

monitor

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Como residents examine traffic

Wilebski's brings the blues to Rice Street



Owner Ted Wilebski of Wilebski's Blues Saloon has been open at 1638 Rice St., the former location of the Cancun Club, since late August, offering weekend music while the building has gone through a complete renovation. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

By JAN WILLMS

Ted Wilebski has gotten used to sleeping on the couch in his office as he puts in long days and short nights preparing his blues saloon for its grand opening Oct. 15 and 16, featuring Sugar Blue.

Wilebski's Blues Saloon has been open at 1638 Rice St., the former location of the Cancun Club, since late August, offering weekend music while the building has gone through a complete renovation.

"We've done a lot of painting and fixing, and we gave this building a facelift," Wilebski said. The results are spectacular. The saloon features a glistening bar and artwork that could put many a gallery to shame.

The main stage has a backdrop mural by Kyle Holdridge, featuring a musician and guitar. Small portraits of musicians, painted by Mark Kroeten, cover one wall. And throughout the building, murals by Richard Hubal of scenes from Memphis, Chicago, New Orleans and St. Paul feature historic events. Included are portraits of Blues legends like Etta James, Robert Johnson and Louis Armstrong.

Hubal and other contributing artists completed the murals in 37 days.

Hubal said the murals depict different locations that had a major influence on the blues.

"Each room has an individuality and character, and we follow the sun, ending in St. Paul,"

Hubal said. "We want to bring the blues back to its origins."

"The blues started out of times of depression," Hubal said. "Music from the Civil War and the chain gangs influenced musicians like Robert Johnson. Blues really hits the soul."

Whether it's a scene of a well known hot dog vendor on Bourbon Street or the assassination of Martin Luther King, the murals provide both artistic pleasure and a sense of history. And as for the music, legends have frequently been headliners at Wilebski's since its beginnings in 1979 at Western and Thomas.

Wilebski grew up about a block and a half away from that bar's location. His Polish parents were drawn to polka festivals, going to Chicago on weekends to participate. Wilebski was a drummer for a rhythm and blues band, traveling around Minneso-

ta. But then he heard the Paul Butterfield Blues Band.

"It turned my head around," Wilebski said. "It was a wonderful band, and it got me hooked."

In 1979, he opened his saloon at 601 Western Ave. "I tried a few things, polkas and rock and roll," Wilebski said. "That's not where I was at, and in 1980 I started booking blues bands from Chicago and all over the world."

He ran Wilebski's Blues Saloon until 1990. Wilebski said he took on a partner in 1989, and things did not work out for him.

"I left, and got into some other ventures," he said. He took part in a snowmobile race from Thunder Bay, Ontario, to Minneapolis. He tried his hand at pro wrestling, and sold time shares and worked in credit card verification.

But the blues were his life, and in January of this year he

opened up the saloon again upstairs at the location on Western. When the bar owner beneath him lost his liquor license, however, Wilebski decided to relocate.

"His liquor license was for the whole building, and I saw the writing on the wall," he said. "I had bands booked, and I had to go to Plan B."

Plan B was moving the saloon to the Cancun, which previously catered to 18 plus crowds and hip hop music lovers.

With a lot of hard work and artistry, however, the club soon was transformed into a home for the blues. Wilebski plans to have music every night. He has local bands during the week and national bands performing on weekends.

"Blues enthusiasts are usually an older clientele," Wilebski said. "We put the headliners on first for the older crowd, in case some of them want to leave earlier. We have the opening acts close, the reverse of what's normal."

Although Wilebski charges as much as \$35 for some of the bands, he said the price is well worth it. "Some of the best musicians in the world are coming through here," he said. He said that some of the bands cost \$30,000 to bring in, and when hotel rooms need to be booked for about 10 people and special sound equipment rented, a band's performance can easily cost \$40,000.

"If people were seeing these bands at the State Theater, they would pay \$50 and up for tickets and think nothing of it," Wilebski said. "Here, they can have a more intimate set-up talking to the band between sets."

Wilebski added that many blues listeners are more well off than the average person, with judges and senators stopping by to listen.

Wilebski said he is also trying to reach out to youth to become blues fans, also.

"A lot of bands have been influenced by the blues," he said. He said he wants to bring in black audiences, especially kids, and show them the real roots of their music. In that vein, he is working with a friend on eventually setting up a blues museum in a Brooklyn Center Mall.

Wilebski gazes up at a wall of photos of blues musicians, most of them now deceased. "My goal is to bring the legends back before they are all gone," he said. One legend he has scheduled is Eddie Shaw, who played with Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters.

"We want to put St. Paul back on the map as an entertainment mecca," Wilebski said.

"Some of the best musicians in the world are coming through here."

- Owner Ted Wilebski

monitor

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

Publishers:

Calvin deRuyter, Tim Nelson

Managing Editor:

Denis Woulfe

Advertising:

Denis Woulfe
Dennis Stern (651-452-5324)

Photographers:

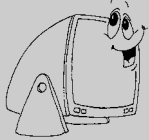
Liberty Willms
Andrew Fossbinder
Tom Conlon

Production/Illustrations:

Bob Wasiluk

Contributing Writers:

Eric Nathanson, Deborah Brotz,
Jane McClure, Tom Conlon,
Jan Willms, Elizabeth McLister



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Monitor in a Minute

Light rail seminar offered Oct. 28

Helping small businesses prepare for light rail is the focus of small business workshop 2-6 p.m. Thursday, October 28 at Lifetrack Resources, 709 University Av. The workshop is sponsored by University Avenue Business Association and Asian Economic Development Association. The workshops include 20 minute presentations, at 2:30 and 4:30 p.m., as well as information and business consultants the rest of the time. Business owners are urged to bring their financial records and other documents.

More than 40 people attended an Oct. 7 session to discuss the experience of businesses in Lowertown, and the experiences those businesses have had during utilities work over the past several months. Innuendo and Rumors night club owner Seam Fetterman and city council members Dave Thune, Melvin Carter III and Russ Stark discussed the experiences downtown and what can be done to help businesses along University Avenue.

Fetterman urged University Avenue business owners to plan ahead and prepare for rail. He said Lowertown businesses only had a few weeks to prepare before Fourth Street was torn up. Businesses there have seen drops in revenue of 30 to 60 percent. One nightclub has had its basement flood twice. All businesses have had the problems of loss of streetlights and lighting, having their storefronts physically blocked by equipment and losing parking.

Ward Two Council Member Dave Thune described what has been done to help Lowertown businesses, calling them the "practice victims" of the light rail project. One of the greatest needs was to provide parking, which the city did by providing validated space in a city-owned ramp. The city and

Metropolitan Council staff also provided a quick response to problems. The city is also providing low-interest loans of up to \$10,000 to help tide businesses over.

But Thune said sometimes bureaucrats aren't clear on what businesses truly need. When the Lowertown businesses were asked what they need, the loud and clear answer was "Parking." But an initial city response was, "We could give you a marketing plan."

Thune said public policy toward businesses affected by light rail construction should be "Do ask, don't tell." He, Stark and Carter said they will do everything they can to help University Avenue businesses.

Rock of Ages bill set

The last chapter in the story of a now-demolished Dale Street church has been written. On a 6-1 vote Oct. 6 the St. Paul City Council approved the demolition bill for Rock of Ages Church, which stood at 507 N. Dale St.

The historic church, which was more than 100 years old, had to be torn down due to its deteriorated condition. But the building's congregation objected to the \$100,389.56 bill, saying it was too high and that they cannot pay it. At a legislative hearing last summer church representatives their building should have been purchased as part of the Central Corridor light rail project. Congregation representatives have also claimed they were unable to recover all of their property before the church was torn down.

City staff argued that the building was dangerous and a nuisance and had to come down, and that the congregation had plenty of time to remove their belongings. City staff has suggested that the congregation could recoup the costs of demolition by selling the Dale Street property.

The contractor for the demolition, Frattalone Company, provided the city with detailed records of the demolition costs. The contrac-

tor had to pay the final water bill, dispose of paint and chemicals, build an egress stair to use during demolition and close a concealed stairway between the church and its former school building.

The agreement approved on a 6-1 vote Oct. 6 calls for the demolition costs to be spread out over a 10-year period. Council Member Lee Helgen cast the lone vote against the payment arrangement, raising concerns about the length of time.

Home owner ordered to remove garden

A Como Park home owner will have to remove her boulevard platform garden, after the fall growing season ends, the St. Paul City Council decided October 6. But the council also wants to research ways that Patricia Owens, 1240 Churchill St. and others can more efficiently use boulevard garden space in the future.

Owens has been growing several varieties of herbs and vegetables in a raised box on her boulevard this season. She has been wrangling with city officials over the garden since June. One of her objections was confusing information the city provided during the summary abatement process used to order the garden's removal, which has the support of most of her neighbors.

Owens told the City Council the garden is a demonstration project, to demonstrate how much food can be grown in a space that is just three by three by eight feet. The garden box is designed to be a height that elderly people and people with disabilities could more easily garden there. She also pointed out that in many shaded yards there isn't space to garden, while street boulevards offer sunny space.

The city allows boulevard gardening, but has a number of regulations on plant heights and types, as well as what materials can be used on the boulevard. Many people use timbers or stones, or install

chairs, benches and lawn ornaments in violation of city ordinance. But Owens' structure is designed so that it can be moved and lifted.

Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark and other council members said while the box should be removed this fall, the city should revisit its ordinance to see if there are more ways to accommodate people who want to grow food on their boulevards. That can be looked at over the winter by the city's food commission, with the goal of bringing forward ordinance changes in time for next growing season.

Council considers tobacco ordinance

Many St. Paul stores would have to place further restrictions on tobacco products sales, if the St. Paul City Council adopts a proposed ordinance October 13. The ordinance would restrict how tobacco products are sold and would expand the definition of what a tobacco product is. A key goal of the ordinance is to restrict youth access to tobacco products.

The Ramsey Tobacco Coalition, a youth-led group that works to limit young peoples' use of tobacco, spoke in support of the changes. The group led the charge against sale of candy cigarettes and toy-shaped lighters a few years ago.

Member displayed new types of tobacco products during an October 6 council public hearing, including dissolvable tobacco products that look like breath mints, sweet-flavored cigars and snus. The proposed ordinance would expand the definition of tobacco to include "any products containing, made or derived from tobacco that is intended for human consumption, whether chewed, smoked, absorbed, dissolved, inhaled, snorted, sniffed or ingested by any other means,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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Midway artists dominate Bush Fellowships

By ERIK BURGESS

The news had just arrived. It was his first time. In celebration, he jumped about the living room.

It seemed a fitting response for Dean Lucker of the Midway. He, along with five other Midway artists, was announced as a Bush Foundation Fellow for the year 2010. For these artists, this news meant they would be receiving \$50,000 to fund their artwork.

"I was definitely excited about winning it," Lucker said, sharing a laugh as he remembered receiving the news.

Fifteen artists this year were chosen from a field of over 500 to receive the prestigious fellowship from the Bush Foundation.

Six of this year's fellows, Lucker included, live and work here in the Midway.

Lucker, who works in mechanical sculpture, has been a full time studio artist for around 20 years, working out of his University Avenue studio with his wife, Ann Wood. He attested to the effect of having so many Bush Fellows in one area.

"It really does strengthen the art of the community," he said. "It brings recognition to the fine work being done in the area."

Another 2010 fellow representing the Midway is Michael Kareken, whose studio sits on the corner of Hampden and University Ave.

Kareken, who works full time as a professor of drawing and painting at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD), was awarded his first fellowship in 2000. At the time, he used the funding to take time away from teaching at MCAD and work solely on his art.

"It was an opportunity to reconnect with my studio process," he said. "It's such an amazing opportunity to step out of your everyday life and focus on your studio."

Lori Greene, owner of Mosaic on a Stick on Snelling Avenue, also received her second Bush Artist Fellowship this year. She was awarded her first fellowship in 1994, and said that after receiving it the first time she no longer had to work a separate job to fund her art.

"It changed my life the last time, so I suspect it will do the same this time," Greene said.

The Bush Fellowship website states that artists should "contribute to community dialogue through their work." The three fellows admitted the Bush Foundation often looks for applicants who work with a strong sense of community in their art.

For Greene, this has manifested in her attempts to include the Midway community in her art-making processes at Mosaic on a Stick. Since its opening six years ago, she said she has worked to provide a nearly-free environment for non artists to experience the process of creating art.

"We do a lot of community projects in the neighborhood," she said.

Her Snelling Avenue planter project drew over 200 volunteers, she said, many of whom were not artists.

With the money from her most recent fellowship, Greene said she hopes to create a non-profit arm for Mosaic, creating an entirely free environment for anyone who wishes to create or learn about her art specialty.



Fifteen artists this year were chosen from a field of over 500 to receive the prestigious fellowship from the Bush Foundation. Six of this year's fellows live and work here in the Midway. Clockwise, from top left, are: Dean Lucker, Lori Greene, Beatrix* JAR (Bianca Pettis and Jacob Aaron Roske), Nate Young and Michael Kareken.

Lucker said his sense of community manifested itself in his love for public art pieces – art that involves interaction with the public. He cited one of his own statues featured at the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory in Como Park – which allows the public to place money in it and watch it move. He said artwork like this is something he is interested in pursuing.

"I really believe in art having an accessible component for people," Lucker said. "And the Bush [Fellowship] will be able to give me the clout to approach organizations [with such ideas]."

Kareken, whose studio faces Rock-Tenn recycling center, said he was also inspired by the community in his work, especially in his paintings of recycling centers. He said he plans to use his fellowship to continue "engaging in a process of discovery" outside of his studio.

"There's just amazing artists all through this area," Kareken said of the Midway. "[They are] all hidden around in different places."

Despite having been awarded the fellowship before, Kareken stated with optimistic uncertainty about where this one will take him.

"Truthfully, I don't exactly

know where this will lead," he said. "[But the Bush Foundation] are open to the idea that you might discover something new."

Greene also attested to the individuality of the award.

"It's different for everyone... but it's really an exceptional experience," she said.

Other Midway fellows include visual and multimedia artist Nate Young and audio/media artists Beatrix* JAR (Bianca Pettis and Jacob Aaron Roske).

According to its website, the

Bush Foundation's Artist Program has awarded 504 grants to 453 different artists in the Dakotas and Minnesota since 1976. Other fellows this year include artists from North Dakota and other areas in Minnesota. The applicants are reviewed by a national peer-panel. This year, the applicable artistic fields were visual arts, media arts and traditional and functional craft arts.

For more on the Bush Foundation, visit www.bushfoundation.org. For the entire list of 2010 fellows, visit www.bushfellows.org.

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Candidates in state and local elections debate budget challenges

By JAN WILLMS

It's the Budget with a capital "B."

Local House and Senate candidates were asked what the biggest challenge facing the legislature would be, and the budget was named the most pressing concern by incumbents and challengers alike.

"The biggest challenge Minnesota will face is right in our revenue debacle," said John Lesch, an eight-year DFL incumbent legislator for District 66A. "We now give over \$1 billion per year to the wealthy for special tax breaks, which has been breaking our back for eight years. We need to get off this cycle of bust and responsibly balance the budget."

Chris Conner, the GOP candidate in 66A, said the budget deficit facing the legislature is nearly three times the size of California's per capita.

"Overcoming this challenge is only possible if we move beyond the rhetoric of budget cuts vs. new taxes and look towards bi-partisan governmental reform that sets ethical fiscal priorities," Conner continued. He stressed the importance of putting people and essential services first and creating living wage jobs in the private sector.

Conner said he chose to run because he feels District 66A has become a battle zone with rioting in the streets south of Maryland, nearly 1/3 of businesses closing or being sold and a malaise and sense of helplessness and an absent legislator, Lesch.

He claims that Lesch expects to be deployed in March as part of his National Guard duties, leaving the district without representation. "He takes credit for things he has not done and is extremely partisan at a time when we need to transcend partisanship to save our state and community from disaster," Conner said.

Lesch has said he is not aware of rioting in the streets of District 66A.

"That's the kind of hyperbole you could hear from someone who doesn't understand the district of St. Paul," he said. "One should get a firmer grip on the facts before making statements like that."

He added that there is no chance of him deploying in March. "I'm proud to have the opportunity to serve my country and my community," he said. "The point of the National Guard is to train citizen soldiers."

Reflecting on the achievement gap in education in the Metro, Conner said that he believes the new superintendent of St. Paul Public Schools is outstanding but faces overwhelming challenges. "I want the State Department of Education to have more power to support and intervene in failing districts," he said. "I support school vouchers or expanded tax credits per child that broadens parental choice beyond the public system and cuts the cost of education to the state while leaving more mon-

ey per student for our public schools."

Lesch said his main focus has been securing justice for working people, both economically and socially. "I am especially proud of securing the funding for the praxis audit which implemented a comprehensive change of the way domestic violence cases are handled in the City of Saint Paul, and is now a model being implemented around the state," he noted.

Lesch said he believes the achievement gap can be best addressed by returning the state to the principles of the Minnesota Miracle. "This leveled the playing field of public education in the early 1970s," he noted.

In District 66B, Bob Koss, Republican challenger to Alice Hausman, said he feels the term "crisis" regarding the budget is appropriate in this instance. "We are faced with the results of a state legislature that didn't feel it necessary to tighten the purse strings," he said. "Rather than return taxpayer dollars directly to the taxpayers themselves, my opponent authored a bill that would hand over nearly \$100 million to unnecessary, bureaucratic boards."

Koss said he has always had a passion for politics and wants to prove to the voters of 66B that this is the time to try something new.

"I would like to see Minnesota open for business again," Koss said. He said he sees a myriad of buildings for lease as he drives down Energy Park Drive, and wonders what made these businesses fail or decide to get out of town. "An unfair tax burden being forced upon them from a DFL dominated legislature," Koss said, is the answer he comes up with time and time again.

He said he would also call for a greater police presence and the installation of more surveillance cameras and a well organized community safety program.

Hausman, the DFL representative in District 66B since 1990, emphasized that the legislature has a priority to solve the budget deficit after the actions of the past eight years have drained every cash

reserve fund that could be drained.

"I intend to play a role on a team that includes the Governor, House and Senate working together for the first time in a very long time," Hausman said. "Partisan rhetoric and blaming must stop."

Hausman said her legislative work has focused on the environment, energy and infrastructure with a special emphasis on public mass transit.

She said she supports light rail as part of a multi-model system of transit that serves the entire region equitably.

"The construction phase is always a challenge and we have to assure that a project manager and construction manager are qualified to move us through that phase quickly and with care for all of those residents and businesses who are affected along the way," she said.

DFLer Ellen Anderson, District 66, was first elected to the Senate in 1992, and said she is proud of her record. She authored the state's Renewable Energy Standard requiring 25 per cent of our electricity to come from wind and solar by 2020.

"I was a strong advocate for Clean Water legacy funding and have worked hard to ensure that we get results for the money approved by voters and that we are accountable for every dollar spent," Anderson said. She added that she has been the chief author of bills to raise the minimum wage, to give nursing mothers time at work, for paid sick days and family leave for school conferences.

"I have also authored many bills to protect consumers," she said.

Anderson said that as chair of a Budget Division committee, she has had to cut state budgets every year to balance the budget. She sees the need for a combination of solutions to solve the current massive deficit.

"Middle income earners pay a higher share of their income than the wealthy, and that's wrong,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Como Pool receives \$150,000 Solar Energy Legacy Grant

By JANE MCCLURE

Planning for the new Como Park pool facilities continues, with construction to start this month. One huge boost for the project is a \$150,000 Solar Energy Legacy Grant, which was announced last month.

The grant, which is from the state's recently created Heritage and Legacy funds, will be used for a solar heating system for the new facility. The pool will be the city's first parks and Recreation facility to use solar panel technology.

"Our ongoing effort to find green solutions for our energy challenges has made Saint Paul a national leader in sustainability," Mayor Chris Coleman said. "This grant will allow us to set a new bar in energy efficiency for public facilities."

In addition to the solar panels, interpretive signage will be installed throughout the site to educate pool users of the technology and energy efficient measures the solar panels provide. The grant will help the project meet the minimum Minnesota State B-3 requirements for energy efficiency.

The project is being constructed with additional energy efficiency measures including:

- Occupancy sensors for lighting efficiency
- Low-flow fixtures for water efficiency

- Skylights and use of natural light
- High-efficiency mechanical equipment
- Rain gardens and infiltration basins
- Native plant species to minimize irrigation needs
- On-site chlorine generation for pool sanitation
- Regenerative media pool filters
- Variable frequency drives on all pool pumps

The Como facilities won't be complete until 2012. Final details of the funding for Como Pool, the Highland Pool bathhouse improvements and other projects were approved September 15 by the St. Paul City Council.

The action taken September 15 approved the sale of general obligation capital improvement bonds and Build America Bonds for the projects, which also include the Payne-Maryland recreation center-library project.

Sale of the bonds allowed both the Highland and Como pool projects to proceed earlier than planned. Both were to get underway next year, leaving the city with no outdoor public pool. But work on the Highland Pool began this summer, which will allow the pool to open for the 2011 season. The second phase of pool and bath house renovations was moved up to allow the city to take advantage of a favorable



Above are the most recent renderings for Como Pool, but the plans could change since they're still in the process of finalizing design.

construction market, historically low interest rates and debt service savings associated with federal Build America Bonds, according to Coleman.

The Como Pool was closed at the end of the 2008 season and later demolished due to its

deteriorated condition. It will take two years to rebuild Como, at a cost of \$7.4 million.

Coleman included both pool projects in his Rebuild St. Paul initiative announced in August.

Rebuild St. Paul is a large

project of housing, commercial and community improvement projects meant to put people back to work.

Additional details about the Como and Highland pools can be found at www.stpaul.gov/parks



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Hamline Midway Library offers books, classes and more

Drop into Hamline Midway Library the month of October and pick up some good books to read in your cozy home as the weather turns brisk, take one of our popular classes, or enjoy some cultural programming.

The library offers computer classes through the month of October on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Call the library at 651-642-0293 to see if space is available.

There will be a Computer Help Lab offered Wednesday afternoons from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. A staff member will be available to assist you with filling out forms online, creating a resume, and other basic computer operations. This is a drop-in lab and patrons will be helped on a first-come, first-served basis.

The annual Neighborhood Voices Series kicks off on Wednesday,

October 13 at 7 p.m. David Weiss, author of *To the Tune of a Welcoming God*, will give a reading in celebration of National Coming Out Week. Guest musician Sean Egan will showcase his talent.

Join the fun at the library! School age kids are invited to play and participate in fun activities at the Saturday Club on Saturday, October 16 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Games, crafts, and more!

Teen Read Week is October 18-22! Wednesday, October 20, we will host a pumpkin carving contest. We supply the carving tools and pumpkins, you bring your creativity! Call the library to register for the contest. Open to teens age 11-18.

On Thursday, October 21, the library welcomes Ghost Whisperer Duke Addicks. Duke tells true ghost stories selected from the

hundreds of hauntings by American Indians, explorers, fur traders, pioneers and the recently deceased that he has investigated.

The final Teen Read Week event will take place Friday, October 22, with a showing of the film *Blood and Chocolate* to take place in the auditorium at 2 p.m. Snacks provided; open to youth ages 11-18.

In the Heart of the Beast: on the Day you were Born is a play created by the acclaimed In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre based on the award-winning children's book by Debra Frasier. This toy theatre production combines puppetry, poetry and music, celebrating the natural

miracles of the earth and extending a jubilant welcome to each member of our human family. The library is excited to host this production on Friday, October 22 at 10:30 a.m.

Call 651-642-0293 or stop by the library at 1558 W Minnehaha Ave, near the intersection of Snelling and Minnehaha, to sign up for events that require registration. All events are free.

Candidates

Continued from page 4

Anderson stated. "I support restoring the income tax rates for highest income Minnesotans that were in place a few years ago."

Greg Copeland, the Republican candidate who is challenging Anderson in her Senate race, said that in the worst economy since the Great Depression began in 1929 telling Zygi Wilf that he will have to use his own checkbook and/or credit to finance his \$900 million Vikings Stadium should be an easy task. "The Minnesota Legislature, however, has no history telling professional sports team owners no and really meaning it," Copeland said. He said he would be happy to tell Wilf no, that Minnesota taxpayers owe him nothing.

"The 2011 Legislature must stay focused on making Minnesota the best place for new jobs and new private investment, restructuring public services and setting spending priorities to operate state government on less money," Copeland noted.

Copeland said he would like

to put taxes to work cleaning up Lake Como and the other 24 lakes in Ramsey County that have been labeled by the DNR as unsuitable for swimming and recreation. Among other ideas he would like to implement if elected, he believes Minnesota should offer an income tax credit on student loan payments that would be an incentive for recent college graduates to stay in Minnesota. He would also like to see Minnesota repeal the Corporate Franchise Tax.

In other local races, Janice Rettman is running unopposed for County Commissioner in District 3. In the U.S. Congressional races, DFL Rep. Betty McCollum faces a challenge from GOP candidate Teresa Collett in District 4. State races for Governor, Secretary of State, State Auditor and Attorney General will be decided. Four seats on the Supreme Court, ten seats on the Court of Appeals and 14 seats on the second Judicial District Court complete the state elections. In Ramsey County, candidates are running for Sheriff and County Attorney. Districts 1 and 4 will elect Conservation District Supervisors. The election will be held Tuesday, Nov. 2.

In A Minute

Continued from page 2

or by any component, part, or accessory of a tobacco product, including but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, cheroots, stogies, periques, granulated, plug cut, crimp cut, ready rubbed, and other smoking tobacco; snuff; snuff flour; Cavendish; plug and twist tobacco; fine-cut and other chewing tobacco; shorts; refuse scraps; clippings, cuttings and sweepings of tobacco; and other kinds and forms of tobacco."

The ordinance currently defines tobacco as cigarettes, cigars, snuff, chewing tobacco and "any other kind or form of tobacco prepared in such a manner as to be suitable for chewing or smoking."

Another ordinance change would restrict how tobacco, cigarette papers, cigarette wrappers, or pipes for smoking are sold, and would require those items to not be available in a store without an employee's intervention. This would mean putting the

items in a locked case or behind a counter. This restriction wouldn't apply to tobacco retail stores.

A third change would block use of tobacco product vending machines, unless the machines are in a facility that cannot be entered at any time by persons younger than 18 years of age.

Katie Engmann of the Ramsey Tobacco Coalition said the changes are needed to further restrict youth access to tobacco. She and other coalition members displayed the products, some of which are in containers that look like cell phones. They also displayed tobacco product giveaways, such as shorts and hats, which are used to attract young consumers.

The changes also tie into the Tobacco Modernization and Compliance Act of 2010, which Gov. Tim Pawlenty signed into law this spring. The city ordinance reflects the act, which took effect August 1. The state law also aims to reduce minor's access to tobacco products.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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New immigrants cook up new lives at new 'Flamingo'

By JAN WILLMS

When you walk into the colorful rooms and friendly atmosphere of the Flamingo and smell the tempting aromas of the African dishes, you would never know the difficult path the restaurant owners have walked to reach this point.

Shegitu Kebede and Frewoini Haile have been operating the Flamingo, at 496 Syndicate, for about seven months. Haile came to the United States on her own in 1986. Kebede came in the early 1990s with her son. Both arrived as refugees. Kebede is from Ethiopia, and Haile from Eritrea.

"The restaurant has been here since 2006," Kebede said. "First some Somalis ran it, then five years ago Eritreans had it. We took over from them."

Taking over the restaurant has not been without its challenges.

"We were struggling in our restaurant, when we had a power surge," Kebede said recalling last June. She said the women had to use their money to repair the disastrous results of the surge, which included the failure of their freezer and spoilage of food. Their insurance did not cover power surges, and they wondered how they would come up with the money to pay the rent and utilities.

But one of their supporters sent out an e-mail, and soon people from all over were contributing to help them keep the restaurant going.

"One e-mail just worked and

got all the community to help us, like a ripple effect," said Haile. "Everyone from different ethnic groups came out to help us, because they heard our story. It shows how the community can come together."

Kebede has dealt with challenges before in her life. She recently published a book, "Hidden Scars, Visible Strengths," a story she had written a long time ago, telling of her rape and struggles with domestic abuse. Her early life was spent in an orphanage. She has overcome numerous obstacles and come through them with a smile on her face.

"We all experienced very severe poverty, domestic abuse, rape and torture, but we have to be strong for our families and show no emotion," she said. She was speaking of herself and of the many refugee women she has helped.

"Their story is not told," she said. "There is such a huge scar that nobody knows about." She said that for men, fleeing to another country can be very difficult.

"They identify with their profession, and their education is not recognized here. They have to start over with training. But there is no time, because the immediate needs of the family are right now. There is no support or connection," Kebede said. "They have to support not just the families here, but relatives back home, and there is all that pressure."

She said things are very diffi-

cult for female refugees, also, but if they have family, they thrive.

Before Kebede started the restaurant, she used to have an organization that helped women. She worked with Common Bond and saw a lot of immigrant women struggling to work for a living.

"They don't know how to write or speak English, and they have no job history," she said. "I started a cleaning business and started training them on how to be a good worker, how to be on time, the importance of personal hygiene and how to dress. I got them into ESL classes."

Kebede did all this for five years, and was the recipient of a McKnight Humanitarian award. After she had trained the women, she would help them get jobs with other companies that could offer higher wages and benefits.

"Then the economy hit," she said, "and I lost all my cleaning business."

She said that what has worked for her and Haile has been their faith in God.

"There are many who are more educated and wiser than us, but the grace of God has helped us to keep going. We can tell others about any mistakes we have made, and what we have done and what we have learned."

"God is always there and never changes," Haile added. "Seeing what He is able to do gives you more faith."

She came to the United States



Shegitu Kebede (pictured) and her partner, Frewoini Haile, have been operating the Flamingo, 496 Syndicate, for about seven months. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

in 1986 as a refugee. She had learned English from when she was in the 7th grade. But because of the war-torn country she left, she had no certificate or documentation of her education and had to complete a GED when she arrived here.

Haile attended Brown College and obtained an associate's in computer programming, then got her bachelor's in business administration from National American

University.

"I found out a little too late that I love people, and not computers," she joked. After her graduation, she worked in hospitality management and managed a restaurant at Holiday Inn and then at Embassy Suites before she was laid off during the economic downturn.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



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Como residents struggle with dramatic growth of Como Park's popularity and its traffic

By DEBORAH BROTZ

When Como resident Dennis O'Rourke tried to get a new washing machine from Sears delivered to his home on a recent Saturday, the delivery men had to come back because there was no place for them to park. Having Como Park visitors park their cars in front of his house has become a common occurrence.

Como Park is not the quiet park it used to be. It's changed. Some people like the changes, while other people hate it.

With the new polar bear exhibit, Tropical Encounters, the Carousel, Como Town, new picnic pavilion, and new ball fields, public usage of Como Park has increased. From 1997 to 2010 (13 years), there has been an increase in visitors from 2 million to 3.1 million, a 55 percent increase. This has stretched the limits of the park infrastructure and increased the impact on the neighborhood.

Having Como Park visitors' cars parked in front of his home has prevented O'Rourke from doing repairs on his house, having family over, and from getting out.

"I can't invite friends over," he said. "I cannot get work done on my house because there's no place for workmen to park. I didn't mind occasional park-ups. Now, it's every day all the time. We've become the parking lot for Como Park. We have to pick up dirty diapers, McDonald's boxes, and Kentucky Fried Chicken wrappers in front of our house."

Through the Como Regional Park Transportation Implementation Plan (CRPTIP), transportation issues in and around Como Regional Park are being explored.



With the new polar bear exhibit, Tropical Encounters, the Carousel, Como Town, new picnic pavilion, and new ball fields, public usage of Como Park has increased.

The primary objective of the CRPTIP is to find collaborative solutions that balance the interests of the park with interests of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Kimley-Horn and Associates were chosen as project consultants for the transportation plan, and the City assembled a 15-member task force, known as the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) to implement its CRPTIP.

Issues identified from the information gathering process include: not enough close parking, underutilized shuttle system, loss of green space, traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, and limited support of other transportation modes (bicycle, transit, shuttle system).

Planning concentrated on the following issue areas: roadway, parking, shuttle/transit,

pedestrian/bicycle, and signing/wayfinding.

On Oct. 1, Kimley-Horn presented its final report and recommendations, which were posted to the City's website. Since project phasing is integral to the successful implementation of the plan, the recommended improvements have been categorized as short-term, mid-term, and long-term.

Some of the short-term improvements (0-2 years) for an estimated cost of \$410,000 are: agreement for off-site shuttle lot for 2011-2012, shuttle/circulator stop at Como Town, lot full sign system, parking lot renaming and destination wayfinding signing, and bike parking.

Some of the mid-term improvements (2-4 years) for an estimated cost of \$2,225,000 include: agreement for off-site

shuttle lot for 2013-2020, shuttle lot within Como Park, permit parking, paid parking, roundabout at Horton Avenue/Midway Parkway, and pedestrian crossing improvements at Lexington Parkway.

Other mid-term improvements (5-10 years) at an estimated cost of \$23,400,000 include: underground ramp at Visitor Center, bike/pedestrian path on Hamline Avenue, bike/pedestrian path from McMurray Fields to Horton Avenue, and guide signs on Lexington Parkway and Snelling Avenue.

Some of the long-term improvements (10-20 years) for an estimated cost of \$4,150,000 are: permanent off-site shuttle parking lot, roundabout at Midway Parkway/Estabrook Drive, and angled parking on Jessamine Avenue.

For Dennis O'Rourke, who is District 10's PAC representative, the recommendation to delay permit parking, which was supposed to take effect May 11, 2011, is unfair.

"I think it's just a red herring to not implement permit parking," he said. "The State Fair, Lancer Enterprises, and the management of the Como Campus are against it. What gets me is Como Park has permit parking in front of their facility. It's good enough for volunteers and staff, but as a homeowner, I cannot have it for my home. I do not have access to my own home. It just chokes me."

Living in his home for 25 years, O'Rourke says he has been working on getting permit parking for three years.

"With the polar bear exhibit, Como Town, the pool, the resource center, and the new exhibit for primates, we're choking to death," he said. "This has grown up around us. We're the first neighborhood that has ever been asked to wait for permit parking."

Dolores Rufenacht, At Large member of District 10 Como Park Community Council who lives about two blocks from the park's main entrance, is concerned about parking in Como Park and the plans proposed for changing some of the roadways.

"I don't like the roundabouts," she said. "They're going to take up more green space. And, they're confusing. People are not familiar with them and don't know where to go."

Pete Bolstad, CRPTIP Ad Hoc chair, was hoping the plan would address areas that abut Como Lake.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

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In Our Community

Sauerkraut Supper at St. Stephanus Nov. 13

The Annual Sauerkraut Supper put on by the Men's Club at St. Stephanus Lutheran Church, will be held on Saturday, November 13 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the church, located at 739 Lafond (Lafond & Grotto). Adults: \$9; Children (5-12): \$4; (Children under 5 FREE); Family \$22. Supper includes pork loin, mashed potatoes, green beans, bakery bread, and dessert served family style. A traditional dinner served for over 50 years! For further information, please call the church at 651-228-1486.

Wine on Rice Oct. 28

Celebrating a Century of the Rice Street Festival, The 2010-2011 Royalty committee is pleased to invite you to: Wine on Rice: October 28th at 6 p.m. at Abetto's (560 Como Ave). At this event you will savor an array of wines and wonderful food, enjoy music and entertainment, along with Live and Silent Auction items! Advance purchase for admission is \$20, or on the event day for \$25. Proceeds benefit the Rice Street Festival and Royalty Program.

To RSVP, please send your name, number of tickets and payment for tickets to:

Rice Street Festival - Wine on Rice, 8485 Lake Jane Trail N., Lake Elmo, MN 55042. For more information please visit www.ricestreetfestival.org

Craft Fair October 23 at Bethlehem Church

Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Midway is having a Craft Fair on Saturday, Oct. 23, at 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. We will have Lunch, a Bake Sale, Baking & Holiday Nuts and a Raffle. Be sure to stop at 436 N Roy St. It is 1 blk S of Univ & Snelling (651-646-6549)

District 6 Planning Council Open House

Join District 6 Planning Council and the community in viewing the newly rehabbed office at 171 Front Avenue. The Open House will be held Thursday, October 28, from 4-7 p.m. All are welcome and encouraged to come view our new office space! Feel free to bring any non-perishable food items that will be collected for the local food shelf.

Senior Resource Fair held October 21

District 6 is holding a Senior Resource Fair at Arbor Pointe Apartments, 635 Maryland

Avenue W (corner of Dale and Maryland). The event will be Thursday, October 21, from 1-3 p.m. The fair will have information and resources from local programs and organizations that work with seniors in the area. Invited guests include Store to Door, the 551 Club, Saint Paul Public Libraries, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation 50+ Programs, North End/South Como Block Nurse Program, Senior Chore Services, Twin Cities Retires and Senior Volunteer Program, United Hospital, County Commissioner Janice Rettman, Councilmembers Lee Helgen and Melvin Carter III, and more. Contact Stephanie at District 6 (phone: 651-488-7684, email: district6cc@dist6pc.org) with any questions.

Community barn dances at Hamline Church

Hamline United Methodist Church, 1514 Englewood Avenue, will host two Community Barn Dances on Friday, October 15 and Friday, November 19.

Barn Dances are open to all ages and stages—singles, couples, and families and feature traditional American folk dancing accompanied by a three-piece Appalachian string band. Robin, the dance caller, teaches all the dances.

Dancing is from 7-9 p.m. For more information, contact the church office at 651-645-0667 or check out the Friends & Fellowship web page at www.hamlinechurch.org.

Homebuyer Workshop planned November 1

There will be a Homebuyer's workshop held at Rice Street Library, 1011 Rice Street, on Monday, November 1, at 6 p.m. The workshop is designed to inform first-time homebuyers of the purchasing process for buying a home and answer all financing questions. Wells Fargo Mortgage Consultant Heidi Welch and Big Real Estate Realtor Jennifer Dunn will lead the workshop.

***RSVPs for the workshop are required. Please contact Stephanie at District 6 Planning Council (phone: 651-488-7684, email: district6cc@dist6pc.org) to register.

Speaker on Identity Theft and Mail Fraud Nov. 8

Central Police meetings are held at Rice Street Recreation Center, 1021 Marion Street, the second Monday of the month, at 6:30pm. At November's meeting, on Monday, November 8, U.S. Postal Inspector J.D. Long will be joining the meeting to inform residents about ways to avoid identity theft

and how to recognize mail fraud. Join in hearing about ways to protect yourself from these common scams.

Invest Saint Paul Meeting

Join District 6 Planning Council and the community for an evening of updates and information about Invest Saint Paul efforts in District 6. You will hear from important Saint Paul city staff on topics such as vacant housing, home inspections, problem properties, new development projects in the area, and more. The meeting will be held at Abetto's, 560 Como Avenue, on Wednesday, November 10, at 6:30 pm.

Knox Fall Sale Oct 16th

Knox Annual Fall Sale and Sloppy Joe Lunch, October 16th, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., 1536 Minnehaha Ave W. Corner of Minnehaha and Asbury next to the Library. Books, household items, decorative items.

Sloppy Joe Lunch served 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Bag sale starts at 2 p.m. For more information call 651-645-6488 or email knoxpres@comcast.net.

Art of Breastfeeding discussed Nov. 9

The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties is the topic of the meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche Group on Tuesday, November 9. All expectant and nursing mothers are invited to attend with their babies and toddlers. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information.

'Financial Foundations for Life' workshop

Learn practical tips to wisely

manage your money and build a secure financial future at Bethel's "Financial Foundations for Life" workshop. Issues addressed during this four-session workshop include: (1) Budgeting to create savings; (2) Debt reduction and asset building; (3) Building a good credit rating; (4) Consumer protection and understanding financial institutions.

The workshop will be held Mondays from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on October 18, 25, November 1 and 8. The workshop is led by Bethel Lutheran members, trained by Lutheran Social Service. For more information, call 651-488-6681 or visit www.bethelstpaul.com.

Zion serves free breakfast Oct. 24

Zion serves free community breakfast on October 24th on Sunday at 9 a.m. All are invited! Zion Lutheran church is located on 1697 Lafond Ave. If you need more information please call the church at 651-645-0851.

Turkey Bingo at St. Columba Nov. 13

Save the date and your appetite for Turkey Bingo, Saturday, Nov. 13, 10 at St. Columba Church, 1330 Blair Ave. Adult tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door and include a Turkey Buffet Dinner with Beverage plus 2 Bingo Cards for each game. Bingo play runs about 2 hours with chances to win turkeys as well as special prizes and drawings. Doors open after mass at 5:30 p.m. with Dinner and Bingo starting at 6:30 p.m. For more info or tickets call 651-646-4419. Bring your neighbors, we would love you to join us for the fun—there's plenty of good laughs to go around.

Free community breakfast at North Emanuel Church

North Emanuel Lutheran Church, FREE Community Breakfast. This month October 24, and every fourth Sunday of each month. FREE Community Breakfast served 8-9 a.m. Come one Come All to our Fellowship Hall. 5 blocks west of Rice Street on Hatch Ave, and 1 block north of Front Ave on Matilda Street. Address 301 Hatch Ave. 651-489-5611. Where Pastor Kisten Thompson and members welcome all, for Breakfast and fellowship with your neighbors. Any questions call Sandy 651-283-1681, or Larry 651-373-5797.

Hamline begins season With 'Spring Awakening'

Hamline University Theatre begins its 80th season with a new translation of Frank Wedekind's 'Spring Awakening,' the result of a 2005 Collaborative Research project grant accorded to Nicole Bachman (Hamline Class of 2006) and Jeff Turner (Associate Professor of Theatre Arts). Exploring the relationships between youth and adulthood, freedom and structure, and the societal conventions binding them together, this provocative play will premiere on the Anne Simley Stage in early November. Due to the play's mature content, this production is not recommended for children.

Tickets: \$2-\$8, November 5th, 11th, 12th, and 13th at 7:30 p.m., and November 6th at 8 p.m.

For advanced reservations or more information please contact the Hamline University Theatre Box Office at 651-523-2905 or tickets@hamline.edu.

LETTERS

Farewell from community organizer

I'd like to take this opportunity to let you know that I have resigned my position as the community organizer at the District 10 Como Community Council. The time came for me to hit the open road (metaphorically) and seek my fortune.

I want to let you know that I have enjoyed working with you and have much pride in the work that we all did together; getting to know our neighbors, facilitating some (sometimes difficult) conversations, exchanging information and having some fun in the process.

I am still in the neighbor-

hood, doing my grocery shopping, grabbing a cup of coffee, riding my bike and all the other things that busy moms do. If you see me out and about, please stop me and say hi, and I will do the same.

Enjoy our beautiful Minnesota autumn and keep on talking amongst yourselves-neighbors talking to neighbors—that is what it is all about.

Happy Trails Neighbors,

*Rhonda DeBough
Como Park*

Supporting John Choi candidacy

It has been a long time since Ram-

sey County voters had a chance to elect a new Ramsey County Attorney. It is an important job and I hope that all the residents of Ramsey County take some time and consider the candidates. In my mind, none of them are as qualified as John Choi. When he was Saint Paul's City Attorney, John focused on tough issues like domestic violence and gangs. He developed innovative approaches and worked cooperatively with both the public and the private sector. Now that he is running for Ramsey County Attorney, John has the support of both the police and the firefighters. I know I'll be voting for him on November 2.

*John Kelly
Como Park*

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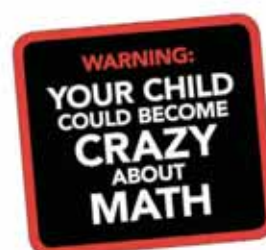
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St. Paul declines to raise property tax levy for 2011

By JANE MCCLURE

Despite concerns about unstable state funding, St. Paul will not increase its property tax levy in 2011. The city will levy \$94.6 million to help pay for budgets totaling \$584.6 million. The September 15 vote to approve the maximum levy was 5-2. Council President Kathy Lantry, Dan Bostrom, Melvin Carter II, Pat Harris and Dave Thune voted in support and Lee Helgen and Russ Stark voted in opposition.

Under state truth-in-taxation law, cities must set maximum levies by September 15. After that date the levy can be increased but not decreased.

The council also approved a Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) levy of \$3.178 million.

For the last several weeks council members and Mayor Chris Coleman had clashed over the need for a levy increase. Helgen, Stark, Lantry, Bostrom and Carter all expressed concerns that the city was setting itself up for mid-year budget cuts and more difficult choices in 2011, if no levy increase is built into the budget.

Coleman's 2011 city budget

was prepared with the assumption that the city will receive the \$62.5 million in Local Government Aid (LGA) it has been promised. But with a looming \$6 billion state budget deficit and the governor's office up for grabs November 2, there is uncertainty as to whether St. Paul and other cities will receive their promised allocations.

Prior to the vote Coleman indicated he would veto any levy increase. In a letter to the council, the mayor stated, "My call for a zero percent increase in the levy is not made pursuant to any political agenda. Rather, it is a reflection of the decisions we've made over the last several years and the challenges posed by continued economic struggles."

"Our residents are going through some difficult times - with recessionary pressure and uncertain economic conditions weighing heavily on their ability to meet their financial obligations," he continued. "It's something that I see every day as I travel through our community, and over the last four years I have heard their concerns on our approach to budgeting, specifically as it relates to our use of

the levy."

In his first years as mayor, Coleman's budget increased the property tax levy by 9 percent, 15 percent, 8 percent and 6 percent.

Coleman told the council that he did look at the possibility of state aid cuts, when preparing the 2011 budget. The city has had repeated LGA cuts in recent years, losing \$17 million in promised funds last year. But he weighed that against the levy increases placed on St. Paul property owners in recent years, along with the level of service the city could maintain with the resources it has. "I came to the conclusion that we would be able to maintain our current level of service without raising the levy - and that's what I chose to do," he said.

Stark and Helgen argued for a levy increase, saying it would provide flexibility next year if the state cuts the city's promised \$62.5 million Local Government Aid (LGA) allocation. They said the vote September 15 is for a maximum levy, which can be cut by year's end.

"I think the responsible thing to do is to try to make up

for a part of what we could lose," Stark said.

But council members couldn't agree on a percentage increase and Helgen's proposal for a 4 percent increase was withdrawn in the face of opposition from the rest of the council.

The lack of certainty about state aid frustrated council members. "All I know if that to some degree, we're going to be up a creek without a paddle," said Carter. "The question is, how far up the creek we are and how fast the current is."

Carter said any property tax levy increase is difficult to approve, with so many people struggling in a tough economy. "But the challenge we have is that the exact same family that's scraping together the money to pay property taxes is the same family that needs to use the library to do a job search and that relies on the Rec Check (an after-school recreation program) for their kids."

Lantry said the difficult in increasing the levy would be that even if LGA is cut, the city would be placed in the position of cutting services as it raises taxes. "That's a complicated message to

be sending," she said.

Harris and Thune have defended the zero percent levy increase, saying the city cannot ask property owners to pay more during tough times. Harris said the city needs to live within its means.

"We have to be cognizant of where this economy is right now," Harris said.

Helgen also tried unsuccessfully to increase the HRA levy by \$531,000, to provide increased funding for expanded job training, regional economic development activities. But that motion failed on a 1-6 vote. Helgen said the HRA is too reliant on spending a fund balance, which will be exhausted in four years if it is spent at the current rate. But other council members said they'd rather have a more detailed discussion of HRA and city Planning and Economic Development (PED) activities and staffing before increasing the levy. Thune said it's likely that PED, which provides staff for HRA projects, could be restructured in the future.

Council members are already discussing five percent budget cuts with city department heads. Lantry is blunt in noting that if LGA is cut, the city could be looking at closing recreation centers and libraries, and making other service cuts. One idea recently outlined by Parks and Recreation would mean reducing the city's number of recreation centers down from 23 to just one for each of St. Paul's 17 planning districts.

Departments are also being asked what capital purchases and other expenditures can be delayed until after the 2011 legislative session ends. "There's great anxiety about what could happen during the 2011 session and we need to discuss ways we can save before then," said Lantry.

YOGA

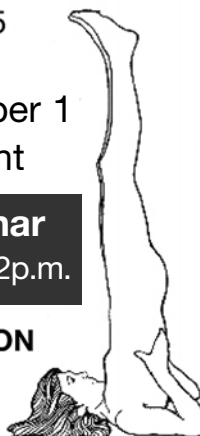
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City Council to determine fate of Kim Huoy Chor restaurant

By JANE MCCLURE

Filthy conditions including a cockroach infestation, rodent droppings and numerous food handling violations could close the doors for good at a University Avenue restaurant. The St. Paul City Council will decide October 13 on the fate of Kim Huoy Chor, 1664 University Av.

City licensing staff want the restaurant's license revoked immediately, saying it's one of the worst situations they have seen. City files and photos show numerous examples of dirty conditions and more than 40 code violations. But Kim Huoy Chor owner Vuthy Taing and his attorney, former council member Jay Benanav, asked the council for another chance. They said the restaurant has already been cleaned up and problems corrected.

The council postponed a decision Oct. 6 so that city inspections staff and Taing could meet and discuss possible conditions under which Kim Huoy Chor could stay open. That could include more frequent inspections, paid for by the owner. Assistant City Attorney Rachel Tierney said that while licensing staff and the City Attorney's Office could develop possible conditions, licensing staff may continue to recommend immediate revocation of the licenses.

Ward Two Council Member Dave Thune, acknowledged the severity of the violations, but

asked city staff to look at other options. He said the city should try to avoid closing a business if possible. Because there were only four council members present Oct. 6, Thune's request prevented council members Melvin Carter III, Kathy Lantry and Russ Stark from voting for license revocation. Council members Dan Bostrom, Pat Harris and Lee Helgen were absent. A minimum of four votes is needed for the council to act on the issue.



The St. Paul City Council will decide this week on the fate of Kim Huoy Chor, 1664 University Av. City licensing staff want the restaurant's license revoked immediately, saying it's one of the worst situations they have seen.

cil to act on the issue.

1644 University Av. is a building that dates from the 1950s. Longtime area residents might recall that it was the home of the original St. Paul Embers restaurant, and also the Embers chain corporate headquarters. Embers closed several years ago.

Other restaurants have operated in the building since then. Kim Huoy Chor began operations three years ago.

Pictures of dirty, rusty and greasy equipment, huge stacks of dirty dishes, rat droppings, cockroaches, and food improperly stored and prepared dismayed council members. Stark, whose Fourth Ward includes the restaurant, called the situation "very, very concerning." He also noted

should have taken it seriously two years ago." She and Carter questioned whether the restaurant could operate in a safe manner.

"This is a unique case," said Tierney. Licensing staff said the only comparable case was a fast-food restaurant 20 years ago. But that situation didn't have as many violations.

The city has never asked for a closure due to environmental health reasons, Tierney said. But the number of violations, combined with the severity and frequency of the offenses, leaves city licensing staff with no other option. Licensing staff members also question whether the restaurant owner can operate the business.

"We're not contesting the facts of the case," said restaurant attorney and former council member Jay Benanav. "This is obviously a serious, serious situation for the owner." But he called the recommendation sanctions a "death penalty" and said closing Kim Huoy Chor would put almost 30 people out of work. Benanav suggested the council impose the maximum penalty but stay it for six months, imposing it only if there are future violations.

Taing took over the restaurant in 2007. Kim Huoy Chor was fined \$825 in 2008 after 28 violations were found, and ordered to close. But the violations were corrected and the restaurant remained open. Last year the restaurant almost lost its licenses when its licensing fee check to the

city bounced.

The history of problems continued. Many of the complaints dealt with non-functioning equipment, and food stored at the wrong temperatures, with temperatures off in some cases by more than 20 degrees. Twice this year there have been complaints to the Minnesota Department of Health, claiming customers became ill after eating at Kim Huoy Chor.

Tierney listed a menu of violations including failure to maintain hot and old food at adequate temperatures, failure to store food properly, rodent droppings and other problems. The restaurant also has evidence of a cockroach infestation, with insects at all stages of the breeding cycle.

Benanav and Taing said new equipment has been purchased and many changes have been made to clean up the restaurant. After trying several exterminators, the cockroach infestation has been controlled. The menu was reduced from 143 items to 74. Restaurant hours were reduced to allow more time for cleaning each day. Staff members were fired and replaced. Taing blamed a disgruntled former employee for one of the complaints of food-borne illness, saying the person boasted of the complaint on Facebook.

But Taing also said he believes Kim Huoy Chor has served the community well, producing a petition of support with more than 500 signatures.

Restaurant

Continued from page 8

Haile and Kebede had a mutual friend and attended the same church, and soon became close friends themselves.

"We both are single mothers and have a lot in common," Haile said.

"We both love to help and have had businesses," Kebede

added.

The weather here was a big challenge for both of them, and Haile said she missed her home and family. "It's a different culture and a different environment," she said.

But the two have made the best of their environment, trying to develop their restaurant business as an example for other women.

"We want it to be a success so we can make a difference in others'

lives who have a dream," Kebede said. "We want to help any women, not just African women. We believe if you have a strong woman who is grounded, it will make a difference in the home, the community, the city and the state. Financial freedom is just one of the ways for a woman to be strong."

Kebede and Haile put in long hours in their new enterprise. They are open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Monday through Saturday and from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Sundays. They serve injera, Somali rice, gyros and pasta and offer an East African breakfast as well as American food.

"We're working on dessert," Haile said. Everything is cooked from scratch and everything is fresh. Their children and nieces and nephews help out in the restaurant. They have also had assistance with a website, technical

support and marketing.

"We want to thank everyone who has come to support us and who has come out to help us," Haile said.

Kebede, who has overcome so much hardship in her life, reflected on how far she has come.

"I have to say one thing," she said. "When we are open-minded and positive, we will see the kindness of people of every color and background."

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Como Park

Continued from page 9

"If they put a roundabout at Victoria, Maryland, and Wheelock right over by the east part of the lake, I feel that would help traffic around the park area," he said. "It could serve as another gateway to the lake area. That would be an interesting long-term recommendation."

Bolstad was also hoping for some more short-term resolutions that really focus on the shuttle.

"I want to make sure that there's a commitment to getting the shuttle better advertising and better maps as soon as possible," he said. "I was hoping for a plan that integrated Como bike paths to the rest of the St. Paul System. That wasn't addressed."

Betsy Wehrwein, a member of the District 10 Neighborhood Relations Committee who lives a block from the park, says when she moved to the neighborhood in 1994 neighbors were inundated by parking.

"People on Midway Parkway did not want more parking lots put in the park," she said. "They wanted to preserve the green space and historical aspects of the park."

Not seeing anything compelling about the TIP, Wehrwein believes the shuttle should have more time to be properly implemented before other recommendations are tried.

"Neighbors need permit parking," she said. "They're at wit's end. The park needs the shuttle, and people who come need to know they can count on it. I don't think people are aware of the shuttle. We need another year of really promoting the shuttle and lot. We need to see what the shuttle can do before we do other things to the park. After we get permit parking and establish the shuttle, let's study it some more and then revisit the plan."

Wehrwein feels building a parking ramp is not a good idea. Daily attendance peaks in the months of June, July, and August.

"A ramp is not compelling and is extremely expensive," she said. "It's not fiscally frugal right now. We should try to reduce our carbon footprint, not add to it. Do we want to add all these parking places for three months of the year?"

From the neighborhood point of view, Wehrwein believes people want to see something changed.

"We have Como Park," she

said. "It's a wonderful park that has historical significance. We need to be very careful with what we do and not screw it up. There's no plan for overall preservation of the historical aspects of the park."

On Oct. 14, the District 10 Neighborhood Relations Commit-

tee will renew the final recommendations made by Kimley-Horn and will draft an action item to support or not support the recommendations made. The action item will be taken to the full District 10 board and community.

Oct. 19 is the District 10 An-

nual Meeting, where there will be a community vote on the action item.

On Nov. 17, 2010, the City Council will meet to discuss the recommendations.

For the complete TIP, visit <http://tinyurl.com/comoparktip>

St. Paul Parks and Rec to unveil draft of new parks and rec plan

This past May and June, the Parks and Recreation Department hosted five community meetings. That was the very beginning of a planning process for the transformation of the parks and recreation system. Because we are in a time of economic, environmental, and demographic change, Saint Paul's parks and recreation system must also change. It is becoming increasingly difficult to pay for the facilities we have, and many of these facilities do not meet the needs of current park users.

At those spring meetings, participants were asked to consider what kind of park system they would want. They even had to make some of the same difficult financial decisions the Parks and Recreation Department and the City Council must make. Since those meetings, department staff and consulting landscape architects and architects have been considering every one of the city's recreational facilities - everything from rec center buildings to tennis courts to trails. They have a draft plan ready and would like to ask residents what they think so they can tweak the plan accordingly.

Anyone may attend any of five planned commu-

nity open houses. Attendees will be asked to comment on various aspects of the draft system plan. All the open houses will be held from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. The open house format means that attendees can come at any time and stay for as long as they like. There will be no formal presentation, but staff and consultants will be on hand to answer questions. The dates and locations for the open houses are:

November 3 - Hillcrest Recreation Center, 1978 Ford Parkway; November 8 - Phalen Recreation Center, 1000 East Wheelock Parkway; November 9 - Wellstone Community Center/El Rio Vista Recreation Center, 179 Robie Street East; November 15 - Oxford Community Center/Jimmy Lee Recreation Center, 270 Lexington Parkway North; November 18 - North Dale Recreation Center, 1414 St. Albans Street North.

The content will be the same at each of the meetings so community members can attend those that best meet their schedule and location. The plan may be tweaked based on input from these open houses, and a final Park and Recreation System Plan will be presented to the Saint Paul City Council for approval near the end of the year.

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Como Lake Curbside Cleanup planned October 16

Join your neighbors in a cleanup effort on October 16th and help battle the algae!

Did you know leaves, grass and dirt are a major source of phosphorus? When they fall on "impervious" surfaces (sidewalks, driveways, streets), these phosphorus sources wash down our storm sewers and into Como Lake and the Mississippi River. Excess phosphorus fuels the overgrowth of noxious algae blooms, which disrupt the lake's natural regulating system, harm aquatic life, and threaten downstream waterways.

According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, just 5 garbage bags of organic debris contain 1 pound of phosphorus, which can fuel as much as 1,000 pounds of algae!

On October 16th, the Como Lake Neighbor Network and several partnering organizations will conduct an organized Curbside Cleanup in neighborhood blocks east of Como Lake. They also invite all Como neighbors to cleanup the organic debris in front of their homes and then take the bags to the county yard waste site. By cleaning debris from our curbsides and clogged storm drains, we can prevent phosphorus pollution and help our beloved Como Lake and Mississippi River.

Help count the bags to tally the phosphorus prevented! CLNN also is asking Como neighbors to count how many bags of curbside debris they fill so we can calculate pounds of phosphorus and algae prevented by the Como community. You can report your bags online at Just click the "Community Clean-Ups" button, then Click the "share your results" link.

Together our community CAN make a difference for our precious water resources! For more details go to

Classifieds

Monitor Want Ads are now \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, Iris Park Place, 1885 University Avenue, Ste. #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. Classifieds must be prepaid via cash, check, or credit card. Classified ads can be e-mailed to denisw@aplacetoremember.com. Want ads must be in the Monitor before November 1 for the November 11 issue. Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at www.MonitorSaintPaul.com

APPRAISAL PARTIES

Entertain-have fun. Raise money for your charity. Bring favorite collectibles. For information, call Shannon 612-729-5910. 11-10

Correction

Last month's feature story about lyre-playing author Marianne Dietzel mentioned several places where readers could find copies of her book *Laughing in a Waterfall*, but misidentified one of the bookstores. Her book can be found at Micawber's at 2238 Carter Avenue in St. Anthony Park and Common Good Books at 165 Western Avenue North.

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Classifieds

Continued from page 15

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Como Zoo welcomes two more giraffes



On the heels (or hooves) of baby Howie's birth on August 3rd to mother Daisy, Clover, the other female giraffe at Como Zoo, gave birth to a female on September 20th. But that's not all. Como Zoo also welcomed Skeeter, a 1 year, 3 month old male from the Jacksonville Zoo into its herd in the past month. Within 48 days, Como Zoo went from two to five giraffes. The honor of naming the new baby female giraffe will go to the nearly 20,000 Facebook fans of Como Park Zoo & Conservatory. Five names will be presented to Facebook fans and they will have the opportunity to vote for their favorite. The five names are: Lance, Cordell, Jahari Jr. (JJ), Serengetti & Skinny. Voting ends Friday, October 22nd at noon Central Time.

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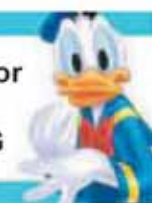
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PUBLIC EVENTS offered at Hamline University in October

Hanna Lectures, October 13-14

Professor Robert Holmes of the University of Rochester will deliver the 27th annual Hanna Lectures at Hamline University. Holmes is the author of *On War and Morality* and *Basic Moral Philosophy* and coeditor of *Nonviolence in Theory and Practice*. The Paul Robert and Jean Shuman Hanna Lectureship in Philosophy was created in 1982 to bring a distinguished teacher and scholar in philosophy, of national or international reputation, to Hamline each year.

The first talk, "Gandhian Nonviolence and its Relevance Today," is Wednesday, October 13 at 7:30 p.m. The second talk, "Affirmative Action or Reparations? How to Deal with Social Inequality," is Thursday, October 14 at 11:30 a.m.

Date: Wednesday, October 13, 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, October 14 at 11:30 a.m.

Location: Both lectures take place at Sundin Music Hall, 1531 Hewitt Avenue

Cost: Free and open to all; no RSVP needed.

Second District Court Judicial Candidates Forum, October 18

Watch Second District Court candidates Gloria Bogen, Mark Ireland, Connie Iversen, and William Leary participate in a forum on Hamline University's Saint Paul campus. Hamline School of Business Professor David Schultz will moderate. The event is cosponsored by the Ramsey County Bar Association, the Saint Paul League of Women Voters, and Hamline University School of Law.

Location: Annette K. Levine Moot Court Room, Hamline University School of Law, 1492 Hewitt Avenue

Cost: Free and open to all

For additional information, contact: Cheryl Dalby at 651-222-0846.

Conflict Resolution Day Event: "Conflict Resolution within a Chaotic Reality," October 19

Hamline University School of Law, the Jerusalem Program, and Conflict Resolution Minnesota will cosponsor an event focusing on the dynamic nature of international conflict resolution. From his experience involving multiple challenges of crisis and conflicts, internationally recognized conflict resolution expert Michael Tsur will share the tools and approaches he uses to resolve conflicts—tools that are suitable to many other locations and disciplines throughout the world.

Date: Tuesday, October 19, 6-7:30 p.m.

Location: Hamline University School of Law, room 103, 1492 Hewitt Avenue

Cost: Free and open to all, no RSVP needed.



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