl LPs in 2011, with the number of LPs sold a little under 4 million. That's a tiny fraction of the total recorded music sales, which included 227 million CDs and 1.27 billion downloads. But as *The Economist* noted last year, cool bands such as Bon Iver and Arcade Fire have released LP versions of their albums. For Noiseland, vinyl now represents a significant niche business.

The company could pursue that market because of its business model. "We have more in common with a



Noiseland's work with graphic artists and its French vinyl partner allow the firm to create distinctive album designs. Noiseland's download cards include this promotion for the show *Mad Men*, which lets fans download 1960s lounge tunes.



graphic design agency or a packaging company" than a record business, Volna notes. Since Noiseland isn't a production house per se, "we've always been opportunistic in what we go after."

Finding a vinyl presser proved to be a challenge. As LPs gave way to CDs in

the 1980s, record companies shuttered their vinyl-record plants. Volna says that about eight small, independent companies in the U.S. still make LPs. None had excess capacity. So Noiseland journeyed to Europe and found MPO, a French company with 16 presses and the capability to produce small runs at high quality.

Unlike the LPs of baby boomers' youth, the current crop is printed in "smaller quantity, but with a higher price point," Volna says. The packaging also is fancier. Noiseland recently put together a double LP for local rap collective Doomtree that retails for \$50. The box that contains the LPs also includes several extras, including a limited-edition T-shirt and a double-sided glossy poster. With fans willing to lay down that kind of do-re-mi for a record, Noiseland and its clients "can be successful selling a thousand," says Volna, who describes this new wave of LPs as "coffee-table art books for bands."

Noiseland contracts out the jacket design work to local and international creatives. One of them is Storm Thorgerson, who as a member of British design firm Hipgnosis co-created some of the best-known album covers of the 1970s, including Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*.

In 2008, Noiseland entered a music market with very different dynamics from vinyl: download cards. "Bands want a physical token, whether it's a CD, a piece of vinyl, or download card, that they can sell at the show," Volna notes. Compared to LPs, download cards are cheap; they're also a fast way

for fans to obtain music files for sharing on smartphones. In addition, cards offer musicians a way to sell their music without spending money on packaging, and to sell outside of what Volna calls “the iTunes cabal.” Noiseland has spun off a separate entity, Soundtrax.com, to market download cards.

to finish” on a project, Gehring says. That’s especially important on vinyl records, he adds, since producing LPs is more complicated than laser-cutting compact discs.

Volna has ridden the waves of the changing music business for more than 20 years, ever since the University of



Another Noiseland spin on LP design: color speckles unique to each pressing.

All told, “we’re seeing growth at both ends,” Volna says: low-cost download cards and high-end LPs. Currently, Volna says, about 20 percent of Noiseland’s business is vinyl; the rest comprises CDs and download cards. He’d like to see each category make up a third of Noiseland’s revenue. Though Volna won’t reveal revenue figures, he does say that the company made about 100,000 LPs last year, and expects to make 400,000 annually by 2014.

Minnesota clients for Noiseland LP production include Minneapolis record label Totally Gross National Product, whose recent album for local band Polica has been gaining national attention in the indie-music world. (Label cofounder Drew Christopherson is a member of Polica.) Another client is Mark Gehring, an Owatonna-based band manager and the executive director of Vega Productions, whose “Minnesota Beatle Project” is an ongoing series of releases featuring Minnesota musicians performing classic Beatles songs.

“Noiseland is a smaller company, so you get personal attention from start

Minnesota history grad found himself helping bands with behind-the-scenes work, like getting CDs made. “I was given the responsibility of finding out how to get stuff done,” he recalls. “People I didn’t know starting asking me for help. And I realized that there could be a business opportunity.”

Noiseland currently operates inside the former headquarters of the Paul E. Hawkinson Company, whose name still adorns the metal canopy over the building’s front door. (Hawkinson, which makes equipment for retreading tires, relocated to Maple Grove.) The Hawkinson Building is one of five industrial structures in Northeast Minneapolis owned by Apiary Workspaces, founded by a Northeast native named Andrew Volna. Apiary repurposes the buildings primarily as office space; Volna says that his buildings seem to be attractive to small, entrepreneurial businesses, particularly creative ones, like his own.

To quote a tune: Everything old is new again.

—Gene Rebeck

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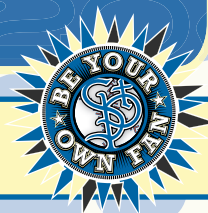


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# Learning Social

**Sophia wants to tap the teacher in everyone to make students learn better.**

Each month, students make more than 3 million searches on Google just on the topics of algebra, chemistry, biology, and English, and what they find is a mess,” notes entrepreneur Don Smithmier. To help students sort through it, Smithmier launched in March the public beta version of Sophia, a teaching and learning website that allows anyone to upload tutorials on topics such as math, English, or science for free. These tutorials, or “learning packets,” can be viewed by anyone, anywhere—also for free.

“We refer to [Sophia] as a social education platform, and the idea is that if you can get people out there contributing what they know about a

online college, where he worked for 14 years in various positions, including vice president of general management. He left Capella in 2008 to found or cofound three new ventures: recording studio Rumble Music in 2008, digital ad agency GoKart Labs in 2009, and BringMeTheNews, also in 2009. The three businesses, along with Sophia Learning, share offices in Minneapolis’s Warehouse District and operate under umbrella company Matter Worldwide.

The idea for Sophia came out of a chat between Smithmier and his GoKart partner, A. J. Meyer, who agreed that online education hasn’t embraced social media. Smithmier says that the allure of Sophia is similar to

## Don Smithmier’s Entrepreneurial Empire

Sophia is just one of his current businesses. The others:

### Rumble Music

**Founded by Smithmier, Jess Ford, and Rick Meyer**

Smithmier is an active musician and songwriter, and Rumble Music gave him the opportunity to start something in the music industry. Since 2008, he has also been a member of country band Rocket Club.

### BringMeTheNews

**Founded by Smithmier and Rick Kupchella**

The news aggregator was originally funded by the founders; in 2010, it earned \$1 million in financing from two Minneapolis firms: media firm Dolan Company and public relations agency Padilla Speer Beardsley.

### GoKart Labs

**Founded by Smithmier and A. J. Meyer**

GoKart Labs is a digital-only ad agency that also acts as an incubator for other technology-based business ideas. GoKart developed Sophia with seed funding from Minneapolis-based Capella Education; Sophia was spun off from GoKart when Capella provided a round of funding in 2010. —N. B.

particular topic, you can start to change the student-teacher ratio,” Smithmier says. “You can have 30 teachers for every student and not 30 students for every teacher.”

Smithmier moved to Minneapolis from Madison, Wisconsin, in 1994 planning to become a high school teacher. He ended up at Capella Education Company, the Minneapolis-based

that of sites students are already familiar with, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Anyone can be the teacher.

“It’s not about teaching courses, it’s about teaching concepts,” Smithmier says. “You may not be able to teach a course in algebra, but you might remember a cool way to factor polynomials. And if you do, we want you to share that.”



Entrepreneur Don Smithmier’s newest venture weds education to social media.

Sophia lets individuals create learning packets using different media—text, images, presentations, video, audio, and so on. Learners rate a tutorial packet using a five-star system, write a review, or post questions. A packet gets an extra endorsement if three (or more) teachers or content experts within that field deem it accurate. Sophia also allows instructors at schools and colleges to create groups that let them share their class content privately. Like Wikipedia’s entry writers, Sophia’s “teachers” aren’t paid, except perhaps in goodwill. For professional teachers, Sophia offers the platform to post multimedia teaching materials to supplement textbooks

and classroom teaching. For students, it offers multiple tutorials created by teachers on the same or similar topics that help students learn by providing many different ways to learn the same concept.

Aaron Mullally, who teaches human anatomy and physiology at the Brooklyn Park campus of Rasmussen College, has posted more than 100 learning packets on Sophia, mostly videos of his lectures. He says they let him “flip the classroom”—students watch lectures as homework and then discuss the material or complete assignments in class. This allows them to learn from lectures at their own pace and ask questions in class, Mullally says.

While Mullally has used Facebook and YouTube to share his lecture videos, he prefers Sophia because it lets him add notes, worksheets, and PowerPoint presentations to supplement his videos. He can also organize learning packets in the order that he wants his students to view them.

Last spring, Sophia acquired an adaptive learning company offering to schools at a membership fee a library of videos, along with assessment tools and quizzes, that teach math concepts in a wide range of teaching styles. Sophia plans to offer that content to students and teachers worldwide for free beginning in April. Sophia will thus increase the number of packets available from 5,000 to 30,000. It also plans to add more science and English content within a year.

Smithmier plans to keep Sophia free of ads, but then "there is the nasty issue of how do we make money." One possibility: Sophia plans to provide opportunities for students to earn college credit. This would fund Sophia's growth, along with support it already receives from sponsors such as Capella, which provided financing early last year and is now a co-owner.

Sophia isn't profitable yet; Smithmier says that the company's 14 employees and 25 contractors are focusing on refining the website's offerings and expanding its reach. In April, Sophia will also offer expanded search and navigation tools that will provide students with multiple options on a specific topic. **TCB**

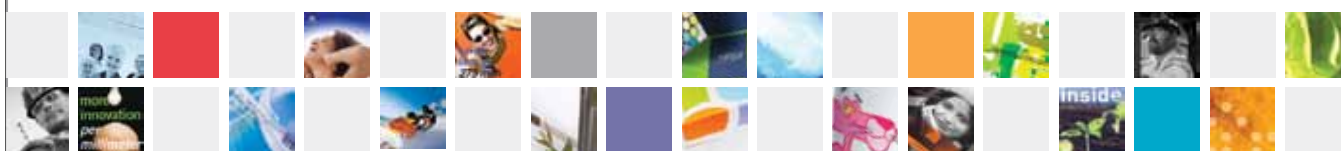
—Nataleeya Boss

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# DUGOUT CONFIDENTIAL

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From Manager of the Year to the season from hell, **Twins Manager Ron Gardenhire** speaks out on a decade of leadership, the Twins Way, and life inside the 162-game pressure cooker.

BY ADAM PLATT

**It's a sunny, breezy, 52-degree March 2011 morning at the Twins complex in Fort Myers, Florida. Players are running wind sprints. Former manager Tom Kelly is leading drills on field 6. Twins legends Tony Oliva and Paul Molitor are kibitzing with veterans, and waiting to impart their wisdom to up-and-coming players.**

The reigning Major League Baseball Manager of the Year saunters out of the locker room into the dank tunnel that threads under Hammond Stadium's seating bowl. "We need music out here," he says. A machine that issues fly balls is turned on and pointed in the direction of several players. The manager tosses as many one-liners as fly balls.

"Oh, my bad," he says, after overthrowing one player. "Take you out to dinner." The banter is constant.

"Give him an ovation, folks."

"I got you, Plouffy."

"Is that Hughesy?"

"No chance, no way, can a catcher get that."

"Backbackbackback."

"Nice swing, Matty Tolbert."

"Now that's how I used to hit."

Later, the pitchers arrive for fielding practice. It could well be a little-league park for the level of instruction offered. "That's it, pull the ball to your chest, good throw," Gardenhire says. "Stay outta that base path." Or perhaps a field in the Dominican. "*Un momento, mira, mira, el doce* [second base], *el trece* [third base]." Or maybe not. "*Fernando, que plasma?*"

Practice is brief and the manager walks off the

field, inquiring as to the health of the family of a Japanese TV reporter and talks snowmobiles with expectant fans.

It's just another breezy day of spring training as the American League Central Champion Twins prepare to defend their crown, and their manager, Ron Gardenhire, prepares to defend his. The assembled players would go on to dominate Grapefruit League competition, tying for most wins on the spring circuit. Hopes were high.

Reality proved something else entirely.

The 2011 Twins finished with a 63-99 record, underperforming even the most emphatic skeptics. Wracked by both injuries and abysmal play, the team's local hero, St. Paul's Joe Mauer, would be booed at his midseason emergence

from the disabled list, his decade-long \$23 million-a-year contract hanging like a noose around the team's neck. Gardenhire was often seen in the dugout averting his eyes as the miscues mounted.

"Did we turn stupid?" asks longtime pitching coach Rick Anderson. "We were working so hard and it just got worse and worse."

#### **Built for the Dugout**

Nine months later, in the depths of the off-season, Gardenhire is sitting in the living room of his modest lakefront home in the northeast metro, sporting his off-season uniform of a sweatshirt, jeans, and athletic shoes. A massive flat-screen TV soldiers on silently on a nearby wall, within view of the oft-referenced

**"Did we turn stupid?" asks longtime pitching coach Rick Anderson. "We were working so hard and it just got worse and worse."**



**History: Ron Gardenhire bantering with Twins longtime right fielder Michael Cuddyer, who departed as a free agent for Colorado this winter.**

double-wide hot tub, draped in one of the winter's rare snowfalls. There is little if any baseball bric-a-brac on display.

"Sure there was tension in the clubhouse," Gardenhire recalls. "And there was no way to manage it. I got tired of holding meetings. Little cliques of players—it was the first year we'd had that. The veterans were frustrated."

"We had meetings with the Pohlads," he continues. "I was worried about my job. People told me it



## A Gardy Timeline

- 1957: Born Butzbach, Germany
- 1975: Gradates Okmulgee (Oklahoma) High School as all-state shortstop
- 1978: Hits University of Texas record 10 RBI in game versus Arkansas
- 1979: Joins New York Mets organization as shortstop at Lynchburg affiliate
- 1981: Major League debut September 1.
- 1982: Spends season in majors as Mets starting shortstop
- 1985: Plays final Major League game
- 1986: Traded to Twins in November; spends entire season at AAA Portland (Oregon)
- 1988: Becomes manager of Twins affiliate at class-A Kenosha
- 1991: Becomes Twins third base coach under Tom Kelly
- 2002: Named Twins manager, takes team to AL Championship Series
- 2010: Notches 800th regular season win and sixth AL Central title
- 2012: Begins 11th season as Twins manager

wasn't on me, but why not? It was on me to figure it out. . . I told my wife we have two years left on a contract, but we may not be managing."

"I'd have fired me," says the former Manager of the Year.

Instead, the second-longest tenured manager in the Major Leagues (after the Angels' Mike Scioscia) is back for year 11, and fans expecting a different Twins Way or a different Gardy, in light of the 2011 debacle, are in for a letdown. The team, if not the manager, has given itself a mulligan, attributing most of last season's inadequacies on injuries to star players and the limitations of minor league talent brought up to replace them. There will be tweaks; of course, there will be a renewed emphasis on fundamentals and a few new players, but little else (see sidebars, pages 34, 35).

Gardenhire, 54, was built for the dugout. He would laugh at that, because he makes much of his inadequacies as a light-hitting shortstop, who did two full seasons in the big leagues with the New York Mets (1982 and 1984) but was a starter only in the '82 campaign.

But even a dedicated sabermetrician would miss something important by focusing on that .232 career batting average. "Being a utility infielder, you had to follow the game," Gardenhire says, "which I did."

Recognizing that, Twins adviser and longtime American League manager Ralph Houk told Gardenhire during his final season that "you're going to manage in the big leagues." At the end of the 1987 season, spent entirely with the Twins minor-league Portland Beavers, Gardenhire was asked to go to the instructional league to coach. The following spring, he was in charge of the Twins' Kenosha A-ball team, managing them to a first place finish.

He moved to AA Orlando in 1989 and 1990—two more first place finishes. In 1991 he was plucked past AAA to "the show," coaching third base on Tom Kelly's World Series champion team. 1991 was a high-water mark—Gardy would serve under Kelly for a the ensuing decade, around some of the feeblest talent the Twins ever assembled, coaching from the bench, and at first, and third base.

The 1993-2000 period was one of the darkest in franchise history, as the team strained under the paltry revenues the Metrodome afforded it and ownership engaged in a brinkmanship war to get a taxpayer-funded ballpark.

Kelly retired from managing after nearly reaching the playoffs in 2001. The fan favorite for his job was St. Paul native and former Twin Paul Molitor, who was ambivalent about the job, perhaps because Major League Baseball was trying to eliminate the flagging Twins franchise, which had spent a decade playing to a mostly empty house.

"We were in limbo," remembers Dave St. Peter, now team president. "The season was tied up in court. [The Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission was trying to enforce a lease by forcing the team to play at



Despite his history as an infielder, Gardy still throws batting practice now and then.

**"I'd have fired me," says Gardenhire. "I told my wife, 'We have two years left on a contract, but we may not be managing.'"**

the Metrodome.) We had decided on Gardy [as the new manager] and got the green light to announce it." That afternoon, the Vikings fired head coach Dennis Green, and St. Peter remembers reporters leaving the Metrodome in the middle of Gardenhire's press conference.

The Twins dodged a bullet with the help of the courts. Gardenhire took the reins and brought the 2002 team to the AL championship series. (Not until his seventh season managing a professional baseball club did he finish out of first place.) The Twins rode that momentum to six division crowns in nine seasons and a showpiece outdoor ballpark.

Until last season, a Ron Gardenhire team had never finished more than two games under .500 or lower than third place. If you accept the sports cliché that certain players and coaches "just know how to win," it would be hard not to apply it to Gardy.

Ronald Clyde Gardenhire was born to a father in Army service in Butzbach, Germany. His parents eventually returned to Oklahoma, where Gardenhire attended Okmulgee High and went on to become an all-conference shortstop at Paris (Texas) Junior College. Gardenhire would have entered the military had he not gotten scholarships to junior college and the University of Texas, where he was captain of his conference championship team and still holds the record for most runs batted in one game—10.

Eight years in the Mets organization ensued, followed by a concluding chapter with the Twins Portland AAA team in 1987, the year of the Twins first World Series championship.

Gardenhire says he knew as early as 1983 he was destined for the dugout. "I told a teammate that year I'm gonna manage in the big leagues and Rick [Anderson] is gonna be my pitching coach," he recalls. "I liked teaching, I liked to help people along."

It was not, then, the multi-million dollar gig that has earned Gardenhire two homes and a big, bad motor home as well. The job entailed long bus rides, rough motels, and shared apartments. "You do not go into coaching for the money," he notes. "I worked temp jobs in the off-season, I helped frame houses."

Gardenhire had a sense that he might manage the Twins in his years coaching under Kelly. "The last few years, he would take me in and explain how he'd handle all these different situations," he says. "Tom would say, 'You always have to be yourself, don't change.'"

When observers rank Gardenhire's value, they rarely talk about his game skills. "Gene Mauch was a master strategist; Tom Kelly is the best baseball man I've ever been around," says *Star Tribune* columnist

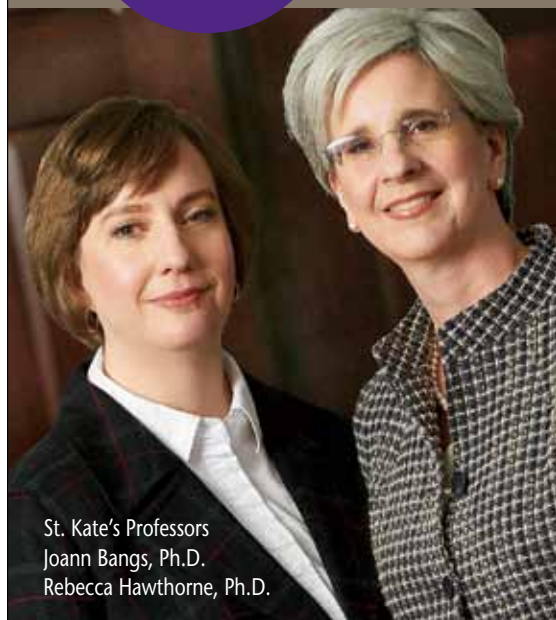
**"You do not go into coaching for the money,"**  
Gardenhire notes. "I worked temp jobs in the off-season; I helped frame houses."



Celebratory moments after the team clinched the 2011 AL Central crown.

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## 2011: THE SEASON ON THE BRINK

The Twins as an organization have adopted a narrative on the 99-loss year: It was the result of a spate of injuries to almost all key starters, including all the team's impact players. "We're giving ourselves a mulligan on 2011," General Manager Terry Ryan has said.

Despite fan and media speculation, Ron Gardenhire's job was never in jeopardy. "The manager got more criticism than was warranted," says Ryan. "Ron did a good job keeping the bickering under control."

And the Twins prefer to "take the long view" on a manager who averaged 87 wins a season over the last decade. "A lot of managers are fired by owners for PR reasons, impatience, a quick fix," says team President Dave St. Peter. "It takes discipline to think long-term."

Nonetheless, there is a tacit acknowledgement among on-field leadership that more than injuries afflicted the Twins in 2011, as the team struggled to master basic fundamentals of the game. "This winter we've talked about 'Have we been letting things go?'" says Gardenhire. "Players complained a lot last year about my coaches trying to teach them. 'Why are they getting on me?'" The supposition is the team is tightening the screws, trying to reassert a fundamentals-based style of baseball that statistics indicate the Twins have gradually moved away from.

"I'd show up at the ballpark at 2 P.M. and see Gardy out on the field with some of the young players working on fundamentals," says *Star Tribune* beat writer La Velle E. Neal III. "A Major League manager shouldn't be doing that."



The 2011 season took its toll, but perhaps not as much on Gardenhire, who says it was toughest on his coaches, who "take it hard, don't sleep. I got through this one pretty good."

Observers say Gardenhire tends to show cracks when the team is actually playing well. "He was more irritable in 2010," says ESPN 1500's Phil Mackey. "Focusing on winning the division, then in the playoffs. He seemed resigned pretty early to where [2011] was heading."

Two of the biggest goats of 2011 have seen different fates. General Manager Bill Smith was reassigned, replaced by his predecessor, Terry Ryan. Gardenhire's relief is manifest: "The manager and the GM have to communicate. I have to be up on everything. I valued both their opinions, but Terry will ask for mine; he calls me every day." (Not long after that, Gardenhire's cellphone rang; it was Ryan.)

Following free agent closer Joe Nathan's departure, Gardenhire fought for the team to re-sign relief pitcher Matt Capps (at an expensive \$4.5 million and loss of a draft choice), whose mediocre record over the last two years frustrated fans and sportswriters alike. The signing reinforced one thing that is not changing about the organization: its preference for reliable players of moderate skill over raw but

potentially erratic talent.

"Cappy was on the front steps of the dugout for the National Anthem every day," says Gardenhire. "He handled the boos. He didn't blame the fans. He asked for the ball every day. That's the kind of player you want to see when you look across the dugout."

and ESPN 1500 radio personality Patrick Reusse. "But I don't think of Gardy as a great in-game manager."

His value to the club is rooted more in the things that happen outside the dugout. "Ron is the face of the franchise," says St. Peter. In an organization rife with introverts and curmudgeons (Jim Pohl, Bill Smith, Terry Ryan, Tom Kelly), Gardenhire is the smiling hail-fellow-well-met. "We knew he would bring support to our side of the business," continues St. Peter. "But not many managers would put on a mullet to film a TV ad."

St. Peter enumerates Gardenhire's value as a series of attributes: "He cares about his players. He understands the needs of the organization. He empowers his coaches. He strikes the right tone. He's a teacher. He's a good person."



## Fixing What's Broke

The Twins have chalked 2011's problems up to injuries and unready minor league players replacing injured Major League talent. Here's a quick digest of the problems and fixes.

2011 Mess	2012 Redress	Will It Work?
Key injuries to premier players	Time heals most wounds	50/50
Atrocious infield play	New shortstop Jamey Carroll	Yes, probably
Sloppy defense, base running	Longer spring training	Will improve
Weak bullpen	Joel Zumaya	Hurt, won't play
Weak power hitting	Replacing Cuddyer, Kubel Young, with Josh Willingham	3 for 1?

## A Leader of Men

Those attributes pale, though, in the face of one overriding consideration: Gardenhire is one of the game's premier motivators, which has allowed the Twins to field rosters picked for fourth or fifth place and win divisions.

"Sometimes we may not have the best talent, really," admits General Manager Terry Ryan, "but the manager can cause the team to perform beyond their abilities. Tom Kelly did that as well."

His charges concur. "Players overperform for Gardy, they want to win for him," says Gardenhire protégé, infielder Nick Punto, currently with the Boston Red Sox.

Gardenhire identifies watching his father lead recruits at Fort Ord in California as the beginning of the process of learning leadership. "Since becoming manager I've never hit a ball or made an error," he says. "But all bosses have to get people to perform."

"You control men and you're asking them to believe in you and accept your leadership," Gardenhire continues. "Players need guidance; they need someone to tell them what to do."

Though baseball is a team game, "You can get selfish as a player in pro sports," says Ryan. "Our manager commands respect. And if players respect you, you're not going to lose the club."

It boils down, says Gardenhire's longtime friend and pitching coach Rick Anderson, to building confidence in the face of experiences that engender anything but.

"The game is built around failure. You fail most of the time," Anderson says. "That's our job with the kids, to keep them thinking they will succeed. You can lose a player if you don't think about their confidence. Gardy has a calming effect on players."

Managing personalities is Gardenhire's forte. "You don't ask people to do what

**"You're asking them to believe in you and accept your leadership,"**  
Gardenhire explains.  
**"Players need someone to tell them what to do."**

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# Beyond the Buzz

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- **Redefining the Customer Experience**  
How does your business or brand create a favorable and engaging experience for your customers that go beyond one-on-one interactions? Learn specific ways to connect with your customers through digital platforms and social media and understand exactly what kind of engagement experience they are looking to have.
- **Using Insight to Grow Brand Affinity**  
With the vast amounts of customer data available through digital sources, how can businesses quickly and efficiently turn this data into valuable information? Learn how to quickly pull key insights about their customers that translate into intelligent marketing strategies.





they're not capable of doing," explains Kelly, Gardenhire's predecessor. "You adjust to the team rather than the team adjusting to you. But if you have beliefs about the game, you instill them."

Member of the press marvel at how Gardenhire uses them to motivate players. "He's a master manipulator," notes ESPN 1500's Phil Mackey, who covers the team in person from spring training to October. "He knows how to use the media to critique a player, and he'll ream a reporter, to have a player's back."

Mackey says Gardenhire would repeatedly critique lippy Twins third baseman Danny Valencia via the press last year. "He'll do that with a player who he thinks has lots of potential that he's not reaching," says Mackey. "He's a very subtle motivator. He blends dictator with being one of the guys. He manages egos really well."

### The Gardenhire Way

More than most sports franchises, the Twins are known for a philosophy of play rooted in attention to detail and personal character, the Twins Way. "They care so much about makeup," says Pat Reusse, "that they value it more than talent."

Tom Kelly is credited for instilling the Twins Way, but it came to full flower under Gardenhire. "The Twins Way is an attitude more than anything," explains Nick Punto. "We played like we thought we were supposed to win."

Gardenhire says it began for him that first day—spring training, 1987. "I'd never been through a spring like that," he recalls. "We worked so hard, we spent so much time on details." And today it's his mantra: "The quickest way to get in trouble is letting things go. A guy misses a sign, but things turn out OK, well, that's still wrong. If you don't deal with it, it will take the organization right down the tubes eventually."

As the game becomes ever more built around young, inexpensive, durable players, these challenges become magnified. "An abundance of young players can mean you lose sight of the team aspect of the game," Gardenhire relates. "An RBI means cash in the next contract, but getting the player over to the next base only gets you a pat on the back. So you get a lot of me, me, me, I."

Gardenhire says he works hard to try to relate, nonetheless, to the narcissistic desperation that sets in: "The hardest thing

these young guys go through is figuring out how to stay [in the majors]." And the biggest difference from AAA to the majors is the advance scouts. "They're there to find your weakness and then [your opponents] just go after it and after it."

The manager recalls minor league phenom David McCarty, who had "superstar written all over him, but in the majors he couldn't hit water if he fell out of a boat. The scouts beat him."

"Look, I've been through it. The minor leagues, the buses, your body gets beat up. You have to love the game," Gardenhire says. "The career is short, only the strong survive, and a couple of good seasons can set you up for life."

Although he's considered a player's manager, there are certain types of play and players Gardenhire can't abide, and the team tends to fix or dispose of them in short order. "Lazy errors I can't handle. There's no excuse for not hustling," he insists.

Though Punto says "it's tough not to get on with Gardy," the keen-eyed will recall notable exceptions (Matt Garza, Kyle Lohse, Pat Neshek, Glen Perkins). They tend to be players (pitchers, mostly) who challenge team authority or display self-regard in its most emphatic forms. "He hates me-first players," says Phil Mackey, "to a fault."

### LOOKING AHEAD: THE 2012 SEASON

This will not be a season of major changes for the Twins. Target Field sports a new Kent Hrbek statue, but no other structural or cosmetic changes. Season ticket sales remain strong; don't expect a lot of seats for sale for most games. A few new food concessions are in development, says the team, but details were not available at press time. Here are the notable changes and anticipated highlights.

✦ **Departures:** Michael Cuddyer (Colorado), Jason Kubel (Arizona), Joe Nathan (Texas), Jason Repko (Boston), Kevin Slowey (Cleveland), Matt Tolbert (Cubs)

✦ **Additions:** Jamey Carroll (infielder), Ryan Doumit (catcher), Jason Marquis (starter), Joel Zumaya (relief pitcher, injured, out for season)

✦ **Key Opponents:** Texas (April 13-15), Red Sox (April 23-25), Cubs (June 8-10), Phillies (June 12-14), Yankees (September 24-26)

✦ **Special Events:** Opening Day (April 9), Fireworks (May 25, July 27, Aug. 10), Turn Back the Clock to 1951 (June 30).

"You can't show up a player or a coach in front of him, especially his coaches," recalls Nick Punto, who says Gardenhire depends on a veteran core of players to maintain influence in the clubhouse. But when that fails, "Ron can be thin-skinned," says Pat Reusse. "He has the ability to turn minor irritations into big agitations."

He points to last season's contretemps with starting pitcher Kevin Slowey, who resisted team efforts to convert him to a relief pitcher. Reusse regards Slowey as "a smart-ass" rather than a cancer, but Slowey was held in the minors for a long stretch of the season and then traded for very little in the offseason. He's now on the rival Cleveland Indians and might come back to haunt his former team. "They've definitely sold low on some players once they ended up in Gardy's doghouse," Mackey says.

Reusse says a key test this season is third baseman Valencia, the prototypical "cocky guy. . . I sense [Gardy's] patience is wearing thin. Be interesting to see how he fares" if his game has not tightened up in the off-season.

### Clubhouse Confidential

Gardenhire owns a .534 winning percentage as Twins manager and will surpass 900 wins this season. His average number of wins per season stands at 87. But how many of those wins can be laid at his feet? In baseball, it's hard to figure out.

"Football coaches have far more impact on the course of a game," says Mackey. "More than any other sport, the baseball manager's job is to motivate and read peoples' state of mind."

Tom Kelly believes the best manager is worth merely "four, five, six" wins a season. Fans overestimate a manager's role as an in-game puppet master. For example, when the manager walks out to the mound fans assume intricate strategy is being discussed, but mostly "it's to slow it down and lighten it up," says Rick Anderson. "Take a deep breath, you can do this."

Those last innings are where a manager earns his money. "Managing a bullpen," says Nick Punto, "is the toughest thing."

"Pull a closer with men on base and you will kill their confidence," adds Gardenhire.

## The Minor League System

Ron Gardenhire worked his way up as a player and manager via Major League Baseball's extensive minor league development system, like none other in professional sports.

Players start in rookie leagues, move to low A, high A, AA, and then AAA teams, each exclusively affiliated with the Twins. The affiliates change from time to time (none that Gardy managed remain with the Twins organization), but the basic hierarchy does not.



## Gardy By the Numbers

**Born:** 1957; Butzbach, Germany  
**Resides:** Fort Myers, Florida and Little Canada  
**Pro Playing Career:** 1979-1987  
**Major League Average:** .232  
**Home Runs:** 4  
**Errors:** 47  
**Minor League Managerial Record:** 245-183  
**MLB Managerial Record:** 866-755  
**MLB Ejections (as manager):** 60

"You may win today, but it will come back on you tomorrow."

"You might lose your player if you quit on them, so you leave a guy out there to fix their mess. It doesn't always work. But don't ever mistake that for Gardy not wanting to win. He's one of the most competitive guys out there. You'll find out if you bowl or play darts with him."

Or when an umpire makes a call Gardenhire can't abide. He's been ejected from 60 games in his Major League career, and each comes with a fine (they've ranged from \$300-\$2500).

"Jim Pohlada says 'I hate it when you get thrown out,' but players need to know you have their back," says Gardenhire, "There are also times when I'm really upset, and there are times I want

to keep my player from being ejected" by sacrificing himself.

Sacrifice defines Gardenhire's 6-21 playoff record. The Twins have a 1-6 record in playoff series under Gardenhire, who has not won one since 2002. The record includes series where the Twins were thoroughly outclassed, even humiliated. Many of those losses came at the hands of the New York Yankees, a team Gardenhire's Twins can't beat whatever the season. Most of the playoff losses can be attributed to a complete collapse of the team's hitting.

"He's become a bit defensive about the playoff losses," notes *Star Tribune* baseball beat writer La Velle E. Neal III. "It's not a topic you can get anywhere on."

As predicted, Gardenhire shrugs, expressing general bafflement: "No clue on the Yankees. I can't explain it. We play our game; it just hasn't worked out."

Although Punto says Gardenhire, like all managers, favors key veterans, it's respect for tenure, not stature or status. Gardenhire recalls with pride how Tom Kelly "treated Kirby Puckett the same as Jeff Reboulet."

Though many of Gardy's players could buy and sell him several times

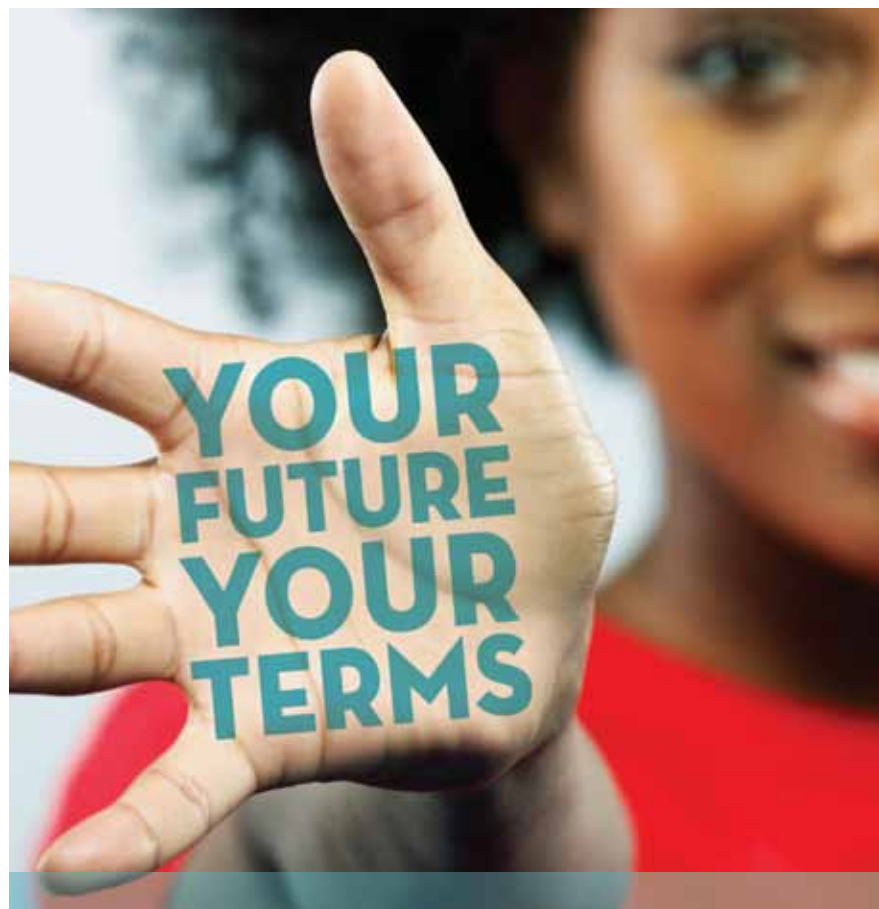
over (and the manager himself earns an estimated couple million a year), he insists the wages of wages be left in the clubhouse. "Most of us in this game didn't have a lot growing up," Gardenhire says. His roots are modest, "and I will never change. I tell my players, 'None of us play with our billfold in our pocket.'"

And with that, Gardenhire bids me farewell. Tomorrow he will head to South Dakota to hunt game birds with buddies. The media relations gatekeepers and reticent handlers are nowhere to be seen on this late fall day—just a man in an easy chair, with a house cat and a double-wide hot tub overlooking a lake.

"I'm just a normal Joe," smiles Gardenhire . . . "who has one of the coolest jobs in the world." **TCB**

*Adam Platt is TCB's executive editor.*

**"The quickest way to get in trouble is letting things go," says Gardenhire. "It will take the organization right down the tubes, eventually."**



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# BEST<sup>OF</sup> BUSINESS 2012

**SIGNS THAT THE LOCAL ECONOMY  
IS RESETTING IN SOME CREATIVE  
AND PROFITABLE WAYS.**

BY TCB STAFFERS

Jake Anderson, Nataleeya Boss,  
Mary Connor, Dale Kurschner,  
Christa Meland, Adam Platt,  
and Gene Rebeck

**I**s our ride on the recession rollercoaster coming to an end? Here's hoping. We've seen the good signs: lower unemployment, a stronger stock market. We've also seen the less-than-positive portents: an unstable European economy, early-rising gas prices, a stubbornly flat housing market. The ride could start up again, without stopping to give us a chance to exit.

But we're going to follow the idea that optimism, as long as it's not blind, offers a more profitable way to see what's coming. Instead of bemoaning the past, individuals and businesses have responded by becoming more entrepreneurial—trying new approaches, uncovering new opportunities. As any entrepreneur knows, the journey isn't always smooth. But the future is well worth welcoming.



### Most Promising Comeback The Opus Group

The Minnetonka-based developer's previous incarnation, Opus Corporation, had 35 million square feet of space in planning or under construction at its 2007 peak, and projects included condos in Florida and an upscale mall in Orange County, California. It also took on high levels of debt that led to many of its assets falling under water when real estate values plunged in 2008. Not to mention the messy legal battles with creditors and some former employees that followed.

Opus Corporation has liquidated its troubled subsidiaries and settled most of its lawsuits. The new Opus, called the Opus Group, is building again. Projects include a 33-story apartment tower in downtown Minneapolis, ongoing construction of the headquarters for household-products maker Church & Dwight Company in Ewing, New Jersey, and an almost complete six-story, 120-unit student housing and retail property near the U of M's East Bank in Minneapolis (pictured above). Additionally, Opus is constructing a two-building corporate campus for CSG International in Omaha, totaling nearly 203,000 square feet and to be completed in July. —N. B.

### Best Brand Makeover Pentair

Pentair knows about reinvention. The Golden Valley-based company started as a manufacturer of research balloons; it later entered businesses including absorbent paper and power tools. Pentair has shed all those operations, and now



focuses on manufacturing and marketing water filtration and equipment enclosures. A few years ago, the company saw that its 50-some brands, garnered largely via acquisitions, had diffused its presence both in its "developed" markets and high-growth regions (China, India, Brazil). As part of its ongoing rebranding, Pentair updated its logo, simplified its brands down to about a dozen, and rationalized its marketing materials so that customers and the public (in the words of Pentair VP Todd Gleason) "see the same Pentair everywhere." —G. R.

### Best Economic Trend Now Hiring!

It's been happening across Minnesota, quietly and on a broad scale, for the last two quarters. And it's expected to continue. Job openings across the state increased nearly 48 percent during the



fourth quarter, compared with openings a year earlier (58 percent of openings were full-time), according to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. Plus, 40 percent of business leaders responding to *Twin Cities Business's* quarterly economic indicator survey said they planned to increase their full-time employment levels by the end of the first quarter. During January alone, 15,500 jobs were added in Minnesota, and the state's unemployment rate dropped to 5.6 percent. The rate nationally remains above 8 percent. —D. K.

### Best Venture Capital Investment Code 42 Software

Code 42 provides backup software and data storage to individual consumers and corporate customers, with clients including Google and Adobe. It's also the recipient of one of the largest venture capital deals for an information technology company in Minnesota's history. In January, Code 42 secured \$52.5 million in a venture funding round led by California-based Accel Partners and Split Rock Partners of Eden Prairie. Split Rock Managing Director Michael Gorman, who joined Code 42's board, described the venture round as "a seismic event in the Minnesota tech landscape." —J. A.



### Best Stock Run Arctic Cat

Arctic Cat's (Nasdaq: ACAT) recent stock performance is more indicative of a rocket than of snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles. In the 52 weeks ended March 2, the Thief River Falls-based company's stock price rose 181 percent to \$38 a share. It bested all other Minnesota stocks and ranked 31st in the nation for best stock appreciation when compared with the overall performance of the S&P 500 index during the same period. Strong revenue growth following the launch of 23 new snowmobile models, combined with cost reductions, improved Arctic Cat's operating margins and yielded a higher-than-anticipated earnings-per-share price of \$1.15 in its most recent financial quarter. Analysts anticipate that revenues and earnings will soar even further. —D. K.

### Best Stock to Watch Target Corporation

The Minneapolis-based retailer's stock (NYSE: TGT) seems to be unfairly weighed down by overly bearish stock analysts. Target's operating profit margin is about 29 percent stronger than that of Wal-Mart, yet its stock is valued about the same on a price-to-earnings basis. TGT has plenty of room to run once management improves Target's U.S. same-store retail sales, provides more information on how profitable its new Canada operations can be, and either fully leverages or finally sells off its incredibly profitable but risk-related credit card business. —D. K.

### BEST (AND ONLY) IPOS OF 2011 KIPS BAY MEDICAL AND TORNIER

Minnesota's best initial public offerings of 2011? Kips Bay Medical and Tornier, of course. Indeed, they were the state's only companies to go public last year. Kips Bay, founded in 2007 by Manny Villafaña, makes a mesh sleeve that is placed over a vein graft during heart bypass surgery. The company raised \$16.5 million in its February 2011 offering and is pursuing U.S. regulatory approval for its device, which is currently marketed in Europe.

Tornier, an Amsterdam-based medical device company whose U.S. headquarters are in Edina, raised \$166 million in an IPO the same month as Kips Bay. It had previously aimed to raise about \$205 million. Proceeds were used to repay \$115 million in debt. The year's two measly IPOs actually matched 2010 and outpaced 2009, when there was only one, and 2008, when there were none.

Last April, Eden Prairie-based Bluestem Brands filed to go public, looking to raise about \$150 million, but later postponed for undisclosed reasons. Maple Plain-based Proto Labs also filed for an IPO last year. Its offering went live in February. (Read more about that IPO on the next page.) —J. A.







**Best Emerging Company  
Proto Labs**

This Maple Plain company bills itself as the fastest in the world to turn CAD drawings into parts and prototypes. High-tech computer-assisted manufacturing and a fully automated, web-based quoting and ordering software enable it to provide a quote and make CNC-machined or injection-molded parts in as fast as one business day. Customers range from independent inventors to multinational corporations in a variety of industries. And unlike many custom manufacturers, Proto Labs specializes in low-volume production, which it describes as an underserved market.

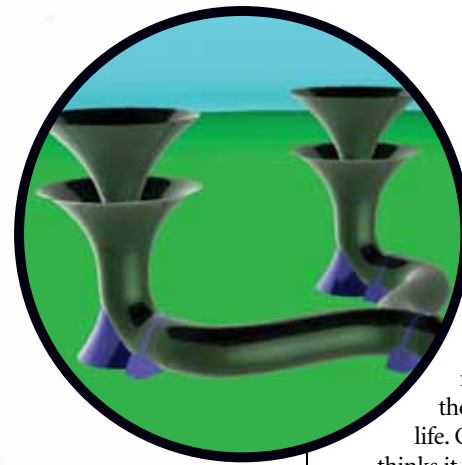
Founded in 1999, Proto Labs has grown revenues from \$35.9 million in 2007 to \$98.9 million in 2011. On

February 24, the company's IPO went live, and had a strong first day. The stock (NYSE: PRLB) was offered at \$16—in the first week of March, the share price was over \$27. —N. B.



**Best New Product  
ReconRobotics' Scout XT Throwbot**

Edina-based ReconRobotics' little robots may not have the charm and personality of, say, R2D2, but for the U.S. military and numerous law-enforcement agencies, the Scout XT has plenty of appeal. These remote-guided devices can sneak into nooks and crannies and sniff out bad guys without putting humans in harm's way. In August, the U.S. Army ordered 385 XT kits for troops in Afghanistan, a \$5.8 million contract that was followed in October with a \$4.8 million order for 315 more. In February, ReconRobotics announced that the Army had ordered an additional 1,100. —G. R.



**Best Potential New  
Energy Source  
SheerWind's Invelox  
System**

Wind turbines are getting extra scrutiny from neighbors and regulators, particularly those concerned about bird life. Chaska-based SheerWind thinks it has a more eagle-friendly way to catch the wind. Its Invelox system stands lower than a windmill, and places blades and turbines at ground level, capturing and accelerating wind to create (the company asserts) more power production. SheerWind's Invelox technology won the Cleantech Open's North Central Region Sustainability Award last year. Now it's time for some more pilot projects. —G. R.

**Best Established Company  
General Mills**

The Golden Valley-headquartered Fortune 500 predicted in February that its earnings per share in its current fiscal year would be a little lower than it first stated (\$2.53 versus \$2.61), due largely to higher input costs and weaker consumer demand. These have been challenges General Mills and other packaged-food companies have been facing lately.

Still, the company has proven to be dexterous during tough times, and open to new ideas (and not just to new flavors of Cheerios). It has been building markets for its brands overseas: about a quarter of its sales are now outside the U.S., with the Asia-Pacific region being particularly strong. What's more (and this is a journalist speaking), CEO Ken Powell and his team have built a culture that doesn't seal its lips around media. —G. R.



**BEST NEW APP  
OFFICIAL MINNESOTA  
STATE FAIR APP**

A great deal of the State Fair's appeal is rooted in its retro charm. But there's nothing wrong with making your way through that charm using au courant digital tools, like one's smartphone. The fair's official app connects fairgoers with nearby food, merchandise, and other useful locations, wherever one may be amidst the vast fiesta. The fair also will have its mobile website up and running starting in June. Feel free to attach your mobile phone to a stick to get the full fair effect. —G. R.







### Best Behind-The-Scenes MVP

#### Kathryn Tesija, Target Corporation

As Target's executive vice president of merchandising since 2008, Tesija and her team strive to keep every square inch of the retailer's shelf space profitable. Target built its rep on affordable style. But what can make or break a retailer is the hard work that customers don't see—keeping track of buying habits, running and interpreting sales data, and devising strategies that give price-conscious customers what they need. Walmart has been Target's top competitor. Tesija and company will also need to keep on eye on a resurgent J. C. Penney—where former Target marketing star Michael Francis is now a top honcho. —G. R.

### Best Small-Business Program

#### The Minnesota Chamber's Grow Minnesota Program

Launched in 2003, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's job retention program has raised its profile in the past couple of years, thanks to its partnership with almost 60 local chambers of commerce and financial support by the McKnight and Pohlad Family Foundations. Grow Minnesota was founded with two chief purposes in mind: to thank Minnesota businesses for staying here, and to identify their challenges so that they stay and expand. It also provides help for small businesses looking for information from state government and other businesses. The Chamber reports that in the program year ending in September 2011, Grow Minnesota's efforts provided 125 companies with help, which in turn saved at least 4,900 state jobs. —G. R.

### Best Blast from the Past

#### The Iron Range

Taconite mining experienced a dismal 2009, as the Iron Range's six plants each shut down for various intervals amid the recession. But in 2010, production more than doubled, with 35 million tons of iron pellets produced. And the positive trend continued in 2011, hitting 39 million tons.

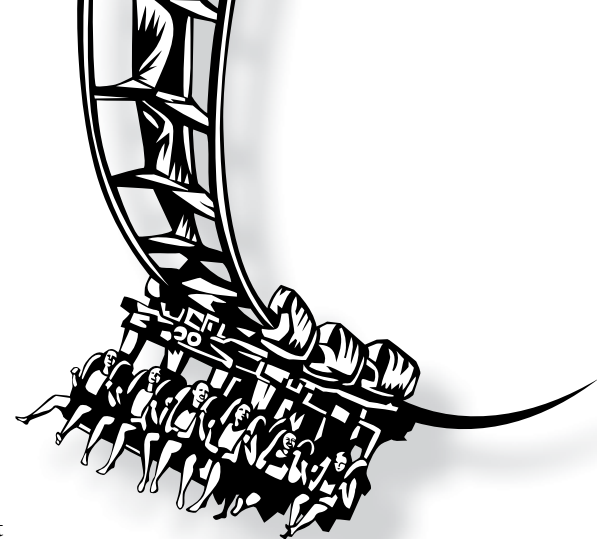
That's due in part to new companies with new technologies entering the territory. The Mesabi Nugget plant near Hoyt Lakes creates nuggets that contain upwards of 95 percent iron. (Traditional pellets contain only 65 percent.) A Magnetation facility near Keewatin, meanwhile, uses a new technology to reclaim iron ore from waste piles at old mines, and it has a second plant in the works. Essar Steel Minnesota is also constructing a new facility on the Range. Existing mines, meanwhile, are running out of room and expanding onto nearby land. Too, new prospects exist beneath Minnesota soil: PolyMet Mining Corporation is taking steps to commence the first copper-nickel mining operation in the state, and deposits of titanium have been confirmed near Hoyt Lakes and Duluth. —J. A.



### Best Countertrend

#### The Analog Renaissance

Digital dominates the media world, and rightly so. But there also are innumerable artisans who are creating fun, beautiful works that blend art and commerce—and that are produced with hand-propelled machines that in many cases were made decades ago. They include firms such as Studio on Fire and Lunalux that are using old letterpress machines ("iron beasts," as Studio on Fire calls them—that's one of the company's presses on the right) to create stylish, retro-modern marketing materials, business cards, and event invitations; and dozens of screenprinters designing and hand-producing posters and art prints. (We should also mention companies making vinyl LPs.) These firms and folks aren't Luddites; they use computers to promote their work and sell their wares. But they do prove that you don't need to be digital to be cutting edge. —G. R.



### Most Imaginative Workspace Configuration

#### BWBR's open workspace

St. Paul's largest architecture/interior-design firm (and the fourth-largest in the Twin Cities) has a diverse practice, designing education, recreation, government, and health care facilities, among other types of projects. With that kind of diversity, BWBR needs a flexible environment for staff to pool their expertise and creativity across markets and share insights.

Its workspace layout is designed to allow staff to easily shift from one



project type to another. Instead of cubicles, BWBR uses four-workstation bays that bring together project teams for more direct collaboration. When a project wraps up, team members can pick up their laptops and roll their portable drawer setups to another bay and a new project. The open work environment also is designed to encourage active listening and informal learning between staff. —G. R.





### Best Efficiency Improvement "No E-mail Wednesdays"

The leaders at Gabriel deGrood Bendt are "always thinking" of creative ways to solve problems, like the ad agency's tagline suggests, and not just for their clients. For the past four years, Minneapolis-based GdB has banned internal e-mails on Wednesdays. The idea was simple: Eliminate needless distractions, and enable creative people to do their jobs more efficiently.

"It was just kind of absurd, the amount of time wasted," says Creative Director Doug deGrood (above on right, with agency CEO Tom Gabriel). "[E-mail] can be a huge time suck." deGrood explains that it takes 30 minutes to get into a "deep brain dive" to solve creative challenges. After every distraction that interrupts that intense focus, the process starts over.

At first, the agency's 35 employees were a bit baffled by the policy, but most now tout its benefits. On Wednesdays, when they need to talk, they pick up the phone or stop by a coworker's desk—which often results in quicker, more fruitful discussions than those via e-mail. —C. M.



### Best Comeback Clow Stamping

Seeking a microcosm of what the state's manufacturers have gone through the past several years? You could do worse than Clow Stamping's experience. The Merrifield metal fabricator and stamping company had to lay off 70 people in 2009 as recession and higher costs took their toll. Then starting in 2010, the company bounced back with a 45 percent increase in revenue and more than 50 hires. According to company CEO Reggie Clow, 2011 was "even better," with a 38 percent increase in sales.

—G. R.



### Best Reason to Fly Local restaurant concepts at MSP airport

This year, several national brands, including McDonald's Quiznos, Starbucks, and Chili's, shuttered their concessions at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. That paved the way for more upscale concepts helmed by Twin Cities chefs and restaurateurs.

Delta Air Lines is spearheading a reinvention of concessions at MSP's G concourse. Plans include remaking gate areas to function as dining/seating areas and iPad pods for ordering food and monitoring flight status.

The first restaurants make their debut on Concourse G this spring. They include the Mill City Tavern (from Heartland's Lenny Russo), Mimosa (a raw bar and brasserie from Meritage's Russell Klein), and a beer-driven pub from Victory 44's Erick Harcey. For cult-coffee fans, there's Worldbean Coffee from Dogwood Coffee Roasters. More local food sources are waiting in the wings. —N. B.

### Most Generous Business Leader Richard Schulze

Minnesota has so many philanthropists that it's nearly impossible to name the most generous Minnesota executive. But Richard Schulze is unquestionably on the short list. Even those who don't know him as Best Buy's chairman and founder have surely seen his name around town.

For example, there's the Schulze Diabetes Institute at the University of Minnesota (named after Schulze's family foundation, which pledged up to \$40 million for diabetes research) and the Schulze School of Entrepreneurship at the University of St. Thomas (which recognizes a \$50 million gift).

With a \$2 billion estimated net worth, Schulze was named to *Forbes'* list of the "400 Richest Americans" in 2011. And he hasn't been shy about sharing his wealth. Organizations looking to cure type 1 diabetes are perhaps most near and dear to Schulze's heart as his daughter has battled the disease for about 30 years. —C. M.



### Best Take on the Company Holiday Card Patterson Thuent Christensen Pedersen

The Minneapolis intellectual property law firm celebrated the season with a memo to "2011 Minnesota Snowstorm #3, Snowflake #103,381,773,290, 113." Patterson, it seems, represents another snowflake with a patent on a certain "stellar dendrite snowflake formation":

"For the next 45 days, our client is willing to license [its patent] and give you a non-exclusive snowfall-wide right to use the design in your own formation as a snowflake. The details are set forth on the enclosed license agreement." —M. C.



### Best Television Commercials Mono for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota

Eagan-based health insurer Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (BCBS) in September launched its "Tomorrow" television commercial, a one-minute spot featuring overweight individuals (and a couple of smokers) singing about beginning their healthy practices—tomorrow. The commercial culminates with the message: "Today



is the day we stop making excuses." Minneapolis ad agency Mono handled the creative for the commercial, which directs people to the BCBS website, where health-coaching tools like a body-mass index calculator are available; the site's traffic almost doubled following the commercial's launch.

—C. M.



### Best Career Save

#### David Kahn, President of Basketball Operations, Minnesota Timberwolves

David Kahn rode into the Twin Cities on the recommendation of NBA Commissioner David Stern, following the abysmal tenure of ex-Gopher Kevin McHale. Media skepticism was rampant, as Kahn had never run an NBA club and the rookie GM fanned the flames by hiring a rookie coach, Kurt Rambis, whose failed tenure hollowed out the team's season ticket base. But with the development of McHale's draft pick, Kevin Love, and the long-awaited arrival of Kahn's bonus baby, Ricky Rubio, plus the addition of veteran

coach Rick Adelman—the

Wolves are playing to big crowds.

The talk is that Kahn is to be rewarded with a second contract from owner Glen Taylor. —A. P.



### Best New Business-Lunch Spot

#### The Oceanaire Seafood Room

The Oceanaire Seafood Room recently exited its longtime home in the Hyatt Regency Minneapolis for new digs at the corner of Nicollet Avenue and South Sixth Street. And with the new location, the restaurant gained more than a shiny new bar and a lighting design that paints the interior a lush, undersea blue: It added a whole new meal.

The restaurant in late January debuted weekday lunch service. Patrons can select from an abbreviated menu, ranging from snacks like shrimp cocktails and crab cakes to more robust meals, from flown-in-fresh fish to a 20-ounce ribeye steak. The upscale vibe and proximity to downtown offices, not to mention the convenient skyway access, make the new Oceanaire a perfect spot for discussing sales over swordfish, or mergers over mussels. —J. A.

### Best Business Event

#### Starkey Annual Gala

If you measure the impact of a corporate event based on the sums raised and the stature of the guests who attend, then Starkey Hearing Foundation's annual summer event is beyond compare. SHF is the charitable arm of hearing-aid developer Starkey Laboratories,



and last summer's gala, for example, raised \$7-plus million and attracted Bill Clinton, Kevin Costner, Miley Cyrus, and more. Starkey CEO Bill Austin has taken some heat for the percentage of CHF's fundraising that goes to expenses, but there is no denying this is Minnesota's highest-profile corporate charitable event. —A. P.



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# GLASS BREAKERS

**Women make up half the work force but less than one-fifth of its executives. What's being done to remove the glass ceiling once and for all.**

**A**ndrew Humphrey has tackled his fair share of challenges over the years, not the least of which has been leading Minneapolis-based law firm Faegre & Benson through a merger only a year after becoming its managing partner. Yet one of his more intriguing conundrums has been ensuring that women ascend to top leadership positions within his firm, now Faegre Baker Daniels.

"We want more women in our most senior positions, because having a diversity of views and perspectives when strategies and key decisions are made ultimately leads to better results for clients," Humphrey says. But, of course, knowing what's best and achieving it can be two different matters.

by  
**DALE KURSCHNER**  
and  
**CHRISTINA M. CAVITT**

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Twenty years ago, the percentage of women graduating with law degrees began to nearly equal that of men. (The percentage of women surpassed that of men in 1993, then dropped back into the upper 40

percent range.) As it did, the legal community expected that incoming women attorneys would eventually work their way up into top positions. But about four years ago, Faegre discovered this wasn't happening within its own walls. Worse, it found that talented female attorneys were leaving after only a few years with the firm.


Faegre's diversity committee spent one year examining why women were not staying with and advancing within the firm, and what could be done to improve matters. By the end of 2011, Faegre ranked ninth amongst the nation's top 100 law firms for women, according to *MultiCultural Law* magazine; it also was named one of the Best Law Firms for Women by the Women in Law Empowerment Forum. Today, women represent 24 percent of all attorneys at Faegre, compared with an industry average of 16 percent. Three of the firm's five-member C-level leadership team are women.

What changed? Corporate policies were modified and new initiatives designed to remove barriers and encourage talented women to pursue top leadership positions.

Business-as-usual mentoring wasn't yielding results, so new mentoring opportunities were developed through a formalized women's leadership program. Generational perspectives were also a challenge. Junior attorneys, both men and women, saw older partners making lifestyle sacrifices that younger lawyers didn't necessarily want to make.

Flextime was also readdressed and clarified. Women attorneys were reluctant if not fearful to take flextime, despite advice from their managers to do so whenever needed. Men were working flexible hours, so of course women could as well—simple as that. Or so Faegre managers thought.





“Unfortunately, female employees didn’t feel comfortable taking advantage of flextime because they were afraid it could typecast them,” Humphrey notes. Leadership talked with managers throughout the firm to encourage greater use of flextime, but there was still reluctance by women to take it.

The solution turned out to be a rewriting of HR policies that more explicitly spelled out that it was okay for men and women to take flextime so long as their work got done. It didn’t matter where it was completed or if it was finished after their children’s soccer games, band concerts, and homework. The rewrite encouraged women to use the flexibility benefit without fear of reprisal.

Faegre also identified apprehension among male attorneys about male/female interaction. One male partner was uneasy with wanting to celebrate a legal victory with his usual “let’s celebrate and go have a drink” because the other team member was female. Would his overture be misperceived as something other than a sincere invitation to celebrate as two professionals? His query shed light on how both men and women can still be thrown off course by preconceived notions and fears. Again, Faegre took action by openly discussing problems with employees to create solutions.

**T**he challenges that Faegre addressed are similar to those of other Minnesota corporations interested in increasing the percentage of women within their highest leadership roles—board directors and C-suite executives. And the subject is becoming a greater priority for businesses looking to maintain or

improve their competitiveness in the marketplace. Yet despite increasing awareness of how important gender diversity is to a company’s bottom line, it appears that corporate America’s advancements on the subject has stalled in recent years.

And while, in the past, this subject was often attributed to generationally shaped sexism and old-fashioned apathy, today it involves a myriad of complex issues ranging from how corporate culture in America needs to become more work/life balanced, to preconceived notions that women have about how they may be judged, regardless of what the rules allow or encourage them to do.

A diverse work force in an increasingly diverse business world simply makes sense, many CEOs say. How else can a business understand its constituents well enough to serve them? “The value of our firm is its people,” says Andrew Duff, chairman and CEO of Minneapolis-based Piper Jaffray, a leader within the investment banking industry for women in top executive positions. “Over time,

to best reflect your client base, you need to diversify your leadership and your organization. Without it, we would not be as competitive here and in other markets where diversity is even more important.”

Research involving 6,000 leaders recently conducted by PDI Ninth House found that women usually rank higher in a greater number of key leadership competencies than do men, especially the further down a leadership chain one goes. The study found that women are typically best at self-leadership, customer matters, trust,



## IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY

By the mid-1970s, women made up more than 40 percent of the American work force, and the media began to take notice. *Mpls.* magazine in August 1975 published a special feature titled "Woman Power!" The following excerpts from leaders quoted 37 years ago seem eerily similar to comments made by some women business leaders today:



**BANKING AND FINANCE**  
Marilyn Nelson, former broker and current board member at the First Trust Company of St. Paul:  
"Women must learn economics no matter what their major field is."



**BUSINESS**  
Mercedes Bates, vice president and director of General Mills' consumer center:  
"Many women enter business as a specialist and stay there, whereas men tend to branch out. Women tend to not look at the larger picture of their company. They don't bother reading the annual reports, for example."



**BUSINESS**  
Bea Kersten, recently retired, former liaison between labor groups and United Way services:  
"One of the first problems is our educational system where there is still a great deal of role conditioning and a need for better career counseling so young people do not stereotype jobs as men's or women's work."



**EDUCATION**  
Betty Jo Zander, principal at Pratt Elementary School and formerly the administrative assistant to the superintendent of the Minneapolis schools:  
"The biggest problem is women themselves. They worry too much about 'How will I be viewed? Do I want to make that commitment? How will it affect my interpersonal relationships?'"



**EDUCATION**  
Pearl Rosenberg, assistant dean of student affairs at the University of Minnesota Medical School:  
"I know that I am automatically paid a lot less than a male in the same position. Although it is hard for a person who feels the work she is doing is important to spend her time complaining about pay, internally this is a problem."

and dealing with people while men tend to score highest in the areas of strategy, leading courageously, and finance.

At the top-leadership level, however, men and women tend to have almost the same number of key competencies, but those competencies are distinct. Mixing these two different but complementary sets of key competencies through a gender-equal executive team leads to better overall business results and higher profitability. Meanwhile, many developing countries, including China and India, are further ahead at promoting women into top business leadership positions, helping to accelerate their economic growth rates beyond that of the U.S.

**W**omen have accounted for more than 40 percent of the U.S. work force for nearly 40 years now—plenty of time for many of them to advance up the corporate ladder. Yet only 3 percent of Fortune 500 companies have female CEOs. About 14 percent have women executives, and 16 percent have women on their boards of directors, according to Catalyst, Inc., a nonprofit women's research group.

In Minnesota, 6 percent of the state's 100 largest publicly traded companies have women CEOs, and 17.4 percent of all executive positions are held by women. In fact, Minnesota leads the nation with the highest percentage of women corporate executives, according to research that compares activity here with 13 other regions participating in an annual study done by ION (InterOrganization Network), a national nonprofit dedicated to advancing women as corporate directors and executive officers.

Minnesota lags a bit when it comes to boards of directors, however. Women hold 14.2 percent of the board seats at Minnesota's 100 largest publicly held companies, compared with 16.1 percent held by women within Fortune 500 companies nationwide. In the 14 regions reporting data to ION, women hold between 8.1 percent and 17.7 percent of board seats.

What worries those who follow the issue of women in business leadership is that Minnesota has actually regressed

when it comes to directorships, according to the fourth annual *Minnesota Census of Women in Corporate Leadership*. (See the insert starting opposite this page. The census feeds Minnesota data to ION's annual study.) Fifty independent directors were appointed to the corporate boards governing Minnesota's 100 largest public companies during 2011; only five of them were women. In terms of total available board seats awarded to women last year, 10.4 percent went to women—a nearly 50 percent drop from the 19.4 percent of new appointments secured by women in 2010.

"The importance of board diversity, however defined, can have a dramatic impact on the culture, tone, and decision-making of the board itself," says David Fisher, counsel at Minneapolis law firm Larkin Hoffman Daly & Lindgren and president of the National Association of Corporate Directors, Minnesota chapter. "The statistics don't lie: When women are in the boardroom, company performance improves."



**"The importance of board diversity can have a dramatic impact on the culture, tone, and decision-making of the board itself. The statistics don't lie—when women are in the boardroom, company performance improves."**

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President of the National Association of Corporate Directors,  
Minnesota Chapter



Fisher adds that “merely giving a nod to diversity by placing a woman on an all-male board, for instance, may not yield the full benefits of solid board decision-making. These benefits are better realized when there are two or more women on a normal-sized board, who then are able to interact and leverage their position in such a way as to influence analysis of such decisions. Call it a ‘critical mass’ of board governance.”

Indeed, studies have found that companies with two or three women on their boards deliver higher returns on equity and total returns to shareholders, compared to those with one female director or none. Yet while women serve on the boards of 72 of Minnesota’s 100 largest publicly held companies, they do so as the sole woman serving as a director in more than half those companies. There are two women directors at 26 companies, and three women directors at six companies.

**P**rogress is being made on a variety of fronts, however. More and more, leaders are recognizing that gender diversity at the top is critically important to achieving improved bottom-line performance. In response, many organizations are grooming tomorrow’s executives through sophisticated internal leadership programs, informal mentorships, and everything in between.

The *2011 Minnesota Census of Women in Corporate Leadership* recognizes organizations that have made the most progress in advancing women into top leadership roles. It does this by highlighting all publicly traded Minnesota companies that have both 20 percent or more women on their boards and 20 percent or more female executive officers. (See page 14 of the insert.) CyberOptics, MTS Systems, and Target received Special Distinction for achieving 30 percent or more women directors and 30 percent or more women executive officers.

There are, of course, dozens of other Minnesota companies, public and private, making great strides on this issue, but not yet topping lists such as those in the *Minnesota Census*. One example is Minnetonka-based UnitedHealth Group,

where women hold a large percentage of middle and upper-middle management positions. This, too, represents significant progress when it comes to women leading in corporate America—more women are now in management, professional, and related occupations nationwide than are men, according to Catalyst. The pipeline of female C-suite candidates is the fullest that it’s ever been, promising a potential surge in women CEOs in the near future.

About four years ago, Austin-based Hormel conducted internal research and goal-setting around advancing more significant numbers of qualified women



**“Allianz has been an amazing place for me as a parent. They opened a child care facility last spring, and we love having our daughter attend the day care on site. It is amenities and efforts like this that will help employers retain top female talent.”**

**—Amanda Brinkman,**  
vice president, brand  
and creative services,  
Allianz Life Insurance  
Company of North America

to leadership positions throughout the company, according to *Minnesota Census* co-author Rebecca Hawthorne, director of the master of arts in organizational leadership program at St. Catherine University. One of Hormel’s tactics is an internal program called Women Our

Way, which provides female employees with education, leadership, networking, and mentoring opportunities. Today, women hold four of Hormel’s 12 board positions. Two women were added to the executive leadership team last year.

As Minnesota companies delve deeper into how they can advance more women into top leadership positions, a common set of challenges arise.

### Providing the Right Experience

CEO candidates need a broad range of business-related experiences, and one of the best places to pick them up is on a board of directors.

“Women still have a tougher time getting some of those broadening experiences, such as being on a board of directors,” says Mary Brainerd, president and CEO of Bloomington-based health care provider HealthPartners. “I learned so much sitting at a board table for another company—and felt that I brought back a lot of value in terms of other ways of approaching issues, analogies to someone else’s business problems compared with what we were facing in my organization. Spots at the board table are really helpful for getting you prepared for the CFO or CEO spot.”

Too often in Minnesota, however, the same women are recruited for available board seats. “There’s a talent-spotting element to choosing board members, just as there is to executives,” Brainerd says. “And I think it’s sometimes weaker when it comes to knowing who the emerging women leaders are in the community.”

In addition to directorships, “Women must learn economics, no matter what their major field is,” said one Marilyn Nelson, then a board member at First Trust Company in St. Paul, in an August 1974 *Mpls.* magazine story on “Woman Power!” What was true 37 years ago remains true today.

Anyone whom a company hopes to groom for a top leadership position needs to know not only the business, but also why and how business works. And the best way to gain such knowledge is by working in profit-and-loss (P&L) positions, says Janet Dolan, president of consulting services firm Act III Enterprises and former president and CEO of Golden Valley-based Tennant Company.



**“I often hear people say that women haven’t had enough time in the pipeline. But it’s very important to understand which pipeline you’re talking about. It’s not just tenure in a company. It’s whether women have operational experience in profit and loss positions. When that happens, doors open.”**

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“I often hear people say that women haven’t had enough time in the pipeline,” Dolan says. “But it’s very important to understand which pipeline you’re talking about. It’s not just tenure in a company. It’s whether women have gotten operational experience P&L positions. When that happens, doors open.

“On the other hand, it’s still challenging for women to actually get into P&L. But that’s the experience anybody needs to really get a leadership role in a company. And clearly, the kind of track record gets looked at for who is going to lead divisions and move up. It’s critical that women go beyond service roles in HR and finance, and get into the P&L side of the house.”

### Improving the Mentoring Process

Companies that are serious about increasing the number of women in top executive positions have mentoring programs. And as Faegre did, those companies are improving them to be more effective.



Mentoring programs typically establish relationships on common ground between younger employees and more experienced executives, who teach their mentees the mistakes she or he made, and what was done to recover from those mistakes. Discussing successes is important, too, leaders say, especially when the mentor and mentee are in the same firm and the mentee is trying to maneuver through a maze of organizational politics.

Brainerd and others say that it's critically important for the top leaders of a company to mentor, in addition to ensuring there are mentoring programs that address up-and-coming leadership at other levels within the organization.

This comes back to developing a healthy pipeline. Richard Templeton, chairman, president, and CEO of Texas Instruments, was quoted in a 2010 Catalyst report as saying that companies need to "build programs to prepare women at every level to be role models for those coming just behind them, who are watching how they manage career and life as they advance. We also need to challenge some of the rhetoric that steers women away from line leadership roles, such as claims that business unit managers must travel all the time. Do they travel? Yes. All the time, no."

As for what company executives advise up-and-coming leaders, Brainerd tells young women—and men, too—who aspire to C-suite positions: "Don't try to be something you're not. For instance, I'm not a sports nut, but I'm well informed on a lot of things, including sports, history, and politics. Just be a well-rounded person with whom people want to work. Most of getting ahead in the corporation is really about being a good team player.

"If you're a good team player," Brainerd adds, "others will overcome a lot of their preconceived notions if they can say, 'She's just darn good to work with. She's always there to support me and when we were on the team together, we made things happen. I trust her.'"

### Developing a Healthy Work/Life Culture

Another challenge for corporations wanting to hire women C-suite executives is the tendency for women to be



**"Women have fantastic abilities, but many need somebody telling them, 'Yes, you absolutely can do it.'"**

**—Dee Thibodeau,**  
Co-CEO, Charter Solutions, Inc.

more thoughtful about what such a move can do to one's personal life.

Even as women gain the right credentials—board service, P&L experience, great mentoring—and ascend the corporate ranks, many choose to stay in their vice president or executive director positions, rather than take that last step to a C-suite position or, better yet, the CEO's chair.

"Younger women are more confident about asserting their goals," Dolan says. "They expect more opportunities. But when they hit their 30s and start to have the work/family issues, I don't think they are as willing to push as hard" as women professionals who came before them. "I don't know that the work ethic is different, but the pattern of how people work through their careers is different. [My generation] kind of started at the bottom, began working our way up, pushing every barrier out of the way to make it. Younger women don't have as many barriers. They kind of move about halfway up the ladder and they're doing well and everything, and then they have children and sort of stall professionally. Whether or not they come back is the real question."

Corporations seriously interested in increasing the number of women in top executive roles provide a culture and work environment conducive to those who want to pursue both career advancement and a healthy family life. One local company well known for its

ability to do this is Golden Valley-based General Mills.

In 2011, it ranked first on the National Association for Female Executives' list of "Top Companies for Executive Women." In describing why, the association says, "Women presidents outnumber men and run four of the seven major retail divisions. Half of those promoted from the U.S. directors to officers in 2009 were women. So were 59 percent of participants in the General Mills Institute for Leadership Development. Five women serve on the company's 14-member board."

Such environments remain the exception rather than the rule, however, leading some women to alter where they work as they pursue a C-suite position. Nichol Beckstrand, COO of Twin Cities-based Sunrise Community Banks, decided to hold off having children until she was a little older, then identified an employer that provided her with a leadership position at work but enough flexibility to spend time with her children.

This leads to another issue, that of retention. "The more employers understand the value of flexible hours, and encourage work/life balance, the better they will do on this front," says Amanda Brinkman, vice president, brand and creative services, at Golden Valley-based Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America. "Allianz has been an amazing place for me as a parent. They opened a child care facility last spring, and we love having our daughter attend the day care on site. It is amenities and efforts like this that will help employers retain top female talent."

### Encouraging and Supporting Risk Taking

"Part of the problem of filling critical roles with women is themselves," says Dee Thibodeau, co-CEO of Plymouth-based Charter Solutions. "Too often, women [when first in a leadership role] ask forgiveness: 'Oh, I'm sorry, I'm not sure if I'm good enough to be doing this.' Women have fantastic abilities, but many need somebody telling them, 'Yes, you absolutely can do it.' The problem is complex—steeped in age-old practices and archaic attitudes."

Women tend to be more risk adverse, according to national studies. Yet corpo-

rate cultures often expect from up-and-coming leaders a willingness to take risks, and the ability to, more often than not, prove the risk was worth it.

"Maybe it's old-school wisdom, but it's still wise: take risks," Dolan advises aspiring women business leaders. "Part of the risk factor is seeking opportunities. Often, you have to let your manager and others in management know you are interested in running an operation."

Companies interested in increasing the number of women in top positions need to first make sure that their culture supports risk taking—and understand how women view risk differently from men. Women may need to be encouraged more to take risks and be more competitive. They also need to see that there's more than just words and policies encouraging them to do so.

"When it comes to one's willingness to take risks, for women, a lot still depends upon who you see at the top of the organization," Brainerd says. "No matter what the policies are, if you don't see other women progressing in an organization or in some of the key top spots,



**"You want generational diversity, you want racial diversity, you want gender diversity. And every time you get another perspective, another point of view, another way of looking at a problem, your organization is better for it."**

**— Mary Brainerd,**  
president and CEO,  
HealthPartners

## WOMEN IN CORPORATE LEADERSHIP NATIONALLY

As of January 2012, women account for:

<b>46.7</b>	percent of U.S. labor force
<b>51.5</b>	percent of management, professional and related occupations
<b>14.1</b>	percent of Fortune 500 executive officers
<b>16.1</b>	percent of Fortune 500 board seats
<b>7.5</b>	percent of Fortune 500 top earners
<b>3.6</b>	percent of Fortune 500 CEO roles
<b>3.6</b>	percent of Fortune 1000 CEO roles

SOURCE: CATALYST, INC.

you end up wondering, 'Is my career going to be a dead end here?'"

A phrase from her early childhood helps Shari Ballard to take risks and be competitive when need be. The president of international for Richfield-based Best Buy recalls first hearing "The devil loves a coward" when she was six years old, playing euchre (a card game) at her great-grandparents' kitchen table.

"In euchre, you have to take an offensive or defensive stance, based on your

cards," Ballard explains. "I was Great-Grandma's partner, and if I hesitated on a play, she'd look at me with this remarkable intensity and remind me about the devil and cowardice."

She smiles about it now, but back then, Ballard took her elder's admonishment to heart and learned to embrace the fiercely competitive spirit that is integral to the women in her family. Nearly 20 years into her career at Best Buy, she's known and respected for that

spirit. Her boss, Brian Dunn, Best Buy's CEO and director, says that Ballard is the most competitive person he's ever met. ("He hasn't met my mother!" Ballard says, laughing.)

Ballard considers herself fortunate to have grown up in a setting with strong female role models. From them, she learned the ability to work hard, the confidence to take risks, and the competitive nature that is inherent to her success. She's also aware that in many ways, her experience is unique. And she's concerned that there aren't more women in corporate leadership roles.

"Best Buy has wide range of work styles and life experiences in our work force," Ballard says. "We enjoy a deeply diverse executive team. That range is expanding, although we remain light on some experiences that are critical to our current and future success. We still have a lot of work to do."

### Addressing the Bigger Picture

Perhaps the most important issue, area business leaders say, is the need to

keep women in business leadership in perspective with the overall need for companies to be more inclusive, period. And that inclusiveness means diversity beyond gender.

"Women in leadership is only one dimension to the point that it's important to have more diversity anywhere [regardless of the industry]," Brainerd says. "You want generational diversity, you want racial diversity, you want gender diversity. And every time you get another perspective, another point of view, another way of looking at a problem, your organization is better for it."

"Fundamentally, most of us are going to end up serving a much more diverse and changing local and national community, and international clients," Brainerd adds. "So to not understand and benefit from a lot of different perspectives is like a one-note song. You're better off if you have all the notes." **TCB**

*Dale Kurschner is Twin Cities Business's editor in chief; Christina M. Cavitt is a St. Paul-based writer.*



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Salsa's Mukluk is one of several locally designed "fatbikes."



# GROWTH CYCLE

BY  
CHRISTY  
DESMITH

**E**rik Noren is showing off his 5,000-square-foot shop in South Minneapolis. “I’ve got \$100,000 worth of tools in here,” he says. He passes a welding torch and boxfuls of raw steel tubes, then gestures to the cluster of tiki torches in the corner, which resemble a grouping of lilies with long stems. (“Erik has a lot of parties,” notes one of his colleagues.)

A row of unpainted bicycle frames hangs like curing meat. Having traversed the entire workshop, Noren finally rests his palm against his shop’s most mysterious contraption: an army-green Hitachi Seko computer-numerical control (CNC) lathe from 1980.

Noren is a custom bike-frame builder, and he’s as colorful as his workspace. Tell him what Noren’s colleagues often told me—“You can make bikes. You make money. You can’t make both”—and you’ll get a roaring earful in reply.

“I’m sick of hearing ‘can’t, can’t, can’t,’” Noren barks. He has big dreams. Noren wants to put that CNC lathe to work making hubs, headsets, and other bike components. He’d also like to hire someone to craft the frames that he’s been making for hometown bicycle companies including Speedhound and F-Bom. That would give Noren more time and money to focus on his passion: the flashy custom bicycles he’s been building for the past 10 years under his personal label, Peacock Groove.

With an estimated 13 frame builders working in the Twin Cities,

**The Twin Cities high-gear bicycle culture has helped inspire a booming number of home-grown frame builders. Are there enough customers to keep them rolling?**





The Ivy  
(Building) league  
of bike-building gentlemen:  
(clockwise from top left)  
Vincent Domínguez,  
Chris Cleveland, Matt  
Appleman, and  
Erik Noren.





plus a growing contingent of other bicycle designers, Peacock Groove is hardly the only ambitious bike business in town. “There’s a lot of talent up in Minneapolis,” says Don Walker, president of the North American Handmade Bicycle Show (NAHBS), one of the industry’s highest-profile trade shows. “I’m not sure the rest of the country knows it.”

### A Frame Builder’s Hub

Noren plays a central role in the growing orbit of professional bike-makers—he’s the loudmouth and the community organizer. “He flies the flag,” says Bjorn Christianson, administrator of bike-geek website Minneapolis Bike Love and a web developer at Bicycle Theory, a Northeast Minneapolis branding agency staffed by cycling aficionados.

Christianson sees Noren as a tireless advocate for the local bike industry, always touting local talent at events like the NAHBS. (He’s made some enemies along the way. Some attendees at the 2009 NAHBS show took offense at the track bike he brought, whose back disk wheel featured the frightening artwork from Guns N’ Roses’ 1987 album, *Appetite for Destruction*.) Possessing a sailor’s tongue and a puppy’s warm, watery eyes, Noren is an aggressive booster of the local bike-making scene, and was instrumental in organizing Minnecycle, an annual exhibition of craft bicycles featuring Curt Goodrich, Paul Wyganowski, and other local frame builders. (Look for the third annual show this September.) You also find Noren defending fellow frame builders on national sites such as [velocipedesalon.com](http://velocipedesalon.com).

Noren recently swapped his 912-square-foot studio for the enormous space in the Ivy Arts Building, just off the Midtown Greenway cycling trail. In order to afford rent on the bigger place, Noren asked a few colleagues to sublet corners of the spacious shop. The upshot: Noren’s shop functions almost like a collective, where frame makers readily swap design ideas and construction techniques, not to mention sales leads.

One tenant is 10-year veteran Vincent Domínguez, a reserved fellow who specializes in customized steel bikes for randonneuring, or marathon cycling, with a base price of \$2,800. (On the side, he writes customized business software.) “We don’t compete so much,” Domínguez says of Noren. “We serve different parts of the market.”

Another shop mate is Matt Appleman, one of the local bike industry’s freshest faces. An expert in composite materials engineering, the 25-year-old Appleman is the city’s only frame builder specializing in customized carbon-fiber frames for high-performance riding, with a base price of \$4,000. Appleman finds Noren’s collaborative environment very helpful for a start-up like his. “Erik has every tool you could possibly need,” Appleman says. “He’s really generous about lending me things.”

Yet another tenant, Chris Cleveland, is a Minneapolis lawyer-turned-bike designer who founded Speedhound Bikes in 2009. “I designed a bike that’s a little more stable, a little less twitchy,” Cleveland says of his Speedhound frameset (a frameset typically includes both the main frame and the front fork). “It’s better suited to riding long distances without tiring you out.” Cleveland sells a standard steel frameset, in an array of eight colors and five frame sizes, for \$1,450 a pop.

A big believer in American manufacturing, Cleveland says that he “looked all over the country for someone to do the fabrication. Minneapolis turned out to be a great place.” He ended up enlisting Noren to build Speedhound’s frames. For purely practical purposes, Cleveland now also rents space within Noren’s shop. (He continues to practice law on a part-time basis.)

With its modern furnishings in primary colors, Cleveland’s corner office clashes with Noren’s taste for busty pinups and secondhand easy chairs. But the arrangement enables close collaboration between busi-

In the groove:  
Erik Noren makes bicycles as  
distinctive as his personality.  
(Left) The frame of his  
Voltron Force track bike.  
(Right) Showing off his ver-  
satile “Country Mile”  
at a 2011 industry  
event.



“MINNEAPOLIS TURNED  
OUT TO BE A GREAT  
PLACE” FOR  
MANUFACTURING  
AMERICAN-MADE  
BIKE FRAMES.

nessmen and bike lovers. For example, when Cleveland sells a frame, he simply walks out of his office to notify Noren, who can quickly finalize the order. Speedhound bikes are deliverable in five to seven business days; custom frames can take as long as a year.

The Ivy Arts Building is home to yet another frame builder. Down the hall from Noren and the gang is a tidy workshop lined with vintage cycling posters. Meet Chris Kvale, who specializes in high-performance steel bikes, with a base price of \$2,900. “I make a very classic bike,” he says. Kvale started building bikes in 1976, along with an earlier crop of Twin Cities fabricators. “This is the same bike I made 35 years ago,” Kvale says of his European-style road bikes.

None of these guys works with distributors. Their websites function as important sales tools. Kvale’s new site has “been really good for me,” he says. “I’m really busy this year.” Speedhound’s Cleveland plans to make a big online push this year, hoping for a big bump in business. He’s working with Bicycle Theory to make his site more appealing to customers and search engines, partly by adding stylish videos.

Word of mouth and referrals are still these frame builders’ biggest sources of business. Most of their customers are hardcore bike enthusiasts, so Noren’s parties are helpful in terms of sales contacts. It’s also worth noting that most of their customers are local.

### Wheels of Industry

Why does the Twin Cities have so many frame builders? Sure, there are throngs of cyclists—lots of potential customers for these tiny bike businesses. Another, less obvious reason lies with the area’s booming corporate bike industry. The metro

is home to many a large bike business—from Penn Cycle and Erik’s Bike Shops (two of the nation’s largest bicycle retailers) to Shoreview-based Hed Wheels (a top manufacturer of racing wheels).

The biggest player is Bloomington-based Quality Bicycle Products (QBP), the nation’s largest supplier of bicycles, parts, and accessories for bike shops and other dealers. QBP also owns several well-regarded bike brands, including Surly (no relation to the local brewer) and Salsa.

“People graduate from QBP. Then they go off and do their own thing,” observes Minneapolis Bike Love’s Christianson. This makes QBP an important incubator of talent, like a miniaturized version of Target, which fuels the regional fashion and design scenes. Noren logged 11 years at QBP, starting in the warehouse and eventually landing in the bike builder department. Another QBP alumnus named



(Left) Appleman's Spicy track bike is designed for serious racers, with a steep seat tube and fixed-gear design. Base price for the carbon-fiber frame, fork, and headset is \$4,000.



(Right) Quality Bicycle Products' fatbike lines were inspired by independent craftsmen. (Left) Speedhound's patent-pending dropout system, machined in Minneapolis.



Speedhound's frame design (top) includes a stylish head badge (middle) and the capability to use a lubricant-free drive belt (bottom)

Shad Holland recently founded F-Bom, which specializes in American-made bikes and accessories. Other QBP alumni include Brian Rose, founder of Shockspital, a mail-in suspension and brake repair service; and Gene Oberpriller, owner of One on One Bicycle Studio, a Warehouse District shop that's a retailer, repair shop, and coffee bar all in one.

As an industry leader, QBP works hard at keeping abreast of emerging bicycling trends. So the company constantly looks to the little guys, especially frame builders, for signs of innovation and splintering product categories. One of QBP's most popular new products owes to a group of Alaskan frame builders who craved monster-size mountain bikes (complete with four-inch tires) for excursions through their snow-packed surroundings. QBP and Surly tweaked the concept with the Pugsley, launched in 2004, reputedly the world's first factory-produced fatbike.

## WITH THEIR INTRICATE METALWORK AND ARTISTIC PAINT JOBS, THESE CRAFTSMEN PUSH THE ENVELOPE ON AESTHETICS.

It took a few years, but fatbikes have finally gone gangbusters. QBP now manufactures three versions of fatbike—the Mukluk by Salsa along with the Pugsley and another Surly product, the Moonlander. QBP also has launched 45North, a specialty brand devoted to products for cold-weather riding, including fatbike tires, studded tires, and other parts.

In addition to 45North, QBP introduced two additional brands in 2011: Foundry Cycles, making carbon-fiber bikes; and Whisky Parts, producing carbon-fiber parts. In a way, the proliferation of these niche brands is equally inspired by the hyper-personalized approach that custom builders favor. “Even on a scale like QBP, we’re tapping into the idea of customization,” says QBP’s Jason Grantz, brand manager for both Foundry and Whisky. “We’re building a portfolio of products and smaller brands for specific people.”

### Riding Up

As the cyclist matures, he'll crave products that suit his individual tastes and body proportions. If he's a new cyclist, he'll probably stick with the complete bikes by QBP-owned brands Surly, Salsa, Civia, and All-City. A more style-conscious commuter might like the \$640 frameset designed by Minneapolis-based Handsome Cycles. On a smaller scale, four-year-old Handsome Cycles caters to style-conscious commuters with classic contouring and vintage colors. One of Handsome



Cycles' coolest products is the Speedy Devil, featuring a frame bedecked in patriotic stars and stripes. It resulted from a partnership with another local business, Twin Six, which designs cycling apparel.

As he increases his mileage, the weekend warrior might go for a Speedhound. With its lower-cost designs, Speedhound addresses another significant gap in the market: serious riders who otherwise couldn't afford, or couldn't wait for, a lovely handmade frame. Speedhound also has a bona fide invention to its name: Its patent-pending dropout system allows bicyclists to swap greasy chains for lubricant-free drive belts.

Further up the price ladder: a custom Peacock Groove, whose framesets start at \$2,400.

With their intricate metalwork and artistic paint jobs, frame builders push the envelope on aesthetics. St. Paul's Curt Goodrich is admired nationally for his graceful European-style touring bikes. Another St. Paul builder, Dave Anderson, won top honors at NAHBS last year with his stainless steel bike. Domínguez insists Noren was one of the first frame builders in the country to use polished stainless steel, and to embellish his frames with flashy cutouts.

Changing tastes, habits, and needs propel constant innovation in bike design. QBP hopes to stay atop the constant splintering of subcultures and product categories—say, fatbikers in the American Southwest who want to cruise through desert sands. Handmade-frame builders are “the true trendsetters,” says Joe Meiser, QBP's product development manager.

### Shifting to a Higher Speed

The Twin Cities frame-building scene is by no means anomalous. “All over the country, we're seeing outcroppings of these custom builders. It used to be a much more limited industry,” says Rich Kelly from Interbike, the U.S. industry's largest trade show. “As the traditional bike brands have gravitated toward higher-end materials like carbon fiber and aluminum, we've seen this countertrend of buyers going back to the hand-builders, who usually work with steel.”

The NAHBS's Don Walker estimates that “in the U.S., there are between 50 and 75 professional frame builders who do it for a living. There's probably another 50 or 75 guys on the fringe trying to make it full-time.” Walker says the number of U.S. frame builders has edged slightly in recent years: “The guys who came into it in the last three or years, if they didn't have anything special, they're starting to fade out.”

A different market estimate comes from Elliot Gluskin, a Pennsylvania-based consultant and researcher who specializes in the bike industry. Gluskin started researching the custom fabrication industry in 2007. Based on his experience at the NAHBS and in the field, he estimates there are 250 custom frame builders working in the United States total, each averaging about 30 bikes per year. The average selling price is \$3,000. That suggests a total industry worth about \$22.5 million.

“It's a market of regions, of niches,” Gluskin says. “So yes, it's growing, but the rate of growth is different by region.” He feels that Minneapolis and Portland are two of the biggest pockets. Off-street trails and biking

Appleman, Cleveland, Noren, and Domínguez share space, tools, and sales leads. Down the hall from them is another custom frame builder, Chris Kvale.



**LOCAL FRAME BUILDERS' DESIGNS ARE GETTING ATTENTION. ONE PROBLEM: "WE'RE NOT MAKING MUCH MONEY."**

infrastructure also has something to do with the growth. “I consider bike-sharing a leading indicator,” Gluskin adds. “It's an indicator of a city looking to accomplish a number of things, like making transportation more efficient and attracting more business by saying, ‘Come to my city—we have a healthy lifestyle.’ And Minneapolis's [Nice Ride] bike-share is one of the leading examples in the country.”

The members of the local handmade bike industry do think that they have some special designs. There's just one problem: “We're not bringing in much money,” admits Noren, speaking for the custom-frame building community as a whole. Some frame builders cop to relying on well-employed wives. Noren, who's 37, recently moved back home with his parents to save money.

Noren recalls Minneapolis Mayor R. T. Rybak asking a group of local frame builders, “What do you need to succeed?” The answer came quick for Noren: money. Lots of it. He wants Peacock Groove to become a strapping small business, like Surly Brewing or (a more apt model) Boston-based Firefly Bicycles, which employs three full-time employees.

So Noren is eyeing Kickstarter, an online forum for crowdsourced funding of creative projects. “I'm going to ask for a quarter million,” he boasts. He'll use the funds for more machinery, making a wider array of parts, and perhaps add an employee or two. “If I get that Kickstarter money,” Noren says, “I guarantee—I'll set the world on fire.” **TCB**

*Christy DeSmith is a Minneapolis-based freelance writer. She wrote the cover story on Mayo Clinic executive Shirley Weis in the October 2011 issue of TCB.*

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# KICK IT IN GEAR

The latest golf gear will get you ready for the coming season.

By Joseph Oberle



At one time or another, most golfers have had a club in their bag that they just couldn't part with. Perhaps it never sliced off the tee, it helped hit a perfect approach in a tournament, or it was old reliable in the weekly Nassau. It simply performed well in so many clutch situations that out of a sense of loyalty we have stuck with that beat-up, nicked and scratched, out-of-date old club that should be hanging on the wall of a sports bar creating atmosphere.

Like Judge Smails in the movie *Caddyshack*, who called on his "Billy Beroo" club to find the bottom of the cup, we think what worked for us in the past will forever work its magic. But with continuing technological advancements in golf equipment—and the resulting lengthening of courses—those old reliable clubs are becoming more and more obsolete each year until you find that "Ol' Billy" is holding you back.

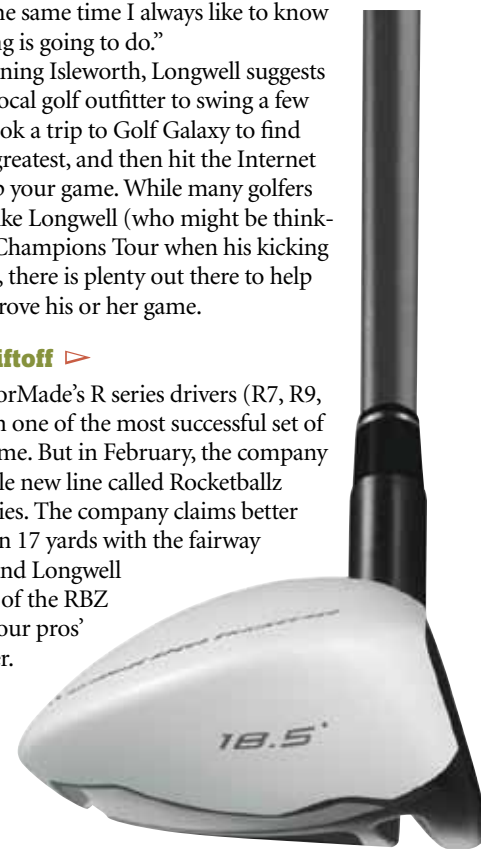
"There's a lot to that," says Minnesota Vikings kicker (and avid golfer) Ryan Longwell. "But if someone doesn't have a driver that's been made in the last five years, they are really costing themselves distance and accuracy, which make the game easier. Golf is changing so fast that you've got to keep up to maximize your enjoyment. You don't need a new club every year, but if you are waiting five years, you are being passed by."

Longwell is the son of a golf pro from Seattle, and a +.08 handicap golfer who plays out of Isleworth Country Club in Windermere, Florida, where he spends time on the range with plenty of PGA Tour golfers. He understands the importance of good equipment. "I talk to the tour guys and see what are the hot items, which you can see by looking in their golf bags," Longwell says. "I'm always curious because I am always trying to get better, but at the same time I always like to know what something is going to do."

Short of joining Isleworth, Longwell suggests a trip to your local golf outfitter to swing a few clubs. So we took a trip to Golf Galaxy to find the latest and greatest, and then hit the Internet for gear to help your game. While many golfers may not play like Longwell (who might be thinking about the Champions Tour when his kicking days are done), there is plenty out there to help any golfer improve his or her game.

## Ready for Liftoff >

For years, TaylorMade's R series drivers (R7, R9, R11) have been one of the most successful set of clubs in the game. But in February, the company released a whole new line called Rocketballz or the RBZ series. The company claims better players can gain 17 yards with the fairway woods alone, and Longwell spotted plenty of the RBZ demos in the tour pros' bags this winter.





"The people I talked to at Taylor-Made say the three wood and the Rescue hybrid are going to be really hot sellers because of their really hot faces," Longwell says. "Everything is legal, of course, but they have noticed a lot of yardage gained from the testing of the pros who have used it." **Drivers starting at \$299.99, [taylormadegolf.com](http://taylormadegolf.com)**



#### Flytee for an Eterni-tee ▲

Since the time when a small cup of sand or even a tuft of grass served as tees, there's been little innovation in how golfers tee up. But that might change with the Champ Zarma Flytee, which boasts "increased distance and accuracy from tee to green." With a six-prong head for stability and a shallow cup for less friction and more distance, the Flytee is made of environmentally friendly and durable plastic material. Flytees are biodegradable, but that may be irrelevant; they don't often break and their bright colors are easy to spot after teeing off.

**Suggested retail price: \$5.99 for a 30 piece pack, [bit.ly/xIG14e](http://bit.ly/xIG14e)**



#### Loop Like the Pros ▲

If you think your game is not good enough to be improved by a high-tech rangefinder, guess again. You may not reach the green because of shot execution, but it shouldn't be because you don't know the yardage. Leupold rangefinders can take the guesswork out of club selection with its new GX4 model, endorsed by the Professional Caddies of America. The GX4 Smart Key faceplate provides accurate information that matches your personal striking distances and even suggests which club to use. More than 100 caddies on the 2011 PGA tour use them for mapping courses for their pros in tournament play. **Suggested retail price: \$500, [golf.leupold.com](http://golf.leupold.com)**

#### Looking Good, Feeling Good ►

Golf shoe innovation is usually more subtle than other equipment improvements (say, the newest metal alloy promising power and feel beyond a golfer's wildest dreams). But it's hard not to notice the Ecco shoes that pro golfer Fred Couples has popularized on tour. A spikeless outer sole cast in vibrant, eye-catching colors, the Ecco Street Textile is a sporty hybrid golf sneaker for a young and modern look. The outsole is engineered with more than 150 molded traction bars that provide more than 800 traction angles for excellent grip in all conditions. Designed for long-lasting wear and comfort, the Street Textile won't rip up the greens or the clubhouse carpet. **Suggested retail price: \$150, [eccousa.com/shoes/golf](http://eccousa.com/shoes/golf)**





## SPECIAL FOCUS

### GOLF



#### Get a Grip ▲

Most golf instructors say that a good swing starts with the grip. It is often the first thing they teach. Good grip position and pressure results in better wrist turn, an improved swing plane, a straighter ball flight, and more distance. GripSolid is a training device designed to solve grip pressure and position problems. Winner of the best new product at the 2011 PGA show, GripSolid uses soft, raised fins to promote a proper grip on the club, helping to eliminate “death grips” that impede distance and accuracy. **Suggested retail price: \$19.95, [gripsolid.com](http://gripsolid.com)**



#### Lost and Found ▲

You might not need Golf Ball Finding Glasses from the Sharper Image if you use the Polara ball (see below), but they may come in handy for the wayward-hitting members of your foursome. They use a combination of physics and technology to help golfers locate golf balls that are hard to see in

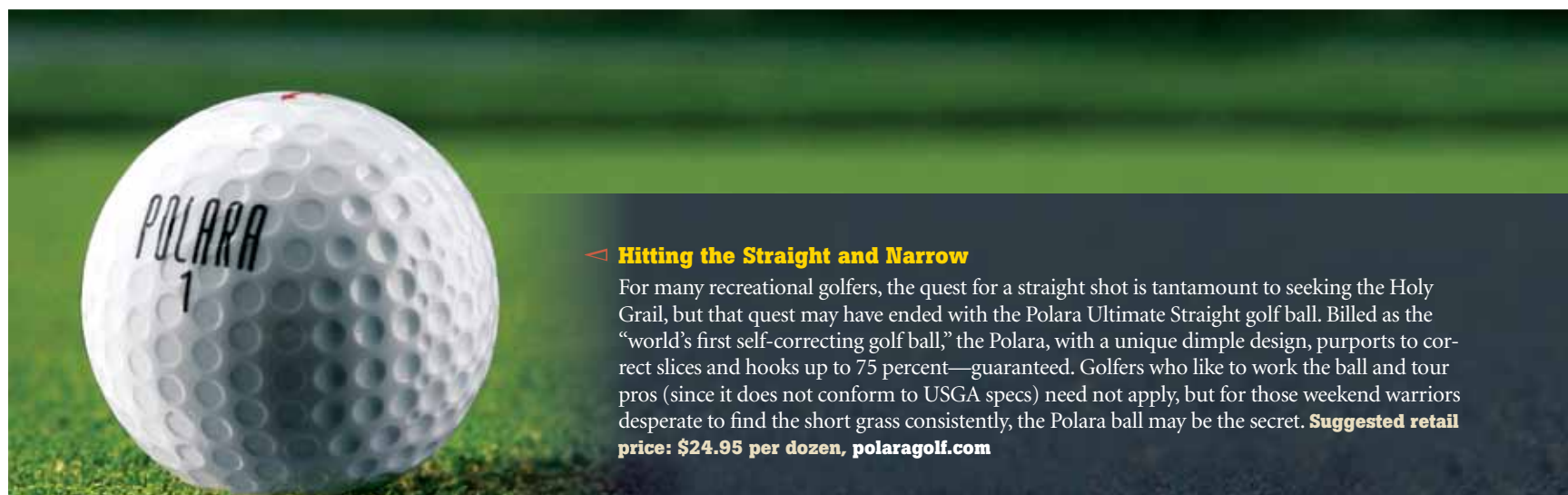
bright and reflective sunlight. With a special lens pigment that reduces light from background objects, and a wraparound design to eliminate peripheral light, the glasses “illuminate” lost golf balls. You could save a few penalty strokes, or even a few dollars on replacement balls. **Suggested retail price: \$39.99, [bit.ly/wYwuAq](http://bit.ly/wYwuAq)**

Player	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Adam	0	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	4									
2. Benji	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1										
3. My Name	0	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	0								
4. Kandi Bepi	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1										
5. Maxton	0	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	0	1								
6. Nip	1	0	1	0	1	2	2	1										
7. Ben	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	2									
8. Wendy	1	2	1	2	2	3	3	2										
9. Monica	0	1	1	1	0	1	3	3										

#### Apps for Smart (Phone) Golfers ▲

If you carry a smartphone (and keep it on vibrate when at the course), a couple of new golf apps will come in handy. On your way to the course, check out up-to-the minute **Golfweather.com**, which tracks conditions on more than 20,000 golf courses across the country for free. The service forecasts temperature, wind speed and direction, and rain probability on your iPhone (and soon for Android phones).

Once at the first tee, log into the Grow the Game live leaderboard and golf event management app to track your tournament, or just your weekly game. The app includes 17,000 courses, and league and event management for up to 100 golfers. **Free 30-day trial, or enroll starting at \$2.49 per month, [home.gtggolf.com](http://home.gtggolf.com)**



#### ◀ Hitting the Straight and Narrow

For many recreational golfers, the quest for a straight shot is tantamount to seeking the Holy Grail, but that quest may have ended with the Polara Ultimate Straight golf ball. Billed as the “world’s first self-correcting golf ball,” the Polara, with a unique dimple design, purports to correct slices and hooks up to 75 percent—guaranteed. Golfers who like to work the ball and tour pros (since it does not conform to USGA specs) need not apply, but for those weekend warriors desperate to find the short grass consistently, the Polara ball may be the secret. **Suggested retail price: \$24.95 per dozen, [polaragolf.com](http://polaragolf.com)**





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## SPECIAL FOCUS

### GOLF

#### High-Tech for Less ▸

High-tech golf balls can certainly increase distance and enhance performance, but they often cost a pretty penny. Innovex offers an affordable option with its V-Motion Tour Golf Ball. The V-Motion has a cast urethane cover for high spin and a compensating speed core for distance like the big-name balls from Titleist and Callaway. The ball received a *Golf Digest* 2011 Ball Hot List award (including 4 stars in the performance and innovation categories). And the lower price may lessen the anxiety of staring down a 220-yard forced carry over water. **Suggested retail price: \$44.95 per dozen, [innovexgolf.com](http://innovexgolf.com)**



#### Local Lore ▴

If your favorite Minnesota course is not yet open for the season, you at least may be able to read about it in the new book *From Fields to Fairways—Classic Golf Clubs of Minnesota* (University of Minnesota Press). Written by local author Rick Shefchik, the book is the first to thoroughly explore the history, architecture, and life inside Minnesota golf clubs. With 200 photos, this exhaustively researched compilation brings to life the personalities who founded and shaped the clubs and courses. It will be the book of record on Minnesota's illustrious golf history for anyone with interest in the local game. **Suggested retail price: \$39.95, [bit.ly/wyWg1j](http://bit.ly/wyWg1j)**





#### ◀ Light and Logical

According to Golf Galaxy, the new wave in lightweight carry bags are those with 14 slots to separate and evenly distribute the weight of all 14 clubs. The Sun Mountain Four 5 is one such bag. The Four 5 has a 10.5-inch top with dividers running the full length of the bag for optimal club protection and organization. It also features eight pockets (including a water bottle pouch and a velour-lined valuables pocket), plus the contoured E-Z Fit Dual Strap System, which adjusts to fit. While the Four 5 is lightweight and designed to be carried, its base fits on a riding cart. Available at Golf Galaxy. **Suggested retail price: \$199.99, bit.ly/xhHIwJ**

#### A New Frontier for Putters ▼

With a look that resembles the Starship Enterprise, the new Nike Method Core Drone putter can have you boldly going lower than you've ever gone before. The pros testing the Drone say "its incredibly tight roll is the first thing you notice," Longwell says. The center and wing-weighted club and lighter face prevents twisting of the face during a stroke, while Nike's polymer and milled steel groove technology is designed to create a faster forward roll at impact for better accuracy. "It's very easy to get on line," Longwell says. "The grooves roll it tighter to the ground—which, if you catch the lip, it's more likely to go in than lip out if it is rolling pure. It's pretty good technology." Available at Golf Galaxy. **Suggested retail price: \$203.99, bit.ly/xTqz2M**



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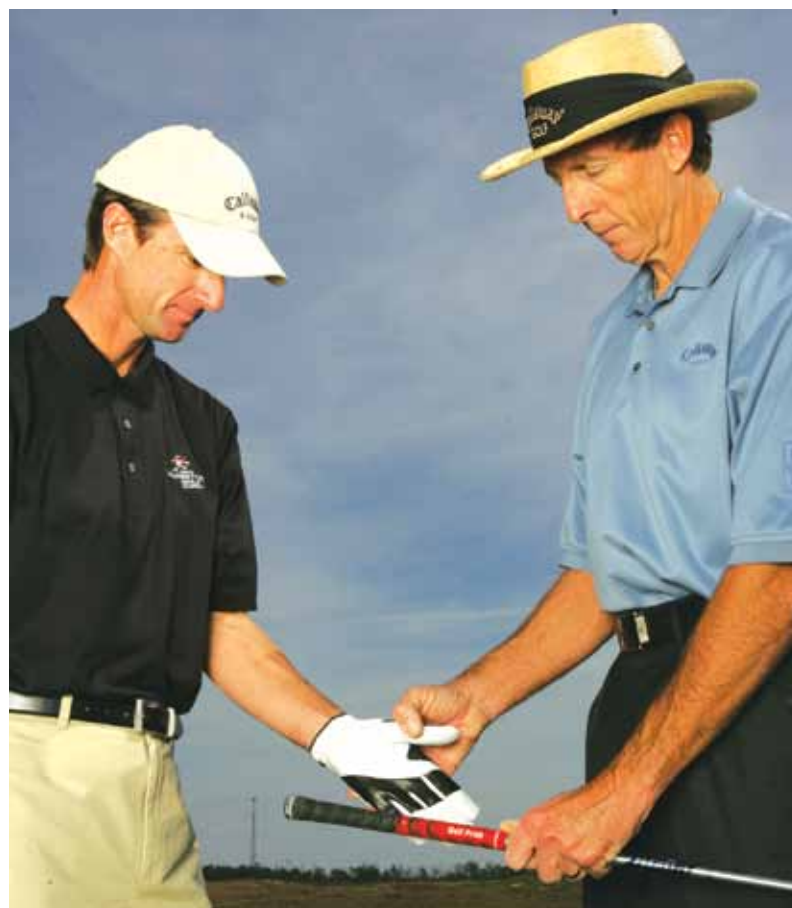
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*Joseph Oberle is managing editor for Minnesota Golfer magazine and the Minnesota Vikings RapidReporter for CBSSports.com.*

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# SONS AND DAUGHTERS

Three generations of Grand Rapids State Bank leadership: (from left) Steven Wilcox, Noah Wilcox, and Clair Wilcox (Steven's father).

**The thorny process of passing on a family business.**

**By Jamie Swedberg**

**O**n New Year's weekend, 2007, while less industrious souls slept off their revels, two bankers in northern Minnesota were moving into new offices. Steven Wilcox was leaving the president's office at Grand Rapids State Bank to become the bank's chairman of the board. Meanwhile, his eldest son, Noah Wilcox, was moving in, becoming the fourth generation of his family to lead the institution.

"My dad and I had long conversations, both personally and through our strategic planning process over the years, about what that succession would look like," Noah Wilcox says. "We did not make the announcement to the staff far ahead of time, but I think they knew that sooner or later that would happen. My dad came to work at 10:00 A.M. the first work day of the new year, and it only took until about 11:00 before somebody bypassed me and went to him with a question. He just said, 'Listen, it's not my call. It's not my team. You have to talk to Noah about it.' End of discussion."

Not all family business successions are so drama-free, Wilcox says. "We're very, very fortunate that we have a family that can sit down and have a conversation about redeeming somebody's stock or transitioning ownership," he says. "It can make for interesting Christmases. But I think you have to be willing to

have those open conversations. Because if you don't, there are concerns and needs and issues that don't get addressed, and at the eleventh hour, those things crop up and can really be a problem."

## **A Matter of Gravity**

One of the most common challenges families face as they hand down a business from one generation to the next is the emotional difficulty of relinquishing control.

"There are some people who want to just cut it clean and leave cold-turkey," says Earl Cohen, managing shareholder at the law firm Mansfield Tanick & Cohen in Minneapolis. "But what happens more often is Dad or Mom say they're letting go, they transfer ownership and control, and then they're there every day telling the kids what to do. It does not go over well."

That's what happened to Mark Halla, owner of The Mustard Seed Landscaping & Garden Center, a Chaska plant nursery. Halla was the third generation to take the helm of Halla Nursery, the business his grandfather started in 1942. His father transferred land and company stock to him, but then couldn't follow through.

"As much as we'd put in place, my dad just wasn't willing to give up control," Halla says. "And there were some insecurity



issues. My dad believed he should actually make as much money, with exactly the same benefits and more, as he did when he was actively participating in the business. He thought that any gain in the business, that he got large share of that value. While I was buying him out for about four times the book value, in his opinion he was giving it to me. It was two different viewpoints,

ily business and started The Mustard Seed. “Clearly, this was what I wanted to do with the rest of my life, and I knew that,” he says. “So it really was a good fit for me to continue on with the business. But I think I also just needed to be able to express my own individuality and not be underneath someone else’s control. It’s hard enough, I think, for most of us to have someone else

point where they may lack outside interests and may not know what to do if they’re not in the office. They also want to protect their legacy.

“They have to feel confident that if they do step away, the business will still go,” Morrison says. “That involves identifying and grooming successors. It’s not an immediate action; these things take a long time. And then training them and letting them take on responsibility so that there is a level of confidence that it will work. It seems silly, but we sometimes advise clients to do a bit of a fire drill: ‘Imagine I’m not around—what happens in this situation?’”

The ultimate fire drill is the business sabbatical championed by the transition services consulting firm Platinum Group, LLC, in Eden Prairie. Partner Steve Coleman explains that many owners and CEOs have trouble letting go because they don’t have a new interest or challenge to take on.

“They go through their departure ritual, but if they don’t have something better to go to, they’re back,” he says. “Gravity wins, pulls them back in. ‘Oh, I’ll just stop by the office, stop by the shop and see what’s going on.’ And the next thing you know, they’re in it up to their eyeballs, much to the unhappiness of whoever is in there after them.”

Coleman advises business owners at this stage in their careers to take a minimum of 90 days off to unplug and decompress. Before they leave, the execs give their managers a very clear set of business plan instructions, with rules about what they can and cannot do. Then they take off—to sleep, sit on the beach, travel with family, write a book, give presentations to colleagues, or whatever floats their boat.

When they return, much has changed. Usually, Coleman finds, the company has done better than it did while the owner was there. Meanwhile, the owner is full of new ideas and has re-prioritized, often becoming interested in philanthropy and community-building.

“When the time ends and the owner returns, we’ve found that it’s important to renegotiate roles and responsibilities,” Coleman says. “In an effective sabbatical, the managers keep the higher ground that they have been given as the sabbatical began, and the owner typically doesn’t get so much or

at all involved in daily operations. Their work very often has a lot to do with new business development, being an ambassador, traveling around looking for new ideas, new problems to solve.

Coleman adds that it is psychologically helpful for the owner to not reoccupy the same office. “They’re in the building, but they have a different office because they’re going to have a different role,” he says.

### The Next Generation

Richard Brown, CEO of JNBA Financial Advisors in Bloomington, became the leader of his family business in an abrupt manner that was far from ideal. “My mom started the company 30-plus years ago, and then my sister [joined her] the next year,” he recalls. “Then my sister and my father both



**“My mom was like,  
‘What am I  
going to do with  
this business?’  
I told her that I  
would do it,  
but I didn’t want  
to do it the way  
she did.”**

became ill within like a 30-day period. We were actually in a hospital waiting room when we had the conversation. My mom was like, ‘What am I going to do with this business?’ I told her that I would do it, but I didn’t want to do it the way she did.”

Under Brown’s mother, JNBA was a one-person registered independent advisory business. Brown’s mother saw every single client herself. But that could no longer continue. Brown reimagined the company as a team-based advisory business with far more growth

## FAMILY FINANCES

### The financial side of succession.

Acquiring shares and property is another piece of the family business succession puzzle—one that lawyers and accountants can help make simpler. Sheryl Morrison, principal at Gray Plant Mooty, says there are a number of ways an advisor who knows tax law can help business owners pass assets down more easily and efficiently.

For instance, she says, “If you give a gift, that asset isn’t included in your estate for estate tax purposes. So let’s say my business is worth \$5 million now, and I give it to my son. If I die 10 years later, and at that point my business is worth \$10 million, the fact that I gave the gift earlier means that it’s not in my estate. So that additional \$5 million of appreciation . . . [is not taxable]; if I’d held onto it when I died, I would have had \$10 million in my estate that was subject to tax. So there could be a benefit of gifting early.”

Morrison says if the family’s end goal is to transfer stock to the next generation over time, advisors often recommend giving stock to heirs in increments. Fractions of family stock are subject to a “minority and lack of marketability discount” for tax purposes, because they offer no control and can’t readily be sold on the open market. So stock given piecemeal ends up being taxed at a lower rate overall.

Tax advisors can also help family businesses time their gifts to their best advantage. “If I really wanted to sell my interest or part of my interest to my kids, now is a really good time to do a sale,” Morrison says. “My kid’s not going to be able to buy my shares outright. They’re going to have to pay over time. The IRS says if you do that, you have to charge reasonable interest. If I had sold my business in the 1980s or 1990s, interest rates were 8 and 10 percent. But right now, the interest rates for an installment obligation like that, for 10 years, is somewhere around 1 or 2 percent. That’s a very good deal for the kid, and it’s also a good deal for my taxable estate, because I want to die with less.”

—J. S.



Sheryl Morrison

almost like two different worldviews. I felt like I was purchasing something; he felt like he was giving it away. And I think that’s very common. Even though in business it might be an incredibly fair buyout, it probably doesn’t feel like that on the selling end.”

The situation deteriorated until a distraught Mark Halla left his fam-

exercising control on us. But when it’s a family member, it just becomes all that much more difficult.”

Even in the best cases, says Sheryl Morrison, principal at Minneapolis law firm Gray Plant Mooty, family business succession is often a long process. Entrepreneurs usually identify extremely strongly with their business, to the

potential.

"At that time, being a financial advisor was not my strength," he admits. "Running a business was. So within 60 days, I actually reorganized the whole thing. I had conversations with the employees. Most of them either I let go, or they decided to go a different direction."

What Brown did wouldn't have been possible without the vote of confidence from his family. And even then, it was a tough row to hoe, because he had no history with the company. Often, employees resent a new boss whom they perceive to have gotten the job solely because of his or her family ties.

"Family members who take over businesses often have to overcome the notion that it's just because they're the son of the founder, for example," Morrison says "That's why the grooming and training and such are important. It's also important that the founder instills and makes public the notion that this person is the successor."

Cohen says if children have an interest in joining the family business, they should start work in the firm early. "This probably should start in high school," he says. "It might be in the mailroom. It may be in distribution. It may be somewhere that they can use the limited talents that they currently have. You wouldn't put them in the finance department and make them the assistant CFO, of course. They have to start from scratch, and they have to learn the business from the ground up."

Cohen emphasizes that children of family businesses should always

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\*Headd, B. Office of Advocacy, SBA. "An analysis of small business and jobs." (2010). <http://archive.sba.gov/advo/research/rs359.pdf>.



get a college degree—in something relevant, if possible. And they should continue to get additional vocational training after college. He recalls the case of his college roommate, the scion of a packaging firm, who after attaining his bachelor's degree, embarked on a term at "cardboard school" to learn the technical aspects of his future job.

Many up-and-comers get jobs at other companies in their industry



**"Put things in place now while we're younger and clear-headed, and we're **not making decisions based on fear at the moment.**"**

before rejoining the family business and beginning to take management or ownership control. "I went and worked for a big bank out of school for several years," Wilcox says. "I guess I felt that was necessary for me to have real perspective on the value of a family owned business. When I came back to work, I didn't come back to work as the bank president. I came back to work in another capacity, and over time have gone on to acquire a pretty good portion of the shares of the bank, and am currently the president and CEO."

### The Devil is in the Details

Lawyers and accountants aren't the only professionals who can help guide family businesses through these transitions. In many cases, consultants who specialize in succession planning can offer valuable advice.

At the time of her father's death in 2004, Jessica Richards-Palmquist, co-owner of Jones Metal Products, Inc., in Mankato, says her mother chose to become more involved in the family business, deciding to take the role of board chair instead of being a passive owner. In 2007, she made her three children minority partners; she has since made them full partners. All three children chose to become involved in operations.

"We had been outside managed for a long time, so it was a big and difficult transition for us," explains Richards-Palmquist. "So we hired a family business consultant [Mary Daugherty, a University of St. Thomas professor and Family Business Center fellow]. We knew that we needed to figure out a succession plan, that our mother wasn't going to stay in her position as sort of chairman of the company forever. That was critical, because even if we weren't at odds over who was going to do what, or what we ultimately wanted to happen, it was difficult for my mother emotionally. So it really helped us that we found someone that our mother was comfortable with and could talk to, and confide things in, and would also listen to and take advice from."

Richards-Palmquist's sister, Sarah Richards, aspired to become CEO, but the board (including their mother) didn't immediately agree that she was ready. For a time, a member of the board served as CEO and mentored her. "That was very bumpy," says Richards-Palmquist. "And there again, our consultant really helped us. It was not smooth, and it hasn't been pleasant in many ways. We've gone through two managers, and now my sister just took over as CEO January 3. So we are finally there."

"Anybody who has a family business and is looking at succession planning should bring in an independent, trusted consultant to give advice and to evaluate the family members' strengths and weaknesses," Brown advises. "Some are good at some things, and some are good at others. It's simple if you take the emotions away. You'll never prob-

## CONTROL AND COMPENSATION

### What's due to non-participating family members?

One of the most challenging aspects of handing down a family business is finding ways to treat all the heirs fairly, whether they have chosen to join the business or not. Earl Cohen, managing shareholder at Mansfield Tanick & Cohen, says the problem even found its way into the plot of the book (and film) *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*. "One of the subplots was about a family that owned, but did not necessarily all participate in the management of, a very large Swedish concern," he says. "It's very common for one or two children to want to participate in the business, and for other children in the family to either not be available to participate, or not be capable of participating, but still feel that they're entitled to an equal share of the parents' estate. Without managing the expectations of that next generation, it is very common for a group of siblings to say, 'We all have a right to equally participate in the management of the company.' You can end up with a board of directors made up of siblings, none of whom can agree with all of the others, so that it stalls decision making, or worse yet, results in no decision making or bad decision making."

Compensation is an equally thorny problem, says Sheryl Morrison, principal at Gray Plant Mooty. "I've encountered situations in which the founder will blithely . . . leave the business to son 1, and then divide everything else equally amongst the kids, including son 1," she says. "The founder really has to think about what is it that he is leaving to the kids involved in the business. Did they literally earn it? Is it essentially that they're being compensated because they earned it? Or is it a gift to them? And if it is a gift to them, how does that fare with the other kids? If you distill everything down to dollars, the issue is, how do you treat everybody fairly?"

Dividing company stock between participating and non-participating kids is one option, but many heirs would prefer that parents leave business assets to business managers and compensate non-participating parties in other ways. "I would have never [divided our stock] the way my mom did it, because it put me in an awkward position, both financially and tax-wise," admits Richard Brown, CEO of JNBA Financial Advisors. "At the time, to divide the stock up into thirds might have mentally been the right thing, but ultimately, the person who is going to take care of the other two-thirds is me. So I ended up buying them out within, I would say, five to seven years of taking over the business."

—J. S.



Earl Cohen

ably make everybody happy, but it's better when it comes from an independent person."

Halla says if there's one thing he would recommend to family businesses so that their transitions might go more smoothly than his did, it would be to start working with a succession consultant early—far earlier than they think they need to.

"Put things in place now while we're younger and clear-headed, and we're not making decisions based on fear at the moment," he stresses. "Perhaps that

includes a mandatory retirement age. Perhaps that includes a stock buyback that's actually part of the bylaws. Maybe you can create a clear definition of how the stock is valued so that it can be gifted or purchased. What's most important is that the transition is actually planned 15 to 20 years before it ever happens. That makes sense whether it's part of the family or not." **TCB**

Jamie Swedberg is a freelance writer and a frequent contributor to Twin Cities Business.



# Telemedicine REACHES OUT

**Maureen Ideker talks about reaching rural patients with telemedicine, and her hopes for the governor's new broadband task force.**

**By Katie Westfall**

**D**uluth-based Essentia Health, a regional health care system and Minnesota's 15th largest employer, serves thousands of people in the smaller communities of northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Idaho. (The system logged more than 680,000 outpatient visits in its 2010 fiscal year.) Maureen Ideker, Essentia's director of telehealth, has a key role in keeping Essentia's patients connected with care. She helped start what's thought to be one of the nation's first telehealth programs in 1994 when she was the director of nurses at Tri-County Hospital in Wadena. Telehealth or telemedicine involves the use of videoconferencing and other electronic communications to serve patients remotely. Tri-County partnered with the University of Minnesota's physicians and developed telemedicine programs that linked rural hospitals to facilities in urban centers.

In November, Governor Mark Dayton appointed Ideker to his new task force on broadband. Ensuring access to broadband around the state is an essential part of expanding telehealth offerings, especially for residents that must drive long distances to see their doctors. And the cost savings can be significant. UnitedHealth Group's Connected Care statistics from a 2009 study from the University of Texas Medical Branch estimates savings to the health care system of more than \$4 billion a year with the widespread use of telemedicine.

*Twin Cities Business* had a chance to chat with Ideker about what telehealth services Essentia is offering and what the task force hopes to accomplish.

**TCB: What is Essentia doing in telemedicine?**

**Maureen Ideker:** [Mine is] a new position. I've been with Essentia only sev-

en months. The year before, the administration and some of the physicians got together and worked up business plans for four different areas of telehealth to get started on: behavioral health, emergency room, dermatology, and cardiology.

Tele-emergency room is where the ER doctors in Aurora, for example—a small [Essentia] hospital a little over an hour and a half from Duluth—are connecting up so they can get support from board-certified specialists in Duluth. They just hit the button [on the] wall-mounted videoconferencing equipment and connect, and then the board-certified doctor is right there. They do a little prompting. It has good audio speakers. There's a hand-held camera and a digital stethoscope that works with it. It travels over our secure broadband connection.

We are doing interactive dermatology sessions [via videoconferencing technology] with our two Essentia

hospitals in Idaho. These little towns in Idaho . . . are very remote. People have to drive a long, long way . . . in order to get service.

Some applications are easier to do over telemedicine than others. Some you really can't do. What you can do usually is parts of it. Initial examinations—lots of that time needs to be face to face. And then follow up visits after that—and this is generally speaking—can be done over telemedicine.

**TCB: Videoconferencing seems central to the way telehealth is done.**

**MI:** Yes. There are three kinds of videoconferencing equipment [at Essentia]: mobile, wall-mounted, or desktop.

Many of the videoconferencing cameras are . . . controllable on the provider's side so they can zoom in. For instance, maybe the physician wants to check what [a patient's] pupils look like.



## SPECIAL FOCUS

### TELECOMMUNICATIONS & WIRELESS

**TCB:** What does your job entail?

**MI:** I work with the doctors—let's say the board-certified emergency-room doctor—we work together to develop this program for tele-emergency room. And then I work with the family practice doctors on the rural side, and I help to figure out what equipment they're going to need, where they're going to put it, who's going to use it, what kind of training is needed for the nurses on the rural side who will be presenting the patient to the specialist. [I] also teach the specialists on how to use the equipment.

**TCB:** Essentia isn't new to telehealth, though. It's been providing tele-home monitoring for congestive heart failure patients for some time.

**MI:** [A scale downloads the patient's weight daily] into a centralized computer at Essentia that is watched by a nurse. [The data] goes through the telephone lines. There are little red flags that pop up if certain things happen. The patient answers some daily log questions like 'Are you short of breath?' There are certain parameters for every single patient. A lot of the time, if it's something as simple as a two-pound weight gain over a two-day period, that patient is called by a nurse practitioner. The nurse practitioner would probably modify the patient's medication for that day, or two days. Because with congestive heart failure, fluid builds up around the heart. The medication will take that off, but you have to get on it right away. With congestive heart failure, if that goes on for five days, the patient ends up in the hospital.

In rural environments, congestive heart failure is one of the main reasons for admission to the hospital. In Duluth, because of this program with Essentia, not many people come into the hospital with congestive heart failure if they're in this program.

**TCB:** Is serving rural areas the goal of telehealth at Essentia?

**MI:** Essentia has so many specialists in Duluth and Fargo, [but] in the rural sites, they have mostly family practice doctors and nurse practitioners and [physician's assistants]. In order to help support these rural practices, we're deploying telehealth. A lot of specialists are interested in serving the rural areas.

Not that the family practice doctors



Maureen Ideker

aren't doing a good job. There are not enough of them to go around. There's a scarcity of specialists in the rural area—they just aren't there.

**TCB:** In order to implement Essentia's business plans, do you feel that access to broadband or increased broadband speeds is going to be necessary in the coming years?

**MI:** In order to actually deliver telehealth services along with the other electronic applications, there needs to be adequate broadband. [Editor's note: Ideker declined to specify Essentia's broadband-speed requirements; it changes depending on the type of service and other factors.] One of the main goals I have for Essentia is to deploy telehealth equipment across all of our facilities: the hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities. And then to also get tele-home monitoring into people's homes in order to keep them healthier, monitor their chronic conditions, and keep them out of the hospital and keep them in their homes longer.

**TCB:** You were appointed to Governor Mark Dayton's Task Force on Broadband in November. What is the purpose of the task force?

**MI:** The task force is together to advise the governor and the state on what special considerations should be given for broadband and why. On the task force, there's all kinds of different representation: There's economic development, telcos, schools, tribal bands. It's very inclusive. I'm speaking for health care.

The task force overall needs to come to recommendations that will serve all of

Minnesota and put Minnesota in a leading position in the nation and world.

**TCB:** The previous broadband task force appointed by Governor Tim Pawlenty recommended 5-10 megabits/second upload speed and 10-20 megabits/second download speed. But at the time, only 18 percent of Minnesotans had access to these speeds.

**MI:** You can recommend, but there needs to be some kind of economic driver as well. There needs to be the state behind it saying, 'You know, if you do this, we'll give you a tax break. If your community has this, you'll be known as a destination.' The money that comes into Minnesota, we have to decide where they're going to put that incentive-wise.

**TCB:** In terms of delivering telehealth to people in rural Minnesota, what should be our goals?

**MI:** Telehealth is just one of the applications that broadband will be needed for in the future. Diagnostic images and even the business office applications—all of that uses broadband. So video-conferencing is growing, telehealth is growing, and you have all these other functions that have been happening for many years, that all need broadband. It's been coming gradually, but there is a big demand for broadband. Not only do you have to make sure you have enough to receive e-functions, you have to have enough to send. The task force will ask [these questions] for Minnesota: What should we have? What should be our baseline? What are we going to recommend for schools, for hospitals, for communities?

**TCB:** Are there patients that can't be helped in Minnesota due to broadband limitations?

**MI:** Yes, there are. It depends on how much [broadband] capacity they have in the town where their clinic is. There are places that can't do the broadband as easily, such as in the Arrowhead region and the northwestern corner of the state.

**TCB:** What do patients think about telehealth?

**MI:** I have been involved for many years with patient-satisfaction and provider-satisfaction surveys [for telehealth], and 99 percent say they are satisfied. [Patients] feel like they had the provider's attention. They appreciated not having to travel. They would do it again. It's reimbursed just like a face-to-face visit. When people are sick, they don't want to travel.

**TCB:** Is it reasonable to say that Minnesotans could save millions of dollars in health care costs with telehealth?

**MI:** Oh, billions! The national studies show billions and billions can be saved with tele-home monitoring and by having easier access for people in the rural environment. So they get treated faster, they get diagnosed faster. A 2007 *Wall Street Journal* article reported on a study that quantified annual savings for remote monitoring of chronic conditions in the United States as \$10.1 billion for congestive heart failure, \$6.1 billion for diabetes, and \$4.9 billion for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

**TCB:** So telemedicine is poised to grow.

**MI:** There are predictions of growth. Before too long, [25 percent of] visits that can be done virtually, will be.

**TCB:** Do other major health care providers in Minnesota have telehealth departments?

**MI:** I don't know of them. There are some working on it.

**TCB:** This hasn't caught on too quickly!

**MI:** If back in 1994 somebody had told me it would take 20 years before it actually was in full swing, I never would have believed it, because it just works so well. **TCB**

*Katie Westfall is a freelance writer and a frequent contributor to Twin Cities Business.*

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**LLD** - Local and long distance service provider  
**VOIP** - Voice over Internet protocol services  
**WHS** - Wireless handheld service provider

# Constant COMMUNICATIONS

Minnesota telecommunications companies keep your lines of communication open.

Compiled by Mary Connor

**T**he word “telecommunications” has a vaguely dated ring to it, even though it refers to a range of very relevant and cutting-edge technologies. The word may remind you of your office phone, all black, gray, and boring. But in the wake of rising VOIP adoption and integration of mobile and fixed systems, the phone on your desk can offer surprising new opportunities for collaboration and connectivity.

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 612-230-6800  
 accentcommunications.com

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 ➤ Telecommunications and data products, structured cabling, installation, service

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 763-528-2400  
 acomminc.com

**Contact:** Jeff Chapman (president); Jerry Chapman (vice president)  
 ➤ Telecommunications network design and implementation

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 4455 Village Lake Dr., Ste. 732  
 Prior Lake, MN 55372  
 952-992-0888  
 activelogic.com

**Contact:** Anthony Tanner  
 ➤ Networking and cabling, graphical management of calls and voicemail

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 4445 W 77th St., Ste. 102  
 Edina, MN 55435  
 952-224-5500  
 aexcom.com

**Contact:** Tom Fletcher (president)  
 ➤ Phone and voicemail systems; Iwatsu, NEC, and Adtran products; voice and data cabling

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 ➤ Hosted and premise-based IP voice, managed data solutions including T1, bonded T1, MPLS, EoC, and optical ethernet

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 10400 Yellow Circle Dr.  
 Eden Prairie, MN 55343  
 800-852-8935  
 amcomsoftware.com

**Contact:** Mike Devine (vice president, marketing)  
 ➤ Software for contact centers, emergency management, mobile event notification, and messaging

**AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION, INC.**

AGT • HRD

12942 63rd Ave. N  
Maple Grove, MN 55369  
763-416-1100  
ambuscom.com

**Contact:** Carolyn Morain (president); Nita Singh (founder and CEO)

- Telecommunications expense management, procurement, telemanagement outsourcing, carrier selection

**AT&T**  
WHS

4300 Market Pointe Dr., Ste. 350  
Bloomington, MN 55435  
800-246-4852  
att.com

**Contact:** Chris Handrahan (senior marketing manager)

- Mobile voice and data services

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651-344-9935  
betterwaysolutions.com

**Contact:** Andrew Boettcher (managing partner)

- Asterisk hybrid phone systems, traditional and VOIP PBXs, network design and support, software development

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bisinc.net

**Contact:** Tom Domini (director of sales)

- Telecom and connectivity products and services

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5101 Shady Oak Road  
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blackbox.com

**Contact:** Donna Warner (vice president)

- VOIP and data technology, customer contact solutions, remanufactured equipment

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**Contact:** Jack McDonnell (system administrator)

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WHS

294 Grove Lane E, Ste. 190  
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952-473-3100  
cacommunications.com

**Contact:** Marc Agar (president and CEO); Michael Agar (vice president of sales and

marketing)

- VOIP phone systems, Internet access, MPLS data networks, PRI/T1, POTS voice services, voice and data cabling, managed IT products

**CALABRIO, INC.**

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605 Hwy. 169 N, Ste. 800  
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800-777-9594  
centurylink.com

**Contact:** Tyler Middleton (vice president and general manager, Minnesota metro)

- Cloud services, hosting, Internet/data (ethernet, MPLS) networking, network management, managed applications, managed security, voice services, VOIP/SIP, customer premises equipment

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651-556-5656  
cerzan.com

**Contact:** Sandy Miezwa (sales manager)

- Web hosting, spam filtering, colocation, managed security and network services, e-commerce site development

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10 River Park Plaza  
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business.comcast.com

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952-252-2100  
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**Contact:** Mike Haigh (partner); Barry Todd (partner); Jenny Jeffers (business development)

- Technology consulting

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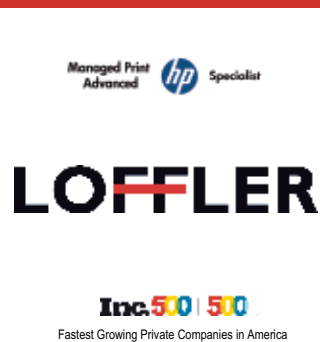
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**Contact:** Steve Ferry (executive vice presi-

dent and general manager)

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[mva.com](http://mva.com)

**Contact:** Wayne Miller (president and CEO)  
➤ AEV, interactive voice response, voice applications, telecom wholesaler

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**Contact:** Jamie Arvig (account executive)  
➤ Local, long distance, VOIP, SIP, Internet, T1 services, wireless Internet, hosted PBX

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**Contact:** Amy Wakefield (operations manager)  
➤ Computer telephony integration, VOIP, structured cabling

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AGT • APP • HOST • HRD • ISP • LLD • VOIP

4445 W 77th St., Ste. 106  
Edina, MN 55435  
952-960-1000  
onenetusa.com

**Contact:** Bob Brunmeier (president)

- Wireless and wired Internet, hosted phones and voice services, integrated voice and data, web and e-mail hosting

**PARALLEL TECHNOLOGIES, INC.**

HRD • VOIP

1815 Equitable Dr.  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344  
952-920-7185  
ptnet.com

**Contact:** Pat Siebenaler (business development)

- Network infrastructure integration, including network services, data center, IP telephony, surveillance, emergency response, digital signage, audio visual

**PERFORMANCE CABLE SYSTEMS, INC.**

HRD

7308 Aspen Lane N, Ste. 123  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55328  
763-493-4161  
performancecablesystems.com

**Contact:** Steve Haverstock (president)

- Design, installation, and maintenance of voice, data, security, and fiber optic cable systems

**POPP COMMUNICATIONS**

APP • HOST • HRD • ISP • LLD • VOIP

620 Mendelssohn Ave. N  
Golden Valley, MN 55427  
763-797-7900  
popp.com

**Contact:** Mark Gray (network design specialist)

- Design and support business-class voice, Internet and data services with an emphasis on communication network and phone call analytics

**REAL TIME ENTERPRISES, INC.**

HOST • HRD • ISP

10181 Crosstown Cir.  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344  
952-943-8700  
real-time.com

**Contact:** Rick Tanner

- Web, network, and Linux consulting, wireless

**RENODIS TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

AGT

476 Robert St. N  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
651-556-1200  
renodis.com

**Contact:** Craig Beason (cofounder); Praba Manivasager (COO)

- Telecom outsourcing, mobility and network services, telecom expense management, telecom consulting

**SELECT COMMUNICATIONS, INC.**

AGT • HRD • WHS

12975 16th Ave. N, Ste. 100  
Plymouth, MN 55441  
763-744-0900  
selectcommunicationsinc.com

**Contact:** Scott Alexander (CEO); Rob Alexander (CEO)

- Wireless voice and data products and services

**SOUND CHOICE COMMUNICATIONS, LLC**

APP • HOST • HRD • ISP • LLD • VOIP

P.O. Box 17010  
Minneapolis, MN 55417  
651-999-0888  
soundchoicecomm.com

**Contact:** Eric Osterberg; Kurt Unzicker

- VOIP equipment and network services

**SPANLINK COMMUNICATIONS**

APP • VOIP

605 Hwy. 169 N, Ste. 900  
Plymouth, MN 55441  
763-971-2000  
spanlink.com

**Contact:** Eric LeBow (CEO)

- Unified communications, contact center solutions

**SPRINT-NEXTEL CORPORATION**

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7700 France Ave. S, Ste. 400  
Edina, MN 55435  
952-703-7686  
sprint.com

**Contact:** Trent Gifford (senior manager, solution consulting and engineering)

- Wireless Internet, VOIP, wireless phones and plans, GPS navigation, MPLS, wireless integration, converged services

**T-MOBILE USA, INC.**

WHS

8251 Flying Cloud Dr.  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344  
952-944-3421  
t-mobile.com

**Contact:** Dan Stoner (senior business development manager); Tim Adams (vice president and general manager, Minnesota/Wisconsin region)

- Cell phones, accessories, wireless plans

**TCQ INTERNET CORPORATION**

AGT • HOST • ISP

P.O. Box 47114  
Plymouth, MN 55447  
952-277-1000  
tcq.net

**Contact:** Gary Whitehead (president)

- DSL, dial-up, website design and hosting

**TDS TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION**

APP • HOST • HRD • ISP • LLD • VOIP

3640 Washington Dr., Ste. 109  
Eagan, MN 55122  
651-289-3242  
tdstelecom.com

**Contact:** Sue Courteau (associate manager, market management)

- Business technology, local and long distance, high-speed Internet

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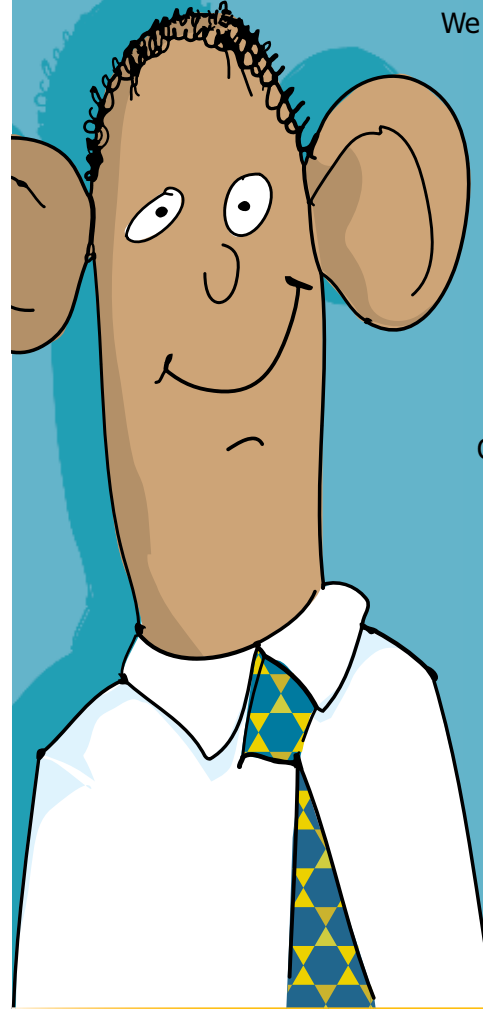
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**AGT • HOST • ISP • LLD • VOIP • WHS**  
3350 Annapolis Lane N, Ste. C  
Plymouth, MN 55447  
952-738-7000  
teleprovision.com

**Contact:** Jeff Olson (president)  
➤ Local, long distance, Internet service, network consulting

**TELECOM TECHNOLOGIES, INC.**

**AGT • HRD • VOIP**  
2935 W Service Road, Ste. 100  
Eagan, MN 55121  
651-456-5800  
telecom-tech.com

**Contact:** Vicki Houston (communications specialist)  
➤ Unused and reconditioned voice and data communications equipment

**TELEPLUS CONSULTING, INC.**

**AGT**  
10125 Crosstown Cir., Ste. 200  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344  
952-829-1000  
teleplusconsulting.com

**Contact:** David Steen (CEO)  
➤ Telecom consulting and contract negotiation

**TELESYSTEMS, INC.**

**AGT • APP • HRD • VOIP**  
2405 Annapolis Lane N, Ste. 220  
Plymouth, MN 55441  
763-420-4200  
tsimn.com

**Contact:** Chris Aase (owner); Tom May (account manager)  
➤ Toshiba VOIP phone systems, voice and data cabling, communications consulting

**3KEYLOGIC, LLC**

**AGT • VOIP**  
1801 American Blvd. E, Ste. 4  
Bloomington, MN 55425  
952-885-7810  
3keylogic.com

**Contact:** David Peterson (solutions account manager)  
➤ IP telephony consulting, project management

**TRANSCEND UNITED TECHNOLOGIES**

**AGT • APP • HOST • HRD • VOIP**  
2101 Kennedy St. NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55413  
763-463-1000  
transcendunited.com

**Contact:** Mark Lindgren (vice president of sales, Midwest region)  
➤ IT and communications infrastructure including telephone systems, IP video, data security, wireless and wired network infrastructure, storage, and data center management

**TW TELECOM**

**HOST • ISP • LLD • VOIP**  
5480 Felt Road  
Minnetonka, MN 55343  
952-351-2300  
twtelecom.com

**Contact:** Steve Hatcher (vice president and general manager)

➤ Business voice, Internet and data services, web hosting, managed security services

**UNIMAX**

**AGT • APP**  
50 S 6th St., Ste. 900  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
800-886-0390  
unimax.com

**Contact:** Todd Remely (director of marketing)  
➤ Automation, self-service tools, centralized administration for single- and multi-vendor voice systems

**US INTERNET**

**HOST • ISP • VOIP**  
12450 Wayzata Blvd., Ste. 224  
Minnetonka, MN 55305  
800-874-6837  
usinternet.com

**Contact:** Joe Caldwell (vice president of sales and marketing, cofounder)  
➤ Wireless, VOIP, disaster recovery, colocation and remote backup, spam filtering

**USMAC.NET**

**AGT • HOST • HRD • ISP • VOIP**  
1181 Homestead Lane  
Chanhassen, MN 55317  
952-402-9000  
usmac.net

**Contact:** Wayne Wenzlaff (principal)  
➤ Macintosh services including Internet access, hosting, and support

**VELOCITY TELEPHONE/  
USFAMILY.NET**

**APP • HOST • HRD • ISP • LLD • VOIP**  
4050 Olson Memorial Hwy., Ste. 100  
Golden Valley, MN 55422  
763-222-1000  
velocitytelephone.com, usfamily.net

**Contact:** Jim Hickel (president)  
➤ Local, dial-up, DSL, ethernet, DS-3, T1, fiber, integrated T1, data aggregation, v-mail, unified messaging, VOIP virtual PBX, IPTV

**VERIZON WIRELESS**

**WHS**  
505 N Hwy. 169, Ste. 600  
Plymouth, MN 55441  
763-595-2650  
verizonwireless.com

**Contact:** Scott Nash (director of business sales)  
➤ Wireless voice and data communication

**VISI**

**HOST • ISP • VOIP**  
10290 W 70th St.  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344  
612-395-9090  
visi.com

**Contact:** Bob Marquardt (director of sales)  
➤ Data center services including colocation, managed hosting, cloud and managed IT services

**VOICE & DATA NETWORKS, INC.**

**APP • HRD • VOIP**  
6981 Washington Ave. S  
Edina, MN 55439

952-946-7999  
voicedata.com

**Contact:** Joe Hines (CEO)  
➤ IP telephony, enterprise networking, contact center, unified communications, applications integration

**VOICENET TECHNOLOGIES, INC.**

**AGT • APP • HRD • VOIP**  
3140 Neil Armstrong Blvd., Ste. 301  
Eagan, MN 55121  
651-405-0909  
vntech.com

**Contact:** Chip Sullivan (president)  
➤ Custom interactive voice response software, business phone systems

**WINDSTREAM**

**HRD • ISP • LLD • VOIP**  
2996 East Center Cir.  
Roseville, MN 55113  
952-238-4551  
windstream.com

**Contact:** Pat Crosby (regional director)  
➤ Internet, VOIP, network security, managed and cloud services, data center and colocation

**WIZMO, INC.**

**HOST**  
6300 W Old Shakopee Road, Ste. 140  
Bloomington, MN 55438  
952-983-3300  
wizmo.com

**Contact:** Nancee Melby (executive vice president, business development and marketing)  
➤ Software-as-a-service models for companies delivering applications over the Internet

**XO COMMUNICATIONS**

**AGT • APP • HOST • HRD • ISP • LLD • VOIP**  
1200 Washington Ave. N  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
612-338-7977  
xo.com

**Contact:** Renate Cormier (branch manager)  
➤ Local, long distance, DSL, calling card, ethernet, managed hosting, wavelength technologies

**XORA, INC.**

**APP**  
2770 Blue Water Road  
Eagan, MN 55121  
888-449-7253  
xora.com

**Contact:** Chris Whidden (director, business development)  
➤ Mobile enterprise applications for employees working in the field **TCB**

If your company provides telecommunications and wireless services and is not listed here, please contact TCB special-sections editor **Mary Connor** at **612-336-9293** or **mconnor@tcbmag.com**.

# Super Lawyers®



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## THE TOP WOMEN ATTORNEYS IN MINNESOTA

A special section devoted to female attorneys from the  
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Rachel Peterson

Rebecca Egge Moos

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Carrie Hund

Robin Ann Williams

Janine Loetscher

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Kerri Nelson

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Congratulations to our 6 women attorneys in Super Lawyers®, 4 in the Top 50, and 4 in Rising Stars.

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## MINNESOTA THE TOP 50 WOMEN

An alphabetical listing of the women lawyers who ranked top of the list in the 2011 *Minnesota Super Lawyers* nomination, research and blue ribbon review process

**Ball, Stephanie A.**, Fryberger Buchanan Smith & Frederick, Duluth

**Berg, Nancy Zalusky**, Walling Berg & Debele, Minneapolis

**Bratvold, Diane B.**, Briggs and Morgan, Minneapolis

**Bremer, Cynthia A.**, Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart, Minneapolis

**Broman, Stacy A.**, Meagher & Geer, Minneapolis

**Burns, Ann B.**, Gray Plant Mooty, Minneapolis

**Carey, Jennifer L.**, Hanft Fride, Duluth

**Carlson, Kathryn Hipp**, Hipp Carlson Law, Minneapolis

**Christy, Angela M.**, Faegre Baker Daniels, Minneapolis

**Conlin, Jan M.**, Robins Kaplan Miller & Ciresi, Minneapolis

**Dale, Candace L.**, Dale Law, St. Paul

**Daley, Annamaria A.**, Barnes & Thornburg, Minneapolis

**D'Aquila, Barbara Jean**, Fulbright & Jaworski, Minneapolis

**Ferguson, Sally J.**, Arthur Chapman Kettering Smetak & Pikala, Minneapolis

**Fleming-Wolfe, Julie**, Attorney at Law, St. Paul

**Hein, Laura J.**, Gray Plant Mooty, Minneapolis

**Holden, Susan M.**, Sieben Grose Von Holtum & Carey, Minneapolis

**Honsa, Anne M.**, Honsa & Associates, Minneapolis

**Hunt, Kay Nord**, Lommen Abdo Cole King & Stageberg, Minneapolis

**Huntrods, Ann**, Briggs and Morgan, Minneapolis

**Karasov, Phyllis**, Moore Costello & Hart, St. Paul

**Kingsley, Karen J.**, Kingsley Law Office, St. Paul

**Knoll, Jocelyn**, Dorsey & Whitney, Minneapolis

**Lach, Susan M.**, Tuft & Lach, Maplewood

**Lee, Jeannine L.**, Leonard Street and Deinard, Minneapolis

**Loidolt, Cecilie M.**, Meagher & Geer, Minneapolis

**Martin, Kathleen M.**, Malkerson Gunn Martin, Minneapolis

**McBride, Katherine**, Meagher & Geer, Minneapolis

**McKenzie, Dana**, Wolf Rohr McKenzie & Gemberling, St. Paul

**Michales, Marilyn J.**, Marilyn J. Michales & Associates, Minneapolis

**Moos, Rebecca Egge**, Bassford Remele, Minneapolis

**Mrachek, Jacqueline A.**, Nilan Johnson Lewis, Minneapolis

**Newman, Kathleen M.**, Kathleen M. Newman + Associates, Minneapolis

**Niemi, Andrea K.**, Niemi Jerabek & Kretchmer, Minneapolis

**O'Gorman, Patricia A.**, Patricia A. O'Gorman, Cottage Grove

**Olup, Linda A.**, Olup & Associates, Eden Prairie

**Peterson, Kathleen Flynn**, Robins Kaplan Miller & Ciresi, Minneapolis

**Phillips, Penelope J.**, Felhaber Larson Fenlon & Vogt, Minneapolis

**Putney, Kelly A.**, Bassford Remele, Minneapolis

**Ranum, Mary S.**, Fredrikson & Byron, Minneapolis

**Rhode, Susan C.**, Moss & Barnett, Minneapolis

**Schanfield, Karen**, Fredrikson & Byron, Minneapolis

**Short, Marianne D.**, Dorsey & Whitney, Minneapolis

**Tataryn, Denise Yegge**, Mansfield Tanick & Cohen, Minneapolis

**Unger, Jeanne H.**, Bassford Remele, Minneapolis

**Van Dyck, Sharon L.**, Van Dyck Law Firm, St. Louis Park

**Van Sambeek, Mavis J.**, Lindquist & Vennum, Minneapolis

**Williams, Robin Ann**, Bassford Remele, Minneapolis

**Yerigan, Debra E.**, McGrann Shea Carnival Straughn & Lamb, Minneapolis

**Zurek, Barbara A.**, Meagher & Geer, Minneapolis

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## WORD FOR WORD

ELLEN BRINKMAN / BRIGGS AND MORGAN

### WOMEN MENTORS



The best advice I have ever received from a woman mentor is this: Credibility is your most precious asset. Guard it closely, because if you lose it, you cannot recover it. People have to be able to trust what you say and the decisions you make. You can be a tenacious advocate, a consummate confidante, a trusted adviser, but if you lose your credibility—whether before a judge, a partner, a client or colleague—you have

lost your power of persuasion, and you invite people to question your advice and decisions.

To rise to the top of a business or firm that may be dominated by men, you have to build relationships—with men and women—based on your credibility. Building credibility comes out of establishing a track record of being thoughtful and assertive, but entirely dependable. It comes out of knowing where to draw the line and not overstating. It comes out of proactively seeking those experiences that will push you out of your comfort zone to build your area of expertise, and showing that you can hold your ground. If you can successfully build relationships with credibility as your foundation, your colleagues will look to you as a person to lead the business.

BARBARA ZUREK / MEAGHER & GEER

### FROM BUSINESS TO LAW



Business professionals are in a good position to have their skills transfer to a career in the law. It can be a challenging transition, but well worth it. Those thinking about law school must consider things like:

- Your personal deferred income dependent on part-time or full-time law student status
- Goals for how you will use this new degree
- The rigorous academic demands, especially if added to the pressure of your day job
- The job prospects in what has become a tight job market for lawyers in the changing legal industry
- Cost. This year, Twin Cities law school tuition is estimated to be between \$24,000 to \$45,000 per year

Consider researching class profiles that law schools publish on the web. These provide interesting data on percentages of students coming directly from undergrad, those who are one to two years out of college, and those who are two or more years out of college. These numbers will help you to predict who your classmates (and competition) will be, and will give you a sense of how many, like you, come with career experience to their credit.

No matter which area of law a lawyer pursues, all lawyers tend to be analytical people. Certainly, litigators may differ from transactional lawyers, but the point is that to compete as a lawyer, it is critical that you assess your personality and your business style to find the best fit. Lawyers are paid to craft and understand complicated materials. They have to be thorough, innovative problem-solvers. Lawyers must confidently think outside the box. They have to challenge and expect to be challenged, and be prepared to defend and advocate their positions. It's possible you do these things already, every day, in your business.

I worked as an RN for 13 years before going to law school at age 31. I believed that a law degree would better equip me to manage my own professional destiny, and it did. I was able to leverage my medical training as I became a medical malpractice defense lawyer.

## Congratulations to Gislason & Hunter LLP Attorney

### Angela Nelson

On being named to *Minnesota Rising Stars* for 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Angela practices law in many areas of civil litigation. Her area of concentration is in medical malpractice defense. Angela rigorously represents medical professionals and medical entities through the challenges of litigation to achieve a just result on their behalf.



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## WORD FOR WORD

SUPER LAWYERS / MINNESOTA 2011

PAMELA F. ROCHLIN / ROCHLIN LAW FIRM LTD.

### MINNESOTA WOMEN LAWYERS (MWL)



MWL is an association dedicated to advancing the success of women attorneys. I joined the organization eight years ago on a whim, stemming from a desire to have more contact with women lawyers. I soon learned that the organization's members are from all demographics and areas of practice, and that the organization has much to offer women lawyers, and the community at large as well. As part of its mission to strive for a just society, MWL is committed to helping women and girls achieve success. For example, MWL members organize a Day at the Capitol, Girl Scout Law Day and volunteer at a sexual violence law clinic. There is also fundraising for domestic abuse programs and for the MWL Law Student Scholarship Fund.

The organization is devoted to encouraging members to take on leadership positions, helping members develop as leaders in the community and supporting them in their leadership roles. This includes our new Leadership Project, an eight-month, intensive leadership development program.

MWL also offers numerous opportunities for members to network with other members. While joining a committee is often the first step, there are also MWL yearly signature events and numerous events organized by MWL committees, chapters and affinity groups.

In 2010, MWL launched the Parity Task Force to examine the status of women lawyers in Minnesota and recommend strategies to reach gender parity in top leadership positions. (With Justice Lori Gildea's help, the state has now started collecting gender data on attorney registration forms.)

President Carrie Daniel Russell's theme this year is "celebrating the success of women lawyers," and this is not empty rhetoric. Members sincerely encourage and applaud each other's success. I have a deep respect for this accomplished organization and for its talented members. And I am proud to be an MWL member.

MARIANNE SHORT / DORSEY & WHITNEY

### MINNESOTA WOMEN IN BUSINESS



Taxes aside, Minnesota offers a business climate as hospitable as anywhere in the world. But unlike much of the world, it's an equal opportunity business climate. Our local business culture is as close to gender blind as any I've seen.

In part, this business environment is the legacy of many prominent Minnesota women business leaders—Janet Dolan, Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Sister Mary Madonna Ashton, Susan Engel, Barbara Carlson Gage and Sally Smith, to name a few. At Dorsey & Whitney, we see their legacy carried forward by strong women in senior corporate roles at U.S. Bank, UnitedHealth Group, 3M, Cargill, Hormel and many of our other Minnesota-based corporate clients.

They have all contributed to a corporate culture in Minnesota that is accustomed to successful women.

Minnesota's local culture is comfortable with women in business to the point that the novelty is gone. For many years, women have excelled in the law schools, MBA programs and undergraduate business programs, often getting their early start in organizations like Girl Scouts or YWCA. Now, women are coming out of those programs in record numbers. Moreover, the men with whom these women graduate are accustomed to working with capable, talented and dedicated women. I fully expect the "equal opportunity" aspect of our local business culture to continue well into the future, as these graduates become the faces of our community. The result is a business and financial community in Minnesota that does not give a second thought to dealing seriously with women as managers and entrepreneurs.

Given the economic and political challenges facing us in the 21st century, diversity in Minnesota's leadership ranks is a true business asset. There is room at the corporate table for anyone who possesses a keen intellect, fierce determination, solid judgment and an innovative approach.

#### BARBARA PODLUCKY BERENS

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**BUSINESS LITIGATION**  
ANTITRUST LITIGATION  
SECURITIES LITIGATION

Barbara Berens, a 1990 *magna cum laude* graduate of the University of Minnesota Law School, boasts a 20-plus-year career as an experienced, tough litigator who pays attention to detail and gets results in complex business litigation. Known as a talented writer and speaker with impressive people skills, Berens has successfully handled significant cases in and out of Minnesota. Representative clients include, among others, NFL players in *Brady v. NFL*; NBA players in the recently settled antitrust litigation; UnitedHealth Group Special Litigation Committee; VantageScore Solutions, LLC; Winthrop Resources Corp.; Allianz Life Insurance Company of North America; Prudential Financial, Inc.; Prudential Insurance Company; The Fox Group, LLC; U.S. Bancorp; and Kardia Health Systems. Berens clerked for U.S. District Judge David S. Doty.

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**EMPLOYMENT LITIGATION: DEFENSE**  
PERSONAL INJURY DEFENSE: GENERAL  
CIVIL LITIGATION DEFENSE

Barbara A. Burke has successfully defended numerous employment claims in state and federal courts and has responded to numerous administrative employment law claims filed with EEOC and Minnesota Department of Human Rights. Barb is a Panel Member of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis Office of Conciliation. The office performs conciliation and arbitration of employment-related matters. She has defended chiropractors, dentists, and mental health professionals in medical malpractice cases and board matters and attorneys in legal malpractice cases and defended and tried numerous bodily injury and death cases. Barb is Certified as a Civil Trial Specialist by the Minnesota State Bar Association and is a member of the Litigation Counsel of America. She is rated AV preeminent by Martindale.

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**FAMILY LAW**

Cathy E. Gorlin represents parties in family law matters, including custody matters and divorces with complex financial estates and business valuations. She has more than 32 years of experience litigating and negotiating family law disputes, including marriage dissolutions, post-decree disputes, parentage and custody disputes, prenuptial agreements, and living together agreements, and is experienced in alternative dispute resolution. Ms. Gorlin has extensive experience providing aggressive and effective advocacy for clients. She combines this with her knowledge of the most up-to-date settlement techniques and her creativity to help clients reach the best resolution of their disputes. She is the Editor of the *Minnesota Family Law Practice Manual* and has been the past Chair of the HCBA and MSBA Family Law Sections. She is dedicated to providing the highest quality legal representation.



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**EMPLOYEE BENEFITS/ERISA**  
**HEALTH CARE**

Darcy L. Hitesman (J.D., with honors, University of Minnesota) is a shareholder practicing in the area of employee benefits. She advises clients regarding compliance with the Internal Revenue Code, ERISA, FMLA, and state insurance laws. Hitesman represents for-profit, non-profit, and governmental entities. Her clients include third-party service providers, health care providers, plan sponsors, employers, and benefits consultants. Hitesman is a nationally recognized speaker to both legal and non-legal audiences on various employee benefits and FMLA topics. She co-authors *ERISA Compliance for Health & Welfare Plans*, published by the Employee Benefits Institute of America.

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**FAMILY LAW**

Anne is known for her professionalism, meticulous case management, thorough preparation, and exceptional knowledge of the law. With over 23 years of experience practicing exclusively in family law, she is a dedicated advocate for her clients and recognized for her expertise in dealing with the complex issues of family law including finances, business, property and asset valuation, and spousal maintenance. As one of the premier attorneys in Minnesota, Anne has been named in the *Super Lawyers* list every year since 2003, named in the Top 100 Women attorneys consistently since 2005, and named in the top three family law attorneys in 2007. Additionally, she has been recognized by her peers as one of *The Best Lawyers in America* in family law.

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**APPELLATE**  
**INSURANCE COVERAGE**  
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Kay Nord Hunt is an appellate advocate, practicing in Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Seventh and Eighth Circuits, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Having handled over 500 appeals, she hones in on the pivotal issues. She works with disputes involving securities, liens, insurance, contracts, family law and other civil matters. Working with trial lawyers, she handles certification hearings, motions to exclude expert testimony, for summary judgment and other dispositive and post-trial motions; prepares trial briefs; and handles mandamus or interlocutory appeals, all in civil matters. She associates with counsel or works directly with clients. She is a member of the American Academy of Appellate Lawyers, the 2012 Minneapolis Best Lawyers Appellate Practice Lawyer of the Year, in the Top 100 *Minnesota Super Lawyers* list, and an adjunct professor at the University of St. Thomas School of Law.

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**FAMILY LAW**

As a co-founder of Mack & Santana Law Offices, P.C., Laurie Mack-Wagner focuses on developing creative and practical solutions for clients seeking assistance in family law matters and divorce cases. Laurie is experienced in a variety of family law issues. After graduating from Florida State University College of Law in 1994 with Highest Honors, Laurie has efficiently managed multimillion-dollar business and family law litigation including family law litigation with modest estates. Laurie leverages her strong business background when faced with complex financial issues that often surround family law cases. Laurie is also a Qualified Family Mediator under Rule 114. The firm is of counsel to the law firm of Mansfield, Tanick & Cohen, P.A.

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**ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION**  
**FAMILY LAW**

Ms. Miller-Dolan founded Dolan Mediation, LLC in 2007, refocusing her years of litigation experience toward providing creative, effective, and cost-efficient alternative dispute resolution services for family law clients. Ms. Miller-Dolan is qualified and experienced in providing all types of alternative dispute resolution services, including mediation, early neutral evaluations (financial and parenting), arbitration, consensual special magistrate services, and various parenting dispute resolution services. Ms. Miller-Dolan specializes in resolving family law disputes ranging from marital dissolution, paternity, child custody, and parenting time to child support, spousal maintenance, and division of assets with complex financial issues. She is the current Chair of the Ramsey County FENE Program and an adjunct professor at the Hamline University School of Law.

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**FAMILY LAW**  
**ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Well respected as an excellent trial attorney, Kathleen Picotte Newman has handled family law matters for over 30 years. She has extensive experience in all aspects of divorce, including cases involving closely held businesses, complex valuation issues, location of hidden assets, income protection, prenuptial agreements, and non-marital property. Additionally, Ms. Newman brings her negotiation skills to mediation, where many divorces are resolved. Ms. Newman is Board Certified as a Family Law Trial Advocate through the National Board of Trial Advocacy and has been named in *The Best Lawyers in America* for 19 consecutive years. She is also a Fellow in the prestigious American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.

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**FAMILY LAW**  
**ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Linda A. Olup has been a family lawyer for over 34 years. She co-authored the Thomson West treatise on family law, which has been used as a reference by the Court of Appeals. Linda has been named in every *Super Lawyers* list since its inception in 1991. She has also been named one of the Top 40 Family Lawyers and Top 50 Women Lawyers in Minnesota. Linda was one of the first women admitted into the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and the International Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. In addition to litigation, Olup & Associates LLC has an alternative dispute resolution department dedicated to family law cases. The ADR department provides family law mediation, early neutral evaluations, parenting consultant, and parenting expeditor services.

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**INSURANCE COVERAGE**  
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Andrea E. Reisbord's practice has focused primarily on the handling of motions and civil appeals before state and federal courts, including the Minnesota Supreme Court. In addition to her own cases, Andrea oversees the majority of civil appeals handled by the firm's liability attorneys. Andrea regularly consults with insurance companies and other attorneys on insurance coverage matters and has brought a number of significant insurance cases to the state's appellate courts. Andrea is a member of the Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association's Insurance Law Committee and, for six years, served on the governing council of the Minnesota State Bar Association's Appellate Practice Section.

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**FAMILY LAW**

Shelly D. Rohr is a shareholder in the law firm of Wolf, Rohr, McKenzie & Gemberling, P.A. Her practice is limited to the area of family law, which includes marriage dissolution, post-decree matters, custody and parenting time issues, domestic abuse, harassment, and appellate practice. She handles complex issues and has extensive trial experience. Rohr is a former co-chair of the Family Law Section for the Ramsey County Bar Association (2000-2001). She has been named in the *Super Lawyers* list since 2000.

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**FAMILY LAW**

Lymari has been practicing law since 1994, focusing exclusively on family law litigation since 2000. She co-founded Mack & Santana Law Offices, P.C. in 2004, and the firm has been of counsel to Mansfield, Tanick & Cohen, P.A. since 2005. Lymari has successfully represented high-net-worth clients in complex divorce cases, and she is also experienced in paternity cases and post-decree actions. Lymari excels in providing strong, dynamic advocacy for her clients, combined with efficient, creative legal services. Lymari has been listed in *Super Lawyers* since 2007 and listed in Top 100 Women *Super Lawyers* in 2007 and 2009. Lymari speaks Spanish and English and lectures frequently on family law topics. She is also a qualified mediator.

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**ESTATE PLANNING & PROBATE**

Mary E. Shearen's practice includes estate planning, probates, trusts, and wealth transfer for clients at all levels of wealth. She provides customized, client-friendly services for individuals seeking estate planning help or help with estate services, trustees needing help administering trusts, and trust beneficiaries regarding trust issues. Mary has been named to the *Super Lawyers* list (2005-present), as one of the Top 100 Women Lawyers in Minnesota (2007-present), and as one of the Top 40 Estate Planning Lawyers in Minnesota (2007-2008). At the end of 2011, Mary was honored with *Finance & Commerce's* Top Women in Finance award.

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**EMPLOYMENT & LABOR**  
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Selected to 2012's *Rising Stars* list, Janet C. Ampe practices in business and employment law. She provides corporate and employment advice to a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and churches. She assists clients from small startup companies to international corporations in a variety of industries, including contractors and technical and medical service organizations. Janet works proactively with her clients to develop policies and strategies to help avoid expensive disputes and minimize legal risk. Janet served two terms on the Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association Board of Directors, is co-treasurer of the Rogers Rotary Foundation, and is a longtime chair of the Maple Grove Crimson Football Booster Club. She is a dedicated Rotarian and is active in her church and multiple youth sports organizations.

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**PERSONAL INJURY DEFENSE: GENERAL**  
**EMPLOYMENT & LABOR**  
**TRANSPORTATION/MARITIME**

Susan D. Thurmer began her legal career with Cousineau McGuire, subsequently went on in her practice to handle employment-related and bodily injury claims for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (formerly Burlington Northern Railroad) and Canadian Pacific Railroad (formerly Soo Line Railroad), and continued to represent several national insurance carriers. Susan has defended and tried numerous bodily injury, insurance coverage, product and premises liability, Federal Employers Liability Act, Railway Labor Act, automobile, and employment claims in state and federal courts in Minnesota and Wisconsin. In 2001, Susan rejoined Cousineau McGuire as a Shareholder. Susan is rated AV preeminent by Martindale.

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**FAMILY LAW**

Debra Yerigan is a shareholder at McGrann Shea Carnival Straughn & Lamb, Chartered. Debra has practiced exclusively in the area of family law since 1989. She believes that focusing on one area of the law gives her the opportunity to provide the best services to her clients. Debra has been admitted to the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers and is a member of the Family Law Sections of the American, Minnesota State, and Hennepin County Bar Associations. She is an adjudicative qualified neutral under Rule 114 of the Minnesota General Rules of Practice. Debra graduated from Hamline University School of Law.

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**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**  
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Kristine specializes in intellectual property and the commercial component of intellectual property, handling trademark, patent, copyright, and trade secret needs. She litigates, arbitrates, and mediates. She defends, enforces, and protects rights in the United States District (Federal) Courts and at the United States Patent and Trademark Office. She handles licensing and due diligence in acquisition work. Kristine is consistently recognized by her colleagues in Minnesota and across the nation for her leadership and excellence.

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**PERSONAL INJURY DEFENSE: GENERAL**  
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**ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Sylvia Ivey Zinn is an experienced civil litigator, having tried many jury trials, court trials, and arbitrations. In addition to an active litigation practice, she frequently serves as a mediator, participates in binding arbitrations, and is an arbitrator with the American Arbitration Association. Her skills have been praised in the *Minnesota Lawyer* and by the Judges' Choice Awards, and she has been recognized in the *Super Lawyers* list. Ms. Zinn has authored materials on civil litigation, including the arbitration chapter for *Minnesota Practice*. Currently, Ms. Zinn is a member of the Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association and served three terms on the Alumni Board of Directors for William Mitchell College of Law.

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**FAMILY LAW**

Rebecca Chaffee is a Partner at Best & Flanagan LLP and practices exclusively in family law. She graduated *cum laude* from the University of Minnesota and began her legal career as a law clerk for a judge on the Hennepin County Family Court. Rebecca represents clients in a variety of family law issues including child support, child custody, parenting time, grandparent visitation, marriage dissolutions, post-decree motions, lump-sum child support settlements, paternity actions, and adoptions. Rebecca also drafts premarital and postmarital agreements and cohabitation agreements to create protection for the assets and income of individuals. When settlement efforts have been exhausted, she has won favorable motions and trials in counties throughout Minnesota. In addition to her trial work, she has argued successfully at the Minnesota Court of Appeals.



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**EMPLOYEE BENEFITS/ERISA**  
**GENERAL LITIGATION**

Amy L. Court practices in the area of civil litigation, focusing primarily on employee benefit litigation and ERISA litigation. Ms. Court represents and counsels trustees of multi-employer fringe benefit plans in matters relating to the enforcement of the contribution and related obligations in collective bargaining agreements and trust agreements, subrogation, and withdrawal liability. In addition Ms. Court defends benefit plan trustees in claims for the wrongful denial of benefits. Ms. Court is a graduate of the University of St. Thomas and William Mitchell College of Law.

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**CLASS ACTION/MASS TORTS**  
**EMPLOYMENT LITIGATION: PLAINTIFF**  
**CONSUMER LAW**

E. Michelle Drake represents consumers and employees in both individual cases and class actions. Whether the claims involve your mortgage, your credit card, your cell phone, or your job, Michelle is committed to ensuring your rights are protected. Michelle has taken on some of the largest corporations in the country and achieved favorable results for her clients. She has the talent, the dedication, and the resources to fight for her clients, no matter how large the organization on the other side. Michelle has a nationwide practice and has been admitted to state and federal courts across the country. She graduated from Harvard Law School in 2001 and received her Master's degree from Oxford University in 1998.

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**EMPLOYMENT LITIGATION: PLAINTIFF**  
**EMPLOYMENT & LABOR**  
**CLASS ACTION/MASS TORTS**

Michele R. Fisher is a partner at Nichols Kaster, PLLP whose practice is primarily dedicated to national wage-and-hour class and collective action litigation. She has represented thousands of employees seeking to recover overtime, minimum wage, and commission payments. She also represents employees in other employment matters such as employment discrimination, retaliation, and sexual harassment. Ms. Fisher has spoken at numerous conferences and training sessions on topics such as wage-and-hour litigation, sexual harassment, and electronic discovery. She is also the Chair of the firm's Business Development and Marketing Committees.

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**WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

Jennifer M. Fitzgerald joined Cousineau McGuire in 2005 and devotes her practice solely to workers' compensation law with the majority of time spent representing employers, insurers, and self-insured employers. During her career, Jennifer has handled a great variety of cases, including simple back injury cases, multiparty contribution claims, death cases, and catastrophic injuries, including claims of psychological injury. She has represented clients before the Office of Administrative Hearings, the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals, and the Minnesota Supreme Court. Prior to joining Cousineau McGuire, Jennifer was a law clerk at a firm which specialized in representing injured workers. All of this experience gives her a unique perspective on the Minnesota workers' compensation system and law.

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**FAMILY LAW**  
**ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Sherri L. Krueger is a senior associate attorney with Olup & Associates. She focuses her practice on all facets of family law, divorce, and child custodial issues. With compassion, empathy, and respect at the core of her work, Sherri uses a practical, commonsense approach to helping clients overcome complicated family issues and emerge with the future in mind. As a Rule 114 qualified neutral, she also offers clients mediation services. Sherri's areas of practice include custody, parenting time, division of assets and debts, spousal maintenance, child support, paternity, never-married parents' custody, and mediation. Sherri is a member of the Minnesota Bar Association, Hennepin County Bar Association, Family Law League, and the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts – Professionals.

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**PERSONAL INJURY PLAINTIFF: GENERAL**  
**CONSUMER LAW**

Jody is a partner at Martineau, Gonko & Vavreck, PLLC. She and her legal partners are dedicated to providing skillful and innovative legal representation to individuals in the areas of personal injury, consumer law, employment law, and civil litigation. Jody is licensed to practice law in Minnesota and Wisconsin. She is also an arbitrator who presides over no-fault arbitrations in her personal injury practice. She has served on the Finance and Planning Committee of the Hennepin County Bar Association. She was also honored to serve as the Community Director of the Sherburne County Thrivent Board for Care and Communities. She enjoys assisting as a guest judge critiquing law students of the William Mitchell Negotiation Program.

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**CONSTRUCTION LITIGATION**  
**CONSTRUCTION/SURETY**

Holly practices mainly in the area of construction litigation with a specific focus on representing design professionals. She represents local and national companies of varying size in numerous litigations with claims ranging from under \$100,000 to over \$300 million. She has an in-depth understanding of the business threats and opportunities of her clients. She manages her clients' litigation with a view to providing effective and efficient services. Her experience includes negotiation of contracts and representation of clients through trials, arbitrations, appeals, mediations, and other pre-trial proceedings. She is a frequent lecturer on topics relating to construction claims, statutes relating to construction industry, loss prevention for design professionals, contract forms, and professional liability issues.

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**CIVIL LITIGATION DEFENSE**  
**EMPLOYMENT LITIGATION: DEFENSE**  
**APPELLATE**

Tamara L. Novotny is an officer with Cousineau McGuire. Her diverse practice includes handling claims of professional liability, employment, commercial trucking, personal injury, insurance coverage, motions, and appeals. Tamara has successfully argued before the Minnesota Court of Appeals and Eighth Circuit and has effectively defended clients in both state and federal court actions and trials. She has presented at the Care Providers of Minnesota annual convention, has spoken on Commercial Trucking Insurance, and has authored various professional articles. She is a member of the MDLA and Litigation Counsel of America. She is a graduate of the University of North Dakota School of Law and admitted to practice in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.

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**EMPLOYMENT LITIGATION: PLAINTIFF**

Rachhana T. Srey is currently litigating several class and collective action cases on behalf of employees for unpaid overtime and minimum wage violations and has represented thousands of workers since joining Nichols Kaster, PLLP in 2004. She was recently involved in two collective action trials in 2011, securing a substantial verdict for 300 employees in one of the trials. Additionally, Ms. Srey has handled a variety of types of employment cases including retaliation under the FMLA, breach of contract, and discrimination claims based on pregnancy, gender, race, national origin, religion, and age. She is a member of the ABA's Section of Labor and Employment Law and a member of the National Employment Lawyers Association. Ms. Srey has spoken both nationally and locally on topics related to wage-and-hour claims, the FLSA, and discovery in civil litigation.



## corner office

BY MARK W. SHEFFERT ■ INSIGHTS ON CORPORATE LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE, AND ETHICS

# Culture Eats Strategy...

... or feeds it. Getting it right is the key to your company's success.

**H**ow many times have you been involved in a strategic planning process that went like this: A small group of executives convene off-site to brainstorm strategy. In their own cocoon, they discuss the company's strengths and weaknesses. They then discuss market research and competitive analysis, try to identify

Then everyone returns to their daily routine while the new strategy gathers dust on the bookshelf.

Many leaders are adept at kicking off strategic plans with carefully planned schedules, budgets, processes, and PowerPoint presentations, but they forget that strategy is executed one person and one project at a time within the context of their company's culture.



opportunities and threats, and predict the future of their industry and their company's position within it.

The executive team then returns to the company, psyched about new strategy, markets, and products. It holds employee meetings and explains the strategy, as well as measurable objectives, tasks, and accountabilities. Sensing the enthusiasm of the executive team, but not fully understanding the impact on their jobs, everyone nods and returns to work with renewed purpose.

### Culture is Underestimated

I have observed many mergers and acquisitions that failed because leaders overlooked or minimized cultural differences in their organizations. Also, companies spend untold hours planning and writing strategic plans, but invest little time assessing, understanding, maintaining, or changing a culture.

Culture is perhaps underestimated because it's fungible and hard to define. Unlike financial or manufacturing metrics, cultural goals and metrics

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are difficult to quantify. I'll define culture as the blend of attitudes, values, and actions in an organization that create a collective environment which subconsciously drives the organization's ability to succeed. OK, my football and wrestling buddies are rolling their eyes, wondering if I have been inhaling glue.

Sorry, but we can't be so primal as to not understand that culture determines:

- Whether your organization is performance-driven or accepts mediocrity.
- If employees are engaged in work or simply showing up to get a paycheck.
- If a company has the habit of utilizing internal communication and teamwork, or promotes working within cloistered silos.

Culture even determines if a

**We can't be so primal  
as to not understand  
that culture determines  
if an organization  
accepts mediocrity.**

company is risk-adverse.

Because culture either supports or kills strategy implementation, it's one of the most important factors to nurture for sustainable, long-term success. Companies with great products positioned for growing markets and a foundation of solid financials cannot succeed if their corporate culture isn't vibrant and supportive. Culture either feeds strategy or slowly eats it, like being nibbled to death by ducks.

## Building Vibrant Cultures

It's easy to note companies with passionate and engaged corporate cultures (Apple, Southwest Airlines, Disney) and assume it's always been that way, but building a culture takes work and commitment. It is a process and not a project. Here are the qualities of a strong culture:

- **Inspired leadership:** Vibrant cultures are inspired by leaders who are energetic and engaged. They care about vision, values, strategies, products, employees, customers, and other stakeholders. They thrive on communicating vision, mission, and goals, and believe their job is to motivate employees and give them

the tools they need to do their best.

- **Real values:** When leaders walk the talk about ethics and corporate values, the values become genuine and modeled throughout the organization. If corporate values are just a list in the employee manual, they become meaningless. If executives make the values real in the people they hire, products they create, communications they share, and actions they take, then values become a part of the culture.
- **Authentic accountability:** If your corporate culture is one of stagnation and procrastination, the best way to jump-start it is to encourage accountability. When people know what they are responsible for and when tasks are to be finished (and have the resources to achieve them), they are empowered. They want to know what they can do to contribute to the advancement and well-being of the company and how they will be measured, held accountable, and rewarded for doing so. Empowered people nurture a corporate culture that gets excited about a new strategy, rather than viewing it as an intrusion into their world of inertia.

Unconvinced? Consider these thoughts about leadership from NFL legend Vince Lombardi: "Loyalty is the greatest of loves," he told his audiences. Lombardi cultivated "teamwork, the love that one man has for another and that respects the dignity of another."

In that light, another definition of corporate culture should be that it's what pulls you together in the workplace. Businesses with new strategies launch those plans best when employees support each other within a culture of genuine emotions, values, and teamwork. You know you've made it when your employees care about customers, coworkers, and doing the right thing more than they care about their coffee or lunch breaks. That's when culture nurtures strategy instead of eating it. **TCB**

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# A Business Model that Quintuples Your Money?

The Lutonix sale proves there's still money out there for good med-tech companies.

**S**pend time with entrepreneurs or those following early stage, private equity activity and you'll hear there's no growth capital out there—none at any price. This conversation is particularly pointed when it comes to medical technology start-ups. The hottest model for early stage investing in these parts during the 1990s is today, by most accounts, all but dead.

So what to make of CR Bard's \$225 million, all-cash purchase of Maple Grove-based Lutonix, a four-year-old company without a product in the market? Announced before Christmas,

1998, capital for early stage companies had been almost too easy to get. The best ideas and managers can still attract funding, he says, but all involved still need to understand just how scarce capital is and spend accordingly. For his portfolio companies he counsels "pay only for what you need and avoid the overhead" by outsourcing key functions to contract research organizations and others. He notes that late last year, when Pfizer agreed to buy Excaliard Pharmaceuticals (another of his firm's portfolio companies), it had completed three Phase 2 drug trials with a staff of

million. But they faced a large task. Lutonix was developing a ground-breaking, drug-coated balloon to treat peripheral artery disease, and the product was going to take a long regulatory path.

Branded as Moxy, the product consists of a balloon catheter that delivers the compound paclitaxel to the arterial wall in a single, short inflation. Paclitaxel is a chemotherapy drug once branded as Taxol that is now commonly used to prevent arterial restenosis, or re-blockage, of the artery. Moxy looks a lot like a standard angioplasty balloon, a mature technology, but the Lutonix version contains a special coating consisting of paclitaxel and a proprietary carrier that enables the drug's transfer to the arterial wall. In addition to effectiveness—dropping therapeutic quantities of drug right on the target—this approach minimizes chemotherapy entering the bloodstream.

Schmelter says that along the way Wahr made a point to keep updating the "strategics," meaning the large medical device manufacturers like CR Bard who are keen to buy or license innovative product platforms. And Bard's interest grew so intense last year that the investors who controlled Lutonix

concluded that they could orchestrate a private auction for the company.

Bard is a 105-year-old company based in New Jersey with just under \$3 billion in annual sales. The problem Bard shares with a number of its industry

peers is that it can't easily generate double-digit revenue growth. Bard also has a sizable business unit selling devices for interventional treatment of peripheral artery diseases. Bard's Lutonix announcement coincided with its annual investor conference, and Bard CEO Timothy Ring told his investors "the next big move in

this space—and by big I mean greater than \$1 billion big—will occur in drug-coated balloons. We see this disruptive technology as both an opportunity and a threat to our market-leading presence." Ring explained that Bard concluded that Lutonix had a "tangible lead" in this niche and was therefore willing to pay a premium. And it is costly—with earnings dilution estimated at \$.25 per Bard share in 2012—for a product two-plus years from U.S. launch, if everything goes well.

There is broad agreement with Schmelter's thesis of the new normal in life science venture investing. Paul Knapp, of Roseville-based Space Center Ventures, says he noticed in the data from PricewaterhouseCoopers' MoneyTree report that the value of VC-backed exits last year bounced back to 2007 levels and that median valuations upon exit have been moving up. He tells life science entrepreneurs to "Do more with less. Be more efficient with capital. But do it knowing there will be tons of people who will want to buy your company at the end." **TCB**

*Lee Schafer (lee@sargentadvisorsllc.com) is managing director of Minneapolis-based Sargent Advisors, which guides clients on growth strategy, mergers and acquisitions, and licensing and joint venture opportunities.*

**"Just find a way to do it. But do it knowing that there will be tons of people who will want to buy your company at the end."**

the deal includes an additional \$100 million to be paid by CR Bard upon U.S. clearance of Lutonix's lead product.

Lutonix's sale is proof that investors are interested in the life sciences space, according to the company's cofounder, Jay Schmelter of RiverVest Venture Partners. Limited partners in RiverVest's Fund II made 4.7 times the fund's \$5.6 million investment in Lutonix, and that will jump to eight times if clearance comes from the FDA. He says Lutonix is not a fluke. Closing the deal capped a year in which RiverVest distributed proceeds from four successful life science exits, generating returns in excess of five times investors' money.

Schmelter's firm is in St. Louis, but he has deep connections to the Twin Cities' medical device industry, including past work as an equity analyst at Piper Jaffray following cardiovascular manufacturers.

Schmelter says that up through

just six.

Another strategy of life science VCs is what the Boston venture capitalist Bruce Booth of Atlas Venture calls "go early to shape the DNA"—meaning working with the entrepreneur from day one by hammering out what key milestones are and how to reach them. RiverVest wrote the first Lutonix investor check—\$5,000 for common stock. An executive who had previously joined RiverVest, Dennis Wahr, helped assess the potential of forming a company around the Lutonix inventor, Lixiao Wang, and by the time RiverVest funded it, Wahr had become its CEO.

It's not like Lutonix was exactly bootstrapped, with three other VCs in addition to RiverVest collectively putting in more than \$35

## ON THE WEB

A *Star Tribune* blog, written after CR Bard's purchase of Lutonix, still forecast a poor 2012 in medical device investing. Read it at [bit.ly/tLpJsF](http://bit.ly/tLpJsF).



Jay Schmelter





# We're All Jablonski Now

Catastrophic injury coverage for high school students.

To: Jack Jablonski  
Sister Kenny  
Rehabilitation Center

Dear Jabby:

Everyone knows what happened to you on December 30 during a junior varsity hockey game at the St. Louis Park Recreation Center. Nobody knows what the future will hold for you, but based on your determination, the support of your family and friends, and the heartfelt best wishes from the broader hockey community, I imagine you will surprise. Your sacrifice and courage have also made an impact on the game.

The governing bodies of youth and high school hockey have already made

More than 17,000 hockey players have taken Jack's Pledge, promising to play hockey for the sport and not to injure and intimidate.

three changes in the rules: The penalties for checking from behind, boarding, and contact to the head all have increased significantly. The Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) adopted these changes with unprecedented speed and has posted a video on their website showing the appropriate hockey behavior ([mshsl.org/mshsl/hockeyvideo.asp](http://mshsl.org/mshsl/hockeyvideo.asp)). All of these changes have been greeted as long overdue by the grand guru of hockey, Jack Blatherwick, and the unofficial spokesman for the State of Hockey, Lou Nanne.

And you motivated people to take "Jack's Pledge," by which players

and teams promise to play hockey for the sport and not to injure and intimidate. More than 17,000 hockey players from around North America and Europe have already taken the pledge ([jackspledge.com](http://jackspledge.com)).

Ice hockey is classified as a "collision sport" by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and statistics indicate that ice hockey injuries ranked third after basketball and soccer in emergency room visits. As one might expect, almost all serious hockey injuries are the result of collisions occurring in games, not practice. One of the leading experts in ice hockey injuries, Michael Stuart, chief medical officer for USA Hockey and vice chair of orthopedic surgery at the Mayo Clinic, has noted that the risk of spinal cord injury appears to be increasing and is higher in hockey than in football. Dr. Stuart has written for some time about the necessity of strictly enforcing rules regarding checking from behind, charging, and boarding. All of these are warnings that should have been heeded earlier, but will be now.

Your injury, and your journey from the injury, highlight another issue: catastrophic insurance coverage. Currently, member schools of the Minnesota State High School League are provided with catastrophic insurance coverage for all students in grades 7–12 who participate in MSHSL-approved interscholastic athletic and fine arts activities. According to its website ([mshsl.org](http://mshsl.org)), since 1984, the league has paid more than \$5.6 million for this insurance. A summary of the insur-

ance plan indicates that there is a lifetime plan maximum of \$2 million, subject to a \$50,000 deductible, and a limit on extended care facility spending of \$365,000 per year (with a home

health care maximum of \$125,000 per year). Injuries so catastrophic that they exhaust these lifetime limits are rare.

I ran some of my questions by Scott Lynch, chief legal officer at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. He pointed out to me that the Afford-

And in this case, the state could establish excess coverage with a deductible equal to that already provided by the Minnesota State High School League. This type of excess coverage would be affordable and, one hopes, rarely needed. The thought of a family pull-



Jack Jablonski joined fellow Benilde-St. Margaret teammates on the ice after they won the boys' high school hockey Section 6AA title on February 29.

able Care Act, although not fully in effect for a couple of years, outlawed lifetime limits in any health plan or insurance policy issued or renewed after September 2010. Annual limits are to be gradually phased out before 2014. But I note two precautions; first, that legislation has an uncertain judicial and legislative future; and second, insurance companies in general are still allowed to rely upon coverage limits. And what happens to an uninsured student?

I think it is time for the State of Minnesota, the State of Hockey, to be the insurer of last resort for catastrophic injuries suffered by all young students engaged in high school-approved activities. Most of my insurance contacts tell me that providing excess coverage is generally very inexpensive; it is first-dollar coverage that is really expensive.

ing together to aid a catastrophically injured member, while at the same time facing an uncertain catastrophic financial issue many years down the road, is something that Minnesota should not tolerate.

Let's call upon our State of Hockey to assemble the relevant information and establish an excess catastrophic loss policy for every student in Minnesota. Call it the Jablonski Law.

Vance K. Opperman,  
A Hockey Dad

Vance Opperman ([vopperman@key-investment.com](mailto:vopperman@key-investment.com)) is owner and CEO of MSP Communications, which publishes Twin Cities Business.

## ON THE WEB

Learn more about Jack's progress or donate to the Jack Jablonski Fund at [jabby13.com](http://jabby13.com).



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