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Midway  
Como  
North End

# Monitor



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## Hamline-Midway photographer chronicles story about 'fracking'

By JAN WILLMS

Hamline-Midway artist and photographer Jim Tittle calls himself a person who collects and tells stories. And now he is telling a very personal story through a documentary film "The Price of Sand."

His concern about sand traveling through the St. Anthony Park neighborhood echoes the concern he has felt about a sand mining company setting up shop next to his mom's property in Red Wing.

His story about hydraulic fracturing or "fracking"—collecting oil and natural gas by pounding it out of underground rock—began a couple of years ago with a phone call from his brother, a realtor who lives outside of Red Wing.

Tittle, who still owns property in the Red Wing area, said they discovered that the land next door to the old homestead where his mother still lives was quietly sold for much more than it is worth.

"The buyer was an oil company from Oklahoma," Tittle said. He started doing some research, and he educated himself about the process of fracking. A definition of fracking in simplest terms: fracking is a process that creates fractures in rock to enable the removal of natural gas and oil from rock formations deep below the earth's surface. Deep holes are drilled and a mix of water, sand and chemicals (including diesel) is injected at extremely high pressure in order to make fractures in the rocks.

"This fluid they're using is a witches' brew of stuff you wouldn't want to drink," Tittle said. "The industry says there is no negative effect from cracking the earth while others disagree."

Tittle began interviewing people who live near silica sand mines, talking to them about their concerns and experiences. He went to Maiden Rock, Menomonie and Ottawa, MN, the site of a silica mine.

And, he noted the signs of silica sand in his own neighborhood. Tittle said trucks on I-94 take the Vandalia exit, drive to Capp Road and turn into the railroad yard. He said the trucks dump the sand on the ground, and the sand is scooped up and placed in the railroad cars.

His concern is that the sand dumped on the ground creates a dust that can be toxic. The railroad company claims the sand is



Hamline-Midway artist and photographer Jim Tittle calls himself a person who collects and tells stories. And now he is telling a very personal story through a documentary film "The Price of Sand." (Photo by Stefanie Berres)

wet, and the railroad cars travel only 10 miles per hour, so no dust penetrates the air.

Tittle does not claim to be a technical expert on fracking, and he said there are good people on both sides of the issue. But he does want a conversation to ensue.

"I avoided a documentary, because I know it is a lot of work," he said. "This would be a big, big project. For a one-hour documentary, you can shoot 150 hours of footage, and then you have to edit it. There would be a huge amount of time involved."

But when his interviews were put up on YouTube and reached 44,000 views, he realized he wanted to reach an even bigger audience and create something people would sit down and talk about.

And so "The Price of Sand" has turned into a film.

"Normally, you raise the money first," Tittle said. He created a budget and had some leads for getting checks, but none panned out.

"I didn't have time to court people, and besides I'm no good at it," he admitted. So he turned to Crowd Sourcing, a form of Kickstart in which people can donate small amounts towards a project.

"My goal was to raise \$5600

in 56 days, to cover my mileage and motel costs while I was doing the interviews," he said. He was told it wouldn't work, because he set it up around Christmas.

"It was the wrong time of year, and people are in a bad economic situation," he said. But he

went ahead, and he raised \$6800 in 56 days.

He is still faced with problems of time, but summer is a slower time for him professionally and he can devote his time to the film. He still has about 25 per cent of the documentary remaining to shoot.

Tittle explained that as he proceeded to film interviews and scenes of trucks and railroad cars transporting sand, he has discovered some key issues.

"Right now is a boom for fracking," he said. "It seems unlikely to go on for decades, but right now everyone jumps in. Rules are bent, palms are greased."

He has learned the process brings massive infusions of money into small towns, but property devaluation also follows. And he has learned the dust can bring with it disease, silicosis and cancer that do not always show up right away. Tittle also questions what the huge loads of sand may be doing to the quality of the roads.

In the Red Wing area where Tittle grew up, running freely with his brother in the hills, a group has formed called Save the Bluffs. The group has managed to initiate a one-year moratorium on the sand mining company, which is set to expire in mid-August.

And Tittle continues to work on his documentary.

"I am literally a cameraman," Tittle acknowledged. But his film journey has taught him a lot about the field of fracking, and he is skeptical.

"Anyone interested in air quality or concerned about health risks should be skeptical," he said.

## Rice Street Festival draws a crowd



Clockwise, starting at bottom center, 2012-2013 Rice Street Festival Ambassadors: Peggy Ly, Director Cindy Shanley, Sarah Tobin and Shakira Jones (Photo by Mary Carlson); Vulcanus Rex, alias Steve Robertson (Photo by Kerry Antrim); Monique Lopez (Photo by Gidget Bailey); Grand Marshals Gidget Bailey and Joan Knippenberg (Photo by Michelle Doree); Grand Marshal Kirsten Libby (Photo by Kerry Antrim); Old-Timers Softball Team (Photo by Cathy St. Martin); Jodie Doree (Photo by Michelle Doree).



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Midway/Como/North End

## University UNITED plans to downsize

Facing a tough fundraising climate, University UNITED is moving ahead with a plan to downsize and have a virtual office. Community partners were notified of the decision to close the office last month. UNITED, which has led various University Avenue initiatives for more than 35 years, will focus on creation of living-wage manufacturing jobs. UNITED will become a virtual office, shutting down its storefront at 712 University Av. this summer.

According to Board Chair Stuart Alger, budgetary constraints and a challenging fundraising environment are driving the change. The organization will be less dependent on grant funding and more dependent on revenue it generates through development projects. It will operate for a time with volunteers.

The UNITED Board is seeking feedback and suggestions on its new role, and has been contacting community partners to discuss the changes. Area district councils that have long been

members of UNITED's boards have been discussing the proposed change since last year.

Over the past several months UNITED has shut down its various initiatives, including the University Avenue Business Association (UABA) and U-Plan, an urban planning services office. While UABA could continue as an all-volunteer group, the end of U-Plan was seen by many neighborhood groups as a huge loss. U-Plan was involved in a number of initiatives along the Central Corridor light rail line and in community planning processes, including work on plans for Merriam Park in conjunction with the Union Park District Council Parks and Recreation Committee. While the U-Plan documents and resources may go to the Asian Economic Development Association, UNITED has had to find homes for files accumulated over decades.

"It's the end of one era and the beginning of another," said UNITED Executive Director Brian McMahon. He and the UNITED Board are working on environmentally friendly or "green" manufacturing proposals for properties in the West Midway, working with the St. Paul Port

Authority, property owners and community groups.

## Mosaic on a Stick to move

Mosaic on a Stick will be moving from its Snelling and Thomas area storefront to the Hamline Park Playground building at 1564 Lafond Ave. The move was approved by the St. Paul City Council July 3, on recommendation of city staff.

The building has not housed parks uses since the mid-1980s and most recently was leased by Hamline-Midway Coalition and Asian-American Renaissance. The group underwent an extensive community renovation process and was reopened for use in December of 1993. The building has been vacant since July 2011.

Because Parks and Recreation didn't want to use the building, and wanted to see it used, a request for proposals went on. Mosaic on a Stick was chosen to lease the facility and will do so for more than five years.

St. Paul does have a "no net loss" of park land ordinance, but

because the end of park use of the historic building predates the city's no net loss policy, the lease doesn't fall under those regulations.

## Central Corridor obtains sound level variance

Central Corridor light rail construction crews obtained another sound level variance from the St. Paul City Council June 20, but it is with a warning that city officials will be watching for any violations. The variance allows operations overnight, as needed, until November 30. It covers the project from Hamline Avenue to Robert Street.

Union Park District Council and a Hamline-Midway resident, Paul Niskanen, objected to the variance request. City Council members have received complaints about excessive noise. Niskanen, whose family includes young children, said that passage of the variance would be "very detrimental" to families living

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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# 'Friendly streets' initiative threatens local Snelling Avenue businesses

By JANE MCCLURE

Even before Central Corridor light rail construction began, University Avenue wasn't the most bicycle-friendly street in St. Paul. Giving bicyclists an option to travel parallel to the light rail route is part of the impetus for redeveloping part of Charles Avenue into a bicycle and pedestrian-welcoming "friendly street." Neighbors say that will make their street safer and more welcoming.

But is that friendliness at the expense of some Snelling Avenue businesses? The current and former owners of the Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Home think so.

Owner Rich Purcell said he is worried about losing business if patrons cannot easily access the 96-year-old funeral home via Charles. He notes that changes to Snelling at Charles, meant to make the crossing safer for bicyclists and pedestrians, could be a deterrent to clients trying to get to the funeral home.

"We're concerned that this could put us out of business," Purcell said. "We're the only full-service funeral home left in the Midway."

Purcell and former funeral home owner Dennis Boom said they only recently became aware of the proposed changes to Charles Avenue. City officials have suggested changes to the median at Sherburne to allow neighborhood access, but Boom and Purcell questioned whether that would be adequate. They question whether they will have to take legal action against the city.

The proposal is on a fast track for city approval, going to the



Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Home owner Richard Purcell said he only recently became aware of the proposed changes to Charles Avenue. City officials have suggested changes to the median at Sherburne to allow neighborhood access, but Purcell questions whether that would be adequate. He wonders whether he will have to take legal action against the city.

Planning Commission Transportation Committee August 13 and the full commission as soon as August 24. It could be brought to the City Council for a vote in September.

Charles could become the city's next bike-walk route if City Council approval is granted.

Dozens of area residents and bicyclists attended meetings July 17 and 25 to see the Charles Avenue Friendly Streets proposal. The project has been in the development stages for more than a year. It is part of the Central Corridor Bike-Walk Action Plan adopted by the City Council in early 2010.

Comments from the two meetings will be considered by

city staff, as a recommendation is prepared for city Planning Commission and City Council review and approval. Revisions to the plan could be made in August, prior to commission and council review and approval. The city's Transportation Committee is also expected to weigh in on the plan.

The first of the July meetings focused on design elements. The second focused on intersections. City officials and the district councils are already hearing from businesses with concerns about what the project could do to their access. One of the businesses raising concerns is Holcomb-Henry-Boom Funeral Home.

Draft design plans and background information about the

Friendly Streets project are posted at [www.stpaul.gov/charles](http://www.stpaul.gov/charles), and comments on the plan are being accepted online.

The Charles Avenue plan extends from Aldine Street to Park Street. It calls for seven traffic circles at Fry, Griggs, Chatsworth, Milton, Grotto, Arundel and Farington streets. Other traffic calming measures include signage, speed bumps, pavement markings, and other measures. At major intersections of streets including Marion, Dale, Lexington and Snelling, pedestrian median refuges would be installed. In areas where there are already concrete medians, the medians would be modified to create a safe place for bicyclists and motorists to stop.

Residents have also asked for street landscaping, public art, permeable pavement and other place-making features. They say the project will make their street safer and that it is badly needed.

Residents of the Frogtown and Hamline-Midway neighborhoods embraced the bicycle boulevard idea for Charles, seeing it as a way to make the street safer. "One major goal is to discourage motor vehicles on Charles from speeding," said Frogtown volunteer Tony Schmitz. "The most common comment we heard was that cars go too fast on Charles." There are also concerns about safety for children and the potential for more cut-through traffic once light rail is up and running.

The plans were developed over the past year at a series of five block parties and community meetings attended by about 900 people. More than 2,400 suggestions were received. Project outreach was organized by Hamline Midway Coalition and Frogtown Neighborhood Association. Transit for Livable Communities and the St. Paul Departments of Public Works and Planning and Economic Development are also working on the project.

Even after light rail starts operations, bicyclists will still be able to legally ride in University Avenue mixed traffic, said City Planner Christina Morrison. Bicyclists lost a bid to have bike lanes installed as part of the light rail project. Engineers said there just wasn't room, if University is to maintain two lanes of traffic in either direction.

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# Guest Column

By RICHARD PURCELL

## Pedestrian/bike path for Charles Avenue threatens livelihood of long-time Hamline-Midway businesses on Snelling Avenue

The proposed Charles Avenue Bike/Pedestrian Path from Park to Aldine Streets, threatens the future existence of our long-time neighborhood businesses such as Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Home and Cremation Service, Ellis Drum Shop, Holiday Gas Station, Curly's Barber Shop, Dey Appliance, Griffith Printing, Checkerboard Pizza and others, located on and near the corners of Snelling and Charles Avenue. In our case, Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Home has been serving customers in the neighborhood

community since 1916.

Currently, families traveling to the funeral home, in order to make funeral arrangements, attend visitations, funeral or memorial services, who travel from any points north of Charles Ave., routinely turn left off of Snelling Avenue onto Charles Avenue to enter into the funeral homes parking lot. The proposed bike/pedestrian path will eliminate all left hand turns onto Charles Avenue from either the south or northbound lanes off Snelling Avenue. Eliminating the left hand turn from the

south-bound lane of traffic will jeopardize the future existence of the funeral home. The suggested four-block re-routing to the funeral home, which would require families, and routine delivery vehicles to re-route through the neighborhood from the north, would cause added traffic into the neighborhood as well as creating confusion and frustration in the task for those needing to reach the funeral home, or other businesses near this important corner.

The safety of pedestrians and issues of crossing Snelling

Avenue at Charles is also of great concern. A safer point to cross Snelling Avenue would be to do so at a controlled traffic lighted intersection, such as at Thomas Avenue or Minnehaha Avenue.

Minnehaha Avenue is already a designated bike path, with posted signs along its Avenue. Is there such great demand and need for another bike/pedestrian path to parallel the already existing bike path, just six blocks to the south of Minnehaha Avenue? Furthermore, is this bike/pedestrian path worth threatening the future existence of our long-standing businesses? Keep in mind that one of the points of origin of the proposed Charles Avenue bike/pedestrian path is at Aldine Street, which is just two blocks west of Snelling Avenue. Consider the fact that these businesses have considerable annual costs of operation and pay high property taxes in order to offer their services to our community.

If the intersection of Charles

and Snelling Avenues is allowed to be closed by adding cement medians into its intersection, and eliminating vehicles to turn onto Charles Avenue, most likely these businesses will be forced to relocate or go out of business completely.

The proposed bike/pedestrian path on Charles Avenue will be detrimental and jeopardize the future to our local businesses located near the Snelling and Charles Avenue intersection. So, we need to ask, if closing this intersection at Charles and Snelling Avenues as proposed, to vehicles, will truly create the safest place for pedestrians/ bikers to cross Snelling Avenue, is it in the best interest of our long-standing and valued community businesses, and is it truly needed?

*(Editor's note: Richard Purcell is the owner of Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Homes and Cremation Services, 536 North Snelling.)*



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Meeting on dog safety planned Aug. 9...

# Postcard on pit bulls stirs Como Park

By JAN WILLMS

A dog safety discussion set for 6 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 9, at the Historic Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway, is just that—a discussion about dog safety.

According to Jessica Bronk, administrator and coordinator of District 10 Como Community Council, a postcard sent out to District 10 residents has resulted in several phone calls from people concerned that this is a meeting to ban pit bulls.

"This postcard has gained a lot of attention," Bronk said, "but it was not created or distributed by District 10." The card shows the arm of a child who was bitten by a pit bull last April, on Easter Sunday.

"We have been having a discussion about dangerous dog procedures with the resident whose daughter was bitten," Bronk said. "We agreed to have a meeting for District 10 residents to get their opinions and share information on dog safety."

Bronk said the meeting was planned before the postcard went out. "The postcard was a bit of a surprise to us," she admitted. "It was intended to draw attention to the problem, but we did not distribute it."

The postcard lists several dog bite concerns and statistics. It also lists a website, Dogs-Bite.org, identified as a national dog bite victims' group dedicated to reducing serious dog attacks.

"Through our work, we hope to protect both people and pets from future attacks," the website states.



A dog safety discussion is set for 6 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 9, at the Historic Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway. A postcard sent out to District 10 residents has resulted in several phone calls from people concerned that this is a meeting to ban pit bulls.

District 10 board member Ted Blank, who is chair of the Neighborhood Relations and Safety Committee, will facilitate the discussion at the meeting. Bronk said Animal Control has

been asked to provide any information about city ordinances.

Although Rep. John Lesch, DFL-St. Paul, attempted to author a proposal that would make it illegal for residents to own Rot-

weiler, pit bull, chow chow, Akita and wolf hybrids back in 2008, the bill did not make it out of committee. Currently there are no specific legislative proposals pending with the City of St. Paul, according to Bronk.

However, concerns have been raised over dog bites and maulings, and the question often arises as to whether the dog breeds need to be limited, or more restrictions put on the dog owners. Currently in St. Paul, the decision to put a dog down depends on the seriousness of the dog bite, according to Animal Control representatives.

The Aug. 9 meeting is designed to give the Neighborhood Safety and Relations Committee the opportunity to hear from Como Park residents, including pet owners, dog bite victims and others.

"Interested speakers should prepare brief remarks and be prepared to listen to those who may have different views," Bronk said.

## News from District 6

### News from District 6 Planning Council

Please join us at our Tuesday, September 4, Board meeting beginning at 6:30 at 1414 North Saint Albans. Councilmembers

Melvin Carter III and Amy Brendmoen will attend to have an open and frank discussion with residents about the City budget

and the challenges the City faces moving forward. The Councilmembers are open to suggestions, ideas and particular areas of interest. Here

are links to the 2012 budget overview: [www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/20218](http://www.stpaul.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/20218).

More detailed budget documents can be found at [www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?nid+4626](http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?nid+4626). Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend—tell your neighbors!

The District 6 and District 7 Neighborhood Clean-up is September 15, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. You must be in line by 12:30 p.m., at Veolia Environmental Services, 309 Como Avenue. More informa-

tion will be mailed to District 6 residents.

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# Lexington Parkway bus line, more service on north-south routes highlights of proposed MTC bus route changes

By JANE MCCLURE

The addition of a Lexington Parkway bus line and more service on other north-south routes are highlights of proposed Metro Transit bus route changes. But those who use some east-west routes and the existing Snelling Avenue express route will see their service reduced or replaced either by Central Corridor light rail or other buses. That is causing concern for regular express bus and University Avenue travelers.

The changes, tied to the 2014 start of light rail service, are the focus of the plan. Neighborhood meetings on the plan wrapped up in late June. The St. Paul Planning Commission approved its comments June 29, with the City Council weighing in July 18. The comment period wrapped up July 23, after being extended to allow for more comment from affected Lexington Parkway residents.

"We have a good network of service now," said Scott Thomp-



Those who use some east-west routes and the existing Snelling Avenue express route will see their service reduced or replaced either by Central Corridor light rail or other buses. That is causing concern for regular express bus and University Avenue travelers.

son, senior transit planner for Metro Transit. "But we do have some gaps in the area, and some gaps in terms of times and days of service."

While transit users indicated that they are generally satisfied with the existing bus network, they would like to see increased service. More off-peak service,

earlier morning and later nighttime service were among the requests riders made. The service changes have to be made without adding to the current budget,

meaning cuts have to be made to balance any increased service.

The proposed plan reduces service on routes that will be served by light rail, Thompson said. That would allow Metro Transit to shift resources to improve route coverage and frequency to bus routes that provide connections to light rail. That in turn would improve frequency and reliability of service.

One of the biggest changes in area neighborhoods would be the addition of a Lexington Parkway bus. The new line would extend from the Como-Snelling intersection, to Energy Park Drive, and then travel Lexington to Albion and West Seventh streets. This would fill a significant gap in the transit system, which currently has no north-south service between Snelling Avenue and Dale Street. The route would operate every 30 minutes.

The route has support from the Parks and Recreation Commission, Como Community Council and the Planning Commission, although there is a push from city officials to have it travel to the park itself, said City Planner Christina Morrison.

Several years ago Metro Transit tried a Lexington Parkway route between Como Park and Central High School. That route was dropped in a round of cost cuts less than two years after it was introduced.

There are concerns from the Planning Commission and community members about University Avenue bus changes. The Route 50 Express would be eliminated and Route 16 service cut back. The Planning Commission is asking that Metro Transit continue to look at Route 16 service after light rail begins operations, to see if more midday trips should be added back in. The commission also wants more frequent service on Route 21 considered, as well as pedestrian and sidewalk improvements along the rail line where needed.

Other changes are proposed. Route 84 service on Snelling Avenue would be increased to operate every 10 minutes between Rosedale Mall and Ford Parkway. Snelling Avenue is viewed as the city's first site for rapid bus transit, with a line there opening in 2014. This would provide high-frequency, limited stop service on Snelling and Ford Parkway every ½ to ¼ mile, between Rosedale and 46th Street Station.

The Dale Street bus, Route 65, would continue to operate between Rosedale and Selby Avenue but would no longer go into downtown St. Paul on Selby. Instead it would extend south to Grand Avenue, replicating service that was offered about a decade ago. This route would operate every 20 minutes.

Route 87, which serves riders on Raymond and Cleveland avenues, would have more frequent service, operating every 20 minutes at most times, including new evening and weekend service. This route would be changed to more directly serve the new light rail line at Raymond and University.



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# What's Cookin'...

By COLETTE MULLENMASTER

John's Pizza Cafe, owners John and Kathy Celebrating 25 years

CM: During the past 25 years in business, can you share how the community around you has changed.

JW: John's Pizza Café opened its doors August, 1987. 25 years is a long time. Ronald Reagan was President, the economy was booming, the merry-go-round was still at the State Fair, the Minnesota Twins won the World Series, and Facebook was Sci fi.

I can't think of much that hasn't changed in this neighborhood. We have a new industrial park, a new elementary school and a new church. People come and go, but it's amazing how many people coming into our restaurant reminisce about having lived in this neighborhood and how much they enjoy coming back and seeing progress in the community. They love to reconnect, share a sense of belonging, and return many times over!

CM: How has the community impacted your business?

JW: We started out with just pizza. We have added many menu items due to requests from the community such as Calzones, Stromboli, Lasagna, Hoagies, Hamburgers, Wings, and Pasta. Other menu items have been added due to changes in

people's eating habits such as unique Salads and Wraps. The demand for off-site catering has grown tremendously due to the development of the business community. Both the Business and Residential community have given strong support and recognition of the transformation of this corner with our move to 616 Como. They enjoy our new restaurant and consider it their John's Pizza, so our Garden Room has become a favorite place to share with friends and family for retirement parties, birthdays, anniversaries and rehearsal dinners.

CM: Is there a special memory that stands out over the years?

JW: 25 years - I've got so many memories. Our first day, Carl's TV, Dogger, a 2 yr. old and a slice of pizza, Halloween snow storm, Effie's first day, a flour covered cashier, planters, and our Daktronics sign. So many stories, I will gladly share, but be careful what you ask for! I do want to share a recent special memory. A well respected restaurateur stopped in and remarked, "John what you have done to the outside of this building is amazing, but what you have done to the inside is astounding." So, if you haven't been into the new John's Pizza Cafe, you're invited to come in and create some of your own memories.



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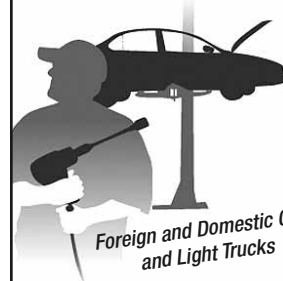
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# Redistricting plan impacts coming primary Aug. 14

By JAN WILLMS

The Aug. 14 primary in St. Paul will see some candidates in the Monitor readership area facing off before the Nov. 5 general election. The 2012 Redistricting Plan

has resulted in new voting precincts.

In Senate District 65 there will be a runoff between 3 DFLers. Incumbent Sandy Pappas, Marcus Walker and Tom Goldstein will

compete in a primary. The winner of the primary will face Rick Karschnia (R).

A small portion of the west Midway now falls into District 64—and in that race DFL incum-

bent Dick Cohen will be challenged in a primary by Alexander H. Jeffries — the winner of that race will face Sharon Anderson (R) in the November election.

In State Senate District 66, in-

cumbent John Marty (DFL) will be challenged by Wayde Brooks (R).

Area House races do not have any primary contests.

In 64A incumbent Erin Murphy (DFL) will be challenged by Andrew Ojeda (R). In District 65A, Daniel Lipp (R) will run against incumbent Rena Moran (DFL). In House District 66A, incumbent Alice Hausman (DFL) will be challenged by Dave Thomas (IND) and Mark Fotsch (R). In District 66B, incumbent John Lesch (DFL) will face Ben Blomgren (R).

The election in November is an election of issues as much as candidates, as interest groups attempt to build up support on opposing sides of the constitutional amendments that will be on the ballot.

Whether to require a voter ID and whether to limit marriage to a union between one man and one woman are the amendments that voters will support or deny this fall.

“Our real priority is taking back the House and Senate,” said Carlie Waibel, deputy communications director for the DFL Party. “And the Voter ID and marriage amendments are really in the forefront.” The party supports a No vote on both amendments.

“One of the big things Congressman Keith Ellison is doing is registering voters to get out and vote against both of these amendments,” Waibel said.

She said redistricting did not affect the DFL so much and worked out well for them.

“We’re excited about the opportunity to get candidates elected in all parts of the state,” she added.

Bill Denney, chair of Congressional District 4 for the Independence Party, said redistricting did not affect the operation of the party, keeping their officers in the districts they preside over.

“Our two big issues are the two constitutional amendments,” he said. The party passed two resolutions at its convention June 23 strongly opposing both amendments.

Denney said the Independence Party has formed a coalition with Minnesota United for Families, which supports equal rights in marriage for all, and Our Vote, Our Future, a group opposing Voter ID.

He said the strong opposing views of the major parties offer an opening for the Independence Party.

“What we hope for is that people will realize as the two parties drive each other farther and farther apart, there is so much middle ground to make up,” said Denney. “The extreme polarization works in our favor.”

The Republican Party was contacted for this story, but did not respond. The Republican Party has supported the constitutional amendments.

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# In Our Community

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## Hamline Church announces events

Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood, is hosting a Tech Dump electronics and appliances collection drive and fundraiser, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, August 11, in the church parking lot. There will be a charge for some items; others can be disposed of for free or a free-will donation. The church is working with the nonprofit Jobs Foundation on this event. Go to <http://techdump.org/faq> or [www.hamlinechurch.org](http://www.hamlinechurch.org) for details.

Hamline will also be selling Izzy's Ice Cream in its State Fair dining hall this year. This is the 114th year for the dining hall, which is the oldest church dining hall and oldest continuous operation at the fairgrounds. The dining hall was visited last year by noted food writer Michael Stern. For more information, go to [www.hamlinechurch.org](http://www.hamlinechurch.org)



This is the 114th year for the Hamline Church United Methodist dining hall, which is the oldest church dining hall and oldest continuous operation at the fairgrounds. The dining hall was visited last year by noted food writer Michael Stern. For more information, go to [www.hamlinechurch.org](http://www.hamlinechurch.org)

invited to attend with their babies and toddlers. Call Heidi at 651-659-9527 for more information, time, and location.

## St. Mark's schedules new RCIA program

Want to better understand Catholic Christianity? Interested in receiving baptism or communion in the Catholic Church? St. Mark's is starting a new RCIA program this fall for anyone looking to learn the why's and how's of Catholic belief and practice. Classes begin Wednesday, September 12 at 7 p.m. in the St. Mark's Parish Center, 2001 Dayton Avenue in Saint Paul. You can also find out more about St. Mark's on the web at [www.saintmark-mn.org/rcia.html](http://www.saintmark-mn.org/rcia.html).

## Pet Therapy planned for September 11

Hamline Midway Elders will present a luncheon and presentation, "Pet Therapy: A Visit With Sasha," on Sept. 11 at Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Avenue. A \$4 free will donation is asked for the luncheon which begins at 11:30 a.m. There is no cost to attend the program which begins at 12:15 p.m. Call 651-209-6542 for free transportation or to learn more how Hamline Midway Elders helps seniors live well at home.

## HU sponsors music program August 10

Peterson Toscano, highly regarded theatrical performance activist, performs to benefit Wingspan's Uganda Project, supporting Bp. Christopher Senyonjo's efforts to secure safety and dignity for LGBTQ persons in Uganda. "Transfigurations: Transgressing Gender in the Bible" offers hearty laughter and poignant insight on Friday, August 10 at 7 p.m., at Hamline University, Sundin Music Hall, 1531 Hewitt Ave. Tickets: [www.stpaulref.org/-wingspan](http://www.stpaulref.org/-wingspan) or at the door. \$15 general admission, \$10 students/limited income; \$10 group sales (10+). Contact David Weiss, 651-645-2079, [drw59@comcast.net](mailto:drw59@comcast.net) for more information.

## Luncheon program planned August 14

"When Should I Stop Driving," will be addressed by a representative from the Courage Center at a luncheon on Tuesday, August 14, 11:30 a.m., at 1514 Englewood Ave (Hamline Church United Methodist). A \$4 free will donation is asked for the meal, there is no cost to attend the program which begins at 12:15 p.m. Call 651-209-6542 for free transportation or to learn more how Hamline Midway Elders helps seniors live well at home.

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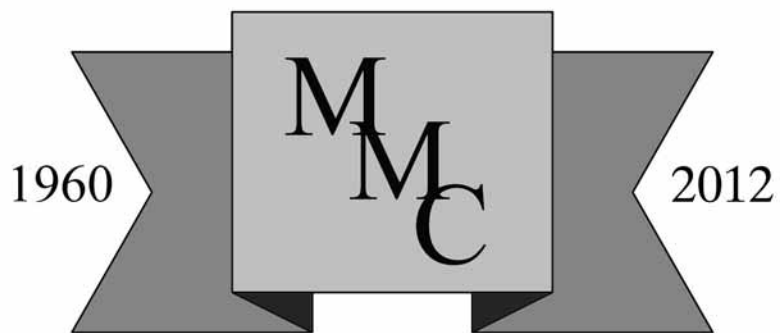
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## Registration at NW Como begins August 6

Registration for Fall activities at the Northwest Como Recreation Center has begun.

Classes scheduled for youth include: Tae Kwon Do, Archery, Artist Workshop, Orchestra Jam, Tantalizing Taste, Dry Ice Capades, and Babysitting Training. A new class for adults this season is Cardio Kickboxing. Also planned are special events such as Back to School Dance for ages 11-14 on Sept 21, and the Family Bonfire on Oct. 5 from 6-8 p.m.

You can register online at [www.stpaul.gov/parks](http://www.stpaul.gov/parks), or call 651-298-5813. You can also come into the Northwest Como Recreation Center during their hours: Monday-Thursday, 3-8 p.m., and Friday, 3-5:30 p.m.

## New chair-based yoga class

Hamline Midway Elders will sponsor a chair-based yoga class for six weeks beginning September 11. The class runs from 10-11 a.m. at Hamline Church United Methodist, 1514 Englewood Ave. There is no charge. Please call Hamline Midway Elders to register. 651-209-6542. The instructor, Nancy Giguere, RYT-200, has practiced yoga since 2003 and began teaching in 2011.

## Area Le Leche meets September 11

"The Advantages of Breastfeeding" is the topic of the meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche Group on Tuesday, September 11. All expectant and nursing mothers are



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# Task Force asks Public Works to consider less expensive traffic options in northwest

By JANE MCCLURE

Getting through St. Paul's northwestern neighborhoods means traveling Snelling or Raymond avenues or winding along neighborhood streets. But with north-south and east-west road and bridge connection options ranging in cost from \$21.9 to \$43.8 million, members of a Northwest Quadrant Task Force have asked St. Paul Public Works staff to consider less expensive options for now. The group hopes to have bicycle and pedestrian access improvement suggestions ready by fall.

The task force recently reviewed recommendations with the West Midway Industrial Zoning Task Force. The industrial zoning task force is studying future industrial land use, potential job growth and other changes in the West Midway area.

"Transportation is such a key piece in the (industrial use) dialogue that we decided to wait for the transportation study to be completed," said West Midway Industrial Zoning Task Force Co-Chairman Jon Commers. The industrial land use group hopes to have its recommendations to the St. Paul Planning Commission by year's end.

Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark said the issues the two groups are studying tie together, not just in term of industrial land reuse, maximizing land value and promoting jobs growth, but also in terms of neighborhood livability in the residential areas in and around the West Midway. Stark also said there is a need long-term, to look at the traffic issues. Yet another issue he noted is how the Northwest Quadrant study will tie into a Minnesota Department of

Transportation study of Snelling.

The Northwest Quadrant group looked at six alternatives for east-west and north-south connections through the West Midway, using a range of alternatives including Pierce Butler Route, Energy Park Drive, and connections to Vandalia, Fairview and other area streets.

North terminus for various north-south options would be Como, Commonwealth or Larpenteur avenues. Western terminus for east-west routes would be Granary Road or a Pierce Butler connection to Energy Park Drive.

Instead of pursuing costly options the group decided to look at developing an improved connection between Transfer Road/Cleveland Avenue and Cretin/Vandalia. Improved access to Interstate 94 at Cretin/Vandalia will be studied, as well as improvements to Pierce Butler and Energy Park Drive connections at Snelling. Ways to improve access to Highway 280 via Raymond Avenue or Territorial Road are considered, as will be improvements to eastbound I-94 at Eustis and Franklin avenues. Costs and timelines will be determined for each of the options.

For more than 20 years, St. Paul Public Works and neighborhoods at the east end of Pierce Butler Route discussed connections to Interstate 35E and Phalen Boulevard to the east. Placement of Central Corridor light rail on University Avenue almost a decade ago accelerated concerns about another east-west route through the city's northwestern neighborhoods, by making changes to Pierce Butler Route or Energy Park Drive, and improving connections from north-south streets including Vandalia, Transfer Road, Cleveland,

Prior or Fairview.

Stark is already hearing that Central Corridor construction on University Avenue is making truck traffic more difficult, especially when turning movements are needed. Bicyclists are also clamoring for better north-south and east-west connections.

But costs are an issue, Public Works staff and Northwest Quadrant Task Force members said. Mike Klassen, a Public Works project manager for Northwest Quadrant, said the city would need state or federal partners to build any of the options. The biggest cost for most options is bridging the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad tracks that bisect West Midway. And, because none of the estimates include potential right-of-way acquisition costs, the estimates could go higher.

Another surprise in computer modeling of the traffic flow changes is that none of the six options provided significant shifts of traffic to new connections and relief to other streets, especially when the Snelling/University area is considered.

Members of the two groups had mixed response to the road and bridge cost options. "To me it's hard to justify spending more than \$40 million when it appears that existing infrastructure, with some changes, would be sufficient," said Northwest Quadrant Co-Chairman Sherman Eagles. "It works - it just may not work as well."

But Paul McGinley, who represents Midway Chamber of Commerce in both groups, said improved roadway connections could provide long-term benefits. He said more needs to be done to weigh cost-benefits.

"We may have to look at this as solving a problem for the city as a whole," said Hamline-Midway Coalition representative Betsy Leach. "The lack of a north-south connection is a problem for more than just this area."

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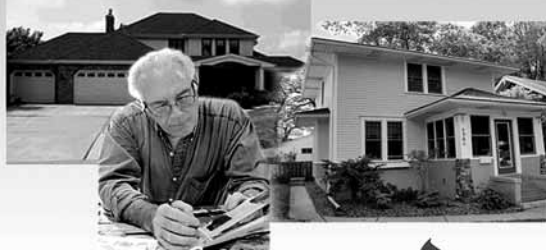
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# Volunteers of America for North End voted down by St. Paul City Council

By JANE MCCLURE

The Volunteers of America (VOA) must decide its next steps after the St. Paul City Council upheld one appeal and rejected another July 3. The council's actions prevent VOA from using 1394 Jackson St., a former residential facility, as a halfway house for up to 74 people leaving the federal prison system. The agency could either seek another location or challenge the City Council decision in court.

The City Council memorialized its decision July 11.

VOA has lost its lease at its longtime Roseville facility and needs to move. In June the St. Paul Planning Commission granted VOA a conditional use permit for 32 residents, not the 74 requested. That prompted VOA to appeal that decision. The nonprofit agency's attorney Tom Johnson called the number "arbitrary" and said it has been "plucked out of the air." Planning Commission members said they chose the number because the property could have 16 residents under city regulations and 32 was seen as a compromise.

But the council rejected the VOA appeal and upheld a District 6 (North End-South Como) Planning Council appeal asking that the permit simply be denied. The

district council representatives said that while they have respect for VOA and its decades of helping federal prisoners transition into society, the Jackson Street site isn't appropriate.

Ward Five Council Member Amy Brendmoen agreed and praised VOA. But she asked that the District 6 appeal be upheld, saying that the halfway house use isn't in compliance with area and citywide plans. "District 6 has longstanding concerns about underutilized industrial land," she said.

The area is poised for redevelopment and that has to be recognized, Brendmoen added.

The nonprofit VOA, which has worked with federal prisoners for 40 years, hoped to operate a residential facility at 1394 Jackson St., south of Arlington Avenue. The organization is losing its lease at its Roseville location and is looking to move.

The proposed new location, just south of the Arlington-Jackson intersection, is zoned industrial and is surrounded by industrial and commercial uses. Years ago it did house a community residential facility for women, Norhaven. More recently it has been used as adult day care, a restaurant and office space. Johnson said that the

building is appropriate for VOA's proposed use and that the institutional use continued into the 1990s. The VOA use would have provided 20 jobs.

VOA representatives, including a man who was able to make a successful transition back into society thanks to the program, said their use is a good fit for the building and the area. VOA Minnesota CEO and President Paula Hart said the nonprofit would pay the city the

equivalent of the property taxes for the site, if the program could locate there. If VOA ever left the site, the city would have first right of refusal for the land and it wouldn't be sold to another community residential facility user.

Hart also pointed out that one in five of the agency's re-entry clients are from St. Paul.

Opponents said the issue is not VOA but one of land use. District 6 Community Organizer Kerry

Antrim said that the plans for the site call for industrial reuse and job creation. "We are clear on job creation, we are clear on keeping our industrial land industrial," she said.

Attorney Kirsten Libby represented the District 6 Planning Council. She said the project doesn't meet the city's standards for a conditional use permit and that the number of residents proposed is a 400 percent increase over what is allowed.

## Monitor in a minute

Continued from page 2

near the rail construction. He said that is especially true for people who don't have air conditioning and want to sleep with their windows open. "I ask that you have respect for families living along the corridor," he said.

Metropolitan Council officials and representatives of Walsh Construction, the lead contractor, have been working to minimize the need for overnight construction. City Engineer John Maczko said the city will keep a tight rein on the construction to make sure there are as few problems as possible. In a few cases of loud overnight noise, city officials believe it was a utility subcontractor that woke up a neighbor.

"I do share the concerns about noise but I also want to see the project completed on time," said Ward One Council Member Melvin Carter III. He said the city is already asking that the overnight work permit be for up to 15 times, not the 25 requested.

## St. Paul competes for DEED grants

St. Paul is among the communi-

ties competing for new Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) grants. The St. Paul City Council voted unanimously June 13 to seek \$27 million for a new regional ballpark in Lowertown. The baseball park would provide a new home for the St. Paul Saints, as well as college, high school, city programs and other teams.

The council approved the financing package July 18, with the city contributing \$17 million and the Saints \$10 million.

The St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department will apply for the grant on the city's behalf. The city and Saints would continue to the \$54 million project, with half cent sales tax dollars eyed as part of the city's contribution.

The city was shut out of state bonding for the ballpark during the 2012 legislative session. During the session state lawmakers set aside \$47.5 million for economic development projects. Applications are due by the end of June.

Council President Kathy Lantry said the fact that all seven council members signed onto the funding request shows what a priority the state bonding is for St. Paul. The new ballpark would replace Midway Stadium. That site would be redeveloped through the help of the St. Paul Port Authority.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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## Classifieds

Continued from page 11

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