



Midway Como monitor

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Como considers mounted police

City says its now or never for Central Corridor's LRT

By JAN WILLMS

Borrowing a phrase from the Elvis Presley hit of 1960, "It's Now or Never."

This is how Cecile Bedor, director of Planning and Economic Development for the city of Saint Paul, sees transit development.

In particular, the development of the Central Corridor, the primary east-west route between downtown Saint Paul and downtown Minneapolis.

The proposed light rail transit (LRT) line along University Avenue will connect the two downtowns, the State Capitol, the University of Minnesota and the Midway area.

"It is unlikely the opportunity will present itself again," Bedor said, "and we need to provide the options for transportation."

"We think we'll have significant importance in terms of development and moving the people of this city with the Central Corridor," Bedor said. "We are providing another mode of transportation."

Based on the high numbers of people who have been using mass transit, the demand for better transportation in the Twin Cities and surrounding areas is increasing.

Donna Drummond, a Saint Paul city planner who is focusing on the Central Corridor, said the Hiawatha line, which runs between the Mall of America and downtown Minneapolis, has opened a lot of people's eyes.

"That line is already at 33,000 per day," she said. "We're projecting 43,000 people per day by 2020 for the Central Corridor."



Cecile Bedor, director of Planning and Economic Development for the city of Saint Paul, thinks its now or never for the development of the Central Corridor. (Photo by Terry Faust)



The potential is certainly there."

However, the plans for improving transit may hinge on whether voters approve a constitutional amendment on Nov. 7.

eral fund to balance the state budget.

"Folks working on the Central Corridor feel passage of the amendment is really critical," said

"It is unlikely the opportunity will present itself again, and we need to provide the options for transportation."

- Cecile Bedor, director of Planning and Economic Development for the city of Saint Paul

The proposed amendment would require that all revenue from the state's existing vehicle sales tax be spent only on roads and transit. Currently nearly half of that money goes into the gen-

Drummond.

If the project wins final federal approval, the estimated cost of \$930 million will have 50 per cent of the capital costs funded by the Federal Transit Administra-

tion. The remaining half will be funded 2/3 by the state and 1/3 by Ramsey and Hennepin Counties.

"It would be increasingly difficult to find those resources if the amendment doesn't pass," Drummond said.

She said she does realize that passage of the amendment would leave a gaping hole in the general fund that has to be filled by some other source, but she felt it only makes sense that the motor vehicle sales tax should go to transportation.

Steve Dornfeld, public affairs director for the Metropolitan Council, said in a later interview that he is hoping the amendment will pass.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Police send out warning on registered sex offender

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul Police are warning Hamline-Midway residents about suspicious behavior in the neighborhood. The person involved is believed to be a male registered sex offender who lives in the community.

The man has knocked on doors asking if he can use a telephone or get a glass of water. He has also asked children if there is a parent home. The suspect description does match that of a known sex offender who lives in

the community. He is described as a white male, 28 to 38 years old, 5 foot 9 inches to 6 feet 2 inches tall and weighing 215 to 240 pounds.

The suspect has engaged in similar behavior in the past. At least three incident have been reported in the neighborhood recently.

The St. Paul Police Department with our partners in the Ramsey County Probation and the sheriff's office work closely to monitor the activities of sexual

offenders, said Assistant Police Chief Nancy DiPerna. "We believe this information serves to better inform our community so they can take basic steps to increase their safety and the safety of entire neighborhoods."

Anyone experiencing a situation similar to the one reported should call police at 651-291-1111. Police do monitor sex offenders, even though they are no longer under intensive supervision as a result of their sentences.

Police remind everyone that

basic safety practices should be used at all times when anyone comes to your door. Keep the doors locked, even when you are home. Attempt to identify the person through the use of a peep hole or window, and communicate with the person through the locked door.

Be especially mindful of answering the door when you are home alone and instruct children on expected procedures for answering the door when adults are away.

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1885 University Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-645-7045

Publishers:
Calvin deRuyter, Tim Nelson

Managing Editor:
Denis Woulfe

Advertising:
Denis Woulfe

Photographer:
Terry Faust

Production/Illustrations:
Bob Wasilik

Contributing Writers:

Eric Nathanson, Deborah Brotz,
Jane McClure, Nancy Giguere,
Jessica Flannigan, Tom Conlon,
Jan Willms, Sherri Moore,
Nate Hamilton, Deb Robinson,
Benita Warns, The Cheapskate,
The Food Snob, and The Bachelor



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Midway Como in a Minute

Frogtown motorcycle mechanic honored

A Frogtown motorcycle mechanic and racer will be honored October 14 when it is "Steve Hamel and his Marvelous Race Bike Day" in St. Paul. The St. Paul City Council declared the special day September 27.

Hamel owns and operates Sterling Cycle in Frogtown. He is well-known for his work with Vincent motorcycles and has been featured in articles and television programs. In late October, a motorcycle he built an engine for will be featured on the Discovery Channel. The engine was build for Biker Build-off Champion Matt Hotch.

But Hamel does much more than build bikes. He recently set the national speed record on a Vincent cycle, besting motorcycle legend Rollie Freed's record. In 1948 Freed set the record of 150.313 miles per hour on a Vincent at Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats. In his Frogtown shop Hamel reengineered a 1950 Vincent to challenge Freed's record and surpassed that record on September 6. He rode at 152.604 miles per hour.

Hamel's next goal is to break the 1967 land speed record of 183.585 set by new Zealand native Burt Munro. Munro set that record on a 1920 Indian motorcycle.

Snelling Cafe OKed for wine, malt liquor

Snelling Café, 638 N. Snelling Av., will be allowed to sell wine and malt liquor on-sale, as a result of St. Paul City Council action September 20. The council approved the licenses with conditions, following a legislative hearing earlier in September.

Restaurant owner Afeworki Bein, who has owned the business for three years, will have to follow



Snelling Café, 638 N. Snelling Av., will be allowed to sell wine and malt liquor on-sale, as a result of St. Paul City Council action September 20.

four conditions to retain the licenses. One is to only sell strong beer and wine in conjunction with the sale of food. City licensing staff will be allowed to periodically review the receipts to verify that at least 60 percent of the restaurant's gross sales would be for food.

A second condition prohibits entertainment at the business, such as karaoke, live bands or dancing. A separate entertainment license would be needed before this is allowed.

A third condition would require the post of signs to direct vehicles to enter the parking lot from Snelling and exit onto Snelling, and not use the alley.

The fourth condition would prohibit the sale of alcohol beverages before 5 p.m. The restaurant closes at 10 p.m.

The legislative hearing was held because the city received two letters of complaint. One neighbor objected in general to the sale and service of liquor. A second raised objections citing the proximity of a school and park near the restaurant. The city has a distance requirement for some liquor licenses. However, that does not apply for beer and wine licenses. No one attended the legislative hearing to speak against the licenses.

BNSF Railway OKed to build crane facility

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway can build a new crane maintenance facility, as a result of St. Paul

Planning Commission action September 22. The commission unanimously approved an enlargement of non-conforming has been posted until mid-September.

The Planning Commission's action is final as it was not appealed to the St. Paul City Council in 10 days.

Hamline Midway Coalition had recommended approval of the BNSF request. No one appeared at a September 14 Planning Commission Zoning Committee public hearing to speak against the request.

The intermodal yard has generated complaints about noisy operations for years. The yard is north of Newell Park and its surrounding neighborhood. Neighborhood residents and the railroad have also wrangled over expansion of operations. In 1996 a building erected without proper city permits was allowed to remain in place by the Planning Commission, despite protests from neighborhood residents.

The railroad's intermodal facility is on Pierce Butler Route between Snelling and Prior avenues. BNSF needs an enlargement of non-conforming use permit to build the new facility. The building would house cranes used and repaired on the site and would allow the railroad to move the equipment and maintenance work indoors. The building would be located on the north central portion of the property, next to an existing maintenance building. It would be 9,600 square feet in size.

City staff recommend approval of the request, with additional conditions on the permit. One condition is that all work associated with the structure shall be limited to the hours of 6 a.m.-6 p.m. The structure shall be built with sound insulation or similar materials to abate noise created by the work within the structure.

No work may be brought in from outside of the facility. All work conducted here shall be limited to equipment that is operated by BNSF and its partners at the Pierce Butler site.

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HealthEast prepares for tear down of homes, construction of parking lot

By JANE MCCLURE

Years of debate may be winding down as HealthEast prepares to tear down Merriam Park houses and build a large parking lot at its Midway Hospital campus. The Merriam Park Community Council approved the project in September.

But there is still controversy over the loss of housing and potential loss of alley access for neighbors. Another concern is that despite the district council's intentions, a community task force process never materialized—despite a 1997 city conditional use permit requirement that such an ongoing task force be formed.

Yet another issue raised by district council members is that tearing down houses to build large surface parking lots is in conflict with the Merriam Park Community Plan, the long-range plan for the neighborhood.

Neighbors are also unhappy that despite promises to work with the Midway Transportation Management Organization, few solutions have been found to the problems created by most HealthEast employees going to and from work in single-occupancy vehicles.

The parking lot site plan was recommended for approval September 13 with conditions, with one district council member abstaining from the vote. The plans are currently undergoing review by city staff.

HealthEast wants to tear down four Aldine Street houses it owns and create one large parking lot of about 170 spaces on the eastern half of the block bounded by Shields Avenue, Aldine Street and St. Anthony Avenue. The half-block already has a 48-space lot at one end and a 44-space lot at another.

What the next steps are for HealthEast will depend on which of two site plans is chosen. It's possible lot plans could have to go through a variance review and approval process through the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). Or the plans would require only a city site plan review. One plan has 172 spaces and the other 175. The key difference is that one plan would allow lot access on an east-west alley and the alley would be widened. When the plans will be considered by city



Years of debate may be winding down as HealthEast prepares to tear down several Merriam Park houses and build a large parking lot at its Midway Hospital campus. The Merriam Park Community Council approved the project in September.

officials isn't known.

The alley is in the north one-third of the lot site and connects to a north-south alley between Aldine and Herschel Street. The plan allowing alley access to and from the lot is the one the district council supports. But whether that could actually happen is unclear as the city restricts commercial use of alleys that are shared with residential neighbors.

A district council committee recommendation that would prohibit HealthEast from ever vacating that alley was deleted from the site plan conditions on an 8-7 vote after HealthEast's district council representative, Ann Sonnee, won an appeal of the chair's ruling that she could not vote on the site plan issue. MPCC President Scott Banas said HealthEast representative Ann Sonnee should not vote due to conflict of interest, a recommendation other district council members objected and overruled him on a split vote.

MPCC Land Use Committee Chairperson Jim Marti said that maintaining alley access is important. "In addition to the loss of the housing, the possible loss of the alley is a real concern to the residents." Neighbors have asked that the alley remain in place as it currently is part of a T-shaped alley that provides access

to their properties.

Herschel resident Bill Oetting said the north-south alley slopes and gets icy in the winter. "If the alley is vacated, it will make it much more difficult for the neighbors to get in and out of their garages," Oetting said.

But HealthEast representatives demanded that they retain the right to vacate the alley in the future, with HealthEast representative Tony Thomas calling the proposed prohibition "unacceptable."

"I don't see where anybody's rights would be inadvertently diminished," he said. Thomas said the City Council would hold a public hearing if and when HealthEast would try to vacate the alley in the future.

The Merriam Park HealthEast campus is roughly bounded by University, Pierce, St. Anthony and Aldine. The campus formed in 1997 after Midway Hospital closed. Since then residential neighbors around the hospital have contended that HealthEast officials don't do enough to work with them. They also say that because their neighborhood is separate from the rest of Merriam Park by Interstate 94, the district council also ignores their needs. The neighborhood has had trouble finding someone to serve continu-

ously on the district council in recent years.

Those controversies resurfaced in fall 2004 when plans were outlined for a parking lot. It's not clear why the latest attempt to start the task force failed. Creating a task force to study HealthEast campus-neighborhood issues and HealthEast participation in the district council is part of a 1997 special condition use permit agreement between the city and HealthEast, after Midway Hospital closed and was converted into outpatient and office facilities.

But the task force hasn't met for many years and it technically puts HealthEast in violation of its permit to continue to operate in Merriam Park. HealthEast did rejoin the district council in 2005.

Banas said he's disappointed that both sides didn't get together and form the task force. "I had hoped these issues would have been discussed."

Not only were district council members disappointed that the task force process wasn't followed, some believe the health care corporation isn't doing nearly enough to encourage its employees to get out of their single-occupancy vehicles and use transit and transportation alternatives such as car-pooling. "I'm not convinced

you've completely explored all of the options to driving single-occupancy vehicles," said MPCC member Chip Welling. He also said HealthEast should consider charging employees for parking, a suggestion company officials immediately rejected.

HealthEast officials said they did work with Midway Transportation Management Organization (TMO) to find transit and transportation alternatives, but that most of their employees drive in to work from a distance. Sonnee said the healthcare organization has only had "minimal success" in promoting transportation alternatives. Nor has HealthEast been successful in finding off-site parking.

HealthEast has gradually moved offices here to make Midway its corporate operations center, with all data operations, financing and accounting here. Human services, which includes employee orientation and meetings, is also at Midway, along with outpatient surgery, radiology and a pain clinic. The campus has 741 lot and ramp parking spaces, but will have about 850 employees as more move here in the near future.

With more employees moving to the Midway campus, HealthEast needs to get to get the lot built, said Sonnee. About 100 people are relocating here, some due to construction at the St. Joseph's Hospital campus downtown.

In 2005 MPCC and neighbors asked HealthEast to consider expanding its parking ramp or building a new ramp. But expansion alone would cost more than \$1 million, said Thomas.

Thomas said the lot needs to be built to keep parking from spilling over into the neighborhood. "I think we've done our level best to find parking, he said.

MPCC's Land Use Committee had recommended that:

*HealthEast will provide attractive landscaping and fencing for the lot.

*All campus parking lots will have lighting and security improvements.

*HealthEast needs to continue to make meaningful efforts to seek transit and transportation alternatives for its employees.

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Viewpoints

Autumn is the time to enjoy crisp cool nights, clear blue skies, and brightly colored leaves. October and November are also the months to get your flu vaccination. Immunization during these months allows you to have the greatest immunity from December through March (prime flu months).

Influenza (or the flu) is a viral respiratory illness that causes symptoms similar to a really bad cold: sudden onset of body aches, fever and chills, severe cough, sore throat, fatigue. Usually by the time you realize you have the flu, it is too late for treatment. Medications to treat must be given within 48 hours of becoming ill and usually only shorten the course of illness by one day.

Most people who get the flu will be sick for about 7 days ... which means time away from work, school, and play. It also means infected people can spread the flu to others. Some folks are susceptible to serious flu complications including hospitalization and even death. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices places the following people in a high risk category and recommends they be vaccinated.

- People over the age of 50.
- People living in nursing homes or chronic care facilities.
- Pregnant women.
- Children ages 6-35 months.
- People of any age with asthma, heart disease, or lung disease.
- People hospitalized during the last 12 months because of diabetes, kidney disease, blood or metabolic disorders, immunosuppression, or other chronic dis-

Cares and Cures

By JANE KILIAN, M.D.

Fall is cool nights, blue skies and flu vaccination time

eases. In addition, anyone working or living with the people listed above should be vaccinated.

I hear lots of myths about flu vaccines. Most commonly, people insist they became really sick after their vaccination, and therefore they won't be vaccinated again. While flu vaccinations are not without possible side effects, you cannot get the flu from the vaccination. You could coincidentally catch a cold right after you get the shot, which might make you think the shot made you sick. But because it is not made from live flu virus, the flu shot cannot give you the flu. You might get the flu even if you receive a vaccine, because it is not protective against all strains. Hopefully, however, you will develop a milder case.

Side effects of a flu shot can include a sore arm or allergic reaction at the site of injection, fever and/or fatigue. These symptoms usually last less than 48 hours. It is rare, but possible, to have an immediate allergic reaction to the vaccine. For that reason people allergic to eggs should not be vaccinated. (The vaccine is grown in chicken eggs.)

Pregnant and breast feeding women can and should be vaccinated. Some physicians wait until women are in the 2nd trimester of pregnancy to vaccinate, but many will give the vaccine at any time. There is no research

that demonstrates any risk to the fetus if a vaccination is given in the first trimester.

When children are vaccinated for the first time, they require two shots given 4 weeks apart.

Protective measures to help avoid the flu, and other winter illnesses include a generally healthy lifestyle. Eat a balanced diet which includes a variety of

foods, exercise, allow yourself enough sleep, and wash your hands often. Remember to plan time for fun amidst all your daily responsibilities.

If you do get sick, rest and pamper yourself. Don't go to work when you are sick because you will expose others to your illness and it will take longer for you to recuperate. I have said this before, but rest is as important as any medicine when recuperating from an illness.

I hope you enjoy the fall. I encourage you to walk around Como Lake, enjoy the leaves on Summit Avenue or along the North Shore, eat some tasty apples, and get a flu shot. So far it sounds like there will be plenty of flu shots available this year, so we won't have the problems we have some years of needing to "ration" the shots. So there are no excuses for not getting the vaccine.

Have 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@aplacetoremember.com.)

Plans for Central Corridor a month behind schedule

By JANE MCCLURE

Plans for Central Corridor are a month behind where regional officials want them to be. Still, Metropolitan Council officials are still hoping for federal approval of preliminary engineering documents by year's end. Council Chairperson Peter Bell told the University Avenue Central Corridor Task Force September 28 that the plans should be submitted to the federal Transportation Administration (FTA) in October.

The FTA approval is needed so that the federal government can eventually cover half of the capital costs for the proposed 11-mile light rail line between downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul.

The document is more than six inches thick. "We don't count the pages, we weigh them," said Bell.

Regional officials had hoped to submit the preliminary engineering application documents, including a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) and numerous public comments and responses, by September 1. But more time was needed to respond to comments and continue working with FTA officials on the documents.

The task force, which was recently appointed by Mayor Chris Coleman, is under the wing of city planning staff and the St. Paul Planning Commission. The task force is examining a variety of issues ranging from land use to public art along the corridor. It recently hosted a project open house in September and will host another October 28. The task force will submit its recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council next year.

If FTA approval is granted, preliminary engineering would take place in 2007-2008. If the project proceeds through final design and a tentative construction schedule, rail would start operating in 2014.

But Bell warned that if project costs cannot be held down, Central Corridor may not be built. During the preliminary engineering phase, officials will try to nail down the project costs and scope, and develop budget and funding plans. Some estimates put the Central Corridor costs at \$930 million. Regional officials are concerned that may not meet the cost effectiveness index the FTA uses to determine whether a project should obtain federal funds.

"This project, in my judgment, simply will not go forward without federal funding," Bell said.

Many Metropolitan Council members want the cost information for Central Corridor determined as quickly as

possible during the preliminary engineering phase, Bell said. "We don't want to spend \$45 million—to be blunt—to figure out we can't get the costs down," he said.

That means key scoping decisions about the project have to be made by mid-2007. These include decisions as to whether a tunnel should be built to carry light rail through the University of Minnesota West Bank area, and how far the rail line will extend in downtown St. Paul. There are also questions about the costs of getting rail through congested University intersections, including University and Snelling.

"Every component of this project has to be looked at," Bell said. The project currently includes 16 stations, plus five Minneapolis stations shared with the Hiawatha Corridor light rail line. But St. Paul neighborhood groups have pushed for more stations, which would in turn increase project costs.

Bell also outlined the public input process for the Central Corridor project for the task force. Public input is an issue that has generated discussions in recent weeks in area neighborhoods. The District Councils Collaborative, a coalition of St. Paul district councils and Minneapolis neighborhood associations along Central Corridor, has been lobbying to add three citizen seats to the corridor management committee. Several area district councils have voted in recent weeks to support a resolution calling for more citizen involvement on the corridor manage-

ment committee, ideally with members of the collaborative itself involved.

Typically corridor management committees don't have citizen seats. But Bell did appoint task force co-chairperson Reggie Aligada as a community member to the task force. Aligada is a Hamline-Midway resident and former St. Paul Planning Commission member.

The rest of the corridor management committee is made up largely of elected and politically appointed officials. Bell will chair the 11-member group, which includes St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, Ramsey County Commissioners Toni Carter and Rafael Ortega and Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin. Metropolitan Council Transportation Committee Chairperson Mary Hill Smith, Assistant Minnesota Department of Transportation Commissioner Robert McFarlin, Minnesota Finance Commissioner Peggy Ingison, University of Minnesota Vice President of University Services Kathleen O'Brien and Jim Westerhaus, vice president of government relations for Ecolab. Westerhaus will represent business.

This committee, which will meet monthly, holds its first meeting at 1 p.m. Wednesday, October 11 at the Metropolitan Council offices at 390 N. Robert St.

The corridor management committee is one of several committees that will weigh in on the project. These committees will be appointed later this fall. There will also be a technical committee, made up of staff of the various agencies involved in the project, and a citizens' advisory committee.

Business input will be obtained through a business advisory committee and the Central Corridor Partnership, a group made up of the Chambers of Commerce from St. Paul, Midway and Minneapolis. These groups will have input to the corridor management committee.



Excess levy referendum for St. Paul may confuse some voters Nov. 7

By JANE MCCLURE

The owner of median-valued \$174,800 home in St. Paul could face a property tax increase of \$84 in 2007. That increase could climb to \$275 if a proposed St. Paul Public Schools excess levy referendum is approved by voters November 7, according to information reviewed September 25 by the St. Paul-Ramsey County-St. Paul Public Schools' Joint Property Tax Advisory Committee.

But because the referendum's impacts won't appear on the state-mandated truth-in-taxation notices, elected officials worry that will generate taxpayer ire. "I just think people are going to be very confused and angry, and will feel that they have been misled," said Mayor Chris Coleman. He and other elected officials said it's imperative that the public get as much information as possible about potential property tax impacts.

Only Ramsey County Commissioner Janice Rettman voted against the joint levy. She voted against the county's 6.2 percent increase last month and said she wanted to be consistent with that vote. Coleman and City Council President Kathy Lantry, School Board members and County Commissioners Toni Carter and Rafael Ortega voted for the joint levy resolution.

The Joint Property Tax Advisory Committee set the date of its annual truth-in-taxation hearing for 6 p.m. Tuesday, December 12 at Arlington Senior High School. The committee also adopted its joint levy for 2007 and stated support for passage of the schools' excess levy referendum and for the 84.8 percent levy increase in Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority. The regional rail levy is increasing because of upcoming projects including the Central Corridor light rail line and proposed improvements to Union Depot.

The combined levy for taxable payable in 2007 is 1.7 percent. The total proposed maximum levy as of September 20 is \$255,605,974, a \$4.2 million increase over 2006's amount. This increase will drop to .1 percent or \$.2 million once fiscal disparities are factored in. The proposed maximum levy amount will drop to \$211,313,981. Fiscal disparities is a program through which property tax revenues are shared between local jurisdictions. Some communities pay in while others receive funding.

St. Paul, Ramsey County and St. Paul Public Schools are required by state law to adopt the joint levy every year by October 1. But it's doubtful that many property taxpayers will see such a low increase, given the levy increases already approved by the City Council County Board and School Board.

What worries elected officials is that the requirements for the tax statements are likely to cause confusion. The truth-in-taxation notices are meant to give property owners an estimate of what their payable taxes will

be for the following year. But the latest any information can be printed is November 1, in order to meet the mailing requirements. The vote on the excess

based on an estimated market value of \$1.421 million and a taxable market value of \$1.041 million.

The estimated tax for 2007

"I just think people are going to be very confused and angry, and will feel that they have been misled."

- Mayor Chris Coleman

levy referendum is November 7.

The notices cannot be mailed out until November 13, according to state law, and must be mailed out within a few day of that date.

The wording of the notices is also dictated by state statute. "State law dictates what we can say," said School Board Member Al Oertwig. "We don't have a hell of a lot of choice."

County Administrator David Twa said there can be an insert with the notices that provides further information. But that prompted some debate among elected officials as to whether people read inserts.

In St. Paul, a median taxable value single-family home is valued at \$174,800. This assumes a 15 percent increase in taxable market value.

In 2006 this home had a tax bill of \$1,567. Loss of homestead credit adds \$21 to the bill, but a gain in fiscal disparities money for local governments means a \$39 reduction. Other shifts in the tax system account for a \$49 increase, leaving a net increase of \$31 due to tax shifts and changes.

The county levy adds \$50 to the bill, with the regional rail levy tacking on another \$34 and the city adding \$56. Other taxing districts, such as watershed districts, add \$1 to the bill.

Without the schools' excess levy referendum the tax bill is reduced by \$88. The net increase caused by levy changes is \$53.

That brings the total property tax bill to \$1,651, with a total increase of \$84. If the referendum is adopted, the tax total is \$1,842, or an increase of \$275 over 2006's payable amount.

What a property owner's bill actually says is dictated by factors including the market value of a home and how much that market value has increased over the past year. Improvements to a property can prompt a value increase. So can sales of comparable properties in a neighborhood.

The Joint Property tax Advisory Committee has tracked three properties for several years. One, 749 Summit Av., has an estimated market value of \$1.510 million and a taxable market value of \$1.197 million for 2007. This dwelling had \$13,819 in property taxes payable for 2006

including the school referendum's passage is \$15,908, a \$2,089 or 15.1 percent increase. The estimated property tax refund for this house is \$258.

Higher percentage increases are seen on lower-valued homes. A house at 1971 Hawthorne Av. on the East Side has an estimated market value of \$179,300 and a taxable market value of \$179,200 for 2007. This dwelling had \$1,644 in property taxes payable for 2006 based on an estimated market value of \$171,000 and a taxable market value of \$155,800.

The estimated tax for 2007 including the school referendum's passage is \$1,928, a \$284



The owner of a median-valued \$174,800 home in St. Paul could face a property tax increase of \$84 in 2007.

or 17.3 percent increase. The estimated property tax refund is \$58.

A home at 204 Granite St. in the North End has an estimated market value of \$145,600 and a taxable market value of \$121,000 for 2007. This dwelling had \$969 in property taxes payable for 2006 based on an estimated market value of \$129,500 and a taxable market value of \$105,200.

The estimated tax for 2007 including the school referendum's passage is \$1,161, a \$192

or 19.8 percent increase. The estimated property tax refund is \$46.

Homes are not taxed at the maximum value due to the use of the Limited Market Value formula. In St. Paul, 82 percent of properties benefit from Limited Market Value. But Chris Samuel of Ramsey County Property Taxes, Records and Revenue noted the state is phasing out Limited Market Value by 2010. The phase-out will force property values and taxes up even more.

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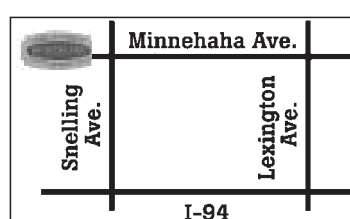
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English language learners thrive at Hamline–Midway's LEAP Academy

By SHARON LACOUR

One year ago, Sia Vang left the Wat Than Kabrok refugee camp in Thailand and came to Minnesota. At 15, Sia is one of only three children left to her mother, who lost 12 others to illness before coming to the United States.

Sia hesitates to find words, but there is nothing tentative about her warm smile and eagerness to talk and to learn. "My father died years ago," she says. "I come here with my mother, my brother, and sister, and my sister-in-law. They have eight children, four boys and four girls." She seems very happy when she describes her home in east St. Paul and her family. "I love Minnesota. My favorite seasons are Spring and Fall. I love my teachers and my school."

Sia is one of 500 students at the International Academy/LEAP (Limited English Achievement Program), nestled in the heart of Midway on a street lined with fragrant linden trees. The students have gathered at the Arboretum for a picnic marking the end of summer term. A boy behind her deflects a soccer ball from a group of students who hold plates of spicy Hmong food brought to share at the picnic. The original LEAP Academy opened in 1994 in a former shoe factory in downtown St. Paul. In 2003 it moved to Midway and

for the next two years, shared the space with the Wilson Middle School students. Since 2004 the building has housed only the LEAP students, and has expanded to maximum capacity.

This past July, the classrooms were bright with light from windows that reached to the ceiling. The stuffy heat did not deter the students of Sophorn Lissick's first level science class. With enthusiasm and humility, they tackled the phases of the moon looking up words such as reflects, glows, crescent, shape, phase, and idioms like "make up your mind". Students read one of their sentences aloud to the group and were supported with smiles and applause.

A group of boys pounds a stick into the ground with the



Sia and her mother, Ya Xiong, discuss work on a skirt they are making for Sia to wear at the Hmong New Year Celebration. Sia's family works for months on the elaborate traditional dresses and beaded vests that are customary attire for the occasion. It takes place at the Xcel Energy Center November 25-27 at the Convention Hall at the RiverCentre in St. Paul. (Photo by Terry Faust)

"Teacher, in my culture, you cannot sing if you are married." Three of the women on the blanket are married, one is single, as is Sia. They all attend classes together. The school offers a com-

in English and students are grouped according to their competence in the new language.

At LEAP the students' native languages include Spanish to Amharic, the language of Ethiopia, to Arabic to Hmong and Thai, and the list goes on. There is no evidence of a common style of dress, or of a prevalent social group that determines such a style. They are all English language learners, and as new arrivals to this country, are dealing with many of the same adjustments to their new lives. Many come from a desert or tropical climate and now face harsh winters for the first time. They share the common goals of fluency in English and a high school diploma.

Lissick herself came to Min-

nesota at 16 as a refugee. She enjoys the intimate size of LEAP and the supportive cooperation of the staff. They work together closely to create English language speakers who can go out into the world as creative and productive members of the community.

"My challenge," she explains between bites of shrimp and green tomatoes, "is to reach the whole class at their different levels of English comprehension. As a science teacher, I am very interested in content. I want them to understand the concepts, but I have to be aware that some of them will not retain the content in their efforts simply to understand the language."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

"My challenge is to reach the whole class at their different levels of English comprehension."

- LEAP Teacher Sophorn Lissick

croquet mallets that the teachers brought to the picnic. They urge a young woman, Peng, to sing. She laughs and shakes her head.

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St. Paul Schools' excess levy tops the Nov. 7 ballot

By JANE MCCLURE

A St. Paul Public Schools excess levy referendum, a state Constitutional amendment to redirect some of the motor vehicle sales tax dollars and a number of state and federal offices are on the November 7 ballot.

The excess levy referendum, which the School Board approved this summer, would replace a referendum that expires this year. The referendum, which proponents say is needed to maintain the quality of education, hold down class sizes and meet a variety of other educational needs, has support from a number of groups. At this point there is no organized opposition to the referendum although concerns have been raised about its passage and the impact on property taxpayers.

In St. Paul, a median taxable value single-family home is val-

ued at \$174,800. If the referendum is adopted, the tax total is \$1,842, or an increase of \$275 over 2006's payable amount.

The state Constitutional amendment would dedicate all of the motor vehicle sales taxes to transit and transportation purposes. Currently a portion of the taxes go to the state's general fund. Proponents of the amendment say that approval would redirect badly needed funds to new roads and to transit projects, including the proposed Central Corridor light rail line. But opponents contend that redirecting the funds would hurt programs that currently benefit from the vehicle taxes.

Voters will also select members of Congress and the entire roster of state offices, starting with governor. Ramsey County races are on the ballot, but not City of St. Paul seats. The City

Council isn't up for election until next year.

Here's an overview of local county and state races:

*The most high-profile county race is for sheriff as 12-year incumbent Sheriff Bob Fletcher is challenged by retired St. Paul Police Chief and former School Board member Bill Finney. Finney has DFL endorsement. Fletcher doesn't have political party endorsement.

County Attorney Susan Gaertner is running unopposed. Several judges are also on the ballot, including a contest between incumbent Elena Ostby and Ward Four Council Member Jay Benanav. Candidate Paul W. Godfrey was eliminated in the primary.

*Both Midway area Ramsey County commissioners, Janice Rettman in District Three and Toni Carter in District Four, are

running unopposed in the general election.

A former Frogtown resident, Charles Barklind, lost his bid for County Board in the primary. Barklind, who now lives downtown, finished behind incumbent Rafael Ortega and challenger Dan Galles. Ortega and Galles go on to the general election.

*In the District 64A race, voters will elect a new representative to replace Matt Entenza. Erin Murphy topped John Gehan in the DFL primary and faces Green Party candidate Jesse Mortenson and Republican Kirsten Beach November 7.

In the District 64 Senate race, incumbent DFLer Dick Cohen faces Republican Christine Van Tassel.

*In District 65A, DFL incumbent Cy Thao and Republican Paul Holmgren are the voters'

choices. In District 65B incumbent DFLer John Lesch faces Republican David R. Buehler. In Senate District 65, incumbent DFLer Sandy Pappas faces Republican Lori Windels and Independence Party candidate Bill Dahn.

*Senate District 66 incumbent DFLer Ellen Anderson will be running against Republican Warren Anderson. In the House races in this district, incumbent DFLer Alice Hausman is running against Republican Joyce Nevins.

Call 651-266-2171 if you have questions about the election. You can also log onto the Ramsey County, Minnesota Secretary of State and City of St. Paul web sites for information on voting and voter registration. Minnesota does allow election day registration with proper identification or a registered voter in the precinct to vouch for you.

LEAP

Continued from page 6

She pointed out one group who had taken her first level science class the previous year working in home made books containing one simple sentence per page. Now, they converse easily in English, joking, teasing and discussing the challenges of life.

Some of the students come to LEAP as adults in their late teens and twenties, and 12 years of education must be condensed into two to four years. "Due to wartime conditions in their country or a regime that denied education to their ethnic group, some students may have never experienced any formal education. To some, paper is an oddity, paper clips even more so," ex-

plains Paul Gore, the program director.

However, once they reach the age of 21, there is no funding for them through the St. Paul Public Schools. Since most programs assume a certain level of educational experience, there is no place for these students to go. Although a group of students over age 21 remains at LEAP, the school must foot the bill.

Like all other schools, LEAP Academy faces the challenges that budget cuts have imposed, including the loss of a Somali social worker. For Paul Gore, however, the greatest challenge facing the school is this issue of older students. His hope is that awareness of the problem will increase and that the legislature will provide the necessary funding for the school to educate the older population of students.

"Pick a word and I will make

a sentence," one tutor suggested on a hot afternoon outside. "Refrigerator," one student offered. "In my refrigerator I have juice. What do you have? Shoes? Do you have shoes in there?" At first there was silence, then, laughter, "No, soda, milk, cheese, apples," slowly the words began to come. The LEAP school brings to the Midway a thriving center of hope, inspiration and cultural diversity.

Students like Sia and others at the picnic will move on to large mainstream St. Paul schools after one or two years at LEAP. Lissick agrees that this can be an ideal transition for some. For others, the small, protective environment may be more appropriate. "If they are young enough and learn to communicate well after one or two years, a larger high school setting can provide more stimulation and choices.

The transition to the work force or to a large college will be easier."

This fall Sia is thriving at Harding High School, making new friends and excited to be in the larger, more diverse environment. When asked if the transition has been difficult, she shook her head with a quizzical expression as though that never occurred to her. Considering the challenges and changes that she has endured in her young life, it makes sense that she is prepared to face the next one with similar courage and enthusiasm.

The LEAP school continues to strive to meet the needs of its students. Enrollment this year is at 350 students, many of them returning from last year. The high percentage of returning students is new for the school and an improvement over previous years.

"We have many students

who are returning for their third year and LEAP Academy," says Paul Gore. "We are not only seeing their academic progress, but their experience here, and with a U.S. school in general, has been a good influence on the newer students. With more veteran students there are fewer issues to manage, and newer students can check in with a student who has more experience with the school."

Gore would like to include an extended program earlier in the day to offer more opportunities for students, but transportation is an issue. Students have expressed interest in having intramural or club sports at their school. Although funding is not available for coaching and equipment at this point, Gore is optimistic that the zeal of the students will make it happen somehow.



Next deadline: October 30
Next Issue: November 9



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Proposed pizzeria loses bid for new parking variance

By JANE MCCLURE

A proposed pizzeria near Snelling and Minnehaha avenues has lost its bid for a parking variance. The Macalus family wants to open the restaurant, and is supported by the Hagen family, owners of the building at 735 N. Snelling Av. But at the September 25 Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) meeting the body voted 5-2 to deny the variance.

As the *Monitor* went to press, however, we learned an appeal was filed this past Monday. The appeal means that the variance request will now go to the full City Council for a vote, although no date has been set.

Debate over the parking variances pits several small businesses and two families that own property on the block against each other. The two-story building has most recently housed consignment shops. Fred Macalus Jr. wants to open a pizza restaurant there, but would need an additional eight off-street parking spaces.

A restaurant of the size and type proposed needs 18 off-street spaces. The previous retail uses required 10 spaces, so the variance is 8 spaces. The building has just four to six spaces behind it but the Hagens and Fred Macalus Jr. said they would lease space from Hamline Hardware to the north.

City staff recommended approval of the variances on the condition that the restaurant owners and landlord lease space from Hamline Hardware or find another parking lot within 300 feet. Another condition limits restaurant hours from 4-11 p.m. The request is actually considered a minor variance because of its size and potential impacts.

But a majority of BZA members said they believe that granting the variance would only add to parking problems in the Snelling-Minnehaha area. They noted that the hardware store spaces are already shared with the adjacent Mirror of Korea restaurant. BZA Member Vince Courtney said he believes the building could be used for other retail purposes. "I think other businesses in the area would be hurt if we grant this variance," he said.

Macalus said his target clientele would be Hamline University students and he would expect many to walk to the restaurant. He and building owner Matthew Hagen said they would also continue to look for more off-street



A proposed pizzeria near Snelling and Minnehaha Avenues has lost its bid for a parking variance. The Macalus family, which wants to open the restaurant, and the Hagen family, owners of the building at 735 N. Snelling Av., made the proposal at the September 25 Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) meeting where the BZA voted 5-2 to deny the variance. The denial was appealed earlier this week.

parking options.

The Hamline Midway Coalition took no position on the request but did forward pro and con comments from a recent meeting. The district council's land use committee had recommended denial. The city has also received several letters and emails for and against the variance. "This is a situation where there is a lot of community support and a lot of opposition," said John Hardwick of the BZA staff.

Attorney Patrick Smith, who represents the Macalus family, said University UNITED and the Snelling Avenue Business Initiative have discussed the need for more parking in the area, and possibilities of redeveloping the area behind the businesses for more parking.

Owners of neighboring businesses complained that granting the proposed restaurant a variance would be a detriment to the area. "I feel pretty strongly about parking variances," said Kathy Sundberg, owner of Ginkgo Coffeehouse at 721 N. Snelling Av. She said the area already has a parking crunch and questioned how the city would be able to regulate future ownership or hours changes at the restaurant. But Hardwick explained that the variance and conditions would remain in place until a business and property owner came back to the BZA to try and change them.

Gary Carlson of Iver Carlson and Sons at 749 N. Snelling Av., said his family has owned property and operated a business on the block for four generations. "If

(customers) are going to have to fight to get a parking space, they're not likely to come back at all," he said.

Carlson said if necessary his family would take the step of booting and towing vehicles that aren't authorized to park in his business's space or his tenants' spaces. He also said the Hagens' building could be put to other uses. But Hagen pointed out that the building has been vacant for eight months and that the family has turned down other businesses, including a dollar store, because they weren't seen as desirable tenants. Hagen said many people support the idea of a pizzeria and that a web site in support of the restaurant has been started.

Macalus, Smith and Hagen objected to the variance opponents' claims. Smith said that by denying the variance, the city would be blocking a business that wants to put in more than \$100,000 in improvements and sign a 10-year lease.

Hagen, whose family has also been on the block for four generations, said there is strong community support for a restaurant. He said that efforts would be made to direct restaurant customers to the hardware store lot and parking behind Mirror of Korea. Restripping that area could create 19 spaces.

Hagen also said the Carlsons have erected physical barriers between the parking lots, which make it impossible for pedestrians to get from one lot to another. Instead patrons would have to walk to the north to Englewood and then to Snelling.

Block Party in Iris Park

A block party in Iris Park drew over 200 people Sunday, October 1 for live music, food, a moonwalk, and other entertainment including a martial arts demonstration.



The Food Snob

Gnomes are among the most benign of the legendary creatures. Their name comes from the Greek word for knowledge and according to legend (according to Wikipedia), gnomes gathered secret knowledge just as they hoarded treasure. We figured that the namesake of the Happy Gnome restaurant, bar and musical torture chamber (more about that later), must know something that Without Reservations doesn't. Hoping that it was fine food, the Without Reservations crew – accompanied by our cub reviewer Bassett Boy – went to unearth the Happy Gnome's treasure.

We found a clean, sunny space that formerly housed Chang O'Haras, and surprisingly ambitious food for a bar that purportedly offers more than 100 beers. A very similar concept to its sister restaurant on Dale, the Muddy Pig.

Among the dishes we sampled were salmon in coconut curry, fig and wild mushroom pizza, bacon bison burger, and carrot cake and cheesecake. I ordered the crab cakes, which were more like croquettes – firm and somewhat dry. There was more breading and less crab than ideal, but the accompanying salad was nice and fresh.

It was difficult to concentrate on the food because of the '70s middle-of-the-road music playing (loudly) throughout our lunch. As the oldest person at the table, I knew all the songs, but I didn't like them 30 years ago, and find them less appealing now. The music acted as an irritant to my younger companions, as if I was forced to listen to Perry Como for



Without Reservations

Unearthing the Happy Gnome's treasure on Selby Avenue

an extended period. Gnomes may demand easy listening music like Harry Chapin, but what about the rest of us? Try the Happy Gnome for beer, above average food, but consider bringing earplugs.

The Cheapskate

I have been studying up on the nuanced distinction between obstinacy and stubbornness. Being obstinate is when you refuse to do something. Being stubborn is when you refuse NOT to do something. The Bachelor is obstinate. If he is not on board, you can threaten and cajole to your heart's content. He just smiles with implacable serenity. The Snob, on the other hand, is stubborn.

Between the two of them, it's always interesting to predict which form of hard-headedness will prevail. In this case, the Snob was so stubbornly intent on visiting a beer palace at lunchtime (which sounded dubious to the rest of us) that even the Bachelor's obstinacy was reduced to a sad, knowing shake of the head.

Thus it was that we found ourselves strapped into the red Matrix, barreling down Selby Avenue and screeching to a halt in the barren tundra that is the Happy Gnome parking lot at 11:30 a.m.

The Happy Gnome is open for lunch ... technically. On the bright side, we had our choice of seating and enjoyed a spacious, sunny booth right next to the bar. It was almost as if we had the entire wait staff and kitchen staff to ourselves. Wait, we did.

The Gnome thing was bugging me before we even got there. It's over. It was clever in "The Full Monty" and all those TV ads for something or other. But gnomes have seen their day. Somebody needs to inform Wikipedia.

The food is not your average bar fare. I had the salmon, served over fresh greens soaked in a sweet coconut milk sauce. I really enjoyed it. Learning that the desserts come from A Piece of Cake bakery across the street, we split a couple and polished them off in no time.

Bottom line for the Cheapskate: Ample free parking is a boon on Cathedral Hill, and I'll be returning sometime in the near future to sample the beer and the atmosphere—in the evening. The Happy Gnome, by its location and ambitious menu, has lunch destination potential. However, in my view, it did not measure up to the gastro-gnostic reputation that made the Snob so stubborn about going in the first place.

Bassett Boy

Wanting to enjoy the still bearable weather, the first thing we did after arriving at the Happy Gnome was check out the outdoor seating. Blocked off by tall privacy fences and a lot of plants, it would have been a perfect spot to

eat, except for the swarm of angry bees. Well actually we only saw one bee, but the Bachelor got scared, so we headed inside.

First to catch my attention were the large totem poles on either side of the entrance. I wondered about the connection between gnomes and the strange looking figures that made up the totem poles. Maybe that's one of the secrets that the gnomes are keeping. After sitting down, my eyes were drawn to the large sign listing out the impressive beer selection. If only I didn't have to go back to work in a functional state.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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In Our Community

Como Zoo ZooBoo scares up Halloween fun

The 19th Annual Cub Foods ZooBoo at Como Zoo offers a spook-tacular line up of new activities and events for 2006! The Cub Foods ZooBoo takes place October 21, 22, 27, 28, and 29; gates are open from 5-7:30 p.m.

ZooBoo is a non-scary Halloween festival for families and young children. For this unique fall event, the grounds of Como Zoo transform into a world of fairy tales and fun! Over 200 live costumed characters interact and entertain children. This magical event offers families a safe trick-or-treating alternative plus many Halloween surprises.

New this year—live entertainment including puppet shows, storytelling, dancing, and a Scarecrow Search sponsored by *Star Tribune*. Children are encouraged to come in costume and should dress appropriately for this outdoor event.

This year also includes a pumpkin coloring contest sponsored by Subway. Stop by any participating Subway location to pick up the official pumpkin contest entry form.

ZooBoo guests are encouraged to park at Bandana Square and take the free shuttle to and from the Zoo grounds. Bandana Square is located at 1021 Bandana Blvd., just off Energy Park Drive.

Advance tickets for the Cub Foods ZooBoo are \$5 and available at Como's Garden Safari Gifts and all metro-area Cub Foods stores beginning in October. Tickets may also be purchased at the gate each evening for \$6. Tickets are good for any night of the event. The event is held rain or shine. For more information call 651-487-8226 or visit www.comozooconservatory.org.

Proceeds from ZooBoo benefit two of Minnesota's most treasured year-round attractions, Como Zoo and Marjorie McNeely Conservatory. ZooBoo is a production of the Como Zoo and Conservatory Society.

Senior Federation holds info fares this month

How does your Medicare fare? Join the Minnesota Senior Federation at one of our informational events in St. Paul to get answers you need about the donut hole, prescription drug costs, and what you should know before November 15-December 31 to make sure your Part D plan will meet your needs.

St. Paul events will take place on Friday, October 20 at the Wilder Community Center, 958 Jessie Street; and on Monday, October 23 at Lyngblomsten Chapel at 1415 Almond Ave.

Events are free and open to all—coffee and treats, flu shots, and on site health plan reps will be featured from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Call Dawn at the MnSF at 651-783-5047 for information.

Hamline reception for Water~Stone Review

Come and join Minnesota writers as they celebrate the release of their original work in Hamline University's ninth annual Water~Stone Review with a public reading and reception at Sundin Music Hall, Hamline University, 1531 Hewitt Ave., 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 28. Water~Stone is filled with poetry, short stories, essays and writers, interviews from emerging and established writers from Minnesota and across the nation. Selected sections of Water~Stone will be read by the authors at the event. Book lovers of all ages are welcome to attend. It is free and open to the public.

Water~Stone Review, now celebrating its ninth year, is an annual review published by Hamline's Graduate School of Liberal Studies. It includes trend-setting work and the artistic excellence of a proud Midwestern literary tradition. Water~Stone is geared to the curious reader who prefers a range of style and voices, intelligent and lively discourse, and strong, original writing. Water~Stone publishes work in all genres, as well as essay/reviews and writers, interviews.

Art of breastfeeding discussed November 14

The Art of Breastfeeding and Avoiding Difficulties is the topic of the next meeting of Como-Midway La Leche League, to be held on Tuesday, November 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.

Community celebration at Mosaic on a Stick Nov. 4

Come to Mosaic on a Stick on Saturday, November 4th for Anything Worth Doing is Worth Overdoing, a community celebration of creativity and the Stick's two-year birthday party.

The party will include a mosaic cookie decorating contest, make your own mosaic on a stick, a big thank-you to those who have participated in the

Snelling Avenue Planter Project, and a community creativity show featuring arts and crafts and unusual creations by anyone and everyone in the neighborhood.

So, bring your art to show off and your best cookie decorating talents to the Stick between 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on November 4. All activities are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Mosaic on a Stick at 651-645-6600 or www.mosaiconastick.com.

Tea time at Hamline Church November 12

The annual Holiday Tea will be held on Sunday, November 12, at 2:30 p.m. Faith Sullivan will be our speaker this year. She is a well known author from the Twin Cities and is a gifted speaker as well as an author of many books. One of her first books is *The Cape Ann*. The latest book she has written is *Gardenias* which is now out in paperback and will be for sale at the Tea.

Faith Sullivan comes to us highly recommended by Kent Krueger and Lorna Landvik. Mark your calendars now for Sunday, November 12, at 2:30 p.m. and plan to join us for a delightful time. We will start taking reservations for this event on October 15. Please call the church office at 651-645-0667 to make your reservation. The cost will remain at \$25 this year. Reservations will not be held after November 1st without payment.



Como Park Senior High School Senior Hannah Worku was one of 11 African American Minnesota Seniors who have been named as a semifinalist in the 43rd annual Achievement Scholarship competition.

CPSHS senior semifinalist for academic Scholarship

CPSHS Senior, Hannah Worku, was one of 11 African American Minnesota Seniors who have been named as a semifinalist in the 43rd annual Achievement Scholarship competition.

The semifinalists were chosen on the basis of their PSAT scores and will submit essays and other information for the next stage of the competition.

Semifinalists are competing for 800 Achievement Scholarships, worth a total of \$2.5 million.

Candidates in District 66B to Debate Oct. 16

The League of Women's Voters is sponsoring a debate between candidates for Senate and House seats in District 66B. The debate is open to the public and will be on Monday, Oct. 16 starting at 7 p.m. It will be held in the Chapel at the Lyngblomsten Care Center at 1415 Almond Ave. The candidates running for the House seat for District 66B are incumbent Rep. Alice Hausman and Joyce Nevins. The candidates for the Senate seat for SD66 are incumbent Sen. Ellen Anderson and Warren Anderson.

This event will give the public a chance to evaluate the candidates and to hear important discussions on many current issues. It is free and open to everyone.

Gospel discussed at Mt. Olive Church Nov. 3-5

Professor Mark Paustian of Martin Luther College, New Ulm, will talk about effectively communicating the Gospel in a series of three sessions at this year's Reformation Renewal Weekend Friday, Nov. 3-Sunday, Nov. 5 at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, 1460 Almond Avenue. Friday's session 7- 8:30 p.m., Saturday's session 10 a.m.-12 noon, Sunday's session 10:30 a.m.-11:45 a.m. All are welcome to attend any or all of the sessions. Meals and snacks will be provided. For more information call 651-645-2575.

Elders looks for volunteers for seniors

Hamline Midway Elders provides services to keep seniors in their own homes. Current volunteer openings include daytime driving (to take seniors to nearby medical appointments), grocery shopping, telephoning, friendly visiting and snow shoveling. For more information, or if you are an elder and could use some help, please call the Hamline Midway Elder's office at 651-209-6542.

Clovvia Bazaar holds event October 20-21

Bazaars come and go. Forty six years ago when the Clovia Bazaar opened its doors for the first time in 1962, large bazaars were rare and unusual.

A single, popular and unique Children's Hospital Bazaar attracted a committee of women from the Beta of Clovia Alumnae Chapter to use that success as a model for the first ever Clovia Bazaar.

This model, as a two-day event, has continued. For the twenty third time, the biennial Clovia Bazaar will feature its popular merchandise on Friday and Saturday, October 20 and 21 at the St. Paul Campus Student Center Ballroom, 2017 Buford Ave. Hours are Friday, 9 a.m.- 7 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m -2 p.m.

Continuing to attract the shoppers are the popular home-baked foods in the Clovia Kitchen displayed with jams, jellies and pickles. Dozens of hand woven rugs and gifts for the home or personal giving along with collected natural items from home gardens and fields fill two areas. Delightful gifts for children, treasures from around the world and the ever popular fall and winter holiday handcrafts feature current trends. The old in "Grandma's Attic" and the chance at a new handsome designer quilt in the "Shortcut to School" pattern are all in a visit to the 23rd Clovia Bazaar.

Shoppers can easily reach the Student Center using a free shuttle from the University's State Fair parking lot on Randall Avenue on the east side of the campus on Friday. Campus parking is available on Saturday.

'Natural' camps offered at Como Park this winter

Kids can join in the fun at Como during school break Wednesday-Friday, December 27-29, 2006 and Tuesday-Friday, January 2-5, 2007. Como's camps focus on expanding each child's appreciation for the natural world while meeting zookeepers and gardeners, having "behind the scenes" experiences and meeting Como's plant and animal ambassadors up close! Camps are half-day sessions, but are set up so that all day adventures are available by taking two camps in the same week within the same age group.

A supervised lunch period is available for "all-day" campers. Extended care sessions are also available for a fee. Camps are age/grade appropriate for Preschoolers (4-5 years old) to Kindergartners and 1st to 3rd graders.

Call 651-487-8272 to register or for more information or register online at www.comozooconservatory.org, then click on Education. Have a birthday party for your child here at Como! Adult learners can also join in the fun with our Discovery Series classes.

For more information on these exciting programs and to register for fall classes for our Adult Art program; Family & Parent/Child Preschool program; Winter Camps for kids and more call 651-487-8272 or visit our website at www.comozooconservatory.org then click on Education.

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In Our Community

Continued from page 10

Zion Lutheran Church's 1st annual Costume Party

Zion Lutheran Church, 1697 Lafond Ave. at Aldine St., will be hosting their 1st annual Costume Party on Sunday, October 29, from 4 to 6 p.m. All ages are welcome to come for food, fun, and fellowship. There will be games, food and prizes for all. Cost to get in is a non-perishable food item for the Keystone Community Food Shelf.

Self Defense for Women Workshop November 11

Running Tiger Shaolin Kenpo is hosting a Self Defense workshop for Women on Saturday, November 11, from 12-4 p.m. Claim

your inherent power and improve your focus, awareness and relaxation. Delivered with sensitivity and respect, this intensive session will introduce women to the best self-defense techniques from Shaolin Kenpo and other self-defense methods and teach practice strategies for ongoing development.

Presented by Black Belts Robyn Lingen, and David Meyer at the Running Tiger Studio, 783 Raymond Avenue, St. Paul. The cost is \$49. For more information please contact David Meyer, 651-247-6602; email runningtiger@comcast.net or visit our website: www.runningtiger.com.

Knox Fall Festival and Book Fair October 21

The Knox Presbyterian Fall Festival and Book Fair will be held October 21, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. A sloppy joe lunch will be served 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Knox Church is located at the corner of Minnehaha and Asbury Avenues. New and used books and book related items will be offered for

sale. Baked goods, white elephant items, crafts, face painting, chair massage and more.

MMSA holds Gold Plate Dinner Oct. 15

MMSA's annual Gold Plate Dinner is Sunday, October 15, at Mancini's Char House in St. Paul. The grand prize is \$2000. Tickets are \$100 per couple. The public is invited. Call the school at 651-489-1459 for ticket information.

Many students and families would appreciate help paying tuition at MMSA. Can you sponsor a student? Whatever you can contribute will help some families in big way. Donations to the Sponsor A Child program can be sent to MMSA at 592 West Arlington Ave. West, St. Paul, MN 55117. Please mark Sponsor A Child on the envelope.

MMSA School is located at 592 West Arlington Ave. in St. Paul's Como Park area.

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Extreme Landscape Makeover: School Edition

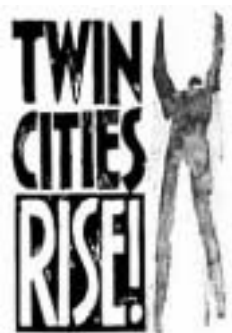
"Extreme Landscape Make-over: School Edition" could well be the title of this summer's project undertaken by members of Emmaus and St Stephanus Lutheran Churches, St. Paul, Minnesota this summer. Just as in the television program name sake there is a giver and a receiver but in the end all are really receivers, some of material things and others of the tremendous satisfaction of having contributed something consequential to another.

During the months of May through August of 2006, 57 volunteers spent over 500 hours to beautify the landscapes of two local schools, Central Lutheran and Concordia Academy, Roseville. The entryway of Central Lutheran got a "new look" designed to streamline and emphasize the entrance and camouflage some necessary but unsightly pipes and meters. The landscape plan which was fol-

lowed provides for seasonal changes in colors and blooming patterns and simultaneously varying shapes and textures.

Concordia Academy now has a reflection garden at the southeast corner of the building. The empty space has been filled with a relaxing and visually stimulating assortment of shrubs, trees, and herbaceous plants. The meandering path as well as plant balance and repetition enhance the solitude. The herbaceous plants proclaim the school colors of green and white. On the opposite side of the building, the north entrance way, once barren, now is accented by an array of plants of mixed shades of color and various shapes and sizes.

The project was partially funded by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and ably assisted by the generosity of Lawn and Landscape Gardens of Moundsview, MN.



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Central Corridor

Continued from page 1

"It is critical to improving our transit system," he said. "If it doesn't pass, we have to go to the Legislature for another solution."

Dornfeld said the amendment would be phased in over five years, and he is confident that growth from existing revenue would more than cover other budget needs.

"Transit is at a disadvantage right now," he said. "Every legislative session, we have to go back with requests."

Russ Stark of University UNITED said he is not sure if the amendment will pass.

"It is worded in such a way that the amendment is not real clear," he said.

He said the coalition supporting the amendment, Minnesotans for Better Roads and Transit (MBRT), is trying hard to educate voters about it.

According to the coalition's website, passing an amendment to the constitution requires a majority vote of all people voting. If a voter leaves this question blank on the ballot, that is considered a "no" vote.

Although over 1,000 organizations reportedly support the amendment, the outcome of the

vote is uncertain.

"If the amendment does not pass, it could mean a couple of things," Stark said. "It could mean that people are not supportive of putting more money into roads or transit, but I don't think that would be correct."

"It could also mean looking at a new funding source for transit," Stark said.

He said that source could be a regional sales tax. Stark said several other cities who have been putting in transit have passed regional sales tax increases to support the transit costs.

Meanwhile, plans for moving ahead with the Central Corridor continue.

"The mayor has developed two task forces," Bedor said. "They are the University Avenue Central Corridor and the Capitol/Downtown Central Corridor Task Forces." She said there are a lot of interested parties along the Corridor, and these task forces include representatives from a significant number of groups in the area.

"There will be a lot of conversation about parking and other concerns," Bedor said, adding that the task forces will serve as a clearinghouse for businesses and residents to be heard.

A consulting team led by the planning and urban design firm Urban Strategies is assisting the task forces and city staff in developing recommendations for the Central Corridor.

"Our goal is for the two task

forces to complete their recommendations by February 2007," Drummond said.

She said disruption to businesses along University is clearly a concern, especially the small businesses east of Lexington Avenue.

"There is a real interest in attempting to strengthen these businesses and not push them out,"

met along the Avenue, insuring current businesses are successful and that there is room for new opportunities, as well."

Although Bedor and Drummond see the Central Corridor project as a positive step for University Avenue, not all merchants and residents share their optimism.

"It is worded in such a way that the amendment is not real clear."

- Russ Stark, University UNITED

Drummond said. "We hope to keep local businesses flourishing, and we hope there will be ideas brought out at the task force meetings."

Drummond said that in general, University Avenue has a different character. The LRT project hopes to maintain that character.

She said she sees a place and need for both small businesses and larger stores in making the Midway shopping area more pedestrian-friendly.

"People like to shop at both," she said, "but we would like to see fewer surface parking lots."

"The market drives the situation," Bedor added. "We want to make sure all the needs can be

Take Tom Stransky, owner of Midway Rare and Used Books at the corner of University and Snelling Avenues. He's been a staunch opponent of light rail for University Avenue since the beginning.

"You know the fix is in. It's all about big developers coming in and getting the little people," Stransky said. Stransky believes that light rail is virtually a done deal.

"Big business wants to put us (small businesses) out of business," he said. Stransky just hopes the transit amendment doesn't pass. "It will be used to finance the corridor along University." But he's afraid that the money will be used

only for light rail on the Central Corridor, as opposed to other transit applications.

Stransky feels that the light rail lobby is too powerful to fight. "The minority businesses and the small, white independent business owners just don't have the political power," Stransky said.

Stransky isn't alone in speaking out against light rail.

At a recent meeting of the Midway Chamber, one of the business owners along University cited his concerns about loss of sales during the construction period. He noted that businesses along Lake Street have been dropping like flies during the reconstruction project in that area.

Not so, according to Joyce Wisdom, executive director of the Lake Street Council. She said there have not been any business closures this season at all as a result of reconstruction.

She added that with businesses, however, the more they have been proactive, the better they have fended.

To address some of the business concerns of the toll that construction might take, Wisdom will be meeting with the Midway Chamber and will offer information on what the area has learned to keep its businesses healthy during times of construction.

Another group that has not voiced its concerns over the impact of light rail are the many

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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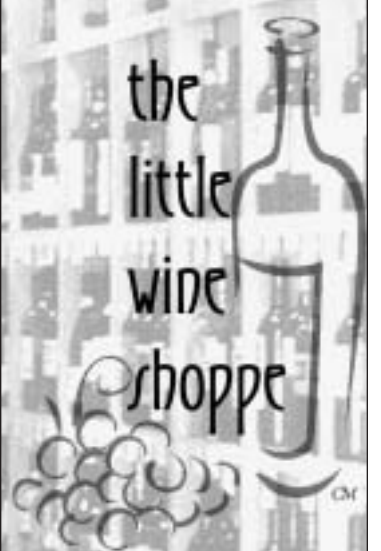
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Como Park reviews proposal for mounted police

By DEBORAH BROTZ

If neighbors approve and funding can be found, Como Park may be getting some horses. The District 10 Como Community Council has contacted the St. Paul Police Department to suggest that Como Park be the permanent home for the horses in the mounted police unit. The horses are currently using rented stables in rural Washington County.

"We would like to house the horses someplace in the city," said Cmdr. Eric Anderson, one of the original members of the mounted police unit, which was created in 1994. "We always wanted to be in the city. Our biggest down time is transporting the horses to and from their boarding facility. We spend a minimum of an hour in transporting. I could get more time on a beat out of my officers. They could be on the street an extra hour a day if they did not have to drive 12 miles a day one way. It's 22-24 miles a day going to and from the barn."

Because the project is still in its very early stages, a site has not been chosen for the proposed stables and offices.

"It will depend on what Parks says they have available for us," said Anderson. "There is a piece of land near the Humane Society, at the intersection of Como and Beulah, just north of that wooded area. That's one spot I'm aware of. We can't be too close to the actual zoo. We don't want airborne diseases."

The paddock area at Como Park would likely be much smaller than the 10,000-square-foot area the horses enjoy outside the rented ranch stables in Stillwater.

"We would not have enough area for pasture turnout," said Anderson. "That's one of the things we would like to look at. In the

past, we've rotated horses in and out of a boarding stable type environment. If we're in town, I would like to maintain a relationship with a stable to rotate the horses working every day."

While working a beat atop a horse, officers are better poised to bust dope dealers and prostitutes. In addition to peering over fences they can move through tight spaces where cars can't maneuver. Being on a horse hasn't affected

Anderson would like to see the number of horses in the fleet double to 10, which is close to its original size.

"There are 55 square miles of city," he said. "We could support the size and area and effectively use 10 officers. It would be nice to have that many. They would certainly have plenty to do."

The District 10 Como Community Council feels Como Park, the most heavily used city park in

"It hasn't been easy to get an estimate for combined stables and offices, and site preparation is kind of unknown," said McCall. "It's a fairly tentative figure."

With Como's 126 fairly uncontrolled acres, the community needs to find creative ways to secure the park with limited resources. Many teens come to the park to drink beer and party.

"The Park Rangers Program was discontinued," said McCall.

mer," he said. "There was a gradual increase in stealing purses and laptops. It really started from that. The police having more of a presence might be a deterrent."

Volz says when they first started working on the project, they talked to all stakeholders.

"There was some general support for the idea so we were able to move forward," he said. "If anybody indicated we were going to hit a brick wall, we would have stopped. The only issues are how to pay for the facility and what kind of environmental impact there would be by putting up stables."

The project is getting a lot of attention even though the process has barely started.

"Not all board members are convinced this is a project they want to back," said Volz. "They want more information and a chance to weigh all pros and cons."

Anderson feels it's important for the city to have a mounted police unit because it provides a very visible law enforcement presence.

"When officers go on a beat, they're a little more proactive," he said. "They're not driving through an area. They can see much farther than an officer on foot. Horses are trained to push or pin people against things. On foot or on a bike, you will not get away from a horse. They can go in and out between houses. Officers get more voluntary compliance with requests when they're on a horse."

At its Oct. 17 board meeting, District 10 hopes to hear how residents feel about having the stables at Como Park.

"It's really encouraging that District 10 started this grassroots effort," said Anderson. "It would be a plus for the area and certainly it would be a plus for us to be in town somewhere."



The District 10 Como Community Council has contacted the St. Paul Police Department to suggest consideration of Como Park as the permanent home for the horses in the mounted police unit.

officers ability to sneak up on offenders.

"I've actually walked up behind people in a situation when I worked on a horse," said Anderson. "I've been behind a fence and saw drug deals happening. The advantages far outweigh the negatives. We can't transport people and don't go into buildings and leave the horse untended. If we make an arrest, we have to call another officer to transport."

Minnesota, is the perfect site to board the mounted police horses.

"It's something that came from the Land Use Committee," said Sue McCall, District 10 community organizer. "This is something that has not gone out to neighbors."

While the city pays \$25,500 a year to board the five horses at a Stillwater ranch, it will cost roughly \$190,000-\$240,000 to build the stables and adjoining offices.

"There are only three or four people to do security in St. Paul. There are a lot of parks. Como has a huge amount of visitors."

Nathan Volz, a Como district council board member, actually came up with the idea of moving the stables to Como Park more than a year ago at a district board meeting.

"We were discussing some issues related to break-ins in automobiles in the spring and sum-

Central Corridor

Continued from page 12

Hmong business owners along University. Although Mayor Chris Coleman has made a strong effort to include them in the planning process, very few have participated. Those who do have attempted to draw their fellow business owners into the discussion to express any misgivings they may have.

Drummond said that as part of the process of the development of LRT along University, a series of open houses is being held for community members to learn more about the project and voice their opinions. The first one was held Sept. 16, and another is scheduled for Oct. 28.

"These are being held at the old Lexington Library," Drummond said. "This is where the Central Corridor community office is housed."

"This was set up so folks would have an opportunity to be heard," Bedor said. "We realize there are a lot of issues. We hope the decisions we make are informed decisions."

While the city is responsible for land-use planning, the Met Council is primarily in charge of

building the LRT track. The Met Council has also organized a group to address issues called the Citizens Advisory Committee, which will start meeting at the end of the year. It is another venue for people to have some input, according to Drummond.

The Saint Paul Area Chamber is setting up Business Advisory Council, as well.

"We want light rail down University to beautify as well as be functional," Bedor said. "The trees and other amenities are just as important."

She suggested looking at Chicago and the density of that city, but the ease in which people get around with mass transit.

"It is very seamless, and I think we'll get there. We're moving in that direction."

"We want people to come to the open houses and tell us what they think," Bedor said.

(Editor's note: If you have an opinion about light rail transit coming to the University Avenue corridor, let US know. You can e-mail the Monitor at denisw@aplacetoremember.com, and we will post responses on our website, www.MidwayComoMonitor.com, and publish a selection of responses in the next edition of the Midway Como Monitor.)

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In Our Community

Continued from page 11

Volunteers sought for shopping for seniors

Store To Door is a non-profit grocery/prescription delivery service for over 1000 seniors and disabled individuals in the Twin Cities. We have a great need for volunteers in the Midway area. Meet Tu-Fri mornings at Cub on 1440 University to shop grocery orders, or call clients from home for their orders (days, nights or weekends) and enter orders online.

Please contact Karen Liu, Volunteer Coordinator, at 651-641-4047 or karen@storetodoor.org

Cub Foods ZooBoo at looks for volunteers

Como Park is seeking hundreds of volunteers to help with this annual event. Persons over 16 years of age, who can volunteer for late afternoon or evening shifts on Oct. 21, 22, 27, 28 and 29, are needed

to wear fabulous costumes, greet and entertain young children and families and pass out Halloween treats. Also needed are many non costumed volunteers—helping at the shuttle bus stops, providing direction during the event, applying simple make-up or helping to set up before the event. Individuals or organizations are encouraged to volunteer for this major fund-raising event for the benefit of Como Park Zoo and Conservatory. Pre-registration and event orientation required—apply now.

For more information call the Como Volunteer Services office at 651-487-8252 or apply on line at: www.comozooconservatory.org/vol/ZooBooapplication.

Zion Lutheran's Holiday Bazaar November 11

Zion Lutheran Church, 1697 Lafond at Aldine St. will host a Holiday Bazaar on Saturday, November 11, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bake sale, craft, recycled Christmas items, coffee and cookies will be available for purchase. A light lunch can be purchased between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. There will be musical entertain-

ment. Bring your neighbors and friends. For more information call the church at 651-645-0851.

Hamline Sr. Hi-Rise Bazaar November 4

The Hamline Sr. Hi-Rise at 777 North Hamline Avenue will hold its annual bazaar Nov. 4, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. There will be craft tables, featuring painted folk art, embroidered tea towels, dream-catchers and more; Many white elephant tables; bike sale, lunch and a silent auction with an antique Limoges. Luncheon set as one of the offerings.

St. Andrew's Rummage sale October 19-20

St. Andrew's Church, 1051 Como Avenue, will be having their annual rummage sale on Thursday, Oct. 19 and Friday, Oct. 20 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturday, October 21 from 9 a.m. to noon in Carroll Hall in the church basement. We are handicapped assessable (elevator on the east side of the church).

Peacejammers from Como



On September 14th, eight students from Como Park High School's Conflict Resolution Team went on a peaceful field trip to Denver Colorado. This field trip was to the 10th Anniversary Celebration of PeaceJam. It was an international event with 2,700 participants from all 50 states and 31 countries. While there the students attended several workshops, listened to numerous Nobel Peace Prize Laureates and worked in family groups. In their workshops they learned about the peace work happening around the world.

Without Reservations

Continued from page 9

When the waiter rattled off his favorite dishes, I was excited

to learn that they have a bison burger, and not just a regular one, a bacon bison burger. I called "dibs" and patiently waited while my counterparts decided. The food came and I took a big juicy bite. It was delicious and cooked exactly as I asked,

medium rare. It was so flavorful that I could avoid dipping it in ketchup, the true test of a burger's worth. When I go back to the Happy Gnome, next time after work, I will definitely order the bacon bison burger again.

The Bachelor

I'll have Bassett Boy know I've been wearing "bee beards" since his stubby little mohawk was little more than a bad case of bed head. I only wanted to go inside because I couldn't find enough


hornets to assemble into the proper sort of Grizzly Adams-esque chin drapery that I'm known for.

And as for the Cheapskate's outrageous accusation of me being obstinate, let me just say I will never, ever, ever, ever agree with that assessment.

Now, on to the gnomes. (You have no idea how long I've waited to utter that phrase.) Where the heck were they? I was expecting a virtual Candyland™ of frolicking, wizened little men littering every conceivable inch of this rather large bar (it's not really a restaurant.) Yet, I could only find one sad, lonely little ceramic gnome perched inconspicuously above the bar. A day trip to one of those impressive yard ornament outlets on the way to Brainerd could have stocked this place with more gnomes than even the Food Snob has in her curio cabinets. Yet, it was virtually barren. There would be no woodland magic, no wisps of pixy dust, no creepy glassy-eyed stares from little old men. Our hearts were heavy....

Alas, this wasn't the first time – and I'm sure won't be the last – that I'll be disappointed by a gnome fantasy unfilled. I was left with no choice but to try and console myself with the fig and wild mushroom pizza (a bit doughy for my taste but with a flavorful topping) and half the Cheapskate's salmon (tasty and succulent) that arrived amid the soulful croonings of Cat Stevens. I have to agree with the Snob that the choice of musical selections at the Happy Gnome defied any explanation of taste or cognitive reasoning.

I recommend that you try the Happy Gnome one of these cool fall evenings – for the food and the beer – but bring your own gnome.



Re-Elect Janice RETTMAN

Ramsey County Commissioner District 3

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Prepared and paid for by the Rettman Volunteer Committee, Ramsey County Commissioner, P.O. Box 17063 Rice Street Station, Saint Paul, MN 55117, Joyce Haselmann, Treasurer

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Monitor Want Ads are now 80 cents per word. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, Iris Park Place, 1885 University Avenue, Ste. #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. \$8.00 minimum on all classifieds. Classifieds must be prepaid via cash, check, or credit card. Classifieds are accepted over the phone with credit card payment only (\$16 minimum order). Want ads must be in the Monitor before October 30 for the November 9 issue. Call 651-645-7045 for more information.

ADDITIONS

Kustom additions, kitchens, bathrooms, patio decks, ramps, garages. Expert workmanship. Marty. 612-724-8819. 11-06

ASBESTOS ABATEMENT

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14 inch female Huffy bike, about 5 years old, good condition. Just tuned up. \$150. 651-646-0259. 10-06

BUY AND SELL

Vintage lights, house hardware. Doors, tubs, radiators, etc. Also furniture hardware 651-644-9270. 11-06

CRAFT FAIR

Faith Lutheran Church, 499 Charles Ave., 651-227-5299. Our annual craft sale Nov. 4, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Nov. 5, 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon. Come shop, eat and have some fun. Something for everyone. 10-06

EMPLOYMENT

Looking for delivery carriers to deliver the Monitor approximately 3 to 4 hours per month. Pay by route. Great for supplemental income! Call 651-458-8053, ask for Lloyd. 12-03

HAULING

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Change pipe to copper. Replace toilets, sinks, tubs/shower, water heater, etc. Ceramic tile. Add a new basement bath. Terry. 612-306-7878. 11-06

FOR RENT

Como area - 3 bed, 2 bath home avail. immed. Large fenced in yard, db garage, w/dry. \$1250 plus utility. Call Roxie 763-413-9532. 10-06

REAL ESTATE

River view - Complete remodel! Gorgeous St. Paul condo on 24th Floor with patio and view of Mississippi River! Sale price: \$149,900. Washer dryer in unit, new stainless steel appliances including dishwasher, new carpet and new matching tile in kitchen/bathroom. Private patio with view of Mississippi River, and secure underground parking! 1 Bedroom / 1 Bath. 620 sq. ft. Call Melissa at 651-261-3305 with any questions or if you would like to set up a showing. 9-06

Lake Lots For Sale - Rare opportunity. 2+ acre lake lots near Siren, Wisconsin. Only 90 minutes from St. Paul. Call Betty Knutson at ReMAX Northwoods Realty, toll-free 877-648-0648.

PAINTING

Painting - specializing in wallpaper removal. Average house \$600, average 3 rooms \$200, average garage \$200. Jim 651-698-0840. 1-07

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WANTED TO BUY

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Paying the most cash for your furniture, dishes, glassware, knick-knacks, costume jewelry, antiques, pictures, lamps, household items etc. I make housecalls. Call Mary 612-729-3110. 12-06

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Writing a paper for admission to Harvard? A resume for your company's web site? A journalist with 25 years experience is available for assisting folks who need help in writing. Reasonable rates. Call 651-486-9760. 12-02

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Hamline's Sundin presents American pianist Siegel

Hamline International Piano Institute & The Schubert Club welcome internationally-renowned pianist Jeffrey Siegel to Hamline University's Sundin Music Hall for a "masterclass" presentation. It is free and open to the public.

A masterclass consists of an artist/master working with students as the audience observes. In the case of our masterclasses, the students perform on the pi-

ano portions of larger classical music pieces and then the artist goes over their performance with them.

The class will be at Sundin Music Hall at Hamline University, 1531 Hewitt Ave, on Wednesday, October 25, 10 a.m.-Noon

Concert is free and open to the public! For more information contact Pamela Burger at 651-523-2332 or pburger01@hamline.edu

Find us on the web at:
www.MidwayComoMonitor.com

The morning glories were past their glory, but still attracting a few bumblebees. A bald eagle soared in circles high in the clear blue sky above us. The hound and I were enjoying one last summer-like day on the deck. It was even warm enough to encourage a tired dog-day cicada to belt out a farewell buzz. There were still a few colorful blooms in the garden, but the turning colors of the trees were beginning to steal the show. It was a beautiful autumn day made more precious because I knew it would be a long wait before I would see another day as warm and as fine.

As I watched the milkweed seeds swirl by along with a few maple leaves, I noticed a movement up against the fence. With its ears laid flat against its back, a tiny Eastern cottontail rabbit was trying to look like a rock. Only the twitching nose gave it away.

This year looked like a good year for rabbits, but every year looks like a good year for rabbits. In spite of the cottontails' appetite for tulips and tree bark, I can't bring myself to wish them ill because they are awfully cute. However, my dog is not so sentimental.

On that day, the dog walked right by the cottontail. Only if the rabbit bolted in a panic would the dog have given chase. But this young cottontail already knows every nook and cranny in our yard. I've watched the backyard bunny escape by dodging this way and that, diving into the thickest part of the hedge, and leaping through some cryptic little gap in the fence. The bewildered dog is left panting as she watches a white tail bounce down the alley to safety. In spite of its tender age, this rabbit already knows how to pull off a disappearing act.



Neighborhood Naturalist

By DEB ROBINSON

Enjoying one last summer-like day on the deck



Illustration by Deb Robinson

It seemed odd to see a baby animal this late in the season, but Eastern cottontails (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) bred like, well, rabbits.

They start feeling amorous in late February. After mating, the gesta-

tion period is only about a month, and the babies are weaned less than a month after that.

We have two terraced plantings in our yard that have been popular nesting sites for rabbits. Under thick vegetation, the mother rabbit digs a shallow depression and lines it with her own fur and grass clipping. The first litter of up to six bunnies is born in early spring, and the rabbits keep on reproducing into August.

A mother rabbit can breed within hours of giving birth. And a female bunny born in spring can produce young of her own by summer's end. If one female cottontail and all her offspring lived and reproduced at the optimum rate, that female would have 2.5 million descendants within five years. Now that's a high reproductive capacity!

Cottontail rabbits are most active during the morning and at dusk. When I walked through my neighborhood woodland to do this month's bird survey, I flushed several cottontails from their daytime resting spots. While I was fussing with my Peterson Field Guide (those two pages labeled: Confusing fall warblers), I nearly stepped on a cottontail concealed in a tangle of raspberry canes. It exploded from cover with a jolt—I don't know which one of us was more surprised.

The natural range of the Eastern cottontail rabbit is on the eastern half (no surprise there) of North America from Canada to Costa Rica. And, because of their keen survival instincts and incredible reproductive capacity, cottontail rabbits are common in urban yards as well as country landscapes.

According to the Minnesota DNR, local hunters bag around 60,000 cottontail rabbits a year. When a good friend told me that he liked cottontail rabbits best baked in cream sauce, I was mortified. Then I remembered that the DNR also reported that 80 percent of Minnesota's cottontail rabbits die every year from natural causes. Yet, there never seems to be a shortage of bunnies eating the spring tulips and gnawing the bark off the fruit trees the following winter.

Love them or loathe them, the Eastern cottontail has readily adapted to my backyard, which must look like an open salad bar to a rabbit. I have to admit, even when it's nibbling on my garden produce, that little bunny is still awfully cute.

Endnotes: *One more Como Buckthorn Bust! Oct. 28 from 9 AM to noon. Meet with other volunteers at Como Pool Parking lot for a little conversation and refreshments before we start. Sign up: Environment@comopark.org or just show up. *A program about the Great Gray Owl Irruption of '04-5, will be presented by Mark Alt, at 7 PM on Nov. 9, Fairview Community Center (1910 W. County Rd. B in Roseville). This St. Paul Audubon Society meeting is free and open to the public. *To contact this writer: dmrobinson@bitstream.net

HAMLIN UNIVERSITY

UPCOMING LECTURE

2006 3M/Ronald A. Mitsch Lecture in Chemistry

"Olefin Metathesis: Where Fundamental Research Can Lead"

Speaker: 2005 Nobel Laureate

Dr. Robert Grubbs

Date: Friday, November 10

Time: 12:40 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall

Contact: Christine Berg Schroeder, 651-523-2426 or cbergschroeder01@hamline.edu



FINE ARTS EVENTS

Artaria String Quartet "Tango Ballet"

The featured piece on the program by Piazzola and includes music by Beethoven, Sculthorpe, and Mendelssohn.

Date: Sunday, October 22

Time: 4 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall

General admission is \$15

Tickets: 651-523-2459

Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegel

Mr. Siegel begins his third decade of Keyboard Conversations in the Twin Cities with an all-Beethoven program of the composer's most upbeat, light-hearted works.

Date: Tuesday, October 24

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall

Reserved tickets begin at \$17

Tickets: 651-523-2459

Guitarist Jeff Lambert

Mr. Lambert performs the premiere of a piece by David Crittendon

Date: Thursday, October 28

Location: Sundin Music Hall

Tickets and information: David Crittendon, 651-523-2438

Manhattan Piano Trio

Date: Tuesday, October 31

Time: 8 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall

General admission is \$17

Tickets: 651-523-2459

Dracula

Bram Stoker's horrifying classic takes the stage in a fresh adaptation by local playwright Steven Dietz. *Dracula* is directed by local director Joel Sass.

Date: November 3-4, 9-11

Time: November 3, 8 p.m.;

all others, 7:30 p.m.

Location: Anne Simley Theatre

Contact: Hamline University Box Office, 651-523-2905 or tickets@hamline.edu

Did you know....

Hamline University has schools and programs that are housed in the Hamline Park Plaza office building at 570 Asbury Street, just five blocks south of campus. The tenants include the Graduate School of Management and the Center for Excellence in Urban Teaching.

Other neighborhood buildings that house Hamline University programs include the School of Law Resource Center at 734 Snelling Avenue.

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