

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

■ **Push Our Buttons:** Tell us what you think by offering your opinion on a select question on our Web site: www.hibbingmn.com
 ■ **In the Mail letters:** tribune@hibbingmn.com or P.O. Box 38, Hibbing, MN 55746

Just Remembering

Memorial Day means something different depending on a person's age. For example, Memorial Day probably doesn't represent much of anything to very young children, considering a fat man in a red suit delivers no presents, and a gigantic rabbit doesn't tuck candy baskets into corners.

In contrast, Memorial Day carries a whole lot more weight for those who understand the serious nature of the holiday, and remember the past or present sacrifices of the veterans in or close to their family.

I am lucky enough to have no such connection. Before Iraq, none of my extended family since World War II had been shipped overseas to participate in an active conflict (although I did have one rather intense uncle who volunteered to go to Vietnam... three times). We came close — my mom tells this great



Matt Nelson
Summer Intern

story about how, during my parents' junior year of college, my dad's lottery number was called just before Nixon started pulling troops from Vietnam.

Oddly, I guess this means my

existence relies entirely upon Richard Nixon. I try not to think about that very much.

If I look deeper into my history, I can see how military involvement has more dramatically affected other family members. There's an old family story about my grandfather's brothers who went off to war, while my grandfather stayed behind to watch the farm (after all, somebody had to do it). My grandfather lost his brother Leonard in Germany. I also had a great-aunt Phyllis, on my grandmother's side, whose twin brother Theodore went MIA in the South Pacific. Phyllis maintained for years that he would return, but Ted never came back.

When I think of Memorial Day, I don't just think about the Teds or the Leonards; I remember the Phyllises, and my grandfather, and the sons and daughters who were left behind and carried on. They've made a sacrifice too,

even if it doesn't always seem as glorious.

In the last four years, I've had two cousins become involved in the armed services, one joining the National Guard, and the other now a Marine. One has already been to Iraq and has returned, while the other will be heading over there in the fall. While I can't say that I understand what they have gone through and will go through, I could not be more proud of them.

Memorial Day — it's a family holiday. It isn't about getting the kids hopped up on sugar; it's about remembering those whose lives have been shaped by awesome events beyond their control. It's about knowing what they went through and keeping that knowledge or passing it on, even if you don't fully understand it. Simply remembering is a tribute.

ku'dos, noun 1. fame; honor; glory; prestige; credit; as for an achievement.

2. a Hibbing Daily Tribune column featuring words straight from the community recognizing outstanding individuals and institutions.

Kudos to the Greenhaven PTO for the teacher appreciation luncheon. The food was delicious, the decorations were beautiful and the flowers were an unexpected surprise. We truly appreciate all that you do. (Submitted by the Greenhaven staff)

Kudos to Lisa Dolinich for being the team photographer for the girls' U14A hockey team. The CD and picture collages you made were awesome! We know that you spent a lot of time on them, and all of the players and parents thank you very much!



Kudos to Ben Sartori for being such an awesome girls junior high softball coach. Your energy, patience, and encouragement were very much appreciated. Playing the girls fairly really gave them confidence. Many of the girls had never played before, and they learned so much this year. Thanks also for the wonderful year-end barbecue! The girls all had a really great time. All the players and parents of the white and blue team say "thank you."

Kudos to Mark Casey for the fast response in getting the stop signs up on East Lake Street and Sixth Avenue N.E. The signs will help keep children on bikes and people safe.

Kudos to Pam Paoli, noon-hour aide ... the boys and girls miss your big heart in the lunchroom and playground. (Submitted by a second grade parent)

Kudos to Charlie Tomsich, Dave Pessenda and Rosie Marino for the wonderful American Legion banquet. A good time

was had by all. See you next year.

Kudos from the 2009 Chisholm seniors to Rosie Marino. Thanks for the hard work on the rigatoni fundraiser. Your help makes all our All Night Grad parties a success.

Kudos to the Hibbing Daily Tribune for bringing the United States Air Force's Winds of Freedom to Hibbing. It was a great concert for anyone who missed it! P.S. Can you see about bringing the U.S. Marine Corps band here?

Send signed or anonymous to the Hibbing Daily Tribune, 2142 First Avenue, P.O. Box 38, Hibbing, MN 55746. They run as soon as possible on a space available basis.

GUEST COLUMNIST

Property taxes on the rise: paying more, getting less

by Jeff Van Wychen
Minnesota 2020

If you think your property taxes are rising rapidly, it's not your imagination.

According to a new report from nonprofit think tank Minnesota 2020, Hibbing homeowners have seen their property taxes increase by 16 percent since 2002 in inflation-adjusted dollars. Homeowners are being hit around the state. The average homeowner property tax in Minnesota has increased by 29 percent since 2002.

However, revenue for K-12 education, police and fire protection, roads, parks and recreation, and other public services and infrastructure has declined over the same period. Why are we paying more and getting less?

The number one reason: state aid cuts.

In Minnesota, all income tax revenue and 95 percent of sales tax revenue go to state government. In exchange for its near monopoly on major taxes, the state is charged with sharing a significant portion of these dollars with local governments to help hold down local property taxes.

However, the state of Minnesota has responded to the ongoing budget crisis by cutting back on the income and sales tax dollars that it shares with counties, cities, towns, and schools. Over the last six years, total state aid to all Minnesota local governments has fallen by \$2.4 billion in constant 2009 dollars. In response to this loss of funding, local governments have

been forced to cut budgets and increase property taxes to address gaping budget holes.

State government has shifted a disproportionate share of its budget problems on to the backs of local governments and local property taxpayers through excessive state aid cuts. Because of state aid cuts, local government revenue has fallen much more rapidly than state government revenue.

And homeowner property taxes have grown about two times more rapidly than all other types of property taxes after adjusting for inflation. On a statewide basis, the more rapid rate of growth in homeowner property taxes is also due to state tax policies that have shifted a larger share of the property tax on to homeowners over time.

Since Governor Pawlenty came to office, the State of Minnesota has been in a recurring budget crisis. During the first five years of the Pawlenty administration, per capita state tax revenues fell by five percent after adjusting for inflation, with another eight percent decline anticipated in the current fiscal year. While real per capita state spending has also fallen, the spending decline has not been nearly as great as the drop in revenue.

The State of Minnesota is now confronted with yet another budget deficit even larger than that experienced in previous years. If the state continues to respond to its deficit problem through large cuts in aid to local government, we can expect the same results: higher property taxes

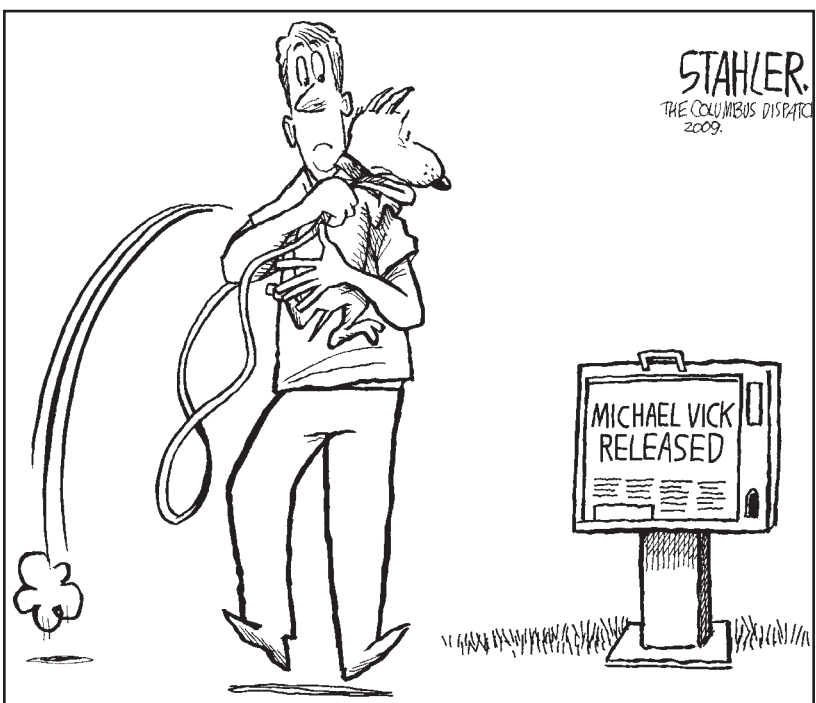
and less funding for schools and other public services.

Rather than continuing to shift the state's budget problems on to local governments and local property taxpayers through disproportionately large state aid cuts, Minnesota 2020 urges state policymakers to consider a balanced approach that involves prudent reductions in state spending combined with increases in progressive state taxes, such as the state income tax. Unlike property taxes, income taxes do not fall disproportionately on low and moderate income families who have the least ability to pay.

Moreover, state policymakers need to come clean about the true cause of rising property taxes in Minnesota. Since

2002, the rapid growth in property taxes in general and homestead property taxes in particular is primarily the result of state policies, not local spending decisions. True reform to the property tax and state aid systems will not come about until policymakers acknowledge—or citizens compel them to acknowledge—the real causes of property tax increases.

Jeff Van Wychen is a Minnesota 2020 research fellow focusing primarily on property tax and state and local budget issues. For the last 23 years, Jeff has been a policy analyst for various local governments and nonprofit organizations.



Hyper local Looking for the latest information on the Central Iron Range? We've got your life covered. For local businesses opening, city hall news and the latest on the libraries, park, arts organizations, or just an explanation on the latest economic development project, we are your source for comprehensive news source. Find us on your doorstep, on the street corner, or online every minute of every day.
Hibbing Daily Tribune — www.hibbingmn.com



A tradition of excellence since 1894
(USPS 243-120 • Vol. 115, No. 142)

**2142 First Avenue
Hibbing, MN 55746**

Published daily except on Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day by the Hibbing Daily Tribune, 2142 First Ave., P.O. Box 38, Hibbing, MN 55746. Periodical postage paid at Hibbing, MN 55746.

TO REACH US:
Phone: (218) 262-1011
Fax: (218) 262-4318
E-mail: Tribune@hibbingmn.com
Web site: www.hibbingmn.com

TO SUBSCRIBE:
Carrier delivery is \$3.33 per week. Motor route delivery is \$3.85 per week. Mail delivery is \$3.54 per week. New subscribers may send a check to same address or call (218) 262-1011 for circulation assistance. Postmaster and subscribers send address changes to: Hibbing Daily Tribune, 2142 First Avenue, P.O. Box 38, Hibbing, MN 55746-0038.

THE STAFF
Publisher
Wanda A. Moeller
e-mail: wanda.moeller@mx3.com

NEWS
Editor
Mike Jennings
e-mail: mike.jennings@mx3.com
Assistant Editor
Kelly Grinsteinner
e-mail: kelly.grinsteinner@mx3.com
Sports Editor
Gary Giombetti
e-mail: gary.giombetti@mx3.com
Sports Writer
Ted Anderson
e-mail: ted.anderson@mx3.com
Staff Writer
Anna Kurth
e-mail: anna.kurth@mx3.com
News Assistant
Sue Hancock
e-mail: sue.hancock@mx3.com
Heather Irlbacker
e-mail: heather.irlbacker@mx3.com
Historian/Curmudgeon
Jack Lynch
e-mail: jack.lynch@mx3.com

DISPLAY ADVERTISING
John Odegaard
e-mail: john.odegaard@mx3.com
Mary Bischoff
e-mail: mary.bischoff@mx3.com
Jean Sporer
e-mail: jean.sporer@mx3.com
Classified Ad Manager
Mary Ferris
e-mail: mary.ferris@mx3.com

OFFICE ASSISTANTS
Sue LaBrosse
e-mail: sue.labrosse@mx3.com
Barb Koschak
e-mail: barb.koschak@mx3.com

CIRCULATION
Ida Meyer
e-mail: ida.meyer@mx3.com

DISTRIBUTION
Larry Meyer

MEMBER
Minnesota Newspaper Association
National Newspaper Association
Newspaper Association of America
Inland Press Association