



New jobs coming to Midway

By JANE McCLURE

A firm with water resource projects, including the recent Transforming Central work, is relocating to University Ave.

The St. Paul City Council Jan. 8, 2020, acting as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Board, unanimously approved a \$49,500 forgivable Strategic Investment Fund loan to Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc.

It is one of two jobs creation projects coming to the Midway.

"We're excited to be here," said Brent Emmons, CEO of Emmons & Olivier. "This is a big decision for us. Our business is growing." He described the University Ave. site as being in a vibrant area. "We found a great location."

The location is on University between Fairview and Prior avenues.

NEW JOBS >> 10

DOING THEIR PART TO REFUSE, REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE



PCs for People Tech specialist Chang Yang tests more than 100 donated computers every day. If a computer can't be repaired, its usable components are refitted and its unusable ones are recycled. Last year, PCs for People provided affordable computers and related technology to 804 customers in the 55104 zip code. At its most recent community event in this part of St. Paul, 50 computers were distributed to families at no cost. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin) >> Read more on page 5.

Jessica Kopp steps into new role on school board

She views her job as connecting community, SPSD

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Former middle school teacher Jessica Kopp started a new part-time job in early January. She is one of two newly elected members of the Saint Paul School Board: a four-year, non-partisan position which she won with more than 20,000 votes.

Interviewed after her first two weeks on the job, Kopp said, "I'm aware of the bigness of it right now. Our school board has a budget of more than \$700,000,000. We're the second largest school district in the state, with more than 35,000 students in K-12, transitional programs, early childhood education, special needs, adult basic education, and more."

JESSICA KOPP >> 8

Assume mothers get custody of kids in domestic abuse cases? Think again.

Violence Free Minnesota Executive Director points out abuser more likely to get custody in contested cases than mom

This series seeks to put a face on domestic abuse and intimate partner violence. Read past articles on our web site.

By TESSA M. CHRISTENSEN
Over the past 40-year history, the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW) has witnessed huge changes in how society thinks about domestic violence but there is still more work to be done, according to its executive director Liz Richards.
There are still plenty of myths to be dispelled.
"While we are proud of our history, the landscape of our work and the movement to end violence is more complex and challenging than ever. The movement to end relationship

ALIENATION TRUMPS ABUSE

When mothers claim any type of abuse and fathers claim "alienation:"

Courts believe only

Mothers are **3X** more likely to lose custody.

1 in 51 of the cases when mothers report child sexual abuse and fathers claim "alienation."

Even when alienation is believed by court... and abuse believed by court...

43% Mothers lose custody **43%**

Information courtesy of 2019 study by George Washington University Law School

"As advocates and survivors, we continuously search for new and innovative ways to end relationship violence in Minnesota and beyond. This is why we are excited to embrace our new identity as Violence Free Minnesota: The Coalition to End Relationship Abuse."

Fathers getting children more when mothers bring up domestic violence

Richards is proud of the progress her organization has made for women in Minnesota.
"In 1978, if you were experiencing domestic violence, you had few options," she pointed out. "If you fled, there was no place to go. If you called the police, there was no crime."
Today, there are shelters, organizations aimed at helping survivors, support groups, and laws that protect those in abusive situations.

Yet, there still remains a disconnect between that progress and family court. "What goes on

in family court doesn't mirror that," remarked Richards.

Instead, new research done by Professor Joan Meier at George Washington University Law School shows what is actually happening in family court.

"The general presumption is that moms get custody in divorce cases," observed Richards. While that may be true when you look at all of divorce cases, those where couples can agree on what to do about their kids, it isn't true when domestic violence is a factor.

In contested cases, a father is just as likely to get custody as a mother, Richards pointed out, citing Meier's research.

And what shocks people is what happens when there's domestic violence.

"If you look at the contested cases with domestic violence against the mother or child abuse by the father against the child, fathers are more likely to gain custody," said Richards.

THINK AGAIN >> 2

abuse must be highly iterative and adaptive," said Richards.



Find it in our annual Summer Camp Guide

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Author tells kids to embrace feeling happy and sad at same time

PAGE 11



Here's what you need to know about latest plans for Shalom Home

PAGE 12

Assume mothers get custody of kids in domestic abuse cases? Think again.

>> from 1

The study looked at more than 2,000 custody cases involving child abuse, domestic violence, and parental alienation nationwide. There is no study specific to Minnesota and no state agency that looks specifically at domestic violence, but Richards believes that Minnesota mirrors what has been found at a national level.

"When there are contested cases and domestic violence, fathers are receiving custody more frequently," stated Richards.

Why is this happening?

That's not an easy question to answer, but Richards thinks that part of the answer lies in how the family court system has evolved.

She began her career as a family law attorney who worked in Hennepin, Ramsey and Chisago counties before taking a job with the MCBW 10 years ago.

Richards believe that part of the problem is that so many parties are unrepresented by legal council, and lack the knowledge and guidance of an attorney. Part of that is because of high fees for legal services that stretch over years. "You have parties showing up not understanding the system," observed Richards.

ALIENATION TRUMPS ABUSE

Mothers' reports of Fathers' abuse in custody litigation are believed less than **1/2** the time

When Fathers use the alienation defense, courts believe abuse - especially child abuse - far less

Child abuse allegations and alienation defenses put Mothers at highest risk of losing custody

Courts are far less likely to believe child abuse claims than partner violence (DV)

Information courtesy of 2019 study by George Washington University Law School

At the same time the caseload of judicial officers has grown tremendously. Ancillary court services have been cut - Hennepin County is the only one in the state that still offers custody evaluations. These were the people who used to be able to spend more time with cases and provide the court with more outside data to determine what was happening within a family.

"We've got this perfect storm," Richards remarked.

There's been a movement within family court to streamline the process. "They keep looking for the thing that will make it

better," Richards said.

One Hennepin County judge began sitting down with both parties within a week or so after they filed for divorce to figure out what they could agree upon, and then set up a process for managing the finances and custody. It worked so well for that one judge that the county and then much of the state instituted it for everyone, giving it the name of Initial Case Management Conference (ICMC), which is followed by the FENE (Financial Early Neutral Evaluation) and the SENE (Social Early Neutral Evaluation). However, things are so backlogged

now, it can take months for an ICMC to occur, and longer for the ENEs.

"Now instead of becoming a way to make things smooth, it's become a roadblock," observed Richards.

Then there's the issue with requiring mediation between an abuser and a victim, she pointed out. It doesn't account for the power imbalance found in abusive relationships.

Plus, it is set up in a way that further abuses the victim.

At an FENE or SENE, each person gets to tell their side of the story without comment from the other - even to correct blatant lies. And each side is paying for their attorney to be there but the attorneys aren't allowed to speak as there is an attitude that they augment conflict. "The process in and of itself can be very damaging," said Richards. It is only natural to want to respond when you hear mistruths, but participants have to ignore that.

"It's just insane as a process," said Richards.

'We need a smorgasboard of options'

She doesn't think there is one magic answer to the problems in family court. "We need a smorgasboard of options," Rich-

ards said.

In some cases, the domestic violence that occurred isn't relevant to a financial division or custody. It could have been an isolated incident that occurred at the end of the relationship when it was most stressful. But in other situations, the domestic violence played out for years through coercive control, financial manipulation, and psychological, sexual and physical abuse of one partner by the other. Sometimes there was direct physical and sexual abuse of the children, and other times emotional and psychological.

Richards believes the system needs to ask about domestic violence immediately, gather information on it, consider the context, and factor it in. "Who is doing what to whom, with what impact?"

That should be followed up with this question in custody cases: "What is the impact and effect on children?"

The Battered Women's Justice Project in Minneapolis has created a system focused on this, pointed out Richards. Termed the SaFER Approach, staff are working to educate family court professionals across the country.

THINK AGAIN >> 3

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VOICES against VIOLENCE

This series seeks to put a face on domestic abuse and intimate partner violence. Read past articles on our web site.

DEFINE IT

"HIGH CONFLICT" – To the court, "high conflict" can refer to cases that just won't settle. To many mediators, it can mean that parties are unable to communicate effectively. To custody evaluators, it can refer to anything from frequent disagreements to severe, long-term domestic violence. Labeling a case as "high conflict" can often distract from what is actually going on, according to the Battered Women's Justice Project. It can also disguise things as "high conflict" that are not conflict at all, like intimate partner abuse, child abuse, and child sexual abuse.

CONTESTED CASE – When parents can't agree on custody and parenting time arrangements, it becomes a contested case and the court is involved in making the decisions.

"ALIENATION" – Sometimes called "parental alienation syndrome," this theory has been rejected by the psychological definition book, the DSM-V, as it lacks any scientific basis. However, it is still being used in the family court system. Often used to limit protective mothers to supervised or no visitation, it assumes that problems in a relationship between an allegedly abusive father and the children must be caused by alienation. The most common context of alienation claims is that fathers accused of abuse counter with claims of alienation.

ICMC – The ICMC is the first appearance in Family Court. It is supposed to happen about 3 to 4 weeks after a filing for divorce.

FENE – A Financial Early Neutral Evaluation (FENE) is part of the Alternative Dispute Resolution process in Minnesota divorce cases. An FENE involves a half-day session (or more) with a court-appointed neutral. This neutral is typically an experienced family law attorney, or a CPA familiar with the financial issues.

SENE – A Social Early Neutral Evaluation is a voluntary process parents may choose to participate in when they disagree about custody or parenting issues. Typically the SENE will involve both parties, both attorneys, and two court-appointed custody evaluators (one male and one female). During the session, each party (and his or her attorney) is given the opportunity to explain what they would like for a custody and parenting time arrangement, and why.

Think again.

>> from 2

Kids affected when moms are abused

"We know there is a high correlation between those that engage in domestic violence and child abuse," observed Richards.

Plus, research has shown that domestic violence in a home affects the children who live there, whether or not they are physically hurt.

"What we know about resiliency of children is definitely linked to support of the non-abusive parent," said Richards.

Unfortunately, she doesn't think the system in place is set up to adequately account for that.

'It takes two' is a myth

There is the idea in family court that there are two equal parties in a divorce. "The mantra is that it takes two," observed Richards, and that both parties are engaged in conflict. These are then termed "high conflict" cases.

That doesn't factor in the reality of domestic violence. Where there's intimate partner violence, one person is exerting power and control over the other and is engaged in manipulating the system. "If you have a father who has been engaged in coercive control, they're highly skilled in using these same tactics in the family court system," said Richards.

For example, the abusive party may set things up to make the other parent look inflexible when they're trying to keep things consistent for the kids. The abusive parent works to create chaos by trying to change the schedule, not show up, or move the pick-up location.

"What is the other party supposed to do?" asked Richards. "It is assumed that both parties have the best interests of the children at heart. In a situation with domestic violence, one is trying to use the children as a tool for the manipulation. It's just a set up."

Richards said, "If you have one parent who is working to abuse and manipulate, what does it mean for the other parent to go along?"

She pointed out that some judicial officers do a better job than others at recognizing this dynamic. There aren't any standards for training in domestic violence dynamics for judicial officers, and the system overall isn't set up to adequately understand and recognize domestic violence.

The domestic violence organizations in the state are primarily shelter-based, and they're dealing with the emergency shelter needs of their clients. There

Current Law on Custody & Parenting Time



START

Parents are seen as equals.

There are **no presumptions** about what physical custody should be or what amount of parenting time a parent should get. (Minn. Stat. 518.17(b)(7))

The Court considers 12 Best Interest of Children (BloC) factors as established by the state legislature in 2015:

Child's needs & effect of Parenting Time arrangements on child.

Any special needs of the child (health, medical, educational).

History of caretaking.

Benefit of maximizing time with each parent and determinant of limiting time.

Physical, mental, chemical dependency issues of parent that impact the child.

Child's preference (if appropriate).

Willingness and ability to care for child.

Effect on child of changes in home/school/community.

Relationships of extended family, including siblings.

Whether domestic abuse occurred & implications for child.

Parent's ability to support child's relationship with other parent.

Ability of parents to co-parent.

Decide physical custody; how time is structured between parents; parenting time schedule

Endangerment of child: restrict parenting time (e.g. supervised). (Minn. Stat. 518.175 subd 1(b))



At a **minimum**, parents should receive 25% parenting time as established in 2006.

(Minn. Stat. 518.175 subd 1(g))

MCBW Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women

aren't any that have the resources to also manage what happens after the emergency when the victim is in family court fighting an abuser.

"Some of these cases stretch on for years," observed Richards. "This is a problem across the country."

She believes that Minnesota's 12 best interest factors in statute 518.17 used in determining custody arrangements are supposed to place the focus upon kids. But Richards acknowledges, "There is a breakdown in what the law says and how it gets implemented in court."

Does a child need a parent who is not safe?

Part of the problem is the insistence that every child needs to have two parents, a belief Rich-

ards says is deeply ingrained in society. To that, Richards asked, "Do you think it matters if one of the parents is sexually abusing a child? Do you think it matters if one of the parents is physically abusive towards a child?"

What is best for children is to have two safe parents, stressed Richards. "But if it's not safe parenting that's happening, it's not in the child's best interest."

She doesn't believe that the standard should be equal access to both parents, and doesn't support any change in state law that would make 50/50 parenting the base assumption.

"I think safe parenting has to be the standard," Richards said.

Some argue that women make false claims of abuse to get their way in divorce cases. "I have yet to see one person claim do-

mestic violence and it made their life better," said Richards. "Most people who talk about domestic violence do because it's happening in their lives."

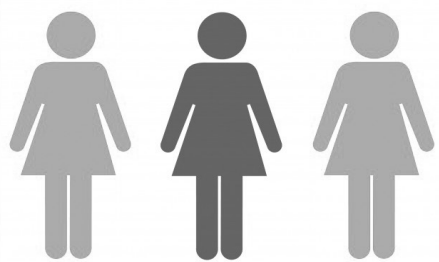
The incidences of false allegations are extremely rare, she said. "The parent most likely to make false allegations are fathers and not mothers."

But this idea, like many others that show up in family court, are not driven by evidence. They're driven by emotion, according to Richards. They're myths that society has adopted as true.

"It plays out in people's lives and it's devastating," she said.

Contact editor at tesha@MonitorSaintPaul.com. Read more articles in this series at <http://monitorsaintpaul.com/category/voices-against-violence/>

1 in 3 women experience domestic violence by their partners



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The Motley Conversation

Monitor

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Letters to the Editor

We are not believed about our own lives

Dear Editor:

Thank you for interviewing Leigh Ann Block and, presumably, believing her story. Unlike the lawyers, judges and social workers who cared more about giving the violent man who would murder her daughter "a chance to demonstrate good behavior."

I could have lost either or both of my children to their abusive father many years ago. But they and I - were luckier than Mikayla and Leigh.

I had decent lawyers for my divorce, unlike Martha Eaves of SMRLS. But I knew that most people, and most professionals involved in divorce and custody cases, think women trying to protect our children from violent men in their lives are making up stories to get revenge. That's the baseline wrong done to Leigh, Mikayla and so many other victims of abuse, most of which is perpetrated by men.

We are not believed about our own lives and our children's lives, and the violent men in our lives. My children's father was a - now retired - Presbyterian minister. You think most people believed me about his violence, his refusal to recognize other people's rights or boundaries, his resentment at "having to be a good boy"?

My children are grown, and caring, nonviolent, great people. We've survived. But part of me will feel safer when that man is dead.

Thank you, Leigh Ann, for your love and courage to keep going after being abused by that monster, suffering your little daughter's murder, and having your warnings ignored by people who should have paid attention.

It's a disease of "professionals," of "experts," to think they know better than the people who come to them for help. Doctors, lawyers, cops, judges, social workers, even some teachers and mental health workers have this disease. People die every day because of this disease of arrogance, distrust of women, racism.

Thank you again for writing this. I'm sure you'll receive a lot of letters like mine.

Helen Hunter
St Paul

Impactful series in wake of triple murder by father

Dear Editor:

Just finished reading your two stories about domestic abuse in the most recent edition of the *Monitor*. Very impactful writing, especially with the tragedy today in south Minneapolis, demonstrating the worst outcome of an abusive relationship.

May I offer a correction of the name for one of the resources for those in an abusive relationship? You referred to the "Alexander House"; I believe you meant the Alexandra House in Blaine.

Sincerely,
Joel Carter

What about men who are abused by women?

Dear Editor:

I received the newspaper today, and read the article about Leigh Ann Block and her late daughter Mikayla. The story is at once heartbreaking and frustrating, and I thank you for writing it. I admire Ms. Block's activism, and I wish she could find more peace of mind, though given what happened, that may not be possible.

I wanted to bring up one sentence from the article, that I'm kind of stuck on. It's on page 2, column 3, 4th full paragraph: "Like many men, he didn't really start showing his abusive side until...."

I feel like doing a slight rewrite on the first phrase of that sentence. Maybe something like "Like many eventual abusers...." This phrase takes gender out of it (since women are abusers, too, though not nearly as often as men) and it also shrinks the pool from all males to just abusive people. As written, that sentence struck me as a little unfair to my gender.

But I'm nitpicking, and I'll stop now. Thanks again for the article - it was an engrossing account of a very sad situation.

Have a Happy New Year,
Mark Brandt

Editor's note: *While it is definitely true both males and fe-*

males can be abusive, the majority of abusers are men, and the majority of violent abusers are men. Many do argue that while both genders employ power and control dynamics, it is significantly worse for women. This isn't something everyone agrees on, though, and is currently a hot discussion topic with the recent re-naming of the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women to Violence Free Minnesota.

I hope that the graphic that accompanied the article you're referring to helped put things in perspective by showing the exact breakdown of murders by father/mother/etc. according to the Center for Judicial Excellence.

I hope fellow dog park users attend Area C meeting on Feb. 20

Dear Editor:

As a visitor to dog parks along the river, community member concerned about water quality, and kayaker, I am looking forward to learning more about the impact of Ford's Area C dumpsite to river water quality downstream of Hidden Falls later this month.

What is known about the pollutants from paint solvents and sludge that were buried in the now fenced-off area just upstream from Hidden Falls? Are they getting into the river? Will the area and water in the river be monitored and cleaned up before development happens over the Area C site? I first heard about this issue because I work at Friends of the Mississippi River, but I imagine many fellow residents want to know the answers to these and other questions, too.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's public meeting is coming up on Thursday, Feb. 20 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 700 Snelling Ave. S. I hope fellow dog park users, river lovers or concerned citizens will attend so people can learn more about what is going on and where we go from here.

Thank you,
Jennifer Schuetz Hadley
Hamline Midway resident

Send in letters to the editor, press releases and more!
Email tesha@MonitorSaintPaul.com

DIVING DEEPER

What we've learned: Highlights from Intimate Partner Homicide Report

Now in its 30th edition, the Femicide Report has a new name: the Intimate Partner Homicide Report coinciding with the renaming of the Minnesota Battered Women's Coalition to Violence Free Minnesota.

Over three decades, at least 685 people were killed due to relationship abuse. The youngest victim was just 22 weeks old; the oldest was 88. Homicide victims include not only the victim of abuse, but people who tried to intervene to stop the violence: bystanders, first-responders, neighbors, friends, family, and children. Such victims represent the ripple effect of domestic violence and how it permeates communities. In sharing their stories, we chip away at the discredited notion that domestic violence is a private, family affair to invite public discourse and action towards a violence free future.

Power and control

While public perception of relationship abuse often emphasizes long histories of physical violence and noticeable injuries, relationship abuse is about a larger pattern of power and control.

People who abuse feel entitled to use physical, sexual, financial, and emotional tactics to control, isolate, and trap their partners. Relationships that have not previously involved physical abuse may involve long histories of humiliation, intimidation, and gaslighting that can culminate in an act of homicide. These tactics are used to instill fear in victims, increase compliance, and cause psychological injury. Victims who experience such abuse may gradually lose access to support services, become isolated from social networks, start to blame themselves, and believe they do not deserve better.

Abuse can look different in every relationship but always ties back to the same motivation: to gain and maintain power and control. Abusive partners may become horrifyingly creative in their tactics, including knowingly transmitting infections to victims and endangering their health; threatening or injuring their children and loved ones; responding with severe violence to rejection; monitoring their location and

movements; controlling their access to healthy relationships; and undermining their mental and chemical health by sabotaging their recovery efforts. Many victims who have experienced pervasive levels of abuse report feeling helpless, confused, "crazy," and defeated due to a gradual breakdown of their sense of self.

Children affected

Intimate partner homicides have a devastating impact on children, as well. CDC-Kaiser Permanente's Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study is one of the largest investigations of the impact of childhood experiences on life-long health and well-being. The ACE research demonstrates that exposure to domestic violence can increase risk for physical, mental health, and substance abuse conditions. The impact of chronic domestic violence exposure in childhood was found to have long-term effects throughout the life span.

Impacts on minor children are seen throughout our 30 years of data: children who witnessed the homicide of a parent (22% of cases); children who were killed alongside their parent (16 children); and children killed as a method of coercion by an abusive partner (17 children). This data does not include the number of adult children who may have witnessed or were murdered alongside their parent. In many of the cases involving minor children, the need for protection was raised in a court proceeding or made known to another professional.

While some children are injured or killed as part of the relationship abuse against their parent, many more children are harmed by witnessing the violence. Over three decades, 151 cases of domestic violence homicide occurred with a child witnessing the murder. While experiencing and witnessing relationship violence negatively impacts children, research shows that children are most resilient and have the best emotional recovery when there is a strong relationship with the non-abusive parent. Safety of children is directly linked to the safety and support of victim-parents.

Selection of report above. Read the full report at <https://www.vfmmn.org/reports>.

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Story ideas always welcome.

Keep in touch with the *Monitor*. Letters to the editor under 200 words and news releases for publication can be sent via e-mail to news@monitorsaintpaul.com. Unsigned letters will not run.

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is both black and white, both/and. As a media company, we work to highlight issues, solve real, meaningful problems, and repair existing social systems. We are working with our readers and advertisers to create a more just and responsible society that hears, helps and heals the customers and communities we serve.

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Rebuild Repair Recycle

Reusing electronic waste = free and affordable computers

PCs for People diverts electronics from waste stream, promotes digital inclusion

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Last summer, PCs for People expanded to a 31,000-square-foot warehouse in the Como neighborhood. National communications and marketing director Tina Stennes said, "We were bursting at the seams. Our original location at 1481 Marshall Ave. is still our home-base for retail, but it was also our recycling and refurbishing space for 20 years.

"We've been able to increase both the scope and scale of our operations since we expanded. Our combined workforce in the two locations is now close to 50. One fifth of the employees at the warehouse are adults with disabilities."

Stennes said, "Everybody that works here has a real passion for our mission, which is to provide income-eligible adults with equitable access to technology. In my previous job (in workforce development), I saw that lack of access to technology was a huge barrier to people trying to get ahead."

PCs for People accepts donated computers – and other forms of digital technology – from individual and corporate donors. Items do not need to be in working order. Corporations



Saytun Ahmed is a customer service representative at the Marshall Avenue store. She spent a day on the line in the new warehouse, getting a feel for the recycling process. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

are considerable donors because the average lifespan of digital technology in the corporate world is three years. There are a lot of digital electronics entering the waste stream.

The new warehouse is stuffed with used laptops, desktops, old typewriters, outdated cell phones, ancient car phones, hard drives, miles of USB cords, and every component imaginable, but there's room for more. Email recycle@pcsforpeople.org to schedule a free pick-up of your used digital technology.

Privacy protection is a huge



PCs for People national communications and marketing director Tina Stennes said, "Last year, we provided affordable computers and related technology to 804 customers in the 55104 zip code. At our most recent community event in this part of St. Paul, 50 computers were distributed to families at no cost." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

issue when it comes to refurbishing computers. Stennes explained, "We hold the highest industry certification for data security. The donor should do a data transfer prior to coming in, but we'll do the rest. The computer is literally wiped clean of all personal information; the donor is given a transfer of ownership. We guarantee that the parts will be refurbished or responsibly recycled."

Free computer events

PCs for People hosts about 10 community events each month, where they bring refurbished computers out into the community for distribution at no cost. Participating families are pre-selected using income eligibility based on the free and re-

duced lunch program guidelines. Most of these events take place in schools, and everything needed to operate the computers is included.

Stennes said, "In 2018, 60% of the customers we served through our community events or through our store had never owned a computer before. Often students know how to operate a computer, but their parents don't. We follow up with new owners, providing tech support and digital literacy support. Every computer comes with a no-questions-asked one year warranty."

Affordable computers for sale

When a prospective customer enters the Marshall Ave. store, they are greeted by a customer service representative. Each cus-

tommer provides income verification paperwork; acceptable forms are listed on the website www.pcsforpeople.org. Income eligible customers can purchase a desktop starting at \$30 or a laptop starting at \$50, which is approximately 1/10 of the used market value. Each refurbished computer comes with all new RAM, hard drive, Microsoft Word 10, and the same warranty as computers distributed through community programs.

Another point of removing digital barriers is having affordable access to the internet. Income eligible customers can choose to buy low cost internet (as low as \$15/month). This service is prepaid, has high speed 4G, and runs off of a mobile hot spot.

"We want customers to have an experience in our store that is as professional as any other retail outlet, and we want them to leave with a computer that fully meets their needs," said Stennes. "Customers often come back and tell us what they've used their computer for. Or, they'll send an email saying, 'This is the first email I've ever sent. Thank you!'"

PCs for People started in St. Paul, has expanded to Denver and Cleveland, and plans to open soon in Baltimore and Kansas City. If you are interested in their mission of digital inclusion and waste stream reduction in St. Paul, email volunteer@pcsforpeople.org to learn about volunteer experiences for groups. No tech experience is needed.

Why recycle?

1. Recycling helps you be more responsible – According to academic studies, those who recycle become more self-aware about how much they acquire and how they dispose of things.

2. Recycling preserves natural resources – Recycling materials such as paper, metal, and plastic to make new things reduces the need to use virgin materials, which means reducing the need to cut down trees and mine and drill into the Earth.

3. Recycling helps our economy – Recycling supports businesses dependent on recycling – from companies that provide recycling services to manufacturers dependent on using recycled goods.

4. Recycling saves energy – Every product you purchase requires enormous amounts of energy to produce: harvesting a product's raw materials, transporting these materials, manufacturing them into final form, and bringing the product to market.*

Hamline Midway Coalition



By **MELISSA CORTEZ MICHENER**
melissa@hamlinemidway.org

5. Recycling reduces pollution in our community – Recycling reduces the need for newly manufac-

tured goods, which helps reduce the pollution generated by material-making industrial processes. Recycling also helps cut down on carbon emissions, which reduces greenhouse gases.

For more information about recycling at home, refer to RamseyRecycles.com/GeneralRecycling.

- General tips
- Empty and rinse containers and replace caps.
 - Flatten cardboard boxes. Do not flatten cartons, metal cans or plastic containers.
 - Keep paper and boxes dry.

• Place all recyclables loose in the recycling cart or dumpster.

• Do not include plastic bags with your recycling. They can jam sorting machines at recycling facilities. Bring plastic bags to a retailer or visit Plastic Film Recycling to find a drop off site.

- No shredded paper, wrapping paper or tissue paper.
- No boxes with foil, foil pouches, bags and wrappers.

* Editor's note: Recycling also uses energy as compared to refusing, reducing and reusing.

10

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Summer Camp Guide

Create a cardboard castle, a cigar box guitar, or a Lego robot. Connect with long-time friends and make new ones while learning how to kayak, juggle or sew. Make a puppet, animated cartoon, stationary, or your own song.

THERE ARE SO MANY SUMMER CAMP OPTIONS IN THE TWIN CITIES AREA, YOUR KIDS WILL HAVE TROUBLE PICKING JUST ONE!

Browse below for more information on some of the camps offered locally.

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

AUTISM SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA

Experience outdoor activities at AuSM camps tailored for youth age 6 and up and adults with autism. Two residential camps where campers stay several days and nights are also offered in northern Minnesota at several locations.

ausm.org/camp/ausm-summer-camps.html
651-647-1083

BLACKHAWKS OF ST. PAUL

Blackhawks offer several exciting half- and full-day soccer camps for players ages 5-18 that encompass a wide variety of activities and skills. Specialty camps focus on specific skills such as ball control, shooting, and goalkeeping.

651-894-3527
<http://blackhawksoccer.org/>

CAMP COMO

Spend some time "Monkeying Around" with your primate pals, go for the gold in "Animal Olympics", take an "African Adventure" without leaving Como, or try on the hat of a zookeeper or gardener in "Behind-the-Scenes!". Como's camps focus on developing children's appreciation for the natural world through play and exploration, behind-the-scenes experiences, interactions with zookeepers and gardeners, and up-close encounters with plant and animal ambassadors. Five-day, half-day or full-day sessions for preschool to

grade eight. Extended care available.

651-487-8272
<https://comozooconservatory.org/como/camp-como/>

FOREST SCHOOL

Free Forest School of the Twin Cities is a free group, open to young children and their parents or caregivers. This is a welcoming and non-judgmental group where parents and caregivers can practice giving children space and autonomy to explore and create in nature. Free Forest School meets every day of the week throughout the year at wilderness areas around the metro. Share a snack, take a hike, play in the woods, and have circle time. Parents get a chance to unplug and step back... Kids and their imaginations take the lead.

Cost: Free
www.freeforestschool.org/free-forest-school-twin-cities-minnesota/

FRIENDS SCHOOL

Want to make a film just like the professionals do? Feel like biking 10 (or 20!) miles a day? Have a secret stash of poems you want to share? Feel a need to express yourself through paint and paper-folding? Maybe you'd rather argue for the defense in a real courtroom? Friends School will be the place to do that--and more--from June to August for ages 4-14. Weekdays, half- and full-day. Extended day care in the mornings and afternoons and need-based financial aid available.

651-621-8941
<http://www.fsmn.org>



Boys who love to sing may enjoy creating music during the Boychoir Boot Camp Aug. 3-7 at Concordia University. The camp is for boys entering first to fifth grade. (Photo courtesy of the Boychoir)

GERMAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CAMPS

Speak, hear, sing, and create in German while exploring subjects ranging from history and art to science and music during five-day, half-, full- and extended-day sessions for grades K-13 at the Germanic American Institute.

651-222-2979
<http://gai-mn.org>

GIBBS MUSEUM OF PIONEER AND DAKOTA LIFE CAMPS

Travel back in time and learn about life in the 1800s. Explore seasonal Dakota activities including the maple sugar camp, wild rice village, life in the tipi, hunting games, methods of travel, language and song. Three-day, half-day camps. One-day Pioneer Peewees camps offered for ages 4-5.

651-646-8629
<http://www.rchs.com>

HAMLIN YOUNG WRITERS

High school students ages 15-18 can explore the craft, prepare for college, and connect with other young writers in the Twin Cities,

while working closely with Hamline Creative Writing faculty and published authors.

651-523-2476
<http://www.hamline.edu/gls/youngwriters/>

MINNESOTA WALDORF SCHOOL

Join the Minnesota Waldorf School for good, old-fashioned summer fun with outdoor games, natural crafts, water play, gardening, fairy camp, and much more. For children ages 3.5 to (rising) 6th grade.

651-487-6700 x202
<http://mnwaldorf.org/summer-camp>

RAPTOR CENTER

Summer sessions for ages 6-14 are run by the University of Minnesota's Rec & Wellness Camps. Camps also offered in partnership with MIA and Richardson Nature Center.

www.raptor.umn.edu

ST. PAUL ACADEMY

Make your own games and design circuits. Paint with pizzazz. Search out connections between visual

art and creative writing, and explore the life of a story in journalism. Options at SPA cover a wide range of academic, arts, and enrichment activities for grades 2-12.

651-698-2451
<http://www.spa.edu>

ST. PAUL CONSERVANCY OF MUSIC

Music day camp for aspiring young musicians - offering a setting where children can explore their musical knowledge and ability through classes, creative play, and presentations by renowned professionals.

www.thespcm.org/summercamp
651-224-2205

ST. PAUL BALLET

Summer is a great time to try dance. Programs include workshops and camps for ages 3 and up, and weekly drop-in classes for teens and adults.

651-690-1588
www.spballet.org

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www.boychoir.org

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neighborhoods, St. Paul Urban Tennis offers a summer program for all age groups and skill levels. Tennis lessons combine high quality instruction with life skills learning. Sampler Camps offer a condensed, 4-day version of the lesson program. Scholarships available.
612-222-2879
<https://stpaulurbantennis.org/summer/>

STEPPINGSTONE THEATER

Learn about devised theater, music and other performance art forms during these one- to two-week, half- and full-day sessions for those preK to grade 12. Two theater classes offered in collaboration with the Science Museum and Minnesota Zoo.
<http://steppingstonetheatre.org>

TEXTILE CENTER CAMPS

Sew, knit, felt, dye, and more. Take home hand-made creations from half-day, weeklong classes, for students ages 6-16.
612-436-0464
<http://textilecentermn.org/sc>

VERTICAL ENDEAVORS

Climbing camp in single day, half and full day sessions run early June to late August for ages 6-13.
www.verticalendeavors.com

YMCA

Explore the variety of Y Summer Programs at over 60 metro-area locations. Programs include flexible three-, four-, and five-day options for preschool and up, as well as day camps, overnight camps, Teen Wilderness, family camps and more.
http://www.ymcatwincities.org/child_care_preschool/summer_programs/

IN THE TWIN CITIES

ANIMAL HUMANE SOCIETY

Kids entering grades 3-10 spend a full week immersed in animal learning and fun at one of four AHS locations.
animalhumanesociety.org/summer-camp
763-489-2220

ALEXANDER RAMSEY HOUSE

Solve mysteries of the past in this three-day History Detective Camp for ages 10-13. Or, young ladies ages 9-12 can step back in time in a unique Finishing School for Young Ladies day camp.
612-341-7555
<http://www.mnhs.org/summer-camps>

ARTSTART



Aspiring young musicians explore through classes and creative play at St. Paul Conservancy. (Photo courtesy of St. Paul Conservancy of Music)

immersion; 15 languages to choose from. Resident camp for ages 6-18 and family camps.
1-800-222-4750
<http://www.concordialanguagevillages.org>

FARM TO TABLE

Make butter, ice cream and bread while learning about science, agriculture and history at the Bruntrup Heritage Farm in Maplewood. Plus, students will play old-time games like townball and do arts and crafts during three four-day sessions.
651-748-8645
<http://www.maplewoodhistorical-society.org/>

IRISH DANCE

Professional Irish Dance training by director Cormac O'Se, an original member of Riverdance.
612-722-7000
www.osheairishdance.com

LEONARDO'S BASEMENT

Girls and boys ages 6 to 17 can design and build their creative ideas, mixing art, science and technology during partial-day, weekday camps. There are more than 120 classes available over 10 weeks.
612-824-4394
www.leonardosbasement.org

MINNEHAHA ACADEMY

Pick from an amazing variety of camps for children grades K-12. From fencing to Lego robotics, baseball to history field trips, there is a camp to jump start a child's summer adventure.
612-728-7745, ext. 1
<http://www.minnehahaacademy.net>

NORTHERN CLAY CENTER

Explore clay through sculpture or wheel-thrown pottery in half or full-day sessions for ages 6 and up.
612-339-8007
www.northernclaycenter.org

TRAPEZE CENTER CIRCUS CAMP

Students ages 8-17 enrolled in the weeklong, half-day camps will experience a variety of circus disciplines (including Trampoline, Static Trapeze, Acrobatics, Circus Bike, and of course Flying Trapeze).
651-262-9477
twincitiestrapeze.com

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is not a comprehensive list of every camp in the Twin Cities. If you would like to be included in next year's guide, please send us detailed information on the camp.

Creative cultural camps exploring Peru & Ecuador through art that reuses discarded materials. Sessions for ages 4-teen run late June - July.
651-698-2787
www.artstart.org

BASE CAMP

Climb high, climb far during the Discovery Day Camp's high energy activities offered near Fort Snelling Mondays to Fridays June to August for ages 5-15.
612-261-2301
<http://www.explorebasecamp.org/>

CENTER FOR BLADE ARTS

Modern Olympic fencing camps for all ages run from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday-Friday in June and July.
612-501-0640
www.centerforbladearts.com

CIRCUS JUVENTAS

Explore international circus arts at Circus Juventas. Five-day, full-day sessions and one-day sampler camps offered for ages 6-18.
651-699-8229
<http://www.circusjuventas.org>

CONCORDIA LANGUAGE VILLAGES

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1365 Englewood Avenue, St. Paul 55104
651-917-0636

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LEONARDO'S BASEMENT

Paper artist releases book to let children know it's ok to be wrong or right, happy or sad

'ALWAYS BE YOU'

By JAN WILLMS

When Hamline-Midway paper artist Ioana Stoian gave birth to her son, George, who is now two and a half, she and her husband searched for books to read to their young child.

"The board books we found were mainly counting or colors," Stoian said. She said that any books with messages for the very young were not what they were looking for, and they often changed the words as they read them. "There were messages that you can't do this because you're too small, or this is bad and this is good. We had to vet the books, and I didn't want to keep changing the words," she noted.

So Stoian wrote a poem to her son and then realized she wanted to share the message. "I wrote the book I wanted my son to see when he was a baby. This was the message I wanted him to hear, and I don't think I'm alone," said Stoian. "Always Be You" was published in November.

The book celebrates a child's emotions and feelings and lets a child know it's okay to be wrong or right, happy or sad.

Universal character

"I wanted the character to be gender neutral," Stoian said. "When you have a person as a character, all these questions arise. What color is the hair, the eyes, the skin?"

To make it as universal as possible, Stoian chose to make it a flower, not any particular gender or color. "Any parent or child can identify with it," she said. The book became a collaboration between herself and the illustrator, Dawn M. Cardona.

"She is extremely talented and handcut the illustrations," Stoian said. "She is also a mom, and we have a lot in common."

For her book, Stoian made every sheet of paper and then sent it to Cardona. "I hand-glued each individual letter down for text," she said.

Stoian, who is British-born, said she and her husband, a native of Minnesota and also a paper artist, have a small publishing company in the UK that published "Always Be You."

"All the words come genuinely from me to my son," Stoian said. She was able to avoid a publisher making changes to her writing. She also was able to select her own illustrator, which was very important to her.

The book was printed and bound in Germany. "It's very hard in America to print board books," Stoian explained. "You need specialized machinery, and it's very expensive. I found a really good company that printed on sustainable paper. We could have done it for a third of the cost in China, if it were all about the money. But I wanted a high quality product that would feel good in spreading this message."

Respectful parenting

The message for a child to embrace emotions, and that it's okay to be jealous or angry or shy, is an idea Stoian and her family promote.

"Children are taught to share, but they don't understand the concept of sharing until they are three or four," she said. Her book encourages the feelings of happiness or sadness a young child may experience. "Violence is never okay," she said, "but thoughts are okay."

Stoian exchanges and shares ideas on parenting with other parents, educators and communicators who are part of a group called Friends of RIE MN (FORM.)

"When you first move to a



Ioana Stoian knows that messages are crucial to children, and wants adults to let children know that feelings are okay. Hear more about her parenting style on Thursday, Feb. 27 at the Hamline Midway Library. (Photo by Jan Willms)

new place, you look for a community where you will fit in. At first, I was part of a paper artist's community, and we did a lot of paper making at the Minnesota Center for Book Arts," Stoian said. "And when I had my child, I found FORM, which is based on respectful parenting. We meet once a month and discuss parenting, and it is free and open to all."

She said the group recently had a Hamline professor come in and talk about bringing up boys in today's world. Stoian organizes a free play gathering each month, when adults mingle and kids play. "Finding this community and learning respect is how we brought up our child," she said.

Child isn't an object but a person with emotions

Stoian said that society often sends the message to parents that their child is an object, rather than a person with a need to express emotions. "Children are innocent when they are born," Stoian continued, "and throughout all of life they are trying to find out who they are. It is very rare that a person is 100 percent confident in their body and mind as to who they are."

"Messages are crucial to children," she said. "If we give the message that feelings are okay, it's okay to love whoever you want, think of the world we could live in."

Stoian said she has reached out to some different birthing centers with her book and to spread the message children need. She hopes to have discussions using the book with new parents and expectant parents.

Her aim is to get the book into as many libraries as possible. "Most of the things I do, I want to be available for everyone. I love the library system here; it's amazing. It's open to anybody, so if you don't have the money to buy a book, you can get one for your child."

Reflecting on her book, Stoian said it took exactly nine months to complete. "It was just like having a baby," she joked. Although children's books can reportedly be very difficult to write, she said she did not find that to be the case. "The book came purely from my heart," she said.

Take it slow

She said she considers the paper of her book to have a slowness to it, and she compared it to the slowness of life when a child is born. "Having a newborn is a slow time, just like the beginning of life," Stoian said. "It is such a beautiful time and goes by so fast. We need to savor it, because we can never get it back."

Her book offers a parent the opportunity to slow down and have a conversation with his or her child, to talk about feelings and thoughts and life on this planet.

If someone is interested in purchasing "Always Be You," Stoian encourages them to buy a copy from an independent book shop. "While it's easy to buy from an online retailer, we need to support independent book shops so that they continue to be there," she noted.

Stoian is hoping the book can be the focus of parental discussion groups, also. She welcomes anyone who is interested in learning more about respectful parenting to attend a gathering of FORM.

> Stoian will be leading a discussion on respectful parenting alongside Carolyn Paetzl (founder of FORM). It will be held at the Hamline Midway Library at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 27.

IN FOCUS

Jessica Kopp has three broad areas she wants to influence during her tenure on the board:

1. To contribute to a school board and school district that are welcoming, responsive, and accessible to all.
2. To build strong partnerships between the school district, the city, and the county – so schools can concentrate on teaching. Mental health, food insecurity, and homelessness are issues more appropriately handled by staff at the city and county levels.
3. To support diversity of education in both teaching and learning.

School board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month at the District Office, 360 Colburne Street. The public is welcome to attend and participate. Jessica Kopp can be reached by direct email at Jessica.kopp@spps.org.

Jessica Kopp steps into new role

>> From 1

The school board administers almost 70 different programs across the city. Being on the Saint Paul School Board is a big responsibility.

Kopp doesn't want the identity of the elected official to be her dominant one. She sees herself as being a connector between the community and the district in her new role.

The 20+ year Midway resident feels she was "accidentally prepared" for becoming a school board member. Kopp was very involved at Hamline Elementary when her daughter (now 12) was a student there. She said, "Although we'd lived in the neighborhood since 2000, it wasn't until 2013 that we really felt we were part of the neighborhood."

Kopp credits her involvement with Hamline Elementary for solidifying her family's sense of belonging.

She often talked about the foundational value of neighborhood schools during her nine month campaign last year. Kopp said, "St. Paul has some really awesome specialty schools, but we also have to invest deeply in

our neighborhood schools. As I travelled to different parts of the city, the message that 'neighborhood schools strengthen neighborhoods' resonated with a lot of people."

The idea of running for school board was born out of those years of working in the school district and in the community. Kopp didn't claim to know much about local politics when she started campaigning, but she did know how to organize – and she had years of experience helping to rebuild Hamline Elementary when it was facing declining enrollment and funding levels.

Kopp had a campaign team of talented, smart, dedicated volunteers working behind her. Some had political experience, but most didn't. She said, "Because of the years I spent teaching, I'm good at recognizing people's strengths – and getting them to work from their strengths." She ran her campaign the same way she approached advocating for education as a community activist, which was by doing the very best she could.

St. Paul schools face many



Jessica Kopp, newly elected Saint Paul School Board member, said, "I wasn't someone who daydreamed about running for the school board. I was accidentally prepared for this job by all the years I volunteered as a parent activist in the district." (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

challenges in the coming years including budget shortfalls, declining enrollment, and racial disparities in both learning and discipline. Kopp believes there's a full palette of opportunities within the district, and that there's a school for every student out there.

Her advice to families considering where to send their children? "Don't just read the demographics online – go into the schools and talk to staff, students, and families. Move away from your computer and pick up on the real vibe of a place before writing it off."

Como Park Senior High School



By ERIC ERICKSON
Social studies teacher

Forty AP Government students witnessed democracy in action at the Iowa Caucus on Feb. 3. The whirlwind political activity included a chartered bus ride past the Iowa border and into Cerro Gordo County. After a brief stop and walk in Clear Lake, the field trip reached its destination of Mason City.

Following dinner at The Pizza Ranch, we headed to the Republican Caucus site. A meeting was scheduled with the Republican County Chairperson to learn about Republican Caucus procedures and to ask student-generated questions. After another Republican speaker, and observation of caucus-goers filing in, we hopped on the bus to arrive for the beginning of the Democrat Party Caucus. Iowa Democrats use the unique procedure of standing together for their preferred candidate, and being completely public about their support. Then there's reallocation for candidates who didn't earn 15% of the vote. While complicated, it's a vivid example of voting and political participation.

Student observations ranged from "it's interesting to see the process for picking the president," to "it's way smaller and simpler than what I imagined," and "there's a lot of old people."

Iowa caucus, history day, Urban Growler event



Como's AP Government students witnessed democracy in action at the Iowa Caucus on February 3. (Photo submitted)

Several students had never been to Iowa before, and were surprised to see such rural landscape and a lack of ethnic diversity. After about five hours of being on the ground in Iowa and interacting with its people, our bus headed north up Interstate 35, arriving back at Como by 11 p.m.

The goal in bringing students to the Iowa Caucus is to create a connection to the electoral process and inspire political participation going forward. Plus it's a unique and fun memory. As a teacher, they may not remember my lessons about nominations and campaigns or our reading about separation of powers in Federalist #51, but they'll never forget the Iowa Caucus - and how decisions are made by those who show up.

About half the AP Government students will be able to vote in their first presidential primary on March 3. Another 20 will be serving as Ramsey County Election Judges. Hopefully an evening in Iowa can help lead to a lifetime of political participation.

History Day at Como featured the research and final prod-

ucts of 11th grade U.S. History students, and any student who desired to produce a history project in addition to their existing coursework. Students advancing to St. Paul regional competition include the following:

Individual Documentary - Wim Lenkeit for The Fall of the Berlin Wall. Alisaed Ali for Redoshi: Last Survivor of the Mid-

dle Passage. Kashia Vang for Loving v. Virginia.

Group Website - Sara Capone and MaiKou Her for The European Union. Hay Blute Paw, Htoo Baw and Dissel Moo for Genghis Khan. Lah Say Wah Hser, Naw Mu, Sumayo Yusuf for Edward Jenner's Small Pox Vaccine. Johntae Hudson and Jahrese Adeagbo for Elijah Mohamed and the Nation of Islam.

Individual Website - Antonin Sequot for the Japanese Military Unit 731. Cerenity Khang for The 19th Amendment.

Individual Performance - Olivia Miller for Jim Henson and The Muppets.

Save the date! The annual Como Park Booster Club fundraiser at the Urban Growler will be held on March 22 from 3-7 p.m. For questions or ticket information, email comoparkboosterclub@gmail.com



Student scientists at Murray Middle School

Murray Middle School's Science Fair is known as the largest science fair of any middle school in the state. This year was no exception.

Briefs

Watershed district honors D10 volunteer

Congratulations to Erin Spry, who received this year's Watershed Citizen Award from Capitol Region Watershed District. Spry voluntarily coordinated 2019's Como Lake Cleanup. The cleanup, overseen by the District 10 Environment Committee, attracted more than 60 volunteers last summer. They pulled more than 200 pounds of trash from the water and the shoreline.



Hamline Hardware closing

After serving St. Paul's Midway area for nearly a century, Hamline Hardware is closing its doors.

For the last 94 years the Hagen family and current owners Jim and Jan Gildner and their staff have strived to provide excellent products and outstanding service for the do-it-yourselfer and working professionals alike.

Hamline Hardware, now known as Hamline Hardware Hank, has been in business since 1926 when Walter Hagen started the business at its current location at the corner of North Snelling Avenue and Englewood Avenue. Over the next several decades two succeeding generations owned and operated the business, selling to the Gildners in order to pursue other ventures about 10 years ago.

Jim and Jan are now ready to retire and are conducting a store-wide liquidation sale through March 28.

Classifieds & Service Directory

Monitor

Want ads must be received by the Monitor by March 2 for the March 12 issue. Call 651-917-4183 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

Monitor Want Ads are \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, 5139 34th Ave. S. #17097, Minneapolis, MN 55417. Ad copy can be e-mailed to denis@monitorsaintpaul.com, or call 651-917-4183.

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New jobs coming to Midway

>> from 1

Recently the development firm Reuther Walton announced plans to build two apartment buildings east of the site.

Central High project

Emmons & Olivier Resources is moving its headquarters to 1919 University Ave. from Oakdale. It is a water resource-based engineering and environmental consulting firm that specializes in water resources engineering, watershed planning, environmental compliance, biological surveying, restoration, sustainable site design, planning, and landscape architecture. The company works with watershed districts and watershed management organizations, municipalities, counties, federal and state agencies, corporations and individuals. It has six offices, with two in Ontario, Canada, three in Iowa and one in

Wisconsin.

Emmons & Olivier has been in business since 1996 and has been looking for a St. Paul site since 2016, according to an HRA staff report. The site at 1919 University Ave. was occupied for many years by University of Minnesota offices. Now known as University Centre, the building houses a variety of local government and private companies.

The move will fill vacant office space, which is undergoing renovation. The company will use the city funds to purchase office furnishings and fixtures.

Emmons & Olivier was involved in design work for Transforming Central. The St. Paul Central High School project took place between 2011-2019. Part of the project included managing stormwater runoff on school property, improving landscaping, relocating walkways and creating

an outdoor classroom. The project had a total cost of more than \$760,000.

'We're seeing job growth'

Interim Department of Planning and Economic Development (PED) Director Kristin Guild praised the company's move to St. Paul. "They're bringing 33 jobs to start and are projecting at least three more so we're seeing some growth," she said.

The Strategic Investment Fund will have \$208,602 remaining after the Emmons & Olivier funding was approved. The loan fund can be used for capital expenses, leasehold improvements or other renovation of space. It can also cover costs of parking and transit-related improvements. The term of the loan would be five years and the interest rate will be 5.75 percent (prime plus

one percent).

A key feature of the Strategic Investment Fund is its focus on retaining companies. Each scheduled yearly payment on the loan would be forgiven if Emmons & Olivier maintains at least 33 full-time (or full-time equivalent) jobs on site. The loan will be a full-recourse obligation of the company. The HRA will have a separate security interest in the firm's fixtures, equipment, and other business assets.

Most firms that receive loans from the fund meet their obligations and the loans are forgiven. It's rare for a firm to default on a loan.

'This is a great fit'

Mary Rick administers the fund for PED. "We really felt like this was a great fit, primarily because the company is relocating their headquarters into St. Paul," she said. That is one of the primary criteria for the fund. Rick also said that the Emmons & Olivier track record, historical financial performance, the types

of jobs offered and the types of business the firm generates are other factors. "We use a pretty extensive scorecard," she added.

108 new jobs coming

The move of Emmons & Olivier, and a second Jan. 8 HRA action to sell part of the old St. Paul Fire Department property at 1675 Energy Park Drive will bring a total of 108 new jobs to the city.

Citing the increased jobs, Ward 2 Council Member Rebecca Noecker said, "It's a great day for St. Paul."

The property sale to Wellington Management affiliate Snelling Properties LLC will help tenant Minnetronix expand its medical technology business, but adding parking area. Minnetronix current employs 260 people at its location near Energy Park Drive, and has plans to add 75 more jobs over the next three years. A \$6 million expansion is planned by Snelling Properties to accommodate Minnetronix.

{ Monitor in a Minute }

By JANE McCLURE

Liquor licenses

St. Paul's historic cap on on-liquor licenses continues to vex prospective bar operators and city officials who want to encourage more nightlife. Three requests for West end and West Side locations won recommendations of approval Jan. 24 from the St. Paul Planning Commission.

Several similar requests have been studied for University Ave. for several years. Those requests, which have been placed on hold, should move forward again in the future, according to city staff.

St. Paul has a cap of 215 on-sale liquor licenses citywide. The number varies by council ward. In some cases, business owners have waited for years to get a license. In 2016, the city council changed liquor ordinances to allow full-service restaurants to obtain on-sale liquor license outside of the cap. But that doesn't help businesses wanting to offer liquor and not provide full food service.

Commercial development districts were created under the city charter in the 1980s to set up entertainment districts and promote nightlife. The charter outlines six districts - downtown, Selby Ave./Cathedral Hill, University Ave. and Dale St., Energy Park, Hamline/University avenues, and the area near the former Amtrak Station on Pierce Butler Route.

But for many years business owners have sought additional commercial development district designations to obtain a single on-sale license for one location. The city has about 20 districts, most single sites.

Commissioners questioned why the Planning Commission and planning staff are involved in

what should instead be a licensing process. "This seems like a weird use of our time," said Planning Commissioner Kristine Grill. She and other commissioners said the districts seem more like a licensing issue than something tied to land use planning.

That is being discussed between city planning and licensing staff, said Planning Director Luis Pereira. City staff is looking at whether commercial development districts properly. "We review for consistency with neighborhood and the city comprehensive plan, but is there ever going to be a case where one of these is inconsistent with those plans?" Pereira asked.

Pereira said more commercial development districts are in the works, including a long-discussed proposal for several sites along University Avenue and Green Line light rail. That proposal has been on the drawing boards for several years but was last the subject of city action in 2018.

Alcohol allowed on Great Lawn

Attendees at Allianz Field events will be able to purchase and consume alcohol on the Great Lawn green space outside of the stadium. On Jan. 22, the St. Paul City Council approved the area as an entertainment district.

No one appeared at city council to speak for or against the district's creation. Area district councils didn't weigh in on the change.

The Great Lawn is a park area north of the stadium, proposed as part of a master plan proposed for the Midway Center superblock. Not all of the proposed park space has been built. Plans for call green space to eventually extend to University Ave.

The change winning council approval allows for beer and

wine to be sold and consumed in the park area. The city's parkland agreement with MUSC LLC keeps the green space open to the public as part of the city park system.

Similar agreements have been used in other city parks, including Harriet Island, when there are events.

Other uses at churches

Faith-based institutions often house other uses, including child-care centers, offices, food shelves and other community programs. How those uses are regulated is the topic of a study underway by the St. Paul Planning Commission.

A public hearing will be held in the future on possible zoning code amendments. No date has been set. Changes to a city ordinance won't affect existing uses, which are grandfathered in. But the intent of the study is to establish a better process for land use applications for religious organizations.

The religious accessory uses zoning study is court-ordered, said Senior City Planner Bill Dermody. It arises from the dispute when the Listening House drop-in center relocated from downtown St. Paul to First Lutheran Church in Dayton's Bluff. Listening House serves low-income and homeless adults. It was in Mary Hall for several years before its space was needed for Catholic Charities meal programs.

The Planning Commission denied Listening House's request to relocate to the church, a decision reversed on appeal to the St. Paul City Council. But church leaders objected to conditions the council placed on the approval and the matter wound up in court.

A February 2019 U.S. District Court ruling in the church's favor included the condition that the city amend its zoning code to change processes for religious organizations to make land use applications.

{ Development Roundup }

By JANE McCLURE

Taco Bell won't be rebuilding

Facing the prospect of a no vote from the St. Paul Planning Commission, Taco Bell has shelved plans for a new restaurant at 565 N. Snelling Ave. That means the current restaurant, which dates from 1973, can remain in place indefinitely. It also means neighbors may have less leverage to seek changes in what they considered to be disruptive operations.

But it drops a plan that could have put vehicles closer to adjacent homes.

The request was supposed to go to the Planning Commission Zoning Committee in December 2019, but were delayed at the applicant's request. A January hearing was cancelled after the application was withdrawn.

Casket company building to become affordable housing

A Midway project is among the efforts winning grants in January from the Metropolitan Council. The council approved a total of \$3.3 million in grants.

The council awarded one contamination investigation grant and 10 clean-up grants. "Housing affordable to working families and older residents who earn lower incomes is increasingly scarce in the metro region," said Council Chair Charlie Zelle. "Stable, quality housing is at the heart of thriving families and communities. These local projects are revitalizing properties and creating housing and jobs that will increase regional prosperity."

One project is for the former casket company building at 1222 University Ave. The building has housed different office and commercial uses in recent years. Plans call for it to be renovated into 62 affordable housing units.

The grant awarded is \$49,200 for an environmental assessment work plan, environmental assessment, hazardous materials abatement plan, vapor mitigation pilot test and other activities.


Met Council gives \$ to Alatus

A controversial housing project near the southwest corner of University Ave. and Lexington Parkway has obtained development funding from Metropolitan Council. On Jan. 8, the council approved a \$1.25 million Livable Community Transit-oriented development grant for Alatus' proposed project at 411-417 N. Lexington Parkway.

The funding, which was approved on the council consent agenda without discussion, would help pay for new sidewalks and streets, a renewable energy geothermal system and stormwater management. The total cost for the mixed-use, 226-apartment project is estimated at more than \$59 million. Most of that is private funding.

The next step is for the funding request to go to the St. Paul City Council, which has the option of accepting or rejecting the funds. Livable Communities grants are submitted by cities on behalf of developers. No date for city council action has been announced.

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In Our Community

Introducing the HMELC

We are a group of residents and organizations who work to address the needs and experiences of youth 0-14 in our community. We are a group committed to enacting change through conversation, outreach and action. Our experience has taught us we can do more to support youth in our community when we do it together so we're excited to invite our neighbors to drop us a line at earlylearning@hamlinemidway.org and/or join us at an upcoming meeting so we can get to know each other. Hope to see you soon!

• Feb. 13, 12:30-2:30 p.m. at Hancock Recreation Center

Hamline Midway Early Learning Coalition



By **JESSICA KOPP**
earlylearning@hamlinemidway.org

• March 12, 12:30-2:30 p.m. at Hamline Station Community Room

How to declutter and downsize

Monthly Luncheons – Second Tuesday of each month, 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m., at Hamline Church United Methodist (1514 Englewood Ave.). Chef Erik Hendrickson will prepare a wonderful meal, blood pressure checks will be provided, and new attendees are always welcome at our "Second Tuesday" luncheon events. Suggested donation \$7.

• March 10 – Decluttering and Downsizing, with Laurie Wrobel of Clutter 911

Reading Buddies: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month, 12:30–1:10 p.m. We invite elders to be a Reading Buddy with third grade students at Hamline Elementary School. No experience is necessary, just a desire to interact with children. And you don't have to attend every session, just come when your schedule permits.

Cards & Games: Feb. 11, 1-3 p.m. (after luncheon), Hamline Church United Methodist.

Jody's Documentary Film Series: Jan. 29, 1 p.m. at Hamline Midway Library. Check website for film description (www.hmolders.org/events.html).

Arts on Lafond

Arts on Lafond is cultivating a thriving music and art scene in the Hamline Midway area of St. Paul. "We are a group of local artists who teach, perform, and encourage others in self-expression," said organizers.

Feb. 14 - All You Need Is Love - an evening of music and painting with Xibaba Brazilian world jazz. Visual artist Andrea Marboe will offer a guided paint-

Hamline Midway Elders



By **LAUREL COLLINS**
laurel@HMelders.org
651-209-6542

Chair Yoga with Nancy: Thursdays, Jan. 9-Feb. 27, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave.

Knitting & Crochet Group – Mondays from 1 to 3 p.m. (ongoing) at Hamline Church United Methodist. Yarn and needles, tea and cookies provided.

"Friendly Frog" Potluck Lunch and Bingo: third Friday of each month, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. at Frogtown Community Center (230 Como Ave.). Join other Frogtown seniors for a meal and bingo. Bring a dish to share, plus \$1 for supplies, and 5 cents and additional coins for bingo cards.

ing experience; no art experience necessary. Paints, brushes, easels and canvas will be supplied. Painters are welcome to arrive at 6:30 p.m. to get started before the music begins. Suggested donation is \$10 for the concert; \$40 for the painting experience and concert.

All concerts run 7-9 p.m. at Zion Lutheran Church 1697 Lafond Avenue St. Paul. For more information, contact 651-321-4235 or artsonlafond@gmail.com. Refreshments will be available.

Couples drum jam

Announcing a Valentines Day Couples Drum Jam at the Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. W. in St. Paul on Saturday, Feb. 14, 6-8 p.m. Couples come in all shapes and sizes! Valentine's day is a day to celebrate the loving relationships in our lives, so come and join us in some lovely rhythms using the large variety of drums we have available at the Women's Drum Center. "Special games and rhythm explorations will be part of the fun and of course, there will be chocolate!" say planners. Register by email to reserve your place with your name and phone/cell number (in case of event changes): info@womensdrumcenter.net. Pay by cash or check at the event. \$20 per person, or \$30 per pair/couple. Facilitator: Jo Klein.

Learn about elections and security Feb. 18

"What Do YOU Know About Elections and Cyber Security?" will be presented on Tuesday, Feb. 18, 6:30- 8 p.m. in the Ratskeller taproom at Summit Brewing (910 Montreal Circle) by the League of Minnesota Women Voters. The event is free and open to the public, with opportunities to purchase beverages onsite. Interested participants can register on the LWVSP website, (www.lwvsp.org). The program will delve into election cybersecurity from both a local and state perspective, with Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon leading the discussion on the state level and Ramsey County Elections Manager Dave Triplett, providing insight at the local level.

Chamber Legislative Panel Feb. 19

Back by popular demand, hear from Hamline University pro-

fessor of political science, David Schultz on his thoughts regarding the 2020 election on Feb. 29 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Delta Hotels by Marriott (1330 Industrial Blvd. N.E.). Prior to the Midway Chamber of Commerce luncheon, join Senator John Hoffman and additional elected officials as we discuss current issues facing local and state government. Leadership Awards finalists will be honored in the lead up to the Annual Celebration & Leadership Awards that will be held Saturday, Feb. 29 at the Intercontinental Hotel-Riverfront.

Annual gala celebrates 101 years

The Midway Chamber of Commerce will celebrate 101 years during its annual gala on Leap Day, Saturday, Feb. 29, 5:30-9:30 p.m. at the Intercontinental Hotel Riverfront (11 E. Kellogg Ave.). Enjoy fellowship, food, and the annual Leadership Awards. Last year over 340 guests attended the Centennial Celebration making it the Chamber's biggest Gala ever! More at <http://www.midway-chamber.com/pages/Gala>.

Community yoga set

The Como Community Council is expanding its Community Yoga sessions in 2020. Spring sessions take place on Sundays March 8, April 5, and May 3 from 9:30-10:30 a.m. at the Como Park Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway N. Community member Meegan Hall leads the sessions, which will be suitable for all levels of skill and experience. Bring a yoga mat or blanket and wear comfortable clothes. Registration is \$5. If you really want to plan ahead, sessions resume on Sept. 13, Oct. 4, and Nov. 8.

Respectful parenting group meets Feb. 27

Local children's author, Ioana Stoian, will be sharing her latest children's book, "Always Be You" on Thursday, Feb. 27, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave. It is part of the Respectful Parenting: Let's Talk About It! Library Series hosted by The Form Network (theformnetwork.org). Founded in May 2014, FORM is a growing community of parents, educators, students, and administrators who gather monthly to inspire, support and engage in topics relating to early childhood education and parenting. Form provides an open forum for collaborative inquiry, dialogue, and advocacy influenced by Magda Gerber's Educaring® Approach.

emPOWER social hour

Join WomenVenture for an evening of networking, learning, inspiration, shopping, socializing and fun on Thursday, March 5, 4-7 p.m. at Urban Growler Brewing Co. (2325 Endicott St.). Comedian Miss Shannan Paul will host the event with short talks from WomenVenture CEO Elaine Wyatt and social entrepreneur Anna Tsantir of Two Bettys Green Cleaning Service. Enjoy drinks and appetizers, take part in fun networking activities and shop the mini-marketplace of WomenVenture clients.

Tonic Sol-fa show

Enjoy the award-winning music of Tonic Sol-fa at Roseville Area High School (1240 County Road B2 W.) Friday, Feb. 28, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Purchase tickets online at: www.isd623.org/tonicsolfa. Tonic Sol-fa is a ground-breaking a cappella ensemble from Minnesota, in constant development since their formation two decades ago.

HAMLINE HEADLINES

sharing campus events with the neighboring community

Karen P. Oliveto, bishop of the United Methodist Church

Mountain Sky Area, speaks on the church's current struggles from the point of view of the conference's first openly LGBTQ+ bishop. **The event is free of charge.**

When: Tuesday, February 25, 7 p.m.
Where: Sundin Music Hall, 1531 Hewitt Avenue, Saint Paul

Poverty and Barriers to Reentry

This conference will discuss the barriers, as well as solutions, to societal reentry for incarcerated individuals. Register at hamlinecjl.ticketbud.com/reentry.

When: Friday, February 28, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
Where: Mitchell Hamline School of Law
875 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul

The Reshaping of the Middle East

Hamline Professor Binnur Ozkececi-Taner, a local expert on the Middle East, will present on this important area of the world. Bring your lunch. **The event is free of charge.**

When: Friday, February 28,
11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m.
Where: Anderson Center, rooms 304 and 305
774 Snelling Avenue N., Saint Paul

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An architect's rendering of a renovated 1554 Midway Parkway. The plan calls for 150 rental apartments at the site.

Curious about latest Sholom Home site plan?

Developers have officially filed for parking and density variances so they can convert the former Sholom Home property into rental apartments. Midway Community Group LLC wants to renovate the former nursing home at Midway Parkway and Snelling to create 150 rental apartments. Variances are necessary because the developer's plan does not meet the city's existing zoning code for the property, which is zoned RM2 multi-family.

The zoning code presumes 1,500 square feet for each unit. After adjustments, that means code allows a maximum of 82 apartments, not the 150 units the project envisions. The plan calls for 22 studio apartments, 97 one-bedroom apartments, 24 two-bedroom apartments, and 7 three-bedroom apartments in the existing buildings. All apartments would be less than 1,100 square feet.

For that mix of units, the zoning code also requires 166 off-street parking spaces. The developer's latest architectural site plan, however, provides only 80 spaces: 51 surface parking spots on its Canfield side, plus 29 new indoor spaces. That means the project is 86 parking spaces short.

Therefore, the developer is seeking a parking variance of 86 spaces and a density variance to allow 150 apartments.

District 10's Land Use Committee was scheduled to consider the variance requests on Feb. 10; any committee recommendations would go to the full Como Community Council board on Tuesday Feb. 18. (The board meeting, which is open to the public, is at 7 p.m. at the Como Park Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway N.)

The city's Board of Zoning Appeals is tentatively scheduled to hold a hearing on the Midway Parkway requests on Monday Feb. 24 at 3 p.m. in City Hall.

More details are available on the Como Community Council website: www.district10comopark.org.

Expand Your World with 2020's Sunday Series

The Como Community Council's annual Sunday Series gives you six opportunities to expand your world, six Sundays in a row.

All the events are free, all events the events run from 1-2:30

District 10 Como Community Council

By **MICHAEL KUCHTA**, Executive Director
district10@district10comopark.org



The Minnesota Cameroon Community Center is tucked between the Best Western hotel and the Atrium office building in Bandana Square.

p.m., and all events include presentations and plenty of time for Q&A. For full information, see the Como Community Council's website: www.district10comopark.org. A quick rundown of this year's Sunday Series lineup:

Feb. 23: Trash or Treasure. Unclutter your space, unclutter your life. With Laura Gilbert and Jennifer Victor-Larsen. Where: Como Park Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway N.

March 1: "Minnesota Stories in a Changing Climate." This film from Will Steger's Climate Generation features six stories about how climate change already is changing our state. In cooperation with the Saint Paul Public Library's Read Brave Documentary Film Series. Where: Como Zoo and Conservatory's Visitor Center Auditorium.

March 8: Forgotten Como History: The 1917 Winter Carnival's 500-Mile Winnipeg-Saint Paul Dog Sled Race. With Drew Ross. Where: Mount Olive Lutheran Church Fireside Room, 1460 Almond Ave.

March 15: Nature in Your Own Backyard. With John Moriarty, author of "Field Guide to the Natural World of the Twin Cities" and the Como Lake Turtle Study.

March 22: Old Media in a New Era: What's the Future of Local News? With Kelly Smith from the *Star Tribune*, Tesha Christensen from the *Midway Como Monitor*, and Chuck Carlson from the *Park Bugle*. Where: Como Park Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway N.

March 29: In Search of Justice: The Purpose and Promise of Bail Reform and Juvenile Detention Alternatives. With Ramsey County District Court Judge DeAnne Hilgers. Where: Como Park Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway N.

Family homeless shelter?

Interfaith Action and Ramsey County are exploring the feasibility of opening a homeless shelter and day center for families inside the Minnesota Cameroon Community Center in Bandana Square.

"There are no solid plans, but it's an exciting opportunity with lots of possibilities," Sara Liegl, director of Interfaith Action's Project Home, told the Como Community Council's Land Use Committee in January. The groups are working out renovation and code requirements; costs; construction and operational funding; staffing; and logistical needs, Liegl said. Late summer is the earliest she envisions a shelter could open.

Ramsey County currently does not have a permanent shelter for homeless families. Instead, Project Home provides 40 beds a night in a rotating group of faith communities and schools. Families must move every 30 days. Project Home also operates a day center for families at First Baptist Church downtown.

The shortage of beds for families is mind-boggling, Liegl says: At any given time in 2019, there were at least 120 parents and children in Ramsey County on a waiting list for shelter.

The Cameroon Community owns about 57,000 square feet of space in the northwest corner of Bandana Square, in Energy Park. The space used to be a medical clinic. It still has more than 70 exam rooms with sinks, plus public bathrooms and other public space. The belief is that exam space could be converted into flexible, dormitory-style rooms. That could provide private space for 40-60 families of different sizes, and perhaps older women, Liegl says. Other space could be used for meals, showers, storage, laundry, and case management services.

"When we found out about the plight of the homeless families, the school children, it was heartbreaking," said Christian Akale, a board member of the Minnesota Cameroon Community. "We hope the building will be part of the solution."

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