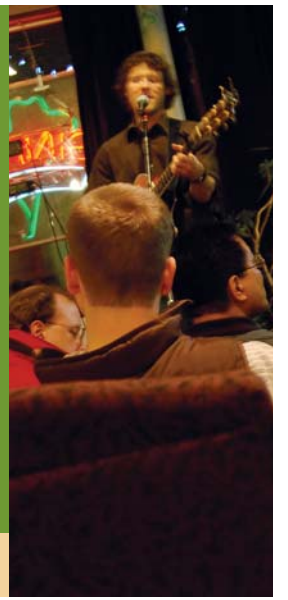


# monitor

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



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## Neighborhood rallies to save Hamline Midway Library

Neighbors at a March 4 meeting with Mayor Chris Coleman expressed concern that he said he would not consider an alternative of spreading cuts across the entire library system rather than eliminating Hamline Midway Library. Above Hamline Midway Library supporter Carrie Pomeroy and seven-year-old Sylvie Chaput talk to Coleman about their concerns. (Photo by Denis Jeong Plaster)

**By JAN WILLMS**

The possibility of closing the Hamline Midway Public Library has set off a local uprising. Budget cuts are threatening many institutions of St. Paul, but nothing has set off alarm bells like the foreshadowed shutting down of the branch library at 1558 West Minnehaha Avenue.

The campaign to save Hamline Midway Library has taken many forms. Petitions, a Facebook website and blog, a YouTube video and countless letters have all been a part of it. It has been a campaign that has touched library users both young and old.

Sylvie Chaput, age 7, was concerned about Hamline and all the other neighborhood libraries even before word was out about the potential closure.

Chaput, a member of the Daisy Scouts Troop # 53505, was at a Girl Scout meeting at her school, Highland Park Elementary.

She asked me, "Mom, how can I change the world?" recalled her mom, Karen Chaput. She said her daughter has been going to the Hamline Midway Library since she was a toddler, and part of the reason the family bought their house in 1992 is that it was so close to the library.

Sylvie Chaput came up with a petition asking that all the neighborhood libraries be saved. "I asked a lot of people to

sign the petition," she said. She spent a day going to each classroom in Highland Park, and she collected 280 signatures.

The petition was presented to Mayor Chris Coleman at a March 4 meeting at City Hall by Sylvie, her mom, and a small group of other neighbors from

the Hamline Midway community. Neighbors present reported that Mayor Coleman said he did not favor the option of making unilateral cuts to all of St. Paul's libraries, rather than closing one branch. Given the Mayor's position, Hamline-Midway residents are fearful that the library's fate is

sealed.

This is not the first time that Hamline Midway Library's future has been threatened. Julie GebbenGreen initially got involved in trying to save the library more than two years ago.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

*Fate of city services revealed in April...*

## City Council to act on painful budget cuts

**By JANE MCCLURE**

The fate of Hamline-Midway Branch Library, the Griggs, Sylvan, Front and South St. Anthony recreation centers, cops, firefighters, street lights, snow plowing and a host of other city services will be known in April. That is when the St. Paul City Council is expected to act on what could be the most painful city budget cuts in recent memory.

Hundreds of St. Paul citizens have already weighed in on the impact of \$30 million in proposed budget cuts, or about 14 percent of each St. Paul city department's spending. Mayor Chris Coleman hosted two budget meetings in February; Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark discussed budget issues and ideas with about 80 citizens March 3. The public gets another chance to speak out at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 18 at City Hall, before the full City Council.

Coleman is to announce his proposed budget cuts March 11. The City Council will then act in April after hearing from the public again.

Although the proposed closing of Hamline-Midway Branch Library has been a flashpoint for area residents, the other cuts are also being scrutinized. One proposal not part of the package, but announced late last month, is that the city's dis-

trict councils also could take up to 14 percent in budget cuts. Most area councils see that as meaningful reductions in staff hours and services.

Coleman said there are no easy or good choices. "Folks, this is as challenging as it has ever been in any of our lifetimes."

In area neighborhoods, much of the focus is on loss of facilities and services. Questions are being raised about closing or leasing out recreation centers. In the North End, Ward Five Council Member Lee Helgen said his office is looking at ways to strengthen the remaining Rice Recreation Center and revitalize its booster club, in light of proposals to close Front and Sylvan. He and community members have also discussed what the city could do to make up for lost facilities. One idea that has been raised is that of tearing down Sylvan's recreation center and replacing it with a new outdoor park feature, such as an improved basketball court or water splash pad.

Stark said the idea of leasing out recreation centers to non-profits needs to be looked at more carefully. While that may have worked in some neighborhoods, it has raised complaints about

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



# monitor

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## Monitor in a Minute

### City suspends restaurant licenses

Call it a sign of tough times – two area restaurants have had their business licenses suspended by the St. Paul City Council, after not paying license fees. During the past month the council suspended licenses for Rice Street mainstay Tin Cup's Place at Rice and Maryland, and for Dara Thai, which is located in the Minnehaha Mall.

Tin Cup's, which has been on Rice Street for more than 50 years, failed to pay its 2009 restaurant fees. A sign posted on the business's front door said the restaurant is closed until further notice. Tin Cup's, which derives its name from its original owner's nickname, is known for its fried chicken, Lenten fish fries and polka music. District 6 Planning Council's Land Use Task Force was notified last month of the suspension. It would be the third Rice Street bar/restaurant to close in the past few years.

Dara Thai had its licenses suspended after a check written to the city bounced. Dara Thai has had a long history of conflict with neighbors and city officials over noise and patron behavior issues. The business has had a number of conditions placed on its business licenses because of past issues.

When a business's licenses are suspended, the city does allow the license fees to be paid and the business to reopen. That may be done by the license holder or by a new business owner. But the city could impose additional conditions to make sure license fees are paid in the future.

### Como Pool replacement discussed

Plans to replace the Como Park swimming pool are the topic of a community open house and design workshop this month. The open house is 5-7 p.m. Wednesday, March 18 and Thursday, March 19 at the Como Park Visitors Center.

A design team from USAquatics will host design workshops both days, starting at 9 a.m. March 18 and 10 a.m. March 19. The public can observe the design workshops and can comment on the plans and provide feedback during the evening hours.

The pool will not be open this year due to its age and deteriorated condition. A community task force, city staff and USAquatics consultants have discussed ideas for the pool for several weeks. Other ideas discussed have included tennis court relocation, parking and traffic changes and the future design and features of the pool itself. Last month St. Paul parks and recreation shelved a proposal to redesign the pool as a natural pool, using European technology. Plans used in Europe had been explored by were set aside due to concerns about costs and regulation.

The task force hopes to make its recommendations to the city in May. Replacement pool costs have been estimated at \$7 million, although that number could change.

### Bike lanes approved for Como, Marshall

New bike lanes for sections of Como Avenue and Marshall Avenue have won approval from the St. Paul City Council. The Como bike lanes between Raymond Avenue and the west city limits

won City Council approval Feb. 18. That project has an estimated cost of \$418,800.

But the council tabled approval of bike lanes on Marshall Avenue between Cretin Avenue and Mississippi River Boulevard until Feb. 25. The council delayed action on that project until it could discuss concerns about a sidewalk with the town and Country Club, which would have a sidewalk placed along its street frontage. The golf and country club objected to the sidewalk, saying it would add an assessment and ongoing maintenance costs for a feature its members wouldn't use. Club officials were also concerned about potential impacts to their trees, as well as the loss and replacement of boulevard trees to make way for the sidewalk.

Town and Country does support the idea of extending the bicycle lanes to the west.

Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark said he would work with country club officials to see if a way could be found to help cover the sidewalk installation costs. There is currently a dirt path along the north side of Marshall west of Cretin. There are fruit trees in the boulevard but their low-hanging branches are an obstacle for pedestrians.

The Marshall project has a cost of \$671,300. Both projects are paid for through a federal non-motorized transportation grant.

### City drops tag citations

Residents of the Hamline-Midway neighborhood whose vehicles were illegally tagged and in some cases towed during the first snow emergency of February caught a break from the city of St. Paul. The city dropped the tag citation and fine and will reimburse those affected for their tow and impound charges during the Feb. 21-22 snow emergency.

St. Paul declares a snow

emergency after three or ore inches of snow falls, or after snow accumulates over a period of several days. When St. Paul declares a snow emergency, plowing begins at 9 p.m. on snow emergency and posted night plow routes. At 8 a.m. the following day the day plow routes – mainly east-west residential streets and one side of north-south residential streets – are plowed. But vehicles in an area northwest of University and Snelling were ticketed and some towed even though they were parked properly during the Feb. 21-22 snow emergency.

Public Works staff blamed the ticketing and towing on contract workers from Avalon Security. Avalon, which has had trouble finding workers for snow emergencies, then agreed with the city to end its contract. The city will finish out the winter using its own workers to tag illegally parked vehicles.

Both the city and private contractors have struggled to find contractors because of the cold working conditions and the threats made to snow emergency workers. About a decade ago the city had volunteers help with tickets but dropped that plan after a volunteer was punched by an irate vehicle owner.

### Concordia plans new stadium

Concordia University's plans for a new \$14.5 million stadium, as well as a campus boundary change, returns to the St. Paul Planning Commission Zoning Committee at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, March 19 at City Hall. The university needs a conditional use permit modification as well as a modification in where parking can be located, before the new facility can be built at 289 Hamline Av.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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# Midway in a minute

Continued from page 2

Plans for Sea Foam Stadium have been on the drawing board for several months. Because the site is not adjacent to homes and is on university-owned property, it has generated little public comment. Its city staff site plan review was Feb. 10 and an initial Zoning Committee hearing held Feb. 19. Planning commissioners laid the issue over last month for clarification of the actual parking variance needed and plans to lease parking space from nearby Central High School. Neighboring business owners objected to the variance and expansion Feb. 19, saying that spillover parking from the university already causes problems for them.

The stadium would be located on property the university owns at the southwest corner of Concordia and Hamline avenues. The site is currently occupied by athletic fields, parking lots, a former community garden and former St. Paul Water Utility property. Not all of the property is within the current campus boundary, so the boundary must be expanded.

The new stadium would be located behind Fandrei Hall, a former water utility building.

1951 Concordia graduate Phil Fandrei and his Sea Foam Sales Company are key donors for the project. Sea Foam, which is based in Eden Prairie, makes automotive and marine petroleum products. Fandrei, Mark Hanson and Matthew Hanson of Sea Foam Sales presented a \$5 million donation toward the project at the Concordia Homecoming football game last fall. It is the largest single donation in the university's history.

The stadium would seat 3,500 people and be used for football, soccer and track. Locker rooms, a weight room and new offices are included in the plans. It would have artificial turf and an inflatable bubble that would be installed every fall for year-round use, similar to facilities at Augsburg College.

The stadium would allow Concordia to host NCAA Division II national sports events.

The facility would have its parking spaces along Hamline Avenue and to the south and west of the new facility. The location of the parking will be discussed by the Zoning Committee, along with the campus boundary expansion to include the property. Typically the city would encourage colleges and universities to place parking behind new facilities. But the stadium site is landlocked and how it can be configured is limited. There are private businesses west and south of the planned facilities.

All St. Paul colleges and universities are required to have conditional use permits. The permits set campus boundaries, restrict heights and setbacks of new buildings, restrict enrollment and set on-campus parking requirements. Any changes must be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission, but can be appealed to the St. Paul City Council.

## Nonprofits benefit from Council ordinance

The St. Paul Housing and Redevel-

opment Authority (HRA) and non-profit community development corporations including Sparc and Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation will have an easier time buying and rehabilitating some of the city's worst properties, under an ordinance changed adopted unanimously Feb. 11 by the St. Paul City Council.

The ordinance change addresses concerns raised in recent months by community development corporations. Last year the city implemented a classification system of Category I, II and III for its vacant buildings. The system is

used to determine which buildings are in good enough shape to be sold on a turnkey basis and which need rehabilitation. Class II and III buildings are considered those in need of rehabilitation before they can be sold.

The ordinance change was adopted last year during the mortgage foreclosure and vacant building crisis. The city has more than 2,000 registered vacant buildings, most of them houses. City officials had reports of homes being sold that were uninhabitable or very costly to repair due to deteriorated conditions. The intent of regulations passed last year and the clas-

sification system was to make that didn't happen and that buildings in poor condition weren't sold for reoccupancy. Some district councils supported the stronger regulations, saying they didn't want to see run-down properties fall into the hands of slumlords or inexperienced landlords or property owners.

However, lenders, the real estate industry and contractors protested the regulations, saying it would make it too difficult to get buildings repaired and sold to new owners. The complication is that the seller has to make sure the repairs are completed. In many

cases, sellers are out-of-state banks and mortgage companies.

The regulations have had the unintended consequence of making it harder for the city to get its hands on some dwellings and for the community development corporations that renovate buildings to buy the properties. That's why the change only applies to buildings sold to the HRA, which typically transfers ownership of buildings to community development corporations. The corporations then tear down the buildings or rehabilitate and resell them.

-Compiled by Jane McClure



Jane Scheidnes  
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## Como Park holds Como Pool/Waterpark Design workshop March 18-19

Como Pool/Waterpark Design Workshop and Public Open House: March 18 - 19, from 5- 7 p.m. at the Como Park Zoo & Conservatory Visitor's Center. Community members are invited to view design concepts and provide input and comments on the new Como Pool, aquatic and surrounding Park features and uses, including possible traffic rerouting, and parking in the overall study area.

The public may also observe the work of the USAquatics design consultants from 9-5 on March 18 and 10-5 on March 19, also at the Como Visitor's Center. A final design from this workshop will be selected for City approval and next phases, including City funding, by May of this year. For updated information please check the District 10 website, or 651-644-3889.



## Library

Continued from page 1

"The first round was two and a half years ago," GebbenGreen said. "At that time the library was an important part of my family, one of the reasons we purchased a house in the Midway."

"A library is a huge investment for the community," GebbenGreen said. "It is a critical point of the well-being of a community."

GebbenGreen said that earlier, when Mayor Coleman said he

was going to increase services at the library, she sent him a thank-you card.

She said that with the economy as it is, she is thinking that this round of closing the library has reached a different level of seriousness.

GebbenGreen tried to identify the library users and talked to the principal of Hancock School.

"There are 22 classes, and at least once a month each class goes to the Hamline Library in addition to using the school library," GebbenGreen said. "There are things at Hamline not available at the school."

GebbenGreen said she takes her own three children to the Hamline library three to five times a week. She said it is only two blocks away, and it is easy to say "Who wants to walk with me to the library?"

"The kids go to the children's section, flop down on the floor and pop open a book. There is so much that the library contributes to our lives, and I want to contribute to the well-being of the library."

GebbenGreen said that with six months of not really being outside in Minnesota, the library becomes the place you can run

to and catch up with the lives of the people around you.

"The impact would be so large in closing a library," she said.

Carrie Pomeroy, who lives only a block and a half away from Hamline Library, had previously written letters to the mayor and library director about her concerns in keeping it open.

"This year I felt I had to do more," she said. "I started e-mailing people, and that sort of got the ball rolling. I wrote a letter to the editor of the *Pioneer Press* and it was printed. I organized letter-writing parties for the kids to

write letters to the mayor about the issue."

Pomeroy also takes her young children to the library, filling up two bags full of books every Thursday.

"In the summer, we take a wagon," she said. "We get out in all seasons and see our neighbors throughout the year. We patronize local businesses along the way."

Pomeroy noted that small children can negotiate a small library more easily.

"I understand the budget crisis is severe, but I'm not going to stand back and let that steamroll over our neighborhood's livability," she said.

Triesta Brown saw Pomeroy's name on one of the e-mails and contacted her.

"I've been down this road before, and I thought she might like to tap into my experience," Brown said. "So I e-mailed her, and the rest is history."

Brown said this is her third go-around in trying to keep the Hamline Library afloat.

"During George Latimer's administration it was slated to be closed," she said. "Latimer is now the head of Friends of the Library."

Brown said when her son, Pippin, was only five he read a letter to then-mayor Jim Schmeibel asking the library not be cut from the budget. Today, Pippin is in the cavalry in Colorado Springs, preparing to go to Afghanistan, and he still is concerned about his neighborhood library, according to Brown.

She said the online community is a whole new feature that was not present in earlier fights for the library. "It's so much easier for people to get in touch," she said.

Mark Ireland and his wife, Amy Schroeder Ireland, interviewed community members and put the results up on YouTube. The couple also set up a Facebook page and blog to try and save Hamline Midway Library.

"This is a real grassroots effort, using the Internet to pull together," Ireland said.

He started using the library back in 1981 when he was eight and lived in the neighborhood. Today he takes his young daughters to Hamline throughout the year.

Ireland said he moved to the Hamline Midway area for a reason: Amenities like Hamline Midway Library make the neighborhood special.

A budget hearing on the library's future is tentatively scheduled for March 18.

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# Central Corridor budget to bring bare-bones streetscape work

By JANE MCCLURE

Unless the city can find \$11.5 million somewhere, don't expect Central Corridor to bring the extreme makeover many University Avenue businesses had hoped for. News that the planned light rail line's \$913.9 million project budget only includes bare-bones streetscape work is a huge disappointment to many business owners, area residents and elected officials. That's especially true for business owners who note that a selling point for the rail line has been a rebuilt University Avenue and streetscape improvements.

The lack of funding for streetscape improvements is a growing frustration for many community groups and elected officials involved in the Central Corridor light rail project. University Avenue only has 245 boulevard trees for its entire length. Street lighting doesn't match the lantern-style lighting that is standard in the rest of the city. The last major streetscape improvement program even discussed was the University beautification project, which was shelved almost 20 years ago.

"It's very disappointing," said Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark. He noted that improvements to University Avenue were postponed over the years, due to the promise of light rail.

How to pay for new street lights, street trees and other amenities was debated February 11 by Central Corridor's Corridor Management Committee. Central Corridor Project Manager Mark Fuhrmann admits that those designing the Central Corridor have heard complaints about the lack of streetscape improvements. Fuhrmann said the word he'd use to describe the streetscape im-

provements is "banal."

That brought a swift retort from St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman. "Awful" would be mine," he said.

The base budget for streetscape improvements, which is covered by the project budget, would include sidewalk replacement, construction of a concrete street median and reconstruction of intersections and crosswalks at signalized intersections with concrete instead of asphalt. Non-signalized intersections would be striped and lighting added.

The budget calls for removing and re-installing existing light fixtures along the light rail route. Bus shelters would also be removed and replaced. Boulevard trees would be replaced on a one-to-one basis, but no additional trees planted.

New station markers and directional signs, new railings, fencing, bike racks and concrete bollards would also be of the project. Fences and railings would provide safety for transit riders, and would block pedestrians from crossing the street at places where there aren't marked crosswalks. But those features have been criticized as unattractive.

The City of St. Paul and neighborhood groups along Central Corridor are pushing for more street trees in the medians and along boulevards, and new street lighting. The city wants twin

lantern-style street lights, rather than the taller, highway-style poles that are currently along much of University. This would add \$2.5 million to the project budget. St. Paul officials also want sidewalks rebuilt with pavers in the boulevards, as well as additional trees and the soils needed to sustain those trees. That would add an additional \$8.5



mil-  
lion  
to the  
budget.

St. Paul and Minneapolis officials also want to see a different style of overhead contact system poles used. These poles are part of the system that provides power to the light rail line. The pole style city officials want would add another \$1 million to the project budget.

The \$12.5 million in additions sought by the two cities don't include other amenities community groups have clamored for, including benches, trash cans and other features. Nor does it include the public art components, which are limited to stations.

For streetscape planning purposes, project staff divided Central Corridor into six sections. This in-

cludes the West Bank, University of Minnesota transit/pedestrian mall, East Bank/Prospect Park, University Avenue, capitol area and downtown St. Paul. The longest stretch, along University Avenue in St. Paul, is more than six miles long.

Both cities would like to have colored concrete used at intersections. Although Minneapolis would like entire intersections colored. St. Paul would only want the concrete colored at crosswalks.

Minneapolis is making an argument for more bicycle racks. Peter Wagenius, who represents Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak on the management committee, said he doesn't think having six bike racks at each station is enough. He asked if more could be added.

Coleman asked why the additional amenities couldn't be part of the Central Corridor's base budget. Fuhrmann said any project feature that isn't needed for day-to-day light rail operations can't be part of the budget.

Coleman said project planners need to find a way to make improvements to University Avenue, but a lack of city resources could stymie that goal. St. Paul is facing a ballooning city budget deficit, so streetscape improvement funding may have to come from state or federal government. The city has a request in to the 2009 Minnesota Legislature for assistance, and also has requests as part of the city's own 2010-2011 Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB). But at this point it's not clear how large the CIB will be or even if there will be much capital spending over the next few years.

A lack of amenities won't help public perceptions of light rail,

said Coleman. Nor will it help long-term plans for new development. "It most certainly impacts the ability to redevelop the corridor."

Stark and Allan Lovejoy, a transportation planner for St. Paul Planning and Economic Development (PED) and Public Works, have said that the streetscape improvements could be the next major sticking point in Central Corridor discussions. The city's land use plans for Central Corridor and the areas around each station call for more streetscape improvements. "I just think people are expecting a lot more to be done," Lovejoy said.

The city does have a Transit for Livable Communities (TLC) grant for physical improvements meant to improve biking and walking routes along Central Corridor. Those plans were unveiled Feb. 19. (See related story.) But the improvements called for in those plans focus largely on neighboring streets and not University itself.

Some elected officials have asked if additional streetscape work could be paid for through project contingency funds. That is possible, according to Fuhrmann. But that still could mean the city would have to front the money for the improvements, with no guarantees it would be repaid, due to timing of when the rail line is built.

Any decision on using contingency funds for streetscape improvements would have to be made by Metropolitan Council. Also, the contingency funds have already been earmarked for an additional station - at either Hamline, Victoria or Western. The infill stations were added last year in the face of enormous community pressure.



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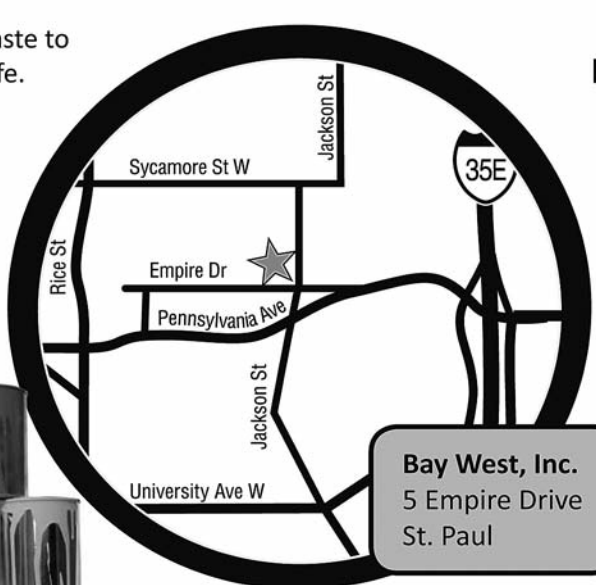
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**Questions?**





# Spring's warmth turns thoughts to BBQ, home maintenance

By DEBORAH BROTZ

Spring and warmer weather are coming soon, which means people's thoughts turn to baseball, flowers, gardening, rain, and barbeques. But, spring also means it's time for home and yard maintenance, after letting it go during the winter. Here's a list of things to do to get your home ready for spring and summer.

## HOME & GARAGE

### Gutters and Downspouts

- Remove debris from gutters and downspouts and patch any holes. Make sure the downspouts direct water at least 5 feet away from your foundation walls.
- Reattach gutters that have pulled away from the house.
- Run a hose on the roof and check for proper drainage. If leaks exist, dry the area and use caulking or epoxy to seal the leak.

### Windows and Doors

- Inspect/replace caulk on windows, doors, and other penetrations, such as dryer vents and cable wire holes.
- Clean screening and check for holes. If holes are bigger than a quarter, that is plenty of room for bugs to climb in.
- Patch holes or replace the screen. Save bad screen to patch holes next year.
- Tighten or repair any loose or damaged frames and repaint.
- Replace broken, worn, or missing hardware.
- Wind can ruin screens and frames if they are allowed to flap and move so make sure they are securely fastened.
- Tighten and lubricate door hinges and closers.

### Furnace

- Replace or clean your furnace filter. It should be checked once a month and replaced or cleaned as needed.
- Have a professional air conditioning contractor inspect and maintain your system as recommended by the manufacturer.

### Hot Water Heater

- Check your water heater. If you have a gas-fired water heater, make sure it is venting properly.
- Check around the base of your water heater for evidence of leaks. If water leakage or rust is found, the water heater should be replaced.

### Plumbing

- Check the shutoff valve at each plumbing fixture to make sure they function.
- Know the location of all valves and what equipment and water lines they serve.

### Siding, Fascia and Trim

- Clean siding with a pressure washer to keep mold from growing. Check all wood surfaces for weathering and paint failure.

- Examine fascia or soffit boards. Replace if they are soft or rotting because they may allow rain in your attic.

### Foundation

- Check foundation walls, floors, concrete, and masonry for cracking, heaving or deterioration.

### Roof

- Inspect roof surface flashing, eaves, and soffits. Check flashings around all surface projections and sidewalls.
- Inspect the roof for damaged, loose or blistered shingles.

## LAWN & GARDEN

### Lawn Care

- It is important that you wait until the soil temperatures rise and you get some growth before attempting any renovation program on your lawn.
- Rake to remove leaves and to control thatch.
- If you have a moss problem, apply a product called lawn sand to your lawn.
- Aerate your lawn in the spring to help encourage root growth, relieve compaction, and dry out any wet areas on the lawn.
- If your lawn is riddled with bare patches due to dog spots, heavy traffic or neglect, apply grass seed to fill in those bare patches. The solution is called "over seeding."

- Lawns can be fertilized organically by using compost and mulching mowers or with chemical fertilizers.

### Trees & Shrubs

- Cut back and trim all vegetation and overgrown bushes from structures.
- Clean up fallen limbs, branches and other debris around the home to discourage the proliferation of wood-eating insects such as termites.

### Flowers & Garden

- Resist the urge to start digging in your flower beds too early. When it's dry enough, you can start to dig beds and add compost or manure in preparation for planting.
- Prune early blooming bulbs such as forsythia and viburnum as soon as blooms have passed.
- Remove a winter protection of mounded earth from roses. Prune rose bushes before they start to leaf out.
- Remove spent flowers from bulbs, but leave the rest of the plant as is.
- Pull weeds from your beds and borders before they have a chance to take hold and spread.
- Tend to your compost if it has been neglected over the winter. If you do not have a compost bin, start one.
- Add new plants in your garden such as hardy annuals and summer blooming bulbs after all threat of frost has passed.
- Stake plants that may be prone to wind damage during unpredictable spring weather.
- Fertilize and mulch beds and borders. Spring is also a good time to fertilize fruit trees and clear away heavy winter mulch you applied for protection from the cold.



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# More than 150 projects vie for CIB funding

By JANE MCCLURE

More than 150 projects are vying for funding through St. Paul's Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process. Applications from city departments, district councils, community development corporations and business associations were received in January and are currently under review. Area projects in the mix include reconstruction of Pierce Butler Route to I-35E, replacement of the Hamline Avenue Bridge and parking and sidewalk improvements tied to the proposed Central Corridor light rail line.

But how capital spending will be affected by the city's current budget woes is a question mark, city staff and elected officials said. About \$20 million per year of the capital budget comes from capital improvement bonds, which are repaid through property taxes and Local Government Aid (LGA) from the state. Pleas to keep taxes low and cuts to LGA could in turn cut capital spending.

"Everything has to be on the table, including the capital budget," said Council President Kathy Lantry. CIB bonds are paid back over a period of 20 years, meaning city officials must consider how much debt they want to saddle taxpayers with – and for how long.

Review of the projects is already underway, by task forces on community facilities, streets and utilities and residential and economic development. District councils will be asked to rank and review projects in their districts. City departments will also rank projects they would oversee. The full CIB Committee will make its recommendations to Mayor Chris Coleman this summer, with the City Council voting on a final slate of projects by year's end.

The number of projects submitted for 2010-2011 is down from past CIB cycles. Most area groups submitted few projects. Citywide, there are few new initiatives. City department requests focus largely on ongoing capital maintenance, housing purchase and rehabilitation and commercial revitalization programs. Several programs are tied to Invest St. Paul, Mayor Chris Coleman's proposal to revitalize some of the city's most troubled neighborhoods.

Central Corridor is also the focus of requests from Public Works and Planning and Economic Development (PED). About \$900,000 is sought for off-street parking improvements, to improve existing lots and alleys and post signage. An unspecified amount is sought for streetscape improvements including boule-

vard trees, landscaping, new lighting benches, trash containers, colored and textured pavers and other amenities not covered as part of the main project budget.

A third proposal calls for installing sidewalks in neighborhoods around the rail line, on north-south streets that would be pedestrian connections to light rail. The streets would be in an area bounded by the west city

limits, Pierce Butler Route, Snelling and Marshall avenues.

Most projects have yet to have dollar figures attached to them. Project cost estimates and potential sources of funding are typically added for each project after city staff review is completed.

#### Area projects include:

**Como Historic Bridge.** Parks and Recreation wants to get city

funds to match a federal grant and preserve the historic streetcar bridge near the Como Streetcar Station. The bridge, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, is blocked off due to its condition. CIB funds would be used to install historic information and rehabilitate the bridge for trail use.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

## Rank Capital Improvement Budget proposals at March 17 Como District 10 Council meeting

The CIB is the City of St. Paul's bi-annual process of rating the long-range capital projects that affect the public. There are three CIB Task forces: 1) Community Facilities, 2) Street and Utilities, 3) Residential and Economic Development. Taskforce members are volunteers from the 17 Community Council Districts, and they rank all the CIB proposals. Task force recommendations go on to the CIB Committee. CIB rating finally go to the Mayor and the City Council for approval. Help Task

force volunteers, from the Como area, rank CIB proposals at the March 17 District 10 Council meeting.

#### District 10 Community Council seeks Board candidates for sub-district 3

A special election to fill a vacancy on the board will be held at the March 2009 council meeting.

Residents and business owners residing in sub-district 3 (Victoria Street east to Dale, and Larpenteur Ave. south to Maryland Ave.) of District 10 are eligible to serve. The election will be to fill a term that runs through October 2009 annual elections.

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His very normal appearance does not alter the fact that John Smith (not his real name), who lives in the Rice Street area, is struggling to fit back into the community after years of being in and out of prison.

# Local sex offender struggles to reenter community life

By JAN WILLMS

The man is in his late 30s, with light brown hair. He is of medium build, sports a nice haircut and is dressed casually. He wears a pleasant smile.

No one would ever suspect that John Smith (not his real name), is a recovering sex offender.

His very normal appearance does not alter the fact that Smith, who lives in the Rice Street area, is struggling to fit back into the community after years of being in and out of prison.

"I have been in and out of trouble my whole life," he related in a recent interview. "I abused drugs and alcohol. I was in juvenile detention. As a teen, I dropped out of school. I started using women—girls, really—at parties. As I hit the bar scene, I was in and out of prison for theft, burglaries and an array of offenses."

Smith said that sometime in his early 20s he was given his first prison term for the sale of narcotics.

"Two years later, I started using cocaine," he continued. "I also used marijuana. I started picking up prostitutes on a regular basis, using them and offending against them, although I didn't see it as that at the time."

Smith committed burglaries to support his drug habit and was caught after a year and a half, leading to another prison term.

"After that prison term, I violated a couple of times while on supervised release," he said. He said he kept struggling with the abuse of drugs and prostitutes.

Smith eventually was charged with improper touching of his wife's eight-year-old daughter, and he received a 33-month stayed sentence.

"I was sent to the Hennepin County Workhouse," he recalled. "I was on work-release. I would say there and go out to work." He said that within about eight months, he was getting high and

was back to using prostitutes.

"One of the times I used I didn't go back for two days, but they gave me a break. Less than a month later I used again. I decided to go until they caught me. I committed aggravated robbery and was sentenced. My supervised release was revoked at the time for my criminal sexual misconduct. I was back in prison," Smith said.

At this time, Smith participated in a Sexual Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) at Lino Lakes for a little over two years. He was released in November 2007.

"I wasn't prepared like I should have been to go back to society," Smith noted. "I used prostitutes two times. Normally my use of drugs and prostitutes went together, but at this time I had laid off drugs. I still used prostitutes, and I realized it was an addiction, like the drugs."

He violated his supervised release by picking up a prostitute, and he was back in Lino Lakes for two months. At that time, Russel Balenger of Amicus went to see him and ask him if he wanted to participate in Minnesota Circles of Support and Accountability (Mn-CoSA), a project sponsored by the Department of Corrections (DOC) and Amicus. Amicus is a not-for-profit organization with over 41 years of experience in improving public safety by helping inmates and ex-offenders through positive relationship-building, restorative justice practices and individualized transition services.

MnCoSA includes volunteers, a core member who is a released individual convicted of a sexual offense, and an outer circle of professionals. Circle members work in teams of 4-7 with a core member and are supported by an outer circle.

Smith is a prime candidate for assistance from MnCoSA.

"We have a circle ready and do an electronic search to find a potential core member who meets our criteria," said Bill Donnay of

the Department of Corrections. "Members of Amicus and the DOC go out and talk to the offender. Of those who volunteer, one is selected."

Donnay said the candidate needs to be a Level 2 offender, one who is at moderate risk of re-offending, and not a candidate for civil commitment. He or she must be coming to or returning from Hennepin, Ramsey or Olmstead Counties and must be within two months of release. Smith was a Level 1 offender, one who is considered a rare risk to re-offend. He reached Level 2 because he violated the terms of his supervised release.

The circles are based on a program that was started in Canada in 1994 and had successful results.

Smith met with his circle in July 2008, a month before his August release.

"They came to visit me four times before I exited prison," he said. "We met once a week when I first came out. I can call at any time I need to talk to one of them or all of them."

The circle provides assistance with finding housing, employment, transportation, medical assistance, mental/chemical health appointments and acceptance.

"We talk about how things have been going and what issues have come up," said Smith, who is currently going through a divorce. "We have a round robin of how our week has gone."

Smith has tried hard to maintain a normal life in the neighborhood where he lives.

Smith regularly works out at a local gym. He has also found full-time employment with a nonprofit in the Midway.

"The group puts together a covenant with John, defining accountability and setting boundaries," Balenger said.

"I decided right away I wanted to participate in this program,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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# Hamline Midway LISN fellow uses photos to engage her neighbors

By DEBORAH BROTZ

While Hamline Midway resident Julie Caruso has worked as a photo stylist and photo editor, she has never had an exhibit of just her own photographs. That recently changed. As a 2008 Leadership in Support of Neighborhoods (LISN) fellow, she took photographs of the Hamline Midway neighborhood to engage her community through photography.

On Feb. 21, her photography exhibit had its opening reception at the Hamline Midway Library, at 1558 Minnehaha Ave., where they will be on display until late March. They will also be displayed in Ginkgo Coffeehouse, 721 Snelling Ave. N., during the month of May.

Caruso says the idea for a photography project was her own. She currently works as a photo editor at Lerner Publishing Group, which publishes children's books, and she has also worked as a stylist in a photo studio.

"I've been doing photography for over 20 years," she said. "This is the next step in me growing as a photographer, and I'm hoping to share my ability with the community."

The photos are Caruso's comprehensive idea of the Hamline Midway.

"They're more documentary in nature," she said. "It's very hard to define us as a community. We're very diverse."

This project allowed Caruso's two interests of photography and community building to come together.

"The inspiration for my project was really to find a way to share my appreciation and perspective of community with other people," she said. "I'm interested in photography in general. It's a tool for community building



As a 2008 Leadership in Support of Neighborhoods (LISN) fellow, Julie Caruso took photographs of the Hamline Midway neighborhood to engage her community through photography. (Photo by Julie Caruso)

and bringing people together."

Although Caruso took hundreds of photos over the past year, she chose approximately 35 framed images for the exhibit. There are a handful of photos from neighborhood residents.

"Some of them are portraits and streetscapes," she said. "Many of them are a little bit on the abstract side conveying an idea or emotion. Some are documentary such as happenings and goings-on in the community."

Caruso is pleased with the exhibit as a whole.

"I like the way it's put together," she said. "One thing they all have in common is that none are staged. They're all found moments or found scenarios. It was just me wandering around and seeing what catches my eye."

Going to college at the U of

M, Caruso minored in photography. As a student abroad in Florence, Italy, she took pictures in black and white and worked in a darkroom. Shooting digital for two years, Caruso's photos now are mostly color.

"I did a lot of photography in the late '80s and early '90s," she said. "I got back into it when I started my career in book publishing and photography about 10 years ago. It's something I kept coming back to in life."

Through these photographs, Caruso hopes to grow as a photographer.

"I was trying to put together a body of work that's cohesive," she said. "I'm putting my photo editing work on my own work. I'm interested in how people respond to it. I'm also interested in how photography can be used as

a tool for community building. It can get people thinking about the time and place they live in and

what they can do to make it better."

Caruso says showing so much of her work is new for her.

"I like how the images feel together," she said. "I like the picture that they paint. They capture the essence of where we live and what we do here."

Knowing someone who was a LISN fellow the previous year, Caruso thought becoming a fellow herself was an interesting idea.

"I was looking for ways to make time for my own photography," she said. "This seemed like an opportunity."

Caruso moved to Hamline Midway about 10 years ago from Castle Danger, Minn., about 40 miles past Duluth.

"My husband and I split up, and I had two little girls," she said. "It was a very difficult time in our lives. I moved to the neighborhood where my brother and sister-in-law live and bought a house across the street. We landed in a good place by accident."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



LISN fellow Julie Caruso's photos are on display at the Hamline Midway Library through late March, and they also will be on display at Ginkgo Coffeehouse during the month of May. (Photo by Julie Caruso)

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# In Our Community

## 'Once Upon A Mattress' at Como Park High

Como Park High School Performing Arts Department announces its production of Mary Rodgers' "Once Upon A Mattress," Como's annual fall musical production. Once Upon A Mattress will be performed Thursday, March 12th, and Friday, March 13th at 7 p.m. in the auditorium at Como Park Senior High School, 740 West Rose Avenue. Tickets are \$9 for Adults, \$5 for Students and Seniors. This is a jazzed up version of the princess and pea, with lots of surprises. Will Prince Dauntless the Drab ever get a princess to marry? Will King Sextimus the Silent ever speak again? Will Princess Winifred the Wobegon sleep through the night and fail the test? Tickets are general admission and go on sale 30 minutes before curtain. Como Park High School is 4 blocks west of Dale, just south of Maryland and Grotto.

## Nutrition and weaning at La Leche Tues., April 14

Nutrition and Weaning is the topic of the next meeting of Como-Midway La Leche League, to be held on Tuesday, April 14, at 7 p.m.

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

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

## Crime Prevention Committee meets

Be involved for the greater good of the neighborhood! Help provide a safe community for your family & friends join the Hamline Midway Coalition - Crime Prevention Committee. Vision - Neighbors working together proactively to reduce crime. Mission - Strengthen community relations through awareness, education, and action.

The group will meet the 3rd Saturday, 11 a.m. at Ginkgo Coffee Shop, Minnehaha and Snelling. Please contact Michael Jon Olson to be involved - 651-646-1986.

## Five Choirs in Concert March 27 at Jehovah

The internationally known Concordia University, St. Paul (CSP) Christus Chorus, directed by Dr. David Mennicke, will be joined by four high school choirs in a gala spring concert on Friday, March 27, at 7 p.m. at Jehovah Lutheran

Church, corner of Snelling and Thomas Avenues. A wide variety of music from classical to Gospel will be sung. The high school choirs are from Concordia Academy Roseville and Bloomington, St. Paul Central High School and Pine River-Backus High School. A free will offering will be taken, and refreshments will be served following the concert for community fellowship. This concert is the first of 14 concerts on the Christus Chorus' seven-state spring tour which concludes April 17. Director Mennicke is the chair of the CSP Music Department and holds numerous awards in choral music. The Christus Chorus has sung concert tours in Poland, Germany and Ghana. For more information call Dawn at 651-644-1421 or go to [www.jehovahlutheran.org](http://www.jehovahlutheran.org).

## Frogtown Events Committee donations

The Frogtown Events Committee and West Minnehaha Recreation Center are looking for donations for the annual garage sale, which is May 1-2 at 581 Blair Av. Good, clean, reusable items are sought, including clothing, household goods, furniture, knick-knacks, dishes, toys and other items. Proceeds from the sale are used to pay for children's and senior citizens' activities, including parties, a holiday lights tour, a horseshoe club and other events. Call Larry at 651-224-2456 for information about donating to the sale.

## Wednesday Devotions/ Soup at Jehovah

During Lent the community is invited to drop in for worship and a soup/bread meal at Jehovah Lutheran Church on Wednesdays at noon and at night. Devotions, "The Stones of Lent," begin at 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. The soup/bread meal follows the mid-day devotion, but the meal begins at 5:30 p.m. in the evening preceding worship. Enter at the Thomas Street entrance. For Holy Week times of service on Maundy Thursday, Friday and Saturday see the church ad in this issue of the *Monitor*.

## 'Fire Safety for Seniors'

"Fire Safety for Seniors" will be the topic at a luncheon for seniors on April 14 beginning at 11:30 at 1415 Englewood Avenue (lower level, Hamline Methodist Church). A representative from the St. Paul Fire Department will review important tips. A free will donation is asked for the meal. Call the office of Hamline Midway Elders 651-209-6542 to make reservations or request free transportation. A 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)

## No. Area Girls Fastpitch

North Area Girls Fastpitch Softball registration dates are Monday, March 16, Wednesday, March 18 and Monday, March 23, from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at Como Senior High School. The registration fee is \$225.00. Girls ages 9 - 18 years are eligible and must bring a copy of their birth certificate and one-half of the fee, \$112.50, to registration. The remainder of the fee is due by Friday, May 1. For more information please contact Monica at [monica@blackhole.com](mailto:monica@blackhole.com)

## Annual Meeting April 6

District 6 Planning Council will host its Annual Meeting & Elections on Monday April 6th at 6:30 p.m. at North End Elementary, 27 East Geranium, gymnasium. District 6 has invited Mayor Coleman to speak, along with Councilmembers Lee Helgen and Melvin Carter III, and Ramsey County Commissioner Janice Rettman as well as other dignitaries. This year we are fortunate to have the "International Fiddle Conspiracy," an arm of the Young Fiddlers Association performing. The theme of the evening is the importance of citizen involvement and what is happening in the North End/South Como neighborhoods. That evening is also the time District 6 holds elections. For a list of open seats and boundaries, please visit [www.district6stpaul.org](http://www.district6stpaul.org) or email [district6@qwestoffice.net](mailto:district6@qwestoffice.net) or call the office 651-488-4485.

## Public meeting on new Como Pool

Wednesday, March 18 and Thursday, March 19 the City of St. Paul and USAquatics will host a public information session from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Como Park Visitors Center. Community members are encouraged to attend and comment on the new Como pool/waterpark designs. This project is in its conceptual phase, and has received CIB funds to create a community-approved design for a new regional aquatic center. Public input is encouraged prior to May 2009, when the concept will be forwarded to CIB members, Planning Commission and the Mayor for approval. Also during the 18 and 19, community members can observe the designers working during day hours at the Visitor Center. Public comment is reserved for the evening sessions. For more information, see [www.ci.stpaul.mn.us](http://www.ci.stpaul.mn.us), [www.district10.org](http://www.district10.org) or [www.comoparkalliance.org](http://www.comoparkalliance.org)

## St. Bernard's Spaghetti Dinner March 28

The Saint Bernard Men's Club 23rd annual Spaghetti Dinner will be on Saturday, March 28th, from 4 p.m. until ???, in the Parish Center, Rice and Geranium. Adults \$7.50 and 6-12 years, \$3.50. Under 6, FREE. Menu is Spaghetti, (all you can eat), plus Meatballs, Bread, Butter, Coffee or Milk, and Dessert. All profits go to the school and to the local area youth.

## Style Show April 4 at Holy Childhood

"Fashion to a Tea" will be held on April 4th, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm in Buchanan Hall at Holy Childhood Church, 1435 Midway Parkway, St. Paul, showing Modest and Pretty Fashions for Girls, ages 10 to 14. Tickets are \$5 for ages 5 to 11. Tickets for ages 12 and above are \$12, which includes a light lunch and the fashion show. Tickets can be purchased by calling Joyce Nevins at 651-488-9652.

## Food Drive to Benefit Food Shelf

Join Embodied Health, LLC, a south St. Anthony Park wellness business, for its 3rd annual food drive. Food donations will benefit the Midway Community Food Shelf, which is run through Keystone Community Services. The food shelf provides food to residents of the Midway, St. Anthony Park, Merriam Park, and other local communities.

Hunger is a problem that affects many people in our communities, and the current economic crisis, associated job loss, foreclosures, and financial stress have driven greater numbers of individuals and families to seek help. Now, more than ever, is the time to help our neighbors in need.

Embodied Health, LLC donated 247 pounds of food to the Midway Community Food Shelf in 2008. We would like to exceed that amount in 2009. Non-perishable food donations will be accepted at 2500 University Avenue West #F5 beginning March 1, 2009. Food donations will be accepted through March 31 and will be presented to the food shelf on April 1, 2009.

Donations are accepted from 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, and can be left in the designated box in the hallway outside of studio #F5 (second floor, east end of building). Each day's donations will be taken into the studio and stored until the final day of the food drive.

## Falcon Hts. School holding Tag Sale

Falcon Heights Elementary School will be holding its annual Tag Sale Fundraising event Saturday, April 18th from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Our Sale has everything a family needs: children's clothing, sporting equipment, toys, baby equipment, books, games, furniture and more. Infant through school age items for sale. Half price sale begins at 11 a.m.

## HM Elders looking for gently used art

Hamline Midway Elders is looking for new and gently used art to be sold at the third annual "Feast, Friends & Fabulous Art," a lasagna dinner and art sale on Friday, May 1. Requested items include paintings, photos (framed or matted), textiles (cross stitch, knitted, crocheted, quilted, sewn, etc), sculpture, woodwork, metal, jewelry, beading, mosaics, ceramics, pottery and works by children. Please call 651-209-6542 for more information or to arrange to have items picked up.

## St. Stephanus Spaghetti Dinner April 4

The Men's Club of St. Stephanus will be having their Annual Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, April 4, 2009, from 4 to 7 p.m. at St. Stephanus Lutheran Church, 739 Lafond Avenue, St. Paul MN. Adults: \$6.00; Children 5 to 12: \$4.00; and Family: \$15.00. Take out available. For tickets, call the church at 651-228-1486.

## Easter Eve Vigil April 11 at Jehovah Lutheran

The community is invited to an intergenerational family friendly evening of preparation for Easter on Saturday, April 11, the eve of Easter, at 8 p.m. at Jehovah Lutheran Church, 1566 Thomas Avenue. Gathering outside the door, participants will light the new fire, carry the new light through the darkened halls to the main chapel and follow the story of salvation to the full glory of the Resurrection of Christ with readings, music, drama, action, introspection and joy using the ancient, exciting Easter Vigil services of Light, Readings, Thanksgiving for Baptism and Service of the Holy Eucharist. The evening concludes with refreshments. For more information call Dawn at 644-641-1421 or go to [www.jehovahlutheran.org](http://www.jehovahlutheran.org)

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



# Mosaic on a Stick offering free Mosaic Art Day

Lori Greene, mosaic artist and owner of Mosaic on a Stick, says the recession is for the birds and people need to get together to connect and create art. To make that happen, Greene is offering a Free Mosaic Art Day at Mosaic on a Stick, Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. People are invited to come for the whole day or a few hours and make a small mosaic project. They will have access to studio space, tools and basic mosaic supplies (ceramic or porcelain tile mix), plus mosaic artists will be on hand to offer instruction and assistance.

Participants should bring an item from home to use for a mosaic base, such as a picture frame, mirror, flower pot or small table. Or, assorted mosaic bases (such as mirrors, frames, birdhouses, wooden shapes, piggy banks) will be available to purchase. Bins will be filled with a mixture of broken tiles, dishes and ceramics for gluing to the mosaic surfaces.

ing to the mosaic surfaces.

"I just want to bring people together to make art, make friends and have fun," says Greene. "The depressing news about the economy is wearing people down. Spending a day making art will help lift their spirits."

Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Parking is available in the lot south of the building or along Thomas and Snelling Avenues.

Registration is preferred. To register, email [info@mosaiconastick.com](mailto:info@mosaiconastick.com) or call 651-645-6600.

Mosaic on a Stick, a mosaic supply shop, community classroom and artist studio, is located in the Minnesota State Fair corridor at 595 N. Snelling Ave. Visit [www.mosaiconastick.com](http://www.mosaiconastick.com) for more information. To view Greene's work, visit [www.greenemosaic.com](http://www.greenemosaic.com).



Mosaic on a Stick is offering a Free Mosaic Art Day at Mosaic on a Stick, Saturday, March 21, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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# Budget cuts

Continued from page 1

lost access to fields and facilities in other areas. Thus far no one has come forward to take over Griggs, which also concerns him.

"I think we have to look really hard at whether or not that system of partnering (to keep recreation centers open) is working," he said.

Stark is also concerned about proposed cutbacks in services at South St. Anthony Recreation Center and what that could mean.

But much of Stark's focus is on saving Hamline-Midway Branch Library. "We're working real hard to find ways to keep that library open," he said. That could be done even on an interim basis, giving time for city officials and community members to find a nonprofit partner or other way to keep the library open permanently. At his March 3 meeting he asked citizens to write down their ideas, which ranged from using more volunteers to a small fee for library cards to cutting all library hours citywide.

Coleman and Library Director Melanie Huggins have noted that the usage of Hamline-Midway Branch Library could be cited to justify the closing. At budget hearings and in city memos, they have said that while no one wants to close a library, it may be one of

the few options available for the city.

Citywide, cuts of \$2.156 million have been proposed for libraries. Proposals include reducing and reprogramming library hours throughout the system, cutting an administrative position and cutting the materials budget by \$400,000.

In a memo, library staff wrote "Hamline consisted ranks among the least used libraries in the system." It ranks third from the bottom in library usage. The memo points out those library users could also use the Rondo, Merriam Park or St. Anthony Park libraries, which are a few miles away. Hamline is also targeted because it lacks computer lab or homework center facilities.

But Hamline-Midway residents, who turned out in droves for a Feb. 24 budget hearing and for Stark's March 3 meeting, said their library should be saved. Some said they would be willing to pay extra property taxes.

"We're wearing red to show that the library is vital to our community," said Hamline-Midway resident Julie GebbenGreen. She and others wore red shirts and homemade red buttons. Kids made signs with crayons, pleading to save their library.

Eight-year-old Adam Ickler gave the mayor a petition and a plan to keep the library open,

written on a big piece of cardboard. He asked the mayor why all of the libraries don't close one day a week, instead of closing Hamline-Midway. But Coleman rejected that idea, saying it would lead the city down a "slippery path" of further cuts systemwide. The mayor made suggestions, such as allowing another non-profit to use the library building and offering library books at a kiosk at Ginkgo's Coffee House. But library supporters didn't like those ideas.

At this point, a check with council members indicates the mayor may not have the votes to close the Hamline-Midway facility. But under the city budget process, the council could allocate money to keep the library going – and still not have it spent by the mayor and library director. That irks library supporters, as did news that Huggins is a finalist for the library director position in her hometown of Columbia, N.C.

No matter what the decisions are, city officials warn that the services St. Paul residents and business owners have come to expect could look very different in the weeks ahead.

Coleman's administration is reviewing proposed cuts in preparation for difficult budget-balancing decisions in March. Ideas on the table include 59 fewer firefighters and 67 fewer cops, part of cuts that could include the loss of

about 400 jobs from the city's workforce of 3,300. Half of the city's street lights could be turned off and snow could be plowed less often. Numerous capital improvement projects could be shelved.

St. Paul must cut its spending due to cuts from the state in Local Government Aid (LGA). The state in turn is trying to address a budget deficit, of \$4.57 billion. The city lost \$5.7 million in 2008 LGA in December. The city faces a budget gap of about \$8 million in 2009 and \$17 million in 2010.

"While many people know LGA by its official title in St. Paul we know it as cops, firefighters, parks and libraries," Coleman said. "The governor's proposed cuts will take Minnesota in a direction that, I believe, most of us don't want to go. However, we must prepare for the potential of his plan and the significant impact it will have on our city."

City department submitted their proposals for budget cuts to Coleman's administration last month. Public safety would take more than \$10 million in cuts. In the Police Department, 67 officers and 23 civilian positions would be cut. The East, West and Central districts would be merged into two and Ben Doran Center on Rice Street would close. A number of units would be eliminated or reduced, including mounted patrol.

Crime prevention coordinator

programs would be dropped including graffiti, crime-free multi-housing and National Night Out. The number of police districts would be cut from three to two. In the Fire Department, four fire companies would be eliminated, adding to a total of 59 layoffs. Essential equipment wouldn't be purchased and the 2009 firefighters entrance test would be canceled.

Parks and Recreation would cut \$3.83 million in spending cuts and staff reductions of 59.3 full-time equivalent positions. Of those posts 35.9 are currently filled; others are vacant or will be vacant due to early retirements. Three recreation centers (Baker, Griggs and Margaret) would be turned over to community groups to run. Sylvan, Front and Prosperity would close and adjustments would be made to schedules at Wilder and South St. Anthony. The changes would mean St. Paul has gone from 42 recreation centers in 2006 to 25 in 2009. This would save \$1.42 million alone. There would also be saving from restructuring special services and main office staff, as well as reductions in staff.

A variety of other parks programs and services also face cuts

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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# Budget cuts

Continued from page 12

Phalen Beach would no longer have lifeguards. Winter-Skate downtown would be eliminated. Golf course management could be consolidated.

Public Works would cut \$250,000 from the general fund and \$7.3 million from special funds. One of the most high-profile proposals on the table is not having the Residential Street Vitality program (RVSP) in 2009 and 2010. That would drop area projects that are in the planning stages for this year and possibly push back other projects.

Department of Safety and Inspections, \$2.1 million in reductions would mean cutting about two dozen positions. Fees for services could increase. And it would take longer to have in-

spections and enforcement actions completed. In this department a number of employees, including building trade inspectors, have offered to reduce their hours.

At this point the City Council hasn't laid out detailed plans for which positions or services it would cut. But it's assumed the council would have to eliminate at least one position.

Coleman must cut \$221,400 from his office budget. That will be done by eliminating 2009 cost-of-living adjustments, reducing all mayor's office and inter-governmental relations salaries (including Coleman's) by 5 percent eliminating 1.5 full-time equivalent positions and cutting supplies and travel.

The city did offer early retirement to 180 employees as a means of cutting spending. The

deadline to accept a retirement package was last week, with 54 employees taking the incentive. Those leaving including longtime Planning Administrator Larry

Soderholm and former Rice and South St. Anthony Recreation Director Tony Ruiz. Fire had the most applicants at 13, with 11 from parks and recreation, seven

from police and five from the water department. An additional 10 employees citywide have offered to reduce their hours or take leaves of absence.

# Photos

Continued from page 9

Hamline Midway Coalition worked with Hamline University and designed the LISN program together. They are starting the fourth year of the program.

"We had a series of conversations on how the University and Coalition could work together to support the neighborhood," said Jun-Li Wang, Hamline Midway Coalition community organizer. "We designed the program, and Hamline University helped get funding."

Wang says every neighborhood has its leaders.

"They burn out because they keep getting called," she said. "Everybody calls on the same 12 people. LISN really develops new leaders. An unanticipated conse-



Julie Caruso

quence of the program is that when we do projects in the community, they work with more community members. It's a great trickle effect."

Wang feels Caruso's photos are an opportunity to start conversations.

"Whether they are in the picture or not, they can talk about it and get to know people in a different way," she said.

Taking photos is important to Caruso.

"It's something I do all the time, and I love doing," she said. "This project is special to me. I'm hoping it's a way to give back to the community."


Caruso likes her photos and hopes other people do, too.

"I hope they will get people thinking about where they live and what are things they appreciate and what are things they would like to see changed," she said. "I hope it's a springboard for conversations with each other. People can step out of their own perspective and broaden their scope a little bit about who we are. Part of the experience is to see what happens and that's fun."

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**PALM SUNDAY**  
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9:30 AM Worship  
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*This month we honor,*  
**Isai Orrostieta**  
  
Isai Orrostieta began the year as a very shy learner. He didn't want to take chances or try things on his own. We worked hard to help Isai gain confidence as a learner. He has really grown this year. He is independent and confident. When other students have questions or need help, Isai is there to help. Isai has made many gains in reading. The biggest improvements I have seen have been in math. Isai has gained the confidence to try new things in math, even if he is wrong.  
Isai is also a Peace Builder and friend in our class. He is kind to other children and is helpful to me. Keep working hard, Isai!  
Congratulations to Isai Orrostieta and his family on his selection as New Spirit School's Star Student of the Month.  
New Spirit's Star Student of the month receives a \$25 gift certificate for a local bookstore.  
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# CIB funding

Continued from page 7

**Como Pool replacement.** Parks and Recreation wants to replace the Como park Pool, which will be closed this season due to its age and condition. Funds would be used to build a new pool, provide vehicular access and put in parking.

**Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom.** Parks and Recreation and a coalition of groups are seeking funds to restore the historic "Dutch ovens" that were built in the park in 1936 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The ovens are part of the outdoor classroom that is being developed.

**Como Park play equipment.** Midway Parkway and Estabrook Drive. Parks and recreation wants to replace playground equipment that was installed in 1990. The deteriorated equipment has the third-highest ranking on the city's list of playgrounds needing replacement.

**McMurray Field.** Parks and Recreation wants to improve the adja-

cent streets, which were built in the 1930s, and rebuild the softball field.

**Trillium site development.** Parks and Recreation is submitting this proposal, with support from District 6, Tri-Area Block Club and other groups. The intent is to continue development of the park and nature preserve just west of I-35E. The project began in 2000.

**Merriam Park Master Plan.** Union Park District Council is seeking money to continue a park planning process the district council began several months ago. That plan identified a number of physical needs for the park, which is more than 100 years old. The funds sought for 2010-2011 would be for plan implementation.

**Midway Stadium.** Parks and Recreation wants to replace seats, add restrooms and concessions space, renovate locker rooms and rebuild the field itself.

**Hampden Park improvements.** Parks and Recreation and St. Anthony Park Community Council want to use the park master plan to add rain gardens, remove dying trees, add new trees, add native

plantings and add new lighting, picnic tables and benches.

**Pierce Butler Route extension.** Public Works has had this plan on the drawing board for many years, to extend the road from Dale Street to I-35E. CIB dollars would be used to buy right-of-way and continue project design.

**Wheelock Parkway Bridge.** Public Works wishes to replace the bridge near Park and Sylvan streets. Planning funds for bridge replacement were granted in 2007. The bridge is considered structurally deficient.

**Lexington Parkway Bridge and bikeway.** Public Works wants to connect the proposed off-road bikeway along Lexington and make improvements for bicyclists.

**Rice Street Bridge.** A coalition of groups wants to make lighting and sidewalk improvements, as well as streetscape improvements, to the bridge near Sycamore. The streetscape improvements would extend to University Avenue.

**Raymond Avenue improvements.** Public Works wants to add traffic calming improvements, bicycle features and sidewalks, and recon-

figure intersections between University and Hampden.

**Hamline Avenue.** Public Works wants to rebuild the street between University and Minnehaha avenues, as part of the Blair/Griggs Residential Street Vitality Program (RSVP) in 2011.

**Minnehaha Avenue reconstruction.** Public Works wants to rebuild the street between Prior and Fairview avenues, as part of the Hewitt/Tatum RSVP in 2011.

**Snelling Avenue Green Streets Phase I.** Hamline Midway Coalition wants to make Snelling between Blair and Pierce Butler Route more pedestrian-friendly, with median improvements, street trees, new lighting, rain gardens and other amenities.

**Marshall Avenue median and green streets project.** Union Park District Council is seeking funds to complete installation of medians, boulevard plantings, signage and other improvements. The project lost out on CIB dollars two years ago but was instead partially funded by Transit for Livable Communities (TLC).

**Prior Avenue bicycle route.** Mister Michael Recycles Bicycles, a volunteer bicycle repair business, is asking that bicycle lanes be striped on Prior from Summit Avenue to Pierce Butler Route.

**Shotspotter.** The Police Department would like to install the cameras and audio devices at three locations through the city, including Lexington Parkway and Concordia Avenue. The devices can closely track when and where gunshots are fired.


**Sparc home improvement grant programs.** The community development corporation seeks funds to provide grants for low-income home owners how need to make health and safety-related property improvements in the North End, South Como and Hamline-midway areas.

**Frogtown Facelift.** Thomas-Dale Community Council and Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation (GFCDC) would provide funding to home owners for repair of deferred maintenance and health and safety hazards.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

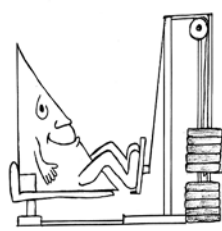
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**Details and Registration** [www.blackhawksoccer.org](http://www.blackhawksoccer.org)



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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](mailto:denisw@aplacetoremember.com). Want ads must be in the Monitor before April 6 for the April 16 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)

## BATHROOMS

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# Sex offender

Continued from page 8

Smith said. "When I was doing the SOTP program, I learned how to take care of myself and how a support group could benefit me. I had plans for that before, but it didn't happen. I knew if a support group was waiting for me when I came out, it would be helpful."

"John is an excellent example of the strength of MnCoSA," Donnay said. "His first release didn't go very well because of a lack of support. MnCoSA fills that vacuum."

Smith said the most difficult

thing for him to deal with has been sexual activity with prostitutes.

"Working with the group has flushed this out of my system," he said. "I know that keeping secrets is dangerous. This circle is made up of unbiased, caring individuals. I originally wanted to use my wife and family as a support group, but these are good people, providing emotional and moral support."

One individual who has worked as a volunteer was a member of one of the first circles developed in Ramsey County. Ray Wiedmeyer has been involved in restorative justice for several years, and has worked as a volunteer mentoring with Amicus for five years. He is a lead person of a restorative justice group in his church.

Wiedmeyer said that when he heard about the MnCoSA project with sex offenders, he wanted to help in whatever way he could.

"I thought it was the right thing to do," he said. "I don't like society's knee-jerk reaction to sex offenders, painting everyone in a broad term. The public wants to dump everyone under one label. People should be allowed redemption and should be allowed to change."

Donnay said the circles first started in January 2008, with five in Ramsey County and five in Hennepin County. An eleventh circle is in training. Seven of the original circles are active; in three, the core member declined to participate. Close to 50 volunteers participate.

"The volunteers are generous

and amazingly devoted," Donnay said.

Donnay said the program has not been running long enough to determine results, but data is being collected.

"The project is based upon sound research design," Donnay noted.

For Smith, he just knows it has made a difference in his life.

But will that difference be enough?

Smith explained that he has worked through some of his issues with the circle. Meanwhile, he realizes that dealing with his sexual addiction is not unlike the emotional work dealing with any addiction. It's a matter of taking one day at a time.

(Editor's note: Those interested in volunteering can call 651-361-7593 or go to the Amicus or DOC websites for more information.)

## Home & Garden Show slated for March 14

Join us on Saturday at the 18th Annual Greater Midway Home & Garden Show, Sat., March 14th. Sparc, a non-profit community development corporation presents the 18th Annual Greater Midway Home & Garden Show at Crossroads Elementary School, 543 Front Ave., (Front & Dale). Visit expanded workshops on bathroom remodel-

ing, making a rainbarrel, neighborhood safety, shade gardening, saving energy, pruning, and lead glass windows! Exhibit Hall features local home improvement contractors/products, garden/landscaping experts, financing options, senior resources, "green" remodeling options, and Q&A with Ramsey County Master Gardeners. New!

Free Foreclosure Clinic, meet with certified counselors and understand your options. Children's Building Project - (10 a.m.-12 noon) build a wood basket with Elpis Enterprises. Workshops - 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Exhibit Hall - 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Free admission and parking. 651-488-1039. Find more details at sparcweb.org.

## CIB funding

Continued from page 14

**Frogtown Flexible Fund for Housing Development.** Thomas-Dale Community Council and GFCDC would use funds to buy vacant lots and houses,

demolish houses if needed and do housing rehabilitation and new construction.

**Capital Backyard Business Fund.** Sparc and GFCDC want funds for targeted commercial revitalization projects on Rice Street, Dale Street and Snelling Avenue.

**Sparc acquisition and rehabilitation fund.** Sparc wants to rehabilitate and sell housing to families meeting income guidelines.

**Sparc emergency home improvement grants.** Sparc wants funds to help home owners make emergency repairs to address health and safety needs.

## Classifieds

Continued from page 15

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## MARCH HAPPENINGS AT HAMLINE UNIVERSITY

### FOUNDERS DAY AND HUMANITIES SYMPOSIUM

Hamline University invites the public to three events surrounding the 2009 Founders Day and Symposium on the Humanities, "Pioneers Together: YMCA Women and Racial Justice." The program features the work of historian Nancy Marie Robertson, author of *Christian Sisterhood, Race Relations, and the YWCA, 1906-46*, which examines black and white women's approach to race relations leading up to the civil rights movement.

#### "A Special Mission: Anna Arnold Hedgeman's Efforts to Educate White America"

Tuesday, March 17, 11:20 a.m.

Learn about Anna Arnold Hedgeman '22, Hamline University's first African-American graduate and an influential social justice activist.

Location: Klas Center, Kay Fredericks Room

Cost: Free, RSVP required.

RSVP by March 11 to Linda Nybakken, 651-523-2200 or lnybakken@hamline.edu, or online at www.hamline.edu/foundersday

The 2009 Hamline University Founders Day and Symposium on the Humanities is co-sponsored by the Hamline University Office of Church Relations and the Hamline University Endowed Chair in the Humanities.

#### "Youth Cannot Wait: Student Activism and Racial Justice in the YWCA"

Date: Wednesday, March 18, 11:30 a.m.

Race relations expert and author Nancy Marie Robertson hosts an informal discussion on her research and writing.

Location: Sorin Hall, Rooms A & B

Cost: Free. RSVP required.

#### "Pioneers Together: Black and White Women and the Long Civil Rights Movement"

Date: Wednesday, March 18, 7:30 p.m.

Race relations expert and author Nancy Marie Robertson delivers keynote lecture on her research and writing.

Location: Klas Center, Kay Fredericks Room

Cost: Free, no RSVP required



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