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PERRY FINELLI: Good morning with news from Minnesota Public Radio. I'm Perry Finelli. Employees at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Minneapolis will protest federal furloughs tomorrow. Union representatives of the 2,600 workers at the facility will distribute information and organize picket lines in front of hospital entrances. Jane Nygaard, President of the Nurses Union at the VA Medical center, says enough is enough.

JANE NYGAARD: We have solidarity among the employees. I mean, we've got 2,600 employees that are being told they have to work. And they're not getting paid. I mean, people-- and I think it's really going to hit them tomorrow when they finally get their paycheck, which is a half a paycheck. And all of our health benefits will be coming out of it, so even be less, you know.

PERRY FINELLI: Nygaard says employees aren't allowed to take annual leaves or receive sick time, because they are now technically considered on furlough. A new law goes into effect today intended to help Minnesota cities pay for the demolition or renovation of buildings damaged by fire or explosion. The law was passed in response to property owners who collect fire insurance after their property has been destroyed by fire, and who fail to use the money to tear down or renovate the building.

Under the law, cities will be able to demand that fire insurance companies withhold 15% of the payment that the city may receive to use take of the property. The magazine founded by consumer advocate, Ralph Nader, has listed 3M as one of its 10 worst corporations of 1995. The multinational monitor alleges that the Maplewood company's drug Tambocor killed thousands of patients with heart damage. 3M discounts that list.

The weather forecast today for the state, occasional light snow. Temperatures falling into the teens in Northern Minnesota. Steady temperatures in the 20s and lower 30s in Central and Southern Minnesota. Twin Cities high today, 30, right where it is right now with some light snow. In Rochester, some snow and 26 degrees. And in Ely, the temperature is 12. And that's the news from Minnesota Public Radio. I'm Perry Finelli.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PAULA SCHROEDER: Today and every day of the year, thousands of people have food delivered to their homes by Meals on Wheels volunteers. The Meals on Wheels program in Minneapolis is 30 years old, and was developed by Oscar Howard, who's now 81. Today on our Voices of Minnesota interview, we'll hear from Howard. Every Monday at this time on Voices of Minnesota, we hear from a Minnesota resident who's made an impact on society.

In the early 1960s, Oscar Howard won the federal government contract to distribute food to poor people. Charities, businesses, and foundations have added their support over the years. Howard lives in South Minneapolis now. He was born and raised in Georgia, one of five children of a sharecropping family. He worked his way through high school and got a college degree from Tuskegee Institute.

Howard told the FM News Station's Dan Olson he left the farm in the middle of the night when he was 15. Howard said he had a feeling his father would not have granted him permission to leave.

DAN OLSON: Why did you decide to leave home?

OSCAR HOWARD: Well, I-- my father was a sharecropper. And we worked hard. And I was about 14 or 15. And, you know, one year, if it was a bad year, and the rain is too heavy, and you didn't have a good crop, you wait a whole another year to correct your mistake. And that didn't hit with at me too well.

DAN OLSON: A sharecropper meaning your father had to share the crop with a person who owned the land, the land owner there.

OSCAR
HOWARD: The other person owned the land. And we would do the cropping, and gather it, and everything. Then when we get through, we'd pay our bills. And if there's anything left, he shared it. But most time, it wasn't that much to share.

DAN OLSON: How big was your family?

OSCAR
HOWARD: My family, five boys-- I mean, three boys and two girls.

DAN OLSON: So not that large a family for the times, but still a lot of mouths to feed.

OSCAR
HOWARD: Still a lot of mouths, seven people to feed. And the family was a pretty good size.

DAN OLSON: And about how many acres was the sharecropping farm?

OSCAR
HOWARD: About 60 to 80 acres. All hand labor, mule, and plow. All hand labor, hoeing with your hands, the cotton and--

DAN OLSON: So cotton was one of the big crops?

OSCAR
HOWARD: Oh, cotton was the crop in South Georgia at that time. But, you know, later on in the years, the boll weevils came in and ate up the cotton. And that was another thing came into my life. I went to Tuskegee. A fellow from Tuskegee named Dr. Carver, a great scientist, he came over to the country and talked about Tuskegee and Booker T. Washington.

Now, Dr. Carver was the man who originated the build products out of peanut, 300 and some products out of peanut. After the war, he was ate up with cotton. And the South farmers didn't do well at all. So he came up with the peanut and the sweet potato. So I went to Tuskegee after all the running around in high school, and what have you.

DAN OLSON: I'm told there's a story about you essentially hitching a ride out of Georgia.

OSCAR
HOWARD: Oh, yes. I left home with \$2.50 in my pocket. And I had a pair of pinstripe pants. They cost \$1.98, and a shirt.

And that was what I had extra. And I left home. I got out of the window early in the morning before my parents got up and left home walking. And two white fellows passed me up the road and asked if I wanted to get a ride.

Well, they gave me a ride. But in that day, you had these running boards on the side of the car. They didn't let me get in the car. I stood on the running board. And the road was all non-paved, bumpy. And I learned something about the trade of riding on the side of a car. You wouldn't keep both feet down flat, because they would bounce off about the same time. Keep one up front and one in the back. That one get backed off, you put the other on that front. And I rode 20 miles on a side of that car. And they had to keep going. But I wanted to go North. So they put me off on this corner.

DAN OLSON: They wouldn't let you ride inside because that was the state of race relations in the South.

OSCAR --of the state-- that was always the understanding. That was the kind of prejudice type thing. But we didn't know
HOWARD: it, because we lived in it all the time. And we didn't paid any attention.

DAN OLSON: And yet they stopped to give you a ride, these two white men.

OSCAR --to give me a ride. And I always stayed grateful about little things. If I hadn't got the ride from them, I probably
HOWARD: wouldn't have got the next ride. But when they put me off, there's two men over across the street going North with an orange truck. Those days, you could go down in Florida and get oranges out from under the tree that falls for little or nothing. They get a load of oranges. And they would go back up North, peddling them through the little cities as they go.

So I went on and saw these fellows. One of them was paying for the gas. And I said, look, I'm going up to Fort Valley to school. If you give me a ride, I help you sell your oranges. I saw what they were doing. And they looked at each other. And one of them said, well, so what? And I got up in the back.

And when we got up in the next little town from Cordele, that was Vienna, Georgia, this man, they go to the grocery store. And they'd get-- he'd want one basket. And he'd hold up one finger. And they had a little place in the back where you could sit, had sacks and baskets. I'd fill up those baskets while we were going up the road. And he want one, I jumped down and take him one. I went through. I'd come back and get another one.

But when they got up as far as I could go with them, they were going on too long. And I wanted to go across to Fort Valley, Georgia. It was 12 miles between Perry, Georgia and Fort Valley. So I spent \$0.46 of my \$2.50 on the bus, so I could go into Fort Valley riding, kind of, in style, you know. I got on the bus. And I rode over there, and had \$0.04 left out of the \$2.50 So I went up to my aunt's house about a mile up, half a mile. She lived right on the campus.

And I went up to see Professor Hunt and told him the next morning, I wanted to go to school. And he asked me, why do you want to go to school? I said, well, I want to make a better living and help other people. Now, he took me up on that, help other people, and never let it go to help other people. And he gave me a basket, go down to the farm place and get a basket. And I want you to help kill these sandspur. That's a little weed that grow around on the campus, sticky. I would dig them up. And when the ladies go by, I turn my back, and I just keep digging them, put them in this basket. And I take them and burn them.

But he let me go to school. And it got so rough. By February, I just didn't have any clothes. Those pinstriped pants were white. But what I did, I went to the drugstore and got \$0.15 worth of blue paint and dyed them blue. So that made them winter pants for me. [LAUGHS]

DAN OLSON: Why didn't you tell your parents? Why didn't you tell your parents when you left home?

OSCAR Well, it wasn't-- my father wasn't that much on going to school. And to go away from home wouldn't have been--
HOWARD: he would have never agreed to it. And I didn't have the money to go.

DAN OLSON: He needed you on the farm.

OSCAR He needed me on the farm. And that was it. And he, that's all he thought about.
HOWARD:

DAN OLSON: I suppose it was what some people would call through the help of strangers that you found your way through those early years.

OSCAR HOWARD: That's right. It was through the help of strangers. And you had to accept everyone as a stepping stone. If this one hadn't done what they did, it wouldn't have worked.

DAN OLSON: But what was in you that caused you to do this? I mean, all kinds of other people theoretically have the same opportunity to ask for the help of strangers, but don't, or don't take the-- or don't see the opportunity. What was it about your childhood, about the way you'd been brought up, that you saw opportunity, you knew how to figure things out?

OSCAR HOWARD: Well, I had an aunt that went to Florida in 1919. And she'd send us back clothes. And that the pants are too big for me, we pass them on to somebody else. And she told us all to go to school. And my mother felt the same way. So that drive got in there. And I just remembered these little things that people said, and just kept it in the back of my mind.

DAN OLSON: Where did you find the money to go to Tuskegee when you wanted to go to college?

OSCAR HOWARD: Well, I worked in Atlanta, worked in the day and went to school at night. That's for my 11th grade. That's the junior year. And, you know, I did that and saved enough money to go to day school. So I finished my senior year with the class. So the junior year, I worked in the day and went to school at night.

Sometimes it was bad. Wouldn't be with two of us at school, the teacher and me, raining. But I worked at [INAUDIBLE] and [INAUDIBLE] and hop cars. And I got that year in. And then I got a little scholarship to Tuskegee that senior year when I finished. I was progressive and what have you. And I went down to Tuskegee. And I worked my way through.

DAN OLSON: This was the depths of the depression that you were going to school.

OSCAR HOWARD: It was depression. But, you know, in our lives, we never knew what depression really meant. You see, the philosophy, even that I got to Tuskegee was take what you have, and make what you need. We needed everything. So we just made everything. The guys made the bricks. And they call that brick making.

And they built a building. They call that brick masonry. And they learned how to do pipes. And that was plumbing. So they put all those trades. I had one-- trades, got into that school. Didn't have clothes. So we made everybody wear uniform. And nobody was ashamed. Everybody looked alike. And then we had a tailoring department. So we made the uniforms.

PAULA SCHROEDER: Oscar Howard, the founder of Meals on Wheels in Minneapolis, talking with the FM News Station's Dan Olson.

SCHROEDER: We're going to continue our conversation with Oscar Howard in just a moment. I'm Paula Schroeder. And you're listening to voices of Minnesota, which is heard nearly every Monday morning at this time on Mid-morning.

In the weather today, we are expecting occasional light snow across the state, with temperatures holding steady in the 20s and 30s in the Central and Southern parts of Minnesota. Temperatures will be falling into the teens in the North. Snow is going to continue near Lake Superior overnight tonight. And lows will range from five below in the Northeast to 15 above in the South.

It is going to be colder tomorrow, mostly cloudy, with snow showers still possible around the North shore. Highs from around 10 above in Northeastern Minnesota, to the lower 20s in the South. In the Twin Cities today, temperatures should be holding steady right around 30 degrees. Time now is 10:16 o'clock.

Well, 81-year-old Oscar Howard still travels the world talking about his philosophy of life, which, reduced to its essence is, don't quit. He told Dan Olson he met obstacles at every turn when he tried to start his own business.

OSCAR HOWARD: I went to the bank to go in business for myself. So I went down to the bank, and talked with them. First, I talked with the bookkeeper out there that I work with, Mr. [INAUDIBLE] He said, how much money you have. I said, well, I had \$300. You can't go in business with \$300. Well, right then, he kind of insulted me, because I told him. I said, you know, how can you fall out of the bed when you're sleeping on the floor? I mean, I didn't believe any of those things when people said no.

So I went on. And he said, why don't you try to get a loan? I went to the bank. And they said, listen, in order to give you a loan, we'd have to see your balance sheet. I said, I don't have a balance or a sheet, but I got an idea. And I'm going to make it work. And they didn't give me the loan. I went to the guy running a market down there one Thanksgiving. I wanted to buy a turkey. But I wanted to give me a little credit. He said, I can't. He wouldn't credit me for one turkey. But I got the turkey, and I got into it. And after that, later on, I bought more food from them in five years. And most any one single person.

DAN OLSON: Why do you think people wouldn't loan you money? Was it lack of experience, or was it race, or both?

OSCAR HOWARD: It was race or lack of experience, I think. Because I think most people, if they know they're going to make money from a project or from a person, they would take a little bit of a chance. It was like it was an experience. And it was a new thing.

DAN OLSON: I want to know where you got the idea for Meals on Wheels.

OSCAR HOWARD: Well, we got the idea from some older people. It was a program here called OEO, Office of Economic Opportunity. And that was the government was giving surplus food to people to feed kids in parks, and playgrounds, and restrooms, and zip-zip.

DAN OLSON: When was this? About what time was this?

OSCAR HOWARD: This was in '60, about '65, somewhere early '60, '63 or three. But anyway, they offered this program to some white caterers. And they wouldn't take it. \$0.15 for breakfast, and \$0.45 for lunch, and \$0.45 for supper just wasn't enough to send trucks out and do the job. So the people in charge asked me if I could handle it. I told them, sure. I thought it was an opportunity.

I took the program and built it up to 32,000 meals per week. And after we did it two years, the White people wanted to buy it. And they went to the banks. And the banks told me, said, well, we went along with you, and we'll go along with you again. But you go along with us. And what happened, they wanted to give them to them, because they had other accounts with these people. So I gave it back to them.

But there come your blessing sometime when you sacrifice. At the point they got it, it was no profit to be made in it. And if I had taken it the third year, I would have lost money, because apples I was getting for \$2:50, selling for a nickel. Apple had gone up to Christ. It cost about a nickel. Milk, I got for a nickel a carton and sold it for a dime. And it was going up.

Then when they got in the middle of that, some older people saw us doing that for these people in the parks and playgrounds, say, what can you do for us? And I talked with them. And what I found out, some older man might have lost his wife. He didn't need to go in a home. He had enough money to stay home. But he wouldn't eat right. He'd eat cornflakes for breakfast and probably nothing much for lunch.

But we figured out a way to help him. And we called it Operation Leapfrog, go from door to door. But then that didn't sound popular. Then we called it hot on the spot, Meals on Wheels. And that sounded better. And it worked better. But then I went to find out it wasn't registered. Meals on Wheels was not registered in the capital. So we went over and registered Meals on Wheels and took off. And so it got going.

So today, that program started 30 years ago in my part of it. Last year was the last statistic we took on it, and that was 1994. Did 900,000 meals for the year 1994, fair. Used 11,000 volunteers and fed 10,000 on a regular basis is our senior citizen at a price of \$4.3 million. That's the subsidized amount.

DAN OLSON: We're at a period of time here in our economy where the country is very wealthy, but the number of poor people, including older people who are poor, is growing as the population ages. I'm wondering if a program like Meals on Wheels can really keep up, can really do enough to help all of the people who need the service like then.

OSCAR HOWARD: I think it can. But it has to go away from all volunteer service. There must be some funding for it, because there is a need. And there's a big saving to leave a person in their home, rather than take them on the government payroll or whatever home and subsidize them. If they just subsidize a part of that meal and let the person stay in his own home, that's going to be a great saving down the road. I think it's going to have unusual connotations in the economy.

And we all-- and the whole thing I've always felt, and many people asked me, how much money did you get? You know, I never did worry about the money. But I did worry about if you gave me a job, I'd do it better than anybody else can do it, and with a smile, and an attitude, and an atmosphere better than anybody else's. And then if I didn't hold a job or didn't get it, I never worried about competing with anybody. People tell me, can you do our job? They didn't say, can you bid on it. Can you take care of us in July? It was because of the attitude and the spirit that we put into it.

DAN OLSON: When you started Meals on Wheels, you must have done a fair amount of the driving and delivery yourself.

OSCAR HOWARD: Oh, my god. I'd be the first man up there in the morning and the last to leave to start the coffee pot going.

DAN OLSON: Did you have family members to help you out, pitch in, neighbors, friends?

OSCAR No, I had a friend or two. I had one old man I brought here from Tuskegee because he wanted his kids to go to school. He's an old fireman at the airport down there. And he would help me a little early in the morning. And he told me, Oscar, when you in business, and I don't ever take a bribe, he said, because if the next guy take or give a bigger bribe, you're going to have to give a bigger one. And next thing you know, you're going to be in trouble. He said, if you can't make it on your own merit, he said, hell, you ain't got no business being in business. But that was the kind of attitude we had.

DAN OLSON: What was the reaction of some of the people you delivered to when they realized they could get this service, a hot meal delivered?

OSCAR Oh, they would get curious. And many of the times, as I said, with the right attitude, people needed the conversation as much as they needed the meal. I break in and make a delivery for myself. I go in the man's place. First thing I open the door, hey, let's go fishing. I don't need to go fishing. You bringing me some dinner. Then he wanted to talk another 20 minutes. I got to go to the next place. But we kind of worked it out. Concern with people in the service was my business. Feeling and money just-- money took care of itself.

DAN OLSON: Do you have any feelings about the direction the country is going in terms of our ability to take care of one another? We have, over the span of your lifetime, developed huge government programs. Now we're in a period of cutting back some of those government programs. So what are your thoughts about that?

OSCAR My whole feeling about all of it is management and honesty in your job. I get the feeling in politics sometimes is not what's good for the country. It's whether I can get in or not. I don't care what happens. Let me win, and then we'll wrestle with the country. Because actually, the waste that people have allowed in this country, we throw away more than some people have to work with.

DAN OLSON: This is spoken like a man who works in the food service, because you see what people do not eat, and what people throw away.

OSCAR Sure. And another thing, though, I give to young people who ask me about what the opportunities are in the country. And I do a lot of speaking. And I tell them right away, it looks very bright to me. They say, why? I say, well, there are more people in the world than they ever been. There are more needs in the world than they ever have been. Anybody can meet those needs better than anybody else, they're going to have more than they can ever do. It's a matter of service with honesty and confidence.

You know, when I was in business, a person might say to me, I want on my menu turkey, chicken, Swedish meatball, and slice this. And I would tell them, listen, if I might be of help to you, I'm the doctor in this case. I said I can give you turkey and chicken, but you don't need both of those. They are fowl. I give you turkey or chicken, which I think you eat just as well off, because they're not going to eat both. One, they're going to eat turkey or chicken. And they would thank you. But that was honest in saying I could do it and take their money, another \$2 and a quarter. That was not the point. What was best for them was best for me. And I didn't ever back off of that.

DAN OLSON: So when you encounter young people, especially teenagers, especially young men who are saying, you know, Mr. Howard, times are different now from what they were when you were coming up. I don't have the same kind of opportunity. The barriers I face are higher than the barriers you faced when you were coming up. What's your response?

OSCAR HOWARD: My response is, what-- do you have a goal in life in your mind? Do you have a goal? What do you want to be five years from now, three years from now? And then I tell you the next thing, find the best way to get there. And you don't have to ask a lot of questions. I say you want a starting point for me. And you 14 now. I say you just take this one block. There's 35, 40 houses on the block. You can do all the snow and let nobody else do it. You make \$10 per house. You make \$400 a month. Don't talk to me about opportunity, I mean, about negative. I don't know anything about negative stuff.

DAN OLSON: Where did you get that attitude? Where did you get the attitude that there's opportunity?

OSCAR HOWARD: Well, when I went to Tuskegee, they said to us, they said, take what you got and make what you need. And we needed everything. So we made everything. And then not only that, they also taught us, never worry about a man throwing you in the ditch or keeping you in the ditch. The only way a guy can keep you in the ditch is he get in the ditch on top of you, he said. And both of you in the ditch, he said. But always stay on top.

And another thing, I've had to be very honest with you. I tell Blacks very honestly. You are missing the boat when you can't equal anybody white or Black. I said, now we got two cultures. We got the white man, Black culture and the Black man's culture. And if you can't keep equal with them with two, and he got one, there's something wrong with you. I mean, I don't-- I don't know. I just don't have the same philosophy that some have.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

PAULA SCHROEDER: Oscar Howard, the developer of the Meals on Wheels program in Minneapolis. Our Voices of Minnesota interview series is produced by Dan Olson, who was the man talking with Oscar Howard. He has assistance from research intern Marcy Tveidt.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

It's 29 minutes past 10 o'clock. You're listening to Mid-morning on the FM News Station. I'm Paula Schroeder. Coming up, we are going to be talking with a commander of the Salvation Army to find out how fundraising efforts went in the Twin Cities and across the state of Minnesota this year. I think that the bad weather that we had in December did certainly have an impact, not only on retail stores, but on the Salvation army bell ringers as well. We'll find out more about that.

And then we'll introduce you to a man who has a very unusual job. I'm not going to tell you what it is. You wait and find out. You'll find out in the next half hour of Mid-morning. And of course, we'll bring you, as always, Garrison Keillor and the Writer's Almanac. All that and more coming up in the next half hour. First, Perry Finelli is here with a look at the news. Is there any news today, Perry?

PERRY FINELLI: Well, of course, New Year's Eve last night, an incident we'll report on. A Boston man who had no driver's license is facing a battery of charges after he allegedly ran his car into a New Year's Eve crowd. Police say more than 20 people were hurt. The suspect is charged with assault with intent to murder, among other things.

The Conservative National Taxpayers Union says at least a dozen members of Congress will continue drawing 60% or more of their current salaries for life. The House and Senate have voted to bring pensions for future retirees more in line with plans offered to other federal workers. But the language was included in budget legislation vetoed by President Clinton.

A new state law taking effect today should help diminish discrimination by health insurance companies in determining who will and will not receive coverage. State representative Charlie Weaver says the law protects people who have undergone genetic tests to determine if a medical disorder may be present.

CHARLIE WEAVER: Insurance companies cannot force a person to undergo a genetic test for any reason. And if they find out that you've had one taken, they can't use that against you to deny health coverage.

PERRY FINELLI: Weaver says advances in technology are making health insurance discrimination cases more common. He says scientists can currently identify at least 4,000 human genes and the indicators of up to 1,000 medical disorders. And a float sponsored by Target store has won an award at the Tournament of Roses parade today in California. The float, called Clowning Around, won the award for best use of color and color harmony.

And the state forecast today, occasional light snow around the state of Minnesota. Temperatures falling into the teens across the North. Steady temperatures in the 20s and some lower 30s for Central and Southern Minnesota today. For the Twin Cities, cloudy skies, occasional light snow, steady temperatures right around 30 degrees. Northeast winds at 5 to 10mph.

At last report, still some light snow on some locations. The International Falls, 12 degrees and light snow, and 26 in Duluth, Superior. In Willmar, some light snow and 27 degrees. In the Twin Cities, light snow. And the temp is at 30 degrees. And that's the latest from the Minnesota Public Radio newsroom. I'm Perry Finelli. Paula, back to you.

PAULA SCHROEDER: All right. Thanks a lot, Perry. Now, those floats in the Rose Bowl parade are truly amazing. I've been to the Rose Bowl parade once, long ago. And it's wonderful to see them up close. Today's programming is sponsored in part by Lerner Publications, Musclebound Bindery and Interface Graphics to wish listeners a happy, healthy new year. It's 28 minutes before 11:00 o'clock. This is Mid-morning on the FM News Station.

Well, at the end of every year, a lot of people rush to send checks to their favorite charities so they can deduct their contributions from their taxes. Now, with the holidays behind us, most of us turn to paying off our credit cards and holiday bills. For the Salvation Army, the new year means it's time to pull their bell ringers off the streets and see if shoppers have dropped enough cash into the red buckets to meet their fundraising goal for the year. Joining me on the line now is Lieutenant Colonel Don Arnold, the Salvation Army commander for Minnesota and North Dakota. Good morning, sir.

DON ARNOLD: Good morning, Paula. Happy New Year to you.

PAULA SCHROEDER: Happy New Year to you as well. How did things go this holiday season for the Salvation Army?

DON ARNOLD: Well, this has been an interesting year with the cold weather that interrupted right in the middle. But right now, we're standing at about, throughout the state, about 85% of our goal. Minneapolis has done a little better in some contributions that have just come in. So we're at 90% of our goal. And Saint Paul is about 80, 86% of the goal. So things are still going on. And fortunately, people here that we haven't reached our goal and are sending in some checks. And we hope by the 15th of January to reach the goal in Minneapolis. And Saint Paul's right behind, and hoping that will happen as well.

PAULA SCHROEDER: What happens if you don't meet the goal? Do you have programs that have a certain budget prescribed for that may not get funded if you don't reach the goal?

DON ARNOLD: Well, yes. If we don't reach the goal, we probably will contact some of our special donors and ask if they would help. And if they can, that would be great. If not, then we would have to cut programs. And that would be in the area of food assistance and housing, and perhaps some other types of services that we render throughout the year.

PAULA What usually happens to contributions once the holidays are over?

SCHROEDER:

DON ARNOLD: The giving usually declines quite a bit after Christmas. There are those who still-- in fact, some people still write checks even after the first of the year, for which we're grateful. But it declines for the first couple of weeks. And then because of the Salvation Army's dealing with the homeless and the weather conditions, when we publicize the fact that there are people who need help, the contributions start coming in again. So that's very helpful to us.

PAULA There was a situation that you had of, what? About \$1,000 worth of gifts stolen this December.

SCHROEDER:

DON ARNOLD: Yes, that was most unfortunate. We try to find a warehouse each year for our toy shop. And this year, it was broken into twice. One time, the first time, they took about \$1,000 worth of toys. The second time, they only took a few little items that were not very important. But the first time was quite a devastating thing, because the toy shop was all set up to open the next week. And roller blades, and a lot of portable radios, and boom boxes were taken. And that really devastated us.

But here again, the people of Minneapolis were just great. In fact, we had to call people and say, well, thank you for your offer to help us. But we've already reached the amount. And they said, that's all right, we're going to send you a check anyway, which was very, very helpful.

PAULA Right, yeah. So people responded when there was a crisis?

SCHROEDER:

DON ARNOLD: Yes. And I think they were hurt to think that someone would do that during the Christmas season, particularly for the children who probably would have very little or anything for Christmas.

PAULA What do you think is going to be the need this winter? Are there more people who are in need of assistance?

SCHROEDER:

DON ARNOLD: Yes. And it's hard to understand why. But we are up about 30% in requests during the Christmas season this year. And we know that that's going to carry over into the winter months. We're nervous about what government is going to take care of as far as social services. And when the government doesn't, then other agencies, such as the Salvation Army has to fill in the gaps. And so that's kind of a worry for us.

PAULA I know that one that a lot of organizations are concerned about is with the heating assistance. Is that part of the

SCHROEDER: Salvation Army program as well?

DON ARNOLD: Yes, we have a program called HeatShare that we work with Minnegasco and NSP. And it's to help those who are - really, it's for those who are handicapped or elderly, or for those who just cannot pay their fuel bills. And there are funds available through government assistance. But when that doesn't happen, then they come to us. And we're the last resort for them. And of course, we think that's going to be much higher this year because of the cutbacks.

PAULA You know, there has-- you mentioned Congress and some of the fears about what some of those cutbacks will be.
SCHROEDER: And there have been statements by individuals in Congress that, well, you know, the churches are just going to have to take over some of this responsibility, or individuals, or businesses, or something. Do you think that we're maxed out in terms of charitable giving here in Minnesota? Or is there more to be gained?

DON ARNOLD: That's a very good question. Sometimes I feel like we have just come to the limit of being able to receive more donations to take care of all these things. And then somehow in Minnesota, people are so conscious of needs that when we let them know, they usually come to our aid. We've never been let down so far. And we assume that will happen in the future.

PAULA Well, Don Arnold, I want to thank you for joining us this morning. And good luck in trying to meet the rest of your
SCHROEDER: goal here in the state of Minnesota.

DON ARNOLD: Thank you, Paula.

PAULA And Happy New Year.

SCHROEDER:

DON ARNOLD: Thank you.

PAULA Lieutenant Colonel Don Arnold. He is the Salvation Army commander for Minnesota and North Dakota.

SCHROEDER:

[MUSIC PLAYING]

21 minutes now before 11:00 o'clock. We're going to be visiting a hot New York restaurant in just a moment. Let me tell you, though, that if you're wondering if it's going to be safe to drive today, it certainly looks like it. We're going to have some occasional light snow around the state, but nothing really to get too worried about, just that little light snow. That's about it. With temperatures falling into the teens in Northern Minnesota, steady temperatures in the 20s and lower 30s in the Central and South. And roads are reported in good driving conditions all over the state.

Of course, remembering that it is winter time. And you're always going to run into a little slippery spot. I know that I was glad that I had some good brakes on my car today, when I ran across a little patch of ice. But again, just take it easy, and get to where you need to go, if you've got a New Year's day party or something like that. I know there's a lot of people are going to be getting together to watch that Rose Bowl game today with Northwestern, of all schools, playing for the Big Ten in that game this afternoon.

Actually at noon today, you can hear Howard Sinker talk about what's ahead in sports, both high school, college, and also professional sports for 1996. He'll be on the air with Gary Eichten. That's coming up at noon today as part of midday. At New York's 21 club last night, they rang in the new year with a multi-course meal, wines, champagnes, singer Barbara Cook and a \$375 per person tab that included taxes and tips.

For 75 years, 21 has been a place for special occasions and daily lunch for moneyed moguls. Movie stars go there, agents, literati. So when the new 21 cookbook arrived, there was a collection taken up. And NPR's special correspondent, Susan Stamberg was sent to New York, where she prepared this report.

SPEAKER: This right here, this is the door.

SUSAN STAMBERG: No, it's a sealed brick wall. We begin in the basement, which is where 21's most colorful history is stored. The restaurant consists of three townhouses hitched together along West 52nd Street. It began as a speakeasy during Prohibition. The basement wine cellar is hidden behind a thick brick wall.

SPEAKER: This is the key to the door.

SUSAN STAMBERG: --long skewer?

SPEAKER: Mm-hmm.

SUSAN STAMBERG: Uh-huh.

SPEAKER: And you'll notice if you look around, it's a little hard to see in this light. But there are flaws in the mortar. This guy right here--

SUSAN STAMBERG: That's a hole in the wall.

SPEAKER: This is the keyhole. There we go. And if you listen--

[CLICK]

SUSAN STAMBERG: I heard something click.

SPEAKER: Mm-hmm.

SUSAN STAMBERG: That was the lock opening?

SPEAKER: It was the lock opening. And [GRUNTS]

SUSAN STAMBERG: Wow, it's moving.

SPEAKER: It's sort of like going into the arch villain's lair from a James Bond movie or something else.

SUSAN The doorway is two tons, and is almost a foot thick. It opens on silent hinges to reveal a guy sitting at a computer, and walls and walls of wine bottles on wooden shelves.

SPEAKER: What we've done here is we've actually left 21 West 52nd Street. We're now in 19 West 52nd street.

SUSAN Which is why when federal agents raided the place in 1932, they never found the wine cellar. Christopher Shipley, 21's beverage manager, says the agents had detailed blueprints for 21 West 52nd. For 11 hours, they slapped basement walls looking for hollow spots. They lit cigars to find drafts. But they were barking up the wrong building.

SPEAKER: There was no record of this space in the blueprints of 21 West 52nd street, because it's not. It's 19.

SUSAN During Prohibition, 21 also had a special shelf behind the bar. Push a button, the shelf tilted backwards, and all the bottles slid down a chute to crack on the cement floor one story below. Then all the alcohol disappeared into the sewer system. Destruction of evidence, get it? After Prohibition destruction gave way to preservation. Guests would buy bottles off the menu and ask 21 to store them.

SPEAKER: Elizabeth Taylor has wine here. Ivan Boesky, Burgess Meredith--

SUSAN You kept it nicely for him, did you, during this period?

STAMBERG:

SPEAKER: That's right.

SUSAN Some of the private stock at 21 is wine whose time has come. Bottles laid down for Richard Nixon, Sammy Davis, Jr. Joan Crawford, Aristotle Onassis, all dead, but their bottles linger on.

STAMBERG:

[CROWD CHATTER]

Upstairs now, and into the dimly lit dining room, 135 people can gather here for lunch or dinner under a low-slung ceiling, hung with guy things, model trucks, airplanes, soccer balls, football helmets. It's the kind of good-times noisy place that looks as if men should still be smoking cigars at the small tables, and drinking scotch on the rocks.

SPEAKER: What do you recommend we eat, chef?

SPEAKER: We have roast goose as a special. And the salmon steak with curry oil is terrific.

SUSAN Humphrey Bogart ate here, drank is more like it, they say. Ernest Hemingway trysts on a stairway, they say.

STAMBERG: Robert Benchley, the humorist, came in one dark and stormy night and said to the bartender, get me out of this wet coat and into a dry Martini.

Legendary women ate here, too, of course, and had a hand or cheek kissed by the maitre d'. In 21's heyday, the 1930s through '50s, Helen Hayes and Mary Martin were regulars. At the front door near the row of jockey statues that stand guard along a wrought iron balcony, writer Clare Boothe Luce once made way for satirist Dorothy Parker. Age before beauty, said Ms. Luce, to which the acerbic Miss Parker replied, pearls before swine. On our visit, we were thinking beyond oysters and pork.

JERRY BURNS: I am happy to report that the chicken hash, created by Michael Lomonaco is superior to the chicken hash of the old days.

SUSAN Jerry Burns, who turns 89 in February, is an authority on the old days. His brother Charlie founded 21 with a man
STAMBERG: named Jack Kreindler. Jerry Burns has worked in 21's wine cellar, the dining room. He eats lunch here five days a week.

JERRY BURNS: First, the pieces of chicken are larger. And second, the sauce is not as gloppy as previous chefs had it.

WALTER You like to order or wait?
WEISS:

SPEAKER: Yes, we're ready.

WALTER What would you like?
WEISS:

SPEAKER: I think I'll have chicken hash. Do you think that's a good decision?

WALTER Well, it's a famous dish here at 21.
WEISS:

SUSAN Maitre d' Walter Weiss takes our order. He's seen plenty of changes since he first came in 1946.
STAMBERG:

JERRY BURNS: It was very chic to come to 21. You know, it was very difficult. Everybody was intimidated coming to 21, you know, days ago. If you wore brown shoes and a blue suit, they wouldn't let you in.

SUSAN And what about ladies in those days, hats and gloves?
STAMBERG:

JERRY BURNS: Well, there were a lot of ladies that wore hats and gloves. There was a time you couldn't come in here in pants. I remember once a lovely young lady came in a wonderful pant suit. And they told her she couldn't come in. So what do you think she did? She went to the ladies room, took off her pants, had a beautiful jacket on. We let her in.

SUSAN There are still rules at 21. Gentlemen must wear ties and jackets. The exception, a young man with big dark eyes
STAMBERG: and curly black hair who prowls the dining room in a white coat and apron. It's Michael Lomonaco, 21's executive chef since 1989.

SPEAKER: Whoops, here comes lunch.

SPEAKER: I mean, yes.

SPEAKER: You better tell us what this is, since it's not what we ordered.

SPEAKER: Snapper.

SPEAKER: Well--

SPEAKER: Michael, where's my chicken hash--

SPEAKER: So you have sea bass and truffled mashed potatoes. We're just going to do that. It's going to be that kind of afternoon. The chicken hash is coming now on the side.

SPEAKER: But, I mean, my friend here wanted salmon.

SPEAKER: We have them both.

SPEAKER: I think [LAUGHS].

SPEAKER: You know what you--

SUSAN STAMBERG: If 21 is like a public country club, it's top chef is like the host of the best party you ever went to and a solicitous mom. Michael Lomonaco, hovers, checks back, brings food. He wants you to eat and serves what you want to eat as a side dish. And he's right. The \$25 chicken hash is OK.

The recipe in the 21 cookbook shows it's made with lots of butter and heavy cream, not crisp like corned beef hash. The \$29 poached salmon is OK too. But the sea bass, \$34, seared, then perched on a thin layer of mashed potatoes and truffles with a glaze of balsamic vinegar. Ah, the sea bass is fantastic.

Michael Lomonaco's challenge has been to keep 21's old guard happy, the macho, meat-eating regulars, and to lighten the menu for new customers. Asked to define a great restaurant, he speaks about more than food.

MICHAEL LOMONACO: If I'm in a restaurant that really feels right and is comfortable, and I feel comfortable and not awkward or ill at ease, where they put me at ease and helped me to relax, and help me to enjoy my meal from start to finish, that is the place that I'm most likely to return to.

SUSAN STAMBERG: Michael Lomonaco, taking 21 into the next century after 75 years of feeding the world's rich and famous. And the cost? Let's put it this way. Writer John Steinbeck said, 21 was a home about \$40 away from home. And that was a long time ago. Back in Washington on a diet and a strict budget, I'm Susan Stamberg. Is it true iced tea is your most popular drink?

MICHAEL LOMONACO: [LAUGHS] Well, we'd like to say that the wine list has our most popular beverage. But iced, we do sell a lot of iced tea. But we give refills. Refills are included.

SUSAN STAMBERG: Yeah, what's a glass of iced tea at 21 cost?

MICHAEL LOMONACO: A few dollars. What's the experience at 21 cost? It's a great experience. It's like no place else in America.

PAULA SCHROEDER: And if we could go back and eavesdrop on a conversation between Dorothy Parker and Clare Boothe Luce, it would be worth the trip, wouldn't it? You're listening to Mid-morning on the FM News Station. 11 minutes now before 11:00 o'clock. I'm Paula Schroeder.

Well, for most of us, Monday morning means the beginning of a new work week. Hopefully, a lot of you are not working today, though. For most of us, work is pretty conventional stuff. But on this particular Monday morning, we begin a new series of reports from the strange and unusual sides of the workplace.

We're calling this series Odd Jobs. And every once in a while, we're going to bring the stories of some truly odd jobs to you. For example, in Northfield, Minnesota, Dick Heibel runs a thriving business repairing snow globes. He'll fix almost any snow globe, from the tacky souvenir to the family heirloom.

DICK HEIBEL: I unwrap one. I get them like this. And as you can see how they come in, they're broken. They come in, wrapped carefully. And they're broken.

MARTIN KASTE: We're not talking cheap plastic globes here. We're talking something a little bit better--

DICK HEIBEL: --ones. And mainly the ones that I repaired were the ones that could not be replaced. See, here's what the glitter is like. It's very, very fine, like a Mylar that's colored. And there's only a special kind that will work in water. The other kind just drop like lead.

MARTIN KASTE: You've got glitter on your face. I have a feeling you--

DICK HEIBEL: --got glitter on me all the time.

MARTIN KASTE: I have a feeling you working on a glitter--

DICK HEIBEL: Yeah. Well, I was doing these before you come. I have glitter. Some people wonder if I'm going out for the night, because I get it on my face, and in my eyes. And--

MARTIN KASTE: Is that water usually pretty non-toxic?

DICK HEIBEL: Well, it's non-toxic, I believe, except that sometimes, it will come very discolored and very smelly, because most of these are made in China or Taiwan. And some factories do not use purified water. They just probably take it out of the tap. And it will get fungus. And I've seen worms and everything else in the water.

MARTIN KASTE: Worms in a snow globe.

DICK HEIBEL: Yeah, yeah. It will-- they will come in-- they will come in the water. They'll set in the heat.

MARTIN KASTE: I see now, in my ignorance, I never thought that a snow globe went bad.

DICK HEIBEL: Oh, yeah.

MARTIN KASTE: Well, what aspect of this work is-- what would the layman not appreciate?

DICK HEIBEL: Well, I think the layman would have the most difficulty with the bubbles and getting it sealed properly. That took a lot of years to figure out. It looks easy, but it's not that easy. And the layman for fixing their own would probably have difficulty with first of all, finding the snow and glitter.

MARTIN KASTE: Are your sources, kind of, trade secrets to you?

DICK HEIBEL: My sources are mine. It took me too long to develop them. I do it because I love to do it. And I like, you know, when you get letters like these, these just come in yesterday. You can read it and see if you--

MARTIN KASTE: Well, why don't you read it?

DICK HEIBEL: Well, "enclosed is my beloved little snowman. As I stated, he is not the great elegant globe with music. He is far greater than that to me. He has accompanied me over 235,000 miles in the back of my Lincoln town car. My prayers and wishes are all answered." Hey, this is a guy, a little guy right here. Just a little plastic fella.

PAULA SCHROEDER: Dick Heibel fixes snow globes at his home in Northfield. He spoke to the FM News Station's Martin Kaste. This kicks off our hopefully, regular series called Odd Jobs. And if you have some information about somebody who has a very odd job that you think listeners would be interested in hearing about, why don't you call our member listener services line and tell us about it? That number is 290-1212, area code 612, 290-1212. Happy New Year from Mid-morning at the FM News Station at seven minutes before 11:00 o'clock.

GARY EICHTEN: The New Year's weekend belongs to college football, with football factories on display from coast to coast. But this year, Northwestern? Yes, Northwestern is in the Rose Bowl. Hi. Gary Eichten here inviting you to join us for our special New Year's day edition of Midday. We'll be talking with sports commentator Howard Sinker about the amazing story of the Northwestern Wildcats, plus all the other big sports stories in 1995. We'll look at the New Year as well. Midday begins at 11:00 on the FM News Station, KNOW FM, 91.1 in the Twin Cities.

PAULA SCHROEDER: And during the 11:00 o'clock hour of Midday, we'll take a look back at the political life and personal life of Rudy Perpich, who died in 1995. We'll also talk to Nick Hayes of Hamline University about the future of Russian communism. First, here's Garrison Keillor and the Writer's Almanac.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

GARRISON KEILLOR: Here is the Writer's Almanac for Monday, the 1st of January, 1996. It's the birthday of Betsy Ross in Philadelphia, 1752. She was born Betsy Griscom, a seamstress who made many flags for Revolutionary War units and who, according to legend, made the first American flag. Sir James George Frazer, anthropologist and folklorist who wrote the Golden Bough, was born in Edinburgh on this day in 1854.

President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on this day in 1863. It's the birthday, in 1864, in Hoboken, New Jersey, of the American photographer Alfred Stieglitz. It was on this day in 1890 that the first Tournament of Roses was held in Pasadena, California. Originally called the Battle of Flowers, sponsored by the Valley Hunt Club.

It's the birthday, in 1897 at Haverford, Pennsylvania, of Catherine Drinker Bowen, famous biographer of Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Adams, and many others. And it's the birthday, in 1919 in New York City of JD Salinger, Jerome David Salinger, who, like Holden Caulfield, the hero of The Catcher in the Rye, grew up in New York city, went to public schools and to a Military Academy. He served in the army during World War II, and then came back to write his famous stories for the New Yorker magazine, for Esmé with Love and Squalor, A Perfect Day for Banana Fish, and many, many others.

Here's a poem for New Year's day by Philip Appleman entitled New Year's Resolution. "Well, I did it again, bringing in that infant purity across the land, welcoming innocence with gin in New York, waiting up to help Chicago, Denver, LA, Fairbanks, Honolulu. And now, the high school bands are alienating Dallas. And girls in gold and tangerine have lost all touch with Pasadena. And young men with muscles and missing teeth are dreaming of personal fouls. And it's all beginning again, just like those other Januaries in instant replay.

But I've had enough of turning to look back The old post-morteming of defeat. People I loved but didn't touch. Friends I haven't seen for years. Strangers who smiled but didn't speak, failures, failures. No, I refuse to leave it at that, because somewhere off camera, January is coming like Venus up from the murk of December. Revirginized as innocent of loss as any dawn.

Resolved, this year, I'm going to break my losing streak. I'm going to stay alert, reach out, speak when not spoken to, read the minds of people in the streets. I'm going to practice every day, stay in training, and be moderate in all things, All things but love." Poem by Philip Appleman, "New Year's Resolution," from his collection, Open Doorways, published by WW Norton, and Company.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

That's the Writer's Almanac for Monday, January 1st, made possible by Coles Magazines, publishers of World War II and other magazines. Be well. Do good work. And keep in touch.

PAULA SCHROEDER: Well, that's Mid-morning for this Monday morning, New Year's day, January 1, 1996. Hope you're having a great day today. Tomorrow, Mid-morning will be back. We're going to take a look at the top 10 jobs of 1996. Looks like healthcare is still a good field to be in. And we'll also talk about taking care of your animal behavior problems. That and more coming up tomorrow on Mid-morning beginning at 9:00. Midday's next.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

ROBERT MACNEIL: I'm Robert MacNeil. Now that I'm no longer on the News-hour, I'm going to have a lot more time in the afternoons to listen to All Things Considered.

SPEAKER: Afternoons at 3:00 on the FM News Station, KNOW FM 91.1.

PAULA SCHROEDER: You're listening to Minnesota Public Radio. 30 degrees under cloudy skies at the FM News Station, KNOW FM, 91.1. Minneapolis, Saint Paul. It's going to continue to be a cloudy day today with temperatures holding steady right around 30 degrees. Then it's going to be getting colder overnight. Look for a high in the low 20s tomorrow.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

GARY EICHTEN: Good morning. It's 11:00 o'clock. And this is Midday on the FM News Station. I'm Gary Eichten. In the news this morning, the New Year begins with no agreement in sight on balancing the federal budget or ending the partial government shutdown. The president and congressional leaders aren't expected to resume negotiations until tomorrow. And apparently, no major issues have yet been resolved.

Scientists say new research shows that estrogen treatments do reduce the rate of early deaths from all causes for older women. Sarajevo has celebrated its first peaceful New Year's Eve in four years. And a new survey is out that says Minnesota's subsidized healthcare program has, in fact, reduced Minnesota's welfare rolls. Those are some of the stories in the news today.

Coming up during the program, a special retrospective looking at the life of former Governor Rudy Perpich. And then over the noon hour, sports commentator Howard Sinker will be here to talk about the most important sports stories of 1995, and look ahead to the big stories of this year as well. Our phone lines will be open, so hope you'll be able to join our conversation.