

monitor

Serving the Midway, Como, and North End Communities of St. Paul



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Blue Star Moms send care packages laced with love to U.S. troops abroad

By JAN WILLMS

Serving in Afghanistan or Iraq can be a challenging task these days.

But that burden can be somewhat lightened for a young man or woman in the military when it feels like a dozen mothers are sending love from home to each service member.

That description of the Blue Star Moms, a Saint Paul branch of the Blue Star Mothers of America, was recently offered by Army Staff Sergeant (SSG) William "Jesse" Kelley, 3rd Special Force Group Airborne, US Army.

His mother, Pattie Kelley, joined the Blue Star Moms, a group of mothers who have a child currently serving or who has served in any branch of the military.

"Finding and joining the Blue Star Moms has had a definite and obvious positive effect on my mother and her well being," Sgt. Kelley said. "The same way military members understand and can be sympathetic to military issues other service members have, so can military moms understand each other in unique ways and rely on one another for support."

Pattie agreed. "It's just been a lifesaver," she said.

Her son, Jesse, joined the military five years ago and is in the active army branch. After basic training, he went to Goodfellow Air Force Base in Texas, which provides intelligence training for all branches. He attended airborne school, learning to "jump out of a perfectly good plane," as his mother puts it. He spent a year in Korea, and then was at Ft. Briggs, NC, his home base. He became attached to the 3rd Special Force Group Airborne and found out he was going to Afghanistan.

When she knew he was going on his first deployment, Pattie found out about the Blue Star Moms and attended some meetings in north Minneapolis. Less than a year ago, Cindy McLean started a chapter in Saint Paul.

"We meet the first Tuesday of each month," said Pattie, who serves as chaplain and is on the board for the Saint Paul chapter. She said anyone can

also send out an e-mail saying they need to talk, and any members who can will get together and provide support.

Support is the primary benefit the group has to offer.

"Nobody knows what you're going through more than another mom," Pattie said. "My family is so supportive, as are friends, but nobody knows like another mom. They are experiencing exactly the same thing."

Pattie also relied strongly on e-mail when Jesse was in Afghanistan.

"I would wake up about 3:30 a.m., turn on the computer and get coffee going. Then I checked e-mails," she said. She said she was fortunate in that Jesse's army duties allowed him to have access to the telephone, as well as a computer.

"I would hear from him every one to two weeks," she said. "Some moms may not hear from their kids for months, depending on their jobs."

As she became more active in Blue Star Moms, Pattie said someone came up with the idea of creating a cookbook. The mothers send a lot of care packages to their children, and those can get expensive. The group was looking for a fundraiser.

"We talked about it, and I said I would take it over," she said. "We collected recipes from all our members—our own recipes, family recipes and friends' recipes."

The result is a recently published cookbook, "Blue Ribbon Recipes," put out by the St. Paul Blue Star

Moms.

Pattie said each entry gives a little bit of history about the person providing the recipe and their child, serving in the military. The cover has a map of Minnesota, and the back page of the book has the Blue Star Mothers flag. A friend of Pattie's did the artwork for the back page, placing the flag in a cozy setting.

Since its beginnings in 1942, the members of Blue Star Mothers of America have hung a flag with a blue star in their windows, indicating the family has a child serving in the military.

The book has poems, as well, including "I'm A Soldier's Mom," a poem that Pattie wrote.

"It was at a point when Jesse first started talking about his deployment. I was restless, tossing and turning at night," Pattie recalled. She got up and started writing.

"I had never in my life written a poem before," she said.

The cookbooks, which sell for \$15, are available through the Blue Star Moms' website, <http://bluestarmoms.home.comcast.net>.

"The profits will go towards future projects the moms plan on doing for their sons and daughters," Jesse said, "but more than that I see it as a way for people to show their support of military members and our families, enjoy

the wonderful food we grew up with, and hopefully feel a little close to those who serve."

"All of our profits will be set aside to do something special for all our kids," Pattie said. "Whatever your political beliefs, we just want you to support our kids. We don't talk politics—we talk about our children, what we are giving them, our fears. But we also share our joys."

And Pattie recently has some joy to share. Her only child, Jesse, just found out that through a program called Green to Gold, he has been accepted at St. Thomas to work on a four-year degree in English, paid for by the military.

"I'm proud in so many ways," Pattie said. But most of all, she said this means he will not be deployed for another four years. After a short stint at Ft. Bragg, he will be home. "I could do a happy dance," Pattie said.

Jesse, who is currently spending a few weeks at home before returning to Ft. Bragg, repeated how grateful he is to the Blue Star Moms for the support they provide.

"Truth be told," he said, "we worry about our mothers while we are deployed just as much as they worry about us."



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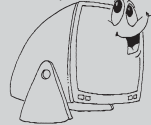
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Monitor in a Minute

Home Depot zoning meeting delayed

Anyone waiting to weigh in on the plans for a new Home Depot will have to wait a little longer. A St. Paul Planning Commission Zoning Committee public hearing set for May 24 was postponed until 3:30 p.m. Thursday, June 21 at City Hall. Home Depot wants to construct a store at the north-west corner of Pascal and St. Anthony Avenue. The vacant property is south of Midway Center and is used for parking.

Home Depot officials sought the delay, which the Zoning Committee unanimously approved. The home improvement retailer has also signed a waiver to a state-mandated 60-day deadline. No reason was given for the delay and a call to Home Depot headquarters in Atlanta wasn't returned.

The store would be Home Depot's first store in St. Paul. Company officials have spent more than a decade trying to find a site. The Midway Center store is designed to have parking on its roof and the building will take up most of the available property. The site does not include the former Metro Transit bus garage property to the west.

The Home Depot project has been controversial as area district councils and University UNITED have raised concerns in recent years about "big box" development in the Midway. Concerns have been raised about traffic and parking impacts, and how Home Depot would factor into the area's cumulative traffic problems.

Although the project is within an area studied during zoning and land use planning studies along the Central Corridor light rail transit line, it would be exempt from a proposed set of in-

terim zoning regulations for the area along the rail corridor. That is because the Home Depot plans were submitted to the city before the regulations or a development moratorium were adopted.

The regulations are meant to limit land uses and zoning changes along the proposed rail corridor until after any proposed zoning changes can be adopted. Zoning changes would be adopted as part of the Central Corridor Development Strategy. The development strategy is the topic of a St. Paul Planning Commission public hearing at 8:30 a.m. Friday, July 13 at City Hall.

Judge finds Diva's in violation

Diva's Overtime Lounge has violated state law and conditions of its licenses to do business in St. Paul, an administrative law judge has found. Those findings and a recommended penalty will be considered at a public hearing this summer by the St. Paul City Council.

As of early June no hearing date had been set. The soonest date for a hearing is June 20. The bar is on Rice Street and has been a focus of controversy since it opened. City officials have repeatedly tangled with the bar's owner over incidents at and near the bar, including a fatal shooting last year.

The latest violations stem from an incident in March 2007 when police on patrol near Diva's saw a man confronting a bar security guard. The officers intervened but the man continued to attack the security guard. The officers then used a Taser device to stun the man. Police then learned that the man had been removed from the premises because he was overly intoxicated and had acted inappropriately inside the bar. The officers arrived after the man had been ejected from the premises.

The police report was for-

warded to city licensing staff, who requested copies of the tapes from that evening. The tapes were found to not show the complete premises as required. City staff allege the tapes were spliced, a conclusion the judge agreed with. The tapes were found to switch from one date to another, and from black and white to color. One part of the tape showed patrons smoking, which could not have occurred in March 2007 due to the city's smoking ban in bars and restaurants. The ban took effect in March 2006. Another part of the tape showed patrons in shorts and short sleeves. Also, part of the tape was recorded at 16 times the normal speed.

The incident with the drunken patron and the inconsistencies in the tapes led city licensing staff to recommend that Diva's pay a \$1,000 fine or go before the City Council and have the March violation considered with another pending license violation. Instead Diva's chose to go before a legislative hearing officer.

An administrative law judge hearing was held in May. The judge's decision and conclusions were released May 30.

In the judge's conclusions, it was found that Diva's had served alcohol to a patron who was obviously intoxicated. The city's legislative code also allows city licensing officials to impose additional sanctions for that violation.

The judge also found that Diva's violated a license condition requiring that the premises be videotaped and that the videotapes be made available to police and licensing officials. A further violation was found when city licensing staff were unable to obtain all of the videos they requested.

Minnehaha Lanes gets a break

An area bowling alley, which was the first St. Paul business to be

penalized under the city's smoking ban got a break in May from the St. Paul City Council. The council voted 4-3 to reduce the proposed fine assessed to Minnehaha Lanes from \$500 to \$150. The vote was council members Debbie Montgomery, Dave Thune, Pat Harris and Dan Bostrom for the reduced fine, and Jay Benanav, Kathy Lantry and Lee Helgen against.

The council held a public hearing on the violation May 2 and took final action on the reduced fine May 16.

Minnehaha Lanes is in the Minnehaha Center, at 955 Seminary Av. It is one of many St. Paul businesses affected by the smoking ban enacted in March 2006, which banned smoking from restaurants, bars and bowling alleys. Minnehaha Lanes has displayed no smoking signs since then and publicized the ban to employees and customers.

But during an unannounced health inspection in January 2007 a city inspector found a standing ashtray and cigarette butts in a basement hallway. A cook reportedly was smoking there. The city found no evidence of smoking elsewhere in the establishment. The standing ashtray was immediately removed and the business owners requested a hearing before an administrative law judge. That was held in February. Minnehaha Lanes management had argued that the ashtray was in storage and was not put out for employee use. But the ashtray was apparently being stored in a hallway.

The penalty for a first-time violation of the smoking ordinance is \$500, but the judge recommended that the council consider a reduced fine of \$150. The judge found that Minnehaha Lanes has posted signs and made other efforts to comply with the smoking ban. The judge also noted that the business has otherwise had a good record of compliance with its city licenses.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

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Steps move three District 13 councils closer to merger

By JANE MCCLURE

More steps toward the merger of St. Paul's three District 13 councils have taken place, with the trio winding down their separate operations this month. Lexington-Hamline, Snelling-Hamline and Merriam Park Councils have all adopted the new bylaws for the merged District 13, are selecting members for an interim board and are to do their final business as independent councils in June. The deadline for the three councils to merge is July 1.

District 13 has been the only St. Paul citizen participation district to have more than one council. The Lexington-Hamline and Merriam Park councils predated the formation of the district council system and were allowed to remain in place when the city-wide districts were set up in 1975. Snelling-Hamline formed its council in 1976 because that part of the neighborhood was left unrepresented.

The three councils had divided one district's funding allocation for many years but squabbles over funding and a failed bid by Merriam Park to be a separate council prompted City Council members Debbie Montgomery and Jay Benanav to push for the merger. The City Council approved the merger late last year. The three district councils were supposed to have plans in place to merge in February but have gotten extensions of time and money from the City Council. In April an extension to July 1 was approved.

One frustration that has been expressed by members of all three

district councils is that the city has offered little assistance and volunteers from the three councils have put in hundreds of hours of their own time.

The change is the most significant to St. Paul's district council system since the split of the former Southwest Area District (SWAD) more than 20 years ago. That split resulted in the creation of Macalester-Groveland Community Council and Highland District Council. But that split was driven by the neighborhoods and not by city officials. There have been smaller boundary changes since then, and an unsuccessful push for South Como to split from North End (District 6) and join Como Community Council (District 10) several years ago.

Of the District 13 merger, and Merriam Park's vote on new bylaws, "It's a historic evening for the neighborhood," said Merriam Park Community Council Member Scott Banas. He recalled the challenges that led to the City Council decision, including Merriam Park's recent bid to form its own district council. Merriam Park is the largest of District 13's three existing councils and has more population than several of the city's other stand-alone councils.

There is still unhappiness over the City Council's decision. "Debbie sold us out," said SHCC Member Tom Robison. City Council members Debbie Montgomery and Jay Benanav pushed the merger through last year. Montgomery has had sometimes contentious relationship with SHCC and members believe she

didn't give the council enough support in its bid to remain independent.

Of the three councils, the most concerns have been raised by Snelling-Hamline. That group voted 11-2 to approve the bylaws, noting that the group has "significant concerns" over aspects of the document and how the council will be organized. Size of the new board, board structure, elections and other concerns were raised.

groups can maintain its non-profit status and continue. Some SHCC members would like to maintain a separate identify, even if it is on a limited basis to be a neighborhood association and run small programs such as the community garden near Ayd Mill Road. There is a concern that once the new council forms, Snelling-Hamline could lose its neighborhood identity. Others point out that city funding has

line and Snelling-Hamline could maintain their nonprofit status as neighborhood associations. Lexington-Hamline Community Council (LHCC) will continue as a neighborhood association, making the decision to do so. That group has a legal agreement to manage Dunning Recreation Center that resulted from a lawsuit against the city many years ago. Lex-Ham also has a number of other stand-alone programs and activities it would like to maintain.

The merged council, which hasn't announced a new name yet, will eventually office in the new Anchor Bank at Snelling and I-94. Its board will have about 30 members, making it one of the city's largest councils. Its members will include 20 representatives of neighborhood grids or areas, along with at-large members and institutional representatives.

That prompted some dissension at the May Snelling-Hamline meeting. "I can't vote for this," said SHCC President Travis Snider. "There's just way too many people on the board." Others noted that because the grids are based on population, Snelling-Hamline as the smallest neighborhood will only have four votes between its grid and at-large seats. Lexington-Hamline will have five. Merriam Park will have 11 grid representatives and one at-large seat. Other seats will be occupied by institutions, businesses and special interests such as the Skyline Towers high-rise in Lexington-Hamline and the Desnoyer Park Improvement Association in Merriam Park.

"Debbie (Montgomery) sold us out."

- Snelling-Hamline Community Council Member Tom Robison

But with a deadline approaching for Snelling-Hamline, Lexington-Hamline and Merriam Park councils to merge, SHCC members reluctantly agreed that they are running out of time. An interim board is to be in place by June 1 and funding for the three independent councils will be cut off as of July 1.

SHCC was the first of the three councils to act on the bylaws and to hold its final meeting June 7. At that meeting, held after Monitor deadline, Snelling-Hamline members were to decide whether will continue to maintain a separate identify, through a neighborhood association or other group. The City Council's demand that three councils merge is silent as to whether any of the

been the major source of support for SHCC and once that's gone it will be difficult to keep any type of group going.

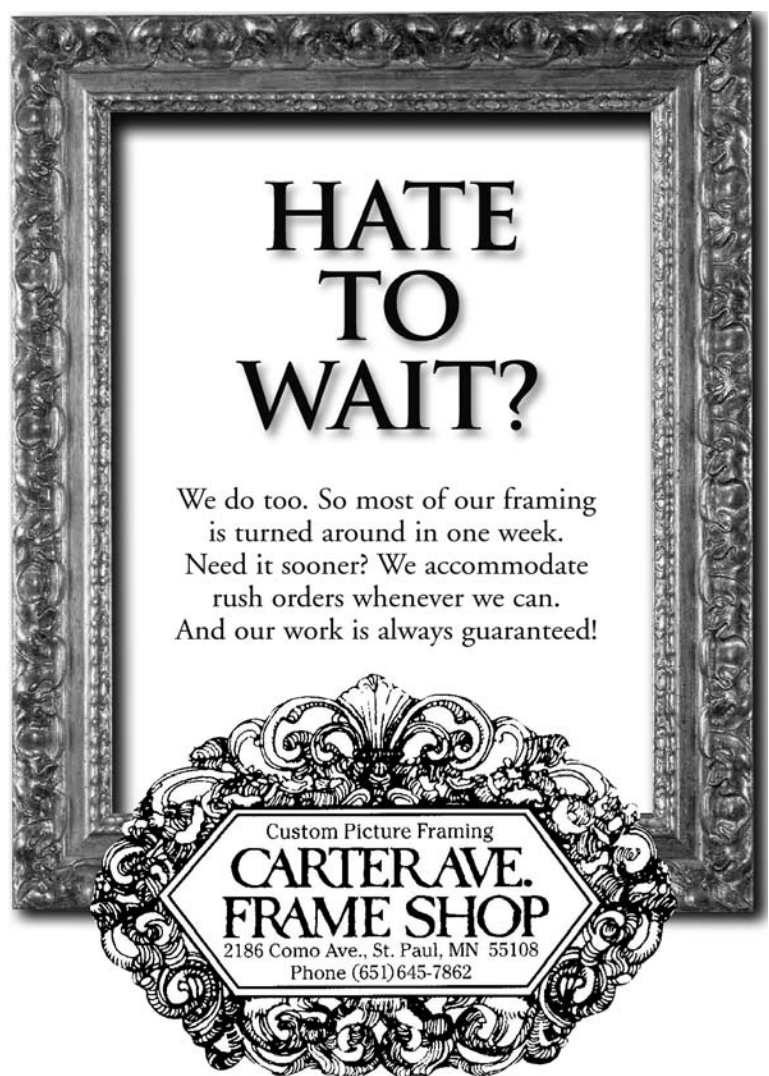
SHCC Member Shirley Reider is one of the volunteers working on the merger. "It's a big change for us," she said. "These (bylaws) are very different from how Snelling-Hamline has operated for the last 30 years." She said the bylaws are a product of compromise and that every district council didn't get everything it wanted.

Merriam Park Community Council's non-profit status will be used for the new group. Forming a new non-profit could have taken many months to get needed state and federal approvals.

That means Lexington-Ham-



Next deadline: July 2
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Viewpoints

Watching media accounts of the cutbacks at the Star Tribune has led me to believe that I must preside over what has become some kind of "National Treasure" for media outlets trying to make a living selling newspapers. New Star Tribune Editor Nancy Barnes was interviewed by KSTP-TV the other night telling readers that the Tribune's focus will be redirected to "exclusive local coverage." Exclusive, meaning that the stories found in the Tribune will be unique to the Tribune. Likewise, last week the new Pioneer Press publisher was named and he once again touted the PP's commitment to local coverage. There's a novel concept, I thought to myself with a wry smile.

At the Monitor, for the past 30 years we have carved out a niche that the big papers couldn't afford to cover. Just look at last month's issue which featured the Arlington High School students who were honored by the Mayor for growing organically grown vegetables, the Jennings High



From the Editor's Desk

By DENIS WOULFE

Scooping the daily papers for over 30 years

School students who have been working to raise funds for Hamline Park Playground, and the simple, but nonetheless vital listings of story times at the Hamline Midway Library.

Don't get me wrong: We've also covered the high-profile, controversial stories like light rail coming to University Avenue, the proposed garbage burner at Rock-Tenn, and the proposal to place Snelling Avenue in a tunnel under University Avenue. And we've never shied away from coverage just because it might be controversial. In fact, one regular advertiser even withdrew his ad last week due to our coverage of

the City's fight with him over his license. It's not a shock—news gatherers don't always curry favor by reporting the facts of a story. Sometimes they make enemies. It just goes with the territory.

But our stock in trade has always been the local news that the big papers didn't think was important enough to cover.

We've been following it, you might say, before it became the mantra of the daily papers. And our readers continue to show their appreciation on a monthly basis. Just last week, I heard from one of the businesses on Rice Street that started receiving the Monitor with the April issue. The owner said his Monitor supply was running short only days after the paper was delivered to his business. So while the big papers are struggling to maintain circulation, our readership just spiked. Thank goodness for local coverage! And thanks to all of you, for reading the Monitor.

Every spring I head up to the North Shore for several days of combined relaxation and learning. I attend a Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Conference hosted at a beautiful resort north of Two Harbors. It provides several days of learning about topics near and dear to my heart—the mental health issues faced by children and adolescents. And after the lectures, I have the pleasure of relaxing by a fire while watching and listening to the waves of that wonderful lake. I also knit. But I am not able to connect to a computer or cell phone. So mostly I savor the solitude.

This year, one of the lectures focused on the effect of media on kids and teens. I have never been a fan of TV. I grew up in a household with almost no television exposure; my mom had us reading instead of watching TV. I didn't know any different and never felt deprived.

I do remember finding it odd to visit the homes of friends and find a TV on almost constantly, whether or not anyone was watching it. I see this in public places now—when I walk into a lunch room or lounge area in workplaces and hospitals, often there will be a TV on even if the room is empty. We are sometimes mindless of our exposure to the tube.

Personally, I don't watch any television except for a rare program that my husband tapes. I am uninformed when patients come in asking about drugs they saw advertised on TV. I am not exposed to any of the other hype that comes across the tube. So, you probably know that I was already a bit biased about TV exposure even before the recent lecture.

Nevertheless, I learned some sad facts this spring which surprised me and fostered my concern about TV use:

- More households have five TVs than have one.
- The average U.S. school age child has about 6 hours/day of "screen time" (this includes computer games, etc.). This means that the average child spends 900 hours in school each year, but over 1000 hours in front of a screen.
- A child who watches 3-4 hours of TV daily will see an estimated 8,000 murders on TV before finishing grade school.

So does it matter that kids watch so much TV? Is it necessarily a bad thing? Well, not always. Some educational programs do help children learn about the alphabet, animal

life, other parts of the world, etc. But most of what kids see on the tube, and the actual process of watching TV, has little redeeming value.

More facts: Kids who watch over 2 hours of TV daily are more likely to be overweight. Why? Because television watching is sedentary and often kids snack while watching. Plus they see ads for food products with little nutritional, but high caloric content.

Research shows that children who witness violence on TV develop more aggressive behaviors themselves. Teens who watch sexually explicit television are more likely to initiate sexual activity than those who do not watch that type of programming. Although cigarettes are not advertised on TV, smoking is often portrayed during shows. Children who see more than 5 hours of TV daily are more likely to smoke than those who watch less than 2 hours daily.

Violence, smoking and sexual activity are usually portrayed as exciting, but rarely are the consequences of such behavior shown. So there is an unrealistic impression about such activities.

Young children are not able to distinguish reality from fantasy, television from real life. Those who see violence have a sense that the world is unsafe for them. They may have elevated anxiety and difficulty sleeping.

Television watching actually changes the way the brain processes information. This is especially important for young children. So much so that the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under the age of 2 not watch any television at all.

Also, there is a clear line of demarcation between children who see less than 2 hours of television daily vs. those who see more. The kids who see more than 2 hours of TV have a difficult time learning to read. Not just because they are spending time watching vs. reading, but because of the effect of the media stimulation on their brains.

Cares and Cures

By JANE KILIAN, M.D.

TV Guide: Are we overdosing our kids on TV?

So what can parents do about this TV blight? Lots. First of all, set a good example by watching minimal television yourself. Turn off the TV when it is not being watched. Don't have the tube on during meals or homework time.

Decide how much time your child can spend on TV daily. The suggestion by the "experts" is less than two hours. One way to facilitate this is by not having more than one set. Aside from my general dislike of it, I know that one reason I don't watch TV is because our set is in a room that is inconvenient. There is no reason to be in that room other than to watch the TV. So I just don't go in there, because I have too much else to do in the other rooms. You can remove TVs from most rooms, and especially should remove them from the bedrooms of your children.

Supervise which programs your children watch, and whenever possible, watch with them. You can then use the program to prompt discussion about family values regarding the situations you have witnessed.

Plan family activities each evening that don't involve television. A walk, bike ride, game of cards, craft project are all more interactive and challenging than watching a screen.

Some families have a "no TV during the week" rule. You could also consider taping shows so that you can skip the exposure to commercials. Use tube time as a treat to be experienced occasionally, but not necessarily every day.

Educational children's videos can provide an alternative to network programming. The Coalition for Quality Children's Media is a good resource (www.cqcm.org).

So...summer is here. What better time to turn off the TV and head outside for some family fun?

Stay happy and healthy.

Dr. Kilian is a family practice physician who lives and works in the Midway Como community. She believes that good medicine means caring for people as well as curing diseases. We want to address your health concerns so please let us know what topics you would like to see in future columns. If you have suggestions or questions, write to the Monitor c/o 1885 University Avenue West, #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. Or e-mail denisw@aplacotremember.com.

Hamline Midway is In Motion!

Hamline Midway In Motion (HMIM) is a new program that aims to encourage Hamline Midway residents to leave their cars at home and bike, walk or bus for local trips. The program goals are to reduce automobile trips and air pollution, increase physical activity, and encourage residents to explore their neighborhood and patronize local businesses.

HMIM is a partnership between the Leadership in Support of Neighborhood (LISN) program (a collaboration between the Hamline Midway Coalition and Hamline University) and the Midway Transportation Management Organization (TMO). The program is an affiliate of Midway In Motion, a program developed by the TMO in 2005. The TMO, a program of the community-based group University

UNITED, works to mitigate traffic congestion and air pollution in the Midway area.

The centerpiece of HMIM is an artist-drawn map of the Hamline Midway neighborhood (District 11) which stretches from University Avenue to Pierce Butler Route between Lexington Parkway and Transfer Road.

The map is a tool to help residents and visitors "explore and enjoy Hamline Midway on foot, bike, or bus." The map highlights various amenities throughout the neighborhood such as scenic parks, playgrounds, two recreation centers, historic architecture, the oldest college in Minnesota, public art, unique shops, music and performing arts venues, coffeehouses, and ethnic restaurants.

Local resident and LISN fellow, Krista Finstad Hanson, researched and compiled data for the map. Hanson sought input from Coalition staff and board members, neighbors, LISN fellows, and local business owners. Artist Roberta Avador created the lively artwork for the map.

Map recipients are asked to pledge to replace at least two car trips per week with a walking, biking, or bus trip. As added incentive to take the pledge, participants receive a discount card to six local businesses and earn a chance to win two grand prizes.

The free map will be available at local businesses, rec centers, and libraries by mid-June or through the TMO at 651-644-5208 or www.midwaytmo.org/mim.htm.

Development along University Avenue could face restrictions

By JANE MCCLURE

Development along University Avenue and the proposed Central Corridor light rail line could face restrictions if St. Paul city officials adopt an interim zoning ordinance proposed by the University Avenue Central Corridor Task Force. At its last meeting May 17 the task force approved the proposed regulations. The St. Paul City Council and Mayor Chris Coleman are expected to take up the issue this month, imposing interim restrictions until permanent zoning restrictions can be adopted.

If the ordinance is adopted by the St. Paul Planning Commission and City Council, it would restrict certain types of new development along University Avenue for up to one year. It would not affect existing properties that don't change in use. Existing businesses could make some additions and changes to their properties during the interim period. But it could make it more difficult to do major redevelopment projects during that time.

The proposal would also ban certain types of new businesses, such as auto sales, auto rentals, auto repair shops, service stations and car washes. Businesses wanting to add new drive-through sales and service features would face restrictions on where those are located

and how large they could be.

The restrictions are meant to give city planning staff time to draft permanent zoning changes along University Avenue, said City Planner Donna Drummond. Those would then be adopted by the Planning Commission and Council. Those permanent zoning regulations would be consistent with recommendations in the draft design strategy for Central Corridor, which was recently released by the University Avenue and Downtown Central Corridor task forces. The development strategy contains numerous redevelopment suggestions ranging from urban villages to smaller, neighborhood-scale development.

Most district councils along University Avenue support the regulations, as does the District Councils Collaborative, a group of St. Paul district councils and Minneapolis neighborhood associations involved in Central Corridor development and transit issues, and University UNITED. UNITED has been calling for interim zoning regulations for several months. But the St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce, Midway Chamber of

Commerce and a number of private property owners have raised questions and concerns about the proposed restrictions and their impacts on future redevelopment.

The Midway Chamber asked for a number of considerations, ranging from

2010 at the earliest, with trains starting to operate in 2014.

"The Midway Chamber of Commerce, the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce and many existing businesses and property owners along the Central Corridor have strongly supported light rail transit and have worked to reassure other business members and business neighbors that light rail transit is like to be of benefit to the community,"

Midway Chamber leaders said in a letter to the task force. "The proposed interim ordinance could undermine these assurances and could have an adverse impact on existing businesses as well as on job creation, tax base and the vitality of the Midway area."

There is also a split among City Council members who represent University Avenue neighborhoods. Ward One Council Member Debbie Montgomery has opposed the regulations and led the charge to block them several months ago. But Ward Four Council Member Jay Benanav supports the idea of the regulations, saying time is needed to put permanent development restrictions in place.

The restrictions would start at Marion Street and extend to the Minneapolis border, with the restrictions extended to cover areas that are one-quarter of a mile around transit stations. It covers areas suggested for future redevelopment in the draft development strategy. In most cases residential neighborhoods are protected, especially those north of University. The boundary south of University dips south in some places to take in large commercial areas, including the area between Dunlap Street and Snelling Avenue. There the boundary extends to the St. Anthony Avenue-Interstate 94 frontage road, to take in Midway Marketplace, Midway Center and other retail/commercial areas. It also takes in commercial and industrial properties in the West Midway.

The regulations would not affect development proposals that already are in process, such as the proposed Home Depot store at Pascal and St. Anthony Avenues. Nor would it affect the Midway SuperTarget under construction at Hamline and University Avenues. But it could affect redevelopment of sites including the former Mervyn's department store and the recently shuttered new vehicle sales lots at Midway Chevrolet and Whitaker Buick.



ing from protection of existing businesses to phasing in zoning changes in conjunction with the light rail project. In a letter to the task force, the Chamber noted that the project isn't even fully funded yet. Construction would not start until

Midway in a minute

Continued from page 2

STAR grants to provide funding

The first round of 2007 Cultural Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) grants will provide funding for several projects and programs. The St. Paul City Council unanimously approved the grants May 2. The council didn't change recommendations made by Mayor Chris Coleman. The mayor did change recommendations from the Cultural STAR Board by increasing one grant.

Forty-three groups sought grants totaling \$1,399,375 million. The City Council allocated \$799,435 spread among 29 groups.

Unlike the Neighborhood STAR process, which allocates grants and loans, Cultural STAR provides grants only. Cultural STAR funds can also be used for operating expenses. Neighborhood STAR dollars are limited to brick-and-mortar projects.

Largest of the 2007 grants is \$100,000 for Steppingstone Theater. The youth theater company will use the money to wrap up work on its new theater on Victoria Avenue. The funds will be used to complete building and equipping the theater auditorium and facilities. The space will be shared with groups including St. Paul City Ballet, Lex-Ham Theater and Teatro de Pueblo.

Other area grants that were approved include Penumbra Theater Company, \$25,000 to assist with marketing for the African-American theater company's 31st season. \$50,000 was requested.

Other area groups missed out on funding. They include Goodwill/Easter Seals, which sought a

grant to integrate art in workforce development programs and install public art on University Avenue. The North End-based German American Heritage Foundation lost out on a bid for funds to expand its annual Emperor's Ball.

Council approves changes to Youth Program Fund

It's a new ball game for St. Paul's Youth Program Fund. With no public comment, the St. Paul City Council unanimously approved changes to the fund in May. The changes were sought by St. Paul Parks and recreation.

The fund comes from charitable gambling proceeds collected throughout the city. Various youth groups and youth service organizations sell pulltabs at these establishments as a fund-raiser. These groups range from sports booster clubs to Catholic parishes that operate schools and youth programs. These groups each donate 10 percent of their proceeds to the Youth Program Fund.

For many years the Youth Program Fund proceeds were divided up among numerous non-profit community groups that serve youth age 20 and under. The groups had to be on an approved city list, known as the 10 Percent Club. Originally the fund went only to sports teams. But in the 1990s the City Council expanded the list to include non-sports activities, promoting a huge increase in the number of groups vying for funds. That change was very controversial and prompted heated debate at City Hall.

But as the number of groups seeking dollars grew, the organizations selling pulltabs saw their proceeds shrink in the face of casinos and other gambling options.

Now the Youth Program Fund will be used to provide fee waivers

for Parks and recreation youth recreation or education programs. Eligible youth must be ages 2-18 and must be actively enrolled and attending school to qualify. A set of criteria to determine which children are eligible will be set by Parks and Recreation. The fee

waivers will be based on federal poverty guidelines.

The programs involved will be limited to \$8,000 in contributions per year. An organized athletic program at a city recreational facility will be considered one program. Organizations in low-income

neighborhoods will be eligible for an additional amount of up to \$6,000 per year. What is actually allocated will depend upon the contributions that come into the account.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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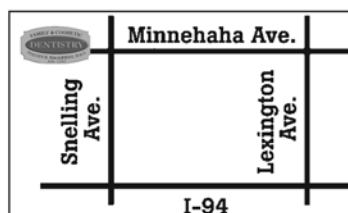
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Man's best friend getting center stage in Council legislation

By JAN WILLMS

Man's best friend has been getting a different description lately, with dog attacks taking center stage in recent months. Both Saint Paul and Minneapolis have been the sites of vicious attacks lately, with some victims nearly dying after their encounter with dogs.

In the aftermath of these attacks, discussions have focused on whether to ban certain breeds of dogs or place more responsibility on the owners for their pets' behavior.

The Saint Paul City Council recently passed an ordinance that owners who have a dog taken away because of abuse or neglect more than once in five years would lose the right to own a dog.

"Our recent actions give us more opportunity to deal with problem owners," said Lee Helgen, Ward 5 councilperson. "Ownership is our biggest concern," he said, citing the importance of the environment the dogs are raised in.

"Bites or attacks come from a large group of animals," Helgen said, "including German shepherds, collies and daschunds." He said no one breed is fully to blame.

Helgen said that although dog



attacks have gone down overall in Saint Paul, the ones that have recently taken place in the Metro have been vicious, with graphic examples of injuries shown.

"We are still facing a number of bites, and how do we get at that?" he asked.

Helgen said that he presently does not see a lot of extra penalties for nonlicensure of dogs, and he believes getting the animals licensed is of primary importance.

"We need to make sure we really get the animals licensed," he said. "If people license dogs, we find they are more likely to be responsible for those dogs."

He said another big issue is

backyard breeders.

"They are turning out litters of mean dogs, and there is not much research being done on this," he said. "We need to do enforcement."

Helgen said there is a need to identify dog fighting rings. He mentioned a couple in the North End of Saint Paul, and he expressed concern about animals being raised and trained to fight.

Helgen said that as a legislator running for office, he has encountered lots of dogs while door knocking.

He said a lot of dogs let their owners know when a stranger approaches, and they guard the prop-

erty.

"In a lot of cases, we found it best to just leave the literature at the door and move on," he said.

"My hope is that the people who have animals take care of them," he added.

Putting the responsibility for dogs' behavior on their owners is also the avenue Chuck Banks of the Alpha Academy for Behavior Obedience Training, Saint Paul, would like to follow.

"There are no bad breeds, just bad owners," he said. "Bad things can happen to dogs, but a puppy comes into the world with a clean slate."

He emphasized the importance of socializing a puppy.

"We tell people to get them in early," he said. "We pass the puppies around to get them socialized with people."

Banks said dogs are put in different situations, and most dog bites are what he calls fear bites. "Dogs are afraid of the situation, and so they bite," he said.

"A dog has two choices when put in a difficult situation," Banks added. "Fight or flight, and if a dog is chained up and can't get away, he will fight."

Banks said that dogs need a leader, and if people don't provide

the leadership, the dogs take on that role themselves.

Regarding various breeds, he said that pit bulls are wonderful dogs.

"A Chihuahua can be just as vicious," he said. "There are a lot of ankle biters out there." Again, he stressed the importance of socializing and training dogs properly.

Banks said he does not recommend getting a vicious dog for protection, or training a dog to attack intruders.

"I tell people if they are afraid, they should get themselves a gun," he said. "A vicious dog is like having a loaded weapon around."

Banks said dogs usually work on command. He expressed concern that a dog be trained to attack with a special word.

"Suppose a two-year-old is around and says that magic word?" he asked.

Banks said that most individuals out to cause trouble are cowards, anyway, and will be scared away just by the presence of a nice, big dog.

Banks also said that most vicious dogs can be retrained.

"We invite anyone to call us and see what we can do," he advised.

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The alarming recent increase in foreclosures has been well documented by the media. It is an immensely complex issue affecting all types of housing – the diverse set of “players” includes lending institutions, the Federal Reserve, mortgage brokers, overseas banks, predatory lenders, and of course, the property owners themselves. The magnitude of this issue is astonishing – a Star Tribune study found 2,500 houses sold at foreclosure auctions in Minneapolis alone in just the past 16 months. As one might expect, the wave of foreclosures is disproportionately affecting lower-income neighborhoods. More than half of the foreclosures cited in the Star Tribune study occurred in North Minneapolis – an area similar in population to the Monitor’s distribution area.

Sparc has been aware of this pending tidal wave for quite some time, but the complexity of the issue and sheer magnitude of the underlying costs are overwhelming for one small non-profit. However, Sparc and a group of other St. Paul



Igniting Community Development

By SETH BENZIGER

Increase in foreclosures alarming

non-profit community development corporations, known as the St. Paul Coalition of Community Developers (SPCCD), can influence the situation. SPCCD initiated research to review existing anti-predatory lending laws from around the country and to then draft model legislation to help protect future homebuyers for dishonest lending practices. That research was provided to the Attorney General’s Anti-Predatory Lending Task Force. Sparc and other SPCCD members then made the case for the legislation with their local legislators. The legislation ultimately passed into law this year closely matched SPCCD’s model legislation.

In addition to that legislative success, Sparc is working with other local community development corporations and district councils. The collaborative is looking at the viability of existing legal tools like the Tenant Remedy Act that would allow non-profits to repair some of the vacant housing and return it to productive use.

While foreclosures have received a lot of attention of late, the associated problem of vacant housing has been less visible. I believe the increase in vacant buildings deserves more attention. How do these vacant houses directly affect the families living nearby? How does the increasing number of vacant houses impact the quality

of life in the neighborhoods we love?

One thing I have really enjoyed about my job is meeting neighborhood “lifers”, as I call them: those residents who have lived in the same house for the last 45 years, or those that grew up in the neighborhood and are now raising families there. The love for their neighborhood runs strong and deep.

I spoke with a long time resident of the East Side to discuss her experiences. It wasn’t the first time she talked about this subject as she says it is the main topic of conversation in her neighborhood. She noted how vacant houses seemed to show up overnight like dande-

lions. “One pops up, then another, then another, then another,” she said. Words like “sad”, “really hard,” and “very depressing” were peppered throughout our conversation.

On top of the distress caused by the appearance of the neighborhood, are the issues related to the criminal element attracted to these houses. She has already noticed an increase in graffiti. She fears that they will be used as drug houses, or party houses, or that the houses will be vandalized and stripped of their copper piping.

There does not seem to be an easy answer to this problem. The media attention is helpful but we must be mindful that behind all of the statistics concerning this issue, families and communities are being adversely affected on a daily basis.

(Seth Benziger is the Program Manager of Sparc responsible for home improvement financing programs. He would love to hear your feedback or thoughts; he can be reached at seth@sparcweb.org or at 651-488-1039.)

Proposed fireworks regulations move to City Council for approval

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul’s proposed new fireworks regulations are en route to the St. Paul City Council. But changes in the proposed distance requirements, adopted in May by the city’s Planning Commission, are likely to fizzle with area residents. One key change in the proposed regulations reduces the minimum distance of the tents from buildings, from 100 feet to 20 feet.

As of early June no date had been set for a City Council public hearing on the new regulations. The new regulations would not be adopted in time for implementation prior to this July 4th. But earlier this spring Ward Four Council

Member Jay Benanav extended a moratorium on fireworks tent permits until the zoning studies could be completed. So that rules out new outdoor tent permits this year.

Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC), Snelling-Hamline Community Council and area residents have objected to the fireworks sales tents for a number of years. They have successfully blocked tents in recent years at Midway Marketplace and the former Whitaker Buick property.

The outdoor sales regulations would not affect sales of fireworks in convenience stores, supermarkets and department stores. Many store displays of fireworks were up

by Memorial Day weekend. The outdoor sales are already regulated to just a couple of weeks before the July 4th holiday.

Planning Commission Zoning Committee members were surprised May 10 when no one from area neighborhoods attended a public hearing to speak for more stringent regulations. Only one fireworks vendor attended the hearing and spoke for fewer restrictions, saying the city was making it too difficult for vendors to find locations for their tents. HMC did send a letter to the hearing, asking that the tents only be allowed in industrially zoned areas.

“Honestly, it’s very difficult to find a site in St. Paul,” said Lisa

Proeschel, a Summit-University resident who tried to open a fireworks tent last year at the Whitaker Buick property. There is only one other site, on West Seventh Street in Highland, where a fireworks tent has been allowed in recent years.

City Planner Patricia James said the changed regulations were requested due to ongoing concerns about fireworks tents in parking lots along University Avenue. The district councils and area residents had opposed the tents, which have been allowed since Minnesota legalized some types of fireworks several years ago. Two companies, TNT and P, sell fireworks in tents in St. Paul.

One of the primary objections to the tents was the potential risk to public safety and whether a spark from a discarded cigarette or other source could ignite a tent full of fireworks. While there is 50-foot no smoking area around fireworks tents the city cannot regulate whether or not someone on a public street or sidewalk is smoking.

The city’s proposed distance regulations largely mirror state and federal regulations. The exception was the distance proposed between the tents and buildings, which was reduced from 100 feet to 20 feet.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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Midway's Dugsi Academy dedicated to preserving traditions of Somali culture

By JAN WILLMS

Concern by parents that their children were forgetting their language and culture led to the opening of Dugsi Academy, 1821 University Ave., a charter school designed to serve the unique needs of East African immigrant students.

"A group of Somali public school teachers saw the problems some of the parents and students new to American culture were having," said Abdulkadir Osman, director of Dugsi.

"The brainstorming started several years ago, and the idea for the school came about in 2003," Osman said. "Parents encouraged us. We filled out the application and took it to the Minneapolis Department of Education."

The result was a school that opened in the 2005-2006 school year teaching children K-5. In its second year, the school has included grade 6.

"Next year, we will include the 7th grade. We are already approved to add the 8th grade in 2008-09," Osman said.

Osman completed his college education in Somali and was assigned as a high school teacher. When he arrived here, he worked as an education assistant and ESL teacher in Saint Paul and Min-

neapolis public schools.

The assistant director at Dugsi is Patty McCauley, who started her career as an elementary teacher. She has her master's in curriculum and education and is licensed as a K-12 principal. She moved back to the Twin Cities from southwestern Minnesota and joined the Dugsi Academy staff.

"It's the first time I worked with an immigrant population,"



Habbon Farah was all smiles during his last day of class before summer recess. Ninety-nine per cent of the students in Dugsi Academy are Somali students. (Photo by Terry Faust)

she said. Education is provided for about 200 students, with classroom sizes ranging from 17 to 20 students. "If we had opened this school in 2000, we would not have had this population," Osman said. "Parents arriving here wanted their children in mainstream education. But they found their children were losing the Somali language. Mothers and grandmothers could not understand their children."

Osman said parents told him that although they and their children shared the same skin color on the outside, inside they were becoming very different. They feared their culture was becoming lost.

Dugsi, which means school in Somali, also means shelter and a place that is cozy. It provides the bridge between the American and East African cultures for many of the families who have arrived in the Twin Cities from their war-torn countries.

"We have 99 per cent Somali students," Osman said. "The others are African American."

According to McCauley, the students come from all over the metro, since charter schools have no boundaries. School buses transport students from various locations.



Dugsi Academy Director Abdulkadir Osman talks to 5th grader Habbon Farah in the Academy's Library. Dugsi Academy is a charter school in the Griggs-Midway Building designed to serve the unique needs of East African immigrant students. (Photo by Terry Faust)

"Many of the students speak Somali, but could not read or write the language," McCauley said. "If they are literate in their native language, it helps them become more literate in a second language."

Dugsi Academy has 11 teachers, including elementary homeroom instructors as well as instructors in ESL, Title 1, art and computers. A world language program offers classes in Somali and Arabic.

"Our secretary and education assistants are Somali, so it is good to have interpreters here for any miscommunication," McCauley said.

"The comfort level is higher, and it allows our students to learn a little easier."

In classes, students speak only English. At recess and lunch, one hears English mixed with Somali. Somali and Arabic are spoken in the world language classes.

Osman said the school pro-

vides Halal breakfasts and lunches. The Halal menu has food that is acceptable to the Muslim diet.

During recess, the younger children enjoy a playground area in front of the YMCA.

Passersby may see little girls, dressed in the traditional hijab headscarf, playing outside and enjoying the late spring sunshine. The older youngsters play at Dickerman Park, which runs in front of several businesses.

Osman said that 55-60 per cent of the students were born in refugee camps.

"Culturally, our community is not very active in schools," he said.

"The teacher is completely responsible. We are trying to educate parents to become more involved. One or two are very active, but most of them are still struggling with that concept."

"We have a great turnout for parent meetings two or three times a year," McCauley added. "But many of the parents work, and some of the mothers don't drive and have little children at home."

McCauley said she has also faced a big learning curve, moving from the private school sector to a charter school.

"In private schools, you don't have state involvement," she said. "I've learned a lot."

Osman said the greatest difficulty in charter schools is enrollment.

"Also, this school is totally different from other charter schools," he said.

The academic focus of Dugsi Academy is to integrate students into the scholastic community of Minnesota and to enable the students to use their talents and experiences to achieve to the best of their capabilities.

Osman said that in the American system, a student is placed in a grade level based on age.

"They ask, 'how old is the student?' Back home, we ask how many years has the student been in school."

Osman said that in Somalia, there would often be older children in second grade, for example, depending on how many years they had attended.

"We have multi-age classes at Dugsi," he added.

"Formal schooling for some of our students has been at a minimum," McCauley said.

Eventually, Osman hopes to have a separate charter school for high school students.

"When we first started, we promised parents we would have K-12. We are trying to get that way," Osman said.

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Metro Deaf School makes new home in Como Park



Lisa Ewan, an administrator at Metro Deaf School, stopped by to look over school work and chat with Rachel Novella, an 8th grader at the school. (Photo by Terry Faust)

By **DEBORAH BROTZ**

When Rachel Novella, 14, who is deaf, was a student at a school in Burnsville, she fell behind in her school work. But, all that changed four years ago when she switched schools and started attending Metro Deaf School (MDS), at 1471 Brewster St. The bright, yellow building is home to the nation's second charter school to open and the only one in the state to cater to deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) elementary students.

In 1991, the nation's first charter school opened its doors in Minnesota. Today, there are 131 charter schools in the state with 23,478 students enrolled.

Even with an interpreter, Novella had problems keeping up in class.

"I was really behind because I didn't fully understand the interpreter," she said. "The teacher would write things on the board. I didn't understand how to do it on paper. I didn't understand everything I read either."

At her school in Burnsville, Novella never socialized with the hearing students.

"They didn't feel comfortable talking to me," she said. "I only had a few friends who were deaf and one of two hearing friends."

Novella visited MDS after her mom suggested it.

"I was having problems at the hearing school and did not feel involved," she said. "I decided

where I wanted to be right away."

MDS is a bilingual school using American Sign Language (ASL) as the language of instruction with English taught through print.

"Everybody here was signing," said Novella. "At my old school everybody talks. I didn't understand everything. Here, I understand everyone. I'm so comfortable."

At her old school, often Novella sat at a desk arranged in rows. She had to look back and forth at the board, the teacher, and the interpreter.

"It was so confusing," she said. "I would have to move to see. Here, the classes are in a semicircle. I'm not put behind someone so I can't see. It's just wonderful."

Always with an interpreter before, MDS has helped Novella to be alone.

"It gave me more independence," she said. "I like socializing because I understand everything here going on. I feel good about myself. Everyone here is the same. We're all friends."

While Novella can interact with people outside of school who don't know ASL, it can be difficult.

"I can talk, and I have hearing aids, but I don't receive everything," she said. "I can hear one on one. But, if people are talking at the same time, it all becomes a jumble. I can read lips but if there's a mustache and I can't see the lips or if the person is mum-

bling with a low voice, I can't understand it."

Novella is an example of why MDS is one of many charter schools success stories.

MDS's director Dyan Sherwood, along with parents and teachers in the St. Paul School District, chartered MDS in 1992. A year later, they opened the doors of a remortgaged house with no furniture to 13 students. Over the years, they expanded in the small house to downtown St. Paul from two rooms to two floors over the five years and then moved to another building they occupied for eight years.

While one of their goals was to eventually own their own building, state laws specify that charter schools cannot own a building. So, a separate nonprofit named 1House2 Hands was created with the sole mission to own and lease a building to MDS.

"It's really nice to have your own space and own identity," said Lisa Ewan, MDS coordinator/school administrator. "There are more benefits to owning our own building. We can do renovations like you would do in your own house."

After looking at numerous buildings, MDS eventually decided on a warehouse near the fairgrounds. If they could put 20 percent down, then their bank, M&I, would provide them with a loan

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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IN OUR COMMUNITY

In Our Community

Stories and Magic at the Library

Hamline Midway Library offers bedtime storytimes at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays except for June 19 and June 26. Preschool storytimes are now offered on Friday mornings at 11 a.m. On Saturday, July 14, there will be a Play & Learn storytime from 10:30 - noon provided by Resources for Child Caring. At the storytime on Tuesday evening, July 10, all the children will help write a book and take home their own copy. Drop in for all or a part of any storytime.

On Saturdays June 16, June 23, June 30, and July 14 at 2 p.m., a series of four movies will be shown. Call 651-642-0293 to find out more.

Monday, July 9, at 2 p.m. Magical Mia will mystify and surprise everyone with her magic, music and dance from Asia. This is the first of Hamline Midway Library's Summer Reading Program events.

Hamline Midway Elders plan luncheons

Hamline Midway Elders sponsors luncheons for seniors each second Tuesday of the month beginning at 11:30 AM at 1514 Englewood Avenue. On July 10, a speaker from the MN Dept of Health will address "Safe Food Handling." Call 651-209-6542 to make reservations for the luncheon, to request free transportation or for more information about tailored services for seniors. Hamline Midway Elders is looking for a part time Registered Nurse to provide home visits to elderly clients with the goal of keeping them independent in their own homes. RN 2 year Associate Degree or 4 years BA/BS PHN, one year nursing experience. Call 651-209-6542 for more information.

Rice St. Library plans June events

Summer Reading Program at the Rice Street Library: Tuesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. from June 26 to August 7. "Go Bananas At Your Library" with Bill the Juggler on June 26th, Crazy Daisy on July 10, and other performers throughout the summer. Signup for the Summer Reading Program starting June 13. Children who read for ten hours this summer will receive a paperback book for a prize; read for another ten hours and pick up another book. Teens set their own reading goal and reading incentives are books selected by our Teen Advisory Group. Check www.sppl.org/srp/ for more details. Sponsored by The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library and MELSA.

The Rice Street Branch Li-

Caterpillar comes to Chelsea Heights

Nancy Shaw's first grade class at Chelsea Heights Elementary School learned about the 3R's (reduce, re-use, recycle) first-hand by turning "trash" into an impressive art project. The class made posters asking their school community to save plastic bottles for them until they collected enough to make the giant caterpillar which graces the lawn in front of their classroom on Huron Street. Many parents helped the students build the wire frame to which the bottles were then attached with twist ties. Eureka Recycling was thrilled to see that the children will be recycling all those bottles when the sculpture is finally taken down."



Nancy Shaw's first grade class at Chelsea Heights Elementary School learned about the 3R's (reduce, re-use, recycle) first-hand by turning "trash" into an impressive art project.

brary will offer preschool storytimes on Tuesdays from 10:30 - 11:00 a.m. on June 19, and July 3.

Looking to fill those long summer afternoons? Check out the fun and free literacy based activities that will be offered Monday through Thursday from 1:15 to 5 p.m. through Thursday, August 9. A variety of arts, crafts, puppet making and more will be offered by the creative Summer VISTAs. The program is a fun alternative at the library for your young ones.

The North End Book Club will meet Monday, June 25 at 12:30. All are welcome to attend. For more information please call Sandy at 651-293-8811. This group is sponsored by North End Community Education of Saint Paul Public Schools.

The Rice Street Library is located at 1011 Rice Street between Lawson and Hatch. Our phone number is 651-558-2223. Hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 12:30-9, Tuesday 10-9, Friday 10-5:30, and Saturday 10-5:30. We are closed on Sundays. We will be closed on Wednesday, July 4.

Midway holds yard sale June 22-23

Midway Neighbors: Are you thinking of having a yard sale this summer? Please consider holding your sale during the 5th annual Hamline-Midway Community Yard Sale. Sale dates: Friday June 22 from 9 am to 5 pm, and Saturday June 23 from 9 am to 3 pm. Please register your sale by stopping by the Hamline Midway Coalition office 1564 Lafond Ave to fill out a registration form (call

ahead at 646-1986 to make sure someone is there). The fee is \$5 (cash only) to pay for group advertising. Questions or offers of help: call Krista Finstad Hanson 651/646-0632 or by emailing her at KLFHanson@yahoo.com Deadline: to sign up will be Friday June 15th. Maps: will be available the days of the sale at the J&S Bean Factory, and Ginkgo Coffeehouse, and the HMC office (Friday only).

Block party at Schroeder's June 17

A Neighborhood Block Party will be held at Schroeder's, 605 Front Avenue, on Sunday, June 17, from 1 to 6 p.m. This will be a great chance to meet your neighbors and receive information on how to improve your property and quality of life! Free pop and hot dog! Children's activities!

Fighting Lions take on business celebs

It wouldn't be the first time The Saint Paul Saints paved the way in baseball, but they will again this year for the fourth time present a beep ball or baseball for the blind game. On June 22, at 5:45 p.m. the St. Paul Midway Fighting Lions will take on a group of business celebrities who will be wearing blindfolds and trying to hit a beeping ball and run to a buzzing base. This game precedes the Saints regular home game of that night. It also precedes an exhibition at a Twins game on July 30th where up to 32 of the best beep ball athletes in the world will compete before the Twins regular

game. All of this is to mark and celebrate the 33rd World Series of baseball for the blind which it held this year in Rochester, Minnesota, August 1-4, 2007.

Playing for the celebrities at Midway Stadium will be Tom Edelstein of Coldwell Banker Burnet Realty; Greg Lutowsky of Horizon Financial Mortgage; Sam Holl of TCF, Lexington Branch; Gene Marsh at Park Midway Bank; U.S. Senate candidate, Bob Olson, and one other celebrity guest.

The celebrities will be contributing \$250 each to Lions Clubs Campaign for Sight First II, which provides services for the blind in Third World Countries, such as cataract surgeries for \$6. International Lions Clubs' goal is \$150 million to sustain their work with the blind which began in the 1920's.

St. Paul Midway Lions have sponsored their beep ball team for four years. Their players range in age from 22 to 68. More information on beep ball and the World Series can be found at www.nbba.org. Contributions for this sight campaign can be made by contacting Jeff Fenske at 651-222-6700.

District 6 to create resource guide

District 6 Planning Council is planning to create a resource guide and we need your help! If you or your organization is involved in youth services such as a Boy Scout, Girl Scout, Campfire or any other youth services please contact the District 6 office at 651-488-4485 or district6@qwestoffice.net. We are also compiling a list of other service organizations such as the Block Nurse Program, Senior Services or other service providers. If you know of any service organization or are involved please contact the numbers above.

District 6 sends out a newsletter and if you are not receiving one let us know and we will get you on the list.

National Night Out is August 7, 2007 and District 6 has the information you may need so please give us a call if your block is planning an event. Don't forget to visit our new website at www.district6stpaul.org.

Remember District 6 is here to assist you so if you have any questions or concerns please let us know.

VBS takes off with BBQ June 24

Kids young and old can indulge their love of airplanes and flight during Vacation Bible School this summer at Jehovah Lutheran Church, corner of Thomas Avenue and Snelling as they chart God's course of salvation and learn more about their pilot. The fun begins with free food and activities at a

barbecue and Family Fun Night on the church parking lot on Sunday, June 24, starting at 6 p.m.

The flight theme continues June 25 to 28, Monday through Thursday, beginning each night with a meal at 6:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall of the church and ending at 8 p.m. with the final safe landing on Thursday evening. The significance of the flight number - 4031 - will also be revealed! There will be classes for every age, including adults. Everyone welcome. Please enter the church Monday through Thursday at the Thomas Avenue door. Call Dawn for more information at 651-644-1421. Also check www.jehovahlutheran.org.

Bethel Lutheran day camp July 2-6

Bethel Lutheran Church is offering a Day Camp for 1st to 6th grade children from the community July 2-6 (9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Mon-Thurs., 9 a.m. - noon Fri). There is no charge to participate, but pre-registration is required by June 17th. Bethel is located in St. Paul's Como Park neighborhood at 670 W. Wheelock Parkway.

Camp Omega trained counselors will lead the Day Camp, and lunch is provided for all participants Monday - Thursday. Come join the fun: songs, skits, bible studies, devotions, arts & crafts, games & activities. Campers and their families are also invited to an ice cream social Thursday at 7 p.m.

For more information about Bethel Lutheran Church, its programs and ministries visit www.bethelstpaul.com or call 651-488-6681.

North End Legion Post sponsors spaghetti dinner

On Sunday, June 24, the North End Legion Post #474 of St. Paul will be sponsoring a Spaghetti Dinner from noon to 5 p.m. at the Post clubrooms, 72 W. Ivy St. The cost is \$7 per person. Menu will include: spaghetti, garden salad, bread, butter, and cake for dessert. Proceeds will go for North End American Legion Baseball Team. There will also be a raffle.

Flag disposal service June 16

On Saturday, June 16, there will be a formal disposal ceremony for unserviceable American flags. It is hosted by the Disabled Veterans Rest Camp, Marine on the St. Croix, sponsored by the Fourth District American Legion, Department of Minnesota. The public is invited. You can bring your unserviceable flags at that time. The ceremony starts at noon.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

In Our Community

Continued from page 10

Sunday Adult Forum at Jehovah Lutheran

The significance of our daily work will be studied and shared during the summer Sunday Adult Forum at Jehovah Lutheran Church, Thomas Avenue at corner of Snelling. The theme is "Centered in Christ - Connecting Sunday to Monday." In addition to Bible study and short DVD clips, each Sunday a member or friend of the Jehovah family will tell his or her story of everyday life as he or she sees fit. Come for coffee starting at 9 a.m. in the church lounge and stay to get better acquainted and build awareness of the many ways God's Spirit leads us in our daily work and life. Call Dawn for more information at 651-644-1421 or see www.jehovahlutheran.org.

Tours sponsored by St. Paul education

There will be a tour of the LeDuc Mansion/ Little Log House Antique Power Show on Friday, July 27th. The LeDuc Mansion was built during the Civil War by William and Mary LeDuc is one of the most intact remaining examples of Gothic Revival residential architecture and landscaping in the United States. After visiting this historic treasure in Hastings, we will venture down the road to the Little Log House Pioneer Village for their annual Antique Power Show. Tour includes admissions, and motorcoach transportation. Lunch will be on your own. Fee: \$35 Guide: S. Mansee. Registration and payment due by July 11th.

Pick-up Times and Sites: 7:45a.m. - Rice & Arlington Athletic Complex, 1500 Rice Street, 8:10a. m. - Conway Rec Center, 2090 Conway Street. Approximate Return Time: 5 p.m.

There will be a tour of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter Minnesota on Wednesday, August 22. The campus tour of Gustavus Adolphus College will include the chapel, sculptures of artist Paul Granlund surrounding Eckman Mall, the 55-acre Linnaeus Arboretum and Interpretive Center followed by lunch on campus. Learn the history of St. Peter during our guided tour that will take us to the St. Peter Pearly Gates, and other significant sites in town. We will also visit the Drugstore and Pharmacy Museum and enjoy a root beer at the soda fountain to top off the afternoon. Tour includes coffee and roll, all admissions, lunch, motorcoach and guide. Registration and payment due by August 6th. Fee: \$45 Guide: S. Mansee. Pick-up Times and Sites: 7:15a.m. - Rice & Arlington Athletic Complex, 1500 Rice Street. 7:35a. m. - West 7th Community Center, 265 Oneida. Approximate Return Time: 5:30 p.m. For further information or to register call 651-293-8634. Spaces are limited so call today.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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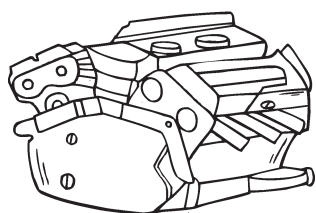
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Council approves Java Train rezoning

By JANE MCCLURE

A Como Park coffee house can expand its food offerings and become a full-fledged restaurant, with St. Paul City Council approval May 16 of a rezoning request from residential to business use.

The City Council decision on Java Train is controversial as the St. Paul Planning Commission and city planning staff consider the action to be an illegal spot zoning. Spot zoning is when a zoning change is made that isn't compatible with the surrounding zoning.

The council's decision isn't likely to end debate over the business at 1337 Pascal. The owners are considering whether or not to seek a beer and wine license, which will trigger another round of public review in the future. More than a dozen people attended the council public hearing. The Java Train request generated dozens of emails, calls and letters to City Hall from supporters and opponents.

The City Council vote was 6-1, with City Council President Kathy Lantry against. Lantry said that while Java Train may be a good business, "I can't get over the whole spot zoning issue." She said the city needs to change its codes, to allow restaurants to expand their food offerings with growth of a business. Lantry said it's likely that the challenges Java Train faces with expansion are faced by other coffee shops wishing to grow their businesses.

"It seems dumb to not let a coffee shop sell soup and ice cream," she said.

But Ward Four Council Member Jay Benanav, who represents the area, said the only option for Java Train is rezoning. "Unfortunately this is what we have to

work with now. This business needs to figure out how to increase its bottom line." Benanav said the city needs to have faith in business owners Steve and Christine Finnegan and not question their plans to have a restaurant.

Conditions cannot legally be attached to a property zoning change. Some council members asked if conditions can be attached to a beer and wine license if Java Train seeks one in the future. That could be done, Benanav said. But Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen noted that he struggles regularly with the issue of businesses that don't follow license conditions.

The Planning Commission and city staff had recommended against rezoning the property from residential to community business use, saying that would be spot zoning. Staff looked at other ways to support the request, possibly by making other changes in the city code. One concern with a zoning change is that it stays with the property. That means that in the future, if Java Train moves, other types of businesses the property is zoned for could move in, such as a liquor store.

In 2004 Java Train was issued a non-conforming use permit to allow the coffee shop and a flower shop, the Fighting Iris, to open there.

The Pascal Street property was erected in 1928, and housed a drugstore and a grocery store. The property was originally zoned commercial, then rezoned for residential use in the 1970s as part of a citywide zoning code change. Any other uses since then have been non-conforming. Before the restaurant and floral shop came in, the property was used for a business and warehouse, with residential use on the second floor.

Java Train needs the rezoning to expand its food offerings. "The business has to change to meet what the customers are demanding," said Steve Finnegan. He said people have been asking for more food options for more than a year, but that his suppliers of prepackaged food have been getting out of the business. That has given the business fewer options, not more. As a coffee shop Java Train can only sell prepackaged food items.

Foes of the rezoning and city staff have raised concerns about the change. One concern is that lack of off-street parking. But Finnegan said a shared parking agreement is being pursued with a nearby church, Holy Childhood.

Four neighbors spoke in support of Java Train and the rezoning May 16. Dennis O'Rourke said the business has "brightened the neighborhood" and "become an oasis of activity for the community." Others said they like having a business they can walk to, but would like more food options at Java Train.

Three people spoke against the rezoning, objecting to the potential for parking problems, unloading of vehicles in the street and the potential to add beer and wine later.

Bill Sylvester, who lives directly south of Java Train, said the rezoning would have a negative impact on his property values. He reminded the City Council that planners and an assistant city attorney said spot zoning is illegal.

The current zoning only allows a coffee house with limited, pre-packaged food service. That requires community business zoning. But because it is surrounded by residential uses, that could be considered "spot zoning," which is illegal.

Rice Street Festival preparations underway

By JANE MCCLURE

Preparations are underway for Rice Street Festival, one of St. Paul's oldest and largest neighborhood festivals. This year's festival is July 26-29, with events held in the North End neighborhood. There is still time to get involved in the various activities. Complete information is at www.ricestreetfestival.com, with links to information on being in the parade, working as a festival vendor, running the Rice Street Mile or performing at the talent show.

Fred Huerta is festival director. He can be contacted at fred-huerta@comcast.net or by calling 651-285-4101.

Events start at 7 p.m. Thursday, July 26 with the annual Old Timers Softball Game. Teams from Rice Street bars will face off at the Rice and Lawson ballfields at Rice Recreation Center. The game is free and the public is invited.

At dusk on Friday enjoy a free Movie in the Park at Rice Recreation Center/Washington Middle School. Come and watch

the movie "Night at the Museum." Before the movie, bring the kids to the Radio Disney van for games, a dance contest, prizes and giveaways.

On Saturday, July 28th there will be food and craft vendors between noon-8 p.m. in the Capital Bank parking lot, 1020 Rice St. Lonetti's Lounge nearby will offer free games of badda bingo that afternoon. The sixth annual talent show will also be held between noon-4 p.m.

That afternoon, there will also be the annual festival treasure hunt. Get the clues, look for a medallion and win a prize if you find it.

The Rice Street Mile is at 5:30 p.m. starting at Rice and Front, with men's and women's races. The parade kicks off at 6 p.m. and travels from Rice and Atwater to Rice and Arlington.

Events wind up at 6 p.m. Sunday, July 29 at the Klub Haus, 1079 Rice St. with the coronation of the new Miss Rice Street and Rice Street princesses, and the awarding of the Rob Linder scholarships.

Fireworks

Continued from page 7

St. Paul Fire Marshal Steve Zaccard said he is "always concerned" about fireworks. But his concerns center on use of fireworks, legal and illegal, not sales. The city has had no incidents of fires or explosions with fireworks tents. Nor can he recall violations of the fireworks code, except for a Midway Marketplace tent that had to be shut down because it was pitched in the wrong location.

Zaccard also said in his estimation, it would be safer to sell fireworks outdoors than indoors, if all applicable regulations are followed.

James could not cite examples of other outdoor sales where a 100-foot distance requirement is imposed. That and the difference between proposed local and national standards were enough to sway the Zoning Committee to reduce the distance.

City staff and Planning Commission members concede that fireworks can be a nuisance to neighborhoods. "It has a negative value and it has a shock value," said Commissioner George Johnson. But he also admitted that because Minnesota doesn't allow sales of fireworks that explode, regulating sales in tents doesn't take away the problems that roil neighborhoods before and after July 4th.

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Rock-Tenn power debate continues as energy sources reviewed

By JANE MCCLURE

How Rock-Tenn and possibly other West Midway industries should be powered in the future is a topic that will be debated for the next several months, as studies of potential new energy sources for the Rock-Tenn paper recycling plant continue. The Rock-Tenn Citizens Advisory Committee will be appointed this month. Its creation came about as a result of legislation that also provides \$4.5 million for studies of a steam and energy generation facility for Rock-Tenn and possibly other West Midway businesses and industries.

More than 100 people filled a Hamline University classroom May 29 to learn more about the legislation, a Green Institute study of biomass fuel options for Rock-Tenn and the timeline for the plant's conversion from steam power to a new source. When the new Xcel Energy High Bridge plant goes online and the old plant shuts down in the weeks ahead, Rock-Tenn will lose its steam power. The steam is delivered via a line that runs along the Canadian Pacific Railroad and Ayd Mill Road.

Losing steam power means firing up plant boilers that date from the 1960s to burn natural gas or fuel oil. Rock-Tenn recently went through a Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) permitting process to use the boilers. Emission tests on the boiler smokestacks will be done in the months ahead. But those boilers are only considered an interim step before a permanent new source of energy is found. Without a new source of energy, Rock-Tenn could close and 500 jobs could be lost.

Many area residents are worried about the possibility that refuse-derived fuel, which is made from garbage, could be used to

keep the plant operating. Questions are being raised about the potential for hazardous emissions that garbage burning could generate. A group calling itself Neighbors Against the Burner (NAB) has formed and will hold a meeting to discuss toxic emissions from refuse-derived fuel burning at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 19 at Macalester College's Kagin Commons Ballroom.

Recalling the battles over Hennepin County's garbage burner in downtown Minneapolis, Minneapolis resident and long-time environmental activist Leo Cashman said that burning refuse-derived fuel is a public policy issue for the entire city. He said it should be a community decision, not Rock-Tenn's, to decide whether or not to burn refuse-derived fuel.

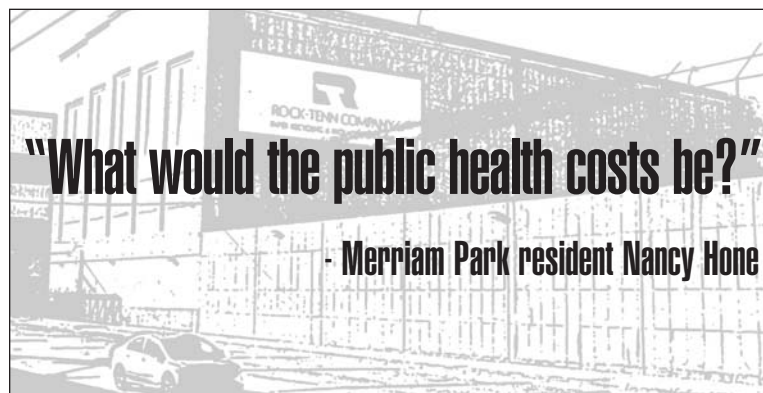
Emissions from burning of refuse-derived fuel are a worry. "What would the public health costs be?" said Merriam Park resident Nancy Hone.

Public health would be studied as part of an environmental impact statement (EIS) study once a fuel source or sources and technology are selected, said University of Minnesota economist Steve Taff. He was on a panel of experts at the May 29 forum. But Taff also said it's "striking" how such studies can gloss over what are important moral issues in debates like the one over Rock-Tenn.

Burning refuse-derived fuel does mean burning what goes into your garbage, said Professor Gurusamy Ramachandran, of the University of Minnesota's Department of Public Health. That raises concerns about items ranging from plastics to heavy metals, and the volatile organic chemicals those generate. But he also pointed out that emissions can be con-

trolled so that most health concerns are addressed.

One question that came up is whether the studies will include a look at the Hennepin County garbage burner and its emissions. That will be done. The studies will also include a look at wind and solar energy options, as well as biomass and refuse-derived fuel.



Senator Ellen Anderson was lead author on the legislation which provides funding for Rock-Tenn studies and sets up the citizen advisory committee. "We've heard many concerns about refuse-derived fuel, and we need to get the best objective information we can," she said.

While saying she isn't going to defend the use of refuse-derived fuel, Anderson said she left it in the legislation at the request of the city, the St. Paul Port Authority and Rock-Tenn. "The city and Rock-Tenn believe it needs to be on the table," Anderson added that it is her intent to keep Rock-Tenn operating while providing the most environmentally beneficial technology.

Of the \$4.5 million, \$500,000 goes to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to identify and restore a Twin Cities area site where ecological restoration is needed. The bio-

mass produced by this restoration would be available for burning at a steam plant serving Rock-Tenn. Anderson said that could provide a couple years' worth of biomass that could be used to produce energy.

Rock-Tenn General Manager Jack Greenshields and St. Paul Port Authority Vice President Lor-

rie Louder said they appreciate the fact that the legislation doesn't rule out refuse-derived fuel. "We're going to look at all alternatives for fuel for Rock-Tenn and it's important that everything be on the table," Louder said.

Greenshields said the goal is to find a fuel source close to the economics of the steam power Rock-Tenn has used since the 1980s. The company doesn't want to rely on fossil fuels over the long term because of the volatile of prices.

Rock-Tenn is working with the Port Authority and District Energy to identify a new fuel source or mix of sources for a new steam generation facility. A fuel source or sources won't be identified until early 2008, said Ken Smith of District Energy. Identifying the fuel source or sources then launches a series of detailed environmental studies and preliminary engineering work.

Discussion currently centers on the idea of a flexible-fuel steam generation plant, which could use a range of fuels, Smith said. "It could use a range of fuels."

A new steam generation facility would not be up and running until late 2011, according to Smith. The goal is to develop a facility that can also generate energy for other West Midway businesses and industries.

Rock-Tenn is the state's largest paper recycler. It uses enough steam in a year to power all of the neighborhoods around the plant, said Carl Nelson of the Green Institute.

The Green Institute released a study this spring to provide more information about various sources of biomass that could be used at Rock-Tenn. The study focused on costs and long-term supplies of biomass materials including forest residue, urban wood waste from trees in the Twin Cities, grasses, oat hulls and corn stover. The Green Institute didn't study refuse-derived fuel because that has been studied in the past, Nelson said.

Costs of biomass collections, storage, processing and transportation were considered. The study for that currently says there is no single biomass source that could meet Rock-Tenn's energy needs, but that could change over the long term.

Further studies would be needed to determine what technology should be used to convert biomass into steam energy and what the pollution controls would be needed.

Rock-Tenn would need about 100,000 semi-truckloads of biomass materials each year to keep operating. That is as much if not slightly more wood than is used by District Energy to heat and cool downtown St. Paul.

Deaf school

Continued from page 9

to purchase the building. So, they turned to Nonprofits Assistance Fund (NAF), which provided the funds they needed.

Phil Hatlie, a NAF loan officer, says they've done over 50 loans with charter schools in the last six or seven years.

"We're very familiar with charter schools, how they're run, and their needs," he said.

"Understanding charter schools is a big step. MDS has shown ability in the past to manage cash very well. They have the ability to pay us back."

It's important for NAF to help nonprofits because that makes a healthy community.

"It's necessary to help nonprofits be stable," said Kate Barr, NAF executive director. "In turn, they go out and serve the community in all the ways they do."

In January 2007, the new school opened with a staff of 45 including 22 teachers. Nearly 80 DHH attend from 24 school districts across the metro area and western Wisconsin.

"The challenge was to find a school that fits our budget," said Ewan. "We didn't have 100 or 200 deaf students. We had to keep in mind which building fit our needs. This building had a lot to offer."

Also, in January 2007, the school got a \$330,000 federal grant to design and build a me-

dia center with an amphitheater, computers, and television studio.

"We put a heavy emphasis on literacy," said Ewan. "We want to have a library where students have access to many books and print things. Students depend on visual learning for instruction."

I'm really excited to have the media center ready for fall."

MDS has also started a capital campaign to raise \$1 million to build a regulation high school gymnasium.

"Students are already using the gym now for PE, but in the future we hope to use the gym for other events after school by students and also by the community for other uses," said Ewan. "In the previous two buildings, we had no gym. We had to go to the YMCA. We had to have transportation time involved, now we don't."

Ewan has many dreams for MDS.

"I'm hoping to see the

school continue to grow and to get more students," she said. "I also hope that we become a model school in a natural way. It's amazing to see a deaf charter school succeed. We see so many schools struggle. It's nice to see us come this far."

While next year Novella plans to attend Minnesota Academy for the Deaf, in Faribault, where she will stay in a dorm during the week, she treasures her memories at MDS.

"I feel good here, and my friends are here," she said. "It's a good match for me. The deaf world is so small. I feel special in my group. There are other people around me who are deaf and know how it feels. We have the same experiences."

MDS has changed Novella's life.

"I'm strong, more independent, and feel more confidence in myself," she said. "I'm deaf, but I know I can do anything."

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In Our Community

Continued from page 11

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The Minnesota Highway Safety Center will be offering a 55+ Driver Improvement Course on the following days: June 18th & 20th (8 Hr Full Course), 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Como Sr. High School, 740 Rose Ave W.; June 23rd (4 Hr Full Course), 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., MN Senior Federation, 1885 University Ave., Suite 190, Saint Paul.

The Driver Improvement course is open to the public; however, pre-registration is requested. A MN Highway Safety & Research Center certified instructor teaches this class. The fee for the four-hour refresher course is \$18.00 and the eight hour course is \$20.00.

For more information or to register call TOLL FREE 1-(888)-234-1294 (be sure to include the 1 before the 888 when publishing

this number). Persons age 55 and older who complete the course qualify for a ten percent discount on their auto insurance premiums for three years, according to Minnesota law. First time participants must complete two four hour sessions. Repeat persons are required to take a four hour refresher course.

Hour Dollars holds July 18 orientation

Hour Dollars Orientation / Informational Meeting July 18th, 7-8:30 p.m. at the Hamline Park Building, 1564 Lafond (corner of Snelling and Lafond)

Hour Dollars is a service exchange program for residents of St. Paul and surrounding suburbs. As an Hour Dollars member, you earn hours by providing a service to another member and receive services from any other member in this grassroots organization. Exchanges are based on time not money, one hour of service will earn you one hour of credit to use. Contact us at 651-644-9759 or www.hourdollars.org.

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Suddenly, it's summer. The first fledglings are testing their wings, and baby cottontails are growing into their big back feet. Female monarch butterflies flutter lazily over the lush foliage looking for milkweed plants to lay their eggs on. And as sure as June bugs clattered into porch lights in May, Mayflies will pile up under streetlights in June.

The summer flotilla of sparkle-green paddleboats are out on Como Lake with the mallard and woodduck hens and ducklings. Bridal parties and recent graduates flock to Como Park's landmarks to have their photos taken. On summer nights, live



Photo information: Sue Crocker (left) and Emily Jaklitsch (right) were two of the 24 hardworking volunteers at the first Como Woodland Garlic Mustard Pull on May 22. Volunteers from EcoPartners, Como Park High School, and the Como Woodland Advisory Committee helped remove invasive garlic mustard from a test plot in a Como Park woodland. (Photo by Matt Schmit)



Nature in the City

By DEB ROBINSON

Along with the sights of summer comes a spoiler

music and barn swallows dance over the water from the Lakeside Pavilion. Soon the basswood trees will bloom and their intoxicating scent will slow down the speed-walkers to an amble.

All the wonderfully familiar sights, sounds, and smells of early summer suddenly unfolded in profusion. But an unfamiliar sight (and smell) also unfolded across the forest floor of a Como Park woodland: garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*).

Many volunteer hours have gone into removing invasive buckthorn trees from Como Park woodlands over the last six years. Unfortunately, that wasn't the end of the battle. Garlic mustard, listed as a "prohibited noxious weed" by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, is just the latest introduced plant to threaten the native flowers of our shady woodlands.

It's shocking how quickly garlic mustard colonized both disturbed woodlands and established native woodlands alike. This Eurasian species was brought here as a food source. It wasn't until the mid 1990's when Midwestern resource managers and horticulture agents started noticing the menacing potential of this innocent looking salad green. But their warnings didn't spread as fast as the garlic mustard did.

Garlic mustard is a biennial (two-year life-span), and it prefers cool temperatures and moist conditions. A long dry spell

in the heat of mid-summer can kill the first year garlic mustard plants. But the garlic mustard plants that survive to the second year will flower and drop thousands of seeds before the heat of July sets in.

Back in 2001, native flowers like jack-in-the-pulpits, trout lilies, Solomon's seal, and nodding trilliums were still present in Como Park's woodlands. Within six years garlic mustard had spread into the shady forests and started to outcompete those same native wildflowers. How did this newcomer take over so quickly?

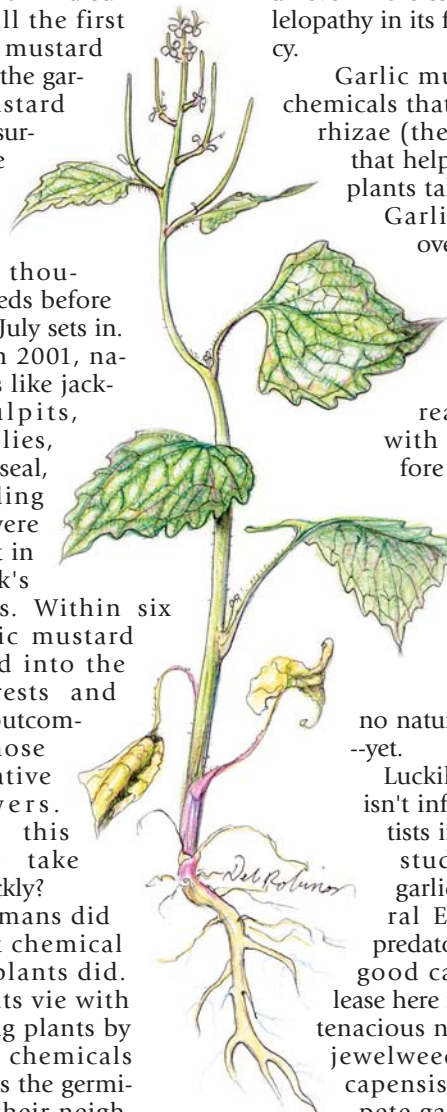
We humans did not invent chemical warfare - plants did. Many plants vie with neighboring plants by producing chemicals that inhibit the germination of their neighbors' seeds. However, garlic mustard employs

an even more cunning form of allelopathy in its fight for supremacy.

Garlic mustard produces chemicals that kill soil mycorrhizae (the fungal partners that help many species of plants take up nutrients).

Garlic mustard also over-shadows native spring flowers because garlic mustard stays green through the winter. It is ready to shoot up with new growth before the native plants have even come up out of the ground. And, because garlic mustard is not native to our continent, it has no natural predators here --yet.

Luckily, garlic mustard isn't infallible. Bio scientists in Switzerland are studying which of garlic mustard's natural European insect predators would make a good candidate for release here in America. Some tenacious native plants, like jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*), can out-compete garlic mustard on their own. And we have the tenacious volun-



(Illustration by Deb Robinson)



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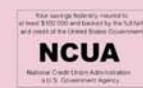
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