

WHEN?

Today through Feb. 28

"Commemorating Controversy" exhibit on U.S.-Dakota War, Plymouth Library

WHERE?

Bloomington Center for the Arts

"An Archeology of Color," through Feb. 15, 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Mon-Fri, 9-5 Sat., 1-10 Sun.

WHO?

Brad Frost

He coaches "the best-kept secret in town," the U women's hockey team, with a record 34-game win streak. C1

around the metro

BREAKING NEWS REPORTED FROM OUR NEWSROOM: STARTRIBUNE.COM/VIDEO

Franken has \$1.3M cushion

• Though no clear challenger has emerged for his 2014 re-election bid, the state GOP expects to land a "very high quality" challenger.

By RACHEL E. STASSEN-BERGER
rachelstassen-berger@startribune.com

Democratic U.S. Sen. Al Franken is starting his re-election bid with \$1.3 million in the bank, according to new campaign finance reports, and a powerful fundraising reach.

While Republicans have been itching to take him on in 2014, the cushion he had at the end of last year could give them a renewed reason to fret that Franken currently does not have a high-profile challenger. The freshman senator raised more than \$20 million for his first run against Republican incumbent Norm Coleman and eked out an exceedingly close win after a prolonged recount battle.

This time, Franken will have the power of the office on his side.

"He isn't a pushover," said Jennifer Duffy, Senate race analyst with the nonpartisan Cook Political Report. "You are going to need someone really strong and pretty well known to run against him."

Republicans say that there is still

plenty of time for candidates to come forward and that the eventual candidate will be a natural draw for cash, given the GOP ire at Franken.

"It's very early in the process for a candidate to have declared," said Minnesota Republican Party Chairman Pat Shortridge. "I'm confident that we'll have a very high-quality candidate against Al Franken. Despite his attempt to reinvent himself as the mature, respectable Al Franken, he's still the same old Al, only now has a very liberal voting record on top of it. ... The right candidate could get in next year and still win."

The Cook Political Report ranks Minnesota's coming U.S. Senate race as one that leans toward the Democrats. But that could quickly change if the right candidate steps forward to challenge Franken, Duffy said.

Last month, Coleman, now a lobbyist and political action commi-

tee head, said he would not be that challenger. But both U.S. Reps. John Kline and Erik Paulsen have left open the possibility that they may try to step up to the Senate. Meanwhile, a recent poll found that Republican voters would prefer that U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann take on the Franken race.

All three Republican House members from Minnesota have filed federal committees to allow them to raise money for re-election efforts but that does not lock them into running for their current seats.

Of the three, Bachmann is the most powerful fundraiser by far. As of the end of 2012, a few weeks after she squeaked out a re-election win, Bachmann had more than \$2 million in the bank. She also reported that she transferred \$100,000 from her House campaign to her presidential committee.

Franken's cash cushion, said Duffy, is a respectable start but is not as much as she will need.

But Franken has yet to fundraise for his re-election in earnest. Most of last year his fundraising pleas and events were focused on Senate col-

leagues and other Democrats who were fighting in 2012.

"Now that he is up for re-election, he will spend more time on his own fundraising," said Ed Shelleby, Franken spokesman. In January, Franken held one Washington, D.C., fundraiser, timed around President Obama's inauguration and headlined by Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, which raised more than \$400,000. That haul is not reflected in the report due on Thursday.

Franken also has used his large e-mail list to bring in the cash for his campaign. One plea this week was titled: "Open this email—not those other ones."

"Many of the other emails in your inbox that want your money probably aren't worth opening. Do you really need a subscription to your local laser tag emporium—even at half price?" the e-mail asked. "Nobody wants to play laser tag more than once or twice, but helping me fight for the middle class will pay off in 2014 and beyond."

Rachel E. Stassen-Berger
Twitter: @rachel1sb



Franken



ELIZABETH FLORES • eflores@startribune.com

Game of thrones

Jeff Lutz, showing he's not afraid of a little icy embrace, played king for a day Thursday on a throne of ice at the St. Paul Winter Carnival ice sculpture garden in Rice Park. Thursday's high was 4 degrees, dipping to a frigid low of 14 below. Friday will bring another high of 4, with a more hospitable low of around zero. By Saturday the metro area will be back in double digits. Carnival events run through Sunday. **More weather, B6**

Red Kettles to collect donations for heat

Just in time for Groundhog Day ... introducing the Red Kettles of the Salvation Army.

Yes, those signature Christmas-time repositories of goodwill are resurfacing Saturday in the Twin Cities, the same day that a certain groundhog issues his annual spring forecast in Punxsutawney, Pa.

The Salvation Army announced that the kettles will be positioned from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at most metro Cub Foods locations. The charity said the goal is to collect enough money to supply 300 families with heat this winter through its HeatShare program.

CenterPoint Energy is offering to triple all donations up to \$30,000 made at the kettles and

online at www.heatshare.org. The utility is also donating \$3 for every view of the Salvation Army's video at the same website.

HeatShare is a last resort for people in danger of having their heat or power shut off. Last year, nearly 40,000 Minnesota families requested HeatShare assistance, but only 4,200 received help due to lack of funding.

The Twin Cities Salvation Army sets out Red Kettles outside of the Christmas season in times of emergency, in recent years for such events as the Interstate 35W bridge collapse, North Dakota floods, Japan's tsunami and the Haiti earthquake.

PAUL WALSH

District puts chief on paid leave while complaint is investigated

The board of the West Metro Education Program has placed its superintendent on administrative leave while a complaint against him is investigated.

Superintendent Daniel Jett, 68, will be paid at his annual rate of more than \$163,000 while the complaint is investigated, according to Ann Goering, an attorney advising the board of the 11-district integration school district.

Jett did not respond to e-mails and phone calls Thursday seeking comment. On Wednesday night, the board voted to hire three firms to assist it during the investigation of the complaint.

Goering said that Antoinette Johns, a former Brooklyn Park superintendent, will start Monday in Jett's role for the district until the School Exec Connect firm finds a longer-term substitute. "This may be a little longer than a few days," Goering said.

The board also hired a firm to investi-

gate the complaint against Jett and a law firm to advise the board on issues related to that investigation. Jett worked for six years as superintendent of the Minnetonka district and has headed the integration district since 2003. He was granted only a one-year extension of his contract when the board last acted on that.

The two-school district was launched to help promote integration of student populations between Minneapolis and 10 suburban districts. It also provides training to teachers and students in intercultural issues and has run a program that allows low-income Minneapolis students to attend suburban schools.

The investigation involving the Jett complaint follows one in which a complaint against Kevin J. Bennett, principal of the two schools, was investigated. Goering said interviews have been completed in that investigation.

STEVE BRANDT

on the beat

Star Tribune metro reporters open up their notebooks

Journal tracks Hmong progress

CULTURES & IMMIGRATION
ALLIE SHAH



Allie Shah

A new study shows the Hmong-American population is maturing and making strides in several key areas. But many still struggle with poverty and disparities in health services.

The findings, published recently in a special issue of the Hmong Studies Journal, are based on an analysis of 2010 census data.

People of Hmong ancestry have been a part of American society since the first refugees arrived in the 1970s. They settled mainly in California, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

But for the first time, there are now Hmong people living in every state, according to the Hmong Studies Journal.

Other report findings:

- More than half of all Hmong-Americans were born in the United States.

- English is no longer a barrier for the majority of Hmong-Americans.

- The Hmong population in Minnesota, like in the nation, is starting to age compared with 1990 and 2000 data, but the Hmong median age in Minnesota is 19.7 years, well below the median age of the overall Minnesota population — 37 years.

- More Hmong-Americans in Minnesota and nationally are attaining higher education. Educational gaps between Hmong-American women and men have been eliminated.

- The U.S. Hmong poverty rate has significantly improved in the past couple decades, decreasing from 64 percent in 1990 to 38 percent in 2000 and 25 percent in 2010.

Despite the progress, gaps in income and health services persist.

The poverty rate for Hmong-Minnesotans was 26 percent in 2010 — more than three times as high as the 7 percent poverty rate for the entire state population.

The study also found that 11.9 percent of Hmong-Minnesotans had no health insurance coverage, compared with less than 9 percent of all Minnesotans. But nearly 40 percent of Hmong-Minnesotans had public health coverage, as opposed to 25 percent of all Minnesotans.

To read the issue, go to www.hmongstudiesjournal.org.

Allie Shah • 612-673-4488

U official says sexy seminar title was just a come-on

CAMPUS CONNECT
JENNA ROSS



Jenna Ross

Read more of Campus Connect at www.startribune.com/local/blogs.

The University of Minnesota is getting heat for an April program called "The Female Orgasm" that welcomes "orgasm aficionados" and beginners of all genders.

A conservative blog pointed it out, and the media ran with it. "Public Universities Gone Wild," wrote U.S. News. "'O,' yes!" wrote the New York Post.

At the Capitol Wednesday, Rep. Glenn Gruenhagen, R-Glencoe, asked who was paying for a seminar that "some people might consider inappropriate." Peg Lomquist, director of the Women's Center, said the program is about sexual health, and the title was just marketing. "As you know, marketing is important, and we want students to come to the program."

Student fees and some state funds will pay the \$3,656 cost.