



monitor

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



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Midway author writes travel book

Rock-Tenn plans encounter groundswell of opposition

By JANE MCCLURE

Plans to keep Rock-Tenn in operation by burning refuse-derived fuel are meeting a groundswell of opposition from area residents. But a consultant to the newly formed Neighbors Against the Burner (NAB) is claiming that burning other forms of biomass as fuel could also have environmental hazards.

NAB had its first major public meeting June 19, attracting almost 150 people to Macalester College. Speakers discussed the future of the West Midway paper recycling plant and how its future fuel choices could affect air quality in the surrounding neighborhoods.

"Burning RDF is landfilling in the sky," said Alan Muller, who leads the environmental activists group Green Delaware. Green Delaware has successfully fought garbage incinerators in that state. Muller said area residents need to

be concerned about emissions and the cumulative, long-term health impacts of burning RDF.

But Muller was also skeptical about the emissions generated by burning various forms of biomass, an idea that has been more palatable for some area residents. Biomass energy sources including lumber industry wood waste, corn stover, oat hulls and grasses are being studied as part of the Rock-Tenn project.

"I wouldn't want a biomass burner any more than I would want a garbage burner," he said. Muller said biomass is misrepresented as a "clean" fuel and suggested it might make more sense for local and state government to subsidize Rock-Tenn's burning of fuel oil and natural gas instead.

Rock-Tenn will lose its source of steam power later this summer. Fuel oil and natural gas will be used to power the 99-year-old plant, but company officials don't

see that as an economically viable choice over the long term. Rock-Tenn, the St. Paul Port Authority and District Energy are studying options that include burning refuse-derived fuel or RDF, various types of biomass or a combination of fuels. One idea is to build a large power plant, much like the District Energy plant that heats and cools downtown St. Paul. That plant burns wood waste.

The idea of burning RDF has residents of neighborhoods around the Rock-Tenn concerned. RDF is produced by processing garbage into a fluffy-looking substance. Garbage from Ramsey and Washington counties is already processed into RDF at a plant in Newport and used by power plants around the state.

Burning RDF means burning substances that go into household and some commercial garbage. That is raising fears about what could be in plant

emissions if RDF is burned at Rock-Tenn.

Rock-Tenn is losing its steam power because the coal-burning Xcel Energy High Bridge Plant is being replaced with a natural gas-burning plant. Burning natural gas doesn't produce steam as a byproduct. The change came about because of concerns about burning coal and the emissions that it produces. The irony, said NAB Member and Merriam Park resident Nancy Cohen, "is that we could be facing a very, toxic, very hazardous garbage burner."

"We think there's a better way to go," said Cohen.

Promoting increased recycling and a goal of generating zero waste, as well as use of renewable energy such as wind and solar power, are more desirable solutions, Muller and several other speakers said.

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Rice Street Festival celebrates "A Family Affair"

By JANE MCCLURE

The 97th annual Rice Street Festival theme, A Family Affair, is appropriate on a number of levels. Not only does the North End's commercial street have many family-owned businesses, it also reflects the family-oriented activities planned for July 26-29.

"We want everyone to come to Rice Street and celebrate with us," said Fred Huerta, festival director. Huerta's own family owns a longtime neighborhood business. Tony's/H & H Upholstery.

Huerta said the annual festival, which is one of St. Paul's oldest neighborhood festivals, salutes longtime businesses and the families who run them. It also is meant to put a spotlight on the efforts to revitalize Rice Street and the surrounding neighborhood.

This year's festival moves many activities off of the Rice/Lawson ball fields and onto Rice Street, as a way to get neighborhood businesses more involved. Detailed festival information is available at www.ricestreet-festival.com or by calling Huerta at 651-285-4101.

The first event is Old Timers Softball, at 7 p.m. Thursday, July



These are just two of the types of smiles that you can expect to see at the Rice Street Parade on Saturday, July 28. The Rice Street Festival runs July 26-29. Detailed festival information is available at www.ricestreetfestival.com or by calling Fred Huerta at 651-285-4101.

26 at Rice/Lawson ball fields. This free event features teams sponsored by area bars.

The following evening, enjoy free activities for the kids. Radio Disney will be at Rice Recreation Center/Washington Middle School Friday, July 27 with a dance contest, games and prizes.

At dusk, Comcast and St. Paul Parks and Recreation will present the movie, A Night at the Museum with Ben Stiller.

Attend the royalty fashion show and silent auction fundraiser at 7 p.m. Friday, July 27 at The Klub Haus, 1079 Rice St. Social hour is at 6 p.m. with a cash

bar and hors d'oeuvres. The candidates will model apparel from Mainstream Fashion Boutique of Apple Valley and Rhinestones and Ruffles of Roseville. There is a charge for this event.

All day July 28-29 is the annual Rice Street Festival softball tournament, which was launched years ago by the late Tim Sager and his family. The Sagers owned Tin Cup's restaurant for many years. The tradition continues with men's and women's teams playing in a double elimination event at Rice/Arlington fields. Entry fee is \$130 and teams are guaranteed at least three games. Prizes are given for first, second and third place teams. Registration forms are at the Rice/Arlington batting cages, 1500 Rice St. Or call 651-558-2255.

Visit Rice Street starting at noon Saturday, July 28 for sidewalk sales and other activities. Food and craft vendors will be in the Capital Bank parking lot, 1020 Rice St. The bank also hosts the sixth annual talent show at noon. Winners receive cash prizes. Entries are on the festival web site and are due July 15.

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monitor

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Monitor in a Minute

Como Park District plan reviewed by city

The Como Park District 10 Plan will be the topic of a St. Paul City Council public hearing at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 18 at City Hall. The hearing is one of the last steps before the plan is adopted by the City Council. It then becomes part of the city's comprehensive plan and will be used to guide future city land use and spending decisions. It includes recommendations on housing, business growth and development, public infrastructure and parks and open space.

Any debate on the plan is expected to center on the issue of where the St. Paul Police Department Mounted Patrol stable is located. The Planning Commission debated that point at length before recommending approval of the plan June 15.

At issue is whether locating the stable in Como Park itself would be a violation of the city's charter language on no net loss of park land. This requirement is meant to protect park land from being used for non-park purposes or from being sold for private development. The charter language was approved by St. Paul voters more than two decades ago.

The plan states a desire for more police presence in the neighborhood and includes language about the police stables possibly relocating to the community. The police horses are currently stabled in Washington County and the Police Department would like a stable in St. Paul.

Planning Commissioner Yung Kang Lu tried to strike language about the stable from the plan, saying it is inconsistent with the charter language. But Commissioner Richard Kramer said the plan language doesn't necessarily mean putting the stable in the park per se. He said the plan doesn't rule out other loca-

tions in or near Como Park neighborhood.

"We don't make the 'no net loss' decisions," Kramer said. Those decisions are instead left to the Parks and recreation Commission and City Council.

Other commissioners disagreed, saying they are concerned that plan language not imply that park land should be taken for police purposes. "I feel we have an obligation to preserve green space in the city," said Commissioner George Johnson.

The motion to remove the stables language from the plan ultimately failed on a voice vote, which prompted some horsing around by the commission.

"The neighs have it," quipped Commissioner Steve Gordon.

"Don't nag me," Planning Commission Chairperson Brian Alton replied.

"Can we proceed to the 'mane' motion?" said Kramer.

Commission approves Park Bank parking

Expansion plans for Park Midway Bank's St. Anthony Park bank took another step forward June 29 as the St. Paul Planning Commission unanimously approved a conditional use permit that will allow shared parking for the new bank at 2300 Como Av.

The Planning Commission decision is final unless it is appealed to the St. Paul City Council. With support from St. Anthony Park Community Council and no community opposition, an appeal doesn't appear likely.

The bank is building a new building at Como and Doswell. A two-story brick building is going up where a smaller commercial building once stood. The new bank building replaces leased space less than a block away.

In January 2006 the Planning Commission granted the new bank building itself a conditional use permit and parking variance of three spaces. The original permit is needed because the bank will have three drive-through

lanes. All drive-through uses in St. Paul – banks, restaurants, pharmacies, dry cleaners and other businesses – are required to have the permits.

The second permit OKed June 29 allows the bank to share parking with nearby Luther Seminary. The school has a parking lot at 2481 Como Av. that will have seven spaces earmarked for bank employees. This second conditional use permit parking agreement will allow the bank to build out the rest of its space without having to seek a second variance.

Bank president Rick Beeson told the Planning Commission Zoning Committee that the Luther Seminary spaces will be subject to a ten-year lease agreement between the seminary and the bank.

Luther Seminary is one of the few St. Paul institutions of higher education that has more than enough off-street parking spaces on its campus. All of the city's colleges, technical schools, universities and seminaries have to have their own conditional use permits on file with the city. The permits dictate campus boundaries, new building heights and setbacks and the amount of off-street parking each campus must provide.

Asian Cuisine faces \$1,500 license fine

A Rice Street restaurant faces a \$1,500 fine for violations of its licenses. Problems there are also leading to new regulations on restaurants that operate as nightclubs. The St. Paul City Council imposed the fine on Asian Cuisine, 945 Rice St., on June 20. The business has had four city license violations in a four-month period in late 2006 and early 2007. The latest violation centered on alleged violations of after-hours display and consumption of alcohol, failure to maintain a video surveillance camera for the parking lot and premise exterior, failure to provide tapes to the St. Paul Police Department and failure to provide security. The business has

several conditions on its licenses.

In January 2007 undercover police visited Asian Cuisine and observed 150-175 people drinking and dancing after 1 a.m. Violations of the businesses' licenses were noted.

But at a recent hearing before an administrative law judge, the judge indicated that the city was unable to make a case against all of the violations alleged and suggested a lower fine. But city licensing staff disagreed with that recommendation.

One concern North End residents and city officials have raised is that while Asian Cuisine is licensed as a restaurant that can sell beer and wine with food, it is operating at times more like a nightclub. The issues at Asian Cuisine and other businesses mean that the city is looking more closely at how it limits entertainment licenses. A public hearing on possible limits was set for July 5, after deadline for this issue of the Monitor.

Recycling business can open with restrictions

A North End metal recycling business can open with restrictions, the St. Paul City Council decided June 6. SCI recycling was granted a license for the premises at 240 Sycamore St., just off of Rice Street.

The business is moving in to a location with a checkered history as one past occupant had violations and run-ins with city officials. District 6 (North End-South Como) Planning Council initially voted against the business, then agreed to work with the new owner.

The business needs a recycling processing center license to collect scrap metal and motor vehicles at this location. Other than having batteries removed, vehicles will not be processed here. Auto parts will not be sold. Vehicles and other scrap metal purchased by the business will be placed in covered containers and then taken to another SVI facility in Anoka for processing.

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Rice St. community rolls up sleeves for 'Development ABCs'

By JAN WILLMS

Community members attending the second in a series of development workshops July 12 will get to play with blocks.

The workshop, "Development ABCs," will give neighbors an opportunity to actually take blocks of wood and build developments on a map, according to Jonathan Sage-Martinson. He is executive director of Sparc, an organization designed to create and maintain healthy, affordable and sustainable neighborhoods by improving residential and commercial vitality in the Hamline Midway, South Como and North End neighborhoods of Saint Paul.

Sage-Martinson said the July 12 meeting will be a very hands-on opportunity for those attending to get an idea of what they would like to see constructed in the Rice Street area.

"Development software will be available to give an estimate of financing," Sage-Martinson added. "For example, if people create a two-story building, but the land cost is too high, there could be a shortfall of \$2 million. But if they add two more stories of housing, maybe the project will work. Developers will be on hand to provide feedback."

The initial workshop, held June 21, had about 20 people in attendance and was designed to share ideas about transit, housing and commercial development along Rice Street.

The third meeting, scheduled for Aug. 2, will explore the opportunities and challenges of moving forward, with a panel of experts present.

"We will have bankers and developers come in and give us feedback," Sage-Martinson said. He said that by this meeting, the community would be able to have an idea of the kind of develop-

ment it would like to see.

The meetings are scheduled from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the St. Bernard's Parish Center, 147 W. Geranium Ave. They are being sponsored by Sparc, the District 6 Planning Council, the City of Saint Paul and the Corridor Housing Initiative (CHI).

The ideas and the workshops for community involvement are a part of the Rice Street CHI. It was first started in Minneapolis by the Center for Neighborhoods to look

get more specific and initiate more development on Rice Street," he said.

Sage-Martinson said that in 2004, the community finished a comprehensive plan for the neighborhood, calling for diversity of housing types and increased attention on revitalizing Rice Street.

"In 2005, the community followed up with a smaller plan and 40-acre study for Rice Street," he said. That plan called for infill development for two proposed ar-

new Rondo Library.

"This was community-initiated, infill development, with a new type of housing," Sage-Martinson said. The Winnipeg, as the project is called, will break ground in September of this year and is expected to be completed in August 2008. It is a mixed-use development and features 56 units of workforce rental housing and 6,000 square feet of commercial space to be built on the corner of Rice Street and Winnipeg Avenue. The new

Rice and Wheelock.

"This process gets the community vision out there first and up front," Sage-Martinson said. "Things can move faster, it is easier for the developer and the neighborhood's voice is much stronger."

He said CHI brings in a facilitator for the community meetings. Ann Forsyth from the Design Center at the University of Minnesota is participating, and a development consultant is available to run numbers.

"We have announced these community workshops through local churches, the District 6 newsletter and the newspaper community events calendar," Sage-Martinson said. "Notices have been posted in the library, and we have a Hmong intern who has been talking to the Hmong centers in the neighborhood."

He said the community has already rallied and is making a big difference with the appearance of Rice Street.

"There are new sidewalks, lanterns, flower baskets and landscaping," he said. "A dozen businesses have done façade improvements."

One of the businesses that has done a great deal of improvement is Ace Auto Parts, a long-established business on Rice Street.

Barb Weyandt, co-owner, said they built a brand new facility after their business suffered a fire.

"Our customers have returned after the fire and some rebuilding," she said. "We are at the southern end of the street, and we have been getting busier."

Weyandt, who has been involved with the community workshops, said she hopes Rice Street can attract businesses that would complement her own.

"I see housing coming, and it sure would be nice to see some business development," she added.



Jonathan Sage-Martinson of Sparc said the July 12 development workshop will be a very hands on opportunity for those attending to get an idea of what they would like to see constructed in the Rice Street area. (Photo by Terry Faust)

at innovations in the community.

"The purpose of CHI is to give the community a voice in what kind of development it would like to see in its neighborhood," Sage-Martinson said. He said Como Avenue is doing a small area plan process for St. Anthony Park with its CHI.

"We are using it as a way to

eas, Sycamore and Rice and Winnipeg and Rice.

Sage-Martinson said a new zoning code encourages and allows development of buildings like those built in the 1920s, with mixed use and built to the street, with parking on the side or rear.

Sparc acquired land at Rice and Winnipeg and brought in a partner, Legacy Management and Development, the builder of the

buildings will resemble those built in the 1920s.

Sage-Martinson said The Winnipeg was done without CHI.

He said that by using CHI for upcoming projects, the community organizations are hoping to find out what kind of development would work for other sites on Rice. He said the July 12 meeting will focus on sites at Rice and Sycamore, Rice and Jessamine and



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Is there anyone who doesn't know that smoking is bad for your health? I doubt it. Then why even write about it? Well, not everyone realizes why smoking is bad, how bad it is, and what can be done to help you quit.

Any use of tobacco products, whether smoking or chewing, activates sensors in your brain that respond to nicotine. Nicotine makes you feel better for a short period of time—it might help you feel energized, happy, and may reduce your appetite. But the problem is that the results only last for a short time, and then your brain craves more of the same stimulation. Nicotine is an addictive drug.

So when you smoke or chew, you are supplying your brain with an addictive—albeit exciting—drug. What else happens? While your brain might be happy, the rest of your body is being assaulted by noxious chemicals and poisons that cause tissue damage and put you at risk for disease.

Everyone associates lung cancer with smoking, and rightly so. Smoking is the primary cause of lung cancer, as well as other lung diseases such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis. However, other cancers are also associated with smoking—specifically cancers of the throat, mouth, bladder, pancreas, liver, cervix, stomach and colon.

In addition to cancer, smoking can lead to the development of cardiovascular disease. This means smokers are at increased risk for high blood pressure, strokes, and heart attacks.

Pregnant women risk premature delivery and low birth weight babies if they smoke while pregnant. Smoking also increases a woman's chance of having a miscarriage.

People who smoke are more likely to get respiratory infections (colds, bronchitis, pneumonia) than nonsmokers.

Children exposed to smoke are more likely to develop ear infections and asthma. And children who grow up in households with smokers are more likely to smoke themselves.

Not to mention that smoking costs a lot of money, turns your teeth yellow, makes you smell bad, and promotes wrinkles.

Cares and Cures

By JANE KILIAN, M.D.

Fall-out from smoking multi-fold

Enough bad news. The good news is that there are lots of tools available to help you quit smoking. In order for any of the tools to help, you need to want to quit. Even with help, it can be difficult. What can you expect if you quit?

Once again, the bad news first. Initially you might feel worse—you could develop a cough for a brief time. You may feel restless, agitated, and irritable. You might experience an increased appetite and insomnia. Enlist the help of your friends and colleagues to help you through the rough time. Withdrawal symptoms are usually worse during the first 3-4 days, but could last for several weeks. Many people who have successfully quit smoking say that they still think about smoking almost every day.

But the good news is that 20 minutes after your last cigarette, your heart rate and blood pressure improve. Carbon monoxide levels in your blood return to normal 12 hours after your last smoke. Within 2-3 months of quitting, your lung function and circulation improve. One year after quitting, your risk of coronary artery disease drops by half. And about 10 years after quitting, your stroke risk returns to that of a nonsmoker. Plus you will have more money in your pocket and you smell better!

If you quit before, and then started smoking again, do not be discouraged. The majority of people need to quit more than once in order to be free of tobacco. So a relapse back into tobacco in the past actually increases your chance of success the 2nd or 3rd time that you quit.

If you are ready to quit, and want some help, there are many resources available to you. Your physician can talk with you about the medications available to help you. Some of the medicines are nicotine replacement products, most of which are available over the counter. These include nicotine patches, nicotine gum, and nicotine lozenges. Nicotine nasal sprays and inhalers

are prescription items.

Other medications that help with cravings are prescription drugs in pill form. These work in various ways to decrease your cravings or to decrease your withdrawal symptoms.

Some people benefit from the use of acupuncture or hypnosis to help them quit smoking.

Part of what makes it difficult to quit smoking is that it becomes such an automatic habit. You are triggered to smoke in certain settings, or when you are with certain people. If you can identify your triggers, you might be able to lessen your automatic response to lighting up. For example, if you know that you always smoke in the car, put your cigarettes in the trunk or somewhere else you cannot reach while in the car. If you always have a cigarette after supper, go for a walk instead and leave your cigarettes at home. Again, if you can get encouragement from family and friends it is really helpful. There are web sites and telephone hotlines that can help as well (see resources listed below).

The sooner you quit the better: it doesn't get any easier with time. So why not pick a quit date this summer? Line up your resources for emotional support and see your doctor if you think you want to try medical intervention. Then when fall arrives the only smoke in your eyes will be if you are sitting downwind from a bonfire.

Have fun. Stay happy and healthy.

Quit smoking resources -

Hotlines: 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). 1-800-ACS-2345 (1-800-227-2345)

Internet: Google "quit smoking" and you will find many listings.

(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@aplacetoremember.com.)

"Daily Life in Bible Times" released...

Midway archaeologist illustrates new book for children

By JAN WILLMS

When Valerie Woelfel told her parents she wanted to be an archaeologist, they were concerned that there would be no money in the profession.

"But how many people are sitting on a street corner in Cyprus?" Woelfel asked, as she gave an interview from a small coffee shop in the village of Dhali.

She was talking about the recent book she has illustrated, "Daily Life in Bible Times." The book was written by another archaeologist, Dr. Pamela Gaber.

Woelfel was on her cell phone from the coffee shop, which she said gave her the best reception in the area.

"It's raining here," she said, as she spoke on a Sunday morning. "It hardly ever rains here—I'm not sure if it's an effect of global warming." She said elderly women in black were standing in the doorways, watching the rain.

Horns were honking, as a wedding party drove by. "It's the season for weddings," she said.

Woelfel is on one of her digs in Cyprus, at a site called Idalion. She said the village is an extension of the archaeological site. In July, she will be in the Ukraine. And later, who knows?

Her archaeological travels take her to Europe or North Africa or the Middle East.

"You go to a conference, and you're never sure where you will end up," she said. She received an e-mail the other day that simply asked "Can you go to Italy?" And she responded, "Yeah, sure."

These international dig sites have provided the subject matter for the book that Gaber and Woelfel collabo-

rated on.

Woelfel completed a degree in art from Augsburg, and later went on to get her archaeological degree from combined studies at the University of London and the University of Minnesota.

She said that although photos are shot at dig sites, and radar and other technology is used, drawings are still always needed. She also does cartoons of people who are working on a dig, and has had her illustrations in academic journals. "Even archaeologists find those kind of boring," she said. This has been her first attempt at illustrating a popular book.

Although the stories and pictures are written for children, describing life in ancient times, the book has become a favorite of adults.

"Everyone is curious about the same thing," Woelfel said. "What was someone's life like?"

Although the book was a compilation of information from around the globe, it all came together on Woelfel's



Midway resident Valerie Woelfel, on the right with the hat, consults with British archaeologist Victoria Coplan.

computer in her Midway townhouse.

"I worked out the glitches, and I passed it around." She and Gaber, who is a teacher as well as an archaeologist, self-published the book through Beaver's Pond Press in Edina. The book is available at Northwestern bookstores.

"We self-published because we didn't want a religious agenda," Woelfel said. "We wanted to tell about what life was like, and how the past was shared by Christians, Jews and Muslims. A lot of publishers wanted to cut that, so we didn't use them."

Woelfel, who has combined her love of art, archaeology and travel, comes back to the Midway to spend her winters in Minnesota.

"Our digs follow the school year," she said. "We have a lot of college and high-school age volunteers, as well as older people who are just interested in archaeology. I have worked with a rocket scientist and with farmers, and everyone brings their own element to a dig. They come from all over the world."

Woelfel, who survived a near-death experience when she was just 15, has always had a lively curiosity about new things. She was out riding one bitterly cold Minnesota evening and took a shortcut across a snow-covered field. Her horse, Nadihr, slipped and fell on Woelfel's leg, then took off in a panic. Woelfel had fallen in shallow water, was wet and could not stand. She did not expect to survive, but her horse returned. She managed to pull herself up on his saddle and make it safely home.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Could be Lowe's, Home Depot or Menard's...

Fight over home improvement store at Midway Center isn't over yet

By JANE MCCLURE

The fight over a proposed home improvement store at Midway Center isn't over, as University UNITED has vowed to appeal a June 29 St. Paul Planning Commission vote of approval to the St. Paul City Council.

The home improvement store, which would be located at the northwest corner of Pascal and St. Anthony avenues, and a proposal to build a new Walgreen's and Big Top Liquors buildings near Spruce Tree Drive have jump-started the complaints that Midway Center and other key University Avenue developments are being allowed to take shape in a piecemeal fashion. UNITED and area district councils have long been critical of large-scale developments done without master plans and consideration for the larger issues of regional traffic impacts, transit-oriented development, pedestrian access and the location of future light rail stations. The planned Central Corridor light rail line will have a stop near Midway Center, although its exact location hasn't been determined.

Two area district councils weighed in on the plans. Hamline Midway Coalition and Snelling-Hamline Community Council raised concerns about potential traffic congestion and asked for further studies. Those studies would include consideration of impacts on University and Snelling, and the possibility of connecting Ayd Mill Road to the Interstate 94 frontage roads. Hamline Midway Coalition said that the store design doesn't comply with community and city goals for transit-oriented development, and asked that the site plan be withdrawn.

It's unclear which home improvement retailer will eventually locate at the site. Home Depot was the original applicant for the project this spring but the application was changed a few weeks ago to have property owner Rein Midway Limited Partnership listed as developer. Paula Maccabee, attorney and consultant for Rein Midway, said the developers are continuing to work Home Depot and intend to have that retailer on the site.

Home Depot has hunted for a Midway location for many years. Several years ago the home improvement giant tried to build a store at the southwest corner of Lexington and University. The level of city financing sought at that time was a huge stumbling block. No public assistance is being sought for the Midway Center store.

Maccabee said a challenge for Midway Center site redevelopment is that the 4.8 acre property is considered small for a major retailer. Maccabee said that putting most of the store's parking on the roof is the way to make the project feasible.

The shopping center owners have worked to redevelop the site for more than a decade, Maccabee

said. "It's been an unbelievable challenge." Pollution from a nearby dry cleaning business had to be cleaned up. Then a series of development proposals came and went.

University UNITED, a coalition of district councils, businesses and neighborhood associations along University Avenue, is calling for a suspension of the home improvement store plans and other redevelopment ideas until a master plan for the shopping center is completed. That plan would include the former Metro Transit bus garage property west of the home improvement store site.

"We're certainly mindful of the need for development on this spot and others along University Avenue," said University UNITED Executive Director Brian McMahon. But UNITED believes that that project-by-project review of Midway Center redevelopment is contrary to the intent of pending zoning studies along University Avenue and the proposed Central Corridor light rail route.

Maccabee and several Zoning Committee members said they don't disagree with the need for a comprehensive plan for the Midway Center property. But they also raised concerns that a long planning process could hamper efforts to redevelop the property.

"It would be good to have a master plan but we've been trying to redevelop this site for more than 10 years," said Maccabee. She said getting the first piece redeveloped may be an impetus for further redevelopment.

McMahon said UNITED might not oppose a Home Depot or other home improvement retailer, but that it's difficult to respond to a site plan when there are questions about overall site development.

"The pitfalls of piecemeal development are painfully obvious to anyone who goes by the Lexington and University site," said McMahon. UNITED and a coalition of community groups fought unsuccessfully for a master plan for the southwest corner of that intersection, rather than approval of separate site plans for an ALDI grocery store, a TCF Bank, the new Wilder Foundation building and a senior apartment building.

"I would concur that we made mistakes at Lexington and University," said Planning Commissioner Carole Faricy. But in the case of Midway Center, Rein Midway doesn't own the former bus garage site. "The developer in this case doesn't own the entire property."

Rein Midway has tried to purchase the old bus garage property from Metro Transit and Metropolitan Council for several months but has been unable to agree upon a sales price.

Planning Commission approval of the home improvement store site plan is with three conditions:

* Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) must approve the driveway to the load-

ing area and the new public sidewalk proposed along St. Anthony Avenue.

* St. Paul Public Works staff must approve final technical details of the sewer system, including an easement for the proposed sewer.

* Department of Safety and Inspections staff must approve final details of landscaping and lighting plans.

The home improvement store would occupy almost all of the site, with a 122,000 square foot main floor area and 340 parking spaces on the roof. Twenty short-term parking spaces and a loading area would be at ground level, with a loading dock at the site's southwest corner. Patrons would enter the store at the northeast building corner, where there would be an entry plaza. The masonry and glass building would have a tower at its southeast corner.

An estimated 180 employees would work at the store.

The site would have two driveways on Pascal and a driveway for delivery vehicles only on St. Anthony Avenue. One drive would be onto a private street, Midway Drive, between the new store and the existing Midway Center.

The St. Anthony Avenue driveway issue has to be sorted

out by MnDOT and St. Paul Public Works. There are already two curb cuts on the old bus garage site. MnDOT wants only one curb cut on the entire St. Anthony side of the block.

Long-term, a share driveway for the two sites would be ideal but the City Attorney's Office indicated that could note a condition of approval for the current site plan, said Beach.

"These are separate parcels with separate owners," said Assistant City Attorney Peter Warner. The city cannot legally give access from one property owner top another.

Joseph Finley, an attorney for Rein Midway, said Metro Transit has an access easement with Rein Midway. One concern with redevelopment is that if the old bus garage site is also developed by a home improvement retailer, "it could be a problem. We couldn't have Home Depot giving Lowe's an easement. The whole deal falls apart if we have to give an easement to a competitor." Lowe's as well as Best Buy have been suggested as possible occupants of the property.

City staff recommended site plan approval, saying the plans do comply with the city's land use plans, a point Maccabee and Midway Chamber of Commerce President Lori Fritts agreed with.

Fritts pointed out that the site has been identified as one of the few in the Midway where new big box development would be appropriate.

Tom Beach, who oversees city site plan review, and Mike Klassen of St. Paul Public Works, reviewed the traffic study data. A Home Depot-commissioned study indicated that the store would generate 3,281 new daily trips and would increase afternoon peak hour volumes by less than 1.5 percent at the Snelling intersections with Concordia, St. Anthony and University.

Public Works has predicted that the home improvement store site and future redevelopment of the old bus garage site could bring development that would generate as many as 6,000 new daily trips to the area.

Snelling-Hamline Community Council resident Tim Mangan lives in the Snelling Park neighborhood just south of I-94. He said adding a Home Depot and more traffic would cause more traffic congestion and hazards for the small neighborhood bounded by Concordia, Pascal, Marshall and Snelling avenues. "We're already getting hammered left and right," he said. "My neighborhood is going to be devastated by the amount of traffic coming through."

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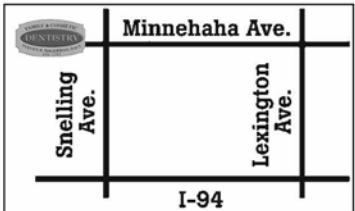
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Festival

Continued from page 1

Also starting at noon is the annual Tom Tschida Treasure Hunt. Tschida, who died in 2006, was a lifelong North End resident and active festival participant. A few years before his death he began a free medallion hunt in the North End neighborhood. Clues are posted every half-hour.

The parking lot between Lonetti's Lounge and the Klub Haus will be the site of other activities, including amateur wrestling. Lonetti's is

also hosting badda bingo.

The festival highlight is the annual parade and Rice Street Mile running race for men and women. The Rice Street Mile starts at Rice and Front at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, July 28. Runners travel one mile north to Arlington Avenue. Entry fee is \$12 if mailed by July 21 or \$15 on race day. Entry fee gets you a T-shirt and chip for timing purposes. The race is USATF and MDRA certified. Forms are available at area running shops or call Corey Swan at 612-920-2606.

The parade starts at 6 p.m. at Rice and Atwater, and continues to

Rice and Arlington. The parade entry cutoff date was July 5 but more entries will be taken if there is room. Fee information and forms are available on the web site. The parade is limited to 95 units.

This is the last year for the Saturday evening parade, said Huerta. The change was made a few years ago. In 2008 the parade will again be on the last Wednesday of July.

Parade grand marshal this year is Ted Natus of Hamernick's Decorating Center, a longtime neighborhood business.

The festival ends Sunday, July 29 with the crowning of the

2007/2008 Miss Rice Street and two Rice Street Princesses. The festival royalty have already enjoyed a whirlwind of activities, starting with a kickoff dinner in June at Major's Sports Café. The royalty candidates and reigning royalty also held a fund-raising car wash on June 23 and were to enjoy a tea party in mid-July.

The new Miss Rice Street and Rice Street princesses will be crowned at 6 p.m. Sunday, July 29 at the Klub Haus. Outgoing royalty Kelly Freiermuth and Sara Stam-schroer will crown a new queen and two princesses. The women

will represent Rice Street at area parades and festivals over the next year and will receive the Rob Linder Memorial Scholarship when their duties are completed in 2008.

The Miss Rice Street and Rice Street Princesses scholarships were initiated several years ago by the family of the late Rob Linder. Linder was an owner of Linder's Greenhouse and Garden Center, a longtime North End business leader and former St. Paul Winter Carnival Prince of the North Wind. The scholarships are now a program of North End Community Foundation.

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Hamline-Thomas intersection blooms

The intersection at Hamline and Thomas Avenues has a much-needed facelift. The boulevards are now home to 13 Accolade Elm trees, resistant to Dutch Elm Disease. New colored brick pavers replace the old black asphalt on the boulevards. New curbs and sidewalks replace old broken areas. Over 20 neighbors planted bright, beautiful flowers on the northeast corner, creating a warm sense of place and community for all who pass by.

The improvements to the intersection are a result of Emmy Vadnais' Leadership in Support of Neighborhood (LISN) project. The LISN is a program through Hamline University and the Hamline-Midway Coalition. The program teaches participants com-

munity leadership skills by assisting them in creating and implementing a project plan that enhances an aspect of the Hamline-Midway Neighborhood.

Vadnais, a resident in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood said, "There was a strong interest among neighbors and local business owners to improve the Hamline and Thomas intersection. Many felt that it had become unappealing, and I wanted to help give it a sense of warmth, safety and community."

Jane Prince, legislative aide to City Council member Jay Benanav, provided steadfast guidance to Vadnais, business owners, city workers, and volunteers who met for several months. Funding came from property and business

owners adjacent to the intersection with matching discretionary funds from Benanav. All of the property owners had to agree to improvements and pay their share of the cost of the project.

Thank you to all who contributed time, money, and support to help make these wonderful improvements manifest: Jay Benanav, City Council member; Jane Prince, legislative aide; Larry Lueth, Public Works; Greg Reese, Forestry; the businesses and property owners: Abby Lamberton, Boreal Yarns; Erika Schwichtenberg, Arie Kroeger, J&S Bean Factory; Norm Morse, Greg Kroiss, Peak Printing; Shawn Punjwani, Embassy Enterprises; Yassir, new owner of Super USA; The Butterfields; Joe Collins, Tom Gallagher,

Dadders Properties; Master Gardeners Stephanie Hankerson and Diane Dodge; The Hamline-Midway Environmental Group; Michael Jon Olson, Jun-Li Wang, The Hamline-Midway Coalition; Dan Loritz, Hamline University; LISN Fellows; and the many Hamline-Midway residents and volunteers.

Improvements will be celebrated on National Night Out, Tuesday evening, August 7, at the intersection of Hamline and Thomas Avenues. Attending will be business and property owners, and City of St. Paul workers who were essential in coordinating the improvements. Donations will be accepted to help offset the cost of the project. All are invited to celebrate this public event.



Hamline-Midway residents brighten the intersection by planting flowers donated from Hamline University.

Midway in a minute

Continued from page 2

Following a legislative hearing this spring, city licensing officials placed 14 operating conditions on the business. The City Council agreed to adopt all of the conditions. The conditions regulate everything from what can be collected on premises to the noise levels. Appropriate licensees and waste management plans are required, as well as a city staff-approved site plan.

SCI is owned by the Schwartzman family. Their company has owned metal recycling facilities in Iowa and Minnesota for more than a century. The company has sought a St. Paul location for many years. At the legislative hearing, company representatives explained their operation. They also described programs the metals recycling industry is setting up to deter the theft and sale of stolen items, such as copper piping, manhole covers, beer kegs and other items.

City hears proposal for new Walgreen's and Big Top

A proposal to tear down Midway Center's west building and erect new Walgreen's/Big Top Liquors stores was heard by the St. Paul Planning Commission Zoning Committee July 5 at City Hall. The Committee decided to lay over the parking variance and site plan, but did recommend approval, with conditions, of the conditional use permit needed for the drive-thru. The Planning Commission will act on the proposal as early as July 13.

The proposal needs a conditional use permit to allow for a drive-through window for the Walgreen's pharmacy, as well as a parking variance. Currently Midway Center is required to have 1,091 parking spaces. The city calculates the requirement by looking at the building area used at the mall for retail, office, the bowling alley, restaurants and the Rainbow supermarket. There are 1,110 parking spaces available. These parking numbers do not include the buildings along University Avenue, which have their own

separate parking spaces.

Under the Walgreen's-Big Top redevelopment plans, the total parking requirement would be 1,095 spaces. The total parking available is 931 spaces, or 85 percent of the zoning code requirement. That requires a variance of 164 spaces.

Before wrapping up its business as a separate district council July 1, Snelling-Hamline Community Council (SHCC) sent a letter stating opposition to any new major developments along University Avenue until the interim zoning regulations can be put into place.

"New development along the (Central) Corridor needs to be designed to support the coming University Avenue light rail line," a letter from the council stated. SHCC also stated that the Walgreen's/Big Top proposal appeared to have been pushed through to avoid having to com-

ply with the interim regulations.

University UNITED has also stated concerns about the piece by piece approach to redevelopment of Midway Center and other large sites.

-Compiled by Jane McClure

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THE LEADER IN IMPROVING OUR URBAN COMMUNITY

Linder's, City and local businesses partner to make Rice Street bloom

By SEAN BAILEY

Rice Street is looking just a little more floral this summer thanks to the Blooming Rice Street Program.

The part local business and city funded program has lined the stretch of Rice Street from Front road to Sycamore with hanging flowerpots. There are plans next year to stretch the flowers further north to Maryland after the construction is finished on Rice Street. The city has bought 68 baskets in all, including the baskets to be added after this year's construction.

Ward 5 Councilmember Lee Helgen said that the idea to spruce up Rice Street came from meetings with members of the community who felt like the area needed to be more welcoming. They used the Blooming St. Paul program—a program that put flowerpots and hanging baskets around downtown St. Paul as an inspiration.

Helgen said that a number of people have told him that the flowers have made the street more welcoming, "and that a lot more people are walking there."

Helgen said that the baskets were bought with his Neighborhood Investment Funds and also gave some of the NIF money to the local businesses for landscaping. The NIF though cannot pay for flowers—which is where Dave Linder stepped in.

Dave Linder is the owner of Linder's Garden Center, in St. Paul. He offered to sell flowers to the business owners along Rice Street at cost—meaning his business would receive no profit from the flowers.

According to Jennifer Dunn, assistant to Helgen, after contacting Linder, Helgen's office sent out letters asking Rice Street businesses to contribute to the flower fund, which bought the flowers



Ward 5 Councilman Lee Helgen and Dave Linder of Linder's Garden Center, check out one of the hanging baskets beautifying Rice Street. (Photo by Terry Faust)

and helps pay for the watering and maintenance of the flowers.

"The business strongly supported the program, they really were interested in making the area

nicer," Dunn said.

The flowers lining Rice Street should be in full bloom by July 29 when the Rice Street Festival parade begins.

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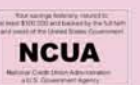
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Local Hamline Midway resident helps tourists travel back in time



Krista Finstad Hanson (Photo by Terry Faust)

By **NANCY HEDIN**

With gas prices topping three bucks a gallon many Minnesotans will be looking for interesting activities closer to home this summer. Hamline Midway resident Krista Finstad Hanson just made choosing those adventures a little easier.

Hanson recently published, *Minnesota Open House: A Guide to Historic House Museums*. The guide is organized by region and showcases nearly 200 homes. There are 37 sites in the Metro area alone. Hanson says, "My primary idea with this project was

to write a travel guidebook featuring the historic homes in Minnesota that are open to the public as museums, from log cabins in a city park to the grand Summit Avenue mansion in St. Paul of J.J. Hill."

The book was an effort that could best be described as a labor of love on Hanson's part; a labor of love that Hanson has been working on for 10 years. While planning a trip to southwestern Minnesota she noticed the tourist materials from the state tourism office did not match the local materials. She

particularly wanted to visit house museums. For this guide, she traveled the entire state (86 counties!) most often by herself but sometimes accompanied by her husband and co-photographer, Paul Hanson. The effort became, in large part, a family affair.

She describes visiting some museums with her daughter, Eva, now seven, still in a baby carrier slung from Hanson's shoulders. Her son, Wyatt, now five, also made many of the road trips to finish getting photographs of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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In Our Community

Viking Toastmasters' plan summer schedule

Viking Toastmasters have started their summer schedule. The meetings will be on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 7 p.m. The July 11 and 25, and August 8 and 22 meetings will be at the St. Paul Public Library, 1011 Rice Street.

Toastmasters is for you if you like to share ideas, work on your communication skills and give a boost to your self-confidence. Come and meet friendly people who care about each other, help each other and have fun doing it. For more information and to confirm the date you would like to attend call Frank Mayers 651-488-7945 (h) or Les or Nancy Anderson 651-735-3953. You may attend three meetings without charge.

Speaker series features local Midway author

The Hamline Midway History Corps Speaker Series will feature Krista Finstad Hanson with a book release party on Thursday, July 19, 7:00 p.m. at the Hamline Midway Branch Library, 1558 West Minnehaha - Lower Level Auditorium. Free

Come travel with Krista Finstad Hanson, author of Minnesota Open House: A Guide to Historic House Museums as she leads the audience to some great destinations. Discover grand mansions, main street homes, immigrant log cabins, pioneer villages, and forts that are all open to the public for tours. 191 historic house museums are located in her guidebook, recently published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

Jehovah Lutheran holds summer adult forums

Do you sometimes wonder if your work matters to God? The summer Adult Forums at Jehovah Lutheran Church, corner of Thomas and Snelling, address that



Rosetown opens 'Once Upon a Mattress'

Rosetown Playhouse will open Once Upon a Mattress, on Thursday, July 12 at 7 p.m. at the Como Lakeside Pavilion in Saint Paul. Over 50 area professionals and volunteers act, sing and dance or work backstage in this full-scale, live musical production. If you thought you knew the story of "The Princess and the Pea," you may be in for a walloping surprise! Carried on a wave of wonderful songs, this rollicking spin on royal courtship and comeuppance provides side-splitting shenanigans and hilarious family entertainment for all ages.

Once Upon a Mattress runs July 12 through July 14 and July 19 through July 21 on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 7 pm. All performances are at the wheelchair accessible Como Lakeside Pavilion, 1360 N. Lexington Parkway. Tickets are \$9, or \$7 for children (12 and under) and can be purchased by calling 651-792-7414 ext. 2 or online at www.rosetownplayhouse.org.

question through Bible study coupled with first person stories from people telling about their life journey's and work. The forums begin with coffee at 9 a.m. every Sunday in the lounge of the church.

On July 15 Grace Carlson, a member of Jehovah and teacher in the Minneapolis Public School system, will tell the "Stories of Slaves through the Songs they Sang." On July 22 Dr. Edie Jones, vice-president of church relations at Concordia University in St. Paul (CSP) will tell her story and her involvement with the Food Shelf at CSP. For a full list of speakers and more information please go to www.jehovahlutheran.com.

The wrap-up for the summer series, entitled Connecting Sunday to Monday - Centered in Christ, is August 26. Community members

are welcome to come and contribute to the conversation.

HM Elders hosts ice cream social July 31

Hamline Midway Elders will host a complimentary Ice Cream Social for neighborhood residents on the lawn of Hamline Methodist Church, corner of Englewood and Asbury, on Tuesday, July 31 from 6:30-8 p.m.

The event will be an anniversary celebration to commemorate six years of arranging services to keep seniors independent in their homes. Information about the organization will be available for interested seniors, their families, neighbors and potential volunteers. Call Beth or Monica at 651-

209-6542 if you would like more information about the event or the organization.

Programs, origami, author, stories at Library

Hamline Midway Library offers bedtime storytimes at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays. 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. Drop in for all or a part of any storytime.

Four Summer Reading Programs will be presented on Mondays at 2 p.m. Monday, July 18, will be Mad Science of Minnesota. Monday, July 23, will be Remarkable Reptiles. Monday, July 30, Bill the Juggler will entertain. Monday, August 6, will be the Woodland Puppets.

Children ages 7 and up can make dinosaur and monster origami on Wednesday, July 18, at 2 p.m. A second session featuring the same models will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, July 20. Registration is required. Call 651-642-0293 to register.

On Thursday, July 19, at 7 p.m. the Hamline Midway History Corps hosts Krista Finland Hanson who will talk about her recently published book, Minnesota Open House.

55+ Driver Improvement offered

The Minnesota Highway Safety Center will be offering a 55+ Driver Improvement Course on the following days: July 16th (4Hr Refresher Course), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., West Minnehaha Recreation Center, 685 W Minnehaha NE.; July 20th (4 Hour Refresher Course), 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., MN Senior Federation, 1885 University Ave.; July 20th (4 Hr Refresher Course), 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Twin City Co-Ops Federal Credit Union, 2025 Larpenteur W., Falcon Heights.

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. Driver safety, confidence and comfort are enhanced by utilizing the most up-to-date research in the field, including the latest visual scanning and steering techniques, anti-lock braking (ABS) skills, airbag information, driver distraction, road rage and new vehicle technology. The fee for the four hour refresher course is \$18 and the eight hour course is \$20. For more information or to register call TOLL FREE 1-(888)-234-1294.

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.

Volunteer at your local community food shelf

Keystone Community Services food shelf clients need cheerful volunteers to help them shop for food, stock shelves, and weigh items at the Midway and North End food shelves in Saint Paul. Volunteer shifts are available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older and should be able to lift 20 pounds and commit to one shift per week. Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator by calling 651-603-6650.

Nutrition and weaning topic of La Leche meeting

Nutrition and Weaning is the topic of the next meeting of Como-Midway La Leche League, to be held on Tuesday, August 14, at 7 p.m. Mothers-to-be, mothers, babies and toddlers are invited to attend. La Leche League meetings offer breastfeeding information and support through mother-to-mother helping. A lending library on a wide variety of related topics is also available. For meeting location or more information, call Heidi at 651-659-9527.

Ginkgo Coffeehouse presents dinner show

GINKGO coffeehouse will Presents its First Dinner Show on Saturday, August 11, 8 p.m. with Claudia Schmidt, Jan Krist and Kitty Donohoe. Tickets range from \$38-\$47.

Tickets are now on sale for the first dinner show ever produced at GINKGO coffeehouse. After nearly fifteen years of presenting performers from around the world, GINKGO offers its first dinner concert, with the talented trio The Biddies (Claudia Schmidt, Jan Krist and Kitty Donohoe)

The intimate setting created just for concerts is perfect for listening to amazing music such as this. In addition to the theater style setting, with no interruption by talking or coffee machines, this show is limited to half the normal concert capacity. Dinner or dessert is included, along with other special touches. This will be an evening to remember.

For more information, contact GINKGO coffeehouse, via e-mail, or 651-645-2647. Tickets may be purchased at GINKGO coffeehouse, or Homestead Pickin' Parlor in Richfield (612-861-3308)



Claudia Schmidt



Jan Krist



Kitty Donohoe

Author

Continued from page 9

houses. She toured the inside of 60-70% of the museums. The museums provided photos for use in the book when Hanson was not able to visit the museum herself. The effort was not only a family affair, but also a somewhat of a family tradition. She credits her Great Aunt Rie (short for Marie) for introducing her to what has become a passion visiting house museums. Great Aunt Rye, still the family historian, took Hanson and her sisters and cousins to visit historic homes in Wisconsin. Hanson wrote a guide for that state in 1999 which was published in 2000. She remembers that when she was a child she either wanted to be an English teacher or an architect. Even at age eight, Hanson could

be found reading Architectural Digest. Now Hanson is an English teacher and an amateur architectural historian with two published guide books to her credit. To me an ideal House Museum is a historic home that is fully furnished and is significant for its architectural integrity or is significant for a famous owner. This book includes fully furnished grand mansions and smaller homes, as well as county historical societies housed in historic homes. I also included living history museums which include several historic structures moved to one site, as well as pioneer log cabins and reconstructed military forts. Without exaggerating, Hanson knows her stuff. Without missing a beat she can recommend a

short day trip. A drive to Rochester gives a history buff the opportunity to see the Plumber House, the Mayowood Mansion, Kahler Mansion, Heritage House, and William Dee Log Cabin and George Stoppel Farmstead. A short jaunt east to Stewartville and you can take in the Richard W. Sears House. For a longer day trip Hanson recommends heading north to Little Falls home of the Charles A. Lindberg Jr. Boyhood Home and Interpretive Center. Linden Hill mansion and Burton-Rosenmaier House are also in Little Falls. Take a side trip to Upsala and visit the Axel Borgstrom House Museum which preserves artifacts from the beginnings of that small town and the Swedish heritage of the earlier settlers who founded the town.

For folks able to make an overnight excursion, Hanson recommends the North Shore. There's the five-story 39 room Glensheen Congdon Estate in Duluth, the Splitrock Lighthouse and Two Harbors Lighthouse both in Two Harbors, the Finland Minnesota Heritage site in Finland, the Lightkeepers Museum in Grand Marais, and the Grand Portage National Museum at the top of the state. Hanson says the guidebook was overdue. "This guidebook is essential, I believe, as such a complete list does not exist. Some of these sites are well known, but those run by county or other small historical societies are often not. The intent of this guidebook is to gather all Historic House Museums into one accessible text that would prove an invaluable resource to visitors." She describes herself as an ad-

vocate of historical preservation and states' money for maintenance of many these homes comes through entrance fees and donations of goods and labor from the local communities. Hanson is a member of the Hamline Midway History Corps and a fellow in the Leadership in Support of Neighborhood (LISN) program, a collaboration of the Hamline Midway Coalition and Hamline University. Hanson's neighborhood building project for the LISN program is creating walking tours of the Hamline Midway neighborhood. For more information about Hanson's book attend the History Corps Speaker's series. Hanson will be presenting Thursday, July 19, 7 p.m. at Hamline Midway Branch Library Auditorium. To learn more about the Hamline-Midway History Corps visit their website at www.hamlinemidwayhistory.org



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STAR projects under consideration include housing and commercial revitalization

By JANE MCCLURE

Area projects vying for 2007 Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) large grants and loans include several housing and commercial revitalization projects in Hamline-Midway, North End and South Como neighborhoods and a refrigerated ice sheet at North Dale Recreation Center.

Twenty-two project requests totaling \$4.796 million came in by the June 15 deadline. The Neighborhood STAR Board will take a bus tour of the project sites July 11 and interview applicants before voting on its recommendations. The St. Paul City Council will approve the requests in late summer or early fall.

A total of \$3,865,933 million in grants and \$930,344 in loan assistance is requested. The matches pledged total \$50,371,743.

Three requests came from Ward One, seven from Ward Two, two from Ward Five, three from Ward 6 and one apiece from

Wards Three, Four and Seven. Four are multi-ward projects.

The total number of applications is consistent with trends seen in recent years, of about two dozen large grant and loan applicants. In 2000 the Neighborhood STAR Board received a record 65 requests totaling \$65 million. Since then the number of requests has dropped. One trend seen over the past decade is that fewer small businesses seek the large grants and loans. Only five four-profit businesses and industries are applicants in 2007.

The largest request city wide, for a \$600,000 grant, is for a West Seventh Street clinic. The second-largest request, for a \$560,000 grant, is from St. Paul East Athletic Association, with support from recreation center booster clubs. The grant would help pay for three refrigerated ice rinks at the Groveland Park, North Dale and Phalen recreation centers. At a time when many St. Paul recreation centers

have scaled back or eliminated outdoor rinks, North Dale can still claim a high number of skaters. Many teams skating there are affiliated with Como Area Hockey.

But like other recreation centers with outdoor rinks, North Dale has suffered shorter-than-usual skating seasons due to warmer winters and unstable ice. Booster clubs sent letters in support of the application. The application contains a March letter from Mayor Chris Coleman, in support of the St. Paul East Athletic Association proposal and the idea of providing more activities for kids. Mayoral spokesperson Bob Hume said the letter doesn't mean the mayor is trying to circumvent the project review process.

"But the ice rinks are a priority for the mayor," Hume said.

Other Monitor area projects include:

*Hmong Minnesota Professional Building. The Vang Dental

Clinic at 365 University Av. seeks an \$111,500 grant to replace a fence, upgrade the parking lot and add signage, new landscaping and a bicycle rack.

*Friends of St. Paul Baseball. The Lexington-Hamline based group has previously raised money for improvements at Rice/Arington, Dunning and West Minnehaha fields. The group wants to install energy-efficient lighting at Dunning Stadium/Toni Stone Field. A \$111,500 grant is sought. The lighting would provide savings of \$53,179 over 25 years.

*Sparc's North End/Hamline Midway Neighborhood Business Investment Fund Program. Sparc is seeking a \$100,000 grant so that the community development corporation can provide small grants for commercial building facade improvements.

*Sparc's 2 Percent Matching Loan Program. Sparc is seeking a \$75,000 loan to continue a program that provides low-interest incentive loans to home owners.

The improvements targeted are for energy efficiency and for lead abatement.

*Sparc's Invest St. Paul Rehabilitation Program. Sparc is seeking a \$50,000 grant to provide a matching loan fund for at least five area landlords. The landlords would use the funds to make improvements to neighborhood rental housing stock.

*The Winnipeg. This Rice Street redevelopment project is centered on the site where the former Flower Hut is located. Plans call for a mixed use, multi-family development. Sparc is seeking a \$149,022 grant and a \$200,000 loan to provide an environmentally friendly green roof for the project.

*United Products headquarters. The longtime North End business would construct a new showroom and office at its Rice and Sycamore location using green technology. A \$200,000 grant and \$200,000 loan are sought.

Rock-Tenn

Continued from page 1

Most at the June 19 meeting said they don't want to lose Rock-Tenn and its 500 jobs. The com-

pany is the largest paper recycler in the state. Susan Hubbard, head of Eureka Recycling, said the goal should be a solution that saves the jobs yet does no harm to the environment.

The 2007 Minnesota Legisla-

ture earmarked \$4.5 million for further studies of Rock-Tenn's energy needs. Other studies have already been conducted, of the potential for using RDF and of the various biomass solutions available. Even at this stage, some of

those connected to the studies have indicated that more than one type of fuel may be needed for Rock-Tenn. There have also been discussions building a larger power plant that would serve more of the West Midway beyond

Rock-Tenn.

NAB was started by Merriam Park resident Nancy Hone, who has hosted many of the startup meetings in her dining room. She is vehemently against the idea of burning RDF, calling it "insane." NAB has grown to the point where it has started a web site and lawn sign campaign.

NAB is one of two community-based groups involved in Rock-Tenn issues. NAB's web site is www.neighborsagainsttheburner.org/

The other group, Rock-Tenn Interested Neighborhoods or RTIN, is made up of St. Paul district councils and Minneapolis neighborhood associations in the communities around the plant. The groups involved are from St. Anthony Park, Merriam Park, Desnoyer Park, Hamline Midway, Southeast Como and Prospect Park/East River Road. The district councils and neighborhood associations have a long history of working with Rock-Tenn on other emissions-related issues. RTIN has not taken a position on a future power source for Rock-Tenn but has instead facilitated discussion of the issues and distribution of information. It has a list-serv and other information available through St. Anthony Park Community Council's web site, at www.sapcc.org/

Over the past several months RTIN has hosted two previous community information meetings on Rock-Tenn issues. But some NAB members felt those meetings were too controlled and that those who wanted to speak out were constrained.

"People left those meetings feeling like this is a done deal," said Cohen. "Well, it's not a done deal."

A third group, the advisory committee that will have input into Rock-Tenn's energy decisions, is being formed by the St. Paul Port Authority with input from the district councils and neighborhood associations. That group will be appointed this summer.

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CIB budget vote goes to Mayor Coleman for final approval

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul's 2008-2009 Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) is in the hands of Mayor Chris Coleman's administration and city budget staff, following its adoption June 18 by the CIB Committee. The recommended budget does contain some projects for area neighborhoods. But others were shut out and one large-scale North End project, the Trillium nature preserve, had its funding slashed at the last minute when it was found to be ineligible for one of its two funding sources.

The adopted budget includes \$22 million in capital improvement bonds, \$12.4 million in federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects and \$11.1 million in municipal-state aid (MSA) funds. These funds are spread over two years.

This year's CIB process was characterized by many previously approved projects, such as \$3.6 million for the Jimmy Lee Recreation Center/Oxford Pool, coming in for completion funding, and by projects that had matching state or federal grants. Few new projects could be included and many neighborhood groups left empty-handed.

Several CIB Committee members said they felt their hands were tied. Eighteen-year CIB Committee Member Paul Savage, a St. Anthony Park resident, said the 2008-2009 process was "the most frustrating CIB cycle I've ever been through."

The committee spent much of its final meeting shifting projects to plug a \$971,000 budget hole, created by the last-minute need to complete the financing for the new West District Police Station. But because \$1.178 million previously allocated for the North End park

was found to be ineligible for federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, a few eligible projects were shifted from capital improvement bonds to CDBG funds to free up money to cover the shortfall. The CIB Committee was also able to add one housing rehabilitation project to the mix. A few projects were trimmed and others shifted between 2008 and 2009 to balance the budget.

But the recommendations don't include some key area projects, such as badly needed improvements at the Como Park Pool, which have been sought for several years by St. Paul Parks and Recreation. The pool's operating systems are so old, it's a question as to whether it can even fully operate from year to year. One parks staffer has described the pool's condition as being one where staff crosses its fingers before turning the equipment on every spring.

The pool needs \$4.2 million in renovations but was bumped from funding to make way for Jimmy Lee Recreation Center/Oxford Pool. Yet the Jimmy Lee/Oxford supporters told the CIB Committee at a June hearing that their \$19 million project actually needs more money because parts of the project as originally planned had to be cut.

The CIB recommendations does include replacement of the Wheelock Parkway Bridge near Rice Street, replacement of the Rice Street Bridge near Sycamore Street, Raymond Avenue traffic calming, an Albert Street bicycle route connection, and planning money for a new Central District Police Station.

Rice Street business owners and area residents lobbied hard for the police station planning funds. The area lost its district police station in 2003 when the new

police headquarters opened. Mike Remmers of Capital Bank spoke for bringing back a police presence to Rice Street, noting changing neighborhood demographics and the need to send a message that public safety is a priority.

The Como Park woodland classroom supporters were able to get \$40,000 in planning funds after seeing their large request turned down. But that irked some supporters of the Marshall Avenue landscaping and pedestrian safety project, who had been recommended by a CIB committee for the same amount of planning money. The Marshall project, which Merriam Park Community Council has sought for more than two years, narrowly missed out on funding.

The mounted police station in Como Park, Rice Street lighting and sidewalk improvements, Merriam Park Recreation Center addition, and Minnehaha Avenue widening between Dale Street and Pierce Butler Route were among the other projects shut out.

The CDBG funding recommendations do include several area projects, including funding for housing rehabilitation programs in Frogtown, new play areas at Hancock Recreation Center/Elementary School and at West Minnehaha Recreation Center, and a deferred loan improvement for Sparc. But other projects, including the badly needed rehabilitation of the Hamline Park Playground building, Sparc business investment programs, a new Scheffer Recreation Center and Dickerman Park redevelopment, aren't recommended. Several of the Invest St. Paul programs, Coleman's initiative to revitalize struggling neighborhoods, were also shut out.

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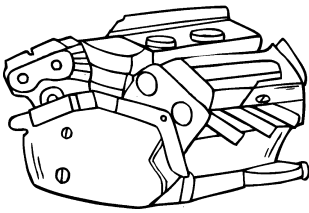
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Every 15 minutes, I turned over in bed to look at the clock. It was daybreak on June 18th, and it felt like the first day of school or the first day of a new job. It was a little bit of both; I had volunteered to help in the mornings at a week-long youth birding camp held at the historic Como Streetcar Station.

The St. Paul Audubon Society (SPAS) has been providing volunteer instructors and subsidizing class supplies for this particular St. Paul Community Education day camp for the last four summers.

When I rode up on my bike on that gray Monday, students and their parents waited out behind the handsome fieldstone building at Lexington Parkway and Como Avenue. The streetcar station was still locked, but the time outdoors, while waiting for the key, was well spent by Adam and Jack.

These two curious youngsters had inadvertently disturbed an ants' nest and were watching with fascination as the ant colony boiled out of the ground to defend their homeland. It wasn't a scientific experiment, but I bet most professors of entomology have been inspired by similar youthful experiences. However, the social insect study was left behind when the doors were finally opened for our first morning of birding camp.

Fourteen kids from grades two to five filed in to spend the next five mornings with five adult volunteers, two teenage volunteers, and three special guest volunteers.

We started each day by taking small groups of our fledgling birders on hikes through Como Park. Of course, the designated objects



Nature in the City

By DEB ROBINSON

Youth birding camp offers science and outdoor fun

of our searches were birds, but just about anything that flew or crawled (real or imaged) was fair game for our attention.

My little flock of birders was allowed to pick and eat ripe mulberries whenever we passed a mulberry tree with low branches. Eating berries from the same trees that the birds ate from, was a simple reminder that our basic human needs are similar to the birds' needs.

On Tuesday, Jules, Sky Li, Mari, Theo, Lucia, and I walked down to Como Lake. Each child had a pair of binoculars swinging from their necks. We saw egrets and herons fishing in the shallows. We saw tiny chipping sparrows courting and barn swallow tending their mud nests under the Lake-side Pavilion awnings. We saw mallard and woodduck hens leading their ducklings across the lake.

After an hour in the field, we meandered back to the streetcar station for juice and snacks. All the smaller groups added their lists of bird sightings to a master class list, which we revisited everyday after our walks.

Karen Eckman and Barb Lindeke, the primary SPAS birding camp teachers, explained complexities of bird migration to the kids. And each student picked a

species of bird to study for the rest of the week. A half hour was put aside each day for the kids to

Baltimore orioles, red-eyed vireos.

A radiant blue male indigo bunting arrived on cue. He



Registered blue bird monitor, Val Cunningham, shows the birding day camp students, Sky Li and Adam, a clutch of blue bird eggs. The eggs were laid in a nest box on the Como Golf Course blue bird trail. (Photo by Matt Schmitt/Deb Robinson)

draw, research, and cut out pictures of their favorite bird in preparation for their Friday presentations to the class.

Wednesday, we walked across the street to the Como Woodlands where we saw birds more adapted to a forest habitat: great crested flycatcher, downy woodpeckers,

perched on a bare branch bathed in sunshine, and he stayed put long enough for every child to get a good look. When the petite little Sky Li hefted her adult-sized binoculars up to her eyes and successfully located the iridescent bird, she gasped, "Beautiful!"

Later that morning, Bob Sher-

man brought 14 birdhouse kits that he had pre-cut and drilled. After brief instructions, the kids hammered away on the slabs of cedar for an hour. My most dangerous job as a volunteer helper was holding together the pieces of wood while six-year-old Jules and Theo competed on how fast they could drive in all eighteen of the galvanized nails. The boys miraculously hit every nail on the head (and my fingers went unharmed).

Thursday, Val Cunningham led us over to the Como Golf Course's blue bird trail. Val opened up a blue bird nest box and showed the kids a clutch of four perfect sky-blue eggs. In addition to blue birds, we saw kingbirds, cedar waxwings, white-breasted nuthatches, and a June bug.

After our last birdwalk together on Friday we celebrated with cupcakes and chocolate milk. The young Como campers gave presentations on their favorite birds. From fierce eagles to gentle doves, I was impressed how much work the kids put into their projects with just a smidgen of adult guidelines, but with lots of nature's inspiration.

When our 14 young birders were asked what they enjoyed the most about our week together, nearly everyone's favorite was the daily birding hikes through the park. Theo said he wished he could, "come to birding camp for the next nine years." If these kids are the future stewards of Como Park, then the birds will be in good hands.

*To contact this writer: dmrobinson@bitstream.net

Archaeologist

Continued from page 4

Woelfel said she was fortunate to learn the value of life at such a young age.

"I learned to appreciate the people around me," she said. "And it's one reason I travel so much. I won't have to say 'I should have done that.'"

Woelfel said she doesn't bother to watch the Discovery Channel—she lives it.

She said she has not had any problems in her recent travels with any anti-American attitudes.

"I travel alone, and I don't go where Americans normally hang out. People, like the ones in this village in

Cyprus, want a good life for their kids. They want peace."

She said people are more likely to invite her in for tea than criticize her.

"There is a big difference between what people on the ground do and what their gov-

ernments do," she said. "A lot of Americans don't understand this."

From her archaeological site, Woelfel can see Turkish guards. There is a minefield next to the site. She said that during the Turkish invasion of 1974, people were taken to the border and shoved over. About 2,000 settled in Dhali

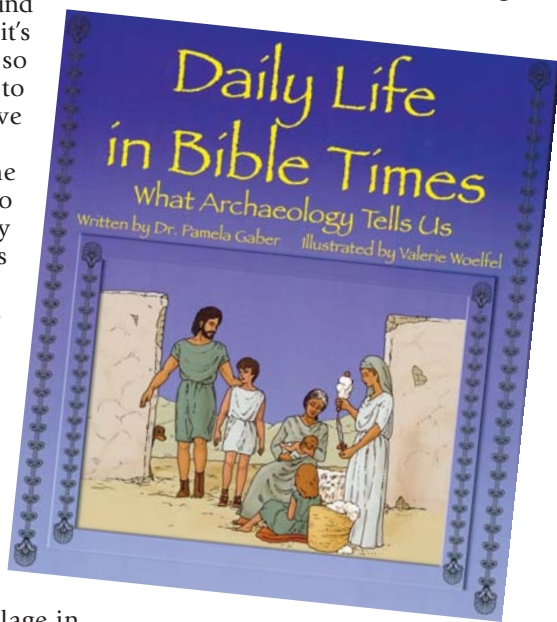
as refugees. Three years ago the borders were opened.

"People don't realize how much of the past they carry with them, and how powerful that past is," she said.

But whether she is on a dig in another country or sitting in the Black Bear Coffee Shop on Como

Avenue, where she put together much of the book, Woelfel is always conscious of the things people can glean from history.

And if someone happens to drop by in Cyprus, she said to ask the old men in the coffee shop how to get to the dig site. They always know how to find her.



Classifieds

Continued from page 14

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