

Duluth Courier

“Clerk Tested & Clerk Approved”

W W W . D U L U T H C O U R I E R . C O M

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INSIDE THE WALLS OF LCO 2625

by Jon Sherman

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We all knew it was coming. So without the anticipation of another impromptu operation, we reflect on how it feels to have made "Everybody Count".

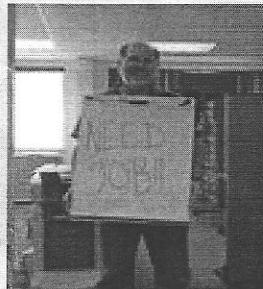
Hal Abernathy's favorite census moment is when they named the boxes of binders. "It was a spontaneous work of art. People would come in and mention, you know, I had a grandmother named Gertrude. We felt we had to name them because we had to move them twice and felt we had an ongoing relationship with them."

Molly Gollinger could not appropriately describe her sentiments regarding map pouch construction. She does, however, recall an incident

where fellow clerk Casey Schwartz shouted a crossword puzzle answer to himself, "Boner!" When another clerk, Erica Carlson, reminded him that he may not have chosen ideal language for a professional setting, he apologized; "I got excited." Carlson again chimed in, "That's usually how it happens."

Like Gollinger, Andrew Harri also started with constructing

Tom Resor preparing for the future



map pouches for the NRFU operation. "And I've just been here the whole time-ever since map pouches," said Harri, referring to his position behind the check-in table.

Production FOS, Wally Newquist, will tell you that he's been here too long. While others may remember him for his eagerness to "burn it," Wally's most memorable experience is when "Leo retired."

Dan Hoffman admits, "The census helped me out to get to retirement. There will be better things to do next time the census rolls around." Hoffman will be 71 in 2020. He adds that there wasn't much urinating in the corners.

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BIG CHANGE COMING TO CLASSROOMS

Board opens eyes to enumerator's tactics

With a new overall educational strategy on the table, the Duluth School Board will meet Tuesday to finalize ballot language for the referendum that the district will present to voters Nov. 2.

Board member and former Census Administrative OOS, Pat Lund, proposed the new approach detailing a plan to increase teacher production while reducing costs.

"I honestly believe it can pass," Lund said. "My recent experience with the Census

has allowed me to see this strategy in action on a large scale. It's purely about separating the weak from the strong."

District officials say the referendum is necessary to protect further cuts. Although many of them are hesitant if the plan

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INSIDE THE WALLS OF LCO 2625 CONT.

Nathan Johnson remembers when AMA Larry LeBlanc instituted a moratorium on the shooting of rubber bands. He also recalls Mike Waldren's "curious" obsession with teen star Hannah Montana, even going as far as celebrating his birthday in true Hannah fashion -balloons and all.

"It was a very gregarious group of people," said Frank Crain. Having always worked for entrepreneurs, the census was a welcomed change. "I think a lot of people felt anchored here. Even though they knew it was temporary, they wish because of the friendship here they could have continued."

Some tools posed functionality issues. Amanda Leppke searched for a working three-hole-punch, but was instead given a roll of tape and instructed to "try this."

Scott Ward reminisced, "Whenever I was feeling down, Evan Williams would do the

sexy librarian and take off his glasses and let his hair down." Scott also remembers when someone made a comment about cigarettes being bad for your health, to which he responded, "Your bad vibes are seriously damaging my aura."

Tom Resor will never forget the festivity of Dan Hoffman's 60th birthday party, or when former census employee Dale Bures received a standing ovation upon returning from his hiatus. He can appreciate both the camaraderie and hilarity of local census office 2625. "I've never laughed so hard in all my life than in my first few months here."

There are a good number of fairly educated people in the office. Another fond memory of Resor's was when there was a quiz following a verbatim training session; he was the only one able to answer a question regarding state-by-state statistics. His reward: being able to say to his coworker, "In your

face [Rich] Ulkus!"

Linda Dean's husband referred to her job at the census as "playgroup". He'd ask, "How was playgroup today?" Dean remembers when the office was debating layoffs and how Resor put a picture of his family on then-AMFO Ron Brochu's desk; she cut out a newspaper picture of her Appalachian-style home. The captions read, "Help me feed my family" and "Help me save my home," respectively.

FOS Scott Welch remembers Brochu telling a snacking Leo Scheibelhut to "Quit eating the nuts like a [expletive deleted] monkey. Leo wasn't supposed to be out on the floor.

AA Joanne Leland has been here since day one. The office was completely bare as it will be once again, "except for more dirt on the walls."

Resor says

"In Your face [Rich] Ulkus!"

OOSA Pat Lund said, "The census of humor were appreciated; the laughter, the wit, the cleverness." She described Jon Sherman's selection calls as "soothing" and she thoroughly enjoyed those she worked with, referring to "Joanne's craziness as a supervisor" and "Ken Falk-a natural comedian-one of the funniest guys I ever met."

"It really was the best place I've ever worked," said Brekklin Ryan. While Ryan may not speak for everybody, the perseverance of the staff here does not go unappreciated. Thanks to all for your cooperation, patience, and friendship.

BIG CHANGE COMING TO CLASSROOMS CONT.

can be implemented realistically.

The plan itself is simple enough: set goals and timelines at a workable level, then, increase the goals and reduce the timeline. This forces the entire hierarchy to assess who the movers and the losers are, and drop the losers.

"It's like the tree in my yard," Lund explains. "When a

storm happens, pathetic branches will be broken off. It prunes itself! This leaves the tree itself stronger and more resilient."

Teachers and administrators will come into the year with certain curricula, then more is added through the term as days are reduced from the back end. Those too slow or prone to mental collapse

will resign or be obvious enough outliers to identify and let go. If subjects get skipped that need to be covered, they will add on summer classes as needed.

According to district Finance Director Larry LeBlanc, "This is gonna save us a grip-load of cash. The census came in \$1.6 billion under budget using this

strategy. Imagine the impact on our budget. I estimate a savings of \$2,629 per pupil over 10 years with inflationary increases added each year."

We've been talking about going year round with more breaks anyway," said board chairman Donny Krosch.