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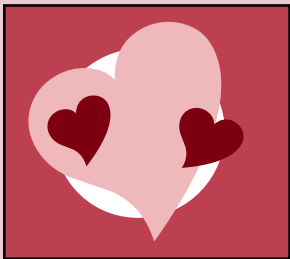
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## Midway couple to celebrate 66th wedding anniversary

By JAN WILLMS

In these days of multiple and short-term marriages, Paul and Marcia Onkka are living proof that a good relationship can last. In May, the Midway area residents will celebrate their 66th wedding anniversary.

The Onkkas, who currently live at Episcopal Home's Iris Park Commons, met through friends. Marcia, 85, was a nursing student at the University of Minnesota and had gone to spend the weekend with a friend in Austin. Paul, 92, a pharmacist in Austin, had been a classmate of the friend's husband.

Paul and Marcia met, and 110 days later were married.

Paul had graduated from the U of M in 1943, and Marcia graduated in 1946, two days before the wedding. They lived in Austin several years.

"Four of our seven children were born there," Marcia said. The couple also has 16 grandchildren and their second great grandchild was born a couple days ago.

"Our pride and joy are our kids," Paul said. "They all have master's degrees, except one who was named attorney of the year."

The couple purchased a drug store in Faribault and lived there for many years. They sold the business in 1988. In the 1990s, according to Marcia, they were ordained as Episcopal deacons and carried on a ministry in Faribault until leaving there in 1994.

"We traveled for three years in a mobile home," Marcia said



Paul and Marcia Onkka are living proof that a good relationship can last. In May, the Midway area residents will celebrate their 66th wedding anniversary. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

of their next venture. They went across the country and into Canada.

"We had a wonderful time," she said. "When you raise a big family, you need to get reacquainted again, just the two of you. Traveling in a motor home is a wonderful way to do that."

The couple also spent some time wintering in Yuma, AZ, serving a church there.

They have resided at Iris Park Commons for the past six years.

"The most important point is that it is an Episcopalian home," Marcia explained. "This has been a good move for us. The staff here is caring and attentive. We're quite independent, and they respect our independence."

To what do they attribute their long marriage?

"I worked, and she took care of the kids," Paul responded.

"It takes perseverance, a willingness to compromise and common interests," Marcia added. "We both like to read. We did a lot of bird watching together when we were on the road." She also confesses to being a political junkie, absorbing all the news of the upcoming election with great interest.

The couple admitted they have, in their many years together, had an argument or two. But Paul said they resolved them by walking away from them.

"What's spooky," he said with a smile, "is that we're still both in good shape."

Marcia said the couple has been blessed with good health.

"I had a heart attack a few years ago, but I'm fine now," she noted. They both keep active. For their first five years at Iris

Park Commons, they carried on their ministry at the church home. Marcia still does a lot of calling and tries to keep in contact with some of the more debilitated residents in the nursing home.

In the summer, they spend much of their time outside and do a lot of walking.

"They have been doing innovative things here," she said. A new building is being planned for memory care. Marcia said that when that is under construction, they can serve as sidewalk superintendents. Paul said Iris Park Commons has lots of activities, including art classes and Bible study.

"My son, who is a psychologist, said older people now are curious," Marcia said. "He said they used to sit in a corner and grow old, but that has changed."

"It's been a good run," she said happily, "and it isn't over yet. We are looking forward to more good years."

When asked if they had any special celebration in mind for Valentine's Day, Paul chuckled. "We stopped planning things a long time ago," he said. "We just let them happen."

"It takes perseverance,  
a willingness to  
compromise and  
common interests."

- Marcia Onkka





# monitor

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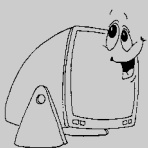
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## Monitor in a Minute

### Central Corridor can continue work

Central Corridor light rail construction can continue, as a result of a Jan. 23 U.S. District Court ruling. However, U.S. District Judge Donovan Frank found, however, that the rail project staff failed to follow a January 2011 court order requiring firm analysis of the construction's impact on businesses. Frank is calling for the Metropolitan Council, rail project staff and the Federal Transit Administration to supplement their final environmental impact statement (FEIS). The judge is asking for a more detailed financial analysis showing how businesses have been and will be affected by rail construction. The judge called a January 2011 environmental analysis of the project unacceptable.

"The Court specifically ordered defendants to discuss the impacts of lost business revenue in the FEIS," Frank stated. But while the judge found that wasn't done to his satisfaction, he did note the "significant public benefits to the (Central Corridor) project."

Frank urged those working on the project to work closely with the plaintiffs in the lawsuit. Those plaintiffs include the St. Paul branch of the NAACP, the Aurora/ St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation, neighborhood businesses and residents, and Pilgrim Baptist Church.

The \$957 million project

continues on University Avenue this construction season with work focused east of Hamline Avenue. The lawsuit and ways to respond to the project were to be discussed Feb. 8 when Metropolitan Council officials are to consider a new \$1.2 million marketing program, paid for with surplus project marketing funds.

### Two sites win national historic designation

Two area sites have won places on the National Register of Historic Places. Officials from Hamline United Methodist Church in Hamline-Midway neighborhood and Charles Thompson Hall were recently notified that their buildings had won the coveted designation.

Last fall the St. Paul Heritage Preservation Commission recommended approval of the two designation requests. Thompson Hall is in Merriam Park. It is the nation's oldest and largest social hall for the deaf, and hosts many community activities for deaf and hearing-impaired Minnesotans.

Hamline Church is being honored for its design, including its unique and historic windows.

Church members plan to hold an open house, special worship service and an evensong event Sunday, April 22 to mark the National Register status. Details on the event will be released soon and the public will be invited to attend.

### City approves property vacations for Walgreens

The last pieces of the Lexington-Larpenteur Walgreens development are falling into place, with Jan. 22 St. Paul City Council approval of property vacations to rebuild the alley between the store and neighborhood homes.

The City Council unanimously the petition of Semper Development to vacate a portion of the alley in the block bounded by Larpenteur Avenue, California Avenue, Lexington Parkway, and Dunlap Street.

Approval was not without objections from commercial property owners west of the project site, which is currently occupied by an MGM Liquor store. These property owners raised questions about how a dead-end alley would affect access to the parking spaces behind other commercial buildings on the block. They also raised concerns about alley maintenance and snow removal.

A Walgreens representative said store officials would work with neighbors on the issues raised.

The alley vacation and reconfiguring are among the last steps needed for the project to go ahead. The MGM building will be torn down to make way for a new Walgreens store. Walgreens worked closely with the Como Community Council to develop the store and alley plans.

### Fate of former Wilder building soon decided

The fate of the 12.21-acre former Amherst H. Wilder Foundation campus in Frogtown will be known soon. The bidding process for the property ended Jan. 26.

The site at 919 Lafond Ave. has been vacant since the new campus at Lexington Parkway and University Avenue was built in 2007. Buildings were knocked down, so bidders are seeking bare land with several wooded areas and what many describe as the best sledding hill in Frogtown. The existing child development center and two other buildings remain. The rest of the site will be sold to a developer or developers. Bids were taken on the site as a whole and on a small 9.25 acre section that was split off from the eastern part of the property.

Wilder has been selling its vacant properties over the past few years. Efforts to sell the former Bush Memorial Children's Home in Summit Hill neighborhood recently hit a snag when an eating disorders program dropped plans to locate there.

The Trust for Public Land has put in a bid for the site but hasn't released details of that offer. Another group interested in the site, but unable to make an offer is a group that has promoted reuse of the property for urban agriculture.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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# St. Paul's Animal Control Center grapples with cutbacks

By JANE MCCLURE

If Fido or Fluffy run away and wind up at St. Paul's Animal Control Center, pet owners will have less time to check for them. Animal control center hours were cut as part of the 2012 St. Paul city budget, as part of cuts and restructuring of the city's Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI).

The changes will allow animal control to allow its employees to be out in the community more, said DSI Director Ricardo Cervantes.

St. Paul is cutting its animal control staff by 1.8 full-time equivalent positions, for a savings of \$89,261. One of the animal control officer positions has been vacant since 2010. A .8 maintenance trainee post will also be eliminated.

The city will have one animal control supervisor and six animal control officers in 2012. The program will have two office assistants and a custodian-engineer.

At the animal shelter near Como Park, service hours are being reduced by four hours a day. Animals will receive the same level of care, said Cervantes, but access to the public will be scaled back. Shelter hours will be 2-6 p.m. Monday through Friday, with the shelter closed on Saturdays and Sundays. The shelter had been open each day except Sunday.

Service hours will be 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8-6 Saturday and Sunday.

By reducing hours St. Paul is following a path other cities have taken. Minneapolis has also reduced its shelter hours, said Cervantes. Some cities don't have open hours for their shelters. Instead, members of the public must call to arrange



Animal control center hours were cut as part of the 2012 St. Paul city budget, as part of cuts and restructuring of the city's Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI).

times to pick up their animals.

Other cities in the Twin Cities area have found savings by not running their own shelters and contracting out the service. In the 2012-2013 Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process, DSI did seek funding to study its animal control shelter needs. The current shelter is more than 50 years old and isn't suitable for housing the exotic animals impounded today. But the study wasn't funded in the 2012 city budget.

Council members questioned whether the service hour cuts would make it harder for people to reclaim lost animals

and said they'd like more information on whether the reduced hours cause problems for the public. Cervantes said that would be watched by DSI. But he also noted that the current trend is that most animals impounded in the city go unclaimed. Some are adopted by animal rescue groups while others are destroyed.

Over the years the number of impounded animals in St. Paul has risen and fallen. In 1966, more than 1,250 animals were impounded. The high point was 1995 when more than 4,300 animals were impounded. In 2010 2,750 animals were impounded. As of fall 2011 about

2,000 animals had been impounded. Most of the impounded animals are dogs, followed by cats and then wild or exotic animals.

One trend is that animal control deals more with wild animals than with domestic animals. One statistic that really surprised council members is for dog bites, which were a chronic problem in the city. The number dropped to about 200 in 2010, compared to more than 1,350 in 1973. Over the past two decades the city has been proactive in cracking down on people who own dangerous dogs, through programs including registration of dangerous dogs.

The need to have animal control staff out in the community is prompted by calls for service about wild animals. One of the greatest challenges animal control deals with now is that of wild animals making their homes in the city, said Animal Control Supervisor Bill Stephenson. Most of the problems in St. Paul are with raccoons, coyotes and foxes, although a black bear was recently shot and killed in the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood.

For years residents throughout the city have battled with deer eating their trees and plants. But now in St. Paul many of the latest wild animal problems are caused by urban coyotes, which can attack and kill small pets.

"We used to rarely hear about coyotes and now they have a real presence," Stephenson said. While coyotes won't attack humans they can create a danger for pets. He said that it's best to not leave small pets outside, unsupervised. Coyotes have been known to slip through small fence openings or leap fences to get into yards. If a coyote does come into a yard, noise will scare the animal away.

Keeping wild animals out of a yard in the first place means taking steps to keep them away, Stephenson said. One of the biggest attractions is cat or dog food left outdoors. Another is open garbage containers.

One of the greatest threats to pets and people is disease carried by wild animals. Because coyotes, raccoons and foxes can carry distemper and rabies, any pet that comes into contact with a wild animal should be taken to a veterinarian. People should not handle or touch wild animals.

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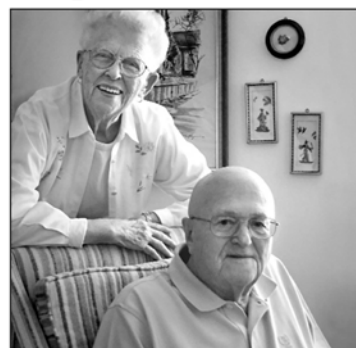


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# North End land use planning hits a snag

By JANE MCCLURE

An update to the land use planning process for the North End neighborhood hit a snag in January, as some property owners told the St. Paul Planning Commission that they hadn't received adequate notice of the community planning process and proposed changes.

About a dozen people attended a January 13 commission public hearing on the plan. Comments were sent back to a commission committee for further review.

The proposed plan is a melding of several smaller land use plans, as well as the North End-South Como district plan that was OK'd by the City Council in 2004. This proposal will become part of the city's comprehensive plan

once it is adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council.

City Planner Penny Simison said the plan is meant to also address land use conflicts in the Como-Dale-Front area, and tie into a current study of possible changes to the city's industrial zoning that the Planning Commission is studying. Because no one who lives or does business in that area was involved in the current planning effort, community members and city officials agreed that the plan needs a second phase of study.

Work is also needed at the Como-Dale-Front intersection itself to slow or calm traffic. Simison noted that the footprint of the Cathedral of St. Paul could fit into the intersection.

Martin Vogel, who owns

property on Front Avenue, questioned why his properties would be changed from industrial to residential use. "Why would you want to change that at all?"

Planning Commissioner Daniel Ward co-chaired the neighborhood task force. He said the change along Front is suggested because it would tie properties, including a now-closed ambulance maintenance center, better into the surrounding residential neighborhood. Industrial and commercial uses there would remain until they closed.

That didn't satisfy Vogel. "Why not leave it alone?" he said.

He also questioned the need for traffic calming at Como-Dale-Front, saying, "That intersection is fine. I don't care if you could fit two Cathedrals in there."

John Bluhm, whose family owns a landscaping business near Hatch and Front, agreed with Vogel. His family wants to expand their business in the future, and put up a new building. But if the site is rezoned, that could be more difficult.

District 6 Executive Director Kerry Antrim said the district council held community meetings, worked with University of Minnesota students, reached out to business owners and took oth-

er steps to get the word out about the land use studies. "We did what we could to get the word out." Both District 6 and the Tri-Area Block Club support the plan and its recommended changes.

The plan was sent back to a Planning Commission committee for further review. It will go to the Planning Commission for approval Feb. 10, then on to the City Council for final approval. The city uses district plans to guide redevelopment, shape zoning and land use decisions and allocate resources such as Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) dollars.

The land use committee of the District 6 Planning Council and an industrial task force that included representatives from area industries, businesses, residents, agencies including the St. Paul Port Authority, and the Ward Five office worked on the plan.

One longstanding issue in the North End is older industrial uses that are in or near residential and commercial areas. District 6 has industrial areas along most of its south border with District 7/Frogton, as well as industry in areas along railroads. There are three industrial parks developed over the past two decades by the Port Authority. But some industri-

al sites are older and don't meet current zoning and building codes. Some are right next to residential areas and cause problems ranging from spillover noise and pollution to traffic issues. How those sites are eventually redeveloped will have long-term implications for the entire community.

The draft plan covers three key topics. One is the industrially zoned land southeast of the Como/Dale/Front intersection, particularly the conflict between industrial and residential uses in that area; Como-Dale-Front's commercial area and past neighborhood and small area plans. There have been numerous neighborhood and city-led planning efforts in the North End and South Como area over the past two decades. These documents include plans for the neighborhood around Loeb Lake, the Arlington-Jackson industrial area and the Rice Street plan. There was also a re-examination of a proposed 2004 District 6 plan update that was never adopted by the city.

## Letters

### Hard at work for public health

While a lot of us students were home on our holiday break, the EPA was hard at work for public health. Last month they finalized a clean air standard that will reduce mercury emissions from coal plants by 90%. As a student member of the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group (MPIRG) at Hamline University, I applaud the EPA's decision to stand its ground and move forward with the strongest air toxics protections possible to defend public health and protect children from toxic mercury. At MPIRG we believe in environmental sustainability, public health, and also jobs for our fellow citizens. The new rules will provide employment for thousands of Americans. Updating older power plants with modern air pollution technology will support 46,000 new short-term construction jobs and 8,000 long-term utility jobs. Standards like these just make economic sense. On top of the jobs they will create, the health benefits associated with these updated standards will be \$37 billion to \$90 billion in 2016. This means that for every dollar spent to reduce pollution from power plants, we get \$3 to \$9 in health benefits.

Last fall, Senator Klobuchar stood strong for Minnesota by voting against Senator Paul's dirty air policy which attacked the ability of the EPA to enact necessary standards like this one. As my Senator, Klobuchar should continue standing firm for the long-term health and economic interest of our state and I hope you will join me in urging her to do so. We must continue to fight for the health of Americans, spur innovation and job creation, and protect our communities.

Lisa Fralish  
Hamline Midway



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# Gremlin Theatre makes a home in the Midway

By JAN WILLMS

The front-row seats of the Gremlin Theatre at 2400 University Avenue are so close to the stage you can see the actors sweat.

This kind of intimacy is what Peter Christian Hansen was hoping for when the theater opened in 2008.

"We've had the theater company for 13 years," he said. "We had performed in different theaters and in 2001 moved to St. Paul and started the whole process of building theaters. In 2002 we had the Loading Dock

Theater in the warehouse district in Lowertown St. Paul."

But Hansen had been looking for a long time in the Midway area, and in 2008 the current location became available.

"This used to be Mike Ciresi's campaign office location," Hansen said. "The building has primarily been an office building."

Walk inside, and a hallway is lined with pictures of past productions. The theater space itself has room for 100 patrons, with the rows of seats descending to the stage.

As he talks, Hansen walks back and forth across the stage. Slim, with classic good looks, he seems completely at home in the theater.

There were several working with the production company in its beginning, according to Hansen, but the current staff consists of him as artistic director and Carl Schoenborn as technical director. The two were in college together, working on the production of "Little Shop of Horrors."

Hansen had started acting as a junior in high school and found he really enjoyed it and continued working in theater during his college years. However, he majored in history and Latin and needed to decide what his career path was going to be.

"I had to choose between being an actor or a college professor," Hansen recalled. "Acting won out."

He toured with children's theater for a year before starting his company.

"Everyone had strange schedules at the time, and we decided we would produce something ourselves," he said. "The first play went reasonably well, and so we did another and another..."

Currently, the Gremlin Theatre does its own productions and rents out the location to



The front row seats of the Gremlin Theatre at 2400 University Avenue are so close to the stage you can see the actors sweat. (Photo by Stefanie Berres)



"I had to choose between being an actor or a college professor. Acting won out."

- Peter Christian Hansen

other groups as well. The Young Artists Initiative has performed there the past couple years, and the St. Paul Academy for Performing Arts has additionally been onsite. Several Fringe performances have also taken place at the Gremlin.

Rather than concentrate on a season, Hansen said his company goes from project to project.

"With two of us as staff and a small board of directors, we can keep everything very small and streamlined," he explained.

Hansen reiterated that he was very happy with the University Avenue location.

"There are no other theaters in this area, and I really like the neighborhood. There are such a great variety of things around here, and lots of good restaurants," he said.

"We escaped the mass death of LRT construction," Hansen added. "What we do is off hours and because of that, we didn't experience the difficulty a lot of other businesses did."

He said that once people got to the Gremlin and found it was not so stressful to get around, everything was okay. The theater also has a parking agreement with US Bank to use its lot for their evening patrons. "Even with the construction, that was a big help," Hansen said.

"It will be interesting to see, when the train comes through, how the noise factor may affect the performances," he noted. "I hope we can stay here."

Hansen said that choosing plays is tricky, and the Gremlin does things all across the spectrum.

"We try to determine what plays will benefit from being in an intimate space," he said.

Plays have ranged from newly written works to classics such as Uncle Vanya, Bus Stop and Long Day's Journey into Night. Some productions are planned a year and a half in advance, others are scheduled a few months out. A month is usually spent on rehearsals.

"We're also very dedicated to helping develop theater audiences," Hansen said. "There is something great about the live experience. For many who are not avid theater goers, they think of their nephew starring in his high school play or a big production like Lion King. In reality, that has nothing to do with theater."

He said many patrons come who say they have never seen a production before, and then they come back.

Hansen said funding is always difficult for smaller theaters such as the Gremlin.

"We have to have people who are really passionate about what you do, because it's not as glamorous to donate to small theater as it is to large productions," he claimed. "There are also various foundations, neighborhood grants and ticket sales. Since we have no staff, virtually all the money goes into production."

Hansen said he is fortunate that he is now able to make his living in the arts. He performs at other venues, such as the Guthrie, Park Square Theater and 10,000 Things. He also performs in about half the productions at the Gremlin.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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# Griggs Street bicycle boulevard plans win unanimous Council approval

By JANE MCCLURE

The Griggs Street bicycle boulevard plans won unanimous St. Paul City Council approval on January 25, but with a last-minute change sought by Lexington-Hamline residents. One of six traffic circles, the one at Dayton and Griggs, will be eliminated to appease unhappy residents.

But a circle at Edmund and Griggs, which also met objections, will remain.

Project construction plans now must go to Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mendota) for approval, with the goal of constructing the improvements this spring.

After numerous complaints about the circle and what some saw as a lack of information about the project Ward One Council Member Melvin Carter III made the change. But prior to the vote he did note that calls and emails to his office were evenly split on the project. Carter also asked that St. Paul Public Works conduct a traffic study to measure traffic counts and crashes before the circles are installed, with a follow-up in two years.

Some people who testified on the project January 18 told the council that while they like the idea of traffic circles, they don't want them on their street.

Dayton Avenue resident Shane Perry said that a traffic circle

at Dayton and Griggs isn't needed, and would cause problems for school buses. "It's not that the bike path doesn't make sense, it's just that these traffic circles don't make sense," Perry said the block is short and has a traffic signal at Marshall and Griggs.

The project will be the city's first bicycle boulevard, said Emily Erickson, sustainable transportation planner for St. Paul Public Works. It is already part of the city's comprehensive plan, as well as the Central Corridor light rail bike-walk plan.

The project would bring six traffic circles, corner bumpouts and a new bike path through Dunning Park. It would extend from Summit Avenue to Minnehaha Avenue, through the Lexington-Hamline and Hamline-Midway neighborhoods. All along Griggs, bicyclists will share the street with motor vehicles, with parking to remain in most places. Share the road arrows or 'sharrows' will be painted on the street and street name signs will be replaced with signs including a bicycle symbol. Guideway or wayfinding directional signs will be installed, along with destination signs at key locations. Stop signs would be removed and traffic circles added at Portland, Laurel and Dayton Avenues in Lexington-Hamline neighborhood, and at Sherburne, Edmund and Blair avenues in



The Griggs Street bicycle boulevard plans won unanimous St. Paul City Council approval on January 25, but with a last-minute change sought by Lexington-Hamline residents.

Hamline-Midway neighborhood.

Ward One Council Member Melvin Carter III asked for the layover to get more of an understanding of the issues raised. Some project foes claimed that much on-street parking would be lost and

snow plowing would be affected by traffic circles, claims Public Works staff disputed.

Other council members agreed to the layover, but said they'd like to see the project move ahead quickly. Russ Stark and Amy

Brendmoen said the project is important. The city has few north-south bike connections in its western neighborhoods.

Construction is to start this spring. The project is funded with \$400,000 in funding through Transit for Livable Communities (TLC), from the federal Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program. It would also be funded with \$100,000 from the capital improvement budget and from about \$20,000 in street lighting assessments for the commercial and industrial properties on Griggs between St. Anthony and University avenues.

More than a dozen people attended the public hearing. A group of 38 neighbors in the Griggs-Dayton Avenue area submitted a petition against the project. Some claimed they hadn't gotten information about the project.

Public meetings on the project began last year, with mailings. An online survey about the project resulted in about 100 responses, with 75 percent of respondents in favor of the plan.

Some asked why the Lexington-Hamline Community Council, a neighborhood association, hadn't taken a position on the plan. They asked that the process be delayed to allow for a community meeting.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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**THE ODD COUPLE TEAM**



# Tom Fashingbauer joins Keystone's Board of Directors

Tom Fashingbauer has been elected to the board of directors of Keystone Community Services, an East Metro nonprofit human services organization.

Fashingbauer is president and CEO of the North End Community Foundation in St. Paul. He previously served as director of the Ramsey County Human Services Department from 1980 to 2002.

"Tom Fashingbauer's depth of experience in human services

and extensive knowledge of community needs makes him a valuable addition to our Board of Directors," said Eric Nyberg, Keystone's president.

Keystone Community Services provides a range of social services aimed at improving the quality of life for families, seniors and youth in the greater St. Paul area.

- In 2011, Keystone's basic needs program assisted more than 27,300 East Metro

households through three large food shelves located in the North End, Midway and Roseville communities.

- Volunteers in Keystone's Meals on Wheels program delivered more than 20,000 hot meals to homebound seniors and disabled residents in the area.
- Other programs include crisis intervention services, a large active seniors program, case management for families and

disabled adults, and a Hmong youth and family outreach program.

For more information about Keystone's services, go to [keystonecommunityservices.org](http://keystonecommunityservices.org) or call 651-645-0349.

*Tom Fashingbauer has been elected to the board of directors of Keystone Community Services, an East Metro nonprofit human services organization.*



## Bicycles

Continued from page 7

But three community meetings, including one on the street itself, were held, city staff said. "The public process on this project was very good," Stark said.

Another traffic circle singled out for criticism is at Griggs and Edmund. Eleanor Schultz has lived near Griggs and Edmund for 51 years. "I'm lucky if I see one bike go by each week." She said the project isn't needed, adding "I can't understand why this is being done."

Perry criticized project planning, saying it didn't take into account most of the people who live in the area. He and another neighbor, Lynn Anderson, were especially critical of the installation of Audible Pedestrian Sig-

nals (APS) at Marshall and Griggs. The audible signals assist visually impaired persons when they cross the street.

Perry and other neighbors have lived near Marshall and Griggs for years. "We've never seen a visually impaired person cross at Marshall."

Anderson said if APS is installed, she won't be able to keep her windows open. "Now I'm going to be hearing voices all summer long."

But proponents said the project is needed, to provide a safer north-south bicycle route. Some speakers said Griggs is already used year-round by bicyclists and that improvements would make it a safer route.

Hamline-Midway resident Paul Nelson and Macalester-Groveland resident Andy Singer said the area needs more north-

"I'm lucky if I see one bike go by each week. I can't understand why this is being done."

- Long-time resident Eleanor Schultz



south bike and pedestrian routes. Nelson said the project is needed as part of a balanced transportation system.

Singer called Lexington parkway a "death trap" and Snelling Avenue "an insane death trap" for bicyclists.

Rhea Rahkonen lives near

Charles and Griggs, and frequently bikes and walks. She urged that the council adopt the bicycle boulevard plan. "I see people on Griggs year-round, walking and biking."

She and others also spoke for the installation of a pedestrian and bicyclist crossing light at

Griggs and University. "Every day when I am crossing that street, I am taking my life into my hands," she said.

The plan for Griggs was approved in October 2011 by the St. Paul Planning Commission.

The Griggs route is also seen as a connection via Minnehaha to a Hamline Avenue bike route to Energy Park and a planned Como Park connection paralleling Lexington Parkway. The Lexington Parkway project is planned for 2012. Longer-term, Griggs is also eyed as a connection to Marshall Avenue bike route. Marshall already has bike lanes west of Snelling. City plans call for extending those lanes to the east.

To the south, Griggs would connect with the Summit Avenue bike lanes.

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# In Our Community

## Community barn dances at Hamline Church

Hamline United Methodist Church, 1514 Englewood Avenue, will host two Community Barn Dances on Saturday, February 18 and Saturday, March 17.

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

Dancing is from 6-8 p.m. For more information, contact the church office at 651-645-0667 or check out the Barn Dance details at <http://www.hamlinechurch.org/connect>.

## Art of Breastfeeding discussed March 13

The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties is the topic of the meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche Group on Tuesday, March 13. All expectant and nursing mothers are invited to attend with their babies and toddlers. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information.

## District 6 annual meeting April 2

Our mission is to continue to improve the quality of life in the community by supporting active and engaged residents with programming that educates, develops leadership and promotes participation. District 6 Planning Council's 2012 Annual Meeting & Elections will be held April 2, at North Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 301 Hatch Avenue, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

To be eligible for any Board seat you must live or own a business in the precinct area:

Precinct 2-Larpenteur, 35 E. Maryland, Rice-2 seats; Precinct 4-Maryland, Rice, Burlington RR, Dale-2 seats. District Wide-you may live or work anywhere within the District 6 boundaries-3 seats.

Please join us for a fun, informative evening and if interested download a Board application from our website; [www.district6stpaul.org](http://www.district6stpaul.org), email us at [district6ed@dist6pc.org](mailto:district6ed@dist6pc.org) or call 651-488-4485 if you have questions!

## Free breakfast at North Emanuel February 26

A free Breakfast is offered the fourth Sunday of every month from 8: to 9:30 a.m. in North Emanuel's Fellowship Hall, 301 Hatch Ave. at Matilda Street.

All are welcome to come for Breakfast and if you would like to nourish your spirit as well,

stay for worship at 9:30 a.m. North Emanuel is working to offer Help and Hope to the North End Community.

You may call Pastor Kisten at 651-489-5611 for directions or more information.

## Dramatic telling of 'Mark'

Have you ever heard the entire Jesus story at one sitting? On Feb. 26, Sunday, the Adult Bible Class at Jehovah Lutheran Church invites you to hear the story of Jesus from his baptism to the empty tomb as told by gifted pastor/dramatist Roger Ezell on video. Ezell's telling of an abbreviated version of the Gospel of Mark takes place with different backgrounds, wastelands and grain fields, pasture lands and vineyard, lakes and streams, churches and buildings and an original music score. It approximates how the early Christians heard this good news story. The telling takes 60 minutes and will begin promptly at 9:30 a.m. Do come and hear The Jesus Story According to Mark" from beginning to end. Enter at 1566 Thomas Avenue. Come early for coffee in the lounge before the presentation starts. Call 651-628-4934 for more information.

## NW Como Rec plans spring sports

Northwest Como Recreation Center is taking registration for spring Sports such as volleyball, indoor soccer and floor hockey. Upcoming clinics to register now for include: Volleyball, soccer and softball. Youth classes to register for are: Get Set To Be A Vet and Orchestra Jam. Movie Night takes place on Friday, Feb 17th from 6-8:30 p.m. "The Smurfs" will be shown so bring your lawn chairs and blankets. The Northwest Como Booster Club will be selling concessions. To register go to [www.stpaul.gov/parks](http://www.stpaul.gov/parks) or call 651-298-5813.

## Spaghetti Dinner and Bake Sale Feb. 18

Spaghetti Dinner and Bake Sale at Bethel Lutheran Church (670 W Wheelock Pkwy.) on Saturday, February 18 from 5-7 p.m. Dinner includes spaghetti & meatballs, garlic bread, salad, beverage and ice cream for a cost of \$8 (age 5 & under are free). Funds from this event will go for Brianna Engen's medical bills, a member of Bethel Lutheran church, who at age 2 was diagnosed with leukemia and just finished two years of treatment.

## Attracting butterflies and moths

Come hear Heather Holm, noted

horticulturist and blogger, share her ideas for creating gardens that help butterflies and moths flourish. Holm's presentation, free and open to the public, is scheduled for Sunday, February 19 from 2 to 3:30 p.m. at the North Dale Recreation Center, 1414 Saint Albans St. No.

"Attracting beautiful moths and butterflies to our landscapes requires more than providing nectar sources," Holm says. She'll focus on 20 moth and butterfly species whose caterpillars require specific native plants to feed on before becoming flying adults.

She'll also discuss the lifecycles of butterflies and moths and their amazing adaptations and survival strategies.

Holm maintains the popular "Restoring the Landscape with Native Plants" blog. Her presentation is the first of a three-month Sunday Series sponsored by the Como Community Council.

## Luncheon features local writer/professor

"Remembering Mimi: Recipes, Family and Cooking Across Generations" will be presented at a luncheon for seniors on Tues., Feb. 14 at 1514 Englewood Ave at 11:30. Hamline University Assistant Professor, Kim Johnson, will address the love of a granddaughter for a grandmother through a history of recipes. A \$4 free will donation is asked for the meal, no cost to attend the program which begins at 12:15. 651-209-6542.

Free Exercise Classes: A free session of "Joint Friendly Exercise Classes" will be held every

Tues. and Thurs. from 2 -3 p.m. through March 29, 1514 Englewood Ave. Instructors have been trained by the MN Arthritis Foundation. Call HM

Elders 651-209-6542 for more information.

## Hamline Midway CONNECTS meets

"Caring for our Neighbors and Neighborhood," a new networking group for persons 50+ will meet every third Thursday from 10:30-noon at the Hamline Library, 1558 Minnehaha Ave. CONNECT's purpose is to offer the opportunity to meet others and share information including updates about volunteer and work projects, etc. Bring your own beverage, baked goods provided. For more information, contact Stephanie Digby at 651-642-1288.

## Jehovah Lutheran Church dinners resume

Jehovah Lutheran Church at 1566 Thomas resumes its fellowship

dinners at 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays in February. Suggested donation is \$2. All are welcome. Confirmation and choir practice follow dinner. On Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, there will be no meal, but a worship service at 6:30 p.m. The 5:30 p.m. meal will resume on subsequent Wednesdays, with 6:30 p.m. worship afterwards.

New singers are welcome at 7 p.m. choir practices. Contact 651-644-1421 or [jlc\\_dawn@msn.com](mailto:jlc_dawn@msn.com) for more information.

## Black History Month at St. Paul Public Library

Saint Paul Public Library is hosting several events in February to celebrate Black History Month. All events are free.

Thursday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m. - Rondo Library, 461 Dale St. N.-Join a panel of local scholars of African American Literature to discuss the work of best-selling author Walter Mosley. Mosley is this year's featured Givens Black Books Community Reading Campaign author. To learn more about his work and the program visit [www.givens.org](http://www.givens.org).

Tues., Feb. 21, 7 p.m., Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave. 55104. Community Cinema Presents: "More Than a Month." Filmmaker Shukree Hassan Tilghman sets off on a cross-country campaign to end Black History Month. His tongue-in-cheek journey explores the complexity and contradictions of relegating an entire group's history to one month in a so-called post-racial America. A discussion follows the film. Presented with MELSA and The Friends.

Events are funded by Minnesota Arts and Cultural Fund. For more information, please call 651-266-7000 or visit [www.sppl.org/black-history-month](http://www.sppl.org/black-history-month).

## Sweetheart Bingo planned February 12!

St. Bernard's will be hosting a Sweetheart Bingo on Saturday, February 12th, from 12 p.m. - 3 p.m. Doors will open at 11 a.m. Come early and have lunch with us! Sloppy Joes, chips, baked goods and beverages will be available for purchase! There will be cash prizes as well as certificates from area business! Bring your sweetheart and join us for an afternoon of fun! Bingo will be held in the large gymnasium (follow the signs). St. Bernard's is located at 187 Geranium Avenue West in St. Paul, MN. Please call 651-488-6733 with any questions.

## Feast of the Golden Fork Dinner - February 18

An elegant seven course dinner

will be served in Buchanan Hall at Holy Childhood Church at 6:33 p.m. on Saturday, February 18, at 1435 Midway Parkway. The cost for the dinner is \$75 per person, \$65 will be a donation to the Holy Childhood Choir Fund to pay for the orchestra Masses.

Reserved tickets may be purchased at the church office by call 644-7495 Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## No tax help at Jehovah Lutheran Church

Jehovah Lutheran Church won't offer tax-return help this year as it has in the past because of a shortage of key volunteers. The American Association of Retired Persons, which sponsored the long-running program at Jehovah Lutheran, still offers tax-preparation assistance at other locations. Call 888-227-7669 for its tax-help locator service.

## St. Paul Curling Club to host national bonspiel

Join us at the St. Paul Curling Club, 470 Selby Ave, St. Paul, largest curling club in the United States, for the 64th annual USWCA Women's National Bonspiel. The event will be held Wednesday February 15th through Sunday, February 19th. The bonspiel will begin with Opening Ceremonies Wednesday, February 15th at 7 p.m. with curling beginning at 1 a.m. Thursday.

Women of all ages from across the United States will come together for 5 days of Curling and Festivities. Paula Arnold, a founding member of St. Paul Women's curling leagues, The Cairn Lassies in 1973, and The Bonnie Spielers in 1951, will hold the broom for the traditional throwing of the first rock by current USWCA president Maureen Guay. Paula has been curling over 60 years and is still an avid curler in the Tuesday morning Cairn Lassies league. For more information, call the St. Paul Curling Club at 651-224-7408.

## St. Cecilia's to host annual parish dinner

The Church of St. Cecilia invites friends and neighbors to its annual dinner on Sunday, Feb. 19, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the church basement.

The dinner features roast turkey and all the trimmings. Tickets for the dinner cost \$9; children age 8 and under eat for free. Fun, food, raffle and silent auction.

The Church of Cecilia is located east of Highway 280 at 2357 Bayless Place, just north of the intersection of University and Cromwell Avenues.



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# Lawsuit filed over Pelham plans

By JANE MCCLURE

As anticipated, the City of St. Paul faces litigation over a City Council vote to reject a site plan development. Meridian Development/Industrial Equities, which wants to build a 68,000 square foot office/warehouse structure at 650 Pelham Boulevard, announced its intentions to sue the city last month.

The St. Paul City Council rejected the project site plan in October 2011, upholding an appeal by Union Park District Council. The council agreed with the district council and neighbors' contention that the plan doesn't meet the guidelines for new development near the Central Corridor light rail line.

The site plan had won St. Paul Planning Commission approval, despite a previous district council appeal. The site plan won city staff approval last summer. Site plans are only heard by the Planning Commission on appeal or by recommendation of city staff; site plan appeals to the City Council are rare and only happen a few times per year at most.

The lawsuit describes the steps the developers went through, only to have their plans rejected by the City Council. The developers contend that they proceeded with their site plan, under the approved zoning, only to have city officials change their minds and reject the site plan at the City Council level. Meridian met with community members prior to the City Council public hearing and made a number of site plan changes, including adding trees and landscaping, building a brick pier and ornamental rail-

ing fence, and adding a sidewalk along Pelham. But neighborhood residents pushed for more changes, including placing parking behind the building and making other changes to the building plans. One suggestion was that a two-story building be built, which Allen contended didn't meet the intent of the site plan.

Developer John Allen and Meridian Management/Industrial Equities worked for many months to develop the site, submitting an initial site plan in the fall of 2010. That plan was then put on hold because of a Central Corridor land use study that was underway.

The Pelham site was initially proposed for rezoning from industrial to traditional neighborhoods mixed use as part of the light rail corridorwide zoning study. The study, one of the largest in recent city history, covered University Avenue from the west city limits to the Capitol area. It drew support from many advocates of more compact, transit-oriented development. But it sparked a firestorm of protests from affected business and property owners, with packed Planning Commission public hearings and much debate. Several protests were made about the potential loss of the Pelham site and other sites that would have been rezoned from industrial use to mixed use.

Although other industrial sites were in play during the light rail zoning study, the Pelham site drew the most attention. Allen, the Midway Chamber, St. Paul Area Chamber, the St. Paul Port Authority and other advocates made the case for

retaining the industrial zoning at the Pelham site. They questioned whether mixed use redevelopment would be feasible for the property, which is adjacent to the Rock-Tenn paper recycling plant.

The St. Paul Planning Commission agreed and changed the staff recommendation to retain the industrial zoning designation. The City Council approved that decision in April 2011 as part of approval of the larger zoning area.

But the site is within the zoning overlay for Central Corridor station areas. The zoning overlay contains a number of regulations for new development with one-quarter mile of stations, calling for more compact, walkable development as well as a reduced emphasis on parking, more landscaping and use of public art.

The decision to not rezone the old Overnight Express property and a bus business, Monarch Bus, across the street, dismayed UPDC, neighbors and members of the Desnoyer Park Improvement Association. They all wanted the zoning changed. They said the site, which is technically in St. Anthony Park, is a gateway to their neighborhoods and should be redeveloped for mixed use.

The property has been industrial in use for at least 50 years, according to city records. It was the home to Overnight Express for many years. That company closed about three years ago and the Port Authority purchased the site.

City officials have declined comment on the lawsuit until they are formally served.

Next Issue: Spring Home Improvement / Deadline: February 27

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# Science, book clubs and yoga: all at Hamline Midway Library!

Saturday, February 11 at 1:30 p.m. the library will host Chemists in the Library. Join University of Minnesota chemists as they experiment in the library. For ages 6 and up.

Yoga classes will continue to be held in the auditorium Tuesdays at 11 a.m. Join instructor Colleen Dooley for this free, drop-in class.

Need help with the computer? Our Computer Coach is available on Wednesday, February 22 from 4-5 p.m. to help you with your basic computer questions. Help is available on a first come, first served basis.

The annual Fireside Author Reading series finishes this month with Diane Wilson reading from her book *Beloved Child*. The event will take place

on Wednesday, February 15 at 7:00 p.m.

Paw Pals will return to the library on Saturday, February 18 from 1:30 to 3:30. This popular event allows children to spend time reading with a therapy dog and a literacy coach. Open to all kids ages 6 through 12. Call the library at 651-642-0293 to sign up.

Join our Kids Book Club on March 3 at 1:30 as they discuss books, participate in reading activities, and eat treats. Open to readers ages 8-12. New members are welcome!

Teen Book Club meets on March 3 at 2:30. Call 651-642-0293 or ask at the desk for the latest selection.

The second annual Neighborhood Cabaret will take place

Saturday, February 25 at from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Balance a pillow, recite poetry, sing or dance! Whatever your talent or age, all are welcome to participate in our second variety show. Prizes for the top winners. This event is hosted by Saturday Club and the Hamline Midway Library Association.

On Wednesday, March 7 at 4 p.m. the library will host a workshop called Job Searching in Your Library. Join the session to learn about the resources the library offers job seekers.

The Saints and Sinners mystery book club meets Saturday, March 3 at 1 p.m.

Toddler and preschool storytime is offered every Friday at 10:30 a.m. Bring your child to share in the joys of reading!

Call 651-642-0293 or stop by the library at 1558 W Minnehaha Ave, near the intersection of Snelling and Minnehaha,

to sign up for events that require pre-registration. All events are free.

## Gremlin Theater

Continued from page 6

"Working with the company and doing acting roles at other places is a balancing act," he admitted. "I have only so much time and energy, and I try to navigate my way through it. Sometimes it's smooth, and sometimes it doesn't work that way."

He is currently playing the role of Brick in *Cat on a Hot Tin*

Roof at the Guthrie, the role made famous by Paul Newman in the film version. Hansen reprised the role from when he performed at the Torch Theater, and said it is one of his favorites.

"I believe you have to control your own career," he said, "and having your own theater helps. But it takes awhile."

"A lot of us in the Twin Cities can have our own homes and a nice standard of living," he said. "But at first you have to be willing to work hard for free, you have to stick with it and you have to be good."

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# Gourmet dinner offered in the Conservatory February 12, 13 and 14

1-2-3-4-5, senses working over-time. That's the sensation diners will encounter when the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory opens its gardens for a truly unique dining experience on Sunday, February 12th, Monday, February 13th and Tuesday, February 14th. So, instead of giving flowers this Valentine's Day, people will have an opportunity to dine amongst them in an unforgettable romantic setting. Candle-lit tables of two will be set throughout the three featured gardens of the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory, each with its own unique characteristics.

Smell the flowers in the Sunken Garden and lush vegetation in the North Garden and Palm Dome. See vibrant pinks, yellows, reds & purple created by azaleas, cyclamen, veltheimia, amaryllis, cineraria featured in the 2012 Winter Flower Show. Hear the sparkling, elegant music of The Baroque Trio and the soothing sounds of the water feature in each garden. Taste a sumptuous, double entrée, gourmet dinner prepared by Lancer Catering and feel the warm, humid air inside the cozy

confines of the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory.

There will be two separate seatings per evening: 5:30 and 8 p.m. Seating is limited and advance reservations are required by calling 651-487-8250, or reserving on-line at [www.comoconservatory.org](http://www.comoconservatory.org). The cost for this all inclusive event is \$165 per couple, a portion of which is tax deductible. For more information, or to view the menus, visit [www.como-zooconservatory.org](http://www.como-zooconservatory.org)



Marjorie McNeely Conservatory opens its gardens for a truly unique dining experience on Sunday, February 12th, Monday, February 13th and Tuesday, February 14th.

## Clarification

In the "College Possible" article published in last month's Monitor, there are some clarifications that need to be made. Students participating in the project perform community service as both juniors and seniors. They need to have a 2.0 GPA. Eighty per cent of the program graduates are persisting towards a degree or have graduated.

Next deadline:  
February 27

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## HAMLIN UNIVERSITY

### Black History Month Events at Hamline University

#### A Tribute to Black Cultural Icons

Friday, February 17, at 7 p.m.

Experience musical, poetic, and theatrical performances by Hamline students and local artists in honor of icons such as Kofi Annan, Sam Cooke, Jimi Hendrix, Sojourner Truth, Kirby Puckett, Toni Morrison, Alvin Ailey, Georgia Mass Choir, Stokely Carmichael, Mahalia Jackson, and others.

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#### Saakumu West African Drum & Dance Troupe Performance

Tuesday, February 21, at 7:30 p.m.

Saakumu Drum and Dance Troupe of Ghana, West Africa treats audiences to an exciting night of culture, inspiration, and tradition as they perform a range of spiritual, ceremonial, and contemporary African dance forms.

Tickets are \$5 at the door.  
Sundin Music Hall  
1531 Hewitt Avenue

#### Keynote: "Remembering, Revisiting and Retaining Our African Roots in America"

Thursday, February 23 at 11:30 a.m.

Keynote speaker Chike Akua is an author and award-winning teacher with a deep commitment to culturally relevant classroom learning and instruction. His book, *A Treasure Within: Stories of Remembrance and Rediscovery*, was nominated for the NAACP Image Award and Akua himself was named one of Ebony magazine's "50 Leaders of Tomorrow."

Free and open to all.  
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