

Restraint, lack of housing spike helped Dakotas avoid foreclosure crisis

By **CHUCK HAGA**

GRAND FORKS, N.D. — Sometimes it's a good thing to be overlooked.

As the subprime loan debacle deepens, with staggering numbers of foreclosures straining the home-loan industry and state budgets in California, Florida and other parts of the country, a few states — including the Dakotas — have recorded significantly lower foreclosure rates.

While almost a quarter-million California properties were involved last year, South Dakota had only 50 homes in foreclosure in 2007, a nearly imperceptible 0.007 percent of homes in the state, the New York Times reported. Nevada's nation-leading rate was 3.4 percent, but North Dakota was below 0.1 percent, along with Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire.

"I think the primary reason we have not had any significant foreclosure problems is that we never did see any spike in residential prices," said Curtis Everson, president of the South Dakota Bankers Association.

"States like North Dakota and South Dakota are not exactly retirement destinations," he said from his office in Pierre. "That's what drove the housing boom in Nevada and some of those other places."

Not a place for buying retirement homes

"For good or bad, we are not the place people want to buy a second home for retirement."

Another factor: "Our economy really is pretty good right now," Everson said. "Our



By **ANNIE GRIFFITHS, Corbis**

The Dakotas' steady people, steady economy: No boom, but no trough either.

rate of personal income growth is toward the top, which has a lot to do with agricultural commodity prices. And unemployment has not seen any spike.

"South Dakota has not boomed with the rest of the country in good times, but then we don't have the trough to fall into, either."

Rick Clayburgh, president of the North Dakota Bankers Association in Bismarck,

offered similar explanations for his state's escaping the subprime fallout.

Farmers received record prices for a bumper wheat crop and other commodities. The Williston Basin oil patch is booming. The Canadian dollar's strength against the U.S. dollar has fueled tourism.

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MINNPOST.WORLD

Teacher, teacher! Candidates aren't discussing schools

By STEVE BERG

The presidential candidates – and the talking heads on cable television who seem to run their campaigns – have shown little interest in talking about education. Concerned parents, business leaders and others feel as if they are kids raising their hands at the back of the class while the teacher, er candidate, is preoccupied with other matters.

“Frustration over how education has been crowded out of the presidential debate is barely contained among the nation’s leading education experts,” according to a story in the latest U.S. News and World Report.

“Each week seems to bring more evidence of how the United States is losing step with the rest of the developed world when it comes to educating children. Seventy percent of eighth-graders are not proficient in reading, over a million high-schoolers drop out each year, and nearly one-third of college freshmen must take remedial math or English courses,” the story reports.

The situation is most critical in the nation’s largest cities. Seventeen of the 50 largest cities have graduation rates of less than 50 percent, according to a new report by America’s Promise Alliance.

Minneapolis is one of the worst performers, ranking 45th, ahead of only Detroit, Baltimore, Cleveland, Indianapolis and Columbus. Only 43.7 percent of Minneapolis kids graduate from high school, according to the study.

The results raise the question, even in Lake Wobegon: Are all children really above average?

The provocative essayist Charles Murray tosses cold water on the popular notion – held in different ways by both the left and the right -- that nearly all children who do poorly in school have the potential to do much better.

Limits of the human mind

Meanwhile, several other writers explore the limits and eccentricities of the human mind on

topics that range from the instant gratification of smoking to our maddening tendency toward short-term thinking. Each of these essays might help explain why humans – educated or not -- continue to make similar mistakes, generation after generation. Learning from history, it seems, is no match for genetic reality.

Let’s start with Murray, the conservative writer who has devoted much of his career to disproving the proposition that “all men are created equal.” His essay in the May issue of *The New Criterion* is titled: “The Age of Educational Romanticism: On requiring every child to be above average.”

In it he describes the approaching demise of what he calls “Educational Romanticism,” the belief that nearly all children who perform poorly in school have the potential to greatly improve. Educational romantics believe, says Murray, that academic achievement is determined mainly by the opportunities that children receive; that innate intellectual limits – if they exist – play a minor role, and that current schools have huge room for improvement.

These romantics exist both on the left and right, Murray asserts. Those on the left focus on race, class and gender. The performance of children of color, those of poor parents and girls would blossom if only they were liberated from racism, classism and sexism. Conversely, romantics on the right see dramatic improvement only if children are liberated from politically correct curricula and overbearing bureaucracy and teachers’ unions.

Murray, most famous for his 1994 best-seller “*The Bell Curve*,” challenges his readers to recall the last educational analysis concluding that many failing students simply aren’t smart enough.

“No one disputes the empirical predictiveness of tests of intellectual ability – IQ tests – for large groups,” he says. “If a classroom of first-graders is given a full-scale IQ test that requires no literacy and no mathematics, the correlation of those scores with scores on reading

and math tests at age 17 is going to be high. Such correlations will be equally high whether the class consists of rich children or poor, black or white, male or female. They will be high no matter how hard the teachers have worked. Scores on tests of reading and math track with intellectual ability, no matter what.”

Murray says that educational romanticism is about to collapse of its own weight, largely because no one truly and actually believes the no-child-left-behind nostrum, and because pretending it’s true is demonstrably damaging the life chances of children of all levels of intellectual ability.

Captive to our impulses?

Ability aside, each of us is captive to the impulsive and comparatively primitive thinking that we’ve inherited through the ages, according to Gary Marcus. Writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, he attempts to explain why so often our noble, long-term goals are sacrificed for short-term gratification.

“We can plan in advance, using our modern deliberative reasoning systems, but our ancestral reflexive mechanisms, which evolved first, still basically control the steering wheel,” says Marcus, a psychology professor at New York University. “When the chips are down, it’s those mechanisms that our brains turn to, and that means that our brains frequently wind up relying on machinery that is all about acting first and asking questions later.”

That explains why so many people bought homes they knew they couldn’t afford, or, physical addiction aside, why so many people continue to smoke despite knowing that it’s bad for their health.

“Letting go: Smoking and non-smoking” is the title of David Sedaris’ extraordinary essay in the *New Yorker* magazine of May 5.

“It’s one thing to give up smoking, and another to become a former smoker,” Sedaris writes. He tells about vowing to quit and leaving five cigarettes on the table in a bar. His friend asks if he’s just go-

ing to leave them there, and he answers with a line he’d heard from a German friend.

“Though she often apologized for the state of her English, I wouldn’t have wanted it to be any better. When it came to verb conjugation, she was beyond reproach, but every so often she’d get a word wrong. The effect was not a loss of meaning but a heightening of it. I once asked if her neighbor smoked, and she thought for a moment before saying, ‘Karl has ... finished with his smoking.’”

“She meant, of course, that he had quit, but I much preferred her mistaken version. ‘Finished’ made it sound as if he’d been allotted a certain number of cigarettes, three hundred thousand, say, delivered at the time of his birth. If he’d started a year later or smoked more slowly, he might still be at it, but, as it stood, he had worked his way to the last one, and then moved on with his life. This, I thought, was how I would look at it. Yes, there were five more *Kool Molds* in that particular pack, and 26 cartons stashed away at home, but those were extra – an accounting error. In terms of my smoking, I had just finished with it.”

Perhaps Sedaris had reached the magic point of human learning – or, in his case – unlearning. Gary Wolf writes in *Wired* magazine about a software product, *Super Memo*, based on the insight that learning can be greatly improved based on the correct spacing of practice sessions.

“Practice too soon and you waste your time. Practice too late and you’ve forgotten the material and have to relearn it. The right time to practice is just at the moment you’re about to forget,” says Wolf.

“Unfortunately, this moment is different for every person and each bit of information.” Or, as Murray might postulate, every child is left behind at a different time and in a different place.

Steve Berg reports on urban design, transportation and national politics. He can be reached at sberg@minnpost.com.

The Daily Glean: Giving 'police shooting' a whole new meaning

By DAVID BRAUER

The Glean underplays crime stories, to compensate for the rest of the media universe. But KSTP's Tim Sherno has a fascinating report on police cameras ... in tasers. Every time cops turn on the electric weapon, the camera whirs. It's one accountability step beyond dashboard cams, and KS shows taser-cam video that helped exonerate the State Patrol in a fatal January incident. (Excruciating dashboard video here.) Minneapolis has 50 such tasers, Hopkins has five, with more coming everywhere.

Speaking of hot video, WCCO's Caroline Lowe ambushes Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak as he gets into the driver's side of his city Prius. Turns out Rybak's license was suspended after he paid most, but not all, of a Rochester speeding ticket. Seems like an honest error, but was he about to drive post-suspension? Just getting stuff out of the car, hizzoner says. But wouldn't you use the sidewalk/passenger's side? Conveniently, the mayor is on bike for a commuter challenge today.

The Legislature passed a minimum wage hike by nearly veto-proof margins. And we do mean nearly: the 40-18 Senate vote meets the test, but the 89-45 is one vote short — and by my math, all 134 representatives voted. Without a switcher, the plan — to raise the wage from \$6.35 to \$6.75 in July, and \$7.75 a year later — dies via veto pen.

The Strib and PiPress revel in a Met Council-U email feud over Central Corridor LRT. A 23-page U memo prompted the feds to term the corridor's timeline "overly aggressive and potentially unrealistic," but delay could raise already-high costs. The council's Peter Bell said the school violated trust and he would "no longer be silent when the U says one thing and does another." The U's Kathy O'Brien demanded that charac-

terization of 'the University as a roadblock ... cease.'"

More Central Corridor feud: Reportedly, peacemakers intervened by day's end. The PiPress reprints the emails here (PDF).

Minnesota Republicans hate mandatory booster-seat laws, but AP reports that a liberal-conservative House coalition killed a provision letting cops pull over unbelted motorists. The story includes the vote count which, by my eyeballing, lists three northside or south-central Minneapolis DFers, one tea leaf that racial profiling was a concern.

Pot, kettle: U.S. Sen. Norm Coleman accuses DFL hopeful Al Franken of changing "positions, demeanor and rhetoric," AP's Frederic Frommer reports. In a fundraising pitch, Coleman notes the satirist "stopped using curse words in public" and times Franken's move away from "radical causes" to a "move back to Minnesota — 30 years after he left." Noting Coleman's evolution from Clinton lover to Bush poodle, a DFL leader calls the e-mail "one of the most hypocritical political pieces" ever.

The Legislature will mandate a half-credit of high school physics as part of a broader education bill passed yesterday, the Strib reports. Now, if they could only do something about my 5th-grader's 10-minute recess.

We can't imagine national GOP delegates using the 1,000 free loaner bikes that the Strib's Anthony Lonetree says will be made available during the convention. But the bikes, available with a credit card swipe, will be great for locals. Turns out 75 of the bikes will remain once McCain's army leaves. Note to troglodytes: the set-up is different than the discredited "yellow bike" program, where credit cards and deposits weren't used.

Great PiPress editorial on a proposed Constitutional

amendment establishing an independent commission to set legislative pay. Legislators are pushing it, but the editorial notes a gaping loophole: lawmakers would still set their own per diems. That's been a back-door way to hike compensation. Let the independent group handle both, the PiPress argues.

The other day, the Glean noted that the city of St. Paul faces a \$13.1 million budget deficit. But MPR's Tim Nelson, a former PiPress City Hall guy, says the gap's emergence is "practically as reliable as a spring ice-out." He posts 10 years of deficit data; nine of the years have seen negative numbers, from \$6 million in 2002 to \$33 million in 2003. This year's number is actually the lowest since then, and roughly average for the period.

Score one for Don Shelby: the state Senate voted to spend a state ban on waterless urinals. It's a conservation step that the WCCO anchor has championed; no word on House or gubernatorial sentiment. Shelby's next crusade: AAVs, which eliminate the need for plumbing stacks up through houses. The concept blows this recent renovator's mind, but Shelby says AAV forces are good at getting courts to go their way, depending on legislative action.

The PiPress's Dennis Lien says the state House passed a bill requiring state agencies to report on greenhouse gas emission reductions, but the face that caught my eye "requires outdoor light fixtures installed or replaced using state money to redirect light downward." I believe this is the so-called "dark skies" provision that Phyllis Kahn has pushed for years. Over time, it might help us better see the stars, but it's also energy-efficient.

The Strib's Sarah Lemagie has an interesting trend piece: Farmington wants to block boulevard trees in a new subdi-

vision; instead it would require them to be 8-10 feet back from property lines. Your correspondent is as envoi as the next journalist, but having done stories on the tight quarters boulevard roots are trapped in, this provision makes sense, especially after paying for heaved sidewalks. Then again, what about front-yard freedom? Meanwhile, Burnsville may begin allowing boulevard trees.

Good primer from the PiPress's Tom Webb on why biodiesel lacks some of ethanol's flaws. The context is the "off ramp" in the state's biodiesel mandate, which goes from 2 percent to 20 percent over time. Requirements ease in cold months, and are waived if price differentials soar. "Biodiesel yields more energy, produces less pollution, and displaces more greenhouse gases" and avoids some of ethanol's food-substitution problems. But soy's rising price makes the oil byproduct less economical now.

The Minnesota Daily's Emma Carew has been all over the U salaries beat, and today notes faculty wages rank middle-of-the-pack compared to peer schools. Including health and retirement bennies, the average U full professor makes \$154,300; associate profs get \$110,860 and assistant faculty reap \$95,030.

The PiPress's Rachel Stassen-Berger notes good moods among Capitol budget negotiators, but Gov. Pawlenty left for the fishing opener examining special session dates. Probably just posturing. The regular session ends May 19.

AP reports that the 4 a.m. convention bar-closing bill passed. Gov. Pawlenty will sign the law, which cities can decide to implement.

Restraint, lack of housing spike helped Dakotas avoid foreclosure crisis

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'A pretty robust real-estate economy'

"We've seen a lot of growth, and with that comes job development and a pretty robust real-estate economy," Clayburgh said.

In a recent editorial, the Bismarck Tribune asked, "Is N.D. way the model?"

The state's economy is strong, even vibrant. While Minnesota and other states struggle with deficits, "North Dakota legislators debate how much of a comparatively enormous surplus to spend."

What is "the N.D. way"?

"There's an inborn sense of restraint, not only among our elected representatives but also found in most of us," the newspaper editorialized. "Perhaps an attitude of restraint explains why North Dakota isn't affected by the mortgage industry mess to the extent many other states are. Lenders and borrowers here

tend to be careful."

Housing Predictor, a Web site that forecasts changes in the real-estate market, includes three cities in what it calls "conservative North Dakota" on its list of the top 25 markets for 2008.

Bismarck is third with a forecast growth of 5.6 percent, Fargo ninth (4.5 percent) and Grand Forks 15th (3.9 percent).

North Dakota a big exception

"North Dakota might be the biggest exception in America's real-estate recession," according to the site's editors. "It's one of only two states to actually see its home sales increase in the latter half of 2007, and it just may make it through the housing market turmoil unscathed.

"That isn't to say there isn't downward pressure on home pricing. These days it's harder to get a mortgage, which will influence North Dakota's housing markets in the future. But the state escaped the use of subprime mortgages and other alternative adjustable rate loans, which have damaged markets elsewhere."

Clayburgh said he was aware of "a couple cases in Fargo where folks got into loans that were not the best for them," and they were facing foreclosure. Local banks "helped them refinance and get out of that trouble," he said.

"From a lending perspective, we're not a hotbed for what are referred to as unregulated mortgage brokers. There are companies ... some of them do a nice job and they're trying to serve customers. But there are lots of them that were ruthless in hiding fees in pages upon pages of documents, putting folks into loans that no lender in his right mind would put a borrower into because of their ability to pay.

Lenders heavily regulated

"Our lenders here are heavily regulated and are doing the proper accounting for folks who were taking out loans they could afford based on income and proper analysis," Clayburgh said. "Nationally, when these [finance] companies sell these subprime mortgages, they don't always hold onto them. They turn around and sell them, close

up shop, take the fees and leave.

"Overall, as a society we're a little more conservative here in North Dakota."

The same goes for South Dakota, Everson said.

"We do have a fairly conservative heritage here," he said. "My people are of Scandinavian and German descent. They came to this country and didn't have much, and then they went through a depression. That left an impression on those folks, and that's not been lost on their children.

"Remember, people in this part of the world are still building capital, not inheriting it. That tends to temper people's risk tolerance a bit."

Chuck Haga, a Star Tribune staff writer from 1987-2007, is a reporter for the Grand Forks Herald. He can be reached at chaga@minnpost.com.

"Perhaps an attitude of restraint explains why North Dakota isn't affected by the mortgage industry mess to the extent many other states are. Lenders and borrowers here tend to be careful."

— from an editorial in the Bismarck (N.D.) Tribune

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Minnesota's congressional delegation tries to cut D.C. living expenses

By CATHARINE RICHERT

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Keith Ellison's first weeks in Washington were more sticker shock at first sight than love at first sight.

"I was paying \$1,600 a month in rent. That's way too much," he said.

And that was the price for living in someone's basement.

Ellison isn't the only Minnesota freshman who's feeling the financial burn of D.C. living. Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Reps. Tim Walz and Michele Bachmann say they were blown away by real estate prices in Washington, where one-bedroom apartments start at \$250,000 and rent averages at \$1,100 a month.

All of them say they can't afford to buy a place in D.C., nor do they want to; Minnesota is their first and only home, and they're happy to pay both rent and a mortgage if it means preserving their roots there.

In the meantime, all four are doing what they can to save some coin. For his part, Ellison, whose net worth ranged from \$2,007 to \$35,000 in 2006, has since moved into a studio apartment, saving \$3,600 a year.

With four kids and one in college, "that's a big deal and I need it," he said.

In 2006, it cost about \$80,000 a year to live in the DC metro area, while the cost of living hovered around half that in Minneapolis.

Cost cutting

Certainly, members of Congress make plenty of money. The salary for rank-and-file members is \$169,300 this year, and that sum is annually adjusted to match the cost of living in Washington. (According to the U.S. Census Bureau [PDF], the median household income in the United States was \$48,201 in 2006.)

While no member of Minnesota's freshman class is poor — Klobuchar, Ellison and Bachmann all have law degrees, while Walz was a high school

teacher — they're not independently wealthy like former Sens. Rudy Boschwitz or Mark Dayton, whose net worth was nearly \$4 million in 2003.

That means most people employed in Washington, from congressional interns to the most senior members of Congress, have to pinch pennies to make ends meet. Take two of D.C.'s most notorious roommates, Senate Democratic leaders Dick Durbin of Illinois and Charles Schumer of New York. They share a bachelor pad with Reps. George Miller of California and Bill Delahunt of Massachusetts to save some cash. There, conversations focus less on legislation and more on who ate the last of the cereal (it's usually Schumer, according to *The New York Times*).

The Minnesota delegation has also cultivated their own money saving techniques for living in the city. Like Ellison, Walz moved to an efficiency apartment after sharing a place with another member of Congress that cost as much as his mortgage in Minnesota and provided about a quarter of the space.

"It was a hole in the wall," he said.

Klobuchar's net worth ranged from \$326,046 to \$1,394,000 in 2006. While that range may make her one of the wealthier members of Minnesota's delegation, that hasn't stopped her from trimming costs, like joining Costco.

Her money saving efforts didn't stop there. On a recent trip back to Minnesota, Klobuchar found an old set of plastic dishes — a good alternative to the new dishes she'd expected to buy for the house she's about to rent.

"I brought them back in my suitcase," she said, "and my chief of staff took some, too."

Just like college

High-priced real estate isn't the only trial that comes along with living in Washington. Most freshmen members are living away from their families for the first time, and making it home only for a few days over the weekend.

Walz says he tries to take flights that allow him to tuck his kids in on Thursday nights and drop-off his 7-year-old daughter at school before returning to Washington on Monday morn-



MinnPost illustration by BRIAN BARBER

ings.

Ellison says his new life in Washington is a lot like his first days in college.

"It's like going back to the dorm," he said, recounting a laundry fiasco in his new digs. "I opened up the machine, and there were clumps of Tide in there that never dissolved. My wife had to explain it to me over the phone. Now I use the liquid stuff."

The members aren't complaining, however. Walz says that all the annoyances that go along with being a member of Congress are "just part of the job." And Ellison says he's not necessarily advocating for a pay raise.

"Members of Congress should be paid fairly, or else it becomes a millionaire's club. Then the politics of our country reflect that," he said. "I'm not hurting. We're doing just fine."

Catharine Richert reports on developments in Congress, agriculture issues and other topics. She can be reached at crichert@minnpost.com.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Teens stats, ethanol bring reader comments

The merits of ethanol fueled a spate of recent comments, along with such topics as teen drivers, Iraq, department stores and Twins closer Joe Nathan. Here's a selection from MinnPost readers:

Dan Hintz was prompted to comment on Craig Westover's Wednesday post, "Oil vs. ethanol: What's riskier?":

Yet another reason why corn ethanol is a terrible product. The biggest problem, of course, is that corn ethanol is an environmental disaster, but a lot of would-be environmentalist legislators don't dare cross the corn lobby. So not only are we stuck with corn ethanol, we are subsidizing it and mandating its use. It's embarrassing that it's the free-marketers who are right on this and who are leading the charge against corn ethanol.

John Olson responded:

Yes, you do trade off geopolitical risks for natural risks on the question of oil versus corn.

Oil, however, is a finite resource. Corn can be planted year after year. The limiting factor on corn is what percentage is diverted from ethanol production over to feed and/or food. Or vice-versa.

Having grown up in a rural area and spent my share of time as a young man on a tractor, I can assure you that farmers will complain about anything and everything: too dry, too wet, too cool, too hot, too cloudy, and so on.

I do agree that it is time to drop the subsidy for ethanol.

Robert Moffitt weighed in:

"I do agree that it is time to

drop the subsidy for ethanol."

Is it time also to drop the tax breaks for oil companies?

In the form of E85, ethanol is a cleaner-burning, largely renewable alternative to gasoline, for those lucky enough to have a flex-fuel vehicle (about 170,000 on the road now in Minnesota). E85 is sold on the free market as an alternative to gasoline for these vehicles. Flex-fuel drivers can choose E85 or gasoline. Increasingly, more are choosing E85. Sales have increased every year at the 350 or so stations that sell the fuel.

Mark Hamerlinck added:

Basing an argument against corn ethanol on anything a senior fellow from the Cato Institute has is laughable. At the very least, it deserves some context, like, for instance, the fact that Cato was founded by David Koch, whose family derives their fortune from Koch Industries (think oil refining).

And shouldn't readers know that funding for the Cato Institute also comes from the likes of the American Petroleum Institute and Exxon Mobil? Or that Cato contributors include the Scaife Foundations, which were founded on the millions the Mellon family made in their family business — Gulf Oil?

The National Corn Growers Association isn't ashamed to put their name to their research and arguments. The same can't be said for Big Oil.

Paul Schatz offered this pithy observation on G.R. Anderson Jr.'s Monday post, "Delta prez careful, conciliatory in latest Capitol hear-

ings on Northwest":

The only people less qualified to run a business than airline executives are legislators.

•••••

Tony Wagner commented on Eric Black's May 2 post, "How you've been misled on teen driving fatalities":

Excellent work, Mr. Black.

It's amazing how one twisted little nugget of misinformation can lead to so much wasted time, money, and energy, both in the media AND in the legislature. Shame on both of them!

Bob Collins disagreed:

There's a fundamental flaw in your research.

You attempted to debunk Kim Norton's assertion (which, by the way, was that we had a high rate of teen "crashes" and fatalities involving teen drivers) by pointing out the number of TEENS killed.

However, according to research, the majority of people killed in "fatal accidents involving teen drivers" are not the teenagers.

According to AAA Minnesota, "between 1995-2004, crashes involving 15-, 16- and 17-year-old drivers claimed the lives of 567 people in Minnesota, of which 212 (37.4 percent) were the teen drivers themselves. The remaining 355 (62.6 percent) included 171 passengers of the 15- to 17-year-old drivers, 155 occupants of other vehicles, and 29 non-motorists."

John E. Iacono added:

While I can see the difference Bob points out, I note that he does not assert we would be the worst state if his measure were used.

And I am impressed with Eric's research.

As a father who steered two daughters through the shoals of learning to drive, I can appreciate the concerns of other parents as fledglings learn to fly, and legislators' efforts to help.

It seems to me, however, that these efforts are somewhat off the mark.

More likely to save teen lives, it seems to me, would be a law making tailgating an offense with a large fine — this seems to me to be the most dangerous and common offense I notice with teen drivers. They can't seem to grasp that they might not be able to stop.

And targeting cell phones and texting similarly would certainly affect teens, but also a number of others who frighten me when I see them thus distracted in my rear view mirror.

Of course this would be less popular, as a number of adults commit the same offense, but teens seem quite unaware of the risks they are taking — until they have an accident.

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Joey Peters reacted to David Brauer's May 1 post, "City Pages: What if it doesn't suck?":

While it's true that CP's music coverage has declined, I feel like they're trying to make up for it in centering much of their coverage features on local music artists. Just last week their feature was about the one-man multi-tasking musician Martin Dosh, and the cover story of the issue posted above was about the history of local hair metal.

Want to add your voice?

If you're interested in joining the discussion by writing a Community Voices article, email Susan Albright at salbright@minnpost.com.