

In case you forgot, this is Joe Mauer. It's OK to stare.

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# A NEW TARGET

After being swept by the Yankees in the ALDS two consecutive years, Twins fans have a higher expectation for this season. The addition of Tsuyoshi Nishioka, the return of both Justin Morneau and Joe Nathan and the best catcher in baseball mean the Twins have a good chance to live up to that expectation — and bring a World Series to our sophomore stadium.

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## A hotbed for artists

// Newcomers to Northeast adding strength to area's arts community //

BY MICHELLE BRUCH

A couple of big Northeast transplants are starting to reach out to the arts community.

The national American Craft Magazine moved here from New York last summer. It recently hosted a listening session for the local craft community. And Corporate Art Force, a company that finds artwork for clients across the nation, recently co-hosted a forum on the creative economy with Council Member Kevin Reich (1st Ward).

"This arts community is really a gem," said



PHOTO BY BRE MCGEE  
Sculptor Nick Legeros (left), art teacher Elizabeth Murphy and and Bill Kieger, president of Corporate Art Force, at a recent arts forum in Northeast.

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## Minneapolis population stagnant, but indicators point to revival

BY NICK HALTER

Minneapolis gained 40 residents over the last 10 years while the state population grew by nearly 8 percent, according to recently released U.S. Census statistics that will be used to re-draw political districts.

The numbers have implications, good and bad, for the city.

The bad news is Minneapolis will likely lose political clout as popula-

tion gains in the "exurbs" give those people more representation at the cost of the city.

The good news is that the city's rapid population loss in the 1960s and 1970s has all but stopped, and recent trends suggest that Minneapolis may get a population boost from retired couples wanting to move back into the metro core, said State Demographer Tom Gillaspay.

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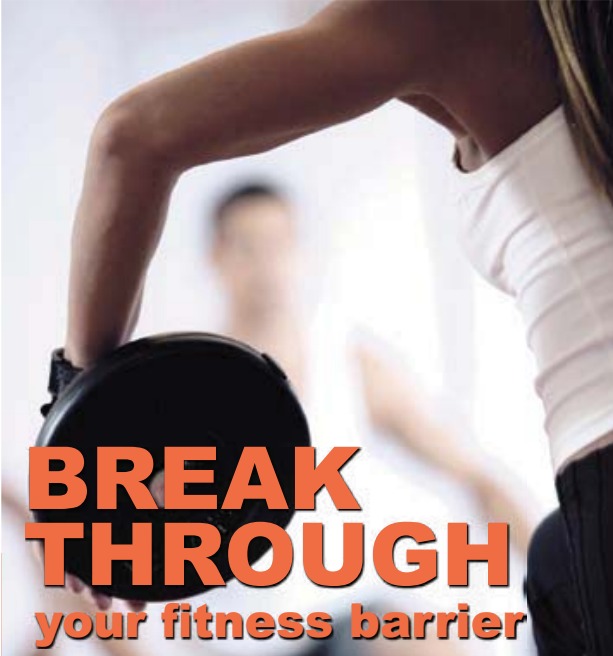
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PHOTO BY BRE MCCREE  
 There was a great turnout for the March 31 community forum. Many artists from around the area were present, including painter Susan Wagner Ginter and Josh Cragun, co-artistic director of Nimbus Theater.

### Arts FROM PAGE 1

Bill Kieger, president of Corporate Art Force. "We believe there is an opportunity to exploit that. ... With the economy struggling over the last few years, we have the opportunity to employ people. There is a lot of talent here we want to utilize."

### Meet Corporate Art Force

Corporate Art Force moved here from Golden Valley in 2010 to set up shop in the Van Buren building. Kieger said Corporate Art Force did business with more than 100 clients last year, many of them Fortune 500 companies, and it distributed more than 6,000 pieces of artwork in 40 states, 30 percent of which was made locally.

Most of their clients need more than a pretty picture. Some companies want artwork that keeps employees productive. Others use the art for marketing purposes, sending subtle messages through the pieces they choose. Health care facilities might opt for peaceful images, and banks might choose sandy beach scenes populated by people that have achieved retirement goals. Corporate Art Force is creating a guide on a new science called "evidence-based design," outlining the best colors, materials and themes to set the proper tone for corporate settings.

"We determined that the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District was really the place to be if we wanted to be a distribution channel for artwork created here in the Twin Cities," Kieger said. "We want to have an impact on this community by serving as a distribution channel, consulting with all of our different organizations and providing them with solutions for wall décor utilizing homegrown talent."

The company plans to add five new staff members in the coming months, and it's going to partner with the Minneapolis College

of Art and Design to hire students to learn the business and work as associates. Kieger said staff are also keeping an eye out for new ventures they could finance, perhaps providing new space for artists to work. The company invited Council Member Reich to tour the new headquarters, and the connection led them to co-host the March 31 forum on the arts.

### Meet the American Craft Council

The American Craft Council (ACC) also spent time with about 30 local artists at a recent "listening session" it hosted at its new headquarters in the Grain Belt brewery. The session was part of a national two-month tour of cities to discuss issues facing the craft community.

Executive Director Chris Amundsen said some of the difficult issues relate to the economy — fewer people are buying crafts. In addition, the identity of "craft" is murky, artists worry about the cost of participating in craft shows, and many museums do not exhibit craft work (the Minneapolis Institute of Arts does, however).

The ACC will formulate a strategic plan in the fall to help address some of those issues, Amundsen said.

Amundsen said the company left New York because of the city's high costs, and chose Minneapolis because of its central location in the U.S. and its strong craft community — about 1,000 members are located within 50 miles, he said. He also cited the solid craft show the ACC hosts annually in St. Paul, which has been going strong for 25 years and draws a crowd of 10,000 visitors.

"We want to be a good supporter of the arts here locally," Amundsen said, noting the ACC's support of Art-A-Whirl this year.

### An evolving Arts District

Hundreds of artists have given Northeast the arts-driven identity that helped

attract these companies — more than 500 are part of this year's Art-A-Whirl, an event that has become the largest open studio tour in the country.

Pamela Caserta, a member of the Minneapolis Arts Commission and assistant registrar at the Walker Art Center, said she wanted to emphasize the importance of smaller studios at the March 31 forum. When the little guys are displaced, as they were in the Warehouse District, the energy changes, she said.

"It's great that Corporate Art Force is there, as well as the American Craft Council," she said. "But that's not what made Northeast what it is."

Reich said he decided to convene the roundtable forum to bring artists together with city officials and even local educators to discuss the collaboration between business and the arts. He noted that Minneapolis' huge concentration of ad agencies is dependent on a pool of employees with artistic training.

"When you make this about the economy, that changes the paradigm," Reich said.

Nick Legeros, a sculptor and board member of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association, is looking at strategies other cities have used to retain their arts districts, and he expected to discuss some of those ideas at the forum. The Northeast arts community has consciously tried to dig in and find staying power, so the artists don't end up gentrifying an area only to watch property values rise high enough to push them out of the community.

"We see it over and over again in cities across the U.S.," Legeros said. "Northeast wanted to prevent that."

The American Craft Council and Corporate Art Force hope to provide a couple of new anchors.

"It's great to be a part of it," Amundsen said. "We want to be supportive where we can."