

BRIEFS

How to find your polling place

The Minnesota Secretary of State's Web site has an easy to use tool to find out where your vote.



Election Notebook

It can be accessed at <http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us/>

You simply type in your county or zip code and it leads you through steps to find the exact location of your polling place. It also tells you which candidates will be on your ballot.

— The Free Press

New accounting system bugging U

MINNEAPOLIS — The University of Minnesota is trying to squash some bugs in a \$50 million accounting system.

The new Enterprise Financial System handles all of the university's business.

Whether it's a payment to an employee, or a payment to a vendor, everything passes through the EFS.

The main problem seems to be that the system is really complex. But users say there have been other problems as well, such as data errors, and some don't fully trust the balances they're seeing for accounts they use.

Financial officials say they understand the concerns, and say they're doing their best to fix the problems and make the system easier to use.

Chief Financial Officer Richard Pfitzenreuter says the last time the university switched accounting systems was in 1991, and it took two years to iron out the bugs.

Hillary Clinton returning to state

DULUTH — Sen. Hillary Clinton is returning to Minnesota for some Election Eve campaigning on behalf of Barack Obama and DFL Senate candidate Al Franken.

Clinton will join Franken at an Obama-Franken Get-Out-The-Vote rally in Duluth on Monday.

Details will be announced when they're confirmed. Sen. Amy Klobuchar also will speak at the rally.

Clinton was in Minnesota on Oct. 21 for two campaign rallies — one in Minneapolis for Franken and one on the Iron Range for Obama.

Her husband, former President Bill Clinton, was in Minneapolis last week for an Obama-Franken rally.

SPCO to celebrate 50th anniversary

ST. PAUL — The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra is going worldwide to celebrate its 50th anniversary season.

The SPCO will host an International Chamber Orchestra Festival in the Twin Cities in January.

Three European orchestras and one from the U.S. will join the SPCO for 17 concerts over four weeks.

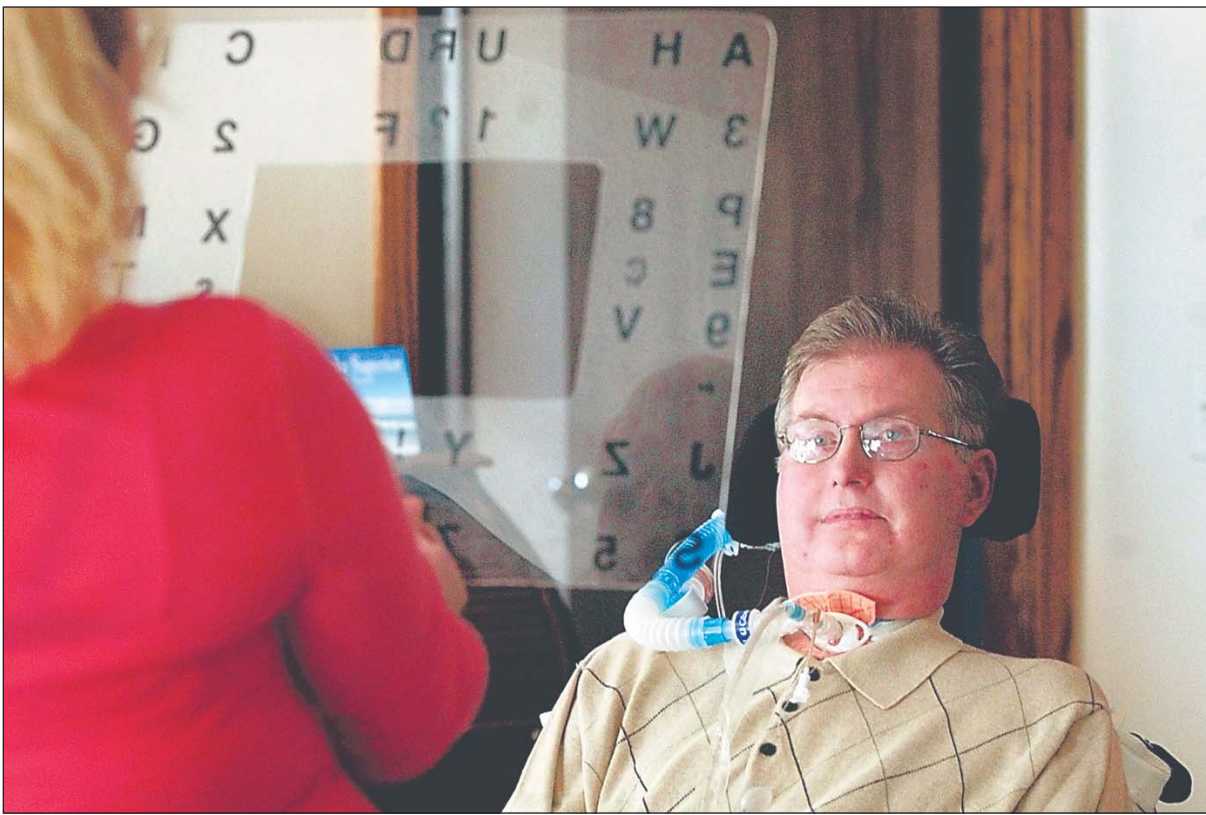
The festival runs Jan. 8-30. Concerts will be performed at nine venues, including the Ordway Center and the SPCO Center in downtown St. Paul.

Each of the visiting orchestras will have one week in residency.

Programs will include baroque music, works by Beethoven and Mozart and modern pieces.

— The Associated Press

Comfort in words



Photos by Pat Christman

Don Roberts communicates by directing his eyes to certain places on a letterboard, which personal care attendant Lori Steen is holding for him. When she names the right letter, he blinks; if she says the wrong letter, he opens his eyes wide.

Pastor Don Roberts battles Lou Gehrig's Disease shares hope, inspiration with new book

By Sara Gilbert Frederick
Special to The Free Press

MANKATO — The foreword was the hardest part for Don Roberts to write.

The devotions that make up the bulk of Roberts' new book, "Words of Hope in the Midst of Lou Gehrig's Disease," had been written one at a time for the Bethlehem Lutheran Church's monthly newsletter during the past six years. When he was persuaded to put them all together in a book, it was just the foreword he had left to compose.

But writing the foreword meant that Roberts had to look backward.

He had to write about recognizing symptoms that seemed suspicious. He had to write about being diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease. He had to write about resigning his post as pastor at Bethlehem Lutheran. He had to write about deciding to

be put on a ventilation tube and losing his ability to actually speak with those around him.

"It brought back painful memories to me," he said, each word dictated one letter at a time by the movement of his eyes across a letterboard held in front of him. "I have been through much with this illness. For instance, I used to be a jogger. I don't purposefully forget what it was like, but I don't think about it every day."

He prefers to think about it hopefully, which is why he wrote "Words of Hope." It's also why he'll be at the 88th annual Nordic Bazaar on Wednesday at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, where his book will be available for sale.

"I hope it will encourage people who are going through rough times," he says. "It may or may not be an illness, but everyone goes through rough times. I hope this book will help them."



Don Roberts with his wife, Bonnie. They learned how to use the letterboard together before Roberts was put on a ventilator in 2000.

If You Go

What
Nordic Bazaar
Where
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Mankato
When
10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Wednesday
Book information
"Words of Hope in the Midst of Lou Gehrig's Disease" by Don Roberts will be available at the church office or by contacting Words of Hope, 1609 James Drive, North Mankato, MN 56003

Roberts has lived with ALS for 13 years. He is in a wheelchair, unable to move. He cannot speak out loud and can only communicate with his eyes. Even his breathing is controlled by a ventilator, which has been keeping him alive since 2000.

But his limitations are only physical.

"He still has the same wonderful sense of humor that's he's always had," says Lori Ruthenbeck, a long-time friend and member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. "His mind is still absolutely active and clear."

Please see ROBERTS, Page B2

ASK US

Arena officials removed bins due to concerns

Q: What happened to the bright-red steel collection boxes for old clothes, shoes and linens that were set out about town not long ago in the interest of recycling? They seem to have disappeared, at least the one prominently visible next to the All Seasons Arena. It was well used. Did the business model for this enter-

prise fail?
A: No, All Seasons Arena manager Paul Ostoff decided to remove the collection bin "out of respect for the organizations that we have currently in the community that are providing those types of services."

Thrift stores, specifically ones operated by Minnesota Valley Action Council and

the Salvation Army, have said the company, U'SAGain, is diverting clothes and money from local families and nonprofits. The company has said that hasn't been proven and says its boxes are a good way to save clothes from landfills.

Initially, Ostoff agreed. It also helped that the arena received 2 cents per pound of clothing in the bin, which

averaged about 400 pounds per week. That's \$416 per year, which would have been spent on helping disadvantaged youth play hockey.

But Ostoff said the arena is "pretty sensitive to the needs of the community" and decided the alleged harm to local residents outweighed the cash.

Please see ASK US, Page B3

Asbestos crimps library's plans

Carpeting project hits major snag

By Brian Ojanpa
Free Press Staff Writer

WASECA — Asbestos, that nagging bugaboo in older buildings, has put a crimp in recarpeting plans for the Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library and raised a question regarding who will pay.

When workers went to remove the 19-year-old carpeting, asbestos tile was discovered underneath in older sections of the building.

That means asbestos abatement procedures must be done before the new carpeting is installed, and that has caused some confusion over how the total cost of the project shall be paid.

The library is the main branch of a nine-library cooperative involving Le Sueur County, Waseca County and the city of Waseca. Each has contributed financially to the Waseca facility, per state law.

Each city where libraries are located is responsible for library services and building maintenance, according to the library system's Joint Powers Board agreement.

Which entity or entities pay for carpet replacement is less clear.

The recarpeting would cost an estimated \$52,000 — nearly \$38,000 for carpeting and about \$14,000 for asbestos abatement.

Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library Director Theresa Meadows said the library would be closed for about a week once work began.

"That's the best estimate we have right now, but there's a good chance it could be longer," she said.

The Waseca City Council is expected to act on the issue at an upcoming meeting.

Antique show draws in die-hards

By Brian Ojanpa
Free Press Staff Writer

MANKATO — As antique aficionados know, there is junk, and there is junkie.

So it was at Madison East Center during the weekend, where exhibitors of antique collectibles crammed the mall, offering vintage esoterica ranging from beer bottles and baseball cards to old maps and period pencils.

There was pop-culture quirkiness (a pair of stiletto-heeled women's sneakers) and the once-common-but-now-remarkable (bygone era strings of Christmas lights that actually were made in the U.S.).

And there were Harold and Barbara Schwichtenberg of Waseca, who harbor a passion for a particular collectible — old bottle openers.

Harold Schwichtenberg was all smiles after scoring a cast iron elephant, circa 1930s, that had been fashioned into an opener.

Please see ANTIQUES, Page B3

OBITUARIES

Francis W. 'Frank' Ryan

Francis William Ryan, 87, of Mankato, died peacefully on Saturday, November 1, 2008, the feast of All Saints, at Immanuel St. Joseph's Hospital in Mankato surrounded by his loving family.



Mass of Christian Burial will be 2:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 5, 2008 at Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Church with Fr. Thomas Ryan, C.S.P. officiating. Burial will be in Calvary Cemetery in Mankato. Visitation will be from 4-8 p.m., Tuesday at Mankato Mortuary with a 7:00 p.m. prayer service and sharing of memories. Visitation will continue one hour prior to the service at the Church on Wednesday. In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to the School Sisters of Notre Dame, the Schola Foundation, or Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Church.

Frank was born on September 12, 1921, in Bird Island, MN, to Francis J. and Elizabeth (Carr) Ryan. He graduated from St. Mary's High School in Bird Island and went on to graduate from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. He served his country in the United States Army Air Corps during WWII from Feb 1, 1943, until November 25, 1945. He was united in marriage to Genevieve Schmelz on October 14, 1943, at the Church of the Incarnation in Minneapolis. He went into business with his father at Ryan Grain and Feed Elevator in Bird Island from 1945 until 1958. He was subsequently employed by the Ralston Purina Company as a District Manager for 27 years before his retirement in 1983.

Frank was an active member at Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Church for many years. He sang in the St. Cecilia Choir, funeral choir, and volunteered as a eucharistic minister at ISJ hospital. He served as President of Mankato Serra Club, a Catholic organization promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life, as Governor of District 7 Serra, and received the Thomas P. Coughlan distinguished Serran award. He also served as a Guardian Ad Litem for Blue Earth County.

He received the Winona Diocese Bishop's Award for Catholic Action and the Knight of St. Gregory the Great Award. Very involved with Mankato Area Catholic Schools, he served on the MACS Board and received the Loyola High School Hall of Fame Award. He was also a member of the Knights of Columbus, the Board of Directors for the School Sisters of Notre Dame, and the St. Thomas University Alumni Association. He was a recipient of the WCCO Good Neighbor Award.

Frank was a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He is survived by his wife, Genevieve Ryan of Mankato; children, Mary Jane Ryan-Connelly and her husband Bill of Grass Valley, CA, Fr. Thomas Ryan, C.S.P. of Washington, D.C., Daniel Ryan and his wife Mary Claire of Brainerd, Michael Ryan and wife Pamela of St. Paul, and Kevin P. Ryan and wife Sharon George of Columbus, OH; 10 grandchildren, Jan Olsen, Ryan Reed, Andrew and Colin Ryan, Brigid Ryan-Ling, Courtney Ryan-Schmidt, Megan Ryan, Nicole Ryan, Kellan Ryan, and Jacinta Ryan; five great-grandchildren, Conner and Gavin Olsen, Caleb and Emmett Ling, and Addison Ryan; nephews, Jim and John Sanger; niece, Mary Colleen Meier.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Dolores Sanger; brother-in-law, Warren; and brother, James.

Carol Tostenson

Carol W. Tostenson, 74, of North Mankato, died Saturday, November 1, 2008 at her son's home in Norseland, MN. Funeral services will be 1:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 5, 2008 at Hosanna Lutheran Church in Mankato. Visitation will be from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Tuesday at Woodland Hills Funeral Home and will continue one hour before services at the church.



Interment will be in Scandia Grove Lutheran Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorials are preferred to Hosanna Lutheran Church Building Fund or I.S.J. Hospice.

Carol Winnifred (Currier) Tostenson was born in Grandby Township on December 21, 1933, at Union Hospital, New Ulm, to Ralph David Currier, and Elva L. (McCracken) Currier. Carol was baptized and confirmed at Swan Lake Lutheran Church, Brighton Township, August 1948. She attended Grammar School at District 21 and Nicollet Public High School graduating in 1951. She graduated from Mankato Teachers College with a provisional license and taught Elementary School in Gibbon from 1954 to 1957. Carol married William E. Tostenson, December 27, 1956, and they farmed in the rural Nicollet area for 28 years. Carol went on to graduate from Mankato State University receiving her degree in Elementary Education in 1971. She taught in Gaylord, St. Peter and Nicollet Public Schools. During her life, Carol was active in PTA and the Nicollet School Board. Carol was elected President of the District Six PTA Board. Other activities included Women of ELCA, Sunday School Superintendent and Teacher at Scandian Grove Lutheran Church. She was also active in Home Extension and 4-H. After retirement, Carol enjoyed traveling, water aerobics, Bible studies and many activities at Hosanna Lutheran Church in Mankato.

She was preceded in death by her husband, William, parents, Ralph and Elva Currier, sister, Louise Currier and granddaughter, Meghan Manino.

She is survived by brothers, H. David Currier, Killeen, TX; Roger D. (Lois) Currier, Nicollet; sister, Kathleen M. (Currier) Kennedy, Walnut Creek, CA. She is also survived by her children, Richard, Nicollet; Dwight, (Tara), Nicollet; Diane, (Sam) Manino, Hesperia, MI; Susan, (Paul) Boettcher, Mankato; Jean, (Gary) Noren, Mankato; John, (Samantha), United States Air Force, Ogden, UT; and close family friend Greg Rueff, North Mankato; fifteen grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Robert Kreutzer

Robert A. Kreutzer, 95, of Mankato, died Saturday, Nov. 1, 2008 at Hillcrest Health Care Center in Mankato. A family service will be held with burial in Glenwood Cemetery in Mankato. Visitation is 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday at Mankato Mortuary.

Wayne Kramer

Wayne M. Kramer, 65, of Arlington, died Sunday, Nov. 2, 2008 at the Golden Living Center-West in Rochester. Services are 10 a.m. Wednesday at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Arlington, with burial in St. Michael's Cemetery in Milroy at 2:15 p.m.. Visitation is 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Arlington.

Royal E. 'Torky' Schwichtenberg

Royal E. Schwichtenberg, 71, of Mapleton, died Friday, October 31, 2008 at his home.



Funeral service will be held at 1:00 p.m., Thursday, November 6, 2008 at Medo Baptist Church rural Mapleton with Chaplain Jacek Saroka officiating. Burial will be in Beauford Morrow Cemetery. Visitation will be held one hour before the service on Thursday. Memorials are welcome. Mankato Mortuary is in charge of arrangements.

Royal E. Schwichtenberg was born January 3, 1937, to John and Veronica (Birr) Schwichtenberg in rural Mapleton. Royal enjoyed fishing, playing cards, riding on the truck with Ray and spending time with his great nieces and nephews.

Royal is survived by his brother, Raymond Schwichtenberg; sister Marie McDonald; sister-in-law, Lee Schwichtenberg all of Mapleton; nieces and nephews, Tony Schwichtenberg, Robin (Michael) Alton, Randy Schwichtenberg, Vicki (Bill) Abdo, Eric (Lisa) Schwichtenberg, and many other nieces and nephews; great nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; six brothers, Oscar, Bill, Jack, Ralph, Jay, Edmund; two sisters, Lenora, Louise, and infant Veronica.

John Eustermann

Dr. John Eustermann, 90, of Mankato, died Saturday, Nov. 1, 2008 at Laurel's Edge Assisted Living in Mankato. Services are 11 a.m. Wednesday at Ss. Peter and Paul's Catholic Church, private family burial will precede in Calvary Cemetery. Landkammer-Johnson-Boman Funeral Home is assisting with the arrangements.

Carol Miller

Carol Miller, 82, of North Mankato, died Thursday, Oct. 30, 2008 at Immanuel St. Joseph's Hospital in Mankato. Services are 11 a.m. Tuesday at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, with burial in Woodland Hills. Visitation is an hour and a half prior to service at the church. Memorials preferred to Mt. Olive Lutheran Church.

TODAY'S SERVICES

Sonnicksen, Bessie, services 2 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church in Winnebago.

Stransky, Jean Ann, 10:30 a.m. at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Mankato.

Weedman, Gary, services 10:30 a.m. at St. John Lutheran Church in Springfield.

BIRTHS

Immanuel St. Joseph's Hospital

Carla and Steve Mills, Mankato, boy, Saturday
Tracy and Benjamin Ulman, Mankato, girl, Sunday

About Obituaries

The Free Press publishes free, basic obituaries provided by the funeral home for residents of Blue Earth, Brown, Nicollet, Waseca, Watonwan, Le Sueur, Sibley, Martin and Faribault counties. Families who want to personalize their loved one's obituary by including more information and a photo may do so at a cost. Your funeral home will provide information on rates. For more information, call the obituary desk at (507) 344-6397.

Candidates get in last jobs

Coleman, Franken trade heated accusations

The Associated Press

ST. PAUL — Months of tension between U.S. Senate candidates Norm Coleman and Al Franken spilled into their last debate Sunday night, as the Republican and Democrat traded heated accusations about allegations against Coleman in a lawsuit.

It started immediately, as Coleman denied that he's taken any money or gifts from supporters without disclosing it. That charge stems from sworn statements in a civil lawsuit filed last week in Texas, claiming Coleman's friend and donor Nasser Kazeminy funneled \$75,000 to a business that employs Coleman's wife in order to enrich the senator.

"The answer is no," Coleman said when asked if the allegations are true. He then swung back to his claim that Franken is responsible for a TV ad about the allegations, which shows a clip of reporters asking Coleman about the alleged payments to his wife's employer and which the senator said defames her. Franken's campaign isn't running the ad, which is paid for by Democrats in Washington.

"You have an ad that's defaming my wife," Coleman said. "I think there's a line in this business. You can take any shot

"You have an ad that's defaming my wife. I think there's a line in this business. You can take any shot you want at the candidate. Mr. Franken, rather than rejecting it, is promoting it."



— Norm Coleman

"This is not about Norm Coleman's wife," Franken said. "This is about Senator Coleman's sugar daddy."



— Al Franken

you want at the candidate. Mr. Franken, rather than rejecting it, is promoting it."

Franken replied that Coleman must answer questions about the allegations — and rejected the idea that discussion of it is an attack on Laurie Coleman.

"This is not about Norm Coleman's wife," Franken said. "This is about Senator Coleman's sugar daddy."

But that didn't end the recriminations between Coleman and Franken. For the first time after five debates, Coleman personally criticized Franken on an issue other Republicans hammered for months — that statements and writings in his previous careers

as a comedian and writer betrayed an angry sensibility unsuited to the U.S. Senate.

"I think folks have a right to look at the character, to look at the record," Coleman said. "Jokes about rape, is that a line? Writing pornography for Playboy, is that a line? Calling a Supreme Court justice sexist, is that a line?"

The sniping between Coleman and Franken left a wide opening for the Independence Party's Dean Barkley, who presented his third-place candidacy as an alternative for voters tired of what he called "the most negative campaign in Minnesota's history."

"I ask people, do you think either Al or Norm will change the way Washington works?" Barkley said. "That's a question you have to ask yourself."

ROBERTS: Credits his illness for instilling hope

Continued from Page B1

Roberts is still the first person Ruthenbeck calls when she or someone in her family needs prayer. She's not the only one. In fact, although Roberts can no longer serve as a pastor at church, he has continued to minister to others throughout his illness.

"I can still listen to people," he says. "I can pray about their concerns."

He was also able to participate in the weddings of two of his sons by writing their wedding meditations. He did the same for Lori, one of his caregivers, and was even able to give her away during the ceremony. He also baptized his first grandson, Ethan.

"I had (my wife) Bonnie move my hand," he explains, "and (my caregiver) Lori used the board for the words."

Writing devotions has been a big part of his ministry as well. Ruthenbeck says Roberts' monthly contribution to the church newsletter, as well as his continued presence every week at church, has inspired her on several levels.

"Your issues, your illnesses, the things you're dealing with — they all seem so minimal when you think of

Pastor Don and what he lives with every day," she says. "But also, we all admire his openness. He admits that this has challenged his own faith, and he shares that very openly and honestly."

Each of the almost 80 devotions in "Words of Hope" were born out of Roberts' own struggles; he says he could not have written them if not for living with ALS. But the overarching theme is not about his suffering. Instead, the focus is on hope.

"This illness has made me a more hopeful person," he says. "That is an irony, but problems can be an alchemist."

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Nov 14th 80± acres, West Newton Twp, Nicollet County
Nov 19th 39.7± acres, Cleveland Twp, Le Sueur County
Nov 20th 240± acres, Elmore Twp, Faribault County
Nov 20th 162.2± acres, Sterling Twp, Blue Earth County
Nov 21st 151.62± acres, Alton Twp, Waseca County
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