

monitor

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



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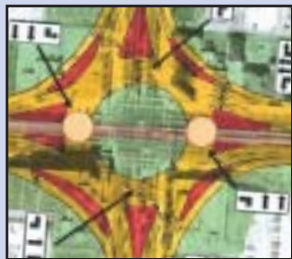
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Group forms out of commitment to community...

'God Squad' is on the job

By JAN WILLMS

Whether it's hosting a group of children for a magic show, driving some gang members home from the potential scene of a crime or calming victims after a shooting, the God Squad is on call 24-7.

The group, which includes ministers, corrections officers, ex-gang members and laypersons, is trying to reach out to include more volunteers in its core.

Rev. Darryl Spence, assistant pastor of the First Covenant Baptist Church, said the God Squad developed out of a commitment to the community.

"I would like to credit Chiefs Finney and Harrington for embracing some African American ministers who were doing intervention work," he said.

Rev. Spence and Rev. Devon Miller developed the group. Rev. Miller has since moved on.

"We started in the early 1990s," Rev. Spence said. He said the name God Squad was placed on the group in about 2001.

They were arriving at the scene of a crime, and someone looked up and said, "Here comes



Volunteer Damon Drake and Rev Darryl Spence are often called out at 2 a.m. to an early morning crime scene as part of their role on the God Squad. (Photo by Terry Faust)

the God Squad."

"The name stuck," said Rev. Spence.

"This is a volunteer effort,

because we know it's our calling," he said. "We are looking and seeking to recruit people from different nationalities to

come and be a part. The community we serve is not just African American."

He said the group is trying to include other community organization leaders.

The God Squad primarily started in the Frogtown-Dale-Summit area. In the late winter of 2006, the group moved to the North End and has opened the Hut.

"The Hut is our latest venture," Rev. Spence said. It is located at 846 Rice St., the site of the old Flower Hut floral shop.

"Our goal is to have the Hut open Monday through Friday," Rev. Spence said. It currently opens about 12:30 or 1 p.m., and generally stays open until about 6 or 7 in the evenings.

Rev. Spence said the site offers a space for boys and girls, where they are taught discipline. Computers have been donated, and the group is trying to get them hooked up to the Internet.

"One of our members has a dad who is a boxing trainer, and we are trying to get a boxing gym

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Police assure neighbors that they are safe...

Triple homicide shakes St. Paul

By JANE MCCLURE

Candles, flowers and teddy bears outside of a Burgess Street home are a sad reminder of the loss of three North End community members. St. Paul Police continue to pursue leads in the March 23 homicide of three family members. But police and community leaders also are quick to assure North End residents that they are safe and that the crime was not a random act of violence.

In early April St. Paul Police identified a career criminal as a "person of interest" in the slayings. Tyvarus Lindsey, 25, is already being held in the Ramsey County Jail in connection with a 2005 murder. Lindsey has a long criminal history and is a suspect in other homicides. He also has been convicted in the past on drug and theft charges.

Police also have two other persons of interest they are questioning in connection with the triple homicide, but have not released those names yet.

There are as many as seven investigators working on the investigation. St. Paul Police are also receiving help from the FBI, Ramsey County Sheriff's Department and other agencies.

At a March 28 community meeting that drew more than 150 people, St. Paul Police Chief John Harrington said he is carrying a photo of 15-year-old Brittany Kekedakis, one of the three murder victims. While it's too late to save Kekedakis and the other murder victims, the police chief said it's time to take action to keep the community safe.

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Cheyenne Patterson held a picture of her half sister, Brittany Kekedakis, and listened to St. Paul Police Chief Harrington assure an overflow crowd at Rice Street Library that the triple homicide would be solved. (Photo by Terry Faust)

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Monitor in a Minute

Midway Chev to close its doors on University

University Avenue's last new motor vehicle dealership is closing its doors. Midway Chevrolet announced April 3 that it will merge with Merit Chevrolet and began an inventory reduction sale. The merger is effective May 1.

Merit is at I-94 and Century Avenue, on the eastern edge of St. Paul.

Midway will close its new vehicle dealership at 1389 University Av. It will continue to sell used vehicles at 1333 University Av. The move comes about a year after Whitaker Buick moved its new and used vehicle sales operations to Forest Lake. Not long before that Ron Saxon Ford left.

In a news release Midway Chevrolet owner Tom Krebsbach said the merger will allow his business to better serve its long-term customers and gain new customers. A larger inventory, longer service department hours, more parking and freeway access are some of the incentives for the move.

However, about 20 people in parts and services will lose their jobs.

Krebsbach also indicated that a tripling of his property tax bill was another factor in the move. Another long-standing concern is transit. He has long been concerned about what the start of Central Corridor light rail would mean for his business and others.

Midway Chevrolet has been on University Avenue for 75 years and was one of the community's oldest continuously operating retailers.

The closing is the end of an era for University Avenue, which for many years was the place for St. Paul and east metro residents to buy new motor vehicles. The street has been home to dozens of new vehicle dealerships since the early 20th Century, with

everything from Chevrolets to Hupmobiles sold here. At times there were more than a dozen dealerships operating along University. Even though Grand Avenue and even downtown St. Paul had their share of new motor vehicle dealerships, no neighborhood came close to University Avenue in terms of number of dealerships and variety of vehicles.

But tough times in the American auto industry have taken a toll, and several Twin Cities area dealerships have closed or merged in recent years.

North End teen receives support

A North End girl has received an outpouring of support from around the world, after her therapy dog was stolen and beheaded by a former admirer. Seventeen-year-old Crystal Brown and her family were horrified in February when the dog, named Chevy, was stolen February 7 from the family's yard. The dog was then beheaded and its head placed in a decorated gift box after it disappeared. The box was then left on the family's doorstep February 28. Crystal opened the box, finding the dog's head wrapped in a garbage bag, giving her nightmares and frightening her family.

The dog's body was later found in a city park. Crystal has been given another pet, a puppy named Diesel.

The crime provoked outrage as well as a flood of cards, letters and gifts for Crystal, who has struggled with disabilities. The Humane Society of the United States began a reward fund to seek information about Chevy's killer. It quickly topped the \$20,000 mark and is the largest reward fund in the organization's history. The case was also featured on the television show America's Most Wanted.

Animal humane activists said one concern about the inci-

dent was that if a person could kill an animal in such a cruel fashion, it would not be difficult for that person to hurt another person.

Anthony A. Gomez was arrested in late March in connection with Chevy's death. St. Paul Police found he took videos of the killing with a cell phone camera. Gomez was an admirer of Crystal's and family members suspected he may have been involved after Crystal told him she didn't want him to be her boyfriend.

Gomez was put in the Ramsey County Jail. He made his first appearance in Ramsey County District Court in late March. He faces possible charges of animal cruelty and terroristic threats.

Alternative Rock-Tenn fuels may not be easy

A recently released study of energy options for the Rock-Tenn paper recycling plant shows that use of alternative fuels to keep the plant and its 400 jobs going may not be easy. The study, released in late March by the Green Institute, examines various ways to fuel a larger power plant for the West Midway.

Rock-Tenn will lose its steam power this summer when the old Xcel Energy High Bridge plant shuts down. The steam travels in a line from the plant on the Mississippi River to Rock-Tenn. Most of the line is along Ayd Mill Road and the Canadian Pacific Railroad tracks.

Rock-Tenn will use fuel oil burners in an old power plant on-site after the steam line shuts down. But company officials do not consider that to be a long-term alternative.

District Energy and the St. Paul Port Authority are working with Rock-Tenn to develop plans for a new power plant. The Port would own the plant and Rock-Tenn would be the main customer. District Energy, which

runs heating and cooling systems for much of downtown St. Paul, would be plant operator.

District Energy uses wood waste downtown but the Green Institute report noted that is a limited resource. A recent Ramsey County study of wood collection at neighborhood cleanups indicates there isn't enough clean wood for both plants.

Green Institute looked at variety of biomass fuel options for the plant, including yard waste, agricultural products or wood waste. The report indicates that these options are either too expensive or need further study.

One idea that has been raised for the plant is that of burning refuse-derived fuel. But that is controversial because burning garbage has the potential to release pollutants in its emissions. Residents of neighborhoods around the plant have raised objections to burning garbage. Much remains to be learned about current burning technology and how it could be used to ease community fears.

Public hearing on Home Depot postponed

A public hearing on a Home Depot store at Midway Center has been postponed. The site plan was set for a March 29 hearing before the St. Paul Planning Commission Zoning Committee. However, Home Depot has contacted the Planning Commission and city planning staff to ask that the hearing be continued. No new hearing date has been set.

The delay will also give city staff time to complete traffic studies around the site.

Home Depot plans to build a new store south of Midway Center, on a 4.7 acre lot at the northwest corner of St. Anthony and Pascal avenues. The lot has been vacant for many years and is used for parking. It is owned

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Twenty-nine years ago I was a senior at Hamline University. I had started college thinking that either I would get certified to teach high school, or I would try my hand at finding a job working in the newspaper business. It was a conversation with my advisor that tipped the scales in favor of journalism; he suggested that scheduling enough classes for my English major and fulfilling all the education requirements might necessitate a fifth year in college. That did it. I decided I would rather relish those advanced courses in Shakespeare rather than the tedium of some of the education courses I had already suffered through.

I was no stranger to the world of journalism. I had edited both my high school newspaper as well as the Hamline Oracle in my junior year at Hamline University. Hamline didn't have a journalism department, but fortunately, Macalester and St. Thomas, did. And through the magic of the five-college consortium, I took classes at the other colleges. At Macalester, my journalism prof, George Moses, who had instructed me in most of my classroom education about the newspapers, urged all his students: "Learn a specialty in college, but get practical experience writing for a real newspaper." That was my goal in my senior year at Hamline before I ventured out on my own for gainful employment.

That charge landed me on Rice Street working for the North End News as an intern for then-editor Lee Svitak Dean. Dean was a talented writer and editor who put the paper together on the kitchen table of her North End home. Each month the paste-ups or "flats," as we called them, were dropped off from the ad manager, who sold, created, and layed out all the ads for the issue. Dean's job was to fill up the rest of the paper with interesting news and feature stories about the North End community.

My internship that fall was a wonderful primer on the North End and all of its community institutions. And Dean was a great teacher whose experience writing for the University of Minnesota Daily, another community newspaper, of sorts, meant that the North End had inherited a top notch editor. (Dean, by the way, went on to become the "Taste" editor for a paper that many of you might have heard of: the Star Tribune.)

I've thought about my internship at the North End News, my start in community journalism, quite a bit these days since the Monitor's decision to expand our distribution boundaries to include the North End. Much like the



From the Editor's Desk

By DENIS WOULFE

We'd like to be *your* neighborhood newspaper

Monitor, the North End News has had a celebrated history in one of St. Paul's beloved neighborhoods, but market forces that have tested all newspapers of late forced the North End News board to announce last month that they were shutting down their newspaper which had served the neighborhood for over 30 years.

The board also announced to folks at the North End Business Association meeting that they had invited the Monitor to consider the North End area as a neighborhood deserving of a first-class neighborhood newspaper, and to expand circulation. And we accepted their invitation.

And so, in a strange turn of events, almost 30 years later, I find myself back on Rice Street. I also find myself talking to some of those same businesses and community institutions that I had contact with when I was an impressionable intern. However, I must confess that a part of me wishes that my arrival back in the North End had come at a different time. Most readers are aware by now that the North End has been the setting for several high profile tragedies that have shaken the entire city.

First, the story about a 17-year-old North End girl who found the severed head of her dog on her front stoop almost a month ago, and then, two weeks ago, a triple homicide that has left the entire community grieving and looking for answers.

I bemoan the timing in part because I clearly remember hearing from some business leaders who suggested that a community newspaper should only report positive stories about the community. I've heard that many times before working in community journalism, but I still cringe when I hear it because most folks may not realize that I never relish telling tragic stories in the newspaper. I still remember the day the Lake Street Bridge collapsed or the day that searchers came to our office looking for Cassie Hanson, the young girl who had been abducted from Jehovah Lutheran Church on Snelling Avenue. Both were somber stories that rocked the communities that we covered, but I never doubted the importance of telling those stories to our readership.

Neighborhood newspapers do, however, cover stories a bit differently than the daily newspapers. We don't always

wait for something to happen before we make it into a story. Ironically, this month, someone pitched me with the idea of writing a story about how the North End would like to push for the return of a Central District police station to Rice Street. Their reason being that having more police patrols traveling through the North End might deter crime from occurring. Who could say, of course,

whether having a Central District police station back on Rice Street would have made any difference in a tragedy such as the triple homicide.

That sentiment, however, to take back North End from its perceived or real vulnerability, is significant. But it's not unique. Three weeks ago I was at a Midway Chamber luncheon where police reps from the Western District outlined their plans to install a high-tech surveillance system on University Avenue. The system has had great success in other communities, most notably a town in England where a commercial corridor's vitality was revived as pedestrians felt once again safe in traveling the corridor. Now that's the kind of crime and safety story I'd like to report, an approach to covering the news in a more proactive fashion that eschews the notion that news only occurs when shots are fired.

So the Midway Como Monitor is reborn this month as the Monitor. You'll notice the type underneath the new banner on the front page which notes: "Serving the neighborhoods of Midway, Como and North End." In an era where newspapers are folding up shops, cutting staff, selling out to new owners for 50 cents on the dollar, the Monitor is expanding. Are we crazy? Maybe. But I'm betting that our readers in Midway, Como and North End will continue to want to know what's happening down the street at their church's pancake breakfast, or when the sewer separation will come to their neighborhood, and what schools will best serve their children's needs. And I'm betting that our advertisers will want a quality print medium to tell their customers why working with local businesses can be rewarding for not only the customer, but for the community's future and vitality.

Bottom line is there's a new neighbor at your door: It's the Monitor. We want to be *your* neighborhood newspaper. And, although I'm no stranger to the world of journalism, and no stranger to the North End, like that senior at Hamline University, I find myself continuing to learn new things. I'm hoping all of you, our readers, will help me learn more about this community and how the Monitor can do its job to bring you the best neighborhood newspaper possible.

LETTERS

Concerned about the Hamline Midway Coalition

The City of St. Paul has designated the Hamline Midway Coalition (HMC) as the officially recognized district council serving Planning District 11. All of St. Paul has been divided into Planning Districts, each having their own district council. The purpose of the district councils is to gather neighborhood input on pertinent issues and then recommend solutions to the City.

After serving ten years, I resigned in 2004 from the HMC Board of Directors. I recently attended one of their meetings and I am very concerned about the manner in which this organization – one that is supposed to be representing the best interests of our neighborhood – conducts its affairs.

HMC has had a web site for a few years. However, they do not publish the agendas for their upcoming meetings on the web site, or in any other venue, such as their self-published Hamline Midway Neighborhood News (HMNN). They also do not publish their meeting minutes on their web site, even after they have voted to approve them. It is very difficult for a citizen to find out what this board is doing without calling in to their office to ask, which is not an efficient use of anyone's time, be they citizen or HMC staff.

At their March board meeting, the HMC Board voted to make major changes in the by-laws that reduces the number of board members as well as the number of sub-districts. Although this upcoming vote was mentioned in the HMNN, the specifics of the change were not included. These changes will:

Reduce the number of board members from a possible 20 to 15.

Reduce the number of sub-districts from 4 to 3.

Reduce the number of appointed board members from 5 to 3.

These changes are now in effect, and will govern the rules for the upcoming HMC Board election.

In order for citizens to vote in this election, they must be registered as members of the Hamline Midway Coalition by a "date of record," but that date has yet to be published. Considering that this election is in May, there isn't a lot of time left for citizens to get signed up so they can choose a new board.

In order for citizens to run for this board, they must apply. The application date has not yet been published. In fact, the Hamline Midway Coalition has not yet published the boundaries of the new sub-districts, nor a list of which members are up for reelection or if there are any vacant seats.

During the March HMC board meeting, a number of members complained about the low rate of participation. Would they be able to attract more people to serve on their board if they made information easier to get? Maybe. However, people will be reluctant to become involved in this organization if their board treats others in the way that they recently have treated me. Within the last two months, some members of the current board have acted with callous disrespect toward me in the following ways:

Voting at their January meeting to kick me off the Land Use Committee without anyone discussing the matter with me in advance.

Giving me a letter accusing me of misrepresenting HMC, and other baseless charges, as their excuse for kicking me off.

Not providing me with specific examples to back up their accusations.

Talking disrespectfully about me while conducting official business at their February Executive Committee meeting, which was held in a public restaurant.

In addition to being unethical, this behavior also violates the HMC board's own code of conduct in the areas of respect and giving due process before making decisions.

As a district council, the Hamline Midway Coalition is supposed to represent neighborhood opinions to the City. Your tax dollars provide a significant portion of their operating budget. At a minimum, they should be required to:

Publish their meeting agendas in advance, either in their newsletter or on their web site.

Publish their meeting minutes, either in their newsletter or on their web site.

Publish their executive committee meeting schedule in advance and hold these meetings in a public place.

It is my hope that by bringing these deficiencies to light that everyone who lives in the Hamline Midway neighborhood will take the time to register and vote in the next HMC board election, and elect some new leaders who will conduct business in a professional manner and respect all constituents, even those with whom they disagree or don't like.

Benita Warns
Hamline Midway

This is the first installment of a new monthly column in the Monitor where issues facing our neighborhoods will be discussed. These issues may be national trends such as the recent implosion of the subprime lending market; city-wide efforts like Mayor Coleman's "Invest St. Paul" initiative; or it may be tightly focused on the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead for Snelling Avenue. No matter the breadth of the topic, the road will always lead back to its implications for the residents of the communities served by the Monitor.

Not only will this column look at trends and issues affecting our neighborhoods, it will also report on how Sparc is working to address those issues.

Now wait a second...Sparc?



Guest Column

By SETH BENZIGER

Igniting community development

Who? What?

Sparc is a local non-profit community development corporation (CDC) with roots in the community dating back to the early 1980s. Sparc is one of many neighborhood-based CDCs working to improve St. Paul. Sparc's mission is to create and maintain healthy, affordable and sustainable neighborhoods by improving residential and commercial vitality in

the Hamline Midway, South Como and North End neighborhoods of St. Paul. To that end, Sparc participates in community planning efforts, builds affordable housing, and provides financing for small businesses and home improvement. The result: \$25.8 million in "bricks and mortar" improvements to almost 1,200 homes and businesses.

As this column matures, you

will learn more about the neighborhoods where you live, work, worship, and play. In addition, you will learn about Sparc, and the pivotal role it and other CDCs play in the vitality of St. Paul's neighborhoods.

In the interest of open and honest communication, I want to provide a little bit of background about myself. I grew up in the Chicago suburbs and was drawn

to the Twin Cities for college. After completing my undergraduate degree in Economics, I remained in the Cities until I found employment with the Hamline Midway Area Rehabilitation Corporation (H-MARC). H-MARC merged with a CDC serving the North End and became Sparc in June 2003. Working in a small non-profit affords one the opportunity to build many different skills. Whatever tasks are thrown my way, my main job is to provide a myriad of home improvement loans and grants. As of this issue I just reached my fifth year anniversary!

I am interested in receiving feedback and comments about articles, topics, or issues affecting your neighborhood. I can be reached via email at seth@sparcweb.org, or at 651-488-1039.

Triple homicide

Continued from page 1

Fifteen-year-old daughter Brittany Kekedakis, her mother Maria McLay, 32, and McLay's fiancée, Otahl "Telly" Saunders, 31, were shot and killed March 23 during an invasion of their home on the 200 block of Burgess Street. Two other children in the home, ages 7 and 10, were not harmed and fled to a family member's house after the shootings.

It's believed as many as five people, wearing masks, invaded the home in the early morning hours of March 23. The intruders forced the family into one room, where the three were shot. Saunders and Kekedakis were dead when police arrived; McLay died a short time later at Regions Hospital.

The house was also ran-



At a March 28 community meeting that drew more than 150 people, St. Paul Police Chief John Harrington said he is carrying a photo of 15-year-old Brittany Kekedakis, one of the three murder victims. (Photo by Terry Faust)

sacked. Police believe that the intruders were looking for drugs and money. Police also emphasize that the shootings were not random.

Crime scene tape was in place at the home for a few days after the shooting, as police gathered evidence.

There has been a large show of support for the victims, with prayer and candlelight vigils at and near the crime scene. Kekedakis was a well-liked student at Como Park High School, where she was involved in a number of school activities. Her death is the second violent crime committed against a Como Park student in recent years. Fifteen-year-old Ben Doran, then a sophomore at the school, was fatally beaten in 2003 near the North End Multi-Service Center.

At the March 28 community meeting, Harrington, Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen and Mayor Chris Coleman said police are taking a number of steps to keep the neighborhood safe. They also called for community members to work together to keep the community safe.

More police patrols are being assigned to the North End. Also, the Getting Residents Involved Daily program, which was used several years ago, will be reinstated. This program, a joint effort between police and the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department, is used to concentrate law enforcement resources in a specific neighborhood.

Coleman, who noted he also has a teenage daughter, said the shootings made him "sick to my stomach." He and Helgen urged residents to get involved in the community, take advantage of crime prevention and community organizing resources and help police to keep the community safer.

One question raised at the meeting was whether an outstanding arrest warrant for Saunders could have been a factor in the

crime. But St. Paul Police Senior Commander Tim Lynch said that doesn't make Saunders any less of a victim. "These people were murdered," Lynch said. "I don't care what they did before that."

The crowd at the March 28 meeting spilled out into the hallway at the Rice Street Branch Library. Many people had questions and concerns about neighborhood safety and crime. Others said they attended to support the victims and their surviving family members.

The three were buried March 30 at Elmhurst Cemetery, following a packed service at the Bradshaw Funeral Home on Rice Street. Many of the mourners were students at Como Park High School, where Kekedakis was a sophomore. Students have been selling T-shirts with Brittany's picture on them as a fund-raiser.

The families of the murder

victims are appreciative for the outpouring of community support they have received. "It is extremely difficult for Otahl, Maria and Brittany's family to come to terms with the overwhelming loss caused by the tragic and senseless event," Carol Reed, Saunders' aunt, said in a statement released on behalf of the family.

The reward fund grew in recent weeks to more than \$22,000, with contributions from the St. Paul Chapter of the NAACP, Crimestoppers and St. Paul Police Federation. One anonymous donor chipped in \$15,000. Contributions to the reward fund can be made at any Bremer Bank.

There is also a trust fund set up to help the four surviving children of McLay and Saunders. McLay has two children who survive her, as does Saunders. Donations can be made at any Wells Fargo branch bank.



At the March 28 community meeting, Harrington, Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen and Mayor Chris Coleman said police are taking a number of steps to keep the neighborhood safe.

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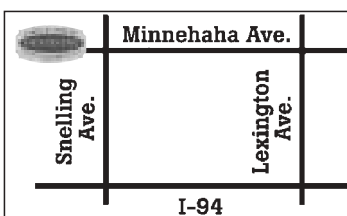
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Consultant proposes closing Monitor-area fire station

By JANE MCCLURE

A proposal that would close one Monitor area fire station and add another have is part of the 305-page St. Paul Fire Department audit, recently completed by Tri-Data/System Planning Corporation, a Virginia-based firm.

The West Midway-South St. Anthony Park-Merriam Park areas would lose Station 20 at the corner of University and Vandalia avenues. But the Como neighborhood, which is considered to be underserved in terms of fire and emergency medical response, would gain a new station. That new station would be from closing the current Station 5 at Victoria and Ashland and building a new station in Como neighborhood.

Even though the report contained a number of criticisms of the Fire Department, Mayor Chris Coleman said that St. Paul residents should feel safe. "This is a good department," he said. "It continues to be a good department." But Coleman also described relations between fire administration and firefighters as at a "crisis" stage. He said that if the ongoing disagreements are not resolved soon, "the level of service and the safety level will begin to deteriorate, and that's what we're attempting to prevent."

The audit states that although the disagreements don't currently

affect delivery of fire and emergency medical services, they "could easily do so" if the problems aren't resolved.

Earlier in March the two firefighters unions voted 366-6 to approve a "no confidence" resolution on Chief Doug Holton. Coleman has ordered the fire unions and chief to resolve their differences, something Holton and union leaders say they are willing to do.

The mayor has taken a number of steps already to address issues raised in the audit. He has appointed two committees, including one headed by former St. Paul Mayor George Latimer, to look at the audit and its findings.

Coleman also ordered that the city's emergency preparedness function be moved from the Fire Department into a separate city function. Coleman said this move is valid, especially in light of the 2008 Republican National Convention coming to St. Paul next year.

Coleman sought the audit last year. It took six months to complete and cost \$215,000.

Staffing and deployment of fire and medical rigs are detailed in the audit, with numerous recommendations ranging from changing the length of firefighter work shifts to changes in supervision. The audit found that although the Fire Department is or-



The West Midway-South St. Anthony Park-Merriam Park areas would lose Station 20 at the corner of University and Vandalia avenues under a proposal that's part of a 305-page St. Paul Fire Department audit. The audit was conducted by TriData/System Planning Corporation of Virginia.

ganized as trained as a firefighting and fire safety operation, 80 percent of its work is in responding to medical calls. One key audit suggestion is to put a medical rig at every fire station. Staff should be reallocated so that firefighters can simultaneously answer medical and fire calls. One criticism of the Fire Department is that if a fire rig is sent out on a call, a call to the area's ambulance has to be answered by another station.

The audit found that parts of some neighborhoods including areas of Como, Highland Park,

Macalester-Groveland and Highland are considered underserved in terms of medical response due to how stations and crews are configured. Size of areas covered by the various fire stations is also a concern. That is one reason why relocation of two stations is recommended.

The audit recommends reducing the number of fire stations citywide from 16 to 13, closing three stations and relocating two others. It also supports the idea of merging two area stations, Station 1 at 296 West seventh Street and

Station 10 at 754 Randolph Av. That idea began moving ahead last year, after almost a decade of debate.

Area community leaders say they are not hearing a lot of discussion about the possibility of closing or relocating fire stations. Construction of new stations could be a few years away.

Of the stations eyed for changes, the most high-profile has been Station 20 at 2179 University Av. Station 20 has already generated controversy because of cuts to its staffing a few years ago.

Midway Chamber of Commerce President Lori Fritts said she hasn't heard comments yet about the closing of Station 20. Nor has the Chamber had a chance to review the audit.

When the staffing cuts were made a few years ago, Chamber members met extensively with city and Fire Department staff to discuss their concerns and have questions answered. "I don't think anyone likes to see fire stations close but I think people can understand the budgetary constraints the city faces," Fritts said.

Station 20 has long been a focus of attention by Ward Four Council Member Jay Benanav, who has fought to restore its full funding and staff strength. Benanav was out of town due to a death in the family and wasn't available for comment.

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Midway in a minute

Continued from page 2
 by RD Management, parent of Midway Center owner RK Midway.

The building would take up the entire site. The store would be 103,021 square feet in size, with a 19,303 square feet glassed-in garden center on the building's Pascal side.

Home Depot would have 333 parking spaces located on the roof of its one-story building. Twenty-seven street-level parking spaces would be located north and northeast of the store.

The property is zoned for community business use, so no zoning change is needed. However, the size of the project and potential controversy over 'big box' retail in the Midway prompted city staff to set a site plan public hearing.

Home Depot's attorney, Tammera Diehm of Winthrop and Weinstine said the company is asking that a final decision on the site plan be postponed. In a letter Diehm is also asking for the city to extend the time period in which a decision can be made, to July 20, 2007.

Under state law there is a 60-day deadline in which a city can act on a zoning request. Without city action, the request is automatically approved. Home Depot and other zoning applicants can ask that the time period be extended.

-Compiled by Jane McClure

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Java Train rezoning stalled by St. Paul Planning Commission decision

By JANE MCCLURE

Java Train's trip to full-fledged restaurant status has been sidelined by the St. Paul Planning Commission. The commission's Zoning Committee tabled a rezoning request March 28, that would have allowed the popular Como neighborhood spot to transform itself from a coffee house to a restaurant.

City staff had recommended against rezoning the property from residential to community business use, saying that would be spot zoning. Instead the issue will be studied to see if there is another way to accommodate Java Train's request. A recommendation will be brought back to the Zoning Committee April 12. But that's likely to require a new public notice and hearing process, so any decision could be pushed back to late April or May at the earliest.

Some Zoning Committee members said they want to find a way to aid Java Train, possibly by another change in non-conforming use permit. Much of the committee discussion centered on how that could be done.

Planning Commissioner George Johnson said Java Train has already expanded its food offerings beyond what the current zoning allows, accusing the business of "food creep." He also said he'd "strongly oppose" the sale of beer and wine. But that is a decision the City Council, not the Planning Commission, would ultimately make, according to city staff.

But Commissioner Richard Kramer asked if there was some way to change the Java Train non-conforming use permit. That will be looked at by planning staff and

the City Attorney's Office.

Java Train is in a building at 1337 Pascal. In 2004 a change in non-conforming use was approved for the property, to accommodate Java Train and a flower shop, the Fighting Iris.

The Pascal Street property was erected in 1928, and housed a drugstore and a grocery store. The property was originally zoned commercial, then rezoned for residential use in the 1970s as part of a citywide zoning code change. Any other uses since then have been non-conforming. Before the restaurant and floral shop came in, the property was used for a business and warehouse, with residential use on the second floor.

Steve and Christine Finnegan own the property and businesses. They want to expand Java Train from a coffee shop to a restaurant that serves soup, sandwiches, pizza and ice cream. But the current zoning only allows a coffee house with limited, pre-packaged food service. That requires community business zoning. But because it is surrounded by residential uses, that could be considered "spot zoning," which is illegal.

Planner Allan Torstenson said the case is a difficult one, due to the spot zoning issue. There are also concerns about lack of off-street parking. Planning Commission members also said the rezoning would allow other types of businesses besides a restaurant, such as a liquor store. The city legally cannot put conditions on a rezoning to restrict the types of businesses that would be there in the future.

Neighborhood residents have had a mixed reaction to the proposal, with more than a dozen letters in support and a few against. City staff has also received a num-

ber of calls about the rezoning. Como Community Council is taking no position. A majority of neighbors signed a petition favoring rezoning.

Steve Finnegan said when his family planned the business and bought the property, they weren't sure there would be requests to expand the coffee house. Patrons want more food options, but that is happening at a time when some of the Java Train suppliers have cut back or discontinued the prepackaged food items.

Neighbors who support the request say Java Train is a welcome addition to the neighborhood and it deserves a chance to grow. Three addressed the Zoning

Committee March 28. "This is the kind of place that you wish you had in your neighborhood," said Betsy Wehrwein.

Sarah Ford, whose back yard abuts Java Train, also supports expansion. "Where we used to have this eyesore, we now have this charming, charming space."

Two other neighbors spoke against. Nancy Zugschwert said she has concerns about what other uses could come in if the property is rezoned. She also complained that the Java Train patio is already noisy, saying "That's just the ice cream and sandbox crowd."

Bill Sylvester accused Java Train of seeking to rezone so the

Finnegans could obtain a beer and wine license. But Steve Finnegan said no decision has been made on beer and wine. Because of state law restricting all types of liquor sales around the Minnesota State Fairgrounds, the Finnegans did start the process to get a law changed for their business this legislative session. They did that because it can take many months for a request to be approved. Even if they did get state permission, Finnegan said they'd have to weigh the high costs of a license and insurance. And beer and wine could only be sold with meals, not by the drink.

"At this point it's not even on the table," Finnegan said.



Java Train's trip to full-fledged restaurant status has been sidelined by the St. Paul Planning Commission. The commission's Zoning Committee tabled a rezoning request March 28, that would have allowed the popular Como neighborhood spot to transform itself from a coffee house to a restaurant.

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One plan calls for Snelling tunnel under University...

Study examines options for University and Snelling

By JANE MCCLURE

Anyone who drives through the University and Snelling intersection, let alone crosses on foot, knows how congested and dangerous it is. But at this point none of the proposed solutions would be easy. All would involve the rerouting of traffic and taking of property, especially the idea of a grade separation.

A recently completed Snelling/University capacity study and recommendations will be presented at 7 p.m. Monday, April 23 at the former Lexington Outreach Library, 1080 University Av. This meeting is being set up by district area district councils, the District Councils Collaborative and University UNITED.

UNITED Executive Director Brian McMahon said the case will be made April 23 for the broader study. "With everything coming up in the area, there's need to look beyond just University and Snelling," he said.

The intersection is already one of the most congestion in the area. Add in the possibility of

Central Corridor light rail, a new Home Depot store southwest of Midway Center and a connected north end of Ayd Mill Road, and many area community activists say there will be even more gridlock.

That's why area groups are asking for a more comprehensive study of traffic, transit and development issues around the intersection. They say a recently released Snelling/University capacity study and technical analysis is too narrowly focused. City staff are presenting the capacity analysis to area organizations this spring, to see if there is consensus to move ahead with one of three possible reconstruction scenarios. A recommendation would then go to the state and regional officials currently planning the Central Corridor project. If a solution can be found planning to design and pay for the project would begin later this year.

Community activists say that Snelling/University planning is happening in a vacuum. "We need to think more broadly about

the implications of all of these issues and what they mean for the area," said Ann White, a Merriam Park Community Council member and co-chair of the District Councils Collaborative. The collaborative is a group studying Central Corridor issues.

White and McMahon said not enough consideration has been given to transit alternatives. But St. Paul Public Works staff counter there's another piece missing: the lack of another north-south traffic route through the northwestern part of the city. Snelling is the only north-south through route between Dale Street and Highway 280. The north-south route issues are being studied by Public Works as part of a study of transit and transportation alternatives in the neighborhoods north of I-94 and east of I-35E.

St. Paul Public Works City Engineer John Maczko said the Snelling/University capacity analysis is simply a technical analysis done in response to the



A recently completed Snelling/University capacity study and recommendations will be presented at 7 p.m. Monday, April 23 at the former Lexington Outreach Library, 1080 University Av. This meeting is being set up by district area district councils, the District Councils Collaborative and University UNITED. Above, one of the possible options suggests what the intersection might look like if the ring road concept was expanded to draw traffic away from Snelling and University.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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Como neighbors debate merits of horse stables to deter crime

By DEBORAH BROTZ

While some Como Park residents feel crime is increasing at an alarming rate, others feel the area has a relatively low crime rate compared to other areas in the City of St. Paul. It depends on if you or people you know have been victims of crime.

In truth, according to statistics, overall crime in Como Park has decreased. In the St. Paul Police Dept. Annual Reports on crime, the total number of crimes committed in Grid 27, which is about a half-mile and has boundaries of Arlington Avenue on the north, Como Avenue on the south, Lexington Avenue on the west, and Victoria Street on the east, went down 57 percent from 2005 to 2006.

Residents in favor of having the St. Paul Police horse stables built in Como Park feel a police presence is needed to help deter crime.

Como resident Victoria Mastro Kane, whose family came from Hungary in 1892 and has resided in the park, would love to see the horse stables built in Como Park.

"There have been a lot of break-ins and a lot of car thefts in surrounding areas," said Kane. "We need a police presence here."

As a day care provider for the last 20 years, Kane spends a lot of time in the park with young children.

"There's no place more fun than to go down to the lake," said Kane. "I have kept myself to two areas or I get uncomfortable."

Walking around the lake, Kane has seen many things going on.

"I've seen lots of shenanigans, as well as drug deals and underage drinking," she said. "Most of the time, there's not a lot going on."

Kane feels having the horse stables in Como Park would be a big plus.

"I think it would be a deterrent from crime," she said. "A lot of incidents might be re-thought. The police are short-staffed. They're strapped because they're needed on the East Side. The neighborhood is quiet. Therefore, they're not here to patrol."



Of residents in favor of having the St. Paul Police horse stables built in Como Park, many feel a police presence is needed to help deter crime.

In talking to neighbors over the past several months, Kane became aware of the crime problem in the Como area.

"Before Christmas, houses were broken into, particularly seniors," she said. "They were breaking into cars in driveways. They go through garages by breaking in side doors. They have also gone through my husband's glove box."

Kane has also heard of crime problems around St. Andrew's Church.

"They were breaking in the beautiful houses surrounding the lake and stealing jewelry," she said. "They take things they can pawn and cash."

The rough estimate of \$200,000 doesn't bother Kane.

"It still would be less cost wise," she said. "They would be spending money where it needs to be spent rather than putting gas into the tank. That truck they use to haul the horses is a gas guzzler."

Kane also doesn't have any problem with using the site over

by the Humane Society for the project.

"I think it's a wonderful idea," she said. "It's just an area where they're storing big rocks. I don't think it will take land away from the park."

Kane sees the horses as beneficial to the environment.

"They make fertilizer," she said. "The parkland and Conservatory gardens can use it to benefit the park."

Since Marceline Mastro Mohn, Kane's mother, has memories of the horse police as a young girl and could never understand why the horse barn was removed from Como Park, Kane would like to see the horse stable return.

"My hopes for it is that it goes through, and we have them back in Como Park, where they belong," she said. "That's quoting my mother. I've really been feeling strange about how people can feel so completely negative about such a positive thing for the park."

The main reason Como resi-

dent Susan Jane Cheney opposes relocating the mounted police horse stables to Como Park or any other city park is loss of parkland.

"I'm not opposed to moving the stables into an urban area," she said. "They spend a lot of time transporting horses. They would save time in transporting horses and money for gas. These are tight budgetary times for the city. I don't feel parkland should be given away for a facility like this. Other options for the city have not been adequately explored including the Equine Center at the University."

Cheney doesn't feel there is a big crime problem in Como Park.

"I don't feel Como Park has a serious crime problem to give parkland away," she said. "I don't feel land is there to trade a relatively secure area of the city for a stable facility. We should not give parkland away to gain security."

The \$200,000 estimated cost for the stables seems impossibly low to Cheney, considering the

city's no net less provision that if a parcel given away is not used for park purposes, another equivalent parcel of land close to the area has to be made into parkland.

"If you take into account buying a piece of land, that raises the cost," she said. "With all of their needs, it doesn't add up to me. \$200,000 does not go very far in this day and age building a structure."

While there has been some discussion about the proposed stables, Cheney feels specifics about the project have been lacking.

"I don't feel there has been an adequate public airing of the project," she said. "Minds might get changed when they hear the details. A lot more discussion needs to happen in the community to evaluate how much support there is for it."

With the reduction of park police services years ago, supporters of the horse stables are hoping the new facility would bring added security to the park. There used to be a police station close by which gave people peace of mind.

In 2003, the Central District Headquarters, on the corner of Arlington and Rice streets, closed. They are now located in the main building on Grove Street.

"The building itself was not adequate to begin with," said Tom Walsh, information coordinator for the St. Paul Police Dept. "The plan was to move it to the library on Rice Street. The plan was scrapped. There was no place to be moved to."

Whether or not a police presence is a deterrent to crime has not been proven.

"I don't know if it would be supported by crime statistic data," said Walsh. "I don't know if physical presence is a deterrent."

If residents subscribe to the theory that a police presence is a deterrent, then they probably believe that having the horse stables in Como Park would deter crime.

"That's one of the things that remains to be seen," said Walsh. "We'd have to see if there's a decrease in property crimes to make that determination."

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Central girls win State Basketball Championship



Angel Robinson received the Player of the Year award from the Associated Press and the Pioneer Press, much to the approval of Coach Willie Taylor. (Photo by Tom Conlon)



Central Girl's Basketball Teammates celebrate their state AAAA championship following their 81-63 win over Minneapolis South at Minneapolis' Target center on March 17. (Photo by Tom Conlon)

By TOM CONLON

Central High School Coach Willie Taylor dodged the ice bucket and potential tournament upsets after his girls basketball team captured the AAAA State Championship with an 81-63 Victory over Minneapolis South (29-2) at Minneapolis' Target Center on March 17.

The Minutemen finished a perfect season at 32-0 and had 4 players—Angel Robinson, Kiara Buford, Georgie Jones and Theaira Taylor—named to the 10-member all-Tournament team. In addition, Megan Howard was one of 32 statewide juniors who won the Minnesota State High School League's (MSHSL) ExCEL (Excel-

lence in Community, Education and Leadership) award in recognition of fine arts, athletic and leadership activities.

Angel Robinson also received Player of the Year award from the Associated Press and St. Paul Pioneer Press, and is a candidate for Miss Basketball next month.

After defeating Cretin-Derham Hall in the March 8 regional 3AAAA tournament 97-58, Central defeated Roseville 76-58 (after an unprecedented two point half-time lead) and Edina 79-41 in the state tournament to pay South for the title. The team, which benefited from several talented new transfers, made them the team to beat and had pundits claiming it

may have been Minnesota's strongest girl's basketball team in history.

Following the championship win, the team attempted to dump a large ice chest over Coach Taylor who escaped when a tournament floor official intervened. After each team member cut down a piece of the basketball net, the team and fans returned to a late night rally at Central as the pep band as coaches thanked the fans for support and gave roses to the players.

The Minutemen set five state girls basketball records, scoring 2,734 season points (breaking Minnesota Valley Lutheran's 2,489 points last year), 85.4 average

points per game (breaking 82.3 by Minneapolis North in 1998), 2,445 field goals attempted (vs. 2,068 last year by Minnesota Valley Lutheran), 1,113 field goals made (vs. 926 last year by Crookston) and 1,476 rebounds (vs. 1,319 by Chisholm in 1984).

Individually, Angel Robinson was the season's leading scorer, averaging 16 points per game (with a game high of 30 points against Cretin-Derham Hall), followed by Georgie Jones with 13.5 and Kiara Buford at 13.3 points respectively. Senior Abby Gust was the team's leading three-point shooter, followed by Theaira Taylor and Kiara Buford. Georgie Jones, Megan Howard, and Kiara Buford lead the team in rebounds.

Prior to the regional final, Angel Robinson had scored 2268 points in her high school career (#24 in career scoring statewide) and #1 statewide in steals with 750. Senior Ebony Black finished with 929 city conference career points, ranking #3 in city conference scoring.

Robinson will play for Marquette University next year; junior Kiara Buford has orally committed to the University of Minnesota, hoping to join one of its stars, Ashley Ellis-Milan, who played under Taylor at Central before graduating in 2005.

"I'm happy for the kids and the hard work they did for us to earn this title," said Central Coach Willie Taylor. "All of us were under pressure with high expectations. If we lost, it was coaching problems; if we won, we were incorrectly accused of recruiting a super team. I'm glad it is over, but am excited for next season. I think

we have the potential to be contenders again and will work hard towards that goal."

The St. Paul School Board and St. Paul City Council both honored the team and coaches on March 20 and 21, and the St. Paul's African American Leadership Council held a community celebration March 25, where Coach Willie Taylor was given their Coach of the Year award.

Central athletic Director Nate Galloway concurred. "Central really is blessed to have this wonderful coaching staff who have built a solid girl's basketball program," he said. "Their success is not always noticed off the court, but they've developed many young ladies to be successful in the classroom, go to college and even go into coaching. You'll find many of Coach Taylor's former players on teams at many colleges across the country. I'm sure we'll see many more in the years ahead."

With only two starters graduating and talented 9th and JV teams (both of whom were undefeated in city conference play this season), Central is likely to contend for the title again in 2007 regardless of the outcome of the new transfer rule approved by the MSHSL on March 16. The rule, which requires transfer students to sit out a year of varsity play unless they relocate to the new school's attendance area or obtain a waiver, replaced one that allowed one transfer without varsity athletic participation penalties.

Bills are pending in the Minnesota legislature to overturn the MSHSL ban on grounds that it hurts athletes who make transfers for academic reasons.

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St. Bernard's Boy's Basketball makes first State tournament appearance; places third

By TOM CONLON

The St. Bernard's High School Bulldogs took Third Place in the Class A state boy's basketball tournament March 24, defeating Barnum 67-44 and finishing the season at 31-1.

The Bulldogs won their March 21 state tournament opener over the Badger/Greenbush-Middle River Gators, 64-46 but lost in the second round to Ellsworth 85-73. Chad Jones, Patrick Cassidy and Trevor Mbakwe made the Class A All Tournament Team.

The Bulldogs qualified for their first-ever state tournament appearance by winning the Section 4A region tournament with victories over Mounds Park Academy (89-32), Minnesota Transitions Charter Schools (67-45), St. Agnes (67-60) and Oh Day Aki Charter School (77-64). They are coached by Ed Cassidy.

Leadership United facilitates mentor program...

Schools, businesses partner via internet 'blogging'

By DEBORAH BROTZ

Chetan Chandrasasekara's office at Minnesota Wire & Cable Co., at 1835 Energy Park Drive, is about six miles away but when he corresponds with Desmond Stewart, a sixth-grader at Galtier Science/Mathematics Technology Magnet School, at 1317 Charles Ave., it feels like he is in the same building.

Through Leadership United, an initiative of Support Our Schools, Minnesota Wire & Cable Co. engineers mentor Galtier students via email. The company has also provided classroom grants for teachers, purchased playground equipment for the school, and sponsored the school's Science Fair in February. Support Our Schools is a nonprofit founded in 1997 to support public education in St. Paul and work for its improvement.

In fall 2006, Support Our Schools launched Leadership United, which assembles their accumulated best practices into a streamlined model for business-school partnership building.

Support Our Schools Executive Director Roger Barr says many



Desmond Stewart at the Dayton's Bluff Library. (Photo by Terry Faust)

business leaders want to support education and help prepare their future workforce but do not know how to begin.

"We're a bridge organization," said Barr. "We know business and schools. Leadership United is designed to make partnership building attractive and easy for both

partners."

Chandrasasekara, a design engineer at Minnesota Wire & Cable, says he got involved with mentoring the students via email after school faculty came to the company.

"They were trying to tell students how industry works," he

said. "Students came up with more questions. We decided to have a regular interaction with students. We're having a forum and try to publish questions and get answers so everyone has access to it."

Katie Roach, a Minnesota Wire & Cable Co. employee, coordinates the partnership between the business and school. Roach, Chandrasasekara, design engineer Dave Bender, and Minnesota Wire & Cable Co. Executive Vice President and CFO Joan Thompson are involved in answering students' questions.

"The questions come directly to Katie," said Chandrasasekara. "She either answers them, or we talk it over and publish it back on the forum. Everybody can see what the answers are."

The students' questions focus on the business.

"In general, they ask what we do, what we make, how it gets used, and how do we get to the end product from scratch," said Chandrasasekara. "We explain each step."

Chandrasasekara thinks the email benefits the students.

"It helps them improve their

creative and analytical skills," he said. "They learn how to define and solve a problem. They learn what are the minimum steps to take to reach that solution."

Mentoring students helps Chandrasasekara.

"It's definitely a stress reliever," he said. "I'm trying to focus and meet deadlines. In trying to explain simple things, it takes my mind off work."

Chandrasasekara feels it's important to mentor the students via email so they learn different ways to communicate.

"It encourages students to improve their skills," he said. "They'll try to understand different modes of communication, which may be written or verbal. Communication is very critical both as students and in the business world."

Stewart, 11, decided to be mentored by a Minnesota Wire & Cable engineer via email because he would like to be one.

"It's interesting," he said. "I want to be an engineer when I grow up. They show me how engineers work."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Mock Trial Team places 8th in State...

Central High Math Team wins State title

By TOM CONLON

While the girl's basketball's state championship captured most of the media's attention, Central High's academics shone on March 12th when it won the state championship of the Minnesota State High School Mathematics League.

Held at Eagan High School, the 22-member Math Team, coached by Marc Schwach, led the 27 high school state tournament participants (out of a possible 163 Minnesota high schools in 24 divisions). St. Paul Academy and Highland Park, two other local high schools, placed 4th and 11th respectively.

Central's top invitational students included Nick Arnosti, Elwood McCreary, Jennifer Wei, Daniel Ihlenfeldt, Michael Lud-

wig, and Daniel Monahan.

At the tournament, the problems posed are divided into five events - Individuals A, B, C, and D, and the team event. Events A, B, C, and D usually consist of pre-algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and pre-calculus topics respectively. The team event is a mix of all four.

The Minnesota State High School Mathematics League was founded in 1980 by Macalester College professor Wayne Roberts. Each year, the league holds five statewide winter tournaments, and the best students are invited to the State Tournament in March.

Another academic team shared some success at the state level as well. Central's Mock Trial "A" Team won its region tourna-

ment and placed 8th in the State tournament in Rochester on March 14.

The Minnesota High School Mock Trial Program, a law-related education activity that introduces students to the American legal system and provides challenging opportunities for personal growth and achievement, is designed to foster critical think-

ing and teamwork skills. Teams are judged on the quality and depth of their arguments, evidence, research and other core competencies an attorney or legal team would use in making a legal case for or against the subject in a legal trial.

All teams in the state use the same case through out the season and at the state competition. This

year it was a criminal case involving trespassing and destruction of property.

Central was coached by one teacher (Shannon LeClair) and two attorneys (Stacey Sorenson and Peter Knapp). Teammates included Pa Foua Hang, Ian Koeller, Liz Lee, Sarah Ludwig, Marissa Papatola, Kate Perry, and Christina Walters.



The State Champion Central High School Math Team is honored in the school's lobby display case.

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In Our Community

Light rail, riding the bus topic of luncheon May 8

"The Ins & Outs of Riding the Bus & Light Rail," will be the topic at a luncheon for seniors Tuesday, May 8 at 11:30 at 1514 Englewood Avenue. Deena Smith, a travel instructor with Metro Mobility will provide tips about how to use the systems efficiently and safely. The event is sponsored by Hamline Midway Elders, a Living at Home/Block Nurse Program. Call 651-209-6542 to make reservations for the luncheon or for more information about tailored services to keep seniors independent in their homes.

Como Women's Golf has openings for members

Como Women's Golf Club has openings for new members at Como Park 18 hole Golf Course, 1431 N. Lexington Parkway. Memberships dues are \$63 and includes weekly events and tournaments. Tee times are available on Tuesday and Friday, 8-8:30 a.m. and Weekends and holidays 9:30-10:15 a.m. The Official Club season runs from April 15 through October 15. For further information, please contact Como Clubhouse at 651-488-9673.

Kindergarten Round Up at Chelsea April 17

Kindergarten Round Up will take place on Tuesday, April 17, from 3:45-5 p.m. at our school. Tours of the school will start at 3:15 p.m. The Kindergarten informational meeting will start at 3:45 in the school cafeteria. Prospective Kindergarten students and their parents are invited to attend for fun activities and the meeting. Questions: call Chelsea Heights School at 651-293-8790.

Stories, Architecture, and Library Birthday

Hamline Midway Library continues to present family storytime on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. Preschool storytime continues on Saturday mornings at 11 a.m. On Saturday, April 14, and Saturday, May 5, there will be Play & Learn storytime from 10:30-noon provided by Resources for Child Caring.

The 125th Anniversary celebration of St. Paul Public Library moves to Hamline Midway Library in April. On Saturday, April 21, from 1-3 p.m., the Hamline Midway History Corps will have a display at the library featuring neighborhood history. On Monday, April 23, from 4-7 p.m., cof-



North Area Sports Association will be holding an information meeting on April 17 at 6 p.m. at the Klub Haus, 1079 Rice Street.

Saint Paul Youth Traveling Baseball for 2007

North Area Sports Association announces traveling baseball for youths, ages 10-14. If you have a child interested in playing advanced baseball, then please attend our meeting to be held at The Klub Haus at 1079 Rice Street on April 17 at 6 p.m.

Information will be distributed and discussed about this summer season of baseball. It is important that youth participants and a parent plan on attending this meeting.

The group is looking for youth players and dedicated coaches that will invest the time needed to produce quality teams. North Area Sports Association works hand in hand with local business, social services, and athletic groups in the Saint Paul area. They are also sponsored by The Minnesota Twins and The Saint Paul Saints. North Area Sports Association is AAU sanctioned nationally, and associated with MYAS, and Saint Paul Parks and Recreation.

They compete in The Gopher State Baseball League. You can contact North Area Sports Association at: 651-263-3333 or 651-214-0403 or E-mail: tio@qwest.net

fee, juice, and cupcakes will be served as a thank you to our customers. Register for free books the week before or on that day.

Paul Clifford Larson, author of St. Paul's Architecture: A History, will speak about the area's architecture and that of St. Paul on Thursday, May 10, at 7 p.m.

Calling all Galtier School alumni, and memories

Hello former parents, kids, or maybe just neighbors. We are the Galtier Magnet School Historians doing a history project in conjunction with the St. Paul Public Schools' 150th anniversary. Do you have any memories, pictures, yearbooks, or other memorabilia from when you attended Galtier School (old building or new)? We would like to interview you.

Please call Galtier at 651-293-8710 to leave your name, phone number, and a brief message with the office staff. We will call you back to interview you and gather information for our history project.

Hamline Church holds rummage sale Apr. 27-28

Hamline United Methodist Church, 1514 Englewood Avenue, will hold an All Church Rummage Sale on Friday, April 27, 5-8 p.m., and Saturday, April 28, 9-12 noon.

Comm. Ed offers Driver's Ed classes at Como High

Community Education of Saint Paul Public Schools offers several options of afternoon classes for Driver Education at the public high schools April through August, including an evening class and a class for deaf/hard of hearing students. This program is geared toward high school students. The cost of the program for Saint Paul residents and/or students who attend school in Saint Paul is \$295, for all others it is \$305. The fee includes 30 hours of classroom and six hours of behind the wheel training.

Evening Classes: April 16 through May 16, Monday and Wednesday, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Como High School, 740 Rose Ave. For more information call 651-293-8811

Applications can be obtained by calling 651-632-6020 or can be accessed online at www.commedprograms.spps.org and click on the Driver Education link.

Swim year-round with us indoors

Now is a good time to register for summer swim lessons with Community Education. Red Cross Swim Levels 1-6 plus Water Babies, Tiny Tots, Waders with and without a parent, Adult lessons, Swimnastics, Water Aerobics, Water Yoga, Private

Lessons and Diving. Schools where lessons are held: Arlington, Bridgeview, Central, Como Elementary, Como Senior, Harding, Highland, Humboldt, Johnson and Murray. Note Program availability varies by site, all activities have fees. Multiple use discounts available for summer daytime classes, Levels 1-6. Register by calling 651-632-6020 or online at www.ceregspps.org

Zion Lutheran Church holds sale April 21

The youth of Zion Lutheran Church are holding a Rummage Sale on Saturday, April 21, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The sale will be in the church basement at 1697 Lafond Ave. Please enter on the Aldine St. side. There will be household items, clothing, toys, books and more! Refreshments will be available. The youth will use funds raised this year for summer camps, various activities, and to support a student at the MaaSae Girl's School in Tanzania. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is matching funds raised.

Metro-Wide Easter Hymn Festival at Jehovah Lutheran Church

A new hymn, "Rise, O Church Like Christ Arisen," with words and music by Twin Citians poet Susan Palo Cherwien and organist Tim Strand, sets the tone for the 4th annual Hymn Festival to benefit the Metro Lutheran monthly newspaper. The festival this year features the magnificent organ at Jehovah Lutheran Church and begins at Jehovah on Sunday, April 15, at 4 p.m.

Dr. Victor Gebauer, professor emeritus of music and worship, will provide narration about the various musical pieces, and Sarah Koehler and Tim Strand will be playing the organ. Koehler and Strand live in the Midway area, and both are former organists at Jehovah. The Jan Van Daalen organ, built in 1983, has three keyboards and pedal controlling 2,446 pipes. The hymn fest includes organ offerings and organ accompaniment to congregational singing of the joyful hymns of Easter.

The Minnesota Boy Choir conducted by Mark Johnson will also sing, and all are invited to a reception following the music and celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord.

The event is open to the public. There will be a voluntary free will offering. Parking is in the lot east of Jehovah Lutheran Church, 1566 Thomas Avenue. For more information please call 651-644-1421.

Toastmasters club celebrates 65th Anniversary

Do butterflies attack your stomach whenever you're asked to speak to a group? Can you confidently express your thoughts and ideas? King Boreas Toastmasters can help! We are a fun, diverse, supportive group dedicated to improving communication skills through a variety of presentation and speaking activities. Come join us as we celebrate our 65th year as a Toastmasters Club!

We meet every Saturday at 7:30 a.m. at the Associated Bank in St Paul - corner of Selby and Snelling Avenues. Free to visitors - for more information, please contact Suzy @ 651-222-1757 or dr_suzy@juno.com

Kindergarten Round Up at Chelsea Heights School

Kindergarten Round Up will take place on Tuesday, April 17, from 3:45-5 p.m. at our school. Tours of the school will start at 3:15. The Kindergarten informational meeting will start at 3:45 p.m. in the school cafeteria. Prospective Kindergarten students and their parents are invited to attend for fun activities and the meeting. Questions: call Chelsea Heights School 651-293-8790.

Rummage Sale planned at Holy Childhood May 10

A Rummage Sale will be held at Holy Childhood Church, 1435 Midway Parkway, St. Paul on Thursday, May 10 - 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and on Friday May 11 - 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Como Golf Men's Club recruits members

The Como Golf Men's Club is recruiting new members ages 18 to 80. The Golf Club offers one of the finest weekend programs of fun and competitive play anywhere in MN. Membership application forms can be picked up at the Como Club House during business hours. Or, call 488-9673 and leave your name and phone number, attn: John Magnuson, and you will be contacted.

The organizational meeting is Friday April 20 at Como Club House, 1432 N. Lexington Ave, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Prospective members are welcome. New members can get help to find others to play with. Present handicaps range from -2 to 36. Membership costs \$100 for the 2007 season.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

Mystery/romance novel built around legacy of Paul Wellstone

By NANCY HEDIN

What do you do if you are a Hamline Midway neighbor, a retired college professor, and you've already written a couple widely acclaimed nonfiction books? Do you: a. practice your Portuguese? b. create your own publishing business? c. write a novel? or d. all of the above? If you are John Harrigan the answer is d. all of the above.

Harrigan was a professor of political science at Hamline University from 1969-2000. During his tenure at Hamline he was department Chair for six years and Assistant Dean of Liberal Arts for one year. In 1976 he wrote "Political Change in the Metropolis" which is in its 9th edition. In 1980 he wrote "Politics and Policy in States and Communities" which is currently in its 8th edition. Harrigan's words on political science have been used in classrooms for three decades.

He took an early retirement from Hamline University with the intention of trying his hand at writing fiction. Harrigan's first novel, "The Patron Saint of Desperate Situations," was released February 28th. It is touted "a thriller of a love story."

Sipping a cup of coffee at GINKGO Coffee Shop, Harrigan describes what inspired him to write his novel. Harrigan explains that one day he was thinking about the plane crash in 2002 that killed Paul Wellstone, his wife, daughter, three campaign aides and two pilots. Being an observer of political events and history, Harrigan recognized the tremendous affect the Wellstone plane crash had on history and Min-



Retired Hamline professor John Harrigan decided to try his hand at fiction with the writing of his first novel, "The Patron Saint of Desperate Situations." (Photo by Terry Faust)

nesota politics, even though he had only met Wellstone once. When a student of Harrigan's was interning at the Capitol and invited Harrigan to come down and meet the Senator, Harrigan jumped at the opportunity.

Harrigan leans in over his coffee, his face fills with color and his grin widens. Then he tells a story that when Wellstone was a professor of political science at Carleton there was an effort to have him removed and the students rose up in rebellion. At age 28, Wellstone was the youngest tenured professor at Carleton. "Love him or hate him,

he was the most intriguing political figure! This was a guy who inspired passion!"

In his novel Harrigan has both major and minor characters weigh in on the Wellstone legacy. Just to be clear, the book is a fictional novel, not a political treatise. It is everyday people responding to a real person's life, work record and death.

They say that opposites attract and in the case of the two main characters, Jake and Sonia, that would be an understatement. Jake and Sonia are attracted to each other but have huge cultural, philosophical and political differences.

Jake is a white businessman and indifferent to Wellstone and even put off by Wellstone's style and politics. In contrast, Sonia idealizes Wellstone, has been personally helped by the Senator, and sees him like St. Jude, known as the patron saint of impossible causes. Hence, the book title, "A Patron Saint of Desperate Situations." Sonia, a scholar of art history, values symbols and uses a St. Jude metal as a protective charm for people she cares about. Sonia holds the view that Wellstone was murdered and is convinced that the people behind that murder are

stalking her.

Harrigan calls on his experience in the Foreign Service to depict Sonia, a Brazilian art history professor at a fictional college, Northland College of Arts and Science.

Enhancing its believability, there are even a few Portuguese phrases in the novel. Harrigan smiles again as he describes his own dream experience as a young man. After college, he did a stint in the Foreign Service and spent three years working as an Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer in the Cultural Section of the U.S. Embassy in Rio de Janeiro Brazil. He learned Portuguese while living there and used that experience and recent interviews with Brazilian women and their partners to make his Brazilian character authentic.

The novel is firmly rooted in Minnesota. The fictional university where Sonia teaches is Northland College of Arts and Science—the Stanford of the Mississippi. The language and specific references to Twin Cities sites and neighborhoods reminds readers that this is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

North End News Board to hold fundraiser 'Happy Hour' on April 27 at the Klub Haus

The North End News, Inc., the nonprofit board which has run the *North End News* for over 35 years in St. Paul, will hold a fundraiser Happy Hour at the Klub Haus, 1079 Rice Street, on Friday, April 27, from 4 to 7 p.m. Members of the community are invited to stop by.

Board Treasurer Bruce Larson said the organization wanted to hold an event to remember the newspaper, which was one of the last non-profit newspapers in the Twin Cities. Larson, as treasurer,

is overseeing the effort to discharge the accumulated debt of the newspaper.

"The *North End News* was our valued friend, and we wanted to hold an event that would mark its place in history, signify what it meant to our community, and have some fun as well. We're hoping that folks will come and help honorably discharge some of the newspaper's debt."

More information about the event can be obtained by calling Larson at 651-489-4656.

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Get the 'Business Buzz' at Arlington High School

The Business Focus Area of Arlington High School, 1495 Rice Street, is one of four focus areas available for junior/senior concentration areas. The following are just several examples of the involvement of students, community and family. We are proud of our students' achievements.

Best Buy to Partner with Arlington High School. Best Buy in an effort to become more involved in the community has chosen to partner with Arlington High School. Among its first efforts has been a presentation to the Business Focus Area Seniors on "Dress for Success." The presentation soon morphed into "tell us about working and what we need to know to get a job." The presenters also returned the next week to conduct mock interviews with the Academy of Finance stu-

dents. Portfolios were also reviewed. Student feedback has been extremely positive. "We are in this for the long haul. We will be back many times," said Jason Flom, General Manager of the Maplewood store.

3M STEP students spoke with Congressman Keith Ellison. As part of the 3M African American Society celebration of Black History Month "Reflections on Success," Keith Ellison keynoted. Afterwards the students met with him during a luncheon reception. "That was a really neat experience. Talking with someone who is famous and who has power in the government was really cool," were but a few of the comments made by the students.

Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota,

launches Leadership Access Partnership Program. On February 27, business community members, members of the School Board, representation from the District, administration, staff, parents and teachers held a celebration to officially kick off the inaugural group's participation in this new initiative. The idea is to give students (especially those from under represented populations) a boost in achieving college graduation. Beginning in 9th grade and continuing through high school students will continue to meet once per week for classes designed to help them graduate high school, gain admission into college and graduate from college. Students and parents will also be involved in on going activities. Weekend gatherings are also planned.

There is a summer component as well. This year's plan is to attend a camp wherein students learn what leadership is really all about.

Academy of Finance students attend St. Paul Area Chamber of Commerce Good Morning! These senior students networked with St. Paul's business community gathering business cards, tidbits of knowledge and offers of internships. Their main purpose for attending, though, was to hear the presentation on team building given by Brad Bombardir, Minnesota Wild former defenseman and now front office director of Wild Community Partnerships. Students will take what they have learned and create a session for the junior members of AOF on teambuilding.

Business Focus Area students visit local college campuses. Students have gone to the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities Campus, Inver Hills Community College and yet have the opportunity to visit Minnesota School of Business Globe College—Oakdale Campus. Life in a dorm? Dorm food? Classroom size? Walking??? College visits allow students exposure to campus life. Students are aware that grades, attendance, and behavior are all prerequisites that must be met to be eligible to attend—just as in entrance to college. By visiting college campuses students become more aware of their post-secondary options and programs available to them.

For more information call Mary Thoenke, Parent and Community Outreach, Arlington High School, 651-487-7318.

Blogging

Continued from page 11

The kids come up with all kinds of questions for the engineers to answer.

"We ask them what they make, what type of wires they use, and what is it made of," said Stewart. "We ask them is the job hard and do they look forward to their line of work. Do they like the things they do."

How often Stewart emails questions varies.

"It can be every one or two or three weeks," he said. "Our sixth-grade class asks questions. I have asked a few questions and some of my friends have asked questions. Whoever has access to the

website and has the password can ask a question."

Emailing a company engineer has helped Stewart decide on a career.

"It has helped me learn a lot about engineering and how much money they might make," he said. "I learned about what type of engineer they are and what they do."

Getting email from an engineer has been exciting for Stewart.

"It's interesting to see what they're going to say because they're actually engineers doing their job as an engineer," he said. "They're pretty simple with the answers. They simplify it for us."

In the partnership, John Garcia, principal of Galtier, says they wanted to focus beyond a financial association.

"Some schools want just a fi-

nancial association," he said. "We were looking at the technical skills of a company that mirrored what we're trying to accomplish here."

Not only did Minnesota Wire & Cable sponsor the school's Science Fair by providing dinner for families who came to the event but also had engineers judge the projects.

"This really strengthened our magnet focus," said Garcia. "It really demonstrates what fine young scientists and technicians we have. They're producing some great scientific work."

A goal of the partnership is to support one another, not just financial support.

"One of our common goals for Galtier students is to watch them grow and progress as students," said Garcia. "Joan Thomp-

son is confident she can strengthen the workforce by helping today. The goal is to challenge the students academically and to create opportunities for them so they can apply science and technology to the broader picture."

Thompson says her company thinks early childhood learning is extremely important. The company has been involved in efforts to connect education with business for many years.

"Learning should bring understanding of business and different types of jobs," she said.

"Teaching children and educators what translates from school into business is important. The fact that Galtier focuses on science, math, and technology and the fact that we're a medical manufacturing company with a strong science, math, and technology component to the business, makes it a good fit."

Barr feels partnerships do not have to be huge to provide real assistance to schools and students.

"There is an old saying, 'Why

wish for a loaf of bread when you can wish for the grocery store?' Not many businesses can be the 'grocery store' for a school, but they can provide a very helpful 'loaf of bread.' Schools are learning that these kinds of partnerships can make great contributions to the students."

In the North End, a Leadership United partnership exists between Equity Services of St. Paul, 1021 Marion St. #104, and North End Elementary School, 27 E. Geranium Ave. Equity Services has made a significant donation to the school, used by classroom teachers for students' school supplies, equipment for the classroom, experiences for students, and to support field trips.

With currently about 12 working partnerships, Leadership United still has about 70 + public schools to go to reach its' goal.

"I hope at the end of the three-year goal, we have a partnership in every school interested," said Barr. "I hope people see this as a model and use it to create other partnerships."

www.monitorsaintpaul.com

In Our Community

Continued from page 12

Rice Street Library offers storytimes, more

The Rice Street Branch Library will offer early literacy based preschool story times on Tuesdays from 10:30 - 11:00 a.m. on April 17, 24 and May 1 and 8.

April 18 at 7 p.m., Richard Hudelson, author of *By the Ore Docks: A Working People's History of Duluth*, talks about his book as part of the Untold Stories: Labor History Events program sponsored by the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library.

In conjunction with the Hmong American Partnership, we will be offering a series of teen writing workshops. These are sponsored by the Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library and will meet on Fridays from 3:00-4:30 from April 20 through June 15th.

The North End Book Club will meet Monday, April 23, at 12:30. All are welcome to attend. For more information please call Sandy at 651-293-8811. This group is sponsored by North End Com-

munity Education of Saint Paul Public Schools.

Barb Keith will be working on a public art project for Rice Street library, making three large stained glass window mosaics, Saturday April 28, 1-5 p.m. Everyone is invited to come and glue down glass pieces. School age kids are welcome with adult supervision. Come for as little or as much time as you can--no experience necessary.

Neighborhood Police Meeting: Tuesday, May 8, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Meet with the local police to discuss conditions in the North End neighborhood. Everyone is welcome.

The STARS Homework Help Center is a comfortable place for students of all ages to work on schoolwork. STARS also provides homework helpers to help students with their questions. Open Mondays through Thursdays from 3:00 - 7:00 p.m.

The Rice Street Library is located at 1011 Rice Street between Lawson and Hatch. Our phone number is 651-558-2223. Hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 12:30-9, Tuesday 10-9, Friday, and Saturday 10-5:30.

Saint Paul Public Library, 90 West Fourth St., Saint Paul, MN 55102 - www.sppl.org

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

God Squad

Continued from page 1

set up," he said. He said that although some might think boxing promotes violence, he sees it instead as promoting the body, mind and soul.

The current location of the Hut is subject to demolition, and the God Squad is planning to move to a building across the street, on the corner of Atwater and Rice. However, a larger building directly across the street is for sale, and they are hoping they might obtain that.

"We could have a center for community needs with the larger building," Rev. Spence said. "A boxing gym, a computer lab, a place where young folks would come and get the full discipline of life, but also a place where they can have fun without some of the restrictions of life."

As well as trying to work with younger children in the community, the God Squad is called when a crime is going down.

"The police call us when they are notified," Rev. Spence said. "The neighborhood normally calls us before the police do."

He said he and other God Squad members often are called out at 2 a.m., and there's no more sleep for them that night. "We deal with the crime scene, the victim, the family, often the person who committed the crime," Rev. Spence said.

"The community is our number one partner," Rev. Spence said, "and the Saint Paul Police Department is a close second."

One who often joins Rev. Spence on those early morning crime calls is Damon Drake, who started volunteering with the God Squad about a year ago.

Drake was formerly outreach director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations and a counselor at Boys' Totem Town.

"I had read an article about the God Squad, and a woman I knew was a member. We were talking about some of the things she did, and I approached the God Squad and met with them. We had similar visions, and I knew many of the members already."

Drake said the God Squad has tried to do gang intervention. Following the recent triple homicide on Burgess Street, group members joined other counselors in talking with students and teachers in the aftermath of the shooting.

"We respond to a crime scene, we go to the hospital, we sometimes drive gang members home," Drake said.

"We're a calming force on the scene. We have earned the respect of many gangs, and we can de-escalate a situation," Drake said several God Squad members used to belong to gangs, and they lend a voice that many kids would otherwise not listen to.

"We feel God is with us, and we are not concerned for our personal safety," Drake said. "We are genuinely concerned about citizens' welfare. We couldn't do this if we were always concerned about our personal safety."

"Because many of us are African American males, we are accepted by a broad spectrum of the community," Drake said. He added that the group is working hard, however, to widen its influence and become more diverse.

Drake said there is a strong level of commitment with the volunteer God Squad. "There has



Entertaining kids with a magician at the Hut is just one of the many tricks up the sleeve of the God Squad, in an effort to reach out to young people in the community. (Photo by Terry Faust)

to be," he said, "when you're called out at 12:30 a.m. and have to be back at your job the next morning."

He said that with the expanded quarters the group is hoping to obtain by relocating the Hut, they are hoping to work with at-risk youth as well as people entering the community who have been incarcerated.

"We would like to have a place where kids can go if they are picked up in the middle of the night, rather than having to be sent to a juvenile detention center," Drake said. He said they could learn negative behavior in a short time in a detention center.

"Every day we have a ton of young people at the Hut," he said. "We have a core group of 30 to 40 kids who alternate through here."

He said he could not have imagined six months ago that there would be a place for young people to go that would be safe, with adults present.

Drake said the youth are encouraged to do service projects in the community. "We are trying to get the kids to take ownership of their community," he said.

"We have had some of the hard core kids in here, but how often is another story. We see them in other settings. That is one of the reasons we want to expand our operations."

Drake said there is a need for a way to employ the young people.

"They need money, and if we don't give them an alternative to gang life, they will go there," he said. "We need to show them how they can get nice things without drugs. We have to give them options."

Drake said motivation is missing in large numbers of young people.

"We need to motivate them to do homework and to study. A large group we work with is alienated, and it is a hard job for us to convince them," he stated.

Drake said the God Squad members don't preach religion.

"We try to instill morality and good character and good conduct and care and liability for others without putting a religious label on it," he said. He added that sometimes, when called out at 12:30 a.m. to a crime scene, there might be more of a need for some spiritual guidelines.

Drake reflected on some of the needs of the community—and the country—in regards to the African American population.

"One of the said things that I firmly believe," he said, "is that if there were these inequities in a different ethnic group, there would be a national call to action. Unemployment, graduation rates, one in four incarcerated

throughout the nation...."

Drake said African Americans are more likely to be arrested than their white counterparts. If brought to court, they are six times more likely to stand trial. If brought before a judge, they are six times more likely to have a higher sentencing.

"There is bias at every level," he said.

Drake said the God Squad is one of the integral parts of working with the community.

"Chief Harrington would much prefer the God Squad to go out and grill on hot days with the kids, rather than (the police) be out there putting kids in detention."

Drake said he had good things to say about policing in Saint Paul, but he also thinks there is a lot of work to be done. "They are not at the level they should be," he said. He said the God Squad can sometimes act as a liaison between the community and the police.

Another voice of the God Squad can go out and speak to gang members with authority. He once was one of them. "Mr. Smith," as he prefers to be called, joined the God Squad two years ago when he was asked to help walk a patrol for the Taste of Minnesota.

"That's when it took off, and I became involved," he said. "I am one of those who go out in the middle of the night when called. I also am at the Hut from 1 to 3, and sometimes I stay until 6 or 7."

Smith facilitates a group for girls at the Huts on Thursday evenings. He said he had never seen so many girls die from gun violence as last year in Minneapolis, and the God Squad wants to show the girls a better way.

As far as his gang affiliation, Smith said one day he just got tired of it all and walked away. He said it was easier for him to walk away, and he was respected for it.

"The gang was like a place I could call home," he said. "They were your friends, like a big brother. But big brother was not giving me a place to stay and was not putting food in my home."

Smith cited a young man that Rev. Spence talked to one day. He did not have warm clothes, and the God Squad found him clothes, a place to stay and some food to eat.

"There are a lot of those kinds of incidents," he said.

He said that some of the youngsters who come to the Hut may have a lack of food at home.

"They can come in, grab a snack and get help with their homework," he said. "We are kind of like a snack shelf or a food shelf. Hopefully they're getting dinner at home."

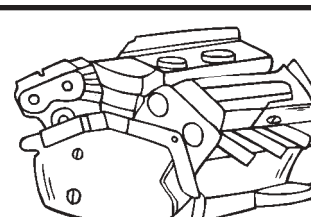
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New Spirit School's
STAR STUDENT

February 2007-Ms. Ferris

Fue Yang is wonderful student! He came into 3rd grade knowing all of his multiplication facts, and now is a master at division facts. His passion is math. Fue is a strong reader who also enjoys writing. He is very respected in his classroom for being an awesome student, kind and thoughtful. Fue is also very helpful and is a great Peacebuilder! Fue works well with his peers and also as an individual during all activities. He comes ready to learn every day of school. It is with honor and respect that I recommend Fue as student of the month. Congratulations Fue Yang!

In Honor of his accomplishments, Fue Yang will receive a \$25 gift certificate to a local bookstore.



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Study

Continued from page 8

pending light rail project. "It's a problematic intersection already," he said. "It's congested now and it's not very pedestrian-friendly."

Snelling carries 48,000 vehicles per day, with an additional 25,000 on University.

St. Paul and Ramsey County Public Works staff, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) and the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority are studying the intersection. What they found is that light rail will have less of an impact on traffic than originally feared, Maczko said. That's because trains will stop with the University traffic signals.

"The issue really isn't the east-west traffic, it's the north-south

traffic," Maczko said. It's possible light rail could be built before anything could be done to address University and Snelling, but if light rail goes in, he said there is a need to have a plan in place.

The study's traffic modeling was done to factor in one big box retail store south of Midway Center. It also does factor in the impacts of Ayd Mill Road.

Several community activists also questioned why Ramsey County is already seeking federal dollars to study a project that doesn't yet have a chosen solution, let alone community consensus on a solution. In late February the Ramsey County Board unanimously OK'd a request to Congress for \$1.28 million to assist in preliminary engineering costs and environmental studies of improvements to the Snelling and University. The federal request is for fiscal year 2008, which starts this Ju-

ly. Federal funding requests for fiscal 2008 were due March 1.

But Maczko said the request was made by county commissioners, not the city or county staff. "There's not an agreed-upon next step."

In the recently completed study, 17 different ideas were studied, and then narrowed to three. The three are:

*Make University and another street a one-way pair. University between Fry and Simpson streets would be westbound, with a new eastbound street routed through the block south of University, where Midway Center and businesses along University are located. The eastbound route would link with Spruce Tree Drive to Fry.

This option would have "pretty significant impacts" on Midway Center, Maczko said. It would take parking and traffic lanes but no buildings.

*A grade-separation of University and Snelling. Originally putting Snelling over University was studied, but now the option is to put Snelling underground. This would involve taking property north and south of the intersection, from Charles Avenue to Spruce Tree Drive, to provide turning lanes from Snelling to University.

This project would be the most destructive, in terms of area properties lost.

South of University, the Big Top Liquors-Great Clips-former Hollywood Video and American Bank buildings would be lost. North of University, CV would lose its parking lot. Five commercial building on the west side of Snelling between University and Charles would also be torn down.

Properties that could be demolished include American Bank and commercial buildings on the

west side of Snelling.

*Build a partial ring road around the intersection. Spruce Tree Drive, which diverts northbound Snelling traffic to westbound University, is one-fourth of a ring road. East of University, another section would be built through the Midway Center property, looping up to Asbury Street. This would require demolishing Midway Center McDonald's. A transit station would be built between Asbury and Simpson.

One huge problem with any ring road system is compliance and usage, said Maczko. When Spruce Tree Drive was built, northbound drivers were supposed to turn there. Many would still go to University and fight the traffic to turn left. "We could not get people to do turns at Spruce Tree to sell our souls," he said.

Cost estimates haven't developed for the proposals yet.

Looking to Make a Move? I have buyers looking in Como Park.

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In Our Community

Continued from page 14

Volunteers needed for blind softball team

Do you enjoy coaching softball? Could you do it with blind players? We at St. Paul Midway Lions have been doing it for three years at Aldine Park, 1717 Iglehart on Saturdays at 1 p.m. This year we start April 21. If you would like to help or can drive our players, please contact Dennis Stern 651 452 5324.

St. Columba hosts International Fest Apr. 29

The Church of St. Columba located at 1327 Lafond Ave in the Midway area is hosting an International Festival on Sunday, April 29th. Four cultures will be represented at the festival - Irish, Hispanic, Indian, and Vietnamese. The festival will begin with mass at 11:00 and will include music and readings from each culture. The festival will follow mass in the school auditorium, with food, music and dancers from each culture. Dance performances will begin at 1:00 p.m. and continue until 3:30 p.m. Please come and join us and taste food from Ireland, Mexico, India, and Vietnam and watch the fabulous dancers perform the dance from their native countries. Suggested donation \$1 per person - \$5 per family.

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Mother's Day Weekend at the State Fair Grandstand

Friday, May 11
11 a.m.-8 p.m.

Saturday, May 12
10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Sunday, May 13
12 noon-4 p.m.
Sunday is half price!

Leg Pain Study

DO YOU HAVE DISCOMFORT IN THE MUSCLES OF YOUR LEGS WHEN YOU WALK?

DOES IT GO AWAY WHEN YOU REST?

You may have claudication, caused by lack of blood flow to the muscles of the legs.

The University of Minnesota is seeking volunteers to take part in a 12-week exercise-training program. We want to find out if this program will improve walking ability in individuals with claudication.

Please call the Vascular Research Office at (612) 624-7614 to see if you qualify for participation in this study

10th 'Arts Off Raymond' planned May 4th and 5th

Arts Off Raymond, an open studio event now in its 10th year, "crosses the border" between Prospect Park in Minneapolis and Midway in St. Paul. Most studios are along newly revitalized University Avenue, which has recently seen the establishment of a commercial historic district between Raymond and Hampden. The addition of over 150 new artist lofts has confirmed the "Off Raymond" area as a major arts community.

Artist studios will be open from 5-9 p.m. on Friday, May 4th, and from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Saturday, May 5th. They will feature the full range of visual arts and performing arts.

The Cheapskate

This is how it's been for about 70 years: You live somewhere near Rice Street. You go to Mass at St. Bernard's. You go to eat, drink, tap your toe to accordion music, and try to win a whole bunch of raw meat at Tin Cup's.

I learned this from a couple of different friends who grew up in the twin shadows of the St. Bernard's spire and the giant blinking Tin Cup's signage. When they heard I was going to Tin Cup's they said, "I've spent half my life there."

So now that I've been there, I have a whole new insight into the whole North End Experience. I feel a little bitter that I didn't grow up there. Of course, before it became smoke-free a couple years ago, I couldn't have stepped inside without an oxygen mask.

I'll let my colleagues go into the details. Judging from our table talk, I have a feeling they have a lot to tell you.

Cheapskate Bottom Line: Go for weekend breakfast, served until about 2 p.m. Excellent breakfast that you'll get for a song.

And no, they don't have a Web site. Duh.

Food Snob

When our esteemed editor informed the Without Reservations crew that the Monitor was expanding to the North End, I rejoiced. Since Day 1 of our glorious reign as food reviewers, I've chafed at geographic boundaries. My contention: people have cars, or they can ride the bus to restaurants. (Shameless aside: Have you seen the new web site www.bustales.com? It's a must-read for anyone who uses public transportation).

Pressured by my colleagues, I have grudgingly agreed to stay within the *Monitor's* boundaries (mostly) for years. Now we have new territory to conquer and no one can stop me.

Tin Cup's Place is almost too good to be true, with a menu of all homemade American favorites, at prices that seem rolled back to the '60s. A full breakfast (with a very tasty steak) for about \$5, with a Bloody Mary or Screwdriver thrown in for an extra 50 cents? No way. Yes, way. So Bloody Marys all around, not too spicy and rimmed with celery salt. Oh, and with a beer chaser thrown in for free.

Fried chicken (or maybe broasted, although the cooking method isn't specified) is the specialty at Tin Cup's, and I splurged with the all-white half chicken for \$8.95. Not only did two ginormous breast/wing combinations show up on my plate, but they were perched precariously on a mountain of crispy hashed browns. All this food was preceded by a choice of salad, soup or coleslaw. Seeing me torn between the vegetable beef soup and the slaw, our server brought me both. The soup was rich and beefy and the cole slaw nice and sweet.

Tin Cup's doesn't serve dessert, so I indulged in some pull tabs instead. I won back my \$1 investment, but may be the only patron to ever cash out. The attendant was incredulous when I asked for a greenback, but I'm not a gambler. A glutton, yes, and Tin Cup's is a sure thing for folks like me.

The Chowhound

The last time I had a Bloody Mary



Without Reservations

Keeping it old school at Tin Cup's

this tasty was, believe it or not, at an airport on the way to my honeymoon a few years ago. Considering that the airport bloody cost \$13 and the one at Cup's is only 50 cents with a weekend breakfast order, I think it's safe to say I've found my new favorite place to drink. That and the fact that the airport was in Dallas, which is a bit further than the 10-minute drive to Cups.

But it's not just the cheap drinks and the impressive bar that stretches the entire length of the building that's going to keep me coming back. Nope, I'm going back for the home-style cooking.

While I was busy reading through the crowded menu, which appropriately showcases six clip-art tin cups on the cover, I heard the server say something about a hot ham and cheese sandwich with soup and chips (\$6.25). I closed the menu. That was exactly what I was craving. The meal made good on its promise: buttery-grilled bread with melted cheese and ham, wavy chips, and chunky vegetable beef soup. Just the way I would have prepared it.

Everything about Tin Cup's is

authentic. Where sometimes I complain about less-than-perfect design (remember when I suggested a certain café rethink their signage?), here it's just part of what makes Tin Cup's such a great place. Dark orange leather chairs and green and orange tiled floors don't reflect what we might consider pleasing color combinations today, but I wouldn't want anything else from a place that's been around for 60+ years.

The Bachelor

I have a knack for being in the right place at the wrong time. Take the time I was standing outside The Ed Sullivan Theater (where David Letterman tapes his show) just moments before Pamela Anderson was ushered out to her limo. Oh, to have "brushed" just one molecule of that cinematic genius. Doh!

Well, I found myself in the same predicament during our recent lunch at Cup's. (Well, there was a lot less silicone involved ... and a lot more Brylcreem.) Our crew grabbed a table near the bar (of course every seat at Cup's is

near the bar, which is the length of a city bus). After waiting a few minutes for my vision to be restored (this place is not exactly well lit), I noticed posters above every booth featuring an elderly gentleman cradling an accordion. That man was none other than Roger Van Horn, and the poster promised me "Funtime Music!"


Funtime Music! I like fun. I like music. Count me in! Alas, it was only 12 p.m., and Roger wouldn't be storming the stage (right there near the pull tab booth) for another two hours. My heart sank when I realized there was no way I'd be able to convince my three curmudgeonly dining companions to stick around that long. There would be no fun. There would be no music. There would be no Roger Van Horn for me. Just another entry on my list of missed brushes with greatness.

So I took solace in comfort food. And if you crave comfort food, Cup's is for you. You may find yourself whisked off to an early grave from the deep-fried this and red-meat that, but you'll be sufficiently comforted for the journey.

I ordered the cod dinner (\$7.95), which consisted of five triangles of breaded cod, a crater of mashed potatoes and gravy, buttered toast, and some truly yummy coleslaw. (I did cast a raised eyebrow toward my "cod," having noticed Gimp's Live Bait directly across the street, but my meal was not in fact breaded bait). I wolfed everything down, and each bite reminded me of countless dinners of my youth: greasy, salty, unimaginative, and oh so good.

Finally, if you ever have a chance to bask in the reflected glory of Roger Van Horn's "Funtime Music!," please send me an e-mail with every aching detail so I can live vicariously through you.

Contact us: withoutres@yahoo.com. Read the blog: <http://withoutres.wordpress.com>



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Monitor Want Ads are now 80 cents per word. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, Iris Park Place, 1885 University Avenue, Ste. #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. \$8.00 minimum on all classifieds. Classifieds must be prepaid via cash, check, or credit card. Classifieds are accepted over the phone with credit card payment only (\$16 minimum order). Want ads must be in the Monitor before April 30 for the May 10 issue. Call 651-645-7045 for more information.

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GARAGE SALE

Garage Sale - Fri. & Sat. May 4 & 5, small kitchen appls., furniture, pictures, nic nacs, etc. 1242 Hewitt Avenue, St. Paul. 4-07

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FOR RENT

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RUMMAGE SALE

Hamline United Methodist Church All Church Rummage Sale, 1514 Englewood Ave., Friday, April 27, 5-8 pm, Saturday, April 28, 9-12 noon. 4-07

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

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Continued from page 18

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WANTED TO BUY

Top cash paid. Older furniture, crocks, glassware, beer items, much miscellaneous. 651-227-2469 (anything). 6-07

Paying the most cash for your furniture, dishes, glassware, knickknacks, costume jewelry, antiques, pictures, lamps, household items etc. I make housecalls. Call Mary 612-729-3110. 6-07

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

District 6 plans spring events

District 6 Planning Council is the North End/South Como's Citizen's Participatory agency. The District acts as a liaison between residents and local government, dealing with all issues involving land use, crime prevention and are a clearing house for information.

The Board of Directors are volunteers who live or own a business within the North End/South Como boundaries. If you have any questions please call Kerry Antrim at 651-488-4485 or if you have concerns about crime or want to join or start a Block Club call our Neighborhood Safety Coordinator, Patty Lammers at 651-488-7684.

Here is a list of Spring Events: April 14, 8:30-11 a.m. St. Paul Spring Parks Clean-up; May 5, Spring Neighborhood Clean-up; May 12, Rally "Round" Rice Street.

Spring into Walking Talking & Taking Action: An April Walk is planned for April 26th.

The walk starts at 6 p.m. and the walk begins at the Rice Street Parking Lot.

Please call the office if you wish to volunteer or participate in any events.

The Rice Street Commercial Corridor has been and will continue to make a number of positive changes in the next year. With

this in mind the Rice Street Marketing Team is in the process of defining Rice Street's brand—its heart and soul and would love your input. Please visit the District 6 Planning Council's website:

www.neighborhoodlink.com/stpaul/dist6/ to download a questionnaire. Return the questionnaire to District 6 by mail: 213 Front Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55117 or fax to 651-488-0343 no later than May 15th. Community meeting will be held at a future time!

For more information call Kerry Antrim, Executive Director, District 6 Planning Council, at 651-488-4485.

Novel

Continued from page 13

not Twain's Mississippi or the Mississippi of southern lore. This is the Mississippi that starts from Minnesota's frosty landscape and winds between St. Paul and Minneapolis and meanders south holding the border between Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Jake's investment firm is an office on West Seventh street and his office assistant, Li Vang, represents the changing face of

neighborhood diversity. Monitor readers will feel right at home with references to Snelling Avenue businesses like O'Gara's Bar and St. Clair Broiler. There are "cat and mouse" chases that trace Summit Avenue and negotiate the on and off ramps of Interstate 94. Jake runs on Mississippi River Blvd on both sides of the river just as Harrigan did when he lived in the Highland Park neighborhood. The characters also take some jaunts to Rochester and northern Minnesota.

Harrigan stays busy by his as-

sociation with writing groups, meeting with former faculty of the independent colleges, working out at Bally's fitness center on University Avenue and meeting once a month to discuss foreign affairs at the Minnesota International Center, The Great Decision Series at the MN International Center is now focusing on the Middle East. This topic is interesting and personal for Harrigan. The youngest of his four sons has been deployed in Iraq twice and is slated for dis-

charge at the end of March.

Harrigan acknowledges that the leap from political science texts to commercial fiction is a big one. It is risky to write a mystery/romance that is so rooted in a locale and a specific event. Also it is risky because there is no plan for making it a series. A big publishing company would not take those risks. Harrigan says those are the very risks that seemed like opportunities for him to self-publish a work he be-

lieves in.

Harrigan says his intention for writing the book was to "give readers a few hours of pleasure and have them feel better about themselves and their fellow human beings." He dedicated the book to his wife, Sandy.

The Patron Saint of Desperate Situations is self published through Bridge Books Press a publishing company that Harrigan created. It was released February 28th. Harrigan will be reading from his novel and signing books on April 19th at 7 p.m. at the Bean Factory at 1342 W. Thomas Ave. His novel is available at Micawber's Books, Lake Country Booksellers, Common Good Books, and Hamline University Bookstore and at www.bridgebookpress.com

"This was a guy who inspired passion!"

- Author John Harrigan

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Spring seemed to be in a hurry. This year's springtime firsts (so hastily scribbled down in my journal) were: the first robin heard singing its pre-dawn song; the first flowering of the lakeside silver maples; the first splash of yellow plumage seen on a resident male goldfinch; the first heavy spring rain; the first flock of Northern shoveler ducks to visit Como Lake right after ice-out; the first Nelson's Deli ice cream cone eaten outdoors after the first bike ride of the season; the first daytime temperature to reach 80 degrees; my first springtime promise to be a more diligent gardener this summer. All these seasonal firsts happened within days of the vernal equinox—the first day of spring in the northern hemisphere.

On the first Saturday morning of spring, March 24, a dense white fog hung over the ground and the lake. The last remnants of ice were drifting away into the warm air.

On that foggy morning, the Como Woodland Advisory Committee was convening its monthly meeting. Volunteer advisors discussed site plans, grant possibilities, resource inventories, educational opportunities, and historical research for the Como Woodland project. I'm always grateful when I look around the advisors' conference table and see so many volunteers with so much talent, expertise, and dedication to environmental stewardship and education.

After the March meeting, I tagged along to the Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom site with a small group of advisors and high school student volunteers. We were going to be trained in on how to conduct our first sample



Nature in the City

By DEB ROBINSON

Winter exhaled, and spring took its first breath

tree inventory.

Rapid drumming from the treetops followed by a loud "kwhirr, kwhirr," confirmed the presence of red-bellied woodpeckers (*Melanerpes carolinus*). Despite their common name, the red on the back of their necks and their zebra-striped backs are their most obvious markings.

Red-bellied woodpeckers expanded their range into our area fairly recently. They were first observed nesting in the Twin Cities in 1930. Now the red-bellies are permanent Minnesota residents.

Woodpeckers of all kinds love Como Park's old oak trees. The oaks provide acorns for food and rotting tree limbs where woodpeckers can excavate their nest holes.

Up on the small hill by the "Dutch Ovens," I saw the first mourning cloak butterfly flutter by. The first tender green leaves were getting ready to unfold. The smell of thawing earth was in the air; winter exhaled and spring was taking its first breath. It felt like spring, but with no leaves out yet, identifying the species of the trees was going to be difficult for us novices. Luckily, we had an expert with us.

Even without leaves, we recognized the first tree we were all standing under as a mature oak tree, but what species of oak?

Last year's leaf scares and the new buds on its twigs could provide clues for species identification. However, all those clues were over 30 feet up in the tree's crown.

Paul Wierzbecki, an urban forester and volunteer advisor for the Como Woodland project, picked up an acorn lying at the base of the tree. He pointed out the hairy edged cap that covered most of the acorn's surface - a bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) produces such an acorn.

Paul showed us how to inventory 1/10th acre plots and how to fill out UFORE data sheets. UFORE (Urban Forest Effects Model) is a user-friendly tool for analyzing urban

ecosystems. UFORE is part of the iTree software created by the USDA Forest Service for use in urban forest management.

The tree inventory information collected by volunteers is used to calculate the value of the



Illustration by Deb Robinson

"services" provided by an urban forest. One such service is the reduction of air pollution; Trees remove ground-level ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, and particulate dusts from the air. Trees store carbon, which helps slow global warming.

We live in a society where money is the measure of all things. In order to justify forest preservation in our economic system, it seems we need to assign a dollar value to what a tree does naturally.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "One acre of forest absorbs six tons of carbon dioxide and puts out four tons of oxygen," and "The net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to 10 room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day." These are quantifiable services that trees provide.

Of course, there are all those services that a forest provides that are more difficult to put a price on. What is the dollar value of a nest hole to a red-bellied woodpecker or a wood duck? What is the value of a quiet woodland where you can take a hike or study nature? On April 27, Arbor Day, I'm going for a long walk in the woods - the cost? Priceless!

Endnotes: *Restore the Como Woodland with Hands On Twin Cities and EcoPartners at a volunteer woodland restoration event on May 18, 1-5 p.m.—go to: www.ComoWoodland.org and follow the link to sign-up. *Volunteer for Lights Out Twin Cities: an effort to make downtown buildings safer for migrating birds - more info: www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn *To contact this writer: dm-robinson@bitstream.net

Hamline University Events

Founders Day 2007

The Rev. Dr. Emilie M. Townes will draw on her work in womanist ethics as she reflects on the service and leadership needed today during the 2007 Founders Day address: "Everydayness: Citizenship & Social Witness."

Date: Thursday, April 12
Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Klas Center, Kay Fredericks Room
Contact: lnybakken@hamline.edu

Petar Jankovic Guitar Concert

Date: Tuesday, April 17
Time: 8 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: For tickets, 651-523-2459

Willow Room, Green Door: New and Selected Poems by Deborah Keenan

Graduate School of Liberal Studies professor and poet Deborah Keenan reads from her eighth book.

Date: Friday, April 20
Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: 651-523-2047 or gl@hamline.edu

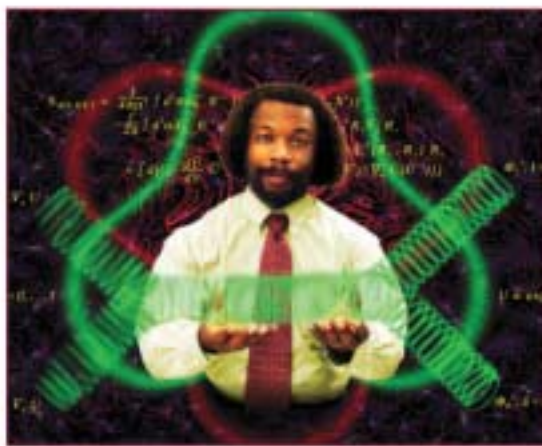
Fefu and Her Friends

Dates: Friday, April 20 and Saturday, April 21;
Thursday, April 26—Saturday, April 28

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Anne Simley Theatre

Cost: General \$7, Senior Citizens and non-ACTC students \$5, Hamline faculty and staff \$3, ACTC students \$1, children 12 and under free



"Modern Cosmology and Superstring Theory: Can They Co-Exist?"

Featuring Sylvester James "Jim" Gates, Jr., the John S. Toll Professor of Physics, University of Maryland.

Date: Friday, May 4
Time: 12:40 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: Christine Berg Schroeder, 651-523-2426 or cbergschroeder01@hamline.edu

First Friday Forum

Dr. Stacey Tovino gives a talk titled "The Visible Brain: Implications of Advances in Functional Neuroimaging"

Date: Friday, May 4
Time: Noon

Location: Sorin A & B

Cost: \$10, includes lunch
Contact: Catherine Price, 651-523-2015, or cprice01@hamline.edu

Hamline Winds and Women's Chorale Concert

Date: Saturday, May 5
Time: 2 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall
Cost: Free and open to the public
Contact: 651-523-2197

Hamline University's A Cappella Choir's Salute to Spring!

Date: Sunday, May 6
Time: 4 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall
Cost: Free and open to the public
Contact: 651-523-2296

Hamline University's Jazz Ensemble Spring Concert

Date: Thursday, May 10
Time: 8 p.m.

Location: Sundin Music Hall
Cost: Free and open to the public
Contact: 651-523-2197

"Arrested Motion"

Year-end performance given by the Hamline Dance Ensemble.

Dates: Thursday, May 10—Saturday, May 12
Time: 7 p.m.

Location: Anne Simley Theatre in Drew Fine Arts
Contact: 651-523-2905

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