

AMERICAN GIRL



What would a Joan Cusack doll be like? We asked her

A&E Live, Page 1D

Sales tax for transit starts Tuesday in 5 metro counties, 1B

St. Paul PIONEER PRESS

83 high, 63 low > See Page 12C

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THE WAR OVER affordable housing

Affordability is tough sell in suburbia

Met Council wants suburbs to build their 'fair share,' but many cities aren't going along

By Bob Shaw
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Greg Bogut lives in a \$575,000 home. He can afford it. To him, that makes it affordable housing.

What bothers him is affordable housing that people can't afford without a government subsidy — such as the town homes he can see from his front porch.

The affordable complex has slashed the value of his Woodbury house, he says.

"If I had known then what I know now," Bogut said, "I wouldn't have moved here."

He would have had many alternatives. While Woodbury embraces affordable housing — government-subsidized or not — dozens

AFFORDABLE HOUSING, 6A >



PIONEER PRESS: RICHARD MARSHALL

"It's a compound. I'm very disappointed," said Greg Bogut, referring to the subsidized Sienna Ridge town homes in the distance, while walking his dogs outside his Woodbury home.

MCA's improve, but not enough

Students advance most in reading; lagging math scores trouble educators

By Megan Boldt and MaryJo Webster
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Minnesota students scored slightly higher on statewide achievement exams this year, but nearly two-thirds of high school juniors still failed to meet state math standards.

That's according to math and reading scores released today by the state Department of Education. The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments were given to about 556,000 students in grades three through eight, 10 and 11.

The state uses the tests to measure students' progress toward proficiency in reading and math, as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

"Overall, we're seeing increases, so that's good. But I'm not totally satisfied," Minnesota Education Commissioner Alice Seagren said. "We have to push harder, especially in math."

The biggest gains were in 10th-grade reading scores. Seventy-one percent of sophomores were proficient in reading, a 9-percentage-point increase from last year.

State education officials credit the increase to the new reading graduation test embedded in the MCAs.

"It's a strong incentive to take the test seriously," Seagren said.

MCA RESULTS, 5A >

More on the MCAs

- > Detailed graphical breakdowns show the latest test results, including the achievement gap. 5A
- > Concerned parents can start by understanding the tests and using online study aids for their kids. 5A
- > Who did well? Test results for all Minnesota schools are available at twincities.com.

U.S. Women's Open > Interlachen Country Club

Never too young to win

Inbee Park celebrates on Sunday after sinking her birdie putt on the 18th green to become the youngest champion of the U.S. Women's Open, at age 19. Inspired by fellow Korean and 1998 victor Se Ri Pak, Park took up the sport 10 years ago. She battled strong winds and dry greens on the tournament's final day to emerge with a 9-under 283. 1C

Trials and troubles

Stacy Lewis and Paula Creamer started the day as Nos. 1 and 2. The rest wasn't pretty. 6C

Tom Powers

Just in time for the Fourth of July, the Americans defeat themselves in grand style. 5C

How'd they do?

Find the top players' scores and standings after the tournament's final round. 6C

More photos

For galleries of heartbreaks and highlights, go to twincities.com.



PIONEER PRESS: RICHARD MARSHALL

Asians' gains redefine the racial divide in test results

By Megan Boldt and MaryJo Webster
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For years, people have bemoaned Minnesota's disturbing achievement gap between white students and students of color.

But a new trend is emerging. Asian students have made gains on statewide tests, and their results are more closely mirroring those of their white peers, particularly in math. Meanwhile, the gap between white and black students is wide and virtually unchanged since 2001.

Carlos Mariani-Rosa, executive director of the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership and a member of the state House of Representatives from St. Paul, said Minnesotans should be asking policymakers like him whether this is acceptable.

"My answer is it's not good enough," Mariani-Rosa said. "It is frustrating."

During the past two decades, Asian students in Minnesota overwhelmingly have

ASIANS' GAINS, 5A >

A Lancaster, Minn., native had to choose: go after solo fame, or go on with her sister act.



Twang, twang, twang go their heartstrings

By Amy Carlson Gustafson
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A small-town girl, one of 13 kids, with dreams of becoming a star, decides to move to the big city after high school. She lands a prime spot on a reality TV competition — but not without a dose of heartbreak.

If Ashlee Hewitt's story sounds a little like a country song, it should. After all, she is a contestant on "Nashville Star," a countrified version of "American Idol."

The 20-year-old from Lancaster, Minn., is one of nine finalists on the reality show, along with another northwestern Minnesota native, Crookston's Alyson Gilbert. Tonight's episode (8 p.m., NBC),

which features clips of contestants reuniting with their families, is a special one for Hewitt.

Not only does she get a visit from all 12 of her siblings and her mom, Kelli — whom she hasn't seen or talked to since the show began — she also sees her dad,

ASHLEE HEWITT, 4A >



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First game together for U's "Twin Towers" shows promise: blogs.twincities.com/gophers

Register to win tickets to one of two Neil Diamond shows at the Xcel Energy Center.