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Midway  
Como  
North End

# Monitor



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since 1975

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By TESHA M. CHRISTENSON

Kids and water go together like peanut butter and jelly. If your kids are anything like mine, they spend the summer asking for pool days.

Give them their wish without stretching your budget.

An affordable afternoon is as close as Como Regional Pool Park. There's no need to drive out to the suburbs anymore. My family of four bought a family pass of \$16 for the day. Those with more than five in the family pay an additional \$3 for each person.

Got a smaller group? The fee for children under 48 inches is \$4.50, and those under age 16 is \$5. Adults are \$6.50 and seniors cost \$6. If you don't want to get wet, pay \$2 for a non-swimming deck fee. Those coming with more than 10 people qualify for reduced group rates.

You may want to check out the family season pass. For \$195, your family can swim whenever they want at any of the city's three water parks: Como Regional Pool Park, Highland Aquatic Center and the indoor Great River Water Park.

Open since June 2012, the city-run Como Pool has something for everyone.

The younger kids will love the zero-depth entry area with sprinklers, and the water fun table situated under a shade canopy. There are three waterslides kids of all ages can enjoy that empty into a two-foot-deep area. The wide slide was a big hit with my four-year-old daughter. It's not easy to find waterslides she go on, let alone a slide she can ride with a parent.

Older kids (and parents) will love the zip line, cliff jumping area, and aquatic climbing wall.

There's also a 25-yard lap pool with basketball hoops, and a 400-foot lazy river.

Plus, you can feel good about swimming in a pool that has half the chlorine of others,

## Affordable family fun at Como

*One spot has it all: pool, zoo, amusement rides, and conservatory*



On the wide water slide, groups of up to four can slide down together. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

thanks to sphagnum moss filters. St. Paul was the first city in the nation to adopt sphagnum moss treatment in its municipal pools and with its partner, Creative Water Solutions, Inc., won the Governor's Award for Pollution Prevention in 2011. Other green features at the one-year-old water park include high-efficiency Neptune-Benson filters in the mechanical room that allow the pool to use less water than conventional filters; 12 solar tubes on the roof heat that water for the showers and concession stand; and rain gardens in the parking lot that reduce run-off.

Open swim hours at Como are weekdays from noon to 8 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Learn more about the pool at the St. Paul City web site <http://www.stpaul.gov>.

### Lots more to do

When the kids are done swimming, check out the many other attractions that are just a hop,

skip and a jump away. (Browse <http://www.comozoconservatory.org/>) If you're like us, you might not have time to see everything in one day, but we'll be back.

### The Carousel

For just \$2 a person, you can take a spin on Cafesjian's Carousel. Originally located for 75 years at the Minnesota State Fair, it is now owned and operated by the nonprofit organization Our Fair Carousel, Inc. Volunteers have restored the carousel to its 1914 appearance. It was installed in a new pavilion next to the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory in 2000.

### The Zoo

Como Zoo's gorillas got a new home in June 2013 when the Gorilla Forest opened. The larger space of 10,000 square feet is about two and half times larger the former outdoor space. The new exhibit is raised so that visitors get an eye-to-eye, up close and personal views of the gorillas. Admission to the zoo is always free. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the summer.

Como Zoo features a seal island, a large cat exhibit, a variety of aquatic life, primates, birds, African hoofed animals and a world class polar bear exhibit. Don't miss the ever popular Sparky the Sea Lion's show, held weekend days at 11:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.

### Como Town

Soar like an eagle 85 feet in the air on Como Town's newest attraction, an exhilarating zip line. A double seat comfortably and

safely accommodates two riders from one end of the amusement park to the other. There are more than 18 rides and attractions in Como Town, including the Splash Zone. In addition to the paid rides, there are free entertainment, events, and activities for the kids. After 4 p.m., an unlimited ride wristband is \$14.95.

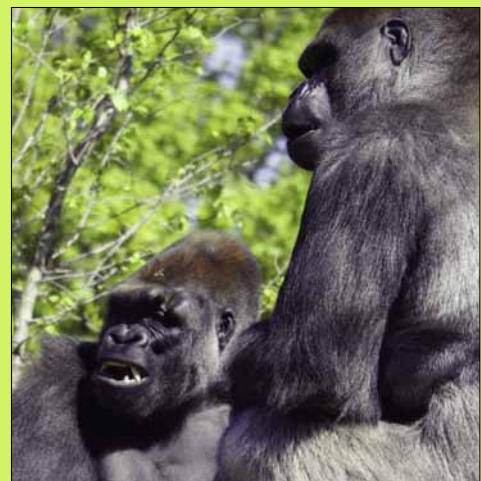
### The Conservatory

Don't forget to bring mom to the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory before your day is over. The conservatory's half acre indoor and outdoor facility features several wings dedicated to a variety of plant life including bonsai trees, ferns, orchids and seasonal flowers.



Check out the new \$2.8 million wing of the Como Conservatory which opened in April. The completion of The Orway Gardens leaves just one more phase in a 10-year project.

## Gorilla Forest opens with ribbon cutting



Gorilla Forest, an 11 million dollar exhibit redesign and overhaul, features seven gorillas, six of whom are new to Como Zoo, and the largest all-mesh gorilla enclosure in North America. The new construction, which at 13,000 square feet is almost three times larger than the previous space, includes a major outdoor exhibit and significant improvements and expansions to the existing indoor facilities. The exhibit was designed to give the gorillas ample room to play, climb, forage, and display their extraordinary family and social dynamics to the public while minimizing stress on the gorillas and creating up close and personal views of the gorillas for visitors.



Como Zoo features a world class polar bear exhibit, as well as a seal island, a large cat exhibit, a variety of aquatic life, primates, birds, and African hoofed animals.

# Monitor

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# Monitor In A Minute



The St. Paul Planning Commission approved a conditional use permit for a new auto convenience market at 1188-1200 Rice St.

## Saga of Rice Street gas station ends

The long story of Bilal Assad and his quest to build a new convenience store and gas station at Rice Street and Maryland Avenue ended quietly May 3 when the St. Paul Planning Commission approved a conditional use permit for a new auto convenience market at 1188-1200 Rice St. No one appealed the decision to the St. Paul City Council so it is final.

Assad initially lost part of his property when Maryland was rebuilt, and won a legal settlement from Ramsey County. His gas pumps were rendered unusable by the street reconstruction. For more than a year he and neighbors and the District 6 Land Use Task Force have debated plans to rebuild, then renovate and then again rebuild the structure on the site. Because he acquired more

property, a new conditional use permit had to be sought.

No one appeared at an April Planning Commission Zoning Committee public hearing to oppose the conditional use permit. District 6 recommended approval with several conditions.

## Hmong Sports Festival gets permit

The annual Hmong Sports Festival was granted a sound level variance May 15 by the St. Paul City Council, but not without objections from a handful of residents. This year's festival is July 6-7 at McMurray Field. The variance is for the hours of 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Churchill Avenue resident Nyals Kittal told the City Council that the event disrupts the neighborhood to the east with loud, early morning noise, traffic and litter. He told the council that he lives one block from Lexington Parkway, describing that street as "the toilet of St. Paul."

Kittal said he and his neighbors are tired of being awakened by loud noises, and that they believe the festival organizers don't face any penalties.

Lexington Parkway resident Carol Gray told the council that

neighbors put up with noise and inconvenience every year. She questioned whether the festival should look for a new site.

But Jenelle Vang of Lao Family Community of Minnesota, the festival sponsor, said the organizers and vendors will work to keep problems to a minimum.

City Council members urged Lao Family to be especially mindful of early morning set-up noise. But they also pointed out that neighbors haven't always shown up for community meetings prior to the festival.

## Animal control officer retires

Longtime St. Paul Animal Control Supervisor Bill Stephenson has retired after decades of corralling countless critters, from bears to bats. Stephenson was honored May 1 by the St. Paul

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## Como Lakeside Pavilion Native Plant Garden event

There was a good crew of volunteers at the Como Lakeside Pavilion Native Plant Garden on Saturday, May 18, for the citywide Blooming St. Paul Day clean-up event. Even in the pouring rain, nine volunteers showed up and dug out weeds, lopped off plant stalks, cut down the dead pagoda dogwood tree, raked a bit, then spread mulch over the entire garden. This garden has been planted and maintained by volunteers for at least the last 10 years.



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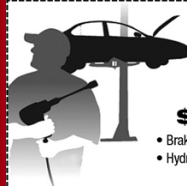
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# The park that "time forgot"?

By JANE MCCLURE

Some Hamline-Midway residents may not know about May Park. One member of St. Paul's Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) Committee called May Park "the saddest little park I have ever seen." Hamline-Midway Coalition calls it "the park that time forgot." But unless city officials act, the park's old equipment may remain in place for at least a few more years.

May Park is what the city calls a "mini-park," on a .81 acre site on Clayland Place, just west of Fairview Avenue and south of Newell Park. Its equipment is more than 25 years old. It has the dubious distinction of ranking fifth citywide, out of 77 play areas needing work due to safety, accessibility and existing conditions.

May Park's equipment include an old six-swing swing set, a wood and metal toddler-sized slide and a slightly leaning merry-go-round. The merry-go-round is of the type area parents and grandparents might remember playing on. It isn't the type of equipment the city has used for many years.

Its site includes a field area and trees that also need attention. One concern St. Paul Department of Parks and Recreation staff has is that the park's two old oak trees have soil compaction because of years of children playing beneath them. "To preserve and protect these trees, any new park amenities such as a play area should be located away from the root zones, yet still take advantage of the tree canopy," a city staff report said.

If and when the project is funded, May Park would get new, relocated pay equipment. Work would be done to improve the field and address the issues facing the trees. A sidewalk would be added on the park's north side. The project has an estimated cost of \$254,000.

"This is absolutely the saddest little park I have ever seen," said CIB Committee Member Kellie Charles Connor. "It has the only old merry-go-round still being used in the entire city."

"It looks like one of the oldest, if not the oldest, of the play areas," said CIB Committee Member Melanie McMahon.

But the two women were unable to get May Park moved

up into the ranks for committee funding. With more than 100 projects vying for funds for the next two years, May Park faces staunch competition.

Hamline-Midway Coalition ranked the park third. The district council's top priority was multi-model improvements to Snelling Avenue, which also have missed out on funding.

"We do hear from people saying from time to time that they would like to see the park improved," said Hamline-Midway Coalition Executive Director Michael Olson. But the capital budget request came from Parks and Recreation.

In a letter to the CIB Committee, the Coalition stated, "The existing play area is antiquated and referred to by local residents as 'the playground that time forgot.' As the proposal notes, the existing play equipment is not accessible to those with disabilities and does not meet current playground safety standards. Also, the multi-purpose field is sorely in need of rehabilitation."

But what hurt the park in the eyes of some CIB Committee members was not having a group of neighborhood residents lobbying for support. But some neighbors said they didn't know



May Park, one of the city's mini-parks, did get recommended for 2014-2015 funding on June 10 just as the Monitor went to press. But its fate won't be known until year's end, when the St. Paul City Council adopts the capital budget. (Photo by Denis Woulfe)

the proposal was being heard and that they would have attended a hearing.

Of the households around

the park, 24% of households have children under the age of 18, according to the 2010 US Census.

## Victoria Theater: Alive again?

By JANE MCCLURE

The vacant Victoria Theater building may have more acts left in it after all. A coalition of theater and arts groups is rallying to find funds and save the building at 825 University Av. More than a dozen supporters of the effort to save and reuse the building met May 28 with Frogtown Neighborhood Association members and staff to discuss ideas.

A number of groups are working together on plans to raise money and make a down payment on the building, said Sam Buffington, community organizer for the Frogtown Neighborhood Association (District 7 Planning Council). Those include the performing companies Dangerous Performances and Trans-Atlantic Love Affair, as well as arts organizations Irrigate, Springboard for the Arts and Center for Hmong Arts and Talent.

The quest to save and rehabilitate the Victoria Theater has gone on for several years. The theater has had local historic designation since 2011. That designation doesn't necessarily protect it from demolition but more review would be required before the structure could be razed or extensively remodeled. The designa-

tion could also help with historic tax credits and other types of funding.

The groups are discussing ways to find a purchase of the building and share space, which could happen in the next few weeks. The current focus is on raising enough money for a down payment on the building and getting site control, said Buffington. Meetings are underway with a number of prospective funders. The district council would work with the arts and theater groups to pull together funding and obtain site control. Eventual ownership hasn't been determined but one idea would be an arrangement similar to theaters in Minneapolis where artists are arts organizations are the owners.

"Right now there are a number of groups at the table," said Tyler Olsen of Dangerous Productions. His group has staged performances at various locations on and near University Avenue. "We'd like to see the building become community art space, whatever that may be."

Olsen said the building's location on the Green Line light rail service will be an asset as it is redevelopment. Light rail service

is expected to start next year.

Those at the meeting were supportive of the request to bring arts and entertainment venue to the theater, which dates from 1915. It has been vacant for more than a decade. Frogtown potter Laurie Nevers said she'd like to see any redevelopment include a gallery space. Others suggested a space to show movies as well as have live theater.

Owner Bee Vue would like to sell the property and recently made an unsuccessful bid for Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) funds to renovate the building. Others have also considered buying and redeveloping the property. It is currently listed for \$350,000.

Music historian Kurt Gegenhuber said that the quest for historic designation was followed by people around the country. He extensively researched the theater and its significance. The Victoria Theater opened in 1915 for movies and live performances, but became a nightclub less than a decade later. The nightclub was known as the Victoria Café and later Casa Grande.

In 1927 the recording "Moonshiners Dance: Part One" was recorded there, by the Victo-

ria Café Orchestra. A history of the Victoria Café, Moonshiners Dance and the recording's influence on and role in the history of American folk music is on the blog Celestial Monochord, at <http://www.celestialmonochord.org/2009/10/moonshiners-parking-lot.html>

Gegenhuber notes that Moonshiners Dance is the only one of 84 recordings in the Anthology of American Folk Music not recorded in the American South or Chicago. The anthology has infected many musicians.

The nightclub itself was a speakeasy during Prohibition and was raided at least twice by federal agents during that era. It became a target of political leaders who wanted it shut down. It housed a number of businesses after that, most recently a lighting store.

But Gegenhuber said that while he wants to see the building preserved and reused, supporters need to not set themselves up for the financial woes that have plagued other community theater groups. Other agreed with that sentiment, saying that any future ownership group needs to run as lean an operation as possible.



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A creative new approach to building community, raising social awareness and inspiring local action through art is gaining momentum in the Hamline Midway area.

Local resident and spoken word artist Justin James has been hosting "Poetry for Thought" at Groundswell Coffee every first Friday of the Month since November. He has brought together some of the Twin Cities best spoken word artists who write original pieces based on a monthly theme of local and social significance chosen by the community.

It's not just about listening to great poetry, though. Following each performance is a discussion between audience members and performers, with the goal of inspiring people to act and connecting them with the resources to do so.

## News from District 11

BY KYLE MIANULLI, HAMLINE MIDWAY COALITION - DISTRICT COUNCIL 11

### Art meets social justice in Hamline Midway community

Spurred by the value he perceives in strengthening local communities, the aim of "Poetry for Thought" is to create a safe space for occasionally unsafe ideas where poetry can pervade as a dialogical force in the public sphere, James says.

"We are hoping that through dialogue with participants and finding what their visions and hopes for the neighborhood are, we can connect people who share those same visions and then provide them with the re-

sources to make those visions a reality," he said.

"Poetry for Thought" is just the beginning of what James has planned. With grant funding from the Artist Neighbor Partnership Initiative through the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs and a cooperative partnership with The Hamline Midway Coalition, he plans to expand the monthly events into a full-fledged community action project called "Art for the Movement."

By building relationships with new artists of varying disciplines, including visual and performance, and partnering with social justice organizations, James hopes to grow Art for the Movement into a widespread initiative that begets meaningful change through the vehicle of art.

One manifestation of "Art for the Movement" community residents can look forward to this summer is regular youth workshops James plans to host.

Recently finishing work in the Education program at Hamline University, he intends to put his skills as an educator to use working with area youth and local artists.

He is also in the process of planning more frequent "Poetry for Thought" performances and is looking for venues interested in hosting the events.

James is open and eager to collaborate with other organizations, artists and people in the community. If you are interested in learning more or collaborating with "Poetry for Thought" and "Art for the Movement," feel free to contact Justin James at [justino.james@gmail.com](mailto:justino.james@gmail.com).

(Kyle Mianulli ([kyle@hamlinemidway.org](mailto:kyle@hamlinemidway.org)) is communications coordinator for District 11 Community Council.)

Summer is a busy time in the Como Park neighborhood. While our neighborhood enjoys easy access to the great amenities of Como Regional Park, we also experience some problems because of its popularity. The District 10 Como Community Council is committed to working on behalf of our neighbors to develop positive solutions to the traffic congestion, parking problems, and crime that are an unfortunate side effect of being home to one of Minnesota's most-visited attractions.



## Como Community Council Corner

JON KNOX, BOARD CHAIR OF THE DISTRICT 10 COMO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

### Popularity of Como Park draws many to area

Traffic congestion and parking problems are among the most common neighborhood complaints related to Como Regional Park. This year, through our District Land Use planning

process, the Como Community Council is working to systematically catalog problematic areas, identify alternatives, and incorporate recommendations and guiding principles for solutions

into our neighborhood's land use plan, which will eventually be adopted by the St Paul City Council. In May, we hosted a community meeting specifically focused on transportation issues where attendees participated in a mapping exercise. As the committee continues its work throughout 2013, please watch our website and weekly e-Newsletter for other opportunities to participate in their work.

Crime in the neighborhood also increases in the summer, and visitors to Como Park are often the victims of property crimes, especially auto thefts. The Como Community Council has an active partnership with the St Paul Police Department to prevent crime in the neighborhood through community education and outreach. Many blocks have active block clubs that keep an eye out for suspicious activities and organize community-building activities that help neighbors get to know each other and watch out for each other. In Como Regional Park itself, the St Paul Police Department recently installed closed circuit TV (CCTV) cameras around Como Lake. These cameras, positioned in and near parking lots, are designed to discourage crime and aid in prosecution.

Evolving uses for the space

in Como Regional Park are also a concern for Como Park neighbors. This year, a proposal by the St Paul Parks and Recreation Department to fund a study of alternative uses for the Como Park Golf Course received a lot of attention. While it doesn't appear that this study will receive funding from the city, the Como Community Council is working to actively engage with Parks and Rec about future plans for the Park. Last year, Parks and Rec launched the Como Regional Park Advisory Committee, a citizen advisory panel. After a learning year for all parties, the committee structure is being tweaked to ensure that it is the start of the foundation for more citizen participation in park-related decisions. Our representatives to the committee provide reports to the full Como Community Council at each of our monthly board meetings, and work with other committees to address issues of mutual concern.

Despite these challenges, summer is a great time for us to enjoy all of the benefits of this world-class park in the heart of our neighborhood. I look forward to seeing neighbors at the pool, at a concert, on a walk around the lake, or checking out the new exhibits at the Zoo and Conservatory!

(Jon Knox is the Chair of the District 10 Como Community Council, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to informing, educating, and connecting the Como Park neighborhood to increase community pride and confidence. More information is available at [www.district10comopark.org](http://www.district10comopark.org).)



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## Letters to the Editor

### Town meeting well received

Thank you to the people who joined me and Representative John Lesch at a town meeting on Saturday, April 27, at the McDonough Recreation Center. As your neighbors and your legislators in House District 66B, we were pleased to meet with you.

This was a great opportunity for community members to voice their feelings and concerns about events at the Capitol and in our district. A num-

ber of excellent questions were raised at the meeting, which made for worthwhile, compelling discussion.

If you would like to be notified about future town meetings, please contact my office at [taina.maki@senate.mn](mailto:taina.maki@senate.mn) or 651-296-5645 with your information. I look forward to meeting with you all soon.

Until then, please feel free to contact me to share your thoughts and concerns.

Senator John Marty

# Como community comes together for couple stricken by cancer

June 15 block party planned to raise spirits, support funds for longtime Como family

By JAN WILLMS

There is an old saying that what goes around comes around. The actions and thoughts that you emit into the universe will someday be returned to you.

And for Bowen and Nancy Phelps, residents of Albert Street, this old axiom is coming true.

Friends, family, neighbors and co-workers are joining together to present a fund-raiser for the couple June 15 from 3 to 8 p.m. on Albert Street, between Hoyt and Nebraska Avenues.

They are both suffering from cancer, and all the volunteering and support and friendship they have offered over the years is being returned in full to them.

"It's kind of a boomerang commitment to life," said longtime friend Bill O'Neill. "You get back what you give."

Bowen had a seizure at his work as a sales associate for Century Link nearly a year ago, and was eventually diagnosed with brain cancer. Nancy had been diagnosed with a slow-moving leukemia ten years ago.

Recently both have been undergoing chemotherapy and experiencing exhaustion, as well as dramatic increases in insurance co-pays.

"That is what they are most concerned about," said Erin Phelps-Stark, Bowen's sister. "Bowen is not working, and they knew their insurance would change. Bowen has had two surgeries, chemo and radiation."

She said that quite a few people are in love with her brother, and she and her other brothers and sisters are putting the fundraiser together. Nancy's siblings are also helping.

"Our younger brother is a pit master, and he is hauling a smoker up from Florida," Phelps-Stark said. "My sister is doing face-painting, and another



Como Park residents Nancy and Bowen Phelps pose with son, Anthony, 14, and hold pictures of sons Jason and Keith. They hope that all sons will be able to attend the fundraiser for the couple on June 15 from 3 to 8 p.m. on Albert Street.

brother has been collecting prizes for an auction and raffle."

Bracelets for \$10 will be sold at the entrance, and this will provide the purchaser with a meal of pulled pork. Music, games and activities for children, a bake sale by Century Link Friends and a silent auction and raffle will all be a part of the day's events.

O'Neill, who said his kids grew up with the Phelps' three sons, identified Bowen and Nancy as always being the life of the party.

"They were people who, until this unfortunate event, gave to their friends and community whenever they could," he said.

"Bowen is animated and full of life, a music lover," he continued. "The best way to connect with him is watching him at a concert and seeing him enjoying himself."

In spite of a recent tough round of chemotherapy, Bowen is planning to enjoy the block party with his family and friends.

"We have lived here awhile, and we go to church at St. Cecilia's. All our kids grew up here, and I used to hang out by Mufuletta's when I was in high school. My wife lived in the Como Park area her entire life.

Everybody who we have touched has been in this general neighborhood," he said.

On the flyers that have been passed out for the June event, there is a picture of a buffalo and the phrase "In the spirit of the Buffalo."

"When the doctor told my wife that I had stage 4 brain cancer and the worst form you can have, my wife asked her if she couldn't be more positive. The doctor said she had to be realistic. When my wife asked her what we could do, she said to surround ourselves with people with good thoughts and good

spirits. She suggested we get a totem and visualize the cancer, which would help the internal body fight," Bowen recalled.

He said he heard about a young kid who visualized Star Wars storm troopers attacking his cancer cells, and Bowen decided to go with a buffalo.

"I got a buffalo hide, and my brother had it blessed by a medicine man," he said. "I wrap myself in it and think. Sometimes bad thoughts, sometimes good thoughts," he admitted.

He said that personally, the fact that both he and his wife are currently fighting cancer leaves them both exhausted. But he said it does bring them closer together with their faith community and friends. People drop off gift cards or food, and he said the family really appreciates the kindness.

"The things I prefer doing, I can't do right now," Bowen continued. "I like to go to the boundary waters and kayak." But he is hopeful that he will be able to do those activities once again.

For now, he likes to read and journal. Nancy likes to sketch and paint. And both are looking forward to the June block party. They are hoping sons Anthony, 14; Keith, 20 and Jason, 26, will all be able to attend.

"Everyone is invited. We'll have lots of food, and we have to get rid of it," Bowen joked.

O'Neill said he has always been impressed with Bowen and struggles he has overcome. Bowen currently has 30 years of sobriety.

"He had some real struggles early on, but he has taken all those emotions and turned them into something that has been positive. And he has been positive through all this."

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# Rice Street Festival:

## *Always changing, adding activities*



By DEBORAH BROTZ

While the Rice Street Festival is the oldest community festival around going back to 1910, it is always changing. This year the Free Family Fun Night has been expanded to include many more activities. And, the newly formed Rice Street Festival Committee has many more community members involved in the festival, which runs from Wed., July 24-Sun., July 28.

"The festival committee is just expanding its volunteer base," said

Kirsten Libby, chair of the Rice Street Festival Committee and president of the North End Business Association (NEBA). "We're getting more help from the community. Many hands make light work. We put a group together so more people from the community can get involved."

Now, there's a little more structure and involvement.

"Louis Ryg, who had been our parade director for many years, retired," said Libby. "He handled so much. We had to bring

new people on and get people educated as to what he did. Cindy Shanley retired as well so we have a new royalty director, Monette Moorman. Between Cindy retiring and Louis retiring, we had to fill a gap."

In addition to Moorman, Don Apitz is the new parade director; Gidget Bailey, from Tin Cup's, and Kevin Barrett, from Dar's Double Scoop, are sharing activities director; while Gina Stokes, recreation director at Rice Street Recreation Center, is in charge of

Family Fun Night at the center.

Libby, owner of Libby Law Office, wanted to be chair of the Rice Street Festival Committee for many reasons.

"I do like to be involved in the North End," she said. "There are so many good things going on. The festival is a good opportunity to showcase Rice Street and the North End. With as many people who work on Rice Street, the festival shows the commitment and enthusiasm these volunteers have."

The committee decided to expand the Family Fun Night because it's so popular with families.

"It was so well-attended and liked last year," said Libby. "It's an opportunity for good, clean, free family fun for kids and their parents."

Family Fun Night will be held Fri., July 26, at the Rice Street Recreation Center, 1022 Marion St. and will feature several activities from 6 to 8 p.m.: a rock climbing wall, a jump castle, carnival games, face painting, temporary tattoos, and spin art and button making. A fire truck and a canine unit are also planned to be at the festival. At 8 p.m., a free outdoor movie, "Wreck It Ralph," will be shown.

The schedule of festival activities is: Wed., July 24, Old Timers Softball Game; Thurs., July 25, Rice Street Festival Parade; Fri., July 26, Family Fun Night; Sat., July 27, Kickball Tournament, on athletic fields at Rice Street and Lawson across the street from Dar's Double Scoop and JMT Subs. The Car Show and the High Heel Race are also on Saturday, which people can register for at Dar's Double Scoop. Sun., July 28, is the Queen Coronation.

Apitz, who moved to the Rice Street area from Isanti in February 2013, helped out with the Isanti Parade as a float driver for the Isanti Ambassador Program for 15 years.

"I love community involvement," he said. "The Rice Street Parade director was stepping down. It was the perfect opportunity to help the community I'm in. The more volunteers you have, the better everything is."

Finding it difficult to pinpoint one parade highlight, Apitz says he's trying to make the whole parade a highlight.

"There is one thing," he said. "There's going to be a lot of fire trucks. I'm trying to get all the fire trucks from the area that represent the different areas. When the little kids see a city block of fire trucks with sirens and lights flashing, it's exciting. The Half Pint Marching Band from Farnsworth Elementary will be in the parade. A lot of schools don't have marching bands."

Moorman, who was a past Rice Street Princess six years ago, brings her past experience to her new position as royalty director.

"We like to keep our Royalty Program really based in the community," she said. "We'd like to get more royalty from the Rice Street area."

Moorman is in charge of the Kickoff Dinner, on Mon., June 24; the Fashion Show, on Mon., July 15; and the Coronation, on Sun., July 28.

The Kickoff Dinner is the introduction of candidates running for Rice Street Royalty. The social starts at 6 p.m. with dinner at 7 p.m. and will be catered by TSI, at Ideal Hall, 1494 Dale St. N.



The newly formed Rice Street Festival Committee has many more community members involved in the festival, which runs from Wed., July 24-Sun., July 28.



In addition to Monette Moorman, Don Apitz is the new parade director; Gidget Bailey, from Tin Cup's, and Kevin Barrett, from Dar's Double Scoop, are sharing activities director; while Gina Stokes, recreation director at Rice Street Recreation Center, is in charge of Family Fun Night at the center.



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CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

# Saint Paul Public Library kicks off annual summer reading program

The library's annual Summer Reading Program, happening at all 13 library locations and the Bookmobile, started June 1 and ends August 30. The program is for anyone birth to age 18. Kids read what they choose, earn book rewards, and enter drawings for other great prizes.

"The success of our students is crucial to the success of Saint Paul," Mayor Chris Coleman said. "We know that reading during the summer is one of the most critical things we can do to address summer learning loss and start to bridge the achievement gap. The Summer Reading Program is a great way to address

the achievement gap and keep our students learning."

All Saint Paul Public Library locations host a variety of summer performances for children and their families, including magicians, musicians, puppeteers, acrobats, jugglers, comedians, and even visits from live animals.

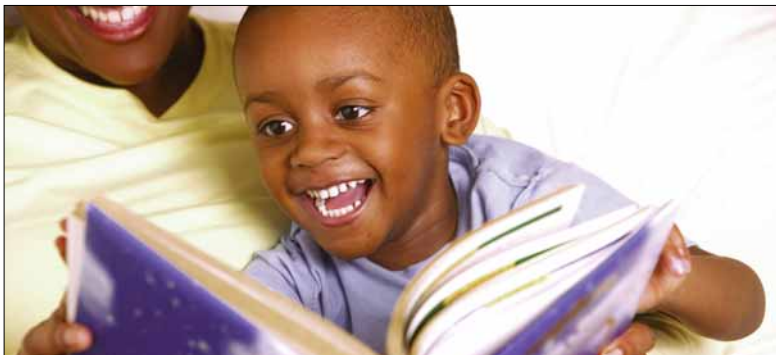
Summer reading activities are great for children who are not as confident in their reading skills, because they show kids that books and reading can be fun. Kids are more motivated to read when they pursue their own reading interests. In the Summer Reading Program, there are no required reading lists or tests.

Children and young people read (or are read to) what they choose. The child (or their adult) tracks their reading time to be eligible for prizes.

The Summer Reading Program is sponsored by The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library.

For more information about upcoming summer reading activities and events at the Saint Paul Public Library, visit [www.spppl.org/summer](http://www.spppl.org/summer) or stop by your local library for a Summer Reading Program calendar.

Explore [SprocketsSaintPaul.org](http://SprocketsSaintPaul.org) for additional summer learning opportunities for children.



The library's annual Summer Reading Program, happening at all 13 library locations and the Bookmobile, started June 1 and ends August 30. The program is for anyone birth to age 18.

## Midway Y: Hotbed for handball



First row left to right: Leland Engelking, Joseph Lallier, Zach Wells, Lucas Wells, Daniel Ramirez. Second row: Mitchell Lallier, Amen Ellbesby, Ahmed Ellbesby, Brandon Latourneau, Jonah Engelking, Youssef Abdallah and Emanuel Woods.

Midway YMCA has always been a hotbed for Handball. A few key long time handball players Gary Aeles, Rich Ryan, Emanuel Woods, Ray Miller, Greg Taylor, Ted Bergstrom (83 years young) and all the other handball players have helped build a new group of young handball players at the Y.

David Miller (16 years old) took first place in the A Division at the Minnesota State Handball tournament last weekend. Jesus Cordova (17 years Old) took 3 place in the B division.

The really good news is the Minnesota State Handball recognize the need to invite more young players to join them at the state handball tournament (April 27) at the University of Minnesota-

ta. Matt Johnson Director of Recreation (handball player) set up two courts to allow 9 young handball players from the Midway YMCA and 2 players from Mankato into the tournament.

Sportsmanship, support of the other players, hard play and having fun was some of the key ingredient to this Youth 2 bounce tournament. The 9 players were from 4 different countries and all have been playing for only 3 months.

The 3 top finisher were Zach Wells, Joseph Lallier and Youssef Abdallah. All the participants Ahmed Ellbesby, Amen Ellbesby, Jonah Engelking, Leland Engelking, Lucas Wells, Braden Latourneau were all great sports and all were winners.



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## Rice Street Festival Kickball Tournament

Saturday July 27th 8:00 AM

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Location Rice Street Recreation Center-Rice Fields

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18 and over! Space is limited to the first 12 teams.

For a registration form or more information contact District 6 Planning Council at 651-488-4485, [district6ed@dist6pc.org](mailto:district6ed@dist6pc.org) or website [www.district6stpaul.org](http://www.district6stpaul.org)

Register by July 12th-a minimum of 6 teams must be registered to begin the tournament

Visit the website [www.ricestreetfestival.com](http://www.ricestreetfestival.com) for a complete list of Festival Activities!

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# North End fights over more sidewalks



**"I think sidewalks are important."**

— Ward 5 City Council Member  
Amy Brendmoen

By JANE MCCLURE

Several area neighborhoods lack sidewalk connections, sometimes for a block or several blocks. That's a problem for walkers, children on bikes or trikes, and people who use wheelchairs or mobility scooters. It can mean crossing the street to travel or in some cases, traveling in mixed traffic.

For property owners, sidewalks add installation as well as ongoing maintenance expense. That's why the notion of adding the walkways can generate so much controversy, as happened recently in the North End.

Getting infill sidewalks added in the future will be easier if Ward Five Council Member Amy Brendmoen is able to craft new policies for the city's street paving program. But during the upcoming summer construction season, one North End resident who wanted infill sidewalks added as part of an upcoming street paving project will be disappointed.

Because the request for sidewalks was made so late in the street project planning process, Brendmoen said a request for a sidewalk along Kent Street's west side from Orange Avenue to

Wheelock Parkway would be denied.

Typically when the city replaces sidewalks, existing sidewalks are replaced as needed. Under the Residential Street Vitality Program, residents pay 25 percent and the city pays the rest. But in this case, there isn't a sidewalk on Ken's west side. Some residents contend that would add too much to project costs.

"I think sidewalks are important," Brendmoen said. She wants to change the city's Residential Street Vitality Program so that future projects include potential costs of infill sidewalks up front.

That action disappointed one group of North End residents, who want to see the sidewalk installed along Kent. More than a dozen people attended a May public hearing on the sidewalk issue, including several children.

Deborah Kuebler and her family live on Front Avenue, and use Kent frequently. They told the City Council in May that the area isn't safe for pedestrians. "Our area has a hill and vehicles tend to speed up there," she said. Her children would use the

sidewalk to get to friends' homes and other destinations.

Deann Urbaniak-Lesch lives on Wheelock Parkway. "I feel badly that we as a neighborhood are so split on this issue." But she walks frequently and agrees with the safety concerns, saying a sidewalk is very much needed.

Others vehemently protested the idea of sidewalks. Concerns ranged from not wanting to pay for sidewalks to not wanting to move landscaping that has been planted in a city right-of-way.

Forest Lake resident Corrine Mitsch owns rental properties at 1309 and 1311 Kent St. "I am opposed to any sidewalk there," she said. She and her tenants testified at they wouldn't be able to keep the sidewalks cleared of snow, and that paying for snow removal could make rents cost-prohibitive.

Steve Nelson lives on the part of Wheelock Parkway eyed for sidewalks. He said installing them would be "a classic over-reach" by city government. He also contended that adding sidewalks would be detrimental to the area and would affect neighborhood character.

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## Rice Street Festival

Continued from page 6

"This is their first chance to be seen by the public," said Moorman. "It's a fun way to raise money for the festival. We also do a dessert auction."

The Fashion Show also starts at 6 p.m. with a social hour, and at 7 p.m., the show starts. It will be held at the Klub Haus, 1079 Rice St.

"This is another one of our fund-raisers we do to support the festival," said Moorman.

People can get in to the Coronation on July 28 with a button that costs \$5. They will be available at many local businesses in the area on June 25.

The purpose of the Rice Street Festival is to celebrate the community.

"It presents the opportunity for people to come together and celebrate their neighborhood, their history, and their diversity," said Libby.

Libby hopes people appreciate all the hard work volunteers have done to make the festival the best it can be.

"I hope that we have a lot of people participate, and they really have a good time," she said.

For information, visit: [rices-treetfestival.com](http://rices-treetfestival.com)



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# In Our Community

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### Hamline Midway Community Rummage Sale

On Saturday, June 22, CityLife Church is hosting a Hamline Midway Community Rummage Sale from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at The Central Mission located at 1632 Charles Avenue in St. Paul. Free electronics and scrap metal recycling will be on site as well, provided by Roque of RW Electronic Recycling. For more information about opportunities to reserve table space for selling your used items, please contact CityLife by email at [citylifechurch.info@gmail.com](mailto:citylifechurch.info@gmail.com).

Come to shop! Come to sell! Join in the fun!

### Ramsey County Fair celebrates 100th anniversary

The 100th Anniversary of the Ramsey County Fair will feature five days of fun-filled activities at the County Fairgrounds near Aldrich Arena - White Bear Ave. at Frost in Maplewood July 10-14. It has been the intent of the fair planners to make this annual county fair a participation experience as well as a spectator's experience. 4-H and other youth and adults can compete in all of the educational exhibits (cooking, sewing, crafts, gardening, etc.) for ribbons and cash prizes. Winners in the talent contest will enter into the Minnesota State Fair competition. There will be a variety of entertainment - daily bands, kids can be "farmer for the day," car show, Gibbs Farm demonstrators, children's petting zoo, fireworks, carnival rides, parade and more. Commercial exhibitors, food vendors and carnival rides round out the fair activities. For a complete list of events - [ramsey-countyfair.com](http://ramsey-countyfair.com). Before the fair opens carnival ride tickets at significantly reduced prices can now be obtained. The admission to the County Fair is free.

### Co-ed Drum Circle June 28

Announcing a Co-ed Drum Circle on Friday, June 28, 6:30 p.m. Percussion, rhythm and freedom of expression will be explored. All levels of experience are welcomed and encouraged. Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. W., St. Paul. \$10.00 at the door. Drums provided. Info and registration at [www.womensdrumcenter.org](http://www.womensdrumcenter.org).

### Como Park Tree Trek

UMN Professor Emeritus Chet Mirocha will lead a walking tour highlighting some of Como Park's

tree species at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 22nd. This free event, open to all ages, will begin in front of the Como Carousel and end at the Como Lakeside Pavilion. Come learn about some of Como's special trees! For more information, call District 10 at (651) 644-3889 or visit [www.district10comopark.org](http://www.district10comopark.org).

### Viking Toastmasters switches to summer meetings

Viking Toastmasters will switch to a summer meeting schedule for June, July and August. Meetings will be held on the second and fourth Wednesdays at the Rice Street Library, 1011 Rice St., St. Paul. All meetings start at 6:30 PM. Anyone interested in improving their communication skills is welcome. You may visit without cost or obligation.

### New pastor at Central Baptist Church

The Reverend Dr. Joel Lawrence preached his first sermon as the Pastor of Central Baptist Church, 420 Roy Street N., on Sunday, June 9.

Pastor Joel comes to Central from Bethel Seminary in Arden Hills where he has been Associate Professor of Systematic Theology since 2007. A graduate of Texas A & M University and Dallas Seminary, Joel earned a Masters degree and Ph.D. from Jesus College, Cambridge University. Lawrence's dissertation explored Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology of human transformation. He has published numerous articles and one book on Bonhoeffer. Another book is to be released soon. While in Cambridge he served on the staff of St. Andrew the Great Church, Cambridge, England.

Pastor Lawrence is married to Myndi, and they have four children. The Lawrence family will be formally welcomed on Sunday, June 16th when Joel will be installed at a special 9 a.m. Installation Service. The public is invited.

### District 10 Boundary Change Committee seeks volunteers

The District 10 Como Community Council is looking for volunteers to join the Boundary Change Ad Hoc Committee, charged with ensuring a smooth transition of the South Como neighborhood from the District 6 Planning Council to District 10. The committee's work begins in June and will last until the end of April, 2014. Volunteers, who will work on bylaw revisions and plans to engage residents in the district,

should expect a time commitment of four hours per month this summer, and five to six hours per month from September through April. Desired qualifications include service on non-profit boards/committees, knowledge about the role of district councils, familiarity with neighborhood issues, and an ability to work with others towards a common goal. Individuals interested in serving should visit [http://www.district10comopark.org/boundary\\_change\\_ad\\_hoc\\_committee.html](http://www.district10comopark.org/boundary_change_ad_hoc_committee.html), or call the District 10 office at (651) 644-3889 by June 15.

### Midway Y begins community garden

This Summer, St Paul Midway YMCA will have a community garden on-site in front of the building. Over 150 kids from childcare and day camp will be learning about gardening and growing produce for their families and for Open Hands Midway, a local food shelf. Community partners include Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cuningham Group, and The Minnesota Horticulture Society. The community is invited to participate in the planting of the garden which will take place on Friday, June 14th from 9-noon. Bring your gardening tools if you have them. For more information contact Cathy Quinlivan, Director of Healthy Living at [Catherine.quinlivan@ymcatwincities.org](mailto:Catherine.quinlivan@ymcatwincities.org) or 651-292-4138.

### Rummage sale at Bethel June 12-15

Bethel Lutheran Church will hold its 12th Annual Rummage Sale benefiting the Children's Christian Education Fund on June 12 (Pre-sale 6-8 p.m.; \$3 admission), June 13 and 14 (9 a.m.-6 p.m.) and June 15 (9 a.m.-3 p.m.). Bethel is located in St. Paul's Como Park neighborhood at 670 W. Wheelock Parkway, St. Paul.

We offer a wide range of items including books, furniture, tools, houseware items, dishes, glassware, stemware, crystal, collectibles of all kinds, arts & crafts, jewelry, office supplies, working electronics, sporting goods, gently used toys & clothing for the whole family.

For more information about Bethel Lutheran Church, its programs and ministries visit [www.bethelstpaul.com](http://www.bethelstpaul.com) or call 651-488-6681.

### Keystone Senior Picnic June 26

Keystone Senior Picnic - will be on Wednesday, June 26th at 11:45 a.m. There will be "summer food" and our special program will be "America's Favorite Pastime...Baseball" present-

ed by Full Bloom. Come join your friends or meet new ones for a fun and filling afternoon. \$6.00 Call to register.

### River Cruise planned July 23

Upcoming St. Croix River Cruise will be on Tuesday, July 23rd from 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. when we will travel to Stillwater, board the Andiamo and enjoy the sights and sounds of the St. Croix River. A deli lunch will be served during the cruise. The cost for coach bus, cruise and lunch is \$39.50. Call to register.

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Call Keystone Senior

Program at 651-645-7424 to register for these events and to receive a copy of our current Senior Hi-Lites newsletter.

### 'Services for Seniors' discussed at luncheon

"Local Services for Seniors" will be the topic for the Tuesday, July 9 luncheon sponsored by Hamline Midway Elders. The guest speaker for this monthly luncheon program will be Monica Gallagher who has served as the Service/Volunteer Director at Hamline Midway Elders for the past 11 years. The luncheon begins at 11:30 am, and free blood pressure checks are also provided. Free transportation can be provided to seniors in the Hamline Midway neighborhood. For more information, please call (651) 209-6542.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

### Behind the Curtain with Park Square Theatre

Join cast members of Park Square Theatre's upcoming production of *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Suicide Club* for an intimate discussion of their work on the play on Monday, June 17, 7 p.m., at the Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave. Contact The Friends for information about a half-price ticket deal in conjunction with the library program, good for any performance June 19 through July 14 (limit four tickets). 651-222-3242

In the heart of London, in a windowless house, some of Europe's most powerful men gather to play a game. The game is murder. This is *The Suicide Club*, and they have a new member: Sherlock Holmes—brilliant, perceptive, the greatest detective in the English-speaking world. Does Holmes wish to die? Will he have to kill? Can Dr. Watson save him?

Theater discussion programs are free and open to the public. As a regular benefit, members of The Friends receive a \$5 discount on regular-price tickets at Park Square Theatre throughout the year (not available with website purchases). For more information on their other plays, please visit [www.parksquaretheatre.org](http://www.parksquaretheatre.org).



Join cast members of Park Square Theatre's upcoming production of *Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Suicide Club* for an intimate discussion of their work on the play on Monday, June 17, 7 p.m., at the Hamline Midway Library, 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave. Contact The Friends for information about a half-price ticket deal in conjunction with the library program, good for any performance June 19 through July 14 (limit four tickets).

## In Our Community

Continued from page 9

### Ice Cream Social, Dinner both planned

Save the Dates - Hamline Midway Elders is planning two events where the entire community is invited to attend. The annual Ice Cream Social will be held Wednesday evening, July 17 and the Friends, Feast & Fine Art (lasagna dinner) will be held on Friday evening, September 20. Details coming soon! For more information, please contact Tom Fitzpatrick at (651) 209-6542 or tom@hmelers.org.

### Como Business Network holds kick off June 19

The Como Business Network, a new initiative of the District 10 Como Community Council, will hold a kick off meeting on Wednesday, June 19 from 8:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m. at Black Bear Crossings Cafe and Banquet Center on Lake Como (1360 Lexington Parkway North, St Paul).

The goal of the business network is to bring together businesses serving the Como Park neighborhood to offer networking and business growth opportunities. The kick off meeting will provide the opportunity to join other business representatives and owners to help guide the direction of the new network, including planning a network launch event and other activities over the coming month. Membership in the Network is open to all businesses located in or providing services to the Como Park Neighborhood. Please RSVP to district10@district10comopark.org or 651-644-3889.

### District 6 Council moves meetings

Beginning in July the District 6 Planning Council's Board of Directors and Land Use Task Force meetings will be held at 301 Hatch-North Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Starting time remains the same, 6:30 p.m. The scheduled July 2013 Board of Director's meeting has been cancelled. Visit our Facebook page or website, www.district6stpaul.org for information, if you want to receive email notifications on neighborhood happenings, crime reports and D6 events, meetings and other communications email district6ed@dist6pc.org, we do not share your information.

### Co-ed Drum Circle planned June 28

Announcing a Co-ed Drum Circle on Friday, June 28, 6:30 p.m. Percussion, rhythm and freedom of expression will be explored. All levels of experience are welcomed and encouraged. Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. W. \$10 at the door. Drums provided. Info and registration at www.womensdrumcenter.org.

### Churches offer joint Vacation Bible School

North Emanuel Lutheran Church (301 Hatch Ave.) and Galilee Lutheran Church (N. McCarrons Blvd and Rice Street, Roseville) are offering a free joint Vacation Bible School June 24-27 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. for children ages 4-4th grade (completed 4th grade). The theme is "God's Backyard Bible Camp-under the Sun-where kids have a blast serving Jesus!" Vacation Bible School will be held at North Emanuel on Monday and Tuesday and at Galilee on Wednesday and Thursday. Free transportation is provided to each site.

Here's the schedule: Monday and Tuesday: 5:15 p.m. Bus pickup at Galilee with transport to North Emanuel Wednesday and Thursday: 5:15 p.m. Bus pickup at North Emanuel with transport to Galilee. Supper is at 5:30 p.m. with activities, stories and games from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

The bus will transport children back to the church of origin each night.

For more information or to register for this free event

### La Leche meets July 9 to discuss 'The Art of Breastfeeding'

The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties is the topic of the meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche Group on Tuesday, July 9. All expectant

and nursing mothers are invited to attend with their babies and toddlers. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information.

### Free Music in the Parks series in full swing

Saint Paul's annual summer Music in the Parks series is in full swing with performances scheduled at locations across the city. The Music in the Park series features music from a variety of genres including orchestra, blues/jazz, 50s doo-wop and popular music. The 2013 season boasts more than 130 free concerts taking place now through September 1.

In addition to the free Music in the Parks concerts, there will also be evening theater-style musicals taking place at Como Lake-

side Pavilion on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings in July and August. This season's schedule includes performances of "Annie" by the Rosetown Playhouse, "Grease" by the Hillcrest Theater and "Memories of Como Park-The Musical" performed by Como Park Productions. The cost of the musical theater performances varies depending upon the show.

Music in the Parks performance locations for the 2013 season include:

Como Lakeside Pavilion, Phalen Amphitheater, Raspberry Island, Rice Park, and Mears Park.

A complete schedule of Music & Theater in the Parks performances and information on how to become a performer for the Music in the Parks series can be found online at <http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=1357>

### Monitor in a minute

Continued from page 2

City Council. He has served the city for 33 years, starting his career with the St. Paul Public Schools in 1979 and then going to the city to be an animal control officer in 1987. He has been the supervisor since 1995. His last day of work was May 3.

Department of Safety and Inspections Director Ricardo Cervantes jokingly asked Stephenson to hold up his hands and show the City Council that he hadn't lost any fingers while working in animal control. Cervantes and council members said they will miss Stephenson and wished him well in retirement. Stephenson thanked the council and city staff for their support over the years. The council praised him for his innovations with new programs and for running a department on a tight budget.

He has helped impound hundreds of animals. Most were cats and dogs but he has also been called to deal with venomous and non-venomous snakes, lizards and even alligators. He has worked in a city that has seen more and more wildlife, including bears, deer and now coyotes.

He has not only worked hard to reunite St. Paul residents with lost pets, he has also led efforts to provide education to the public on how to deal with wild animals. One of his most unusual efforts was to find ways to control pigeons, which the city is doing by putting birth control drugs into bird food. He has also worked on city ordinances that regulate dangerous dogs.

### Pope Automotive will pave its lot

The new owner of a longtime North End auto repair business can continue to use a parking lot associated with his shop, the St. Paul Planning Commission de-

cided May 17. But Pope Automotive will have to pave its lot at 977 Chatsworth Av. The commission approved a nonconforming use permit for the lot but denied a request that the lot not be repaved.

The business was known as Dave's Automotive for many years. It was recently purchased by Justin Pope and will be Pope Automotive. The business is located at 991 Front Av. The Chatsworth lot has been used as parking since 1979, although it is zoned for residential use.

Pope told the Planning Commission Zoning Committee he plans to make improvements to the business and parking lot, but that he wants to use class five or gravel rather than parking. But the Planning Commission said that they want to see the lot paved.

Neighbors support the continued use as a parking lot, as does District 6 Land Use Task Force. But the task force agrees that the lot should be paved.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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Monitor Want Ads are now \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, Iris Park Place, 1885 University Avenue, Ste. #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. Classifieds must be prepaid via cash, check, or credit card. Classified ads can be e-mailed to [denis@deruyter-nelson.com](mailto:denis@deruyter-nelson.com). Want ads must be in the Monitor before July 1 for the July 11 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) 9-12

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# City Council amends sound level variance for Central Corridor

By JANE MCCLURE

Overhead cantenary pole and wire installation this summer along the Central Corridor light rail line must be completed as quickly and quietly as possible, St. Paul City Council members said June 5. The council approved an amended sound level variance for the project after much debate and discussion with project staff and frustrated Lowertown and University Avenue neighbors.

Metropolitan Council, which is building the rail line, initially sought a variance for overnight work from June 5 through December 5. The end date was amended to August 1. The variance covers the hours of 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. Monday through Friday and would be used as needed. The council also asked that work in Lowertown be done during daytime hours only.

Kevin Ryan, construction manager for the project, said the work could be completed by August 1. He said the longer variance was sought "just to be safe."

"If we're still hanging wire in December, we're in big trouble," Ryan said. If weather doesn't cooperate this summer Metropolitan Council could come back for an amended variance. That prompted some council members to joke that it better not start snowing again.

Major construction on the light rail line has caused much noise and disruption for businesses and residents on and near the project, with noise, vibrations, dust and even building damage in some cases. Major construction wrapped up late last year.

Ryan said the work would be much quieter than the construction that has gone on for the past two years. It doesn't involve jack hammers, sawing of concrete, welding or other heavy equipment. The permit application notes that "The main noise is backup alarms." That prompted Council President Kathy Lantry to jokingly ask if the work could be done in a way that doesn't involve backing up of vehicles.

"This (work) is absolutely nothing like the work we have been doing for the past two years," Ryan said. The cantenary poles are already in place all the way from Emerald Street to Fairview Avenue. Crews have been working days for several weeks.

"We're just hanging wire," said Ryan. Once the poles go in place wire is unrolled from a large spool and installed to power the trains. Light rail is to begin running in 2014.

But the request for a noise variance dismayed some project neighbors. "We are really getting sick of noise," said Lowertown resident Justin Busch. The neighborhood has been roiled by light rail, LaFayette Bridge and Union Depot construction, and will soon be coping with the demolition of the former Gillette/Diamond products building and the construction of the Lowertown ballpark.

Busch said he and other Lowertown and downtown residents are tired of being awak-

ened by noise and having their buildings shaken.

"We were told we wouldn't have to deal with this again," said Summit-University neighborhood resident Julie Green. "I can't understand why this can't get done." Her Aurora Avenue home was not only shaken by loud construction noise, bright lights also kept her awake last year.

"The history of the last two years of noise has been pretty significant," said Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark. He said limiting the time period is a reasonable compromise.

"We're dealing with some real consternation due to the past two years of noise," said Lantry.

Council members debated the variance at length. Ward One Council Member Melvin Carter III tried to lay the matter over for a week so he could get more

information on noise levels. "The sound travels like you wouldn't believe," Carter said.

But Ryan said that would slow down the project and city staff said the noise might be harder to quantify than the loud noise from previous work.

Carter's layover motion was defeated.

"I say the sooner we get this done the better," said Ward Six Council Member Dan Bostrom.

While saying that he agrees with the Lowertown neighborhood complaints, "I think we're trying too hard to make everyone happy," said Ward Two Council Member Dave Thune. But Ryan said limiting work to days in Lowertown and downtown wouldn't hurt the project. He noted condominiums and apartments are much closer to the line than they are on most of University. University is where the longer hours are needed.



Construction along the Central Corridor has progressed nicely since time that University was torn up near Iris Park Place, but there's still much work to be done. The City Council recently approved an amended sound level variance for the project after much debate and discussion with project staff and frustrated Lowertown and University Avenue neighbors.

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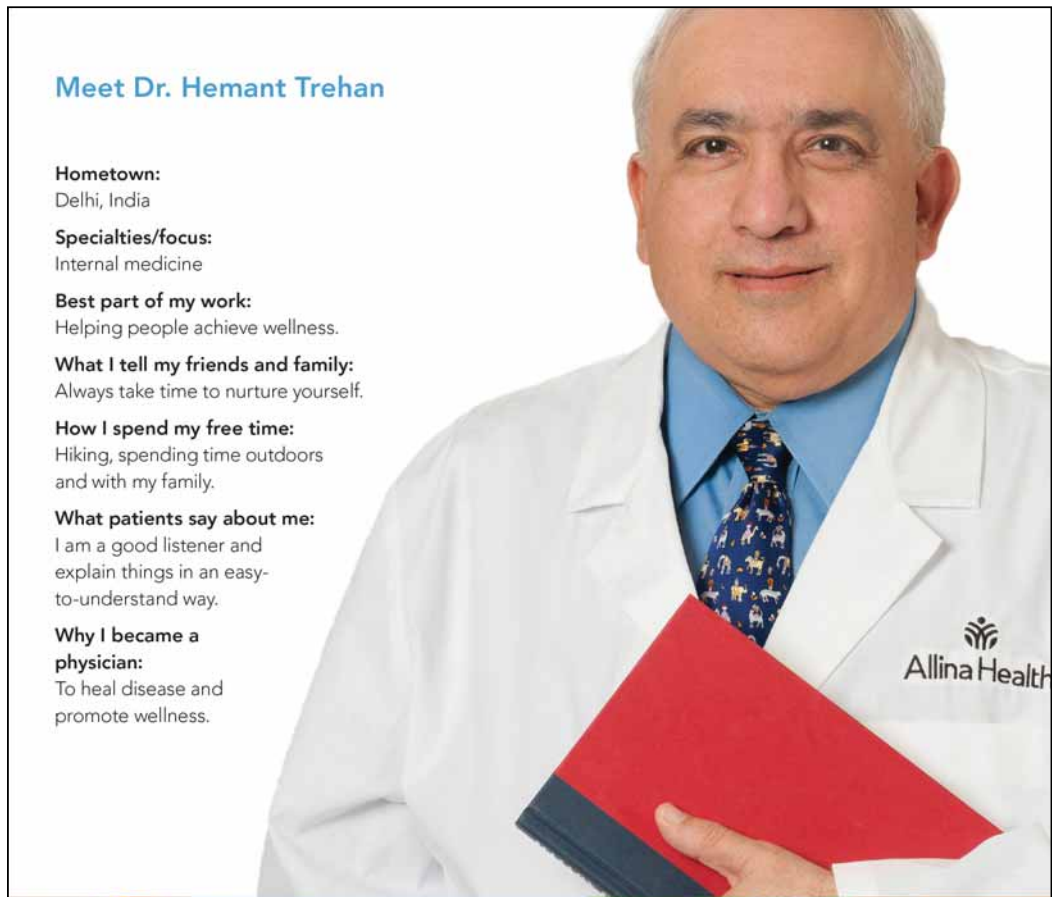
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