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A literary light

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A MediaNews Group NEWSPAPER

5 teens charged with murder in fatal OD

'This isn't harmless,' prosecutor says of synthetic-drug use that led to Woodbury girl's death

By Elizabeth Mohr
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A girl is dead, and five teenagers — including three Woodbury High School students — are charged with murder because they allegedly had a part in distributing what turned

out to be a fatal dose of a synthetic drug. Law enforcement officials hope the case is sending a strong message to young people and parents.

On Wednesday, Washington County Attorney Pete Orput said he and investigators had many discussions

about whether they were overreaching by charging all five teens, even those who wouldn't be considered drug dealers and who weren't profiting from distributing a dangerous substance.

"There's a big lesson to be had out of this," Orput said. "The lesson is:

Guys, this isn't harmless. Handing out drugs to each other isn't harmless. This isn't a bag of weed. ... Nobody's dying from that stuff."

Third-degree murder charges were filed Wednesday against

FIVE CHARGED, 16A >

Scathing new VA report spurs talk of leader's resignation

PAGE 8A



'PEANUTS' IN THE PARK



PIONEER PRESS: SCOTT TAKUSHI

Minnesota Twins first baseman Joe Mauer and students from Hillcrest Elementary School in Ellsworth, Wis., help unveil a baseball-themed Charlie Brown statue Wednesday in St. Paul's Rice Park as Snoopy looks on. Ten statues of baseball-themed "Peanuts" characters will remain in the park until June 16, when they will move to the Minneapolis Convention Center ahead of the July 15 All-Star Game at Target Field. **Story, Page 5A.**

Former deputy told archbishop to consider resigning post

'Option' raised as Nienstedt grappled with abuse scandal

By Emily Gurnon
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A former top deputy of the Twin Cities archdiocese said he suggested last fall that Archbishop John Nienstedt resign in the wake of allegations that leadership mishandled clergy sexual abuse cases.

The Rev. Peter Laird, former vicar general and moderator of the curia, said in a May 12 deposition that resignation was "among options" he suggested to Nienstedt in late September or early October.

Laird himself resigned Oct. 3. Ten days earlier, Minnesota Public Radio reported that the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis possessed, but did not give to police, information regarding convicted St. Paul priest Curtis Wehmeyer's sexual behavior.



The Rev. Peter Laird made his remarks in a May 12 deposition.

ABUSE SCANDAL, 16A >

Choosing their candidates: Minnesota convention weekend

What's a GOP endorsement worth? In Rochester, primary races weighed

By Bill Salisbury and Doug Belden
Pioneer Press

The Minnesota Republican Party's process for endorsing candidates is at a tipping point.

The 2,200 delegates to the GOP state convention this weekend in Rochester must show they can endorse can-

didates for governor and U.S. senator who are capable of winning elections. If they don't, future contenders likely will skip the cumbersome route of courting party activists and jump directly into primaries.

"This may be the year when the Republican endorsement process is given a burial," said Larry

Read more about the five GOP candidates for governor and four for U.S. Senate on **Page 9A.**

Jacobs, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for the Study of Politics and Governance.

GOP CONVENTION, 9A >

Keeping Dayton, Franken in office is DFL's chief mission in Duluth

By Christopher Magan
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Heading into the state convention weekend that marks the kickoff of campaign season, the re-election pitch from Minnesota's dominant Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party is clear: Keep us in charge.

"I think the biggest mes-

sage is promises made, promises kept," said Ken Martin, chairman of the DFL Party, which opens its state nominating convention in Duluth on Friday. Republicans open their convention the same day in Rochester.

For the first time in a long time, not much competition is expected at the DFL convention.

Top-of-the-ticket candidates Gov. Mark Dayton and U.S. Sen. Al Franken are all but guaranteed nominations and will be there to give acceptance speeches. That's a big difference from the last time the two hit the campaign trail and had to beat primary challengers before

DFL CONVENTION, 16A >

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