



Midway Como monitor

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Zion's roots go deep in area

Dreamland Arts: a place where community and performing arts can intermingle and thrive

By JAN WILLMS

Zaraawar Mistry and Leslye Orr were looking for a place where they could live and work. And they found it at 677 Hamline Avenue North in the Midway.

"We came upon this unique property, and it brought us here," Mistry said. The two, who have worked as performing artists in the Twin Cities for many years, set to work.

They had been looking for a place to start a performing arts theater of their own, and they came upon the house and former electrical contractor's shop. With the help of volunteers, they have turned it into Dreamland Arts, a place where community and the performing arts can intermingle.

Mistry came to the United States in 1989 to attend college and study theater. In 1991, he started working at the Children's Theatre Co. (CTC). He and Orr, who also had worked at CTC, met through friends and married in 1992. They have lived and worked in the Twin Cities since then.

Mistry has been an actor at CTC, the Guthrie, and the Mixed Blood Theater, as well as an artistic director at Theater Mu.

Orr has been performing her original plays on a regular basis. She was a member of Ballet of the Dolls, and has written scripts and performed with Illusion Theater, Jungle Theater outreach Series, Dudley Riggs and the Arkansas Children's Theater.

Right after 9/11, the couple



Leslye Orr and Zaraawar Mistry in their Dreamland Arts Theatre. The theatre itself is a black box stage. (Photo by Terry Faust)

co-founded a nonprofit in South Minneapolis, the Center for Independent Artists.

"It was a center for development artists," Mistry said. We ran that the last five years."

He said that Orr, who was born legally blind, could not drive and had to be less involved in that organization.

"We started thinking into the future," Mistry said. "But our plans didn't become front and center until a couple of years ago."

He said that he and Orr have good complementary skills.

"She is a people person, very good at organizing and also very prolific as an artist. She works with comedy, children and people with disabilities. She has also written and illustrated a children's book."

"Even though I am a performer, I create a new show about every five years," Mistry said. "I am a good administrator and a good technical guy. We make a good team."

Mistry said the couple did a large part of the remodeling of the buildings themselves, with the help of volunteers.

"We bought the property in May 2005," he said. "The electrical contractor's shop was fairly decent, but the house was in terrible condition. We cleaned it up and moved in."

He said they tried to gather the financing for remodeling, and that process took nearly a year.

Mistry said they then had to contend with zoning and variances, and finally the theater was ready to open in September 2006.

While they were in the process of looking for a property, Mistry mused that it would be fun to call it Dreamland after a theater in his mother's hometown in India. He said it had been a rather dilapidated old theater, but it was where as a child he saw many American film classics.

"It's like having a baby," Orr said. "You start calling it by name while you are planning for it." When they finally were ready with the theater, they decided to call it Dreamland Arts, to make sure people realized they were not a mattress store.

Conservatory's Winter Flower Show features over 2,000 plants

The weather may be in the sub-zero temperatures all weekend, but what better way to beat the cold and winter blues than a stroll through the Marjorie McNeely Winter Flower Show opening Friday, February 2.

The Winter Flower Show features over 2,000 plants in vibrant pinks, yellow and purples created by azaleas, cyclamen, veltheimia and amaryllis.

The Marjorie McNeely Conservatory's Sunken Garden's Holiday Flower Show, opens February 2, 2007 and runs through March 18, 2007.



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Midway Como monitor

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Midway Como in a Minute

Flag pole accident claims life of worker

An unusual accident outside of the Midway Center Perkins Restaurant fatally injured an Oak Grove man the afternoon of January 25. Gene White, 63, died after he was struck and killed by the metal finial ball that sat atop the Perkins flag pole. The ball fell more than 60 feet and struck White in the head as he repaired the flag pole's pulley system.

The flag pole had not been working properly, which is why White was called in to repair it. It had been flying at half-staff during much of January due to the death of former President Gerald Ford.

White had been working on the flag for two days and was finishing up his work when the accident occurred. He was taken to Regions Hospital after the accident, but died due to a crushed skull.

The metal ball weighed about 10 pounds. Minnesota Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) officials are investigating the accident.

White and his wife Joan owned and operated Twin Cities Flag Source, a company that maintained and repaired many flag poles around the region. The company's clients included Perkins, TCF Bank, Wells Fargo and 3M. Twin Cities Flag Source also repaired and designed new flags.

The family founded the company in 1983 but will close it following Gene White's death. Family members have indicated that Gene White was the only one who knew how to repair flag poles.

Funeral services for White were held in late January and he was buried at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.



Merriam Park Community Council voted January 10 to approve the plans for a parking lot expansion and improvements. The lot is at Aldine Street and St. Anthony Avenue, across from HealthEast's facilities at the former Midway Hospital.

HealthEast parking changes approved

Changes to a parking lot at HealthEast's Merriam Park campus can move ahead, following many months of negotiations with neighbors. Merriam Park Community Council voted January 10 to approve the plans for the lot expansion and improvements.

The lot is at Aldine Street and St. Anthony Avenue, across from HealthEast's facilities at the former Midway Hospital. The project, which involves removing three houses, will allow the health care corporation to link two smaller parking lots into one block-long lot. Plans include new fencing, landscaping and lighting. New trees will be planted. Traffic to and from the lot will be directed in a way that minimizes impact on the neighborhood.

The lot will be expanded from 44 to about 120 stalls.

HealthEast is also removing an old fence and overgrown

bushes along one part of the fence. Yet another part of the agreement means HealthEast and neighbors will cooperate to schedule and pay for snow plowing in a shared alley. The block the parking lot is in has a T-shaped alley. Part of the alley has a steep slope, so neighbors have to sometimes use the alley section that extended through the parking area.

HealthEast brought forward the plans for the lot expansion in early 2005. Neighbors of the campus have long been concerned about facilities expansion and the impact of more parking and traffic in the neighborhood. There are also objections to the loss of houses. Neighbors met several times with HealthEast officials and district council representatives to discuss their concerns.

The campus is roughly bounded by University, Pierce, St. Anthony and Aldine. HealthEast has moved a number of offices, outpatient clinics and programs to the site beginning in 1997, after Midway Hospital closed. More than 700 people

work at the campus, which has about 740 parking spaces in its ramp and lots.

University Ave. tattoo parlor gets OK to open

A tattoo parlor can open on University Avenue if it follows conditions. The St. Paul City Council decided January 24. Five Star Tattoo Company is opening its doors at 927 University Av., the former location of K & M Video.

The tattoo parlor was granted its license with the condition that person under the age of 18 cannot be tattooed. This is a standard condition placed on all of the city's tattoo parlors.

Five Star Tattoo Company will also be a music store that features independent artists.

Two couples will own and operate the business. Tattoo artist Titus McKnight, who has worked for several years at Plant Ink of University Avenue, will be based here. Business co-owner Lisa Fortunato appeared at a January 9 legislative hearing on behalf of Five Star Tattoo Parlor.

The business will be by appointment only. Hours of operation will be 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Fridays and Saturday, and closed Sundays and Mondays.

The District 7 (Thomas-Dale) Planning Council held a neighborhood meeting with the business owners in December and recommends approval of the business. The business owners also met with the Sherburne-Charles Block Club. The only concern the district council raised is the lack of off-street parking for the business. No additional off-street parking is required with the conversion from a video store to a tattoo parlor.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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Viewpoints

Winter isn't over yet and neither is the cold/flu season. There is still time for beautiful snowfalls, clear starry nights - and sniffles, sore throats and coughs.

This article is a revision of my very first article in the *Monitor*. It was published 4 years ago in March of 2003. I requested a re-run of it at this time because I have been seeing so many people with either the flu or bad colds during the last month. I hope I can help you determine how to care for yourself at home, and when to go to the doctor.

Colds are usually (90% of the time) caused by a virus. You catch colds from other people. Antibiotics won't cure a virus, so most of the time you need to let your body heal itself. However, just because you may not need antibiotics doesn't mean you aren't sick. You don't need to be miserable while you recover. Your doctor can prescribe medicines to help you stop coughing, to clear your stuffy nose, and to help you if you are wheezing.

You can also use non-prescription treatments such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and pseudoephedrine to help with aches and stuffiness. If you cannot breathe through your nose, oxymetazoline nasal spray will bring instant relief, but DO NOT USE IT FOR MORE THAN FOUR DAYS. The best time to use it is before going to bed, so that you can breathe well during the night, and get a good night of sleep.

Good old-fashioned steam treatments help with congestion. Put a pan of water on the stove, bring it to a

Cares and Cures

By JANE KILIAN, M.D.

Cold or flu? Doctor or not?

boil, turn it to simmer, and hang your head over it for 15 minutes just breathing in the steam from the water. Or go into the bathroom, turn the shower on hot, and read or do a crossword puzzle while you enjoy your steam bath.

You need to see a physician if at any time you are short of breath, have pain when you try to breathe, or are coughing so much that you cannot sleep. In addition, if after a week you start to feel worse and not better or if you are sick for more than ten days, you should see a doctor. It might be time for antibiotics, inhalers, or strong cough medicine.

The flu (influenza) is a different type of respiratory infection. Many people think the flu means throwing up and having diarrhea (more about that next month). Respiratory flu means fever, headache, muscle aches, exhaustion, and cough. Usually people with this flu get sick very quickly, and don't have the nasal symptoms of congestion and/or runny nose. People will say, "I was fine all day and at 7 p.m. I couldn't get off the couch because I felt so horrid."

Treatment is rest and fluids. If you see a doctor within the first 48 hours of your illness you can get medicine,

but it will only shorten the course of your illness by about a day. Time is the true healer in this situation. Prevention? Get a flu shot next fall.

Strep throat causes you to have an extremely sore throat, fever, and sometimes headache. Children will often complain of a tummy ache. Lots of folks in the Midway/Como area have had strep throat lately, so watch for these symptoms. Usually you won't have a cough, nasal symptoms, or body aches. Most clinics can do a quick test for strep. If you have strep, you need antibiotics and cannot work or go to school until you have been taking medicine for 24 hours.

People often come to clinic hoping for medicine that will make them better by tomorrow or the next day. Remember that you will need rest, fluids, rest, time, and more rest in order to recover. The key message here is that you need to pamper yourself a bit. Take some time off work or school. Ask family and friends to take care of you for a while. Take a nap. If you allow yourself time to heal, you will feel better faster, and won't infect others around you.

While there is still plenty of time to enjoy the end of winter, you might also find yourself feeling a bit under the weather. Use these guidelines to help you decide how to care for yourself and when to see your doctor.

Have fun, stay happy and healthy.

Dr. Kilian is a family practice physician who lives and works in the Midway Como community. She believes that good medicine means caring for people as well as curing diseases.

LETTERS

Questioning impact of public comment on light rail

The "Central Corridor Passes Milestone" story that appeared in the January issue of the *Midway Como Monitor* contains make believe information. The article states: "The Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) spent the last several months studying the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the Central Corridor, along with hundreds of public comments made during public hearings last Spring." Nothing could be further from the truth.

In December 2006, the FTA approved spending an additional \$45 million local/county/ state, non-federal, public transit dollars for Preliminary Engineering (PE). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NGgptUNenw>. Millions have already been spent producing a bad joke of a Draft EIS/Alternatives Analysis. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiiejSt73A>

Just prior to FTA approval to go into PE, I received copies of the agendas and minutes for the 5 "Central Corridor Light-Rail Transit FTA Project Management Oversight" monthly meetings, which took place in Downtown Minneapolis from July-November 2006. Scanning the agendas and minutes for the meetings, I found no mention of the "hundreds of public comments" presented at the public hearings, nor the many hundreds of additional public comments which were provided in writing.

At the January meeting of the Central Corridor Management Committee, I asked Mark Fuhrman, the Metro Transit employee who sent me the FTA "oversight" meeting agendas and minutes, if there had been any mention of the large volume of public comment that was received during the public hearings and in writing. Mr. Fuhrman

responded: "Not one minute" was spent reviewing public comment during meetings with the FTA. I asked Mr. Fuhrman again. Again, he assured me: "Not one minute."

I then asked: "So what happens with the thousands of pages of public comment that was received?" An assistant to Mr. Fuhrman, standing at his side, responded that some time within the next 2 or 3 years, during which \$45 million non-federal dollars will be spent on PE, the issues raised during public comment would be addressed.

Obviously, the public has been ignored and/or manipulated thus far. As transit fares continue to rise, service continues to decline, traffic continues to worsen, the polar ice cap continues to melt, and Big Business, Big Government, and Big University parking and road construction interests continue to loot, I think we can expect more of the same.

Sheldon Gitis
South St. Anthony Park

(Editor's note: The Steven Dornfeld, Public Relations Director of the Metropolitan Council, responds to Mr. Gitis' letter.)

On Dec. 13, 2006, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) granted approval for the Metropolitan Council and its partners to begin preliminary engineering on the 11-mile Central Corridor light rail transit (LRT) project. Central Corridor LRT will provide improved access to the regional transit system and key destinations between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul, including the Midway District.

Preliminary engineering is a two-year process that will resolve issues identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and the 900 public comments received on such issues as parking, station design, safety,

traffic impacts, road reconstruction, pedestrian accessibility and construction mitigation. The Council and its project partners are committed to making this a transparent process and including the public throughout Preliminary Engineering. To demonstrate this commitment the Council has taken the following steps:

- Established the 42-member Community Advisory Committee (CAC), which meets on the third Thursday of every month from 5-7 p.m. at Goodwill Easter Seals.
- Posted meeting agendas, minutes and presentations on the Council's website at: <http://www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/CCPartnersOversight.htm>.
- Coordinated with the project partners to create a Business Advisory Committee representing businesses in the corridor.

The Council and its project partners have analyzed and used the information in the DEIS and public comment record to inform the work plan for the Preliminary Engineering process. A executive summary of the DEIS public comments are posted the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority website at:

<http://www.centralcorridor.org/docs/Comment%202002%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

Current information and upcoming meetings notices related to the Central Corridor project, is available at www.metrocouncil.org/transportation/ccorridor/centralcorridor.htm

The Central Corridor LRT project is part of the Met Council's vision for improving transit in the region. It will allow us to build on the success of the Hiawatha line and our entire Metro Transit system, which in 2006 recorded its highest ridership in 22 years.

Steven Dornfeld
Public Affairs Director



Do the Write Thing!

For more information on submitting letters or news announcements to the Monitor call Denis Woulfe at 651-645-7045.



Planning for the Central Corridor continues

By JANE MCCLURE

Planning for the land uses along the Central Corridor light rail line continues, with about 90 ideas on the drawing board. Meetings are planned to review the latest plans for the corridor, along University Avenue and in the downtown areas. The meetings are:

*8-10 a.m. and 6:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, February 15 at the former Lexington Outreach Library, 1080 University Av. the same material will be covered at each open house.

*8-10 a.m. Friday, February 16 at Fifth Street Center, 55 E. Fifth St. in the second floor skyway.

On both days the public can view informational displays and meet city staff, consultants and task force members. There will also be presentations and a chance to ask questions.

Task forces focused on the University corridor and State Capitol/downtown areas have worked on land use plans and development strategies for several months, with the goal of having plans ready this spring.

The plans will go through a Planning Commission and city council review and approval

process, and eventually become part of the city's comprehensive plan.

The 90 initiatives, developed by the task force and consultants from Urban Strategies, range from specific ideas for redevelopment areas to general ideas such as housing revitalization in the neighborhoods north and south of University.

In areas all along University Avenue, there is a focus toward better bus, walking and biking connections to and from light rail. There is also an effort to tie in existing community plans for nodes from Raymond and University to the Capitol area, and to develop new community plans in areas where there are none.

Other focuses in the development strategy include creation of new public spaces, infill development to fill in some of the gaps along University Avenue, and jobs creation all along University.

The University Avenue task force has not only debated the Urban Strategies proposals, much of its time in recent weeks has been spent discussing ideas



meant to benefit people and businesses along University Avenue.

Various advocacy groups along the corridor have brought in ideas meant to maximize the benefit of light rail and land use changes, while providing some level of protection. At its January 25 meeting the task force reviewed ideas from the University Avenue Community Coalition and from a subgroup of task force members.

But how such principles

would be implemented is still a huge question mark. One idea was that district councils be involved. But several task force members said wouldn't be practical, from the standpoint of council resources as well as the need for consistency along University.

University Avenue task force member Veronica Burt said the intent is to provide environmental justice so that communities along University benefit from light rail and aren't overly burdened by it. "Low income and minority communities will be significantly impacted by this project," she said.

Ways to replace affordable and expand the amount of affordable housing along the corridor, ways to maintain existing businesses and the need to make sure the light rail line itself actually benefits the communities it travels through were outlined by the advocacy groups. There is much focus on the need for community benefits agreements, which would provide a promise of jobs and other tradeoffs to the community in exchange for redevelopment of an area. There are also concerns that living wage

jobs be created.

"The city needs to set rules and have the developers play by those rules," said Jo Haberman of the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability.

But city staff and developers representatives caution that there may be only so much the city can do to regulate redevelopment. One suggestion is that the City Attorney's Office meet with the task force in the future to discuss redevelopment and what the city actually can and cannot do.

Other ideas raised January 25 include having what subsidies are available dedicated to structured parking, as a way to encourage transit-oriented development.

"Most development we will see will be private sector driven," said city planner Donna Drummond. That's because the city will only have limited resources to offer developers. Community benefit agreements and other restrictions on development are typically tied to city subsidies, not to zoning and land use policies.

"If we lay down conditions that are so onerous to the private sector, we're going to have a community that is economically stagnant," said task force member Richard Kleinbaum.

Changes in residential property inspections on the horizon

By JANE MCCLURE

Major changes in rental residential property inspections are on the horizon in St. Paul. New inspection regulations for single-family and duplex rental dwellings won unanimous St. Paul City Council approval January 24.

That same day the council also approved a new ranking and points system for property code violations in all properties and launch a new schedule of inspections for all residential rental properties.

Under the new schedule, properties with good inspection records would be scrutinized every five years. Other properties would be inspected annually or every three years, depending on the number and severity of property code violations found.

Proponents, including City Council members Jay Benanav and Dan Bostrom, say the system broadens the safety inspections to properties that may be most in need of scrutiny while rewarding landlords who properly maintain their properties.

In Benanav's Fourth Ward, he has fielded many complaints about the conditions of houses and duplexes rented by college students. In Bostrom's Sixth Ward, he is seeing more deteriorated rental properties, especially in the wake of more struggling landlords and mortgage foreclosures.

One group is already raising questions about the newly adopted regulations. The Minnesota Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) indicated in a letter that while the organization recognizes the need for rental housing inspections, there are concerns that inspections not violate tenants' rights under the Fourth Amendment. That Constitutional amendment is meant to protect against unreasonable searches and seizures. The ACLU

is concerned about a lack of a notice requirement for tenants, nor a requirement that tenant consent be obtained for inspections.

"Tenants in St. Paul should have the right to understand that the city is intruding upon their privacy and the reasons for the intrusions," a letter to the city Council stated.

Another concern was raised by Ward Two Council Member Dave Thune, who is concerned about a lack of notice to tenants. But other city officials said notice is required by state law and that provision is already covered.

Most council members hailed the ordinance. "This puts all rental properties under the same certificate of occupancy programs," said Benanav. Landlords either have to bring properties up to code "or they lose their ability to rent out that property."

Currently certificates of occupancy are only issued for residential buildings with three or more units and for commercial buildings. Rental single-family and duplex dwellings are inspected on a complaint basis.

A rental registration for single-family and duplex dwellings was implemented almost four years ago by then-Mayor Randy Kelly. But critics say that program doesn't go far enough to address problem properties. When the new ordinance changes are implemented, rental registration would be dropped. The new program would be implemented in March.

Currently there are about 5,900 buildings in the rental registration program. It's not clear how many rental properties aren't registered. Rental registration doesn't include an inspection requirement.

Benanav and Bostrom, and Benanav's predecessor, Bobbi Megard, have tried to implement more stringent regulations for sin-

gle-family and duplex rental dwellings for several years. But those efforts met opposition from past mayoral administrations and from landlords' groups.

St. Paul Fire Marshal Steve Za-

card said the new inspections will be implemented on a "worst properties first" basis. It will take a few years to get all of the single-family and duplex rental units inspected. It's not known yet if the

city's inspectors will be able to keep up with the inspection demands and whether or not more staff will be needed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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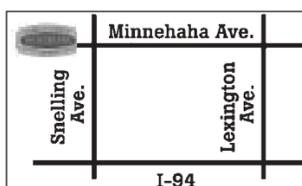
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U-Plan: 'New kid on the block' a community-based resource

By JAN WILLMS

There's a new kid on the block at 1956 University Avenue.

About 20 years in the thinking stages, U-Plan Community Planning Studio opened its doors Dec. 6. The brainchild of Brian McMahon, executive director of University UNITED, the agency is designed to be a community-based resource that facilitates planning and design efforts at the grassroots level.

"University UNITED is our umbrella organization, and Brian got grants specifically for this project," said Julie Burman, one of the staffers at U-Plan.

She has a background in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping, and Betsy Jacobson, the other staff member, has a background in architecture.

"Mainly people come in and ask for specific information," Burman said. "For example, the Lexington-Hamline District Council has merged from three into one. They wanted maps to help them identify the strengths and weaknesses of that proposal."

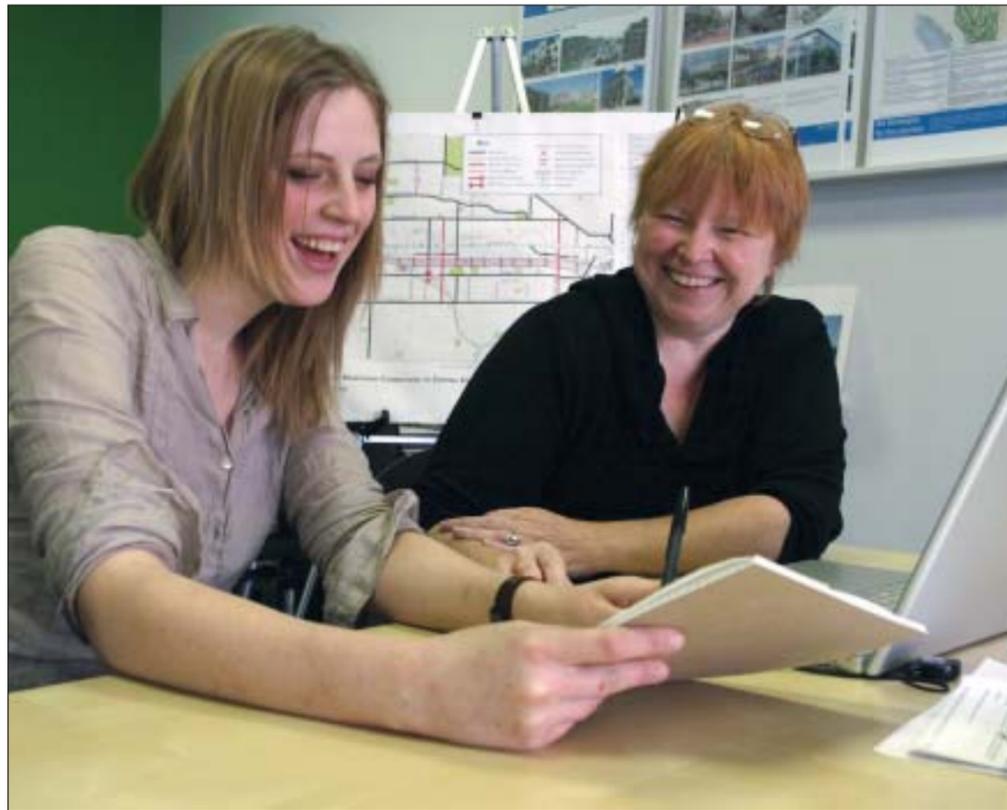
She said the maps she did for them showed traffic counts, land use, estimated market values and median home income.

"It gives them an idea of what turning three neighborhoods into one entails," she said. "Presenting visually on a map is much easier to understand than if you just give people numbers."

Jacobson said another project that U-Plan has been working on involves the American Institute of Architects (AIA).

"In celebration of the group's 150th anniversary, they offered grants to communities that would do a service learning project involving architecture," she said. "Saint Paul was granted one for the University Corridor."

She said the group is doing a block-by-block charrette. A char-



Betsy Jacobson (L) and Julia Burman at U-Plan community planning studio. (Photo by Terry Faust)

rette involves getting architects, students and architectural interns together for a day. They volunteer their time and meet with property owners. The owners present issues, and the architects try to come up with alternatives and make property more transit-oriented.

"We have done three charrettes so far," Jacobson said. "We did a couple as trial runs this summer, and we have done one since we opened."

She said some of the property owners have looked at alternatives for parking or facade improvement. They have also considered higher buildings that

would increase land value and density, and bring more residents to University Avenue.

Burman said they had some early press before they opened, but business has primarily been word of mouth.

The studio has computer work stations fully equipped with GIS mapping, AutoCAD and SketchUp architectural graphics. Google Earth, PhotoShop and other state-of-the-art visioning and design tools are available.

There is also a plotter, or wide-format color printer that will print maps as large as 42"x150'.

"We encourage people to use

Google Earth," Burman said. "They can use it at home or their offices, and then come back and ask us more questions."

Jacobson said U-Plan is set up to do primarily three different things.

"We are a mapping resource; we help form a sense of place, hosting charrettes and gathering background information; and we work with the AIA," she said.

Jacobson said that U-Plan has contacted and worked with district councils in St. Paul and the Powderhorn neighborhood in Minneapolis.

"We work with all the colleges in the area," added Burman.

"We work with organizations, businesses and individuals as well." She said independent property owners can come in and learn more about the area before they buy property, or learn about improving the property they already have.

Burman said the studio's meeting space is open for groups to use.

"We are planning on doing open houses a couple times a month for people to come in and see what we can do," she said.

She said that a funder had been in from the National Organization of Funders and was quite impressed with the operation.

"We are headed in the right direction," she added.

McMahon said he does see the U-Plan as a way for community organizations to provide input in a meaningful way.

"It is just a wonderful opportunity for me to be part of a group of very talented people," he said.

McMahon cited Tim Griffith, who works with Saint Paul on the Mississippi Design Center, as one individual who has been very helpful in getting the U-Plan underway.

"His agency is a hybrid of public entities and nonprofits," McMahon said. "He has played a proactive role in shaping development in downtown Saint Paul, and I have gotten him to spend some time on University Avenue the past few years. He has been an extraordinary resource and especially helpful in setting up the U-Plan."

Burman said the operation is funded through foundation grants.

"We don't turn down donations, but we haven't seen many of those yet," she said. She said the services of U-Plan are free of charge.

"We hope we can keep it that way for a long time."

Being the first of its kind, the U-Plan Community Planning Studio is setting standards for others.

Burman said Minneapolis is considering opening one, and they have heard from other places around the country about starting such an agency.

Jacobson said U-Plan was generated out of need.

"There was no place for community organizations to come and get access," she said.

"It gives district councils and their groups equal standing at the table," Burman said. "It gives them an education piece, and levels the playing field."

The office has a metal wall, with maps and papers attached with magnets. In the back, a bright green wall provides a sense of brightness and energy. The wide format printer and computers dot the landscape.

Anyone interested in finding out more about U-Plan can call 651-641-0293 or visit the website at www.u-plan.org.

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Dreamland Arts

Continued from page 1

One method they used to raise money was to make tiles, which today hang on a wall in the theater's entrance. Each tile contains a quote by a famous person, and can be purchased by individuals or families who support the theater. The "dream tiles," as they are called, were created by nine-year-old Naaja, the daughter of Mistry and Orr.

Now in its sixth month, Dreamland Arts offers a 40-seat theater as well as studio space in the basement, ideal for meetings or rehearsals.

The venue is available for performing artists as well as groups and organizations. A yoga class is taught on Monday mornings, and the owners also use the space to teach private acting classes.

"A dad in the neighborhood is very much into LEGOS," Mistry said.

"He approached us with starting a club for kids who are interested, and the Midway LEGO Robotics Club meets every Tuesday," Mistry said.

The location has also hosted an event for the Hamline-Midway Coalition, and offered a Family Disco night for young children and their parents.

"One of the huge assets of this is living next door," Mistry said. The house is connected to the theater by a passage through the basement.



"It's like having a baby. You start calling it by name while you are planning for it."

- Leslie Orr

Orr agreed.

"I have always wanted a little home base," she said. She added that the intimacy of the theater enables her to keep communion between herself as an actor and the audience.

She has been doing a show since 1990 called "Women Who Drink." She bases the characters on the type of drink they prefer.

"The whole idea of the 1960s and the cocktails is such a funny thing," she said. "People have said they see themselves or others in the play."

Orr said she has considered doing another show, "Women Who Drink More," but said she is out of touch with current drinks.

"Kathleen Sullivan, a bartender at the Uptown, does the show with me," Orr said. "She has said there is more flavor in the drinks today, and more rude names for them."

Orr has also worked on behalf of people with disabilities,

and one of the shows she has written and performed is "Hand in Hand," based on what it was like to live in the world of Helen Keller, deaf and blind, and her teacher, Anne Sullivan, who was legally blind.

Orr leads audience members in with their eyes shut, passes around props such as a Braille book or doll in velvet clothing, and spells the words out in their hands. She also tells stories about the lectures of Sullivan and the letters she and her pupil shared.

Orr tells about a woman in the audience at one of the performances who told her "Seeing you has made me realize I can do things."

"Just the feeling of being alive is a great sensation," Orr said. Through much of her work, she emphasizes the strengths of people with disabilities.

On March 23 and 24, Mistry will present his performance of "Indian Cowboy," a show done in candlelight. He said the show is not an autobiography, but tells the story of a young man who was found along the side of a road in India, his journey to the United States and the funny and dangerous things that await him as he discovers more about himself.

For Mistry and Orr, Dreamland Arts offers the sense of community as well as the sense of theater that has been a part of their professional lives over the years. By living and working in the Midway, they are hoping to share their mission to be a gathering place for creative expression through the arts that builds a healthy community.



"We came upon this unique property, and it brought us here."

- Zarraawar Mistry

Property inspections

Continued from page 5

The University of St. Thomas, district councils and the UST-community advisory group West Summit Neighborhood Advisory Committee (WSNAC) support the new regulations. One of those speaking January 17 for the changes was Steve Dickinson of the Hague-Laurel Block Club. "We have a (rental) property on our block that has been a problem for more than 20 years," he said.

Rental property owners' groups, including St. Paul Association for Responsible Landlords (SPARL) and Minnesota Multi-Housing Association, say they are hearing a mixed reaction from members. Owners of rental properties with three or more units think it's only fair that rental homes and duplexes are inspected, said Carol Buche of SPARL.

Molly Grove, director of municipal affairs for MMHA, said

most of her St. Paul members believe they will benefit from fewer inspections and the city's new ranking and points system. But she and Buche said they are hearing worries that tenants could be displaced in some cases. Benanav said the city is working with advocacy groups to make sure that doesn't happen.

Another issue Buche raises is the potentially high costs of bringing older rental homes and duplexes up to code. "We hope there is a go-slow approach to this and that there is an understanding that this could bring potentially high costs for some landlords." She also said there are concerns the system be applied uniformly.

Several landlords oppose the current proposal, with a few landlords attending the January 17 public hearing. "This is a costly, time-intensive solution to the college housing problems," said Hamline-Midway resident Vaughn Braschler. Saying he is "hardly an absentee landlord," Braschler said he checks his properties in the Midway and Frogtown daily.

Braschler said colleges should do more to make sure the housing their students live in is safe. He said colleges should inspect properties before allowing those properties to be advertised to students.

Another suggestion Braschler made is that the city provide more information so that rental can report problems and that the focus be on problem properties.

He also pointed out that even well-cared for rental properties may not meet current building codes. They noted that many of St. Paul's oldest rental dwellings provide affordable housing and that housing could be jeopardized by overly stringent regulations.

"This is going to put more landlords out of business," said Leslie Lucht, a Como resident who owns several rental properties in Ward One. He said the city's growing problem with vacant buildings is compounded by more strict regulations. Lucht told the council that he would work to "kick you out of office" during this fall's elections.



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Zion Lutheran fights urban church trends...

New pastor leads outreach efforts



Zion Lutheran Church faces many of the challenges which confront urban mainline congregations of various denominations: declining and aging membership, a ministry model derived from its earlier ethnic heritage, and less connection with the community and residents near the church. (Photo by Tom Conlon)

By TOM CONLON

A newly ordained Lutheran pastor who was advised against leading a congregation in her na-

tive India because of her gender turned to Minnesota to fulfill her spiritual callings - and now leads Zion Lutheran Church in the

Midway.

Rev. Nirmala Reinschmidt, 49, assumed the pastorate at Zion in late September 2006 amid challenges facing many urban mainline congregations of various denominations: declining and aging membership, a ministry model derived from its earlier ethnic heritage, and less connection with the community and residents near the church.

Current Sunday attendance averages around 50 at its 10 a.m. service, with about 30 seniors and 20 members of young families. Lack of parking lot space and disability access are two additional challenges she hopes to address long term, Reinschmidt said.

"Before I came, there had been talk of closing the church," she said "I specifically asked (St. Paul Area ELCA Synod) Bishop Peter Rogness for a small congregation that I could minister to

and grow, and I knew it would be a great challenge," Reinschmidt said. "I accepted the pastoral call because I know that God, whom I trust, could give me the strength, energy, wisdom and direction to grow the congregation numerically and spiritually. And I'm thrilled to be here - people have been very welcoming and open to new ideas."

The Ministry Journey

Born in Madras, India, to a pastoral family, she studied history and education at Madras and Maduri Universities, followed by 12 years teaching and later leading a missionary high school in her city for 12 years. "This was a challenge in a country that is 85% Hindu, 12% Muslim, and only 3% Christian," she said. "But I always had a passion for ministry and decided to study at



Rev. Nirmala Reinschmidt, a newly ordained Lutheran pastor, now leads Zion Lutheran Church in the Midway. (Photo by Tom Conlon)

Luther Seminary in St. Paul, earning Master's degrees in Divinity and Theology (in 1996 and 1998)."

Reinschmidt said she hoped to return to India and serve a congregation there, but in India's male-oriented caste society, women in ministerial leadership were not commonly accepted or practiced at the time. Instead, she met her future husband Paul and married 8 years ago. They have a 7-year old daughter Hannah.

Ordained in July 2000, her first call was as associate pastor of First Lutheran Church of Crystal, located in Brooklyn Park. "We were an all-white congregation, and I wanted to bring new people to church that were reflective of our community," she said. "I met a Liberian woman in the community and invited her to church. Soon after, we had 20 Liberian families join the church because we reached out and ministered to them and others through a new English Language Learner (ELL) ministry in our church."

Challenging the Congregation

"I think we have similar opportunities in the Midway community to bring in new people if we simply get out to meet them and give them opportunities to participate in a loving ministry. We need to take Christ's Great Commission seriously if we are to grow and have a future as a congregation. I am dedicating my work, and challenging our congregation, to find new opportunities to serve and grow spiritually. I'd like to explore partnerships with local schools, such as Hancock Elementary and Hamline University, for service opportunities. In light of those goals, our 2007 theme is Reach Up (prayer), Reach In (fellowship among each other), Reach Out (community outreach and missionary work)."

The Reinschmidt's plan to move to the Midway neighborhood as soon as their house in Crystal sells. "We'll be more invested in the community by living here," she said. Zion sold its

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Zion Lutheran

Continued from page 8

old parsonage at 1665 Blair Ave. in 2000, reflecting a trend among smaller churches in need of money and meeting pastoral desires to earn equity in their own home for retirement.

Bernice Kodada, 85, attended the church since 1925 as a young child. "Much has changed over the years - the neighborhood, our membership, ups and downs, the sanctuary renovation in 1965," she said. "I remember Christmas services where we had to set up folding chairs in the aisles to fit everyone in. And just a few years ago we were only drawing 30 or so to Sunday services. Pastor Nirmala has brought a new energy that we've lacked for some time. She's challenging us to think outside of our comfort zones and focus on rebuilding our congregation and spiritual commitment."

At the January 28 service, Nirmala preached in the center aisle without notes, challenging the 50 adults and children present to focus on love, even to our enemies. "Leave the rest up to God - he will help us do what we cannot do ourselves," she said. "Don't just say we love someone, but let our actions reflect it." The congregation honored her with a bouquet of flowers while singing Happy Birthday. Sandwiched between traditional Lutheran hymnbook liturgy and singing Beethoven's Joyful, "Joyful We Adore Thee at the end, the youth performed two guitar and piano songs while inviting "all the old people" to join them.

Reinschmidt and the youth led the congregation in the twists and turns of the performance. During sharing of the peace, all congregants walked up and down the aisles to meet all; Reinschmidt later welcomed 3 guests by name she met during that ritual. And true to Minnesota Lutheran tradition, the congregation gathered for a series of hot-dishes in the basement hall after the service and a brief business meeting.

In the past few months, Zion has started a Thursday night Craft Group for the entire community, is starting a men's and a mom's group, and planning a neighborhood doorknock. "The families are close to the church, more diverse, but we had lost that connection as a neighborhood church. In general, people are not as excited about knowing God, particularly in mainline denominations like ours. My challenge is to create knowledge and passion about God and to help others experience, and desire to bring others, to God. They may not come to church, but they may join us for a community ministry event and take baby steps towards the faith. God welcomes all people from wherever they are in their spiritual journey."

Zion's Swedish History (and a Governor)

Founded as the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran church of Merriam Park in 1890 at the former Union Hall, located at Prior and St. An-



From the Zion Lutheran Church Archives: The Confirmation Class of 1933

Zion Lutheran Church has enjoyed a rich history in the Hamline Midway neighborhood of St. Paul. It also has enjoyed its share of well-known members of its congregation. Above, in the center of this photo taken in 1933, future Governor Harold LeVander stands to the right of then pastor Constant Johnson.

thony, it affiliated with the former Augustana Synod. After renting different halls, it then moved into its first chapel in 1900 (at Thomas & Fairview Aves.), and, with rapid growth, built and moved to its current building at Lafond and Aldine in 1912. It survived a serious fire two years later which destroyed much of the interior chapel. In 1924, Salem Lutheran Church in St. Anthony Park closed and merged with Zion.

In 1931, with membership now around 800, Swedish language services were discontinued and the church changed its name Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Paul. From the fall

of 1932 to the summer of 1933, a young University of Minnesota law student and future Minnesota governor, Harold LeVander, served as an interim lay preacher.

"To put himself through law school, Harold took on lay preaching assignments in the community and found great rewards serving at Zion," said Bernhard LeVander, the late governor's brother. "He was a great speaker, and loved working with the youth of the church." In 1966, LeVander was elected governor following the bitter Keith-Rolvaag DFL primary, returning the office to the Republicans and serving until 1971. Older congre-

gants believe he spoke again at the church once while governor. He died in 1992.

In 1949, the church constructed "Den Skandinaviska Stugan" (The Scandinavian Kitchen) booth at the State Fair (located two doors west of today's Ye Old Mill children's ride near WCCO Radio). Congregation volunteers served fairgoers 3 daily meals for \$1.35 each (which included its famous baked beans dish) and raising needed funds for church repairs and operations. While the booth generated needed church funds, volunteer help became scarcer and, in 1966, it was sold off for \$18,000.

Zion's membership peaked at 960 in the early 1950s but had declined to 616 by the late 1960s, and eliminated the second Sunday service in the 1970s. The sanctuary, which seats up to 300 and displays colorful stained glass windows of the Last Supper and Christ knocking at the door, was last renovated in 1965 with a more contemporary altar.

Services generally offer traditional organ and choir, though a

monthly contemporary service is now held and Reinschmidt hopes to hire a band to do blended services of all musical traditions in the future. The church bell is still rung by hand from the stairwell before and after the morning service.

Pastor Arthur E. Olson, who had served Zion from 1933 to 1963, retired and was succeeded by pastors Reinhold Peterson, Robert Johnson, Ernest Carlson, Mary Wiltse, plus several interims until Reinschmidt's appointment last fall. In 1962, the Augustana Synod merged into the new Lutheran Church in America Synod (followed by merger in 1987 to today's Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Synod).

David Waugh, a member since 1978, said church also hosted a scout troop until 2001. "The U.S. Supreme Court had recently ruled 5-4 that the Boy Scouts did not have to hire a gay scoutmaster, even though they never asked anyone about sexual orientation," he said. "Almost overnight, the nearby Hancock Elementary School, a source of many of our kids from the neighborhood, then banned us from recruiting students in the school. We no longer had the numbers to sustain the troop."

Zion still hosts an annual Christmas bazaar and St. Lucia festival in honor of its Swedish heritage. An annual community corn feed is hosted each summer. During Lent, 11 a.m. midweek services will be held, followed by a joint 7 p.m. service at Bethlehem Lutheran in the Midway. The church is now working on a neighborhood cleanup effort, soup kitchen at Keystone, and plans a National Night Out block party, a crime fighting event, this summer.

Long term, Reinschmidt hopes one day to start a new church. "If I am successful at Zion, building our congregation one person at a time, with the talents, skills and needs of our diverse neighborhood, we will see great rewards as a people," she said. "Instead of closing, wouldn't it be great for us to one day sponsor a daughter church? With God's help, all things are possible."

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Midway landmark gets new look...

Griggs St. Paul Building in midst of extensive facelift

By JANE MCCLURE

One of the Midway's landmark buildings is sparkling again as a major renovation nears completion. New windows, an artistic railing and extensive interior remodeling including a new lobby are transforming the northeast corner of University and Fairview avenues. The Griggs St. Paul Building is enjoying the benefits of an extensive facelift. It's the latest step in the transformation of this building and its neighbor to the south, the Griggs Midway Building.

For the first time since the 1950s the two University and Fairview buildings are under the same ownership. They are overseen by Griggs Cooper/PMI. PMI, Progressive Management Investments, is a company that also oversees the Midway Commercial Building (or "Triangle Building") at Highway 280 and University Avenue and properties in Minneapolis.

The University and Fairview complex, which was built in stages between 1912 and 1925, is poised for new tenants in the renovated space. The complex has well over 550,000 square feet of space.

"Between the State Capitol and the University of Minnesota, we're the largest single office complex," said Nell McClung of Griggs Cooper/PMI. With light rail coming in a few years, it's a good place to be.

The renovation of the Griggs St. Paul Building has gone well, McClung said, and there is strong interest from prospective tenants in the remaining space.

As the transformation of the Griggs St. Paul Building winds down this month, a key new tenant

is moving into the complex. On February 5 the newly relocated St. Paul Workforce Center opened its doors. The new location replaces the longtime center which was located at 2455 University Av. The old location closed its doors January 30.

"The new St. Paul Workforce Center, one of the largest in the state of Minnesota, offers businesses and job seekers greater access to employment resources, the expertise of a larger number of partnering organizations, and convenient access," said Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Commissioner Dan McElroy.

The state has many partners in the new center, including the Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board and Workforce Solutions, HIRED, Employment Action Center, Vocational Rehabilitation and Job Service. A new and updated resource room will have about 20 Internet-accessible computers for job seekers to use. A larger conference room will have space for 75 people, with two smaller conference rooms for groups of 20 to 25 people each. The old location had limited conference space and a very cramped computer area.

The workforce center hours will remain the same, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number will still be 651-642-0363. Parking west of the building is free. Parking in the adjacent south side lot is free for the first hour and 50 cents an hour thereafter. The center is on the Metro Transit Route 16 bus line.

What most people think of as the Griggs Midway Building is actu-

ally two separate buildings. The structures were once at the center of the Griggs Cooper and Company wholesale grocery business, one of the Midway's largest employers in the early to mid-20th century.

At the time the first structure was built it was praised for its large windows and spacious, airy, state-of-the-art design. That wasn't typical for factories in that day. News accounts from the time describe how the space was a boon to the workers who processed as much as six tons of candy and 3.6 million crackers daily for Griggs Cooper and its sister companies Sanitary Foods and later, Foley Grocery.

As the complex grew and buildings ownership changes were made the spaces were repeatedly renovated. Numerous office and manufacturing uses occupied the two buildings. Much of the north building was used by General Electric for many years as a manufacturing facility. Then it housed numerous other office, storage and small manufacturing businesses. Midwest Delivery was a visible tenant for many years. A storage business also occupied a large part of the building.

The south building, which was pressed into service for countless phone banks and political campaigns, was a confusing warren of hallways and offices for many years.

But that wasn't the only confusion. McClung recalled that for several years the north and south buildings had similar numbering systems. More than a few people got lost trying to tell "100 North" from "100 South," for example. The spaces were recently renumbered.

The sale of the north building last year provided the chance to update and improve the structure. Tenant relocation got underway immediately and demolition began in late July. "In six months we took the building down to four walls," McClung said. "We rebuilt from the outside in."

Passersby couldn't help but notice the hum of activity as demolition debris was removed and hauled away. An old lean-to attached to the building's northernmost exterior wall quickly disappeared. New electrical, heating and cooling systems were installed. New windows were put in and the exterior spruced up. New black awnings are going up, replacing the fading red, white and blue ones.

An interior courtyard for the building, which was originally used as a workers' break area, will be restored and used as a courtyard again. Over the years it had become a catchall space for dumpsters and storage.

McClung is especially pleased with the appearance of a new railing on the building's west side. Designed by Minneapolis artist John Pirk, the dark metal railing features a unique, curved design. "The curve design never repeats itself," said McClung. The railing appears to be "flowing."

Part of the demolition project involved reuse and recycling. Area metal scrapers salvaged and hauled away much of the metal. McClung, who is a master gardener, was especially pleased to have the former storage businesses' salvaged two by fours saved and used by area residents who are building a greenhouse.

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IN OUR COMMUNITY

In Our Community

History Corps schedules Sharing Meetings

Saturday, February 24th is the next History Corps Sharing Meeting. Come share your interests and research, talk with others interested in the history of the Hamline Midway neighborhood, and learn more about upcoming History Corps events and members' projects. The meeting will be at the Hamline Midway Coalition/Hamline Playground Building at Snelling and Lafond from 3-5 p.m.

On Thursday, March 8, the History Corps Speaker Series features Stew Thornley, author of *Baseball in Minnesota: The Definitive History*. Shake off the Minnesota winter, think Spring Training, and join us for an evening of Minnesota and Midway baseball history. This is a free program at the Hamline Midway Branch Library, 1558 West Minnehaha Avenue, from 7-8:30 p.m. in the auditorium. Copies of Stew Thornley's books will be available for sale.

For more information about these and other History Corps events, see our website: www.HamlineMidwayHistory.org

Anderson, Hausman hold meeting February 17

Senator Ellen Anderson, Representative Alice Hausman, and Representative John Lesch will hold a town meeting on Saturday, February 17, from 10 a.m. to noon, at the Lakeside Pavilion on Como Lake.

The St. Anthony Park, Como Park and Midway neighborhoods and the city of Falcon Heights are part of District 66B, which is represented by Senator Anderson and Representative Hausman. Residents of these areas are invited to attend the town meeting.

The legislators want to hear the views of local residents on education, jobs and economic development, housing, energy and the environment, transportation, health care, taxes and other issues affecting our area.

The Pavilion on Como Lake has adjacent parking (enter from Lexington Avenue). An elevator inside the building goes to the third floor, where the town meeting will be held. For more information regarding the town meetings, please call the office of Sen. Anderson at 651-296-5537 or email her at sen.ellen.anderson@senate.mn

Como-Midway La Leche League meets March 13

The Art of Breastfeeding and Avoiding Difficulties is the topic of the next meeting of Como-Midway La Leche League, to be

"Ladies Who Lunch" host author Mar. 24 at Hamline Church

Hamline United Methodist Church ladies invite you to have lunch with them and Ann Burckhart, Minnesota author, on March 24 at 12 noon. Tickets (\$18) are available through the church office.

Ann Burckhart will speak about her cooking and book experiences, *Hot Dish Heaven: Classic Casseroles from Midwest Kitchens* (MHS Press, 2006) is a nostalgic look at the foods that nourished Midwest families during the 1950s, '60s and into the '70s. The 70 recipes, all retested and updated, were gleaned from books and folks in Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and North and South Dakota.

A Cook's Tour of Minnesota (MN Historical Society Press, 2003) is two books in one: a food history book and a cookbook. This culinary tour visits a small town food festival, State Fair food vendors, a famous Finnish cookbook writer, a popular Italian radio personality, a U-pick blueberry farm. It also features Minnesota products such as Watkins Vanilla, Betty Crocker Cake Mixes, Spam and Land O'Lakes Butter, along with wild rice and soybeans. The book was nominated for a 2004 Minnesota Book Award.

HUMC ladies will serve Minnesota recipes that will include a delicious entrée accompanied by tempting side dishes followed up with a traditional mouthwatering dessert.

Please join HUMC ladies gathering together and eating comfort foods while listening to one of our own Minnesota cooks share her experiences about cooks and cooking.



Ann Burckhart will speak about her cooking and book experiences, *Hot Dish Heaven: Classic Casseroles from Midwest Kitchens* (MHS Press, 2006) is a nostalgic look at the foods that nourished Midwest families during the 1950s, '60s and into the '70s.

held on Tuesday, March 13, at 7 p.m.

Mothers-to-be, mothers, babies and toddlers are invited to attend. La Leche League meetings offer breastfeeding information and support through mother-to-mother helping.

A lending library on a wide variety of related topics is also available. For meeting location or more information, call Heidi at 651-659-9527.

Adult forum begins at Jehovah February 11

On February 11 the Jehovah Adult Forum begins an 8-week pre-Easter Bible study led by two teams of Jehovah members: Lydia Volz-Kathryn Mennicke and Jim-Janell Kinsel. The study follows the dramatic sweep of salvation history by using Bible readings from the Easter Vigil service—an ancient-but-still-used worship service held on the Saturday evening before Easter, April 7 at Jehovah this year.

At this Easter Vigil service traditionally new believers were baptized (water) and sent on their Christian life journey with the light (fire) of Christ in their hearts. The title of the study comes from these water-fire concepts. Study booklets are available at the class which meets at 9 a.m. on Sundays in the lounge of Jehovah, the Lutheran church on the corner of Snelling and Thomas Avenues. All are welcome. Come a bit early for coffee and pastries before class. Call 651-644-1421 for more information.

Women who need a few minutes group at Zion

How would you like to take a break from the everyday trials of life to spend an hour and a half with a few other mothers who wish to do the same? We are talking about a new group starting up on February 14th at Zion Lutheran Church, 1697 Lafond Ave, Aldine entrance, from 9:30 a.m.-11 a.m. (child care provided), for coffee and talk about anything that happens to strike up conversations about the happenings of our lives.

These "get togethers" are not in the form of a Bible study, although talk of Jesus is always welcome. There are a variety of women, who will be attending with a variety of backgrounds, which always makes for good conversation.

The structure is loose, friendly, and no one is expected to be "prepared" in anyway, topic or otherwise. It is simply a chance to make new friends, learn about each other, and fellowship. There will be no pressure involved for anyone attending.

What will be involved is simply sitting around in conversation on topics that the group would like to discuss. Any questions please feel free to call Ann Waugh 651-645-9334 (home) or Sarah Dillon 612-789-2920 (home).

Family Fun Fair held Feb. 25 at Central Lutheran

Our FREE Family Fun Fair will be

held on Sunday, February 25, 2-4 p.m. Games, activities, popcorn, cookies and fruit drink will all be available at the Central Lutheran School Family Fun Fair. Each classroom will have a fun activity and a small prize for the children, while our teachers are available to answer question from the adults. Snacks will be served in the gym. Some of our school families will also be on hand to answer questions.

Central Lutheran School offers Christian education from preschool through eighth grade and year round child care. We are located at 775 N. Lexington Parkway (at Englewood Ave.) If you have any questions, please contact principal Bob Kuhlman at 651-645-8649.

Concordia University hosts college event

Concordia University, St. Paul will host College Goal Sunday, a one day event to help new and returning students get financial aid for college, on February 11, at 2 p.m., at the Library Technology Center on campus. College-bound students can get no-cost, professional assistance completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. The FAFSA is required for any student seeking federal and state financial aid, including grants and loans.

Concordia University, St. Paul is one of 25 hosts for College Goal Sunday. For more information about College Goal Sunday visit www.mncollegegoal-sunday.org.

Lenten Services at Zion and Bethlehem Lutheran

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 21st, will start our Lenten services. At Zion the service starts at 11 a.m. followed by a potluck lunch and at Bethlehem a soup supper at 6 p.m. followed by the Service at 7 p.m. Every Wednesday though Easter will be the 11 a.m. service followed by a light lunch at Zion and the soup supper at 6 p.m. followed by the Service at 7 p.m. at Bethlehem. The cost for the lunches and suppers are free, but the church will accept a free will offering.

'Intimacy' discussed at February 13 luncheon

"Elder Intimacy," will be the topic at a luncheon for seniors will be held Tuesday, February 13 at 11:30 a.m. at 1514 Englewood Avenue. Sue Bikkie, Geriatric Nurse Practitioner at Unity/Mercy Hospitals, will address different aspects of intimacy in all areas of a senior's life. Free transportation is provided and a free will donation is taken for the meal. The event is sponsored by Hamline Midway Elders. Call HM Elders to make reservations or for more information (651-209-6542).

Exercise classes for seniors offered twice weekly

Arthritis-Friendly Exercise Classes for Seniors will be held from 2:30-3:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays for eight weeks beginning February 20 at Hamline Methodist Church, 1514 Englewood Avenue. Please call the office of Hamline Midway Elders, 651-209-6542 for more information. There is no charge for the classes and transportation may be provided.

Attend a FREE "Start here" information session

"Start here" sessions introduce prospective students to the programs at Saint Paul College, inform them of the admission processes, financial aid, job outlook and other services. It's not too early to begin applying for Summer Term and Fall Semester!

Sign up for a tour & information session by calling 651-846-1600 or go online to reserve a place at www.saintpaul.edu/starthere. These sessions are FREE!

Attend one of these FREE sessions: Tuesday, February 13th at 10 a.m.; Tuesday, February 20 at 10 a.m.; Wednesday, February 21st at 6 p.m.; Tuesday, February 27 at 10 a.m.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

The Cheapskate

I had the very best mousaka of my life. (I usually spell it moussaka but I'm going with the official Shish menu here.) It was the special of the day, so I hope you are as lucky as I was when you visit Shish. The eggplant and potato slices were perfectly cooked, the seasoned ground meat layer was subtly scented with cinnamon or something similarly delightful and unexpected (to my palate at least), and the custardy top layer was light as a feather and delicately flavored. Yum.

And the Turkish coffee. I could write pages about it. Fresh off the burner in the traditional little brass (or maybe copper) pot with the long handle, the Turkish coffee at Shish is my favorite in town so far. It's got the traditional mud of powder-fine coffee grounds in the bottom, it's generously sweetened and spiced with cardamom, and you get to pour it into a tiny, exquisite china cup and saucer. Turkish coffee is meant to be lingered over, but unfortunately the other three lunchers were sitting out in the car double-parked, waiting for me to gulp it down so that we could keep our working lunch down to ... two hours!

I would not say the service was slow - it was blazing at warp speed all around us. But there were only two people sprinting around to staff the whole front end operation on a very brisk lunch hour.

The owner was helping the cook, taking orders, and running food to tables, while the apparently only other staff member was similarly multitasking. The wait was within reason for the entrees, but our baklava dessert took 10 minutes to order (starting over at the back of the lunch order line) and 20 more minutes to put on a plate and deliver to the table.

But why quibble when the food is this good and the prices, while not exactly true cheapskate territory (that's \$5 or less), are very reasonable. Go early, like we did (arriving before 11 a.m. for lunch), or go late, after the rush. Order your dessert right when you order your food.



Without Reservations

Shish is it!

And when you do have to wait, amuse yourselves, as we did, with a little game of "Gee, do you think that free-spirited individual in the Russian fur-lined hat and Birkenstocks goes to Macalester?"

The Food Snob

The food at Shish made me wonder why peace in the Middle East is so hard to achieve. After all, much of the food is similar-same herbs, spices, respect for vegetables and use of meat almost as a condiment. Which is why I asked the owner of Shish (several times) the nationality of his cuisine. "Jerusalem," he said finally, acknowledging almost sheepishly that he was half Israeli and half Palestinian.

"Do you go home and beat yourself up?" asked the Bachelor in one of his most politically incorrect moments. Yet it broke the tension and eased the discomfort I've observed at other Middle Eastern restaurants, even the ones that call themselves Greek or Mediterranean.

I believe food should transcend politics and it's hard to be partisan when your mouth is full. During our lunch at Shish, my mouth was almost as busy as my hand, which was sneaking on to everyone else's plates to steal grilled vegetables (the Bachelor's veggie kebab, \$9.95), yellow rice and chunks of meat (Chowhound's lamb kebab, \$11.95), and huge bites of that succulent mousaka (\$6.95). It was a two-way street. I put my giant pile of fries in the middle of the table and they disappeared in record time. I refused to share my lamb burger (\$7.95) though. It was too good, sparked with fresh mint and served with a salad bursting with tomatoes, olives,

fresh greens (and vitamins too I'm sure). The centerpiece of the meal - figuratively and literally - was our appetizer platter, called the Shish Maza Mix (\$7.95). We all dipped into the hummus, babaganoush and tabbouli with pita bread and decorated each bite with olives, feta and salad greens. I was lucky enough to get one of the falafel balls (chickpea fritters).

If only the food had been the center of attention at Shish. In fact, it was hard not to be sucked into the chaos all around us. The staff was so overwhelmed that I wanted to get up and help. Instead, I chafed while waiting for our pastries-sitting right there in plain view in the dessert case-to be put on a plate. As for the aforementioned Turkish coffee: Cheapy and I both ordered decaf, but the server said one of them was caffeinated. We asked for a replacement, which came quickly-too quickly. It reminded me of the old caterer's maxim: "If they want decaf, just tell them it's decaf." Perhaps my superhuman energy that afternoon came from creative inspiration, or a premenopausal power surge. I think it was the concentrated caffeine in that syrupy Turkish elixir.

The Bachelor

According to that sentry of truth and accuracy called Wikipedia, a hookah is "a multi-stemmed, often glass-based water pipe device for smoking. It can be used for smoking many substances, such as herbal fruits, tobacco, or cannabis." Of course, had I gone online just a few minutes later, it could have just as easily been defined on Wikipedia as "a rust-colored toupee worn by albino Scottish monks" or "the odor pro-

duced by potatoes that have sat in your cupboard for more than eight months."

Thankfully, I have had my fleeting encounters with our friend (one of my closest "buds") the hookah, so I know its true and noble purpose. But "herbal fruits"??? Hey, I went to college, and I never saw anyone try to cram a Honeycrisp into a hookah!

My point? Good question. Not sure I have one. But I did spot a hookah adorning the wall at Shish. Alas, it seemed pristine, a mere decoration that never felt the loving flame of a Zippo.

Indeed, much of Shish felt a little too sterile, a little too ... oh, I don't know ... Pier One, if you know what I'm sayin'. I like a little grit with my ethnic dining, a little sketchiness. Shish was like dining in my dentist's waiting room. In other words, it was altogether too respectable and pleasant for me.

But if you're into that sort of thing, you'll feel right at home at

Shish. My veggie kebab was decent, but like the atmosphere, it was missing a little something. A sauce of some sort would have been nice - cucumber, mayonnaise, butter - you know, dippin' sauce. I will say that the vegetables were grilled beautifully, to the point where even I said, "Hey, these vegetables taste different somehow!" However, I feel they did not need to provide me with an ENTIRE onion. My eyes would have been just as watery and bloodshot had they served me that hookah for dessert.

The Chowhound

Me: So where is Sheesh?
Everyone else in the car: (laughter) It's Shish, as in shish kebab, duh.

Now that we're all pronouncing the name the same way, I can start by saying that Shish is great lunch spot. The fast food style ordering (think McDonald's menu on the wall, but much nicer) means that as long as you get there a few minutes before the lunch rush you won't wait long in line and your food will be delivered quickly to your table. It may be too informal for a romantic dinner, but it works just fine for lunch.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

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Brown decides not to vie for Ward 4 seat; three candidates look to replace Benanav

By JAN WILLMS

The race for Ward 4 councilperson currently has three candidates, as longtime community activist Triesta Brown has made the decision not to run.

In an exclusive to the *Monitor*, Brown said she is expecting to spend more time in the day-to-day management of her property management business. Based on the time required by her business, she felt she did not have the time necessary to devote

to campaigning for the Ward 4 position.

Brown makes her announcement shortly after outgoing Ward 4 Councilmember Jay Benanav decided not to run for re-election.

This leaves Randy Schubring, Bernie Hesse and Russ Stark vying for the post.

Schubring, who is public affairs director for Tubman Family Alliance, a nonprofit agency devoted to preventing violence in

families and communities, is emphasizing sustainable urban environment in his campaign.

Some of the issues he is advocating are encouraging green construction, ensuring no net loss of park space, negotiating with developers from a position of strength with community benefits and building pedestrian and transit-oriented development.

Hesse is political director for UFCW Local 789 and received the endorsement of the Ameri-

can Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). He has been active in organizing opposition to the Super Target in the Midway.

Stark, director of the Midway Transportation Management Organization who has been working with University United, an umbrella organization of community groups, has also worked in opposition to the Super Target. In his campaign, he stresses working for vibrant main streets,

energy-efficient living and connected communities.

Ward 5 has incumbent Lee Helgen, also a recipient of the AFSCME endorsement, running against David Haas.

In Ward 1, newcomer Melvin Carter III, another candidate who received the AFSCME endorsement, is in the race, along with incumbent Debbie Montgomery, who was endorsed by the Saint Paul Police Federation.

In Our Community

Continued from page 11

Fleming appointed to Ford plant task force

Terri Fleming, Senior Vice President of Park Midway Bank, has been appointed by St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman to a task force created to help plan a mixed-use development at the Ford plant in Highland Park.

The 24-member task force includes a wide range of community representatives along with planning and business professionals. Terri Fleming is a life long St. Paul resident and lives in the Highland Park neighborhood of St. Paul. She has been with Park Midway Bank for ten years and in 2006 was Chair of the Midway Chamber of Commerce.

Meals on Wheels available to homebound folks

Meals on Wheels are available for homebound individuals over 60 years of age, on a sliding fee scale. The meals are delivered Monday through Friday during lunch time by volunteers from our community.

If you or anyone you know (family member, friend or neighbor) are in need of meals, please give us a call at (651-645-7424) Keystone Community Services Senior Program at Merriam Park Community Center. Feel free to call with any questions.

If you are interested in deliver-

ing Meals on Wheels to our homebound, please give us a call.

Scout Pack hosts roast beef dinner February 11

Cub Scout Pack 243 is hosting their second annual Roast Beef Dinner Sunday, Feb. 11th from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. in the basement of Jehovah Lutheran Church. Jehovah is located on the corner of Thomas and Snelling Avenues in St. Paul. The menu will include Roast Beef, vegetables, mashed potatoes, gravy, dessert and a roll. Tickets are \$7.50 for adults, \$5 for 2-12 year olds and under 2 year olds are free. Tickets available from a scout or at the door.

LettUs Service is now open for business

LettUs Service is a new business providing professional quality handyperson services to residential and commercial building owners in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Richard Jaeger and Flannery Construction's Tom Yardic, Ken Hinz and Gerry Flannery have partnered together to start this business. They have years of experience in construction, building repair and customer service.

LettUs Service is adopting Flannery Construction's philosophy of earth friendly, sustainable building practices. LettUs Service will strive to minimize its impact on our environment. Whenever possible they will use products and practices that help minimize our impact on the planet.

Lenten Light Meal, Study at Jehovah Lutheran

The worship team at Jehovah Lutheran Church has designed a Lenten prayer service for use twice every Wednesday during Lent—once at noon and once at 6:30 p.m. Following the traditional Ash Wednesday service, which includes the imposition of ashes, on February 21 at both noon and 6:30 p.m. the Lenten prayer service will be held on successive Wednesdays until Easter, again twice on Wednesdays.

Small group Bible studies combine with the Lenten prayer service to examine the meaning of baptism in the life of Christians, especially as seen in the theology of Martin Luther. Starting February 28 a simple meal of soup and bread precedes the prayer service both at noon and in the evening. All are welcome to come and preare through these studies for the upcoming celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord at

Easter. Call Dawn for details at 651-644-1421.

Winter Flower Show at Como Conservatory

Escape the winter white realm and enter the Sunken Garden's Winter Flower Show featuring vibrant pinks, yellow and purples created by azaleas, cyclamen, veltheimia and amaryllis, February 2-March 18, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory

Valentine's Day Soiree at Como Park February 11

Enjoy live music as you stroll through the candle-lit gardens of the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory Sunday, February 11, 5 p.m.-10 p.m. at Marjorie McNeely Conservatory.

Animal encounters, education stations, and an old fashioned cake

walk makes this Valentine's Day celebration ideal for any age. Admission is \$3.

St. Stephanus spaghetti dinner March 31

The St. Stephanus Men's Club is hosting their third annual spaghetti dinner on Saturday, March 31, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The menu will consist of spaghetti and meatballs, bread, pumpkin dessert, and beverage. Donation is \$6 for adults, \$4 for children ages five to twelve, or \$15 per family household. Children under five are free. A bake sale for the youth group will be held in the church lobby during the supper.

For tickets, contact Arnie at the church at 651-228-1486, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. St. Stephanus Lutheran Church is located at 739 Lafond (at the corner of LaFond and Grotto) in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Midway in a minute

Continued from page 2

Hamline Avenue building rezoned residential

A building at Hamline Avenue and Pierce Butler Route will be rezoned from light industrial to traditional neighborhoods use if the St. Paul City Council upholds a recommendation by the Planning Commission. The commission voted unanimous January 12 to recommend rezoning 892 N. Hamline Av. The rezoning request goes to the City council this month.

Property owner Nou Vang wants to use the large brick building to house her extended family. For many years the building was the office for Koppers Twin Cities Coke Company. It is

3 1/2 stories tall and is one of the last vestiges of the days when the Pierce Butler area was dominated by heavy industries.

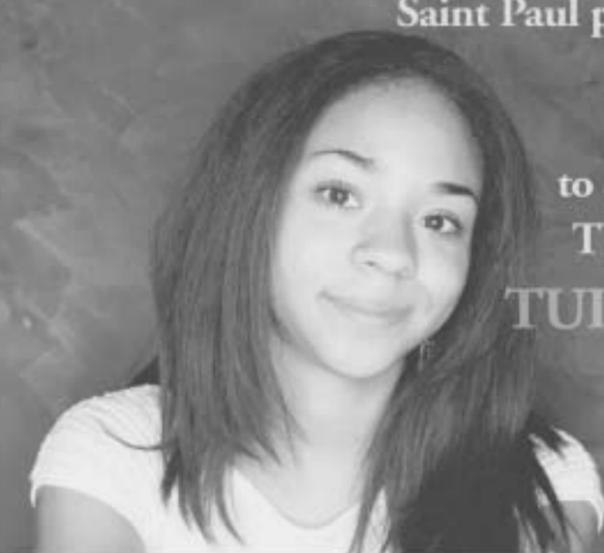
The neighborhood, which was industrial for many years, has redeveloped over time into light industrial and institutional uses. It is just north of a residential neighborhood.

The rezoning will allow the building to be converted for residential use, with the option of mixed-use development in the future. Traditional neighborhood or TN is a fairly new zoning classification, introduced to promote mixed-use development.

City staff recommends approval of the rezoning request and no one appeared at a Planning Commission Zoning Committee public hearing January 6 to speak against the request. The City council will take up the rezoning request February 7. Then it will go through a series of readings before it is finalized.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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Andy's Garage closes its doors after seven years in the Midway

By JAN WILLMS

The memory of sitting on a stool by the counter and spinning around as he visited small roadside cafes in Nebraska farmland as a child always stayed with D.J. Traudt.

And when he and his wife acquired some property along University Avenue more than seven years ago, he turned that dream into reality with the opening of Andy's Garage, a restaurant that reflected the rural upbringing of Traudt and his wife.

"We both grew up on farms," Traudt said. "And I attended a lot

of sales and farm auctions as a kid. We always stopped at those little roadside cafes. This looked like a perfect plan."

As the restaurant closed its doors Dec. 30, Traudt took some time to reflect on how it began.

They purchased a corner lot at 1825 University Ave. West in Saint Paul.

He said the garage had been abandoned for a couple of years when they got it.

"This was our first restaurant, and it was a family affair for my wife, my daughter and myself," Traudt said.

He had worked with the YMCA for 15 years, and as a development director. His wife works as a social worker.

"As much as anything, we wanted to create a community," Traudt said. He said they had the help of the Neighborhood Development Corporation and the Hamline Midway Coalition, and obtained grants to help renovate the windows and doors.

"We got one grant just to help with the retro neon marquee sign," he said.

He said there were pollution control reports to go over, and a lot of updating to be done. The building was a 1948 galley station and needed a lot of work.

He and his daughter did most of the demolition required, and Traudt said it took about nine months for the planning and actual work to be completed.

"We opened June 1, 2000, on my daughter's birthday," he said. "That was kind of nice."



Andy's Garage, Fairview and University Avenues, closed its doors Dec. 30 after seven years of operation in the Midway.

By 2004, they realized they needed more room and added on.

"We had started in a two-bay garage, and we realized we did not have enough seats," Traudt said.

He said they paid for the addition by selling customers stock in Andy's Garage. "The customers became the stockholders, and we used that capital to pay for construction," he said.

The restaurant was open seven days a week, and live music was offered on Saturday evenings. An additional Andy's Garage opened last May in the Midway Global Market on Lake Street, with the same small-town, roadside cafe atmosphere.

But several knee operations have forced Traudt to cut down

on his workload, and so the property on University has been put up for sale.

"We have already had 30 inquiries," Traudt said, "and at least a half dozen are serious."

He said he hoped there would be a similar operation taking over the location, but said that remains to be seen.

Meanwhile, he is putting all his energy into the Global Market restaurant. He said that at some point there might be an additional Andy's.

Traudt said owning and operating the restaurant on University was a wonderful experience for him and his family, citing his appreciation for his customers.

"I would do it again without giving it a second thought," he said.

Kim Huoy Chor, new Cambodian and Chinese Restaurant, to celebrate Chinese New Years Feb. 16-18



Vuthy Taing and his mother, Kim Huoy Chor, invite Twin Citizens to celebrate Chinese New Year at their new Cambodian and Chinese restaurant, in the old Embers location at 1645 University Ave. The celebration will feature Chinese lion dancers, dining specials, drawings and gifts, the weekend of Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 16 to 18. Friday, Feb. 16, at 11:45 a.m. the St. Paul Midway Chamber of Commerce will participate in a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The high-spirited Ha Family will perform their traditional Chinese lion dance at 12 Noon.

Emperor tamarins born at Como Zoo go on exhibit

The newest MN twins came without even a signing bonus, but were unveiled at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory two weeks ago. Twin emperor tamarin babies were born on Tuesday, January 23.

The emperor tamarin belongs to a subfamily of small primates found across South America. Adult tamarin's weigh about

1 pound full-grown; the twin babies weigh approximately 40 grams, about the size of a mini candy bar.

The babies can be found riding the on the back of the parents and will do so for the first 6-7 weeks. The gestation period lasts about five months and mothers will usually give birth to twins. The mother will feed the

babies every 2-3 hours and will wean at about 3-4 months of age.

Emperor tamarins are considered endangered or threatened in Brazil and Peru due to the clearing of forest habitat by humans. This was the first birth to this couple and the birth was in coordination of the Association of Zoos and Aquarium's (AZA's) Population Management Plans (PMPs). The PMPs provides basic population management for various captive populations to maintain stable, self-sustaining populations for displays and conservation purposes.

Chronic Pain? Stop Your Suffering

Nearly one in three Americans suffer from chronic pain. Many have been told they will just have to live with the pain or be prisoners to medication. This may not be true! Spinal Decompression, Acupuncture, Nutrition, and Chiropractic have helped many people find the relief they seek. All of these methods are available right here in the Midway District.

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Looking for delivery carriers to deliver the Monitor approximately 3 to 4 hours per month. Pay by route. Also looking for contract carriers for work two or three times a week. Great for supplemental income! Call 651-458-8053, ask for Lloyd. 12-03

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Hauling/Rubbish. Small trees cut down. Licensed and insured. 612-869-8697, 651-216-1300. 1-07

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Knitting lessons, Ginkgo Coffeehouse, Tuesdays. 651-341-5853. 4-07

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Without reservations

Continued from page 12

Wanting to stick with something familiar, I ordered the lamb kebab. But that didn't stop me from sampling some of the other dishes on our table. I loved the Cheapskate's mousaka. Had we not been on opposite ends of the table I would have easily stolen several more bites. You see, growing up with three siblings I became the master of sneaky food

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tactics. Whether I was swiping the desirable cherry in the canned fruit cocktail from my sister's bowl or draining my brother's glass of water, I always went undetected. It was with this stealth that I also admit swiping a bite of the Food Snob's lamb burger. I know it was wrong, but I'd do it again.

Just like the other dishes, my lamb kebab was delicious. The chunks came squished tightly together, so tight that at first I thought I was about to eat two long lamb tubes. I breathed a sigh of relief when one by one they slid off the skewer. Because of their

Prestige Concrete & Driveway Company. Garage Slabs, steps, floors, sidewalks, patios, custom work-Jim, 651-290-2689. 4-07

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Plow, blow & shovel. De-Icing service. Per time, seasonal or vacation. Business & home. ProServ Property Services. 651-647-5500. Building & grounds maintenance. 3-07-00

VOICE LESSONS

Vocal coach in the Como neighborhood will give voice lessons for music theatre and interpretation technique. Florence Schaffer. 651-488-2212. 5-07

WANTED TO BUY

Wanted Old HiFi consoles, receivers, preamplifiers, amplifiers, test equipment, turntables, tubes, large speakers, reel-to-reel, homemade audio equipment, microphones, studio equipment, ham radios, old electronics, etc. Andy 651-329-0515. 2-07

Top cash paid. Older furniture, crocks, glassware, beer items, much miscellaneous. 651-227-2469 (anything). 12-06

Paying the most cash for your furniture, dishes, glassware, knicknacks, costume jewelry, antiques, pictures, lamps, household items etc. I make housecalls. Call Mary 612-729-3110. 3-07

WRITING

Writing a paper for admission to Harvard? A resume for your company's web site? A journalist with 25 years experience is available for assisting folks who need help in writing. Reasonable rates. Call 651-486-9760. 12-02

close proximity to each other, the meat was very tender, especially the larger chunks. I should also point out, if only to rub it in the Bachelor's face one more time, that my kebabs came with a tasty white sauce. I'm not sure what it was, but it did the trick.

So whether you're looking for a yummy shish kebab or just want to mooch off of your friends' lunch plates, then Shish (remember, it's not sheesh) is the place to go.

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Daylight is lasting a few minutes longer everyday and it's starting to add up. But on a gray February day, I feel like the hibernating woodchucks have the right idea: Don't wake me until spring.

Marmota monax (a.k.a. woodchuck, groundhog, whistle pig) would never willingly step outside on Groundhog Day. I don't know what those folks in Pennsylvania are thinking when they drag the still hibernating woodchuck Punxsutawney Phil out of his burrow on February 2. The traditional belief that woodchucks can predict the weather is an old European folktale that just doesn't hold up on this side of the Atlantic. Shadow or no shadow, there is still going to be six weeks (or more) of winter.

The heart rate of a hibernation woodchuck is only 10 to 15 beats per minute, and his body temperature drops to just a few degrees about freezing. This slowed down metabolic rate conserves the woodchuck's fat reserves as he sleeps through winter, and he's not coming out to look for his shadow.

Why get up when your favorite food, green vegetation, isn't available until spring? Well, there is one reason a male woodchuck might wander out in late winter (but more likely March). With his passions aflame, our male marmot ventures forth from his den and into the den of his ladylove.

Unfortunately for the amorous male woodchuck, the female usually isn't in the mood so soon. But he doesn't give up easily. Eventually a female will accept him into her den, and he'll be allowed to stay for a month of ro-



Nature in the City

By DEB ROBINSON

Woodchucks would chuck Groundhog Day

mance. However, when the female is ready to give birth, she gives the guy the boot.

Woodchucks are common residents in city parks like Como and along urban roadways like Pierce Butler Route. In spite of the woodchuck's prevalence, I've never seen them courting. I've seen woodchucks eating grass at the woodland edges of the park. And I've seen them run for the cover of their woodland burrows when they feel threatened. But much of their lives are spent underground, so someone has to make a serious effort to study our local marmot species.

Thankfully, scientists have taken the time to investigate the private lives of common, non-game animals like the woodchuck. And amateur nature

watchers can make important observations as well, if not just to satisfy their own curiosity.

You may have noticed that I've changed the title of this column to Nature in the City; I



Illustration by Deb Robinson

but the label does seem to imply that it's a paid profession—not a passion that a person pursues on one's own time.

Prominent scientists and self-proclaimed naturalists, such as Gerald Durrell and E.O. Wilson, have noted that we are all born naturalists. Children have an innate curiosity about the world around them. However, few people take that spirit of discovery into their adult lives to make the study of nature their occupation.

Durrell and Wilson both earned advanced science degrees and made successful careers in natural history. However, formal education has not

traditionally been the

mark of a "naturalist."

Gilbert

White, 18th century amateur naturalist, made a lifelong natural history study of the area around his hometown of

Selborne, England. White made his living as a clergyman, but he pried more deeply into the lives of the wild creatures of Selborne than into the lives of his human parishioners. White never ventured far from his village, yet, White's nature observations have traveled to us across the centuries through his writing.

Our modern lives are often hectic with endless tasks and stresses. Contemporary naturalists don't have as much time to study nature the way White did. Nor do many of us have the advanced science degrees of professionals like Durrell and Wilson. But when we can steal a little free time, we don't have to go far to indulge our curiosity about the natural world because there is Nature in the City.

Endnotes: *Project Art for Nature (PAN) is offering their second art exhibit which focuses attention on our natural world. Artists associated with the botanical art program held at Como Zoo and Conservatory founded PAN, but the group has grown to include nature and artists from the entire region. The exhibit: "Presence, Essence, Absence" will be at the Bell Museum from Feb. 10 to May 27. Over those three months, the artists will offer art workshops, demonstrations, and tours in addition to the art show. For details visit: www.bellmuseum.org or call 612-624-7083 *Global Warming's Impact on Birds, presented by J. Drake Hamilton, Science Policy Director for Fresh Energy, will be the topic of the St. Paul Audubon Society's monthly meeting, 7 PM, March 8, at 1910 W. County Road B, in Roseville. The event is free and open to non-members.

Hamline University Events

Celebrate Girls and Women In Sports Free game admission!

In celebration of National Girls and Women in Sports Day, Hamline University's athletic department invites you to bring your children, grandchildren, or friends to attend the Hamline vs. Gustavus Adolphus woman's basketball game. The kids will receive free popcorn, along with the opportunity to meet the Piper mascot!
Date: Saturday, February 10
Time: 3 p.m.
Location: Hutton Arena
Cost: Free admission for junior-high-aged or younger children and those who bring them.
Contact: Dana Johnson, 651-523-2754

Hamline University's Jazz Ensemble Annual Swing Dance

Appearances by Hamline's very own Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Combos.
Date: Friday, February 16
Time: 7 p.m.—free swing dance lessons
8 p.m.—dance begins
Location: Bush Student Center Ballroom
Cost: Free and open to the public
Contact: Marilyn Washenberger, 651-523-2296

Leslie Shank, violin, and Joseph Hagedorn, guitar

Date: Monday, February 19
Time: 8 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: 651-523-2197 for ticket information.

"This is My Story"

This monthly brown-bag discussion series invites members of the university and local communities to share personal stories about their racial and cultural identities and journeys.
Topic: Global Immigrants
Date: Thursday, March 1
Time: 11:30 a.m.—12:45 p.m.
Location: Giddens Learning Center, Room 100E
Cost: Free and open to the public
Contact: MISA Office, 651-523-2423

Never the Sinner, a play by John Logan

Dates: March 2-3 and 8-10
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Location: Anne Simley Theatre
Cost: General admission: \$7
Senior citizens and non-ACTC students: \$5
Hamline faculty and staff: \$3
ACTC students: \$1
Children 12 and under: free

The Musical Offering

Featuring music by Arnold Bax, Lennox Berkeley, Benjamin Britten, and Arthur Bliss
Date: Sunday, March 4
Time: 3 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: 651-523-2459 for ticket information.



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