



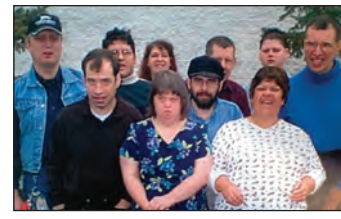
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Midway Como

Monitor



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Como Community Council taps neighborhood resident as Director

Newly-hired Executive Director Michael Kuchta is excited to tap into energy in a neighborhood where people care

By TESHAM. CHRISTENSEN

Fifteen-year Como resident Michael Kuchta stepped into the role of District 10 Como Community Council Executive Director on Oct. 5, 2015.

After a month long application period, the District 10 Executive Committee examined each application submitted and conducted interviews. "We were immediately impressed by the experience and qualifications of Michael Kuchta," stated Council Chair Ryan Flynn. "Michael has experience with multiple non-profit organizations in various roles. He brings a deep understanding of community based organizing, communications, and project management.

"He has worked extensively with volunteers and community members to accomplish organizational goals, and we are thrilled to have him as a part of District 10."

A great foundation to start with

Kuchta grew up in Chicago but moved to the Twin Cities 16 years ago because it is where his wife, Katie, is from. The couple is on their second house in the neighborhood, slowly doing all the things you need to do to update an almost 70-year-old house.

"It's a great location, it's safe, it's friendly, it's human-scale," observed Kuchta.

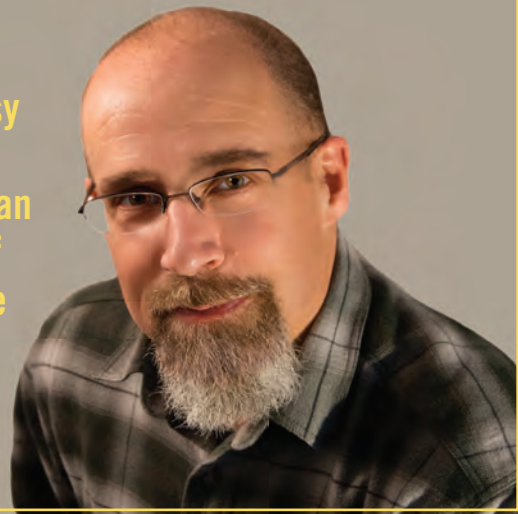
As they walk their dog, the Kuchtas have realized how often people are out in the neighborhood.

"You get to meet people, know people, see people taking care of their gardens, see kids playing, see people working on their houses," he pointed out.

"People care about this neighborhood. They have expectations about the quality of life you can have here," said Kuchta. "And that's a great foundation to start with if you're a district council. I think there's an energy

"Even though we have a nice neighborhood where it's relatively easy to walk or bike, we don't have that central gathering spot or spots that can unify a neighborhood or add a level of cohesion to a neighborhood. Are there ways to create that – and what role can the district council play?"

— Michael Kuchta



here that we can be part of."

Although he's lived in the neighborhood for 15 years, Kuchta acknowledges that there is much he has yet to learn about Como.

He owes it all to his bicycle

Bicycling got Kuchta involved in

community action projects.

He is an avid cyclist who bikes a lot in the summer, commutes to work when he can, and even rides in the winter as long as the roads are clear.

"I was pretty active as St. Paul developed its new city bicycle plan. I really hope we can build that out because I think it's

a great way to connect neighborhoods and make neighborhoods much more people-centered," stated Kuchta.

He serves on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the St. Paul Grand Round project.

"I really want to see the Grand Round develop so that we can have safe, efficient bike

paths, and pedestrian paths, and bike lanes for people of all abilities," he noted. "The Grand Round runs right through our neighborhood along Wheelock, through Como Park, then along Como Ave. past the Fairgrounds. So that could be a huge asset to the neighborhood if we can get it done."

Constructive not obstructionist

Kuchta foresees two sets of challenges for the District 10 Community Council.

The first is at the city level, managing the ongoing budget problems the city of St. Paul always faces. Kuchta pointed out that the city's finances impact city services and property taxes, which impact the quality of life in the city and its neighborhoods, and who wants to live in Como or who can afford to live there.

"That also limits the ability of the city and neighborhood

Continued on page 4

Weeks, if not months, of negotiations ahead on Soccer Stadium

By JANE MCCLURE

Minor league soccer may be rolling to the former Metro Transit bus garage property. But despite encouraging words Sept. 21 from Major League Soccer Commissioner Don Garber and Mayor Chris Coleman, the site selection game isn't over yet. Stadium supporters and opponents may have to wait until a league meeting in December before a stadium location decision is made. Weeks, if not months, of negotiations also are ahead.

The Minnesota Legislature would also have to act on a tax relief package in 2016. Property tax relief already has St. Paul City Council and Ramsey County Board support, as well as support

from Gov. Mark Dayton.

The project has support from the Midway Chamber of Commerce. Union Park District Council (UPDC) and Hamline Midway Coalition, the district councils whose neighborhoods include, or are near, the proposed stadium site. Those organizations continue to monitor the discussions and vet potential issues with neighbors and businesses.

"We're asking people about their concerns and what they'd like to see on the site," said UPDC Board Member David Rasmussen.

UPDC and its Midway Center Task Force are currently collecting input from residents and

business owners, with a focus on the entire 34.5-acre block bounded by Pascal St. and St. Anthony, Snelling and University avenues. An online survey is underway at www.unionparkdc.org under the projects tab.

In June, UPDC passed a resolution endorsing a strategic, comprehensive plan for the so-called superblock. A plan was developed last year by the city, Metropolitan Council and RK Midway, but it has a \$30-plus million financing gap.

In July, UPDC passed a resolution supporting further exploration of the Bus Barn site as a possible location for a soccer stadium, if the project allows for and encourages transit-oriented,

mixed-use development of the entire 34.5 acre site. They also wanted it to be consistent with the city's Snelling Station Area Plan. UPDC hosted a large community meeting in August to discuss stadium-related community issues.

On Sept. 21, after visiting the 10-acre Midway site, touring St. Paul and meeting with political leaders including Dayton, Garber and Coleman addressed reporters at Mears Park. At the press conference and in a radio appearance on ESPN 1500AM with Star Tribune columnist Patrick Reusse, Garber praised the Midway site as a good one for an

Continued on page 8



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Changes being made to the mural at 689 Snelling

To the community,

I want to let the community know that there were concerns brought to my attention in early September about the mural at 689 Snelling Ave., which is home to Kim's Market and My-Ngoc Jewelry.

The mural, by Japanese artist Yuya Negishi, depicted (among other things) a sunrise, and was intended to signal a brighter future for all of us in the community. Unfortunately, it resembled the Rising Sun flag that was used by the Imperial Japanese military before and during WWII. As such, many people—both from Chinese and Korean backgrounds, but others as well—viewed the mural as a painful reminder of military incursions and atrocities, forced labor, foreign land occupation, and the destruction of foreign cultures at the hands of the Imperial Japanese military.

While Yuya was in no way making a political statement with his design—he is one of the kindest and open-minded people I know—and while we certainly did not recognize that the mural would bring anything but joy to the neighborhood and the businesses at that location, we quickly recognized that the mural could not remain in its original form.

Yuya and I met recently with the owner of Kim's Market, as well as leaders from the Korean American Association of Minnesota and the Korean Heritage House, along with Kim Park Nelson, an American Multicultural Studies professor at Minnesota State University-Moorhead. We are now working diligently to change the background of the mural such that the symbolism of the Rising Sun flag no longer exists. We have already covered up the sun, and we are working on new designs for the sunray



With scaffolding in place, Yuya Negishi and assistants are working on changes to the Midway Mural Project at 689 Snelling Ave. As of the last week in September, the rising sun has been removed, and the rays of the sun are being replaced with a grid pattern that will transition to blue skies overhead. (Photo by Margie O'Loughlin)

background.

We have already submitted one design idea with a checkered blue-and-yellow background that would replace the sun rays; this sketch has received the written approval from eight Board and Advisory Board members of the Korean American Association of Minnesota after a discussion they had about the new design with the Deputy Consul General of Korea on Sept. 18. We plan to submit at least one more sketch with a background that covers up the previous parts of the mural that were controversial, and we plan to have the redesigned mural completed as soon as possible, certainly before winter.

So much good has come out of this project, and I have no doubt that this, too, will be a positive outcome and will help us in working towards one of our main goals of bridging

cultural divides. I hope that we can see it as an opportunity to have more conversations about the political, national, religious, and racial tensions that too often keep us divided. I hope it can help us reflect on history, both in the United States and abroad, and how we can create stronger bonds and seek reconciliation and unity moving forward in a situation like this one. And as the leader of this project I will certainly learn from this experience and what I could've done better to avoid

anything like this happening again.

I'm sorry that this misunderstanding happened, that people were hurt, and that we didn't recognize sooner how this mural would be perceived. I look forward to making it right, ensuring that Kim's Market's devoted customers can come to shop and can fully enjoy the beauty of Yuya's artwork.

—Jonathan Oppenheimer
Project Manager, Midway Murals

The Freshwater Society

Because clean water is everybody's business

Article and photos
by MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

Minnesota may be known as the land of 10,000 lakes, but the state actually has 11,842 lakes that measure 10 acres or larger. All but four Minnesota counties contain at least one lake, and we have more shoreline than the golden state of California.

The Freshwater Society (FWS) educates and inspires citizens to value, conserve and protect our water resources. In July, the venerable non-profit moved from Excelsior to the Midway neighborhood because, as executive director Steve Woods said, "We go where the work is." Their new address is 2424 Territorial Rd.

Woods and his team of 12 employees are happy to be here. Following what he called, "a shift in board strategy," they're at the Capitol more often these days, and it just made sense to be closer. The organization frequently partners with foundations, watershed districts, Minnesota Public Radio and the College of Biological Sciences at the U of M—most



Because of impervious surfaces like pavement and rooftops, a typical city block creates more than five times the runoff of a woodland area measuring the same size.

of which are now only minutes away on the Green Line.

While Minnesota doesn't have a problem with water quantity, we do have a problem with water quality. According to the FWS, an estimated 40% of our

Continued on page 9

Monitor

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And check us out on the web at:
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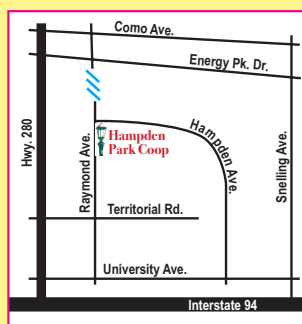
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Opinion

Monitor

Ward 4 City Council candidates sound off on the proposed stadium at the Midway bus barn site

A stadium distraction we don't need

By TOM GOLDSTEIN

Here we go again. After seven years of having the St. Paul Saints ballpark the #1 capital project in the city, we're going to chase yet another stadium for billionaires? Sure, soccer is a great game, and professional soccer provides lots of excitement for fans. But it's not so lucrative a sport that team owners can turn a profit if they also foot the bill for a brand-new stadium.

That's just the tantalizing fantasy Bill McGuire and his partners are offering in hopes that somebody will bite. Unfortunately for taxpayers, the mayor has been all too willing to take the bait, as has the city council with its recent resolution in favor of keeping the old Midway Bus Barn site tax-exempt.

Economists who have been studying the stadium boom for the past 25 years have found little evidence that these projects generate additional development beyond the bars and restaurants that sometimes spring up around them. And for all the talk about a stadium serving as a "catalyst" for additional investment, the owners of the Minnesota United franchise have no interest in spending \$150 million of their money on a soccer stadium just so folks will patronize nearby businesses. They want to capture as much of the revenue as possible for themselves.

In case anybody has forgotten, taxpayers have been to this dance before.

The Saints' ballpark quest began as innocently as did the push for a soccer stadium: a modest \$25 million venue at Harriet Island for which the Saints would provide 60 percent of the funding through advertising revenue, naming rights, and other sources. However, by the time the project was completed, the cost had mushroomed to \$63 million, and the Saints contribution had been reduced to a mere 4%, or \$2.5 million. For that minimal investment, the team

was awarded all ballpark revenue, including naming rights for CHS Field.

Now the same mayor and virtually the same city council that approved funding of the Saints boondoggle want us to believe that the soccer stadium will be different because the owners have agreed to cover the entire cost of construction out of their own pockets.

That's exactly what former Milwaukee Brewers team owner Bud Selig told the city of Milwaukee in 1989: "reroute a highway at a cost of \$6 million and we'll build the stadium ourselves." Six years later that \$6 million turned into a \$250 million publicly-funded stadium in which the Brewers contributed nothing.

This pattern of stadium shenanigans has been repeated time and again for the past 25 years. Anybody who believes "this time will be different" is either not paying attention or deluding themselves.

I know that people will complain about how ugly the Bus Barn site looks or how nothing has happened there for years. All true. But plopping a stadium down to deal with an eyesore that the city has neglected for the past 20 years just means that we'll all have to continue shouldering the property tax burden of another expensive, non-revenue producing asset.

How about if we focus instead on human-scale amenities like repairing the city's long-neglected infrastructure, first class parks, modern rec centers, free after school programming, added green space, and affordable, high speed internet access for everyone?

That's what families want—just ask them.

A lawyer and former school board member, Tom Goldstein is a candidate for city council in St. Paul's Ward 4.

Public investment needed to make site viable

By RUSS STARK

I recently voted to support a City Council resolution that outlines the conditions under which the Council would support property tax exemption for a new MLS Soccer Stadium on the Snelling Bus Garage site.

My initial reaction to the stadium idea was negative. At first blush, the idea seemed inconsistent with community plans for a high-density mix of office, housing, retail, and other uses. What changed my mind is that the current situation with the property as it relates to the Midway Shopping Center is a Catch-22—despite the central location, without major improvements and investments in the shopping center site, the Bus Garage site is not an appealing place to invest for developers, nor an appealing place to live or work for possible tenants.

Recent media attention to the possible stadium has created a great deal of interest in being located on the site from companies looking to relocate or expand their offices. So while the academic literature suggests that stadia do not catalyze economic development, in this case, it seems that this proposal may do just that. As a result, I believe a property tax exemption for the stadium would be a worthwhile tradeoff under certain conditions. For me, those conditions are:

- 1) The team agrees to pay the entire cost of developing the stadium itself, and then hands it over to the City or another public entity to own;
- 2) The facility would be used for many other events and purposes, including amateur and youth soccer, and some tickets be made available at affordable prices;
- 3) A sensible plan can be developed for financing the public infrastructure for the overall 35 acres (the whole area bounded by Snelling, Pascal, University and St. Anthony), including streets, walkways, parks, bike-ways, stormwater management, and shared parking;
- 4) Substantial property taxpaying redevelopment

ment of the remainder of the site begins concurrently with the stadium that increases living wage jobs and/or new housing options.

I think it's important to put the issue of the possible property tax exemption in context:

1. The "Bus Barn" site has been tax exempt for decades as it has been owned by the Metropolitan Council.
2. Both the Xcel Energy Center and CHS Field "deals" included state approved property tax exemptions.
3. A recent assessment of the development potential for the entire 35-acre superblock site concluded that in today's market, any private development there would require a substantial public subsidy for the needed public infrastructure. In other words, there does not seem to be a scenario in which the site gets redeveloped by the private market anytime soon.
4. If the stadium is to happen, it will involve a purchase or lease of the land from the Metropolitan Council and those proceeds will support their operations, likely transit operations.

Enriching the wealthy owners of the soccer franchise is definitely not a goal of mine. However, any development on the site will only occur if there is a profit to be made (with the exception of government or non-profit buildings which would be property tax-exempt). For me to support the development of a soccer stadium on the site, I will need to be convinced that the benefits to St. Paul and the neighborhoods around the site outweigh the costs, and that public monies are only being spent on infrastructure that has clear public benefits.

Russ Stark is the current president of the St. Paul City Council. He is running for re-election in Ward 4 to retain his council seat.



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Taco Bell wins

St. Paul licensing and zoning staff say there is nothing city can do about disruptions—it is a “police matter”

By JANE MCCLURE

Despite complaints about patron behavior and neighborhood disruption at a Snelling Ave. fast-food restaurant, it appears that the St. Paul Planning Commission and city licensing and zoning staff cannot do much at this time. However, some commissioners are going to continue to monitor the situation at the Taco Bell restaurant at Snelling and Edmund avenues.

Some commissioners are unhappy with the response received from city staff, that there is nothing going on at this time that the St. Paul Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) can enforce. DSI staff indicated last month that the behavior issues are the purview of the St. Paul Police Department. Representatives of Border Foods, Taco Bell's owner, have told city officials they work with the police.

The problems at the restaurant, as well as the recent behavior of young people in the adjacent commercial and residential areas, have been a concern for neighbors and business owners as well as for city officials. Large groups of young people congregating in the area, as well as assaults, property damage, and thefts have been detailed on social media.

At the restaurant, loudspeakers, music blaring from motor vehicles, screaming, yelling, and drunken behavior have kept Taco Bell's neigh-



Residents who live in the Taco Bell area complain that the parking lot (left) brings music blaring from vehicles, yelling and drunken behavior in the middle of the night. The drive up window on the left side of the building is so loud that orders can be heard several houses away according to residents. Some residents have taken to posting some of the behavior on social media. The City maintains that there is nothing that can be done, short of police actions, to curb the behavior or to reduce Taco Bell's hours of operation.

bors awake. One neighbor told the Planning Commission this summer that he could hear orders from his back yard several houses away.

The debate over noise and behavior at Taco Bell's drive-through came to a head when plans for a new restaurant were discussed this summer. Neighbors and Planning Commission members had hoped the new restaurant and new permits were a chance to limit hours

and put more conditions on operations. St. Paul requires all fast-food restaurants to have conditional use permits. Drive-through services—be they for restaurants, banks, coffee shops, dry cleaners, pharmacies or other uses—also must have conditional use permits. The permits are used to put conditions on restaurant operations and can be very specific. Drive-through window conditions can be used to regulate

noise, hours of operation and other issues.

But withdrawal of the Taco Bell plans in August means the business can keep operating with the same hours.

The Planning Commission Zoning Committee then asked DSI for a review of site history and operations, to learn more about the situation and to see if anything could be done. Planning Commissioner Julie Padilla said the intent of the review was to explore all of the evidence regarding issues raised recently.

On Sept. 10, Zoning Administrator Wendy Lane outlined the site history dating back to the restaurant's start in 1973. Her statement that the restaurant isn't in violation of its current conditional use permit or site plans troubled some Planning Commission members.

Not all of the commissioners agreed with the need for the Sept. 10 review. Commissioner David Wickiser said that while he agrees with the issues over current operations, he said the Zoning Committee may have been overstepping. He said the plans should have been voted up or down at Planning Commission this summer.

But Padilla disagreed, and said Zoning Committee and Planning Commission are supposed to make the “best decisions possible” for the community. She and other com-

missioners said they need to look into the neighborhood concern and to continue to monitor the situation. Padilla also noted that Border Foods asked for the issue to be sent back to the commission, before withdrawing its request.

There has been a Mexican-style fast-food restaurant at the site since 1973, including Zantigo and Zapata as well as Taco Bell. At some point, a drive-through window was installed, although a conditional use permit was never issued. With no conditional use permit, the city never had a chance to place conditions on operations.

What frustrates the Planning Commission and Zoning Committee is the lack of historic records for the property and lack of clarity of what existing records mean. One issue discussed Sept. 10 is that records refer to the drive-through window as both a pedestrian walk-up window and a drive-through. City staff can not find proof that building permits were ever obtained before the window was installed. Another concern raised is that the drive-through speaker box was installed in a way that creates potential traffic conflicts.

“I find it hard to believe that anyone at the city would approve a site plan where all of the traffic lining up has to go in the wrong direction in the drive aisle,” said Commissioner Gaius Nelson.

Como Community Council Director

Continued from page 1

groups and institutions and businesses to do things—sometimes relatively minor things that can make a big difference,” said Kuchta.

The second challenge is how the neighborhood reacts to change.

“Things are pretty decent in Como, so there's a tendency to be skeptical of change,” remarked Kuchta. “But I think there's a big difference if you perceive change is happening to you, or if you are part of making change happen. That's where I think a strong district council and good community organizing can make a difference.”

Kuchta seeks ways to be con-

structive, not obstructionist—finding common goals and solutions rather than merely riling people up.

As an overwhelmingly residential neighborhood, the area is always balancing the positive and negative effects of the two huge institutions (the fairgrounds and Como Park) located within its borders.

“Keeping that balance takes a lot of energy and effort,” Kuchta observed.

Because of its layout, Como doesn't have a neighborhood business district like others do, such as St. Anthony. Instead, businesses in Como tend to be on the edges of the neighborhood, or scattered in various places.

“Even though we have a nice neighborhood where it's relatively easy to walk or bike, we don't

have that central gathering spot or spots that can unify a neighborhood or add a level of cohesion to a neighborhood,” said Kuchta.

“Are there ways to create that—and what role can the district council play?”

Listening and explaining complex issues

Kuchta believes he was selected as the Como Community Council Executive Director because the job requires communication skills, administrative skills, and community organizing skills—and he's got all three.

Kuchta earned his bachelor of arts in journalism from Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism in Evanston, Ill. He worked for daily newspapers for 15 years and was the editor of a business trade

magazine for five years. Most recently, he has done communications work for labor unions in St. Paul, producing the twice-monthly St. Paul Union Advocate.

In addition to honing the typical journalism and administrative skills, Kuchta also fine-tuned the ability to listen.

This translates into the skill of being able to understand complex issues and then explain those issues in a way that people who are not experts can understand.

“Plus I'm pretty good at connecting dots and seeing where there might be common ground that isn't always obvious,” remarked Kuchta.

Kuchta earned his master's degree in Advocacy and Political Leadership from the University of Minnesota-Duluth, and now

teaches in the graduate-level program at Metropolitan State University.

His labor union background has taught him the ability to organize and connect people while advocating for better outcomes.

Kuchta has spent more than a decade serving on various boards, including Our Savior's Community Services which provides emergency shelter and advanced housing services for more than 125 homeless adults, plus adult education and citizenship classes for 400 immigrants.

He co-founded the Twin Cities Labor Chorus in 2009 and served as its treasurer.

In the winter, when he's not biking, he's skating, cross-country skiing, and listening to a lot of hockey games.

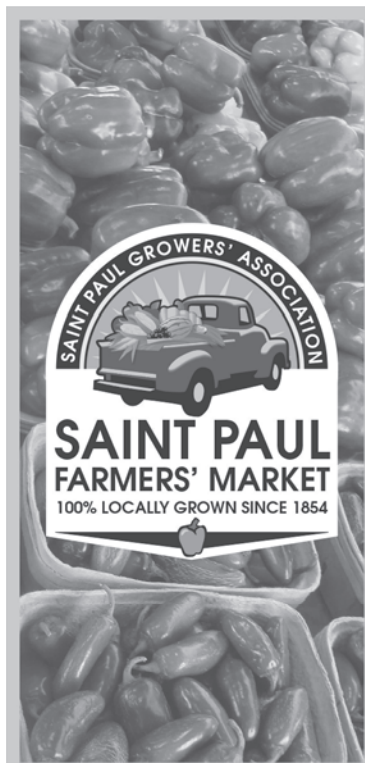


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• Minnesota's Secretary of State, Steve Simon, visited Como on Tue., Sept. 22 to discuss federalism, voter registration, and public policy with AP (Advanced Placement) Government students. Simon's visit was an effort coordinated by Como parent Vicki O'Duffy, the Secretary of State's office, and Tammy Patrick, who serves on the Presidential Commission on Election Administration.

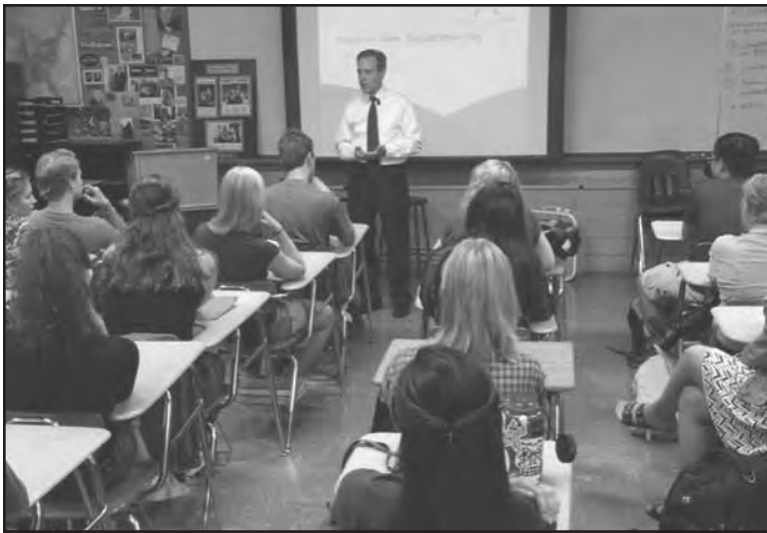
Secretary Simon and Patrick presented information and fielded questions from the students. Connections between government studies and the issues presented by Simon and Patrick were abundant. Both speakers found the sophistication of the students' questions and comments remarkable. WCCO-TV had a film crew in class for coverage of the event and featured the story in their Sept. 22 newscast.

• The Academy of Finance (AOF) is hosting its annual Career Fair at Como on Tue., Oct. 20. There are several guests that have once again committed to the event, and additional speakers are invited to participate in this educational opportunity. Please contact Kris Somerville (kristine.somerville@spps.org) for more information if you would like to share your experience with Como students, and contribute

News from Como Park High School

Compiled by ERIC ERICKSON, Social Studies Teacher

Minnesota Secretary of State visits with AP students



Minnesota's Secretary of State Steve Simon visited Como on Sept. 22 to discuss federalism, voter registration, and public policy with AP Government students.

to this community event with your time and energy.

• The fall production for the Como Theater Department this year is "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The classic William Shakespeare play has been adapt-

ed to a musical. Como's Chamber Singers and Advanced Choir will provide the music and the actors recently auditioned. Rehearsals began in late September. Performances will be Thur.-Fri., Nov. 5-6, in the Como Auditorium, under the leadership of

teachers Carole Whitney and Allison Hartzell.

• French teacher Mademoiselle Teefy is guiding Como's Intercultural Club. The Intercultural Club meets bi-weekly after school and offers students an opportunity to learn about the beauty of diversity as they celebrate and educate each other. Different cultures, religions, traditions, and ways of life within the Como school community are shared, as well as food!

• Keith Eicher and Tuomas Sivula have been designated National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists. This achievement recognizes students that are in the top 1% of students nationwide. Additionally, Ellie Thorsgaard is a Commended Student in the National Merit Scholarship program. Eicher and Sivula will be pursuing the distinction of becoming National Merit Finalists through the submission and evaluation of all their academic achievements. Finalists will be announced in Feb-

bruary 2016.

• Andrayah Adams, Como's All-State Basketball phenom, verbally committed to play college basketball and study at St. John's University in New York. Adams was nationally recruited, with multiple high-profile Division I schools offering full athletic scholarships. Her commitment to St. John's was an exciting announcement, which was made in the Como Library after school last month in front of friends, family and Como supporters.

• Cross Country running star Innocent Murwanashyaka took 1st place at the prestigious Roy Griak Invitational Meet at the U of M on Sept. 26. With 485 runners from across the state and neighboring states in the Maroon Division of the run, Murwanashyaka's first place finish and time of 16:13 in the 5K run were truly impressive.

• Homecoming week events at Como were festive and fun with dress up days in school, a pep fest, coronation, and a battle of the classes on Sept. 18. The weekend culminated on Sept. 19 with a parade, picnic, football victory, and a dance at school. Volleyball, girls' soccer and boys' soccer were also all victorious in their Homecoming games during the week.

Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) is seeking candidates for its Board of Directors. Anyone age 16 or older that resides within, owns property within, or owns a business that is headquartered and principally operates within Hamline Midway, is eligible to run AND vote in the board election!

If you're interested in working with an informed and engaged group of neighbors to focus on local issues around transportation, development, sustainability and more, consider running for the board. We work with the understanding that big change begins at the local level, and only by working together, can we ensure a prosperous future for the entire community. Candidates from traditionally underrepresented populations are particularly encouraged to run.

There are three seats up for election in 2015, one in each of the three neighborhood sub-districts (A, B, and C). Sub-district A covers the area from Transfer Rd. to Snelling Ave. Sub-district B spans the area from Snelling Ave. to Hamline Ave. Sub-district C covers Hamline Ave. to Lexington Ave. All sub-districts are bounded

News from District 11

By KYLE MIANULLI, HMC COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Represent your neighborhood by running for HMC Board of Directors

by University Ave. to the south, the railroad tracks just north of Pierce Butler Rte. to the north.

Candidates can run for a seat in the sub-district in which they live, own property or own a business that is headquartered there.

Anyone interested in running for a seat on the Board of Directors must return a completed application to the Executive Director no later than 8pm, Sun., Nov. 15. To request an application—or for more information about serving on the HMC Board of Directors, please contact Michael Jon Olson at 651-494-7682 or michaeljon@hamlinemidway.org.

HMC Board of Directors voting information

This year, neighbors will have the opportunity to vote either in person or through an online

platform that will be posted at www.hamlinemidway.org/elections following the candidate application deadline. Dates and locations for in-person voting will be announced later this month. Neighbors will be able to vote for one representative running in their respective sub-district.

New project: "Ready & Resilient Hamline Midway"

What makes a community ready and resilient? How can we better prepare to rise to the occasion in the face of extreme weather events or other points of adversity?

"Ready & Resilient Hamline Midway," is a new project that seeks to bring neighbors of all ages and backgrounds together for an interactive exploration of ways we can better prepare for adversity in our community.

What can we do now, so we are ready to act when the occasion requires? How do we communicate with each other, especially in the absence of traditional lines of communication? What skills and tools are helpful when decisions are to be made quickly and action is required? How do we ensure that the most vulnerable among us are connected with resources and neighbors who can offer timely assistance?

This project will include three intergenerational gatherings of Hamline Midway community members, who will explore various scenarios while building capacity to rise collectively to the occasion, should circumstances require it. All events are free and open to the public. Light refreshments and snacks will be provided.

Please join your community

for one of the following Ready & Resilient Hamline Midway workshops:

—Sat., Oct. 24, 3-4:30pm, at Holy Trinity Church, 1636 Van Buren Ave.

—Tue., Nov. 10, 1:30-3pm, at Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Ave.

—Tue., Nov. 17, 6:30-8pm, at Snelling Café, 638 Snelling Ave. N.

Fairview Ave. Underpass Party scheduled Oct. 24

Save the date for the second Fairview Ave. Underpass Party, Sat., Oct. 24, 6-10pm on Fairview Ave. beneath I-94. For the Second year in a row the Friendly Streets Initiative, in collaboration with neighborhood groups and volunteers, will light up the dark and dismal space beneath I-94 on Fairview Ave. This year, there will be an unveiling of a creative lighting pilot project that will remain in place for a period of time following the party. Grab your family friends and neighbors and come down for an evening full of free food, music, art activities, and more!

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Competition brewing in all local city council races

By JAN WILLMS

The upcoming election Nov. 3 for city council will offer some competitive races in Wards 1, 4 and 5. Incumbents were asked by the Monitor what their greatest accomplishments were, and new candidates were asked why they chose to run. All candidates were asked about the greatest challenges facing the council, what issues they would like to work on, any specific problems in their Wards and their thoughts about the extended use of parking meters in St. Paul. All who had filed as candidates were contacted.

Ward 1

Mohamed Said is reportedly running as a write-in candidate for Ward 1 and had not filed. **Trahern Crews**, also a candidate for Ward 1, did not respond by the deadline for this article.



Dai Thao

DAI THAO was elected two years ago to complete the term of Melvin Carter III, who resigned as a Ward 1 council member to take a job in state education. Thao became the first Hmong-American elected to the St. Paul City Council.

Thao, 40, lives in the Frog-town neighborhood and is an IT manager for the Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery.

"In my two years, I'm proud to have focused legislation on social justice, affordable housing, road and pedestrian safety, and parks and green spaces," Thao said. "We formalized a Sister City agreement between our city and the city of Djibouti, approved Paid Parental Leave, secured pool vouchers for low-income youth and supported the Women's Economic Security Act, ensuring all women contractors are paid the same as men."

Thao said he also increased local efforts to support women and minority-owned businesses, declared Indigenous People's Day, passed Responsible Banking Ordinance and limited the tobacco industry from targeting youth with the Single Cigar ordinance.

Thao said he supported police body-worn cameras to strengthen community relations, passed the citywide bike plan and supported the implementation projects within Ward 1. He worked on completing sidewalk projects, supported community gardens and farmer's markets on city-owned lots, brought in over \$12 million to rehab, maintain and create affordable single family and multi-family housing. Thao said he got more green space on Griggs, Little Mekong Plaza, Rondo Commemorative Plaza and helped complete Frog-town Parks and Farms.

"Our challenges are all so interconnected that we need to work across our differences and see that even though we have different histories, we share a com-

mon destiny," Thao explained. "We need access to good paying jobs and affordable housing. We need to create safe and vibrant neighborhoods and commercial districts, all of which connect all of us to doing better together."

Thao said there remained a lot of work to do to create a strong tax base to meet the demand of city services. "We need to maintain a good mixed housing stock of market rate, senior and affordable housing to prevent gentrification," he said.

Implementing racial equity tools into city policy and budget, making city services more accessible and streamlined, creating jobs for youth and positive after-school programs for kids are also areas Thao would like to work on if re-elected. He would like to see better use of city resources and dollars, an increase in the minimum wage and earned sick and safe time.

Thao said specific problems of concern in Ward 1 are jobs and economic development, equity and education, public safety, and affordable housing.

"I am undecided on the expansion of parking meters in business corridors and commercial districts," Thao said. "I do think that the parking policy in downtown needs to be flexible and adaptive to the current demand."

Ward 4



Russ Stark

In Ward 4, **RUSS STARK**, 42, who lives in the Hamline-Midway area and is City Council president, is running for re-election.

Stark cites numerous accomplishments during his time in office. He ensured the Green Line included high-quality streetscape, that businesses were supported during construction, and that walkable, mixed-income and mixed-use urban environments are created around the stations. He worked to maintain high-quality services despite flat or shrinking budgets, including preventing the closure of Hamline-Midway Library and restor-

ing weeknight library hours.

Stark authored the City's Complete Streets Policy and sponsored the City's Green Building Policy and the Urban Agriculture Amendments to City Zoning.

"I championed the City's new Bicycle Plan and the creation of the 8/80 Vitality Initiative and insisted on the inclusion of affordable units in housing developments seeking the use of Tax Increment Financing," Stark stated. Other accomplishments were creating the Como Regional Park Advisory Committee, sponsoring the Student Housing Overlay Zone and supporting improvements to major streets in Ward 4 to make them more pedestrian and bicycle friendly.

Addressing challenges facing the City Council, Stark said, "We need consistent, long-term financing sources for the maintenance of our aging infrastructure. We need to continue to innovate to tackle racial disparities in St. Paul. We need to keep making our city more sustainable, and we have to keep investing in our commercial corridors to attract and create new job and business opportunities and new housing options."

Stark said he would like to see the continued momentum of the success of the Green Line with additional planning and investments in new transitways. "The Riverview Corridor connecting the airport and the Mall of America to downtown St. Paul is a top priority among many transitways being planned," Stark added.

Stark added that he would like to focus more resources on reducing racial disparities in the community and continue progress toward improvements to the city's solid waste systems.

Regarding Ward 4, Stark sees a continuous need to strengthen and improve relationships between the large institutions and the neighborhoods that surround them, including the University of St. Thomas, Hamline University and Como Park.

"Just outside the Ward, we must focus attention on the redevelopment of the Snelling 'Bus Barn' site, whether or not the proposed MLS Soccer Stadium is built," Stark explained. He said the Green Line, while improving livability in many ways, has made it more difficult for semi-trucks to navigate around the community. "We need to focus resources on creating new truck routes that will minimize their use of residential streets," he added.



Stark considers parking meters as a tool to better manage parking and maximize the benefits of a major public asset—the space in our streets. "The expanded hours for meters in downtown St. Paul are sensible to encourage turnover of parking for businesses that rely on short-term parking being available. Parking meters may also make sense in some neighborhood commercial districts where parking demand is very high, such as Grand Ave. and the Selby/Western area," Stark stated.



Tom Goldstein

The other candidate in Ward 4 is **TOM GOLDSTEIN**, 58, a lawyer by training who lives in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood.

Goldstein said there were a number of things that spurred his decision to run for the Council. "During light rail construction, the city and our council member did little to prevent the project from harming existing businesses along University Ave.—and the minimal funding that was appropriated to cover business losses came too late and with too many strings attached to make it effective," Goldstein said. "Meanwhile, the city seems to have no shortage of funds when it comes to subsidizing downtown condo projects or stadiums. In recent months, my opponent

has voted to award Comcast a no-bid contract to manage the city's internal Internet network while doing nothing to leverage customer service improvements for the public or address the digital divide; sponsored a resolution to reduce parkland/green space requirements for developers and been unwilling to aggressively oppose teardowns that have negatively impacted several blocks in Ward 4."

"Imagine where we could be as a city if we focused on sustainable development practices, realized the potential in our parks, lakes and riverfront amenities, and repaired our long-neglected infrastructure."

"We need an advocate in Ward 4 who will put people before politics and leaders who will insist on accountability and transparency rather than pay lip service to citizen concerns. That's why I'm running for City Council," Goldstein explained.

Regarding challenges to be addressed, Goldstein said the most recent data gathered by the Wilder Foundation shows St. Paul has a poverty rate of 24%, with 67,000 individuals living below the poverty line, including 25,000 children.

He said the quickest way to build wealth and prosperity in a community is through job creation. "Instead of figuring out how we're going to create the thousands of livable wage jobs we need to grow our tax base and help lift people out of poverty, our City Council remains fixated on tax subsidies and corporate giveaways that only serve to increase the burden on everyone else."

Goldstein said that if St. Paul is going to compete in the 21st

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City Council Race

Continued from page 6

century, the city needs a bold, sustainable vision that includes greater educational opportunities; multiple affordable housing options; proper maintenance of roads, bridges and sewer system; expanded recreational amenities and green space and investments in the kind of technological innovations that will attract the companies and entrepreneurs creating the high-paying jobs of tomorrow.

For St. Paul to thrive, Goldstein said the opportunities for entrepreneurs and startups to succeed must dramatically improve. He suggests starting an Office of Enterprise Development that encourages businesses to locate to St. Paul, identifies barriers in making that happen, and provides technical assistance to new ventures.

"As part of that effort, we need to explore ways to make affordable, universal, high-speed Internet a reality for everyone in St. Paul," Goldstein noted. "We also need to extend the livable wage ordinance to all St. Paul employers with exemptions for small businesses and start-ups."

Goldstein said he would push to leverage city resources that maximize educational outcomes for children, primarily by encouraging businesses and nonprofits to partner with local schools and provide adult mentors. He added that there is a need for fairer tax policies and changes in the zoning code that will stop senseless teardowns and curtail the growing boom in 'McMansions.'

To achieve these goals, Goldstein emphasizes the need for complete transparency in local government. "I will advocate for the hiring of an independent City Auditor who would regularly evaluate city programs and departments for their effectiveness so that we can have an honest appraisal of how the city is performing from one year to the next," he said. He added that the city must also take care of neighborhood amenities.

Goldstein cites the pursuit of a soccer stadium on the old Bus Barn site is of particular concern in Ward 4. "St. Paul just completed building a new ballpark for the Saints that involved nearly \$7 million of public funding, handed all the stadium revenues to the team for a mere \$2.5 million up-front investment, and now the city is faced with a \$10 million deficit this budget cycle," Goldstein said.

He suggested that a tech hub for the medical device industry, a St. Paul equivalent of the Midtown Global Market or a version of The Shops at West End entertainment complex in St. Louis

Park would be a better choice for the Midway.

"Additionally, we have a golden opportunity in Ward 4 to address the digital divide in our community by piloting an all-fiber network along Snelling Ave. or as part of the Green Line along University Ave.," Goldstein noted.

He said that as a former business owner on Grand Ave., he is particularly concerned that expanding parking meters is more about raising city revenues than addressing a specific problem.

"If there are areas in the city where parking is clearly a problem, utilizing parking districts or other means to ensure turnover of parking spaces may be appropriate," Goldstein said. "But moving forward on a proposal without seeking feedback from taxpayers is exactly the kind of practice that I would work to stop as a council member."

Ward 5



Amy Brendmoen

AMY BRENDMOEN, 45, is the incumbent council member in Ward 5, covering Como, the North End, Payne-Phalen and Railroad Island.

She said that she has been very accessible to the community by having bi-monthly community office hours, authentic involvement in her diverse neighborhoods, taking "Lake Laps" with constituents, managing an active and responsive social media presence, and having a very high-quality Ward 5 staff.

"Community members have led the way and helped shape projects 30 years in the making. We have also been able to create immediate change, sometimes in the span of a business day," she said. "On a weekly basis, someone takes the time to tell me that they feel heard. And that's a pretty cool thing."

Brendmoen said that in partnership with the community, she was able to facilitate a long overdue district council boundary change. "I helped increase services and programming at the Como Lakeside Pavilion, not to mention 79 new jobs," she said. "We will see 12 new single-family homes on a city-owned land on Maryland Ave. that will bring new homeowners and investment in the North End. I helped

to ensure the preservation of the affordable senior housing building 'Como by the Lake', and I directed resources to create a plan to reignite the oft-overlooked Railroad Island neighborhood. I followed up by delivering significant funds to begin the execution of said plan."

Brendmoen said that as the chair of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, she has worked well with her fellow council members to stabilize home prices in many neighborhoods through targeted investments.

According to Brendmoen, St. Paul is on the right track. She said it is crucial that the city continue rebuilding all that was lost during nearly a decade of recession. "This means ensuring our city workforce is fully restored, and overdue maintenance projects are re-prioritized," she stated. "It means addressing the stark inequity seen from one neighborhood to the next so that all may share in the fruits of our recovery."

Brendmoen said the greatest challenge St. Paul faces is its wholly inadequate state funding under Local Government Aid, and the absence of a meaningful state transportation funding plan that recognizes the responsibility of the State to equitably fund heavily utilized inner city street and bridge infrastructure.

"Compounding the State not holding up its end of the deal, St. Paul also has 1/3 of its parcels off of the tax rolls due to the large number of churches, parks, schools, hospitals, nonprofits, government buildings and private colleges as the state's capitol city. Balancing the very real need for maintenance investment against important new projects critically timed to draw in both retiree and millennial residents is incredibly challenging," Brendmoen explained.

Brendmoen said that an underlying and deep concern of hers remains the method in which city services are delivered. "So much of our work is driven by complaints made directly by residents," she stated. "This approach can be very effective for people and neighborhoods that actively report problems, concerns or suspicious activity. But in areas where neighbors are struggling just managing their own daily lives or where residents may not speak English as their first language, I can see a visible difference in how that area is served."

A more organized, intentional system of scheduled service-delivery would help provide balance and equity in how services are delivered across the city and Ward 5, Brendmoen believes.

She said Ward 5 still needs more jobs and economic de-

velopment dollars. "We have a ready workforce ready for action," she said. "In addition, we need housing that is affordable, dignified and adding value to our community."

Brendmoen said she would like to continue livability work in St. Paul by continuing to support multi-modal transportation projects and the development of beautiful parks and neighborhood amenities that make public spaces attractive for residents and employers.

"St. Paul has made significant investments in the downtown core, and there is so much action in our city," Brendmoen said. "It is thrilling to visit downtown in the evening these days. The parking study took a long look at our downtown parking. I believe the recommendation to expand parking meter times and rates was thoughtful, and I support that change. I am also glad that our new technology allows us to adjust meters as appropriate."



David Glass

DAVID GLASS is a business owner whose office is in the North End neighborhood and whose home is in the Como area. He and his wife Pam are former 3Mers and were co-owners of Black Bear Crossings since 1996.

Glass is running for Ward 5 council member, and he is endorsed by the Minnesota Young DFL, Saint Paul Indians in Action and the St. Paul Police Federation. "I'm told this is the first time the police have pulled its endorsement from an incumbent and given it to the challenger," he said.

He is active on numerous nonprofit boards, including Minnesota Housing Partnership, Ain Dah Ung Center, National Coalition Against Racism in Sports and Media and the American Indian Chamber of Commerce.

Glass said he chose to run because he is concerned with cost overruns on the Green Line rail project and CHS stadium project, the lack of commitment to economic development on the East Side and North End, struggles for absentee housing, support of recreation centers and libraries and effective implementation of community policing.

"I am committed to honesty, open transparency, good business

ethics, better city services and better neighborhoods," he said. "I've seen a pattern of decision-making by our current city council member that has ignored neighborhood interests and good management practices."

Glass said the greatest challenge to the city council is to put neighborhoods first.

"Walk with me on Front St., Wheelock Pkwy., Dale St., Rice St. and Edgerton," he commented. "Most of the neighbors I have talked to who live on these streets or have businesses have not been engaged during the past three years."

He said decisions about bike lanes, parking meters, community policing, recreation center programming, relationships with schools, neighborhood housing and street maintenance are all helped by effective neighborhood interaction.

Glass said, if elected, he would like to be a good neighborhood liaison on issues like problem drug houses, unrepaired roads, traffic hazards, safety hazards, new business start-ups and noise issues.

"I would publicize our budget and budget changes, so that the neighborhood can see where our spending priorities really are," he noted. "I would use my city council vote and influence to ensure that the basics like safety, street repair, more plowing and recreation centers are funded first."

Glass stated he would identify a real business plan to fix the city's infrastructure, starting with streets, and understand how amenities are added where they make sense.

"I would ensure that our city government is transparent and accountable," he said. "Currently we find out about decisions made if the news or print media decide to report on them, if they even get the information." He said meetings on Wednesday afternoons at 2:30pm are closed to public discourse, and consent agendas hide important issues affecting our communities and neighborhoods.

Glass said he would find ways to develop an effective housing plan for St. Paul. "Foreclosed houses should be going into homeownership programs through the city partnering with many nonprofit groups," Glass said. "The current city council person could be doing much more to encourage home ownership instead of just selling homes into the rental market."

Glass claimed he would promote the diverse ethnic, cultural events of Ward 5 and all of St. Paul. He would also reach out to local media and the neighborhood through a Ward 5 newsletter that fully covers relevant neighborhood issues.

Regarding specific concerns in Ward 5, Glass said that while areas like Grand Ave., 7th St., Selby and Payne avenues are experiencing a renaissance and renewed prosperity due to efforts

Continued on page 8

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City Council Race

Continued from page 7

by their local city council people, Rice St., Dale St. and Maryland Ave. have been neglected for years. "Our current Ward 5 city council person has spent over a million dollars to add a bar to our previously family-friendly Como Lake while other areas have been ignored," Glass stated.

He said that as a city council person he will bring the economic development and business knowledge, skills and commitment to bring renewal and prosperity to Rice, Dale, Maryland and all of Ward 5.

Glass said he would be a strong advocate for community policing. "My already active good relationship with local police resulted in the endorsement by the St. Paul Police," he added.

"Neighbors throughout Ward 5 are telling me that the city has left them out of decision-making and communication loops on removing trees, installing bike lanes, new assessments, expensive art projects, changing zoning rules and more," Glass said. "The absence of our current city council person at doors, district council meetings and events has been noted. I intend to be very active and present in the neighborhood."

Glass expressed concern about the rec centers, stating there is not enough rec equipment. "Our Sylvan and Front Rec Centers were torn down and replaced with restrooms," he said. "The warm-up rooms, gyms, indoor activities and supportive, caring adults are all gone. Our rec centers need to be people-staffed centers with activities, not just a few fields."

Glass explained that advocating for neighborhoods has to go beyond city hall. "We need an active city council person who will also advocate at the state and city level as well," he said. "Active advocacy goes even further. Railroad safety has become a significant neighborhood issue." Glass stressed that railroads are running longer trains of 100 cars, running contents of crude oil through neighborhoods, running during all hours of the day and night.

"We should be holding neighborhood meetings not to alarm neighbors but to remind them of what we should do if there is an accident and advocate for additional safety measures," Glass said.

"Budgeting new parking fees for many neighborhoods that previously have not had parking fees without neighborhood input is one more example of why we need a new city council member in Ward 5," Glass said. "Neighborhoods should be first in budget spending priorities, not the first to be tapped for

more funds. Parking fees would provide another reason for people to go to free-parking malls instead of local businesses."



David James Sullivan-Nightengale

DAVID JAMES SULLIVAN-NIGHTENGALÉ, 41, has been a safety engineer for almost 15 years after having served in the US Army. He lives in the North End neighborhood and is the other candidate from Ward 5.

"Safety issues in my neighborhood and within the city have gone unmitigated for years," he said. "As a safety professional I can contribute best as a council member."

Sullivan-Nightengale said, "We are the least represented of the citizens of Minnesota's biggest cities, about one council member for every 42,000 citizens. We need to increase the number of elected representatives to reflect our diversity," he said. "We need affordable housing with good paying and stable jobs. We need to run the city like successful and responsible large businesses including best practices such as kaizen, lean, and quality and safety management systems to provide our citizens with on-time and on-budget products and services."

Sullivan-Nightengale said the issues he would most like to work on if elected are those involving safety, design of infrastructure and quality of services.

Regarding Ward 5, he sees specific concerns as being public education, traffic safety, street maintenance and affordable housing. "These are just a few of the things my neighbors are really fired up about," Sullivan-Nightengale noted. "We also have the high hazard trains coming through areas within Ward 5 that could kill many people if there was a derailment and fire."

Sullivan-Nightengale said he would expect expansion of parking meters more in a downtown where you have to pay for parking anyway, rather than on Grand Ave.

"I don't want to turn St. Paul into Minneapolis, where you have to pay to park just to go for a walk in the park or shop at local businesses," Sullivan-Nightengale said. "I saw more people enjoying Minneapolis parks before the meters. We don't want to discourage people from shopping at our small businesses."

Monitor In A Minute

Get those shovels ready!

Snow and ice season hasn't arrived, but those who have been errant in keeping sidewalks clean need to get their shovels and ice chippers ready. The St. Paul City Council passed ordinance changes Sept. 23 to allow more sanctions against those who don't shovel.

Currently, complaints about sidewalks take a week to 10 days to be resolved. Property owners get a warning letter first and then there is a city staff inspection before a crew is sent out to do the work.

But under an ordinance change brought forward by Council President Russ Stark, properties where city crews have done snow and ice removal in the year before are moved ahead. The work is to be done in half of the time at repeat offenders' properties.

Most complaints are quickly resolved by property owners when there is a complaint. Last year the city logged 4,753 snowy walkway complaints. Of those only 978 required work by city crews. Property owners are billed for the work. There is a right of appeal to a legislative hearing officer. Those who don't pay have the assessment added to property taxes.

About 20 percent of those property owners whose walks require city crews' clearance are repeat offenders. Stark said the change targets those who haven't been responsive in the past.

Several district councils and advocacy groups supported the change.



Como receives key grant

A \$1.96 million multi-year state Legacy Grant will be welcomed at the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory. The St. Paul City Council voted Sept. 23 to accept the grant, which is from the state's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

The funding will be used for a wide range of programs at the zoo and conservatory, including programs for children and adults. The city has also used the state funding to help pay for a conservatory centennial garden that was dedicated this summer.

The Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment to Minnesota's Constitution, dedicates 3/8ths of 1% of the state sales tax to clean water, habitat, arts, and parks and trails of state or regional significance. The grants may be spent only for arts, arts education, arts access, and to preserve Minnesota's history and cultural heritage. This grant goes

through 2017.

St. Paul Parks and Recreation has used the grants for various projects since the state funding was set up several years ago.

Bike lanes approved

Bike lanes are taking shape on Western Ave. as part of a St. Paul Department of Public Works mill and overlay project. The St. Paul City Council Sept. 2 unanimously approved the project, which is included in the city's comprehensive plan for bicycle routes and improvements.

Mill and overlay work on Western between Como and University avenues gave the city the chance to mark the bike lanes at minimal cost. The work will be funded through the city's 8-80 Vitality Program.

The project provides a north-south connection for bicyclists on the Charles Ave. Bikeway, which extends from the Capitol area into the Midway, to and from bike improvements on Como Ave. It also connects via Western to planned bike lanes on Marshall, and is near the Summit Ave. bike lanes.

It does, however, mean removal of on-street parking on the west side of Western Ave. between Como and Charles avenues; and changes to an overnight sanitation ban that is used to clear the street for sweeping.

The proposal has support from the St. Paul Planning Commission Transportation Committee.

(Monitor in a Minute compiled by JANE MCCLURE)

Soccer Stadium

Continued from page 1

18,500-seat soccer stadium.

Garber said he is "very impressed" with the site at Snelling and St. Anthony avenues, describing it as "transformational" in bringing the Twin Cities together. He praised its access to transit and major routes, as well as its potential to spur redevelopment.

The site is just north of Interstate 94. By the time a stadium would be built and open in 2018, it would be accessible by Metro Transit A Line rapid bus service as well as Green Line light-rail service. The bus line opens next year.

But Garber also made it clear that it will be some time before all details could be worked out and a decision made. And media reports indicate that while MLS is focusing on St. Paul, Minneapolis and Hennepin County officials say their downtown stadium site shouldn't be ruled out.

Bill McGuire, leader of the

Minnesota United FC team ownership group, has indicated they'd build the \$120 million stadium with private funds. The ownership group would also pay the franchise fees.

The project has many moving parts. The bus barn property is owned by Metropolitan Council. The adjacent shopping center and a vacant property east of the old bus barn site is owned by New York-based RK Midway.

One issue is who would own the site and whether the city or St. Paul Port Authority would lease the land. Talks are already underway between the Port and Metropolitan Council, according to city staff. Lease proceeds could be directed to support regional transit operations.

Another issue is spin-off development taking place on the Midway Center property. But that could mean displacing some Midway Center businesses. For the Big Top Liquor store, that could mean moving out of the community as a new store would have to meet

the minimum city-mandated one-half mile distance between stores. Its current location is grandfathered in.

A third wrinkle is parking, which is already a worry in the adjacent neighborhoods. One idea the city has floated is that of using the nearby Spruce Tree Center parking ramp and building a new ramp at the site. That ramp could be shared. City officials have also noted that there are about 6,000 parking spaces within six blocks of the proposed stadium site.

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Fresh Water Society

Continued from page 2

Lakes and rivers suffer some pollution and are considered "impaired." A significant contributor to water pollution is agriculture, which covers about half of the state. Woods pointed out, "Everything that happens on the land affects the water around us."

The FWS has two main areas of concentration: groundwater sustainability and stormwater runoff. Woods said, "We don't want to be an inch deep and a mile wide. We focus on drafting policies that improve water quality, and then get neighbors involved through our citizen engagement programs."

To understand groundwater sustainability, you have to understand aquifers. Aquifers, which are not visible, are slowly being drained down across the state. Private wells are filled from aquifers and supply three out of every four Minnesota households. People often think of aquifers as underground lakes. They're actually sand and gravel deposits, in which water saturates the empty spaces. Groundwater flows out of aquifers and sustains many of our lakes



Deirdre Coleman (L), project coordinator, said she's been paddling a canoe on Minnesota rivers and lakes ever since she was old enough to sit up. Steve Woods (R), executive director, described himself as "nearly amphibious." He canoes, swims and, in general, is happiest when he's on or near the water.

and rivers. When the aquifers get low enough, the lakes and rivers lose volume too.

There are plenty of things that citizens can do to protect groundwater quality and supply. For starters, dispose of hazardous waste properly. Hazardous waste includes things like paint, garden chemicals, nail polish remover and oven cleaner. Ramsey County's year-round collection and

product re-use center is located at 5 Empire Dr. (just north of University Ave. between Rice and Jackson streets).

Reduce the size of your lawn by planting native plants and grasses. Reduce the amount of fertilizer and lawn chemicals that you use. Reduce the amount of salt on driveways and sidewalks this winter (it doesn't work below 15 degrees Fahrenheit anyhow). All of these chemicals can become part of storm water runoff, ending up in lakes, rivers and, in some cases, groundwater.

One of the FWS's major community engagement programs is called Master Water Stewards. The goal of that program is to train citizens to combat storm water runoff in their own neighborhood. Program participants attend lectures and hands-on classes over the course of eight months and become well-versed in water science, pollution causes, and solutions.

"Our Master Water Steward graduates are bi-lingual," said Deirdre Coleman, FWS's program coordinator. "They speak both science and English." She was quick to point out that anyone can apply, and that a background in science is not required to be accepted.

"What we're really interested in is people who are connected to their communities," Coleman said. Contact dcoleman@freshwater.org to learn more.

It's not too late to register for the 2016 Master Water Steward program, which will begin in January. Modeled after the successful Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs, the class of 2016 hopes to graduate 75 passionate water stewards—who will then be able to help neighbors manage their own storm water better.

The FWS provides other opportunities for education in the community. Their now famous Weather Guide Calendar is full of valuable information for citizen scientists of all ages. It's available

through local independent bookstores. For bulk purchases, contact the FWS directly. The Weather Guide Calendar is also available for schools to buy, along with an accompanying curriculum guide. It's an excellent tool for teaching about the weather, earth science, meteorology and phenology, and provides a dependable source of operating revenue for the FWS. It's a big seller!

On Tue., Nov. 3, the FWS will be sponsoring their annual Moos Family Speaker Series on Water Resources. The event is free and open to the public. Join William Stowe, CEO and general manager of the Des Moines, Iowa, Water Utility. Stowe, who is part-engineer, part-attorney, and part-philosopher, will speak on the challenges of providing safe drinking water to half a million customers in a heavily agricultural area. The presentation begins in the St. Paul Student Center Auditorium (2017 Buford Ave.) at 7pm and all are welcome.



Want to learn more about lakes? Check out honorary FWS board member Darby Nelson's book "For Love of Lakes" at the St. Paul Public Library. The book weaves a tapestry of history, science and poetry for those who value lakes and waterways.

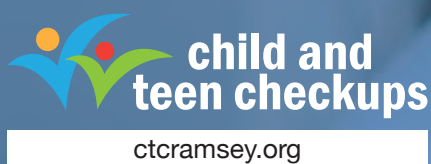
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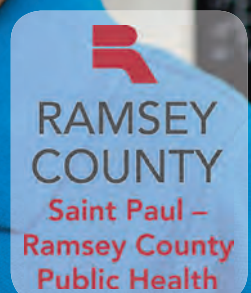
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100 bicyclists tour the Midway, explore bikeways and green living



Photo left: Cyclists ride on Charles Ave., a clearly marked bike boulevard. They were part of Sierra Club's 20th annual bike ride that toured 20 miles of St. Paul in September. Photo center: "Sharrows" on the pavement mark Griggs St. as a designated bikeway. Up the street is a roundabout that helps riders move slowly through the intersection. Photo right: Riders on the bike tour use the bike lane along Prior Ave. (All photos by Jill Boogren)

By JILL BOOGREN

Onlookers watched, and a whole family applauded from the sidewalk as a parade of 100 bicyclists rolled along Charles Ave. on a Saturday in mid-September. The riders were part of the Sierra Club's annual bike tour, which travels to different locations in the Metro area each year to highlight developments that support biking, walking and neighborhood livability.

There was much to herald at this year's tour, the club's 20th annual, which explored the Midway area and other parts of St. Paul. With its new bike plan adopted earlier this year, the City of St. Paul plans to more than double

the number of bikeways in the city over the next 20-30 years and create a downtown loop (now called the Capitol City Bikeway). The plan also includes completion of the Grand Round, which will connect neighborhoods north of I-94 to downtown and the river and allow riders to circle the city entirely off road.

"It's about creating a 'network of safe and connected bicycle facilities,'" said Luke Hanson, a St. Paul Public Works technician, at the start of the tour in Highland Park that morning. "Passing the bike plan allows us to be much more efficient in how we implement the facilities," he said.

Sierra Club Executive Committee Member Luther Dale, who has ridden on several of their bike tours, said he's noticed over the years the progression of biking as being largely for pleasure to being a primary mode of transportation. "Biking is certainly about recreation and fitness," he said. "It's also about transportation options as people increasingly use it for getting to work."

In addition to using the bike lanes along Minnehaha Ave. and Prior Ave., riders got to try out the bike boulevards on Charles Ave., Griggs St., and, farther south, Jefferson Ave. The first of their kind in St. Paul, these roadways are in-

dicated by "sharrows" and other signage and are designed to give bicycle travel priority. They have features like roundabouts, curb bump-outs, and medians that serve as bike-walk "refuges" to aid in crossing busy intersections. These proved to be absolute necessities on Charles Ave. at Lexington Pkwy., Dale and Marion streets, where during the tour there was a considerable wait at each of these island oases to cross the street.

Some people remarked that Charles Ave. contains stop signs at almost every block, and that they should be reoriented to favor cyclists traveling on Charles Ave. Hanson said this has come up, and

while the city views Charles Ave. as largely complete they're always reevaluating to see where improvements can be made. Any new work would be considered a separate project, however.

"I'm heartened to see how St. Paul is doing so many things on a policy level and at the neighborhood level," said first-time tour rider Marijo Wunderlich, herself a 'pretty regular' biker. "I love how [biking is] becoming integrated, with the light rail and of course buses." Bike racks are provided on the front of buses and inside the trains.

Continued on page 11

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Finding sustainable jobs that support impactful quality of life

By MARIA A. HERD

Over 800 economically disadvantaged women received career development help last year from Dress For Success (DFS) Twin Cities, a nonprofit organization located at 1549 University Ave. W.

DFS has been suiting women for interviews and assisting them with job search and retention in Midway for five years.

"This is a great location," said Program Manager Lily Ubbelohde. "We love how close we are to the light rail (Snelling Ave. Station), and we're easily accessible off public transportation and from Minneapolis or St. Paul."

The main mission of DFS is to promote the economic independence of disadvantaged women.

"We work with women across all industries, all fields, all levels; there isn't a typical Dress for Success client," said Ubbelohde. "We see women from 18-80, all racial backgrounds and all educational backgrounds."

DFS, which has only four full time staff members and four contract staff members, really makes DFS a volunteer driven organization. works on a referral basis with over 180 partner organizations, including local homeless and domestic abuse shelters, the Department of Labor, and other government agencies and



Yvonne Williams formerly utilized Dress For Success's services and is now employed full time as the Suiting Program Coordinator. She looks through donated suits to prepare for a suiting appointment with a client. (Photo by Maria A. Herd)

social services.

These organizations will often refer women seeking employment to DFS, and they in turn frequently refer women to other social services. The partnerships help DFS clients overcome barriers that could keep

them from holding down a job such as a lack of shelter, food, child care or transportation.

"There are so many amazing community partners that are already doing phenomenal work," said Ubbelohde. "We don't want to be a

one stop shop. We really want to do what we do, and do it well, while being sure that our clients are getting their needs met."

Suiting Coordinator Yvonne Williams feels a strong connection to many of the women who come

through the doors at DFS because of the hardships she overcame in her life, including teen pregnancy, depression, prostitution and drug abuse. "When I see them blossom while they're here, well it's very encouraging," she said.

Williams first came to DFS as a temporary receptionist after being unemployed for eight years and struggling with mobility issues. She was placed in the position by a partner organization to be observed an office setting.

Williams loved the work and atmosphere at DFS so much that after her observation was over, she continued volunteering at the front desk for three years. Then through donation funding, Williams was hired on as a full-time employee last January.

Watching women come into their suiting appointments shy and intimidated, yet leaving happy and confident, is her favorite part of the job.

"Seeing this transition in such a short amount of time and being able to help women in whatever their situation may be—being able to boost them up a little bit—brings tears," said Williams.

Over 80 percent of DFS clients utilize its suiting program. At suiting appointments, women meet one-

Continued on page 12

Bike tour

Continued from page 10

At the tour's lunch stop at Union Depot downtown, Dave Van Hattum, advocacy director for Transit for Livable Communities, pointed out that the METRO Green Line light rail transit is seeing 30,000 riders a day and spoke to the importance of dedicating state funding to meet all of the region's transportation needs. "It's important for cities to lead, to make bike investments, but we also think the state should do its share," he said.

Green living and livability

The primary focus of the tour may have been about support-

ing bicyclists and transportation, but for the Sierra Club it's all part of a much bigger picture. "It's everything that's said about livability, health, cutting down pollution, better use of resources—[biking] is a healthier way to get around. It's healthier for the environment," said Deb Alper, a longtime volunteer for the club and one of its original tour leaders. "In a time of climate change, that's certainly part of the wider issue. It's all part of the same story."

To show a couple of examples, the 20-mile route went by the 135-acre former Ford plant site in Highland Park, where residents have called for building a bikeable, walkable, transit-accessible, energy-efficient, mixed-use

"21st Century Community."

Riders also stopped at the old Schmidt's Brewery on 7th St., which will house a second Urban Organics commercial aquaponics facility--at 80,000 square feet it's 10 times larger than their Hamm's Brewery location on Minnehaha Ave. According to owner Dave Haider, they'll produce 250,000 pounds of fresh salmon and 500,000 pounds of organic produce a year. This means they're joining with artists' lofts and a keg and case market in making use of this historic space and will be bringing locally-produced food to the market as well.

For Alper, these developments are important for city living and for preserving green

space. "Making urban areas attractive for people to live in, means we destroy less land on the outskirts," she said.

Perhaps as a reminder that building strong neighborhoods means thinking big AND small, the last stop on the tour was at Merriam Park's Ice Cream, Peanut Butter, and Jam Festival. Here riders enjoyed Izzy's ice cream and saw young creative minds at work at a pop-up adventure playground. "We create community backyards where kids create, take risks, and develop skills for lifelong learning," said Seniz Yargici Lennes, of Twin Cities Adventure Play. "Our goal is to build [permanent] play spaces so kids can ride their bikes to the playground, and the community

knows where they're going."

And why not hail the littlest among us? Arguably one of the best signs of a healthy neighborhood is kids jumping onto their bikes to go and play.

Implementation continues

Work to implement the bike plan is already starting. This fall, Front Ave. from Lexington Pkwy. to Dale St. will be resurfaced with bike lanes striped in each direction. Then in 2016 look for work to begin on installing a two-way cycle track on Pelham Blvd. (from I-94 to Mississippi River Blvd.) and an off-road bike trail on Wheelock Pkwy. (from Rice to Edgerton streets).

More information and resources can be found at: Cycles for Change (712 University Ave.) www.cyclesforchange.org; www.smart-trips.org; www.saintpaul-groundround.org; and www.stpaul.gov/bikeplan.

City Council - Ward 4

Tom Goldstein
for Saint Paul



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Dress For Success

Continued from page 11

on-one with an image coach who helps them pick out a professional outfit and cure any jitters they might have about their interview or a new job.

"We're preparing them to not only get ready on the outside for their new experience but so that they also feel ready on the inside," said Ubbelohde.

Women preparing for an interview are suited head to toe with a pair of shoes, a handbag, and an outer jacket if necessary. If a woman is starting a new job, she is given a weeks worth of professional clothing to mix and match.

"The confidence level is really brought up when you're wearing something that's stylish and fits well," said Molly, a DFS client, and volunteer. Her name has been in changed in this story for privacy reasons.

A dislocated worker, Molly has recently started her job search after being unemployed for several years. Back in the day she volunteered for five local food shelters and is now surprised to find herself seeking help from others.

"I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would be on the other side to receive instead of give. That is a heartbreaking thing to be the one on the other side, when I've always, always been on the giving end," she said. But because of the ongoing support at DFS to find employment, "I feel very confident that it is not going to be for long."

DFS is a volunteer driven organization. A third of their funding comes from individual support, one-third is corporate support, and the final third of the budget are grants. Over 300 people volunteer at DFS annually, and about 400 pounds of clothing are donated weekly.

Volunteer sorters go through the donations, looking for items that are fashionable and in good condition.

"My goal is that when our



Volunteer sorters inspect donations in the back room for items that are business appropriate and in good condition. (Photo by Maria A. Herd)

women walk into the waiting room for an interview, they can't tell the difference between our women and anybody else who is interviewing for that position," said Ubbelohde.

The sorters estimate that they keep about 25 percent of donated clothes, while the rest is re-donated to other organizations.

Everything from hair pieces to jewelry to undergarments is available for women in need.

"When we work with women as they are transitioning out of homelessness or fleeing a domestic abuse situation, sometimes they don't always have a chance to pack an extra pair of underwear," said Ubbelohde.

Although DFS is most well-known for its suits, Ubbelohde says it's the career development programs that make the biggest difference in women's lives. This is referred to in the hashtag "#beyondthesuit."

"We want people to understand we do so much more than suits. Suits are what get people in the door. But suits don't get you a promotion, suits don't help stabilize your life, suits don't pay the bills," she said.

About 40 women annually participate in DFS's job search class called Going Places Network, referred to as GPN. The class meets twice a week for 10 weeks in downtown Minneapolis at business community partner offices and the DFS office in Midway. Women build self-esteem as well as interviewing, job searching, resume, and cover letter skills. Walmart Foundation sponsors the class through a grant.

On average participants have been unemployed for over a year, so getting them into the routine of attending classes and connecting with other women is impactful said Ubbelohde.

Holding half of the classes downtown also gives women experience maneuvering their way through the business world.

Molly said that the classes made her more comfortable with public transportation, allowing her to focus more on responses to a hiring manager's questions.

"It dispels that nervous feeling so you can concentrate on what's most important and keeping your chin up," she said.

Molly also highlighted the unique social aspect of GPN. Sometimes women can be exclusive and competitive, "but here we are GPN sisters. We are all rooting for each other and praying for each other," she said.

GPN gave Williams the confidence to overcome her criminal record barrier during her employment search. She explained that it's better to be upfront about one's criminal background and then turn it into a positive by demonstrating recent self-improvement.

DFS follows up with graduates 30, 60 and 90 days after the class is over. Within 90 days, 70 percent of GPN graduates have found employment.

"We're especially proud of that statistic," said Ubbelohde, noting that the DFS Twin Cities office has some of the highest numbers in the country for GPN.

The Professional Intelligence Initiative (PII) is another successful

career development program at DFS. The 14-month job retention course was created a year ago specifically for the Twin Cities market by co-founder and CEO Jeri Quest.

Quest saw the need for a job-retention program because it was common for clients to cycle in and out of unemployment quickly.

The first six months consist of classes on time management, critical thinking, emotional intelligence and financial education to help women stabilize their lives and be successful at work. Women also receive encouraging cards and notes from an anonymous "angel" to offer support. Then, each participant is partnered with a mentor—a business woman in the community who has 10 or more years of experience—to offer professional guidance for the last eight months of the course.

DFS holds graduation ceremonies for the graduates of their programs. Williams graduated from both the GPN course and the PII course. "You feel special, you're given a little gift bag and certificate, and you walk away with the tools

and confidence to continue your journey," she said.

The third program at DFS is the Professional Women's Group, which is more of a support network than a class. The group meets monthly for activities and speakers that cover topics from managing personal finances to eating healthy on a budget to laughter yoga. The women often bring their work problems to the group for advice, but also celebrate new jobs and promotions together. The Professional Women's Group gives these women "the tools that they need to create social support in a way that social services can't provide for them," said Ubbelohde.

Molly believes that the ongoing support at DFS is what sets the organization apart from other services. "I have heard that this is something other programs lack," she said. "For them, it's something like there is this program for one day or five days, and then 'bye you're on your own.'"

But DFS works hard to provide its clients with tools that they can utilize when barriers arise and a supportive network to be successful.

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School Board election draws full slate of choices

By JAN WILLMS

The Nov. 3rd election is approaching, and a full slate of candidates is running for four at-large positions on the Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) school board. The candidates who filed for election were contacted by the *Monitor*. One of those candidates, Aaron Benner, has since decided not to run. Rashad Turner is a write-in candidate who did not file.



Greg Copeland

Greg Copeland

Greg Copeland, 63, is a long-time resident of the East Side's Payne Ave. neighborhood. He is a retired newspaper reporter, grant writer, nonprofit adult and youth job training program director, a community action agency administrator, and was Maplewood city manager. He also served as caregiver and health care advocate for his wife Betty for 16 years following a disabling on-the-job auto crash.

Copeland strongly believes a new superintendent needs to be hired. "We cannot afford to wait any longer if our SPPS district's record of educational failure over the last five years is to be turned around," he said.

"The incumbent school board absolutely ignored the scope of Supt. Valeria Silva's failure to make any reasonable academic progress over the last five years, especially in closing the achievement gap. The 2015 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) Math student proficiency gap between White students and Blacks was 37%; with Hispanics 31%, American Indians 33% and Asians had a 9% gap with White students. Reading results for the 2015 MCAs had the gap between White and Black students at 33%, 31% with Hispanics, with American Indians 29% and Asians at 13%," said Copeland.

Copeland said St. Paul students deserve better than a school system of big financial favors for the insiders in the administration, while rank and file teachers and classroom aides get layoff notices, and property taxpayers get asked to pay yet higher taxes for less academic achievement. Copeland said that voters need to realize this is a non-partisan election for an indepen-

dent school district. "Voters need to elect only those candidates pledged to carry out the needed leadership and policy changes after the election," he stated.

Copeland said he is an independent thinker who is unafraid of making institutional change. "I believe that in choosing democracy and self-government we have accepted that there is inherently controversy as we decide together to leave past failures behind, learn what we can from them, and agree to start anew for a future we choose to improve for both our family and our community," Copeland noted.

Copeland cited several school programs that he considers system failures and would like to end. He said these include: mainstreaming of Special Education students with behavioral and emotional challenges that led to needless disruption of classes for students and faculty; unilaterally placing English Language Learners in regular classrooms without respect to cultural preferences and individual readiness; and rigid adherence to a centralized top-down system that has robbed children and their teachers of exercising creativity, variation and initiative in the classroom.

Regarding the achievement gap, Copeland said that every student needs an individual education plan to eliminate it. "To keep them current we need to hire a lot more guidance counselors," Copeland said. "In today's complex fast moving world every student can benefit from an education plan and later a vocational, college or career plan that we update as they grow, and their interests take shape."

Copeland said the funds for hiring more guidance personnel would come from setting new priorities for spending limited funds. He suggested elimination of programs like the Pacific Education Group race training and reducing staff travel outside the state, except that earned by bringing tax dollars back from the federal and state governments in the form of grant contracts to support new priorities. He also suggested reducing central administration and reorganizing district support staff and functions to strengthen schools.

Copeland said only 48% of General Fund dollars are currently going directly into classrooms. "My focus will be to spend more dollars than ever before on direct student instruction."

Developing legislative policy with state lawmakers and state and federal agencies to improve district budgets is a goal of Copeland's. He also proposes going to single member districts and using the seven city council wards to apportion representation fairly on the school board. He would like to see board meetings held twice a month in regular public sessions.

"All board meetings should be broadcast on cable TV, as should all advisory bodies appointed by the board of education. Transparency is required, not optional," he noted.



Zuki Ellis

Zuki Ellis

Zuki Ellis, 41, is a parent trainer for St. Paul Federation of Teachers' Parent Teacher Home Visit Project. She lives in the Summit-University neighborhood.

Ellis said she decided to run for school board because she feels that the current board is not acknowledging or listening to the concerns of families and the community. "I've been an advocate, organizer and an ally for our teachers and our support staff within the district, and I know the power of listening to students, the community, parents and teachers and how beneficial it can be for everyone when all parties have a seat at the table," she said.

Ellis said that working with the Parent Teacher Home Visit Project, PTO and site councils for years has given her lots of experience working closely with educators, students and families. "I hope to leverage these community ties to keep the district communicating better with the community," she noted.

Ellis claimed the largest issues facing the school board are improving communication and transparency within the district, so parents, teachers and students all feel as if they have a seat at the table. "Beyond that, we need to work on closing the opportunity gap," she added.

Ellis said there isn't a single simple answer to the problem of the achievement gap. "It'll be a long process to address this," she said. "As an initial improvement I'm passionate about, we need to be better about keeping strong levels of support staff in our schools. Staff like social workers, nurses and teachers' assistants often provide the most support to students who are falling the furthest behind. While their work is critical for all students, disenfranchised students are hurt by their absence the most, and we need to see support staff in that light."

Ellis' biggest goal is making sure more groups in the district feel they have a seat at the table, and that the district is communicating and being transparent with them. "Beyond that, I have some background working with



the Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights on special education, so I'd look into what work I could do there as well."



Linda Freeman

Linda Freeman

Candidate Linda Freeman, 63, is from the Como neighborhood and is a licensed elementary and Montessori teacher and consultant. She said she decided to run because she considers schools to be the most powerful place to assure the best possible future for children and the school board the most influential position to keep the focus on children.

"I'm in an optimal position to give the necessary attention to the school board where some of our current and previous members have been falling short," she said. "I'll take the time to ask questions to inform our decisions and reach out and listen to children, parents, teachers, and principals to support our district's data."

Freeman said she has enduring experience with education that she can bring to the school board. She was owner-operator of a preschool and daycare in her home for 10 years. She has taught in SPPS since 1998, focusing on programs designed to meet the needs of at-risk and homeless children. She said she also taught in innovative Montessori schools on a Lakota reservation and in North Minneapolis.

"I've served on the District Budget Committee, school committees, a site council and a district parent group," Freeman noted. "I've had input in developing a Minnesota Montessori resource group, and I'm active with a local Montessori mentorship committee." She said that her active immersion in the culture and cultures of St. Paul and its diverse neighborhoods are as important as her education and

experience.

Freeman said the budget is always the bottom line regarding upcoming challenges. "We have to be prepared to present the budget and bottom line needs that will make our schools great, and bring the public into the spending discussion, especially at their school sites where solutions can become a reality."

To diminish the achievement gap, Freeman suggested a strong, radical effort to minimize testing is overdue. "We should be developing a stronger relationship with the Minnesota Department of Education to assure it's in touch with supporting our needs," Freeman said.

"We can't wait any longer to develop a world class early childhood program through our public schools," Freeman added. "This is necessary throughout Minnesota, but St. Paul is positioned to be in the forefront."

Freeman said she does not support Minnesota's current view of universal Pre-K, which she considers has become a diminishing catch phrase for a very important initiative. "I see public schools teaching four-year-olds the same way they teach 10-year-olds, with no regard for stages in child development," she said. "We have to accept only highly trained, dedicated teachers to this program, who are willing to be scrutinized."

According to Freeman, the St. Paul community has to step up to support closing the achievement gap. "We choose and continue to live in St. Paul because we're a rich, creative, caring culture," Freeman said. "We have to be unified and dynamic in living out our choice."

Freeman emphasized that all children must be reading at grade level. "We have to think twice when we level the playing fields with our iPads, to assure we're not covering up realities in students' abilities."

"We have to assure that our 'gifted and talented' children learn responsibility for their abilities within their curriculum," she continued. Freeman said that obsession with high achievement must be set aside

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School Board Race

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with all the St. Paul community working toward a manageable, significant goal that optimally and realistically positions everyone for success.



Keith Hardy

Keith Hardy

Keith Hardy, 52, an IT project manager for US Bank who resides in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood, is the only incumbent in the race. He decided to run for re-election because he does not believe his work on the board is finished.

"The issues facing our students, especially students who are immigrants, who are poorer or from communities of color, are too important for me to stay out of the campaign," he noted. "I also want to continue being a strong voice for the under-represented communities and for getting more members of those communities involved in our schools as teachers, administrators, tutors and in other ways."

Hardy added that because of policy changes and district initiatives during his service on the board, SPPS graduation rates are increasing across all student groups while academic achievement has increased for more students in the past four years. "However, too many of our black and brown male students continue to feel pushed out of school or feel that school is irrelevant in their lives. As an African American man, I feel responsible for changing that."

Hardy, who has been the only African American on the board for the past eight years, said he comes from a family that was not well off financially. "While I have strongly supported academic rigor and success for all students, I have felt a special responsibility for the majority of our students who come from families of color and of poverty," he noted.

He considers his most important accomplishments to be helping create the racial equity policy and anti-bullying policy; championing the establishment of credit unions in high schools and the Parents of African American Students Advisory Committee; and expansion of FIRST Robotic teams in traditional and alternative high schools. He also passed the gender inclusion policy, tutors students and said he ensures fiscally responsible annual budgets, which included voting twice against the proposed budget. "I also observe learning and authentically listen to principals, students, teachers and staff at all 70-plus SPPS Schools and advocate for students in alternative schools," Hardy said.

Hardy said some of the greatest challenges facing the board include narrowing the education equity gap and strengthening bonds with community organizations to help students and

their families receive necessary mental/emotional and physical/safety needs. Other challenges are pushing the district leadership to recruit and retain more teachers from communities of color and immigrant communities and ensuring racial equity and high academic rigor are practiced daily in all schools.

Some of Hardy's suggestions for eradicating the education equity gap are to help every student read at grade level, continue to challenge students academically, connect students with their culture, educate the whole child and keep students focused on a successful future.

Hardy said his personal goals if re-elected are to become more fluent in multiple languages, continue tutoring in math and reading and add science, help coach urban debate and robotics teams and become a stronger advocate for public education and the school district with federal and state leaders.



Steve Marchese

Steve Marchese

Steve Marchese, 48, a Pro Bono Director at the Minnesota State Bar Association, lives in the Summit-University neighborhood. He said that as a parent and school volunteer, he has watched the central administration take decision-making authority away from the schools and bring it to the central office, leaving educators, families and staff with little influence over what happens in their own buildings. "Time and again, the administration with the support of the current board have pursued a well-intentioned effort to increase educational equity only to have that agenda undermined by poor communication and questionable administrative decisions," he said.

Marchese believes a more inclusive, transparent and effective district is needed; one with clear goals, objectives and strategies for improving achievement. "We also need an independent school board that holds the superintendent and administrators accountable for both their promises and their performance," Marchese said. "I believe I have the professional and personal experience to bring thoughtful, strategic and pragmatic leadership to the SPPS board."

Marchese said he brings over 20 years' experience as an attorney to the school board. He was in private practice earlier in his career, including representing families and children in special education proceedings and as co-counsel for plaintiffs in Michigan school desegregation litigation. He currently serves on the St. Paul Civil Service Commission, as well as several boards.

The school board faces several challenges, according to Marchese. "We need a more independent, active school board committed to representing the public's interest and holding district administrators accountable

for results," he said. "The district needs to do a much better job of engaging all stakeholders in the work of our schools. The district needs to address inequities within our schools, as well as develop a focused commitment to excellence for all students. Every family should be able to believe their children can receive a top-notch education in a St. Paul school regardless of location. Unfortunately, that is not so today."

Lessening the achievement gap starts with a board that is connected to the community, committed to closing the gap and willing to set expectations for administrators, staff, and students, according to Marchese. He said the district needs to think more creatively about how it is meeting the educational needs of students and involve educators, families and students in the process of determining how to be more effective. "What can we learn from successful schools outside of SPPS? How do we look at supportive services for students in schools so that they reinforce teaching and connect students and families in a holistic manner?" are some questions Marchese poses.

Marchese said the board should be the rallying point for a community commitment to closing achievement disparities. "Every parent, caregiver and community member in St. Paul deserves to believe that their schools are excellent," he said.

"I am particularly interested in improving the functioning of the board," Marchese continued, "engaging more actively with the community by soliciting and including their input, and addressing inequities in our schools while also focusing on excellence across the district."



Scott Raskiewicz

Scott Raskiewicz

Scott Raskiewicz, 62, is a Highland Park resident who is a semi-retired tennis teaching professional, writer and author of the book "Economic Democracy: Ending the Corporate Domination of Our Lives."

Raskiewicz was a substitute teacher in the SPPS district for 17 years. During that time, he said he witnessed much dysfunction, most of which he considered the result of America's political and management classes.

"These people are detached from their decisions while wielding great power with little accountability," said Raskiewicz. "I am running to hold the decision-makers accountable and to draw attention to the root cause of the problems facing education and our society."

Raskiewicz said that in his professional life he was worked with young people in a variety of settings for over 40 years. "I know that all people have an intrinsic desire to learn," he said. "But that desire is negated by crowded classrooms and too much standardized testing. We

must have smaller class sizes and a more individualized approach to education to maximize the intrinsic desire to learn."

According to Raskiewicz, the single greatest challenge facing the school board and society is an inhumane, inequitable and antidemocratic economic and political system supported by a corporate cartel that controls nearly all major media. "These systems are hostile to poor and working and middle class Americans, particularly people of color. Social and educational progress requires real democracy—economic, media and political democracy."

Raskiewicz said the achievement gap is largely a result of this same system. "We must also remember that parents are a child's first and most important teachers, and the home is the first and most important educational setting," he explained. "Because the economic and political system and media are hostile to families, it has become very difficult for many parents to provide the sort of stable home and consistent nurturing children need to thrive. Once we have authentic economic, media and political democracy all problems, including the achievement gap, will be solved or ameliorated."

Working for smaller class sizes and an individualized, project-based approach to education is something for which Raskiewicz said he will strive. "We must also guard against the increasing corporatization of education that merely tries to prepare students 'to compete in the global economy,'" he added.

"The purpose of education is to help students strive for self-actualization and prepare them to be cooperative members of the global community. These approaches will also help close the achievement gap," Raskiewicz said.



Jon Schumacher

Jon Schumacher

Jon Schumacher, 63, is the father of two SPPS graduates and lives and works in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood. He has been the executive director of the Saint Anthony Park Community Foundation since 1999. For the past 23 years he has served on school site councils and committees and helped to develop and fund innovative learning solutions for area elementary, middle and senior high schools. "I'm experienced in board management, mediation and community building," he said.

Schumacher said he is running for the school board because he is passionate about St. Paul's kids and wants to do everything he can to give them the public school system they deserve. "I will leverage the skills, experience, and city-wide relationships I've built over my 23 years working with our schools, to develop a more collaborative approach to ensure successful

outcomes for all of our students."

Schumacher said he has three top priorities for the board to work on. "First, we need a process of disciplined inquiry to drive improvement," he noted. "I will work with our board to set clear, consistent expectations for fully developed strategies—informed by open and honest evaluation—with measurable goals and implementable teaching tools."

"Second, we have to re-engage and rebuild trust among our school community," Schumacher said. He said the board must set an expectation of collaboration to actively engage families, students, educators and the broader community by developing a more open process for decision-making with timely presentation of pertinent data and details.

"Third, we need to work to ensure adequate classroom support for students and teachers," Schumacher continued. He said this involves having the necessary staff in place to meet all student needs, which is critical to creating successful and racially equitable learning environments. "In addition," he said, "we need to take more responsibility for preparing our graduating seniors for post-secondary success, and that includes a renewed focus on career and technical education."

Addressing the achievement gap, Schumacher said the first step to overcoming it is to acknowledge that the teacher-student relationship is the heart and soul of any successful learning experience. He said that teachers must be supplied with adequate training and support, and parents and caregivers need to be recognized as the students' first educators and welcomed into the schools and engaged.

"We also need to ensure our curriculum includes an accurate and balanced reflection of all cultures," Schumacher said, "and that every school has a full complement of special education, mental and physical health, behavioral and library specialists, as well as regular access to art, music, and physical activity."

"I also see a need to work with the Department of Education to find ways to better align our large standardized tests with our evolving understanding of what constitutes achievement," Schumacher added. He said he believes there is a sound case to be made that the MCAs contain content that might be unfamiliar or unfair to students of color, recent immigrants or students with learning disabilities.

Schumacher cited a recent report about the success of the state as a whole in closing the achievement gap while the gaps in St. Paul and Minneapolis persist. "We need to learn from successful strategies implemented elsewhere, determine if and how they make sense for St. Paul, and keep our minds open to new approaches," he explained.

Based on his experience working with boards, governance and community-building, Schumacher said he would like to find ways to make board meetings more effective, efficient and user-friendly. He would also like to find ways to better engage families and educators where they live and work.

"That might mean regular op-

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School Board Race

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opportunities for board members to hold listening sessions at schools or community centers," Schumacher noted. "It certainly means forming deeper relationships with members of our school community to bridge the communications gap that sometimes exists between district policy decisions and implementation."



Mary Vanderwert

Mary Vanderwert

Mary Vanderwert, from the Hamline-Midway neighborhood, is an independent contractor with America's ToothFairy, National Children's Oral Health Founda-

tion. She said she has spent her entire 25-year career working with young children and their families in early childhood education, most of the time in Head Start and programs at the Wilder Foundation for five years. She also spent eight years at the Minnesota Department of Education as the Head Start state collaboration director. "My experience in early childhood education, both in the classroom and in administration, would be unique on the school board," she said.

Vanderwert said she raised three children as a single parent and all graduated from St. Paul Public Schools. "I understand how decisions are made in families when there is limited time and even more limited resources," she said, "and how important schools are to families in reaching their goals and dreams."

As an educator, Vanderwert said she also understands how policies created and drafted by the board will affect teachers and students in the classroom environment. As an early childhood education professional, she said she has studied, and continues to study, brain development and the

implications for policy development.

Vanderwert has provided training and technical assistance to Head Start programs throughout the state on issues related to organizational development and strategic planning, and she was selected to serve on the governor's early childhood council.

"I have worked with many children and families and developed programs to support their stability and development," she added.

"We need to improve the culture of the schools to one that is collaborative, creative, supportive and exciting," Vanderwert said in response to challenges facing the school board. "We need a culture that values the contributions of staff and provides them a voice in decision making."

Learning happens within the context of a relationship, according to Vanderwert. "When teachers know their students and families, they can adapt their classroom environment and instructional practices to fit their students' needs, and children will perform better," she continued. "We need to shift the focus from

testing children to ensuring that teachers have what they need to get to know their children to gain their trust and be as effective as possible."

Vanderwert stressed that parents are critical to their children's success. She said parents need to be authentic partners in the decision making for their children and their schools.

Vanderwert said that the earlier the school system starts to support children and families, the better the outcomes will be regarding the achievement gap. "The schools need to work with early childhood programs to provide support and information to families as soon as a baby is expected," she said. "When children enter our doors, we need to embrace the whole family and treat them with respect and openness."

She spoke of the need to ensure that our instructional practices and learning environments meet the learning styles and needs of children living with stress. "Children with stress at home need access to health services and mental health services within the schools," Vanderwert said.

Vanderwert said that when

children come to school they need to know that their teachers like them, want what is best for them, and believe in their ability to achieve. "This makes it imperative that we have staff/teachers/leaders that come from their community, look like them and are trained in mental health and brain development. All teachers need training in how to navigate many cultures and how to relate to parents." She also emphasized the importance of teaching and practicing emotional skills in the schools.

Vanderwert said she is very interested in assuring that SPPS implement Universal Pre-K in a way that is effective and works for children and families. "The program needs to be provided where children already are, such as in high-quality child care, work with families as much as children, and ensure that children are healthy both physically and emotionally."

"From my experience working with Head Start programs on culture and as an administrator, I want to lead the board as it defines the kind of organizational culture we both want and need in our schools," Vanderwert stated.

The Hamline Midway Library at 1558 W. Minnehaha Ave. will be hosting a wide variety of programming in October and November, with events for everyone from toddlers to community elders.

Toddler and Preschool Storytimes happen Fridays, 10:30-11am, with puppets, stories, songs, and finger plays designed to enhance number and letter recognition and build social and listening skills--all while helping children and their caregivers build great memories and associations with books and reading. Upcoming Storytimes take place on Oct. 9, 16, 23, and 30 and Nov. 6 and 13.

In October, the library is also hosting Evening/Pajama Storytimes on Tuesdays from 6:30-7pm. Bring pillows and stuffed animals and feel free to come in your PJs. The next Evening Storytimes are happening Oct. 13, 20, and 27.

On Sat., Oct. 10, 1-3pm, the library hosts Second Satur-

News from Hamline Midway Library

By CARRIE POMEROY

Storytimes, daggers, and things that glow in the dark, at the library

day Science Club with Peter Hoh and Jackie Lannin. In October, this group for ages 6 and up and their families will explore how things glow in the dark and work with black light to make some spooky science happen. On Nov. 14, 1-3pm, the theme will be BIG and tiny, a hands-on exploration of the concept of proportion, with tower building and other fun activities. Walk-ins are welcome!

The library will be closed for staff training on Mon., Oct. 12 and for Veterans Day on Wed., Nov. 11.

Hamline Midway Elders host Chair Yoga with Nancy Giguere

on Thursdays, Oct. 15, 22, and 29 from 10:30-11:30 am. Chair yoga offers a gentle way to improve balance, flexibility, and range of motion, among other benefits. Contact Tom at tom@hmelders.org or 651-209-6542 for more information.

On Thur., Oct. 15, 6:30-8:30pm, the Friends of the St. Paul Public Library and The Advocates for Human Rights, present the documentary film "Lady Valor: The Kristin Beck Story" as part of the Women's Human Rights Film Series. The film tells the story of Christopher Beck, who served his country with the Navy SEALs for over twenty years,

and then, after his 2011 retirement, became Kristin, a transgendered woman. Featuring powerful interviews, the film presents a moving portrait of a hero discovering that living as her true self might be her most challenging mission yet. A moderated discussion will follow the film.

The Wednesdays at 1 programs kick off after a hiatus with What's New at the Library on Wed., Nov. 4, 1-2:30pm. New branch manager Shelly Hawkins will present some of the favorite books of 2015 and highlight some new library resources. The series takes a break on November 11 but continues Wed., Nov.

18, 1-2:30pm with "Be Wise, Be Informed, Be Empowered." The day's program will feature Gary Johnson of the Better Business Bureau on ways consumers can protect themselves in today's changing marketplace. All Wednesdays at 1 programs are joint presentations of the library and the Hamline Midway Elders.

On Sat., Nov. 8, the Saints and Sinners Mystery Book Club will meet to discuss "Cloche and Dagger" by Jenn McKinlay. Contact Geraldine Balter for more information at gerribalter@gmail.com or 651-224-5570.

The Teens Reading Bravely meets on Sat., Nov. 15, 3-4pm in the library's teen area to talk about books that fall under the "Read Brave" category. The group is recommended for grade 9 and up (14 years or more). Read Brave is Saint Paul Public Library's annual, citywide program encouraging youth and adults to read and come together around a young adult novel.

Work to convert the former Midway SuperTarget Café space into an off-sale liquor store got underway in late September. The work is expected to take several weeks.

With no comment, the St. Council on Sept. 2 unanimously approved an off-sale liquor license for the store at 1400 University Ave. The vote caps almost a year of debate and discussion in the Midway area. It allows Target Corporation to renovate the store's current café area into a liquor store, with private entrance and its own business hours and employees.

Union Park District Council (UPDC) hosted several community meetings on the off-sale license request. UPDC asked that the issue go to a legislative hearing officer for a public hearing, which was held this summer. Residents of neighborhoods around the store raised concerns about the potential litter and behavior problems another neighborhood liquor store would potentially bring. The strongest objections came from big Top Liquors in Midway Center. Big Top

Development Roundup

By JANE MCCLURE

Target liquor store gets city nod—construction work is underway

representatives challenged how the city and Target officials defined the distance between the two stores. City officials decided that the off-sale liquor store will be a store within a store and that the distance should be measured from its doorway. Measuring from the west edge of the main store building would have meant not meeting the minimum one-half-mile separation between stores required for St. Paul off-sale liquor license holders.

The license approved Sept. 2 restricts the new store to only selling liquor, tobacco products, beverages to mix with liquor, soft drinks, liqueur-filled candies, home brewing equipment, food products that contain more than

one-half of one percent alcohol by volume, cork extraction devices and magazines, books and videos on the use of alcoholic beverages.

Midway SuperTarget may not store intoxicating liquors outside of the licensed premises unless expressly permitted in writing by the Division of Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

Raymond Ave. Flats wins needed approval

The Raymond Ave. Flats Apartments project in South St. Anthony Park has won a needed con-

ditional use permit from the St. Paul Planning Commission. The full commission approved the permit in early September. That decision is final unless it is appealed to the St. Paul City Council. As of Monitor deadline no appeal had been filed.

Approval allows the building to be built up to 75 feet in a traditional neighborhood zone. The height would be limited to 60 feet without the permit. The development is at 2400 University Ave. and 757 Raymond Ave. Exeter Management is developing the apartments atop the old General Motors Truck Company Building. The long-term intent is to have apartments on the upper floors and commercial uses in

the University Ave. front of the building.

The development is in the University-Raymond Commercial Historic District. The project had to go through St. Paul Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) review. The developers and HPC disagreed on the plan, and Exeter wound up filing an appeal. The City Council decided last month to uphold the appeal if plan changes were made.

No one appeared at the Planning Commission Zoning Committee hearing to oppose the permit. The plans have support from groups including the St. Anthony Park Community Council.

**NEXT
DEADLINE
NOV. 2**

In Our Community

Monitor

Send us your news! When you submit your press release it will be considered for the next print edition of the Monitor. You can also go to our website, MonitorSaintPaul.com and enter your information in the online Event Calendar

Bach Society to perform Oct. 17

Johann Sebastian Bach, was a master of his art, so much so that the Baroque period in musical history "ended" with his death. But his music was composed built on the gifts of those who preceded him. On Oct. 17, 7:30 at the Sundin Music Hall (1531 Hewitt Ave.), the Bach Society of Minnesota will present a concert that invites you to time travel with us from the Renaissance to the Baroque, from Palestrina to Bach. Discover the music that fed and informed Bach's imagination. The Bach Society Chorus under the direction of Paul Boehnke is joined by Julie Elhard, violone and Don Livingston, organ.

Come and hear Historically Informed Performances (HIP) of a wide variety of choral music including music by Palestrina, Monteverdi, Schutz, Kuhnau, and Johann Christoph Bach. J.S. Bach's beautifully transcendent "Jesu, mine Freude" completes the program.

Tickets, available online and at the door are \$22 for adults, \$17 for seniors (65+) and \$5 for students. Contact them at www.bachsocietyymn.com. For more information, call 651-428-5170 or email events@bachsocietyymn.org.

Annual YMCA garage sale set Oct. 8-10

Shop and support YMCA Camps Widjiwagan and du Nord at the annual Garage Sale at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds Merchandise Mart building from Thur., Oct. 8 to Sat., Oct. 10.

Free admission; open 9am to 7:30pm Thursday and Friday. Saturday Bag Sale opens earlier: 8am to 2pm. More than 250 families contribute good quality camping equipment, clothing, household items, toys, books, antiques, furniture, sports equipment, etc. All proceeds go to the YMCA camps. For more information, call 651-645-6605.

Holiday Marketplace scheduled Nov. 7

Do your holiday shopping, enjoy some soup and meet neighborhood vendors and crafters at the Hamline-Midway Holiday Marketplace. 9am to 3pm, Sat., Nov. 7 at Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Ave. Free admission. Enjoy morning coffee and treats, and the St. Columba Women's delicious soup for lunch or carryout. Make and take table and a play area will be there for the children. "Grandma's attic" and book sale will also be a feature. Learn about the church's new community bread oven and the church

craft and sewing group, both of which are open to all.

Vendors are needed and forms can be picked up at the church, by emailing hamline-women@gmail.com or calling 651-646-3473. (Please do not call the church.) Sponsored by Hamline Church Women/UMW and St. Columba.

Ward 4 Candidate Forum Oct. 15

There will be a Candidate Forum for Ward 4 on Thur., Oct. 15, 5:30-7:30pm sponsored by the League of Women Voters of St. Paul and St. Anthony Park Community Council. This non-partisan public event with moderated question-answer for candidates for election to City Council from Ward 4 will take place at the St. Anthony Park Public Library, 2245 Como Ave.

Groovy Gala planned for November

ALLY People Solutions will host the Grooviest Party of the year, Thur., Nov. 12 from 6-8pm, at the A'BULAE Event Center, 255 6th St. E.

For 50 years over 50 businesses have chosen to partner with ALLY People Solutions and hire adults with disabilities to solve key and solve staffing problem in their business. ALLY People Solutions workforce is a uniquely qualified and skilled group of 180 dedicated individuals who are ready to be employed for minimum wage or higher paying jobs with opportunities for advancement.

At the Groovy Gala, ALLY People Solutions guests will be walking down memory lane—back in time to the kitchen tables of its forward thinking and passionate founders. The night's program will reflect upon 50 years of advocacy, legislation, person-centered services, community making and public support leading to greater independence for the individuals it serves.

You can support Ally People Solutions by visiting www.AllyPeopleSolutions.org. Register for the event at www.AllyPeopleSolutions.org/GroovyGala.

"Title IX" staged at Dreamland Arts

Theatre Unbound continues their 16th season with the world premiere of "Title IX," a new work by Minnesota playwrights Eli Effinger-Weintraub, Jessica Huang, Marcie Rendon and Saymoukda Vongsay. "Title IX" will perform October 9 (7:30pm) and 10-11 (3pm) at Dreamland Arts, 677 Hamline Ave. N. Tickets are \$14, \$5 for 13 and under and

can be obtained from 612-721-1186 or at www.theatreunbound.com/tickets.

"Title IX" tells the story of Anygirl, who struggles to keep her place on the school track team despite upsets at home and shoes held together with duct tape. In a dream, she is transported to a fantastical sporting arena where she is coached and empowered by extraordinary real-life athletes past and present, including: Toni Stone, the first woman to play big-league baseball; a karate black belt representing the Minnesota women who fought for the right to spar in tournaments; and Amy "Smoka Hontas" St. Clair, All Star roller derby champ.

"Title IX" explores and celebrates the effects that participating in sports can have on women's lives and how the simple 1972 law has inspired and enabled so many to reach for their goals. The content of the production is aimed at young women in grades 6-9 and their adult champions. The performance is high-energy and interactive. These are stories to get pumped up about!

The performance will also be performed Oct. 16-18 at Intermedia Arts in Minneapolis.

Ward 5 Candidate Forum set Oct. 13

There will be a Ward 5 Candidate Forum on Tue., Oct. 13, 6:30-8:30pm. The door will open at 6pm, at the Washington Technology Magnet School, 1495 Rice St. (Rice St. and Nebraska). You will be able to meet the candidates and join the moderated discussion. Ask questions that matter to you. Hear their positions and make an informed decision on Election Day. The League of Women Voters will follow the established nonpartisan, unbiased and impartial format. A league member will moderate the forum. The candidates will answer written questions from the public at this moderated event. No campaign signs or literature will be permitted in the room. Signs or literature may be placed outside of the hall. Persons wearing t-shirts with slogans or political logos will be asked not to wear them inside the forum room.

Bethlehem schedules craft sale Oct. 24

Bethlehem Lutheran Church (436 N. Roy St.) will hold their Craft Fair on Sat. Oct. 24, 9am-3pm. They will offer crafts, a bake sale, lunch and a raffle. The church is located one block south of University, right between University and Snelling, on Roy St.

School of Music open house Oct. 10

St. Joseph's School of Music, 450 N. Syndicate St., Suite 350, will hold an open house on Sat., Oct. 10, 9-11am. Check website (www.stjoseph-schoolofmusic.net) for details. St. Joseph's School of Music is a community classical music school for all ages, levels, and instruments, offering private lessons as well as foundational music classes for infants to age 7.

The Murphy Beds concert Oct. 18

The Murphy Beds will perform in concert Sun., Oct. 18, at The Celtic Junction, 836 Prior Ave. N. The Murphy Beds (Jefferson Hamer and Eamon O'Leary) present traditional and original folk songs with close harmonies and deft instrumental arrangements on bouzouki, guitar, and mandolin. They have performed and collaborated with artists across the folk spectrum including Beth Orton, Bonnie 'Prince' Billy, Anais Mitchell, and Sam Amidon. Advance tickets (612-874-8892) are \$12; tickets are \$15 at the door.

HU/Community discussion planned

Save the date for a Hamline University/Community discussion planned for Wed., Oct. 14, 7-9pm, at Hamline Church United Methodist (1514 Englewood Ave.). You will have an opportunity to meet Hemline's new President Dr. Fayneese Miller. The agenda will provide feedback on a proposal for a Hamline University Community Advisory Committee, and you will learn about the status of 1549 Minnehaha, the City's Campus Boundary Zoning Study, and efforts to begin a historic survey of the neighborhood.

Support group for partners & spouses

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Minnesota is sponsoring a support group specifically for partners or spouses of someone who lives with a mental illness. The Partners & Spouses support group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm, at Falcon Heights United Church of Christ, 1795 Holton St. (Holton & Garden). For more information, call Melissa at 651-354-0825.

"The Seagull" at HU Theatre Nov. 6-14

Hamline University Department of Theatre and Dance begins its

85th season with "The Seagull," by Anton Chekhov, directed by Genevieve Bennett, starting Nov. 6. Scheduled dates are Nov. 6-7, 12-14, at 7:30pm at the Anne Simley Theatre, 1530 Hewitt Ave. Tickets for the performance are \$2-\$8. For reservations or more information please contact the Hamline University Theatre Box Office at 651-523-2905 or tickets@hamline.edu.

"The Seagull" tells the story of Arkadina, a celebrated yet aging actress and her return to her lover, Trigorin at her Russian estate nestled near a mystical lake. Arkadina and Trigorin along with friends and family attend an experimental play written by her son Konstantin. When the play is rejected by his mother, Konstantin is devastated. In this heartbreakingly ridiculous comedy of life lived, love is unrequited and nothing is ever what it seems. Chekhov's "The Seagull" is one of the most significant and influential plays of the modern era.

La Leche Group scheduled Oct. 13

The next meetings of the Como-Midway La Leche Group will be on Tue., Oct. 13. All expectant and nursing mothers are invited to attend with their babies and toddlers to discuss breastfeeding and mothering issues. In November the group will meet on Nov. 10. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information.

Anxiety support group meets

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Minnesota sponsors free support groups for persons with anxiety disorders. The groups help individuals develop better coping skills and find strength through sharing their experiences. An Open Door Anxiety and Panic support group meets from 6:30-8pm, on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month, at Goodwill-Easter Seals, 553 Fairview Ave. N., in Room 123. For information call NAMI at 651-645-2948.

Co-Ed Drum Circle planned Oct. 23

There will be a Co-ed Drum Circle on Fri., Oct. 23, 6:30pm at the Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. W. Percussion, rhythm and freedom of expression will be explored. All levels of experience are welcomed and encouraged. Cost is \$10 at the door, and they provide drums. Info and registration at www.womensdrumcenter.org.

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Como Zoo earns AZA accreditation

The Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) today announced that the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory was granted accreditation by AZA's independent Accreditation Commission.

"Only zoos and aquariums that meet the highest standards are accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums," said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. "By achieving AZA accreditation, Como Park Zoo and Conservatory demonstrates that it is dedicated to protecting species and educating its visitors about the natural world."

To be accredited, the zoo underwent a thorough review to ensure it has and will continue to meet rising standards, which include animal care, veterinary programs, conservation, education, and safety. AZA requires zoos and aquariums to successfully complete this rigorous accreditation process every five years in order to be members of the Association.

Founded in 1924, AZA is the accrediting body for the top zoos and aquariums in the United States and seven other countries.

NAMI support group meets weekly

A NAMI Connection peer support group for adults recovering from mental illness meets in St. Paul. The free group is sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Minnesota. Trained facilitators who are also in recovery lead NAMI Connection groups. The group meets on Mondays, at 6:30pm, at Goodwill Easter Seals, 553 Fairview Ave. N., Room 123. For more information, contact Mary at 612-387-6730 or call NAMI at 651-645-2948.

Keystone plans numerous programs

The following programs are sponsored by Keystone Senior Services at Merriam Park Community Center, 2000 Saint Anthony Ave.

Beginner and advanced **pickleball** will be held every Tuesday and Thursday, 9-11am. Cost for each session is \$2.

Zumba Gold is based on dancing to a variety of musical styles. A great aerobic workout. Every Friday from 12:30-1:30pm through Oct. 23. No fee. Donations accepted.

Licensed instructors from the Arthritis Foundation will provide **exercise classes** on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11am to noon starting through Nov. 5. Call 651-645-7424 for more information.

Fit and Fabulous Exercise classes for adults age 50 and over planned Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 10:30-11:30am. Stretching and warm up, endurance, cool down, guided relaxation, and fun are planned.

AARP Smart Driver four-hour refresher course. Tue., Oct. 20, 9:30am. to 1:30pm. Cost is \$18. Call 651-645-7424 to reserve a spot.

Higher risk individuals should get flu shot now

If you are living with a long-term health condition like asthma, COPD, diabetes or heart disease, you take steps every day to stay healthy by taking your medicine, carrying an inhaler, eating right, or monitoring your blood sugar and cholesterol. But did you know that there is something else you can do just once a year to keep yourself healthy? You can get a flu shot.

People living with asthma, COPD, diabetes or heart disease have a higher risk of complications from the flu. In past flu seasons, up to 80 percent of adults hospitalized from flu complications had a long-term health condition, as did about 50 percent of hospitalized children. The flu can make these health con-

ditions worse, even if they are under control. People living with these conditions may also have weakened immune systems that make it harder for their bodies to fight the flu. This is why it is so important that people with long-term health conditions get their flu shot every year.

Asthma is the most common medical condition among children hospitalized with the flu. Lung diseases like asthma and COPD cause your airways to swell and become blocked with mucus, which makes it hard to breathe. Flu can also increase the swelling of your airways and lungs, causing severe asthma attacks and symptoms that can lead to hospitalization. Heart disease was the most common

health condition among Minnesota adults hospitalized with the flu in 2012-13 flu season. If you have heart disease, flu can increase your risk of having another heart attack. Flu can raise blood glucose to dangerously high levels in people with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Diabetics also have a higher risk of developing pneumonia by itself or after getting the flu so they also may need a pneumococcal vaccine.

Do you live with a family member who has a long-term health condition? It is especially important to stay up-to-date on recommended vaccinations, including your flu shot. Getting a flu shot can help prevent the spread of flu to people at higher risk. Get vaccinated to protect

your family members.

The flu shot is safe to get, even if you are taking prescription medications. Adults can get the flu shot at doctors' offices, pharmacies, workplaces, health clinics, and health departments. You may also need other vaccines based on other factors so talk to your doctor. Most health insurance plans cover the cost of recommended vaccines—a call to your insurance provider can give you the details. If you do not have health insurance or cannot afford vaccines, find an Uninsured and Underinsured Adult Vaccine (UUAV) clinic near you at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/immunize/adultvax/clinicsearch.html>.

Harp music focus of Oct. 9 concert

The "South of the Border: Traditions" series—a collaboration between the Minnesota Global Arts Institute and Hamline University—wraps up this year with Nicolas Carter with Son de Sur: Harp Music of Paraguay and Latin America on Oct. 9. This event will be the first Minnesota concert in over a year for Nicholas Carter and Son del Sur.

Nicolas Carter was raised in Paraguay where he learned to play the national folk instrument, the Paraguayan harp. This unique instrument is based on the 16th century Spanish harp, but with its own distinctive style and sound. Carter began playing at age ten, learning from maestro Isidro Caballero, a master harpist who travelled extensively throughout the world and father of Nicolas Caballero, one of the world's most accomplished and famous Paraguayan harpists.

Carter has played all over the world including the United States, Europe and South America, and recording a dozen albums. He

finds inspiration for his original compositions from observations of nature and in precious moments of everyday life. His performances integrate harp music with these observations and reflections on culture, often with a hint of humor, to create a warm and inviting experience for audiences.

Son del Sur (meaning "Song from the South") delights audiences with their unique combination of Latin American traditional and contemporary music. They offer an extensive repertoire of traditional and contemporary Latin American music and world music rhythms, as well as their original compositions incorporating instruments and rhythms from throughout South America.

Son del Sur began performing together at a trio in the early 1990s. Their repertoire is comprised of Mexican mariachi music, Colombian cumbias, Paraguayan polkas, Venezuelan joropos, Andean huaynos, romantic ballads, and more. Their first two albums Arriba la Fiesta and Ecos del

Alma, showcased traditional favorites from Latin America.

Today, both Carter and Son del Sur perform sophisticated original compositions and arrangements, as well as their vast repertoire of traditional Latin American folk music. Son del Sur founding musicians Nicolas Carter (harp) and Mauricio Sanchez (guitar, charango, Andean flutes) are the core artists, joined in this concert by Michael Bissonette (Percussion) and Dan Arlig (acoustic bass).

The main concert will be held at Sundin Music Hall, Hamline University, 1531 Hewitt Ave., on Fri., Oct. 9 at 7:30 (free, informative pre-show lecture-demonstration at 7:00). Tickets are by general admission, \$12 for adults, \$8 for students, and \$5 for the Hamline/ACTC community. Seating is limited, and advance tickets are available through <http://paraguaymusic.bpt.me> or by calling 651-523-2459. Free parking is widely available in campus lots.

Knight Green Line Challenge names 12 winners

The Knight Foundation has announced the 12 winning projects in the 2015 Knight Green Line Challenge. The winners, who will share \$574,000, proposed a range of ideas to tap into the potential of the Green Line to make surrounding neighborhoods in St. Paul more vibrant places to live and work.

"This group of winners represents an exciting group of civic innovators working to make their city more successful," said George Abbott, Knight Foundation interim program director for St. Paul. "We look forward to learning alongside them as they undertake this diverse list of projects."

The 12 winning projects were:

—**Charles and Griggs Bikeway Tool Station**, Erin Pavlica, \$4,410. To install a bike tool station at the intersection between the Charles Ave and Griggs Ave bikeways where riders and residents can stop, connect and learn more about bike maintenance.

—**E=MC2**, We Lighting LLC, \$45,000. To strengthen the connection between down-

town and the Mississippi river by creatively lighting the Sibley underpass.

—**Friendship Forest**, Amanda Lovelee, \$43,000. To connect diverse residents in the planting of 500 trees in a new 'friendship forest' designed to catalyze civic engagement.

—**Improved Walkability through Signage**, Matt Privratsky, \$23,250. To encourage neighborhood exploration by installing new, more engaging way-finding signs.

—**Johnny Baby's Rondo Park**, Johnny Baby's, \$60,000. To transform an underutilized parking lot into a relaxing, green gathering space for Rondo residents, bikers, and Green Line riders.

—**Little Africa Cultural Corridor**, African Economic Development Solutions, \$60,000. To create a shared vision, action plan and design standards for the Little Africa corridor through placemaking activities.

—**Living Landmarks**, Minnesota Historical Society, \$35,723. To offer a series of new community-led walking tours highlighting the unique strengths and qualities of Green Line neighborhoods.

—**Mind if I Sit Here?**, Heather Cole, \$8,000. To promote interaction between friends and strangers by inviting people to take part in brown-bag conversations at roving bistro tables throughout downtown St. Paul.

—**River Balcony Prototyping Festival**, Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation, \$100,000. To engage the community in a prototyping festival that helps develop a vibrant public life on St. Paul's River Balcony.

—**Rock the Public Meeting**, St. Paul Smart Trips, \$45,000. To bring fresh ideas to transportation planning along the Green Line through creative, youth-led Frogtown neighborhood engagement and placemaking projects.

—**Rondo Commemorative Plaza and Garden**, Rondo Ave, Inc., \$75,000. To install technology designed to harvest and retell residents' oral histories in this new public space.

—**St. Paul Better Block Wiki-Block**, Team Better Block, \$75,000. To develop, prototype, and open-source templates for snap-together urban street furniture that can be produced by anyone to transform a street or neighborhood.

Grab your **hiking sticks** and join other walkers for a fun stroll around the neighborhoods. Thursdays at 10am. starting from the Merriam Park Community Center.

Qigong classes. For everyone! Three sessions starting Thur., Oct. 15, from 1-2:30pm. Attend one or all three. Cost is \$6 per session. Qigong focuses on movement and meditation.

Gentle Yoga. Five-week session beginning Wed., Oct. 21, from noon to 1pm. The cost is \$15 or assessed on a sliding fee scale. An ideal method for releasing stress, strengthening balance, and increasing core body strength.

Play Mexican Train Dominos with friends and learn the game on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, 1-2pm.

Relax and play **cribbage** with friends every Tuesday, 12:30-3:30pm.

Advanced Beginners Line Dancing, every Monday, 1-2:30pm. \$6 per time. Call 651-645-7424 to register.

Keystone Crafters and Artists meet Tuesdays, 1-3pm. Bring your projects and your art supplies and join fellow artists and crafters.

Health insurance counseling is available every Thursday. Get your health insurance questions answered in one-to-one sessions. You must call 651-645-7424 for an appointment.

Sign-up for events at local rec centers

Register now for what's coming at North Dale, Northwest Como and Langford Recreation Centers:

North Dale, 1414 St Albans St. N.

—Adults/Seniors: Laughter Yoga, Pilates, Senior Fitness, Square Dance and Yoga (Ongoing)

—Special Event: Hallow Fest, Fri., Oct 23 from 5:30-7:30pm (Wear your costume)—Tae Kwon Do: all ages (Ongoing)

Beginning in Nov:

—Tumbling ages 3-6

—Ballet/Tap/Creative Movement ages 3 1/2-7

—Tap/Jazz/Ballet ages 7-13

—Growing With Music ages 9m-5yrs

—Babysitting Training ages 11 & older

Northwest Como, 1550 Hamline

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Ave. N.
—Tae Kwon Do ages 6 & up (Ongoing)
—Senior Gamers ages 50 & up (Ongoing)

Langford, 30 Langford Park
—Pilates & Badminton for adults (Ongoing)
—Halloween Craft ages 2-4
—Take Home Chef ages 8-15
—Soo Bahk Do ages 5 & up

Dementia Friends to meet Oct. 19

Dementia Friends will be meeting on Mon., Oct. 19, from 6-7pm at Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave. Dementia Friends is part of a growing network of people creating dementia-friendly neighborhoods and communities. A Dementia Friend learns a bit about what it's like

to live with dementia and then turns that understanding into action.

The Dementia Friends movement is changing the way people think, talk, and act about dementia.

Dementia Friends was launched in the St. Paul Neighborhoods Action Community to tackle the stigma, isolation, and lack of understanding of dementia. The initiative combines face-to-face Dementia Friends information sessions and an online Champion training video to help people learn more about dementia and the small things they can do to make a difference. ACT on Alzheimer's is committed to helping more communities and businesses become dementia-friendly by offering Dementia Friends information sessions.

Como Zoo names newborn giraffe

As a tribute to recently retired

and ever-affable zookeeper Pete Lee, Como Zoo's baby female giraffe now has a name: Frances.

"Over the years, while working behind the scenes, the animals and I would often listen to Frank Sinatra" said Lee. "I've always suggested that a nice name for one of our beautiful creatures would be Francis, or Frances with an 'e' for a female."

Lee worked 27 years at Como Zoo. At his retirement party, as a nod to Pete's longtime penchant for naming an animal Francis, all the guests wore either a Frances or a Francis name-tag. Pete loved to step out from behind the scenes to engage the public. With a quick wit, the ability to tell a great story, and a larger-than-life personality, Pete would educate and entertain guests of all ages. In his 27 years at Como, Pete had worked with just about every animal and in every corner of the Zoo. He worked with the primates, big

cats, and for the last nine years the bison, kudu, zebras, and giraffes. When asked what he thought of the naming honor, Pete Lee simply stated "I'm over the moon."

Frances was born Aug. 24, and made her public debut three days later. She is the sixth calf born to Clover and the 19th giraffe birth at Como Zoo in the last 22 years. Frances weighed 135 pounds at birth and now stands over 6" tall. Como's current herd of giraffes consists of Clover, Daisy, Skeeter (father), and Frances.

Three residents in SteppingStone play

Two Midway Como residents are in the SteppingStone Theatre for Youth Development original world premiere play, "One Grain of Rice," a Bollywood-style musical tale of greed, ingenuity and math!

Mimi Huelster, age 10, and a student at L'Etoile du Nord

French Immersion (grade 5) is cast in the role of Grandchild.

Noah Greenwalt, age 12, and a student at Capitol Hill Magnet (grade 7), is in the chorus.

Giovanna Soderstrom, age 13, and a student at Twin Cities Academy (grade 8), is a Student Technician for the production.

When the new prince of a faraway land hoards all the land's rice during a famine, all hope seems to be lost, if not for a smart girl and her math skills! The promise of a single grain of rice every day from the prince to the girl doesn't sound like much, but when you double that amount each day for a month, it truly adds up!

Performances run Oct. 23 through Nov 8. Tickets are available for purchase online or by phone at 651-225-9265. Tickets for weekend performances are taken off-sale Thursdays at midnight. You can obtain full info at steppingstonetheatre.org.

Church of 'misfits' gathers weekly at Central Lutheran School

Roots Covenant Church, a new church in the Hamline-Midway neighborhood, is holding Sunday worship gatherings at Central Lutheran School, 775 Lexington Pkwy.

"Roots is a multiethnic group of misfits finding identity in Jesus. We are imperfect people who are being made new in Jesus," said Pastor Touger Thao.

Founded in 2013 by Touger Thao and Mykou Thao, Roots grew from a community of twelve to a community of over fifty and growing. Roots moved to Central Lutheran School from their rented space at 655 Fairview. The new location gives Roots even more room to grow as it continues to invest in Hamline-Midway.

"We decided to help form a



(l to r) Mari Xiong, Tim Krueger, Matt Hansen, Roger Valois at the Hamline-Midway Spring Festival. (Photo by Mykou Thao)

new faith community in the neighborhood because we like it here. We wanted our home to be here. The events, the Green Line, the closeness of college campuses, and

the people make it a worthwhile neighborhood to belong to. In addition, we believe God is here and at work, and we want to participate in what God is doing to bring hope

and healing to this beautiful and yet broken world," said Thao.

Roots, a church plant of the Evangelical Covenant Church, gathers weekly at 10am on Sunday mornings. During the week, they gather in smaller groups in homes to study the Bible, eat together, and share life with one another. People from Roots can also often be found playing volleyball at Newell Park and visiting with residents at Galtier Health Center.

"I love hanging out with people at Roots. We all come from different backgrounds, but we learn from and teach each other. It's the most inspiring part of my life in Hamline-Midway! It helps me get connected with the community through serving, conversation and getting to know others who are in-

vested in the neighborhood," said Ruth Hamberg, Hamline-Midway resident.

The Roots vision is to "invite misfits to experience new life by becoming a new people rooted in Jesus, who passionately love God and purposefully seek the renewal of our city." This multiethnic, multi-generational community of Christians hopes to be a blessing to the neighborhood, to form genuine relationships with one another, and to be bringers of hope, peace, and justice.

Learn more about Roots by stopping by Central Lutheran School on Sunday mornings or visit their website www.rootscov.org. You can also follow Roots on Facebook and Twitter, @Rootscov.

Classifieds

Monitor

Want ads must be received by the Monitor by Nov. 2 for the Nov. 12 issue. Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

Monitor Want Ads are \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, 125 1st Ave. NW, PO Box 168, Minneapolis, MN 55369. Want ads must be mailed to the Monitor by Nov. 2 for the Nov. 12 issue. Ad copy can be e-mailed to denis@deruyternelson.com. Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

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ALLY People Solutions celebrates 50 years

ALLY brings the historic struggle for rights for people with disabilities into the mainstream

By CONNOR KLAUSING

ALLY People Solutions, 1246 University Ave. W., has seen a lot of change since its inception 50 years ago when a group of determined mothers set out to change disability services for good.

ALLY began in 1965 as a parent effort to provide education and socialization to their children with intellectual disabilities. The group has since evolved into a broad network of career and life support services for the 285 adults who now participate in ALLY's programs.

Today, the group serves as a powerful example of what long-term community engagement looks like.

"For 50 years, we've been helping create a genuine relationship between the individuals we serve, the community who supports them, and the businesses who employ them," explains Erika Schwichtenberg, Director of Development and Communications for ALLY People Solutions.

Leading the way

ALLY's been part of historic struggles for the rights of people with developmental disabilities.

At the time ALLY was founded, doctors and state officials regularly encouraged parents to institutionalize children with intellectual disabilities—sending the children to state hospitals, which kept residents in dehumanizing and abusive conditions.

ALLY (originally known as the Merriam Park Day Activity Center) revolutionized this approach. The original group of parents knew they wanted to provide socialization and recreation for their adult sons and daughters, who were normally isolated from their peers. Even more importantly, they were committed to building a culture that would treat their children as people, not as problems.

As the program developed, parents of participants shifted their focus to developing job skills. If their sons and daughters were going to live independently, they would first need the skills



Pamphlets from throughout ALLY's 50 year history. (Photo by Connor Klausning) The inset is from circa 2005 when ALLY was known as Midway Training Services, located at 720 Vandalia Ave.

necessary to make a living wage.

To do this, the group—which by this point, in 1985, had grown to sixty-five participants—moved into the Midway neighborhood on University, and rebranded themselves as the Midway Training Services (MTS).

Participants worked both on-site and in local businesses. As former board member Mickey Michlitsch recalls, "There would be a staff trainer and five or six workers, and we had jobs at a window company and other companies, like machine companies, and direct mailing companies."

As MTS developed, it took advantage of government funding for disability services, as well as new legislation prohibiting discrimination against those with disabilities. They pushed for

more workplace integration—putting MTS participants at jobs alongside non-disabled workers—and acquired a fleet of vehicles to help participants get to their new jobs.

In the 2000s, the organization began focusing on digital imaging services—converting physical records to digital ones—which remains a mainstay of ALLY's employment opportunities. As more participants joined the program, the group added new locations, expanding to five sites around the metro area.

Finally, in 2013, MTS adopted their new name, ALLY People Solutions, to better reflect their mission as Allies of those with disabilities.

Employment services

Today, ALLY provides a broad

range of services. Their largest focus is on employment.

"We have our individual placements with fifty-two area businesses that hire our program participants," Schwichtenberg explains. "We also have supported employment services, where a job coach is on the job with participants."

The ALLY employment model is "person-centered," meaning participants go through a discovery process to figure out what jobs or services would be most fulfilling to them. "We're not just filling jobs or reporting numbers," says Schwichtenberg, "we're focusing on the individual's needs and employment goals."

To provide this level of service, ALLY employs about 70 staff members, as well as a team

of volunteers, who aid individuals and families in discovering the services that are available to them, and opportunities that best fit goals, skills, and desires of program participants.

ALLY also sets itself apart by ensuring higher wages for its participants. Organizations that provide employment services for people with disabilities are allowed to apply for a Special Minimum Wage Certificate, which permits them to pay disabled employee workers less than minimum wage. For the last three years, ALLY has refused this exemption, meaning that all participants in ALLY's programs earn minimum wage or above.

Creative touch

ALLY also provides a variety of life skills services to participants, including self-advocacy training, volunteer opportunities, counseling, and recreational programs.

One ALLY participant has enjoyed particular success because of the recreational programs. ALLY participant Tony Harold-Pappas, who has been with ALLY for three years, found his artistic calling through one of the painting programs.

After taking his first class, Harold-Pappas knew he had found his passion. Since then, he has been constantly painting and has sold so many paintings that he says he can't keep track of them. In January, he achieved a major artistic milestone when the Ordway chose him as a featured artist in a month-long exhibit.

For Harold-Pappas, the experience is therapeutic as well as recreational. "Painting is an outlet for me," he explains, "so if I have something building up inside me, I can paint instead of doing something destructive."

He reflects on his work with pride. "It's a joy every time I see my paintings," says Harold-Pappas. "I'm proud of what I've done, and how far I've come."

Looking forward

As it passes the fifty-year mark, Schwichtenberg says that ALLY is going to continue supporting and removing barriers for people with disabilities. "We've seen a lot in our fifty years. Before, it felt at times as if we would take a few steps forward and one step back. Now we're ready for a renewed growth phase, and ready to engage the community we've worked to co-create."

In addition to providing its normal host of services, ALLY will look to expand in a few ways. According to their strategic mission for the next three years, ALLY is committed to increasing collaboration with other organizations, while also increasing revenue. They will expand their education and advocacy efforts, and finally look to formalize a volunteer program for other people looking to get involved in ALLY's work.



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The Autumn Leaves are Falling

Article and photos
by MARGIE O'LOUGHLIN

What to do with all those autumn leaves?

According to Sam Bauer, turf specialist with the University of MN Extension Services, "It's a misconception that leaves need to be raked, bagged and hauled away."

In natural ecosystems, no one is doing anything with the leaves that fall. They land where they land, they decompose, and the process is essential to building healthy soils.

"The main reason that people haul their leaves away in the fall is that it's what they're used to doing," Bauer said.

Bauer recommends making leaf mulching part of a fall lawn care regimen. "Mulching fallen leaves into the lawn is advantageous, so long as about 75% of the grass canopy is left visible," he said. In other words, you want to see more green than brown. There's no need to worry about snow mold. If you stick with Bauer's recommen-

dation, air circulation will be more than adequate.

Grass should be mowed and watered well into the fall. Just leave the leaves and mow right over them, either with your regular lawn mower (it will take a few extra passes) or with deeper serrated mulching blades. Mulching blades can be purchased for any lawn mower.

When mowing, remove whatever container would usually capture the grass clippings. Leave the cut grass and chopped-up leaves to rest on the lawn surface. They'll settle into the lawn, providing some nutrients and organic matter for the soil below.

Leaf mold is "black gold"

What to do if you have more leaves than your lawn can absorb? Leaf mold may not sound pretty, but to gardeners it's nothing short of "black gold." There are a couple of ways to create it, the easiest being to make a pile of leaves, either contained or not contained, about

3' by 3'. Let the leaves sit, adding water periodically, and within 6-10 months, they'll have decomposed. By keeping the pile moist, decomposition will happen faster. Shredded leaves will also decompose faster than un-shredded ones.

The result will be leaf mold, a dark, rich mulch that is arguably the best soil amendment around. While leaf mold doesn't provide the nutrients of regular compost, it does greatly improve soil structure, texture and water holding capacity. Leaf mold helps loosen heavy soils and adds heft to sandy soils. It can hold several hundred times its weight in water, and helps create a healthy ecosystem for beneficial insects.

While it almost sounds too good to be true, consider this. Soils amended with leaf mold may approach the poetic phrase, "well-drained and evenly moist," so often read about in garden magazines but rarely seen in real life. In our work as gardeners, this is important! It's as much about grow-

ing good soil as it is about growing good plants.

Don't have a compost bin or container to make leaf mold in? No problem. Fill your compostable yard waste bags and, instead of having them hauled, or hauling them away, store them on the side of your house. Moisten the contents periodically and, by spring, bags and leaves should have decomposed into a dark brown to black, aromatic and crumbly leaf mold. Work 2-4" of leaf mold into the top 6" of garden soil in the spring, or ring the periphery of existing perennials with a top dressing.

Another great option for surplus leaves is to rake them loosely onto garden beds. While snow is a great insulator, it comes and goes—leaving perennials vulnerable when the temps dive down.

There is one important place to rake

The place to make sure you have

raked meticulously is along your street. According to Sue Rich, volunteer coordinator with Friends of the Mississippi River, "This is where leaves actually become pollutants. As they break down, they release their nutrients. When allowed to wash into the storm sewer system, it's like throwing down hands full of fertilizer. The excess nutrients encourage algae growth in rivers and lakes, which ultimately deprives fish and aquatic plants of oxygen."

There are many small ways each of us can make a difference in caring for the natural world. Consider adopting the storm drain near your house or at the end of your alley, and commit to keeping it clean of leaves and other organic material.

If none of these options for dealing with fall leaves appeal to you, remember that state law now requires everyone in the metro area to use bio-degradable bags for yard waste.

have regular access to a more affordable way of getting around without having to worry about slipping on icy roads. I can't even imagine when taking the bus after work. It's a vehicle that shields it from winter, it's where I do community work. It has allowed me to

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