



monitor

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Celtic Junction a cultural hub in Newell Park

Now into its first year amid the warehouses on Prior Avenue north of University, the Celtic Junction has added a unique cultural centerpiece to the Newell Park neighborhood. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

By CLAYTON SCHANILEC

A spawning ground for an Irish dance champion, a hub for performing folk artists, a funky space for a wedding celebration—Celtic Junction is stretching out to cover all of that, just as its young dancers stretch their legs to rattle off rapid-fire rhythms. Now into its first year amid the warehouses on Prior Avenue north of University, this rapidly growing business has added a unique cultural centerpiece to the Newell Park neighborhood.

Celtic Junction is the brainchild of Natalie and Cormac O'Shea, she a Minnesota native and he an Irish dancer who toured from the beginning with Riverdance, arguably the most successful touring dance show the world has ever known. The two bought a mobile radio building and shaped its 13,000 square feet into a functional space for the folk community.

A spacious main hall has a stage and can seat 280 at a concert or serve as a wedding dance floor. Four nights a week it becomes an intense training ground for young Irish dancers who skip across the "sprung" marly-covered floor before floor-length mirrors. Two other studios are usually crowded with dancers, and one of them

doubles as an intimate concert venue for audiences of up to 100. The carpeted lobby with its nooks and crannies makes for an attractive reception setting when it isn't crowded with parents during lessons, reading books or accessing the free Wi-Fi. Office space in the building has been scooped up by notable local folk musicians. One tenant has found the largely unfinished basement to be an adequate space to build a replica of a 16th century wire-string harp.

The dance school, though, was the driving force for purchasing the building, said the O'Sheas. Their traditional Irish dance school known as O'Shea Irish Dance opened with 7 stu-

dents in 2005. Once word spread that an original Riverdance performer with TCRG designation—meaning he was certified by the Irish Dancers Commission in Dublin—had begun teaching in the Twin Cities, students flocked to a master. A larger space was soon needed and the O'Sheas moved onto Prior. In just four years the ranks swelled to 170 students and are projected to reach 220 soon, showing phenomenal growth in a declining market.

Cormac's pedigree goes beyond Riverdance. His parents began the O'Shea School in Dublin in 1971 and their fastidious attention to proper styling in a dance known for its stiff car-

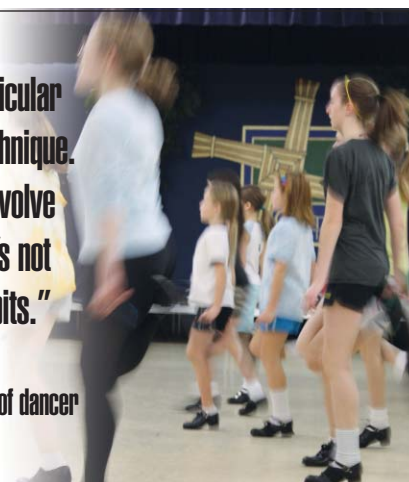
riage and almost manic discipline helped them churn out world champions with regularity. Cormac's sister Dara won first at the world championship once and his brother, Colm, held the men's crown for a decade before an American unseated him.

The school's intent is to train students for competitions, but they make clear that competing in one of the country's 300 plus yearly Irish dance competitions is not compulsory. A love for Irish dance is enough, and the discipline and physical demands have other benefits. Soccer coaches, for instance, noted Natalie, love it when one of their athletes take classes because the training helps develop footwork.

Dorinda Von Tersch is one parent who appreciates the school's attention to form. Thirteen months ago she left Chicago and searched the area for an Irish dance teacher for her children, Hunter and Alexandria. "We absolutely love it," she said. "Natalie and Cormac are particular about form and precision of technique. I think that's helped my kids evolve better as dancers because it's not allowed them to have bad habits. They're learning it correctly early on."

"Natalie and Cormac are particular about form and precision of technique. I think that's helped my kids evolve better as dancers because it's not allowed them to have bad habits."

- Dorinda Von Tersch, parent of dancer



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monitor

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Monitor in a Minute

Teen center receives funding

The move to establish a teen center in the North End took a big step forward Nov. 18 as the St. Paul City Council allocated \$350,000 in Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) funds toward the project. The funds are from money allocated for Ward Five projects. Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen brought the funding request forward.

The teen center is located at Rice Recreation Center, which is in Washington Technology Middle School. It is a project of St. Paul Parks and Recreation.

Next year Rice and North Dale will be the only North End area recreation centers still open. Sylvan and Front are closing due to city budget cuts. Both of those smaller buildings will be torn down. Field and restroom facility improvements are promised in exchange for the loss of the buildings, but the move still leaves the neighborhood with just two recreation centers.

Orchard Recreation Center was closed a few years ago and taken over by the St. Paul Blackhawks soccer club.

Having a teen center is a goal North End residents and organizations have pursued for several years. In the 1990s District 6 Planning Council operated a youth coffee shop and teen center on Rice Street. A charter school assisted in the operation of that facility. But the coffee shop struggled financially and had to close.

No opening date for the new teen center has been announced.

No bikes on Ayd Mill Road

A proposal to allow bicycles onto Ayd Mill Road has been curbed –

at least for now. Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark withdrew the measure Nov. 4 in the face of concerns from St. Paul Public Works and other council members. He had postponed a final vote on the measure last month.

The council ordinance would have eliminated a long-standing prohibition on bicycles on Ayd Mill Road, which was originally known as Short Line Road. The ban dates from 1956, when the street was planned. The ban is believed to be linked to long-standing plans to use the street as a link for the area's freeway system.

The ordinance drew no opposition at a public hearing in October. But Ward One Council member Melvin Carter III, whose ward includes the north end of Ayd Mill Road, said he has concerns about putting bicycles on the street. So do city Public Works officials, who questioned whether the four-lane street has room for bikes.

The ordinance had been amended in its weeks of consideration at the council. The original ordinance would have allowed bikes all along Ayd Mill Road, from Selby Avenue all the way to I-35E. But it was amended last month to exclude the area from Jefferson Avenue to I-35E.

Stark said it is best to withdraw the ordinance. Instead the bicycle and pedestrian access issues will be addressed next year when city staff reopens studies of Ayd Mill Road's future.

City officials are trying to decide the road's configuration and to find space for off-street bike and pedestrian trails. The City council recommended Ayd Mill Road be rebuilt as a two-lane parkway in 2000; former Mayor Randy Kelly pushed through a study of a four-lane roadway four years later. The council voted earlier this year to ask that the Ayd Mill Road studies be reopened and the two-lane option gets more study.

"We don't want to take one step now when a different recommendation might come out of the community process later," Stark said.

Stark also noted that even if the prohibition is lifted, Ayd Mill Road as it is today isn't the best bicycling route, "If I and others had no qualms about bicycling there it would be different," he said. "But no one thinks it's safe as it is today."

Sign rules won't change in a flash

Changes to St. Paul's dynamic signs ordinance have been postponed under year's end at the earliest. The St. Paul City Council laid over a vote on the new regulations in November and may consider more changes to the regulations.

Dynamic signs are electronic signs that can flash, scroll or otherwise change messages. The signs can show text or in some cases show pictures. As the signs have become more popular with businesses, they have also drawn complaints for being a distraction to drivers and passersby.

The St. Paul Planning Commission recommended approval of a detailed ordinance regulating dynamic systems this fall. It outlines which types of signs can be installed in various zoning districts, ranging from industrial to residential. It outlines the various sign sizes allowed as well as distance requirements for each zoning district.

However, the City Council heard concerns from district councils, the anti-billboard group Scenic St. Paul and citizens about the need to more tightly regulate the signs.

One of the district councils most heavily involved in the sign issue is St. Anthony Park, where the West Midway industrial area is very close to homes in some places. Many homes there could

be affected by the regulations proposed by the Planning Commission. The St. Anthony Park Community Council submitted a detailed list of regulations that several council members are interested in looking at for city-wide regulations.

The West Midway industrial area, much of University Avenue and parts of Selby Avenue could also see more dynamic signs under the proposed regulations. Council members said the commercially and industrially zoned areas are often next to residential neighborhoods, and the spillover light from dynamic signs could be a distraction.

Pollution cleanup grant OK'd by Council

Brownfield sites along the planned Central Corridor light rail route could be cleaned up with the assistance of a federal grant. The St. Paul City Council voted unanimously Nov. 18 to accept the \$1 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

About \$400,000 of the grant will be earmarked for remediation of petroleum remediation. The rest will be used for cleanup of other contaminants. There are a number of sites along university Avenue that have contamination due to past industrial uses, according to City Planner Josh Williams.

Other contaminated sites remain from auto-related uses, such as repair businesses.

It's not known yet how many sites will need environmental remediation, according to Williams. And it is likely that the demand for funds will exceed what is available.

One way sites will be selected is through the Central Corridor Development Strategy, a detailed city plan for land use

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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City Council reluctantly approves demolition...

Historic church scheduled to be torn down soon

By JANE MCCLURE

Despite efforts to save it, one of the area's most unique and historic churches will be torn down soon. St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, which has stood on Dale Street since 1888, is too deteriorated to save. St. Paul City Council members reluctantly approved the church's demolition Oct. 28.

The church at 507 N. Dale St. will be the focus of extensive salvage efforts. The congregation that most recently occupied the structure, Rock of Ages Missionary Baptist Church, would like to remove church fixtures. But city council members, led by Dave Thune and Melvin Carter III, want to see if the church windows can be salvaged and reused, possibly in a public building.

Carter said he hates to see such a historic building razed. He had postponed final city council action on the structure earlier this fall, to see if other options could be found. But the church's congregation, which moved out a few years ago, doesn't have the resources to save the building. Nor could anyone be found to step in.

The loss of the historic church is also a concern for the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC). The HPC and others wanting to save the church have worked with the Minnesota Historical Society and Minnesota Preservation Alliance to explore options for the church, to see if there are resources to repair and reuse the structure.

"It's an incredibly historic



St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, which has stood at 507 N. Dale St. since 1888, is too deteriorated to save. St. Paul City Council members reluctantly approved the church's demolition Oct. 28.

building," said Carter. "Unfortunately, it's in pretty bad repair."

HPC members and city staff fear that in a difficult economy, more of the city's beautiful and historic places of worship could

fall to the wrecking ball. Congregations struggling to keep operating may not have the resources to maintain and repair their historic structures.

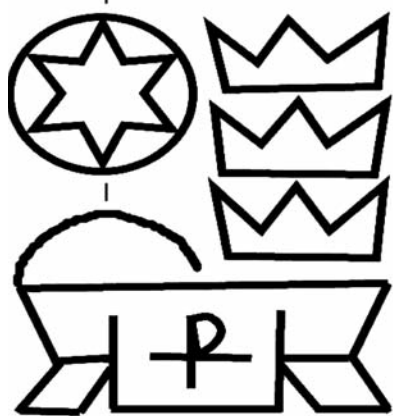
HPC Chairman John Manning said the church's demolition is a huge loss for its surrounding community. "It's a really beautiful building," he said. Other HPC members noted that the windows are especially unique and beautiful in their design, in terms of style and colors used.

Carter said it's his hope the windows can be reused. But removing them may be especially difficult, due to the church's structural condition. "We don't want to end up with a bag of pieces," he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



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Property owners weigh streetscape assessments along Central Corridor

By JANE MCCLURE

Property owners along University Avenue and downtown will still have to chip in for streetscape improvements related to the Central Corridor light rail project. But they will split \$2.9 million in costs, not the \$3.9 million in assessments originally proposed. Still, an \$18.8 million streetscape payment plan approved 6-1 Nov. 25 by the St. Paul City Council will be controversial. Not only will it mean assessments, it includes features the Metropolitan Council has not agreed to pay. Metropolitan Council is building the \$941 million light rail line.

"We heard loud and clear from a number of businesses that all of the streetscaping won't solve the parking problems," said Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark.

Many property owners questioned the notion that \$2.9 million of the improvement costs would come out of their pockets, in the form of assessments against their properties.

Some oppose the assessments outright. Others say if they are going to be assessed, that money should go for parking improvements and business mitigation, not trees, benches and light posts.

"It doesn't do us any good to have trees and benches and pavers if we're not going to be here," said Jim Segal, owner of the Ax-Man Surplus Store at Uni-

versity and Fry Street.

"They can come up with (funding) for streetscape and yet there is so little for off-street parking," said Jeff McCann, University Avenue Business Association (UABA) President and an owner of Update Companies. Update owns several commercial and industrial properties in the Midway.

"Streetscape is important but it's not more important than trying to assist the businesses that want to stay here," said University Avenue Business Association Director Linda Winsor. Businesses might be more amenable to chipping in if they knew city officials were committed to helping them survive the construction project.

"We need to know we're going to be in business before we start worrying about streetscape," said Segal. "We need to know if we're going to have enough funds to pay for parking improvements, we need to know if we're going to have a business mitigation fund."

At this point it's not clear how much each property owner

would be assessed for the improvements. The assessments would vary by amount of street frontage, as well the zoning classification of each

substitute in surplus dollars from a \$2 million surplus in the city's sewer fund. He cast the lone vote against the proposal.

Other council members agreed that while the funding mix may not be what everyone wants, it is an attempt to address the streetscape needs. They also indicated that the sewer funds may be used to balance other areas of the city budget.

The plan approved Nov. 25 is whittled down from a \$22.3 million proposal. It adds \$1.5 million for parking improvements, which business owners have clamored for. It removes \$3.1 million in median improvements and \$185,000 in downtown street improvements. City officials say those are needed safety features; light rail project staff doesn't want to pay for them.

Other cost savings were found by lowering lighting and paving costs.

A number of business groups are reviewing the proposal. The Midway Chamber of Commerce, St. Paul Area Cham-

ber of Commerce and St. Paul Building Owners and Managers got their first look at the plans Nov. 24. Ethnic business groups are also weighing in. University Avenue businesses will be asked to weigh in on the plan 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10 at the Central Corridor Resource Center, 1080 University Av. A public hearing on the assessments is 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan 6 at City Hall.

The City Council was to approve the assessments Nov. 18 but laid the plans over at the request of council members Stark and Melvin Carter III. The two represent neighborhoods along the light rail line. Stark said he's not convinced that the city should be financing all of the proposed improvements, such as those that are life safety-related.

Council members Pat Harris and Helgen had concerns about the proposed financing sources. Harris expressed concern about using TIF dollars and how that would affect the tax base as a whole. Helgen said he has "strong objections to using money for infrastructure that could be used elsewhere for economic development citywide."

"All along Central Corridor the businesses are saying they need help to survive," said Helgen. If the city spends its most flexible funds for infrastructure, that takes money away from other needs.

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Commercial and residential burglaries rose slightly along the lower Rice Street corridor for the month of October. Most of these crimes involved night entry of a residential garage or an unoccupied business.

In response, the Saint Paul Police Department's GRID Unit started looking at the cases. We determined that a well-known burglar named Eddie Dupree who had recently been released from custody was popping up in the areas where the burglaries were taking place. The method of some of the property crimes fit those employed by Dupree during previous burglaries.

We were able to make a break on a case in the area of Front and Rice Streets. With stolen property identified and recovered, and with photo lineups completed, we arrested Dupree. He later admitted to that burglary and several others.

Since his arrest, burglaries have leveled off along the Rice Street corridor. While Dupree was certainly responsible for some of them, the fact remains



On the Beat

By OFFICER CHARLIE ANDERSON

St. Paul Police GRID Unit captures serial burglar

that commercial and residential burglaries happen at the hands of many individuals. Their tactics and methods may vary, but the following precautions could help you, your family, or your business from being a property crime victim:

- Install motion detectors, especially at entrances or areas hidden from public view.

- Install deadbolts on doors, as well as effective window locks.

- Install a quality security system with a police call service.

- Install a quality video surveillance system with recording capability.

- Leave one or two lights on overnight, especially ones that

may cover merchandise or a showroom floor. Criminals prefer to work from the cover of darkness.

- Clean up yards and shop exteriors to make them appear well-cared for.

- Create an aesthetically attractive physical boundary between your property and foot traffic. This could take the form of a wrought iron fence, landscaping, wood fence, shrubs, or retaining wall.

- Create a security routine when you leave your home or business. Check locks before you leave.

- Dissuade would-be thieves by not leaving valuables in plain view.

- Consider using a secondary lock to secure tools inside a chest or cabinet, then locking the door to the garage. These items are now protected twice.

- Keep track of brand, model, and serial numbers. Keep them on file. In the event that something is stolen, police will have a greater ability to track these items.

- Talk to your neighbors, whether they be businesses or residents. Get involved with a block club or business association. Look out for your neighbors, and they will look out for you.

With a little bit of preparation and common sense, we can work together to reduce criminal

behavior in our neighborhoods, thus making them safer and more enjoyable places to live and work. As one of your many dedicated police officers, I'd like to ask for your help in making this possible. In my upcoming columns, I'll be introducing a little more about myself, the GRID Unit, and the police department, but what I'm really looking forward to is connecting with you. Look for contact information to be forthcoming in my next column. Be vigilant. Be safe.

(Editor's note: The Saint Paul Police Department's GRID (Getting Residents Involved Daily) Unit is a federally funded program designed to address street crimes and quality of life issues utilizing problem oriented policing while working in co-operation with the community. GRID focuses on five geographic sectors within the Central District's Rice Street corridor that have historically experienced an elevated level of criminal activity and neighborhood blight.)

Historic church

Continued from page 3

Paul Clifford Larson, who recently chairs the HPC, has extensively documented the church. Its congregation was founded in 1887 by a growing German Lutheran community in Frogtown. The original church, built the following year, was a clapboard building.

The structure was extensively rebuilt in 1912-1913. Accord-

ing to Larson, the existing sanctuary walls remained in place but were raised to create a full basement. Then the entire building exterior was sheathed in brick with Bedford stone trim. The architect, H.A. Miller, was a Frogtown resident who later would work on the city's architectural staff. Nearly all of the church's existing interior fittings, furnishing, and casework, and all of the surviving decorating date from this time.

But Larson found that the beautiful and detailed stained glass windows date from the

1888 church, including six gothic-arched windows on either side of the sanctuary, the beautiful tracied window above the entry and a window diptych (its stained glass long gone) surmounted by a miniature rose window on the third story of the tower.

Amazingly, these windows survived a February 1918 fire, which started in the church's furnace room. That forced the congregation to partially rebuild their church again. The work to restore the church continued into 1925.

Another change was made in 1932 when a 1980 frame Sunday School building was replaced by a two-story brick and terra cotta building, which was connected to the church.

The building has housed different congregations over the years. In 1949 the First Church of the Nazarene moved in. (The original German Lutheran congregation had moved to a new building at Lexington Parkway and Minnehaha Avenue.) Larson found that the church was then occupied by the Church of God in Christ (1964), the Apostolic

Faith in 1968 and then Rock of Ages Missionary Baptist Church.

"Through all of these changes, the building has retained a remarkable degree of historical integrity, with no significant alterations to either exterior or interior," Larson said.

But the church has suffered from a lack of maintenance in recent years, according to city staff reports. It has gone without heat and that has further affected its condition. Its congregation had moved to the North End but recently had to leave space and is moving again.

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City Council affirms decision to force MGM to replace alley fence

By JANE MCCLURE

MGM Liquors must follow its approved site plan and replace a fence along the Larpenteur-California Avenues alley, the St. Paul City Council decided Dec. 2. The council unanimously upheld an October Planning Commission decision rejecting the store's site plan. The council also asked City Attorney John Choi to make sure a require alley fence is installed.

The fence fight has stretched out over the past few years, in the neighborhood, at City Hall and in the courts.

MGM has a retail store and offices at 1102 Larpenteur Av., the southwest corner of Larpenteur and Lexington Parkway. There has been a liquor store at the corner for more than 50 years. MGM has occupied the site for 37 of those years. The site plan for the corner was approved by city staff in 1980 and included a fence, which was on

the MGM side of the property.

MGM attorney Chad Lemmons and co-owner Mike Maglich argued that the fence isn't needed. Lemmons said there is already a screening fence on the south side of the alley, behind homes MGM already owns or is negotiating to buy. He said a second fence isn't needed and that the old fence was taken down because of its age and condition.

Lemmons also disputed neighborhood and city staff concerns that the lack of a fence and directional pavement markings or signage caused a hazard. He told the City Council that alley access is a "Constitutional right" and that it violates the company's rights to equal protection under the law.

"This is not a typical residential alley," Lemmons said. He said it should be compared to shared commercial-residential alleys in the Grand Avenue and

Ford Parkway areas.

Maglich emphasized MGM's long history in the community and the fact that it is a good corporate citizen in making the appeal. He said the store owners have worked very closely with the community over the years.

But neighbors and District 10 (Como) Planning Council said the issue is one of safety. Seven letters in opposition to the appeal were submitted to the City Council.

Dwight Nelson, a 30-year resident of California Avenue and a block club leader, said the safety of all of the homeowners on the street needs to be considered. Safety is also an issue for residents of Dunlap, Iowa, Idaho and Hoyt.

"We have had many near-misses" when people try to pull out of their garages or rear parking spaces, said Nelson.

Dunlap resident Nathan Volz also asked that the appeal



MGM Liquors must follow its approved site plan and replace a fence along the Larpenteur-California Avenues alley, the St. Paul City Council decided Dec. 2.

be denied. "There have been numerous close calls," in the alley and on existing streets. The neighborhood not only deals with alley traffic, it also sees more cut-through traffic from people trying to avoid the Lexington-Larpenteur traffic signal.

A study by Public Works

shows that the alley is carrying three times as much traffic as is on California Avenue, Volz said. "This is just a dangerous situation."

District 10 understands the need for commercial business access, said Chris Martineau, chair of the council's Land Use Committee. But the council is also concerned about safety and wants to see the fence replaced.

The fence was erected years before a 1994 city requirement that restrict access from commercial properties on shared commercial-residential alleys, according to city staff. Alley access in such situations is prohibited unless the property owner can demonstrate that a site plan meets traffic safety conditions.

The fence was removed in late 2007 without city permission, and since then there has been unrestricted access to the alley. Neighbors contend that creates an unsafe situation, as they are unable to get in and out of their garages safely. Vehicles entering and exiting the liquor store parking lot drive at high rates of speed. Some throw litter in the alley.

After the fence was taken down city officials ordered that the fence go back up, leading to a legal tussle that went through district court and the Court of Appeals. The district court ruling was that the fence could come down because there is screening of the property on the south or residential side of the alley that MGM has provided.

The district court also ruled that the city was trying to take MGM's property by denying alley access.

The city appealed to the Minnesota Court of Appeals. That court indicated that MGM should have followed city process to obtain alley access and that the city didn't interfere with MGM's property rights. That ruling also indicated that MGM hadn't satisfied the property screening requirements.

MGM did submit a new site plan to city officials, which shows no fence or barrier along the alley. City staff recommended denial of that site plan for a number of reasons, including safety and visual screening.

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City Hall takes steps to save old Victoria Theater

By JANE MCCLURE

The latest step in trying to save the old Victoria Theater has been taken at St. Paul City Hall. Whether that is enough to stave off building demolition remains unclear. But a proposal to tear the down the building and convert its space into a parking lot has been shelved.

Supporters of the effort to save the theater are hosting a concert 6-9 p.m. Friday, Dec. 11 at the Paul and Sheila Wellstone Center/Neighborhood House, 179 E. Robie St. Cost is \$15.

Area residents and business owners gathered Nov. 17 to call for local historic designation of the building at 825 University Av. Supporters gathered at the nearby Ngon Bistro to rally support for saving the building. A letter outlining that request was then delivered to the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) for consideration.

No timeline for HPC review has been set. The HPC and the Planning Commission review local designation applications, which also are reviewed and approved by the City Council.

The local designation is just one step taken to try to save the theater and do land use planning for the area around it. A group met Nov. 18 to discuss reuse of the property and a longer-term vision of University between Victoria and Grotto. At that meeting it was announced that efforts by Model Cities to buy the theater and tear it down had been dropped. Model Cities is a community development agency that owns housing

and the Model Cities Brownstone building just west of the theater building.

If the theater receives local historic designation it would join more than two dozen other buildings with local historic status. One area building with local status is Thompson Hall at Marshall and Fairview avenues, a historic social hall for the deaf community. While local historic designation doesn't carry the same weight as a spot on the National Register of Historic Places, it can be an aid when preserving a structure is being discussed. Past efforts to get the structure on the National Register have fallen short.

The save the Victoria Theater Project is behind the drive for local historic designation. District 7 Planning Council Director Tait Danielson-Castillo said the designation is needed to help protect the building. "We've heard an amazing amount of support for preserving this structure and reusing it in some way," said Danielson-Castillo.

Danielson-Castillo said discussion of the Victoria Theater has led to discussion of how other vacant buildings along University Avenue should be reused. "With light rail coming, we need to look more closely at which structures can and should be saved and reused, in ways that benefit the community."

The push to save the theater has energized the community, Danielson-Castillo said. Discussion began when the New Victoria Theater Project, a group wanting to turn the property into performance space, asked the district council



Area residents and business owners gathered Nov. 17 to call for local historic designation of the building at 825 University Av. Supporters gathered at the nearby Ngon Bistro to rally support for saving the building.

for support for a Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) grant earlier this year. That effort fell short, although the members of that group are still seeking funding to buy and redevelop the property.

Danielson-Castillo said that no matter who ultimately buys the property, community members want to see it saved. "This has gen-

erated a lot of energy and excitement in the community," he said.

The project members are hoping that additional research on the old theater will lead to local designation. Much of the research on the property has been done by area resident Kurt Gegenhuber. Although his research has focused more on the building's musical history and an obscure recording

made in 1927, Gegenhuber has uncovered much of the building's past. His plan is to write a book about the building.

The Victoria Theater was a silent movie house that opened in 1915. Historic surveys of the city note that the building was designed by noted architect Franklin Ellerbe. He founded the longtime Twin Cities architectural firm that is Ellerbe Becket. The building still has many of its exterior details, including a terra cotta front. It also still has murals on its second floor.

The building's days as a movie theater lasted for only five years. It was then converted into the Victoria Café, a dance hall which had its own orchestra. Gegenhuber's interest in the building was piqued by a recording, Moonshiner's Dance, which is included on the Anthology of American Folk Music album. The anthology was released in the 1950s and is credited as musical influence on artists including the Grateful Dead and Bob Dylan.

Newspaper articles indicate that the Victoria Café was a speakeasy, where patrons could enjoy liquor during the nation's Prohibition era. It was the site of at least two raids by federal agents trying to stop the flow of alcohol there. The St. Paul Dispatch reported in 1927 that the Victoria Café was one of several establishment targeted for selling "set-ups" – non-alcoholic beverages patrons would add their own alcohol to.

The Victoria Café closed in the 1930s. The building housed a lighting store for many years after that but has been vacant for about a decade.

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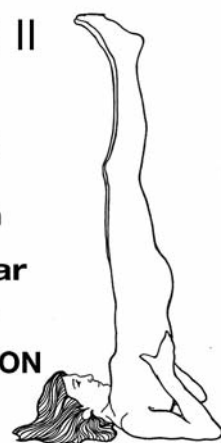
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Midway couple navigates home care despite recent agency cutbacks

By JAN WILLMS

The romance for Bob and Josiane Reinhardt began over 50 years ago in Paris, France, and it continues today in the Hamline-Midway area.

The couple met in 1957 when Bob, a journalist from Philadelphia, was on a junket to Paris. By 1958, Josiane had joined him in the States. They married and raised three sons. After a long and distinguished career in journalism, he and Josiane purchased the Wausa Gazette, a weekly newspaper in Nebraska. When Bob, 83, had his first stroke in 2000, they sold the paper and moved to Yankton, SD, a town of about 14,000 that has a large hospital, rehab center and clinic. A second stroke in 2006 and a fall that broke his leg in 2008 put Bob in a nursing home for convalescence. But the recovery period became extended, and Josiane, 73, brought him home in December 2008.

The Reinhardts' decision to bring Bob home from the nursing home is not unusual. According to a recent New York Times article, a growing number of states are reaching out to people who have been in nursing homes for over six months, aiming to disprove the notion that once people have settled into a nursing home, they will be there forever.

"Nursing homes can be very fine for a person who can walk or express himself, or for those who do not know what is going on," Josiane Reinhardt said. "For someone like Bob, whose brain is fine but he can't walk or communicate, it's very hard.

The Reinhardts decided to move to the Twin Cities, where their son Philip and his family reside. Their other sons are in Alaska and California.

Reinhardt got in touch with



The romance for Bob and Josiane Reinhardt began over 50 years ago in Paris, France, and it continues today in the Hamline-Midway area. When Bob, 83, had his first stroke in 2000, they moved to Yankton, SD, a town of about 14,000 that has a large hospital, rehab center and clinic. A second stroke in 2006 and a fall that broke his leg in 2008 put Bob in a nursing home for convalescence. But the recovery period became extended, and Josiane, 73, brought him home in December 2008. The Reinhardts work with agencies such as the Hamline Midway Elders Program, one of 14 Block Nurse Programs in St. Paul that offers volunteer and professional assistance to enable elders to remain in their homes. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

Monica Gallagher, service and volunteer director for Hamline Midway Elders, one of 14 Block Nurse Programs in St. Paul that offers volunteer and professional assistance to enable elders to remain in their homes. Although budget cuts have caused agencies like the Wilder Foundation to end its home health services for the elderly, the Metro area offers a strong support system.

Gallagher referred the couple to HealthEast, which has provided a physical therapist, social worker and bath giver.

"Bob has been improving," Reinhardt said. "He has been

able to cut down on medication. He is taking Ritalin to stimulate him, and I have noticed a difference."

Even with assistance, the days are full for Josiane. She helps Bob do exercises in bed and gets him up about 7 a.m. She feeds him breakfast at 9 and gives him his meds. At 11, she gives him his Parkinson medications. At 12:30 she fixes him lunch and gives him medication. She starts giving him his dinner at 5, and at 7 p.m. gives him his last Parkinson's medication. Shortly after that, she gets him ready for bed.

She relies heavily on a lift that enables her to move Bob as needed.

"Without it, I couldn't do this," she said. By the end of the day, Reinhardt said she has little energy left. "I'm exhausted, but it's a good kind of exhaustion," she said.

Gallagher said it is not often that people can leave a nursing home and return to their private residence, but it happens.

"It takes a perfect storm of willingness and desire," she said. Hamline Midway Elders lets clients know what assistance is available if they do want to re-

main in their own homes.

"We provide resources and connections to resources," she said.

Although the Wilder Foundation's budget cuts have ended its provision of visiting nurses and home aides, Gallagher said the block nurse programs have recently issued an RFP for new providers.

"We are confident that we will find another home care vendor that will allow us to continue our work," she said.

Gallagher said she has seen more interest in home care and more recognition of it. AARP has gathered figures for 2007, showing the difference in assisted living and residential care nationwide. For Minnesota, assisted living costs \$30,876 per year. Nursing home care for a private room averages \$84,315.

"It is an interesting time for programs like ours because in this economy people are eager to save money or cut programs and the case can be made for long-term staying at home," Gallagher said.

Gaylen Mills, an RN and care manager for Midway Clinic, 1650 University Ave., a part of HealthEast Care Systems, has been a part of the process that allows Bob Reinhardt and others like him to remain in their homes. She assisted them in getting Medicare-skilled services that are available to homebound residents.

"Care management is a fairly new area of nursing," Mills said. "We have seven care managers at HealthEast and cover most of the Health East clinics."

"There are a few diagnoses we care managers look out for," she said. "Dementia, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, diabetes or COPD."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

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Home care

Continued from page 8

She said Midway is an internal medicine clinic and its doctors deal with chronic long-term illness having to do with aging.

"As care managers, our work is kind of like an air controller," Mills said. "We see where patients are in the continuum of health care. I can see what's going on with a patient in the community, in the hospital or in a nursing home. I can then coordinate home care services."

"We often refer to Eldercare Partners, who provide caregiver coaching," she said. "If someone needs to find alternative living, assisted living, senior housing or a nursing home, I enlist the help of Toby Mullenger, a family advisor for A Place for Mom." She

"As care managers, our work is kind of like an air controller. We see where patients are in the continuum of health care."

- Gaylen Mills, an RN and care manager for Midway Clinic

said Mullenger is wonderful at locating the right living situation.

With new cultures developing in the area, Mills said there is a whole department at Health-

East for interpreting services.

"There are all kinds of support groups and resources for caregivers," Mills added. "Part of a care manager's job is being a

detective and investigating possible resources. We always start by calling the family and seeing what they perceive they need. Every family is different."

Kristin O'Connor of Eldercare Partners understands those differences in helping to provide support for the caregiver. Eldercare Partners is a collaborative of four organizations: DARTS in Dakota County; Amherst Wilder Association in Ramsey County; Human Services Inc. in Washington County and Senior Community Services in Hennepin County.

"We are most known for caregiver support services," O'Connor said. "Caregivers experience physical, emotional and financial stress."

She said that the caregiver coaches work with family members to establish goals, following a model using life coaching

techniques.

"We really work with the family member, doing a formal assessment with the caregiver," O'Connor said. "Do they need meals on wheels? A respite situation a few hours a week? Adult daycare, or community transportation?"

O'Connor said relieving the stress for the caregiver allows them to provide care for a longer period of time.

Offering non-medical home care to families is Right at Home, an organization that focuses on housework, laundry, vacuuming, medication reminders or transportation. Lisa Harmon opened her agency, one of four in the Twin Cities, in July of this year.

"We have served a 92-year-old man whose son lived in another state and needed some help," Harmon said. "Another woman needed rides to radiation therapy."

"We help with the chores of life that can get a little more challenging as we get older," Harmon said.

For Josiane and Bob Reinhardt, and others like them, Minnesota's multitude of services has made a world of difference. Bob can listen to classical music, watch an occasional DVD and play with his cat, Millie, all in the comfort of his own home.

"I am grateful I have good health and can take care of Bob," Reinhardt said. "But it's a team effort, really. We have been blessed with really good people."



Josiane Reinhardt relies heavily on a lift that enables her to move Bob as needed. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

Community Resources for Home Health Care

Brightstar Healthcare	866-592-3320 • 651-429-1306
HealthEast Care System	651-232-1573
Hamline Midway Elders	651-209-6542
Eldercare Partners	651-234-2262
Senior LinkAge Line	1-800-333-2433
Right at Home	651-429-1306

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In Our Community

HM Elders offers program on low vision

Maintaining Independence with Low Vision," will be the topic at a luncheon for seniors on January 12 beginning at 11:30 at 1415 Englewood Avenue (lower level, Hamline Methodist Church). If you're an elder and your vision prevents you from performing a certain task, don't assume it can't be done. Decreased vision does not have to lead to the loss of independence. A representative from the Vision Loss Resources will explain how simple changes in the home, using low vision aids and proper organization can allow you to live independently. A free will donation is asked for the meal. Call the office of Hamline Midway Elders 651-209-6542 to make reservations, request free transportation for the 1/12 event, grocery shopping or medical appointments. Anyone interested in joining a small group that will make useable things out of common items found around the house is asked to call the office of Hamline Midway Elders, 651-209-6542 to learn more.

December activities at Rice St. Library

The Rice Street Branch Library has many fun and exciting programs planned for December. Please stop in and join us!

Family story times will be offered on Tuesday and Friday mornings from 10:30-11 a.m. and Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:00-7:30 p.m. Join Rice Street's storytelling experts for stories, finger plays, rhymes, and songs. All ages welcome.

The Collector's Corner Neighborhood Trading Post will be open Wednesdays from 4:00-7:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 1-4 p.m. Bring a tradable natural object to the library and volunteers from the Science Museum of Minnesota will help you learn more about it.

Teen Time will be offered Wednesdays from 3:30-5 p.m. Join us for a rotating roster of activities each Wednesday! Video games, board games, & crafts are just a few of the activities teens can do.

The Runescape Club will meet on Thursdays from 3:30-5 p.m. Each week it's nothin' but Runescape. Bring your friends!

Free Family Friendly Movie Matinees will be shown Saturdays at 2 p.m. Please stop in or call the library at 651-558-2223 to learn which movie will be shown each week.

Free Foreclosure Counseling will be offered by the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development on Wednesdays from 12:30-5:30

p.m. No appointment is necessary.

The STARS Homework Help Center is a quiet place for students of all ages to work on schoolwork. If you need help with homework or would like to be a Homework Helper, please visit STARS Monday through Thursday from 3-7 p.m.

The Rice Street Library is located at 1011 Rice Street between Lawson and Hatch. Hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 12:30-9 p.m.; Tuesday 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; and Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. The library will be closed December 24, 25, and January 1. Hours on December 31 will be 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Jehovah Lutheran adopts theme

In November members of Jehovah Lutheran Church took the path of helping the hungry at home and abroad as they followed their theme: "Jesus the Joy in Our Journey." Love gifts of food and dollars have "journeyed" to local Keystone food shelves and overseas to families needing a helping hand out of poverty through Heifer, Int'l. In December members have adopted several homeless youth in the neighborhood with Christmas gifting and are sending gifts for elderly residents of Lyngblomsten Care Center. The journey together continues and all are invited to worship and serve on that road with Jesus.

Christmas Craft Party December 13

Kids in the Frogtown area from Pre-school through 8th grade are invited to join us for a neighborhood Children's Christmas Craft Party from 2-4 p.m. on December 13 at St Stephanus Lutheran Church on the corner of Lafond and Grotto. There will be entertainment, a puppet show, and you can make presents for your parents, decorate cookies, and make other Christmas crafts.

Concert at Celtic Junction December 12

John C. Van Orman and Sherry Minnick will be appearing in concert at the Celtic Junction on Saturday, December 12th at 7pm. John will be releasing a recording he and Sherry made in 1988, when he enjoyed much popularity in the Twin Cities as a songwriter and performer of traditional music. John currently lives in Arkansas, where he was the Music Director of the Ozark Folk Center for six years.

Sherry has been performing here since 1974, and was a final-

ist for a McKnight Fellowship in Performing Arts in 2007. They will perform separately and together, a cappella and accompanied by guitar, concertina, hurdy-gurdy, and oud. Todd Menton of Boiled in Lead will appear as a guest. The Celtic Junction is located in St. Paul at 836 Prior Avenue, north of University Avenue. The cost is \$15.00 at the door. For further information, contact Sherry Minnick at 651-644-8682.

Join us for Christmas Eve

Thursday December 24th at 6 p.m. we are Gathering for Food, Karaoke and Surprise Gifts (Dress Casual).

All are Welcome. Knox Church at 1536 West Minnehaha Avenue (Minnehaha & Asbury).

For more information please call us at 651-645-6488 or e-mail: knoxpres@comcast.net

Jehovah Lutheran selects new classes

The "Four Looks at Luke" Adult Bible Class runs through Advent at Jehovah Lutheran Church, corner of Thomas and Snelling. The class meets Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. in the lounge. The study whets the appetite for the upcoming year's lectionary readings from the gospel of Luke and is for adults of all ages. DVD lectures by Dr. Luke Timothy John-

son introduce three lessons, and Dr. Maynard Dorow facilitates the ensuing discussion. On Dec. 6 Dr. Victor Gebauer leads a special look at the Lucan gospels read in Advent and how they prepare for Christ's coming.

"Jesus' 'I Am' Words" begins January 10. The "I am..." statements from the gospel of John will be explored in depth under the leadership of Dr. David Lumpp, head of the religion department of Concordia University in the Midway. All are welcome. Each gathering of this small group study begins with coffee fellowship and prayer followed by interactive study. Questions: 651-644-1421.

Community holds benefit for local cabbie

Hamline-Midway resident Pat Burkman was shot in front of his house, coming home from his shift as a cabbie last week. Burkman has been a cab driver for 30 years. His family and friends are hosting a fundraiser to help him out.

Please come out to show your support. The Fundraiser will be at Ideal Hall, Sunday, December 13, 4-8 p.m., 1494 North Dale Street.

There will be a Silent Auction along with food and drink served.

Also we want to help Crime Stoppers with a reward fund. We are encouraging as many people

that care about this issue to step up! If you are interested in helping Crime Stoppers with a reward fund please contact the Saint Paul Police at 651-291-1111.

Reading Series December 17 at Library

Neighborhood Voices Readings Series with Carolyn Holbrook and Pauline Danforth, Thursday, December 17, 7-8 pm at the Hamline Midway Public Library, 1558 Minnehaha Avenue West.

Writers Carolyn Holbrook and Pauline Danforth will read at the last of the 2009 Neighborhood Voices Readings at the library. The series is sponsored by the Hamline Midway Library Association and features musicians and writers with a connection to the Hamline Midway community.

Carolyn Holbrook's writing has appeared in Black Renaissance/ Renaissance Noire, The Black Body, and White Teachers/Diverse Classrooms. A longtime arts advocate, she is the founder of SASE: The Write Place, an innovative community-based literary arts organization. Pauline Danforth, an essay writer, has been published in Yellow Medicine Review.

The event is free and open to the public, and refreshments will be served. For further information, contact the library at 651-642-0293.

Hour Dollars in the Midway:

A network within a network

By ELIZABETH MCCLISTER

When Debora Drower moved to the Midway area over a decade ago she was eager to connect with members of her new community. Drower, a photographer and ice cream vendor by trade, viewed Saint Paul's Hour Dollars service exchange program as a valuable social networking tool.

"I think neighbors are becoming disconnected today. Sometimes you forget to talk to people down the street, or you just never see them. With Hour Dollars you have a new way to meet people." The personal and professional relationships Drower has forged through the program have ensured her continued membership.

Hour Dollars functions under the national organization Time Banks but it is essentially a locally run operation. The grassroots effort was pioneered over a decade ago by East Side residents Sue Stapleton and Beth Mueller. Since then its reach has broadened to encompass all of greater Saint Paul, and its membership has multiplied from two to 150 people. Participants



Richard Pecar, 66, has wanted to learn to play the piano since he was a child. He is now getting his chance with Hour Dollar teacher Dean Johnson. (Photo by Bailey Oden)

"earn" hours by supplying services to fellow users. This unique currency is entered into an online log, at which point it can be withdrawn for use on an array of other member offerings.

Hour Dollars is currently embraced by about 40 other members across the Midway. Local member Kristine Vesley is optimistic about potential program expansion within the area.

She observes, "The Midway is definitely more centrally located for more people in the metro area, and I am betting we will grow as a proportion of HD membership."

Because Hour Dollars is committed to both intra- and inter-community networking, it does not have regional chapters

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Polar Bear Odyssey to open June 3, 2010

On June 3rd, 2010 Como Zoo will proudly unveil "Polar Bear Odyssey". The new World Class Exhibit features 13,140 square foot of outdoor polar bear living space, and a 3,260 square foot state-of-the-art holding building with large indoor bedrooms, a cub den, daylight and pools.

Polar Bear Odyssey was designed with polar bears and the public in mind. Visitors will delight in up-close and personal views of the worlds largest land predator. Visitors will be able to observe the polar bears inside the 1,270 square foot Outpost - a climate-controlled building that provides both underwater views and expansive views of the entire habitat. Outside, visitors will have unobstructed views that bring the bears as close as twenty feet.

The new exhibit will emulate a Hudson Bay ecosystem complete with a river-washed stream, rocky cliffs and evergreen vegetation. Three salt water pools of various depths will provide the bears with options that mirror their native Tundra habitat. A unique feature of the Polar Bear Odyssey structure is the two separate habitat areas that can be joined together by a corridor. This allows Como Zoo to separate the two habitats when housing a family group, as the male bear must be isolated from the female and cubs. All land space in the habitat will be covered with soil, vegetation and gravel so the bears have a soft, tactile, natural surface under their paws. Other features include a 260 square foot digging pit filled with bark chips, gravel and sand and two designated stations for the public to watch operant animal training sessions between zookeepers and polar bears.

The project was designed using the most stringent requirements available for polar bears to insure it contains the features needed to provide the highest standards of quality care for this threatened species. Polar Bear Odyssey places the bears in a natural landscape immersive environment. The habitat provides a multitude of opportunities for the bears to exhibit natural behaviors such as digging, swimming, foraging and hunting.

The new \$15.35 million dollar exhibit meets or exceeds the most recent versions of the USDA Marine Mammals Act, Association of Zoos and Aquariums Polar Bear Standards and the Canadian Polar Bear Protection Act. These three



On June 3rd, 2010 Como Zoo will proudly unveil "Polar Bear Odyssey". The new World Class Exhibit features 13,140 square feet of outdoor polar bear living space.

standards provide detailed requirements for all elements of the care and management of polar bears, including square feet of habitat space per bear, height of

habitat barriers, opportunities for bears to display natural behaviors, type of water, filtration systems, size of holding space, and more. Como Zoo elected to pursue the

most stringent standards available for polar bear care to insure a high quality of life for the bears, to increase the probability of receiving a wild bear from Canada, and to

guarantee the habitat could house a family group with cubs. Polar Bear Odyssey also received a major endorsement from Polar Bears International (PBI). PBI is a non-profit organization whose mission of conservation through research and education has caused it to emerge as the key resource center world-wide for polar bears. This internationally-recognized expert on polar bears endorsed Polar Bear Odyssey as an exceptional design for a polar bear habitat and believes it will serve as a model for other zoos in North America.

Also new is the 650 square foot Lodge which can provide a great get-away for business meetings, education classes and private receptions. The Lodge has floor to ceiling windows looking out into Polar Bear Odyssey. Attached to the Lodge will be beautiful new restroom facilities.

Como Zoo has managed polar bears as a part of its animal collection for over forty years. Since the beginning, the polar bears have been one of the public's most beloved animals.



Visitors will be able to observe the polar bears inside the 1,270 square foot Outpost - a climate-controlled building that provides both underwater views and expansive views of the entire habitat.

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Hour Dollars

Continued from page 10

per say. However, neighborhoods like Midway, Como, North End, and Merriam Park can use the citywide infrastructure to enrich relations within their own districts. Reports Midway member Alexandra White, "You come to find out that this person you are talking to lives practically down the street from you. I think [Hour Dollars] helps to make a tighter knit community."

Hour Dollars' scale may have changed over the years but its democratic vision has not. The program grants equal value to all member contributions, regardless of their nature.

By this model Drower can earn an hour photographing White, who may have obtained her hour working in Vesley's home. Vesley may in turn have received her hour in service to Drower. In this way, financial status, age, and other factors presumably fall to the wayside when participants do business.

The crux of the Hour Dollars philosophy is a belief that neighbors will readily cooperate with one another if given the chance. This egalitarian model sounds ideal in theory but is it viable in practice? Does the electrician feel shortchanged because she values her own labor above the garden-er's?

In fact, most members accept the program's equal opportunity philosophy at face value. Local user Paul Bush asserts, "Hour Dollars is a truly egalitarian way of doing business. Because money is kept out of the picture it's fairer and friendlier." He continues, "I think we're going to be shifting more toward local economies as time goes by."

Fellow Midway member Judy Gibson echoes this sentiment. "I think people are going to be using Hour Dollars more and more now that we have more time than money." Indeed, one of the infrastructure's biggest



Hour Dollars instructor Dean Johnson, 39, gives a piano lesson to Richard Pecar. Johnson began classical piano studies at 6, claiming top prize at international competition by age 17. For 7 years he has mentored and directed the PYPs (Pursuing Your Passion), a vocal ensemble consisting primarily of retired music lovers coming late to music. (Photo by Bailey Oden)

"selling points", especially in these uncertain economic times, is its potential to increase user spending power.

Monitor readers can join Hour Dollars when they attend regularly held orientations. During these gatherings board members address questions, distribute literature, and encourage newcomers to share their unique skills. Prospective members are encouraged to pay a fee of \$12, given three complementary hours, and welcomed into the network.

Midway members report having learned about the program through flyers, notices in the Hamline Midway newsletter, and meetings at Newell Park and Hamline Park. That said, locals agree that the best modes of net-

working and recruiting are those made accessible to Saint Paul at large. The organization is kept afloat through orientations, a well-maintained website, the occasional social function, and old-fashioned word of mouth.

Midway Hour Dollars members attest to a range of practical and values-driven benefits resulting from their participation in the program. But among Hour Dollars' most sustaining features is its potential to forge mutually beneficial relationships within individual neighborhoods and throughout Saint Paul.

To learn more about the Hour Dollars mission and upcoming events, visit hourdollars.org or send inquiries to P.O. Box 600126, Saint Paul, MN 55106.

Central Corridor

Continued from page 4

He was especially critical of spending sale tax funds, saying the city should not use those funds for "whatever shiny object is in front of us next." But Helgen's efforts to amend the financing plan and protect Neighborhood STAR and other dollars failed. Stark said he sees "no better way to spend economic development dollars than in making private investment more attractive along Central Corridor."

The \$22.3 million was an estimate and could be reduced, said Nancy Homans, policy director for Coleman. City and Metropolitan Council officials continue to negotiate on which aspects of the project should be paid for out of federal, state and county funds, and which should be St. Paul's share. One sticking point is the overhead poles that will carry the light rail line's electrical service. Project staff wants

basic poles; city officials want poles that are painted and more attractive.

"We're still developing an agreement with Met Council, to determine what are and are not eligible expenses," said Homans.

"This is a work in progress," said City Engineer John Maczko. He said the streetscape costs could be reduced as the city and Central Corridor project staff work on which cost the project should cover and which costs are the city's responsibility.

The 11-mile rail line has a cost of \$941 million but none of that goes beyond rail line and street construction due to federal regulations. That's a frustration for business leaders and residents of neighborhoods along Central Corridor, who had been promised streetscape improvements for decades.

Plans had called for removing and replacing existing light poles, but not providing anything extra. Existing boulevard trees would have been replaced under the Metropolitan Council's plans but new trees wouldn't be added.

The plan would cover the costs of lantern-style street lights,

1,000 boulevard trees, benches, colored concrete, crosswalk pavers, planters, irrigation, storm water diversion and other improvements. About \$5.2 million would be earmarked for one of three infill stations, at Western Avenue, Victoria Street or Hamline Avenue.

The greatest share of funds, \$12.7 million, would come from scattered-site tax increment financing (TIF) districts along the east end of the proposed rail line. Originally \$15.2 million in TIF would have been used. Another \$2.9 million would come from assessments against benefiting properties, down from a proposed \$3.9 million. The city would bond for another \$2 million through its Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) and take \$1.2 million in Neighborhood Sales Tax revitalization funds.

The plans also include \$750,000 in what the city describes only as "non-transit-related improvements," which would be taken from city Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) funds. That is not included in the \$18.8 million total.

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In a minute

Continued from page 2

adopted in 2007. That plan identifies a number of sites for redevelopment and reuse.

Permit granted for auto repair shop

A Larpenteur Avenue auto sales business has obtained a conditional use permit to allow auto repair at the property. Axtman Auto, 336 W. Larpenteur, was granted the permit Nov. 20 by the St. Paul Planning Commission.

The permit request has the support of District 6 Planning Council. No neighbors contacted the Planning Commission or appeared at the public hearing to oppose the request.

Business owner Duane Axtman has sold vehicles at the site for 15 years. He wants to add an auto repair component to his business but needs a conditional use permit to do so. So he could service vehicles on-site for customers and do warranty work.

What complicated the request were lease agreements for land by the business. Axtman leases some vacant land from Ramsey County and uses it for his business. City officials have contended that the business encroaches on city parkland to the south.

City licensing officials pushed for a number of conditions on the business, including limiting the number of vehicles for sale on the lot to 57. The conditions approved by the Planning Commission call for not allowing more than 57 vehicles on the lot at any one time. Fourteen customer parking spaces have to be provided. Axtman must have a current lease for the county-owned property.

City staff wanted a condition added that would have required a fence to be built at the south end of the property, to screen the site from city-owned park land. But the Planning Commission questioned whether this condition was necessary and dropped it.

Parks get boost from Council

Two area parks - one well-established and the other largely on the drawing board - got a boost in November from the St. Paul City Council.

Plans to convert a long-vacant area into a nature preserve took a huge step ahead Nov. 18 as the City Council unanimously adopted the Trout Brook Regional Trail Master Plan. The plan covers part and trail space from Lake McCarron all the way to the Mississippi River, and includes the proposed Trillium Nature

Sanctuary in the North End. The natural area, which would be used for trails, passive recreation and outdoor classroom area, is located west of Interstate 35E and south of Maryland Avenue.

The plans have been many years in the making, said Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen. The plans have the support of several community groups including the Tri-Area Block Club and District 6 Planning Council.

The plan also has the support of the St. Paul Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Master Plan identifies the entire Trout Brook Regional Trail which will link Lake McCarrons County Park to the Lower Phalen Creek Valley area, including the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary and terminate at the Mississippi River, within the City of Saint Paul's Lower Landing Park. The 4.1 mile trail corridor will provide connections of regional significance between the Mississippi River, Sam Morgan Regional Trail, Bruce Vento Regional Trail, Gateway State Trail and downtown St. Paul metro area destinations to the north and east.

The 2006 Ramsey County Parks and Recreation System Plan identifies the portion of the Trout Brook Trail which has been designated by the Metropolitan Council as a regional trail. This System Plan also identified a search area to link the trail to the existing Bruce Vento Regional Trail in Saint Paul. Currently the trail begins at McCarrons Lake, within the City of Roseville near St. Paul's northern boundary. The existing trail corridor connects two major open space sites, Lake McCarrons and Arlington/Jackson Pond, along the historic path of Trout Brook to where it ends at the intersection with the Gateway State Trail on L'Orient Avenue.

The proposed corridor will expand the existing trail south from the Arlington Jackson Pond site via railroad right-of-way through the Trillium Nature Sanctuary and then it will utilize the proposed Gateway State Trail expansion along the western edge of 35E to Phalen Boulevard. From here, the trail will follow Phalen Boulevard east and curve beneath Westminster Junction bridge to minimize vehicular and pedestrian conflict.

The trail will then proceed along the western side of railroad right-of-way and along proposed Trout Brook Boulevard, a city of St. Paul Department of Public Works initiative to connect University Avenue to Warner Road.

On Nov. 4 the council received more than \$222,000 for Como Park. The funds will cover programmatic costs and will be allocated over a four-year period. Money is provided through the state's Legacy amendment, which provides funding for arts and natural resources.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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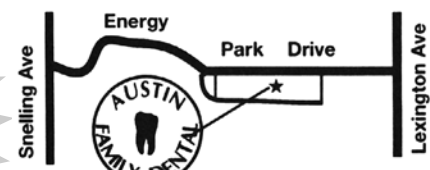
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Park Square Theatre presents 'Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol'

One of the Twin Cities favorite actors, Jim Lichtscheidl, reprises his role of Jacob Marley and brings the old ghost to life with humor and heartfelt emotion in Park Square Theatre's "Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol." A sort of flip side of a classic Christmas tale, Marley's story begins in the afterlife where his business partner Scrooge once again determines his future. Lichtscheidl plays 18 characters in all. For more information call 651-291-7005.



Dancers from O'Shea Irish Dance have fared extremely well in competitions, according to its owners.

Celtic Junction

Continued from page 1

Dancers have fared "fantastically well" in competitions, said Cormac. "We have one kid who was 19th in the world championships this year. She was a classic Riverdance baby who watched the videos incessantly." A recent trip to a regional competition netted the studio two world qualifiers, ten solo medals and a ceili team award.

Having begun his training at four or five years old, the rigors of Irish dance come naturally to Cormac. He sees his dancers developing metronomic timing so they do more than just dance.

"What I foster in these older kids—that becomes its own entertainment itself—is to dance a cappella where the sounds of the steps become the music," said Cormac.

Also talented in engineering, Cormac laid down the sprung floor with the help of a legion of volunteers. "These were people who thought we had something good going here," he said. Parents of dancers also donated much of the comfortable lobby furniture. Volunteers also helped dismantle a workshop, paint walls and install mirrors.

Though the thriving dance school is their greatest success, Celtic Junction is striving to reach out to the larger folk music community. Pop Wagner, Gary Rau and Laura McKenzie—each well known performers for

decades in the Twin Cities—have taken office space in the building. And while McKenzie's music has a decidedly Celtic flair, Wagner plays old-time and sings cowboy songs. Rau is a composer. Upstairs is the office of the Center for Irish Music, a collection of traditional Irish and Scottish music teachers. Recently Cormac added a recording studio. The intent, said Natalie, isn't just to record Irish musicians but to make the space available to musicians of many styles who want to record in a creative-friendly environment.

"We want this to be a hub for touring bands and to support local talent," said Natalie. "We'd like this to be a place where new work gets produced."

Their calendar does include many Irish artists. Most notably, traditional Irish guitar legend Daithi Sproule, of Altan fame, will be hosting workshops on Irish language as well as a course called "Introduction to Irish Mythology and Legend." A ceili this month will honor Brenda Buckley, a local Irish dance teacher who recently passed on. But a January 30th appearance by the renowned Scottish band Malinky is just one of many events that reach beyond the Irish tradition.

The message they want the local folk community to hear is simple, said Natalie O'Shea. "We are stronger together."

Information on Celtic Junction and a documentary of the making of it can be found at www.thecelticjunction.com while information on the dance school is at www.osheairishdance.com.

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The Last Polaroid Show: Images of Como

Como Park Zoo & Conservatory will be home to "The Last Polaroid Show" December 5, 2009 to January 19, 2010. This photo exhibit is unique in that the film dyes of the Polaroid are hand manipulated before they harden resulting in spectacular images. The SX-70 (Time Zero) Polaroid film used in the exhibit is actually now extinct. With their remaining sheets, artists Mark D. Roberts and Denise Rouleau capture the flora and architecture of Como Park's Marjorie McNeely Conservatory.

"Mark and I were in the midst of planning an exhibition with Como when Polaroid announced it would cease production of the SX-70 film. We suddenly had to make

some difficult choices on how we would use the remaining stock of our precious sheets of film," said Denise Rouleau. "We have visited many places with our Polaroid cameras and the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory has become our favorite place to photograph."

The Polaroid camera has the distinct sound and appeal many may remember as rollers eject the film from the camera followed by the anticipation of the image slowly appearing. The SX-70 (Time Zero) film that the artists use goes a step further with its unique properties as the film dyes of the ejected sheet behave like wet paint. Using simple tools, the lines of the image can be exaggerated and distorted

before they harden. Plain backgrounds within the image become an open canvas for creating interesting textures and topographical relief. The results, depending on how the film behaves and the creativity of Mark and Denise, are pictures that can be impressionistic, surreal or abstract. The manipulated images are then printed in sizes of up to four feet square on a metallic coated paper which enhances their textural and luminous qualities.

The public is welcome to the Artists' Reception on Monday, December 14, from 6-9 p.m. and to view the photos everyday from 10 a.m. -4 p.m. December 5, 2009 through January 19, 2010.



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Using simple tools, the lines of the image can be exaggerated and distorted before they harden.

Classifieds

Continued from page 15

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Happy Holidays FROM HAMLINE UNIVERSITY!

A CAPPELLA CHOIR CHRISTMAS CONCERT

December 6, 4 p.m.

George Chu will direct the A Cappella Choir as it performs festive traditional and modern settings of the Christmas season.

Hamline United Methodist Church
1514 Englewood Avenue

HAMLINE UNIVERSITY JAZZ ENSEMBLE AND JAZZ COMBO WINTER CONCERT

December 8, 7 p.m.

Directed by John Koziol, the Jazz Ensemble will play a variety of favorites, from Mangione and Mingus to Steely Dan.

HAMLINE UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA HOLIDAY CONCERT

December 12, 2 p.m.

The Hamline Orchestra, conducted by Yali You, will present its Winter Concert "Songs from Italy."

Sundin Music Hall

HAMLINE UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CHORALE AND WINDS HOLIDAY CONCERT

December 13, 3 p.m.

Kathy Thomsen and Janet Greene will direct this holiday performance.

Sundin Music Hall



All events take place on Hamline University's Saint Paul Campus, 1536 Hewitt Ave. They are free and open to the public. For more information call 651-523-2296