

Austin Post-Bulletin

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Olympics

Americans pan more gold » **B1**



NATIONAL NIGHT OUT



Photos by Joe Michaud-Scorza / jscorza@postbulletin.com

Tim Olson helps first-grader Skye Anderley douse a fake burning house Tuesday during National Night Out at Community Bandshell Park in Austin.

MOWER COUNTY FAIR

Fair kudos go to Bissen

Work on Creative Arts Building nets her Fair Person of the Year title

By **Jim Troyer**
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Minutes before she was named 2012 Fair Person of the Year, Virginia Bissen snipped a ribbon, officially opening the Mower County Fair at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

The award is granted for service to the annual county fair above and beyond the norm. Bissen said she had help providing improvements for the Creative Arts Building that included new siding, electrical improvements and lighting. The money came from a grant by the Minnesota Legacy Fund, she said, and she invited people to visit the building during the fair, which runs through Sunday.

In keeping with the theme, "the pride of Mower County is its people," the recognition to Bissen and five others went to people who have devoted their lives to farming and contributed to Mower County agriculture.

Dan Vermilyea gained a place in the Livestock Hall of Fame for his "superior service to the livestock industry of Mower County." The first Livestock Hall of Fame Award came in 1984 as part of the county's Centennial Fair. Pictures of all the winners are displayed in Crane Pavilion.

"The fair is all about agriculture and youth," Vermilyea said, "and those are two things I've spent a lot of time with."

Peter Marx, vice president of the Mower County Fair Board, presented the Outstanding

Senior Volunteer Award to Gus Johnson.

Johnson said the award was a "big surprise" and said he simply "pitched in wherever the busy board of directors needed help."

This year's Century Farm Award went to Brian and Carmen Howe.

"It is truly a family farm," Carmen said. "Without them, we wouldn't be standing up here today."

An award that carries state of Minnesota status, the Farm Family of the Year was presented by LuAnn Hinker, regional director of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "Family farms are the foundation of Minnesota counties," she said. "Ninety percent of state farms are family owned."

The award went to the Eugene Anderson family. The Andersons have hosted the annual Breakfast on the Farm in 2006, 2009 and 2012 at their 320-acre farm near Waltham. Eugene, Doreen and Donna Anderson accepted the award.

Three 150-year farms drew recognition at the event: the Ambrose and Helen Kresbach farm near Johnsburg; the Richard and Mildred Murphy farm; and the Dean Sayles farm in Austin Township, which goes back to 1861.

Spruce up Austin won the Outstanding Service Organization award for help it provides to people who want to improve the appearance of their yards, farms, businesses or public areas. The group planted 2,589 trees last year.

Jim Troyer is a freelance writer in Austin.

Page A4, B1: Photo coverage of the fair

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Willpower in action

By **Heather Rule**

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Austin Police Lt. Matt Holten brought out his police dog, Ghost, so kids could toss a ball with him. It didn't take long for a line to form.

"Release," Holten said. "Good job."

Playing catch was a bonus before Ghost and Holten provided demonstrations for the National Night Out gathering Tuesday evening at Community Bandshell Park.

It was business as usual for Ghost, despite the fact that he has dealt with epilepsy for the past five years, just a year after he started working with the Austin Police Department. The illness has been managed with medication, but that's not working anymore, Holten said.

"We're running out of treatment options for him," Holten said.

Epileptic seizures haven't hindered Ghost's work ethic. There have only been a couple occasions when Holten had to keep

him home, he said. Every three to four weeks, Ghost has had a bout of seizures; he also bounced back from a health scare about six months ago.

The main difference Holten has seen is that Ghost tires more quickly. Holten said he would be surprised if Ghost survives until the end of the year.

For now, though, "He's super high energy," Holten said. "He kind of lives for his job. He loves his job."

Ghost has been a part of about 250 arrests. He's tracked down shooting and home invasion suspects and found drugs.

He's also won awards, like his father, five-time national champion police dog Tazer, who retired in 2010. Ghost came in first at the national competition of United States Police Canine Association field trials in 2011.

In June, Ghost and his K-9 partner Bosco finished first in regional competition. Ghost was first for the top dual-purpose award. Events in the competition included



Officer Ryan Leif wrestles with police K-9 Ghost during the event.

agility, obedience, article search and apprehension.

Page A4: Night out competes with fair

Congressional candidates debate merits of farm bill

By **Heather J. Carlson**

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REDWOOD FALLS — With the farm bill stalled in Congress, three candidates for the 1st Congressional District seat weighed in on agriculture issues and exchanged political jabs on Tuesday.

First District Rep. Tim Walz and his Republican challengers, state Sen. Mike Parry, of Waseca, and former state Rep. Allen Quist, of St. Peter, squared-off for the first time during a candidate forum at Farmfest. Parry and Quist are battling in Tuesday's primary for the chance to run against Walz in November.

A hot topic at the debate was whether or not candidates would support passing a farm bill this year.

For passage

Both Parry and Walz said it is important to pass the bill this year. Parry said he sent a letter to legislative leaders urging them to take up the bill.

"We need to get that to the floor before elec-

tion. I am not one that sits back and says, 'We can't do this because, oops, we have an election coming. That's wrong,'" he said.

Walz agreed there is no reason why the bill cannot come up for an immediate vote.

"It makes no sense to pay you to grow a crop, but it certainly makes sense to make sure you are able to stay on the land, you are able to balance risk, you are able to feed this country and the world, clothe this country and the world and fuel this country and the world," Walz said.

Against passage

Quist said it would be wrong to pass the existing farm bill because 80 percent of it is used to

fund food stamps, and that is a broken program that needs "absolute, total and major reform."

Throughout the forum, Parry emphasized that the key to a strong agricultural sector are fewer rules and regulations.

"Enough of the rules and regulations, enough of the EPA," he said.

Quist repeatedly made the case that the nation's growing debt is the biggest threat to agriculture.

"Let's get our financial house in order so our kids have the same opportunities we have had," he said.

Walz focused on the importance of bipartisanship, noting that he sponsored five of the 38 bills passed by the U.S. House this year.

"The glue that holds our nation together is compromise, the idea that it's not all for me," he said. "I can't get it all. I am willing to compromise and make it work."



Parry



Walz



Quist

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Thursday

75
52
6 a.m. 61° Noon 71° 6 p.m. 73°

Corrections

The Post-Bulletin is committed to fairness and accuracy. If you have a concern, contact Managing Editor Jay Furst at 285-7742 or furst@postbulletin.com.

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Punchline A2

"What could be worse? The 'Let's Just Be Friends' virus?"

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Student loans

Candidates were asked what they want to see done for students to get Perkins loans. Quist and Walz agreed the government needs to support them. Parry disagreed. He also supports abolishing the U.S. Department of Education.

Renewable fuel

Parry said he thinks the only support taxpayers should provide for renewable energy are tax incentives. Quist said flexibility needs to be built into the system.

Walz said he supports the standards.

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