

Your Neighborhood Newspaper for Over Twenty-Five Years

What's
INSIDE

News 6



Advisory Group rejects plans for 1-story restaurant

News 7



Community groups call for moratorium on new development

News 8



Former Sheraton awaits fate after closure

Feature 9



'Mask' man makes images as life expressions

Hamline's new president sees new role as marathon, not sprint

By JAN WILLMS

Linda Hanson, the new president of Hamline University, sees her challenge in leading Minnesota's oldest university as a marathon, not a sprint.

Hanson, who took over her duties in July of this year, said she does not intend to make any overnight changes at Hamline.

"But over time, I think I will make a difference," she said. "We have to look at what Hamline will be like five years from now or ten years from now."

Hanson said that current university leaders stand on the shoulders of what has gone before, but look forward to what may happen next.

"I think an individual can make a difference in life," she said. She talked about meeting with other women on a retreat and how leadership was a topic of discussion. "I was fascinated by leadership," she said, "and a lot of it relates to what an individual can do. It can be found at any level of an organization."

Hanson said it is important for her to be authentic and transparent with her leadership skills.

She envisions Hamline as engaging in the process of strategic planning, assessing issues and eventually developing a master plan over the next several years.

"First, we need to take an inventory and understand what we are already doing," she said. "The right hand may not always know what the left is doing. We have to see whether what we are doing lives up to the Hamline promise, and see if patterns emerge. Usually, they do."

Hanson said the planning will involve deciding whether to bring something in or phase something out. "You can keep a lot of what you have, given an opportunity to shape it," she added.

She said she believes that themes will emerge as Hamline thinks about its identity. "We need to be very deliberate and careful, and I hope to be here for a long time," Hanson said. "We can increase our visibility."

As a part of that vision, Hanson has become a board member of Capital City Partnership, a group that focuses and channels energies and resources of the larger corporate community to form effective public and private partnerships to revitalize the down-



Although she is still in the early days of her presidency, Linda Hanson is often seen popping into buildings and events on Hamline's campus, introducing herself to students and staff. By many reports, Hanson's style is that of a hands-on president.

town urban core of St. Paul.

"In all of my roles, I worked very closely in the community with major companies," Hanson said. "I am very comfortable in the corporate area. We can get creative working with companies if they have a need, and we can put together a curriculum that will help with workforce training," she said.

tive, I've had experience working with college as a business, employing hundreds of people and serving 4,500 students, with vendors everywhere," Hanson said. "Hamline is an economic force in and of itself. Just the cost of health care, for example. It makes a lot of sense for us to be at the table. We can learn from them, and they can learn from us."

tically but also internationally.

"There were flags from 54 countries at my inauguration," she said, as she emphasized the widespread ethnicities represented at Hamline, a growing phenomenon.

She said a certain number of students are attuned to John Wesley, founder of Methodism, upon which Hamline tradition is built, but many are not.

"Students are from different religious backgrounds, and some have no religious foundation," Hanson said. "Hamline is a place of comfort for them, where they can learn and live and not just be tolerated."

Hanson emphasized the importance of neighborhood relationships to her. She said that once some strategic decisions are made, they will be shared in meetings with the neighborhood.

"It's important for us to be able to share, and I hope we can find common ground," she said. "We hope to have a good dialogue, and we don't plan to make any sudden moves."

"We have to see whether what we are doing lives up to the Hamline promise, and see if patterns emerge."

- Hamline University President Linda Hanson

"If I stay behind my door all the time, I'm not helping build the social fabric," Hanson said. She said she views her role on the Capitol City Partnerships board as getting a good sense of the corporate issues."

Hanson is currently the only college president sitting on the board, and Hamline is the only university represented.

"From the corporate perspec-

Although she is still in the early days of her presidency, Hanson has been noticed on campus. Workmen have seen her strolling the resident halls as early as 6 a.m. She has brought her dog with her to football games. She is giving evidence of being a hands-on president.

Hanson also appreciates the diversity Hamline enjoys among its student body, not only domes-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

1885 University Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-645-7045

Publishers:

Calvin deRuyter, Tim Nelson

Managing Editor:

Denis Wouffe

Advertising:

Denis Wouffe

Photographer:

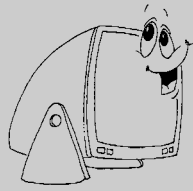
Terry Faust

Production/Illustrations:

Bob Wasiluk

Contributing Writers:

Eric Nathanson, Deborah Brotz, Jane McClure, Nancy Giguere, Bob Wick-er, Roberta Sladky, Jan Willms, Clayton Schanilec, Benita Warns,



Now, communicate with the Midway Como Monitor electronically!

Now it's easier than ever to keep in touch with the Monitor. Letters to the editor and news releases for publication can be sent via e-mail at denisw@aplacetoremember.com. Be sure to send copy in the body of the e-mail, and please mark whether the copy is a letter, a news release for publication, or perhaps just your thoughts on the last issue. Don't forget to write!

And check us out on the web at: www.midwaycomomonitor.com

The Midway Como Monitor is a monthly community publication in the Midway and Como areas of St. Paul, owned and operated by deRuyter-Nelson Publications, Inc. All correspondence should be sent to the Monitor, 1885 University Ave., #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. Editorial and advertising offices can be reached at 651-645-7045. Our fax number is 651-645-4780.

All rights reserved. The contents of the Monitor cannot be reproduced without express written permission of the publisher. Copyright ©2004.



Midway Como in a Minute

Bicycle lane signage fans get present

Advocates for bicycle lane signage along Pierce Butler Route got an early Christmas present November 23 as the St. Paul City Council added \$26,000 for the project into the 2006 Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB). The addition was made during a budget committee meeting. The project is tentative at this point but it appears likely that it will be added to the final city budget when it is adopted by the City Council in mid-December.

Funds for the signs will come out of excess street right-of-way maintenance funds. The request for signs, made by Hamline-Midway residents Mike and Benita Warns, ranked highly in the CIB review process this year but failed to make the final project lists. Some other projects, including the Ayd Mill Road off-street bicycle and pedestrian lanes, were moved ahead of Pierce Butler and given funding.

Bicycle lanes were striped on Pierce Butler Route a few years ago, but signs were never posted. That has caused some confusion for bike riders and motorists. The Warns and a group of volunteers operate a volunteer bicycle repair program called Mr. Michael Recycles Bicycles or Bicycle Recycle. They collect bicycles and repair them to give away to the Center for Victims of Torture and area schools.

Ward Four Council Member Jay Benanav called for adding the project back onto the CIB list, noting that it did outrank other projects. Funding the project out of street maintenance funds will not take dollars away from any other previously committed CIB project.

One factor against the bicycle route signs has been outgoing Mayor Randy Kelly's desire to rebuild Pierce Butler Route and ex-

tend the street west into South St. Anthony Park. When and if Central Corridor transit improvements are built along University Avenue, shifting more east-west traffic to Pierce Butler Route has been suggested. A proposed environmental impact study of Pierce Butler reconstruction was another CIB project that didn't win funding this year.

Park's prelim plans ready for review

Dickerman Park's preliminary design plans are ready for public review. Landscape architects Coen and Partners and photographer Wing Yung Huie will show their plans at 6 p.m. Thursday, December 8 at Marsden Building maintenance, 1717 University Av.

Dickerman Park is a linear park along the north side of University Avenue, between Fairview Avenue and Aldine Street. It was given to the city in 1909 by the Dickerman Investment Company and Griggs, Cooper and Company. (Griggs, Cooper was a food manufacturing, packaging and distribution company located in what is now the Griggs Midway Building.)

In the early 1900s Dickerman Park was envisioned as part of a larger grand boulevard all along University Avenue. But over the years Dickerman Park was largely forgotten. Part of the park was taken to be a parking lot in front of the Griggs Midway Building. Other parts of the park have been used as play space for the Midway YMCA and a charter school.

In 2002 the Friends of the parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County began working with area residents to preserve and improve the park. Members of the Dickerman family, who weren't aware of the park's existence, got involved in the effort as did University UNITED.

UNITED is leading a task force that has been working on

park plans. One unique aspect of the plans incorporates Huie's portraits of people who live and work near the park. Huie is a talented photographer whose Frog-town and Lake Street projects have been published in book form.

A trail and plantings are also planned.

Other groups involved in park planning include the Friends, St. Paul Parks and Recreation, Public Art St. Paul, Hamline Midway Coalition, Merriam Park Community Council and St. Paul Design Center.

Nightclub pays fine from past violations

A controversial nightclub will have to pay a fine of \$2,000 and \$6,000 in partial hearing costs and have further conditions out on its license as a result of past violations. The St. Paul City Council voted unanimously November 16 to impose the penalties against Warehouse Nightclub and its owner, WHT Inc.

The action followed a November 2 public hearing at which the problems at the club were detailed.

WHT, Inc., doing business as Warehouse and American Sports Café, is at 2554 Como Av. The club was a focus of a hearing earlier this year before an administrative law judge. There were several delays before the hearing and public record closed in August.

WHT operates two businesses, Warehouse nightclub and American Sports Café. Since the nightclub opened, the owner has worked with St. Paul police to mitigate any problems there. A number of security measures have been added, including metal detectors and improved lighting and surveillance systems. But police and city licensing staff have been concerned about a high number of police calls to the Warehouse.

In October 2004 police presented testimony to the City Council outlining their concerns about the nightclub, during a proceeding on a proposal to assess WHT for excessive consumption of police services. At that meeting a police officer said the club is considered to be "the most dangerous bar in the city."

Since then licensing staff and club management have clashed over proposed conditions for the nightclub's licenses. WHT ownership disputed some conditions, including one that makes the owner responsible for patron behavior on the premises and in the parking lot. Another objection is to a condition stopping service of alcohol at 1:30 a.m.

The administrative law judge recommended in September 2005 that adverse action be taken against WHT's licenses.

Along with the fine and hearing costs, the City Council put several new conditions on the business licenses:

*The licensee may not sponsor, advertise and/or host events for individuals under age 21, such as 18 and up nights, college nights or other similar events unless the events are held in a portion of the establishment where liquor, including 3.2 malt, is not consumed, sold or served. Any event advertisements must include disclaimers that the events are held in alcohol-free areas and that alcohol will not be sold or served to persons under the age of 21.

*All customers must be wanded or walk through a metal detector to gain entry. Weapons are not permitted inside the establishment.

*The business shall have indoor and outdoor surveillance cameras, will keep tapes for at least seven days and will make tapes available to police or city officials upon request.

*The Warehouse will be closed to new customers after 1 a.m. and last call for alcohol will be no later than 1:30 a.m.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



Midway Animal Hospital

House calls available

Offering high quality, compassionate care for your pets.

Jean Miller, DVM / John Curran, DVM

731 North Snelling Avenue / 651-644-2100

Parking & Entrance in Rear / Mon. 8 am - 8 pm, Tues.-Fri. 8 am - 6 pm, Sat. 9 am - 1 pm

Open House!

Come and experience first hand all that Saint Bernard's has to offer.



Saints • Scholars

Join Us!
Tuesday, Jan. 10
7:00 p.m.



Saint Bernard's School
170 Rose Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55117

Ladies • Gentlemen

Admissions Office: 651-489-1338, ext. 328 • www.saintbernards-school.org



**LAW OFFICES OF
EDWARD P. RUSSELL**

ATTORNEY AT LAW
IN PRACTICE SINCE 1971

BANKRUPTCY STOP

Harassing Phone Calls
Foreclosure • Garnishment
HELP WITH BACK TAXES

FREE CONSULTATION

(651) 647-5600

(651) 387-6575
(Cellular)

520 Snelling Ave. N.
(near University Ave.)

Planning on Buying or Selling a home? This ad is worth

\$250.00 CASH!



Eos Realty

*Some restrictions apply.

Call me now for details!

Eric E. E. Oberg, Broker
Cellular 612.817.6833
Office 651.330.3359
eric.oberg@comcast.net

MLS Your neighborhood Real Estate Company

Midway residents cautioned to stay aware...

Community notification meeting advises neighbors of sex offender in the area

By JAN WILLMS

Awareness was the key word as Jim Halverson and Shannon Harrington, members of the St. Paul Sex Crimes Unit, spoke with residents at a community notification meeting in the Midway area.

The meeting was held to alert community members about the presence of a Level III sex offender in their neighborhood, Johnny Miller, who is residing in the 900 block of Seminary.

"Sex offenders have been required by law since 1991 to register if convicted of a felony sex crime," Harrington said. "If any abductions occurred, we needed a group of people to look at."

Harrington said that in 1997, when she started working for the Sex Crimes Unit, there were 434 offenders on the list—today there are 1104 in St. Paul. In 1997, community notification was also started for Level III offenders, the ones most likely to re-offend.

Harrington said that when an offender has served time in prison and is being released to the community, a committee of experts meets 90 days before his or her release date.

"There is a psychologist from the Department of Corrections (DOC), a victims' advocate, a case manager and a chairperson from the DOC," Harrington said. The committee looks at past crimes of the offender, convictions, the ages of the victim and offender, treatment, and how much force was used in the commitment of the crime.

"Some offenders have no remorse, some have lots," she said. The committee talks to the offenders, assesses them and determines their risk level. Based on this, they are labeled Level I, II or III offenders.

"Upon release of a level I of-

fender, law enforcement is notified," Harrington said. "They get the basic information on the individual's car, home address and job."

She said that for a Level II offender, considered a moderate risk to re-offend, the police and victim are notified. Organizations who work with children are notified if a Level II pedophile is released in the area. Notifications are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Harrington said Level III offenders can be listed in newspapers and on websites. This is the only level that will receive community notification, which is generally done through community meetings.

"The offender usually spends 2/3 of his sentence in prison, 1/3 in the community," Harrington said. "He or she usually goes to a halfway house for 30-90 days, and they look for housing and a job."

She said that since the community notification started, it makes it more difficult for the offenders to find a place to live and work. "Mom and Dad don't take them in anymore, because of the notoriety," she said.

She said that since Miller is on probation, he is easier to keep track of.

Harrington stressed, however, that Miller is one of 1104 sex offenders in the city.

"You can point your finger at him and tell your kids he's the bogeyman, but he is not the only one," she emphasized. "If you only focus on John Miller, you may be a victim of someone else."

According to Miller's probation officer, Dominic Belde, he was convicted of criminal sexual conduct in the third degree in April 1994. He has also been convicted in Missouri in 1979 of as-

sault with intent to ravish. Miller has a history of forced sexual assault with female victims ages 15 to adult.

"Mr. Miller has attended several sex offender programs, and has been successful at completing them," Belde said.

His last sexual offense was in 1997. His probation has been revoked previously on charges of drinking, possession of drugs and loitering.

"This is his fourth try," Belde said.

"Why do we keep letting him out?" asked one man, who said that as a parent of a daughter, he is concerned.

Halverson said that the courts determine the sentencing.

Another community member asked what pro-active things could be done.

"Be aware of what is going on around you," Harrington said. "Set up some safety plan."

She said to pay attention to your surroundings, lock your house doors and car doors.

"Just follow the things you have been taught your whole life," she said.

Jun-Li Wang, who works for the Hamline-Midway Coalition, advised residents to get to know their neighbors, the patterns in the neighborhood. "Know who is at home every day, and who is at work," she said. "Know your neighbors all the time."

Halverson said the sex offender population is a very transient one, with some moving from state to state.

"Street cops find a lot of these guys at traffic stops," he said, as license plates are run through records.

Halverson said that in 95 to 99 per cent of the sexual offender cases, drugs and alcohol are in-

involved. Miller has said that alcohol abuse has been a major problem for him.

"When these guys are released, we pick them up and transport them to their residence," Belde said. "The first eight months, they are under strict house arrest. They can only be out between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., looking for work or working, Monday through Friday." He said they are allowed one four-hour pass during this whole initial phase.

"During the second phase, they get two four-hour passes," he said. "They also get a drug test once a week, and a breath test. Any violations, they go right back."

During the third phase, offenders have a 10:30 p.m. curfew, but can work an evening shift. Restrictions gradually are lessened during the fourth phase. Miller, who is currently on electronic monitoring, entered the second phase on Nov. 17.

City studies ban on agricultural, forest products facilities

By JANE MCCLURE

Gopher State Ethanol was St. Paul's first ethanol production plant. Under zoning changes under study by the St. Paul Planning Commission, it could be the city's last. The commission will hold a public hearing at 8:30 a.m. Friday, December 19 to review a newly released agricultural and forest products processing study.

The regulations would place an outright ban on any new ethanol production or sugar beet processing facilities in the city, said planner Emily Ulmer. Other new facilities that process raw agricultural or forestry products would have to obtain conditional use permits. The city permit requirement would kick in for any new facility that requires a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) air quality permit.

Ulmer said the permit requirement would give the city additional controls over facilities

that have the potential to significantly affect their surrounding neighborhoods with strong emissions. "In a built-up city like St. Paul it would most likely cause problems to have another ethanol plant," she said.

The proposed ordinance bans sugar beet processing plants as well as ethanol plants outright. Ulmer said sugar beet plants were added, as those were found to generate the most complaints in other communities. St. Paul has no large-scale facilities that process sugar beets.

Gopher State Ethanol was located at 882 West Seventh Street, the former home of the Schmidt Brewery. Gopher State began producing ethanol in spring 2000 and almost immediately began generating complaints about pungent odors as well as noise. Area residents, especially those living closest to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Looking for friendly pharmacists who know your name?



- Professional prescription compounding
- Free blood pressure monitoring
- Delivery in the Midway area

Lloyd's Pharmacy 651-645-8636
720 N. Snelling Ave. • St. Paul

FABULOUS DEPOSIT RATES AT WESTERN BANK!

30 Month CD Special
5.00% APY
(Annual Percentage Yield)

A \$10,000 minimum balance is required to open and obtain the Annual Percentage Yield. Annual Percentage Yield accurate as of December 1, 2005. Early withdrawal of principal will result in a penalty. This offer can end without notice.

Premier Money Market
Savings 3.50% APY
(Annual Percentage Yield)

A \$25,000 minimum balance is required to open and to maintain the Annual Percentage Yield. Annual Percentage Yield accurate as of December 1, 2005 and subject to change without notice.

And, there are other reasons to bank at Western Bank!!!

Free Checking with no monthly service charge, no minimum balance requirement, and unlimited check writing.

Free Debit Card

Free Internet Banking

Friendly, Responsive and Knowledgeable Bankers

Socially Responsible Bank that Supports Our Neighborhoods

WESTERN BANK
Member FDIC Equal Housing Lender

We're banking on people.

www.western-bank.com

Edina 4700 W 77th St #160 952-857-1707
Maplewood 1740 Rice Street 651-290-7822
Minneapolis 3033 University Ave 651-290-7888
Mounds View 2711 NE Highway 10 651-290-7866
Oakdale 1155 Hadley Ave N 651-290-7844
St. Paul 663 University Ave 651-290-8100

I have a friend who is unfortunately, a recent widow. Holidays can be a hard time for widows. This holiday season will be very sad for Patti. I refer to Patti as a widow, however she's not technically a widow because she and her fiancé were not married at the time of his death.

Her fiancé Joe, (a high school friend of mine) died this past summer of colon cancer. He and Patti had been soulmates for three years. I know it doesn't seem like much time to someone who's been married 25 or 50 years. To me, his death was more tragic because their bright future died with him. He died at the peak of their joy.

Patti was a real trooper for the entire 18 months of his struggle. She nursed him after his many operations and procedures, and rounds of chemo. She went with him to his doctor's appointments when he needed someone. She kept him at her home because it was better suited to convalesce, and sat next to his bed round the clock during the last days of his life, along with his mother. As far as I'm concerned, she's earned the dubious honor of being called a widow.

It's been five months since his death, and she's doing quite well managing her grief. When I talked to her yesterday, she was dreading the holidays, but was making her own plans. Luckily, she has three great kids, all grown and gone, who have kept her going. We talked about what she can do this holiday season to stave off depression. Here are some of our ideas:

Don't be alone weekends.

Make plans to do something with friends. Along that line, Patti accepts all invitations that have been extended to her by Joe's friends. This fall she has been to a bar-b-que, a fundraiser, and a few other parties.

When at parties, be cheerful.

Patti has worked hard at being cheerful. She brings a dish, or flowers, and thanks her hosts. She mixes with



The Best Years

By SHERRI MOORE

A widow's first Christmas

other guests, and avoids talking about Joe unless someone asks her. She said she'd rather be at home, in bed, crying about Joe, but she knows he wants her to have a full life. Joe was always up for a party.

Invite some close friends over for dinner or drinks.

Patti's planning a wine and cheese party for her co-workers, and another gathering for her close friends. She wants to thank everyone for being so nice to her during her time of grief. She likes to cook and bake, and is trying out some new recipes. She said baking particularly makes her feel at peace.

Attend community functions.

I asked her if she has something like our Hollidazzle Parade. She lives in a small town outside of Philadelphia, so her options are less than ours. She plans to attend the lighting of the town tree, and the Charles Dickens day in the shopping area. They'll have carolers, and vendors selling roasted chestnuts. She'll go from store to store, visiting with her friends.

All the plans that Patti has can be duplicated anywhere. In some ways, it should be easier here. We have two cities to choose activities from. Check either the *Star Tribune* or the *Pioneer Press* for lists of coming events. There are so many things coming up that I can't list all of them here. My favorites are the Hollidazzle Parade (free), the Christmas decorations in the period rooms at the Minneapolis Museum of Art, the Christmas tours at the Ramsey House and the James J. Hill mansion, the Christmas tea at Como Park and any of the Christmas productions in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

My mother said, "you have to keep busy" when she was newly widowed. She missed Dad so much, it hurt me to watch her. She talked to Dad's 1942 army picture every morning, telling him of her day's plans. Somehow, she managed to build a nice life for herself in her last years. I know some of you are thinking, "It's easy for

her to say what to do, her husband's still alive."

Somehow, the spirit goes on. Just after Joe's death, I never thought Patti would be able to manage her grief. I talked to her daily, she was consumed with grief. It broke my heart to hear her cry so much. Normally, she's a funny, happy young woman. I wondered if she'd ever return to her former self. She returned to work a week after Joe died and "went on automatic" for a few months. She'd call me when she was overwhelmed and I tried to comfort her.

After a few months, she'd call me with stories about her kids, her friends, her work. I noticed we laughed a lot too. She has a daughter getting married April 1st, and blessedly, her time had been taken over with wedding plans.

So, here we are, with the holidays looming over our heads. Patti's got her planned events, and is starting to enjoy her life again. She still has "meltdowns" when she hears certain songs, or smells something that reminds her of Joe. We laugh a lot during our weekly calls about what fun we had when the four of us spent a weekend together two years ago. We plan to laugh a lot over the holidays, and will meet up sometime in the summer. It's not easy, but Patti is going to enjoy the holidays.

Happy Holidays to all my favorite readers. Please pray for peace.

(*Sherrri Moore is a freelance writer. She and her husband will be busy at Christmas, but she welcomes your e-mails and can be reached at sherrimoore92@msn.com.*)

"There's no easy way to say this," I was explaining to my wife. "So I'll just say it. Jonah and I are going to be on *The View*." While I am often joking, spinning yarns, and generally irritating my wife, I think she sensed that this one was too bizarre to be false. That's right. Yours truly smacked right there on your screen in all my glory along with my mini-superstar son, Jonah.

I first got the news from my friend and fellow stay at home dad, Tom. Our dads group, Minnesota Dads at Home, had been invited to host a "viewing party" of the national daytime talk show. Apparently, the producers had been putting together a show on stay at home dads. They had come across our web site, and were impressed by how large and organized a group we were. They had immediately contacted Tom, who is our current public relations liaison. Ten dads from our local group were then lucky enough to be chosen to be treated to a morning of catered food, gifts, and a chance to talk about what we do. The show was in just a few days—we had almost no time to prepare ourselves.

On the morning of the shoot, we had to be in Minnetrista by 8 a.m. Jonah and I arrived amid a great hubbub of a whole crew of other dads and kids, signing waivers, lights, and bustling producers and cameramen. Despite the chaos, the dads, I must say, remained pretty calm and cool; retaining all of the good cheer that is cus-



New to the Neighborhood

By NATE HAMILTON

'The View' from here

tomary in our get-togethers.

In the end I was only on-screen for a few brief shots but a few of my pals were interviewed and got to ask some questions. Jonah was also in one close up shot, his cheeks stuffed with croutons and cheese all over his face. "That's my boy!" I thought. They also gave us several gift certificates and gift bags, which was a huge perk.

My best friends from my college days were completely blown away by my appearance on a, let's be frank, very female oriented chat show. Of course, they are still getting used to the idea of me as a parent. This whole parenting scene has been not a small transformation for me. They still remember me as the irresponsible fun times party guy – the one they called Big Bear. They could have never envisioned me as a stay at home parent. But time and people change. If we are lucky it is for the better. More on that in a minute.

But first let me interject that Jonah and my wife and I enjoyed the first Minnesota snowfall this year by running around our yard (and the neighbors') with our trusty sled

ment that was television. But behind the chitchat and the lights and cameras lies the real truth of what this parenting thing is all about. What we often don't talk about is that being a parent can be humbling and terrifying as much as it can be filled with happiness. We often try to wear our facade of constant happiness – complete with our made for TV smile. But the reality is in the tough moments – the middle of the night moments – and the lonely times. But surely it is also in the abundance of joys and smiles – in enjoying the first fun snowfalls of winter.

In that light, this month's column affords me another chance to remind everyone; particularly parents, and most of all myself, to pay attention. Approach parenting with honesty, openness and humility. You might be surprised at what is in store for you; be it an appearance on TV with your child, or as simple as an afternoon in the snow. In life, the saying goes, we don't always get what we want. We often get something better.

If my appearance on TV can teach me anything, it is this.

in tow. Actually, at the first sign of snow, Jonah was insisting we rush out and make a snowman – despite the bitter cold and wispy un-snowman-like snowfall. It was beautiful – and a whole lot more fun overall than the TV shoot was.

But back to the show: I was glad to be invited to be a part of the big production and excite-



Do the Write Thing!

For more information on submitting letters or news announcements to the Monitor call Denis Woulfe at 651-645-7045.



Rising costs of proposed West District Police headquarters come under scrutiny

By JANE MCCLURE

As the 2006 St. Paul city budget process winds down, questions around a new West District Police headquarters are heating up. St. Paul City Council members learned November 23 that a proposed Hamline Avenue facility could balloon in costs from \$3.5 million to almost \$10.5 million.

How the city will find the money to pay for a relocated headquarters remains to be seen. Council members Debbie Montgomery, Jay Benanav and Pat Harris are interested in seeing the West District relocate to a proposed site on Hamline just south of Midway Marketplace. The site under consideration is where Chevy's Restaurant is located, in the Snelling-Hamline neighborhood.

dle of the Midway retail district is also a plus, Benanav said. "I think we would regret the opportunity if we didn't purchase and build on this site."

But Council President Kathy Lantry was blunt in warning her colleagues that before they add Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) projects or increase project budgets, funding sources have to be identified. Another concern she raised is that the capital budget went through several months of community review process before getting to the mayor and then to the City Council. Raising projects to fund others in the final days of the budget review process could generate controversy. The council held its public hearing on the 2006 budget, including the capital budget in early

dancing. Police have been housed in the renovated building for more than a decade. The building is overcrowded and in a deteriorated condition.

The West District building and its parking lot are owned by the St. Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA). The HRA wants to sell the property to the Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation for redevelopment as a senior housing project with first-floor retail.

Mayor Randy Kelly's 2006 budget for 2006 shows a total of \$1 million for the police station. Of that amount \$700,000 is for

property acquisition and \$300,000 is for building design. The remaining funds are budgeted for 2007. Those costs were estimated before a specific site was located.

For the Chevy's property, acquisition cost is estimated at \$1.5 million. Demolition is estimated at \$500,000, with design at \$275,000. That brings the 2006 costs to \$825,000 more than what is budgeted.

Building a one-story police station on Hamline has an estimated cost of \$6.296 million. Montgomery is proposing the city build a two-story police station

and rent out the second floor, either to city departments such as property code enforcement or other law enforcement agencies.

However, city budget analyst Greg Blees said that if the city leases space to outside agencies, such as the Minnesota Gang Strike Task Force, it cannot legally use CIB funds to build the second floor of the structure.

The police have struggled to find a suitable West District site, said Montgomery. In at least one case a property owner dramatically raised his asking price after finding out the city was the prospective buyer.

"We're going to face costs along the way, no matter what."

- Council Member Pat Harris

Montgomery said the city needs to act on the police station site. "I support getting this done," she said. "The costs keep going up the longer we wait on it."

"We're going to face costs along the way, no matter what," Harris said. He thinks the city needs to look into how the project could be financed.

Benanav said the Hamline site would put the district headquarters closer to the center of the West District, which includes all or part of the Highland, Macalester-Groveland, West End, Merriam Park, Summit Hill, Summit-University, Lexington-Hamline, Snelling-Hamline, Frogtown, Hamline-Midway, St., Anthony Park and Como Park neighborhoods. During city budget review, Benanav and Harris have raised concerns about the lack of police officers seen on patrol in their areas.

"We might actually get a couple of police officers that stray into our wards," Benanav said.

Having the police in the mid-

Novembr.

The added police costs come at a time when council members Lee Helgen and Dan Bostrom are trying to find additional capital dollars for projects in their wards. Helgen would like \$300,000 for Rice Street streetscape improvements; Bostrom is seeking \$100,000 for two deteriorated playgrounds in his East Side ward.

Helgen questioned the dramatic increase in the West District headquarters cost, saying it is "way out of line."

During the CIB process earlier this year, police made a strong case for replacing West District's current facility. Police Chief John Harrington also spoke of the building issue in his budget talks with the City Council earlier this fall. Harrington was West District commander before becoming chief.

West District is currently housed at the northeast corner of University and Dale, in what used to be the Belmont Club, a once-notorious nightclub with nude

No need to repeat yourself.
Once you tell us your story, it sticks.

The Genius of Electronic Medical Records

Ever visit the doctor and feel like you're repeating yourself, repeating yourself, repeating yourself? Today, that's old news, thanks to Electronic Medical Records (or "EMR") at all HealthPartners Clinics. Our highly respected doctors have lightning quick access to all your information, so not only will they know you better, they'll care for you better, too. To experience the genius of EMR, call us for an appointment or visit healthpartners.com/clinics.

HealthPartners
Como Clinic

2500 Como Avenue

Clinic Info: 651-641-8200
Appointments: 952-967-7955

 HealthPartners
Clinics

Accepts most major insurance.

LETTERS

Congrats to leaders on National Night Out

A hearty congratulation is due to the residents, block club leaders, agencies, businesses, and SPPD and SPFD officers who took part in National Night Out! St. Paul was awarded 1st place for a city of its size in the nation for overall quality in programming. National Night Out is designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness; generate support for, and participation in, local anticrime programs; strengthen

neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships; and send a message to criminals letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

It is important that everyone in St. Paul get involved in the fight against crime, and this August the city certainly made it clear to criminals that we're not going to sit back and watch as they attempt to harm our great city. Great work!

Senator Ellen Anderson
Dist. 66, St. Paul and Falcon Heights

Lexington Park plans not what community craves...

Advisory Group rejects White Castle's plans for one-story restaurant

By JANE MCCLURE

White Castle's plans for a new restaurant at Lexington Parkway and University Avenue aren't what a community advisory committee craves. Members of the Lexington Park Design Advisory Group reviewed the plans November 17 and told restaurant representatives that a one-story restaurant building with a small plaza at the corner doesn't meet expectations for more dense, transit-oriented development near the proposed Central Corridor transit line.

Preliminary plans call for moving the new building west, away from the Lexington-University corner. The new building would be one story tall. That would free up space for an outdoor plaza at the corner, with pavers, landscaping and seating. A similar outdoor plaza area is part of the newly opened Aldi grocery store to the west.

But task force members would rather see White Castle rebuilt as a part of a larger building, possibly one that is three or four stories tall. While no one is suggesting that housing be built above the popular fast-food restaurant, offices would be a possibility.

How White Castle will respond to the task force's criticism is still an open question. Company officials want to replace the restaurant that has stood near the corner since 1983. A new restaurant would allow White Castle to relocate its current drive-through window and create more interior seating. Ideally, the replacement would be built in about 2009.

The plan presented November 17 shows a 2,584 square-foot building that is 18 feet high. That



Task force members of the Lexington Park Design Advisory Group would rather see White Castle rebuilt as a part of a larger building, possibly one that is three or four stories tall. While no one is suggesting that housing be built above the popular fast-food restaurant, offices would be a possibility. (Photo by Terry Faust)

is about the same size as the current building. The building would face University and have motor vehicle access points on University and Lexington. Motorists using the drive-through window would circle around the front of the building, then exit onto Lexington.

White Castle is a 24-hour operation at Lexington and University. About 60 percent of the restaurant's business is through its drive-through window. But Glen Davidson of White Castle said that given the current restaurant design

and traffic patterns, it is "almost impossible" to have a drive-through window there. The drive-through wasn't part of the original restaurant. It was added in the mid-1980s.

After viewing the plans, St. Paul Design Center director Tim Griffin said, "I think the answer is no. This is a transit corridor." He said that erecting new buildings that don't adhere to the principles of more dense transit-oriented development could hurt the chances for federal funding to build the long-awaited Central Corridor, a

proposed light rail line or busway that would connect the downtown areas of St. Paul and Minneapolis via University Avenue. He said the task force shouldn't consider projects that would hurt Central Corridor's chances for funding.

"This is a keystone corner," said Ward One City Council Member Debbie Montgomery. While admitting that she is fond of the traditional White Castle design, with its tower and castle motif, Montgomery said that just doesn't meet the goals of transit-

oriented development.

Montgomery asked White Castle officials to consider a mixed restaurant-office design that would allow them to move office, possibly their Twin Cities headquarters, to the corner.

"I think what you're hearing is a lot of frustration," said Tony Schertler, West Team leader for St. Paul Planning and Economic Development (PED). He said there is a strong desire in the community for transit-oriented development along University, to tie into the proposed transit corridor.

Last year University UNITED and district councils along University Avenue successfully pressured CVS to build a structure at University and Snelling that appears to be two stories in height and has a corner tower. (The building is actually one story tall.) But pleas for a mixed-use development were cast aside.

During the planning of Lexington Park, University UNITED and several other groups have argued for more of a coordinated redevelopment plan, rather than the piecemeal approach of selling plots of the site to Aldi, TCF Bank, Wilder Foundation and others. There have also been complaints that the Aldi store, which is right on University, should have been party of a larger mixed-use building.

The groups did persuade TCF Bank to build a two-story building on Lexington, rather than the one-story building initially suggested. Other parts of the development include senior housing built by Episcopal Homes, a new Wilder Foundation offices building and mixed-use housing and retail along Lexington.

White Castle representatives said they would consider the comments but it is difficult for them to envision their restaurant as part of a larger development. The company might wind up shelving its new restaurant plans and remodeling the existing building instead.

"We really like what's going on in this area and we would like to be a part of that," said Ron Rehder of White Castle. But he and others from the restaurant chain said White Castle hasn't put a lot of its restaurants in mixed-use developments. One question restaurant officials have is how a drive-through window could be accommodated as part of a larger building.

The restaurant isn't technically part of Lexington Park. Wellington Management's proposed development at the southwest corner of Lexington and University. The restaurant has been a separately owned parcel for more than 20 years. White Castle agreed to appear before the task force as a courtesy. How much the task force and ultimately, city officials can say about the White Castle's building design isn't clear. A new building would require city staff review and approval of a new site plan and St. Paul Planning Commission approval of a new conditional use permit for the drive-through window.

Classifieds 70¢ per word

Switch for Service

Not getting the service you want from your bank? Make the switch to us for great personal service from your locally-owned community bank!

STEVE JOHNSON
Business Banker

KATHY BJERKE
University Avenue Branch Manager/
Business Banker

RICK BEESON
President

Park Midway Bank
THE LEADER IN IMPROVING OUR URBAN COMMUNITY

2171 University Avenue • St. Paul (651) 645-3800
Also located at 2265 & 2300 Como Avenue • St. Paul
www.parkmidwaybank.com Member FDIC

New Member Orientations Twice A Month!

Hampden Park Co-op

Life's Finest Treasures Can be Found in Small Packages!

Welcome to a neighborhood co-op with a full line of fresh natural foods, unique gifts, books and housewares

M-F 9-9 Sat. 9-7 Sun. 10-7
928 Raymond St. Paul 651-646-6686

AVALON SCHOOL
GRADES 7-8 and 9-12

A small, internationally recognized public school for the independent learner

Information Sessions
January 18th
January 31st
February 15th
March 21st

Time: 7 PM-8:30 PM

For information, call 651-649-5495 www.avalonschool.org

Sponsored by Hamline University * Accredited by North Central Association
1745 University Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104

Coalition of community groups calls for moratorium on new development

By JANE MCCLURE

Demands for an approach to redevelopment that focuses on transit-oriented development has sparked the latest debate between City Hall and area neighborhoods. Saying that more time is needed to look at development and transportation issues swirling around the already-busy University and Snelling intersection, a coalition of community groups is calling for a moratorium on new development in the area. The board of University UNITED voted 14-0-1 November 21 to ask the City of St. Paul for a development moratorium in an area bounded by both sides of Snelling Avenue, both sides of University Avenue, Syndicate Street and Interstate 94.

The moratorium would allow time to coordinate how redevelopment would fit into transit and transportation issues on the drawing board. "Given all that is going on in the area, it's time to call for everyone to take a breather," said University UNITED Executive Director Brian McMahon.

UNITED is a coalition of St. Paul district councils, Minneapolis neighborhood associations, business groups and individual businesses along University Avenue. McMahon said the organization and its communities needs time to study redevelopment and plan for future transit improvements. Redevelopment is on the drawing boards at Midway Center and Midway Target. Another issue that has to be thrown into the mix is the ultimate fate of the former Midway Mervyn's store at Midway Marketplace.

The moratorium would coincide with a traffic study getting underway for the University-Snelling intersection. The University-Snelling traffic study is tied to the proposed Central Corridor transit improvements along University. Ramsey County, St. Paul, Minnesota Department of Transportation and Metropolitan Council are involved in the \$200,000 study, which is expected to take several months. The study will examine ways to handle University-Snelling traffic after Central Corridor is built, either in the form of a dedicated busway or light line along University Avenue.

McMahon said that with all of the proposed redevelopment, along with Central Corridor, Snelling Avenue's traffic woes could worsen.

At this point five possible solutions to the Snelling and University traffic issues have been suggested. All have the potential to take business or residential property in the area. These include:

*A ring road system to divert traffic around the intersection. University and Snelling has one ring road in place, Spruce Tree Drive. It was built in the 1980s when Spruce Tree Center was built.

*A grade-separated intersection.

*A change in the Central

Corridor alignment.

*A grade-separated crossing, with an overpass or a tunnel.

*Widening of University and/or Snelling.

Without some kind of change in the University-Snelling area, Public Works offi-



Demands for an approach to redevelopment that focuses on transit-oriented development has sparked the latest debate between City Hall and area neighborhoods. (Photo by Terry Faust)

cials are concerned about the potential for traffic gridlock. A solution may have to be in place as early as 2009, the earliest date a light rail or bus line could open.

The Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority is continuing to work with federal and regional transit officials on a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for Central Corridor. It may be spring before that study is ready to be released for public comment.

With all that is going on, UNITED board members agree that a moratorium is needed. "Transportation and development have to be mutually compatible and supportive," said Mike Madden, a Merriam Park representative on the UNITED board.

Other UNITED Board members said a moratorium would give the community time to seek development that is transit-oriented. UNITED has battled developers and the city over the newly opened CVS at University and Snelling, the Sheraton Midway closing and proposed Target expansion, and the Lexington Park development at Lexington and University.

"We've just been pushed to the line so many times," said UNITED Board Member Sam Riesgraf.

McMahon said a moratorium would give district councils from Snelling-Hamline, Lexington-Hamline, Merriam Park and Hamline-Midway a chance to make recommendations on land use and zoning, to be coordinated with the traffic study. Snelling-Hamline Community Council has already formed its own task force to start examining the proposed Best Buy and Lowe's stores that would be built south of Midway Center. Neighborhood residents are concerned about traffic, air quality and other impacts the additional devel-

opment could generate, said Community Organizer Renee Obrect-Como.

At this point there isn't a City Council sponsor for the development moratorium. Ward One Council Member Debbie Montgomery, who represents

Lowe's, and for an expanded Midway Target," Montgomery said. Lowe's and Best Buy would be built on land south of Midway Center, part of which is owned by Metro Transit and the Metropolitan Council. Target would expand onto the property occupied by the now-shuttered Sheraton Midway.

Council Member Jay Benanav, whose Fourth Ward includes the west side of Snelling, said a moratorium isn't needed. Until a city-Met Council standoff over redevelopment of the former Metro Transit Snelling bus garage site ends, "nothing is going to happen there anyway," he said. "There's plenty of time to do a study without a moratorium."

Mayor-elect Chris Coleman "isn't a fan" of moratoriums, said Nancy Homans, Coleman's director of policy and planning. But she said the new mayor is interested in the issues UNITED is raising and is preparing to launch a planning and visioning strategy for the entire length of University Avenue.

The moratorium would affect a variety of projects on the drawing boards in the neighborhood, including the proposal to redevelop 14 acres of land south of Midway Center. The center's owners want to develop the site with a Best Buy and Lowe's stores, a project that would re-

quire the purchase of the former bus garage property. University UNITED opposes that plan, calling for mixed-use, transit-oriented development.

Metro Transit doesn't want to sell or swap the Snelling land until a new site for a 100-vehicle bus garage can be found. A potential Hampden Avenue location, near a proposed condo and loft project, is opposed by Benanav, the condo and loft developers and the St. Anthony Park Community Council.

Montgomery was prepared to introduce a City Council resolution earlier this fall for a land swap involving the Hampden site but withdrew the proposal in the face of opposition.

The moratorium would also include Midway Marketplace, as well as the Midway Target site and the now-closed hotel. Sheraton Midway shut its doors in October.

Just outside of the moratorium area is a proposed redevelopment site at Snelling and Concordia avenues. Anchor Bank has purchased the former Citgo station and Malt Shop restaurant with the intent of building a new bank on the property. Citgo closed earlier this fall. The Malt Shop closed in mid-November. No timelines has been set for site plan review or any requests for the Planning Commission.

"I'm Dreaming of a Whiter Brighter Holiday Season!"

Get **'Zoomed'** for **\$50 OFF** this month at Dr. Hagerman's office.

One appointment whitening as seen on ABC's Extreme Makeover

- Invisalign™ orthodontics "The Clear Choice for Straight Teeth"
- Zoom in-office tooth whitening as seen on ABC's Extreme Makeover
- Cosmetic tooth colored fillings
- Computerized anesthetic system
- Digital x-rays reduce radiation up to 90%
- Non surgical gum care
- Laser treatment
- Implant surgery & restoration
- Stabilize dentures
- Oral surgery
- Root canal therapy
- Laser decay detection
- Well trained caring, courteous professional staff
- No interest financing plans available

Serving the Midway Como area for over 22 years

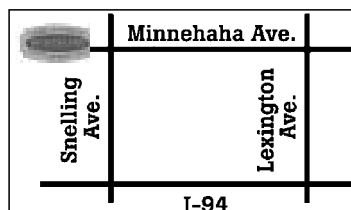
"For Care You Can Trust"

Steven R. Hagerman, D.D.S.

1605 Minnehaha Ave.

(Just west of Snelling on Minnehaha)

651-646-2392



Employees, customers share memories...

Former Four Points Sheraton awaits fate



Angelika Amundson, who began her career in the housekeeping department 21 years ago, later worked in room service and the coatroom until joining the restaurant server staff. (Photo by Tom Conlon)

By TOM CONLON

On October 31, the last 30 guests checked out of the 23-year old Four Points Sheraton (St. Paul Capital) Hotel as St. Paul Port Authority security took possession at 11 a.m. and sealed the building.

The night before, only a handful of regulars and a St. Paul Port Authority inspector sipped their final beers and said goodbyes at the bar in an empty restaurant. A decade ago, the room was jammed packed with stage performances and its own separate restaurant.

The hotel, located at I-94 and Hamline Aves, had survived renovations and different owners without ever closing its doors until that sunny crisp morning. Deliverymen came to pick up their vending machines, and, by the last hour of the breakfast buffet, the staff offered it to the handful of remaining guests

'on the house.' The last guests awaited taxis as the last airport shuttle ever left at 9 a.m.

The swimming pool and Jacuzzi were still lit and running but empty since the early evening before. No maid service this morning; linen and towels were thrown into the hallway. At 11 a.m., re-

maining employees and department managers were lingering in small groups in the few offices, not sure what was coming next – and probably silently coming to term with the emotions of the moment.

Restaurant server Mandy Wilkening, a 3-1/2-year employee, reflected on the final day. "All employees came in from noon to 3 p.m. to get their severance checks at the back door," she said. We weren't even allowed to come in the front lobby anymore since it would be locked up. We celebrated, or cried, at an employee farewell gathering at Billy's on Grand after since we were not allowed to do an event at the hotel.

"I didn't think I'd cry, but I thought about all the Shriners kids I had served and watched grow up during their visits, and that I wouldn't know what happened to them later in life," she said. "I remembered other customers by name; those who I knew their order the minute they walked in.

"What I didn't realize then, but do now, is how close I was with many of those people - I miss them," she said. "Someone told me that this closing is a bit like signing your high school yearbooks at graduation – you pledge lifelong friendship with those you are close to, but know in your heart you'll never see 80 percent of them again," she said. "All our employees, regardless of department, came in for their free employee meals on shift and I got to know them all. We really were like a family. We worked well as a team, and our customers felt a part of that as well."

Angelika Amundson, who began her career in the housekeeping department 21 years ago, later worked in room service and the coatroom until joining the restaurant server staff. She spoke fondly of Bigelow's—the fine dining restaurant that existed from the hotel's opening until a major renovation in 1997.

"Bigelow's was a very elegant and quiet place with a huge menu, dark wood, gold-laced plates, frosted glass between booths, tiffany lamps, calendar girls artwork, brass and a huge Sunday buffet brunch prepared by the late Chef Edwards, who was well-known for his excellent food," she said. "I met lot of famous guests at the restaurant's coatroom (which no longer exists)—Angie Dickinson, Don Shelby, Clint Black, Neil Murray, one of the leads from Midnight Express, and several governors, mayors, entertainers, business executives, educators and others."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Forward in Faith Celebrating 125 Years 1880-2005

HAMLINE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES

8:00AM	Prayer Worship	♿
9:30AM	Traditional Worship	Details on website: www.hamlinechurch.org
9:45AM	Sunday School	
10:30AM	Hospitality and Fellowship	
11:00AM	Informal Worship	
8:30PM	Compline (Evening Prayer) (Compline will not sing on December 25 or January 1)	

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

4:00PM	Family service with Children's Choir
10:30PM	Traditional Candlelight Service of Carols

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

10:30AM	Traditional Worship
---------	---------------------

1514 Englewood Avenue – St. Paul 651-645-0667

Next deadline: Jan. 2

Next Issue: Jan. 12

As part of its continuum of care, Lyngblomsten is proud to announce its **Transitional Care Program** for those persons needing short-term health care or a place of recuperation following serious illness or surgery. If you or someone you know needs a restful place to heal between hospital and home, call (651) 646-2941.

THE LOKENSGARD
TRANSITIONAL CARE PROGRAM
Lyngblomsten Care Center
1415 Almond Avenue, St. Paul
www.lyngblomsten.org

Rest, Rehab, Recuperate™

L
LYNGBLOMSTEN

CORNELIA HOUSE

Gracious Independent Living

If you don't need a "senior community" right now, you'd fit right in. None of our residents do either.

Our residents moved here because *they* wanted to choose their next home instead of having it chosen for them. They also like the idea of living on a *continuing care campus* where they will always have priority access to all of the care and services they may ever need. The great neighbors are just the icing on the cake. If you're age 62 or better, we still have some wonderful choices for you to explore – all with the security and amenities you'd expect, plus available heated parking. Visit us at www.ehomesmn.org. Or call 651-288-3931 for a tour.

1840 University Ave W • Saint Paul MN 55104
Part of the Episcopal Homes family

IRIS PARK COMMONS

A Community of Heart

"If you want to hear from someone who lives here, talk to me after your tour."

Gale Frost

Gale Frost knows what a big decision you're facing. He looked at a dozen other places before deciding on us. That's why Gale has offered to talk with prospective new neighbors like you. We offer inviting, secure apartments with a menu of assisted living services for age 55+. One or two-bedroom and studio designs, most with views of Iris Park or our private campus. Some are available through various County programs. Visit us at www.ehomesmn.org or call us at 651-646-1026. We'll be happy to arrange a tour (and a talk with Gale).

1850 University Ave W • Saint Paul MN 55104
Part of the Episcopal Homes family

'Mask' man makes images as expressions of life



Although he focuses strongly on his mask making, Brently Michael Davis is also an actor, writer, sculptor and painter. He is currently considering the possibility of creating a Van Gogh show. (Photo by Terry Faust)

By JAN WILLMS

In a studio in his apartment off Como Avenue, Brently Michael Davis is working intensely on a mask of the artist, Van Gogh. The lilting voice of a local musician on CD provides a backdrop for his labors. He is surrounded by earlier examples of his work, masks representing tragedy and comedy, the various ages of man, a prisoner of war. On the walls are messages Davis has written, some representing notes to himself, others reflecting his philosophy of life.

One message describes the author Mark Twain. It reads, "Mark Twain wrote all day. He then went home and read to his family."

Davis said this message really struck home for him what being an artist is all about.

"When you are alone creating, your work isn't that visible to others," he said. He said that when he has an opportunity to talk with someone about his art or show it to others, it means so much more.

"This message about Twain shows his way of sharing him-

self," Davis said.

Davis continues working on the Van Gogh mask, scraping and shaping the features. He is creating the mask for a play that he is writing about the troubled artist. Although he focuses strongly on his mask making, Davis is also an actor, writer, sculptor and painter.

"I started Van Gogh because I found I wasn't doing enough art work," Davis said. "I did this to motivate me into the possibility of creating a Van Gogh show." He said that the play will have scenes from Van Gogh's life interwoven throughout, with a punk rock soundtrack being considered.

"For Van Gogh, his art was an expression of his life, not his insanity," Davis said. He is studying several portraits of Van Gogh as he works, because the mask will be three-dimensional. The mask will have an artificial jaw, so that the mask can open and close as an actor wears it.

As he scrapes and pats the clay for the Van Gogh mask, Davis said that this creation is quite a daunting task. He is trying to recreate exactly the same process he used when he made

the tragic and comic faces.

"I use terra cotta red clay, then cover the clay in plastic," Davis said. "I then start applying paper." He will use toilet paper and coffee filters, sculpting the paper on top of the clay with plastic film underneath. Davis also makes his own glue.

"I have my own process of applying the paper in layers," he said, as he continues to work on the foundation for the Van Gogh mask.

"For my masks, my motto is to use any material that works," Davis added. He also makes his creations from rubber, textile or leather.

Most of Davis' masks are used for theatre, and he fits each one with pieces of foam or sponge rubber in the cheekbones or brow or forehead, so that the actor can comfortably wear the mask for a period of time and enunciate clearly through it.

"The masks I use in a play resonate," Davis said. He said that he rarely gets the opportunity to do a mold of an actor's face. "Most of my pieces need to be able to fit anyone," he said.

Davis has been involved in theatre since the age of four, when he played Tiny Tim in a street theatre production of "A Christmas Carol." He was a precocious young actor, writing and performing in his own mime show for street festivals between the ages of 5 and 10.

He performed his own show at the Renaissance Festival in the late 1970s and again from 1988 to 1994. He was a street actor from 2000 to 2004. He portrays several characters of his own creation, as well as Charlie Chaplin.

His foray into mask making began when he and several friends were going to perform a show based on an idea he had sold to the Renaissance Festival, a Commedia del Arte. However, all of his friends dropped out and so he made masks and played all the characters.



Brently Michael Davis says his motto is to use any material that works. He has made his creations from rubber, textile or leather in the past. (Photo by Terry Faust)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Classifieds
70¢ per word

Wendy's Wee World Day Care
Serving Families For 20 Years

- Long-Term, Experienced Staff
- 1-8 Student Ratio
- Computer Classes
- Nutritious Meals & Snacks Included
- Large Gym, Playground & Colorful Classrooms
- Fun, Creative Pre-School Curriculum
- County Payments Accepted
- Ages 2 Yr 9 Mos-12 Years

651-489-9300
21 E Wheelock Pkwy

Life in the City:
Festivals, Theater, Walks in the Park, Orchestra Concerts...

Life in the Suburbs:
Shovel, Snowplow, Shovel, Snowplow
City Living...Because you have better things to do with your time.

COLDWELL BANKER BURNET

Robert Gibb
mini-MBA, Real Estate
651-695-4305
RobertGibb.net

"Your Urbane Realtor®"

CLINIC WITH A BIG HEART

Your Local Family Physicians with a New

E.D.G.E.

Electronic Medical Records online in December.

Doctors: We've added new doctors, including Maria Vu in September.

Generic samples - Coming later this year, generic samples offered FREE for new medical start-ups and simple medical problems such as strep throat, ear infections, urinary tract infections.

Extending our hours, current appointments starting @7:30am (through 5pm Friday). Tuesday-7:30am-7:00pm, Thursday-7:30am-7:00pm

MinnHealth
FAMILY PHYSICIANS, P.A.
www.MinnHealth.com

LARPENTEUR OFFICE
1050 West Larpenteur Avenue
Located near the corner of Larpenteur and Lexington Avenues.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55113
651-487-2831 • Fax: 651-487-1705

Jane Kilian, M.D.
Kenneth Koch, M.D.
John Nichols, M.D.
Julia Perpich, M.D.
Maria Vu, M.D.
William Weincke, M.D.

For more information or appointments call 651-487-2831

In Our Community

Storytimes at Hamline Midway Library

Two storytimes will be offered at the Hamline Midway Branch of the St. Paul Public Library in December. Bedtime storytime for preschool and early elementary-aged children will be held on Tuesday, December 13, at 7 p.m. All children are encouraged to wear their pajamas and bring a favorite bear or blanket to storytime.

Toddler and preschool storytime will be held on Wednesday, December 14, at 10:30 a.m. Parents with babies are welcome. Both storytimes include storytelling, songs, fingerplays, and much more. Pre-registration is requested, but not required.

In the new year, Winter storytimes for toddlers and preschoolers will be offered on Wednesday mornings at 10:30 a.m., from January 18 through February 22. Winter bedtime storytimes for preschool and early elementary-aged children will be offered on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m., from February 7 through March 14.

For more information or to register for storytime, please contact the Hamline Midway Branch Library at 651-642-0293. The schedule will also appear on the Library's website, www.sppl.org.

Breastfeeding is topic of La Leche meeting Jan. 9

The Advantages of Breastfeeding is the topic of the next meeting of Como-Midway La Leche League, to be held on Tuesday, January 9, 2006 at 7 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.

Carnival Royalty at Elders luncheon Dec. 13

The Senior Winter Carnival Royalty will make an appearance at a luncheon sponsored by Hamline Midway Elders on Tuesday, December 13 at 11:30 a.m. at 1514 Englewood Avenue.

A free will offering is taken for the meal and free transportation is available by calling 651-209-6542. Hamline Midway Elders is a Living at Home/Block Nurse Program which provides supportive services for seniors so they can remain in their own homes. Seniors and caregivers can call 651-209-6542 for a consultation regarding anyone over the age of 65.

Advent theme at Jehovah Lutheran Church

"Christmas is coming!" Indeed! And this "coming" theme, called Advent in the Christian church year, permeates worship, study groups and programs at Jehovah Lutheran Church the four weeks prior to Christmas.

The 2nd Sunday Bluegrass Worship, December 11, features an Advent message by Pastor Bob Benke, lighting of the third candle of the Advent wreath and music by John Stowell and Friends, Bluegrass musicians from the Midway area. A light supper follows with good fellowship.

The December Sunday worship services urge a "preparing for the way of the Lord" Advent theme these weeks before Christmas and remind worshippers of Christ's coming long ago, today and in the future.

Likewise, the Sunday 9:15 a.m. adult Bible class, as well as Sunday School for kids, looks toward Jesus' coming. Dr. Victor Gebauer, retired professor of church music and worship from Concordia University in St. Paul, leads the adults in examining the prophecies and promises of God as they were spoken by the Old Testament prophets and as they ring clear yet today.

The community is invited to all Advent worship and study events at Jehovah, corner of Snelling and Thomas Avenue. Check the website, www.JehovahLutheran.org for details or call Dawn at the church office, 651-644-1421.



John Howell and Friends, a Midway Bluegrass group, will provide music for the December 11th 2nd Sunday Bluegrass Worship at Jehovah Lutheran Church, corner of Snelling and Thomas.

MMSA School holds Christmas program

Maternity of Mary-St. Andrew School will present its annual Christmas program on Tuesday, December 13, at 7 p.m. in Maternity of Mary Church. Students in grades K-5, middle school choir and drama will perform under the direction of Mrs. McEvoy and Mrs. Lundberg.

MMSA School is located at 592 West Arlington Ave. MMSA is committed to academic excellence and prides itself on providing a quality, affordable, Catholic education for all children. The school serves children preschool through grade 8.

Christmas for Kids held Dec. 10 at Mt. Olive

On Saturday, Dec. 10, parents can enjoy an afternoon of shopping while their children learn about the true meaning of Christmas at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, 1460 Almond Ave. Activities for children ages 4-12 begin at 2 p.m. and include crafts, songs, snacks, and more.

Parents are welcome to join their children for a Family Time and light supper beginning at 4:30 p.m. For more information call 651-645-2575.

Central holds Christmas Eve Candlelight Caroling

Central Baptist Church, 420 Roy Street, will be holding a Christmas Eve Candlelight Carol Service on Dec. 24 at 11 p.m. called "The Promise of Christmas." The event explores the meaning of the season through the creative reading of lessons and singing of carols. The event is a longstanding tradition at Central Baptist and features a variety of musical ensembles for listeners' enjoyment.

Griggs Rec Centers hold welcome event for staff

A Welcome Night will be held Thur., Dec. 22 from 4-8 p.m. at Griggs Recreation Center. The event will be a chance to walk through the completed renovation of Griggs Recreation Center.

Skating Hours: Jan. 5-Feb. 19 (Weather Permitting); Thur: 4-8, Fri: 4-10, Sat & Sun: 2-8 p.m.; Kids Holiday Vacation Hours: Dec. 19-23 (1-8 p.m.) Dec. 27-30 (1-8 p.m.)

Twin Cities Irish Social Dancing offered locally

Here is the full listing of Irish social dancing opportunities locally, several of which are in the Midway Como area.

Wednesday night Irish ceili dance classes. Learn the basic steps, and then join in the dances. They all start at 7 p.m., they run year around, they are open to all ages, and all are free:

Dubliner Irish Pub - 2162 University Avenue. Learn Irish dancing in a genuine Irish Pub with a wooden floor that has known a whole lot of dancing feet. Steps and dances are taught by Súin Lowary, with some dances not commonly done elsewhere. Stay after the regular class and dance to live traditional Irish music at 9:30 a.m. provided by the inimitable Tom Dahill and his friends.

The Nickel Joint - 501 Blair Avenue. Set dancing is a particular form of Irish social dancing, done in set of four couples in a square (but you don't have to come in couples!) The classes are taught by Karen Cieminski. There is also set dancing in Northfield on the first Friday of each month.

Regular monthly ceili dances are also available. Whether you've learned the steps and dances at any of the above classes, or are a complete novice, you are welcome to join the fun with live music provided (almost always) by some very fine local Irish musicians. Each dance we do is taught by the caller, and there are always plenty of experienced dancers to help newcomers along.

First Saturday Afternoon Ceili - Dubliner Pub, 2162 University Avenue in Saint Paul, from 2 to 5 p.m. This dance is free, but remember to tip the musicians and the bartender. The dances are called by Paul McCluskey.

University UNITED holds Awards Program Dec. 19

University UNITED will hold its Annual Awards Program and Holiday Party on Monday, December 19 at 5 p.m. at Episcopal Homes at Fairview and University. University UNITED is also having its Annual Awards Program, where UNITED honorS development projects or programs that have happened along the Avenue in the past

year. Join us for some wine and hors d'oeuvres.

Three Ramsey County sites open for winter

Three Ramsey County yard waste sites will remain open to the public on a limited basis during the winter months, December through March. Two sites in St. Paul (Midway and Frank & Sims) and the White Bear Township site are open one weekend per month, on Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and on Sundays, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. on the following dates (weather permitting): Dec. 17-18, 2005; Jan. 14-15, 2006; Feb. 11-12; Mar. 11-12.

The sites are closed weekdays and on unscheduled weekends.

All three sites will be accepting tree and shrub waste and leaves from Ramsey County residents only.

Holiday decorations: The Ramsey County yard waste sites will accept Christmas trees. However, residents should check with their waste hauler and/or city first.

Hancock Rec offers cards, rubberstamping

Area Seniors are welcome to join us on Thursday afternoons from 1-4 p.m. for cards (500) and dice games. Beginners and advanced players welcome. For more information please call the recreation center at 651-298-4393.

Area residents ages 9 - adult are welcome to join us on Tuesday, January 10 from 5:30 - 7 p.m. for a free rubberstamping demonstration. Learn how to stamp correctly and make beautiful designs for cards, scrapbooking and other crafts. Classes are held the first Thursday of the month at Hancock Recreation Center from 6-7:15 p.m. Call the recreation center at 651-298-4393 for more information.

Tree sale at Midway Y helps send kids to camp

The Midway YMCA Service Club will once again be selling trees at their lot, 1761 University Avenue, at University Avenue and Wheeler Street, daily Monday-Friday noon to 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. This is the 48th year that the Service Club will be selling trees, wreaths, swags and table top trees. Trees on the lot include Fraser fir, Scotch pine and many more. The proceeds from the sale, which is staff completely by volunteer help, benefit YMCA Kids to Camp. Volunteers are needed to staff the lot. Call Anne at the YMCA at 651-646-4557.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Mask Man

Continued from page 9

"My masks started getting some attention," Davis said. "I was out for a beer on my 21st birthday, and I met a producer who hired me to do some masks for the Minnesota Dance Theatre. This led to further commissions."

Davis created or recreated most of the masks for the Nutcracker Fantasy, performed in the State Theatre by the Minnesota Dance Theatre. He has also done masks for the St. Paul City Ballet, creating the ghost of Marley for "A Christmas Carol" performance.

Although he has been self-taught for the most part, Davis has also had the opportunity to study his craft. He has a degree in anthropology and Eastern Asian studies from Hamline University, with a focus on theatre anthropology, which is a cross-cultural study of theatre. He studied restorative sculpture, starting with the skull and moving through layers of muscle and flesh. At the Minnesota River School of Fine Art, he studied portrait and figure sculpture, molding and casting.

Davis has a wide array of masks, ranging from the delicate Geisha to the rugged Norwegian to the war veteran, with the furrowed brow. He has done masks of the four ages of man, expressing through his art the wisdom that comes with maturity. He also has one he calls the prisoner of war, a mask that radiates hope along with suffering.

"The majority of masks I create come out of my head," Davis said.

Slight in build, with a quiet and almost shy demeanor, Davis seems to put much of his emotion into the artistry of his masks. There you see a world-weary suffering, warmth of spirit, a benign tolerance and an enigmatic smile.

As Davis continues working on the features of Van Gogh, he talks about the time he spent in China.

"I went there for a year and a half," he said. He wrote a thesis on the Sichuan theatrical culture in China and studied stage movement at the Sichuan Opera Institute.

"In China, Sichuan has a strong mask tradition," he said. "I was the fourth non-Chinese to my knowledge to have studied that art form, which is between 2,000 and 3,000 years old."

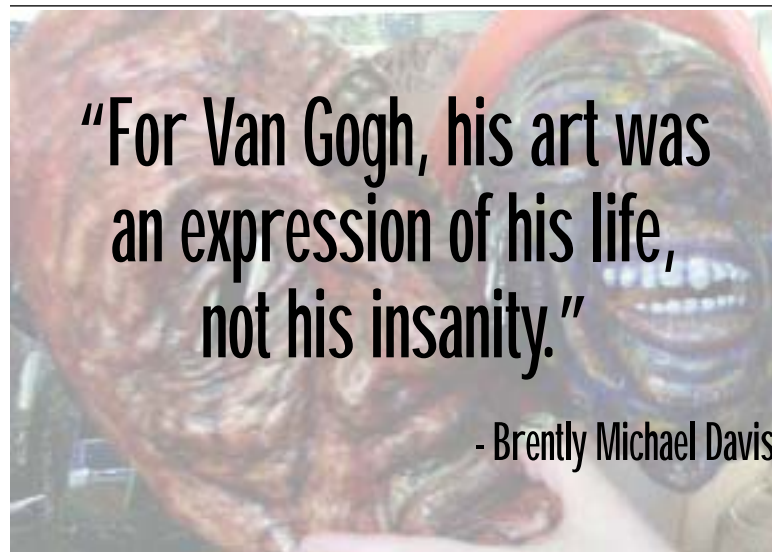
"I don't make a living, I make a surviving," Davis said. "I try to keep my expenses really low. I get hired for all kinds of

great mask needs to be a great sculpture and a great painting," Davis said. He stressed that the importance of how the mask is painted is as important as the mask itself.

"It also needs to be something that can be used as a tool for an actor, that the actor is not capable of doing without the mask," he said.

As he talks, Davis continues to create the likeness of Van Gogh.

"When I'm working on a project, I spend a lot of time alone," Davis said. "I try to have a schedule, but it's hard to make it happen. The art is something I like to do, and it's hard to leave



"For Van Gogh, his art was an expression of his life, not his insanity."

- Brently Michael Davis

things, but lately I have been saying no to certain jobs. This has helped me and made me feel better. If you agree to everything, it is hard for people to take your art seriously."

Besides the Van Gogh piece, Davis is also working on an animation project that is still in development.

"I don't really market myself as well as I should," he said. "That has always been a struggle for me."

"My philosophy is that a

it alone. My mind will be working on this, even when I'm doing other things."

But there is one other focus of Davis' attention. Sleeping in a room nearby is his five-year-old son, Zander.

"He loves to read," Davis said. "We have no TV, and he always has a book in his hand." And often, Davis reads stories that he has written to Zander. Like Mark Twain, he has found a way to share his art and himself.

ADVERTISE! ADVERTISE! ADVERTISE! ADVERTISE! ADVERTISE! ADVERTISE! ADVERTISE!

Help Send a Kid to Y Camp

Midway YMCA Service Club Tree Lot
University Ave. & Wheeler St.

(one block east of Fairview across from Wendy's)

Proceeds to benefit YMCA Kids to Camp

Mon.-Fri. noon - 8 pm
Sat. & Sun. 10 am - 8 pm
Trees (Fraser Fir, Scotch Pine and many more!)

Wreaths
Swags
Table Top Trees

Volunteers Needed!
Call Anne at the Midway YMCA
651-646-4557



Sheraton Midway

Continued from page 8

Amundson said Bigelow's was a victim of the trend away from fine dining and towards the more informal café style dining. "Banquet space was more profitable than dining services, so Bigelow's was converted into the Minnesota Ballrooms and the restaurant merged with Bigelow's Tavern in smaller space," she said. "Before the merger, it was a hot night club with a stage and many big-name bands. We had big screen TVs for games, dartboards, pool tables and a dance floor. We never really recovered that activity after the merger."

Several employees had their own personal memories of the hotel, including birds who flew into the atrium from outside, rowdy guests throwing plants in the swimming pool, or simply strange noises from a water tank the night before Sept. 11, 2001.

What icons will people remember about the hotel?

The lobby reception area included an old wooden birdcage in the design of a dark wooden Russian Orthodox cathedral with cupolas, towers and gables. "It was merely decoration for years, but my daughter Danielle saw the

beautiful cage and thought they would be happy in such a pretty house," said Steve Tacheny, the former general manager. "She donated three Zebra Finches after our 2002 renovation and they have entertained many guests when they checked in and out. Our front desk staff really bonded with them. They cleaned the cage, fed the birds, covered it at night during sleeping hours and worried if they were chirping too loudly. One former employee has now adopted them." The cage, however, remains as hotel property and sat empty at its closing. Will it end up on e-bay or the liquidation for the birds to reclaim?

The hotel also featured large murals of St. Paul landmarks and the two downtowns in the lobby and Cities Grill, the combined bar and restaurant since 1997.

John Marshall, an aide to St. Paul City Council Member Pat Harris, said as of Nov. 22nd, no demolition permit had come before the City Council for action. No liquidation sale has yet been scheduled for the hotel's contents.

Meanwhile, the hotel now sits closed, signs removed, awaiting its fate. An American Security car blocks the front door marked by a black and white paper sign reading "Hotel closed." The old shuttle van, now weathered and dirty, sits in the loading dock. A quiet, undignified death indeed.

Healthy indulgences of the season...

brought to you by
The YMCA

www.ymcatwincities.org

Join the YMCA December 5-19 and we'll waive the joiner's fee (a \$79 value!)

Midway Family YMCA 1761 University Ave
St Paul, MN 55104 **651.646.4557**

the little wine shoppe

Offering a unique selection of wine, beer and spirits at affordable prices

Located at Como & Carter in
Milton Square
(between Micauber's Bookstore & All Season's Cleaners)
2236 Carter Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
(651) 645-5178

offstreet parking available
www.thelittlewineshoppe.com

CVS Pharmacy gets OK for 2nd electronic sign

By JANE MCCLURE

Despite opposition from Hamline-Midway Coalition, CVS Pharmacy has added can add a second electronic message sign to its new store at University and Snelling. It appears the sign will stay up, as there was no appeal of a November 7 Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) decision. On a 6-1 vote the St. Paul BZA granted a distance variance for CVS's sign.

The sign fight is just the latest chapter in a long-standing controversy over CVS and its decision to locate in Hamline-Midway neighborhood. Controversy over the CVS store roiled Midway area neighborhoods last year when the store site plan was debated before the St. Paul Planning Commission and City Council. Business organizations supported the pharmacy's plan to open its second St. Paul store. But district councils and University UNITED argued that the pharmacy is inconsistent with plans for the area that call for mixed-use, transit-oriented development. The store site is along the proposed Central Corridor light rail transit (LRT) line.

The community successfully fought for window openings on the Snelling side of the store but lost a bid to put an entrance there instead of near the building's north parking lot. CVS did make other design changes to its one-story building, including the addition of a corner tower.

CVS is based in Rhode Island

and is one of the nation's largest pharmacy chains. Its entrance into the Twin Cities has renewed debate over independent stores versus chains. A third CVS is planned at Grand and Oxford as part of the Oxford Hill development.

The newly approved variance for the store at 499 N. Snelling Av. is for the distance between electronic message board signs. The city's zoning code sets a minimum distance of 660 feet in a neighborhood business area. CVS already has one electronic sign on the east side of its building tower, visible to University Avenue travelers headed west. The variance is needed for a second sign CVS wishes to add on the south side of the tower, which would be visible on northbound Snelling Avenue.

The second sign would be within 660 feet of an existing sign at Snelling and Spruce Tree Place, on the north wall of the World of Wireless store at 457 N. Snelling Av. That sign is 418 feet away from the proposed CVS sign.

Zoning specialist John Hardwick recommended the distance requirement between CVS and World of Wireless be waived, saying the proposed sign doesn't violate the spirit and intent of the zoning code. The Hamline Midway Coalition disagreed. The district council and its land use committee recently voted unanimously to oppose the sign vari-

ance.

Hamline Midway Coalition Executive Director Michael Jon Olson said there are concerns that adding a second message board sign, along with the large lit CVS signs on three sides of the new building, contributes to the visual clutter in the Snelling-University area.

"We want to reduce distractions, not add to them," he said. Hamline Midway Coalition is suggesting the city look at all of its sign regulations, especially when signs at busy intersections are considered.

Sign clutter along University Avenue has been an issue in Midway neighborhoods since the 1980s. Some plans for the area call for reducing the number of signs along the street.

The district council disagrees with some of Hardwick's findings, which are required before a variance can be issued. One finding is that the property couldn't be put to a reasonable use without the second message board sign. "Obviously the property can be put to a reasonable use," Olson said, noting that the pharmacy opened to customers in late October.

The district council also disputes Hardwick's contention that another sign won't create a hazard, saying that has yet to be determined.

Whether the sign would be distracting for drivers was debated by some BZA members. "If I

can only see one (message board) at a time, then I'm not being cluttered," said BZA member Buzz Wilson.

Jim Lavelle of Velmier, developer of some Twin Cities CVS pharmacies, said the second electronic message board sign won't have a negative impact on the surrounding area. He said the store management is willing to discuss time limits on the two message board signs. One issue the St. Paul City Council and Planning Commission are debating is whether new lighted signs should be turned off when a business is closed.

LaValle also said CVS would be willing to consider using the electronic message board sign for public service messages.

Some BZA members questioned why one CVS sign falls under the distance requirement and the other doesn't. That is because of the way the code requires the distance be measured. The proposed south wall CVS sign and World of Wireless sign are considered facing signs, even though the large Spruce Tree Center retail-office building and parking ramp are between the two signs and block most of the views.

The sign on the east side of CVS's building isn't considered to be facing another electronic sign. Both of the pharmacy's electronic signs measure 39 square feet.

The proposed sign does meet other distance requirements. It

has to be at least 75 feet measured along a street and at least 50 feet measured radially from residential property.

BZA Member Marilyn Porter asked if zoning staff had done any traffic studies or discussed safety issues with Public Works before recommending approval of the variance. Hardwick said that wasn't done.

Complicating the sign saga is American Bank, which is kitty-corner across Snelling from CVS. Although American Bank has an electronic time and temperature sign, that sign isn't considered to be an electronic message board, said Hardwick.

When American Bank's renovation plans were reviewed by city staff and the BZA a few years ago, the bank suggested having an electronic message board along the top of its building. Those plans met staunch community opposition and were dropped.

An electronic message board sign carries information on store specials or, in some cases, community events. The boards are allowed to have messages fade in and out, or "travel" up or down or from one side to another. Message board signs cannot be flashing signs.

Electronic message board signs are allowed in B3 general business districts and not in districts with mixed residential-commercial uses or for smaller, neighborhood-based businesses.

Hamline president

Continued from page 1

She said the college is concerned about any loud parties or litter, just as community residents might be.

She said the college is also doing an analysis of its parking. "We're in compliance, but we're

tight," she said. "But there are ways to negotiate how we use our parking spaces, and if we manage the parking well we may be able to stave off some building for awhile."

She added that people from Hamline University have also been in joint discussion with members of the Hamline Methodist Church, but no decisions about any changes in ownership status have been made. The University has been consid-

ering taking over ownership of the building.

"It's not as if we need to solve anything tomorrow," she said. "We keep in close communication, and we embrace those ties."

The ties between the school and church resemble the ties between the university and the community.

Hanson sees the university as a reflection of society at large, on political and social justice ar-

eas.

"Students here are not any different than the general population right now, regarding their attitudes towards the Iraq war," she said. "The support for the war has gone down nationally, and the students are no less enthused than anyone on the street."

She said students are active politically and have a heightened sense of social justice. "There was a huge effort to respond to Hurri-

cane Katrina," she said.

Hanson said she considers the university to be a zone where students can explore everything for four years.

"The only way you learn is by experience," she said, "and there is not another period in your entire life when you are given permission to color outside the lines. There are all kinds of wonderful things for you to explore."

Hanson is also taking the time for exploration, as she takes on the mantle of president. Citing her passion for education and the arts, she said she hopes to be able to nourish that passion as she learns more about the art programs Hamline offers.

Although the frigid weather of Minnesota is a big change from the warm climes of Santa Fe, Hanson had no doubts about settling in the Twin Cities.

She said that she and her husband, Laird, had agreed when first married that they would only live in wonderful places.

"We met in Denver, lived in Seattle and Santa Fe—but the Twin Cities has always been a place that is on our list." She said she came here because of Hamline, but living in the Twin Cities also played a factor.

Given time, Hanson hopes to put her mark on Hamline. She sees herself as a participant in fund-raising, planning, raising the visibility of the college and nurturing the community and college relationship.

With that, Hanson is entering the first leg of her marathon, and she seems to have prepared well for the race.



Allstate.

You're in good hands.

Doris Menne
Allstate Insurance Company

1575 W. Minnehaha Ave
(Corner of Snelling and Minnehaha)
St. Paul, MN 55104

DorisMenne@allstate.com

Auto • Home • Life
FINANCIAL PRODUCTS

If you think you're paying too much
for your insurance, call me for a **FREE**
no obligation evaluation.

651-917-2445 • Fax: 651-917-2441

MN Ins. Lic. #2010513



Central Baptist Church

420 Roy Street N., St. Paul

651-646-2751

Dr. Ronald Saari, Senior Pastor

Sundays at Central

9:15 a.m. Sunday School

Classes for all ages

10:30 A.M. WORSHIP SERVICE

Wednesday Activities

December 14

5:30-6:30 p.m. Super Suppers (reservations needed-651-646-2751)

6:00-8:30 p.m. Youth (Junior High and Senior High)

6:30-8:00 p.m. Children's Programs (Kindergarten-6th Grade)

6:30-8:00 p.m. Worship Choir Rehearsal

6:30-8:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study

December 21

5:30-6:30 p.m. Super Supper

6:30 p.m. Children's Christmas Pageant

December 28

No programs at the church

Daily Child Care

6:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday

Care for children ages 6 weeks through Pre-kindergarten

Before and after school care for

Kindergarten through age 12

Call: 651-646-2846

NEW PROGRAM

The Food Snob:

All summer long I wanted to get over to Harriet Island and try the River Boat Grill. Ever since the No Wake Café pulled up anchor, I've longed to dine alongside the Mississippi again. But it wasn't until an unseasonably warm day in November that we finally said ahoy to the River Boat Grill.

While the Cheapskate and I merrily bounded aboard, the Bachelor – crippled by a back spasm – stiffly shuffled up the gangplank. Though he couldn't turn his head, or even look down at the menu, the Bachelor's appetite was unimpeded. He not only polished off his own lunch, but grabbed the top of my hot turkey sandwich. "Gravy-soaked bread. Good," was the extent of his culinary analysis that day.

Though we had to work our way through a few clunkers, the Cheapskate and I managed to put together a collection of tasty dishes that would make a near-perfect lunch. First, don't miss the gumbo, served by the chef himself, who proclaimed it "Tennessee-style." Looking just like it should, like a cup of mud dredged from the river bottom, the gumbo was complex and spicy. Another good bet is the Bistro Burger, served with caramelized onions and blue cheese on a nice thick patty with some actual beef flavor. The accompanying fries were so good that, on a normal day, the Bachelor would have been in ecstasy. Alas, even his favorite food couldn't penetrate the curtain of pain.

Tough luck. Undeterred, Cheapy and I moved on to dessert. She unerringly chose the best of the bunch, succulent bread pudding, while I landed a beautiful but artificial-tasting apple pie.

The best thing about the River Boat Grill is that it's on a boat. Second best is that whoever is in charge is really trying. Many items are clearly homemade, from the excellent baked beans and the fresh mashed potatoes. On the downside, my hot turkey sandwich was comprised of processed turkey and packaged gravy. Nevertheless, I'm looking forward to my next voyage.

The Cheapskate:

You probably don't want to waste

Rep. Alice Hausman named Mental Health Legislative Caucus Legislator of the Year

The Minnesota Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Minnesota (NAMI-MN) has named the Mental Health Legislative Caucus Legislator of the Year for 2005. State Representative Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul) was a founding member of the bipartisan caucus.

"The caucus addresses issues that go beyond committee jurisdictions and presents the opportunity to more fully learn and solve the problems faced by both children and adults with mental illness," said Sue Aberholden,



Without Reservations

Plain good food at the River Boat Grill

gasoline driving around and around Harriet Island looking for the River Boat Grill, like the Snob and the Bachelor did. Just take the Wabasha Bridge from downtown St. Paul, and take an immediate left when you've crossed the river. Keep bearing left, left, left until you're going down a long drive with the river on your right. You'll come to a small parking lot near the U of M Showboat, and you're there.

The River Boat Grill is a good value, even though the food isn't dirt-cheap, because you don't pay a premium for eating right on the water. Even in chilly weather, it's amazing how refreshing it is to feel like you're completely away from the city, although you could practically stick your hand out and touch the Qwest tower across the river.

The Snob has covered the food pretty well, but she forgot the most important part – the price tag. We paid \$3.95 for a cup of that fine gumbo (with chicken, shrimp, and andouille sausage – plus a bonus wedge of warm cornbread with honey butter). A big bowl of gumbo will cost you \$5.95, and I'll put in a word here for a classic Cheapskate strategy: hearty bowl of soup, skip the entrée, plenty of room for dessert.

The Bachelor's meal was an excellent value, although even without the mind-numbing pain he's probably too dense to realize it. He had the Friday lunch special – two deep-fried cod filets, those fantastic fries, real homemade-tasting barbecue baked beans, and cole slaw, all for \$6.95.

By the way, lest you're already mentally pigeonholing the River Boat Grill as a summer spot, all the daily lunch specials on the winter menu are perfect cold-weather comfort: turkey dinner on Monday; pork roast on Tuesday; Yankee pot roast on Wednesday; a rotating pasta dish on Thursday; and the Bachelor's

NAMI-MN's Executive Director.

The Mental Health Legislative Caucus is the first of its kind in the nation.

"The caucus gives Legislators from both parties a chance to learn about and find ways to support the mental health system in Minnesota," Hausman said. "I hope it creates more awareness here on the state level about mental illness."

NAMI-MN lists its mission as championing justice, dignity, and respect for all people affected by mental illness.

fish fry on Friday. All of them are \$6.95.

The bread pudding (\$6.50) doubles the price of your lunch but is well worth it. The Bachelor's cupcake-style cheesecake (\$5.25) was unfortunately adulterated with chocolate chips. Alas, only after we had stuffed ourselves with dessert did we learn from the chef that his favorite is the fudgy house-made chocolate cake (\$5). Next time.

I haven't been to Happy Hour yet, but now that it starts to get dark at about 2 p.m., I bet this is a nice spot to gaze across the river at the twinkling city lights. The atmosphere is ultra casual – formica tables and the like – but then I'll leave the Bachelor to rate this as a date location.

The Bachelor:

Let's see, when is the last time I dated a tugboat skipper? Hmm-mm. That would be ... never. It's not that I have anything against those stoic maidens of the Mighty Miss. I'm just, well ... kind of scared of them. I mean, I'm the kind of guy who somehow manages to wrench his back to the point of paralysis while doing nothing but walk through a downtown skyway (and in the ultimate ignominy, the Snob had to tie my shoes for me on our way to lunch).

Now it's true, plenty of land lubbers such as you and I do indeed patronize the River Boat Grill, and I could certainly take a fawning future Mrs. Bachelor there for a casual lunch even if

she couldn't tell a Rapala from RuPaul. But to be honest, I don't want to. Not that I don't like the River Boat Grill. I do. A lot. That's the problem. This is a place that real people should go to, to think real thoughts and have real conversations. Not phonies like me. The thought of me sullying this dining room by pontificating about the laboriousness of Haydn's latter symphonies to some doe-eyed floozie from Edina just makes me shiver.

No, I'll be the guy dining by himself, staring plaintively out the enormous windows at the roiling, mystical currents of the Father of Waters (and the huge duck I saw by the dock. I mean this thing was

HUGE). And as I stare longingly at this gigantic duck (oh, please be there next time I visit, noble avian!), I'll once again be eating the deep-fried cod filet special. Not a hint of fishiness about this fish dish. And the fries ... limp and greasy and delicious ... all gone in a matter of seconds, and then I was on to Cheapy's plate. The only part of my meal I didn't care for was the small bowl of baked beans, and that's simply because I have an aversion to all things "barbecue." But the Snob and Cheaps insist they were good.

So I beseech you, go to the River Boat Grill, but leave your pretensions, your Prada and your PDAs behind. Commune with the river, find comfort in the food (especially that bread pudding ... MAN!), and surrender yourself to the all-knowing gaze of that big, huge duck.

(Are we missing the best-kept culinary secret in Midway-Como Land? Email the reviewers at withoutres@yahoo.com with your recommendations.)

River Boat Grill
Harriet Island
(use East Entrance off Wabasha Bridge)
651-290-2363
Winter hours: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Happy Hour 4-6 p.m. everyday

Greetings To All



Peace and joy, health and happiness...
May all things that embrace the spirit
of the season, be yours to experience!

Thank-You for your continued support!

Janice Rettman

Ramsey County Commissioner, District 3

Prepared and paid for by the Rettman Volunteer Committee, Ramsey County
Commissioner, P.O. Box 17063 Rice Street Station, Saint Paul, MN 55117,
Joyce Haselmann, Treasurer



Water pressure increased in one day!*

HEATING AND COOLING

- Boiler replacements
- Steam and Hot Water Heat
- Furnace and AC Replacements
- Air conditioning
- Boiler and furnace testing & certification

PLUMBING

- Plumbing Fixtures installed
- Water heaters and Sump Pumps
- Disposals • Faucets • Sinks
- Toilets • Tubs
- Water and water pipes repaired
- Bathroom rough-in and finishes

**ST. PAUL AND
PLUMBING
HEATING CO.**

651-228-9200

FREE ESTIMATES*

www.StPaulPlumbing.com

* Call for Details



Next deadline: Jan. 2
Next Issue: Jan. 12

In Our Community

Continued from page 10

Hamline Dance Ensemble performs Dec. 9, 10

Hamline University Dance Ensemble presents UNDER CONSTRUCTION * Works-in-Progress. Shows will be presented Friday, December 9th and Saturday, December 10th at 7:30 p.m. in Hamline University's Anne Simley Theatre, located at 1530 Hewitt Ave, St. Paul. Tickets will go on sale one hour prior to the performance, and may be purchased at the Hamline University Theatre Box Office for \$1. For more information, please call 651-523-2905 or e-mail tickets@hamline.edu.

What does your bedroom have to do with choreography? How does everyday movement connect with dance? How do you make photographs turn into moving images?

In its second season, the UNDER CONSTRUCTION series presents student work from the Dance 1140 choreography class in which they explore these questions.

Included in the line-up are works-in-progress from the Hamline Dance Ensemble, a sensual

Community meeting for Dickerman Park Dec. 8

The Dickerman Park Community Meeting will be held Thursday, December 8 at 6 p.m. at Marsden Bldg Maintenance at 1717 University Avenue. The community meeting to review the preliminary design proposal for Dickerman Park.

Landscape architects coen + partners, and photographer Wing Young Huie will be unveiling a design that shows how this unknown park can be transformed into one of the most exciting public spaces in the country.



Pictured above is one rendering of a possible design for Dickerman Park, and there are more posted on the web at www.universityunited.com.

quintet by Flamenco artist Sachiko Nishiuchi, and a tap piece by Kristina DesJardiens. Also introduced in the show is a collaboration performance by Artistic Director Kaori Kenmotsu and lo-

cal poets about overcoming adversity, particularly focused around themes of death and dying. The show will also be accompanied by the students of Dance Class 1130, and promises to be an exciting,

eclectic evening of dance.

The Hamline Dance Ensemble is a pre-professional contemporary modern dance company under the artistic directorship of Kaori Kenmotsu. The

Ensemble's mission is to give performance opportunities to Hamline University students in the discipline of dance as well as develop the creative voice of students and forge connections with the larger Twin Cities dance community.

Lyngblomsten offers Fireside Dinner Trip

The Lyngblomsten Community Center will be headed for the Fireside Dinner Theater in Fr. Atkinson, Wisconsin February 17-18. The Fireside is offering "Those Fabulous Fifties, a tuneful, rockin' good show. You'll laugh and cheer as you remember such great entertainers as The Platters, Pat Boone, Elvis, Nat King Cole, Frankie Lane and television shows including I Love Lucy, the Ed Sullivan Show, Leave It To Beaver, Milton Berle and Sid Caesar.

The cost is \$249 per person double occupancy or \$279 per person single occupancy. This includes lodging at the Baymont Inn, one breakfast, two lunches, Fireside Dinner Theater, all gratuities, luggage handling and deluxe motor coach along with fun escorts Mike and Julie from J & M Tours.

Please call 651-632-5330 for information and registration form. This trip will fill quickly so don't delay.

City studies ban

Continued from page 3

the former brewery complex, said the plant's emissions produced headaches, nausea, vomiting and heightened allergies and asthma. A few families moved away rather than live with ongoing health problems.

The ethanol plant closed in 2004 and its parent company filed for bankruptcy. The entire ethanol plant-brewery property are currently the subject of a bankruptcy court proceeding.

Questions raised about the chemical content of Gopher State's emissions led the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Justice to craft more stringent regulations on ethanol plant emissions. The federal agencies

did tests at several ethanol plants and found that the amount of emissions was higher than originally estimated.

Gopher State officials tried a variety of methods to reduce the emissions levels, including the installation of industrial scrubbers and thermal oxidizers to clean and process emissions. But the odor problems persisted until the plant shut down for good.

In January 2005 the City

Council adopted a resolution asking for the zoning study. A moratorium on new facilities began in March 2005 and will expire in 2006. City Council members Dave Thune and Jay Benanav led the push for the ban on new ethanol plants and tighter regulations for other processing facilities.

Thune, whose Second Ward includes the Gopher State site, wants to ensure that the controversial facility would never reopen for ethanol production. Most of the equipment used to produce ethanol has already been sold and hauled away. Benanav has a strong interest in the proposed regulation as his Fourth Ward has more industrial property than any other council ward.

At this point no new raw agricultural or forestry product processing facilities are on the drawing boards in St. Paul.

The Planning Commission's Neighborhood and Current Planning Committee voted unanimously November 9 release the zoning study for public comment and public hearing. Comments heard at the December 19 public hearing will go back to the committee for review. The study and any committee-recommended changes go back to the full Planning Commission for action.

Planning Commission recommendations then go to the City Council for a second public hearing. If approved, the regulations become part of the city's zoning code. That isn't likely to happen until early 2006.

Ulmer and Planning Administrator Larry Soderholm said the proposed regulations would only affect large processing facilities, not individual restaurants or coffee shops. "We're not targeting neighborhood-scale facilities," Soderholm said.

The MPCA issues air quality permits for businesses and industries including baking; brewing; candy-making; milk, dairy and cheese production; leather tanning, oilseed processing; flour, grain and cereal milling; and manufacture of paper, cardboard and wood products. Facilities with air quality permits for these operations in St. Paul include Agrilliance, American Carton, Old Dutch Foods, Pearson Candy Company; Pioneer Custom Cabinets; Shaw Lumber Company's millwork operations and Rock Tenn (Waldorf) Paper. These businesses would be grandfathered in and not required to obtain new conditional use permits.

Planning Commissioner Gladys Morton questioned the need for the conditional use permit requirement. "It concerns me to think we're talking about places like Pearson Candy Company and Old Dutch, which have been here for years," she said. Morton lived in the Midway area years ago and recalled when Griggs Cooper Foods would roast coffee, sending that odor throughout surrounding neighborhoods.

Noting that "some people" didn't like the ethanol plant, Morton added, "So we're going to regulate all of these things to get at the ethanol plant? I don't like that."

But Ulmer and Soderholm said the intent is to give St. Paul control over facilities that have the potential to cause emissions problems. When Gopher State Ethanol was proposed in the late 1990s as a way to financially strengthen the brewery and preserve jobs there, the city had no zoning or licensing regulations to control ethanol production. The only regulation St. Paul officials would use was its noise standard.

Committed to **HEALTH**
Dedicated to **ROSEVILLE**

introducing...

DR. FLYNN, a
graduate of the University of Minnesota Medical School, practices Family Medicine, with a special interest in Women's Health, at our Rosedale Medical Center. Whether you are a new or existing patient, Dr. Flynn eagerly welcomes the chance to serve your needs. Call anytime.



ROSEDALE MEDICAL CENTER 763-785-4300
BLAINE MEDICAL CENTER 763-785-4200
FRIDLEY MEDICAL CENTER 763-785-4500

www.multicare-assoc.com



CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds

Monitor Want Ads are now 70 cents per word. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, Iris Park Place, 1885 University Avenue, Ste. #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. \$7.00 minimum on all classifieds. Classifieds must be prepaid via cash, check, or credit card. Classifieds are accepted over the phone with credit card payment only (\$14 minimum order). Want ads must be in the Monitor before January 2 for the January 12 issue. Call 651-645-7045 for more information.

ADDITIONS

Kustom additions, garages, vinyl siding, patio decks, kitchens, bathrooms, expert workmanship. Marty. 612-724-8819. 1-06

BUY AND SELL

Vintage lights, house hardware. Doors, tubs, radiators, etc. Also furniture hardware 651-644-9270. 11-05-58.40

Looking for delivery carriers to deliver the Monitor approximately 3 to 4 hours per month. Pay by route. Great for supplemental income! Call 651-458-8053, ask for Lloyd. 12-03

HAULING

Hauling/Rubbish. Small trees cut down or trimmed. Licensed and insured. 612-869-8697. 12-05

HEALTH CARE

Relief from Pain and Anxiety: Massage Therapy, Reflexology, Integrative Imagery, Energy Work, Relaxation. Hospital and Rehab experience. Multi-Licensed, Certified Health Care Practitioner. Holiday gift certificates. Emmy 651-292-9938. 12-05

HOUSECLEANING

Sherry's housecleaning, 651-489-4007. Affordably priced. Avail. Mon. thru. Sun. 2-06

MUSIC INSTRUCTION

Call Hamline University for Suzuki violin and piano lessons 651-523-2332. 4-06

PICTURE FRAMING

Custom Picture Framing. Bel'Monte Frames. Call 651-647-6681. Ask about our special dimensional photo framing. We frame your memories. Since 1992. 12-05

REAL ESTATE

Lake Lots For Sale - Rare opportu-

nity. 2+ acre lake lots near Siren, Wisconsin. Only 90 minutes from St. Paul. Call Betty Knutson at ReMAX Northwoods Realty, 715-349-7990.

FOR RENT

House for sale! Perfect for off-campus living or as rental property. 2 bedrooms, 1 bath. First and second floors all-new back to studs! Corner of Thomas and Hamline. Call Lisa Baker, Coldwell Banker Burnet, at 763-242-2512. 12-05

PAINTING

Painting, plaster repair, skim coat, wall textures, and ceiling textures. Expert work, 37 years. Ken. 763-434-3645. Bonded - Insured. 12-05

Painting - specializing in wallpaper removal. Average house \$600, average 3 rooms \$200, average garage \$200. Jim 651-698-0840. 4-06

Interior/exterior painting, enameling, spray textured ceilings, plaster patching, free estimates. Bob. 651-633-5565. 10-06

PIANO TUNING

Quality piano tuning and repair, reasonable rates. Call Robert Clough, at 612-722-7586 or email robertclough@aol.com. 3-06

SERVICES

Zappa Construction and Handyman Services. Additions, remodel, mechanical, drain cleaning. Free estimates. Quality work at an affordable price. Stu - 651-271-6925. 8-05

Professional Exterior and Interior Painting, wall repair and plastering; ceiling texturing, wallpaper-hanging, moderate prices; free estimates, licensed, bonded, insured; Merriam Park Painting, 651-224-3660, 651-552-2090. 1-03

RAM Handyman Services, LLC, reasonable rates, no job too small. www.ramhandyman.com Rich 651-485-9680. 12-05

WANTED TO BUY

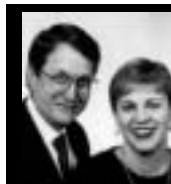
Top cash paid. Older furniture, D.R. sets, B.R. sets, bookcases, etc., glassware, crocks, stained glass windows, many miscella-

**Next deadline:
Jan. 2**

Merriam Park Painting

• Exterior & Interior Painting - Enameling
• Ceiling Texturing
• Wallpapering
• Free Estimates
Call Ed, 651-224-3660 or Norm, 651-552-2090

Nilles Builders, Inc.
525 Ohio St.
Additions • Remodeling
Renovation • Windows & Siding
General Contracting
Licensed • Bonded • Insured #4690
651-222-8701

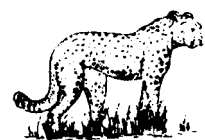


MY HUSBAND IS AMAZING!
He Builds and Fixes almost anything!

professional handyman services
Russell Dedrick • Remodeling • Additions • Renovations
651 776-1780
State Lic# 2011356

TSCHIDA BROS. PLUMBING AND HEATING

- New Construction
- Remodeling & Repairing
- Water Heater Specialist
- Discount For Senior Citizens



1036 FRONT AVE.,
ST. PAUL

LICENSED • BONDED
MASTER PLUMBING LICENSE
NO. 7212

PHONE: 651-488-2596

Zappa Construction and Handyman Services

Additions • Remodel • Mechanical • Drain Cleaning

FREE ESTIMATES

Quality Work at an Affordable Price

Licensed and insured • Lic.# 20546353

Stu - (651) 271-6925

neous items. 651-227-2469 (anything). 12-05

Paying the most cash for your furniture, dishes, glassware, knickknacks, costume jewelry, antiques, pictures, lamps, household items etc. I make housecalls. Call Mary 612-729-3110. 12-05

WRITING

Writing a paper for admission to Harvard? A resume for your company's web site? A journalist with 25 years experience is available for assisting folks who need help in writing. Reasonable rates. Call 651-486-9760. 12-02

**Classifieds
70¢ per word**

ROOFING
Nilles Builders, Inc.
"We Work All Winter"
Full Warranty
Licensed • Bonded • Insured #4690
651-222-8701

**Norman Dale
Electric Co.**

Residential, Commercial
& Industrial
651-644-0655
Norman D. Bartlett Free Est.

Midway in a minute

Continued from page 2

*Every customer entering the establishment must have identification, which will be checked prior to entry. The business is responsible for insuring that no one under age 21 is sold, served or furnished alcohol.

*The licensee is responsible for patron behavior on the licensed premises, including the parking lot.

*On nights when the club portion of the business is open the licensee will provide for staffing and monitoring of all unlocked entrances and exits between 9 p.m. until closing.

Couple allowed to establish arts studio

A Hamline-Midway couple will be allowed to establish a small performing arts studio in their home, with St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) approval of a needed parking variance. The BZA unanimously approved the three-space parking variance November 7 for Zaraawar Mistry and Leslye Orr at 677 N. Hamline Av. The variance was not appealed to the City Council before the end of November so it will stand.

Hamline-Midway Coalition unanimously supports the variance.

Orr and Mistry live at Van Buren and Hamline, with a garage facing Hamline. The garage property is connected to the house but is zoned for business use. It most recently was a contractor's shop, and has housed a chiropractor and repair shop in the past.

Orr and Mistry are well-known performers, artists and playwrights in the Twin Cities area. They have won many awards and have performed around the United States. They want to offer small classes in dancing, acting, music and puppetry, as well as occasional performances. The studio will be called Dreamland Arts.

Mistry outlined the couple's plans to the BZA. He noted that the space includes a two-stall garage area as well as a larger work and office area. Neighbors are in support of the studio, he said.

The property has no off-street parking so a variance is needed. BZA staff recommended the board support the variance request. No one attended the hearing or sent letters opposing the variance.

Midway Residence clears one hurdle

Midway Residence, a Catholic Charities shelter for homeless men and inebriates, has cleared one of its final hurdles at City Hall. The contract to build the fa-

cility should be awarded this month, with construction starting soon after. It is hoped the 120-bed residence will be open by May 2007.

The St. Paul City Council, acting as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) voted unanimously November 23 to accept \$10.9 million in the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA).

The project has a total cost of about \$15 million. The city's share of the costs is \$4.9 million, part of which will be taken from Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) funds.

The council has had to take many steps over the past year to get the project built, including changing its zoning regulations on where shelters can be located.

The project will be located on Capp Road in South St. Anthony Park. The St. Anthony Park Community Council has recommended approval of the project and has worked closely with Catholic Charities to plan the project.

Midway Residence will eventually replace St. Anthony Residence, a 50-bed facility for chronic inebriates that Catholic Charities operates nearby on Wycliff Street.

Providing more housing for the homeless is a key focus of the city and Ramsey County's recently released plan to improve services for homeless persons in St. Paul.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

Winter is in the air. Bare branches sway in the gusty wind and the muscular trees show their structure against a cold gray sky. Yes, my plans were made and my research was done. I was going to write about how to identify trees in winter by examining the bud arrangements of their twigs, and the texture of their bark. But that upbeat subject went out the window when I looked out the window.

An ordinary American goldfinch (*Carduelis tristis*) was perched on our birdfeeder eating ravenously. In summer, the male goldfinch is as bold as his breeding colors of yellow and black. Watching his high-flying displays accompanied by his exuberant calls of "perchicoree" is pure pleasure. In winter, goldfinches grow subdued in both plumage and voice, but they are welcome at our thistle feeder anytime of year.

However, there was something wrong with this individual bird; something I had never seen in a goldfinch before. The area below the finch's left eye was grotesquely swollen. The infected eye was wet and a few crusty feathers stuck out at odd angles. It looked like Mycoplasma conjunctivitis: a disfiguring and blinding disease caused by the bacterium *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*.

Conjunctivitis has long been a disease of domestic poultry, but in 1994 it was first seen in wild house finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus*) on the east coast. That first sighting soon became an epidemic as the disease traveled west with the expanding range of the house finches. Somewhere along the way native



Neighborhood Naturalist

By DEB ROBINSON

A finch in a pinch

goldfinches, purple finches, and grosbeaks picked up the disease, but these species of finches do not appear to be as vulnerable to

conjunctivitis in wild birds), speculates that house finches are more vulnerable to this disease because the eastern population of

leased the remaining captive house finches to fend for themselves, which they did.

I opened the kitchen window and all the other finches and sparrows scattered, but the ailing goldfinch didn't fly far. I grabbed the feeder from its hook, emptied the uneaten thistle seeds out, and took the feeder down to the basement for cleaning with one part bleach to nine parts hot water. The feeder could not go back up for at least a week.

Locally, the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota started seeing house finches with Mycoplasma conjunctivitis in 1996. A dozen sick house finches were treated with drugs for 21 days, and they appeared cured. However, the center held onto the finches for six months just to make sure. The house finches were tested again, but the finches still carried the *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* bacterium even though they no longer showed symptoms. The rehab center can't, in good conscience, treat finches with this disease if the finches can never be safely released back into the wild because the finches would only spread the disease to healthy wild birds.

Birdfeeders, especially the tube style feeders, seem to facili-

tate disease transmission from bird to bird. Waste found below the feeding station can also be contaminated. Avian pox, another bird disease that can be spread at birdfeeders, can also have symptoms that look like Mycoplasma conjunctivitis if it only affects the eyes. Even if no sick birds have been seen in the area, birdfeeders and the areas underneath them should be cleaned regularly.

A few days later, I looked out the window again and saw the same hapless goldfinch perched sullenly waiting for the feeder to reappear. The sad little songbird rubbed its infected eye on a lilac branch and shook its head in obvious distress. Doing nothing was the hardest thing to do.

The clouds opened up near the horizon and the setting sun made a brief appearance. The goldfinch fluffed up its feathers against the wind and dozed off in the fading light. The finch lingered for what seemed like an eternity until hunger must have gotten the best of it, and it flew off into the twilight.

Endnotes: *Help the Cornell Lab track Mycoplasma conjunctivitis in wild birds by volunteering for Project FeederWatch: www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/ *Found a sick bird, but not sure what's wrong? Call the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Minnesota at: 651-486-9453. *At 7 p.m. on Jan. 12, Jim Fitzpatrick, member of the Cornell team that rediscovered the Ivory-billed woodpecker, will speak at the St. Paul Audubon Society meeting (free and open to the public) at Fairview Community Center in Roseville *To contact this writer: dmrobinson@bitstream.net



Birdfeeder sanitation can prevent the spread of Mycoplasma conjunctivitis in wild finches. (Photo by Matt Schmitt)

Mycoplasma conjunctivitis as the house finches. (Humans can not contract this illness.)

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, sponsor of the Project FeederWatch (which tracks the spread of Mycoplasma con-

house finches is inbred. House finches are native birds west of the Rocky Mountains. A few house finches were captured and brought to the east coast to be sold illegally as pets. When the pet stores got busted, they re-

Hamline University

❖ UPCOMING EVENTS ❖

Roberto Diaz master classes for violists and quartets

Dates: Friday, January 13 (viola) and Saturday, January 14 (quartets)
Time: 4 p.m.
Cost: Free for society members, \$5 general admission
Contact: www.minnesotaviolasociety.org

Artaria String Quartet with Roberto Diaz

Performing works by Mozart, Prokofiev, and Schumann.
Date: Saturday, January 14
Time: 7 p.m. - pre-concert with young artists from Artaria Chamber Music School;
7:30 p.m. - Artaria String Quartet
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: For tickets, call 651-523-2459

The Rose Ensemble

Featuring Kathy Lee, soprano and Eric Betthausen, counter-tenor.
Date: Sunday, January 15
Time: 3 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Cost: \$10
Contact: For tickets, 651-225-4340.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration

Date: Tuesday, January 17
Time: 4 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: MISA Office, 651-523-2423

Privatization: What are the Appropriate Roles of the Nonprofit, Public, and Private Sectors?

Part of the Hamline Dialogue series "Thinking Forward: Finding Future Direction for Today's Critical Issues." For more information and to register, www.hamline.edu/news_events/dialogues/26095.html

Date: Thursday, January 19
Time: 4-6 p.m.
Location: Klas Center, Kay Fredericks Room
Cost: \$10
To Receive Credit: \$25 (for the Graduate School of Management, CEUs, or CLEs)
Contact: Kristen Norman-Major, 651-523-2814

The Minneapolis Quartet

Featuring works by Bartok and Schumann.
Date: Sunday, January 22
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Cost: \$15, \$5 for students
Contact: 651-523-2459

Third International Piano-e-Competition

Screening auditions only.
Dates: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, February 10, 11, and 12.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Cost: Free and open to the public.
Contact: 651-523-2197 for times.



HAMLIN
UNIVERSITY