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## Midway Como

# Monitor



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## District Council border change request gets polite, but firm, 'no'

By JANE MCCLURE

A request from Hamline Midway Coalition to expand its southern boundary to take in Midway Center, Midway Marketplace and the planned Major League Soccer stadium met a pointed but polite "no" Jan. 4 from Union Park District Council (UPDC). Although UPDC did extend an invitation to HMC to discuss the matter further in March, HMC Executive Director Michael-Jon Olson said he believes the matter is moot at this point.

Union Parks' land use committee has agreed to jump-start joint working efforts on Midway Center and soccer stadium planning, with the goal of meeting this month.

HMC recently contacted Union Park staff and council leadership to raise the idea of a boundary change. But no one from District 11 attended the Jan. 4 meeting, which irked some of the Union Park board members.

District 13 Union Park's current northern boundary is the south side of University Ave. District 11 Hamline-Midway is on

the north side of the street. Some Hamline-Midway residents and district council members contend that the planned soccer stadium at Snelling and St. Anthony avenues, and the future redevelopment of the Midway Center shopping center, will have more of an impact on their neighborhood than on neighborhoods to the south.

At a June 2016 St. Paul Planning Commission public hearing on the stadium site plan and Midway Center master plan, HMC Board and committee members said their planning district needed a say on the plans. HMC Development Committee Member Renee Spillum said at that time that her biggest concern was that District 11 had no say in the plans, even though her neighborhood would be more affected than Union Park.

But UPDC Board members said Jan. 4 that they have always invited HMC and Hamline-Midway residents to participate in site discussion and to be part of working groups focused on Midway Center and the stadium. Very

few residents and district council members have shown up.

"It's not like we've locked the door and kept them out of meetings," said UPDC Board Member David Rasmussen.

The board also noted that they haven't always had the level of involvement in major projects that they would like. UPDC Executive Director Julie Reiter said the district council had to learn about the soccer stadium groundbreaking last month through media reports.

UPDC Board Member Katie Jarvi, who chairs the district council's development and land use committee, said the request might be an opportunity for more collaboration. "But I don't see us ceding a large part of our district."

"My first reaction is absolutely no," said UPDC Board Member D.J. Johnston. "We've represented that area for a long time." He and others said the area had been well-served as part of District 13.

Another concern is Skyline Tower. Union Park has worked with the hundreds of high-rise

residents, many of whom are immigrants, engaging them on a range of community issues from park development to pedestrian safety and land use planning tied to Green Line light rail.

"We've dedicated a lot of resources to that area," said UPDC Board Member Josh Capistrant.

Then there is the planned park on Griggs St. just south of University Ave. UPDC has worked closely with Gordon Parks School on park plans.

A change would also affect the Howard Park neighborhood around the former Midway Hospital and the Iris Park neighborhood southwest of Fairview and University avenues. UPDC has been involved in planning for improvements at Iris Park.

St. Paul has 17 citizen participation or planning districts, which were set up in 1975 up to facilitate communication on issues and give feedback to the city. The council runs a wide variety of programs, which varies by neighborhood, and do planning for their neighborhoods.

Making a boundary change

means following a petition process with 75 percent of property owners agreeing to the change, or having both councils agree to shift boundaries.

Changes to district council boundaries are nothing new in St. Paul. HMC has discussed a shift of its southern boundary in the past, although the issue hasn't been raised for many years.

About five years ago what was District 6 North End-South Como became North End after South Como neighborhood residents voted to join District 10 and Como Community Council.

In 1982 a section of West 7th St. joined District 9 West 7th/Fort Road Federation and seceded from District 15 Highland District Council. In the 1970s what had been Southwest Area District Council split into Highland and Macalester-Groveland community councils.

UPDC formed in 2007 when the Merriam Park, Snelling-Hamline, and Lexington-Hamline councils merged. But those councils were always in the same planning district.

## Wonderlust Productions to work all year on a 'Capitol' idea

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Wonderlust Productions experienced a swirl of growth and activity in 2016. The theater group received a grant from the Mardag Foundation that allowed them to lease rehearsal space at 550 Vandalia St. in the Midway. As company manager Deb Ervin said, "It really was time to get out of our kitchens."

They had a successful run of their most recent work, the "Adoption Play Project," at Mixed Blood Theater in Nov./Dec. The play was funded by a Metropolitan Regional Arts Grant and explored the many facets of adoption with stories gathered from more than 200 voices in the adoption community.

Along with Ervin, co-artistic directors Alan Berks and Leah Cooper created Wonderlust Productions three years ago. The Wonderlust mission is to forge new ways of seeing common experiences by creating plays that transform the past into a better future.

Their method? To listen, to wonder, to create, and to repeat.

"We don't write plays from our own agenda," Berks said. "Our plays are a retelling of stories that have been shared by others. Our goal is to work in



communities that may have been overlooked or misunderstood and to bring those stories to life. "The Adoption Play Project" was a perfect example of that."

The company is already gathering stories for their next play. Generously funded by the Knight Foundation, the "Capitol Play Project" will look at the day-to-

Wonderlust Productions illuminates shared stories through live performance, mixing community members from across generations, ethnicities, and perspectives with an ensemble of professional actors, designers, writers, and directors. Pictured are two of the three founding members: Alan Berks, co-artistic director, and Deb Ervin, company manager. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

day business of how government works.

Anyone who has experienced the Minnesota State Capitol in a meaningful way is welcome to participate in a story circle. Have you been a lobbyist, a custodian, a protester, a teacher who led grade school field trips, or a nervous college intern? What brought you to the State Capitol Building either recently or long ago?

More than a dozen story circles were held over the summer. There will be three more open to anyone with a story to tell on Mar. 2 and 7 from 6:30-8:30pm, and Mar. 4 from 11am-1pm in Room 317 of the Capitol Building. Learn more about the story circle process by visiting wonderlustproductions.org/story-circles.

According to Berks and Ervin, "Wonderlust projects take anywhere from 12 to 24 months to develop. After a theme is chosen, like the state capitol, we look for community partners and hold story circles where people can share their experiences. That's the foundation. Next, we host workshops to experiment with text and movement, draft a script, and present public readings of the work in development. Finally, we hold auditions, rehearse, and stage a world premiere of our new play."

"It's a gratifying, time-consuming, and transformative process for people who participate in any of the steps along the way," Ervin said,

Berks anticipated that "once the story circles are completed, we'll start writing the first draft of the script in March. Open auditions will be held this summer, and the play will be cast with a mix of community members and professional actors. Our intention is to perform the play at the Capitol in Nov./Dec."

Why a capitol play project? "We hear a lot about politics, sensationalism, and conflict,"

Continued on page 3

# Historian relates the history of retail on University Ave.

Midway Chamber of Commerce presentation explores past and present

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

The Midway Chamber of Commerce sponsors a lunch meeting of their economic development committee each month. As part of January's meeting, local historian Brian McMahon explained that "to understand the history of retail along University Ave., it helps to go back to when it all started."

Imagine traveling back in time to the 1880's, when the Midway neighborhood became home to the Minnesota Transfer Railway Company. The inspiration of railroad magnate James J. Hill, it served as a depository for almost all freight sent to the Twin Cities: lumber, coal, leather, horses, dry goods, anything that could be put on a train passed through here.

According to McMahon, "Railroad and industrial development worked together to help the neighborhood grow." One example of this was Brooks Brothers Lumber, located for years at the corner of Prior and University avenues. Because of easy access to lumber coming off the trains and being sold at Brooks Brothers, a vast array of manufacturing soon sprang up along University Ave. - giving rise to the neighborhood motto, "We make it here."

Much of the identity of the Midway area has been shaped by business leaders and residents who came together in 1919 to form the Midway Club, the predecessor of the Midway Chamber of Commerce. According to the chamber's website, "The club was instrumental in attracting new business to the Midway, improving transportation systems, and obtaining street lights to run the length of University Ave."

With commercial development, railroad transportation, and the growth of the streetcar system, retail in the Midway area was well on its way.

Fast-forward to the present, past years of entrepreneurship involving the changing population of University Avenue's merchants and customers.

Dr. Bruce Corrie, the next presenter at the chamber event, is a professor of economics and dean of the College of Business and Organizational Leadership at Concordia University in St. Paul. A native of India, Corrie has devoted years to researching the economic contributions of African, Latino, Asian, and Native American (ALANA) communities locally and nationally.

"When I came to Minnesota," Corrie said, "one of the things I noticed right away was that minorities and immigrants were perceived according to a 'deficit model.' They were viewed according to what they were taking, or what was being given to them, and not according to what they were bringing to the table."

Corrie developed a concept he called ethnic capital, in which members of the ALANA community are seen as entrepreneurs, as employees and employers, as creators of trade networks. He estimated that "there are at least 300 ALANA businesses in the Midway area," and asked, "How can we create a trickle-up economy? How can we all share in the



Brian McMahon, an architect and historic preservationist, writes extensively about architectural and industrial history. His most recent book, "The Ford Century in Minnesota," details the lives of workers at the now-demolished Highland Park manufacturing site. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

changing prosperity?"

A third perspective was offered by long-time Furniture Barn owner Bobby Wilson, whose business is currently located at Snelling and University avenues. Furniture Barn is ren-

ovating the former Chevrolet Building at 1389 University Ave., and planning a late-winter move there.

"I've learned to say nightstand and chest of drawers in a few different languages," Wilson

shared. "I think about 75% of our customers come from somewhere other than Minnesota. I've tried to make my sales staff understand this—that it's important for people to feel welcome in our store whether they're speaking Hmong or Somali, English or Spanish."

Wilson continued, "I have a passion for this community. I think we have the potential to be great like the Uptown neighborhood in Minneapolis—maybe even better. But because of the

prevalence of on-line shopping, those of us who do own brick and mortar buildings have to be smart, or we're just going to die. I bet you can even order a car online these days."

The irony of the question wasn't lost on a man who is rehabbing the old Chevrolet building, one of University Avenue's preeminent businesses in the chapter of history when used cars ruled supreme in this retail corridor.

The history of retail on University Ave. has been one of resiliency and change.

The Midway Chamber of Commerce represents over 330 businesses and organizations. They are dedicated to building a stronger Midway by being a catalyst for economic development, connecting employers with resources to recruit and train a productive workforce, and helping their members grow their businesses.

Visit [www.midwaychamber.com](http://www.midwaychamber.com) or contact executive director Chad Kulas at 651-646-2636 to learn more about the benefits of membership. They hold 5 to 6 events monthly in member businesses throughout the Midway.

Their Fourth Annual Economic Development Summit, "Driving Growth in the Midway: People, Place, Partnerships, and Prosperity," will take place on Wed., Mar. 15 at the University of St. Thomas. The event will kick off with a St. Paul mayoral forum, and conclude with a keynote address by David Reiling, Sunrise Banks CEO.



Dr. Bruce Corrie of Concordia University researches the economic contributions of immigrant and minority communities both locally and nationally. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

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# Monitor In A Minute

Compiled by JANE MCCLURE

## Rough start for recycling

St. Paul's recycling cart roll-out has had some glitches since it began in mid-January. Confusion over cart placement and missed pickups generated numerous complaints to city officials and contractor Eureka Recycling. The problems followed last-minute delivery of carts in parts of Hamline-Midway.

Some area residents received tags explaining why their recycling hadn't been picked up, due to open or improperly placed carts. Carts need at least an arm's-length clearance on either side to be mechanically picked up by the new trucks and need to be right on the alley line. But in some alleys, space is tight.

The recycling problems have dominated social media sites including Nextdoor and Facebook, with some people saying they'll stop recycling because it is a hassle. Consternation has also been voiced



about tracking chips placed in the carts and cameras on the trucks, with residents raising

questions about rights to privacy.

Ellen Biales, administrative programs manager for the St. Paul Department of Public Works, said that, in general, tracking chips are used to keep track of cart locations and monitor what is a \$4 million city investment. Carts have bar codes and were scanned when they were dropped off. She said the chips won't be used to check and see whether or not people recycle, as is done in some cities. Doing so would require ordinance changes in St. Paul.

The cameras are used to see if non-recyclable materials are put in the carts so that drivers don't dump those items in with recycling.

The St. Paul Department of Public Works and Eureka officials are urging patience, as are City Council members. Eureka has proactively been issuing reminders and posting cart placement information online, as well as leaving tags on carts that are left open or that are improperly placed.

Eureka also posts regular updates at [www.eurekarecycling.org](http://www.eurekarecycling.org). The website includes frequently asked questions about the recycling change.

"It's a big change, and we're asking people to be patient," Biales said. "It's going to take the time to get used to. This is the biggest change we've made since residential recycling began."

"Starting any new program has its challenges, and this is a

brand new system," said Council President Russ Stark. He said many people wanted alley recycling and lidded carts rather than bins, and that everyone needs to work together to make the change. "While you can make plans for a change, until the truck actually got out there, we didn't know how it would work."

If recycling isn't picked up, look for a tag on the cart. At homes with no alley, carts need to be placed right along the curb. The carts need to be closed, with the lid opening facing the street or alley. Carts must be out by 7am on collection day. Eureka won't pick up items left outside of the carts, meaning that items such as large pieces of cardboard need to be cut into smaller pieces and put in the cart.

## Area projects are funded

The Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), which advises the Metropolitan Council on transportation issues, has recommended projects to receive \$208 million in federal funds. The federal funds will leverage an additional \$205 million in local matching funds for a total investment of \$413 million.

The TAB selected transportation projects from throughout the region as part of the Regional Solicitation released last May. The 58 projects selected for funding include local highway, bridge, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian projects in all seven counties of the region; in 45 different cities and townships. A few projects are in *Monitor* neighborhoods, including a \$5 million allocation toward the

Como trail that is part of the Grand Round citywide bike and trail system.

Other area projects include \$2 million to modernize traffic signals at Snelling Ave. and Lexington Pkwy. and \$165,000 toward a travel demand management pilot project for St. Paul campuses. The latter project will be overseen by St. Paul Smart Trips.

"The process of allocating these federal dollars to metro area transportation projects is rigorous and requires the dedication of so many partners," said Met Council Chair Adam Duinink. "This collective commitment to reviewing and approving projects that benefit the region is remarkable. I commend all the various participants for their dedication."

## Outdoor markets easier to hold

Businesses wanting to hold sidewalk sales and groups organizing outdoor events will have an easier time, with St. Paul City Council adoption Jan. 25 of an ordinance governing outdoor sales and events. The ordinance takes effect in 30 days.

Only Union Depot, which supports the changes, was represented at a Jan. 18 public hearing on the topic. The zoning code amendments will simplify regulations for Christmas tree lots, farmers' markets, open-air garden centers, sidewalk sales, fireworks tents, festival vendors, food trucks and similar events. It will simplify events such as the Little Mekong Night Market held every summer on University Ave., which features food, vendors, and entertainment.

The Planning Commission in November 2016 recommended the changes. Outdoor markets and market-style events are becoming more popular. The regulatory changes will make it easier for sponsors to hold the events. In 2014 the Planning Commission approved a conditional use permit for the Little Mekong Night Market. The city used the same regulations for the Night Market as it uses for farmers' markets, but that raised questions among city staff and planning commissioners and the Plan-

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# Monitor

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## CORRECTION TO THE LAST ISSUE

*Editor's note: in the last issue of the Midway Como Monitor, there was some confusing and possibly misleading information about the cost of adopting through Ampersand Families. The article should have said:*

*The cost of adoption placement for a child through Ampersand Families is about \$45,000—but, that cost is born by public and private funds and not by adopting families. Families who adopt a child, teen or sibling group out of foster care in Minnesota have virtually NO expenses, and there is on-going monthly adoption assistance to families adopting in this way.*

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## Wonderlust Productions

Continued from page 1

Berks said, "but on a practical level, somehow things have to get done. The building is used, maintained, and appreciated by ordinary people every day. The way our capitol building is accessible to the public is unusual. There are spaces within the building that can be reserved for free on a first-come, first serve basis. It's meant to be a building for everyone."

Berks concluded, "Leah, Deb, and I make plays because we believe this way of working has the potential to change people's attitudes and behaviors. We have an ambitious growth plan for Wonderlust Productions, and lately we feel like we've been running at a sprint. But at our core, we love theater because it gives us the chance to ponder—to be filled with wonder."

# Thao honored for keeping kids from smoking

Ward 1 Council Member recognized for leadership at 2017 Tobacco Control Conference

Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation (MSFG), a coalition of 50 organizations working to prevent youth smoking in our state, honored St. Paul Council Member Dai Thao with the Inspiring Bold Action award at the 2017 Minnesota Tobacco Control Conference. The award recognizes bold efforts to protect future generations by restricting the sale of flavored tobacco products.

Alicia Leizinger, Policy and Program Specialist at Association of Nonsmokers-Minnesota, presented Thao with the award. "During his time in office, Council Member Thao has championed two major ordinances to protect the health of young people and promote health equity—

an ordinance to set a minimum price for cigars and an ordinance to restrict the sale of flavored tobacco. He has shown great dedication to reducing the influence of the tobacco industry and creating a healthy community for all its residents."

Award were former Shoreview City Council Member Wickstrom, Minneapolis Ward 2 City Council Member Cam Gordon, and Ward 5 Minneapolis City Council Member Blong Yang.

MSFG believes the tobacco industry uses menthol and candy-flavored tobacco products to attract the next generation of smokers. These products mask the harsh taste of tobacco and have packaging that is hard to

distinguish from candy or gum. Young people also believe that flavored products are less dangerous or addictive, but they are just as deadly as other tobacco products. Because of these factors, an increasing number of young people are using menthol, candy and fruit-flavored products:

- 42% of students who smoke use flavored products.
- Menthol cigarette use by Minnesota high school smokers increased from 20% to 44% from 2000 to 2014.
- More than 35% of Minnesota students have tried flavored cigars.

Each year in Minnesota, tobacco use is responsible for

more than 5,100 deaths and almost \$3 billion in preventable health care costs—and 90 percent of adult smokers started before the age of 18.

Other recipients of a 2017 Minnesota for a Smoke-Free Generation award is a coalition of Minnesota organizations that share a common goal of saving Minnesota youth from a lifetime of addiction to tobacco. In addition to limiting access to candy-, fruit- and menthol-flavored tobacco, the coalition supports raising the tobacco sale age to 21, keeping tobacco prices high and funding future tobacco control programs. Find out more at [www.smokefreegenmn.org](http://www.smokefreegenmn.org).



St. Paul Ward 1 Councilperson Dai Thao with his leadership award. (Photo submitted)

Feeling the winter blues? Cabin fever have you ants? Come to the Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave., to find books, DVDs, CDs, free computer and Internet access, and lots of great programs for every age.

The library hosts Chair Yoga with Nancy Giguere on Thursdays, 10:30-11:30am. Upcoming events are on Feb. 9, 16, and 23 and Mar. 2. These events are co-sponsored by the Hamline Midway Elders.

Also on Thursdays are the library's BYO Craft @ Hamline meet-ups, 6-7:30pm on Feb. 9, 16, and 23. Bring knitting, crocheting, or other handmade projects to work on and enjoy community while you craft!

The library features Preschool Storytimes in English on Fridays, 10:30-11am. Upcoming storytimes are on Feb. 10, 17, and 24 and Mar. 3, 10, and 17. The storytimes include puppets, songs, fingerplays, and great sto-

## News from Hamline Midway Library

By CARRIE POMEROY

### Trips to the library can help cure the winter blues!

ries and are open to children of all activity levels.

There is an Evening/Pajama Storytime in English on Tues., Feb. 14, 6:30-7pm. Pajamas, stuffed animals, and blankets are all welcome! There are no evening storytimes scheduled for Feb. 23 or in March.

Sat., Feb. 11 from 11:30am-5pm is Math and Science Day at the library. This family-friendly event will include fun games, crafts, and activities featuring math and science. Use math to make art, do an experiment, hunt for math symbols and more.

As part of the Math and Science Day, Saturday Science meets Sat., Feb. 11, 1:30-3pm to explore 2D and 3D dimensional geometry with a Valentine's theme. Mark your calendars for the March Science Saturday on Mar. 11, 1:30-3pm. The theme that day is wind energy. Science Saturdays are best for ages 6 and up.

The Fireside Reading Series presented by the Friends of the St. Paul Public Library continues through February. On Wed., Feb. 15, 7pm, Fred Amram reads from "We're in America Now: A Survivor's Stories,"

a riveting memoir of a family's escape from Nazi Germany to Holland and America. On Wed., Feb. 22, 7pm, Larry Millett reads from his book, "Sherlock Holmes and the Eisendorf Enigma." Each event features cookies and coffee.

The Teen Book Club meets on Sat., Feb. 18, 3-4pm, to discuss teen books, from graphic novels to Read Brave and more! For grades 9 and up.

All libraries will be closed on Mon., Feb. 20 for Presidents' Day.

On Wed., Feb. 22, 1-3pm, Jody's Documentary Film Series will show "Where Soldiers

Come From," directed by Heather Courtney. This PBS POV documentary follows three lifelong friends as they sign up for the National Guard and journey together from Michigan's Upper Peninsula to Afghanistan and home again. This event is a collaboration with the Hamline Midway Elders.

On Sat., Feb. 25, 1:30-2:15pm, kids in grades 1-3 are invited to join librarian Shelly for the Show and Tell Book Club. Share books, do fun activities, and eat snacks!

On Fri., Mar. 3, elementary-age children are invited to Fun with Mice! from 11am-12pm. Join the fun as we explore mice stories and create mice crafts and comics!

The Saints and Sinners Book Club meets Sat., Mar. 4, 1-2pm. Contact volunteer G. Balter for a book list or more information at [gerribalter@gmail.com](mailto:gerribalter@gmail.com) or 651-224-5570.

### Sunday Series is coming

District 10's popular Sunday Series returns in 2017 with a free presentation every month this winter and spring.

The series launches Sun., Feb 12, when Minnesota State Fair general manager Jerry Hammer—a longtime District 10 resident—gives a whirlwind tour of the history of the Great Minnesota Get Together. There will be plenty of time for questions and trying to verify how good your memory is. The presentation is 1-2:30pm at Como Docks, in the third-floor banquet hall.

The rest of the 2017 lineup:

- Mar. 19: Learn about one of our neighborhood's best-kept secrets: the Como Woodlands Outdoors Classroom. The presentation includes a sneak peak at a new user's guide to the woodlands. 1-2:30pm, Visitors' Center at Como Zoo and Conservatory.
- Apr. 2: Sarah Weaver from the University of Minnesota's Monarch Lab talks about the precarious state of everyone's favorite butterfly. Her discussion includes an overview of the monarch's biology and life cycle, why the population of monarchs is crashing, and what individuals can do to turn this around.
- May: Landscape and Garden Design
- June: The Capitol Region Watershed District unveils a new

## Como Community Council Corner

By MICHAEL KUCHTA, Executive Director

### District 10 releases upcoming Sunday Series lineup

study on Como Lake's ecology.

Keep tabs on District 10's website or on social media to get more details as each event draws near.

#### Report potholes

The unseasonably warm win-

ter means potholes already are blooming all over. The quickest way to file a pothole complaint with City of Saint Paul Public Works is to send location information to [Potholes@stpaul.gov](mailto:Potholes@stpaul.gov).

#### Upcoming District 10 meetings

- Como Community Council Board: Tues., Feb. 21
- Environment Committee: Wed., Feb. 22

- Land Use Committee: Mon., Feb. 27
- Neighborhood Relations and Safety Committee: Tues., Mar. 7

Community members are always welcome to attend and participate. All meetings begin at 7pm at the Como Park Streetcar Station, which is at the northeast corner of Lexington and Horton. Whenever possible, agendas are posted ahead of time on the home page of our website: [www.district10comopark.org](http://www.district10comopark.org).

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## Monitor in a Minute

Continued from page 3

ning Commission initiated a study in 2015.

The changes to the code better define what an outdoor commercial use is, require a conditional use permit for larger outdoor commercial uses, and provide some regulatory exemptions for smaller neighborhood festivals and smaller commercial uses.

### Tree removal program

St. Paul enters its seventh year of fighting emerald ash borer with the removal of trees from city golf courses and several area streets. More than 800 trees were removed around the city. Tree removal began in January. About 175 trees were slated for removal at Como Golf Course after youth ski lessons wrap up there this winter. Work on all golf courses has been planned in a way to minimize damage to turf.

St. Paul has used a structured removal program to remove ash trees, looking for areas with trees in decline. The insects are expected to eventually kill all ash trees. In some areas the city removes trees. In others, some trees are treated while others are removed.

City officials are also placing green bands on trees to

raise awareness about emerald ash borer.

St. Paul leaders had hoped to step up tree removal and treatment this year and had allocated extra funds in the city budget. Those steps are on hold as are any other 2017 initiatives. How litigation over right-of-way maintenance will be settled will likely affect what added spending, including tree removal, can be done this year.

### Walmart police calls eyed

The number of police calls to Midway Walmart, 1450 University Ave., is an issue Union Park District Council (UPDC) is looking at during the 2017 legislative session. Representatives of the group Making Change at Walmart met with the district council in January to describe the problems on Walmart and other retailers needing a disproportionate amount of police services. The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) is one of the groups involved.

The district council heard a report on the police issues but sent the matter to a committee for further review. Advocates want to see more done to ensure that Walmart and other retailers pay for their share of police services. UFCW leader Bernie Hesse said the

time spent on police calls to Walmart could be instead spent on protecting area neighborhoods.

The police issues are also the focus of State Rep. John Lesch (DFL-St. Paul), a former city prosecutor who has described Walmart as the "problem child of Minnesota retailers." St. Paul and Brooklyn Center Walmart's average three police calls per day. The Making Change at Walmart campaign contends that Walmart is simply using police instead of beefing up its private security, and that not having adequate security puts workers at risk.

Lesch and other state lawmakers are planning to hold a hearing this session to put a spotlight on the issue.

### 2018-2019 Capital budget deadline draws near

St. Paul's 2018-2019 Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process won't be the parade of projects seen in the past. For the first time in decades district councils, booster clubs and other groups aren't hurrying to meet a January project submission date. Instead, the pared-back process's first deadline is March 3, when requests for federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) projects are due.

Area district councils, some of which had started planning project submission before the competitive process was dropped last year, are now looking at how their neighborhoods can be engaged in upcoming funding discussions.

In light of millions of dollars in capital maintenance needs and large-scale projects including the replacement of Fire Station 21 in West Midway and Scheffer Recreation Center in Frogtown, the City Council and Mayor Chris Coleman changed the 2018-2019 CIB process. The city will only take project applications this year for CDBG funding. Those requests, which hover around 20 per CIB cycle, come from city departments and neighborhood-based community development corporations. The funds are used for programs including housing rehabilitation, vacant building removal, and commercial building improvements.

The city allocates about \$4 million per year in CDBG funds through the CIB process.

The big focus for 2018-2019 is likely to be capital maintenance, with the completion of a citywide Department of Parks and Recreation conditions assessment expected in April. The study is expected to highlight several million dollars in needs

for recreation centers, parks, trails, courts, and playgrounds.

Capital maintenance requests will be discussed and reviewed by the CIB Committee in the fall. Coleman's 2017 budget included a one-time add of \$1.5 million for parks and libraries' needs. The City Council added more funding. Along with the regular CIB maintenance allocation, the total is at about \$3.6 million for 2017. Much of that is on hold pending decisions on how future right-of-way maintenance fees will be paid.

Coleman, who is not seeking re-election, will present his final capital budget in August. Specific capital maintenance projects can be picked before year's end.

Some district councils and booster clubs hope to advocate for capital maintenance work in their areas, after the parks and recreation needs are outlined. But most are looking ahead with the hopes for a competitive process again in 2019, for 2020-2021 projects. St. Paul has had a state-mandated capital budget process since the 1980s, to fund streets, recreation centers, playgrounds, public safety facilities and other brick and mortar needs. It has been a competitive process, with district councils and city departments ranking every project.

• Two teams from the Como Park Debate program qualified for the Minnesota State Debate Tournament, held at the University of Minnesota on January 13-14. Juniors Jackson Kerr and Stephen Boler placed third in the section tournament to qualify. Sophomores Peter Schik and Henry Hansen placed fourth in sections to earn the final state qualification spot. Both teams participated in the policy debate division, which examined the question of the U.S. increasing its diplomatic and/or economic engagement with the People's Republic of China.

Teams prepared arguments and positions for 90 minutes of debate against their opponents. The experience of debate has been rewarding for the participants. "We know infinitely more about China-U.S. relations than we did prior to the debate season," said Kerr. "We really enjoyed the camaraderie, and the practices were lively."

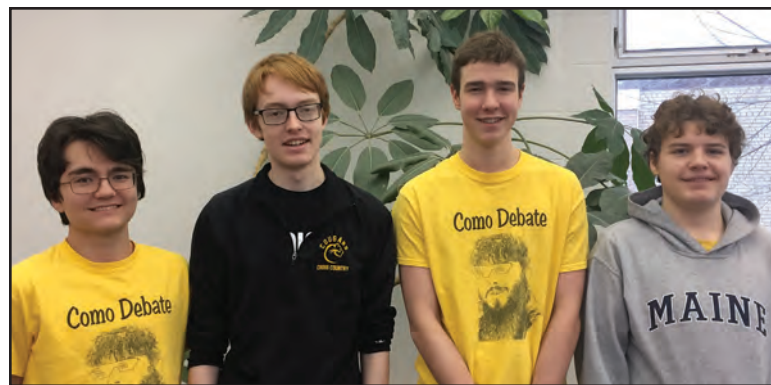
Como has sent teams to state in debate before, but qualifying two teams in the same year was a



## News from Como Park High School

Compiled by ERIC ERICKSON, Social Studies Teacher

### Two debate teams from Como HS qualify for State



Como Debate team members qualified for the Minnesota State Debate Tournament. State qualifiers pictured from left to right are sophomore Peter Schik, junior Jackson Kerr, junior Stephen Boler, and sophomore Henry Hansen. (Photo provided)

first for the program. Deb Hansmier has stepped into the role of debate coordinator at Como, following the contributions of Abbey Boehm-Turner. The technical aspects of research and debate preparation are led by Como debate alum Ian Johnson, who takes pride in the progress of the program. With the state tourney entrants being sophomores and juniors, there is already enthusiasm and great promise for next season.

• Como Park students Sumaya Mohamed, Kari Gurney, Josafen Sanchez, Annalaura Mendez, PaNhia Vang, and Lay Lay Thoo participated in the Youth in Government Model Assembly program at the newly refurbished state capitol from January 5-8. The program gives high school students from across the state opportunities to serve as legislators, judges, attorneys, lobbyists, government officials, and media representatives in sessions that are conducted by the

youth themselves.

Senior Sumaya Mohamed served as a press secretary for the assembly, which in total had over 1400 participants. "It was such an amazing opportunity; I was able to network and learn so much. I connected with NBC News correspondent Jo Ling Kent, who was an alum from Youth in Government and was covering parts of the event for NBC," said Mohamed. It was a powerful and inspiring experience for all of Como's participants, organized by Liz Paone.

• Carole Whitney is a nominee for the Minnesota Teacher of the Year Award. Whitney is the music department chair at Como, conducting five choirs, directing the fall musical, and the spring play. She has created opportunities for all students ranging from beginning choir, to preparing soloists and ensembles for state competitions, to leading her advanced choirs to Carnegie Hall in New York City during the span of her 23 years at Como.

She has been certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in Early Adolescent / Young Adult Music and has held several other leadership positions in regional and state music organizations. Nominees for the 2017 Minnesota Teacher of the Year will be announced in May. A panel of community leaders will work with Education Minnesota to analyze and determine finalists during the coming weeks.

• Freshman Amelia Schucker earned a violin seat in the Minnesota Opera's "Project Opera"

program. This year's production is "The Nightingale" which will be staged at the Minnesota Opera Center in Minneapolis on February 10 and 11. Music Director Matthew Abernathy will lead the youth training program for talented performers.

The Como Park Winter Instrumental Concert was held on Jan. 23 in the Como Auditorium. The concert featured the intermediate band, concert band, jazz band and orchestra under the direction of Dr. Philip Fried.

• Como's National Honor Society (NHS) has collected and delivered over 300 books to Como Park Elementary School students. The project is an expansion of a project called the Children's Book Express which was created by retired professor Phil Martin from Minneapolis Technical and Community College. The program goal is to get books in the hands of children that need them.

NHS students set up a collection box (built by Bob Prifrel's woodworking class) in the main office. All books were donated by Como students and staff. Seniors Hannah Rhee and Divine Uchebue launched and coordinated the effort. "It really is a community project, and the school has been very generous with their donations," said Uchebue. "NHS students have constantly volunteered to count, store and transport the books." The project will continue throughout the spring, and the elementary students will be equipped with plenty of new and gently used age-appropriate books to read.

• Winterfest Spirit Week took place at Como from Jan. 30-Feb. 3. Thematic dress-up days were held all week, and the coronation of the Winterfest King and Queen was held in conjunction with a Pep Fest. Spirit Week concluded with the Winterfest Snowball Dance at the Midpointe Event Center on Feb. 3.

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# Port Authority will lease 15.6 acres of Midway Center property

Stadium should open in 2018 or 2019; superblock redevelopment may take up to a decade or more

By JANE MCCLURE

The St. Paul Port Authority will lease 15.6 acres of the Midway Center property, under a plan approved Jan. 24. It's hoped the lease will kick off long-awaited shopping center redevelopment, which is supposed to happen in conjunction with a planned Major League Soccer stadium for Minnesota United FC.

If all goes as planned, soccer stadium construction could start in earnest in April and be completed in 2018 or 2019. Redevelopment of the shopping center could take much longer, possibly a decade or longer.

The lease agreement, which was recommended for approval Jan. 17 by the Port's credit committee, puts the development agency in the position of being a shopping center master tenant. The goal is to find a development partner or partners, and a new potential owner or owners for the 15.6-acre shopping center property. Port Board members said they don't want to be a long-term property owner or developer. Instead, the agreement is touted as facilitating redevelopment.

The Port Authority created a development district at the shopping center last fall.

A private development partner or partners could be announced this month as talks are underway with several interested parties. "The (lease) project will facilitate the Major League Soccer project and will likely be a mixed-use development in a commercial district," Port documents stated.

Tenants would be consistent with a master plan approved by the St. Paul City Council last year, according to the agreement. That plan calls for offices, retail, restaurants hotel space and apartments on the 34.5-acre "superblock" bounded by Pascal St. and St. Anthony, Snelling and University avenues.

Port Authority President Lee Krueger has characterized the Port's necessary participation due to the "complicated financial aspects" of redevelopment. RK Midway and Minnesota United FC owner Bill McGuire have been in talks for several months but aren't commenting about how that is going.

The Port Authority involvement and the likelihood or another developer are being watched closely by Union Park District Council as the council's land use and transportation committees prepare to review more



The proposed lease agreement puts the Port Authority in the position of being a shopping center master tenant. The goal is to find a development partner or partners, and a new potential owner or owners for the 15.6-acre shopping center property. Redevelopment of the shopping center property could possibly take a decade or longer according to officials. The illustration is an example of an almost infinite number of development possibilities. (Photo provided)

detailed site plans for the soccer stadium before construction begins in April. The detailed site plan starts city staff review this month. That plan will provide more detail on issues including utilities, streets and contamination sites. Several district council committee members said they are concerned that development plans unveiled last year by Minnesota United and RK Midway have stalled and that a new development partner could make changes to the master plan.

"It's fair to say that there are a lot more questions than answers at this point," said Union Park District Council Executive Director Julie Reiter.

The Port Authority has done similar deals before, with the redevelopment of the former Macy's store downtown as the most recent example. That space is being redeveloped into a practice rink for the Minnesota Wild and retail/office space.

The property covered by the Midway Center lease includes much of the shopping center, including Rainbow Foods and properties along University Ave. It doesn't include land along Snelling, including the former American/Midway Bank Building and a building housing Big Top Liquor. That property would continue to be owned by RK Midway. RK Midway also would retain the vacant lot at the northwest corner of Pascal and St. Anthony.

The master lease agreement gives the Port up to 120 days to do its due diligence, determine the financial viability of the lease and the potential cost of any environmental remediation required in connection with development. This time period would be used to complete an agreement with a development partner or partners. RK Midway would retain control over the shopping center during that time.

If the agreement moves forward it would be assigned to the Capital City Partners arm of the Port Authority. A limited liability company of Capital City Partners and private develop would be formed.

The agreement is for 52 years, the same duration of the

city's agreement with Minnesota United and Metropolitan Council on the stadium.

Annual rent will be negotiated, based on the existing revenues collected from the shopping center's current tenants, for years one through five, with a three percent increase for years six through 10, and a five percent increase for each five-year period hereafter.

Little work has been done on the old bus garage property despite a ceremonial groundbreaking in December 2016. Xcel Energy has relocated some utilities, and lead contractor Mortenson Construction has hung a banner on a fence.

But Rainbow and stores to the east need to be torn down to

make way for the planned soccer stadium.

Minnesota United officials wish to have the stadium open in 2018, but Port and team officials have said a 2019 opening is more likely. Most of the stadium will be on 10 acres owned by Metropolitan Council, where a Metro Transit bus garage stood for many years.

Another aspect of the agreement has the Port overseeing environmental cleanup for the entire superblock, not just the stadium site as announced earlier. It has pollution from several sources, including decades as a streetcar and bus garage facility and from a long-gone dry cleaner in the eastern part of Midway Center.



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# CRWD Watershed Stewardship Awards note area leaders

Locals are the main recipients of Capitol Region Watershed District's (CRWD) Watershed Stewardship Awards

CRWD hosted its annual Watershed Stewardship Awards in December 2016. The awards honor individuals or organizations that exemplify watershed stewardship through activities, projects or policies, which demonstrate a commitment to protect, manage and improve water resources of the District. Each year, this event brings CRWD staff, board and Citizen Advisory Committee members together with our partners to reflect, share and celebrate our accomplishments.

## Watershed District Citizen of the Year Awards

Working with neighbors, Janna Caywood helped establish the

Como Active Citizen Network (CACN) in Saint Paul. CACN organizes annual leaf clean-ups to prevent phosphorous from getting into Como Lake and causing algae blooms. In 2016, 223 households participated in clean-ups, removing more than 11 pounds of phosphorous. Janna's leadership has inspired many others to get involved in watershed protection efforts.

Patricia Ohmans is a resident of Saint Paul's Frogtown neighborhood who has been instrumental in many gardening and water protection efforts. She was a co-founder of Frogtown Farm and Park, which converted office space to green space including a large community garden. Patricia also helped establish FrogLab, an education program at Hmongtown Marketplace, focused on Bringing the Frogs Back to Frogtown. Patricia is a visionary and does an

excellent job of creating opportunities for community-led environmental education and activism.

## Watershed District Partner of the Year Award

The District 6 Planning Council represents residents of the North End community in Saint Paul. They have worked closely with CRWD and the City of Saint Paul to complete a natural resource inventory, establish plans for a community rain garden and advocate for the restoration of Willow Reserve. They also supported efforts to transform a brownfield site into an environmental treasure known as the Trout Brook Nature Sanctuary. District 6 is a valued and trusted partner in the North End.

## Project of the Year Award

The owners of Bang Brewing,

2320 Capp Rd., have shown a commitment to sustainability in their choice of building materials, brewing techniques, recycling and composting practices, and rain gardens on site. They have created a little oasis that is both beautiful and functional. Bang Brewing is an excellent example of how to thoughtfully redevelop a site with sustainability in mind.

## Young Watershed Stewards of the Year Award

Olive Murdoch Meyer and Bridget Moynihan served as student representatives and advisors for clean water projects at Central High School. They donated countless hours to rain garden maintenance, raised money to help cover project costs, and offered suggestions for how to best connect students with the project

as part of their work with the Roots and Shoots club. CRWD hopes to use their work as a model for future partnerships with schools.

## Lifetime Stewardship Award

David Arbeit has been an integral part of CRWD since the beginning. As a longtime member of the District 10 Environment Committee, David has a history of working for clean water in Como Lake. He was intimately involved in the creation of CRWD and has been a dedicated member of its Citizen Advisory Committee since the District was founded in 1998. The District values his thoughtful participation in and knowledge of CRWD programs and projects. We feel very fortunate to have him on our team.

# Rihm adds major acquisition to start its 85th year

*Rihm Family Companies also building two new facilities and puts University Ave. property up for sale*

Rihm Family Companies, Inc. (RFC) – owner of one of the oldest Kenworth truck dealers in the world – kicked off its 85th anniversary by acquiring LTX, Inc. LTX owns Lawrence Leasing Inc., the operator of Lawrence NationalLease, a commercial truck leasing company with 15 locations in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and South Dakota.

RFC, 2108 University Ave. W., also announced plans to build new facilities in South St. Paul and Coon Rapids, where the family-owned business will sell and service The World's Best® Kenworth trucks.

"Like Rihm, Lawrence NationalLease has been family-owned and operated for multiple generations, and is a leader with a trusted legacy in the truck leasing and rental market," said Steve Lawrence, former CEO of Lawrence NationalLease. "Our employees and assets are in extremely capable

hands under the leadership of Kari Rihm and her family. This acquisition is a win-win for both of our companies."

Lawrence NationalLease is a 15-location truck leasing company headquartered in Red Wing. Its 110 employees and management team will all remain employed under RFC's ownership. Steve Lawrence will serve RFC as a consultant. Other Minnesota locations include Owatonna, Rochester (two locations), Sauk Centre, Winona, Northfield, and Cloquet; Wisconsin locations include Barron, Durand, Eau Claire/Chippewa Falls, LaCrosse, and Madison; and South Dakota locations include Volga/Brookings and Sioux Falls. For more information, visit lawrencenl.com.

RFC's new facility in South St. Paul at Concord Blvd. and Armour St. totals 68,000-square-foot and will serve as RFC's new headquarters and offer sales, parts, and service. A new lo-

cation in Coon Rapids near Highways 610 and 47 totaling 75,000-square-feet will serve as a body shop, in addition to offering sales, parts, and service.

Construction of both facilities will run on concurrent

schedules, with groundbreakings planned for spring 2017 and grand openings in late 2017.

RFC is currently in the process of selling its Saint Paul facility on University Ave. There will be no changes to the company's

other facilities in Minnesota (Albert Lea, Sauk Centre, Lake Elmo, and Bemidji) or its Superior, Wisconsin, facility.

For more information on Rihm Family Companies, visit rihmkenworth.com.

# Hamline president named to Wilder Foundation Board

Dr. Fayneese Miller, President of Hamline University (HU), has joined the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation's Board of Directors. Dr. Miller joins 11 other Board members comprising the governing body of the Wilder Foundation.

Miller joined HU July 1, 2015, becoming Hamline's 20th president. She is the first African-American president in the history of HU and the university's second female president. She has 30 years of academic and higher education experience. Miller was the first coordinator of education studies and the founding chair of ethnic studies at Brown University, where she served on the faculty for 20 years. More recently she



Dr. Fayneese Miller

served as the dean of the College of Education and Social Services at the University of Vermont for nearly ten years.

Miller is a social psychologist

who specializes in the psychosocial development of adolescents, with a focus on socio-political and identity development. She has authored or co-authored numerous books and an extensive number of journal articles, research reports, and conference presentations. She has been an invited lecturer at institutions throughout the U.S. and in Saudi Arabia, Thailand, China, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

As HU president, she serves on the boards of the Minnesota Private College Council, the New American Colleges and Universities consortium, and the Associated Colleges of the Twin Cities. Since coming to Hamline, she has been elected to the national board of the National Association of Schools and Colleges of the United Methodist Church (NAS-CUMC), and the NCAA Division III Presidents Council. In the Twin Cities, she serves on the board of Twin Cities Public Television. Minnesota Governor Dayton appointed her both to the Minnesota Governor's Residence Council and to the Young Women's Initiative of Minnesota, a public-private partnership with the Women's Foundation of Minnesota to improve the lives of young women.

"We are excited to have Dr. Miller join our Board of Directors," says Alex Cirillo, Wilder Foundation Board Chair. "Her extensive experience in education and youth and her broad perspective will undergird our work with children, youth, and families. We are extremely pleased to have this tie with Hamline University, another longtime Saint Paul institution. Dr. Miller's commitment to community will help guide Wilder's mission and increase its impact today and into the future."

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# Is West Midway and Como next step in the Grand Round?

By JANE MCCLURE

The Grand Round, St. Paul's citywide bike and pedestrian link to lakes and the Mississippi River, could grow this summer with work in the West Midway and Como areas.

More than 50 people attended a Jan. 17 meeting at Merriam Park Community Center to see the plans for Pelham Blvd. and connections to Raymond Ave. and Mississippi River Blvd. If the project wins approval from the St. Paul City Council, it would be implemented this spring.

The Grand Round is a 27-mile system of bicycle and pedestrians facilities that connect the Mississippi River, Como, and Phalen parks. Parks Planner Kathleen Anglo said the Grand Round was envisioned in the late 19th century by landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland. Cleveland was hired by both St. Paul and Minneapolis to outline a plan for the cities' park systems.

Cleveland, who was a leader in the "City Beautiful" movement, wanted St. Paul to protect its natural areas along the lakes and river. While most of the street parkways were in place by the 1930s, most Grand Round work stalled for many years. Proponents revived the plans in the 1980s, but city financial support and detailed planning didn't start again until 2000.

Anglo said that the current Grand Round effort focuses on the northern 13 miles of the Grand Round, through East Side, North End, Como, St. An-



The Grand Round was envisioned in the late 19th century by landscape architect H.W.S. Cleveland, and was meant to be a 27-mile system of bike and pedestrian facilities. This section would come up from University Ave. and run just south of the State Fairgrounds. (Illustration provided)

thony Park and Desnoyer Park. More than 40 meetings have been held to discuss the project, which is supported by the city's Vibrant Places and Spaces (formerly 8-80 Vitality) Fund. Work along Wheelock Pkwy., from Edgerton to Rice St., was done last year. More work is planned in the Como area this year.

"This has been a gap in the bicycle network for a long time," said Reuben Collins, a Public Works transportation planner who leads the city's bicycle planning. Public Works and the city's Department of Parks and Recreation are working on the plans. This year's plans call for work along Raymond, Myrtle St.

and then to Pelham.

Pelham south of I-94 could have one of St. Paul's first cycle tracks, to create another leg of the Grand Round.

While plans to continue the Grand Round have strong support among bicyclists and advocacy groups, neighborhood groups are weighing support and concerns about the plans. Desnoyer Park Improvement Association, Union Park District Council, and St. Anthony Park Community Council all are following the plans and will weigh in at some point, as will the St. Paul Planning Commission Transportation Committee. No groups have taken a position

yet, although St. Anthony Park Community Council's (SAPCC) Transportation Committee is considering route options in that area. Union Park District Council's initial discussions have included more focus on Pelham traffic calming.

Neighbors and businesses along the route had mixed reactions, with some expressing strong support and others asking that heavy rush hour traffic volumes on Pelham be considered in the context of cyclist safety.

A cycle track is a signed and striped set of bicycle lanes on one side of a street, with a buffered area between the bike lane and motor vehicle traffic, between the parking lane, or between both. Pelham would have one bike lane in each direction for its cycle track. Minneapolis has recently installed a cycle track on First Ave. N. between Eighth St. N. and Washington Ave. St. Paul Public Works is looking at cycle tracks in other locations.

The on-street cycle track plans are considered an interim step, with a permanent change eyed when Pelham is rebuilt, said Collins. It doesn't call for street reconstruction—just paint and flexible plastic posts installed into the street. The posts and paint narrow the street and provide a measure of traffic calming as well as a safer place for bicyclists.

A cycle track does mean extra measures at intersections, including more signage and green pavement markings to denote where bikes go.

Pelham isn't in the Public Works' five-year street construction plan, so a permanent bike-way is several years away, said Collins. Its status is a 35 rating on a 100-point scale. Longer-term ideas call for off-street bicycle trails, with landscaping between Pelham and the trails. The street would be narrowed as a result of reconstruction.

The interim and permanent solutions would take away parking on the east side of Pelham in Desnoyer Park.

Pelham is a municipal/state aid street and a collector route, carrying about 4,000 motor vehicles per day. Speed studies indicate that most motorists

drive over the posted speed on Pelham, at 39 miles per hour. The limit is 30 mph. Narrowing Pelham with the cycle track is seen as a way to slow traffic. The street varies in width from 36 to 44 feet.

"We have a high volume of traffic on Pelham during rush hour," said Desnoyer Park resident Marit Bujold. "It's hard to get in and out of driveways as motorists, and hard to cross Pelham as pedestrians,

"This is a wonderful neighborhood, with lots of new, young families," Bujold said. "The number of children living here has skyrocketed." She described rush hour traffic as "bumper to bumper" at times and questions how the bike project would promote safety.

"We don't want people to use Pelham as a cut-through," said Collins. But he admitted that it can be a challenge to redirect motorists. Pelham traffic is something city staff continues to look at. The hope is that the cycle track will narrow the street and slow motorists down.

North of Interstate 94, bike lanes would be striped on either side of streets. In that area city staff and consultants have focused on parking. The Raymond-University area has some businesses and multi-family buildings, as well as Avalon, a charter school.

Pat Thompson serves on the SAPCC Transportation Committee. "We know there are business concerns about the potential loss of parking on Myrtle and Raymond," she said. The committee would like to see Wabash Ave. looked at as the connection between Pelham and Raymond, but railroad tracks in the street mean that option has been ruled out by Public Works.

Shannon Forney, co-owner of Workhouse Coffee Bar near Raymond and University said her business would welcome the bike connection. She does see improved bike parking facilities as a need after the project is completed.

Forney also said she likes the idea of a cycle track. "That kind of protected bike lane gives more comfort to some riders, especially novice bike riders," she said.

## Hamline Elementary School

By JESSICA KOPP

### Student art displayed in community settings

If you've noticed more art in the Midway recently, it might be because the talented young artists at Hamline Elementary have a champion in visual art teacher Katie Laubenstein. In just her second year at Hamline, she is building a meaningful, high-quality art program for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Her enthusiasm for art is contagious, and her ability to teach and inspire students creates opportunities for artistic success and joyful learning.

Thanks to Laubenstein's efforts, Hamline Elementary student artwork is going public. In January, students showcased their work at Anderson Center on the Hamline University campus, featuring art inspired by India including beautiful representations of mandalas, henna, dhurrie rugs, elephants, and banyan trees. And neighbors who have been to the Hamline Midway Library recently have been treated to a rotating art exhibit featuring the work of Hamline Elementary students. Keep checking back to see what's new!

#### "I Heart Hamline"

All are welcome to stop by Hamline Elementary on Tues., Feb. 14, 9am-1pm, for our "I Heart Ham-



Art is blossoming at Hamline Elementary due to the effort of visual art teacher Katie Laubenstein. (Photo provided)



Hamline Elementary student art was displayed in the Anderson Center at Hamline University. (Photo provided)

line" event. We'll have coffee and cookies and another chance for prospective parents and neighbors to take a tour and chat with Hamline staff and families about why

they chose Hamline Elementary and why they stay. Call the school at 651-293-8715 for more information about this, or other programs, or to schedule a tour.

Planning overseas travel?

# THINK MEASLES

**Talk with your doctor about what immunizations you and your family need before traveling.**



For more information go to [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

**MDH** Minnesota Department of Health



# In Our Community

## Monitor

Send us your news! When you submit your press release it will be considered for the next print edition of the Monitor. You can also go to our website, [MonitorSaintPaul.com](http://MonitorSaintPaul.com) and enter your information in the online Event Calendar.

### Dist. 11 names Honor Roll recipients



John Bailey (left) and Ande Quercus are Dist. 11 honorees for the city-wide Neighborhood Honor Roll. (Photo by Hamline Midway Coalition)

Congratulations to Neighborhood Honor Roll Honorees' John Bailey and Ande Quercus.

John Bailey and Ande Quercus were recognized for their extraordinary volunteer work in District 11-Hamline Midway. Bailey was recognized for his continued work in affordable housing, accessible transportation and for his work that launched Saint Paul Tool Library. Quercus was awarded this award for continued work around the Hamline Midway neighborhood that keeps the Mississippi clean, the sidewalks cleared, and for a passion for accessible transportation and a healthier environment for all.

### Fellowship meals planned at Jehovah

Jehovah Lutheran Church, 1566 Thomas Ave., will serve fellowship meals from 5:30-6:30pm, Wednesdays Feb. 15 and 22. All are welcome. After a break for Ash Wednesday on Mar. 1, soup suppers will resume Mar. 8 through Apr. 5.

Meals are free, with donations welcome. Lenten worship follows at 6:30pm each Wednesday starting Mar. 8.

At the meal on Wed., Feb. 15, volunteers will accept donations of toiletries and hygiene items for the homeless and for recently released prisoners.

More information is available by calling the church at 651-644-1421.

### Coffee talk scheduled Feb. 27

A coffee talk, entitled "Social Connections & Well-Being" will be presented on Mon., Feb. 27, 10-11am. This free event sponsored by 2nd Half with Lyngblomsten will include coffee and treats, a brief presentation on their new life enrichment centers for older adults, and prizes. It will include a guided conver-

sation on the importance of caring for your whole self (mind, body, and spirit) and ways you can do this through 2nd Half programs and resources. You will also be able to meet 2nd Half with Lyngblomsten staff and get to know other participants. Plus get a sneak peek of upcoming opportunities. And everyone who attends receives a free 2nd Half with Lyngblomsten coffee mug!

RSVPs appreciated to 651-632-5330.

They also plan an open house on Wed., Mar. 8, 3-6pm. This will be a chance to learn more about 2nd Half with Lyngblomsten life enrichment centers for older adults. You'll mingle with old and new friends, enjoy refreshments, meet instructors and Lyngblomsten staff, preview upcoming programs and trips, learn about resources, get a copy of the new Spring 2017 catalog, and win prizes! No RSVP required.

2nd Half with Lyngblomsten is a new life enrichment center for older adults that is designed to connect them with community services, resources, and opportunities to enhance their quality of life. Offerings focus on: Education & the Arts; Health, Wellness, & Spirituality; Social & Outings; Resources & Support; and Service Opportunities.

For more information, visit

[www.lyngblomsten.org/2ndHalf](http://www.lyngblomsten.org/2ndHalf) or call (651) 414-5293.

### Co-ed Drum Circle planned Feb. 24

The Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. W., will present a Co-ed Drum Circle on Fri., Feb. 24, at 6:30pm. Percussion, rhythm, and freedom of expression will be explored. The cost is \$10 at the door, and all experience levels are welcome. Drums are provided. Info and registration can be found at [www.womensdrumcenter.org](http://www.womensdrumcenter.org).

### Elders plan a roster of monthly activities

**Monthly Luncheon** - On Tues., Feb. 14, Melissa Cortes, Community Organizer from the Hamline Midway Coalition, will share information about the neighborhood-based organization and its work in the neighborhood. Second Tuesday luncheons are held at Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Ave. The meal starts at 11:30am, and the presentation begins at 12:15pm. Green Books will also be hosting another book giveaway during the luncheon. New attendees are always welcome at these free-will donation events.

**Chair Yoga** - Nancy Giguere continues to lead Chair Yoga at Hamline Midway Library. Classes will be held on consecutive Thursday mornings from 10:30-11:30am.

**Jody's Documentary Film Series** - Please join in on Wed., Feb. 22 at 1pm at Hamline Midway Library for two short POV film "Where Soldiers Come From" by filmmaker Heather Courtney No registration is necessary, just enjoy the documentary, some snacks and a lively discussion led by Jody Huber after the film.

**Volunteers Wanted** - The majority of our services to neighborhood elders is provided by some wonderful volunteers, and we could use more. We have a variety of volunteer needs ranging from driving folks to/from medical appointments to spring raking to friendly visiting, to helping out at program events. Please consider helping our program help neighborhood elders.

For more information on any of the above items please contact Tom Fitzpatrick at Hamline Midway Elders at 651-209-6542 or [tom@hmelders.org](mailto:tom@hmelders.org).

### Jehovah Lutheran seeks donations

Jehovah Lutheran Church's Caring Hearts group is gathering toiletries and personal hygiene items for the homeless and for individuals recently released

from the correctional system.

The collection culminates with a free dinner at Jehovah Lutheran from 5:30-6:30pm on Wed., Feb. 15, to which all are invited. The church is at 1566 Thomas Ave.

Bring items to donate on Feb. 15 or call the church office at 651-644-1421 to arrange another drop-off time. The self-service donation center is inside the church to the left of the Thomas St. entry.

Please bring new and unopened items such as shampoo and conditioner, soap, deodorant, toothbrushes and toothpaste, hand lotion, hand sanitizer, razors, washcloths, socks, hats, and gloves as well as medications such as cough syrup, cold and flu tablets, cough drops and children's vitamins. Items for new and expecting mothers are also welcome, including prenatal vitamins, baby diapers and the like. A complete list of needs is at [jehovahlutheran.org](http://jehovahlutheran.org).

Money donations will also be accepted, to be divided between Health East and Crossing Home. A Thrivent grant is helping fund the project.

### Hamline Elementary plans drop-in times

While Hamline Elementary is always open to prospective families and community members, they are setting aside daytime hours for interested folks to stop in without an appointment. You can take a tour of the school and learn more about the community partnerships and programming that make Hamline Elementary outstanding and truly unique in St. Paul Public Schools. Stop by the school, 1599 Englewood Ave., Tues., Jan. 17, or Jan. 24 from 9-10:30am for tours, question and answer sessions with staff and current families. For questions about any of these events, or to schedule a tour, please call the school at 651-293-8715.

### Keystone offers monthly events

The Keystone Senior Center, located at the Merriam Park Community Center, 2000 St. Anthony Ave., offers a variety of programs for seniors in the community. Here are a few ongoing events along with others scheduled for the coming weeks.

**A Valentine's Day Party** is planned for Tues., Feb. 14, from 12:15-1:45pm. Meet friends and take in the crowning of our King and Queen. Be entertained by the Showtime Choral Singers. Enjoy a lunch of roast beef, cheesy potatoes, vegetables, bread, and cheesecake. The cost is \$8 and call 651-645-7424 to reserve your place.

**Jane's Button Collection** will be on display Wed., Feb. 22,

from 11:15am to noon. Free. See Jane's collection of buttons, some of them a century old. Enjoy her pieces of art and collect ideas for your own creative projects with buttons

**AARP Smart Driver Refresher Course:** Tues., Mar. 9, 9:30am to 1:30pm, \$20 per person. Call 651-645-7424 to reserve a spot.

**Free health insurance counseling** is available the third Thursday of the month (Feb. 16, Mar. 16, Apr. 20) from 10am to noon. Appointments last about one hour, and preregistration is required. Call 651-645-7424 for an appointment.

**Foot care:** Half-hour appointments available the first Monday of the month (Mar. 6 and Apr. 3) from 8:30am to 12:30pm. Cost is \$20. Call 651-645-7424 to schedule appointments.

**AARP Tax Assistance:** Mondays and Wednesdays from 9am to 2pm. Free. Call 651-645-7424 for an appointment and information about what to bring. (Provided by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Revenue.)

**Arthritis Exercise:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11am to noon. Cost is \$8 for a four-week session or \$1 per class. Instructors from the Arthritis Foundation provide low-impact joint-safe exercise classes, which help with pain, relieve stiffness, and increase flexibility and range of motion.

**Meals on Wheels:** Fresh, hot, cold, or frozen meals delivered to your home. Available to all who need nutritious food in their lives. Cost is based on a sliding fee scale. Call 651-545-7424 to register.

### Let the kids clown around!

Homeward Bound Theatre Company will offer "Clowning Around" Thur., Feb. 23, 10:30-11:15am, at the North Dale Recreation Center (1414 St Albans St. N.) where ages three through five years old will learn about clowns, their makeup, costumes, and personalities. Discover the clown in you, what makeup and costume best fits your personality. Explore the art of performance with skits, gags, stories and magic.

For more information, and cost of registration call North Dale Recreation Center at 651-558-2329.

### Annual food/wine event set Feb. 26

The Musical Offering presents its annual food and wine event, "The Kitchen Revue," on Sun., Feb. 26 at Sundin Music Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave.

Modeled after a more histor-

*Continued on page 10*

## In Our Community

Continued from page 9

ically accurate concert experience, "The Kitchen Revue" combines the best of French music and cuisine similar to a Parisian style Salon. The program features a variety of music for winds, strings, and piano performed by top musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra, and closes with Martin's La Revue de Cuisine – a lighthearted ballet about the love, lust, and passions of kitchen utensils.

Sunday's concert (\$50, all inclusive) starts at 3pm and includes French appetizers, drinks, and desserts. Music by composers Lili Boulanger, Anton Reicha, George Enescu, and Bohuslav Martin explore this season's focus on migrant musicians and their mentors drawn together in Paris.

Go to [musicaloffering.org/kitchenrevue](http://musicaloffering.org/kitchenrevue) for more information and tickets.

## Focus on poetry is subject Feb. 16

Poetry is one of the most powerful tools we have for articulating the joys, mysteries, difficulties, and meaning of spirituality and the inner life. Join others at 7pm on Thur., Feb. 16 in the sanctuary of Hamline Church for a candlelit reading of contemplative poems from around the world, touching on universal themes of presence, mindfulness, silence, unity with nature, and others. Poets of all different religions, eras, and cultures have written poems to express their feelings of connection to a greater reality. Although from different backgrounds, their poetry resonates with a common chord of this deeper dimension of human existence. Contact Ross at [rhackenmiller@hamlinechurch.org](mailto:rhackenmiller@hamlinechurch.org) for more information

## Community garden has openings

Join your local community garden and grow some happiness!

Tatum Park Community Garden was founded in 2012. The garden is located on Taylor Ave., just two blocks west of Newell Park. Currently seeking new members to join us for the 2017 season. Plot sizes are 8' x 20' and the garden is completely organic! The returning and new members meeting will be Mar. 25. For more information and to RSVP, email [TatumParkGarden@gmail.com](mailto:TatumParkGarden@gmail.com) OR call 651-968-9624. Plot fees are \$30, and scholarships are available!

## Bible study group meets at Jehovah

A women's Bible study on Second Timothy is set for alternate Wednesdays at Jehovah Lutheran Church, 1566 Thomas Ave.

The group meets Feb. 22 at 6:30pm, Mar. 8, 22, and Apr. 5 at 7pm, and Apr. 19 at 6:30. The change in times are during Lent, and the group meets at 7pm so participants can attend Lenten worship at the church at 6:30pm.

Author and evangelist Beth Moore leads the Bible study via DVD, covering how St. Paul's second letter to his friend and associate Timothy helps us fulfill God's call. The gathering in the church lounge is free, with snacks provided.

## Events planned at Merriam Library

The following upcoming events are scheduled at Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave.:

Kids Storytimes in English, Fridays, 10:30-11am and Saturdays, 3-3:30pm. Spend time sharing stories, songs, and rhymes with your child while building a foundation for reading success. Preschoolers, toddlers, and babies welcome.

LEGO Time, Sun., Feb. 19, 2-4pm. Come and build with Legos in the library. We have all the parts you'll need to build your next masterpiece. No preregistration is necessary.

Open Lab for Adult Writers, Thursdays, 10:30-noon. No instructor. This is an opportunity to meet, discuss, or work on whatever you're writing. All styles welcome.

"St. Paul Tool Library: The Handiest New Library in Town" will be held Tues., Feb. 21, 7-9pm. Learn how the St. Paul Tool Library works for you, providing equal access to thousands of tools for homeowners, handy-persons, hobbyists, and professionals. Join us for an informational presentation about our mission, goals, Grand Opening, and future.

The Merriam Park Book Club meets Mon., Feb. 27, 6:30-7:30pm to discuss "Between the World and Me" by Ta-Nehesi Coates.

## Register now for The Sneetches

Homeward Bound Theatre Company will offer "The Sneetches" for ages 9-12, Thursdays, March 9 through March 30, 6-7:30pm at the North Dale Recreation Center. Participants will learn the basics of acting and theater: movement, vocal articulation and enunciation, breathing techniques, the mirror game, pantomime, conflict resolution, character development, monolog, dialogue and group dynamics. With a focus on the natural ability of children to pretend, they will play out children's literature such as "Dr. Seuss", "Stone Soup" and other favorite stories, as well as creating their own improvisation plays.

## Concordia gets prominent ranking

Concordia University St. Paul has been ranked as #22 among the most Affordable Online Colleges in the United States. SR Education Group (SREG), an education research publisher, just published the list in January. 739 colleges met the criteria for inclusion

and were included in the overall study.

SREG, which promotes tuition transparency in higher education, conducts extensive in-house research into program-specific tuition data and has compiled their research into affordability rankings covering 68 subjects.

Concordia offers 19 different online master's degrees with an annual online tuition of \$5670 compared to the annual tuition rate of \$10,292. Concordia, which is a Christian College located just south of I-94 and the Midway area in St. Paul. The University strives to foster a strong sense of community among its students so that online students can earn their degree while also feeling like they are part of a larger community. Students in the online programs will take their classes in a cohort, meaning that they will start their program with a certain group of students and take all of their classes with those same students. This way, online students will have more opportunities to work with and get to know their fellow students, despite not being present for face-to-face classes.

## PIRTEK sponsors snocross team

Craig Heitkamp, owner of PIRTEK Midway (2161 University Ave.) and PIRTEK Plymouth, is again a major sponsor of the Hentges Racing Team competing in the 2017 Snocross competition. This is the 13th year Heitkamp is supporting the Hentges team in the high-performance snowmobile racing events.

"It's exciting, it's motocross on snow," said Heitkamp. "It's great because the track is fan-friendly so you can see what's going on."

"There's a lot of adrenaline." PIRTEK is the only franchise of its kind in the United States, providing hydraulic and industrial hose replacement sales and services. There are

63 PIRTEK franchises and a

fleet of Mobile Service Vehicles throughout the United States. Globally, PIRTEK has more than 400 locations and

2,000 Mobile Service Vehicles in 23 countries around the world.

For more information on Snocross, including a schedule, go to [snocross.com](http://snocross.com).

## Behaviors class scheduled Feb. 18

Raising a child or adolescent with challenging behaviors can be difficult. Learn when and how to seek help, develop parenting strategies, learn the ins and outs of special education and other educational supports, and discover community and county resources available to you and your child. This free, one-day workshop is for parents and caregivers of school-age children and is approved for two hours training for foster care families. Presented by NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness), the Children's Challenging Behaviors class will be held on Feb. 18, 10am-5pm, at the Northdale Recreation Center, 1414 St. Albans St. N. To register, call NAMI Minnesota at 651-645-2948 or go to [namihelps.org](http://namihelps.org).

## Blood drive scheduled Feb. 15

There will be a blood drive at HealthEast-Midway (1700 University Ave.), on Wed., Feb. 15, 9:30am-1:30pm. Only volunteer blood donors can make a life-saving difference to someone in need. You are eligible to give blood if you are: —In good health —Free of antibiotics for 24 hours, unless taken daily for a skin condition —Symptom-free for at least three days following a cold or a flu —17 years or older—16 with written parental consent (form available at MBC.ORG)

Continued on page 11

# Classifieds

## Monitor

Want ads must be received by the Monitor by Feb. 27 for the Mar. 9 issue. Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at [www.MonitorSaintPaul.com](http://www.MonitorSaintPaul.com)

Monitor Want Ads are \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, 125 1st Ave. NW, PO Box 168, Minneapolis, MN 55369. Want ads must be mailed to the Monitor by Feb. 27 for the Mar. 9 issue. Ad copy can be e-mailed to [denis@deruyternelson.com](mailto:denis@deruyternelson.com). Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at [www.MonitorSaintPaul.com](http://www.MonitorSaintPaul.com)

### APARTMENT WANTED

Seeking one-bedroom apartment by March-April. Quiet, small building preferred. 651-489-9053

### ATTORNEY

Creative Solutions With a Personal Touch. Legal Services in the areas of: Small Business, Wills and

Trusts, Probate, Real Estate, and Family. Kirsten Libby, 855 Rice Street, Suite 100, St. Paul, MN, 651-487-1208 [www.libbylawoffice.com](http://www.libbylawoffice.com). B-17

### AUTO STORAGE

Secured auto and boat storage near Snelling and University. Short term or long term. Heated and unheated available. 570 Asbury Street. 651-641-0166. [hamlineparkstorage.com](http://hamlineparkstorage.com). 2-17

### BATHROOMS

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### LAWN CARE

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### OFFICE SPACE

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### SMOKING STUDY

The University of Minnesota is looking for African American cigarette smokers who are interested in quitting smoking. This study requires 12 visits. Participants will

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## In Our Community

Continued from page 10

While walk-in donors are always welcome, appointments in advance are encouraged. To register for a blood drive, go online to [MBC.ORG](http://MBC.ORG) or contact the sponsoring organization directly.

## Mugs for Maryah scheduled Mar. 18

The second annual Mugs for Maryah fundraiser will be held Sat., Mar. 18, 1-4pm at Lake Monster Brewing, 550 Vandalia St., #160. "Love life and drink beer" in honor of Maryah Tift, a special young "Champ" and friend who dreamed of building a place for kids like her facing life-threatening illnesses. All event proceeds will again support Crescent Cove, a local non-profit organization dedicated to opening and operating the first residential children's hospice home in the Midwest. Mugs for Maryah features beer on tap, food truck fare, a silent auction, t-shirt sales, and more.

## Free tax services now available

With tax season right around the corner, Prepare + Prosper (P+P) encourages low- and moderate-income individuals and families to save money this tax season by filing their taxes for free to get their maximum refund.

Until Apr. 15, P+P's IRS-certified volunteers work one-on-one with taxpayers to help them claim all the credits they've earned. The nonprofit also pro-

vides financial services to help people save some of their refund, get connected to financial coaching, and answer money-related questions.

In 2016, 575 P+P volunteers prepared taxes for 13,227 taxpayers who received more than \$24.7 million in refunds and; 1,231 of those taxpayers committed to saving \$1.9 million of their refunds.

### Who is eligible for free tax preparation?

Individuals with an annual income \$35,000 or less and families and self-employed taxpayers with an annual income \$55,000 or less in 2016 are eligible to file their taxes for free.

### Where are the free tax preparation sites located?

Prepare + Prosper main office, 2610 University Ave. W., is open by appointment. Other appointment sites are in Minneapolis and Hopkins.

Five sites (2 in St. Paul outside of the Midway Como area, 2 in Minneapolis, and one in Bloomington) are also open on a first come, first served basis

### When are tax sites open?

P+P tax sites are open at varying times until April 15. For a complete list of times or to make an appointment, go to [www.prepareandprosper.org](http://www.prepareandprosper.org) or call 651-287-0187. P+P also offers audit assistance, and the main office is open year-round.

### What other services are offered at the tax site?

Taxpayers can open a savings account, start a myRA retirement account, purchase a U.S. Savings Bond, pull their credit score, and sign up for P+P's free financial coaching program. Taxpayers can also apply for an Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) at the P+P main office.

### What languages are available?

Spanish and ASL interpreters are available at the P+P main office and Hmong interpreters at their Eastside Financial Center.

## Workshops planned at Wilder Services

Wilder Community Services for Aging presents the VocalEssence WITNESS Program, one of the nation's premier annual initiatives celebrating the contributions of African Americans to our shared cultural heritage. Join VocalEssence artists as they highlight Saint Paul's historic role as a sanctuary provider both during the time of the Underground Railroad and today. No previous artistic experience required for these workshops and all are welcome and encouraged to participate!

Sat., Feb. 11: "Building Rhythms and Body Percussion" with Brandon Commodore: This workshop will explore the integral role that song and rhythm played in the development of unique communication styles during the Abolitionist Movement. Participants will learn about the intricate dynamics of these communications, hidden meanings therein, and will be given a chance to create their own rhythms and develop their own system of communication based on influential movements during their lifetime.

Sat., Feb. 18: "Singing Freedom Songs from the Underground Railroad" with Melanie DeMore: Freedom must be sung about and fought for. These freedom songs are our nourishment, our food, our life blood. In this workshop, VocalEssence WITNESS guest artist Melanie DeMore will lead us in raising our voices together to honor our ancestors and celebrate the songs that got us to where we are today.

Reserve your space to any or all workshops at 651-280-CARE [2273]. Workshops are free, but donations are welcome.

## Music Under Glass continues into Feb.

"Music Under Glass" continues at the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory. The Music Under Glass series is renowned for featuring

## New exhibit opens at Raymond Gallery



Raymond Avenue Gallery, 761 Raymond Ave., will present the pottery of Andrea Leila Denecke and the paintings of Mary Jo Van Dell in its next scheduled exhibit. The opening reception will be held Fri., Feb. 17, 6-8pm, and the exhibit will run through Apr. 21.

Leila Denecke is a ceramic artist and potter who has been influenced by the natural environment and vernacular architecture to inform her work. She studied and worked for over four years in Japan, and the Japanese aesthetic has also had a significant effect as evidenced in her quiet, refined forms and references to the Japanese storehouse called a "Kura." As a child, she grew up alongside the St Croix River, and the river has remained a very strong constant in her life. The St Croix is depicted in her "River Trays" eliciting the feel of the current in the patterns embossed and inlaid in the surface of the clay with crushed granite.

Contemporary oil painter Van Dell finds inspiration in the woods, on the road, in the lakes, prairies, coasts and wilderness areas. Her paintings are recognized by her minimalist technique, limited use of palette and often somber and moody sense. Along with many awards, she has been invited to and attended residencies including an International Artist Residency in Newfoundland, Canada and Isle Royale National Park on Lake Superior. Her work is part of many private and public collections including the National Park Service, The Minnesota Historical Society, and the Minnesota Marine Art Museum.

Minnesota's finest musicians in free concerts.

The concerts are held on select Sundays from 4:30-6:30pm inside the comfy confines of the Conservatory. Beer, wine, pop, and light snacks will be available to purchase. (Please, no outside food or beverages in the Conservatory.)

On Feb. 19 The Bad Companions, a long-standing (and popular!) Minneapolis-based roots-rock quartet, takes the stage. Featuring two guitars, stand-up bass, drums, great vocals, a strong original catalog, and a set-list as long as your arm drawn from the swingin' heyday of American rock-a-billy, r & b, country, and blues.

Feb. 26 Café Accordion Orchestra (CAO) performs an eclectic

mix full of French flare, Latin heat, and Bohemian attitude. The heart of the CAO repertoire is the romantic, gypsy-influenced valse-musette. The group complements the musettes with swing, ballads, tangos, cha-chas, rumbas, and cumbias to create a wonderfully varied show.

On Mar. 5 Jelloslave will perform. Jelloslave is known for their dynamic improvisational compositions and pours heart and soul into an eclectic original repertoire ranging from mesmerizing fusions of jazz, Afro-Caribbean, Middle Eastern and Indian rhythms, to surprising pop music interpretations.

## Millett to appear at Fireside Series

Author Larry Millett to read from and sign copies of his new book "Sherlock Holmes and the Eisendorf Enigma" at 7pm, Wed., Feb. 22, for the Fireside Reading Series, Hamline Midway Library (1558 W. Minnehaha Ave.)

Millett is the author of twenty books, including seven mystery novels—mostly set in Minnesota—featuring Sherlock Holmes and St. Paul detective Shadwell Rafferty. A longtime reporter and architecture critic for the St. Paul Pioneer Press, Millett is also the author of numerous books on architecture.

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# SFER hosts meeting at Central about police presence in schools

By MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

A community meeting held at Central High School on Jan. 27 attracted about 200 participants. The meeting was organized by the Minnesota branch of Students for Educational Reform (SFER), a non-profit organization that empowers community members, parents, and students to bring their voices together for educational justice.

At issue was the racially charged question of how community members view having police officers in St. Paul public schools.

For the 2016-17 school year, the St. Paul School Board has authorized \$984,499 to fund nine school resource officers (called SROs) across the city. The School Board bears nearly all of that cost; \$100,000 is covered by the City of St. Paul.

SROs are sworn law enforcement officers who work in the schools but, according to several voices in the audience, that's about the only commonality they share.

A broadsheet distributed by Students for Educational Reform at the meeting said "SROs work in 28% of Minnesota schools, yet there is no standardized training, certification, or workplace monitoring to guide how the officers interact with students. If SROs do receive pre-service or on-the-job training, it's related to law enforcement or security. It rarely covers mediation, de-escalation, youth development, working with youth who have special needs or have experienced trauma—all of which are critical issues when it



Educator Rashad Turner (pictured at right) moderated a youth panel with high school students from Minneapolis and St. Paul. The student panel expressed a unanimously negative opinion of police in their Minneapolis and St. Paul high schools. They perceive that students of color are especially targeted, and do not see SROs as a positive presence in their schools. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

comes to having a positive school culture."

Latasha Gandy, executive director for SFER MN said, "We want to make sure that all Minnesota students feel safe and nurtured in the school environment where they're meant to learn. Once a kid has had even one interaction with the criminal justice system, the likelihood that they'll drop out of school rises dramatically."

At the meeting, a panel of community members was moderated by educator Rashad Turner. In response to his question, "Why do you think police are being placed in St. Paul schools?" Anni-

ka Foley, community arts activist and Rondo resident, said, "There is a need for public safety, but it's coming at the expense of students of color."

The mostly African-American, East African, Latino, and Asian audience agreed.

Jason Mattlock, a 12 year veteran of the Minneapolis Police Department and a former SRO, said, "When it comes to doing the job of an SRO, what the officers lack is an understanding of their own biases—as well as an understanding of the importance of racial disparities."

Tony Simmons is principal and co-founder of the High

School for Recording Arts on University Ave. near Lexington Pkwy. He requested an SRO in his

school a few years ago, because he felt it was necessary to ensure a safe learning environment. "We haven't had an incident that resulted in an arrest since then," Simmons said, "but every day I worry that something could escalate into that."

Pastor Marea Perry, a parent of a Como High School student, said, "I feel that SROs are trained to be out on the streets, not dealing with our kids in the schools."

"At SFER," Latasha Gandy summarized, "our hope is that there would be no police officers in the schools. Our reality view is that SROs will be present – but that they will answer to the same code of conduct across the board. We have asked Governor Dayton for a task force that would create a state-wide curriculum and certification for SROs; clearly defined SRO roles, duties and protocol; an emphasis on prevention and restorative justice, data collection and evaluation of SROs impact on students. We are eager to see what the outcome of that will be."



Students for Educational Reform staff (in black) helped with registration and translation for the community meeting at Central High School. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

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#### The Musical Offering Kitchen Revue Concert

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