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Washington dons new look

By JAN WILLMS

Although she is over the shock of Gov. Tim Pawlenty's recent slashing of the bonding bill, DFL Rep. Alice Hausman of Saint Paul said she still feels anger, confusion and grief. "This is real," she said, "and it does have the potential to do great economic harm to our city and region."

Hausman, chairwoman of the House Capital Investment Committee, was chief sponsor of the bill, which funds the building of physical infrastructure in higher education, environment, corrections, public safety and transportation.

When Pawlenty received the \$925 million bill from the Legislature, he used his line item veto to cut it to \$717 million. The big loser in projects was St. Paul, with its projects getting cut by 60 per cent. Forty per cent of the line item veto was for transit funding cuts.

"I think people just assume we can still figure this out, but the complexity of this process makes it very, very difficult," Hausman said. She took a break from the House session April 28 for a brief interview, sitting in a nearby area so that she could quickly return to House Chamber and be counted when a vote came up.

The emotional tug of war that has been playing out over the bonding bill has not outwardly affected her, as she appears fresh and fit at the end of a long day of discussion. But when she speaks, the seriousness of the situation is apparent in her voice.

"The bonding bill, unlike any other passed by a simple majority, requires a super majority, 81 out of 134 votes," she said. "The only way you can accomplish that is by putting a balanced bill on the table, with something for everyone in every part of the state."

Hausman said that since the governor had signed virtually everything for greater Minnesota, most other regions are celebrating the windfall that the bill brought to their districts.

"There is no question the big loser on the line item veto was Saint Paul," she said.

Regarding the extensive cut to the Central Corridor light rail project, Hausman said Minnesota is dangerously close to losing \$450 million in federal money because of a line item veto of \$70 million.

"The business community finds it almost impossible to believe," she said.

Hausman said she spoke to the Midway Chamber in late April about the light rail situation and found the group dismayed at the Governor's veto.

State Rep. Hausman examines loss of \$70 million for Central Corridor



Although she is over the shock of Gov. Tim Pawlenty's recent slashing of the bonding bill, DFL Rep. Alice Hausman of Saint Paul said she still feels anger, confusion and grief. (Photo by Terry Faust)

"There is no question the big loser on the line item veto was Saint Paul."

- DFL Rep. Alice Hausman

"What I'm aware of is a lot of tension," she said. "Groups like the Chamber and business organizations have worked hard to hold a whole coalition of people together, and they keep working hard and hanging in there. Now

they wonder, how long do they do this?"

Hausman said that because businesses along the Central Corridor route have been planning for so long on how to deal with parking and construction issues,

no other investment has been put in to that area. She said the light rail funding cut has put these businesses in a state of suspended animation that presents a problem in so many areas.

"But it's a fact that investment in the West Metro continues," she said. "Not all the transit was vetoed." Hausman said the Urban Partnership Agreement, covering 35W and Cedar Ave. South in Minneapolis, was approved. That provides for \$200 million of investment between federal and state funding.

"Investment is continuing in the West Metro, while we potentially in the East Metro get weaker," she said, citing concerns for Chisago, Ramsey and Washington counties.

She expressed concern that the transportation veto for Saint Paul has such consequences for all of the East Metro.

"Every year we get further behind," she stated. "Dallas, Houston, Denver, Phoenix and Salt Lake City are building multiple lines. They understand the value."

Hausman said that for three years in a row, there have been Central Corridor losses.

"Three years ago, in the governor's office, \$2 million for the Central Corridor disappeared in 24 hours," she said. "Last year, with \$40 million in bonding, the entire bill was vetoed. This year, \$70 million was line-item vetoed. The rug has been pulled out from under the Central Corridor, and at a certain point you stop believing in the support of the governor."

Hausman said it was difficult to meet the governor's desire for an \$825 million bonding bill.

"My problem is that we don't have a single house—we have two houses," she said. "The Senate said it would never vote for an \$825 million bill. The Senate wanted a \$965 million bill. That put me in an impossible position, because I have to work with the other body."

Hausman said a lot of people are saying the transportation funding will happen, but she has doubts. She said although the Met Council thinks it will be worked out, she feels the Met Council has zero power to do anything.

Citing how little time is left before the end of the session, Hausman acknowledged that pressure is mounting.

"Getting 81 votes is the challenge," Hausman said. That is the number needed to pass another bill with the Central Corridor in it.

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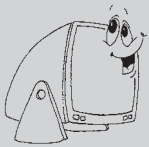
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Monitor in a Minute

Dunning Field lighting gets OK

Lighting improvements for Dunning Field can go ahead, as a result of St. Paul City Council action April 16. The council unanimously adopted the financing and spending plan for the project, allowing the Friends of St. Paul Baseball and St. Paul Parks and Recreation to implement the project.

The field is used by many area teams, including Midway Baseball programs.

Last year the baseball boosters got two Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) allocations, a \$55,750 loan and a \$55,750 grant. The boosters have raised an additional \$75,000 toward the project as part of the required match for the sales tax proceeds. The city will provide \$103,500 in capital maintenance funding. The project will have a total cost of \$290,000.

Dunning has field lights but the funds will allow for the lighting to be improved. Dunning, which is located in Lexington-Hamline neighborhood, is one of the oldest and most extensively used baseball facilities in the area. It hosts a wide range of youth, prep and municipal games. Its stadium was rebuilt several years ago.

City Council members laid over the original vote on the lighting project because they had questions about the mix of funding and use of the capital maintenance dollars. The improvements will be made later this year.

Groups compete for Neighborhood STAR funds on an annual basis, through small grant and large grant and loan review and approval processes. The Dunning project fell into the large grant and loan category.

The 2008 small Neighborhood STAR projects must await

their fate for a bit longer. The projects were to be selected April 9 but a lack of a quorum at that meeting meant pushing the decision back to May. The City Council will finalize the board's recommendations in May or June. North End, Hamline-Midway and Frogtown projects are in the running for funds this year.

Awards handed out for projects

Nine awards for environmental projects were handed out April 16 by the St. Paul City Council and Mayor Chris Coleman. The Sustainable St. Paul Awards are in their second year, given to honor groups or individuals that work to protect the environment. Anyone can make a nomination for the awards, with winners selected by a city staff committee. The awards are part of the Coleman administration's efforts to make St. Paul a "green" and environmentally friendly city.

Local award winners include:
*Water quality and conservation: St. Paul Parks and Recreation environmental services staff for their work to restore the Como Lake shoreline after last year's storms.

*Youth leadership: Como Park High School's Greeneyez Club, which promotes environmental awareness. The students work on projects including a push for more paper recycling and use of recycled paper in schools.

*Waste reduction and recycling: Como Zoo and Conservatory Society for its cell phone recycling programs. Como buildings, area libraries and other public places can put out the collection boxes, which are a fundraiser and environmental awareness program.

*Transportation options: St. Paul Bicycle Classic. The annual bicycle event draws more than 7,000 riders each year. The event promotes non-motorized transportation options and provides

public education. It is organized by the Neighborhood Energy Connection.

*Commercial green building design: Gordon Parks Alternative High School at University Avenue and Dunlap Street. The school, which recently opened, was built in what had been a polluted site. It utilized a number of energy efficiency and materials conservation measures in its construction. It is part of St. Paul Public Schools' ongoing effort to reduce energy consumption systemwide.

A citywide program honored is Eco Education, which received the environmental education and awareness award. This program provides teacher training and other assistance for educators. More than 2,400 St. Paul middle school and high school students have benefited from Eco Education programs over the past five years.

Other honorees include the Community of Peace charter school and the green roof it installed on its East Side Building; Macalester College's work to promote energy efficiency and city employee Larry Zangs, who worked on an East Side wetlands restoration project.

Rice St. Bridge project postponed

It's official – the Rice Street Bridge project has been postponed until 2009. Ramsey County and St. Paul Public Works officials decided in mid-April to postpone the project, due to delays in Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad approval of the bridge plans. The delay was announced April 14 at the annual meeting of the District 6 (North End-South Como) Planning Council by County Commissioner Janice Rettman.

The bridge is ¼ mile north of the Maryland-Rice intersection. It's one of two area bridge projects slated for this summer. The other is the Maryland Av-

enue Bridges over the rail tracks just west of I-35E. That project will go on as scheduled and the street will remain open on a limited basis during construction.

Although city and county officials said it made more sense to have one summer of disruption and do both bridge projects at once, some business owners still worried about being cut off from two directions. That is especially true for the Rice-Maryland area businesses.

But lack of approval by the railroad means there is not time to get the Rice Street Bridge plans finalized and out for bid in time for the 2008 construction season. Public Works wanted work to start in May and be done by October.

Officials have made it clear they do not want construction slipping into the late fall or even early winter months. And a delay of a year could be a worst-case scenario if the project got a late start. That rarely happens but when it does it can be devastating for area businesses and a huge inconvenience for residents.

It is estimated that the Rice Street Bridge would have to be closed for 120 days during construction, a schedule that could stretch longer if it is a rainy spring and summer.

The Rice Street Bridge will be 50 years old this year. The Rice Street Bridge has an estimated construction cost of \$2.886 million. It's not known what a one-year delay will do to the construction costs, which have been rising on all road and bridge projects due to higher fuel prices and higher materials prices.

The cost for the Maryland Avenue bridges is \$2.215 million. A combination of funds is being used to pay for each project, with federal, state, county and city funds used for the Maryland Avenue project and city, county and state funds for the Rice Street Bridge.

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District 10 holds Neighborhood Garage Sale May 17

Attention District 10 Como Community Council residents: Meet your neighbors, sell your stuff! On Saturday, May 17, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., any District 10 resident, church, or school can take part in our free annual Neighborhood Garage Sale. (A tax-free donation to the District 10 Como Community Council is also welcomed).

Visit our website to find a map and list of all participants' addresses, including yours. Printed copies of the map and list also will be available to the public at two Como neighborhood locations. Signup deadline is May 14, 8 p.m. To register your sale location, please visit the District 10 website: www.comopark.org or call the District 10 office: 651-644-3889.

City and county team to improve Como Golf Course drainage

By ANDY FINKEN

You can't slice your ball on holes 3 or 11 at Como Golf Course anymore; there is a pond there now.

Last year, the course underwent heavy renovations during a joint effort by the county watershed district, city public works, and the Como Golf Course to improve the drainage conditions of the course and the neighborhood.

"There was a lot of flooding in that area during the spring and after storms," said Vince Gillespie, Section Manager for the Saint Paul Parks Department. "The renovations to those holes were part of a bigger issue. We had a master plan to better manage storm water, and now with a major storm we can divert some of the water to that area where it is able to drain slowly."

Gillespie said that the Public Works Department often had to pump water out of the area, espe-

cially during spring. Now, after the renovations, a standing pond remains to catch the excess water that would usually invade fairways. Their other option was to build a second large drainage pipe under the course from the third hole to the pond behind the eighth tee box.

"Those two holes were not in good shape. The turf was bad, the soil was bad and the drainage was bad," said Gillespie. "The pond that was there would first overflow, then turn into swamp as it dried." He said a lot of rain could raise the water level in the new pond by a fair amount but that now it would not do any harm to either fairway.

"It was a nice compromise. We get some better holes. They (public works) get a place to put water," said Como Golf Course Superintendent Stephen Dinger. "It's an improvement in the sense that the holes will be drier, have

better turf quality and actually decrease our costs."

He said that with the addition of the new ponds, a pond was built between the seventh and eighth hole for drainage purposes as well, the course will save on fertilizer and other chemical costs by using that rain water for irrigation during the dry season. The Como Zoo paid for the construction of the latter pond to catch the runoff from their new polar bear exhibit, according to Zinger.

"We act as a kind of filter for Como Lake for all the water coming from the North," said Zinger. "I now have an additional one million gallons of water to use as a backup irrigation source." He said that all of the water the course uses for irrigation comes either from Lake Como or is pumped from wells. Now, he says, he will never run out.

Both Zinger and Gillespie agreed that the changes represent



Last year, Como Golf Course underwent heavy renovations during a joint effort by the county watershed district, city public works, and the Como Golf Course to improve the drainage conditions of the course and the neighborhood. (Photo by Denis Jeong Plaster)

an aesthetic improvement as well. There is, however, still some concern about whether those areas will be ready for play in a couple of weeks.

"The course is supposed to be ready, but some of the sod was

laid a little late last fall and had already started to freeze up," said Zinger. "As of now, the pond is beautiful, the trees are nice – some vandals cut the tops off of a row of trees in one location – and the turf looks nice."

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Hamline University christens School of Business

By ANDY FINKEN

Hamline University formalized their entrance into the undergraduate business education market on April 23 when President Linda Hanson and Dean of the Graduate School of Management Julian Schuster christened the Hamline University School of Business.

Since Hanson became the university's president in 2005, committees have been running nonstop in search of the best way to carve Hamline's niche into the future of higher education. They found business.

In an interview in February, Hanson said that the university missed out on upwards of 4,000 prospective students between 2003 and 2006 because the majors they were interested in were not being offered at Hamline. She said the business school was created in response to these contemporary trends.

The business school will be situated comfortably next to the new Hamline Masters in Business Administration program



Dean of the Graduate School of Management Julian Schuster talked about Hamline University's new School of Business at a reception on campus April 23.

launched by the University on the first of this year. Both schools now make up the Hamline School of Business, girded under the auspices of Schuster as his title now switches to Dean of the

Hamline School of Business.

It is not immediately clear exactly where classroom facilities will be built or leased in order to support the emerging enrollment that is expected to populate un-

dergraduate business programs. Last year's strategic plan set a goal of increasing undergraduate enrollment by 500 students by 2012, so it appears as if some structural additions will have to be made in the near future.

At the ceremony on April 23, Hanson did announce the discovery of a location in St. Louis Park that will accommodate the MBA program's eventual transition from its current location in Minneapolis. In addition, the university has nearly finalized a twenty year master plan that anticipates student housing additions (2011) as well as a new student center (2012) to be built on the three blocks immediately bordering the south end of campus.

During a presentation on Hamline's second quarter finances, Vice President for Finance Doug Anderson said that the university is anticipating that the majority of the capital required to build a student center and resident housing will come through the use of debt financ-

ing. Much of the immediate cost of these endeavors will then be deferred to a date in the future, however, tuition will eventually have to follow in order to finance continued expansion. According to Anderson, there is no indication that it won't.

"Every year since 2002, we have met and/or exceeded our budget," Anderson said. "Across the board, in terms of enrollment, we're strong."

Fernando Delgado, Dean of the Hamline College of Liberal Arts, agrees with Anderson. He said there was marginal growth this year and that current enrollment levels for next year are indicating further marginal growth. Although, he said the heart of expected enrollment expansion will not come until undergraduate business classes are integrated, which will be at least one more year.

Regardless of the speculative changes in Hamline's future, the university is now, in fact, the proud owner of their very own business school.

Hausman

Continued from page 1

She said the whole process has felt like a political game, but

she doesn't understand the reasoning.

"It doesn't make any sense to me," she said. "Why would Saint Paul have been targeted? We're hosting the Republican conven-

tion, and we're being very accommodating. To have chosen this moment in time to line-item veto every project for Saint Paul will have huge consequences."

Hausman said she has been

floating ideas to people as to what to do next.

"What I ultimately discovered is that there is no clear direction from the governor," she said. "I think we need a very, very clear

statement." Hausman said the governor needs to say that he wants a bonding bill, and state what he wants in it.

"Were he to say that also to the minority, it would give us the impetus we need," she said.

Hausman said she had complained that energy and environmental groups had done nothing, but they are stepping up to the plate. She said a huge grassroots effort is taking place, and business groups also are talking to the governor.

"What I ultimately discovered is that there is no clear direction from the governor."

- State Rep. Alice Hausman



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As the Monitor goes to press, there are signs that this grassroots effort may be having an effect. On May 1, Pawlenty called for including two of his own pet projects in a final budget solution which would involve a nursing care facility at the Minneapolis Veterans Home and a new state park in Lake Vermilion. The deal would also involve capping property taxes, all in return for putting the Central Corridor back into the State budget.

Still, as of last week, Hausman soberly reflected on the trials and tribulations that the Central Corridor has presented.

"I began in the Legislature in 1990," she said. "I have had challenging years before." She paused for a moment. "I can't think of anything that has been quite so personally traumatizing as the loss of the Central Corridor because of what's at stake for the East Metro."

Business owners weigh impacts of Central Corridor on street parking

By JANE MCCLURE

Block by block, storefront by storefront, business owners are getting to see the impacts the proposed Central Corridor light rail project could have on their on-street parking. As the project's future hung in the air at the State Capitol, planning continues with an eye toward public hearings in May and June.

Despite Governor Tim Pawlenty's veto of the project in early April, work continues on detailed engineering plans for the 11-mile light rail project. (See related story.) Metropolitan Council and the Regional Rail Authority boards of Ramsey and Hennepin counties will hold a public hearing and take comments on the detailed plans at 5 p.m. Thursday, May 29 at Goodwill/Easter Seals, Fairview and Charles avenues. St. Paul and Ramsey County will hold another public hearing or hearings in June, with a final Metropolitan Council vote August 27. Then the project is to go to the Federal Transportation Administration.

Although there has been uncertainty about whether Central Corridor will get funding from the 2008 Legislature, many business owners said it's critical to get involved and deal with parking issues now. Parking maps have been posted on the project web site, <http://www.centralcorridor.org>.

"We need to be able to argue our case as a group, collectively," said Ax-Man Surplus owner Jim Segal. "Otherwise, we'll get what they decide we'll get."

More than 40 business owners met with city and Metropolitan Council staff April 16 and 17 to share concerns about parking, at meetings organized by the University Avenue Business Association,

the Hmong Chamber of Commerce and Hmong Business Association. Many are in the same situation as Ax-Man, which is located at University and Fry Street, with no off-street parking.

Segal's business will lose its University spaces when the Snelling station platform is built. "Without customer parking in front of our businesses, we're going to go away," he said.

Businesses are not only worried about the loss of on-street parking, they are also wondering how to plan for the future with so much uncertainty hanging over them. They speak of delaying improvements or even questioning whether to sign new leases.

The latest count shows that University could retain only 185 of its 1,150 parking spaces, under the worst-case scenario. Robin Kaufman, who is leading Metropolitan Council's public outreach efforts on Central Corridor, said that is 10 more spaces than previously thought. The 10 spaces were added back in at locations along the corridor.

While those involved with Central Corridor anticipated some parking loss, no one knew the numbers would be as high as they are, said Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark. "A lot of us feel pretty sheepish about that."

Stark said the higher number amplify what already is a critical situation. He and Ward One Council Member Melvin Carter III, along with County Commissioners Janice Rettman and Toni Carter, promise to work on the parking issues. Stark said that although there is less than two years' time before light rail construction starts in 2010, that is enough time to bring forward a variety of solutions and pull to-

gether resources.

Parking is being lost along University so that the light rail project can fit within the existing street right-of-way, which is 120 feet in most areas. For most of its length, University Avenue has 120 feet of right-of-way. What has caused the parking crunch is the need to fit in two lanes for light rail vehicles and two lanes of motor vehicle traffic in each direction. Space also has to be allowed for left turn lanes at signalized intersections and for median platforms to allow rail passengers to get on and off of the trains. Dan Soler, a project engineer, said the crunch for space is the worst where there are station platforms that must be placed in the street.

"We have to figure out how we can make this work to serve all of the competing interests," Soler said. "It isn't like we can widen the street to fit everything in." One issue that has to be determined during preliminary engineering is if and where curbs have to be pushed back and sidewalks narrowed slightly when they are rebuilt.

The parking situation along University Avenue already is one of haves and have-nots, if comments from business owners are any indication. Businesses with off-street parking question whether they will have to police their lots, to reserve spots for their own customers. Businesses without off-street parking wonder where their customers can go.

Chang Thao, whose family owns Foodmart at Uni-Dale Mall and a smaller grocery store near University and Virginia Street, is already worried about two different problems. One is that of keeping commuters from parking in the Foodmart lot at



Many University Avenue businesses are in the same situation as Ax-Man, which is located at University and Fry Street, with no off-street parking. Ax-Man's business will lose its University spaces when the Snelling station platform is built.

University and Dale, taking space from customers. The other is the prospect of the smaller store losing its on-street parking. Thao wondered if the city would be able to help affected businesses.

Dr. Bobby K. Yang, who operates a clinic on University at Oxford, said she is worried about her 18 off-street spaces. Those are needed for staff and customers. "I don't want to have to share parking," she said.

Other businesses feel tapped out already due to what they spend on parking. Tina Lehmann of Metro Dental Clinic said the clinic spends \$8,000 per month to provide employee parking off-site, at the nearby Spruce Tree Ramp and in a nearby restaurant lot. Metro Dental also must pay to have its patient lot patrolled. "We have no other resources at this time," she said.


The city has no dedicated funds for neighborhood parking, said Craig Blakey of St. Paul Planning and Economic Development (PED). Finding resources may mean drawing on programs such as the Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) funds or assessments to property owners.

The city also will seek help from the Central Corridor's budget for mitigation, which is meant to address areas affected by the light rail project. That budget is at \$32 million, but much of that may be sought by the University of Minnesota to address its rail-related parking and traffic needs.

If business owners see advantages to shared parking, Blakely and City Planner Al Lovejoy said there can be efforts to study available parking and find areas where space can be shared. That may also take relaxing the standards the city has for how much off-street parking a business needs, so that businesses with shared parking don't have to seek a conditional use permit.

The city cannot simply force property owners to share off-street lots but could offer incentives to do so. In the 1990s the city used a \$1 million Places to Park fund to create shared lots. One, near Grand and Snelling, continues today through assessments to benefitting business owners. Another, using the House of Hope Presbyterian Church lot on Summit,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



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Community meetings encourage public input for Rock-Tenn options

By JANE MCCLURE

The studies of energy options for the Midway's Rock-Tenn paper recycling plant are at a point where more public input has sought. A series of community meetings began April 26 with a sparse turnout at Luxton Park in Southeast Como neighborhood. A meeting May 3 at South St. Anthony Park Recreation Center was held after Monitor deadline. The turnout is expected to be higher at the upcoming St. Paul meetings, which include:

*Macalester-Groveland, 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 7 at Groveland Park Elementary, 2045 St. Clair Av.

*Union Park (including Merriam Park and Desnoyer Park neighborhoods), 7 p.m. Monday, May 12, at Bethel Christian Fellowship, 1466 Portland Av.

*Hamline-Midway, 10 a.m. Saturday, May 17 at Hamline-Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Av.

Rock-Tenn has recycled paper in the West Midway for about a century. The plant currently employs 500 people. Since losing its source of steam power in 2007, Rock-Tenn has used an older boiler system to burn a mixture of natural gas and fuel oil. The company needs to find a more cost-effective energy sources and would like to have a new power facility up and running by 2011.

The Rock-Tenn Community Advisory Panel (RCAP) was set up by the 2007 Minnesota Legislature to find a new source of thermal energy for Rock-Tenn. The St. Paul Port Authority, District Energy and a team of consultants are working with RCAP on the studies of numerous potential fuel sources and technologies for the paper recycling plant, which needs to generate steam as well as electricity.

Rock-Tenn requires as much energy as would be needed by 20,000 homes. The high demand means that some energy sources,

such as wind, solar, hydroelectric and geothermal, have been set aside. Various forms of biomass, ranging from wood waste to agricultural byproducts, are still being studied. But biomass options may be limited by factors including availability of materials, costs of transportation, technology and emissions controls. RCAP will continue its studies of biomass this month.

RCAP is set to complete its studies and prepare a report in May or June, said Nina Axelson, who is coordinator for RCAP. The report, drawn from studies that began in August 2007, is considered a pre-environmental review.

"We're nearing a key point in the study process," said Axelson. That is why the upcoming series of public meetings are important, as a way for neighborhood residents to learn about and weigh in on the process thus far.

RCAP is looking at different fuels, energy production technology and other related issues with the goal of finding a fuel source and technology that is environmentally friendly. The report will address the economic and technical feasibility of the various fuel types, and prospective environmental emissions and environmental controls for each fuel type. Part of the report will cover potential energy efficiency improvements that can be made at the Rock-Tenn facility and potential additional uses for steam and electricity generated at Rock-Tenn.

RCAP meets twice a month and has been spending part of its meeting time on a report draft. The report then goes to district councils in Districts 11 (Hamline-Midway), 12 (St. Anthony Park), 13 (Union Park) and 14 (Macalester-Groveland). The district councils weigh in before all of the information is sent to the St. Paul City Council, most likely in the fall.

The City Council then de-

cides which options should go on for further environmental review. Or the council could send the matter back to RCAP and its consultants for further study.

The studies have been controversial, with foes of burning refuse-derived fuel and forms of biomass organizing as Neighbors Against the Burner. In recent weeks discussion has focused on technology including gasification, refuse-derived fuel or RDF, and anaerobic digestion, a process which uses decomposing organic materials and microbes or bacteria to produce biogas. Biogas, such as methane, can be used to produce thermal energy in the form of steam or electricity.

Burning of refuse-derived fuel to generate energy is a highly regulated industry at the state and federal level. Whether those regulations would do enough to ease concerns about potential health risks for communities around the Rock-Tenn paper recycling plant is generating intense debate. More than 100 people heard recent presentations on refuse-derived fuel or RDF before RCAP.

Zack Hansen, solid waste programs manager for Ramsey County and retired Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Engineer Peter Torkelson discussed how refused-derived fuel or RDF is produced, how its burning is regulated, and what pollutants are generated at RDF plants in the region.

Panel and audience members compiled lists of questions on the RDF issue. When Torkelson was asked what concerns he would have if an RDF plant went into his neighborhood, his answer surprised some audience members.

"I would be more concerned about the peripheral operations of the plant than the emissions themselves," he said. Traffic from trucks bringing RDF in and out,

as well as the potential for loose trash, would be his concerns.

RDF is made from mixed municipal solid waste. Resource recovery projects to convert trash into fuel picked up steam in Minnesota in the 1980s because an energy value was seen in solid waste. Processing solid waste into fuel is preferred over burying garbage in landfills, where it can contaminate soil and groundwater and emit gases. "No waste disposal method is free, said Hansen. "It all has a cost to it."

Some panel members wondering if the need to process trash into fuel is at odds with the notion of promoting more recycling, especially recycling with a goal of zero waste. When the Newport plant was built there were concerns that such "waste to energy" plants would impede recycling, Hansen said. But historically, areas with waste-to-energy plants have had higher recycling rates than other areas.

Others asked if more could be done to remove plastics from waste processed into RDF, to reduce hazardous emissions. St. Paul only allows certain types of #1 and 2 plastics to be placed with curbside recycling. Other plastics drop-off options for recycling are limited. Torkelson said that although plastics provide some of the highest BTUs (British Thermal Units, a measure of energy) when RDF is burned, most of RDF is still made up of paper.

If RDF is burned at Rock-Tenn it would most likely come from a processing plant built in Newport more than 20 years ago. The plant was built by Ramsey and Washington counties and is now owned by a private firm called RRT.

Garbage trucks come to the Newport plant and dump waste on a tipping floor. Although household hazardous waste items such as cleaners or pesticides can make their way into this waste stream, medical waste, construc-

tion waste and more toxic hazardous wastes are banned.

On the tipping floor bulky items are removed first, including appliances, tires, carpet, propane tanks or concrete. The remaining garbage is carried onto a conveyor to a hammer mill area. Ferrous materials are removed with a magnetic separator. Through a process of using hammer mills to shred garbage and screens to sift out small, noncombustible items called "fines," the waste is separated repeatedly. At one point in the process the waste goes through an air classifier. Lighter waste is blown off and heavier materials falls away to be sorted out. An electromagnetic process is used to remove aluminum. Large magnets remove ferrous materials.

The screening and sifting does allow products such as smaller batteries to fall out and not be burned. Other household hazardous waste, such as pesticide cans, are broken open and the contents drained out when waste is hammermilled.

Minnesota doesn't require RDF plants to analyze what makes into the final fuel. RDF is fluffy-looking. About 23 percent is paper, with plastics making up another 15 percent.

When RDF is burned, various pollutants are produced including sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, hydrogen chloride, carbon dioxide, dioxides and furans. There are various technologies used at RDF plants to control emissions and to control the gathering and disposal of ash. The controls vary from industrial scrubbers used to clean emissions to activated carbon and ammonia used to control such pollutants as mercury and nitrogen dioxide.

Dioxins are created by incomplete combustion, Torkelson said. Plastics and the materials they are of can be a source of dioxins. Con injection or fabric filters can be used to control dioxins.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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Book features local authors...

'Riding Shotgun' anthology about mothers a mosaic of portraits

By JAN WILLMS

Thinking about your relationship with your mother is one thing. Putting it down on paper to share with the public is another.

Yet that is what 21 women authors have recently done in an anthology entitled "Riding Shotgun: Women Write About Their Mothers."

Edited by Kathryn Kysar, the book features authors who grew up or now live in the Midwest, describing that unique bond that connects a mother and daughter.

Several of the authors have a Minnesota link. Some were raised here and several are teachers at Hamline, Metro State or Anoka Ramsey.

But whether their mothers hail from Minnesota or Illinois or Laos, their strength and independence shines through.

"The original idea was an anthology on mothering," said Kysar, author of a book of poetry, "Dark Lake."

She sent the proposal to the Minnesota Historical Society Press, and they volleyed ideas back and forth with her.

"They were interested in a book about mothers," Kysar related, "and I said sure. Ann Regan and Alison Vandenberg at the Minnesota Historical Society Press came up with the idea."

Kysar said she went about collecting women to write, and ended up with a mosaic of portraits of women.

"The struggles many of these women had came through," Kysar

said, "even in the lighthearted stories." She noted that she has been surprised how many people have thought the book would be syrupy sweet stories about mothers and daughters. Instead, the stories reflect the very real tensions and issues that are often a part of a mother-daughter relationship.

"There is the cliché about the perfect mother, but none of us is perfect," Kysar said.

Kysar said some of the women she asked to submit a story were women she knew. Others she wanted to have in the book.

"When I invited people, I didn't know their relationship with their mothers," she said. "I was striving to get diversity in age, culture, ethnicity and gender preference. I was trying to create a full picture."

Kysar said the youngest writer is around 33.

"You have to be a certain age to have some clarity about your mom," Kysar said.

As editor of the anthology, she did not include a story about her own mother.

"I don't like anthologies where the editor puts in her own work," she said. Kysar said she and Rogers, from the Minnesota Historical Society Press, did the editing. "If I had written, there would have been one less editor," she added.

Kysar said that editing and writing are very different.

"It's like a right-brain, left-brain thing," she said. "Writing is a creative process and editing is



Edited by Kathryn Kysar (left), "Riding Shotgun" features authors who grew up or now live in the Midwest, describing that unique bond that connects a mother and daughter. Hamline-Midway resident Carrie Pomeroy (right) is one of the authors featured in the book. (Photo by Terry Faust)

more analytical, more detail-oriented. But very fulfilling, too."

She said the creativity came in through choosing the writers and organizing the book.

"It took a couple of years to get it done," Kysar said. "It was a significantly difficult writing assignment. Now that the book is out, a couple authors have not yet sent it to their mothers to read. Some mothers have been in the audience at readings, and the authors are still a little nervous."

Midway resident Carrie Pomeroy, a contributing author to

the book, said that writing about her mother was definitely difficult.

"If you saw my laptop, you would see Mothers Essay 1, 2 and 3," she said.

Pomeroy said she had previously been doing some free form writing, trying to get some kernels of her childhood memories down.

"The anthology was the impetus to shape those thoughts into something more complete," she said.

"I would guess it is more difficult writing this when your mom is still alive," Pomeroy said. "Now

Schedule of Readings

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Friday, May 16 at 7:00 p.m.
Amazon Books
Barrie Jean Borich
Susan Power
Morgan Grayce Willow

Saturday, May 31
Highland Park Barnes and Noble
Heid Erdrich
Susan Steger Welsh
Sun Yung Shin

Thursday, June 19 at 7:00 p.m.
Micawber's Books
Sandra Benitez
Carrie Pomeroy
Susan Steger Welsh

that it's finished, I worry that I exposed too much of my mother's privacy. If I had to do it again, I might not write as intimately as I did."

She said she felt she had to get her mother's approval before publishing her story.

"She read it, suggested a few things to take out, which I did, and I took a few more things out. She has mixed feelings about it."

Pomeroy said her mother has always been very supportive of her writing, but she was sure there was a part of her that said, "Oh, couldn't she write about something else?"

Pomeroy said she thought that women who have lost their mothers seemed to have a different perspective of their mother's life, perhaps more compassion.

"What strikes me as a theme that seems to play out for many of the writers is seeing your mother as someone you want to emulate and at the same time trying to avoid some of the things she did, and learning from her," Pomeroy said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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After 15 years, Ginkgo Coffeehouse becomes a Hamline-Midway addiction

By ANDY FINKEN

On his way to work every morning, Midway resident Mark Dahlager stops by Ginkgo Coffeehouse, says hi to a few of the regulars, and orders a cup of coffee. It has been that way for 15 years.

Since 1993, Ginkgo has given local residents a place to gather, musicians a crowd to play for and coffee addicts some darn good coffee.

"I think I go there every day of the week," said Dahlager. "It's a nice way to start my day."

Before 1993, Ginkgo owner and operator Kathy Sundberg lived and worked in Boston doing research and technology marketing. She said that the word "coffeehouse" in Boston actually means "a place to hear music."

"I was used to looking in the paper and seeing ads for five or six shows a night. We didn't have that around here," said Sundberg. "I didn't open this because I had experience in the food business. I wanted to manage a business and this felt like a really good fit for me."

She said that at the time she opened Ginkgo there were only five or six other coffee houses in Saint Paul. Hers is now the oldest single-owner coffee house in the city.

She attributes Ginkgo's longevity to three simple ideas she is continually trying to incorporate: make everyone feel welcome, music, and staying fresh.

Without a coffee house, Sundberg argues that there would be nowhere for people to meet outside of going to a restaurant, and the music, she said, has made Ginkgo well known in music circles all over the country.

On Thursday evenings, when notable musicians perform at Ginkgo, the lights are turned down, the cappuccino machine is unplugged and the coffee drinkers become a crowd. She recounts these nights with a deep sense of accomplishment, then adds, "Not that it helps the bottom line," and laughs.

As for staying fresh, she said there's always something new to try. Ginkgo recently added booth seating near the rear entrance as well as a play area for kids and she said the cards and other retail gizmos offer a unique spice to the space.

In addition to the Snelling location, Sundberg operates three hospital coffee bars. She said that these locations offer a different sort of service on the order of a five minute escape from work for health care professionals. Ginkgo offers a full coffee bar at Saint Paul Saint's baseball games as well.

The fact that she lives in the community as well, she said, is what really brings it all home for her.

"It gives you a chance to really participate in the community when you both live and work in a neighborhood – and I really like this neighborhood," she said. Just after opening Ginkgo, Sundberg got married and has since been raising a family of two

boys, now ages seven and nine.

"These kinds of places (Ginkgo) add such depth to the community," Sundberg said. "Corporate coffee houses try to get people out the door as fast as they can. This place is about gathering."

Dahlager agrees. "Kathy is a neighbor too. She's really connected to the community and not just another corporate coffee shop."

He said Sundberg has effectively represented the community's interest over the years while working with the Hamline-Midway Coalition.

"She's committed to the neighborhood, so I'm committed to her," said Dahlager.

Having lived in the community for twenty years, and stopping at Ginkgo almost every day of the last fifteen, Dahlager has earned the right pass judgment on one of the most fundamental services of this coffee house: The coffee is good.

"I don't even remember what I did for coffee before Ginkgo," he said. "Maybe I made it at home...Ish."



Ginkgo coffeehouse owner Kathy Sundberg attributes Ginkgo's longevity to three simple ideas she is continually trying to incorporate: make everyone feel welcome, music, and staying fresh. (Photo by Terry Faust)

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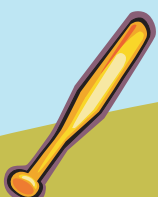
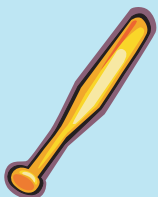
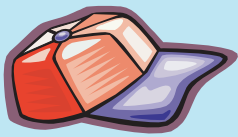
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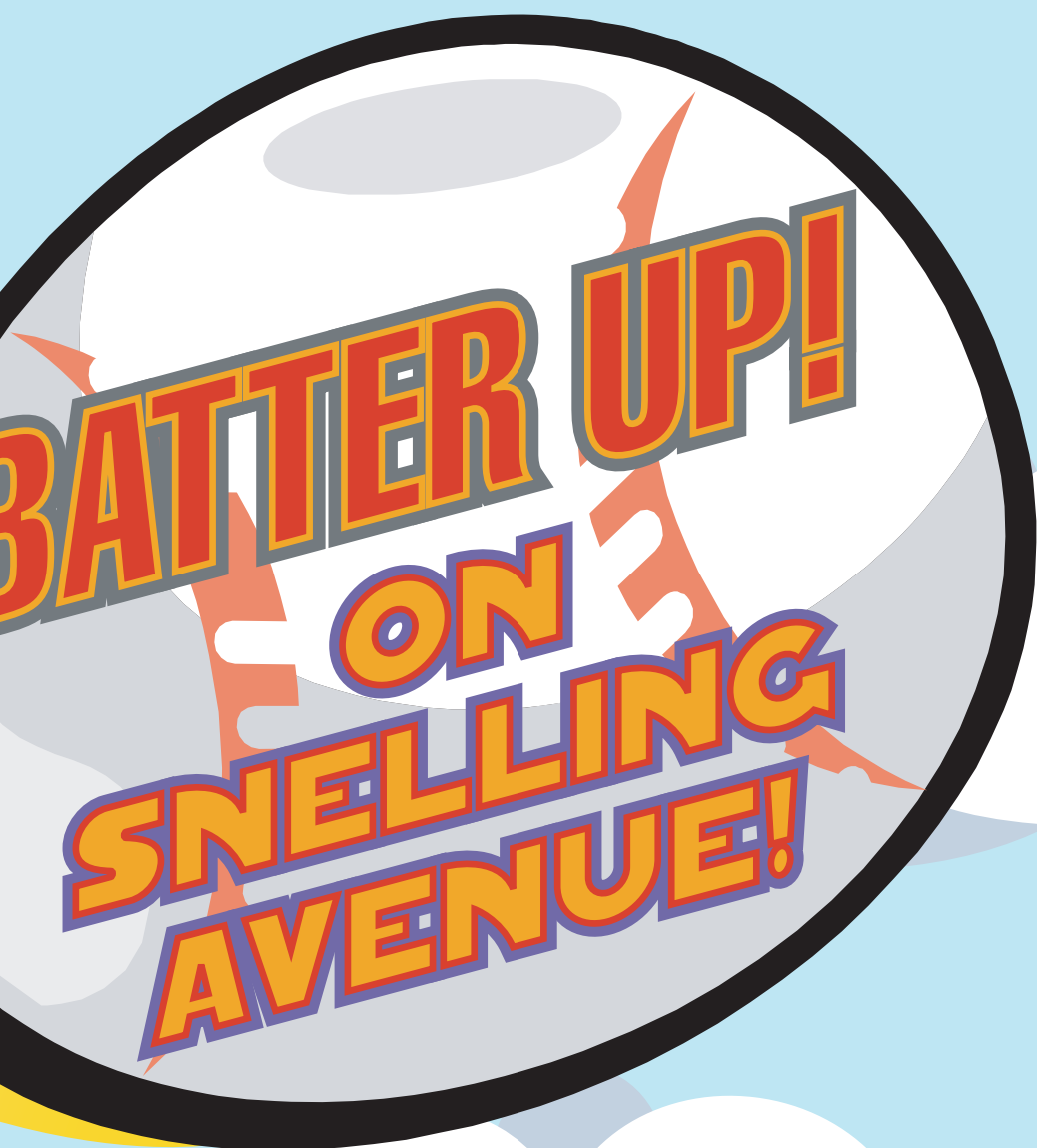
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18 SF 2:05	19 SC 7:05	20 SC 7:05	21 SC 7:05	22 SC 7:05	23 FTW 7:05	24 FTW 7:05
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RockTenn

Continued from page 6

RDF plants have constant monitoring for emissions. Permits are required to be tested annually. Air quality permits, written by the MPCA, limit what can be emitted. Limits on emissions can also be placed during the environmental impact statements (EIS) process when a facility is planned, in federal and state air emissions permits.

Anaerobic digestion also has its pros and cons. The success of a system is closely tied to its energy source or feed stock. Patrick Hill, an engineer who has worked on several types of anaerobic digestion systems, said the most viable feed stock for a system for Rock-Tenn would be agricultural or food byproducts. Human waste or animal waste has been used in systems elsewhere but the quantity of waste available means that isn't feasible for Rock-Tenn.

The pros include the fact that it uses renewable fuels, with a low temperature, low-pressure form of

fuel gas production. It is also an efficient form of energy production in use of feed stocks with a high water content. It allows for the recovery of nutrients such as ammonia, phosphorous and potassium. It also allows for water recovery and reuse of water. Organic solids that are a byproduct of anaerobic digestion can be recovered and sold as topsoil.

But anaerobic digestion plants can be large, which is one drawback. Hill estimates Rock-Tenn would need a facility the size of eight to 10 acres. That facility, which would have six three million gallon digester tanks, could cost \$50 to \$60 million to build.

Another con is the potential for air emissions and odors, although the system is enclosed to prevent the escape of methane. Odors could come from ammonia or organic used in processing, the latter of which would generate a musty, earthy smell. Some RCAP members were concerned about odors and the risks involved with methane, especially the risks for plant workers.

Yet another challenge to

anaerobic digestion is that the system can be easily disrupted and go off-line, making it necessary to have a back-up power source. That is why it is important to have a consistent quality and quantity of feed stock. Hill said that would be one challenge to using garbage as a fuel source. Plants in Europe that use garbage need to have the garbage carefully sorted before it is used in a digester.

Hill studied the types of feed stocks available for an anaerobic digester, finding that the food or agricultural wastes available in and around the Twin Cities aren't available in large enough quantities or of a consistent quality. Food waste or agricultural waste generated or processed in the region is usually used as food for livestock. That could mean producing biogas elsewhere and then piping it in, an idea that drew mixed reactions from RCAP members. Some said that sounded feasible while others questioned why anyone producing biogas would not use it on-site for energy, rather than sending the biogas elsewhere.

Street parking

Continued from page 5

failed because only a few business owners were willing to foot the costs.

The city can lease a private lot and improve it for use as shared parking, if business owners are willing to pay an assessment for the lot's upkeep, Blakely said. A recent state law allows cities to set up parking improvement districts, where an assessment against property owners can be dedicated to parking improvements, in a parking improvement district.

What the city could do is make it easier for lots to be shared, said Stark. He is looking at the possibility of changing the conditional use permit requirement process, which can be time-consuming and

costly.

Another way to pay for shared parking improvement is through on-street meters. After making that comment, Blakely quipped, "I can hear the sudden intake of breath." Businesses may not like meters but the income can be directed to parking-related improvements.

Other ideas include looking behind University businesses to see if alley parking can be shared, or seeing if parking on north-south cross streets can be angled rather than parallel parking. There are also programs, mainly for business employees, through the Midway and St. Paul Transportation Management Organizations.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution. "Some businesses might do fine with rear parking," said Lovejoy. "At others customers need to get in and out quickly. In some places that is going to be a tougher issue."

In a minute

Continued from page 2

Como Ave. club could have license suspended

Numerous health code violations mean that a Como Avenue nightclub has had its licenses suspended by the St. Paul City Council. The council voted unanimously April 16 to take adverse action against all licenses held by American Sports Café - Playground at 2554 Como Av.

City officials allege that the

business failed to correct numerous health code violations documented in a November 2007 inspection. The business owners contested the allegations but did not respond in time to get a public hearing scheduled before the council. The city then suspended the licenses until the violations are corrected and there is a new inspection. The business also must pay a \$500 fine.

City inspectors found 9 critical and 20 non-critical violations in the restaurant and bar. Sixteen of the 20 non-critical violations were repeat offenses, as were seven of the nine critical violations.

Lack of maintenance of plumbing fixtures, unsafe conditions with the exhaust hood over cooking equipment, fruit fly and mouse infestations, non-working equipment, heavily soiled surfaces,

improper sanitizing, disrepair of walls and floors and other violations were found. Paper towels were found stuffed in a fire suppression system in order to soak up excess grease on filters. A dishwasher was discharging dirty wash water directly onto the floor.

The city has met with the business representatives but the violations have not been corrected. American Sports Café—Playground has had other license violations in the past due to patron behavior and alleged illegal activity.

Coffee houses allowed to host events

Coffee houses and small restaurants that want to host a limited number of entertainment events

will be allowed to do so, as a result of an ordinance adopted by the St. Paul City Council April 8. The ordinance would allow a restaurant to have no more than 12 events, or no more than two per month, each calendar year without holding a cabaret license. It is limited to venues with fewer than 50 seats.

The ordinance, brought forward by Council President Kathy Lantry, would especially benefit coffee shops. These businesses otherwise have to pay \$172 for a cabaret license and go through a neighborhood notification and review process.

No one appeared at a recent public hearing on the proposal to speak in support or opposition. Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) staff said it would help small businesses that want to offer limited entertainment, such as acoustic music. For example, a coffee shop could not bring in a large band with amplified music or host a dance under the new ordinance.

If there are complaints about a business holding too many events without a license, or if an event is disruptive to the surrounding neighborhood, the city can take steps to block the business from holding more events in the future. Or the business could be forced to apply for the license and then have conditions attached to the license to prevent future problems.

When coffee houses began popping up around St. Paul in the 1990s, the city was forced to crack down on establishments that hosted entertainment without the required cabaret licenses. Several businesses complained at that time that the requirement was onerous.

The vote on the ordinance was unanimous with Ward Two Council Member Dave Thune abstaining. He owns a tea house and art gallery in the city's West End.

More time is needed to draft proposed new regulations on St. Paul sober houses. The St. Paul Planning Commission had hoped to have a draft ready for an April 28 public hearing. But that has been postponed until June.

Sober houses are residences for persons who are recovering

from alcohol or chemical dependency. The group living situation allows residents to support each other in the quest for sobriety. Sober houses typically have rules that call for residents to remain sober, attend meetings or obtain counseling to stay sober, and hold jobs or attend school.

Sober houses cannot be regulated in the same way that the city regulates shelters for battered persons, homeless shelters or group homes for the mentally handicapped or mentally ill. That is because the courts have determined that sober house residents have a disability that is protected by the Federal Fair Housing Act.

The city can regulate sober houses under fire and building safety codes. But the houses do not have to meet other regulations. For example, the city typically doesn't allow more than four unrelated persons to live in a single dwelling units. That rule doesn't apply to sober houses.

City officials have no idea how many sober houses are operating in St. Paul. A growing number of sober houses in some neighborhoods, including Merriam Park, has neighborhood residents and district councils asking that the city find some way regulate the homes and avoid an over-concentration in some neighborhoods.

Condition of some homes is one concern. Another is resident behavior. Homes that have a large number of residents or host meetings can generate problems with on-street parking. But operators of sober housing and residents say that those who want more regulations are being discriminatory.


Any new regulations would affect new sober houses, not the ones in existence.

A Planning Commission committee has been looking at the proposed regulations for the past few months, working with the City Attorney's Office. The group was supposed to have wrapped up its work this spring but hasn't finished yet. The clock is ticking on the committee's work as a one-year moratorium on new sober houses in St. Paul expires in October.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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6:00		Math		Math	

Summer Session begins June 9th and runs thru August 29th. We will be closed for the week of July 4th.

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In Our Community

Central presents show May 16-17

Saint Paul Central Touring Theater is proud to present "We are Called to Speak" and Seeds of Change; two original plays created by the youth ensembles. The event is being held at Concordia University in the E.M. Pearson Theater, 312 Hamline Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota, on Friday May 16 at 8 p.m and Saturday May 17 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. The cost is \$5.

"We are Called to Speak" follows this story of a young, Charles, who tries to help his younger brother to stay in school by introducing to what is happening in the world. The story connects to life of an average Minnesotan teenager to sweatshops, child labor, and global warming. This play was inspired by the indifference the youth experiences in their classmates and community at large. The play also explores the issues of teenage self-identity, public education, and the importance of family.

La Leche League discussing breastfeeding

The Advantages of Breastfeeding is the topic of the next meeting of Como-Midway La Leche League, to be held on Tuesday, May 13 at 7:00 p.m.

Mothers-to-be, mothers, babies and toddlers are invited to attend. La Leche League meetings offer breastfeeding information and support through mother-to-mother helping.

A lending library on a wide variety of related topics is also available. For meeting location or more information, call Heidi at 651-659-9527.

District 10 seeks Community Organizer

The District 10 Como Community Council is accepting applications from qualified candidates for the position of Community Organizer/Crime Prevention Coordinator. Applications will be accepted through May 27, 2008. For more information, visit the Council website at www.comopark.com.

This is the principal staff position for the District 10 Como Community Council and provides support for all of the Council's activities. The Community Organizer reports directly to the Chair of the Board of Directors but works closely with all Board members, City staff, representatives of partner organizations, and the district's residents and businesses.



Central Lutheran teacher retires in June

Connie Petersen, 1st grade teacher at Central Lutheran School (CLS), St. Paul, Minnesota, will retire in June of this year after 40 years of teaching. Ms. Petersen has been teaching 1st grade at CLS since 1977. Prior to coming to CLS, she also taught in Lutheran schools in Berlin, Clintonville, and Oshkosh, all in Wisconsin.

A special day honoring Ms. Petersen is planned for Sunday, June 1. She will be recognized for her 40 years of teaching at a 9:00 a.m. worship service at St. Stephanus Lutheran Church, 739 Lafond Avenue. An open house reception will be held at Central Lutheran School, 775 North Lexington Parkway, also on Sunday, June 1, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. All former and current students and families and friends are invited to attend and reminisce with Ms. Petersen.

Ms. Petersen grew up in Denison, Iowa. She received her teaching degree from Concordia College, St. Paul, in 1967. She also holds an M.S. in Reading from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. Ms. Petersen is a member of St. Stephanus Lutheran Church, St. Paul, where she has been active in choir, Sunday School, and the usher team.

Movie, History, Novels at Hamline Library

Learn how to design your own graphic novel and share your anime with others on Saturday, May 31, at 11 a.m. Hosted by guest graphic artist Teri Blauer.

Interested in the history of St. Paul and your neighborhood? On Thursday, May 15, at 7 p.m. the Hamline Midway History Corps will present another local author.

The next movie matinee will be on May 17 at 2 p.m. Call 651-642-0293 for details.

Join in a few friendly matches against your friends and neighbors and play chess or checkers on Tuesday, May 27, anytime between 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

Bedtime storytimes are held every Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. Toddler and preschool storytimes are held every Friday morning at 10:30 a.m. On Saturday, May 10, a special Play & Learn Storytime will be held from 10:30 - noon. Share age appropriate books and toys with your child from birth to 5 years old. Drop in! No registration required. Provided by Resources for Child Caring.

Mount Olive holds plant exchange May 17

The Mount Olive "Great Give, Grow, and Grill Day" is coming Saturday, May 17th!

Mount Olive will hold its annual plant exchange on May 17 in conjunction with the District 10 neighborhood garage sale the same day. Again this year the Memorial Blood Bank Blood Mobile will be on site conducting a blood drive from 9:30 to 2 pm.

Plant exchange will begin at 10 am. Thin you garden and bring your surplus plants to exchange, or get a new plant for nominal cost. Many varieties of plants will be available.

To satisfy your hunger free hot dogs and other food will be provided under the big tent from 10:30 - 2 pm, along with free music. Come and enjoy the "Give, Grow, and Grill" events at Mt. Olive May 17th!

Holy Childhood holds Rummage Sale May 15

Holy Childhood Rummage Sale will be held Thursday, May 15th, 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Friday, May 16th 9:00 a.m. to noon. The church is located at 1435 Midway Parkway, St. Paul. [at the corner of Pascal and Midway Parkway].

Alpha comes to Midway

ALPHA will begin on April 24th at Zion Lutheran Church, 1697 Lafond Ave. This is an excellent course with a history of helping people learn some of the basics of Christianity. It will help people answer questions like, "Why did Jesus Die? And Why and How do I pray?" We really want to encourage everyone who is new to Christianity or who is just checking it out to come and be a part of this Alpha course. We'll meet Thursday evenings from 6-7.30 p.m. beginning April 24th and ending June 26th (9 weeks). Dessert will be provided each week. This course is totally free. Please begin asking your neighbors, friends and coworkers to attend this course with you. This is a very non-threatening way to introduce your friends to Christ. Alpha Preview Dinner is on April 20th on Sunday at 5 p.m. For registration and further information contact Zion Lutheran church at 651-645-0851. Alpha's website: www.alpha.org

"ART-CYCLE" event at Mosaic May 10

Saturday May 10th, 1-4 p.m. at Mosaic on a Stick, 595 N. Snelling Ave and across the street at Hamline Park, Snelling and Thomas. Come help decorate and celebrate the new "ART-CYCLE" - a bike and trailer that will be used to distribute free art supplies and promote bicycling throughout the Twin Cities. Also help create a bike mural for the Sibley Bike Depot and decorate your own bike helmet (bring it). This will be a free event with food, music, games, art, bikes and more! Macalester's Bike Organization will also provide bike information and an on site mechanic for a drop-in hour for bike tune-ups. We will raffle three children's bikes donated by the Sibley Bike Depot. Organized by Mosaic on a Stick, Mac Bike and Sibley Bike Depot.

Como Park Tree Trek Identification June 14

The Environment Committee of District Ten and Capitol Watershed District is holding its annual Tree Identification Trek through Como Park on June 14, (Saturday) from 10 a.m. to noon. Meet at the Como Park Pavilion near the wooden black bear on the west side. The tree trek is open to the public and is free. Please call Chet Mirocha 651-646-4226 if you have questions.

AAUW Scholarships awarded

The St. Paul Branch of AAUW [American Association of University Women] awards scholarships and grants to area women to further their education. The scholarship will be given to Ashleigh Hayes, a senior of Como Park Senior High School. Two grants will be given to Bao Vue, a senior at Arlington Senior High and to Ka Xiong, a senior at Como Park Senior High School.

The St. Paul Branch began educational awards in 1911. Its trust fund is supported by an annual book sale, house tour, concerts, etc. plus gifts and bequests.

Safe Travel" topic for program

"Safe Travel for Seniors," will be the topic on May 13 at a luncheon for Hamline Midway seniors at 1514 Englewood Avenue beginning at 11:30. A free will offering is collected for the meal. Call the office of Hamline Midway Elders 651-209-6542 to make reservations for the luncheon or if you require free transportation or if you are a senior, caregiver or neighbor and would like information about our services. Visit www.blocknurse.org Hamline Midway Elders is a neighborhood non profit with a goal to keep seniors in their own homes.

Pork Roast Dinner May 17 at St. Bernard's

St. Bernard's Catholic Aid Council will be holding a Pork Roast and Sauerkraut Dinner on Saturday, May 17, 4 to 7 p.m. at St. Bernard's Parish Center, Rice and Geranium. The cost is \$7 for adults and children 12 and under \$3. Dinner includes: potatoes, dumplings, gravy, dessert and beverage. Bottomless cup of coffee. For more information 651-488-6733.

Galtier holds annual Beach Party May 22

Galtier Magnet School of Math, Science and Technology, located at Charles and Hamline Avenues, is hosting its annual Beach Party on Thursday, May 22, from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Families and friends are invited to join us for food, games, raffle, music, limo rides, cake walk, and more. Our Beach Party celebrates the completion of a successful year of learning.

Legislature, Governor wrangle on funding for Central Corridor

By JANE MCCLURE

Restoring \$70 million in state funding before the Minnesota Legislature adjourns on May 19 is just one roadblock facing the Central Corridor light rail project. As this issue of the Monitor went to press, state lawmakers and Governor Tim Pawlenty were discussing budget ideas that could add some of the governor's priorities into the mix and restore the \$70 million that he vetoed in April.

But the veto is just challenge the project is facing. On May 21 the Central Corridor Corridor Management Committee must decide whether or not to put the brakes on the northern alignment, a route which would take light rail off of Washington Avenue and extend it through the East Bank campus and Dinkytown.

Members of the Corridor Management Committee, a group made up of local elected officials and appointees from the University of Minnesota and Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) are at odds over how light rail should extend through the U of M. The committee will do a side-by-side comparison of the route alternatives May 21 and make a decision then as to how to proceed. The committee hopes to have ridership projections and impacts on the Cost Effectiveness Index or CEI for both routes. The CEI is a complex formula the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) uses to rank and fund transit projects.

At a sometimes tense meeting April 30, committee members debated the northern alignment and what further studies of the option could mean. Committee members are already worried that the dissension over the U of M route will not reflect well on chances for federal money for the \$909.1 million project.

Metropolitan Council Chair Peter Bell said the project planners would need a "very compelling reason" to shift from Washington

Avenue to the northern alignment. If that decision is not made in time for preliminary engineering to be done, it could push the project back by at least a one year and add at least \$40 million in project costs. "I feel strongly that we need to make a decision," Bell said.

"We believe the northern alignment is a worthy alternative," said U of M Vice President Kathleen O'Brien. She said it should be included in studies of the project and that U of M officials want all options studied.

Those involved say that moving rail off of Washington Avenue and to a northern route would save the project \$15 million. In April the Board of Regents reaffirmed that position. But changing the U of M alignment could add a year's delay and at least \$40 million to its price tag, project planners say.

The project is due at the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) by early September, which means the full Metropolitan Council must sign off on it in August.

The route selected by the Metropolitan Council February 27 included an at-grade alignment on Washington Avenue, after the idea of a tunnel was dropped due to costs. At that time the committee and Metropolitan Council agreed that the U of M could continue studying a northern alignment through the campus. This route would cross the Mississippi River at the Ninth Street Bridge, then extend through Dinkytown and past athletic facilities and a planned biosciences research area before connecting with University Avenue at the campus's east end.

The northern alignment isn't a new plan, said O'Brien. It has been considered as long ago as 2001. At that time the U of M Board of Regents passed a resolution calling for the tunnel beneath Washington Avenue. If the tunnel could not be built, the board stated, it wanted the northern alignment pursued. That resolution was reaffirmed by the Regents in April.

U of M officials held onto their desire for a tunnel



up until the February 27 vote. The tunnel was scrapped because dropping it cut about \$147 million from the project budget. Tunnel construction plans had to be changed due to the placement of the Gophers football stadium that is now under construction.

The concern about Washington Avenue is traffic and how traffic would be mitigated for the surrounding neighborhoods if other vehicles have to be moved off of that street. One estimate is that 25,000 vehicles could be detoured off the street each day if light rail is built at-grade there. But a list of related mitigation measures needed hasn't been finished, yet another question mark for the Corridor Management Committee.

The committee heard a report April 30 from Michael Monahan of SRF Consultants about how the northern alignment could be built, then a response from Central Corridor Project Director Mark Fuhrman about the alignment's shortcomings including bridge replacement and negotiations for railroad right-of-way.

Other committee members said they understand the U of M concerns. But they are also worried about the future of the light rail project. "Delay is our enemy," said Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin. He said the project is at a "lethal moment."

St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman said he would respect the wishes of Hennepin County, Minneapolis and U of M leaders on the U of M alignment. But he is concerned about anything that would "delay or threaten the future of this project."

"I'm not going to vote for anything that delays this project," said Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak. He pushed for an objective look at both alignments and for the Metropolitan Council and U of M planners to work together. But Bell said the two groups have been working together, to the point that he is concerned that time spent on the northern alignment is creating a time crunch for the rest of the Central Corridor project.

What is also roiling the Corridor Management Committee is the U of M's high-profile lobbying effort for the northern alignment, which has included meetings with Minnesota's Congressional delegation. In March U of M officials sent the FTA a 23-page legal memorandum that claims the Metropolitan Council forced the university to support the Washington Avenue route and may be violating federal laws due to the rail project's timelines.

The letter, signed by U of M

General Counsel Mark Rotenberg, said the U of M has not modified its opposition to the at-grade Washington Avenue rail plans.

Another point of debate for the U of M is how the light rail project's impacts will be paid for. The Central Corridor project's \$909.1 million budget only include \$39 million for mitigation along the entire 11-mile route. When the light rail plans were approved February 27 it was with the understanding that any leftover mitigation money would be used to build one of three additional stations sought along University Avenue in St. Paul.

St. Paul businesses that would lose on-street parking due to light rail construction are also eyeing the mitigation budget, as is the St. Paul Fire Department. Two University Avenue fire stations and one downtown station would have access impacted by light rail running outside of their buildings. But some members of the Corridor Management Committee have indicated that \$39 million may not be enough to meet the U of M needs around Washington Avenue, let alone any other project issues.

State lawmakers and Pawlenty are watching the U of M debate as they seek a way to get \$70 million for Central Corridor approved before the end of the legislative session. Pawlenty has indicated he would be amenable to restoring a vetoed \$70 million allocation if several conditions are met including a cap on property tax increases. The governor is also seeking funding for a nursing home for the Minnesota Veterans Home in Minneapolis and a new state park on Lake Vermillion in northern Minnesota. Meetings to negotiate an agreement began last week.

But the governor's offer to fund the light rail project is also contingent on working toward resolution of the issues surrounding the U of M light rail alignments and to have a process in place to resolve those issues.

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Speaker Series event at Hamline Library May 15...

University UNITED's McMahon shares history of transportation on busy University Avenue



University UNITED Executive Director Brian McMahon has had his eye trained on University Avenue for the last eight years, and it is McMahon's belief that "there is no corridor that has more history related to transportation in the country." The Hamline Midway History Corps is pleased to host McMahon who will share his research and a large assortment of historical images of transportation along University Avenue at the Hamline Midway Branch Library (1558 Minnehaha Avenue West, St. Paul) on Thursday, May 15th in the lower level Auditorium beginning at 7 p.m. (Photo by Bill Klotz)

By KRISTA FINSTAD HANSON

Most people familiar with Brian McMahon know he is the Executive Director of University UNITED, in the news for its advocacy along the Central Corridor. What may be less well known is that McMahon's sideline documenting, preserving, and celebrating the urban built environment. He has had his eye trained on University Avenue for the last eight years, and it is McMahon's belief that "there is no corridor that has more history related to transportation in the country."

The Hamline Midway History Corps is pleased to host McMahon who will share his research and a large assortment of historical images of transportation along University Avenue. This Speaker Series event will take place at the Hamline Midway Branch Library (1558 Minnehaha Avenue West, St. Paul) on Thursday, May 15th in the lower level Auditorium beginning at 7 p.m. The event is free and is co-sponsored by the Friends of the St. Paul Public Library.

"Historical rehabilitation is a big part of my professional career," says McMahon.

Born and raised in New York, McMahon trained to be an architect at the Pratt Institute. He did coursework in Historic Preservation at Columbia, and worked with the South Street Seaport project, revitalizing a historical dockyard area complete with rebuilt clipper ships. He later became a historic property redeveloper. A move to Minnesota 15 years ago found McMahon working as a consultant with the

North East Neighborhoods Development Corp. Under Brian's leadership, the NENDC along with the Ramsey County Historical Society put together a large show on "Bungalows of the Twin Cities" at the Landmark Center in the 1995. He then did oral histories for an exhibit for the Minnesota Labor Interpretive Center, a proposed museum for which funding was vetoed by Jesse Ventura.

McMahon is currently working on a book about the history of the Ford Company in Minnesota for the University of Minnesota Press. A tour of the St. Paul Ford plant in Highland Park prompted McMahon's interest in the plant's history, and eventually led him to discover there was another St. Paul Ford plant at 117 University Avenue (which produced Model Ts) and one in Minneapolis. "I am fascinated with history in general," says McMahon, "but my interest in Ford is part of my interest in industrial architecture."

Along the way McMahon has become inspired by transportation history too, as many of the artifacts and stories he's turned up in the 8 years of working for University United relate to some aspect of transportation. Perhaps it is fate that University UNITED's offices are located in the Zimmerman building, owned by a descendent of the joint proprietor of Barrett & Zimmerman, a horse trading company formerly operating at 1933 University Avenue. In the 1896 St. Paul City Directory, Barrett & Zimmerman was one of four horse dealers at what be-

came the Great Horse Market at Prior and University. While the firm eventually went out of business, McMahon states that "there was a long transitional period where all modes [of transportation] were competing against each other - horses, railroad, streetcars, trucking, and automobiles."

McMahon has also enjoyed following serendipitous leads to other facets of transportation history along University Avenue and the surrounding neighborhoods. One such interest is William Stout, who attended Hamline University and became an engineer, founding Stout Aviation which was later bought out by Ford. However, William Stout's connection to aviation history goes even further as "he was one of the founding charter partners in Northwest Airlines," says McMahon.

With a busy day job, a wife, and four kids, McMahon admits that "research is my weekend job." He hopes to complete his Ford book this year, but it may stretch into next year.

He also admits to a long-standing avocation for "trading on eBay" allowing him to amass a large collection of photographs, ephemera, and artifacts related to University Avenue.

We are all the more fortunate then to have Brian McMahon present his research and visual details of University Avenue transportation history at the next Hamline Midway History Corps Speaker Series. For more information please visit our website at www.HamlineMidwayHistory.org

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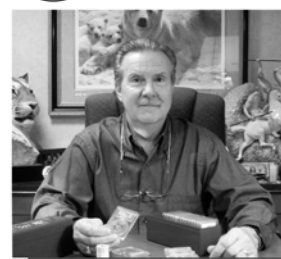
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Congratulations to Hlee Vang and her family on her selection as New Spirit School's Star Student of the Month.

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A two-space parking variance has been granted to a growing Como Park restaurant.

Java train chugs back

By JANE MCCLURE

A two-space parking variance has been granted to a growing Como Park restaurant. But the St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) vote isn't likely to end controversy over Java Train, 1337 Pascal.

The April 21 BZA decision, adopted on a 5-2 vote, is final unless it is appealed to the St. Paul City Council. As of Monitor deadline no appeal had been filed.

The variance is subject to the condition that Java Train close at 10 p.m. The board split on the vote because two members disagreed with the idea of overturning a staff recommendation to deny the variance. Staff found that the variance request didn't meet a series of conditions the city applies to every variance.

The business has four off-street parking spaces but was required to have 11 for Java Train and a florist, The Fighting Iris. Expanding the restaurant requires two more off-street parking spaces, prompting the variance request.

Java Train is seen by its supporters as the little coffee house that could. Business owners Steve and Christine Finnegan are praised for their efforts to create a community-friendly business. Getting the doors open took months of wrangling at the neighborhood and City Hall levels. But its detractors see it as a business that is trying to grow in an area where it doesn't belong, in a neighborhood where parking is already an issue.

In 2004 Java Train was issued a non-conforming use permit to allow the coffee shop and a flower shop, the Fighting Iris, to open there. The Pascal Street structure was erected in 1928, and housed

a drugstore and a grocery store. The property was originally zoned commercial, then rezoned for residential use in the 1970s as part of a citywide zoning code change.

Then came a request to allow the coffee shop to become a restaurant. In May 2007 the City Council rezoned the property from residential to business use as a way of allowing the coffee house to expand its menu to restaurant status. That was controversial because the St. Paul Planning Commission and city staff considered the move to be a spot zoning, which is illegal in Minnesota. Spot zoning is when a zoning change is made that isn't considered to be legally compatible with the surrounding zoning.

One concern with a zoning change is that it stays with the property. That means that in the future, if Java Train moves, other types of businesses the property is zoned for could move in, such as a liquor store. City staff looked at a variety of ways to help the Finnegans, possibly by making other changes in the city code, but were unable to come up with anything in a timely manner.

Similar concerns were also raised by city staff about the two-space parking variance, which city staff recommended against. The variance is sought because the Fighting Iris has closed and the Finnegans want to expand the restaurant into the former floral shop space. They also need to renovate the kitchen and expand the food offerings allowed under the restaurant's current license classification. The current expansion is not tied to any request for a beer and wine license, said Steve Finnegan. That has been debated by the community in the past.

Como Community Council

recommended approval of the parking variance. Three people spoke for granting the variance, two parishioners of the nearby Holy Childhood Catholic Church, and one neighbor. Neighbor Sarah Ford said there have not been parking problems and she anticipates that the variance and business expansion won't create any. She also said it is "embarrassing" to be wrangling over the parking variance.

But another neighbor, Bill Sylvester, said there is a parking problems in the area, which will be made worse by the expansion and variance. "This will dramatically increase the number of cars," he said. Sylvester gave the BZA photos of illegally parked vehicles in the area and noted that even city vehicles sometimes park illegally in the neighborhood so that city employees can go to Java Train.

BZA Member Vince Courtney asked Steve Finnegan if he'd be willing to accept a variance with the condition that any request for a beer and wine license be brought back for action later. But Finnegan refused, saying "I don't want to tie my hands as a business owner and limit my menu."

John Hardwick of the BZA staff said issuance of beer and wine licenses for Java Train would require a separate review process, with Como Community Council and neighbors. At that time the parking needs would be looked at again.

Other BZA members asked if shared parking could be pursued with Holy Childhood. But Finnegan said that would be another city process and more costs, for a separate conditional use permit from the Planning Commission.

Authors

Continued from page 8

Pomeroy said another commonality she saw in the stories was that many of the mothers were struggling with roles they had not chosen for themselves, but had been foisted upon them.

"Issues like divorce, death, political upheaval or cultural expectations defined them," she said.

This seemed like a common thread drawing the women together, however different their lives and backgrounds. And this book has brought several of the authors together, participating in readings locally.

"We're having a great time," said Kysar. Some writers have come from Kansas and Washington to participate in the readings.

Kysar said the book's title, "Riding Shotgun," came from one of the stories. A daughter de-

scribes how she "rode shotgun" for her mother as she drove across the country selling Stanley products. It was the daughter's job to make sure her mom stayed awake on the long drive home.

"We needed a title that would explain that this is not a book just about sweetness and light," Kysar said. She said it also described the mother-daughter relationship, helping each other on the metaphorical journey of life.

Eagle Scout Award May 15

Brian Madison, 15 yrs. old, of St. Paul, MN, has earned the highest advancement award the Boy Scouts of America offers to Scouts, the Eagle Scout Award.

Madison will be recognized in ceremonies on Thursday, May 15th, 2008 at 7pm in the school

auditorium at the Church of St. Columba.

A member of St. Columba's Troop 13, Madison is one of approximately 4 percent of all Boy Scouts who attain the Eagle rank, according to Scoutmaster Nick Denking.

Carty Heights holds Grand Opening, honors funders



Carty Heights is a federally-subsidized residence for limited-income individuals age 62+ at 412 North Dunlap. It opened November 1, 2007 as a full house with a waiting list. As last week's official Grand Opening celebration on May 1, 2008, the waiting list had grown to an estimated 10 years long. The program honored the organizations and individuals that participated in the funding of Carty Heights. (Back Row): Jerry Timian, The Saint Paul Foundation; Melvin Carter III, City Council, Ward 1, City of Saint Paul; Chris Coleman, Mayor, City of Saint Paul; Robert Odman, Assistant Commissioner, Multi-Family Division, Minnesota Housing; Paul Woxland, Director, Minneapolis Multi-Family Hub, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development; (Front Row): Sylvia Carty, wife of namesake Fr. Denzil Carty, flanked by daughters Jaqueline and Celeste.



Washington Middle School announces \$17 renovation

By JAN WILLMS

Changes to a Northside landmark add the latest in technology but holds onto historical tradition.

A grand reopening at 10 a.m. on May 28 will celebrate the completion of the \$17 million renovation to Washington Technology Magnet Middle School at 1041 Marion St.

"We kept the shell of the building, the nice brick exterior and the natural woodwork," said Dr. Mike McCollor, principal of the school. "But we gutted a lot of the interior."

The architectural changes, which make the building handicap accessible and more usable, have earned the school the FAB award for design.

According to McCollor,

plans to renovate the 1924 building began about four years ago, with the actual process taking place the past two years.

"The biggest piece of the project has been to bring more technology to the school," McCollor said. "We have eight different computer labs, a new media center and wireless computer network."

The three-story Technology Gallery addition is the heart of the school, according to McCollor. The atrium space is described as flooded with daylight and alive with student interaction.

The contrast between the traditional exterior and the bright and fresh interior look is energizing and invigorating. The improvements in the technological aspects of the school are de-

signed to match the new programs, such as the BioSMART initiative, that Washington has undertaken.

The school remained open all during the renovation and construction process, with the architect and school coordinating closely to maintain safety and security in order to help avoid disruption.

According to information provided by Washington School, the goals for the renovation included unifying and rejuvenating an old building; clarifying circulation in a complex floor plan; increasing security and visibility within the school; enhancing technology capabilities to support special curriculum and exploring sustainable opportunities.

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Ngon Vietnamese bistro a diamond in the rough

By KRISTA FINSTAD HANSON

Getting a good meal from an independently-owned restaurant is high on my list of favorite things to do. Finding a place with excellent locally-grown food, a lovely interior, and fair prices is definitely hitting the trifecta!

Recently my husband and I tried Ngon Vietnamese Bistro (799 University Avenue, www.ngonbistro.com). The 1922 historic retail corner store has been gloriously restored by current owners Hai and Jessica Truong. The building housed the Caravelle restaurant (1984-2001) and recently Pho Anh, both owned by Truong's family, where he cut his teeth in the restaurant business. Although his degree is in economics and he previously worked as a stock broker, he joined his passion for food with his wife's interior design skills in unearthing a diamond in the rough along the avenue.

I was instantly pleased with the charming interior. The shimmer of light inside comes from the buttery yellow walls, wrought iron candelabras, silk-shaded sconces, and the brilliant openness of the restaurant that still feels intimate. There is an air of French Colonial Vietnam, which is certainly fitting. With the whispery curtain panels blocking the unsightly view of the bus shelter, I had for a moment a quick déjà vu ... were we in Paris or were we in the Midway? Then I realized that this restaurant was exactly what University Avenue needed. When you want to talk about revitaliza-



Ngon Chef Hai Truong holds the "Tuna Mango Pasta" which is seared ahi tuna with frisée, pickle mango salad, fresh herbs, green beans and angel hair pasta. Ngon Vietnamese Bistro, 799 University Avenue, is a 1922 historic retail corner store which has been gloriously restored by current owners Hai and Jessica Truong. (Photo by Denis Jeong Plaster)

tion of the Central Corridor, you needn't look any further than Ngon.

On our first dinner out my husband sampled appetizers. We had the lettuce wraps, spring rolls, soup, and the Asian pear salad with walnuts, organic spring greens, and a lychee vinaigrette. Local food supporters will be happy to know that Executive chef/Proprietor Hai Truong sources as many local and organic

ingredients as possible, as well as featuring organic wines and a Minnesota beer selection.

We were impressed with the food presentation initially and the quick service of the professional servers. While we had certainly too much food for our small table, we enjoyed the large white platters of food with garnishes that made even simple spring rolls appear elegant. We had nary a complaint with the

taste of our food, and were smiling even wider when our bill for two came out with tip for under \$50.

I decided to visit again for lunch. A friend and I were treated to a lovely sunny day wherein the curtains were closed, yet the restaurant continued to sparkle.

My friend had the lettuce wrap appetizers and fried tofu, glazed in a house ginger sauce. She thought that the tofu had a

"terrific texture - a little crisp, a little chewy" with the "right amount of sauce" and that it was "very flavorful" and "not greasy."

The "Bun" dishes consist of a grilled piece of meat or tofu served over rice vermicelli. I had the Bun Ga Nuong which was served room temperature. It was topped with shredded carrot, scallion, chicken, and lettuce. With a side of peanut sauce thrown on as the dressing, it was heavenly.

The Com Tam is served warm with a center pile of rice topped with shredded carrots, surrounded by the grilled meat (again chicken) and sliced tomatoes. Both dishes had unique tastes and textures, were light yet filling, and were generous portions for their \$6.95 price tag.

I have yet to return to sample the soups, but my friends who have eaten there several times swear the Pho is the best around. Those who don't eat beef should know that Pho is made from a beef stock, but can be glad that it is grass-fed, Minnesota-raised beef. A vegetarian soup option is the Hu Tieu with a vegetable-broth base, that can be had with duck, chicken, seafood, or vegetables. There is also a daily fish feature, as well as other entrees and specials.

The only complaint I could possibly muster is that I ordered way too much food and had to request a to-go box, which was unfortunately Styrofoam. Next time I will know to bring along more friends and some Tupperware from home just in case!

Hamline University Commencement 2008

Commencement ceremonies will be held on Saturday, May 17, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

We ask for your patience as we welcome the friends and families of our graduates to the neighborhood.

For more information on Commencement, please call the Office of Marketing Communications at 651-523-2216 or commencement@hamline.edu.



Upcoming Summer Events

Minnesota Private College Week

Open house for prospective students and parents featuring information sessions, faculty speakers, student panels, and campus tours.

Dates: Monday–Friday, June 23–27

Contact: 651-523-2207

A Taste of Hamline

Open house for prospective students and parents featuring a picnic lunch, ice cream social, information sessions, faculty speakers, student panel, and campus tours.

Date: Monday, July 21

Contact: 651-523-2207

Hamline at the Minnesota State Fair

Come for a corn dog and visit the Hamline booth in the Education Building!

Dates: August 21–September 1

Location: Education Building

Cost: Price of State Fair admission ticket

Contact: Tracy Sparby, 651-523-2216 or tsparby@hamline.edu

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