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The life and times of Walt Dziedzic

by Margo Ashmore

He gave a "Round Tuit" award to a company that was dragging its feet on waste cleanup. He called 1982 school boundary changes for desegregation "a jigsaw puzzle" and railed at Cub Foods and other grocery chains for not building in the inner city.

Walt Dziedzic spoke his mind and fiercely stood up for what he thought would benefit his constituents, collectively and individually. Retired from elected office in 2009, Walter Paul Dziedzic died of natural causes the Saturday after Thanksgiving, and was buried on the day he would have turned 86, November 29, 2018.

Best known as the Minneapolis First Ward Alderman (that was

what they called city council members then), Dziedzic was elected in a special election in 1977 when Sam Sivanich became a Hennepin County Commissioner. He'd already had careers in the military, graduated from St. Thomas, taught at De La Salle and then served as a police officer.

In 1997 at age 65, Dziedzic ran instead to represent Northeast on the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, a part-time commitment that he embraced as "a gear down." He ousted a long-time incumbent and held the post for 12 years that included the controversial hiring, at his suggestion, of Jon

WALT DZIEDZIC ▶ 8



Miles Erickson pondered a question from Santa during a visit Sunday, Dec. 2 at The Coffee Shop NE. The jolly fellow led the assembled kids and adults in song, then visited with individuals, while parents took photos and videos. More pre-holiday fun and shopping, in pictures on pages 6 and 14. (Photo by Margo Ashmore)

Al Bangoura to head Mpls. Park Board

The Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board had a good day Nov. 28. In the morning, it received a \$1 million, no-strings-attached grant from Bank of America to put toward its RiverFirst initiative. In the evening, it authorized MPRB President Brad Bourn to negotiate a contract with Al Bangoura as its new superintendent.

The grant puts MPRB and its philanthropic arm, the Minneapolis Parks Foundation, within digging distance of beginning its Water Works project on the west side of the river, the second RIVERFIRST INITIATIVE ▶ 5



A new year, a new MTN:

Using crowdsourced content to return from the brink



MTN treasurer Mike Wade read from a selection of his own work in between readings from community members during "The Word." Some performers were scheduled, and some were volunteers from the audience who wanted to share material they brought. "The Word" may become a recurring segment on MTN.

(Photo by Alex Schlee)

by Alex Schlee

It was a Thursday night, and most of the offices in the Thorp Building were getting ready to close down for the evening, but the lights were still on at the Minneapolis Telecommunications Network (MTN). Inside, a single microphone was painstakingly lit with soft lights and a blue backdrop, and cameras were set up from multiple angles. An audience assembled to hear "The Word," the latest in a series of potentially recurring livestreamed shows featured on MTN as part of their ongoing attempt to rebrand after a complete organization overhaul last year. Hosted by MTN treasurer Mike Wade, The Word aired on November 29.

"The issue that MTN has always had is that no one knows we exist," said executive director Val Lockhart, who took charge of the network after a major leadership turnover that left a lot of things in limbo. As things settle, she and other MTN leaders are working to revitalize the network by allowing neighborhood creators to air their ideas via livestreamed events, YouTube submissions, and programs through East Side Neighborhood Services (ESNS).

MTN has a few staples it still airs regularly on Minneapolis channels 16, 17, or 75. Somali Media Live has been running on MTN since 1999, and is the country's longest-running Somali language variety talk show. "We

the People," a show sponsored by the League of Women Voters, has worked through MTN for 25 years. "Black Focus," hosted by civil rights activist Ron Edwards, has aired for 28 years. And while it's not an MTN production, "Democracy Now" has been a long-time standby (as it has been for public access channels nationwide for years).

"If [Democracy Now] doesn't run at the exact time it's supposed to, people call and start yelling," said Lockhart.

Despite a relatively quiet year, there is still a tight-knit community based around MTN, and if the eclectic lineup of poets who

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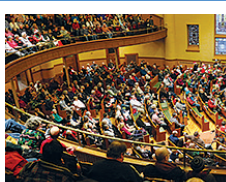
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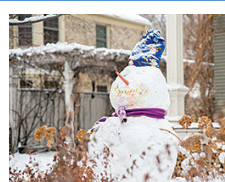


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