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top news



22-YEAR-OLD KILLED FOR HIS BICYCLE

The north Minneapolis man was delivering lasagna to a family friend when he was accosted. **B1**

Stock market sinks a fifth day

Analysts say it was ripe for a correction. "It's payback." **D2**

Obama pushes for 'Buffett rule'

Proposal, prospects bleak, deepens distinction from rivals. **A7**

Thwarting phone thieves

Police hope deal to disable stolen devices will cripple appeal. **A2**

CDC: Teen births hit a new low

The 9 percent drop continued years-long trend, report said. **A2**

local news

Rybak hosts stadium forum

Conversation was polite but pointed at the first of the mayor's public meetings. **B1**

No arrest in triple killing

As manhunt continues, Brooklyn Park police say public is not in danger. **B1**

business

Supervalu beats expectations

Grocery giant earnings up 3 cents a share from projections. **D1**

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have you heard?

A Minnesota hunter lures collectors (and turkeys) with hand-carved calls that look like turtle shells — worth \$400 each. **C10**



Best Buy CEO resigns under cloud



BRUCE BISPING • Star Tribune file
CEO Brian Dunn started out on a store floor.

Interim CEO tough competitor. D1

• Board of directors committee is looking into "personal conduct."

By THOMAS LEE • tlee@startribune.com

Best Buy CEO Brian Dunn resigned Tuesday and the company confirmed that it is investigating allegations that he engaged in personal misconduct.

The news stunned investors and industry analysts, who called the accusations a major distraction at a time when Best Buy is trying to fix its ailing stores. Less than two weeks ago, Dunn said that Best Buy,

the nation's largest consumer electronics retailer, will close 50 stores nationwide and lay off thousands of workers.

"It's unfortunate that a case of [Dunn's] poor judgment got in the way of Best Buy making progress," said Carol Spieckerman, president of newmarketbuilders, a retail consulting firm. The allegations "are going to be a real hit to the company's credibility."

Best Buy said the board of directors audit committee, normally responsible

for overseeing Best Buy's finances, is investigating Dunn's "personal conduct."

"Certain issues were brought to the board's attention regarding Mr. Dunn's personal conduct, unrelated to the company's operations or financial controls, and an audit committee investigation was initiated," the company said in a statement. "Prior to the completion of the investigation, Mr. Dunn chose to resign."

The company disclosed no details

Best Buy continues on A10 ▶

APRIL FROST THREATENS MINNESOTA'S APPLE CROP



BRUCE BISPING • bbisping@startribune.com

Craig Schaper, son of apple grower Lowell Schaper, checked buds for damage on Tuesday after overnight freezing temperatures.

Growers race against the cold to protect early buds from freezing

By KIM PALMER • kpalm@startribune.com

Minnetrista apple grower Lowell Schaper spent a cold, sleepless Monday night driving a tractor through his Minnetonka Orchards, trying to circulate warmer air and protect his budding trees from the chill.

Bill Jacobson hired a helicopter to churn the night air over his family's Pine Tree Apple Orchard in White Bear Lake, an experimental effort his father tried back in the 1960s — "the last time we needed it," Jacobson said.

The chopper cost more than \$600 per hour, "but it doesn't take too many bins of Honeycrisp [apples] to pay for that," Jacobson said. "It's scary, but what are you going to do? The helicopter makes you think you're doing something."



MINNESOTA'S APPLES
\$12.6 million
worth of annual crop
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pounds grown each year
17
varieties developed by the U

Minnesota's apple growers are on edge after two nights of below-freezing temperatures, threatening the delicate buds that formed weeks ahead of schedule, thanks to this year's balmy March. No one knows what, if any, damage has been done or how it will affect this year's apple crop, but many growers are going to extremes to protect their crops. "This could be devastating," Schaper said.

Spring bloom is a sensitive time for apple trees, according to David Bedford, research scientist and apple breeder at the University of Minnesota. "Well-bred apples from the University of Minnesota can withstand 30 below [in winter] when they're dormant," he said. "We've got that

Apples continues on A6 ▶

election 2012

Santorum clears path for Romney

• "This has been a good day for me," said the GOP front-runner.

By KATHARINE Q. SEELYE and JIM RUTENBERG • New York Times

GETTYSBURG, PA. — Rick Santorum, with an abrupt decision to end his campaign Tuesday, cleared the way for Mitt Romney to claim the Republican nomination while dashing the hopes of social conservatives who had propelled Santorum's surprisingly successful challenge to the Republican establishment.

Santorum, a former senator from Pennsylvania, was trailing Romney in delegates and had little hope of catching up to him, but his strong performance in a brutal nominating contest established him as a force that the party will probably have to reckon with this election year and beyond.

His departure from the race created an anticlimactic moment in the long presidential primary season for Romney, who has been actively seeking his party's nomination for five years and found his conservative credentials constantly in question by the durability of Santorum's candidacy.

The move springs Romney from a political limbo in which he was acting like the nominee even though he

GOP continues on A6 ▶



GENE J. PUSKAR • Associated Press

Rick Santorum turned to his wife, Karen, after announcing his departure.

Romney takes aim at Obama. A6

New artificial heart lets patients leave hospital

• Mayo Clinic patient is ready to walk out with backpack.

By MAURA LERNER
mlerner@startribune.com

Sometime this week, 51-year-old Alvin Carter will leave the Mayo Clinic with a man-made heart and a power pack, ushering in a new era in Minnesota medicine.

In March, Carter became the first patient in Minnesota — and one of 1,000 in the world — to receive a portable artificial heart that won't keep him tethered to a hospital.

Now Mayo and two other Minnesota hospitals — Abbott Northwestern and the University of Minnesota — are all starting programs to make the device

available to their patients.

The mechanical heart, made by a company called SynCardia, is designed to keep patients alive until they can get a human heart transplant. The device should allow Carter, who lives in Michigan, to live a normal life while he waits for a donor heart, said his surgeon, Dr. Lyle Joyce. "That's the exciting thing," said Joyce. "Now we can send them home."

After decades of research, the artificial heart has finally hit prime time, Joyce says. And he should know. He was one of the surgeons who made headlines in Utah in 1982, when they

Heart continues on A5 ▶



MATTHEW MEYER • Mayo Clinic

« THAT'S THE EXCITING THING. NOW WE CAN SEND HIM HOME. »

Dr. Lyle Joyce, about Alvin Carter, 51, above, with his power pack.

Chinese leader is ousted; his wife is murder suspect

• Lurid scandal has embarrassed the Communist regime.

By CHARLES HUTZLER
Associated Press

BEIJING — A flamboyant politician who until recently had seemed destined for the top ranks of China's leadership was stripped of his most powerful posts on Tuesday and his wife was named in the murder of a British businessman as Chinese leaders moved to stem a scandal that has exposed their infighting.

The announcement that Bo Xilai was being suspended from the Communist Party's Politburo and Central Committee and that his wife was a suspect in a homicide investigation put an end to a colorful political career.



Bo

Media-savvy with a populist flair, Bo gained a nationwide following for busting organized crime and for reviving Communist culture while running

the mega-city of Chongqing. His publicity-seeking ways angered some in the top leadership, however. In recent weeks, allegations of Bo's and his family's misdeeds were leaked into public view, complicating preparations by the leadership for a delicate, once-a-decade transition to younger leaders at a con-

China continues on A5 ▶

Conduct under investigation, CEO Brian Dunn resigns

◀ BEST BUY FROM A1

about the investigation. When Best Buy released a statement Tuesday morning announcing Dunn's departure, it made no mention of the investigation, saying only that the company and Dunn parted ways by "mutual agreement." The company later acknowledged the investigation of Dunn in response to a Star Tribune inquiry.

For most of his three years, Dunn has faced criticism from investors over the sinking stock price and sales. The Richfield-based retailer started as a single store in St. Paul in the 1960s and has since grown to about 1,100 U.S. stores with \$50 billion in annual sales. But in recent years it has been losing market share to Wal-Mart and online competitors such as Amazon.com.

The company's core market, big-ticket consumer electronics items such as PCs and flat-panel televisions, has been rapidly shrinking as more consumers migrate to the Internet.

Best Buy's struggles have led to speculation that Dunn would lose his job. Yet Dunn continued to call the shots and announced the company's restructuring plan, which aims to slash \$800 million in costs over three years, expand more aggressively overseas and open smaller format stores.

"All of the sudden, 13 days later, they can the guy," said Jeremy Brunelli, a retail analyst with Consumer Edge Research. "Something else must have happened."

Best Buy stock fell 6 percent Tuesday, or \$1.33, to close at \$21.32. Analysts say investors were driving down the price out of fear that Dunn's departure meant company sales were worse than expected. But it turned out, Dunn's personal behavior, not the company's sagging fortunes, led to his exit.

A fairy-tale rise

Until now, Dunn's rise had a fairy-tale quality to it — a hard-working, 28-year Best Buy veteran who rose from the store floor to the executive suite.

Recalling his first days as a store employee, Dunn recently told a leadership conference that he was not impressed with the retailer. "My first day was dreadful," Dunn said. "I hated it. The store manager asked me, 'How do you like what you're doing?' I said, 'I think this place stinks.'"

But Dunn said he grew to love the company, a devotion that eventually caught the eye of founder Richard Schulze.

When former CEO Brad Anderson retired in 2009, Dunn was the only serious candidate,

former top executives said.

But Dunn's appointment raised eyebrows among employees and analysts, who said he lacked vision and strategy.

During the next three years, Schulze stuck by his protégé, even as Best Buy's declining stock price eroded the value of Schulze's 19 percent stake.

Despite the criticism, Dunn expressed confidence that he

would ultimately succeed by staying the course. "The farther away you get away from being who you are, the more trouble you will get into," Dunn told the leadership conference.

"You have to reward people for being honest and forthright," he said of his leadership style. "Do you understand who you are and what you're good at?"

Looking ahead

For investors, the key question is who replaces Dunn. The company named board director G. "Mike" Mikan as interim CEO.

Analysts threw out some outside possibilities, including former Best Buy executive and current Advance Auto Parts CEO Darren Jackson and Charles Dunstone, chairman of British retailer Carphone Warehouse,

who helped develop the highly successful Best Buy Mobile format.

But Best Buy has a history of hiring from within. The company's three CEOs to date, Schulze, Anderson, and Dunn, were all longtime employees.

Spieckerman of newmarket-builders said the company needs new blood. Dunn's resignation "gives Best Buy permission to

move a different way," Spieckerman said. An outside CEO can restore confidence among investors and customers.

"This is absolutely the turning point for the company," she said. "The window of opportunity [to revive the company] is starting to close. This is a make-or-break moment."

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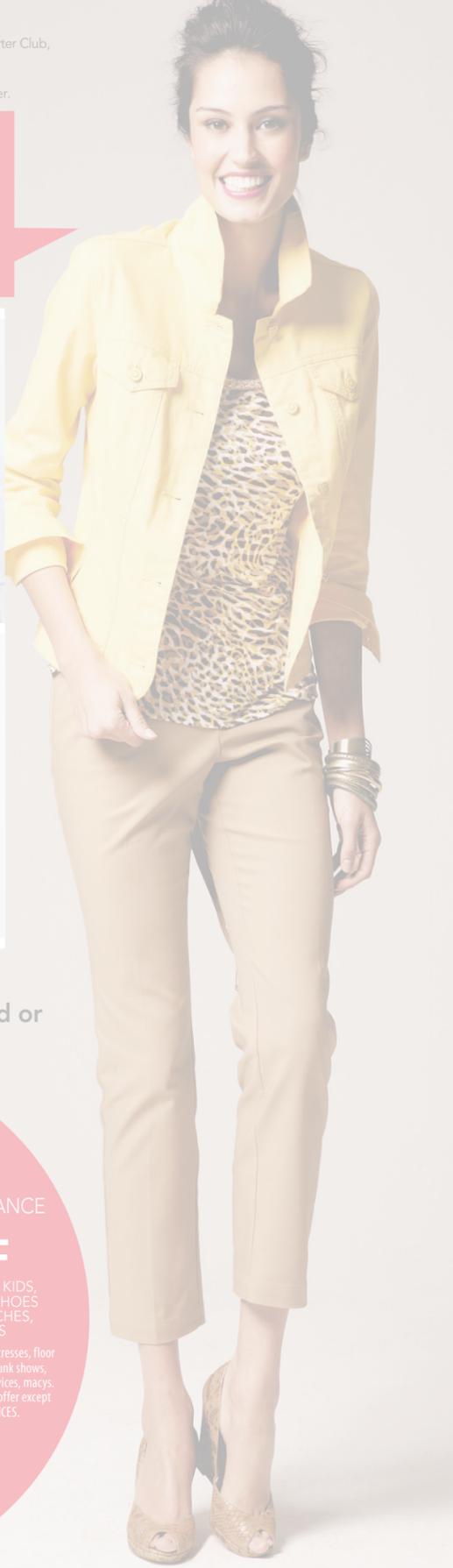
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BEST BUY CO. INC.
Headquarters: Richfield
Description: Nation's largest consumer electronics retailer
2012 revenue: \$50.7 billion
2012 net income: (-\$1.23 billion)
Employees: 180,000
Ticker symbol: BBY
Brands: In addition to Best Buy's stores and online operations, brands include Geek Squad, Audio Visions, Carphone Warehouse, Five Star Appliance, Future Shop, Magnolia Home Theater, Pacific Sales, Best Buy Mobile and Best Buy for Business

A LOOK AT CEOs
Best Buy Co. Inc. was founded in 1966 and has had three permanent CEOs:

- **Richard Schulze**, 71
1966-2002: Founder, chairman, CEO
June 2002-present: Chairman
- **Bradbury Anderson**, 62
Joined Best Buy in 1973
1991-June 2002: President and COO
June 2002-June 2009: CEO
- **Brian Dunn**, 52
Joined Best Buy in 1985
1985-2006: Various positions
2006-June 2009: President and COO
June 2009-April 2012: CEO and board member
- **G. "Mike" Mikan**, 41
April 2012: Named interim CEO



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UNITEDHEALTH VET MIKAN ASKED TO STEADY BEST BUY



GLEN STUBBE • gstubbe@startribune.com

Mikan has been on Best Buy's board since 2008. His departure from UnitedHealth Group Inc. last July surprised some analysts who saw him as a future CEO.

Though he brings financial bona fides as the company's interim CEO, analysts don't see him in the job permanently.

By DAVID PHELPS and JANET MOORE
Star Tribune staff writers

As a basketball player, G. "Mike" Mikan III, Best Buy's interim CEO, was known for being prepared, tough and competitive, attributes that should serve him well as he takes the lead of the struggling electronics giant.



G. "Mike" Mikan

The former UnitedHealth Group Inc. executive, who hails from basketball royalty, will lead Best Buy just as it begins a massive retooling of its business model after the sudden departure of CEO Brian Dunn, who resigned Tuesday amid a company probe relating to his "personal conduct."

The "G" in Mikan's name stands for George, as in George Mikan, his grandfather and the late Minnesota professional basketball legend.

Mikan, who turned 41 on Monday, has been on the Best Buy board of directors since 2008 and knows Chairman Richard

Schulze. In addition to his tenure on the board, Mikan also is a graduate of the University of St. Thomas, where the business college's school of entrepreneurship is named after the Best Buy founder, who remains the company's largest shareholder. Both men call Edina home.

"As we move forward we are very pleased to have a strong leader with Mike Mikan's credentials as interim CEO," said Schulze in a statement announcing Mikan's promotion. Mikan will remain on the board while a formal search for a new chief executive takes place.

Best Buy noted in its news release that Mikan has "strong financial and operational expertise, as well as public company leadership experience." Mikan was not available for an interview Tuesday.

Mikan continues on D6 ▶

Related: Brian Dunn out as Best Buy CEO amid misconduct investigation. **A1**

Related: From fast rise to recent stumbles, a Best Buy timeline. **D6**

« MIKAN'S A PROVEN LEADER, BUT I THINK YOU NEED TO BRING IN FRESH BLOOD AND FRESH IDEAS ... TO FIND SOMEONE WHO IS RELEVANT TO THE MARKETPLACE. »

Wall Street analyst Matt Arnold of Edward Jones & Co.

What Best Buy needs is an outsider as its next CEO



eric wieffering

Brian Dunn is out as chief executive of Best Buy, but not for the reasons many thought would prove his ultimate undoing: Losing the loyalty of customers and the confidence of investors.

Too bad, because it means Best Buy remains — at least for the time being — wedded to a flawed strategy. And that will make it much tougher for the next CEO to revive the fortunes of the nation's biggest electronics retailer.

Best Buy has had only three CEOs in its 46 years, and all grew up within the company. Dunn, whose tenure was the briefest, began his career wearing a blue shirt on the sales floor.

What Best Buy most needs now, however, is someone who can look at the company with fresh eyes, someone not burdened by history. And that means hiring from the outside.

The interim appointment of board member G. "Mike" Mikan to the top job could be taken as an encouraging sign that directors recognize that the next CEO won't come from within the halls of Best Buy's Richfield headquarters. If that person existed, he or she would surely have been identified in the succession plans that companies have in place for days like Tuesday.

Though an accomplished executive, Mikan should not be seen as anything more than a placeholder. He

Wieffering continues on D6 ▶

Investors get a reason to buy shares of Supervalu

• Quarterly results at the battered grocery operator beat Wall Street's estimates, sparking a big gain in the company's shares.

By MIKE HUGHLETT
mhughlett@startribune.com

Troubled supermarket giant Supervalu Inc. offered a ray of hope Tuesday, its fourth-quarter performance and its new fiscal year outlook both exceeding Wall Street's expectations.

The Eden Prairie-based company's stock soared 15 percent, making it the biggest gainer in the S&P 500, a broad measure of the stock market, which generally tanked Tuesday.

Supervalu still has a long way to go in executing its turnaround, and it "remains a major work in progress," according to a research note by Ajay Jain, a stock analyst at Cantor Fitzgerald.

"But the latest results offer validation that the business is not fundamentally broken and that [Supervalu] is not in a financially distressed situation."

Supervalu posted a third-quarter net loss of \$424 million, or \$2 per share, the result of one-time asset impairment charges of \$492 million after taxes. The charges completed Supervalu's write-down of eroded intangible assets from the \$12 billion purchase of most of Albertsons in 2006.

Excluding one-time items, Supervalu earned 38 cents per share, better than the 35 cents per share estimated by analysts for the quarter. Its sales of \$8.2 billion were down from last year's \$8.7 billion and below analysts'

Supervalu continues on D3 ▶



Supervalu's stock closed at \$6.13, up 81 cents. The stock is trading at levels that haven't been this low in more than 25 years.

STOCKS DOWN
The S&P 500 posts biggest loss of 2012 **D2**

Kocherlakota:
Rate bump may be needed **D6**

Cargill earnings rebound
from last year's slump **D2**

Cafesjian accuses former employee of theft

• He alleges that a trusted employee, who's suing him for back wages, embezzled millions.

By DAN BROWNING
dbrowning@startribune.com

A former West Publishing Co. executive who has spent his retirement years as a patron of the arts and promoter of Armenian causes has accused a longtime employee of embezzling millions of dollars from him and his companies.

Gerard Cafesjian, 86, now living in Naples, Fla., made the accusations in a federal lawsuit he filed Monday in St. Paul. The suit came as a reply to a

lawsuit filed last month by a former employee, John Joseph Waters Jr., 55, of Eden Prairie.

Waters' suit, filed without an attorney, alleges that Cafesjian has become increasingly paranoid, miserly and vindictive as he has aged, and stiffed him out of more than \$5 million in salary.

"Waters believes that Cafesjian, angry with Waters over Waters' [2009] departure from the day-to-day operations of the Cafesjian Family Office, [is] seeking to avoid paying his outstanding obligations to Waters, fearful of the sensitive and confidential information Waters possesses regarding Cafesjian, and bitter over the poor performance of the Cafesjian

Holdings subsequent to Waters' departure, is intentionally working to cause harm to Waters and to Waters' reputation," he wrote in his suit.

Cafesjian, the primary benefactor of the historic State Fair carousel that now bears his name in Como Park, fired back in a counterclaim against Waters and his wife, Cheri Kuhn Waters.

"Waters initiated this lawsuit in an audacious gambit to rationalize his illegal diversion of Mr. Cafesjian's funds," the suit says. The suit, filed by Andrew Luger of the Greene Espeel law firm in Minneapolis, says that Waters exploited his position of trust

Cafesjian continues on D2 ▶

Credit union contest offers cash prizes for the best bank-bashing

By JENNIFER BJORHUS
jennifer.bjorhus@startribune.com

Complaining about fees and other big bank frustrations is nothing new. Now, you could actually win money for it.

Minnesota's credit unions are hosting a "Bankziety" contest on Facebook with cash prizes and gift cards as they try to capitalize on the public's bank-bashing mood and spotlight their not-for-profit industry. The lenders are encouraging people to vent their bank frustrations, as well as share their stories about positive experiences with

credit unions, on the "Minnesota Credit Unions" Facebook page.

The top four winners will be awarded \$2,000 and a chance to take part in a video series, the Minnesota Credit Union Network (Mn-CUN) said Tuesday. Stories can be submitted Tuesday through May 7.

The grouse-fest marks the launch of a new marketing campaign being run by Minneapolis-based public relations agency Padilla Speer Beardsley. MnCUN wouldn't specify what it's paying Padilla Speer, but said it's less than \$300,000 for

Credit unions continues on D2 ▶

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UNITEDHEALTH VET ASKED TO STEADY BEST BUY

Best Buy from the beginning

1966: Richard Schulze and a business partner found an electronics store called Sound of Music

1969: Sound of Music trades as a publicly held company, has three stores

1978: Sound of Music operates nine stores in Minnesota

1981: A tornado hits Roseville; company responds with "Tornado Sale" which launches its low-price, no-frills retail environment

1983: Company name changes to Best Buy Co. Inc. and it opens first superstore

1985: Best Buy has an initial public offering on Nasdaq and raises \$8 million

1989: Best Buy launches non-commissioned warehouse-style retail strategy, introduces Best Buy yellow tag logo

1993: Becomes nation's second-largest consumer electronics retailer

1995: Best Buy debuts in Fortune magazine's annual ranking of 500 largest companies at No. 373

1999: Competitor Highland Superstores Inc. is forced to liquidate

2001: Best Buy goes international, acquires Canada-based Future Shop

2001: Best Buy acquires Musicland for \$685 million

2002: Brad Anderson succeeds founder Richard Schulze as CEO

2002: Best Buy acquires computer service company Geek Squad

2003: Moves into new \$160 million, 1.5 million-square-foot corporate campus in Richfield

2003: Sells its interest in Musicland

2004: Forbes magazine names Best Buy "Company of the Year"

2006: Best Buy acquires majority interest in Jiangsu Five Star Appliance stores in China

2008: Acquires online music service Napster for \$121 million

2009: Competitor Circuit City liquidates

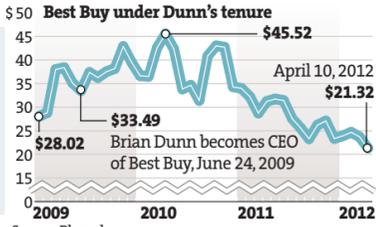
2009: Brian Dunn named CEO in June

2011: Best Buy sells Napster in November

2012: Best Buy announces plans to close 50 superstores and lay off hundreds

2012: S&P puts Best Buy's corporate credit rating on watch, in line for possible downgrade to "junk" status

Tuesday: Dunn resigns; G. "Mike" Mikan named interim CEO



MIKAN FROM D1

Sales at the Minnesota-based big-box retailer have remained flat for three years at about \$50 billion. Meanwhile, online competitors such as Amazon.com have taken market share from the company, which has responded with plans to close 50 stores and lay off thousands. Best Buy, the third-largest public company based in Minnesota, has about 180,000 employees worldwide.

Analysts who follow the company say Mikan can help provide stability in the wake of Dunn's surprising departure, but they predict someone else be selected to take the job permanently.

"Mikan's a proven leader, but I think you need to bring in fresh blood and fresh ideas," said Matt Arnold, an analyst with Edward Jones & Co. "Best Buy can take this opportunity to look everywhere to find someone who is relevant to the marketplace."

Dave Brennan, professor of marketing at St. Thomas, agreed.

"Mikan is a financial guy. In the longer term, the real issues are marketplace issues," said Brennan, co-director of the Institute for Retailing Excellence. "They need to look outside the organization for someone familiar with Internet retailing."

Mikan's professional credentials were burnished in the big health care provider's finance department, which he joined in 1998. After assuming a series of positions with increasing responsibility, Mikan was named a finance vice president and chief financial officer in November 2006, a job he held until January 2011, when he was tapped to head the company's fast-growing Optum unit, a \$27 billion

health information and technology business.

When named to head the Optum unit, analysts speculated Mikan could advance to the top spot at UnitedHealth. Ana Gupte, analyst at Sanford C. Bernstein, said at the time, "Mikan's move to head up health services is significant. They are giving him operating experience to develop him."

Dave Shove, health care analyst with BMO Capital Markets, calls Mikan "a pretty capable guy."

"He not only understood the money side of the ledger, but also how the business worked — the products, customers, the trends. He's definitely not a green-eyeshade kind of guy. Whether that will translate to computers and phones at Best Buy, I have no idea."

But in a move that left analysts wondering, Mikan abruptly left UnitedHealth in July 2011. UnitedHealth announced that former Fidelity Investments executive Larry Renfro would take over Optum, after a relatively brief stint with the health care company. That transition was part of UnitedHealth's ongoing strategy to build two distinct business platforms — health services under the Optum brand and traditional insurance and other benefits under the UnitedHealthcare umbrella.

Mikan was out after only six months at Optum. A news release at the time said Mikan was "leaving to lead a private equity company." The firm was not named, and its identity is still a mystery.

In a statement, UnitedHealth CEO Stephen Hemsley called Mikan "an extraordinary talent who has made numerous contributions of incalculable value to our enterprise over the years. ... While we will miss him as a friend and colleague,

GEORGE L. 'MIKE' MIKAN III

In the news: Named Best Buy interim CEO Tuesday

Age: 41

Career: Mikan has been a Best Buy director since April 2008. He's held senior executive positions at UnitedHealth Group Inc., including executive vice president and CEO of OptumHealth from January 2011 to July 2011, executive vice president and chief financial officer of UnitedHealth Group from November 2006 to January 2011, chief financial officer of UnitedHealthcare and president of UnitedHealth Networks, both affiliates of UnitedHealth Group, from 2004 to 2006. He joined UnitedHealth Group in 1998 after working four years at Arthur Andersen.

Education: Bachelor's degree, University of St. Thomas, 1994

PATRICK KENNEDY

« WE ARE VERY PLEASED TO HAVE A STRONG LEADER WITH MIKE MIKAN'S CREDENTIALS AS INTERIM CEO. »

Richard Schulze, Best Buy's founder and largest shareholder

we understand his desire to move in a new direction."

At the time, several analysts viewed the news negatively. "The main negative here is not that there was a surprise change in management, but rather a loss of one of the strongest managers at the company," Barclays Capital analyst Joshua Raskin wrote in a research note to investors.

Raskin further speculated that the executive shuffle was "reflective of internal difficulties at UnitedHealth Group."

Mikan was well-compensated for his more-recent leadership roles at the Minnetonka-based company. Between 2007 and 2010, he earned about \$12.5 million in total compensation, according to securities filings.

Like Best Buy, the Mikan name is a home-grown institution. His grandfather, George, was a Minneapolis Laker who is known as one of the pioneers of pro basketball. He led the Lakers to several championships (the franchise lat-

er moved to Los Angeles) and was instrumental in forming the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Mike Mikan's father, Larry, was a star University of Minnesota Gophers basketball player. The youngest Mikan played basketball at Benilde-St. Margaret's.

In a 1989 interview with the Star Tribune, comments by Mikan's high school coach seemed prescient: "He knows the game and he's thorough. That's a big advantage. If he makes a mistake, it's because he's aggressive. But we can use him to guard one of the opponent's better players because he's heady and doesn't get into foul trouble. If anything, he's too tough on himself. That's his competitiveness."

Staff writer Patrick Kennedy contributed to this report.

David Phelps • 612-673-7269
Janet Moore • 612-673-7752

Best Buy should put outsider in CEO's job

WIEFFERING FROM D1

has no retail experience, he's never run a Fortune 500 company and his tenure running UnitedHealth Group's Optum unit lasted just six months.

Any insider also would be dogged by questions relating to Dunn's departure and the findings of the continuing internal investigation, such as how long executives or directors knew about the allegations of personal misconduct, how were they made aware and how long they waited before deciding to investigate.

Best Buy can't afford that kind of distraction. Investors, meanwhile, aren't interested in a caretaker. The next CEO will be under intense pressure from Wall Street to evaluate and overhaul the company's business model. So the next CEO would ideally be less wedded to the current big-box format and more willing to upend the orthodoxy that Best Buy is a few tweaks, some modest store closings and a hot gadget away from regaining its momentum.

What's not clear is whether Best Buy would welcome a person whose first act might be to repudiate the restructuring plan Dunn unveiled

two weeks ago, and that investors panned for being too little, too late.

Typically, a new CEO gets a fresh start; everything is on the table. Best Buy's next CEO might not have such free rein. As my colleague, Thomas Lee, reported on Sunday, the company's directors, including Best Buy's founder, chairman and largest shareholder, Richard Schulze, played a major role in hammering out the restructuring plan that opened to such bad reviews.

In fact, Best Buy went out of its way on Tuesday to insist Dunn did not leave because of differences over strategy or operations. Investors weren't exactly cheered by that prospect, sending Best Buy's shares down almost 6 percent on a day when the major indexes fell less than 2 percent.

As they consider CEO prospects in the coming days and weeks, Best Buy's directors will surely ask candidates if they agree with the company's strategy and tactics for regaining relevance with consumers.

Hint: Hire the one who says no.

ericw@startribune.com • 612-673-1736

Earnings season begins with surprise Alcoa profit

By SANDY SHORE
Associated Press

Alcoa Inc. reported a surprise profit for the first quarter after it sold more aluminum to a wide range of customers, from automobile manufacturers to beverage can makers.

The largest U.S. aluminum maker also benefited from cost-cutting steps that made its operations more efficient.

The company's stock price jumped more than 5 percent in after-hours trading Tuesday.

Alcoa reported net income of \$94 million, or 9 cents a share, on Tuesday. While that's a 70 percent decline from net income of \$308 million, or 27 cents a share, a year ago, analysts had been expecting a loss of 4 cents a share.

Revenue totaled \$6 billion, up from \$5.95 billion in the year-ago quarter. Analysts predicted revenue of \$5.77 billion.

Alcoa's performance can reflect broader economic trends because it mines, processes and sells aluminum used by a vast number of industries — including auto-

mobiles, aircraft, construction and packaging for beverage cans.

Alcoa's report gives an optimistic start to what is expected to be the weakest earnings season in more than two years. Analysts expect earnings for companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 index to decline 0.1 percent compared to a year ago, according to FactSet.

"It looks like they're going to get the earnings season off on a good note," said Argus Research analyst Bill Selesky.

Alcoa cut some smelting and refining operations earlier this year. Demand fell late in 2011 because of concerns about a slowing global economy. Those cuts, among others put into place during the recession, helped improved productivity.

The company said it recorded higher sales from automotive, commercial transportation and aerospace manufacturers.

Alcoa released its earnings after the market closed. Shares rose 5.6 percent to \$9.84 in the extended trading session.

Fed chief: Rate bump may be needed soon

By JEFF KEARNS
and JOSHUA ZUMBRUN
Bloomberg News

NICOLLET, MINN. — Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis President Narayana Kocherlakota said the central bank may need to begin raising interest rates as soon as this year as inflation may exceed its 2 percent target next year.

"My own belief is that we will need to initiate our somewhat lengthy exit strategy sometime in the next six to nine months or so, and that conditions will warrant raising rates sometime in 2013 or, possibly, late 2012," Kocherlakota said Tuesday in Nicollet, in southern Minnesota near Mankato.

Federal Open Market Committee members expressed no sentiment for increasing monetary accommodation unless the U.S. economic expan-



RICHARD SENNOTT • Star Tribune file

Narayana Kocherlakota: "We will need to initiate our somewhat lengthy exit strategy sometime in the next six to nine months or so."

sion falters or prices rise at a rate slower than its 2 percent target, according to minutes of their March 13 meeting. U.S. employers added 120,000 jobs in March, the fewest in five months, a report showed April 6.

Kocherlakota said that he

sees inflation, as measured by the personal consumption expenditures index, of around 2 percent this year, rising to 2.3 percent in 2013. He expects the unemployment rate to fall to 7.7 percent at the end of 2012 from its current level of 8.2 percent. By the end of 2013, he ex-

pects an unemployment rate of around 7 percent, he said.

The regional bank chief said he wouldn't rule out that higher rates may be warranted as early as the first half of 2013. He also said accelerating the policy change involves risks to the recovery.

"If the sense of the committee was to move the date to early 2013 I would be open to that possibility," Kocherlakota told reporters after his remarks to the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation. "That's something I'd be happy to talk about and interested in thinking about, but I think there's always a danger in moving policy levers too much too fast."

Fed presidents rotate voting on monetary policy, with Kocherlakota next voting in 2014. The Minneapolis Fed chief dissented from two decisions of the FOMC last year to increase monetary stimulus.

Do odd work hours pile on the weight?

LOVE TAKES BIG HIT
WOLVES STAR LEAVES GAME, GOES TO HOSPITAL



Twin Cities home prices rise in March

thursday APRIL 12, 2012

StarTribune

60°/32° There goes the sun Late clouds to bring rain. B8

startribune.com

top news



ROMNEY OUTLINES TO-DO LIST

The presumed GOP presidential nominee ticks off goals, a campaign tradition - but first? The election. A6

John Edwards trial to convene

Jury selection begins today in politician's corruption case. A2

Two quakes, but no tsunami

Indonesians panicked after the warnings, later canceled. A4

Confusion over health law scope

Supreme Court may think the challenged legislation is broader than it truly is. A3

local news

Rybak: North Side vital to city

We must "get north Minneapolis right," he said in annual State of the City speech, at Capri Theater. B1

Chewing tobacco at Target Field

Lifting a two-year ban, Twins officials say smokeless tobacco now permitted. B3

business

Consumer credit picture brightens

Risk managers indicate they expect fewer delinquencies. D1

HomeServices expands to east

Owner of Edina Realty buys Connecticut brokerage. D2

online



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have you heard?

The FBI hadn't added to its Ten Most Wanted list since 2009, but the death of Osama bin Laden in May made room for a new entrant: a teacher. A2



Dunn's conduct with staffer at issue

Best Buy resources allegedly used during relationship with subordinate.

By THOMAS LEE thomas.lee@startribune.com

Best Buy's board of directors is investigating allegations that former CEO Brian Dunn, who abruptly resigned Tuesday, used company resources to carry out an

inappropriate relationship with a female employee, the Star Tribune has learned.

Asked multiple times to respond to the allegations regarding Dunn, Best Buy representatives declined to comment. Asked directly Wednesday whether the company wanted to challenge the Star Tribune's report-



Dunn

ing, the company declined.

"As we have said, the investigation is ongoing. We have no additional comment at this time," said Greg Hitt of Public Strategies Inc., who is acting as a spokesman for Best Buy.

According to a source close to Best Buy, the company is investigating multiple complaints that Dunn behaved inappropriately with a female subordinate.

Dunn, a Best Buy veteran who started with the company in 1985 as a salesman, has not responded to phone calls and other efforts to reach him for comment.

On Tuesday, Best Buy said that Dunn had resigned by "mutual agreement," less than two weeks after he announced the largest restructuring plan in the compa-

Best Buy continues on A14

WORRIES CRESCENDO FOR MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA



BRIAN PETERSON • brianp@startribune.com

The Minnesota Orchestra, led by Osmo Vänskä, practiced Tuesday at Orchestra Hall, which will soon close for renovations.

As it plays in exile, the state's largest arts group faces a big deficit and enters crucial labor talks with musicians.

By GRAYDON ROYCE grayce@startribune.com

In concert, the band has rarely sounded better. Backstage, the Minnesota Orchestra faces a year of living dangerously.

Last December, the organization reported its biggest annual deficit ever. In June, the band evacuates Orchestra Hall for a yearlong face-lift of its iconic home on Nicollet Mall. A shortened 2012-13 season opens in October in the acoustically challenged Minneapolis Convention Center.

The greatest challenge comes even sooner.

On Thursday, high-stakes negotia-

\$135,000

Average salary for musicians in the Minnesota Orchestra in 2011.

147

Concerts the orchestra played at Orchestra Hall in 2011, along with approximately 20 in other venues.

tions begin on the musicians' contract, which expires in September. Management says it must resolve "unsustainable fiscal practices" by cutting costs. Musicians hear that and wonder how the or-

ganization can spend \$50 million on the building project and continue touring and recording plans. Musicians' salaries account for 48 percent of the orchestra's \$32 million budget for fiscal 2012.

"The full extent of where we are will not work itself out for five years," said orchestra president Michael Henson. "Change is always difficult."

Minnesota is one of eight orchestras, including the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, negotiating new contracts against a national backdrop colored by bankruptcy at the renowned Philadelphia Orchestra, a bitter strike in Detroit, declines in

Orchestra continues on A11

Murder charges filed in Trayvon case

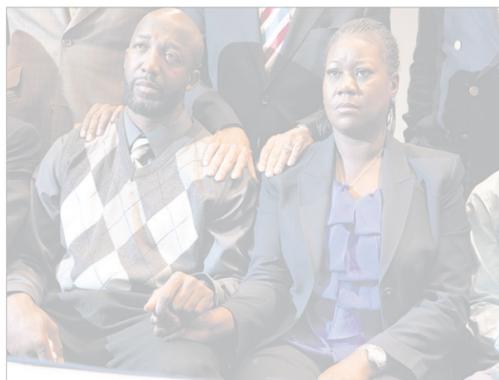
Shooter faces the toughest charges possible in killing of 17-year-old.

By LIZETTE ALVAREZ and MICHAEL COOPER • New York Times

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. - More than six weeks after he shot and killed Trayvon Martin, an unarmed 17-year-old with no criminal record, neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman was charged by a special prosecutor Wednesday with second-degree murder and taken into custody.

The charges, which Martin's family praised but called overdue, opened a new chapter in a case that set off a searing national discussion of racial profiling, Florida's expansive self-defense laws and the fairness of the criminal justice system.

The charges against Zimmerman were announced by Angela Corey, the state attorney for the Jacksonville area, who was appointed as a special prosecutor in the



case after the local state attorney stepped aside in the wake of criticism that the case had been moving too slowly. Corey would not discuss how she reconciled the conflicting accounts of what happened or explain how she arrived at the

charges. But she made it clear she was not influenced by the uproar over the past six weeks. "We do not prosecute by public pressure or by petition. We prosecute

Martin continues on A14



Martin Zimmerman

The parents of Trayvon Martin, left, held hands Wednesday as charges were announced against George Zimmerman.

EVAN VUCCI Associated Press

Publishers, Apple sued over prices of e-books

Authorities said price-fixing cost consumers \$100-plus million.

By HAYLEY TSUKAYAMA • Washington Post

The Justice Department on Wednesday accused Apple and five of the nation's largest publishing houses of fixing prices on e-books and forcing consumers to pay more than \$100 million in the past two years for their favorite titles by adding \$2, \$3 or sometimes as much as \$5 to the price of each e-book.

In a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in New York, the government painted a portrait of an industry desperately trying to turn a profit amid rapid changes in technology and aggressive competition from online retailers. In phone conversations, e-mails and dinners at exclusive New York restaurants, the companies' top executives colluded to wrest control of the market from Amazon.com and raise prices on e-books, the complaint said. It was this coordinated effort that raised flags for federal investigators.

"We allege that these executives knew full well what they were doing," acting Assistant Attorney General Sharis Pozen said.

None of the firms has admitted

E-books continues on A9

Burnsville to weigh shorter school weeks

Looking for savings, district may lengthen days, use four-day weeks.

By HERÓN MÁRQUEZ ESTRADA and MARY LYNN SMITH Star Tribune staff writers

As part of an effort to save \$5 million next year, the Burnsville School District might give students every other Monday off or even send students home for the summer before Memorial Day.

"That's ridiculous if you work full time," said Joy Smetanka, who has three children in the district. "Every other Monday? I wouldn't do that. If they do that, they are going to have a lot of families moving out of the district."

If board members give students regular days off, Burnsville likely would be the first metro-area school district and the largest in the state to use a four-day school week on a regular basis or end the school year so early.

"This would be the first time for a major district to take this on," said Ron Hill, chairman of the Burnsville school board. "We just can't keep doing things the same old way."

The ideas are part of a proposed budget plan to lower costs by cutting 17 school days from next year's calendar.

Burnsville continues on A10

Murder charges filed in Trayvon case

◀ MARTIN FROM A1

based on the facts on any given case as well as the laws of the state of Florida,” Corey said.

Asked about the racial overtones of the case — Martin, who was black, was shot and killed by Zimmerman, a Hispanic man — Corey said that law enforcement officials were committed to justice for all, regardless of race, gender or background. “We only know one category as prosecutors, and that’s a ‘V,’” Corey said. “It’s not a ‘B,’ it’s not a ‘W,’ it’s not an ‘H.’ It’s ‘V,’ for victim. That’s who we work tirelessly for. And that’s all we know, is justice for our victims.”

‘Look into Trayvon’s eyes’

Many legal experts had expected the prosecutor to opt for the lesser charge of manslaughter, which usually carries 15 years behind bars and covers reckless or negligent killings, rather than second-degree murder, which involves a killing that results from a “depraved” disregard for human life.

If he is convicted of second-degree murder, Zimmerman, 28, could face life in prison. It is the toughest charge he could have faced, short of first-degree murder, which would have required a finding of premeditation — something that all sides agreed was not present in this case.

Martin’s parents, Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin, praised the decision to arrest and charge Zimmerman at an emotional news conference in Washington, where they had been meeting with their lawyers and supporters.

“We simply wanted an arrest,” Fulton said. “We wanted nothing

HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

Feb. 26: Trayvon Martin, 17, is walking back from a corner store in Sanford, Fla. with a bag of Skittles candy and iced tea. George Zimmerman, a resident, reports him to police and begins following him, despite pleas by a dispatcher not to. Zimmerman fatally shoots Martin. Zimmerman tells police he killed Martin in self-defense after a fight. No charges are filed.

Early March: Trayvon Martin’s parents, Tracy Martin and Sybrina Fulton, launched an online petition for state attorney Angela Corey to prosecute Zimmerman. The post was soon followed by tweets from celebrities, including Russell Simmons, Mia Farrow, Cher and more, calling for justice for the slain teenager.

March 9: A suit is filed on behalf of Martin’s parents for public records in the case.

March 16: The 911 tapes are released, and media coverage of case intensifies.

March 19: The U.S. Justice Department says it will investigate.

March 23: President Obama said the case should be investigated, adding: “If I had a son, he’s look like Trayvon.” Florida Gov. Rick Scott appoints Angela Corey, a state attorney, as a special prosecutor.

April 10: Zimmerman’s attorneys say they have lost track of Zimmerman and have stopped representing him.

April 11: Charges filed.

WASHINGTON POST

more and nothing less; we just wanted an arrest. And we got it. And I say, ‘Thank you, thank you, Lord, thank you, Jesus.’”

His father, Tracy Martin, said: “The question I would really like to ask him is, if he could look into Trayvon’s eyes and see how innocent he was, would he have then pulled the trigger? Or would he have just let him go on home?”

Zimmerman turned himself in, arriving at the Seminole County jail around 8:25 p.m. and stepped out of a black SUV in the custody of law enforcement agents.

The killing of Trayvon Martin — who was shot on the evening of Feb. 26 as he returned

from buying Skittles and iced tea at a 7-Eleven, bound for the home in a gated community in Sanford, a small city just north of Orlando, where he and his father were guests — incited outrage and protest marches across the country.

Zimmerman, the founder of the local neighborhood watch, called 911 that evening to report that Martin looked like “a real suspicious guy.” Some questioned whether Martin attracted Zimmerman’s attention simply because he was black. Others were outraged by the slow reaction of the local police and prosecutors, who did not immediately arrest and charge Zimmerman, saying that Flori-

da’s expansive self-defense law could make it difficult to prove a criminal case against him.

The case drew attention to Florida’s so-called stand your ground law, which was enacted seven years ago after lobbying by the National Rifle Association. The law gives the benefit of the doubt to people who claim self-defense, even if they are not in their homes; it says that people who feel that they are in danger do not need to retreat, even if it would seem reasonable to do so.

‘I’m expecting a lot of work’

In this case, Zimmerman, who had founded the neighborhood watch after a string of burglaries, saw Martin, began following him and called 911, telling the dispatcher that he appeared “suspicious.” (A lawyer for Martin’s parents, Benjamin Crump, said that Martin was speaking on his cellphone at the time with his girlfriend, and told her that he was being followed.)

The dispatcher asked if Zimmerman was following him.

“Yeah,” Zimmerman said.

“OK, we don’t need you to do that,” the dispatcher said.

Zimmerman said: “OK.”

The case will probably hinge on what happened next.

Zimmerman’s new attorney, Mark O’Mara, said Zimmerman will plead not guilty and will invoke the stand your ground law. He asked that people not jump to conclusions and said he is “hoping that the community will calm down” now that charges have been filed. He said, “I’m expecting a lot of work and hopefully justice in the end.”

The Associated Press contributed to this report.



JACQUELYN MARTIN • Associated Press

Trayvon Martin’s parents, Sybrina Fulton and Tracy Martin, were joined Wednesday by the Rev. Al Sharpton in Washington.

Second-degree murder charge may be strategy, experts say

By choosing to charge George Zimmerman with second-degree murder in the killing of Trayvon Martin, special prosecutor Angela Corey selected the toughest possible charge involving a killing short of first-degree murder, which requires a finding of premeditation. Under second-degree murder, the jury must find that a death was caused by a criminal act “demonstrating a depraved mind without regard for human life,” said Eric Abrahamson, a criminal defense lawyer in Tallahassee, Fla. The maximum sentence for second-degree murder is life in prison; the minimum penalty is 25 years.

Dan Markel, a law professor at Florida State University, said he was “very surprised” by the severity of the charges. The charge also means that Zimmerman will not be entitled to be released on bail before his trial. Instead, his lawyer will be able to ask for what Florida calls an Arthur hearing, which can take place weeks after the arrest, to determine whether he should be allowed to post bond.

Jeff Weiner, a former president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, said an Arthur hearing is “a very good preview of the evidence.” He suggested that the prosecutor might have “overcharged” to retain the option, should she feel a murder conviction is slipping away, of asking the judge to instruct the jury to consider lesser offenses. It is also possible, he said, that she might be trying to coax Zimmerman to the negotiating table to plead guilty to such a lesser charge. But, he added, it is impossible to say whether it is overly tough, since evidence has not yet been produced.

The case will almost certainly include a pretrial hearing to determine whether the state’s stand your ground law, which grants broad protections to people who claim to have killed in self-defense, applies; if the judge finds that Zimmerman acted appropriately, the case will end there. If the judge decides that the protections of the law do not apply, the case will go forward. The question of self-defense can also be brought up again at trial. That could lead to a fallback position for the jury — if allowed by the judge — of a lesser verdict of manslaughter should the jury decide that Zimmerman sincerely but unreasonably believed that he was appropriately using lethal force to defend himself, which is known as “imperfect self-defense.”

NEW YORK TIMES

Board is investigating Dunn’s conduct with female staffer at Best Buy

◀ BEST BUY FROM A1

largest restructuring plan in the company’s history, which included store closures, layoffs and other cost reductions. In response to a Star Tribune inquiry Tuesday, Best Buy acknowledged that the board of directors audit committee, which normally oversees the company’s finances, was investigating Dunn’s “personal conduct.”

Dunn took over as Best Buy’s CEO in June 2009, replacing Brad Anderson, who had served in that role for seven years before retiring. When contacted Wednesday, Anderson left open the possibility that he could return to the company if asked.

Anderson told the Star Tribune that he would not pursue his old job. However, when asked whether there was a scenario in which Best Buy could retain his services, Anderson didn’t rule it out.

“I would be hard-pressed to do something that was not in the best interest of the company,” he said. “I don’t know.”

Caught off guard

In March, Dunn said he was determined to lead the company through the deepest restructuring in its history — a plan which included closing 50 big-box stores across the country and eliminating \$800 million in costs over the next three years. Anderson said he hasn’t spoken to Dunn in a while and was caught off guard by the resignation.

“I was very surprised that Brian was leaving the company in the middle of the transformation,” Anderson said.

Anderson enjoyed a successful 36-year career at Best Buy, the nation’s largest electronics retailer. He became the key driver for the company’s shift away from a strategy that pushed high-tech gadgets to one in which consumers’ needs become the core focus — a mission it called “customer centricity.”

The strategy led Best Buy to expand its Geek Squad computer services as well as add a host of other services — from installing home-theater systems to setting up smartphones in stores.

Under Anderson’s leadership, Best Buy’s annual sales increased from \$17.7 billion in fiscal 2002 to \$40 billion in 2008. Earnings grew at an average of

16.5 percent a year. The company expanded from almost 600 stores in North America in fiscal 2002 to nearly 3,900 locations in 13 countries. Since Anderson stepped aside, the company’s stock has tumbled 35 percent.

Anderson said it has pained him to watch the company, based in Richfield, struggle the past three years. Best Buy has faced tough times before, but “I

wasn’t watching from the sidelines,” he said.

Moving forward

Already, analysts have thrown out a number of names as candidates to replace Dunn, including former Best Buy executive and current Advance Auto Parts CEO Darren Jackson, former Williams-Sonoma chief financial officer Sharon

McCollam and former RadioShack CEO Julian Day.

McCollam is known for helping Williams-Sonoma build a successful online business. Day’s expertise is cost-cutting, something that might complement Best Buy’s plans to reduce expenditures.

In a memo sent to employees Wednesday, interim CEO G. “Mike” Mikan acknowl-

edged Dunn’s resignation was a distraction to the company.

“I know the news of Brian’s departure was a surprise ... [and] likely raised additional questions for many of you,” Mikan wrote. “I’m very aware that was difficult to read and experience.”

With that said, Mikan said, the company is moving forward. In addition to the previously announced restructuring

plan, Mikan said the senior executives are developing a new “blueprint for growth.”

“This blueprint will be a longer-term plan designed to capitalize on the actions we are already implementing,” Mikan wrote, “and position Best Buy for sustained, profitable growth in the years ahead.”

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Thinspo posts: Prodding kids into illness?

SPIELMAN SET TO REMOLD VIKINGS



Local flavor found in the cocktail glass

StarTribune

Sunday

74°/60°
Thunder today
Flurries Monday? B12

APRIL 15, 2012 STARTRIBUNE.COM

marching home life after the wars ★ A STAR TRIBUNE EXCLUSIVE SERIES

VET HEARD VOICES, SOUGHT HELP - AND WAS TURNED AWAY



BRIAN PETERSON • brianp@startribune.com

Four days after the Minneapolis VA declined to admit Blake Uddin, the Iraq war vet stole a car, crashed it and ran into rush-hour traffic.

As 1 in 3 Iraq vets seek mental health care, VA faces criticism over delays and shortages.

By MARK BRUNSWICK • mbrunsick@startribune.com

After six sleepless nights, Blake Uddin knew he was in trouble. He was hearing voices and feeling "clairvoyant." A sergeant in the Wisconsin National Guard with two tours of duty in Iraq, Uddin drove himself to the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs hospital, where he expected to be admitted. Instead, after a two-hour exam, doctors said he was not a threat to himself or others, even though they called his Guard unit and suggested he not be allowed around weapons. He was told to come back the following week.

Four days later, with the voices now telling him, "Run ... run ... they're coming," he stole a car, crashed it and spent desperate minutes rushing across four lanes of morning rush-hour traffic. Footage from an overhead traffic camera shows him stepping in front of a semi-truck slowing to keep from striking him. Then he is hit by a van and thrown 50 feet into a ditch. A psychologist who later examined him said Uddin was experiencing "an acute, significant, psychotic break." The psychologist took the unusual step of criticizing the VA for not admitting him or giving him medica-

tion and called the VA's lack of action "perplexing." "I'll take responsibility for it," Uddin says now of the morning last year that changed his life. "But light needs to be shed that things could have changed." The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is facing unprecedented demands on its mental health system. Like Uddin, about one of every three soldiers returning from Iraq was seen in a VA facility for mental health treatment within a year of returning. Nationally, there is growing concern that the VA is failing its mission. It's facing criticism for staffing shortages and delays in seeing veterans worried about their mental state. "There is a serious systemic problem with access to mental health care,"

Vets continues on A10 ►

▶ Blake Uddin takes us through his near-death experience on Hwy. 52 at startribune.com/video.

★ STAR TRIBUNE EXCLUSIVE

Best Buy deals tied to insiders draw scrutiny

Analysts point to business arrangements between retailer and its board members, including founder Richard Schulze.

By PAUL McENROE, TONY KENNEDY and PATRICK KENNEDY
Star Tribune staff writers



Schulze

As Best Buy tries to move forward, the spotlight will definitely be on leaders. A8

While outside investigators probe allegations of misconduct by former Best Buy CEO Brian Dunn, some industry analysts suggest the retailer's troubles go deeper than the question of whether Dunn used company resources to pursue an inappropriate relationship with a female employee. For years, analysts have expressed concern about the insular nature of the company's board and certain business dealings involving founder and chairman Richard Schulze, members of his family and longtime board members. In March 2010, the independent research firm Management CV Inc. raised signifi-

cant concerns about nepotism and business arrangements it considered "inappropriate for a public company." As outlined in public documents, those dealings include six-figure jobs for Schulze family members, real estate and corporate aviation agreements that steer nearly \$2 million a year to separate businesses owned by Schulze, millions spent on products from a company owned by Schulze's brother and spending on services from businesses affiliated with the family. Best Buy continues on A9 ►

Iranian nuclear talks advance to 2nd round

West lauded Iran for "serious engagement," but heavy lifting left for later.

By STEVEN ERLANGER
New York Times

ISTANBUL - In a rare show of unity, Iran and six world powers agreed Saturday to hold a new round of talks on May 23 that would be aimed at securing assurances that its nuclear enrichment program will not lead to nuclear weapons, European Union leaders said. "We want now to move to a sustained process of dialogue," said Catherine Ashton, the E.U. foreign policy chief who led the talks, the first negotiations with Iran in 14 months over its nuclear program. In the meantime, she said, ex-

perts will draw up a concrete agenda for the meeting to be held in Baghdad. "We expect the subsequent meetings will lead to concrete steps towards a comprehensive negotiated solution," she said. The decision to meet again appeared to reflect what European and U.S. officials saw as a serious commitment from Iran to negotiate. However the initial statements after the talks ended did not suggest that any concrete proposals or confidence-building measures had been made or agreed to. There will be enormous pressure on the parties for the Baghdad meeting, since very little of substance appeared to have been discussed here. Iran continues on A10 ►

More buyers are seeking homes in 'shadow market'

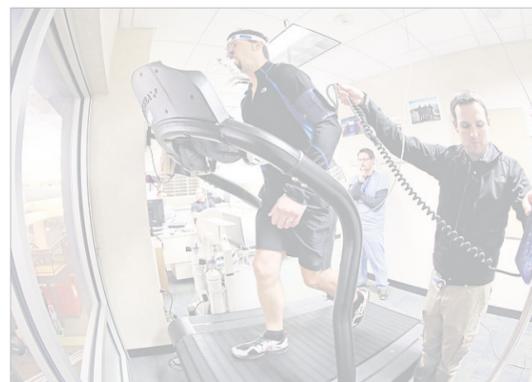
By JIM BUCHTA
jbuchta@startribune.com

House hunters frustrated with the area's scant supply of homes have shifted their search from the streets to underground. More buyers are targeting homes that haven't yet hit the market, a trend agents say will grow as inventory shrinks and the mismatch of what's available and what's desired continues. Such back-pocket deals used to involve mostly luxury homes

where buyers and sellers wanted to keep the sale hush-hush. But lower-priced houses are becoming a bigger part of the mix because even those are in short supply. Working behind the scenes gives buyers access to the deep well of Twin Cities homeowners who would like to sell, but don't think the market is healthy enough to list. Agents say they identify these sellers through referrals, as well as track those who listed their

Homes continues on A11 ►

Mayo team to explore body's limits in lab on Everest



Derek Campbell of North Face completed a battery of base-line tests at the Mayo Clinic to prepare for the expedition. Mayo's Alex Kasak, right, and Bryan Taylor, back center, also will take part.

By MAURA LERNER
mlerner@startribune.com

Bruce Johnson is a soft-spoken man who's drawn to extremes. He once camped on the edge of a soaring cliff in Argentina, with 40-mile-per-hour winds threatening to blow his tent away. "Like sitting behind a jet plane," he says. As a scientist at the Mayo Clinic, Johnson has gone to some of the most forbidding places on the planet (including the South Pole) to explore one question: "What are the extremes that the human body can endure?" Monday, he takes

his quest to Mount Everest. Johnson, 54, is leading a team of scientists to "the promised land," as one colleague calls it, to study the extraordinary ways the body can change on the highest mountain on Earth. In Nepal, Johnson and his colleagues will trek on foot for 10 days, to an elevation of 17,500 feet, to set up a Mayo outpost at Everest's base camp. "We're bringing 1,300 pounds of medical equipment on the backs of yaks," said Johnson. "We're essentially creating a remote laboratory up there." Everest continues on A12 ►

top news

Wave of storms hits the Plains
Iowa hospital damaged; many states on high alert. A7



Highest hopes for astronomy
Up 16,597 feet, researchers study universe's origins. A12

Secret Service investigation Agents questioned about accusations involving prostitution in Colombia. A12
The Titanic, a century later Time can't dull fascination with ship. A6

local news

Time to undo 1978 decision?
Minneapolis debates Lake Street Kmart, again.



BEST BUY: THE WEEK IN REVIEW

TUESDAY

- Best Buy delivers a morning announcement that the company's CEO, Brian Dunn, resigned by "mutual agreement."
- G. "Mike" Mikan, a former executive with UnitedHealth Group, is named interim CEO.
- Company later confirms an ongoing investigation into Dunn's "personal conduct," and that Dunn chose to resign before the probe was completed.

WEDNESDAY

- Star Tribune confirms that Best Buy is investigating allegations that Dunn, who is married with three children, used company resources to carry out an inappropriate relationship with a female employee.
- Mikan writes a memo to employees that says the company is developing a new "blueprint for growth." The initiative follows a previously announced restructuring that includes \$800 million in cost reductions over the next three years.

THURSDAY

- Best Buy says it will release to the public its findings of the investigation into Dunn in a matter of weeks.
- Company officials say a permanent CEO will be in place in six to nine months, and a search committee will be led by Kathy Victor, a board of director who is founder and president of an executive coaching firm. Mikan is named as a candidate for the position.
- Star Tribune confirms that Best Buy had retained an outside legal team to lead the Dunn investigation — Tom Strickland, who served as U.S. attorney for Colorado, and William McLucas, a former director of enforcement for the Securities and Exchange Commission.

FRIDAY

- Best Buy stock closes at \$22.04 a share, down 40 cents from its opening on Tuesday.

Deals with ties to insiders come under fire

◀ **BEST BUY FROM A1**

ed with board members. Best Buy has regularly disclosed these arrangements in filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Some analysts have directed sharp criticism at Best Buy for agreeing to the deals.

"Even if these many transactions are done at truly market rates, as the Board asserts, they are certainly rife with potential conflicts of interest," Management CV founder Renny Ponvert wrote.

Ponvert said in an interview Saturday that it's highly unusual "for such a big dominant public company to have such a long list of unflattering behaviors." He believes it stems from a corporate structure where Schulze remains chairman of the board and still controls 20 percent of Best Buy stock, a stake worth about \$1.5 billion.

"It's really the 'Schulze Show,'" Ponvert said. "This is probably a more egregious case than some, but it's not that unusual when you have such a dominant co-founder. Politely, I'm not sure he cares much about what other people think."

A pivotal time

The company's board is filled with longtime friends of Schulze, said Mike Pachter, an analyst with WebBush Securities, based in Los Angeles.

He said the board "defers to Dick Schulze," the first of just three CEOs, including Dunn, to head the company in its 46-year history. Schulze was a mentor to Dunn, who abruptly

« ONE OF THE GOLDEN RULES IN BUSINESS IS THAT WHEN YOU'RE WINNING, YOU HAVE FEW CRITICS. »

Renny Ponvert, founder of Management CV

ly resigned Tuesday in connection with an internal investigation of his behavior in regards to a relationship with a female employee.

Greg Hitt, a spokesman for the Best Buy board, issued a one-sentence statement Saturday in response to Star Tribune questions about the company's financial relationships with Schulze and related parties. "The company fully complies with all legal requirements, including public disclosure, regarding related-party transactions," the statement said.

The scrutiny of Best Buy's dealings comes at pivotal moment for the Richfield-based consumer electronics retailer, the nation's largest, with more than 7,800 Minnesota employees. It announced a major restructuring shortly before Dunn's departure, amid questions about whether it can recover its sales momentum from competitors such as Amazon.com and Wal-Mart.

Ponvert said the combination of Best Buy's sagging profits and the cloud created by Dunn's sudden departure could give new life to the uneasiness that has lingered among some outsider observers.

As long ago as 2006, the Wall Street watchdog group formerly known as Corporate Library was concerned about the issue of nepotism at Best Buy. How-

ever, Best Buy was still posting strong results at that time.

"One of the golden rules in business is that when you're winning, you have few critics," Ponvert said.

Many of the conflicts, listed as related party transactions, directly involve Schulze. He could not be reached for comment.

Arrangement details

SEC filings by Best Buy show that the company leases two of its stores from Schulze, an arrangement that dates to 1990. In 2011 alone, the company paid \$1 million in rent for the two stores. The leases ran through 2011 and 2018, respectively.

Schulze also benefits from Best Buy's patronage of his corporate travel company, Minneapolis-based Best Jets International. According to Best Buy's proxy statements, it leased airplanes and chartered aircraft services from Schulze over the past five years for \$3.56 million.

"Our senior management generally use the airplanes when it is more economical or practical than flying commercial airlines," the proxy statement said.

Best Buy purchases store fixtures from Phoenix Fixtures Inc. of Roberts, Wis., which is owned by Schulze's brother. The total amount paid to Phoenix in a five-year period that ended last year was \$70.7

ABOUT BEST BUY

Headquarters: Richfield
Status: Largest consumer electronics retailer in U.S.
Stores: 1,100 (U.S.)
Finances: Revenue of \$50.7 billion; net income of -\$1.23 billion (fiscal year 2012)
Employees: 167,000 (Minnesota: 7,850)
History: Founded in 1966; originally called Sound of Music; changed name to Best Buy Co. Inc. in 1983.
Brands: In addition to Best Buy's stores and online operations, brands include Geek Squad, Audio Visions, Carphone Warehouse, Five Star Appliance, Future Shop, Magnolia Home Theater, Pacific Sales, Best Buy Mobile and Best Buy for Business
Ticker symbol: BBY

million, documents show.

Susan Hoff, Schulze's daughter who spends a significant amount of time at a home in California, is founder, chairwoman and CEO of the Best Buy Children's Foundation. In addition, she serves as a Best Buy vice president, receiving a base salary for fiscal 2011 of \$242,000. The proxy statement said she was eligible for a cash bonus with a "target payout" of nearly half of her salary.

Son-in-law Duane Hoff worked at Best Buy in the early 2000s, making \$160,000 as vice president for business development in his last year.

Connections to the board

Best Buy also regularly has had business relationships with board members and some of their family members.

G. "Mike" Mikan, now interim CEO of Best Buy, is a former senior executive of UnitedHealth Group who has served on the audit committee at Best Buy. Mikan also has

served as a Best Buy director since 2008. The company buys employee medical plans from UnitedHealth — \$175 million worth in fiscal 2009. About \$14 million of that was for administrative and other services.

The proxy statement said the amounts paid to UnitedHealth were an "insignificant portion" of consolidated revenue of Best Buy for each of the past three years.

"In addition, Mr. Mikan did not influence or participate in negotiating our agreement with UnitedHealth," the proxy said.

While the company has taken pains to distance itself from the inquiry into Dunn's behavior by hiring an outside legal team to perform the review, one of the lawyers on the team has connections to Mikan and UnitedHealth.

The attorney, Tom Strickland, was appointed executive vice president and chief legal officer of UnitedHealth Group in May

2007, when Mikan was executive vice president and chief financial officer.

Elliot Kaplan, a founding director who left the board last June, is a partner with the law firm of Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi LLP, the company's outside counsel. The company paid \$12 million in legal fees to the Robins firm in 2011.

Jane Kirshbaum, Kaplan's daughter, is one of Best Buy's senior corporate attorneys and works in the human services department. Her total cash compensation for fiscal 2011 was \$193,946.

Michael J. Stillman, Kaplan's stepson, was vice president for Best Buy Connect until he left the company several months ago. Stillman's total cash compensation for fiscal 2011 was \$284,008.

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