

ST. PAUL

Kelly's 2006 budget gives boost to public safety resources, 1B

STAR chairman says he'll retain post despite council spat, 3B



HIGH 70 LOW 57

Forecast, Page 12D

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13, 2005 | WWW.TWINCITIES.COM

PIONEER PRESS



SPEED READ Today's top news in 5 minutes, Page 2A

MINNESOTA'S FIRST NEWSPAPER

25 CENTS



PHELAN M. EBENHACK, ASSOCIATED PRESS
Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson listens Friday as members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America present their views in Orlando, Fla.

LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

ELCA holds line on gays

Church won't allow ordination, but upholds leeway in blessing couples

BY STEVE SCOTT
Pioneer Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America rejected making exceptions to its policies that could have allowed people in same-sex relationships to become ordained, in effect upholding prohibitions shared by most

other Christian denominations. Although the ELCA seemed to clearly — if narrowly — maintain its ordination requirements, its Churchwide Assembly adopted a less specific proposal on the blessing of same-sex couples that was lauded and criticized by members on both sides of the issue. The ordination proposal would

have kept in place current ELCA policy prohibiting the ordination of non-celibate candidates for ministry but would have set forth a detailed process to permit case-by-case exceptions for those in "lifelong, committed and faithful same-sex relationships." Approval would have been required from a variety of local and

national church authorities, more than what is required for current ministerial candidates. Although the proposal was defeated by only a 503-490 vote, it had required two-thirds approval to

RULING ON GAYS, 10A

Online: To review the final resolutions, go to www.twincities.com and click on Interactive.

HEARING THE WORD OF GOD



BRANDI JADE THOMAS, PIONEER PRESS
Standing atop pews, Stefan Svärd uses a meter to take sound-level readings as he works on the installation of a digital speaker system in the Cathedral of St. Paul, whose cavernous space presents an acoustical challenge. Svärd was assisted by Art Gonzales, seated.

A new state-of-the-art sound system will make it easier for parishioners even in the back pews to understand pulpit speakers in the cavernous Cathedral of St. Paul.

BY LAURA YUEN
Pioneer Press

The Rev. Michael Skluzacek has mastered the art of being heard at the Cathedral of St. Paul: Speak clearly and speak slowly. Otherwise, his words become garbled in one of the cathedral's so-called "dead spots."

Although the cathedral is among the most visually arresting buildings in the downtown skyline,

anyone who has sat in a back pew for Mass knows how the homilies from the pulpit can bounce off the floors, walls and the 186-foot-high dome.

"I call it the echo chamber," said Skluzacek, rector of the hallowed landmark, who said the muffled message is the No. 1 complaint he receives from parishioners. "We're a church based on the word of God, and if people can't hear it, we're not doing one of the many things we should be."

His solution: a state-of-the-art digital sound

system, custom made in the Netherlands and the only one of its kind installed in Minnesota, according to the audio-equipment company working on the project. Cathedral officials say they hope to marry the recent exterior restoration of the landmark with a sound to match.

The 90-year-old cathedral was built when those trained in the seminary learned a certain oratorical style, Skluzacek said. But in an era of microphones and amplifiers, there's been less of an emphasis on how to project one's voice in such cavernous spaces.

Deborah Organ, an assistant professor who teaches homiletics at the St. Paul Seminary,

CATHEDRAL SOUND SYSTEM, 9A

SEPT. 11 RECORDINGS

GO ONLINE FOR AUDIO

WWW.TWINCITIES.COM
CLICK ON INTERACTIVE

"I love you, brother. It might be the last time I see you."

New York City firefighter Timothy Brown to fellow firefighter Terry Hutton on Sept. 11

Transcripts bring tears, memories

Firefighters' oral histories, radio transmissions released

BY MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN
and SARA KUGLER
Associated Press

NEW YORK — They were trudging up the stairs of the north tower, weighed down with gear and pausing every four floors to catch their breath. They had no idea the south tower had been hit.

"It was single file, civilians going down and firemen going up," firefighter Marcel Claes recalled. "The civilians were orderly and blessing us and helping the injured down."

At the 35th story, on his knees and talking with other firefighters about how best to get equipment up the tower, Claes felt a rumble — like an earthquake, or a train going through your living room, he said.

It was then, as the south tower of the World Trade Center was collapsing in a giant cloud of debris, that he heard the voice of a chief from another battalion: "Drop everything and get out."

The story was just one that emerged Friday as the Fire Department released 12,000 pages of oral histories recorded by firefighters who responded to the World Trade Center attack and lost 343 of their brethren — the most finely sketched portrait yet of the horror and chaos of Sept. 11, 2001.

There were stories of firefighters' dramatic attempts to rescue civilians, of their decisions to

SEPT. 11 TRANSCRIPTS, 11A

Zebra mussels hit state's walleye haven

Two adult invaders pulled from Mille Lacs

BY DENNIS LIEN
Pioneer Press

Zebra mussels, small but harmful invaders that can disrupt aquatic ecosystems, have found their way into Lake Mille Lacs, the state's most popular walleye fishery.

A fisheries biologist from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources recently found

two adult zebra mussels four miles apart in the northern portion of the lake, the DNR said Friday.

"This is a very major development for zebra mussels in Minnesota," said Gary Montz, DNR zebra mussel coordinator. "When people think about walleyes, Mille Lacs immediately springs to mind."

At slightly more than 200



JOE ROSSI, PIONEER PRESS
A zebra mussel is attached to a native mussel found in the St. Croix River in July. Two adult zebra mussels were recently found in Lake Mille Lacs.

square miles, Mille Lacs is Minnesota's second-largest lake, a big, shallow basin filled with walleyes and a storied destination for anglers.

ZEBRA MUSSELS, 11A

Charges swirl around Ameriquest

Minnesotans allege improprieties even as lender parleys with states

BY SHERYL JEAN
Pioneer Press

Mary Edwards had big plans for her small lake cabin in Richmond, Minn.

She planned to refinance the mortgage and consolidate other debt into a new \$90,000 loan and take out some cash for renovations. Then, at her June closing, she found nine errors in the loan documents Ameriquest Mortgage Co. provided. She signed the papers anyway, but canceled the loan during a

seven-day review period.

Edwards and other Minnesota customers of the big mortgage lender say that such problems continue even while Ameriquest has been in settlement talks with attorneys general or regulators of 30 states for alleged improper lending practices. In late July the company said it set aside \$325 million for a potential national settlement with the states, but an agreement has not yet been reached.

Borrowers in Minnesota and

other states say Ameriquest charged them exorbitant fees, failed to disclose loan terms and provide documents before closing, inflated home appraisals, forged documents, and used bait-and-switch sales tactics.

Minnesota Solicitor General Lori Swanson and other state regulators said they want a settlement to include restitu-

AMERIQUEST, 9A



SPORTS, 1D
WOLVES DEAL CASSELL, DRAFT PICK TO CLIPPERS FOR JARIC

DAILY LIFE, 1E
Watch domestic diva Teri Bennett whip together a party



LOCAL NEWS, 1B
U junior crowned Miss Black USA



▶KNIGHT RIDDER▶

INDEX Crossword.....8E Opinion.....15B
Bulletin Board 14B Dear Abby.....11E Stocks.....3C
Comics.....8E Obituaries.....13B TV listings.....10E

ONLINE For additional photos and coverage from Friday night's Vikings preseason opening game, go to www.twincities.com


INFORMATION FOR LIFE
Newsroom 651-228-5490 Volume No. 157, No. 108
Subscriber service 800-678-7737 8 sections, 94 pages
Customer service 651-222-1111 ©2005 St. Paul Pioneer Press
Reader advocate 651-228-5446 (Northwest Publications)

[Back to Home >](#)

Tuesday, Aug 23, 2005

PIONEER PRESS

Local News

 [email this](#)  [print this](#)  [reprint or license this](#)

Posted on Sat, Aug. 13, 2005

Hearing the word of God

A new state-of-the-art sound system will make it easier for parishioners even in the back pews to understand pulpit speakers in the cavernous Cathedral of St. Paul.

BY LAURA YUEN
Pioneer Press

The Rev. Michael Skluzacek has mastered the art of being heard at the Cathedral of St. Paul: Speak clearly and speak slowly. Otherwise, his words become garbled in one of the cathedral's so-called "dead spots."

Although the cathedral is among the most visually arresting buildings in the downtown skyline, anyone who has sat in a back pew for Mass knows how the homilies from the pulpit can bounce off the floors, walls and the 186-foot-high dome.

"I call it the echo chamber," said Skluzacek, rector of the hallowed landmark, who said the muffled message is the No. 1 complaint he receives from parishioners. "We're a church based on the word of God, and if people can't hear it, we're not doing one of the many things we should be."

His solution: a state-of-the-art digital sound system, custom made in the Netherlands and the only one of its kind installed in Minnesota, according to the audio-equipment company working on the project. Cathedral officials say they hope to marry the recent exterior restoration of the landmark with a sound to match.

The 90-year-old cathedral was built when those trained in the seminary learned a certain oratorical style, Skluzacek said. But in an era of microphones and amplifiers, there's been less of an emphasis on how to project one's voice in such cavernous spaces.

Deborah Organ, an assistant professor who teaches homiletics at the St. Paul Seminary, agrees that speakers today take for granted the ability to be heard. While her students practice their oratory skills, she listens for content as she roams the seminary chapel in search of the pockets where their voices fade.

The Cathedral of St. Paul's nearly 3 million cubic feet of space create that rich, powerful reverberation for organ and choir music.

"It's the thing people love and want, but it's exactly the opposite for what spoken word requires to be understood," said Stefan Svärd, president of Brooklyn Park-based Audio Video Electronics.

The new system includes a set of four sleek and slender multispeaker units known as "digitally steerable line arrays" mounted to arch supports on each side of the pulpit. Technicians have been testing and tweaking the new setup, which can aim the sound more directly at people seated in the pews.

"The old speakers work like floodlights. These new loudspeakers are more like a laser beam," Svärd said.

The equipment, paid for by donations from parishioners and guests, will cost somewhere between \$116,000 and \$200,000. They debut this weekend.

Like any restoration of a national historical landmark, this project took careful treading. The contractors couldn't prop up acoustic panels on the walls as they do in other churches. And the cathedral insisted that all the hole-drilling be performed by its contractor, who led the exterior renovation.

The beige linear speakers easily escape notice, unlike the former system's black speaker equipment that sits on a saucer-like platform above the pulpit. (The old speakers will be removed after the new system is complete, much to the joy of parishioner Cecilia Oknich of Roseville. "They look so terrible," she said.)

The acoustics have not been a problem for Oknich, but they affect her husband, who lost much of his hearing after years as a sheet-metal worker. Homilies are often a mystery to him.

"He sits and watches," Oknich said of her husband, Philip, 78. "When he sits with me, he asks, 'Was it nice?' "

The cathedral also is working with the audio company to develop headphone packs to assist hard-of-hearing parishioners and guests. And, for those people who can't make it to worship services in person, officials are working with national Catholic station Relevant Radio to broadcast Mass on local station 1330 AM.

Skluzacek said it wasn't hard making the case for the new speakers. Like any good man of the cloth, he simply turns to Scripture — in this case, Romans 10:14: "How can they believe in him of whom they have never heard?"

Laura Yuen can be reached at lyuen@pioneerpress.com or 651-228-5498.



email
this



print
this



reprint or license
this

