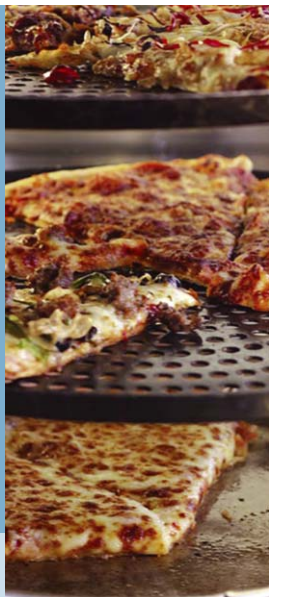




monitor

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



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Sen. Ellen Anderson accepts PUC chair

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By JAN WILLMS

What she will miss the most is driving down University Avenue and not seeing the building.

That is what Nora Truelson, owner of Porky's, is lamenting as she reflects on the closure of the historic drive-in at 1890 University Avenue.

For Truelson, Porky's has been a part of her life since 1957, when she first began working there as a carhop. This was four years after Porky's first opened.

"I was working downtown at Loman's," she recalled. "I went to Porky's to eat, and I thought it looked like fun to work there, so I said I would go and apply." She did, and that summer she delivered hamburgers, chicken, fries and the special onion rings that Porky's is known for to customers eating in their cars.

She quit some time later and in January got a call from the owner of the drive-in.

"I thought he wanted me to come back as a carhop," Truelson recalled. "Instead, he asked me for a date."

The couple was married in 1968, and Truelson partnered with her husband, Raymond, in the restaurant business from then until his death in 1994.

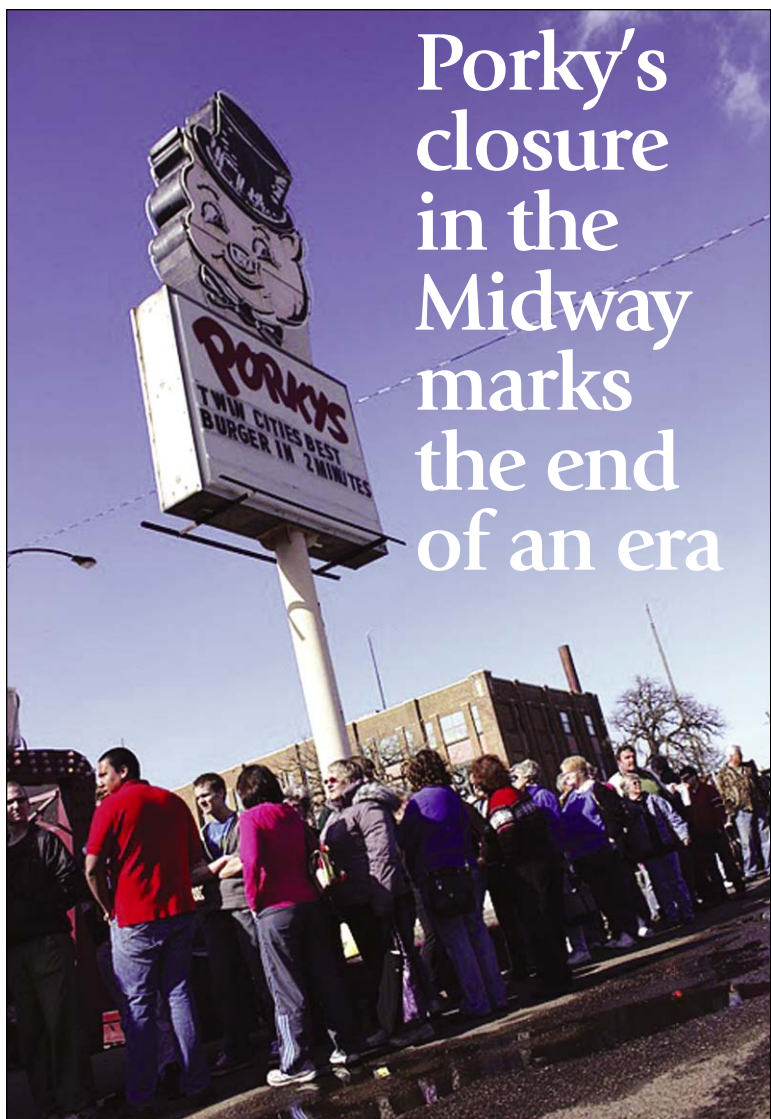
Although Porky's was closed for a few years in the late 1980s, it reopened in 1990 and has been a staple of the community for all these years.

"A lot of people grew up in the 1950s, when there were not a lot of restaurants right after the war," Truelson said. "Porky's was one of the first drive-ins to be built, and it has been one of the few remaining."

She said the drive-in started in an era when Dad would cash his paycheck on a Friday, and the family would go over to Porky's to eat.

"It's kind of a nostalgic thing," Truelson said. "People grew up going to Porky's." She said the restaurant kept its same menu and same atmosphere since it began.

Porky's became the place to



But these final days of operation for Porky's has brought crowds of people to the drive-in for one last chance to savor the fries, onion rings and burgers that have been staples of the restaurant for its many years of operation. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

go to watch the classic cars drive along University Avenue.

"The car shows were not organized," Truelson recalled. "People just started showing up."

She said she has known many of the customers for a long time. Many couples met at Porky's and became engaged at Porky's.

"The people have been so supportive," she noted. "We never really had a fight there. If anything started between customers, other customers put them in line. It was always a real peaceful

Porky's closure in the Midway marks the end of an era

crowd, even the young people."

She said the drive-in holds many memories for her, some good and some bad.

A few years ago a young man, a relative, was badly injured while working on some signage. He lost his arms below the elbows, but he did survive an electrical accident. "That was a very bad time," Truelson said.

She also remembered years ago, closing around midnight, some of the older workers in the kitchen would call up a beer joint on Snelling, order a pitcher of beer, clean up the drive-in and go over there for a drink.

"The carhops were much younger, and they would go over to the laundromat across the street from the beer joint and wait for us to give them a ride home," she said. "I found out later they were riding in the dryers while they waited."

Truelson said she and her husband had five sons, three from his first marriage and two of their own. The whole family grew up working in Porky's or the other restaurant locations the Truelsons owned in Minneapolis.

Her youngest son, Tryg, is

the only one working today in the business. He has a restaurant, Tryg's, over on Lake Street in Minneapolis. That location serves more of an upscale dinner menu, but still has Porky's onion rings listed as an appetizer.

Truelson said they were reluctant to close Porky's because it has been in the family for so many years, but they knew it was coming for awhile. The onset of the LRT was a strong factor in their decision to sell the property to Episcopal Homes, a senior living facility.

"It was just time to sell," Truelson said. She said the construction for the light rail is making it difficult for businesses along the Central Corridor, and parking is going to be a major problem for many.

"There are high taxes, so many regulations and everything is so expensive," Truelson said. "It's not a good time to be in business."

She expressed concern for the many merchants that are struggling to keep their businesses operating in the black as construction gets underway for the light rail tracks.

But these final days of operation for Porky's have brought crowds of people to the drive-in for one last chance to savor the fries, onion rings and burgers that have been staples of the restaurant for its many years of operation.

Not even the extensive construction work along University Avenue has slowed the run of traffic to sample one more meal at the memorable eating place.

Although an auction has been scheduled for much of the restaurant's equipment, Truelson said she hopes to keep the beacon of the drive-in, a pig in a top hat with a neon light. That was made especially for Porky's a few years after it opened.

"I might take it home," Truelson said. "I might put it up in my front yard. I'm sure my neighbors would love that, a huge pig blinking at them."

"Lately I have to confess that I have not been going to Porky's every day," Truelson admitted. "But I have been to Tryg's every day; our offices are there. It will be a big change. I will really miss the building."

She said that having Tryg's in operation and owning another property on Central Avenue that leases to Falafel King makes it a little less traumatic to close Porky's. If she had no other restaurant to help operate, it would be even more difficult.

As for now, Truelson said she is applying for a booth at the Fair for Porky's.

"I might put it up in my front yard. I'm sure my neighbors would love that, a huge pig blinking at them."

- Porky's Owner
Nora Truelson

monitor

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Next deadline:
May 2



Monitor in a Minute

Excedra to be repaired

The Como Park excedra will be repaired as a result of St. Paul City Council action April 6. The council voted unanimously to shift \$40,000 in surplus Phalen Bridge project funds to repair the 1929 structure.

The excedra is a Beaux Arts-style structure. It is wooden, with a stone retaining wall. During an August 2010 rain storm, the structure's stone retaining wall collapsed, making it unsafe for use. The beautiful structure is used for numerous open air events and needs to be rebuilt this spring.

The request to shift funding went to the city's Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget Committee in March. The committee unanimously approved the request. No one appeared at the City Council meeting to speak in opposition.

Tobacco shops face new city rules

New regulations on tobacco shops take effect a month from now, but at least one Council member thinks further study of so-called hookah bars is needed. The St. Paul City Council adopted new tobacco shop regulations March 23, but opted to stay silent on hookah bars, one of the issues that prompted a St. Paul Planning Commission study of tobacco shops overall.

No one appeared to speak at a March 16 public hearing on the proposed changes, which recently won approval from the Planning Commission.

The city currently has 12 tobacco shops, including at least two hookah lounges. One is near

Grand and Fairview, Grand Hookah; the other is FaKir Lounge 280 on University Avenue near Highway 280. Hookah lounges were cited as a concern by Ward 4 Council Member Russ Stark when he brought forward the moratorium last year.

But the ordinance that was developed focuses more on tobacco shops and distance requirements. That has prompted Ward Two Council Member Dave Thune to ask that there be more study in the future of hookah lounges, because he would like to see further restrictions.

"Having places where people can smoke just seems to fly in the face of all we've done to limit smoking," he said. The businesses, which are licensed as tobacco shops, allow sampling of tobacco products that are smoked in hookah or water pipes.

The council noted at the time that smoking tobacco in water doesn't lessen the health risks.

The adopted changes differentiate between shops that sell tobacco and tobacco-related products and those that sell tobacco along with many other products, such as a grocery store. The ordinance changes bring the city into compliance with current state law, which does allow sampling of products in tobacco shops. It also would set a conditional use permit requirement for new tobacco shops and would only allow new shops in commercial and mixed-use traditional neighborhoods districts.

In May 2010 the council placed a moratorium on zoning permits or approvals, building permits and occupancy certificates for any type of new tobacco shop. That moratorium expires this May.

Council poised to designate Victoria Theater

As the Monitor went to press, the St. Paul City Council was poised to adopt local historic designation for the Victoria Theater. Fans of the old Victoria Theater staged one more performance April 6 to save the old University Avenue building, turning out for a St. Paul City council public hearing on local designation. The final vote will be this month.

The council heard from four supporters of historic designation for the building at 825 University Av. One supporter, Keith Johnson, is discussing a purchase of the property with owner Bee Vue. John recently submitted information on the theater to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He is pursuing a phased redevelopment project to convert the building into an entertainment venue.

Designation, even at the local level, would help Johnson or any other buyer-developer to obtain state historic tax credits to redevelop the property. Designation could also help a buyer-developer obtain capital grants through the National Trust.

An architect has done a detailed analysis of the old theater and nightclub, Johnson said. "The building has a significant amount of life still in it."

Johnson said redevelopment as an entertainment venue could make old theater a key attraction along the planned Central Corridor light rail line.

Ward One Council Member Melvin Carter III, whose ward includes the theater, praised the widespread, grassroots community effort that has been made to save the building. He said it has "engaged and excited a number of community members."

Frogtown Neighborhood Association Executive Director Tait Danielson-Castillo, Frogtown resident Denise Harris and music historian Kurt Gegenhuber also spoke for preservation.

"This about putting pride back into our community," Danielson said.

Residents tire of construction

Blocked streets, rerouted business traffic, noise and two gas leaks in recent months are taxing the patience of Merriam Park residents who live near Central Corridor light rail construction. More than 50 neighborhood residents and business owners met April 5 at Healtheast's Midway building to discuss problems and what can be done to mitigate them.

The \$957 million light rail construction project means much of University between Emerald Street and Snelling Avenue is under construction. Many north-south residential streets south of University and west of Snelling have been blocked. Eustis, Cromwell, Franklin, Raymond, Vandalia, Cleveland, Prior and Fairview have signalized crossings and remain open. But people who live on other streets may have to detour for a time.

Despite the roadblocks, businesses are sending customers down those streets to park. Motorists seeking shortcuts or detours are getting frustrated. Residents who have to dodge cars are, too.

"It's just getting ridiculous," one woman said. "I can't even get to my house."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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'Lunch on the Avenue' keeps business on the corridor

By DEBORAH BROTZ

As construction began last month for light rail on University Avenue, the community is working on measures to keep University Avenue business alive and flourishing. With the recession, light rail build out, and loss of on-street parking, some University Avenue businesses will have a hard time surviving.

John Schwietz, a part-time server and student who used to be with The McDowell Agency and Midway Chamber of Commerce, created Lunch on the Avenue to introduce people to restaurants on the Avenue they may not know about.

While the idea for Lunch on the Avenue came out of a Chamber meeting with its ambassadors, Schwietz says he is the one who volunteered to put it into action.

"We were looking at how to get more people out to the restaurants," he said. "A lot of restaurants are struggling now with light rail coming. Light rail might stick a fork in their business. The Chamber is pro-business. I thought it was an opportunity to show some support from the community."

Even though Lunch on the Avenue came from the Chamber wanting to support University Avenue restaurants, it became more urgent with light rail coming.

"It was spurred by light rail coming through," said Schwietz. "Businesses need support from people who live there. Lunch on the Avenue started with 10 people. Now, that we're getting into our



Last week Midway Chamber members visited Que Nha, 849 University Avenue, for "Lunch on the Avenue."

13th or 14th restaurant, we have 30. People need to know more about the restaurants. People don't know about them. We wanted to build awareness with these people out there."

Starting in July 2010, Lunch on the Avenue was first held at Saigon, a Vietnamese restaurant.

"I just stumbled on this place," said Schwietz. "A lot of people were talking about getting this going. It didn't start up right when the idea came along. I thought I'm just going to take this thing and go."

Schwietz says Lunch on the Avenue has been helping businesses on University Avenue.

"We're seen some businesses report back that people who went to Lunch on the Avenue came back," he said. "They're getting re-

peat business. Lunch on the Avenue people are spending on average \$10. So, they get \$300 on that day."

When light rail construction continues to roll this spring, Schwietz feels this program will get a lot more exposure.

"There's going to be a lot more attention drawn to this program," he said. "Businesses will take center stage especially as construction starts reaching all these areas. It's not feasible to go to every single restaurant on the street. You can't invite people five times out to the same kind of restaurant. You've got to mix it up. So far, all the businesses appreciate it."

Schwietz feels the Lunch on the Avenue program is beneficial to the community because it

brings people together.

"It's important for people to know about these restaurants," he said. "It's important for the business community to come out and support these restaurants. We're getting groups of people from diverse backgrounds making business contacts, getting to know each other, and supporting the restaurants."

Ward 4 Councilmember Russ Stark has been encouraging people in his online newsletter to support businesses on University Avenue, which will be impacted by the start of light rail construction.

"We know construction is going to make access to businesses harder for a time," he said. "The community has an opportunity to help support them and hopefully make this a win-win. So, not only

will businesses survive construction, but they will also benefit from new investment in the area."

Stark feels people will be willing to come back to businesses on University Avenue affected by light rail construction when finding a parking space may be easier someplace else for a few reasons.

"A lot of people who live in the neighborhood like to support local businesses and like their presence nearby," he said. "There's motivation for people to support them. Getting to businesses may be harder than it is today. There will be parking on the north-south streets during construction. People driving here will have a little bit of inconvenience in order to support their local businesses and to keep the area vital. In some cases, people can walk down. This way they can make a contribution to businesses during this period of time."

The Central Corridor initiative Loyalty Program will keep people coming back to University Avenue businesses by offering patron discounts and a percentage of what they spend at participating businesses.

"That program is all about giving people some good deals and special discounts for patrons," said Stark. "It's giving people a little reward for coming out."

Even though 85 percent of the on-street parking will be gone after light rail is finished in four years, many businesses are expected to survive.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

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Met Council criticized for minimizing light rail impacts

By JANE MCCLURE

A supplemental environmental assessment of potential Central Corridor construction-related impacts on business impacts provoked pointed comments from affected businesses and residents of neighborhoods around the light rail line. When a comment period closed March 31, many people will have weighed in with criticism, describing the report as "shameful" and "inadequate." Several speakers said the report was put together too quickly and without adequate information.

The University Avenue Betterment Association (UABA) weighed in with more than 200 pages of comments alone prior to the March 31 deadline. Many of the businesses were upset when the draft environmental assessment predicted a mere 2.5 percent drop in business revenue by comparing LRT to a suburban Houston road expansion project.

UABA's submission contains an extensive comparative analysis and suggests several more appropriate comparables, such as a similar light rail project in Seattle and the recent Lake Street reconstruction.

UABA's submission was prepared by a team of volunteers, utilized no paid staff, and received no government or philanthropic funding. All materials and time were 100% donated.

In addition to contending that the Met Council gave primary consideration to a project that is not relevant, UABA is strongly arguing that the Met Council has been deficient in not conducting baseline traffic, pedestrian, and sales revenue studies so that the true impacts of light rail construction on businesses can be measured.

"It is almost as if they do not want to know so they cannot be

held accountable. Well, that is going to change. We all need to face the facts," said Jack McCann, UABA Board President.

UABA has focused on advocating for more parking, better targeted and timelier implementation of resources for small businesses to survive construction such as a business compensation fund, and for local government, nonprofits, and philanthropic organizations to better listen to and respond to the needs of small businesses.

In early April, UABA will conduct a storefront vacancy survey and compare it with December 2010 data, thus creating an apples-to-apples tracking system for changes in the commercial vacancy rate. This will in turn be done on a quarterly basis during light rail construction. UABA will be using the same business list that the Met Council uses.

The UABA submission to the FYA and Metropolitan Council can be found at www.universityavenuebiz.com.

Many UABA members and other businesses weighed in at the March 16 hearings. More than two dozen people attended the March 16 morning hearing, with more than 60 at the evening session. Metropolitan Council conducted the hearings. Comments collected will be sent to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The comment period ends March 31, with comments and responses becoming back of the final supplemental assessment document.

The environmental assessment was written to comply with a January ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Donovan Frank. The assessment stated that potential impact on revenue for small businesses along the project corridor would be no more than 2.5 percent and that some businesses

could even see a gain in business.

Metropolitan Council and FTA staff didn't take questions at the sessions or comment, saying they were there only to gather information. Business owners scoffed at the assessment, which used two Wyoming and two Texas highway project studies as comparisons. The assessment stated that the reports were chosen because they are the "only four studies since 1990 were identified that used objective data to attempt to quantify the construction impacts on businesses that about the construction of transportation alignments."

Larry Peterson, an attorney and leader of the University Avenue Betterment Association (UABA), told Metropolitan Council and FTA staff that they could have instead looked at Lake Street reconstruction in Minneapolis, and a transit study in Seattle, for better data. "Right out of the chute, the report admits that there are no valid studies out there." The proj-

ects used for comparison in the assessment weren't built in established neighborhoods dominated by small businesses.

Peterson also said the report had numbers incorrect, such as the number of general merchandise, food and furniture stores along Central Corridor. Calling the numbers "ridiculous," he added. "These are just false numbers used to justify a zero impact."

UABA is tracking businesses that have left University or have gone out of businesses. Peterson also spoke of the Lowertown impacts, saying businesses there were "virtually demolished. The data's right there - a 20 to 40 percent loss in revenues by the liquor stores, the Master Framers store, the bars, the restaurants, and the landlords."

The District Councils Collaborative (DCC) also raised concerns. DCC member and Frogtown resident Karen Inman said that although the group continues to support light rail, members are

worried that the project isn't providing sufficient business mitigation measures. She said there needs to be a detailed report on how much funding has gone for business mitigation and for small businesses.

Inman also said a February town meeting set up to receive comments on the project was "extremely frustrating" and didn't provide opportunities for people to speak as a group.

"This report is completely deficient and I hope you didn't pay too much to have it produced," said Ax-Man Surplus owner Jim Segal. He brought a copy of the report, a roll of toilet paper and a bag of shredded newsprint to the podium and said that in his opinion, "all three could be used for the same purpose."

Segal also asked Metropolitan Council staff present if troubled actor Charlie Sheen had helped to write the report. Segal estimates that Ax-Man will lose \$100,000 in revenues during the first six months of construction.

Some business owners said they have already sustained losses since heavy construction began in March on University Avenue between Hamline Avenue and Emerald Street. Impressive Print had to hire another driver so that customers wouldn't have to drive to pick up orders. Ax-Man Surplus has lost on-street parking and has had water and debris splashed against its building. Business owner and landlord Tim Holden estimated he has already lost more than \$7,300 in the first few weeks of the project.

Mary Leonard, owner of Chocolat Celeste, estimated that she lost \$20,000 in Valentine's Day sales after moving off of University Avenue last year. Even



In early April, UABA will conduct a storefront vacancy survey and compare it with December 2010 data, thus creating an apples-to-apples tracking system for changes in the commercial vacancy rate. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

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Como Pool gives contractors a big surprise below

By JANE MCCLURE

Longtime St. Paul residents might remember the old Ramsey County Workhouse, which stood near the corner of Lexington Parkway and Como Avenue. St. Paul Parks and Recreation and crews building the new swimming pool at Como Park might prefer to forget it.

Construction crews found old bricks, more than 30 feet below ground, while excavating at the pool site. According to Jody Martinez, who oversees facilities design for parks, the bricks are believed to be from the old county workhouse.

"We found a building," Martinez said, as well as other old building remnants. The old building debris had to be removed before the new pool could be built. New soil had to be brought in to stabilize the site.

The St. Paul Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) Committee unanimously recommended changes to the Como Pool project budget March 14. Those changes go on to the City

Council and Metropolitan Council for final action and approvals.

The Como Pool project originally had a budget of \$7,530,207.66, including a recently awarded grant for solar improvements. The city actions will take \$1,344,347 from other sources to correct soils and to complete the pool area east parking lot, parking lot lighting and trail to Horton Avenue. This will bump the budget up to \$8,874,554.66.

The funds will be taken from money earmarked for work on Estabrook Drive/Nason Place (\$240,567). Money from the parks and library capital improvement fund (\$300,000) and an internal city loan of \$803,780 will also be used. The loan will be paid back from Metropolitan Council/Metro Parks funds, which the city is expected to receive in July 2012.

The funding needs to be put together now so that pool construction can continue and the pool can open in time for the 2012 swimming season, Martinez



Construction crews found old bricks, more than 30 feet below ground, while excavating at the pool site. According to Jody Martinez, who oversees facilities design for parks, the bricks are believed to be from the old county workhouse. The City Council voted on the financing and spending plans for the Como Pool on April 6. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

said. Como closed two years ago when city officials decided the old pool could no longer be repaired. After a long and sometimes contentious community review process, a new pool design was chosen and work got underway.

The old workhouse stood at the site for many years, before it was demolished in the 1950s.

The old pool was built in the early 1960s by a private firm called Public Pools, Inc. The firm opened the pool in 1962 after negotiating a land lease with the city. The company later went out

of business and the city bought the pool in 1965 for \$15,000. Parks and recreation operated the pool until finally deciding that it didn't make sense to continue repairing the aging facility.

While there was some joking among CIB Committee members about finding a building buried on site, some noted that it is a situation that isn't unfamiliar. In the past, if a new building wasn't planned at a site, it was just easier sometimes to dig a hole, knock down a structure and push dirt over the top.

The city has had situations before where old buried debris impacted new projects. When the Circus Juventas tent was erected in Highland Park more than a decade ago, buried demolition debris was found at that site. That debris was believed to be from the old Ancker Hospital.

When the Mississippi Market/Neighborhood Energy Connection building was constructed at Selby and Dale in the 1990s, that project ran into higher-than-anticipated costs because of buried construction debris.

Lunch on the Ave.

Continued from page 3

"We've put a lot of effort into working with the City and Met Council," said Stark. "More than \$1 million has been awarded in funds to improve off-street parking. Parking back behind some

businesses is dark and scary. It's really kind of hit and miss. Some really depend on on-street parking. We've tried to focus on those areas hardest hit by loss of on-street parking."

Many businesses fear they will lose a percentage of their customer base because it's too difficult to find parking.

"Construction is going to be a hassle, but we feel strongly if we all pull together and support busi-

nesses, the project will in the end be beneficial and most businesses will make it through," said Stark. "We want to keep as many businesses on the avenue thriving and doing well as we can. We want to make sure people can get to businesses during construction. In the end, we'll have a pretty intact street, and people will want to come and invest in them."

Some businesses many not survive the build out.

"One or two businesses have already moved off the avenue to nearby locations," said Stark. "For some businesses, this may be the best thing. We hope for most of them to stay where they are and do well afterward."

Schwietz's hope for Lunch on the Avenue is to get more people out to the restaurants.

"It's a simple, fun program that helps people learn about these restaurants," he said. "It

helps the restaurants bring in more revenue and to find a way to bring people back again. The key to success is to keep it simple. Everybody is welcome to join us."

Lunch on the Avenue is held every other week on Thursdays from noon to 1 p.m. The next one, Thursday, April 21, will be at Cafe Biaggio, 2356 University Ave. W. For more information you can email Schwietz at jmschwietz1@gmail.com.

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Sen. Ellen Anderson accepts Governor's appointment as chair of Public Utilities Commission

By JAN WILLMS

When Ellen Anderson left her job as public defender to work on Paul Wellstone's campaign for his 1990 run as senator, she did not realize she would spend nearly 20 years as a senator herself.

Stating in a recent interview that it has been a great honor for her to serve in that body, Anderson said that if anything could have gotten her to leave, it would take something like her recent appointment as chair of the Public Utilities Commission.

Anderson remembers that Wellstone got her started in politics. "It was a transformational experience for me," she says. "I learned so much, and Paul's campaign was so inspiring. It opened my eyes, and it showed me that a person of principal could get elected. For the first time, I started thinking about running myself."

Two years later, the opportunity for her to run presented itself.

"I lived in St. Anthony Park," Anderson recalls. "With redistricting I lost my great state sena-

tor John Marty, and would now be represented by the very conservative DFLer Gene Waldorf, so I thought someone should run against him."

Anderson decided she would run, and she won her first election for DFL Senator in Senate District 66 in 1992. "I had a fantastic grassroots group of people helping me," Anderson says, "and that was also considered the 'Year of the Woman'. It was a very exciting time."

Anderson says she became interested in environmental issues right away and was very involved in the Prairie Island nuclear plant debate. But her district also had needs and issues that went beyond environmental development.

"There was the minimum wage, workplace policies, mortgage foreclosures and consumer protection," she notes. "Investing in neighborhoods and communities was important to the district."

Reflecting on her years in office, Anderson says she considers her authoring the Renewable Energy Standard Law her most im-

portant accomplishment. The law requires at least 25 per cent wind and solar and other renewable energy sources.

She says getting the law passed was so difficult; it took over six years. "When I started, I was told politely it was not feasible and technically was not possible," she says. "But I built coalitions and found common ground."

Anderson says the bill, which became law in 2007, brought economic development to rural communities. "For steel workers, it meant jobs where they had been losing jobs," she states. "It was not just an environmental issue, but about building Minnesota's economy. I feel like it will transform Minnesota for years to come."

Anderson laughs as she recalls another major milestone when she was elected. She was the first woman to wear pants on the Senate floor, and the press made a lot of that fact. "It was symbolic," she says, "and 1993 was important to women in having a genuine place at the Capitol."



When Ellen Anderson left her job as public defender to work on Paul Wellstone's campaign for his 1990 run as senator, she did not realize she would spend nearly 20 years as a senator herself.

Anderson's marriage also made news. She and Andy Dawkins married in 1995. He served in the House, while she was in the Senate. They were in

two districts and continued to live in two locations after their marriage.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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Planning Commission reviews land use changes for station area plans

By JANE MCCLURE

Station area plans for Central Corridor light rail stations at Hamline, Victoria and Western are seen as providing opportunities for area residents, especially those who are transit-dependent. However, any long-term land use changes need to help people who need access to shopping, jobs and educational opportunities. Redevelopment also has to be planned in ways that benefit surrounding neighborhoods. Those are among the messages the St. Paul Planning Commission is mulling after a February 18 Planning Commission public hearing on the plans. The commission is reviewing the testimony and will adopt the plans, with any revisions, later this month.

The testimony has shaped some changes to the plans, as the commission has clarified some language and made changes in response to public comments.

The plans then go to the St. Paul City Council for final approval. The plans will be used to guide future redevelopment and infrastructure improvements around the three stations.

The plans for Hamline, Victoria and Western were developed over the past several months by a community task force. When they are eventually adopted by the Planning Commission and St. Paul City Council, the plans will become part of a larger framework for development along the planned light rail line. The city already has seven other station area plans, for areas around stations along University Avenue. Station area plans suggest new ideas for long-term redevelopment.

The three station plans will serve areas of Lexington-Hamline, Hamline-Midway, Summit-University and Frogtown where many residents are transit-dependent. The plans were reviewed at a series of community workshops. The plans include land use recommendations specific to each area as well as general recommendations for improved connectivity to neighborhoods, more green space and following St. Paul "Complete Streets" plans to make adjacent streets more user-friendly for all modes of traffic. All of the plans also call for improving bus service in the neighborhoods. Parking management, so that light rail and future development don't cause neighborhood parking problems, are additional recommendations.

After the public hearing, commissions on the Neighborhood Planning Committee agreed that they may not be able to address all of the concerns. For example, many of the issues raised by Skyline Towers residents, about jobs creation cannot be addressed by a station area plan. But the commission can address concerns about parks and the idea of skateboard

park in the area by revising the plans to speak more generally about parks goals.

More than 30 people attended the commission public hearing on the three station area plans. Almost a dozen people including translators came from Skyline Tower, a high-rise at 1272 St. Anthony Av. Built in 1971, Skyline is the largest high-rise west of the Mississippi River. It has 500 apartments. It originally housed college students and senior citizens. Many who live in the building today are immigrants. Residents speak 20 languages and dialects, according to Deb Lande of Common-Bond Communities. Common-Bond owns and operates Skyline Tower.

Lande and others said the Skyline residents' needs must be considered when planning the Hamline Avenue station. The number of residents is equivalent to or greater than the number of a typical city block. "If you spread that number across a block that would be a really important contingent of people" she said. Lande said the challenge for the city is to think of the high-rise residents as individuals.

"There's a lot of unemployment and there are a lot of elderly," said high-rise resident Ahmad Hassan. Residents need improved access to jobs and destinations.

"Most people don't know what this is, whether it's a benefit or not," said resident Hadi Khaliq.

Several residents of Skyline Towers told the Planning Commission that they would like to see redevelopment that serves their needs. They would like to see more done to provide safe pedestrian connections between the high-rise and light rail, as well as more green space and play area for children. Skyline has a playground but the closest park space is across Interstate 94 at Dunning Field and has to be accessed by a foot bridge. The closest recreation center, Jimmy Lee, is also across the freeway. About 300 Skyline Towers residents are youth ages 18 and younger.

Another request the Hamline area residents made is for a shopping mall and shops that are specific to the needs of ethnic groups.

Some Planning Commission asked how much outreach was done for Hamline area residents, especially those at Skyline. City staff said that efforts were made to inform Skyline residents of the Hamline Avenue station area planning. But some Planning Commission members, as well as high-rise residents and staff, said it would have been nice to have hosted more meetings there.

Of the three station area plans under study, Hamline calls for the most change, with multi-use buildings proposed on areas

that are now used largely for parking. Another need cited in the plan is for more green space, possibly as a park or even a skateboard park. The other two plans call for smaller-scale redevelopment and preservation of surrounding neighborhoods.

Commissioner Tony Schertler raised questions about the green space. One challenge is that as the Central Corridor area redevelops, land may become more valuable and there will be pressure for redevelopment.

Area district councils including Union Park District Council (UPDC) and Frogtown Neighborhood Association also weighed in on the plans, as did business owners. While generally supportive of the plans, the district councils raised issues about neighborhood connectivity, green space and redevelopment ideas for their areas.

UPDC is supporting Skyline Towers' concerns on the Hamline plans, said Community Organizer Annie Johnson.

The Frogtown council commented on the is supporting inclusion on the plan of the proposed Frogtown Farm on the former Wilder Foundation property and the inclusion of the proposed Victoria Theater redevelopment in the Victoria station area plans. But the Frogtown district council is supporting some of its neighborhood businesses in the Victoria area in opposing the notion of labeling the area as a "World Cultural Heritage District."

Hai Truong, who owns Ngon restaurant, said the naming idea for the area was proposed without adequate input from businesses. He and Planning Commissioner Anthony Fernandez, who is a past Frogtown Neighborhood Association president, said the idea shouldn't be in the plan when it hasn't been vetted among area businesses. Businesses there tend to already have identity as part of Frogtown.

Some Planning Commission members said the issue of giving a neighborhood a name without community support needs to be considered. They may decide to take the reference out of the plan.

"Is this the place where the name should be placed and should we be promoting it?" said Commissioner Jun-Li Wang.

The idea for the cultural heritage district was raised several years ago by Concordia University Professor Bruce Corrie, said Planning Administrator Donna Drummond. It is seen as a way to market the area's ethnic diversity and has been discussed as a possible tourist attraction.

"The idea has been out there for a while but it doesn't seem to have a lot of traction," Drummond said. The commission is poised to remove the reference, although noting that the designation idea can still be brought up at a later date.



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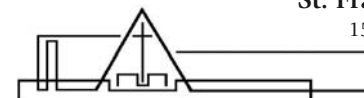
Palm Sunday Masses	Sat., April 16 at 5 p.m.
.....	Sun., April 17 at 10 a.m.
Holy Thursday Mass	Thurs., April 21 at 7:30 p.m.
Good Friday Service	Fri., April 22 at 7:30 p.m.
The Great Easter Vigil	Sat., April 23 at 8:45 p.m.
Easter Sunday Mass	Sun., April 24 at 10 a.m.

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St. Paul Schools forges new plan for the district

By JAN WILLMS

As Supt. Valeria Silva forges ahead with a plan for Strong Schools, Strong Communities in St. Paul, she recognizes that this is a very challenging time for public education.

"Not just for teachers, but for cafeteria workers and administration," she said. "We are all challenged by the kind of work we do and how we do it."

"Everyone thinks that they can be a teacher or a superintendent because one time they went to school," she claimed. "We never challenge a surgeon about an operation, because he or she went to school for it. But based on the experience they had, everyone likes to put their teaching hat on."

Silva said public education is at a crossroads, and the next five years will be critical not just for Minnesota, but for the whole country.

"We can end up with a system where we educate some and do it well, and another group does not get educated. My personal belief is that everyone who has an education has the opportunity to become someone," she declared.

With that in mind, Silva has held 39 meetings across the school district, getting input from parents and explaining the plan to close the ever-present achievement gap, deal with budget cuts and still provide a sustainable and strong education for all.

The plan, adopted by the school board on March 15, will reorganize the district over the next three years, dividing it into six attendance areas, closing some schools and ending citywide busing for many schools.

Silva said the plan is all about achievement: how instruction is being delivered, classroom practices and measuring programs by assessing students.

"We will assess students three times a year, to see growth and

benchmarks," Silva said. "They need to be making progress. At the end of the year, we will ask why they achieve at one level and not another, and we will let this assessment guide our instruction in a better way."

She said classroom teachers will be meeting every week, learning from each other. "Teachers tend to be very isolated, and peer coaching can be very effective," Silva said.

She affirmed that today's schools need to teach the whole child, addressing the fact that the child may be dealing with lack of food or a place to stay or problems in the home. "We can't continue believing that children won't be successful," she said. "There are many schools across the country that have 90 per cent poverty, 90 per cent students of color and 90 per cent performance above grade level. It's the challenge of urban education, working without excuse or rationale."

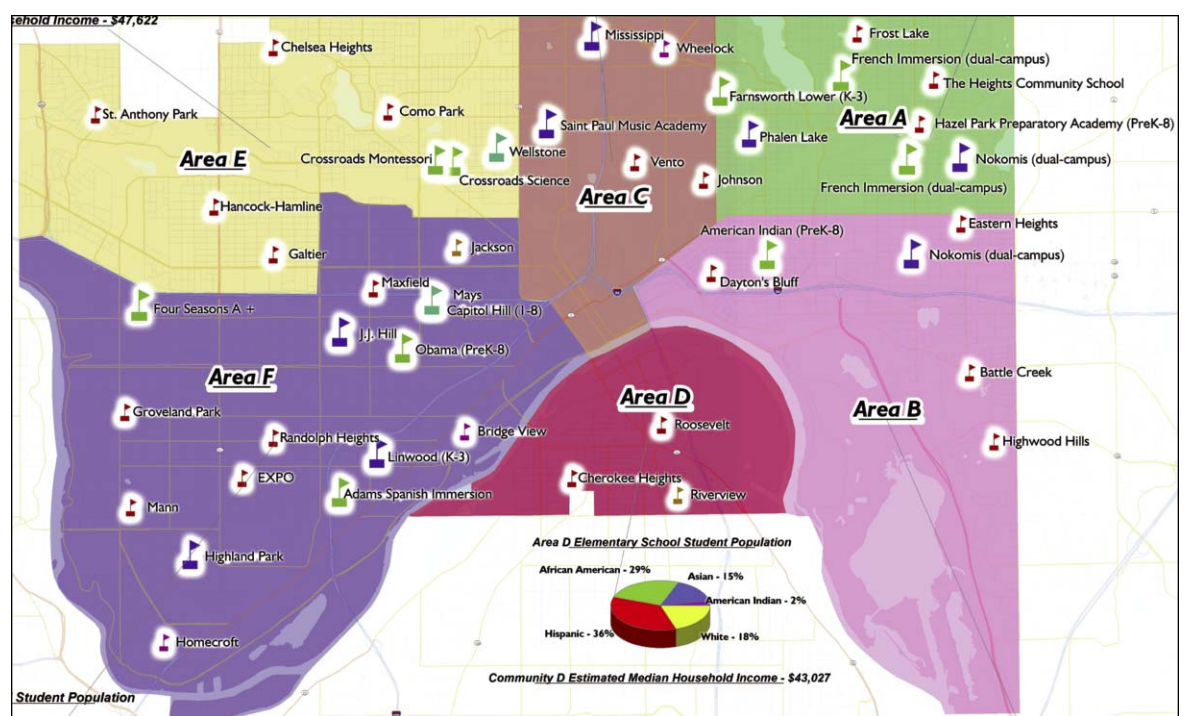
Silva said schools in the University/Como/Rice area are gaining strength.

"Washington will gain 11th graders next year, and its enrollment has been higher than predicted. Kids from Roseville are coming to Washington because of its program offering; it's amazing, no private school can compete. Top world class education is being offered there," Silva said.

"We have to show what kids can get out of public education," Silva continued. "We have to ensure our parents are better informed, and bring the schools back into the communities."

She said she sees the middle class disappearing with resources going down and one group being pitted against another.

"Public education is the civil rights issue of this era," Silva stated. "We need to have the best educators in front of every classroom. My job as superintendent is to en-



The new plan, adopted by the school board on March 15, will reorganize the district over the next three years, dividing it into six attendance areas, closing some schools and ending citywide busing for many schools.

sure all our teachers are the best prepared. I want to feel that I could put my own child or nephew or grandchild in that classroom. It is about quality."

Concerns about the quality of education on the east side were strongly raised by parents whose children attend L'Etoile du Nord, a French immersion school located in the Parkway Building.

Although the initial plan called for moving the school to the former Longfellow building on the west end of St. Paul, the final decision allows the school to remain on the east side, but with a divided campus.

"The east side doesn't have a lot to hang its hat on, and really good schools make a difference to the neighborhood," said Steve Adams, whose children attend the school. He said the school had first been in Highland, then Como

and now the east side. He was very concerned it would be moved a fourth time to another neighborhood.

He said the parents hope for a move from K-6 to K-8 for the immersion school, and that will require moving from the Parkway Building.

"The district has listened to us and understands the situation," Adams said. "That is heartening and re-establishes some trust. Supt. Silva stated publicly they are committing themselves to working with our families and teachers to be a K-8 program if we choose to do that. In the end, it will be a stronger program and on the east side."

He said the three-year plan will only work if the details are gotten right.

He said the situation with L'Etoile du Nord was a complicat-

ed one, and he is concerned that people hate each other over it.

"It divided us so much, but the school board showed it is listening and trying to find a solution, even if it is not perfect," Adams stated.

Kevin Huepenbecker is another parent with children in the St. Paul Public Schools who supports some parts of the plan, but questions others.

Huepenbecker does not see parents being engaged or held accountable by the school district.

"There have been so many plans over the past eight years from different superintendents, and I don't know if anything in this plan, specifically on the achievement gap, is any different from what was done before," he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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Old Easy Street bar new home to John's Pizza Café

By **DEBORAH BROTZ**

As John Weatherston, owner of John's Pizza Café, Ltd., sits with a cup of coffee in his tranquil Garden Room surrounded by lush green plants and floral paintings on a beautiful, sunny day, he smiles thinking that it doesn't get any better than this.

Gone is the old Easy Street bar, and in its place is John's Pizza, at 616 Como Ave., which used to be located kiddie-corner from the new location. Renovated both inside and out, the new restaurant now displays the eye-catching electronic sign from the previous location.

In addition to pizza, grilled hoagies, desserts and treats, and individually prepared pastas have been added to the menu.

For three or four years, Weatherston had been looking for a new location for his restaurant. But, he did not want to venture far from where he was.

"I had my eyes open for some time looking for a larger 'home' for John's Pizza Café," he said. "We outgrew our old location some time ago. When the opportunity presented itself, we couldn't overlook it."

Purchasing the property on Aug. 2, 2010, Weatherston says it took 106 days of extensive remodeling and landscaping to get the building ready to open.

"I remember the move," he said. "We had to shovel the first snow of this long winter season.

We opened on Nov. 16, 2010, and Wow! The comments and the surprised looks when our customers walked through the doors were just overwhelming."

Although Weatherston considered several interesting locations to move his business to, he found there was a reason he has kept his business in the neighborhood for 23 years.

"The more I looked, the more I realized how great this location is and really wanted to stay in the area," he said. "It's easy to find us. It's close to the Capitol and Como Lake, we have great neighbors, and with a three-street intersection, delivery and accessibility are greatly enhanced."

Gutting the old Easy Street building and then renovating it has totally transformed the corner.

"We're changing the direction of the Como, Dale, and Front corner," said Weatherston. "Things don't always have to be deteriorating and slowly go to hell in a bucket. We're taking this corner that people couldn't wait to get through and changing it to a destination."

Visualizing and creating what things could be is what Weatherston does best.

"Some people see what something is, and other people see what it can become," he

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Gone is the old Easy Street bar, and in its place is John's Pizza, at 616 Como Ave., which used to be located kiddie-corner from the new location. Renovated both inside and out, the new restaurant now displays the eye-catching electronic sign from the previous location. The restaurant is owned by John Weatherston and his wife, Kathy. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

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In addition to pizza, grilled hoagies, desserts and treats, and individually prepared pastas have been added to the menu. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

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District 10 will advertise in the weeks prior to the event, as well as distribute a map of the addresses and sale descriptions of all participants.

There will be a \$10 registration fee to cover advertising and administrative costs. Registrations must be submitted by Friday, April 29. Any registrations submitted after that deadline will not be included on the official garage sale map. For more information and to register your location, go to: www.district10comopark.org/2011GarageSale.

Hamline Midway Elders program May 10

"All About Carpal Tunnel Syndrome" will be addressed on May 10. The event will begin at 11:30 at 1514 Englewood Avenue. Lunch is served from 11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. and a free will donation is asked for the meal. Presentations are from 12:15 - 1 p.m. A registered nurse will be available to take blood pressures. For more information call the office of Hamline Midway Elders 651-209-6542. There is currently an urgent need for volunteer drivers to transport seniors to and from medical appointments.

Midway Independent Businesses meet May 9

Sole Proprietors who live and/or work in the Midway area are invited to join Midway Independent Businesses (M.I.B.) The group meets 10-11 a.m. on the first Monday of each month (unless a holiday) at the Hamline Park Building (1564 Lafond; SE corner of Snelling & Lafond). M.I.B.'s next meeting is Monday, May 9. We are dedicated to creating a strong presence in the Midway neighborhood and to develop our own business to its full potential. For more information, contact Nancy at nucc50@gmail.com.

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Restored Kilmer Fireplace to be rededicated

On May 19, at 1p.m, the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Fireplace, located in Como Regional Park, will be rededicated in a public ceremony - 75 years after the fireplace's original dedication. The fireplace's original designer described the intent of his project (in progress at the time) in a letter to the Joyce Kilmer Post No. 107 of the American Legion.

William LaMont Kaufman was Superintendent of Parks for the City of Saint Paul for over thirty years, starting in 1932. Under Superintendent Kaufman's direction, the 18-acre woodland in the southwest corner of Como Park (between Como and Horton Avenues) was dedicated as a memorial arboretum in 1936. The centerpiece of the arboretum was a large stone fireplace - the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Fireplace - dedicated to a World War I hero and author of the famous poem "Trees." The woodland where the fireplace is located is now the site of the Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom project.

Featured speakers at the Rededication are Bryan Murphy, City Landscape Architect, and John Covell, Joyce Kilmer biographer. Group poems written by students from Chelsea Heights Elementary and Como Park Elementary will be recited. (The Como Woodland Advisory Committee and District 10 Como Community Council helped raise the funds that paid for Poet-tree Workshops for the students - the group poems came out of those workshops.) After the poetry reading, the students



Kilmer Fireplace on its original dedication day in 1936.

will plant an oak tree near the fireplace, with the help of Saint Paul City Forestry.

Immediately following the Rededication, at 1:45PM, Saint Paul City Forestry Department, volunteers, and Poet-tree Workshop students will plant 100 tree seedlings in the Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom.

A limited number of commemorative booklets (The Rededication of the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Fireplace - Rediscovering a Forgotten Como Park Icon, the "Dutch Oven") will be available at the District 10 Office in the Historic Streetcar Station (1224 Lexington Pkwy N.) a week before the Rededication. For more background information about the Kilmer Fireplace or Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom visit www.comowoodland.org.

Snelling) is having a Rummage Sale on Saturday April 30 at 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. We will have a Bake Sale and Lunch. Come and shop! Good buys for everyone!

Breastfeeding discussed May 10

The Advantages of Breastfeeding is the topic of the meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche Group on Tuesday, May 10. All expectant and nursing mothers are invited to attend with their babies and toddlers. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information.

Healthy Eating for Successful Living will be held Thursdays, April 14 - May 19, 6:30 p.m. at 1514 Englewood Ave. Learn about nutrition, how to make effective behavior changes and realistic goal setting, all in an interesting, relaxed setting. No cost. Call 651-209-6542 to register.

Pay for college without debt

If you're like most parents, you're looking for ways to lower the costs of sending your children to college. And while you probably know that scholarships exist, few people know how to apply or where to begin looking. Jason Lum (with ScholarEdge), a Harvard graduate and former admissions counselor, who paid for his entire college education with scholarship money, will be giving a seminar on how to fund college without going into debt by finding, applying for, and winning scholarship money. This outstanding, award-winning seminar will help you get past the "learning curve" and avoid common mistakes that often discourage scholarship applicants. The content is practical, fun and anyone can do it. The program will be held on Thursday, April 28th at 6:30 p.m. at Central Lutheran School, 775 Lexington Pkwy N. Please RSVP! Call the CLS school office @ 651-645-8649 or email school@clss.org to reserve your spot. An RSVP is necessary to

ensure that adequate materials are available for all attendees.

Free Como Bike Safety Rodeo April 30

The District 10 Neighborhood Safety Committee is sponsoring a free Bike Safety Rodeo for ages 5 and up on Saturday, April 30 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the North Dale Recreation Center, 1414 N. St. Albans.

Bring your bike and helmet, learn to ride safely and follow the rules of the road before venturing out on your bike this spring! Children 10 and under must be accompanied by an adult and all participants are required to wear a bike helmet.

Bicycling instructors and a SPPD Bike Patrol & Safety Specialist will be there to offer safety tips and helmet and bicycle inspection checks. Resource tables and light refreshments will be available as well.

Register by calling District 10 office at 651-644-3889, online at www.district10comopark.org/rodeo or on the day of event. Volunteers (ages 18+) are also needed. Please call the office or submit an online registration form if interested in helping with this event.

Pre-adoption free information session

Downey Side...families for youth, invites community members to attend a FREE information session regarding adoption and Minnesota's Waiting Children. Downey Side's next information session will be Tuesday, April 19th, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Downey Side Minnesota, 450 North Syndicate Street, Suite 90. Pre-registration required. To register, email stpaulmn@downeyside.org or call 651-228-0117.

Como Park Funtastic Carnival May 26

The Como Park Elementary Funtastic Carnival is scheduled for Thursday, May 26th from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at 780 West Wheelock Parkway.

We will have a raffle, games, bingo, face painting, crazy hair, inflatable castles and crafts. Please come and join us for a night of good food and fun activities with your family!!! Proceeds go to maintain our school playground and equipment.

Hamline produces 'Crimes of the Heart'

Hamline University continues its 80th season with a presentation of Beth Henley's classic tale, "Crimes of the Heart," with spe-

cial guest direction by Wendy Lehr. The three Magrath sisters, reunited at Old Granddaddy's Mississippi home, find themselves reminiscing over their years apart and helping each other through facing their troubles.

Tickets: \$2-\$8. April 14, 15, 16 at 7:30 p.m. For advanced reservations or more information please contact the Hamline University Theatre Box Office at 651-523-2905 or tickets@hamline.edu.

Bethlehem Church holds Rummage Sale April 30

Bethlehem Lutheran Church In the Midway will hold their Spring Rummage Sale, Saturday, April 30 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Come shop & have Lunch. 436 N Roy St, 1 blk South of Univ & Snelling. Watch for signs

Screening of 'The Waste Land' April 27

Hamline Midway Library Association presents a screening of the film "T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land'" in the waning days of National Poetry Month. This 50-minute contemporary multimedia translation of the poem and its "heap of broken images," committed with mingled reverence and postmodern skepticism by St. Paul filmmaker Tom Schroeder and Minneapolis writer Jay Orff, offers a 21st-century perspective on an iconic 20th-century poem. The event will be held in the auditorium of Hamline Midway Library, 1558 Minnehaha Ave., on Wednesday, April 27, at 6:30 pm, with a brief introduction by one of the producers. Admission is free!

Nominate your favorite tree

It's time to nominate your favorite neighborhood tree for a Como Tree Appreciation Award. The District 10 Environment Committee is sponsoring these awards as a way to treasure our valuable neighborhood trees and to promote the planting of new trees. Trees work hard for us, yet many of us take them for granted. In addition to beautifying our landscapes, trees clean our air, reduce rain runoff, help us save on heating and cooling costs, and support urban wildlife.

Please nominate a residential tree—big or small, old or new, yours or a neighbor's, any tree you treasure—by visiting the District 10 website at <http://www.district10comopark.org/nominateatree.html>. Nominations will be accepted until May 28, 2011. Winners will be notified by late June 2011.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

New District 10 coordinator relishes coming to Como Park each day

By **DEBORAH BROTZ**

As a child growing up in South St. Paul, Jessica Bronk used to come to Como Park a lot with her family and loved the area. Now, although she lives in North St. Paul, as District 10's new administrator and coordinator, she gets to come to Como Park five days a week.

Bronk, who started her new job on Jan. 31, was interested in the position because it gave her the opportunity to work in areas she hadn't worked in before.

"I was always interested in non-profits and community organizing," she said. "I haven't had experience in it. It's something I've always wanted to do."

She felt District 10 would be a good organization to work for.

"It seemed like a really great organization," said Bronk. "I felt a connection to the job in the interview and felt it was something I would really love. Going out and meeting people and doing community organizing seemed like an awesome job to me."

Previously, Bronk was in

banking and worked at US Bank for two and a half years in the operations center off of Kellogg Boulevard in the Corporate Trust Building. This helped her gain a fundamental understanding of financial practices.

"I worked on a team of 12 people," she said. "Prior to that, I was in school. This is my second job out of school."

What Bronk likes best about her new job is that there's so much variety.

"I get to go out and meet people from the community," she said. "I get to write, which I love. I love journalism. Every day is different. I feel like I've been learning so much in the past few months about the city and government. There have been a lot of new experiences I'm enjoying so far."

Graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a bachelor of arts degree in journalism and mass communications with an emphasis on strategic communications, Bronk feels her education will help her in her new job.



Now, although she lives in North St. Paul, as District 10's new administrator and coordinator, Jessica Bronk gets to come to Como Park five days a week.

"To have a journalism and mass communications background, you have to be somebody who needs to be objective," she said. "You know how to speak professionally to people to get them to open up. The biggest part of my job is communication. The community and board need to be on the same page. My journalism background will benefit me."

When she is not working, Bronk loves reading and biking.

"I have a great group of

friends and family," she said. "I love camping and being outdoors. I even dabble in fishing. I don't bait my own hook. I'm kind of a fair weather fisherman. My boyfriend and family love to fish. I come from a big family, and they're outdoorsy."

Although Bronk was born in South St. Paul, where she grew up until fifth grade when her family moved to Prescott, Wis., she has many fond memories of Como Park growing up.

"I really love the zoo," she said. "We had annual 4th of July picnics at the park. We would go to the Conservatory in the winter a lot and take in the flowers and pretend it was spring. I'm still kind of learning the neighborhoods and streets. My knowledge is somewhat limited. I'm learning the boundaries and finding my way around."

As the administrator and coordinator of District 10, Bronk will dedicate her time to building strong relationships in the community and continuing to make Como neighborhood a great place to live, work, and play.

"Being administrator and coordinator is important to me because I've always wanted to work in a non-profit and community organizing," she said. "It's my dream job. It's something I've always had an interest in doing and finally I'm doing it."

In the future, Bronk wants to continue learning.

"Right now, I'm learning my job as best I can," she said. "I'm learning the neighborhoods and community as best I can. I need to get out there and meet the businesses and people in District 10. I want to familiarize myself with everything."

Bronk admires the great sense of pride and community in the Como neighborhood, and she looks forward to being a part of it.

"I hope in this new position I can be a person who helps facilitate a board that's active and a community that's engaged," she said. "I hope people will look at District 10 as an organization that strengthens the community and helps the neighborhood as a whole."

In Our Community

Continued from page 10

Breakfast at North Emanuel Church

A FREE Community Breakfast will be served on Easter, April 24, served 8-9 a.m., at North Emanuel Lutheran Church in celebration of our 120th year. Breakfast FREE to the community of the North End.

North Emanuel Lutheran Church, 301 Hatch Ave. at Matilda Street. Church phone is 651-489-5611. For more information you may call Larry 651-373-5797 or Sandy 651-283-1681. FREE Community Breakfast April 24th, served 8-9 am.

Award-winning author visits library

Phillip Hoose the widely-acclaimed author of books, essays, stories, songs, and articles, including the National Book Award winning book, "Claudette Colvin: Twice Towards Justice," is coming to Saint Paul. "Phil Hoose's books bring life to important and sometimes overlooked American stories. We are very excited to host Phil Hoose at the Saint Paul Public Library in April," says Janet Van Tassel, Library Specialist at the Merriam Park Library.

Hoose will discuss his book, "Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice" at the Rondo Library, 461 Dale Street, Saint Paul, on Thursday, April 28 at 7 p.m. and again at the Saint Paul Central Library, 90 W. 4th Street, on Friday, April 29 at 10 a.m. Claudette Colvin is the first in-depth account of an important yet largely unknown civil rights figure. Hoose skillfully weaves her dramatic story into the fabric of the historic Montgomery bus boycott and court case that changed the course of American history.

Hoose will discuss his book,

"The Race to Save the Lord God" at the Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., Saint Paul on Saturday, April 30 at 11 a.m. The tragedy of extinction is explained through the dramatic story of the legendary bird, the ivory-billed woodpecker, and those who tried to possess it, paint it, shoot it, sell it, and ultimately save it.

All events are free and no registration is necessary. For more information, please call 651-266-7000 or visit www.sppl.org.

Como's Women's Club Golf

The Como Women's Golf Club has opening for new members for the 2011 golf season at Como Park Golf course in St. Paul Tee times for 18 holes are available on Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings with the season running from May 1st through September 30th. This is a great way to improve your game, establish a handicap, golf with other women, and have lots of fun. For more information

please contact Kathy Zieman at 651-488-1916 or email @razieman2004@msn.com. You may also go to www.golfstpaul.org to download an application.

a.m. - 5 p.m. May 6-7 at 581 Blair Av. Household goods, clothes, toys, furniture, books and other donations are sought. All funds raised go to support activities for children and senior citizens in Frogtown. Call 651-224-2456 if you would like to donate

Frogtown holds annual rummage sale

Frogtown Community Events Committee is seeking donations for its annual rummage sale, 8

Next deadline: May 2

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Good Friday	Noon & 7 p.m.
Vigil of Easter	8:00 p.m.
Easter Day	8:45 & 10:45 a.m.

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9:30 Adult Bible Class • 9:45 Sunday School

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Senator Anderson

Continued from page 6

They had two sons, and Anderson says she remembers the babysitter coming down to the Capitol and pushing her son Jack around in a stroller until 3 a.m.

"Our kids grew up around the Capitol," Anderson recalls.

"Our lives were so entwined with politics."

But when her older child entered school, the family decided to reside in one location, and Dawkins stepped down from his House seat. "It was a hard choice for him," Anderson says.

As she starts her new career, Anderson says she is so honored that Gov. Mark Dayton chose her.

"He asked me to interview, and then called me back in and asked if I would be chair," she

says. "There was no way I could say no."

She indicates it will be a great chance to guide energy policy.

"It was a very difficult decision," she admits, "but I'm looking forward to stepping out of politics. It consumes your life, and I am thrilled about this opportunity."

"Our job on the Public Utilities Commission is in some ways like being a judge," Anderson

comments. "We have to follow the law, and Minnesota has really good laws on the books, so I'm excited to be here. My job is to ensure electricity and phone service is affordable, reliable and environmentally sound."

She says that right now, no nuclear plants are allowed to move forward in Minnesota. Anderson notes that there is an effort taking place to repeal that law.

"If the law changes, I will

follow it," she says.

As for the Senate seat she retired from March 20, a recent primary election resulted in Mary McGuire winning that race to be the DFL candidate. She will face GOP candidate Greg Copeland in an upcoming election.

"I want to thank everybody for all their support these past years," Anderson says. "It's been fun, exciting, frustrating at times, but I wouldn't have traded it for anything."

St. Paul School Plan

Continued from page 8

He said a big concern for him is enrollment, and if those gains are not met, what it will do to the budget plan. He said he is in favor of the neighborhood schools, however.

Huepenbecker said although

there have been a number of meetings regarding the three-year plan, he is not sure that board members have listened to what parents have to say.

"I hope that does change, but am I confident it is going to? No. It's one of the reasons I'm running for school board," Huepenbecker said.

For Duane Dutrieuille, a parent with two 11th graders in St. Paul schools, his support of the plan is 100 per cent.

"The plan is not perfect, but it is a start in the right direction," he noted. He thinks the district is really invested in African American students' improvement.

"I just want to do my part and be involved," Dutrieuille said. "We need to talk about our differences, our strengths and systematically work together for the good of our children."

Board member Keith Hardy, who was a slow convert to the

school plan, is happy to hear about parents wanting to be involved. He said his initial concern was with all of the goals, and not seeing the numbers behind the goals. He also expressed doubts about the high academic goal within three years being achievable.

"I was won over enough to approve of the plan," he noted. "Different people came up to me and said they would work in the schools to have that achieve-

ment."

He said the caveat for him will be to have the superintendent put together an implementation for the details of the plan. Hardy uses the term equity gap, rather than achievement gap, that the district needs to address.

"We need to see everyone as gifted and talented," he said. He emphasized that all students are capable of learning, but many are dealing with domestic problems that need to be addressed.

Monitor in a minute

Continued from page 2

More street closings are coming up, including the closing of Pascal Avenue to through traffic. That is prompting protests because Pascal has long been a shortcut for motorists wants to avoid Snelling or Hamline avenues. Pascal is also a north-south bike route.

Snelling typically carries 35,000 vehicles per day in the area, with another 25,000 on University. Additional traffic has flowed into the neighborhood around the Healtheast/former Midway Hospital campus since April 4, when Snelling Avenue was narrowed to a single lane in each direction north of Interstate 94. The narrowed lanes are be-

tween Spruce Tree Drive and Sherburne Avenue. This is to allow utility work, said Mike Pretel of the Central Corridor Project Office.

"Where we're at today is that Xcel Energy needs to be in the University and Snelling areas to relocate utilities," Pretel said. Traffic was on the east side of Snelling last week. This week traffic moves to the west side of Snelling Avenue. University Avenue will also be one lane in each direction.

A number of utilities need to be relocated, some temporarily as a result of light rail construction. There have been two natural gas leaks in the University and Fry area; the most recent on March 23. Xcel staff present said the leaks weren't related. More than 1,200 customers were affected by the most recent gas leak.

The construction that began last month has already hit some

roadblocks of its own. One huge challenge along University Avenue was potholes, especially west of Snelling in the westbound lane. That will most likely require more mill and overlay work, rather than simply patching the street.

The worst of the construction affecting the Merriam Park neighborhood will be this year, said Pretel, although there will be some work in 2012. "It will be nothing like what you're seeing now," he said.

Residents of the area around Midway Hospital and Spruce Tree Center said the construction is making a bad situation worse. "Fry Street is a big problem right now," one man said. Traffic cutting through Fry to get to University or to the St. Anthony Avenue frontage road already causes congestion. Traffic is now stop and go at times.

Mighty Midway Storytellers hold May 7 story time at the library

The Mighty Midway Storytellers invite you to our May 7, 11:15 a.m. story time at the Hamline Midway Library, corner of Snelling and Minnehaha.

Spring is finally here, and it's a great time to get outdoors and get our hands dirty (and our faces and shirts and pants and sneakers, too!). At this storytime, we'll read about planting gardens, playing in the mud, and exploring nature. Plus, songs, finger plays, and time to draw a picture of what you like to do outside.

Kids of All Ages Cabaret: Come share your talent, whatever it is, on the Hamline Midway Library stage (lower meet-

ing room) 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. May 21. Performers sign up for a five-minute slot. All types of performances welcome: singing, playing an instrument, reciting a poem, telling or reading a story, or buzzing on a kazoo. Refreshments. Prizes awarded by our crack panel of judges. Donations welcomed; no one will be turned away. Entrance fee: one thin quarter, with proceeds benefiting the Hamline Midway Library Association. The library is located on the corner of Snelling and Minnehaha avenues in St. Paul.

Please email me with questions or call. Thanks so much, Jean 6561-771-8421

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Healthy Corridor Coalition proposes major changes to Central Corridor LRT zoning

By JANE MCCLURE

Proposed zoning changes along the planned Central Corridor rail line could harm rather than help low-income people, minorities and small businesses. That's the message the Healthy Corridor for All Coalition took to St. Paul City Hall April 6, for a hearing on major changes to zoning along University Avenue, from Marion Street to the west city limits.

The hearing, held after deadline for this edition of the Monitor, also included a 24-hour prayer vigil at City Hall. It was the first zoning-related prayer vigil there that anyone could remember.

The council could adopt the proposed changes as soon as April 13, and they could take effect in mid to late May.

More than 300 people filled the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer sanctuary March 5 to advocate for residents and businesses along the 11-mile light rail line. The day before the rally, the St. Paul Planning Commission recommended approval of numerous property rezoning from Marion Street to the west city limits. While those sweeping recommendations are meant to spur redevelopment and investment on and near University Avenue, speakers said the decisions made by the City Council could deepen the city's current

economic and racial inequities, destroy small businesses and force low-income people out of their homes.

"Why should people have to leave? We have a moral obligation to keep people in the community," said Rev. Dr. Charles Gill of Pilgrim Baptist Church.

Chong Vang, owner of Destiny Café in Frogtown, said 15 employees depend on his business to put food on their tables. He is worried that light rail could force out his customers and cause his five-year-old restaurant to close. "Parking will be limited and tents will go up," he said.

Eve Sawn, an Aurora-St. Anthony resident and business owner, is involved in the Save Our Homes campaign. "We don't just have statistics, we have solutions. Things can be done to keep us in our homes and businesses."

Several speakers made it clear that they support light rail and the advantages it could bring, but they are worried about how the city will guide future redevelopment. Speakers called for more new jobs, retention of affordable housing, support for existing small businesses and help for new small businesses. There is also a need to make sure that any public transportation improvements be accessible to those who need it most. Many households in neighbor-

hoods around the Central Corridor don't have motor vehicles and already rely heavily on University Avenue and connecting bus lines. Concerns were also raised about easy access to the light rail, especially for older people and people with disabilities.

"Zoning is the framework that holds the whole city together," said Pastor Anita Hill of St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church. "Zoning will determine whether housing stays affordable." Zoning will also determine how the area changes over time. That's why clergy members involved with the advocacy group ISAIAH plan a 24-hour prayer vigil tied to the council vote, which is expected as soon as April 13.

The March 5 event was when the coalition rolled out results of a health impact assessment. Neighborhood demographics and other existing conditions were weighed against the changes rezoning could potentially bring.

The zoning changes proposed by the Planning Commission, which are expected to guide long-term land use along University Avenue, would promote denser, mixed-use redevelopment. Many of the recommendations have already been changed due to community pressure. Some industrial land for rezoning has been pulled out of the plan. Also, the city is

taking steps to make sure non-conforming uses such as auto repair businesses can remain on University.

But the coalition is still concerned that more needs to be done to protect the community. One key finding is that more than 60 percent of all jobs in St. Paul are in neighborhoods along Central Corridor. Small businesses make up 86 percent of all businesses along Central Corridor. Unemployment of corridor area residents is at 9.9 percent, as compared to 7.6 percent for all of Ramsey County.

Forty-five percent of Central Corridor area households pay more than one-third of their income on housing. That is up from 33 percent of those households a decade ago. In the study presentation, it was indicated that rapid gentrification could force residents out of their homes.

Healthy Corridor for All is using the health impact analysis to prepare its zoning recommendations, which are meant to support high-quality jobs, develop and support diverse local businesses, protect residents from negative impacts of gentrification, meet the demand for affordable housing and maintain and improvement public transportation.

"Our concern is, who will benefit from the project?" said Shireen Malekafzali of PolicyLink,

a national research and policy institute. PolicyLink was involved in the health impact assessment. Changes in zoning and subsequent redevelopment could mean that people of color and low-income people could feel the most significant negative effects of the project. Already, the neighborhoods around Central Corridor are more diverse than the city as a whole.

The assessment shows very mixed results. Redevelopment could result in more jobs, but also in more displacement of people. If residential and commercial rents rise, that would disproportionately affect low-income people and people of color.

Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark and Nancy Homans, Mayor Chris Coleman's point person on light rail, addressed the group. Stark said some changes, such as the new King's Crossings retail-residential development at University and Dale, is already happening. That is the type of affordable, mixed-use redevelopment the city wants to promote.

Stark said city officials and the coalition share many of the same goals for the corridor, but that they may disagree as to how to get there. He urged those present to support existing small businesses, saying, "Get out there and get into those businesses during construction."

April Events at Rice Street Branch Library

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

The MacPhail Center for Music will present Sing, Play Learn! on Tuesday April 19 at 6 p.m. Through hands-on musical play activities, families will experience music's impact on learning and reading readiness. Together we will sing, rhyme, read, move and create! Please call 651-558-2223 to register.

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

The Computer Gaming Club will meet on Tuesdays 4:00 to 5:30. Try Runescape, Wii, Scratch or other computer games and programs. Bring your friends!

The Collector's Corner Neighborhood Trading Post will be open Wednesdays from 4 to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 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 English Language Conversation Circle will meet on Mondays from 4 to 5:15 p.m. The Circle is for adults interested in improving their English speaking

skills. Sessions are free and open to the public.

The North End Book Club will meet on Monday April 25 from 12:45-2:30 p.m. 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.

Free Job Search Assistance will be offered on Fridays from 10:30 to 12:30. A consultant from Goodwill-Easter Seals will provide help with job applications and resumes. Please call 651-558-2223 for more information.

Computer classes will be offered on Friday mornings from 10:15-12:15. For more information or to register, please call Sandy at 651-293-8811. Classes are offered in partnership with North End Community Education.

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 p.m. to 7 p.m., Thursday from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. or Sunday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

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.-5 p.m. For more information about the Rice Street Branch Library or any of our programs, please call 651-558-2223.






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Hamline University breaks ground on new University Center

With hard hats on and shovels in hand, students, faculty, alumni, and donors broke ground on Hamline University's new University Center on April 11 at the site where the new building will stand—on the southwest edge of Hamline's Saint Paul campus at the corner of Snelling and Englewood avenues.

Aspiring to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED silver standards, the three-level glass and terra cotta building will include solar panels and a green roof. It will include large and small meeting spaces, computer bars, dining facilities, a coffee shop, a Spirit Store, a meditation room, an outdoor terrace, and an underground parking garage. The 75,000 square foot building will serve as the anchor gathering place on campus for commuter and residential students, faculty,

staff, and visitors. Architectural firm Shepley Bulfinch has designed the building, and Roseville-based McGough will construct it.

Thus far, Hamline has raised more than \$13 million in gifts toward the project and expects to raise an additional \$11 million before the center is completed in August of 2012. The lead gift of \$8.3 million came from 1946 Hamline University College of Liberal Arts alumna Carol Anderson and her deceased husband Dennis. The building will be named the Carol Young Anderson and Dennis Anderson University Center, in honor of the couple.

"Through their generous gift, Carol and Dennis Anderson have allowed us to begin realizing the dream for the new University Center," said Hamline University



In this photo, from the left- Carol Anderson ('46 alumna), Hamline University President Linda Hanson, Dick Hoel (Hamline trustee), Brenda Heim (Hamline trustee), Kita McVay (Chair of the Hamline Board of Trustees), and Dan Loritz (former Hamline University VP of University Relations).

President Linda Hanson. "We recognize that a modern, attractive, and functional University Center plays a critical role in creating a sense of community, recruiting students, and serving commuting students, many of

whom are professional working adults. It will invite living and learning activities with all the amenities of good food, a one-stop shop for services on campus, quiet places for students to study, and robust spaces for groups of our Hamline community members to gather."

The Andersons are longtime supporters of Hamline. After graduating from Hamline University in 1946 with a degree in sociology, Carol married Dennis Anderson, and they farmed and ran a ranch in South Dakota for the next several decades. Over the years, Carol Anderson has volunteered her time and talent as a member of the South Dakota State Board of Social Services and the State Board for the League of Women Voters. Twice she has been named the Democratic Par-

ty candidate from Pennington County for the South Dakota State House of Representatives, and she has held a unique position as the first female president of the YMCA board of directors in Rapid City, South Dakota. Carol served on the Hamline University Board of Directors from 1993-2001 and as chair of the estate planning and endowment committee for the New American University Campaign. Carol resides in South Dakota.

The Andersons have made a previous gift of \$1 million to endow the Carol Young Anderson and the Dennis Anderson Chair in the Social Sciences. Added to their gift for the University Center, and their 50+ years of annual support, their total giving to Hamline University exceeds \$9.6 million.

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Met Council

Continued from page 4

though she put up signs at her old location before the holiday, the sidewalk was blocked and meters were hooded, which may have prevented prospective customers from even seeking the signs.

Twin Cities Photography Group owner Diane Pietro said her building interior was torn up by construction crews. Her business lost parking, and she has already gotten two parking tickets. "This has been mishandled all the way," she said.

McCann, whose family owns office and industrial properties in the West Midway, said tenants are already asking for rent reductions due to worries about lost revenue. Most of the losses are due to loss of on-street parking. "If parking near our buildings was replaced, people wouldn't need the compensation that they're asking for."

McCann and others also said the project has been mismanaged

and scolded the Metropolitan Council. "There's a sense that you're just incompetent and it can't be done right."

"We don't need mitigation, we need compensation," said Mike Baca, owner of Impressive Print. He said the only program available, \$10,000 loans from the City of St. Paul, is not nearly enough for affected businesses. "Who wants a \$10,000 loan when you're losing between 30 and 60 percent of your revenue?"

Steve Bernick, who owns Milbern Clothing and the building that houses a Firestone Tires store, said his businesses unexpectedly lost access to Aldine Street and he is already looking at moving his business off of University Avenue. "Fifty percent of our business comes from Minneapolis," he said. Now those motorists from the west have to make an illegal u-turn to get to the store.

"We've been very frustrated by the process," said Scott Walker of the Capital City Business Council. Walker said business owners and residents feel patronized by the process used to conduct the environmental assessment.

Porky's

Continued from page 1

"I think it would be a good fit for us," she said.

As of this writing, attempts by the Minnesota Street Rod Association, the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota and the St.

Paul Heritage Preservation to keep Porky's standing have been unsuccessful.

At the April 4 auction, however, Preservation Alliance of Minnesota was planning to bid on several items. And that neon sign with the blinking pig in the top hat was up for bids, so Truelson's neighbors won't be seeing it in her front yard.

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John's Pizza

Continued from page 9

said. "I have always been a dreamer. My draftsman captured my ideas in his drawings and the craftsmen and contractors, most of them from this community, took the ideas and made them into a reality."

At his previous location, Weatherston could only seat 16 or 18 people.

"Our new location is fabulous," he said. "We have three beautiful dining areas increasing our indoor seating to 82. Our main dining room provides a comfortable space with the privacy of large high-backed booths as well as tables and chairs for flexible seating. Our Garden Room is a peaceful, cheery and bright room filled with plants

and pictures. Our third dining area is a great new lighted patio with outdoor seating for 44."

In addition to handicap parking, the new location has an expanded food preparation area.

"We have a larger pizza prep area and a second cooking area for sautéing, grilling, baking and pasta preparation," said Weatherston. "Our customers are blown away and can't believe the transformation of the space and the quality of food coming from a local family restaurant."

Weatherston believes there are a number of reasons why people like his food.

"The first thing about great Italian cooking is olive oil and great cheeses," he said. "You need fresh ingredients and you've got to care about what you're putting out."

Weatherston feels he has



"The first thing about great Italian cooking is olive oil and great cheeses."

- John Weatherston, John's Pizza

some of the best pasta chefs in the Twin Cities.

"We have been told our signature pastas measure up to the finest," he said. "But, it wasn't until we stepped away on our visit to the Pizza Expo that we had the privilege of dining in some of the most respected Ital-

ian restaurants in the greater Tucson area. Except for the white tablecloths and the authentic Italian staff, you could not tell any difference in their entrees and ours."

Although Weatherston did not go to culinary school, he has got a tremendous amount of

cooking experience.

"I went into the pizza business after a trip to the West Coast," he said. "I was introduced to designer pizzas and fell in love with the concept."

Weatherston, 65, could retire, but he won't because he enjoys his employees, his customers, and selling high quality food so much.

"I love the business," he said. "I love meeting people. We have a crew of wonderful people working for us."

Weatherston's goal at his new location is to maintain the high quality of food that John's has become known for.

"My hopes are that my customers will enjoy it as much as I do," he said. "Employing neighborhood people and creating new and interesting dishes, that's what's fun and important."

Classifieds

Continued from page 15

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Spring Concerts & Events at Hamline University

Friday, April 15, 4-7 p.m.

Hancock-Hamline Collaboration Benefit Concert

Benefit concert and silent auction to raise money for the Hancock-Hamline Scholarship Fund.

Bush Student Center Ballroom
1551 Hewitt Avenue, Saint Paul

Thursday, April 28, 5-6 p.m.

Women in Philanthropy

Conversation and networking. Please sign up in advance. Call Donna Carlier, 651-523-2273

Klas Center-Kay Fredericks Room, 1535 Taylor Avenue, Saint Paul

Sunday, May 1 at 4 p.m.

A Cappella Choir Spring Concert

Conducted by George S. T. Chu, the concert will feature music of American composers. It will also include the premiere of the new Hamline Alma Mater "There is Promise in the Sound," conducted by its composer, Edward Marcus.

Sundin Music Hall
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Friday, May 6 at 7 p.m.

Hamline Jazz Ensemble Concert

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Sunday, May 8 at 3 p.m.

Hamline Orchestra Concert

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Saturday, May 14 at 2 p.m.

Hamline Winds Spring Concert

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Saturday, May 14 at 8 p.m.

University Women's Chorale Concert

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All events listed are free and open to the public

