

# monitor

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## What's INSIDE

Feature ..... 3



Summer fun as close as area rec

News ..... 4



Business group talks about parking

Feature ..... 5



North End School receives grant

News ..... 6



Rice St. Bridge project underway

# Rice Street 'fixture' recovers jewelry, reaffirms bond with North End community



"When I got the necklace back, it was a warm feeling. "I felt like I was put back together again."

- North End resident Vivian Clausen

Vivian Clausen was robbed May 21 of a precious item, a 14-karat gold necklace she received from her husband, Andrew, when he returned from serving in World War II. The following Saturday the assailant, Allen Fenton, 49, was apprehended and later charged with the theft. By Thursday, May 28, her necklace had been located in a pawn shop and returned to her. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

By JAN WILLMS

Bright sunshine floods the small apartment where Vivian Clausen, 95, sits and looks out over Rice Street on a recent Saturday afternoon.

A slight woman with white hair and a sweet smile, Clausen sits in her cheerful kitchen amidst hanging baskets of colorful artificial flowers. She shakes her head, saying she has been living on Rice Street for the past 70 years and she cannot remember a time when she has had so many people calling on her and wanting to talk.

"There were four television stations here," Clausen said. "Even Princess got her picture taken." Princess, the roly-poly toy poodle who shares the apartment with Clausen, sits up as she hears her name mentioned.

The reason for all the excitement is that Clausen was robbed May 21 of a precious item, a 14-

karat gold necklace she received from her husband, Andrew, when he returned from serving in World War II. The following Saturday the assailant, Allen Fenton, 49, was apprehended and later charged with the theft. By Thursday, May 28, her necklace had been located in a pawn shop and returned to her.

Sgt. Paul Schnell, the public information officer for the St. Paul Police Department, said Clausen is an icon on Rice Street.

"She's best described as kind of a character," he said. "She knows everybody and talks to everybody, from the police to the business owners."

"She's known by Viv, Mama or Ma to a lot of people and organizations," Schnell continued. "She's regarded as a special fixture in the North End."

Schnell said that when the theft happened, it disturbed every-

one in the area, and the police department wanted to hold the person responsible accountable.

"When we got the suspect and had him charged, it was a good feeling," Schnell said. "But returning the necklace to Vivian, that was a great feeling."

For Clausen, the past several days have been memorable. She said she did not know the man who robbed her and had never seen him on the street, where she often takes walks with Princess.

"He just put his arm around me and said something like 'Hi, Mama,'" Clausen said. She said he moved her a little bit, and she felt like she was going to flip over, but she didn't.

"I didn't know he had taken the necklace until he ran away, and I put my hand to my chest and realized it was gone," she said.

"When I got the necklace back, it was a warm feeling," she

said. "I felt like I was put back together again."

Her husband had bought both the necklace and a watch, engraved on the back with the letters AC to VC, 1949, from a jewelry store that used to be across the street from where Clausen now resides. She has been in this apartment since 1945, first moving to a building on the other side of Rice in 1939 after her marriage.

She and Andrew met at the old Strand Ballroom, where she was a dance hostess. She remembered he bought a string of tickets to keep dancing with her, and he told another fellow that she was going to be the woman he would marry. Four months to the day after they met they were wed.

He ran a flooring business before he entered the service and worked as an army engineer,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

# monitor

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St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-645-7045

**Publishers:**  
Calvin deRuyter, Tim Nelson

**Managing Editor:**  
Denis Woulfe

**Advertising:**  
Denis Woulfe  
Dennis Stern (651-452-5324)

**Photographer:**  
Denis Jeong Plaster

**Production/Illustrations:**  
Bob Wasiluk

**Contributing Writers:**  
Eric Nathanson, Deborah Brotz,  
Jane McClure, Tom Conlon,  
Jan Willms, Sherri Moore,



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## Monitor in a Minute

### Battle against vacant properties continues

The City of St. Paul's ongoing battle against vacant and foreclosed-upon housing took another step forward May 28 with adoption of ordinances meant to encourage property owners to get buildings rehabilitation and back into occupancy.

The council unanimously adopted ordinances that:

\*Create a detailed process for vacant building remodeling. One intent of this ordinance is to encourage property owners to rehabilitate vacant buildings, yet not do demolition and then leave the house gutted and uninhabitable for long periods of time. The ordinance calls for a city inspection following completion of the demolition phase of a total remodeling project. This will be done through signed agreements with city inspections staff.

This not only makes sure the demolition permit is followed but also gives city officials a chance to list other code compliance requirements before remodeling begins.

\*Includes a fee schedule to cover the costs of inspections. Fees increase from \$138 to \$475 for a single-family dwelling code compliance inspection and from \$172 to \$595 for a duplex.

\*Increases the vacant building registration fee to \$1,000. City licensing staff had suggested increasing that to \$500 from the current range of \$250 to \$500, but the council decided to increase that amount to \$1,000.

Because the fee increases are more than 300 percent, the city will phase the inspection fees in 2008 and 2009. The vacant

building fee increase takes effect in 2008.

St. Paul has more than 1,700 vacant registered buildings. Because not all property owners register their buildings when they become vacant, it is believed that number is actually much higher. That in turn means the city is facing skyrocketing costs for building inspections, as well as exterior maintenance needs ranging of boarding up buildings to cutting grass and shoveling snow.

No one appeared at public hearings May 21 to speak for or against the changes.

### Vacant property could be supportive housing

A vacant Lexington-Hamline nursing home could be reused as supportive housing for single adults and be linked to a new headquarters for the non-profit agency CommonBond Communities, if a site plan and a required property rezoning win city approval. The plans for the site at Lexington Parkway and St. Anthony Avenue were reviewed by the Union Park District Council's Land Use Committee in May and the full district council will be forwarding its comments to the St. Paul Planning Commission and other city officials.

CommonBond develops and operates various housing projects throughout the Twin Cities, including the Selby-Dayton Apartments in Summit-University neighborhood and Skyline Towers at 1247 St. Anthony Av. The non-profit operates low-income housing and well as housing with supportive services for residents.

CommonBond has acquired the former Lexington Health Care Center, a now-shuttered plastic surgery clinic and a house next to the clinic building. Lexington

closed more than three years ago. Its building would remain but would be remodeled into apartments. The house and clinic building would be torn down to make way for a new 30,000 square foot CommonBond corporate headquarters. The new building would be 30,000 square feet and would front on Lexington. It would have a connecting walkway to the converted nursing home. The headquarters building would have underground parking. The former nursing home has a surface parking lot.

The development site needs to be rezoned from residential and commercial uses to allow for traditional neighborhood or TN zoning to be used there. This type of zoning is used to promote more density and mixed residential-commercial development.

Different proposals have been made for the nursing home site, including a halfway house. But those proposals were opposed by former Ward One Council Member Debbie Montgomery, Lexington-Hamline Community Council and neighbors.

### Union Park supports land subdivision

A proposal to subdivide land north of the new Midway SuperTarget store won the support of Union Park District Council May 7. But the council is also asking that any new structures in the area along University Avenue follow transit-oriented development guidelines, as Target officials promised when the store plans were approved two years ago.

Yet another request is that the city extend its zoning overlay restrictions for Central Corridor station areas to include the proposed Hamline station area. The

restrictions, which the City Council approved last month, limit development around other station sites.

Hamline is not one of the station areas currently under study by a St. Paul Planning Commission task force. City staff have indicated that Hamline, as well as the Victoria and Western station sites, could be studied next year.

Target officials want to split what is now one parcel on University Avenue into three parcels for commercial or mixed-use development. This plan was discussed when SuperTarget went through the city approval process.

Target owns about 15.7 acres of property on University between Syndicate, St. Anthony and Hamline. Target would like to split off its store property and parking areas, with two smaller lots created along University.

The two lots along University are vacant and don't include a building that houses a video store and travel agency. The two lots would be developed as new retail uses. No specific users have been identified by Target. Union Park Land Use Chairperson Scott Banas said that when specific retail users are identified, plans would be brought back to the district council and city officials for review and approval.

A proposal to site a hotel on one of the parcels fell through last year.

When SuperTarget was built, some underground utilities were installed for future sanitary sewer service. Storm sewer connections and drainage plans will be planned when specific uses and plans come forward.

The properties are zoned for business use, which will not change.

- Compiled by Jane McClure

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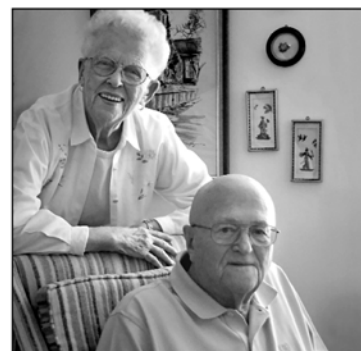


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# Summer fun as close as your local rec center, park

By DEBORAH BROTZ

With the recession continuing to affect your pocketbook this summer, your entertainment budget has probably been cut to shreds. But, luckily, if you live in St. Paul, there is plenty of entertainment available throughout the summer for free or a nominal fee.

St. Paul Parks & Recreation Music in the Parks offers a wide variety of music and theater performances at Como Lakeside Pavilion, Como Park (Cromulent Performance), Mears Park, Newell Park, Phalen Amphitheater, Phalen Park (Cromulent Performance), Raspberry Island, and Rice Park.

A sampling of free performances includes: The Cromulent Shakespeare Company performing "The Tempest," 6/14, 2 p.m., at Como Park, at Newell Park, 6/21, 2 p.m., and at Phalen Park, 6/26, 7 p.m.; Como Pops Ensemble playing at Como Lakeside Pavilion, every Sunday throughout the summer except for Sat., July 4, at 3 p.m.; and Minnesota Sinfonia, playing orchestra music at 7 p.m., on 6/25 at Phalen Amphitheater and on 7/6, at Como Lakeside Pavilion. [www.stpaul.gov/parks](http://www.stpaul.gov/parks) or 651-266-6400.

Theater performances taking place at Como Lakeside Pavilion at 7 p.m. charge admission of \$10 for adults and \$8 for children 12 and under. They include "Music Man" from Rosetown Playhouse on 7/9-7/11 and 7/16-7/18, for tickets 651-792-7414 Ext.2; "Honk!" from Hillcrest Theater on 7/23-7/25 and 7/30-8/1, for tickets 651-695-3706; and "If You Like Pina Colodas" by Como Park Productions on 8/21 and 8/22, for tickets call Bill Rasmussen 651-489-3405.

Bring a picnic basket and enjoy free movies on the giant screen under the starry sky all summer long as Comcast presents "Movies in the Park" at neighborhood recreation centers and some parks. Movies are geared for families with children and begin at dusk. A sampling includes: "RV," at Griggs Recreation Center, on 6/12; "Hotel for Dogs," at Rice Recreation Center, on 7/24; "The Tale of Despereaux," at Hancock Recreation Center, on 7/31; and "Beverly Hills Chihuahua," at N.W. Como Recreation Center, on 8/28. [www.stpaul.gov/parks](http://www.stpaul.gov/parks) or 651-266-6400.

St. Paul Central Library, 90 W. 4th St., will also be showing free movies this summer on Fridays outdoors on the lawn in the courtyard. These movies are geared more for teens and adults and begin at dusk. A sampling includes "Iron Man," on 6/19; "Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist," on 7/10; and "Quantum of Solace," on 7/31. [www.sppl.org](http://www.sppl.org) or 651-266-7000.

Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is a very popular spot for summer fun from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. every day. [www.comozooconservatory.org](http://www.comozooconservatory.org) or 651-487-8200.

One special feature will be Blooming Butterflies, from 6/19-9/7, a seasonal, free-standing butterfly exhibit resembling a caterpillar. Approximately 3,000 square feet of enclosed butterfly 'garden' space will showcase a colorful variety of tropical annual and perennial flowering nectar plants to sustain hundreds of butterflies.

Another special treat is the 2009 Sunken Garden Flower Show

from 5/3-10/4. Roses, Statice, Geraniums, Asiatic Lilies, Heliotrope, New Guinea Impatiens, Petunias and Caladiums are some of the floral features.

If you like dancing, bring a lawn chair and pack a picnic and let your children boogie during 9 Night of Music, Tuesday, 6/30-8/26, from 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m., at Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd. Performances and activities are free and are held on the Laura Jane Musser Plaza at the Center. Museum stores and galleries are open until 8 p.m. and the admission fee is waived on this

evening. So, listen to infectious music and get out your dancing shoes for saucy Salsa, soulful Cajun, toe-tapping Calypso, and classic big band Swing. Co-sponsor Tapestry Folkdance center provides instructors to lead the way. [www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org) or 651-259-3000.

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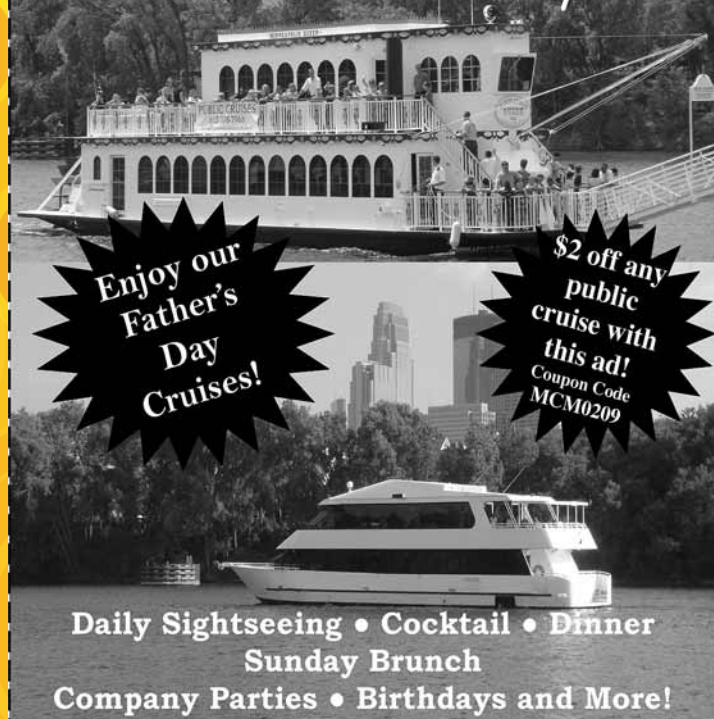
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# Business association tells University businesses to get involved in parking issue

By JANE MCCLURE

University Avenue businesses need to get involved and learn more about how the planned Central Corridor light rail project will affect their on-street parking and business access. That's the message the University Avenue Business Association (UABA) is sending to its 175 members, and to other business owners along the street.

More than two dozen business owners met with Central Corridor project staff May 21 to review parking issues and a parking plan recently developed by central Corridor project staff. Parking workshops for specific areas along University began last month and will continue through the summer.

When the light rail line is built, 85 percent of the on-street parking spaces will be lost. Only 175 of the current on-street parking spaces will remain.

UABA is asking that the Metropolitan Council – which is charged with building the \$914 million light rail line – and other partners find the money and make plans to keep businesses viable during and after light rail construction. The organization is also asking for detailed origin and destination traffic studies, to determine the habits of University Avenue motorists. Those studies could be used to make new plans for University and other area streets in the future.

UABA Chair Jack McCann, whose family firm Update Companies owns and manages properties in the University-Raymond area, said the parking issues will change as the light rail project goes on. Construction, which is to start in 2010, will bring one set of problems. Starting in 2014 the rail operations will bring another.

Some University Avenue business leaders are disappointed with proposals to mitigate parking loss and question whether a recently released set of recommendations does enough to make up for the

on-street parking that will be lost and the challenges they and residential neighbors will face in the years ahead. A report, "Mitigating the Loss of Parking in the Central Corridor," is being reviewed by district councils along the proposed light rail route and at charettes for affected businesses at 11 locations from Western Avenue to Raymond Avenue.

Business owners and others who have seen the report are disappointed in what they see as a lack of substance. While saying they think city and corridor staff have done the best they could with limited resources, several said the report doesn't contain enough specifics. Nor are some of its recommendations, such as shared parking, going to be practical in every area.

"It's a big disappointment," said McCann. "This whole process has gotten a lot of business owners very angry and very frustrated." Update may be put in the position of having to actively patrol its off-street parking when light rail goes in.

"The report seems to more about ideas than about actual solutions," said Summit-University Planning Council Executive Director Ina Landrum. She and district council members are concerned that they and other neighborhood groups will end up vetting many of the future parking issues, as well as conflicts between residents and businesses about spillover parking or commuter parking.

Mike Baca of Impressive Print said "Businesses are having a hard enough time as it is." He and others question whether the parking issue will prompt some businesses to move off of University.

McCann and Baca said there is frustration among business owners that the extent of the parking loss wasn't known until a year ago, despite years of light rail planning. "The inability for the project staff to anticipate that

shocked a lot of people," Baca said.

"Parking is one of those flashpoint issues that can create conflict and can be potentially explosive," said Craig Blakely of St. Paul Planning and Economic Development (PED). "Many, many of these businesses are very passionate about the potential loss of parking," Dan Soler of the project staff.

Metropolitan Council Chairman Peter Bell praised the plan, said it is a key step in addressing a "very important and nettlesome issue." Other committee members, including St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman, also praised the effort. "People are at least beginning to see that there is an end in sight."

The Central Corridor is a key project for the region, said Coleman. "But if we build it at the cost to all of these other people then we've lost something."

Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark said it's critically important for businesses to participate in the parking workshops, and to ask Metropolitan Council and project team staff for help. "We're going to be looking for really local, site-specific solutions," he said.

It also may be that solutions come one vehicle at a time. "One parking spot may not seem like much in the scheme of things," said McCann. "But it's huge to that person who has that parking spot."

Baca said many business owners still don't realize that light rail is coming and that it will have an impact. "People need to understand that this is pretty much a done deal," he said. UABA is urging all businesses to contact Central Corridor project staff to learn parking impacts for their businesses. If parking options cannot be found, he said that businesses owners may have to make hard decisions about their future. Baca is looking at whether he should



University Avenue businesses need to get involved and learn more about how the planned Central Corridor light rail project will affect their on-street parking and business access. That's the message the University Avenue Business Association (UABA) is sending to its 175 members, and to other business owners along the street.

make physical changes to his building, because there won't be a row of parked cars between it and street traffic when light rail begins operations.

Business owners continue to be frustrated at the lack of financial resources for parking. At this point the only money even on the table is Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) for 2010-2011. That money would be used to repave 10-11 alleys and mark them for parking. City officials are also looking at using youth workers to clean up alleys this summer.

Twice, the Metropolitan Council has turned down City of St. Paul requests for Livable Communities grants to address Central Corridor parking issues. Parking improvements aren't considered eligible expenses under the federal guidelines for the project, meaning federal money isn't available.

A request from the 2009 Minnesota Legislature for financial assistance was rejected. City officials had suggested changing state law to pool funds from several tax increment financing districts along the light rail line and using that money to pay for parking improvements. But that idea met a cold shoulder from state

lawmakers.

"Something I keep scratching my head about is that the project doesn't have the resources to solve this problem it's created," said Jim Segal of Ax Man Surplus. "You have this betterment coming down the street but it's not an equitable situation for everyone involved."

"On-street parking is significantly impacted by the construction of light rail," said Dan Soler of the project staff. Over the past year city and project staff have knocked on business doors, met with business owners and community groups and done a building-by-building look at University. Every block was mapped out.

The problems vary from block to block and even business to business, said Blakely. The parking issue is complicated because there are so many variables. "It's a set of interrelated problems."

Some areas have large under-used parking lots that are restricted or are inaccessible. According to the report, owners of larger lots fear that their off-street parking will become park-and-ride lots for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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# City faces mounting budget gap, host of unknowns

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul's budget-cutting efforts are already being felt – even before Gov. Tim Pawlenty's anticipated cuts to Local Government Aid (LGA). City Council members met with finance staff and Deputy Mayor Ann Mulholland May 27 to discuss what lies ahead. Under the worst-case scenarios, the city could lose \$7.7 million in 2009 and \$16 million in 2010. Add in inflation and other factors, and the 2010 budget gap could grow to \$26.6 million next year. That could mean fewer cops and firefighters, closing and service cutbacks at recreation centers and libraries, and a range of cuts to other city services.

"We're just facing a lot of unknowns," said Mulholland.

Council members are already studying ideas for balancing the budget. Ward Four Council member Russ Stark, who is working with Hamline-Midway residents to keep that neighborhood's library open, is having a summer intern research private-public partnerships around the country. He is hoping to bring results of that research back to the council, to see if there are ways to keep city facilities operating.

Stark is also working with a city-community task force to discuss ways to keep the library open, possibly in conjunction with the advocacy group Friends of the St. Paul Public Library.

Area recreation centers Griggs, Front, Sylvan and South St. Anthony Park face cutbacks or closing due to the looming budget crisis. Parks and Recreation has worked to find non-profit partners to keep the centers open but hasn't reached any agreements yet.

"There are no alternatives except to make the hard choices," said Ward Three Council Member Pat Harris. The public and the council may not agree

with decisions to close facilities and cut services, 'but the money's just not there and there's no way to get it.'

The council is to receive the 2010 budget in mid-August but will be adjusting the 2009 spending before then. Even without firm numbers from the state city officials are already dealing with difficult situations. Council members clashed May 27 over use of Cultural Sales Tax Revitalization (STAR) to balance the library budget.

Council members also heard a report from Police Chief John Harrington, who indicated that a hiring freeze means his department is down 42 officers, from 630 to 588. While Harrington said police are "making it work," he admitted that beat officers, traffic enforcement and other police functions have been cut back to keep officers on regular street patrols.

Because the 2009 Minnesota Legislature and Pawlenty couldn't reach agree on a state budget and a wide range of other spending issues, the governor is using his powers of unallotment to keep state spending in balance. Pawlenty hasn't indicated when he'll announce cuts to LGA payments to cities. Cities, led by the League of Minnesota cities, are asking that the decisions be made sooner rather than later and that the cuts be reasonable.

In late May Coleman and Pawlenty engaged in a heated war of words over pending state cuts. Pawlenty said cities should use budget reserves and make cuts to balance spending. Coleman said the governor's cuts would threaten city services.

St. Paul officials anticipated LGA payments of \$62.6 million for 2009 and \$64.1 million for 2010. The payments come twice a year, in July and December. But Pawlenty had to unallot part of the city's 2008 December payment, forcing city officials to use

budget reserves to cover costs. City officials worry that sort of late decisions could have come again.

"Had we not had budget reserves and reserve policy in place we would not have met payroll," Mulholland said of the 2008 unallotment. She pointed out that the city's reserves serve as a cash-flow account, unlike state budget reserves.

Earlier this year city departments unveiled plans for cuts of up to 14 percent. Department heads are being asked to look at their strategic plans and focus on what can be done with fewer resources. Mulholland said she hopes the cuts don't go beyond 14 percent but that is another unknown.

But council members are concerned that some city departments because of the type of funds they operate on, will take larger cuts than others. That would put parks and libraries in the bulls-eye, said Council President Kathy Lantry.

No one mentioned property tax increase at the May 27 session, although some level of increase may be inevitable for 2010. Nor was there much discussion of the federal economic stimulus funds, which some cities have used to bolster capital improvement and public safety budgets. One challenge with the federal money that city officials have noted in the past is that is it short-term funding that would have to be made up or cut from budgets later.

The juggling of 2009 and 2010 budgets at the same time isn't the only change the council will see. The 2010 budget process will be different for other reasons. It will mark the end of the annual St. Paul-Ramsey County-St. Paul Public Schools' 'truth-in-taxation' public hearing, as well as hearings statewide. State legislators dropped the public hearing re-

quirement this session after hearing complaints that the December hearings occurred too late in the local government budget process to effect meaningful changes.

Instead, the council will hold a hearing earlier in the fall. Local units of government

also can readjust property tax levies after the September 9 maximum levy certification date. But that can only be done to make up for budget shortfalls if those shortfalls are state aid cuts made by the governor. That was also adopted as law by the 2009 legislature.

## Surprise for University Academies



Students and staff alike celebrated on Friday, May 30th when UPS presented the University Academies for Boys and Girls at North End Elementary a check for \$4,000.00. The check was presented at the Academic Awards Assembly on Friday as a surprise for both staff and students. UPS and the University Academies for Boys and Girls at North formed a partnership earlier this school year.

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# Rice Street Bridge reconstruction project gets underway after year's delay

By JANE MCCLURE

After a year's delay the Rice Street Bridge reconstruction project gets underway this summer. Area residents and business owners who'd made preparations for several weeks of detours last year now get to put those plans into action.

Motorists began seeing warning signs for the bridge closing the week of June 8, with closing tentatively planned for June 15. A preconstruction meeting was set for June 12. It will mean detours and a truncated Rice Street Parade. The parade typically crosses the bridge and ends at Arlington Senior High School.

This year it will end at Ivy.

The bridge is ¼ mile north of the Rice-Maryland intersection. It crosses the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad tracks. Delays last year in getting railroad approval forced the project to be postponed. But with railroad approval in hand the work can get underway, most likely this month. The project is expected to take about 120 days but there are incentives offered to get the work done more quickly.

During construction the detour will be Arlington to Jackson to Maryland. Signs will be posted and information placed on local government and community



The bridge project start date hasn't been set but will be announced soon. It will mean several weeks of detours and a truncated Rice Street Parade. The parade typically crosses the bridge and ends at Arlington Senior High School. This year it will end at Ivy. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

group Web sites.

Businesses are being urged to distribute maps of the detour

and to remind customers that the work is underway. Both North End Business Association and

District 6 Planning Council are publicizing the project, as are city and county officials. Residents and businesspeople should watch for fliers and other updates. More than 1,500 fliers went out in early June.

Businesses began discussing plans in May, with a session May 28 at Sparc headquarters and another May 20 with Hmong business leaders.

Ramsey County and St. Paul Public Works, along with Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) are working together on the project. Lunda Construction is the lowest of five project bidders. The bid is for \$2.024 million, approximately \$256,000 less than the engineers' estimate.

Bids came in in mid-May. Since then officials have worked to finalize the bids and contracts, and to get the word out to those affected by the project.

"We were very pleased with the bids," said Jim Tolaas of Ramsey County Public Works. "Lunda is a good contractor with a good track record."

The bid amount doesn't reflect incentive pay offered to get the job done quickly. Incentive pay is \$7,000 per day up to a maximum amount of \$210,000.

In 2008 the Rice Street Bridge had an estimated construction cost of \$2.886 million.

City, county and state officials awarded the bid in early June, Tolaas said.

The bridge is more than 50 years old and is at the end of its useful life. While not posing an immediate danger, the bridge is considered deficient and needs to be replaced.

One difficulty was that of reaching agreement with BNSF. The railroad line is very active. During the entire construction period, the railroad will have flag crews on site to make sure construction workers and train engineers are aware of the project and keep the area safe.

Construction last year would have had the bridge reconstruction going on at the same time the Maryland Avenue bridges over I-35E were rebuilt. That worried businesspeople, who questioned why two community access points would be cut off at once. Tolaas said that having the two projects in two successive summers is probably easier for the businesses to take.

Officials are hoping the work can be done quickly. They don't want construction slipping into the late fall or even early winter months. And a delay of a year could be a worst-case scenario if the project got a late start. That rarely happens but when it does it can hurt area businesses.



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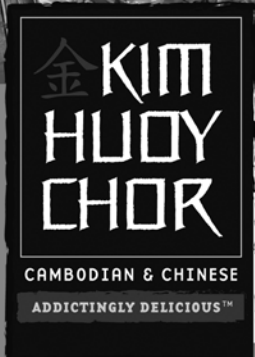
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By JANE MCCLURE

Pleas to fund improvements to the Como Park Outdoor Classroom and not fund the park's replacement pool dominated the May 26 Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) meeting. Supporters of funding for the North End's Trillium/Trout Brook outdoor classroom and Central Corridor improvements also made their case to retain the money preliminarily allocated.

More should be known about those projects by mid-June, when the CIB Committee makes its recommendations. But Committee Chair Pat Sellner notes that group's recommendations are advisory and that Mayor Chris Coleman and the St. Paul City Council have the final say. Those decisions won't be made until year's end.

More than 70 people attended the public hearing. The CIB Committee made its recommendations in May after several months review by citizen task forces, said Sellner. The committee is recommending support for 57 projects in 2010-2011, as well as 40 annual maintenance programs. The committee was to vote on its recommendations June 8, and then send them to Mayor Chris Coleman and the City Council. A final project list will be adopted by year's end as part of the 2010 city budget.

More than 150 projects throughout the city are vying for city dollars. At this point it appears that only a few Monitor area projects will be funded, with several others left unfunded. Among the high-profile projects that didn't make the committee's cut are replacement of Central Team Police Station in the North End (\$14.7 million) and \$614,000 for work at Como's outdoor classroom. Nor did Como Park swimming pool replacement, \$5.2 million, make the committee cut.

More than a dozen Como area residents attended the hearing, some to speak against pool replacement and others to speak for at least some level of funding for the classroom and restoration of the deteriorating Dutch ovens there. The ovens are named in honor of poet Joyce Kilmer, who wrote "Trees."

Parks and Recreation Commissioner Therese Kelly, who co-chaired the pool task force, spoke for project funding. "It was bandaged together for the past 10 years and now it's been demolished," she said. Kelly defended the pool planning process, saying it included many people.

But several Como residents opposed the pool, saying it would bring more traffic to their already overburdened area. Susan Janda, who also served on the pool task force, called the resulting design "flawed." "Let's be realistic about putting more entertainment in Como Park," she said. Other speakers agreed, with one claiming the city was trying to set up another version of the ValleyFair amusement park.

Some spoke for at least partial funding of \$242,000 for the outdoor classroom, to save the oven structures. Volunteers have removed invasive species and worked with area schools to clean up and improve the area. Matt Schmidt and Deb Robinson said that without funding soon, the old Dutch ovens could deteriorate further and even fall down.

Linda Jungwirth of Tri-Area Block Club brought artwork from North End Elementary students in support of Trillium/Trout Brook

## Como's replacement pool doesn't receive support... CIB Committee moves towards funding Como Park Outdoor Classroom



More than a dozen Como area residents attended the May 26 hearing, some to speak against pool replacement and others to speak for at least some level of funding for the classroom and restoration of the deteriorating Dutch ovens there. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

funding. The project is recommended for \$1.178 million. Kids made pictures of what the proposed nature preserve and classroom areas look like now, after a field trip, and what the park could look like.

Jungwirth said one child asked her teacher, "Are we in the woods?" The child had read a story about children who live in woods. Having the classroom would provide a key learning opportunity. "Kids don't get beyond where their bicycles can take them." The project tied for sixth in the rankings.

Another group speaking to retain its funding was the District Council Collaborative, which sup-

ports Central Corridor-related improvements that won't be covered by state or federal dollars. DCC Chair Anne White said that without money for parking and streetscape improvements and connecting sidewalks, the city will miss out on benefit of the benefits of having light rail run down University Avenue.

Three Central Corridor-related projects are recommended for funding. Streetscape improvements tied for sixth overall, with \$500,000 allocated in 2010 and \$1.5 million in 2011. That request was cut by \$500,000.

Completion of connecting north-south sidewalks (\$175,000 in 2011) tied for seventh overall.

That project is also penciled in for an additional 4175,000 in future years.

Off-street parking area improvements, including improving alleys for parking, tied for eighth. That project is recommended for \$175,000 in 2010 and \$175,000 in 2011.

The DCC is an organization of 10 St. Paul district councils and five Minneapolis neighborhood associations around the planned light rail line. White said the projects sought by Public Works cannot be paid for with the \$914 million in federal, state and county funds eyed for the project. She urged the CIB Committee to not cut the projects.

The off-street parking improvements are especially important, she said, to protect many of the small businesses along the proposed light rail line. Businesses will lose most of their on-street parking when the light rail line is built.

Unlike past years there are several unknowns with the city's capital budget. One is the federal economic stimulus package, which could cover some "shovel-ready" projects and in turn free up city money for other CIB candidates. But another wild card is the fact that large projects, including Como Park swimming pool replacement, didn't make the cut.

If the mayor and council choose to fund those, smaller projects could be knocked out.

Yet another factor is pending state funding cuts to the city, which in turn could affect future capital spending.

Here's how area projects fared in the hands of the CIB Committee. The committee not only ranked projects last month, it chose which types of money would be used. The main sources include capital improvement bonds (CIB), federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) or Municipal-State Aid (MSA). Here's how the other projects line up:

\*Emergency home improvement funding. This Sparc project, which would receive \$100,000 over two years, tied for first place.

\*Hamline Avenue Bridge replacement tied for second with two other projects. The project would receive \$900,000 in 2010-2011. The city would seek \$4 million in other funds for the project, which has a \$4.9 million price tag.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



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# Longfellow Elementary, called a St. Paul 'landmark in learning,' slated to close down

By JAN WILLMS

Longfellow Humanities Elementary School has been described as a landmark in learning since 1883. But the 127-year-old school, located at 318 Moore St., may have to shut its doors permanently.

Declining enrollment and budget cuts play a major part in the St. Paul School District's proposal to close Longfellow, Roosevelt and Sheridan elementary schools.

"There are two big changes for St. Paul," said Mark Vandersteen, who has been principal at Longfellow for the past four years. "They're closing three schools and moving to a regional system."

Vandersteen said three regions would be created in St. Paul. "Instead of citywide choice, families would select a school within their region," he said.

Students could be transported to any school within their region as long as it's more than a mile from home.

Although students could still attend schools outside their region, transportation would not be provided by the district. This plan could save the district \$2.2 million.

"It would be a huge change for the district," he said.

Vandersteen said the school has been told that education funding will remain flat, since the legislative session has closed and Gov.

Tim Pawlenty is doing line-item cuts.

"This proposal could take effect at the end of the next school year," Vandersteen said. "The changes would go into effect in 2010-11."

Parents and children would feel the impact of Longfellow's closing, since it has been at its same location since its beginnings as a one-room schoolhouse.

"This is the fourth building," Vandersteen said. It was dedicated in May 1976.

"This was about the time the district adopted citywide busing as part of desegregation laws," Vandersteen said.

higher percentage of low-income students than the district average.

"Eighty-seven per cent of our children participate in the free and reduced-cost lunches," Vandersteen said. He said 85 per cent of the school population is students of color.

"Twenty-five per cent of our kids are proficient in reading and math," Vandersteen added. "We're aware that's not where we are supposed to be."

"Living in poverty is part of the mix of public school education," Vandersteen noted.

"We have a diverse student population, with its challenges and benefits," Vandersteen said.

It's supported by the state and used across the nation. We have had such success with it, the district is looking at making it a model for the whole district to follow. That's one of the contributions we have made."

The program is a proactive systems approach to establishing the behavioral supports and social culture needed for all students in a school to achieve social, emotional, and academic success.

Vandersteen said Longfellow is also working on a State of Minnesota model, providing more early intervention to help students so they may not need Special Ed.

He said the education system usually waits until a student falls behind before intervening; this program works right away to find students who may need help.

Vandersteen said Longfellow, like other public and private schools, has faced a decline in student population. It currently has 271 students.

"The school district has space for 45,000, and houses 39,000," he said. "Longfellow has space for 500 students, and we have 271."

He said the school is influenced by the changing neighborhood.

"When we were doing door-to-door surveys, we found a lot of college housing and a sizable group of retired people. This neighborhood is great, but there are just a few children," Vander-

steen said.

"If we could get more students to fill our seats, we wouldn't be in this predicament."

Vandersteen said it is difficult to tell people about the possible closure.

"People have put lots of heart and soul into this school," he said. "It's disheartening to see this happen."

Vandersteen said there appears to be a leveling off in declining student population.

"Some thought, if given the extra time, we would have an opportunity to rebuild the school population," he said.

The school offers the Core Knowledge curriculum, espoused by E.D. Hirsch.

"Hirsch said that in a civilized nation, there are core pieces of information every citizen should know," Vandersteen said.

Classes are offered in science, music, Spanish, art and Latin.

Longfellow has a staff of 50, which would be spread out across the district when the school closes.

A school board meeting is scheduled for June 15, just for Longfellow. Vandersteen said it will be an opportunity for a last open forum. He said the decision is still in the hands of the school board to vote upon.

"This is a big change that has an impact on the community," Vandersteen said. "Our wish and hope is that it hadn't happened. But I wouldn't wish it on another school, either. We hope the closing year is great for the kids, and a lot of good comes out of it."



Longfellow Humanities Elementary School is currently housed in its fourth building, according to Principal Mark Vandersteen. The school houses children in pre-K through sixth grade. The school is tentatively slated to close as of the end of the coming school year. Above, Vandersteen bids adieu to one of his students before he departs from Longfellow for the day. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

**"We have a diverse student population, with its challenges and benefits."**

- Longfellow Humanities Elementary School Principal Mark Vandersteen

The school currently houses children in pre-K through sixth grade. In 1985, it focused on a Humanities Magnet curriculum.

But along with the other two schools slated for closing, Longfellow has failed to meet both state and district expectations for performance. The schools also have a

He said Longfellow's student community is more reflective of the community at large.

"We have tried several new approaches," Vandersteen said. "We are the first and now the only school in St. Paul that took an interest in the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports system.

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# Gay youth often find themselves homeless, struggling to survive

By JAN WILLMS

When Robyn Strowder was 13, she left her home and was placed in an assessment center to determine if she was suffering from a mental illness. It was not until she was 18 and living at Rezek House, a transitional living facility near Sherburne and Asbury, that she gained the strength to tell her grandmother that she was lesbian.

Homeless for many of her teen years, Strowder is one of many GLBT youths who find themselves without a home, without family support and struggling to survive.

Trying to provide a safe place for youths like Strowder is all part of a day's work for Susan Phillips, director of homeless youth services for Lutheran Social Services (LSS).

LSS provides services through Rezek House; Safe House, offering overnight emergency shelter to single youths 16-20; LifeHaven, offering short-term housing to homeless minor mothers and their children; and Street Program, which sends youth outreach workers into the streets to contact youth at risk.

"I think we have seen a pretty steady stream of homelessness for the last 8-10 years," Phillips said. "At Safe House, we have turned away 800 referrals."

She said that although no program in St. Paul exclusively targets GLBT youth, reports show that a good number of youth assisted fall into that category.

"GLBT youth are overly represented in the homeless population in general," Phillips said. "They have been turned out by their families. There's usually family dysfunction."

"When I was living with my grandmother and aunt, they thought I was bi-polar or something was psychologically wrong with me," Strowder related in a recent conversation.

"I wouldn't show my personality, and I have such a huge personality. I wanted to just be safe, and so I would be quiet."

Strowder said she comes from a family of Caribbean and African American ancestry.

"Being gay is not really accepted in either culture," she said. "It is something that is not talked about."

After spending time in a treatment center, Strowder went to a foster home in Brooklyn Park when she was 15.

"That family had a lesbian daughter they were not comfortable with. They were nice people, but I couldn't come out to a fami-

ly that was having a difficult time accepting its own flesh and blood," Strowder said. After a year, she asked to be moved and went back to live with her aunt.

"My aunt is from Trinidad, where same-sex relationships are definitely not accepted. But she kept wondering what was wrong with me," Strowder said.

It was a difficult period for Strowder. Everyone wondered why she had no interest in boys and only hung around with boyish-appearing girls. "I kept telling my family they were all basketball players," she said.

Her aunt finally asked her if she liked girls, and Strowder told her she did. "She made it very comfortable for me, but told me I could never tell anyone else,"

she said. "No other relatives knew. I felt like I was living in a place where I couldn't be black."

She left her aunt's five days before she turned 18 and went to another homeless transitional space, the Bridges.

"I had no home, nothing. But I felt so happy there because I was in a place where it was okay to be me," Strowder remembered.

After graduating from high school, where no one knew she was homeless, she moved to Rezek House, where she lived two years before striking out on her own. She currently lives in the same Midway area she grew up in.

"Being there gave me space," Strowder said. "I felt like I had a roof over my head as long as I didn't mess up."

It was also here that she met her partner, Alexis Collins, and where she gained the strength and resolve to finally tell her grandmother the truth.

Strowder said her grandmother and other family members have finally accepted her, as much as they can.

"My grandma is nearly 70 and was involved in the civil rights movement," Strowder said. "I told her that she marched because she couldn't help that she was black—she should understand. My life from 13 to 18 sucked; now that I'm 21, my family knows. But Alexis and I still can't hold hands around the Caribbean people."

Strowder said a lot of GLBT youth come out, and their parents don't accept it.

"They either get discriminated against or they're scared to talk about it," she said.

"You feel like you're all by yourself, and when you're home-

less on top of it, it feels worse."

"I will probably be in my grave before it is wholly acceptable to be gay," Strowder said. "It's sad that I'm 21 and feel this way."

Although a Wilder Foundation Study completed every three years shows Minnesota's GLBT youth are only about nine per cent of the homeless population, Alex Nelson of Minneapolis agrees with Phillips that numbers are higher.

"National statistics indicate GLBT youth are 20 to 40 per cent of the homeless population," he said. Nelson has worked with homeless youth for over 10 years and currently does a lot of contracting work on providing services for GLBT youth.

"I think the difference in the numbers between GLBT homeless youth nationally and in Minnesota is on how the survey is done, and who is doing it," he said. He

said the Wilder study is done within a 24-hour period by volunteers reading off survey questions. He said he was not sure how much GLBT youth might respond to such a survey.

For Strowder, who is one of the statistics in the survey, the numbers do not matter as much as the resources that are out there.

Those resources may be strengthened by a couple of bills that were recently passed in the legislature.

Kirsten Anderson-Stembridge, director of advocacy for LSS, said that the Youth Moving Forward successfully advanced its 2009 legislative agenda including permanent funding for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act to help fund street outreach, drop-in centers, emergency shelters and transitional housing for homeless youth. The legislature funded the act at \$218,000 in the current biennium

and \$238,000 for future biennia.

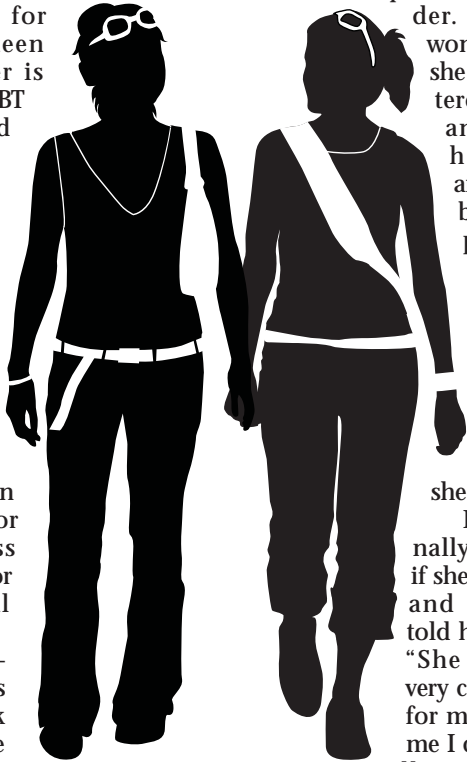
"It's a sum far short of meeting the need, but an indication of the support legislators seek to provide to this important and vulnerable population," Anderson-Stembridge said.

According to Anderson-Stembridge, the coalition of homeless youth and out of home placement providers also secured passage of policy that allows youth to return to the county for services up to the age of 21.

"This is helping to end homelessness for youth who age out of our foster care system," Anderson-Stembridge added.

Youth who age out of care at the age of 18 will also receive health coverage through Minnesota Care up to the age of 21.

Anderson-Stembridge said a federal stimulus of \$2.5 million was set aside for homeless youth services in greater Minnesota.



## Picnic in the park? Remember to recycle



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# In Our Community

## 'Healthy Moves' for seniors

"Healthy Moves," a no-cost, home based, physical activity program is now available for seniors through The Hamline Midway Block Nurse Program. The program is a three month opportunity and is specifically designed to help adults age 62+ build strength, increase flexibility and reduce the risk of falls. One-on-one assistance for seniors in their homes will be conducted by staff who have been trained through the Wilder Foundation. If you or someone you know are interested in learning more, please contact Monica at Hamline Midway Elders 651-209-6542.

## Curator presents at History Series

Please join the Hamline Midway History Corp as they welcome Minnesota Historical Society Exhibit Curator Brian Horrigan on Thursday, June 25, 7-8:30 p.m., at the Hamline Midway Library, Lower Level, 1558 W. Minnehaha Avenue, as he talks about his efforts to bring the Greatest Generation to life via the new exhibit at the Minnesota History Center. Brian Horrigan will offer a slide show presentation with information about the exhibit and the process of collection oral histories and artifacts from Minnesotans for this exhibit. Brian Horrigan will also help inspire audience members to collect and share their Greatest Generation stories—their own or those of their family members. Members of all generations welcome to this event!

For more information about the Hamline Midway History Corps check out our website [www.HamlineMidwayHistory.org](http://www.HamlineMidwayHistory.org)

Also check out our neighborhood page on Placeography [http://www.placeography.org/index.php/Hamline-Midway\\_Saint\\_Paul\\_Minnesota](http://www.placeography.org/index.php/Hamline-Midway_Saint_Paul_Minnesota)

## June Activities at Rice Street Branch Library

The Rice Street Branch Library has many fun and exciting programs planned this summer. Please stop in and join us!

Magician Norm Barnhart will be performing on Tuesday, June 16, Circus Manduhai will visit on Tuesday, June 23, and the Wonderweavers will tell stories on Tuesday, June 30. All programs begin at 10:30 a.m. and are part of the St. Paul Public Library's Summer Reading Program.

## City debuts parking Shuttle for Como Park

Calling a new leopard-print shuttle van a great addition to one of Minnesota's most popular attractions, Mayor Chris Coleman along with city councilmembers, parks officials, and supporters unveiled the free Como Shuttle that will begin operating at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory on Memorial Day weekend.

The shuttle service will expand parking options for the nearly 2 million annual visitors to the zoo, conservatory and children's amusement park. The shuttle will pick families up at parking lots at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds and the Saint Paul Public School District Service Facility both off of Como Avenue and drop them off at the Visitor's Center at the zoo and conservatory. The buses will run 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. every weekend through September with the exception of Independence Day weekend.

The new free service will ease traffic congestion in and around the park, improve neighborhood safety and air quality by reducing vehicle emissions, and reduce the frustration of circling the parking lot in hopes of nabbing one of the rare open parking spots. In the summer of 2008, a survey was conducted and found that out of the 92 percent of visitors who drive to Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, 68 percent would likely utilize the shuttle bus service.

"The free Como Shuttle is a great solution for both visitors to Como Park Zoo and Conservatory and neighbors surround the popular attraction. Not only will there be ample parking in nearby lots, but the shuttle will drop visitors off close to the entrance," Mayor Coleman said. "Como is one of Minnesota's great attractions for families across the region, and now the shuttle will make the experience more enjoyable by reducing the stress and hassle of finding a parking spot."

The city and Hogle Bus Company officials leveraged a \$1.6 million federal grant with the help of some of Minnesota's Congressional delegation to purchase the three low-emission diesel shuttle buses. Along with support of rented shuttle buses, they will be in continuous operation during the weekends. The buses are wheelchair and stroller accessible.

For more information on Como Park Zoo and Conservatory and the free Como Shuttle, including the location of the new parking lots, visit the park's website at [www.comozooconservatory.org/](http://www.comozooconservatory.org/).



Senior Summer Social Time will be offer Scrabble on Thursday, June 18 and the movie National Treasure on Thursday June 25. Both activities begin at 1 p.m. For more information or to register, please call Sandy at 651-293-8733. This group is offered in partnership with the Community Education Senior Program.

The North End Book Club will be discussing Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel Garcia Marquez on Monday, June 22, from 12:45-2:30 p.m. For more information or to register, please call Sandy at 651-293-8733. This group is also offered in partnership with the Community Education Senior Program.

Family story times will be offered on Fridays from 10:30-11 a.m. Join Rice Street's storytelling experts for stories, finger plays, rhymes, and songs. All ages welcome.

Teen Time will be offered Wednesdays from 3:30-5 p.m. Join us for a rotating roster of activities each Wednesday! Book clubs, board games, video games, & crafts are just a few of the activities teens can do.

The Runescape Club will meet on Thursdays from 3:30-5 p.m. Each week it's nothin' but Runescape. Bring your friends!

Free Saturday Movie Matinees will be shown every Saturday at 2 p.m. Please stop in or call the library at 651-558-2223 to

learn which movie will be shown each week.

The Saturday Sewing Circle will meet 10-11:30 a.m. on Saturdays. Bring your knitting, crocheting, embroidery or mending projects. Learn techniques and share tips with others.

Computer classes are offered on Tuesday and Friday mornings from 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. For more information or to register, please call Sandy at 651-293-8733. Classes are offered in partnership with the Community Education Senior Program.

The Rice Street Library is located at 1011 Rice Street between Lawson and Hatch. Hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 12:30-9 p.m.; Tuesday 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; and Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. The library will be closed July 3, 4 & 5 in celebration of Independence Day.

## Day Camp runs June 22-26

Children 6-12 years of age are invited to the free DAY CAMP 4 KIDS June 22- 26 (Monday through Friday) at Central Lutheran School (CLS), 775 Lexington Ave. N. The camp includes group activities, crafts, Bible stories, music and games all led by experienced youth workers. Free breakfast and lunch will be served.

Supervised bus transportation to CLS is provided from both Jehovah Lutheran Church on the corner of 1566 Thomas and Snelling and St. Stephanus Lutheran Church on the corner of 739 Lafond and Grotto. Campers may also come directly to CLS. The program runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. except for Friday when the classes end at noon. A program for parents to attend will be Thursday afternoon.

## Free Ice Cream Social

Registration for DAY CAMP 4 KIDS will be held June 21 at 7 p.m. in conjunction with a free ice cream social and fellowship event at three sites: Central Lutheran School, Jehovah Lutheran Church and St. Stephanus Lutheran Church. Parents are encouraged to enjoy the ice cream evening with their children, register for the camp and learn more details. Questions may be answered by contacting the LINC Twin Cities office, which is coordinating the event in conjunction with CLS and the two neighborhood churches, at [info@lincwincities.org](mailto:info@lincwincities.org) or 651-270-4600. Or, call Central Lutheran School at 651-645-8649, Jehovah Lutheran Church at 651-644-1421 or St. Stephanus Lutheran Church at 651-228-1486. All neighborhood folks are

cordially invited to the ice cream social.

## Hamline Midway Yard Sale June 26

Host a sale in conjunction with other neighbors! Friday, June 26 (9 a.m.-6 p.m.), and Saturday, June 27 (9 a.m.-3 p.m.) Host the sale at your house, place your own ad in the Pioneer Press or on Craigslist, put up your own signs at high traffic intersections, and watch for crowds to appear as multiple neighbors have yard sales at the same time. Organize your block for the benefit of strength in numbers! Great for sellers and for shoppers!

## Community Building session June 17

District 6 will be hosting a Block Club orientation informational session on Wednesday, June 17th at 1021 Marion Street beginning at 6:30 p.m. This session open to all who want to learn about block clubs and get crime prevention tips. You do not have to be a block club member or leader to attend! We hope current block clubs will attend to give advice and network!

## Open the Door to your Dream Home

The first drop in session concerning what to do if you wish to purchase a home will be on Thursday June 18th from 6 to 7 p.m. at the District 6 Planning Council offices located at 213 Front Avenue. Professionals will be on hand to advise you. This is free and confidential. Call District 6 at 651-488-4485 to reserve a spot or for more information.

## Hiring home health care

"How & When to Hire Home Health Care" will be the topic at a luncheon for seniors on June 9 beginning at 11:30 at 1415 Englewood Avenue (lower level, Hamline Methodist Church). Carol Houghtby from BrightStar will address the basics as someone who has experienced this topic first hand. Call the office of Hamline Midway Elders 651-209-6542 to make reservations or request free transportation. A freewill donation is asked for the meal. If you are a senior, caregiver or neighbor and would like information about our services or volunteer opportunities, visit [www.blocknurse.org](http://www.blocknurse.org)

# Do the Write Thing!

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

# Arts-based teen center created at Hancock Rec Center

By DEBORAH BROTZ

If Mayor Chris Coleman had his way, St. Paul would be the best city in America for children to grow up in. Back in 2006, Coleman started the Saint Paul Second Shift Youth Commission to extend learning beyond the school day. Midway residents will be pleased to hear one of the first projects targeted is to create an arts-based teen center at Hancock Rec Center, 1610 Hubbard Ave., through the Youth-Friendly Spaces & Places Committee.

Currently, the St. Paul Youth Commission is looking for young people, in grades seven to 12, to help transform Hancock Rec into a teen-designated, teen-run art center called The Canvas. They are going to be making the space more youth friendly, designing and painting a mural, setting up classes and workshops, and getting the word out to St. Paul youth.

Brainstorming design sessions for The Canvas inside mu-

ral will be held on Wednesday, June 3 and 10, from 6 p.m.- 8 p.m. The painting sessions will be held on Wednesday, June 24, July 1, and July 8, from 4 p.m.-6:30 p.m.

Two artists, Aaron Kupcho and Eli Esters, from Juxtaposition Arts, a non-profit youth-focused visual arts organization in North Minneapolis, will be working with the youth to create the murals.

The idea for The Canvas came from the Saint Paul Second Shift Youth Commission 2007-2008 group.

"Rec centers in St. Paul cater to sports activities," said Kim Christoffel, organizer and coordinator for The Canvas. "Arts are quite limited. They wanted to increase the arts focus in Parks and Recreation. Second, they feel what's important is to have more youth use rec centers. They could do this by creating more youth

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



The Saint Paul Second Shift Youth Commission is looking for young people, in grades seven to 12, to help transform Hancock Rec into a teen-designated, teen-run art center called The Canvas. They are going to be making the space more youth friendly, designing and painting a mural, setting up classes and workshops, and getting the word out to St. Paul youth. Brainstorming design sessions for The Canvas inside murals will be held on Wednesday, June 10. The painting sessions will be held on Wednesday, June 24, July 1, and July 8, from 4 p.m.-6:30 p.m. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

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This year's festival is July 23rd to July 25th, so the special section comes out two weeks before in perfect time to allow neighbors to "Save the Date."  
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# Hamline Midway Library's 101 year history

By ANNE LEVIN and KRISTA FINSTAD HANSON

Hamline Midway History Corps

The Hamline Midway branch of the St. Paul Public Library celebrated 100 years in 2008. Fortunately, the history of the Hamline Branch Library and the "Hamline People" has been preserved in scrapbooks with newspaper articles, photos, and documents saved by previous library supporters, to tell the story of the dedicated neighbors who strongly believed their community needed a public library.

The village of Hamline formed around Hamline University which moved "midway" between St. Paul and Minneapolis in 1880 from their first location in Red Wing. Although the area was annexed by the city of St. Paul in 1885, it was known simply as "Hamline" for many years.

In 1907 members of the Hamline Mothers' Club began to investigate the possibility of a library in the neighborhood. And in May of 1908 Mrs. Nellie Hall agreed to start a lending library in her millinery shop at 720 N. Snelling (now Lloyd's Pharmacy). The neighbors paid subscriptions to fund the library and to pay Mrs. Hall \$10 a month salary to be the librarian. Later library locations included 719 N. Snelling (1912) and



The Hamline Midway branch of the St. Paul Public Library recently celebrated 100 years in 2008.

the Masonic Hall at 1560 Capitol (now Englewood) Avenue in 1914.

In March 1918 an official relationship with the St. Paul Public Library system was established, and in September of 1919 space was rented at 694 North Snelling (now Kum Gun Sang restaurant) for the library. The storefront library was actively used and the community's needs quickly outgrew the space.

The Hamline neighbors realized they needed to help the city along in the process of building

them a "real library." A subscription fund began and raised \$2,910 from neighborhood residents and businesses, with many giving between \$10 and \$50. The Midway Commercial Club brokered the purchase of land on behalf of the neighbors, and the land was deeded to the city on December 16, 1920 for the building of a library. The committee purchased lots 8, 9 & 10 in Block 3 of the Hamline Syndicate addition on Minnehaha Avenue just east of Snelling.

As the land sat unused, from

1922 and on there were countless letters written to the city council and the library board asking them why they weren't moving faster on the process to build Hamline their library. An idea was brought up among the library advocates of the possibility of using money from the Henry Hale estate to build their branch library. Henry Hale was a lawyer and judge who died in St. Paul on December 7, 1890. The funds from his estate went to his surviving wife and children, with a clause that excess funds go towards building a library and providing for a medicine dispensary in the city of St. Paul.

A March 25, 1926 St. Paul Daily News article details the request for the money to be used from the Hale estate. This process eventually became a lawsuit to be able to use the estate money for the building of the library. In 1929, the suit was settled with money from the estate going to the city of St. Paul.

On September 17, 1929 the St. Paul City Council voted to accept the money, approximately \$45,000, from the Hale estate and use it to build two libraries – the Merriam Park branch and the Hamline branch, with both to be known as Henry Hale Memorial Libraries. Looking forward to the new building, the September 1929

issue of "The Library Beacon" shows an architectural rendering of the exterior of the Hamline branch library. It is difficult to identify exactly the architect of the new branch — however, it is likely that it was the lead City Architect Frank X. Tewes (who died in October of 1929 and was replaced by James C. Niemeyer), and Carl Buetow is listed as the lead draftsman on the plans.

Ground was broken for the Hamline branch library on March 6, 1930, and the new library building first opened in September of 1930. A grand opening was held on October 9, 1930 and historic photographs show community members celebrating on the lawn in front of the library. Hamline neighbors then raised another \$800 to purchase furnishings for their library. The people of Hamline continued to play an active role as members of the Hamline Branch Library Council and as eager users of the library. The new building quickly became a focal point and gathering place for the neighborhood.

Current Hamline Midway library patrons couldn't agree more and will continue to advocate for keeping open a neighborhood library that so many people worked so hard to establish and maintain over the past 100 years.

## Parking issue

Continued from page 4

commuters. That's especially true for lots near station areas, including Midway SuperTarget, Midway Marketplace, Midway Center and Griggs-Midway Building.

Yet many small businesses have no parking at all, other than what is on the street. Deliveries are often made off of University.

Even when there are time restrictions posted or meters, parking enforcement by the city isn't consistent, said Blakely. Currently enforcement of time restrictions in neighborhoods occurs on a complaint basis. Funding to pay for solutions ranging from shared parking agreements to physical improvements of lots is another complication.

Blakely said the intent was to take a look at the total issue, which includes neighborhoods north and south of University, as well as the immediate business strip.

The study revealed 11 critical areas that need extra help with business parking needs. Soler said a number of factors tipped an area into the critical category, such as how buildings are placed in an area, the types of businesses and customer turnover, and even the terrain of a block.

The critical areas are:

- North side of University, Galtier to Western.
- North side of University, Western to Arundel.
- South side of University, Arundel to MacKubin.
- North side of University, Kent to St. Albans.
- South side of University, Grotto to Victoria.
- North side of University, Lexington to Dunlap.
- North side of University, Albert to Pascal.
- North side of University, Simpson to Fry.
- North side of University, Fry to Aldine.
- North Side of University, Transfer Road to Vandalia.
- North and south sides of University, Raymond to Highway 280.

Potential parking problems and solutions are outlined for each area. The report describes the long-term and short-term, parking needs for each area, what parking will be lost and what parking will still remain. For some areas, it is recommended that off-street parking be shared or made more accessible. For others, use of side streets is recommended, Alley parking is even proposed in some areas.

The communication issue is one that the parking team encountered in every area. Businesses may be neighbors but owners don't speak to each other, said Soler. The parking team has tried to bring groups together in the areas and will do that again at the workshops.

There are also solutions that can be implemented along the entire length of University. There are no plans to create large park and ride lots, which some business owners question. They said there will be park and ride commuter parking that needs to be addressed.

"Everybody wants there to be a magic bullet," said Blakely. But that isn't the case. He said that parking needs to be thought of as a system and that many measures need to be taken to mitigate the impacts.

Soler notes there are about 560 parking spaces on north-south streets, one block north and south of University. There are also more than 25,000 parking spots in private lots along the street. Some of those off-street spots are heavily used, he said, while others often sit empty.

But one barrier to sharing lots is the city's own zoning and licensing regulations, which require set amounts of parking for businesses.

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**corner**

# Como Elementary Awarded Superintendent's Banner for Continuous Improvement Award

For an unprecedented tenth year in a row, Como Park Elementary has won the prestigious "Superintendent's Continuous School Improvement Award." Como Park is the only school in St. Paul to receive the award in all 10 years that it has been presented. The award is judged on results from the yearly MCA tests and student attendance. Como has demonstrated its commitment to academic excellence.

Over the last decade, Como Park Elementary has been greatly

enriched by the children of St. Paul's immigrant population and, as a result, today, celebrates the diversity of its student body. As its Principal, Christine Vang has a unique understanding of both the challenges and the achievements of Como's students. Born in Laos, Mrs. Vang immigrated to Minnesota when she was in second grade. Following college, she began a career in St. Paul Public Schools as a teacher at Hancock-Hamline Elementary. She also acted as a Program Coordinator

for ALC Elementary. Here administrative experience was gained at Humboldt Junior High School and Phalen Lake Elementary.

Como Park's success is a tribute to its exceptional staff. The majority of teachers hold advanced degrees and continue to study their craft. As they pursue excellence in their own profession, their actions model for their students what it means to be a lifelong learner. Congratulations to Como Park Elementary on working together to succeed.

# Hancock Center

Continued from page 11

friendly spaces and places. Third, if there are more youth friendly spaces, it would decrease youth violence and youth getting into trouble."

As a joint project of St. Paul Parks and Recreation and the mayor's Second Shift Initiative, The Canvas will offer art classes and workshops. A joint grant with Hamline Midway Coalition from the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) at the U of M will help pay teachers who teach classes.

"There will also be open studio time," said Christoffel. "Young people will have a safe place to go. They can go to The Canvas to work on painting, ceramics, or dance alone or with friends. There will also be events, discussions, musical experiences, and non-arts related things of interest to young people in St. Paul."

Brady Lorenzen, 16, who is a freshman at Central High School, has just completed his first year as a youth commissioner.

"I wanted to be a youth commissioner because I thought it would be a good opportunity to develop leadership skills and have a say in what goes on in the community," he said.

Lorenzen feels The Canvas is needed because he knows a lot of teens who are into arts in St. Paul.

"They may not be sure what kind of art they're into," he said. "They are not sure they know where to go with their career. I

think it's good that kids around St. Paul can find out if they really like doing this project or this class."

Lorenzen hopes being a youth commissioner will benefit him.

"I'm hoping to become better at public speaking and to gain leadership skills," he said.

Grace Manz, 16, who is a junior at Hill-Murray High School, was part of the group who came up with the idea for The Canvas last year.

"It will be created by teenagers," she said. "A lot of things fall when adults plan things for teenagers. People who are going to be using it will be involved in creating it."

Manz feels she has gained a lot of experience being a youth commissioner.

"A lot of times you join an organization and it's not that youth led," she said. "The structure is already set up. It's totally up to us what we want to focus on. It's empowering."

Manz feels St. Paul needs more arts.

"I hope the community really gets involved and enjoys it," she said. "I hope more people go in and see what opportunity exists. I hope it's a place where teens want to go and be a part of it."

Renee Kargleder, 18, a senior at Highland Senior High School, played a leadership role in The Canvas project for the last two years.

Starting with the Youth Commission in 2007, Kargleder looked to her own Summit-University neighborhood to help develop committees for things that created the greatest problems for youth.

"We created an arts-based teen center to prevent youth violence," she said.

The Canvas is geared toward an underserved population.

"It's focused on a whole group of people who play on guitar or like the spoken word," said Kargleder. "It's going to make people try different things."

Kargleder's interest in bringing The Canvas to life stems from her own life experience.

"I've seen a lot of friends go into gang violence," she said. "There are marvelous artists who don't have any place to do it. They go to the side of a building and tag."

As a youth commissioner, Kargleder has benefitted from her experience working with adults and people of authority.

"I'm more confident with myself and settings where I would be accountable for something," she said. "It has taught me to step up and lead if I see something wrong."

Christoffel hopes many teens get involved in creating The Canvas this summer and looks forward to its grand opening in the fall.

"We hope it will be successful, will continue to grow, and be a model for other centers both in St. Paul and other parts of the country," she said. "We hope it will be a great experience for youth taking a class, working on their own art, or participating in discussions about issues or events. It will increase leadership and give them a sense of pride making a positive difference in their community and helping other young people."

For information, call Kim Christoffel, 651-266-6426.

# Outdoor classroom

Continued from page 7

The bridge is deteriorating and recently had weight limits posted.

\*Como Park play area improvements also tied for second and are recommended for \$313,000.

\*Frogtown Flexible Housing Fund tied for fifth, and would receive \$300,000.

\*Sparc's property acquisition and rehab fund, at \$200,000, tied for sixth.

\*Frogtown facelift, a housing improvement program, tied for ninth and is recommended for \$400,000.

\*Sparc's North End and Hamline-Midway home improvement grant program, for \$300,000, tied for 10th.

\*Part of the Lexington Parkway bike trail and bridge improvement fund is recommended for \$500,000 of its \$1.57 million budget. The project tied for 11th.

\*A Frogtown-North End project, capitol backyard business improvement fund, tied for 12th and is recommended for \$400,000.

\*Raymond Avenue traffic calming between university and Hampden is recommended for \$164,000 and tied for 12th.

\*Bicycle lanes and other bike-related improvements on Prior Avenue in Merriam Park and Hamline-Midway tied for 14th and are recommended for \$53,000 in 2011.

\*Preliminary design of improvements to Merriam Park tied for 15th, with \$64,000 dollars penciled in 2010.

\*Part of the controversial Pierce Butler Route extension project ranked 29th and is recommended for \$1.94 million.

Projects not recommended include Midway Stadium improvements, Marshall Avenue median work in Merriam Park, off-leash dog parks, installation of shotspotter technology, Hampden Park improvements, Hamline Avenue reconstruction between university and Minnehaha, Snelling Avenue "green streets" traffic calming, Midway Stadium improvements and McMurray Field road and ball field improvements and restoration of the historic streetcar bridge in Como Park.

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# Jewelry

Continued from page 1

building bridges for soldiers to cross. He survived the war, but was shell-shocked.

"Any noise or loud bang, he would hide in the closet," Clausen said. "He used to sit in the chair by the window and cry when I went off to work, because he had never wanted me to have to work. But I had to then."

She spent 17 years working as a machine operator for Kaplan Paper Box. When her husband died in 1974, the necklace he had given her became even more special.

In spite of being a crime victim, Clausen has not even considered leaving Rice Street.

"I have never been afraid on Rice Street," she said. "It has been good to me. Rice Street belongs to me."

Life for Clausen has not always been easy. She said her mother gave her away when she was six months old, and her grandmother raised her. She was also physically abused by an aunt and still has a lump on her head from that early time in her life.

She had a daughter who was stillborn.

"I've had cancer, and I've been paralyzed. I have heart trouble, but I won't let that get to me. I could go out and run a race if I had to," Clausen said.

"People ask me how I get up the stairs, and I tell them I just walk. Lots of people try to help me, but I don't want to be helped. I want to make it on my own."

Clausen's independent attitude, however, does not prevent her from making friends with the people along Rice Street.

When she first moved to her apartment, it was owned by Dr.

Peter Bilge. A dentist's office was at the end of the second-story hall, and the surrounding rooms were doctor's offices. The building was once a Big Wheel and then Checker auto parts store. Now it houses Tiger Supermarket, which offers Asian foods.

"The Asian people are wonderful to me," Clausen said. She said they carry her groceries up if she needs any help, and they are both her landlord and neighbors. They call her mother.

Clausen said she doesn't really remember when she became so active in the Rice Street community.

"A bunch of us women used to get together, and we started going to meetings," she said. Clausen also has adopted a bus stop near her building, which she keeps clean. "I adopted my first one in 1969," she said.

She still gets picked up every second Monday and attends a police-community meeting.

"There used to be meetings held across from the Coffee Cup," she said, "That's where I first met Tom Smith." Smith is the assistant chief of police and calls Clausen his second mother. Clausen also called Sgt. Matt Toupal, another police officer, a very dear person. They are the two officers who returned her necklace to her.

The bright afternoon sunshine continues to illuminate Clausen's apartment. Princess prances around, and Marnie, her bird, starts to chirp. On the living room walls are numerous proclamations and awards honoring Clausen for her community service.

For Clausen, Rice Street has been home for 70 years and continues to be.

"I don't want to move off Rice Street until God takes me," she said.



For Vivian Clausen, Rice Street has been home for 70 years and continues to be. (Photo by Liberty Willms)

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Monitor Want Ads are now \$1 per word with a \$10 minimum. Send your remittance along with your ad to Monitor Classifieds, Iris Park Place, 1885 University Avenue, Ste. #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. Classifieds must be prepaid via cash, check, or credit card. Classified ads can be e-mailed to denisw@aplacetoremember.com. Want ads must be in the Monitor before June 29 for the July 9 issue. Call 651-645-7045 for more information. Your classified ad will also be automatically placed on the Monitor's website at [www.MonitorSaintPaul.com](http://www.MonitorSaintPaul.com)

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Time: 1 p.m.

Location: Oak Glen Country Club, Stillwater

Contact: Dana Johnson at 651-523-2754 or djohnson@hamline.edu

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