



Minnesota Journal

Inside This Issue

A publication of the Citizens League

Guideposts for Advisory Council on Local Government. — Page 2.

A look at Minneapolis gangs. — Page 4.

Testing for teacher stipends. — Page 8.

Volume 14, Number 10

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Leaders see political, cultural barriers to efforts to address region's challenges

Public leaders in government, business and the civic sector don't need to worry about a shortage of problems to work on. The public agenda is plenty full—but changes in political, social and cultural environment are making it harder for leaders to lead the community toward solutions.

That was the message the Citizens

by Janet Dudrow

League heard from 56 Twin Cities leaders its board and staff interviewed last summer in the first phase of the League's one- to two-year long Public Leadership Initiative. The individuals—who represent a wide variety of leadership posts in state and local government, business, philanthropy and com-

munity affairs—candidly shared their thoughts on the state of the art of public leadership in Minnesota. And we agreed to share their views, but to protect the identity of each individual speaker.

The interviews focused on four questions: What are the most important public challenges that

Continued on page 7

Metro State evolution supports its mission

by Susan A. Cole

The planning initiative for higher education in the metropolitan area currently being undertaken by the recently merged Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system is the latest in a series of such efforts. Much of the discussion has concerned Metropolitan State University. The present planning effort coincides with a time when Metro State has a record number of enrolled students.

While the planning discussions have continued over the years, Metro State has evolved from a small, nontraditional, upper-division institution into a larger, four-year, comprehensive university serving a more diverse population. This evolution has been guided by many reports and studies identifying the educational needs of the region and by an internal master planning effort. It has been supported by the former Minnesota State University System, the former Higher Education Coordinating Board and by operating and capital funds provided by the state Legislature.

Although much of the best of the

Continued on page 5

Engaging corporate leaders in public life

Editor's note: This month the Minnesota Journal begins a year-long look into the some of the challenges public leaders face today. The series of articles is part of the Citizens League's Public Leadership Initiative, a one- to two-year project to define what public leadership is and ought to be in terms that are meaningful in today's political and social climate and to develop proposals for practical steps the League and others could take to develop and support public leaders in Minnesota and, particularly, the Twin Cities.

This month, we invited three outstanding leaders who have navigated the private and public sectors—Ron James, Shelly Regan and John Rollwagen—to respond to these questions: Why is it important for people with private-sector experience to serve in elected or appointed public office? Why are fewer business leaders doing so? What would encourage more private-sector leaders to do "tours of duty" in government?

Private sector has many roles

by Ron James

I believe answering the question of how to engage private-sector executives in public-sector jobs only provides part of a solution to the challenges we face in our commu-

Continued on page 4

Time for leadership

by Shelly Regan

What is the state of the republic as Minnesota and America advance into the next century? Do our institutions enjoy the public's warrant to address the issues of the day?

Continued on page 6

Help steer public car

by John Rollwagen

Four-and-a-half years ago, I had the most terrifying experience of my life, when I accepted a high-level appointment in the brand-new Clinton/Gore administration. It was

Continued on page 6

Advisory council should start with needs in metro area

The 1997 Legislature created an Advisory Council on Local Government to advise on the appropriate roles and responsibilities of local and regional government in the metropolitan area. The group is to report to the Legislature in July 1998. The council is made up of the Governor's appointees and House and Senate appointees and is cochaired by Glenn Olson and Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville).

The Council offers us a major opportunity to look at those challenges in our 2.4 million population metropolitan area that require a regional response and to begin to build consensus on necessary changes in our very complex web of general- and special-purpose governments.

We should use two major "touchstone" questions to structure our approach to governance reform. First, how should we structure our metropolitan region for successful competition in the global economy and to preserve and enhance our quality of life? Second, how do we do so in a way that is effective and efficient in the eyes of the taxpayers of the region?

Let's not put the cart before the horse. Sorting out who does what and how we raise the revenues among the various layers of government in Minnesota is a daunting task. To date, we have had less than a sterling set of prior efforts at advisory councils on intergovernmental relations in Minnesota. Here are

Viewpoint

by Lyle Wray

some suggestions to make this effort likely to produce positive results.

It is very tempting to begin with each of the governmental players—cities, counties or townships—asserting their interests and attempting to elbow out another level of government. Efforts, for example, to replace the Metropolitan Council with a body of appointed local officials should be looked at much later, if at all.

We should, instead, work through three important questions, in the following order:

● **First, which challenges—whether environment, transportation, affordable housing or economic development—require a regional solution?** Some of the challenges that are strong candidates for such a list include: affordable housing, effective strategies for workforce upgrading and welfare to work transition, transportation and transit for the developed core, suburban and exurban areas in the 20-county commute-shed, economic and social strengthening of our urban cores, major environmental issues, and economic development promotion for the region. For many of these complex challenges, parts of problems might be addressed at a broader regional

level while other parts might be appropriately addressed at neighborhood levels. In short, it is important that we develop a sound way to decide which issues require regional responses.

● **Second, how might identified regional challenges be met effectively and efficiently?** Typical responses to regional challenges include an elected regional government (in two metropolitan areas—New York City and Portland, Oregon); city-county consolidation; appointed regional planning or governments, such as our Metropolitan Council; and councils of governments made up of elected officials from a defined geographic area. In addition to structural responses, there are a variety of other regional problem-solving tools, including: shared services/joint powers, of which we have many examples in our region; single-purpose authorities—which we have, from mosquitoes to airports; and such tools as annexation to a single core city, which has not been on the table for the core area for decades. It is important to answer the question, Which items from this menu of options for regional solutions—or from newly invented approaches—would work best in our region?

● **Third, and finally, how should desirable regional strategies**

impact and involve township, city, county and regional governments? This third question is particularly difficult, in that it brings bear not only the rational problem-solving process, but also our core values as a region. What are those core values? Based on the experience of referenda overwhelmingly failing to change the structure of government, we might conclude that we have an allergy to major structural change. As Americans we historically have strongly valued the principle of subsidiarity—only go to broader levels of government when we must and otherwise leave things local. Our high value on connection to neighborhood and smaller cities may overwhelm our desires for efficiency and effectiveness, when push comes to shove. This third area brings together what needs to get done with our core values and the realities of the structures we have in place.

As the Advisory Council continues its work, it is important the regional perspective be given its due. We will need to develop—in the Legislature and elsewhere—effective oversight of important challenges affecting the "real" region of more than 20 counties in two states. Many of our stubborn challenges simply cannot be resolved by municipalities acting alone. We should start with what needs doing in the region and get to how that affects current governmental units later.

Lyle Wray is executive director of the Citizens League.

Add Twins checkoff to state income tax, paper says

On Balance

"Words ought to be a little wild, for they are the assault of thoughts upon the unthinking."—J.M. Keynes

Lake Mille Lacs. The paper said the "easy way out" for legislators is to "yield to public opinion and give up looking for gambling money as a way to fund the stadium." It said (Sept. 23), "There is absolutely no guarantee that a new stadium will result in a subsidy-free operation... Sound judgment requires an end to pro sports subsidies whether they come from taxes, slot machines, lottery proceeds or any other source."

St. Cloud Times said (Sept. 20) the newly proposed privately funded voucher program in the Twin Cities should provide more information on how voucher programs affect student performance. It suggested that good referral and mentoring systems will be crucial to the program's success. Duluth News-Tribune said (Sept. 18) the private voucher program "deserve[s] applause" as it seeks "to expand education choice without taking money from public schools." It said (Sept. 12) publicly financed vouchers will hurt the public school system. "Better to offer choice—char-

ter schools, postsecondary enrollment options, open enrollment—within the public system." It backed (Sept. 17) efforts by several Duluth schools to become districtwide "schools of choice." "There's no turning away from choice as the future in education."

Fergus Falls Daily Journal said (Sept. 17) "American school children are already tested too much" and said federal money aimed at expanding testing should instead be use to help build new facilities and buy new classroom and library resources. Post-Bulletin criticized (Sept. 12) Gov. Arne Carlson for opposing national standards in education, when he has been a strong advocate of mandatory testing and graduation standards. It said Carlson's call for more choice and Clinton's call for national standards are not mutually exclusive.

Republican Eagle said (Sept. 17) government users fees are "becoming a big source of revenue" and must be kept in mind when debating

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Publisher — Lyle Wray
Editor — Dana M. Schroeder
Contributing Editor — Ted Kolderie
Sketches — Ray Hanson

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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and correct.

Signed, Lyle D. Wray, publisher.

Violent African American kids have endured violence

Edited excerpts of remarks by Peter Rode, vice president of research, The Urban Coalition, to the Citizens League on Sept. 30.

We've been looking at the data from the Minnesota Student Survey, which was conducted throughout Minnesota in 1995. I want to focus on just one group—African American students in the ninth grade.

One question on that survey asked, In the past 12 months how many times have you hit or beat up someone? The answers to this question are closely tied in with other forms of delinquency—very strong tie-in with questions about damaging

school property, about taking things from stores, about running away from home, about driving with people who are drunk or have been using drugs.

It appears that the youth who are more involved in violence—who are more likely to have hit or beat up people at least three or more times—these kids are more likely to feel bad about themselves. They are more likely to agree that they don't have anything to be proud of, don't feel like their particular life is very useful, they're under more stress than they feel they can take and they feel discouraged or hopeless and wonder if anything is

worthwhile at all.

Second, these kids are much more likely than other kids to have thought about suicide.

Thirdly, they're more worried about not having enough money for food or a place to live. They're also very concerned about fighting within their family. They're more likely to say that they're worried about their own death or the death of friends and family members.

They are much more likely than other kids to say they've been physically abused. They're also more likely to say they've experienced

sexual abuse or unwanted sexual touching either from persons within or outside their family.

They're also much more likely to say they have been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property or that someone has stolen or damaged their property at school.

They seem to have much less of a sense of connectedness on the part of their families. They were much less likely to feel that schoolteachers and others cared about them

They were also more likely to be engaged in a whole range of chemical use, beginning with smoking.

the price of government. "They may not show up on your new property tax bill, but they are none-theless coming out of your pocket." Duluth News-Tribune said (Sept. 23) the extent to which Duluth city government depends on sales taxes and state and federal aid "should be of grave concern to city officials," since sales tax revenues are volatile and state aid may be declining. The property tax is more solid, it said, but more property taxes now go into TIF districts than into the general fund. It urged the city not to create any new TIF districts "until we find out if the city has tied up too much of its wealth in them."

St. Cloud Times praised (Sept. 18) Cold Spring and St. Joseph for preparing for growth. The two cities are working with the Minnesota Project to solve water quality problems and to take steps to preserve their rural character.

Correction/Clarification

An article in the Sept. 16 Minnesota Journal incorrectly reported that Metropolitan State University serves only upper-division students and that the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) had not supported Metro State's attempts to develop into a four-year public university.

In fact, the HECB supported the evolution of Metro State to a four-year institution each year between 1991 and 1995. (The Legislature replaced HECB with the Higher Education Services Office in July 1995.) And while the Legislature created Metro State as an upper-division institution in 1971, the school has enrolled lower-division students since 1994. According to the Higher Education Services Office, 1,028 of the 5,310 students enrolled at metro State in fall quarter 1996 were freshmen or sophomores. The Journal apologizes for the errors.

In addition, the article's discussion of legislative support for expanding Metro State to a four-year institution deserves further clarification. While the Legislature did not act explicitly on the four-year issue, it did appropriate additional funding for programmatic development at Metro State each year from 1994 through 1997.

James

Continued from page 1

nities. There are already multiple roles the private sector should and does play today in helping to build community.

First, the private sector generates sufficient income to pay adequate returns to shareholders and to employ hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans. These companies and employees are part of the fabric of our communities and contribute tax dollars that fuel the public services our state provides.

Secondly, the private sector supports the public sector through phil-

anthropic contributions to help improve the quality of life in the State of Minnesota. Millions of dollars and countless hours of volunteer time are given each year to education, the arts, health and human services and numerous other charitable organizations. These dollars are investments in building our Minnesota communities.

While these represent some of the ways the private sector engages with the public sector, there are even more direct ways to help. But the private sector must recognize that its role is to complement many of the gifted public servants already engaged and not to enter with a spirit of "We're from the private sector and we have all the

answers."

Private-sector employees can, by either mentoring or serving on boards and in advisory capacities, provide useful experiences to increase the quality of decisions being made in the public sector. This provides a great way for public-sector employees to grow their skills on the job.

Next, the private sector can help by granting public-sector access to training it normally employs for its own use and by making available job shadowing experiences. I also believe that sabbaticals or exchanges that allow private-sector employees to provide a public service and vice versa, should be

encouraged. And there are cases where those in the private sector choose to pursue public-sector careers. These are all ways that allow rich ideas and experiences to be shared and can provide two benefits.

The important thing for all of us is to recognize that the private sector has unique gifts to offer to help us build better communities. We must expect, value and recognize these gifts and complement them with the leadership already in place in the public sector.

Ron James is president and chief executive officer of Ceridian Corporation.

Gangs provide a lot for kids without positive models

Edited excerpts by Sgt. Jeff Rugel, Gang Strike Force, Minneapolis Police Department, to the Citizens League on Sept. 23.

The last two summers, '95 and '96, we saw a huge increase in the homicide rate. Traditionally, we had about 60, 62, 64 homicides a year over the last 10 years. All of a sudden we went to 97 homicides and then to 87 homicides. We looked at all the homicides for those two years and even back a few years. What we found was a huge increase in the number of gang-related homicides and particularly retaliation homicides.

We knew that gangs are predominantly young people, under 25. That's who we targeted. We went through the records we had of known gang members and we came up with about 100 people that we knew were involved in a lot of crime. These are people that had 60, 70, 80 arrests apiece over their short careers.

We knew these people were the reason for these homicides, even if they didn't pull the trigger, they were calling the shots, they were ordering these things, they were always right on the edge. We got together with Hennepin County Probation and said, How many of these guys are on probation? About 60 percent were.

That's great, because if you're on

probation, you have to meet some strict requirements. So let's hold them to those requirements. If they're supposed to have a job, make them get a job. If they're not supposed to use drugs or alcohol, let's do those urinalysis tests. If they are using drugs or alcohol, we're going to revoke them.

And if they're caught with a weapon, we're going to make sure there is no bail this time. So we started just enforcing the regulations they had agreed to when they went on probation. This had a pretty good effect.

It worked very well this summer. We went from having 47 homicides for June-July-August of last year to eight this year. It's a huge drop.

There's a huge number of guns and when those guns are around and being carried, it's easier to use them. So what used to be maybe a street fight, now there are guns handy and it becomes easier to use them.

Of 4,500 gang members in Minneapolis, probably a third are juveniles under the age of 18. It may even be higher than that. Most commonly they're from single-parent families, where the single parent is a mother. They're mostly male. There is no father in the family. There is no positive role member in the family raising the kid.

Too often the only male role model is an older uncle or brother who may already be involved in gang activities. These kids are being raised in that culture.

The gang provides a lot for a kid like this. You get a lot of good friends that'll hang out with you and do a lot of adrenaline-rush, fun things. Kids are adrenaline junkies. Kids like to do exciting, fun things. When you're 13 years old driving around in a car with a bunch of guys drinking, who have guns in the car—that's kind of a rush experience. Kids fall into that.

They get told early on that the gang is your family. You stand up for the gang, we'll stand up for you. Quite often they find out it doesn't work that way when they get into jail and they expect somebody to come and stand up for them and nobody does. But that's what they're told. And they buy into that. It can be very important to somebody who has nothing else to have this kind of family feeling.

Once a kid like that gets kind of indoctrinated in the gang, it's extremely difficult to get them out of there. When you're 16 years old and you've been making \$500 or \$600 or \$1,000 a week running drugs for your gang members or working even as a lookout at a gang house and getting \$200 or \$300 a week—try to tell that kid you should quit that and maybe go

to work at Burger King and go back to school and join the band. It's hard to get somebody out of that lifestyle.

There is not much in the way of gang prevention being done anywhere in Minneapolis. The school have programs that try to offer alternatives. What I see most often is all of these alternatives to gangs work best with kids that aren't real likely to join gangs in the first place. I don't know that anyone's found a real effective way to stop the real at-risk kids from getting in trouble.

A kid with strong role models growing up is almost never going to join a gang. It doesn't mean they're not going to be troubled kids. Kids from the best families—sometimes something happens and they get in trouble. But there doesn't seem to be that lack of consciousness about it. They can be caught and reprimanded and change their ways. I've met plenty of 13 year-olds that you can see looking in their eyes that they have no concern for what you're telling them. They've never been taught how to deal with problems other than through violence. At 13 it's a little late to start.

A more complete version of Rugel's remarks is available at the Citizens League's web site at <http://freenet.msp.mn.us/ip/pol/citizen>.

Metro State

Continued from page 1

original institution has been preserved, Metro State is a very different university today from what it was 10 years ago. For example:

- During the 1987 academic year, Metro State served 5,261 students. During the 1997 academic year, it served 8,331 students.

- In 1987, Metro State admitted only upper-division and master's level students. Since 1994, Metro State has admitted freshmen and sophomores, as well.

- In 1987, 6.6 percent of Metro State's students were students of color. In 1997, 17.2 percent (excluding nonresident aliens) were students of color.

- In 1987, Metro State granted degrees to 436 students and had 4,774 cumulative graduates. In 1997, it granted degrees to 906 students and its cumulative graduates numbered 12,910.

- In 1987, Metro State offered only individualized degree programs at the upper division, a nursing major, and one master's program. In 1997, Metro State offered four-year programming, 30 undergraduate majors, 17 minors and three masters programs. Three new majors and five professional master's programs are currently under development.

- In 1987, Metro State had no programs in mathematics, the sciences or technology. Today, with support and advice from the business community, Metro State has developed strong programs in applied mathematics, biology, computer and management information systems, and, partnering with Bemidji State University, in industrial technology. It is currently developing programs in computer science and, partnering with St. Paul Technical College, in manufacturing technology.

- In 1987, Metro State had no partnership programs with the public schools. Today, Metro State has 15 strong school partnerships. Each year, the university reaches hundreds of high school students with career preparation programs and hundreds of elementary school children and their families with

reading and literacy activities.

● In 1987, Metro State offered courses in over 60 dispersed rented facilities that lacked appropriate classrooms and laboratories, a library, computers, study spaces and site supervision. In 1997, Metro State was able to offer its students laboratories, electronic technology and study facilities, having opened its second new building on its permanent St. Paul campus and begun construction on its third. However, that campus currently can accommodate only 30 percent of the university's total instruction. The remainder of Metro State's instruction still occurs in rental facilities in Minneapolis, the Midway section of St. Paul, Brooklyn Center and Bloomington, as well as on community college campuses.

The extraordinary reengineering of the university that has occurred, especially in the last several years, has been designed to support the key elements of Metro State's mission, which is strongly regional, focused on the needs of the people and the business community in the metropolitan area. This focus has governed the direction taken by the university in the development of its academic programs, which have a heavily applied emphasis, aimed at employment opportunities in this region; its facilities, which are designed to be highly accessible and appropriate to the needs of commuter (not residential) students; and its flexible scheduling (offering instruction evenings, weekdays and weekends).

Because such a large majority of Metro State's students are studying part-time, the university has been designed to support the education of those who work and study at the

same time. Those students include adults of all ages with family and work responsibilities, individuals continuing their education at mid-career, first generation college-goers, including many new immigrants, and the other nontraditional and highly diverse students who comprise the human fabric of the metropolitan region. Even with the broader mix of our student population, among the things that have not changed much between 1987 and 1997 is the age of our students. The median age of the Metro State student in 1987 was 34; in 1997, it was 33.

Metro State has recognized that many people currently in the workforce need to integrate work and education if they are going to continue to be creative and productive employees. Metro State strongly encourages part-time study. Faculty and staff believe that working and studying at the same time—carrying classroom learning into the workplace and the practical applications of work into the classroom—is actually a very good way for large numbers of individuals to benefit from further education and to bring added value to their performance as employees.

Metro State has undertaken a major initiative to provide a broader array of academic program options that focus on the particular needs of business and industry in this region, including applied mathematics; natural science; computer and information sciences and management information systems; technical communications and media; law enforcement, criminal justice and public safety; violence prevention, social work and community psychology; and all the major business disciplines, from accounting to international business. The univer-

sity has also developed over 30 carefully articulated programs in partnership with the region's technical and community colleges to assure strong opportunities for credit transfer and career ladder-

Metro State has taken the position that partnerships with the public schools, with community organizations and with other institutions in the metropolitan region are central to its purpose and identity. Since 1994, Metro State has launched major initiatives that have created active and effective partnerships addressing such areas as career preparation for urban youth, literacy programs, community redevelopment, health care for underserved populations, violence prevention and community policing.

Over the last several years, Metro State has evolved and succeeded in serving a broader and more diverse mix of students. Its sense of identity as an institution is very focused and strong. The university's faculty and staff have worked with extraordinary commitment and too few resources to create an institution that can serve this region and its people with excellence.

And, as is clear to anyone who meets them, Metro State's students know why they are here. In our most recent survey of alumni, 81.6 percent said they attended Metro State to get a degree that would be useful to their career. They said their most important reasons for attending were the flexibility of Metro State's programs, the availability of evening classes, the ease of credit transfer and the cost. Nearly all, 97.6 percent, indicated that they were satisfied with their Metro State education, 91.2 percent rated its quality as excellent or good and 93.9 percent were employed.

With support from many sources, Metro State has come a long way toward what it was meant to be. We are confident that both the accomplishments of the university and the aspirations of its students will be recognized in the creation of the latest MnSCU plan, enabling us to complete the task we have begun in building a resource that will serve generations to come.

Susan A. Cole is president of Metropolitan State University.



Regan

Continued from page 1

Are there effective processes in place to marshal and manage the resources to solve them? And are citizens actively involved in public life, either as engaged followers or energetic leaders?

If you raised even a slightly cynical eyebrow in response to these questions, you're not alone. Despite a high level of engagement in many aspects of public life, the sense of duty that once led citizens to seek government office is in decline—perhaps nearly dormant.

That is in sharp contrast to the many ways individuals, organizations and businesses are genuinely connected to their communities. Charitable contributions—including some recent gifts of awe-inspiring generosity—remain high. The steady growth of Minnesota Keystone Program, which recognizes business giving to the community,

is just one indicator. Block clubs and neighborhood betterment associations enjoy continued participation. And countless businesses formally and informally encourage the volunteer activities of employees.

Still, citizens are distancing themselves from the government institutions in which they have vested so much power but so little faith. Business owners, executives and managers—the people perhaps best equipped to deal with the complex issues that confront governmental bodies—may have the least amount of time to commit to such public enterprise. The circumstance of business operations, such as downsizing, increased work loads, far-flung operations and the globalization of economic competition, are substantive obstacles.

And what would motivate them to do so even if time wasn't a barrier? The stature of government institutions is at an all-time low, while the business community enjoys relatively positive sentiment. "Politician" has become a career for

many, with the power of incumbency holding potential newcomers at bay. And modern "governing," with its overemphasis on process, is vexing to the more results-driven business person.

If it is the lack of involvement of skilled leaders from the business community that has created—or at least compounded—these problems, then perhaps it is time for the business community to step forward and reassert leadership.

In 1987, the Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) Board of Directors passed a resolution supporting a "model policy" for companies that would provide procedures to encourage employees' involvement under terms and circumstances that were fair to the employee and the company. The model policy was intended to increase political participation, improve understanding and respect for the political process and encourage talented individuals who are employees of GMCC member companies to run for political

office. The model policy recognized that companies unknowingly erect significant barriers—both economic and noneconomic—that discourage employees from running for elected office.

Ten years later, a few companies have adopted the model. More need to. It will take a few more large, visible employers to make a commitment to the policy. It will mean communicating the policy to employees and in the general media. It will mean implementing it with a commitment from the top. It will mean that top management devotes the same effort and resources to encouraging, recruiting and supporting good business candidates that it presently brings to charitable and civic activities.

Let's dust off the model policy and have another go at it.

Shelly Regan is president of the Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce.

Rollwagen

Continued from page 1

also the most illuminating and exciting thing I've ever done.

Our government is a long-standing and successful democracy that depends on the involvement of a broad base of its citizens. We all should be prepared to step forward and do our part. But those of us in the private sector have to realize that the government is fundamentally different from anything else in our experience. If we do go to the public sector, we have to be prepared for a huge culture shock.



"One thing nice about driving my own car... I could tell 'em to shut up and sit down!'"

In a system where no one's in charge—as is appropriate—everybody's in charge. We are all invited to the table. In that environment it's impossible to get

Government is based on the separation of power. The reason? We very explicitly do not want any one person in charge.

This is the world's most powerful country and the politicians we send to Washington and to the state capitols are the people who run it. If we're going to give politicians that kind of power, we can't just

hand over the power and then say, "See you later."

consistent agreement about a set of goals, organize the troops to accomplish those goals or establish accountability for working toward those goals. As a result, that isn't even the objective of government.

Today, if you're a politician, it's as if you have your hands on the wheel of a very powerful car. But while you're at the wheel, there are lots of other powerful vehicles on the road and the back-seat driver—the citizenry—is in control. You have to jockey for position with the other cars and sometimes you just have to get the other cars out of the way so that you can move your car into that position. All the while, you're taking instructions from the back-seat driver—who's watching your every move and talking constantly.

Private-sector leaders typically want to decide where the car should go and they expect to be able to steer it there. But most politicians are willing to steer the car in any direction—as long as they can stay at the wheel. They're constantly asking the back-seat driver, "OK, now what? OK, now what?" And we—the citizens—are the ones telling them what to do next.

The political system still works. But it works differently from its original design—providing representative government in an environment of compromise. Today, it's a balance of power. Public leaders can arrive at the same conclusion or end up making the same decision as they would in an environment of compromise, but they will probably get there an entirely different way. There will be much more tension and the consensus will be more vulnerable to short-term political change.

My message? Don't change the system, except around the edges—campaign finance, for example—where there clearly are problems. Instead, recognize the public-sector system for what it is. It's certainly helpful to have "lay" help in the system. For lay people who do accept that call to serve in the public sector for a short time, your objective should not be to reform government or to accomplish civic goals yourself, but to help the folks with their hands on the wheels to steer the car, under the direction the citizens in the back seat.

John Rollwagen is a venture partner at St. Paul Venture Capital.

Leadership

Continued from page 1

It be addressed in the Twin Cities? What are some of the barriers leaders encounter when trying to get something done today? What are the main gaps in leadership? And what's the most important contribution the Citizens League could make to improve the quality of leadership on the top-priority community problems?

The conversations revealed wide agreement about what most needs doing in the Twin Cities and Minnesota: Improve elementary and secondary education, especially for poor and minority students in inner-city schools. Get serious about curbing urban sprawl and building livable neighborhoods throughout the metro region. Figure out a strategy to meet the state's future transportation and transit needs. Get at the roots of the increase in violent crime among young people. And put creative energy into helping current welfare recipients find jobs and economic opportunity.

These are the tasks that ought to be on the agenda, these leaders said, but too often that agenda gets short shrift while attention is diverted to other battles.

What are the barriers that thwart leaders' efforts? The first and most obvious is that these problems are just plain hard, the interviewees said. In many cases, it's hard to even understand or agree about what exactly the problem is.

And the political and cultural environment is making solutions even more elusive. Among the trends that hamper leaders' efforts:

- Citizens—who are getting less and less civics education in school—don't understand what government's job is, or what level of government is in charge of which public responsibilities. "The public needs a 'Government 101' course," one person said.

- Government might need one, there isn't much rationality to the division of responsibilities among government jurisdictions. "We need to get under control—

what are state issues, what are regional issues, what are local issues?," said one person. Members of school boards, city councils and appointed commissions often don't know how to fulfill their roles—and that leads to micromanagement. One leader, reflecting on his experience serving on a school board, observed that the members "didn't understand the big problems, so they spent lots of time on the little problems."

- "Politician" has become a full-time career path, which is eroding the quality of leadership. The job doesn't pay well, the hours are long and the brickbats fly fast and furious. Who's willing to take the risks? The ambitious, according to the leaders we interviewed. "The system rewards people who are willing to do anything to get elected or get a bill passed," one person said. "Winning an election is self-ratification," said another. The unfortunate result is that politicians are afraid to take unpopular positions because their entire careers depend on reelection. It's hard not to cave in to pressure groups with so much at stake, the interviewees said.

- Corporations are much less involved in the hard work of public policy than they once were, according to the people we interviewed. Not long ago, business people knew that if they wanted to climb the corporate ranks, they had to make their mark in community and policy matters. The Twin Cities area was known nationally for the active leadership of its corporate CEOs. Now, "the CEOs of these companies live on airplanes," we heard, and all the employees are under relentless competitive pressure to keep their noses to the company grindstones. We can't change these conditions, many said, but we shouldn't give up either. "We have to find a substitute for the good old days when a handful of people got together to get the job done," one leader said.

- Talented people from the private sector are less and less inclined to spend time in the public sector. They're scared off by the low pay and the media's vicious treatment of public figures. And the public sector is worse off because of it. Three business leaders—Ron James, Shelly Regan

and John Rollwagen—say more about these problems in the accompanying articles on page 1.

- Modern techniques of polling, marketing and communications are great for selling beer and shampoo, but terrible for solving public problems. Public officials use polling to identify the public's immediate—often ill-informed—opinions. Then marketing techniques, such as segmentation, targeted mailings and telemarketing, are used to cobble together "majorities" for a particular candidate or position. There is a vast difference, however, between uniting people around a common understanding of a problem and simply adding up enough interest groups to win a majority vote, one person pointed out.

- The media's treatment of public issues adds to the difficulty of building a shared understanding of problems and potential solutions. "Journalists talk about the media's right to know," one person said, "but what about their judgment about what's important to know about?" The superficial way the media treat complicated issues gives citizens the impression that they—the citizens—know and understand the issues, even when they don't. People with real expertise are dismissed as irrelevant, another said.

- Minnesota's culture of populism, egalitarianism and politeness—"Minnesota nice"—resists leadership. "The model of consensus here is sitting around talking and talking," one person said. "We don't think of innovation that succeeds, builds credibility and produces momentum," he added. Others were even more direct: "Minnesotans are willing to accept mediocrity as long as the process is fair," one said. And another: "Sometimes there's manure below the grass roots."

Some of the most poignant comments had to do with changes that pervade contemporary society: America hasn't come to grips with its increasing racial diversity and Minnesota is even further behind. The Twin Cities is one of the most



"...Maybe if we weren't so darn nice we'd need public leadership!"

racially segregated of the nation's large metropolitan areas and that's dealt with as a quiet little secret that many whites would sooner ignore. Too often, the better-off residents of the region blame "those people" for the region's troubles, we heard. Not enough people are convinced that the welfare of inner-city people of color and that of white suburbanites are connected. And nearly everyone is afraid to talk out loud about the connection between race and other public concerns, such as youth crime, except off-the-record and behind closed doors.

Some of the attempts to get race-related issues on the table might be hurting rather than helping, a few suggested. The ground rules of multiculturalism are than nobody is allowed to speak about a problem unless he or she belongs to the affected racial group, one person said. "Multiculturalism says that it's not proper to question someone's values or opinions—that each group is not to be judged by any other group. It's a pernicious, anti-intellectual notion" that stymies public dialogue, this leader said.

The Citizens League will continue to explore these and other challenges to public leadership throughout 1997 and 1998. (See article in the accompanying *Citizens League Matters*). The League's hope is to shine a light on what helps or hinders leaders from doing their part to tackle the tough problems on the public agenda—so that citizens and leaders alike can get on with the real work ahead.

Janet Dudrow is a research associate at the Citizens League. A complete description of the public leadership interviews is available at no charge from the Citizens League office at 612-338-0791 or at the Citizens League web site at <http://freenet.msp.mn.us/ip/pol/citizen>.

AP/IB teachers to get stipends if students test well

A sneak preview of merit pay? Teachers of Minnesota high school students who do well on Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) tests will be rewarded with stipends starting next spring, under a new program created by the '97 Legislature.

According to Marlys Peters-Melius, AP/IB coordinator at the state Department of Children, Families and Learning, the Legislature appropriated \$375,000 to provide \$25 to \$50 stipends to teachers for each student in their classes who scores three or better (out of five) on an AP test and four or better (out of seven) on an IB test. An additional \$300,000 will go to scholarships for the students scoring at those levels that can be used at Minnesota public or private postsecondary institutions. The amount of the stipends and scholarships will be determined by the numbers of students scoring at the qualifying levels.

Peters-Melius said controversy has erupted over the teacher stipend provision of the program. "Who really should be credited for that score?" she asked. IB courses are often two-year courses, sometimes taught by two different teachers. Even for AP courses, generally one-year courses where the assignment of the stipend should be more straightforward, the students received training from a number of teachers prior to taking the AP class. In addition, she noted, some teachers teach only IB or AP classes, whereas others teach none.

Richard Schwartz, IB coordinator at Minneapolis Southwest High School, expressed concerns about the stipend program. "If you are going to offer this kind of incentive and award, you have to offer it to everybody," he said. "This separates teachers, depending on whether they teach AP or IB courses."

"There's a lot of positioning and a lot of concern," Peters-Melius said. "Maybe it'll be no problem at all and maybe it'll be a disaster."
—Dana Schroeder.

In last month's *Journal* Citizens League Executive Director Lyle Wray suggested that the state's Truth in Taxation mechanism not only explain what's behind property owners' tax bills, but talk about

Take Note

Stipends instead of apples?

what taxpayers got for their money, too.

Reader Larry Lee, director of community development in Bloomington, sent us a nifty publication that the city mails to each resident annually. The tabloid-sized newspaper is chock-full of information about city government, public services and spending. Easy-to-read tables and graphs show where Bloomington's tax money goes, how its spending has changed over time and how the city's taxes compare to those in other metro communities.

The prose gets as close as humanly possible to explaining Minnesota's incomprehensible property-tax system and showing what it means for taxpayers. For instance, the report points out that the average home value was \$225 per month higher in 1997 than in 1996, while the estimated cost for city services rose only six cents per month.

Best of all, the report shows what the average homeowner pays for various services. City Manager Mark Bernhardson said the goal is to approximate the "value exchange" that happens in the marketplace for other goods and services. Bloomington taxpayers can ask themselves, Is the fire protection I'm getting worth \$2.27 a month? Simply writing out a check twice a year for property taxes doesn't prompt that kind of value-for-spending question, Bernhardson said.

We hear some other metro communities have produced similar reports. It's encouraging to see this buzz of innovation.—Janet Dudrow.

A report is due in early November from Conflict Management, Inc. (CMI), the team from Cambridge, Mass., brought in to see if the big lawsuits against the state for "inadequate" education in Saint Paul and Minneapolis can be settled through mediation, rather than in court.

Pushing for trial may look a bit dicier now for the plaintiffs—certainly for the Board of Education, which brought the mainly-about-money suit in Saint Paul. How do

you maintain a case for the state to do more when you've just cut your own tax levy?

As a result, those cases (the suit in Minneapolis is brought by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored people) may turn toward charges other than more money. The complaints from parents—as voiced, for example at CMI's hearing at Sabathani Community Center in Minneapolis on Sept. 22—went heavily to problems that more money won't fix.
—Ted Kolderie.

A bird in the hand? Minnesota has long been known for its low prison population, which ranks among the lowest in the nation per 100,000 people. This reflects a number of priorities, including the state's inclination for probation versus incarceration.

For the first time in the state's history, the number of Minnesota criminal offenders on probation topped 100,000, according to the Corrections Department's annual probation survey. This means that one out of every 36 Minnesotans over the age of 12 is currently on probation. So while the state's incarceration rate is comparatively low, its probationary rate is fifth highest in the country.—Ron Wirtz.

Sgt. Jeff Rugel of the Minneapolis Gang Strike Force, speaking at a recent Citizens League Mind-Opener breakfast, (see excerpts on page 4) noted a difference in what might be termed "the business lines" of

various gangs operating in the Twin Cities. The gangs that migrated here from Chicago and Los Angeles—such as the Vice Lords, D-ples and Cripps—run large drug distribution systems.

But the Asian and Somali gangs—comprised of relatively new immigrants from other countries—tend not to be involved in the drug business. Instead, they run large, profitable auto theft rings. Rugel said a Minneapolis Somali gang is responsible for the theft of dozens of cars each week that are put into trucks—or, sometimes, dismantled first and then put into trucks—and shipped to other cities.—D.S.

Don't be too reassured if the auditors report before long that, yes, indeed, school districts are using the "compensatory" revenue—given to districts by the state based on their concentration of poor students—for the purposes intended. The use of the revenue is not the issue. The issue is two-fold: (a) whether that revenue is or isn't going to the schools the kids eligible for free school lunch attend (it's supposed to) and (b) who gets to decide on how that revenue gets used (the school is supposed to).

Hopefully, the auditors will look at allocation and at decision-making—both major issues this fall in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. They might also look at how money voted originally for low-income kids was shifted to kids having trouble learning, which is not quite the same thing.—T.K.

"Take Note" contributors include Minnesota Journal and Citizens League staff members.

**Minnesota Journal
Citizens League
Suite 500
708 S. Third St.
Minneapolis, MN 55415**

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Citizens League Matters

October 14, 1997

News for Citizens League Members

Welcome New and Returning Members

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Amy Zimmer

Citizens League

708 South 3rd St. Suite 500
Minneapolis, MN 55415
Ph 338-0791 Fax 337-5919
citizen@epx.cis.umn.edu
Please visit our web site at:
<http://freenet.msp.mn.us/ip/pol/citizen>

The Citizens League promotes the public interest in Minnesota by involving citizens in identifying and framing critical public policy choices, forging recommendations and advocating their adoption.

Suggested dues for membership are \$50 for individuals and \$75 for families. For more information, please contact the office at the numbers and location listed above.

Public leadership activities kick-off in October

As part of its comprehensive Public Leadership Initiative, the Citizens League is sponsoring the first of several Mind-Opener series exploring issues of public leadership and citizenship.

The first series will begin on Tuesday, Oct. 21 with **Duane Benson**, executive director of the Minnesota Business Partnership. Minneapolis Councilmember **Brian Herron** will follow on Tuesday, October 28, and **Laura Wittstock**, executive director of Migizi Communications, will wrap up the series on Tuesday, November 4.

Many people today believe we are in a crisis of leadership. All of our common institutions—government, businesses, non-profits, even the so-called “private” institutions of family and church—are failing to find solutions to our most pressing problems.

Perhaps most dramatically, people have lost faith in government as the major collective problem-solving mechanism. But people have also “checked out” of many of the traditional forms of civic life. The League believes that the decline of trust in government and civic participation has a negative effect on public leadership.

Many Twin Cities community leaders are disheartened. Most

of these elected officials, policy makers and other leaders entered public life because of an earnest desire to make a difference—but the reality of their daily work is that partisanship is paramount, every issue is politicized, and policy analysis too often yields to policy paralysis. Not surprisingly, it is becoming more difficult to find new people to fill public leadership roles.

Ultimately, what makes a community vibrant, healthy and just is the wisdom of the public's decisions. Public leadership is what helps citizens—together—to understand, define and move forward on common community challenges. That won't happen unless the environment for leadership brightens.

To address these concerns, the Citizens League is investigating the state of public leadership in the Twin Cities metropolitan region today. Through its Mind-Opener breakfasts — along with additional activities in its other lines of business — the League hopes to raise awareness of issues of public leadership, define what public leader-

ship is in meaningful terms for today's political and social climate, and develop proposals for tangible, practical steps to develop and support public leaders in Minnesota and the Twin Cities.

As part of this Public Leadership Initiative, the Citizens League will be organizing a number of Mind-Opener series throughout the coming months and into next year.

The first Mind-Opener series will provide a broad overview of some public leadership issues from representatives of business, government and non-profit sectors. All meetings will be held at the University Club, 420 Summit Avenue in St. Paul. Cost of the program is \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members.

Additional Mind-Opener series on public leadership and citizenship are expected for December, February and April. Some of the expected topics include corporate citizenship, the role of the media and opinion polling on politics, the professionalization of politics, and interest group activism.

Wisconsin Senator talks about historic preservation at special Mind-Opener meeting

Public forums begin in October for the Twin Cities Project on Media and the Public

details on the other side

Wisconsin Senator Brian Rude to speak at special Mind-Opener meeting

The Citizens League will host a special breakfast meeting with Wisconsin Senator Brian Rude on the issue of historic preservation on Monday, October 27. The event will be held from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. at the University Club, 420 Summit Avenue in St. Paul.

Sen. Rude is the assistant minority leader in the Wisconsin State Senate. He previously served as president of the Senate from 1993 to 1996. A Republican, Rude began his tenure in the State Assembly (Minnesota's version of the House), and later won election to the Senate in 1984.

Sen. Rude's district is in southwest Wisconsin, and includes parts of five counties bordering the Mississippi River. This geographic relationship to Minnesota has led to his chairing the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission for the Wisconsin Senate.

The League is piggybacking its event with Sen. Rude's partici-

pation in the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota's (PAM) Fall Festival, which will take place on Sunday, October 26, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at International Market Square, 275 Market Street, Minneapolis.

PAM's Fall Festival will include more than 50 preservation-related exhibitors, and feature its annual award ceremony recognizing the state's most noteworthy achievements in historic preservation. The PAM event is free and open to the public.

The following morning, Monday, October 27, the League will host Senator Rude

To register for the special Mind-Opener on October 27, please call 338-0791.

at a special Mind-Opener breakfast. Cost of the League's program will be \$10.

There will be no other mailed announcement for this event. To make reservations please call the League office at 338-0791 by Friday, October 24.

Thank you members!

Thanks to all of you who made an extra financial contribution to the League during the recent fiscal year-end drive.

While final year-end figures will not be available until after the annual audit currently being conducted, preliminary results indicate that extra contributions from individual members increased by more than \$22,000 from last year.

The \$75,000 contributed by members this year (over and above dues payments) is within a couple of hundred dollars of the League's record for annual giving set in 1993 during the McKnight Foundation's challenge grant.

Forums announced by Twin Cities Project on Media and the Public

The League is pleased to co-sponsor the Twin Cities Project on Media and the Public. Through research, public forums and, ultimately, the creation of a media/public compact, the project hopes to restore public trust in the media; motivate both the media and the public to take responsibility for generating coverage that accurately reflects our region; and identify ways in which the media and the public can work together and stay connected in the future.

The public forums, which begin in late October, are a critical part of the project. Eight to 10 forums, held throughout the Twin Cities, will use interactive keypad technology to gather input from diverse audiences on issues cited most frequently as underlying the loss of public trust in the media (accuracy, fairness, sensationalism, cynicism and market-driven coverage, etc.), and explore the types of coverage that participants say are valuable. Notice of the forums will be mailed soon.

League Board picks next study topic

The Citizens League Board of Directors on September 23 approved "Mobilizing Public Leadership to Address Minnesota's Labor Shortage" as the topic for the next study committee. In keeping with the Citizens League's historic niche and the current interest in public leadership, this committee will examine the practice of leadership in the context of public policy-making. The study will focus not just on leadership, or just on a substantive policy problem, but on intersection point between the two.

The charge to the study committee is to answer the question: How should Minnesota's public leadership—which includes the government, business and civic sectors—mobilize to address Minnesota's labor shortage?

In order to answer this question, the committee will review the facts about the situation, the major strategies for addressing a labor shortage and roughly assess the potential of

each strategy to solve Minnesota's problem. The committee will also identify who is currently responsible for addressing various pieces of the labor shortage problem, identify gaps in leadership or barriers that prevent current leaders from addressing the labor shortage appropriately, and describe what steps would be needed to mobilize government, business and civic leaders to create and implement a strategy.

The League will also ask itself the following question: How can we as an organization illustrate how the barriers to effective public leadership might be overcome? To accomplish this second purpose, the League will experiment with innovative approaches that involve important stakeholders in solving the problem.

A detailed description of the project and an application for committee membership will be mailed to all League members.