

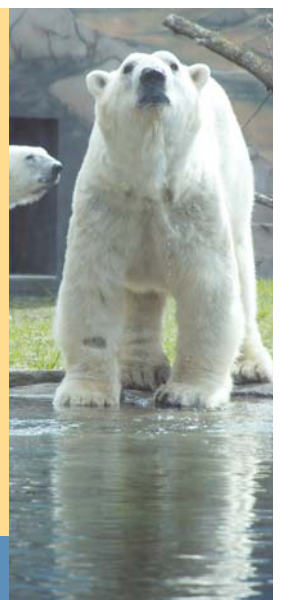


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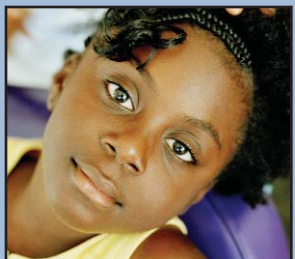
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Passion for job guides new St. Paul Superintendent Silva

By JAN WILLMS

Arriving in a new country with little money and not knowing the language is difficult for anyone. But for Valeria Silva, 48, it was a starting point. In a little over 25 years, since she left Santiago, Chile, she has gained the education and experience that has resulted in her being selected as the superintendent of Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS).

As Silva looks back on her own progress since she came to this country, she credits her parents for the tenacity and determination she needed to accomplish her goals. She also is keenly aware of her roots and where she came from. She knows her family deserves recognition for influencing where she is today.

"My dad died three years ago," she noted. "But he would tell me 'If you are going to do something, you have to do it 120 per cent. You have to have a passion for it.'"

"My mom is still alive, and I talk to her about three times a week," Silva continued. Her mother resides in Chile and does not speak English.

"I am not sure if she understands the magnitude of this job, but I send her pictures of me with the students. She did watch my interviews for the superintendent's position on the Internet," Silva said.

Silva said her mom did not complete 10th grade because she had to go to work.

"I am the baby of the family," she said. "I accomplished this for her," she added, referring to her job leading SPPS.

Silva graduated from the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and began her teaching career in Santiago. She continued her education at St. Cloud State and the University of Minnesota.

She most recently served as the chief academic officer in SPPS. Before that she was the director of the English Language Learner (ELL) programs, principal at Dayton's Bluff Elementary and Adams Spanish Immersion schools and coordinator of the district's Spanish Immersion Program/Curriculum. She also worked as a specialist for standards and accommodation in the Minnesota Department of Education. She began her career with SPPS as a teacher.

Silva considers her back-



In a little over 25 years, since she left Santiago, Chile, Valeria Silva has gained the education and experience that has resulted in her being selected as the superintendent of Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS).

ground in ELL and Spanish Immersion to be a plus in her new position.

"I think, first of all, in my country having two languages is almost a necessity," she said. "Knowing English in many parts of the world is essential, and I came to the United States to learn English."

Silva's life experiences have guided her approach and style as a superintendent. While her welcoming smile makes her approachable as a person, her intellectual curiosity pushes her to be

of the most amazing countries in the world, I found many people spoke only one language," she said. "Why not learn another language early in life? Research shows that by learning one language, you learn another faster."

"I know what it's like to have to learn a second language," Silva said. "I was in the same situation."

She said the world is changing in how people are encouraged to retain their native language while beginning to embark on learning another.

"I know what it's like to have to learn a second language. I was in the same situation."

- St. Paul Superintendent Valeria Silva

tenacious in solving academic problems.

One of these is the challenge of a language barrier. However, in a district that is comprised of 22 per cent students who do not have English as their native language, Silva is not asking them to do anything she did not do herself 25 years ago.

"When I came here, to one

"People who came here in the 1940s and 50s and 60s did not allow their kids to speak their native language." She said the trend now is to keep your language and speak another as well.

Silva said that education and the economy and a lot of other factors have made this a totally different world.

Silva said the choice of St. Paul to select someone locally, who has been in the public school system for many years, can affect the Superintendent's efficiency. Of the three finalists, she was the only candidate who came from within the SPPS system.

"If you come to a new city and a new school district you have to learn about it," she said. "It takes a year to learn a new school system."

She said someone chosen from another locality may have experience, but every district has its own culture.

"Our learning curve will be faster," she said, regarding being hired from within SPPS.

"SPPS has given me a chance to work at many different levels," she added. "What I have done is the result of hard work and experience. If it doesn't work, it's because I can't make it work."

Silva, who is known for being a hands-on type of administrator, said she believes this effort will serve her well.

"I think one of the strengths I have is that I have been all over the (SPPS) organization," she said. "I have been given an opportunity to find what it is to be a teacher, and an assistant principal. I have that emotional sense, and I like that."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

monitor

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Monitor in a Minute

Wilder building is sold

A longtime Snelling Avenue apartment building will continue to provide housing for low-income residents, but not under the auspices of Wilder Foundation. The St. Paul City Council, acting as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Board, signed off on the sale of Wilder Apartments at 545 N. Snelling Av. and American House in downtown St. Paul. Wilder is selling the properties to Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation from Minneapolis. The HRA has loaned Wilder money to improve the two buildings and the new owners will assume that debt and make needed improvements to the Snelling Avenue building.

Wilder Foundation's board decided last fall to sell most of their affordable housing to other providers. The Wilder Apartments and American House are single-room occupancy buildings. A request for proposals to sell; the properties was issued last fall.

Over the last six years, Plymouth has acquired eight developments in Minneapolis constituting 119 rental units of which 100 have been rehabilitated. Plymouth's developments serve a variety of tenants including homeless families, low income students pursuing nursing degrees from Minneapolis Community and Technical College, and limited equity cooperatives.

The Snelling Avenue building is 90 years old and was a hotel many years ago. Wilder has owned it since 1986. The building has 76 units. Rents range from about \$210 - \$290 per month.

The building has not had substantial improvements for many years; Plymouth plans to

make property improvements in the future. Last year the city awarded Wilder \$501,130 to renovate the Wilder Apartments, as part of a larger project with additional state and federal funds. Plymouth will now take on this project.

New Crossroads playground is funded

Crossroads Elementary School, which lost its new school playground to fire last year, will be getting a replacement. The St. Paul City Council April 7 approved an allocation of up to \$25,000 toward the project, through the Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) year-Round Program. The program provides grants and loans to projects outside of the annual small grant and large grant and loan cycles. Proceeds for the program come from a half-cent sales tax paid on most purchases in the city.

The school is on Front Avenue in the North End, near the Como-Dale-Front intersection. Its playground was heavily used by students as well as children in the community, before it was extensively damaged by fire last year. The fire was intentionally set.

Since the fire students, parents and community members have worked to raise money for a replacement playground.

Bike/walk hearing set

A public hearing on the Central Corridor Bike/Walk Action Plan is set for 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 21 at City Hall. The plan has been developed over the past several months by city staff from Planning and Economic Development, Public Works and Parks and recreation. Its preparation included community meetings

and a community survey which almost 300 people took part in.

The plan calls for a number of bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the neighborhoods around University Avenue and the planned Central Corridor light rail project. The plan not only proposes improved connections to the light rail service, it also is meant to outline proposed improvements for people traveling through the neighborhoods around the Central Corridor. One complaint about the area is that bicycle commuters don't have a lot of options when passing through the area, both east-west and north-south.

One potentially controversial point about the plan is that it doesn't call for any specific bicycle improvements on University Avenue itself. Bicyclists will continue to be able to travel with motor vehicle traffic on University after light rail is built but there won't be special bike lanes or improvements for them. That has generated some protests from bicyclists who want to use University.

However, in the plan survey responses recreational bicyclists' issues greatly outweighed those of bicycle commuters.

The plan was developed with the assistance of funding and technical support from Bike Walk Twin Cities and Transit for Livable Communities. The plan is available on the city's Web site.

City, County approve broadband

Like many other communities, St. Paul and Ramsey County have thrown their hats into the ring for a Google Fiber-to-the-Home project. The St. Paul City Council approved the application March 24; the Ramsey

County Board took a similar action earlier in March.

St. Paul is applying as part of the Ramsey Broadband Coalition (RBC), which is made up of the county and other cities in Ramsey County.

City officials have been looking at ways to address what is called a "digital divide" since a 2005 consultants' report outlining the city's broadband technology needs. That led to the appointment of a citizen advisory committee, which made several recommendations on ownership and technology strategies to provide broadband access city-wide. One of the committee's recommendations was to create a partnership of public institutions and build the core of the community fiber network. Another was to leverage the community fiber network to facilitate the construction of an open access fiber network throughout St. Paul.

This February Google announced that it plans to launch an experiment to test 29 ultra-high speed broadband fiber-to-the-home networks, with trial locations in one or more communities in size between 50,000 to 500,000 in population. Communities needed to apply by March 26.

In the chosen communities Google would provide ultra-high-speed broadband networks that would deliver Internet speeds more than 100 times faster than usual. Many communities, including Dakota County, have sought the service, not just for residents but as an economic development tool.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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Students and other supporters of St. Bernard's staged a rally recently to call attention to their campaign to save the school.

St. Bernard's High slated to close; grassroots campaign keeps the faith that school can still be saved

By ELIZABETH MCLISTER

"I got so much on my mind / school is closing/ I'm trying to keep flowing but man / we're running out of time / not to mention we've gotta leave so much behind/ no matter what happens it will always be mine."

These words were lifted from "Bulldog Spirit", an anthem penned, performed, and recorded by St. Bernard's students Andy Broadnax and Steve Quam. Broadnax, Quam, and 196 other students are coping in their own ways with news that their high school has been slated to shut down this year.

Current students aren't the only people grieving. St. Bernard's left an imprint on the lives of many alumni as well. Emily Korf's response to the loss is personal. "I feel if St. Bernard's closes I will lose a piece of my family history." Korf's great-grandmother, mother, aunts, uncles, and cousins all attended the school at different points in time. She insists that her deep roots are not unusual - "Our family is not the exception, we are the norm!"

Weeks have passed since the Archdiocese's February 16th announcement that St. Bernard's will close its doors for good at the end of the academic year. Archbishop Nienstedt and St. Bernard's pastor Mike Anderson have blamed the decision on debilitating financial troubles. In a letter posted to St. Bernard's official website, Father Anderson lamented, "[Many] challenges have added up to an insurmountable reality that contributes to closing our high school."

The blow comes less than a year after St. Bernard's grade school closed last spring. The elementary school had become a fixture in the North End since it was forged 119 years ago by the Sisters of Benedictine. School advocates hoped that the high school (founded in 1957) would continue to be an anchor in the community, but even without expenses being funneled toward the grade school the parish still struggled to make ends meet.

Financial issues have afflicted St. Bernard's parish and schools for years. Debts were influenced by a constellation of factors, including a high student demand for financial aid; fewer contributions from valued donors; changing demographics; and declining enrollment on the whole.

St. Bernard's High School reported a \$350,000 shortfall for the 2009-2010 school year and a projected deficit of \$279,000 for next year. Total indebtedness to the Archdiocese is somewhere in the vicinity of 3.7 million dollars; tack on an additional \$800,000 loan for the grade school (also owed to the Archdiocese), and St. Bernard's total deficit reaches \$4.5 million plus operating costs. It was with this daunting figure in mind that the School Board approached the Archbishop with the request to close.

As far as Archdiocese communications director Dennis McGrath is concerned, the status of St. Bernard's has remained virtually the same since bad news broke in February. But the recent activity of "Save Our School"

("S.O.S."), a massive grassroots fundraising effort, suggests that a glimmer of hope still exists.

In the days following the Archdiocese's mid-February announcement, a volunteer movement of business owners, family, alumni, and friends mobilized to rescue Saint Bernard's. S.O.S. set out to generate \$1.5 million by April 1 and by that date the group's exhaustive drive had raised \$873,510 in pledges.

A successful phone campaign reached out to all 5,650 St. Bernard's alumni, a March 14 rally on Rice Street attracted 300 people, and an array of media tactics have been employed to bring in donations from the North End community and beyond. Students have chipped in too, hosting an all-night bowl-a-thon and participating in out-of-uniform day to amass funds.

Last month the S.O.S. fundraising committee said it would bow out gracefully if it didn't foresee mustering its original goal of \$1.5 million. So far the movement hasn't wavered. S.O.S. is closing in on \$1 million but they say they already have enough money to cover the budget deficit for the first two years that St. Bernard's would be back in business.

S.O.S. co-chair Ron Rud maintains, "If we can get the thumbs up, we will continue our pledge drive until we hit the \$1.5M, which covers us through the four years, the number of years we feel we need to implement the new plan and turn the school around for long term sustainability." Given the chance, S.O.S. hopes to present the Archdiocese with a detailed sustainability model then secure approval for the 2010/2011 school year.

Dennis McGrath is skeptical. He says he can discern more than one loophole in the grassroots effort. In the first place, he says in his experience pledges don't always equate to money in the bank - and St. Bernard's desperately needs money. Secondly, he says even \$1.5 million is still a small sum compared to an overarching debt of \$4.5 million. Furthermore, McGrath says, "God love their effort but you cannot operate an institution with a student body of just 198."

School supporters hoped that the promise of an International Baccalaureate program (St. Bernard's would be the first Catholic high school in the Twin Cities to offer one) would bolster

its current enrollment. Grassroots advocates say that an I.B. program still holds potential for reeling in new students, including kids from outside the North End. Rud says, "As an I.B. school, our demand has started to and will continue to reach far beyond the borders of the neighborhood."

McGrath's math is sound but he concedes that he has not viewed S.O.S.'s comprehensive Five Year Strategic Plan Proposal. S.O.S. insists it is committed to providing a viable and thorough business model to ensure St. Bernard's continued success for at least another four years. Volunteers are currently on version

14 of a strategy that includes an action plan for generating revenue and a blow-by-blow timeline for the first year back. In the words of Saint Bernard's parent Patti Rud, "There is a very complete and thorough process taking place well beyond figuring out the money issue."

Money may not be the sole issue under consideration but S.O.S. acknowledges that it is a critical one. Volunteer and parent George Niece says that realistically, the school still needs up to five million dollars in order to rescind the request to stay open.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



S.O.S. is closing in on \$1 million but they say they already have enough money to cover the budget deficit for the first two years that St. Bernard's would be back in business.

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Urban farm supply store comes to Selby Avenue

By JANE MCCLURE

A Selby Avenue building will become an urban farm supply store, tapping into a growing movement for city dwellers to grow their foods and even raise their own chickens. Egg/Plant Urban Farm Supply will open soon at 1771 Selby. The St. Paul Planning Commission granted the conditional use permit for the property March 26. The Planning Commission is final unless an appeal is filed with the St. Paul City Council within 10 days.

The Planning Commission Zoning Committee unanimously recommended approval of the conditional use permit March 18.

Egg/Plant Urban Farm Supply is planning to tap into what is becoming a nationwide urban farming and backyard food production movement, as people plant vegetable and herb gardens, and backyard orchards.

Store owners Audrey Matson and Robert Lies want to sell seasonal "kitchen garden" plants at the property, along with supplies for backyard food production. Although the main floor of the building has been a retail use since it was built almost a century ago, all garden centers in St. Paul are required to have conditional use permits.

Matson and Lies are Hamline-Midway residents, involved with community gardening and urban chicken-keeping groups in their neighborhood. She is also a 4-H leader.

City staff recommended ap-



Audrey Matson, part-owner of the newly opened Eggplant Urban Farm and Supply at 1771 Selby Ave., which provides city dwellers with the supplies to grow produce right in their own backyard. (Photo by Andrew Fossbinder)

proval of the conditional use permit, and asked the Planning Commission to modify one condition on the property. City

Planner Anton Jerve said that zoning lots where garden centers are to be located are required to be on lots of at least

20,000 square feet. The Selby Avenue property is only 4,366 square feet in size.

But Jerve said the garden

center request meets other conditions. The sale of plants will be an accessory use to the main store. The sales will be located at the rear of the building, in a fenced area.

The store is consistent with the Selby-Snelling Small Area Plan and with the Merriam Park Community Plan. Both plans call for attracting new businesses that serve local residents and maintaining the mix of commercial and residential development along Selby Avenue. No one appeared at the public hearing to speak against the permit. Three letters were received in support, including a letter from Union Park District Council.

The outdoor sales will be of live plants, April through October. Plants won't be grown on-site. Plans call for selling plants, containers, bagged mulch and soil, and garden décor.

"Not having the ability to have outdoor sales would restrict potential sales volume," said Jerve.

Matson said she and Lies were surprised to learn that they would need a garden center permit to sell plants, and that the permits are typically issued for such large properties. The business has received a nursery dealer license.

"We don't think of our business as a garden center," she said. Matson does have previous garden center experience, working most recently as manager of Hermes Garden Center on Lar-penteur Avenue. But the plan for Egg/Plant Urban Farm Supply is of a smaller scale, meant to help area residents who are interested in raising vegetables and fruits in small backyard or "kitchen" gardens.

"2009 is also the year that 'locavore' entered the national lexicon, referring to people who try to eat only locally grown produce and food," Matson said in a presentation to the Zoning Committee. "The Twin Cities market has seen an increase in the number of restaurants that serve locally sourced foods, as well as some delis and food shops."

"It doesn't get any more local than your own backyard," she added.

The store will be a combination garden center, hardware store, bookstore and gift shop. Along with the plants sold outside during the growing season, Egg/Plant will also sell seeds, growing supplies, fertilizers, soil, garden tools, books and canning and preserving equipment. Classes are planned as well as a garden plant pot recycling program.

The store will also carry supplies for people who raise chickens and bees. Having more than three chickens in St. Paul requires a city permit and permission from surrounding neighbors. Home owners cannot own roosters. Nor can they sell eggs without a permit. Keeping a backyard bee hive also requires a permit from the city.

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Central Corridor releases construction schedule on University

By JANE MCCLURE

Business owners, landlords and residents along the planned Central Corridor light rail line now know when construction will take place. Announcement of the project construction schedule for 2010 and beyond has set off a flurry of planning. University Avenue Business Association (UABA) hosts a meeting at 8 a.m. Thursday, April 15 at Model Cities Brownstone, University and Victoria, to review construction details with Central Corridor project staff.

Business owners got a general schedule but want more details, said UABA President Jack McCann. "People need the hand-holding and explanation of what's going to happen in front of their properties." While getting a general schedule is welcome news, "it still doesn't carry a lot of weight until you see a map and diagrams."

Business owners have sought information on construction schedules for more than a year, saying they need time to plan for light rail work. University Avenue will lose about 85 percent of its on-street parking to the light rail project. While the current schedule doesn't include specifically when a block in front of business will be torn up, McCann said it does give people a general idea of what will happen.

The intent is for light rail trains to be running on Central Corridor in 2014. Central Corridor will connect downtown St. Paul to downtown Minneapolis and the Hiawatha light rail line. Project staff and Metropolitan Council, which is in charge of the project, are awaiting Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) approval this spring to cover half of the project costs. State and county funds will cover the rest, through what is called a Full Funding Grant Agreement.

Construction in downtown St. Paul got underway last year and continues through November on Fourth Street. Work gets underway later this year near the state office campus, state capitol and Interstate 94. The Robert-Cedar Street stretch will be built between August and November 2010. Work on Cedar Street, where special equipment is being installed to allay noise and vibration concerns, takes place between June 2011 and November 2012. Minnesota Public radio, which is on Cedar, has filed a legal challenge to the project, saying its concerns haven't been met. The floating slab equipment

being installed is also meant to protect two nearby historic churches, Central Presbyterian Church and the Church of St. Louis. But MPR and Metropolitan Council disagree on what type of equipment should be used.

University Avenue west of Hamline Avenue will be the focus of construction in 2011. Work will take place from Emerald Street, the west city boundary, to Hamline between March and November 2011.

East of Hamline, University Avenue businesses will feel the brunt of construction in 2012. Work

streetscape improvement plan approved earlier this year by the St. Paul City Council, which will be paid for through tax increment financing, city capital improvement bonds and assessments against property owners.

Bids for the Civil West or western part of the line, the planned Lowertown operations and maintenance facility and other parts of the project will be sought starting this spring.

The plans were unveiled March 10 at a Corridor Management Committee meeting. The intent is to try to minimize the construction impacts and not tear up University from sidewalk to sidewalk, so that some traffic and buses can get through.

No sidewalk is to be closed for more than 15 days. Storefronts and business driveways are to be accessible at all times.

No area will be under major construction for more than 150 consecutive days. Notice of work will go out 30 days before the shovels go into the ground.

Elected officials and Metropolitan Council Chairman Peter Bell hailed the schedule's release as an important milestone for the project. Nancy Homans, who has led Mayor Chris Coleman's administration's work on the project, said the schedule release is welcome news as it gives businesses time to plan.

The Minneapolis construction schedule hasn't been released yet, although some work is expected to start this year. Metropolitan Council and University of Minnesota officials are still quarreling over how to build light rail along Washington Avenue through the east bank campus. University officials fear that light rail vibrations and electromagnetic interference could impact research equipment in nearby buildings.

But the high-profile disagreement with the University of Minnesota continues to threaten Central Corridor, with any potential delays likely to further drive up project costs. Bell said he is "increasingly pessimistic" that agreement can be reached with the university. He and U of M Vice President for University Services Kathleen O'Brien clashed over the U's refusal to sign off on easements needed for the project. The Metropolitan Council, university and other project representatives met in March in a closed session to see if project details could be hammered out. Those talks are ongoing.



will take place between Hamline and Robert Street from March 2012 to November 2012.

In March St. Paul city staff began reviewing site plans for signal equipment and power station installations along the line. Those site plans are expected to be approved by staff later this spring.

Major work on Central Corridor is divided by area and by the type of work on the \$957 million project. Bids for the St. Paul section or Civil East, were advertised in early March and will be opened and awarded June 23. Civil East has an estimated cost of \$231.9 million. It is the largest part of the project, with about seven miles of track, construction of 14 stations, bridge modifications at Highway 280 and Interstate 94, utility relocation, demolition of the former Bremer bank building downtown and reconstruction of the streets. The Bremer building will be torn down and rail built between April to November 2011. The building's demolition will mean the loss of a skyway over Cedar for a time but plans do call for an interim connection to be built by late 2011.

The construction will also include the controversial

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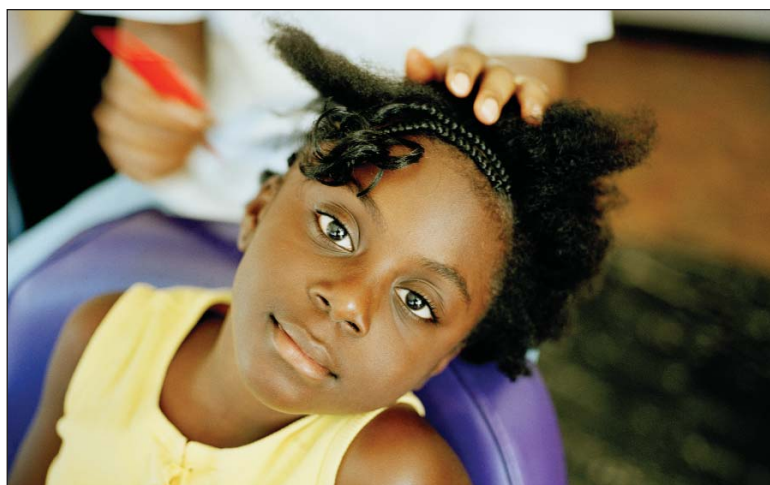
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Wing Young Huie documents a changing America



Internationally acclaimed photographer Wing Young Huie spent three years chronicling the colliding and evolving American experience on University Avenue, a jammed stretch of storefronts, taverns, big-box retailers, blue-collar neighborhoods and condominium communities.

Few cities in America are feeling the cultural changes of urban immigration as rapidly and intensely as Minnesota's capital of St. Paul.

Over the past 20 years, a dizzying diversity of new arrivals has transformed this formerly sleepy, predominantly Irish, German and Scandinavian city. New arrivals include Somalis, Mexicans,

African-Americans and one of the largest contingents of urban Hmong in the United States.

The pulse of this change beats strongest along University Avenue, a six-mile thoroughfare that connects the University of Minnesota campus with the state Capitol complex.

Internationally acclaimed

photographer Wing Young Huie spent three years chronicling the colliding and evolving American experience on University Avenue, a jammed stretch of storefronts, taverns, big-box retailers, blue-collar neighborhoods and condominium communities.

The result, "The University Avenue Project," will open May 1 as a

gallery of 500 photographs exhibited in store windows and on buildings along the six miles of University Avenue between the Minneapolis border and the state Capitol. At the center of the project is a spectacular installation site where images will be projected nightly on billboard-size screens, accompanied by recorded soundtracks from

local musicians and monthly live performances.

Blending documentary photography with revelatory statements by his subjects, Wing has created a tapestry of words and images raising complex issues of race, class, gender, sexual preference, immigration, religion and cultural disconnection.

Presented by Public Art Saint Paul, the exhibition will run through Oct. 31.

Wing's subjects responded to one of several questions, including:

- What are you?
- How do you think others see you?
- What advice would you give a stranger?
- How has race affected you?

Their answers, chalked on blackboards, reveal the hopes, dreams and fears of Americans new and old, all striving to make their way in a complex, vital urban community.

"This is not only a six-mile public art exhibition," Wing said. "This is a six-mile classroom that explores the changing cultural landscape of urban life in St. Paul."

Thousands of students from kindergarten through college will engage with the project. Working with a team of educational advisers, University Avenue Project organizers have developed a range of educational activities for use in schools and universities.

The entire project also will be published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press as an affordable, magazine-like book in two volumes during 2010. The first volume, available on May 1, gives an in-depth look at the exhibit itself. The second volume, available in August, will focus on the interaction of viewers with the exhibit during its run.

Unprecedented in its scope and ambition, the University Avenue Project and its subjects carry messages for every community in a rapidly changing America.

This project stands as a testament to the value of art that engages and inspires community connection and reflection. We invite you to share the messages of this exciting and important public art project with your audience.

For more information, visit www.theuniversityavenueproject.com



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FOR BUSINESS

Rice Street rezoning denied for Ace Auto Parts

By JANE MCCLURE

Without a specific plan for a small property at Rice and Sycamore streets, Ace Auto Parts cannot rezone the property. The St. Paul City Council voted unanimously April 7 to deny a request to rezone 780 Rice St. from commercial to industrial use.

Instead, council members want Ace Auto Parts to rezone the site to vehicular parking use. That will require a return trip to the city's Planning Commission and City Council. Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen said the council would ask that the new zoning application fee, which is about \$1,000, be waived.

A small Dairy Queen has stood for more than 50 years at the southeast corner of Rice and Sycamore. That business has closed and Ace Auto Parts bought the property. But Ace Auto Parts owner Marcus Weyandt has indicated that the property could have different uses, either by renting out the building or clearing the site for parking. Ace is also in the process of applying for a city license to sell used vehicles.

"I'm asking you to just help me out here," Weyandt said. His family has owned Ace since the 1960s.

Ace Auto Parts has been at its location since 1929 and has expanded after a devastating fire five years ago. The business employs 30 people and contributes a lot to the community, doing everything from providing jobs to allowing neighbors to use the

property for overnight parking during snow emergencies.

"Our business has just been growing and growing," Weyandt said. He said the space is needed. Weyandt also pointed out that Ace does a lot to keep its property looking good, with landscaping and building upkeep.

Paul Kamp, owner of Kamp's Food Market, said the North End Business Association and many other business owners support the rezoning request. Kamp said the rezoning would allow Ace to continue to grow and provide good-paying jobs that benefit the entire neighborhood.

Opponents agree that Ace has done a lot for the North End community, said District 6 Planning Council Executive Director Kerry Antrim. But there is concern about a lack of a plan for 780 Rice St. Rezoning to industrial and leaving the building in place could open the property to uses including a check cashing business, which some neighbors don't want. There are also objections to a used vehicle sales lot on Rice Street, given problems with other lots and their upkeep. District 6 opposes the rezoning.

Existing neighborhood plans call the corner a gateway and urge that there be no more industrially zoned property along Rice Street. District 6 has cited those plans in its opposition to the rezoning request.

Helgen also said those plans have to be considered. The North End-South Como District 6 Plan and land use plans for Rice Street



Without a specific plan for a small property at Rice and Sycamore streets, Ace Auto Parts cannot rezone the property. The St. Paul City Council voted unanimously April 7 to deny a request to rezone 780 Rice St. from commercial to industrial use.

describe the corner as part of a "gateway" area. The property is in an area with a mix of land uses including industrial, commercial and residential nearby. There have been issues with land uses as well as traffic and vehicle access to properties in the area.

The vehicular parking zoning classification is the only one in St. Paul where a property owner has to file a site plan with the rezoning request. Helgen said that would ensure that the parcel be used for parking and be attractively landscaped.

The uncertainty over industrial zoning and worries about future land use are other concerns the council member cited. "It would have been better if Ace had worked with the neighborhood," Helgen said.

"If there is a nice site plan for parking use I'd be comfortable with that," said Helgen. But unless there is a clear and know use for the old building, he'd rather see it torn down.

City staff had recommended approval of the rezoning request. In March the Planning Commis-

sion narrowly recommended against rezoning the property, after the commission's Zoning Committee split 3-3 on a vote to approve the zoning change.

The rezoning and use of the parcel would add about 25 parking spaces, more if the building is torn down. Ace Auto Parts wouldn't change the site access, Weyandt said, which includes a driveway on Rice and a driveway on Sycamore.

One recommendation from the Rice Street plan is that industrial uses not be expanded

Hamline Midway Library offers wide variety of programs

Hamline Midway Library has a wide variety of cultural and educational programs in April—there is sure to be something of interest for everyone!

Join The Friends of Saint Paul Public Library and the University of St. Thomas Irish Studies Department on April 19 at 7 p.m. for a Writers in Conversation event with the visiting O'Shaughnessy Award recipient Theo Dorgan and local poet Sharon Chmielarz (The Rhubarb King, The Other Mozart).

Regular storytimes are offered every Friday at 10:30 a.m.

Anusara Yoga blends the precision of universal principles of alignment with a deep connection to the heart. Join instructor Chris Gordon for this free class Tuesdays from 10:30 to 11:30. Please bring a yoga mat and a firm blanket (Mexican style or a wool yoga blanket) and wear comfortable

clothing that stretches.

Learn basic skills for using a computer, such as how to use a mouse and keyboard, create and save documents, how to use the internet and set up your own email account. This is a four part class that meets April 8, 15, 22, and 29 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Participants must pre-register.

Call to register your child for an opportunity to read with dog and human team in a relaxed, fun environment on April 10 from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

April is poetry month! Join the Saturday Club on April 17th from 1:30 to 3:30 to engage in poetry making for writers and pre-writers. All children are welcome.

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 pre-registration. All events are free.

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District 6 finds new home on Front Avenue

By JANE MCCLURE

A former North End corner store will become the new home of the District 6 (North End-South Como) Planning Council. The St. Paul Planning Commission unanimously approved re-establishment of a nonconforming use at 171 Front Av. March 26. The Planning Commission decision is final as it was not appealed to the St. Paul City Council in 10 days.

In March District 6 also received assistance from the City Council, acting as the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) Board, to purchase the building. The district council will receive a \$47,000 loan from the city to purchase the property, the same amount the city paid to acquire the building. The loan is forgivable and will be repaid if and when the building is sold.

District 6 has also received \$35,000 in Neighborhood Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) dollars to rehabilitate the property.

The purchase allows District 6 to move out of rented space on Front Avenue, once renovation of the building is completed. It is also meant to revitalize a building that is in the Invest St. Paul program area. Invest St. Paul is a program that targets neighborhoods where foreclosures, vacant and blighted properties have caused problems in recent years. The building District 6 is purchasing has sat vacant for more than two years. The city purchased the property two years ago from a bank.

The two-story brick building housed a grocery store and corner

store over the years; one of the old painted grocery advertisements is still visible on one side of the building. The building had been used most recently as residential rental space on its first and second floors. But the property has sat vacant for many months. A few years ago a stamp company had looked at rezoning the property from residential to commercial and purchasing the building, but those plans fell through.

The building has been on the city's registered vacant building list and is in poor condition. Much of the past renovation work has not held up well and needs to be redone.

The property is zoned for multi-family residential use but will no longer have residential tenants. The Planning Commission decision allows for the office use again.

District 6 Community Organizer Kerry Antrim said that purchasing and renovating the old building is not only a way to provide a permanent space for District 6, it also is a way to restore and reuse an older, historic building. "We hope this is a catalyst for improvements to other properties in the area," she said.

Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen said he, too, hopes the purchase and building renovation will give the area a boost. The building is just one block west of the Rice-Front intersection.

One challenge District 6 has had is finding a permanent, accessible space for its offices and its meetings. Earlier this year board



A former North End corner store at 171 Front Avenue will become the new home of the District 6 (North End-South Como) Planning Council. (Photos by Andrew Fossbinder)

meetings were moved to North End Elementary School at the invitation of school administration.

Most district councils in St. Paul are in rented space. Several are in city-owned buildings, including Hamline-Midway Coalition, Como Community Council and Thomas-Dale Community Council. A few, including Union Park District Council, rent commercial space. For many years District 6 was in North End Multi-Service Center, moving in the early 1990s to rented space on Dale Street.

Only two St. Paul district councils, District 6 and District 9 (West Seventh/Fort Road Federation) own buildings. Several years ago the Federation purchased and rehabilitated a building on West



Seventh Street near the old Schmidt Brewery.

District 6 has owned a building before. In the 1990s the district council owned a building at Rice and Cook, using state youth program funding to buy that property from Sparc's predecessor, North End Area Revitalization (NEAR). A youth-run coffee house

opened there, but had difficulty finding operating funds. District 6 sold that building and then moved to Front Avenue.

Antrim said this time around, District 6 will be the sole occupant of the building and won't lease space to tenants. The district council is confident that it will be able to cover its costs.

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After a 12-year hiatus from acting, Como resident Tinne Rosenmeier (right) is delighted to return to the stage in the Pangea World Theater and Teatro del Pueblo co-production of Federico Garcia Lorca's "The House of Bernarda Alba," at 7:30 p.m., April 9-25, at SteppingStone Theatre, 55 Victoria St. N.

Como resident returns to stage in Lorca drama at SteppingStone

By DEBORAH BROTZ

When Como resident Tinne Rosenmeier, 50, was 8 years old, she saw William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" at the Guthrie and fell in love with acting and Barbara Byrne. Because of Byrne, she decided to become an actress herself, and she has been in about 40 shows making her own appearances on a host of stages ever since both locally and nationally.

Rosenmeier was exposed to theater when her grandmother and mother took her to the Guthrie as a child. She was in awe of Guthrie company member Byrne, a petite redhead and a well-known actress then and now, who she saw in "Twelfth Night."

"I was enamored at what I saw," said Rosenmeier. "She was so adorable and so fabulous. I wanted to desperately be on stage like her."

After a 12-year hiatus from acting, Rosenmeier is delighted to return to the stage in the Pangea World Theater and Teatro del Pueblo co-production of Federico

Garcia Lorca's "The House of Bernarda Alba," at 7:30 p.m., April 9-25, at SteppingStone Theatre, 55 Victoria St. N. She will play the role of Bernarda Alba, the cruel, controlling mother of five daughters, who are forced into mourning by their mother after their father's death. One by one, they make a bid for freedom, with tragic consequences. In the play, Lorca addresses patriarchal constraints faced by women and anticipates Spain's fall to a fascist regime. Within a year of completing the play, Lorca was murdered as the Spanish Civil War escalated.

Although Rosenmeier hadn't been acting in the Twin Cities for several years, auditioning for "The House of Bernarda Alba" was a dream come true.

"I knew about the play when I was back in college," she said. "It was something I always wanted to work on. It's a fascinating story. It's something that resonates with the condition of women in the world like with the Taliban and other countries."

With her second husband's death, Alba becomes the head of her house and forces her daughters into mourning.

"All doors and windows are sealed and they cannot see the light of daytime for eight years," said Rosenmeier. "She controls them. It's a tragedy. Her family honor is tied up in the virtue of these girls. There's no female freedom in this world."

Rosenmeier was attracted to the character she plays because she's a strong woman.

"She's cruel, domineering, and mean," she said. "I'm a classically trained actor. I love to get my artistic piece into these huge characters. People think of her as evil. She's not evil, but what she does is evil. For me as an actress, I understand her humanity, when she seems completely inhuman to the audience."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Carousel seeks volunteers for its eleventh season

Cafesjian's Carousel—the historic and treasured merry-go-round that has delighted riders for ten seasons at St. Paul's Como Park—is seeking additional volunteers for its eleventh season, which begins May 1.

Volunteers operate the carousel, sell tickets, and sell merchandise at the gift shop. They work 3- or 4-hour shifts, two or more times each month. New volunteers are encouraged to apply individually, in pairs or as groups. Training is provided for all positions, and free parking is available. For information about volunteers opportunities, contact Cafesjian's Carousel at 651-489-4628 or volunteer@ourfaircarousel.org,

or visit our website at www.ourfaircarousel.org.

Cafesjian's Carousel originally operated for 75 years at the Minnesota State Fair. It is now owned and operated by the nonprofit organization Our Fair Carousel, Inc. Volunteers have restored the carousel to its 1914 appearance and installed it in its new pavilion next to the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory at Como Park in 2000. The group pays operational expenses through ticket and gift sales.

The carousel operates Tuesdays through Sundays from May 1 through Labor Day, and weekends from Labor Day until the end of October.



Volunteers operate the carousel, sell tickets, and sell merchandise at the gift shop.

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In Our Community

Free energy efficiency workshops planned

Neighborhood organizations are teaming up to offer a residential energy efficiency program to Saint Paul residents. The first step is to attend one of our free workshops on saving energy and money in your home. Next, you schedule a home visit where the Home Energy Squad will install energy-saving materials for only a \$30 co-pay. Finally, we provide one year of personalized home energy reporting.

By attending one of our free workshops you'll qualify to receive the home visit with up to \$400 worth of goods and services for only a \$30 co-pay.

There are two workshops, Thursday, April 29th 7-8:30 p.m. and Tuesday, May 4th, 7-8:30 p.m. both are being held at St. Timothy Lutheran Church 1465 Victoria St. N. For more information and to RSVP please contact us at 651-644-3889 or Nick.Smith@district10comopark.org

Toastmasters event at Hamline April 19

Distinguished Toastmaster and St. Paul Board of Education Director Keith Hardy will lend his high energy and enthusiasm to Wordsmiths Toastmasters Club's first annual poetry slam at 6:30 p.m. April 19 at the Bush Memorial Library, room 305, at 1536 Hewitt Ave. on the Hamline University campus. Come and hear a variety of dramatic and humorous poetry readings from Wordsmiths members and guests. Feel free to bring a poem and participate.

On April 26, at the same time and location, in a separate Toastmaster program, doctoral candidate Lindsay Orr will be practicing her upcoming dissertation defense, which she will present later in May at the University of Minnesota Department of Food Science and Nutrition. Come share your advice to help her have a successful defense.

Community breakfast offered April 25

North Emanuel Lutheran Church will be offering free community breakfast, Sunday, April 25 from 8 to 9 a.m.

Chris Cagle, attorney at law of Cagle Law Group PLLC will provide free consumer law information (bankruptcy, debt collection, foreclosures, etc) during the community breakfast. He will also hold a Q & A session during the Faith Formation Hour at 10:45 p.m.

Directions to North Emanuel are easy when you know where

the Rice Street Library is located. Then go west 5 blocks on Hatch Ave. and stop at Matilda Street.

Pastor Kisten H. Thompson, and the members of North Emanuel welcome all to this event. For more information call 651-489-5611.

For more information call Larry at 651-373-5797 or Sandy 651-283-1681.

Third Annual Celebration of Seniors at Jehovah

On Sunday, May 2, Jehovah Lutheran Church, corner of Snelling and Thomas in the Midway, will celebrate its senior members for the third year at the 10:30 a.m. morning worship and a noon luncheon. The Human Care Committee, youth and Sunday School are participating to make this a special day for members over 80 years of age and their accompanying family members. For more information call 651-644-1421.

Como Women's Golf Club

Interested in joining a women's golf club? Here is a chance to establish a handicap, learn the rules and etiquette of golf, while gaining playing experience and confidence of the game. We openings for new members for the 2010 golf season at Como Park 18 Hole Golf Course at 1432 N. Lexington Parkway. Membership is \$63, plus green fees. Tee times are available Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings. Application forms are available at Como Clubhouse or by calling 651-488-9673. More information is available online at www.golfstpaul.org

New course on Gospel of John

On Sunday, April 11, the Adult Bible Class of Jehovah Lutheran Church, corner of Snelling and Thomas in the Midway, begins a study of the Gospel of John with lectures on DVD by Prof. of New Testament at Emory University, Luke Timothy Johnson, a Great Courses Teacher. All interested may come to the lounge of the church for get-acquainted coffee and rolls at 9 a.m. followed by prayer, Johnson's lectures and interactive discussion. Call 651-644-1421 for more information.

Curbside Clean-Up for Como April 17th

Join the Como Lake Neighbor Network (CLNN), District 10 Environmental Committee, Freshwater Society, Capitol Region Watershed District and City of St. Paul Public Works for a day-of-action to help Como Lake!

On April 17th, between 9 a.m.

and 2 p.m., we are asking Como neighbors to sweep, rake and bag the leaves and other organic debris that has settled on boulevards and in the street in front of their homes.

Then, please share with us how many bags of organic debris you filled and the name of your street (call 651-487-8648 or email jcaywood@goldengate.net).

Como holds school carnival May 20

Como Park Elementary is having its annual school carnival on Thursday, May 20th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at 780 West Wheelock Parkway. We are a non-profit organization, we use the proceeds from the carnival to keep our playground safe by updating and replacing our playground equipment.

The playground is used not only by our school students but also the surrounding community. The carnival will have 19-20 games for small children to middle school age children.

We will have face painting, a crazy hair booth, basketball and an inflatable obstacle course. There are also inexpensive meal deals for families. It will be a night of good fun and activities. Please join us!

Breastfeeding topic of May 11 La Leche

The Advantages of Breastfeeding is the topic of the meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche Group on Tuesday, May 11. All expectant and nursing mothers are invited to attend with their babies and toddlers. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information.

Candidates play baseball with blindfolds

Susan Gaertner and Matt Entenza, both running for governor, will join a team of local celebrities playing beep ball or baseball for the sight-impaired before the Saint Paul Saints exhibition game May 6th, Thursday evening, at 6:15 p.m. You can see members of the St. Paul Midway Lions beep ball team, who this year will be re-named Minnesota Fighting Lions, as they prepare to be in their first World Series since the 1980's.

This year's series featuring 16 teams from around the country and Taiwan, will play in Rochester, Minnesota August 2-8. Proceeds from the Saints game will go to helping pay expenses for that and two other team trips. For more information on beepball and the team, please see www.nbba.org and www.beepball.webs.com. For donating, email dennisstern@comcast.net

April events planned at Rice St. Library

The Rice Street Branch Library has many fun and educational programs planned in April. Please stop in and visit us!

Family story times will be offered on Tuesday and Friday mornings at 10:30 and on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. Join Rice Street's storytelling experts for stories, finger plays, rhymes, and songs.

The Runescape Club will meet on Tuesdays from 3:30-5 p.m. Each week it's nothing but Runescape. Bring your friends!

Teen Time will be offered Wednesdays from 3:30-5 p.m. Join us for a rotating roster of activities each Wednesday! Video games, board games, & crafts are just a few of the activities teens can do.

The Collector's Corner Neighborhood Trading Post will be open Wednesdays from 4-7 p.m. and Saturdays from 1-4 p.m. Bring a tradable natural object to the library and volunteers from the Science Museum of Minnesota will help you learn more about it.

Free Family Friendly Movie Matinees will be shown Saturdays at 2 p.m. Please stop in or call the library at 651-558-2223 to learn which movie will be shown each week.

The STARS Homework Help Center is a quiet place for students of all ages to work on schoolwork. If you need help with homework or would like to be a Homework Helper, please visit STARS Monday through Wednesday from 3-7 p.m., Thursday from 3-5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m.

The North End Book Club will be discussing Innocent Man by John Grisham on Monday April 26, from 12:45-2:15. For more information or to register, please call Sandy at 651-293-8733. This group is offered in partnership with the Community Education Senior Program.

Practice giving speeches and making presentations in Spanish with the Los Lagos Toastmasters on Mondays from 6:00-7:30 p.m. Contact Ralph at 651-730-9817 for more information.

Free Foreclosure Counseling will be offered by the Saint Paul Department of Planning and Economic Development on Wednesdays from 12:30-6:30 p.m. No appointment is necessary.

Free Job Search Assistance will be offered on Fridays from 10:30-12:30 p.m.

A consultant from Goodwill-Easter Seals will provide help with job applications and resumes. Please call 651-558-2223 for more information.

The Community Education Senior Program will offer computer classes on Facebook, Google, and Blogging on Fridays April 16, 23 and 30. For more

information or to register, please call Sandy at 651-293-8733.

The Rice Street Library is located at 1011 Rice Street between Lawson and Hatch. Hours are Monday and Wednesday, 12 p.m.-8 p.m.; Tuesday 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Composting discussed May 11 at Hamline

"All About Composting," will be the topic at a luncheon for seniors on May 11 beginning at 11:30 at 1415 Englewood Avenue (Hamline Methodist Church). A representative from the Ramsey County Department of Public Health will be talking about why good, old fashioned practices are often best. A free will donation is asked for the meal. Call the office of Hamline Midway Elders 651-209-6542 to make reservations for the May 11 event, request free transportation for event, grocery shopping or medical appointments. Also, gentle, in home exercise instruction is also available at no cost.

Community Ed offered for permit

Community Education, St Paul Public Schools has an opportunity for people who are 18 or older who do not have their drivers permit. For \$150 a certified driver education instructor will facilitate two hours of intense classroom instruction and, after obtaining your permit, two hours of behind the wheel instruction. The next class is Thursday, April 22 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Gordon Parks High School, 1212 University Ave, 55104. Limit 10 per class. For more information please contact the Community Education office at 651-632-6020.

Green Living and Mother's Day Celebration

Practical Green Living - Get over green guilt and learn small ways to make a real difference, April 22, 7-9 p.m. Carondelet Center, 1890 Randolph Avenue.

Cost \$25, 651-696-2788 or wisdomways@csjstpaul.org

Mother's Day Celebration on the Labyrinth

Expand your vision of mothering and/or nurturing relationship, May 6, 7-9 p.m. Carondelet Center, 1890 Randolph Avenue. Cost \$25, 651-696-2788 or wisdomways@csjstpaul.org

Recently the Saint Paul Police Department rolled out a new program entitled "Blueprint for Safety" which provides guidelines for dealing with domestic violence cases. This plan is designed to be implemented at all stages of the criminal justice system; from 911, patrol, investigations, prosecution, corrections, and probation. It also seeks to further cement the close working relationship that the police and other city agencies have with the many advocacy groups that are part of the domestic abuse support system.

Over the past few months, from Hugo to Mankato, we've seen the tragic toll that domestic violence takes on a person, a family, and a community. To date, the majority of homicides in Saint Paul have been linked to some kind of domestic situation. In other words the lethal violence in our neighborhoods is not being committed by strangers, gangsters or drug dealers, but by family members.

As a police officer I'm con-



On the Beat

By OFFICER CHARLIE ANDERSON

'Blueprint for Safety' fights violence

fronted by domestic situations on a daily basis. They range from the peculiar (a verbal argument over a pork chop) to the downright tragic. I can think of a recent case where I encountered a female victim who had bruises on her face and cuts on her arms. She was sobbing and her body was shaking with fear. I eventually learned that the suspect (her boyfriend) had assaulted her because she wouldn't give him money. This guy had no job, but he expected his girlfriend to provide for his every want. When she didn't, he turned violent. When police were called he ran away like a coward.

Unfortunately she had been

so manipulated that she blamed herself for what had happened. I pleaded with her to allow us to bring her to a safe shelter, but she refused. I released a pick-up for the suspect, and several hours later a couple of my hard working colleagues arrested him. He was with the victim inside her car. She screamed at the officers to let him go as they took him into custody.

This sad case is just one more reason why we are stepping up our efforts as a department to stand on the side of those victimized through domestic violence. If you'd like to learn more about the Blueprint for Safety, go to the city's website at www.ci.stpaul.mn.us

and type "blueprint" in the search bar.

As a neighbor or concerned citizen, please do not hesitate to call the police about what might be a domestic dispute. If you hear raised voices, threats of violence, or the sounds of a physical fight, call 911. You can be anonymous if you wish. While we understand that everyone (myself included) has had a spirited but non-criminal argument with a loved one, the difference between action and inaction might be one of life and death.

Be vigilant. Be safe.

Do you have a question or

story regarding policing practices or safety concerns? Write in to the editor and we'll do our best to address your query!

(Officer Charlie Anderson is a member of the Saint Paul Police Department's Central District GRID Unit. GRID (Getting Residents Involved Daily) utilizes problem oriented policing to address crime and quality of life concerns within certain geographical sectors along the Rice Street corridor that have historically experienced higher levels of criminal behavior. If you live or work in the North End and have a tip or need to get in contact with the GRID Unit, please contact them at SPPD-GRIDunit@ci.stpaul.mn.us or call (651) 266-5937 to reach Sergeant Jeff Parsons or (612) 751-4423 to reach Officer Anderson. For those in the Como/Midway neighborhoods, please contact Sergeant Bob Donahue with the West District Anti-Crime Unit at (651) 266-5412. If you don't know which district you are in, call the SPPD HQ Front Desk at (651) 266-5628 to find out.)

Lafond Avenue dwelling must remain as single-family house

By JANE MCCLURE

A Lafond Avenue dwelling must remain as a single-family home and not be used as a duplex, the St. Paul City Council has decided. The council voted March 4 to uphold an appeal by neighbors and reverse a previous Planning Commission decision allowing the dwelling at 1784 Lafond Av. to be used as a duplex.

The council adopted a resolution memorializing that decision April 7. In the resolution, authored by Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark, the council stated that property owner Kim Nguyen didn't show evidence that the property could not be used again as a single-family home. That use would be consistent with the underlying zoning. The resolution also states that a majority of homes on the block of Lafond between Fairview and Wheeler are single-family in use. Because the property was vacant for a year, its use should revert to single-family.

What had frustrated several property neighbors was that the Planning Commission held public hearings and a vote on the re-establishment of nonconforming use request in late December, during the holiday season. A request by neighbors and Hamline-Midway Coalition to delay action on the request and allow time for a neighborhood meeting was rejected by the Planning Commission. Commissioners indicated that they believed they had enough information to make a decision.

Nguyen has indicated that the property has historic use as a duplex, and that use should be re-established. She and her family would like to make improvements to the property and use it as a duplex. She also has indicated that her family would occupy one unit of the building. Each unit has its own bathroom, kitchen and bedrooms, and there is adequate parking for two units.

Nguyen currently doesn't live in the city.

What has caused confusion is differences between public records on the property. County records indicate the property is a duplex and Nguyen and her husband have indicated that the building layout and configuration indicates duplex use.

But city records do not show duplex use. Neighbors contend that the property has not historically been a duplex and in fact has been a single-family home for more than 30 years.

Several neighborhood residents turned out for the City Council hearing and to support an appeal filed by Lafond Avenue resident Neil McMahon. McMahon and other residents of the area said the Planning Commission made errors when it granted the property owner's request.

Some neighbors also said that the request to the Planning Commission was misrepresented to them, and that they wanted to withdraw their signatures from a consent petition for the change in use. They said information about the property's historic use wasn't made clear.

Residents said allowing the property to become a duplex will add to the problems the community already faces with absentee landlords and rental properties in the area. McMahon said the

neighborhood sometimes faces "tumultuous" situations due to behavior of tenants and conditions of some properties.

Neighbors also cited ongoing problems at Nguyen's building. The written appeal states that there have been 48 complaints and city work orders for the property since 2006, which neighbors said indicates that the property has been allowed to be in a deteriorated condition. City records indicate most of those complaints centered on tall grass and weeds,

the need for garbage removal and the need to have walks cleared of ice and snow.

A 2006 complaint revealed that work was being done on the building without proper permits. That complaint resulted from a pile of construction and demolition debris that was left outside. Nguyen has contended that she and her family now have the means to make proper repairs to the building and that they should be able to use it as a duplex, once it is brought up to code.



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Hamernick's grows headquarters into Hamernick's Hill

By JANE MCCLURE

Hamernick's Decorating Center is growing into Hamernick's Hill. The St. Paul City Council hosts a public hearing at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 21 to hear the longtime Rice Street business' request to rezone property near Rice and Cottage.

Hamernick's is purchasing the former United Rentals property at 1386 Rice St. and plans to build a new home decorating showroom and warehouse there.

The new building will be on the east side of Rice Street; Hamernick's is currently in buildings on the west side of Rice Street. The company will retain its current buildings on the west side of the street.

The new building will represent a change for a site that has housed rental business uses since the late 1950s. It also is a big step for Hamernick's, which needs to accommodate growing customer demand with a new facility.

The zoning and variance requests have support of District 6 Planning Council, neighboring property owners and area business owners. No one spoke against the



The St. Paul City Council hosts a public hearing at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 21 to hear Hamernick's request to rezone property near Rice and Cottage.

project at an April 1 Planning Commission Zoning Committee meeting.

Ted and Lynn Natus own Hamernick's. "We want to help clean up the area, bring Rice Street back to the way it used to be," said Lynn Natus. She said the family-owned business wants to build a new showroom and warehouse that the community can be proud of.

Last year the City council awarded the project a \$150,000 grant and \$150,000 loan to replace an old building with a new showroom and storage facility. A \$1 million match is proposed.

The new one-story building will be at the northeast corner of Rice and Cottage streets, with an

overall area of 20,782 square feet. That includes a new 9,352 square foot showroom and 11,430 square feet of warehouse area. Two of three old rental business buildings will be demolished to make way for the new showroom and warehouse; a third smaller building will remain to the northeast.

Pope Architects is designing the new showroom/warehouse. The one-story building will feature large windows and precast walls.

But getting that new building up and operating require a zoning change for a nearby site that will be used for parking and truck maneuvering, as well as variances. The St. Paul Planning Commission approved the needed vari-

ances April 9 and recommended approval of rezoning.

Variances are needed to the city's TN or traditional neighborhoods zoning standards. Parts of Rice Street are zoned TN to encourage more walkable, dense neighborhood development. But that zoning classification has a number of restrictions, which require variances in order to build the size and configuration of space Hamernick's wants.

In a TN district, warehouses are restricted to no more than 10,000 square feet of space so that requires variances. The city also requires a floor area ratio minimum of new development of .5; the proposed floor area ratio for the new development is .319. Window and door openings for the front of the building also require a variance. TN zoning requires that at least 30 percent of the building's front facade be windows and doors; 25.8 percent is proposed.

City staff recommended approval of the variances, noting the site's unique circumstances. The property is a long, narrow lot. The size of space needed for a home decorating showroom, plus the

placement of windows and doors as related to building interior design, were additional arguments for granting variances. The building will be an enhancement to a neighborhood seeking to add more businesses, especially businesses that make Rice Street more pedestrian-friendly and attractive.

The old rental property is already zoned TN; Hamernick's is asking that two properties to the east, on Hawley Street, also be rezoned from residential to TN use. Those properties were used for years by United Rentals for parking and vehicle maneuvering but never had their zoning changed.

One issue the Planning Commission and city staff may look at in the future is how TN affects proposals such as the Hamernick's Hill development and whether the TN standards should be changed in the future. The zoning classification was added several years ago because the city needed a way to promote denser, mixed use development. But the variance process is very complex and can be a frustration for applicants as well as for communities clamoring for development.

Rosenmeier

Continued from page 9

Her character's attributes are what Rosenmeier likes about her role.

"She's smart, and she's a survivor," she said. "She likes beauty, is a devout Catholic, and loves her children."

Some of Rosenmeier's favorite roles from past plays include Miss Hannigan in "Annie," Helena in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Tamora in "Titus Andronicus," and La Marquise de Merteuil in "Les Liaisons Dangereuses."

"I like these parts because I get kind of controlling," she said. "It's a blast. I get it out of my system that way."

The play is different than other plays Rosenmeier has been in because she has to do some stage fighting.

"It's actual violence, but all of that is carefully staged so nobody is hurt," she said. "It's important for the audience to know it's not really happening so they can focus on the story."

All things considered, Rosenmeier finds now is the perfect time to get back into acting. As a member of Park Square Theatre's acting company in the '80s, she played several parts but learned she needed to perfect her craft. She did that at the National Shakespeare Conservatory, an acting school in New York City.

"Performing is really great," she said. "I love to act. My whole career has gone back and forth

between performing and teaching."

During her 12-year hiatus from acting, Rosenmeier started a family with her husband Jon Bassewitz. While she enjoyed her time off raising her daughter, who is now in middle school, she found herself at a place in her life when she thought she could return to acting.

"It's another facet of my life to go back to," she said.

Rosenmeier finds it fascinating as an actress to play a character who is both grieving and thrilled to pieces to be in charge.

"To play a fully human and damaged individual is really exciting and gratifying," she said. "I got my juices flowing."

The compassionate and caring Rosenmeier decided to get a

master's degree in educational theater because she wanted to know more about teaching and how theater is used in education. While living in New York City, she got a master's degree in Educational Theater from New York University and teaches theater in the East Metro Integration District at Crosswinds Arts and Science School.

"I love teaching theater," she said. "I believe theater encompasses all of human experience in all its dozens of forms. In studying theater, students find out about themselves and other people around them. It's a window to the human condition."

When she is not acting or teaching, Rosenmeier spends time walking her dog around Como Lake.

"I look forward to getting my garden in shape," she said. "I like to sew and quilt during the winter months."

Rosenmeier wanted to be an actress because it's a way of reaching people and communicating.

"As a teacher, one of the reasons why I act is to change people's lives," she said. "I just love it. I love going deep into these characters and why they make choices. It's so challenging to be so many different parts of who I am. I thrive at it."

Playing one of the parts she has always wanted to play, Rosenmeier's dream is coming true.

"I hope it's well-received," she said. "It gives me a ticket back in the door."

For tickets, call the Box Office at: 1-800-838-3006.



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Eleven candidates confirmed for student-organized gubernatorial forum April 15

A collaboration of student organizations at Hamline University has confirmed 11 gubernatorial candidates for their non partisan forum on student issues taking place April 15th. The forum, entitled "Students Decide: What's Your Vision for Minnesota?" will bring student's questions and concerns for the next Governor of Minnesota to the forefront of the debate.

"We want to make sure that Governor's candidates are listening to the student voice. Students need to be a strong presence in the gubernatorial debate to ensure that candidates are talking about our issues, such as the rising cost of higher education, and growing the economy so that graduates have entry-level jobs," said Antonia Kurtz, freshman at Hamline and one of the lead organizers of the forum.

Young people ages 18-29 represent 30% of the electorate in Minnesota. In 2008, Minnesota had the highest youth voter turnout in the country. There has been an overwhelming response from candidates attending the forum, because they know that students are paying attention to the issues.

Everyone is encouraged to submit their own questions to be asked during the forum to ensure representation of a diverse range of student voices. Questions can be submitted in blue boxes on Hamline's campus, or online at HamlineGovForum@gmail.com. All questions must be non partisan.

Students from MPIRG, Hamline Undergraduate Student Congress, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, College Democrats, College Republicans, and

Women's Resource Center have come together to organize this forum to represent a wide range of student interests.

The forum will on April 15th in Kay Fredericks Ballroom, 3rd floor of the Klas Center at Hamline University, located at 1535 Taylor Ave in St. Paul. Doors will open at 5:30, and people are encouraged to come early so they can vote on which questions they would like to hear answered by the candidates. The forum will be held from 6pm-7:30pm and is open to the public. The media are welcome and a mult-box will be available for use by broadcast media.

Confirmed candidates: John Marty, Paul Thissen, Mark Dayton, Susan Gaertner, Tom Rukivina, Bob Carney, Jr, Leslie Davis, Peter Roess, Rob Hahn, Tom Horner, Peter Idusogie.

Walk-a-Thon Pig and Turkey Roast planned May 17

The 8th annual Walk-a-Thon Pig and Turkey Roast to benefit Survivor Resources will be held Monday, May 17, beginning at 6 p.m. at the East Picnic area at Como Park.

Survivor Resources lends its support to those who have lost a loved one violently and suddenly. The organization works

through Minneapolis and St. Paul police departments, reaching out to survivors of someone who has been killed in a homicide, accident or as a result of suicide.

A Walk to Remember and a Walk for Hope is the major fundraiser for Survivor Resources. Registration fees for the walk in-

clude dinner. The pig and turkey roast will be served by Divine Swine and will be followed at 8 pm by the walk, with a closing ceremony and lighting of luminarias.

An RSVP for the dinner is necessary. Call Julie Chalmers at 612-673-3951 or 612-325-9655 by May 7.

Rally

Continued from page 3

"The Archdiocese and Father Mike, our pastor, have been fairly consistent of late, although their message has changed a bit as a result of our unexpected success in raising a significant amount of money in our pledge drive. Even with a strategic plan for future success and enough pledges to keep the school open for three to four more years they indicate that cash now is the key."

After cordial meetings with both the Superintendent and the Vicar general and the drafting of multiple versions of their Five Year Strategic Plan Proposal, the campaign's self-imposed April 1 pledge drive deadline has been extended in hopes that S.O.S. will be able to meet with the Archdiocese on the matter.

News that St. Paul stands to lose another Roman Catholic school sent shock waves beyond St. Bernard's high school. Factions of the Rice Street Community have stood in solidarity with the school: Ace Auto, Mama's, the Klub Haus, Rice Street Hardware, and other businesses have contributed to the grassroots effort in one form or another. Sup-



After cordial meetings with both the Superintendent and the Vicar general and the drafting of multiple versions of their Five Year Strategic Plan Proposal, the campaign's self-imposed April 1 pledge drive deadline has been extended in hopes that S.O.S. will be able to meet with the Archdiocese on the matter.

port has also come from farther away - the Home Depot of Maplewood, Midway Rental, and even sports teams like The Wild and The Timberwolves have shown their support.

For the moment, St. Bernard's families are being encouraged to enroll kids in one of the Twin Cities' 13 remaining Catholic high schools, including

St. Agnes School, Cretin-Derham Hall, and Hill-Murray School. Superintendent Martha Frauenheim has said that teens who apply at other Catholic high schools may receive financial aid.

The St. Bernard's student body, staff, and parishioners are adjusting to the sobering reality that the school may be in its last days. In the meantime, S.O.S. continues to come up with both creative and pragmatic ideas for raising \$1.5 million. If all goes well they anticipate presenting their plan in detail to the Archdiocese. To learn more about the S.O.S. campaign and upcoming fundraisers, visit www.savesaintbernards.com.

The "Rally to Save Our School" was held at the Klub Haus, 1070 Rice Street, Sunday, March 14, 7 p.m.

"Even with a strategic plan for future success and enough pledges to keep the school open for three to four more years they indicate that cash now is the key."

- Volunteer and parent George Niece

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Silva

Continued from page 1

"The only things I haven't done are cook and custodian," she noted, with a soft chuckle in her voice, "although there is a lot of cleaning up to do in this job."

She said her knowledge of the curriculum will be a big plus. And in going through budget cuts, she knows from experience what people can live with.

"I know in times like these we have to make cuts from other plans," she said. "You may have to lay off a person you really know. I have to be business-like and look at what is best for the whole organization."

Silva said budget cuts are the biggest challenge facing her administration, but it has been done before.

"We have been trimming the bear," she said. "Now we have to reinvent the bear. What do we do, to deliver in a different way? We are recreating programs, not just cutting them."

Silva said it is important to get students able to read, write and graduate and go to the next



Superintendent Silva said it is important to get students able to read, write and graduate and go to the next level of life.

level of life. "They no longer can live with just a high school diploma," she said.

Silva said the biggest issue facing schools across the country is the achievement gap between white students and minorities.

"Eventually it will affect our economy in ways we don't even know," she said.

"We need to have reading to

be prescriptive to give better results," Silva said. She said school systems are dealing with challenges with children who are homeless or who may not have eaten the night before. "We have to maximize how we face those challenges," she said.

Minnesota has been competing in Race to the Top, a \$4.35 billion incentive program designed

by the U.S. Department of Education to spur progressive reforms in state and local district K-12. Although Minnesota did not receive any money initially, Silva said they would go for the second round.

Basically, Silva will do whatever it takes to bring money and resources to SPPS. She wants to enable students to become more proficient.

She said she would like to leave a legacy that all kids can learn, given the right experiences and the right opportunities.

"We are not perfect," she admitted, "But we are in a lot better shape in the St. Paul school district than some others. If we can't narrow the student achievement gap, I don't know who can."

Silva said education is a job not just for the schools, but it requires the help of the community, churches and agencies.

"If the schools are failing, the communities are failing," she said. "We have to rally and work together, not only to help one group, but to help us all."

Silva's days as school superintendent are long, but when she does have a few moments to spare she likes to spend them reading, dancing, scrapbooking or gardening at her home in Woodbury, where she lives with her husband and children.

"But I mostly like to spend time with my friends and family," she said.

Her journey from Chile to America has been a long one, in terms of miles and differences in culture. Silva has managed to complete that journey, bringing with her a wealth of experiences gained not only from her beginnings but from the wide array of tasks and training she has performed along the way.

She is ready to share those experiences with St. Paul Public Schools.



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Headed for New Orleans



Volunteers from Sibley Bike Depot loaded up 150 bicycles April 8 and took them on the road to New Orleans. Bicycles from Sibley and Mister Michael Recycles Bicycles will be given to New Orleans volunteers. That city is still recovering from the effects of Hurricane Katrina and bicycle groups there are in need of bicycles. (Photo by Andrew Fossbinder)

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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 May 3 for the May 13 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

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Continued from page 15

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Spring garden tilling: Existing garden - \$35; New garden - \$65; New garden ready to plant - \$100. Minimum prices shown for 10' x 20' garden plot prices for larger gardens proportionate to size. Please call Joe to schedule. 651-366-2221.

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Wanted to buy - toy trains, Jerry. 651-645-6259. 6-10

Wanted to buy: Top cash paid, older furniture, beer items, miscellaneous antiques. 651-227-2469. 7-10

I buy stuff. Scrap metals, non-working vehicles, computer scrap, circuit boards, jewelry and coins. Cash paid. 651-500-0969. 4-10

Classifieds
\$1 per word

Como's polar bears, Neil and Buzz, return to Como Zoo

The Minnesota Twins aren't the only ones moving into a new home. Twin polar bears, Neil & Buzz, arrived safely back to Como Zoo and into their new home, Polar Bear Odyssey, the Zoo's newest attraction opening June 3, 2010.

The eleven-year-old male bears were accompanied by animal care staff during their trip from the Detroit Zoo where they have lived since February 2008. They were born at the Louisville Zoo and came to Como Zoo in 2002. The male bears are named for the Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin.

"We are so excited to have the bears back home and over the next several weeks we will be getting the bears acclimated to their new surroundings," noted Como Campus Manager Michelle Furrer. "We can't wait to share Polar Bear Odyssey with the community in June."

Neil & Buzz's new home features 13,140 square foot of outdoor polar bear living space, and a 3,260 square foot state-of-the-art holding building with



Twin polar bears, Neil & Buzz, arrived safely back to Como Zoo and into their new home.

large indoor bedrooms, a cub den, daylight and pools. The new exhibit was designed with polar bears and the public in mind. Visitors will delight in up-close and personal views of the world's largest land predator. Visitors will also be able to observe the polar bears inside the Outpost - a climate-controlled building that provides both underwater views and expansive views of the entire habitat. Outside, visitors will have unob-

structed views that bring the bears as close as twenty feet.

Polar Bear Odyssey, which emulates a Hudson Bay ecosystem complete with a river-washed stream, rocky cliffs and evergreen vegetation, is a world-class habitat. It was designed to not only meet, but exceed all national and international standards. The habitat recently received the Three Diamond Rating by Polar Bears International, one of only 2 zoos in the world with that distinction.

A special community campaign kick-off event, Show Your Love For Como, will be held on April 24 and 25. Guests can attend and show their love for Como at this two-day conservation event by participating in special activities, talks, entertainment, or making a contribution to Polar Bear Odyssey. Como Friends, the non-profit partner of Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, goal is to raise \$200,000 for this world-class conservation exhibit from Como's two million annual visitors—the largest audience of any cultural institution in the state of Minnesota.

APRIL EVENTS

AT HAMLINE UNIVERSITY

Lectures

Renowned Author Terry Tempest Williams Headlines 2010 Mahle Lecture

Well-known author and activist Terry Tempest Williams will keynote the university's annual Mahle Lecture in Progressive Christian Thought. Her topic, "Finding Beauty in a Broken World," is also the title of her most recent book.

Tuesday, April 20 - 7:30 p.m.
Hamline United Methodist Church,
1514 Englewood Avenue

"A Writer's Interview with Terry Tempest Williams"

The Mahle Lecture events are made possible through the Hamline Graduate School of Liberal Studies and the Wesley Center for Spirituality, Service, and Social Justice's Mahle Endowed Fund for Progressive Christian Thought.

Wednesday, April 21 - 7:30 p.m.
Sundin Music Hall
For more details, contact 651-523-2902 or 651-523-2878.

Concerts and Performances

Fifth Annual Saint Paul String Quartet Competition

Exceptional young quartets from the best prep music programs in the country will compete in a final round playoff for prize money and awards.

Saturday, April 17 - 1 p.m.
Sundin Music Hall

Guitarist Salome Sandoval Performs

The Minnesota Guitar Society presents this uniquely talented musician in concert. Sandoval, a native of Venezuela, combines her mastery of guitar with a beautiful singing voice. She specializes in music of the Hispanic Renaissance.

Saturday, April 17 - 8 p.m.
Sundin Music Hall
Call 612-677-1151 for ticket information

Paulina Dokovska Master Class, Presented by Hamline's International Piano Institute

Watch a master teacher in action. Dokovska helps students of the highest caliber create ever more powerful emotional and technical performances.

Sunday, April 18 - 1:30 p.m.
Sundin Music Hall

HAMLINE UNIVERSITY

Unless otherwise indicated, events are free and open to the public. Sundin Music Hall is located at 1531 Hewitt Ave. Questions about concerts? Call 651-523-2459.

Brandenburg Concertos with the Lyra Baroque

Violinist Marc Destrubé leads the ensemble in some of J. S. Bach's happiest music for orchestra.

Saturday, April 24 - 8 p.m.
Sundin Music Hall
General admission for adults \$23, seniors or Minnesota Public Radio members \$20, students \$6

The Artaria String Quartet in concert

This is the season's final concert with the quartet. They will play two works with no intermission: Mozart's String Quartet in F major, K. 590 and Debussy's String Quartet. The performers will also speak about the music, offering insight into who the composers were and what their music means.

Sunday, April 25 - 4 p.m.
Sundin Music Hall
Adults \$15, seniors \$13, Hamline students and employees FREE (must show Hamline ID card)

The Bruce P. Carlson Student Scholarship Competition Winners' Recital

The Schubert Club Student Scholarship Competition, held each April, awards approximately \$50,000 annually to young musicians. This is a chance to hear and support the best of the 2010 musicians, all of whom are college age and younger.

Friday, April 30 - 7:30 p.m.
Sundin Music Hall
Call 651-292-3268 for ticket information