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Sex offender releases suspended

Gov. Dayton halts — for now — changes to controversial program

DON DAVIS
Forum News Service

ST. PAUL — Minnesota sex offenders who remain locked up after their prison terms end are supposed to have a chance to go free, but Gov. Mark Dayton on Wednesday snuffed out that hope until he and legislators can agree on a new process.

He said political reaction to the potential release of a man convicted in three sex crimes persuaded him to end sex offender releases.

"I believe this decision should be made by professionals, not politicians," Dayton said, adding that he and legislators must agree on how to handle sex offenders before he allows any to go free.

However, a three-judge panel next year could opt to free three sex offenders, including the man

whose potential release created the controversy.

Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson said that since the three are in the court system, there is nothing she can do to stop the proceedings. However, she does plan to expand her department's investigation into Thomas Duvall, 58, to provide the judges with more information that could keep him in the Minnesota Sex Offender Program.

Duvall's record includes three convictions for sexually assaulting teenage girls. A Human Services Department panel recommended that his release be considered by the judicial panel, an action that set off a series of heated comments from Republicans who want to challenge Dayton in next year's election.

"It was just made clear that this

was an issue that would be seized upon and abused by some who don't mind scaring the people of Minnesota for their own advantage," Dayton said. "We just can't proceed in that environment."

The state's sex offender program is where many serious sex offenders are sent after their prison terms end. It is supposed to be treatment, but just one man has graduated from the program and been released from the locked facilities in the 20 years it has existed.

In response to a suit by sex offenders, a federal judge ruled that the state must change its "civil commitment" program to give offenders a chance to be free. Otherwise, the judge said, requiring treatment after prison terms end amounts to life sentences.

SEX OFFENDERS, A2



DON DAVIS/FORUM NEWS SERVICE

Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson, with Gov. Mark Dayton, talks Wednesday about a new plan to keep sex offenders in treatment until legislators and Dayton agree on a new plan.

Pregnancy center to host fundraiser

ERIN TRESTER
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WORTHINGTON — The Helping Hand Pregnancy Center will host its annual fundraising event from 6:15 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday at American Reformed Church, Worthington.

With the combined theme of "Dare to Hope" and "Celebrating Birthdays," Helping Hand is raising money to continue its services in the community.

"I like to say that we make birthdays happen, because without life there are no birthdays," said Susan Voehl, executive director at Helping Hand Pregnancy Center. "Since we're a non-profit organization, we do rely on generous gifts and donations. People come from all over the region for our services, and I think we're an important organization to the community."

Sara Renner, who Voehl said is returning to the annual event by popular demand, will perform and a gourmet meal will be served. There will also be a silent auction with more than 30 items up for bid. One of the items up for auction — a renovated entertainment center made into a children's play kitchen — was created by one of Helping Hand's own counselors.

HELPING HAND, A2

'Parents Just Don't Understand' play is Friday, Saturday night



BRIAN KORTHALS/DAILY GLOBE

The cast members of the comedy "Parents Just Don't Understand" rehearse Tuesday at Memorial Auditorium Performing Arts Center in Worthington.

WHS fall play highlights generation gap

JANE TURPIN MOORE
Daily Globe

WORTHINGTON — Ten different scenes folded into one contemporary full-length play — "Parents Just Don't Understand" by Bryan Starchman — are guaranteed to illustrate, in a comic manner, many of the clashes that occur in

families, particularly between parents and teenagers.

"Each scene is its own mini-play, and together they share snippets of family life that a lot of people can relate to," explained Anna Korver, co-director of the Worthington High School (WHS) fall dramatic production that takes place at 7 p.m. both Friday and Saturday at Memorial Auditorium Performing Arts Center.

Picture the following and you'll get the idea: a family road trip with its ensuing arguments ... a parent enduring a 16-year-old's early attempts at driving ... shop-

ping for school clothes with a teenage son ... parents unwittingly embarrassing their adolescent children.

"It's basic things that most people have been through at one time or another in their lives, and it's brought out in a comedic form," said Korver, a WHS math teacher who is sharing the fall play directing duties with WHS ESL teacher Kelli Straley for a second consecutive year.

Fourteen students are involved, either in tech or set crew roles or as actors.

WHS FALL PLAY, A3

Nurse discipline due for a change

DON DAVIS
Forum News Service

ST. PAUL — State regulators may treat nurses too leniently, a key Minnesota senator said after a Wednesday legislative committee meeting looked into nurse discipline issues.

Sen. Kathy Sheran, DFL-Mankato, a nurse herself, said she is concerned that the Minnesota Nursing Board leans too far toward nurses when deciding if they violate state laws and rules.

"I intend to be a little tougher on license holders," Sheran said.

Sheran and the other co-chairwoman of the meeting, Rep. Tiny Liebling, DFL-Rochester, said they hope the Office of Legislative Auditor can investigate the issue.

"I still have a number of questions," Sheran said.

Liebling and Sheran praised suggestions that nursing regulators gave them Wednesday, including ones that would give the board more investigative power and a greater ability to reject applications.

There seemed to be a consensus that changes are needed in how Minnesota disciplines nurses.

NURSES, A2

Area farmers see benefits of cover crops

JULIE BUNTJER
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LAKEFIELD — When Jerry Ackermann had some of his crop drown out this spring, he opted to plant purple-topped turnips and tillage radish on the prevented plant acres — the same crops he's tried in each of the last three years to seed into fields of standing corn and soybeans to provide cover during the winter months and break up the hard layers in the soil.

On Wednesday, during a Cover Crops Field Day at his farm, Ackermann showed how the turnips and radish he planted in early July grew to mammoth proportions, while a variety of speakers discussed how those plantings are helping to improve soil health, soak up nitrogen and increase rainwater infiltration.

Ackermann is one of several farmers in the area experimenting with cover crops. His reason for doing so, he told the more than

40 people in attendance Wednesday, is because "I don't want to see any nutrients get away from me."

Jerry Perkins, on the other hand, said he has planted cover crops because they feed the microorganisms in the soil.

Both Perkins and Ackermann participated in a Heron Lake Watershed District program this year in which the district received a National Wildlife Federation grant to assist farmers growing cover crops. In early September

they, along with a few other farmers in Jackson and Nobles counties, aerial seeded fields of standing corn and soybean with cover crop seeds such as the purple-topped turnips, tillage radish and cereal rye, among others.

"The roots are really loosening things up," Ackermann said of the impact he's seen thus far with the cover crop plantings. With some of his acres enrolled in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Ackermann

plans to continue cover crop plantings for at least the next five years.

"We put out cereal rye, which doesn't grow that much in the fall, but it comes up in the spring," Ackermann said.

"When I look at those yield maps, I'll be doing more next year, I can tell you that," he added, saying he's considering cover seeding all of his soybean acres next year in cereal rye.

COVER CROPS, A3

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GOOD MORNING

Greg Hasara
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JULIE BUNTJER/DAILY GLOBE

Jerry Ackermann of rural Lakefield holds a tillage radish (left) and a purple-topped turnip grown on his prevented plant acres this year.

COVER CROPS

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Andy Nesseth, of Extended Ag Service in Lakefield, has been doing soil grid testing on the Ackermann farm in recent years, and noted that while there were no significant changes in fertility on the soil where cover crops were planted, there were more soil nitrates present. From 2012 to 2013, the amount of nitrates in the soil went from 78 pounds to 208 pounds per acre.

"That's quite a difference," Nesseth said. The measurements in 2013 were taken about two and a half to three weeks later than the 2012 measurements due to weather issues, which could have accounted for some of the added nitrates in 2013. Still, Nesseth said there were visible improvements in soil tilth and water structure on the land where cover crops were grown.

Some of the greatest challenges noted Wednesday with planting cover crops is relying on Mother Nature to bring timely rains in the fall to get the cover crops established. To perhaps take advantage of rains earlier in the growing season, one

attendee asked if the cover crops could be planted earlier than the Aug. 10 guideline.

Ackermann said there could be problems if planted earlier due to the canopy of corn and soybeans and the lack of sunlight that would reach the seedbed to promote growth.

Timing of cover crop plantings is one of the greatest obstacles, but Jill Sackett, a University of Minnesota Extension educator who has worked with cover crop management for several years, said seed selection is also important.

"The more diverse plants you have out there, the more diverse your soil microorganisms are going to be," said Sackett.

That said, seed can be rather expensive. For instance, tillage radish seed currently costs \$3.45 per pound. It's recommended that the radish seed be planted at a rate of 8 to 15 pounds per acre. Meanwhile, winter rye is about 34 cents per pound, and oats is 42 cents per pound.

"If you have a mixture of cover crops, then chances are you're going to have some-



JULIE BUNTJER/DAILY GLOBE

Purple-topped turnips and tillage radish are shown growing as cover crops on one of Ackermann's farm fields.

thing grow on the site," Sackett said, adding that farmers should consider both warm and cool season crops. "Almost anytime you have a cover crop, you're going to decrease soil erosion."

Management of cover crops in the spring can range from spraying to tillage, although as Sackett pointed out, crops like the tillage radish leave little residue in the spring.

"There will be basically nothing left next spring," she said. "That root is mainly water, and the freeze-thaw is going to get rid of it. Earthworms like it, too."

Sackett said planting cover crops isn't something farmers should do "on a whim," but instead should be researched and recorded if implemented.

Tony Thompson, one of

the farmers in attendance who has experimented with cover crops, said "Every time we've measured yield, we've had a yield cost. We know there are benefits, but they're hard to measure."

Stephanie McLain, Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist, said cover crops are a tool and something farmers should consider. Not only will cover crops improve soil health, but by keeping a living root in the soil for as long as possible, she said it improves biology for the bugs that live in the soil.

"We need to diversify," she said. "The more diverse roots in our soil, the more diverse biology we have."

Daily Globe Reporter Julie Buntjer may be reached at 376-7330.

WHS FALL PLAY

from Page A1

"They've really enjoyed the play," said Korver. "We split up the cast into two families that alternate through the different scenes."

"The actors look at the show from a student's perspective," she added. "It's lighthearted enough that it's fun, but there are some sweet, serious moments, too."

For instance, Korver mentions the scene revolving around a daughter's "Sweet Sixteen" birthday party and the parents' well-intentioned but ultimately astoundingly embarrassing efforts on her behalf.

"The kids have looked at it from both sides: Are mom and dad trying to embarrass her?" queried Korver. "No, they love her, but she just wants to wilt in her chair and get out of there."

Play auditions were in early September, and rehearsals have taken place on weekdays after school since then.

Elyzabeth Coriolan, Braden DeSmith, Jerrit Vander Plaats, Karina Cuate, Bianca Alvarez, Alex Tang, D.J. Berger, Ivan Parga, Crissy Jimenez and Jaimi Seesongkram are the primary actors, with set and stage assistance from Lizbeth Longoria, Arely Rodriguez and Sammy Vallego.

Vallego also serves as student director for the production, while Jorge Fuentes handles the light and sound boards.

"They're a very lively, but very good, bunch of kids," said Korver. "They give you energy when you show up for practice, and they've been respectful and willing to try anything we've thrown at them."

This is the fourth theatrical production in which Vallego has been involved, and he smiles readily when talking about "Parents Just Don't Understand."

"I love the comedy in it, and even though I've seen the show so many times now in practices, the actors are always improving and making it funnier every single time," said Vallego.

Said Tang, a senior, "I like the fact I'm a father in this play because it gives me a different perspective to work with — last year, I was a child in the fall play."

"I really enjoy theater — it's a big interest of mine, and I'm pretty sure I'll look for more opportunities to be involved with it after high school."

Korver might recommend that.

"Alex is very funny in this; he's such a delightfully awkward father," she said.

Berger, a WHS junior, agrees, saying the scene titled "The Talk" in which Tang, playing Berger's father, shares with him everything he knows about the opposite sex, is among the best.

"My favorite line is in it," noted Berger. "I ask him, 'Are you taking a new medication or something?'"

For her part, co-director Straley chortles over the scene in which a father tries to teach his daughter to drive.

"That's the one I enjoy the most, and the kids do a great job with it," attested Straley. "We can all relate to learning how to drive with our parents, or with being a parent teaching a kid to drive and the stressful moments that result — and later on, it's very funny."

"I've liked watching the students who were in last year's fall play take on different roles and personas from what they had last year," Straley continued. "We can really see the growth in their acting skills."

While the students involved in "Parents Just

Don't Understand" portray family units on stage, they have become something like a family in their backstage interactions as well, according to some of the cast.

"Personally, I've liked getting to know the cast better," said Coriolan, a WHS junior. "I think the play is hilarious, though it's probably a little more dramatic and over-the-top than what would happen in a real family."

Korver and Straley say they are more relaxed in the week leading up to the performances than they were last year, given that they knew what to expect this time around.

"It's good to have a year under our belts because not everything is brand new," said Korver.

Contributed Straley, "We're a great team, we work well together, and this year everything seemed to go a lot smoother."

"It's been a lot of fun." Freshman Longoria, meanwhile, is grateful for the leadership provided by Straley and Korver.

"The directors are very helpful," Longoria endorsed.

Added Rodriguez, also a freshman, "This has been a new experience, but I might try out again next year because I'm really shy and this has helped me be more confident."

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Minnesota deer kill down 8 percent from last year

MOORHEAD (FNS) — Minnesota's deer kill after the first three days of the season was down 8 percent from last year, the Department of Natural Resources reported Wednesday.

According to the DNR, hunters shot 77,008 deer during the first three days of the firearms season. Leslie McInenly, DNR big game program leader, said the slightly smaller harvest dur-

ing the first three days wasn't surprising.

"Last year, opening weekend weather was almost ideal, and the state's corn harvest was virtually complete," she said. "So given Saturday's roaring winds of up to 30 miles per hour, which tends to restrict deer movement, and more available deer refuge areas due to pockets of standing corn, the harvest is about what you'd expect."

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