

# tidings!

October, 2008

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**October 29 2008**

CHAMN Annual Membership Meeting

St. Patrick Church, Edina

FFI: 651/503-2163

**June 7-9, 2008**

2009 Catholic Health Assembly

Sheraton, New Orleans

FFI: www.chausa.org

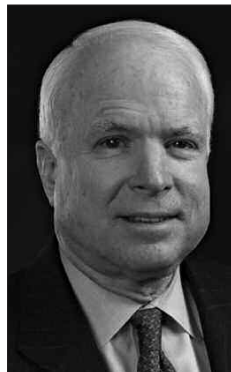
## A Comparison of the Presidential Candidates on Health Care

### JOHN MCCAIN ON HEALTH CARE

John McCain believes that controlling costs is key to making health care more affordable, saving Medicare and Medicaid and protecting health benefits for retirees. He sets down three primary goals: paying only for quality care, offering diverse insurance choices responsive to individual needs, and restoring a sense of personal responsibility. He advocates market solutions, such as allowing companies to provide insurance nationwide. He believes individuals should have a variety of plans to choose from and would offer tax credits and health savings accounts to help pay for them. He favors allowing safe prescription drugs to be imported and more generic drugs to be on the market to control drug costs.

#### Health Insurance: Private/Government

- Provide a variety of insurance choices – nationwide and across state lines -- for people to choose from. The policies would be portable, following the



McCain



Obama

individual, not the job.

- Offer tax credits of \$2,500 (\$5,000 for families) to help pay for insurance coverage.
- Establish a Guaranteed Access Plan (GAP) by working with governors to develop a model that states could follow to assure high-risk patients have

access to health coverage.

#### Medical Costs

- Allow families to be in charge of what they pay for.
- Encourage greater competition and allow insurers to operate nationwide.
- Require caps on malpractice suits.
- Promote market solutions such as walk-in clinics in retail outlets, and shift some care to nurse practitioners since they're less expensive than doctors.
- Require transparency to compare medical outcomes, costs, and prices.
- Individuals need to be more responsible for their own health to help prevent chronic diseases.

**Candidates** *cont. on page 2*

## Candidates *cont. from page 1*

### Health Savings Accounts

- Encourage the availability of health savings accounts.

### Drugs: Costs/Importation

- Sen. McCain has not made it clear in his plan where he currently stands on allowing the government to negotiate with drug companies for lower drug prices under Medicare Part D.
- Allow consumers to safely import prescription drugs.
- Make generic drugs more readily available.

### Drug Safety

- Require that imported prescription drugs be approved for purchase in the U.S. only if they are FDA approved and the exporters are FDA inspected.
- \* Supported the FDA reform bill that broadened the agency's regulatory powers.

### Electronic Record Keeping

- Promotes the use of information technology to help lower health care costs.
- According to the McCain website: "We should promote the rapid deployment of 21st century information systems and technology that allows doctors to practice across state lines."

### Medicare/Medicaid

- Reform payment systems in Medicare and Medicaid to pay for diagnosis, prevention and care coordination, not preventable medical errors or mismanagement.
- Sen. McCain has not made it clear in his plan where he currently stands on allowing the government to negotiate with drug companies for lower drug prices under Medicare Part D.

### Stem Cells

- Oppose creating human embryos for research by banning so-called "fetal farming," the process of creating embryos to use their cells or

fetal tissue.

- Ban research using human cells gestated in animals.
- Ban human cloning.
- Support federal funding for stem cell research using human embryos that have been frozen or are slated for destruction if the patient who is the source of the embryos indicates they would be destroyed.
- Support federal funding for alternate stem cell research, not involving human embryos.

### Public Health Issues

- Individuals need to be more responsible for their own health to help prevent chronic diseases.
- Parents should teach their children how to be healthy.
- Undertake public health initiatives to combat obesity, diabetes, and smoking.

### Abortion

- Overturn *Roe v. Wade*, returning decision-making to the states.
- Empower the pro-life movement to build consensus to end abortion at the state level.
- Encourage adoption.

### Other

- Ensure quality care for veterans by allowing them to choose where they get their health care.

### BARACK OBAMA ON HEALTH CARE

The goal of Obama's plan is to provide health insurance coverage to every American, through both public and private means. His plan would mandate that all children have health care coverage. Those who have insurance through their employers or who qualify for Medicaid or the State Children's Insurance Program (SCHIP) would be able to keep that coverage. For those who don't, Obama would create a new public insurance program. People could not be turned away because of illness or pre-existing conditions. Estimated annual costs for his program would be \$50-\$65 billion, financed by rolling back Bush tax cuts for people making

more than \$250,000.

### Health Insurance: Private/Government

- Mandate health care coverage for all children.
- Provide affordable health insurance that is portable (you can keep your insurance if you change or lose your job, etc.), for every American, regardless of illness or pre-existing conditions.
- Offer a new federal public health insurance program, similar to the health care program for federal employees, available to individuals and businesses who don't have any other coverage.
- Establish a "National Health Insurance Exchange" for private insurance. It would act as a watchdog group to create rules and standards and make coverage more affordable to those who want private insurance. Participating insurers would have to offer benefits similar to those in the new public plan.
- Require employers to contribute to workers' health care insurance.
- Offer small businesses a refundable tax credit of up to 50% on premiums paid by business for employees.

### Medical Costs

- Reduce catastrophic illness costs by reimbursing employer health plans for expenses that go above a certain threshold, as long as employers then use the savings to reduce their employees' health insurance premiums.
- Improve access to programs to manage chronic conditions.
- Conduct cancer screenings, smoking cessation programs, and more by federally supported insurance programs.
- Update health information technology.
- Ensure full transparency by hospi-

**Candidates** *cont. on page 7*

The Catholic Health Association of Minnesota welcomes one of our newest members, St. Gertrude's Health & Rehabilitation Center. Located in Shakopee, it is actually three entities housed under one roof – a 35 bed long-term care center, a transitional care rehabilitation unit and a 40 unit assisted living complex. St. Gertrude's is unique among senior care facilities due to its physical connection to St. Francis Regional Medical

**MEMBER PROFILE:**  
**St. Gertrude's  
 Health &  
 Rehabilitation  
 Center, Shakopee**

short-term rehabilitation, podiatry, audiology, emergency care, chemotherapy and radiation, and dialysis. No other metro provider offers such a comprehensive continuum of medical services all on one campus.

St. Gertrude's Health & Rehabilitation Center and The Gardens at St. Gertrude's are members of the Benedictine Health System, a nationally recognized non-profit leader in providing services and care for older adults. The Benedictine Core Values of



Hospitality, Stewardship, Respect and Justice are evident in daily operations and service delivery by staff. Based in the Christian tradition of servanthood, St. Gertrude's serves persons of all faiths in a caring environment. Surrounded by a country garden atmosphere, residents are treated to convenience, comfort and quality care.

Care providers at St. Gertrude's Health & Rehabilitation Center include nursing staff, dietitians, therapists, social



*Interior and exterior photos of St. Gertrude's Health & Rehabilitation Center*

Center, a state-of-the-art, full service hospital. Residents can simply use the indoor walkway that connects to the hospital, eliminating the need for transportation.

Because of this connection, residents can access a vast array of medical services all under one roof – primary and specialty physician's clinics, dentistry, eye care, pharmacy,

workers and care managers who meet at least two times a week to ensure that each element of the residents' treatment is fully coordinated and utilized. Specialized discharge planners help residents find the resources, equipment and special services they need to return to their homes.

St. Gertrude's Health & Rehabilitation Center is ready to help with comprehensive short-term rehabilitation, long-term skilled nursing care and assisted living apartments. CHA welcomes St. Gertrude's to our membership. ■



## Bishops Issue New Statement of Faithful Citizenship

The document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility* from the Catholic Bishops of the United States was developed by various committees of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was approved by the full body of bishops at its November 2007 General Meeting.

For many years, the bishops of the United States have sought to share Catholic teaching on political life. They have done so in a series of statements issued every four years focused on “political responsibility” or “faithful citizenship.” In this most recent document, they continue that practice, maintaining continuity with what has been said in the past in light of new challenges facing the nation and world.

Catholics are part of a community with a rich heritage that helps them consider the challenges in public life and how they can contribute to greater justice and peace for all people. Part of that rich heritage on faithful citizenship is the teaching of Vatican Council II’s Declaration on Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*). It says that “society itself may enjoy the benefits of justice and peace, which result from [people’s] faithfulness to God and his holy will.”

The work for justice requires that the mind and the heart of Catholics be educated and formed to know and practice the whole faith. This statement highlights the role of the Church in the formation of conscience, and the corresponding moral responsibility of each Catholic to hear, receive, and act upon the Church’s teaching in the lifelong task of forming his or her own conscience. With this foundation, Catholics are better able to evaluate policy positions, party platforms, and

candidates’ promises and actions in light of the Gospel and the moral and social teaching of the Church in order to help build a better world.

Within the Faithful Citizenship document, the following four questions are addressed: (1) Why does the Church teach about issues affecting public policy? (2) Who in the Church should participate in political life? (3) How does the Church help the Catholic faithful to speak about political and social questions? (4) What does the Church say about Catholic social teaching in the public square?

In this document, the bishops do not intend to tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote. Their purpose is to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with God’s truth. They recognize that the responsibility to make choices in political life rests with each individual in light of a properly formed conscience, and that participation goes well beyond casting a vote in a particular election.

During election years, there may be many handouts and voter guides that are produced and distributed. Catholics are encouraged to seek those resources that are authorized by their own bishops, their state Catholic conferences, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The Faithful Citizenship document is intended to reflect and complement, not substitute for, the ongoing teaching of bishops in the various dioceses and states. In light of these reflections and those of local bishops, Catholics are encouraged throughout the United States to be active in the political process, particularly in these challenging times. ■

## The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

*This brief document is a summary of the United States bishops’ reflection Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship. It complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states. A large-print version of this document is available free at [www.faithfulcitizenship.org](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org).*

Our nation faces political challenges that demand urgent moral choices. We are a nation at war, with all of its human costs; a country often divided by race and ethnicity; a nation of immigrants struggling with immigration. We are an affluent society where too many live in poverty; part of a global community confronting terrorism and facing urgent threats to our environment; a culture built on families, where some now question the value of marriage and family life. We pride

ourselves on supporting human rights, but we fail even to protect the fundamental right to life, especially for unborn children.

We bishops seek to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with the truth, so they can make sound moral choices in addressing these challenges. We do not tell Catholics how to vote. The responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience.

*The work for justice requires that the mind and the heart of Catholics be educated and formed to know and practice the whole faith.*

## **WHY DOES THE CHURCH TEACH ABOUT ISSUES AFFECTING PUBLIC POLICY?**

The Church's obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith, a part of the mission given to us by Jesus Christ. Faith helps us see more clearly the truth about human life and dignity that we also understand through human reason. As people of both faith and reason, Catholics are called to bring truth to political life and to practice Christ's commandment to "love one another" (Jn 13:34). According to Pope Benedict XVI, "charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as 'social charity'" (*Encyclical Deus Caritas Est*, no. 29).

The United States Constitution protects the right of individual believers and religious bodies to participate and speak out without government interference, favoritism, or discrimination. Civil law should recognize and protect the Church's right and responsibility to participate in society without abandoning our central moral convictions. Our nation's tradition of pluralism is enhanced, not threatened, when religious groups and people of faith bring their convictions into public life. The Catholic community brings to the political dialogue a consistent moral framework and broad experience serving those in need.

## **WHO IN THE CHURCH SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL LIFE?**

In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. In today's environment, Catholics may feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and few candidates fully share our comprehensive commitment to human life and dignity. Catholic lay women and men need

to act on the Church's moral principles and become more involved: running for office, working within political parties, and communicating concerns to elected officials. Even those who cannot vote should raise their voices on matters that affect their lives and the common good.

## **HOW DOES THE CHURCH HELP CATHOLICS TO ADDRESS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS?**

### **A Well-Formed Conscience**

The Church equips its members to address political questions by helping them develop well-formed consciences. "Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act....[Every person] is obliged to follow faithfully what he [or she] knows to be just and right" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1778). We Catholics have a lifelong obligation to form our consciences in accord with human reason, enlightened by the teaching of Christ as it comes to us through the Church.

### **The Virtue of Prudence**

The Church also encourages Catholics to develop the virtue of prudence, which enables us "to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1806). Prudence shapes and informs our ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act. Prudence must be accompanied by courage which calls us to act. As Catholics seek to advance the common good, we must carefully discern which public policies are morally sound. A good end does not justify an immoral means. At times Catholics may choose different ways to respond to social problems, but we cannot differ on our obligation to protect human life and dignity and help build through moral means a more just and peaceful world.

## **Doing Good and Avoiding Evil**

There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. These intrinsically evil acts must always be rejected and never supported. A preeminent example is the intentional taking of human life through abortion. It is always morally wrong to destroy innocent human beings. A legal system that allows the right to life to be violated on the grounds of choice is fundamentally flawed.

Similarly, direct threats to the dignity of human life such as euthanasia, human cloning, and destructive research on human embryos are also intrinsically evil and must be opposed. Other assaults on human life and dignity, such as genocide, torture, racism, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Disrespect for any human life diminishes respect for all human life.

As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate's position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter's support. Yet a candidate's position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support.<sup>1</sup>

Opposition to intrinsically evil acts also prompts us to recognize our positive duty to contribute to the common good and act in solidarity with those in need. Both opposing evil and doing good are essential. As Pope John Paul II said, "the fact that only the negative commandments oblige always and under all circumstances does not mean that in the moral life prohibitions are more important than the obligation to do good indicated by the positive commandment" (*Encyclical Veritatis Splendor*, no. 52). The basic right to life implies and is linked to other human rights to the goods that every person

**Citizenship** *cont. on page 6*

## **Citizenship** *cont. from page 5*

needs to live and thrive—including food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work. The use of the death penalty, hunger, lack of health care or housing, human trafficking, the human and moral costs of war, and unjust immigration policies are some of the serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act.

### **Making Moral Choices**

Difficult political decisions require the exercise of a well-formed conscience aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with always opposing policies that violate human life or weaken its protection. “Those who formulate law therefore have an obligation in conscience to work toward correcting morally defective laws, lest they be guilty of cooperating in evil and in sinning against the common good” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], *Catholics in Political Life*).

When morally flawed laws already exist, prudential judgment is needed to determine how to do what is possible to restore justice—even if partially or gradually—without ever abandoning a moral commitment to full protection for all human life from conception to natural death (see Pope John Paul II, Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 73).

Prudential judgment is also needed to determine the best way to promote the common good in areas such as housing, health care, and immigration. When Church leaders make judgments about how to apply Catholic teaching to specific policies, this may not carry the same binding authority as universal moral principles but cannot be dismissed as one political opinion among others. These moral applications should inform the consciences and guide the actions of Catholics.

### **WHAT DOES THE CHURCH SAY ABOUT CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE?—SEVEN KEY THEMES**

A consistent ethic of life should guide all Catholic engagement in political life. This Catholic ethic neither treats all issues as morally equivalent nor reduces Catholic teaching to one or two issues. It anchors the Catholic commitment to defend human life and other human rights, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental obligation to respect the dignity of every human being as a child of God.

Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates’ positions on issues and should consider candidates’ integrity, philosophy, and performance. It is important for all citizens “to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest” (USCCB, *Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 33). The following themes of Catholic social teaching provide a moral framework for decisions in public life.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person**

Human life is sacred. Direct attacks on innocent human beings are never morally acceptable. Within our society, life is under direct attack from abortion, euthanasia, human cloning, and destruction of human embryos for research. These intrinsic evils must always be opposed. This teaching also compels us as Catholics to oppose genocide, torture, unjust war, and the use of the death penalty, as well as to pursue peace and help overcome poverty, racism, and other conditions that demean human life.

### **Call to Family, Community, and Participation**

The family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental unit of society. This sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children must not be redefined, undermined, or neglected. Supporting families should be a priority for economic and social policies. How our society is organized—in economics and politics, in law and public policy—affects the well-being of individuals and of society. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate in shaping society to promote the well-being of individuals and the common good.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible. Each of us has a right to religious freedom, which enables us to live and act in accord with our God-given dignity, as well as a right to access to those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

### **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

While the common good embraces all, those who are in greatest need deserve preferential concern. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us—the unborn, those dealing with disabilities or terminal illness, the poor and marginalized.

### **Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, opportunities for legal status for immigrant workers, and the opportunity for all people to work together for the common good through their work, ownership, enterprise, investment, participation in unions, and other forms of economic activity.

### **Solidarity**

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Our Catholic commitment to solidarity requires that we pursue justice, eliminate racism, end human trafficking, protect human rights, seek peace, and avoid the use of force except as a necessary last resort.

**Citizenship** *cont. on page 7*



## Citizenship *cont. from page 6*

### Caring for God's Creation

Care for the earth is a duty of our Catholic faith. We all are called to be careful stewards of God's creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for vulnerable human beings now and in the future.

### CONCLUSION

In light of Catholic teaching, as bishops we vigorously repeat our call for a renewed politics that focuses on moral principles, the defense of life, the needs of the weak, and the pursuit of the common good. This kind of political participation reflects the social teaching of our Church and the best traditions of our nation.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For more on the moral challenge of voting, see *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, nos. 34-39. Visit [www.faithfulcitizenship.org](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org).

<sup>2</sup> These themes are drawn from a rich tradition more fully

described in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005). For more information on these seven themes, see [www.faithfulcitizenship.org](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org). For information on how we bishops of the United States have applied Catholic social teaching to policy issues, see [www.faithfulcitizenship.org](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org).

For a wide range of educational and other resources to help share Faithful Citizenship, go to [www.faithfulcitizenship.org](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org). ■

*The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* was developed by the chairmen, in consultation with the membership, of the Committees on Domestic Policy, International Policy, Pro-Life Activities, Communications, Doctrine, Education, and Migration of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was approved for publication by the full body of bishops at its November 2007 General Meeting and has been authorized for publication by the undersigned.

Msgr. David J. Malloy, STD  
General Secretary, USCCB

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## Candidates *cont. from page 2*

tals revealing quality, safety, and cost of care.

### Health Savings Accounts

- Currently not addressed in his health care platform.

### Drugs: Costs/Importation

- Use the federal government's bulk purchasing power to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs for the Medicare Part D program. The Veterans Administration currently does this, but current Medicare law prohibits government negotiation with pharmaceutical companies.
- Allow safe medicine to be imported from other developed nations.
- Require federal benefit programs to use more generic drugs.
- Boost competition in drug and insurance markets.
- Encourage generic drugs to move quickly into the marketplace.

### Drug Safety

- Allow safe medi-

cine to be imported from other developed nations.

### Electronic Record Keeping

- Update health information technology.
- Move the nation to electronic record keeping for health care, using federal funds.

### Medicare

- Leave Medicare intact.
- Change Medicare's drug insurance program, known as Medicare Part D, to lower costs and the number of plans (the large number of plans have made decisions more confusing for some people).
- Mandate that Part D drug discounts and prices be negotiable.
- Expand eligibility for Medicaid and State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to cover more families and workers.

### Stem Cells

- Expand research on human embry-

onic stem cells that were created for fertility treatments and would otherwise be discarded.

- Support continued research on adult stem cell use and umbilical cord blood use.

### Public Health Issues

- Strengthen public health efforts both for protection from disasters and disease prevention.
- Combat obesity, especially in children.
- Eliminate junk food in school vending machines and make school lunches healthier.
- Fight AIDS worldwide.

### Abortion

- Supports *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.
- Leave women free to decide on so-called "partial-birth abortion" (the procedure is one used in some late-term abortions in the second trimester or later).

- Reduce teen pregnancy. ■

Content from "Health Matters in the 2008 Election" (WebMD)  
For a complete statement on the candidates positions, please visit:  
<http://www.barackobama.com/issues/healthcare/>  
<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/19ba2f1c-c03f-4ac2-8cd5-5cf2edb527cf.htm>

MISSION:

BELIEVING IN THE WORTH AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON MADE IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD, THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION-MINNESOTA ASSISTS ITS MEMBERS TO FULFILL THE HEALING MISSION OF THE CHURCH.



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...what's happening in your organization. Please send your news to Toby Pearson, CHA-MN executive director. Telephone: (651) 503-2163; e-mail: [tpearson@chamn.org](mailto:tpearson@chamn.org). Ask your public relations or communications director to put us on the news release list: CHA-MN, P.O. Box 65217, St. Paul, MN 55165. ■

## 2008 Annual Membership Meeting Wednesday, Oct. 29, 2008

St. Patrick's Catholic Church  
6820 St. Patrick's Lane, Edina, MN



### Featured Speaker Fr. Jan Michael Joncas

*From South Bend to Mayo Clinic to Bethesda Rehabilitation:  
"A Patient's Journey"*

During Holy Week of 2003, noted composer and professor, Fr. Jan Michael Joncas was struck with a severe case of Guillain-Barré syndrome. Fr. Joncas will share his profound journey - both physical and spiritual - of recovery from a neurological illness.

**RVSP:** Email: [tpearson@chamn.org](mailto:tpearson@chamn.org)  
Online: [www.chamn.org](http://www.chamn.org)

Please let us know how many from your organization will be attending; there is no cost to attend. Travel scholarships are available. Please call for more information.

**RVSP DEADLINE:** October 21, 2008

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 651/503-2163.** ■

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