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Midway  
Como

# Monitor



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## German Immersion's new home 'unearths' some parking challenges

By JAN WILLMS

When the Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) moved to its new location at 1031 Como Ave. and started excavating the soil under its planned parking lot, it ran into problems.

Some soil was discovered with elevated levels of metals that were above levels determined as safe by the state.

"The original construction project for the entire school and parking lot were scheduled to be completed by this time," said Assistant Director Jeff Horton, "but the issues with the soil composition in the area have further delayed the parking lot."

The school has had to halt its efforts to create the new parking lot while creating a plan to deal with the unexpected environmental issues.

"Our school is very committed to following environmental best practices," continued Horton. "This can be seen in everything from the green cleaning products we use to our recycling program and now to our parking lot."

Horton said the school is working with the proper authorities to correct the soil problem.



When the Twin Cities German Immersion School (TCGIS) moved to its new location at 1031 Como Ave. and started excavating the soil under its planned parking lot, it ran into problems. The construction project had to be put on hold after elevated levels of metals were detected.

"We do not have a final solution at this time but many parties are working hard on the issue," he said.

TCGIS has applied to Ramsey County for a grant to help with the cleanup costs, which are

estimated at more than \$90,000.

"We don't have a definitive answer for when the grant funds will be approved, and we are not allowed to do any parking lot work before the grants have been approved," added Ann Jurewicz,

the school's director.

"Once the funds are approved, since it is December, we are now in the difficult position of having to hold off on the work due to cold weather and frozen ground," she said. "The school is terribly sorry for any inconvenience."

Horton said TCGIS has been seeking feedback from the Como community members, the school staff, parents of students, the city, the county and the construction project managers.

He said that in the short-term, staff will be leaving more open parking places on Van Slyke Ave. Teachers have been instructed to use parking spaces in the Presbyterian Church across the street, the streetcar Station and to spread out a bit more in the neighborhood so as not to negatively impact neighbors and allow them parking in front of their homes.

"We understand that home owners need some of those spaces, and we want to respect that need," Horton said. "Our goal is to spread out the parking of our staff, which will not put too much pressure on any one area of home owners."

On its website, the school administration claims it is also exploring putting in a temporary gravel parking lot where the future lot will be. This temporary measure would involve hauling away and properly disposing of any contaminate soil that has been excavated to date, removing existing storm water management equipment from under the future parking lot and installing a new storm water management system.

The school would fill in the existing excavation and put gravel on the site so it can be used temporarily for parking.

Ted Blank, district administrator for District 10 Como Community Council, said the district encourages the school to work with the neighbors to resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

Horton said that the school's administration team will continue to monitor and evaluate this issue as well as seek Como Community feedback.

Horton affirmed that the school is committed to being a positive contributor to the Como community.

"We value their past, current and future input," he said.

## Light rail opening and celebration planned for mid-2014

By JANE MCCLURE

With an opening in mid-2014 coming down the tracks, planning is underway for community celebrations to mark the start of Green Line (Central Corridor) light rail service. The Metropolitan Council and the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative are urging area businesses, community groups and citizens to get involved.

Although testing of the line is underway, the opening weekend celebration date won't be determined until early 2014. Metropolitan Council Chairperson Susan Haigh and Funders Collaborative Chair Polly Talen recently sent out letters asking for community in-

volvement.

"The Metropolitan Council and Funders Collaborative are working with the community and businesses to plan a number of celebrations the weekend of the grand opening," the letter stated. "These celebrations will be held at select locations along the line that meet operational, safety, and logistical requirements."

Celebration sites eyed thus far will be near light rail stations LRT stations at Union Depot, Central Station, Western Ave., Victoria St., Hamline Ave., Raymond Ave., Stadium Village, West Bank, and Target Field. The focus will not only be on fun and safety for light rail users, there is also fo-

cus on promotions and special events to welcome the thousands of visitors who will come to ride light rail for the first time. They also hope that there will be activities after opening day to encourage long-term growth and development of the line.

Anyone interested in the events can email [greenlinecelebration@gmail.com](mailto:greenlinecelebration@gmail.com) or call 612-353-4889.

Work on the rail line is almost complete. Along the line the focus has shifted from surviving construction to eyeing what the future will bring. The final light rail contractor advisory

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With an opening in mid-2014 coming down the tracks, planning is underway for community celebrations to mark the start of Green Line (Central Corridor) light rail service.



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# City seeks to oust Black Bear Crossings from Como Pavilion

*Black Bear owners counter that they have not breached their contract*

By TESHA M. CHRISTENSEN

The city of St. Paul and Black Bear Crossings on the Lake are embroiled in a legal battle about who should run the Como Lake-side Pavilion.

The owners of Black Bear are determined to stay for another five years, while city officials have begun the process of finding a new vendor to manage the event and restaurant space at the pavilion.

"There is tremendous potential for the Como Lakeside Pavilion," said Brad Meyer on behalf of the St. Paul Parks Department. "The city is looking for a vendor that can not only manage the highly successful banquet and wedding space in the facility, but could also operate a destination restaurant."

## THE ALLEGATIONS

St. Paul city officials charge that Black Bear violated the terms of its contract.

Specifically, the city charges that Black Bear paid its rent late for the past four years; did not provide the city with three bids for each project it undertook; and submitted receipts two years late.

Additionally, the city charges that Black Bear did not submit its financial records to the city for review in a timely manner. The city requested the records on May 15, 2013 and expected them within 15 days. They were provided in August 2013.

Attorney Ryan Marth is representing David and Pamela Glass, the owners of Black Bear. In a letter to the city, Marth argues that even though the management agreement between Black Bear and the city did not call for a mid-contract evaluation, Black Bear "timely complied with each of the records requests."

Black Bear counters that the city did not issue correct invoices that factored in the money the Glasses spent on building proj-



Black Bear Crossings owner David Glass chats with a Thursday morning regular, Preston Parker, a staff member from Johnson High School. A class of developmentally disabled students and their teachers visit the coffee shop once a week. "It's a community coffee house. That's really what it is," said Jim Durand, who was sitting near Parker. (Photo by Tesha M. Christensen)

ects despite being asked repeated times for them. But when given the correct invoices, the rent was paid. "Tellingly, the city never informed Black Bear that it believed that Black Bear's annual payments were missing or late," said Marth.

According to Marth, the city did not articulate its concerns to the owners of Black Bear over the last five months. "The purported 'breaches' of the management agreement by Black Bear are nothing more than a ruse constructed to allow the city to re-

place Black Bear with a different vendor," wrote Marth.

## SUCCESSFUL OR NOT?

A statement issued by the city pointed out that there are almost 4.4 million visitors at Como each year. The Como Lakeside Pavilion "is nestled in a highly trafficked area of the park near trails and Como Lake. Similar locations in the region, including in Minneapolis at Minnehaha Falls (Sea Salt) and Lake Calhoun (Tin Fish), have seen great success."

According to city representatives, "The city continues to be concerned that the cafe has not shown the level of sales that would be expected from a successful establishment in that location."

"The issue is not revenue to the city, as BBC pays a flat fee pursuant to its most recent management agreement, but rather a concern that this publicly-owned facility is not being operated to its highest capacity."

"We have the responsibility as stewards of public resources and public lands to ensure the types of agreements we enter into are in the best interest of Saint Paul taxpayers," said Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Director Mike Hahm. "We're confident that with the right restaurant concept in this space, the public use of the Como Lakeside Pavilion will increase as a local asset and help it become a regional destination."

"I'm looking forward to working with the community and stakeholders to determine what's next for this great public space," said Ward 5 Councilmember Amy Brendmoen. "With the right partner, these types of facilities can provide a very important service to their neighborhoods and communities."

The Glasses counter that the city's proposed benchmarks are discriminatory, and pointed out that they are not aware of any other city foodservice vendors whose leases are contingent upon meeting city-imposed benchmarks.

## SURPRISED BY CITY

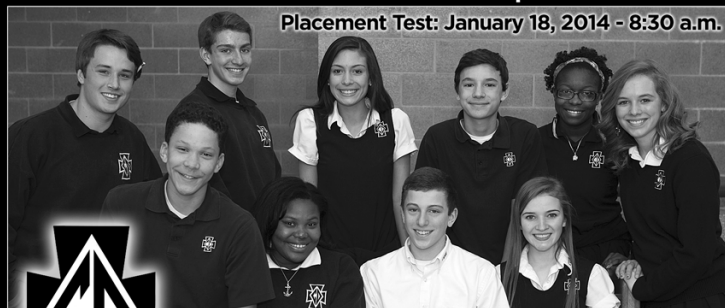
Glass, a St. Paul Ward 5 resident, said he was surprised by the city's decision not to renew their contract "after they came to us in 2009 and asked us to renew for another 10 years." He and his wife, Pam, had been considering moving on with their lives and leaving the restaurant business, but agreed to stay.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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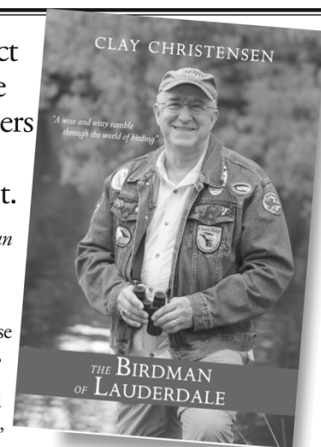


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# Monitor In A Minute

## Planning Commission denies request for triplex to fourplex

A Hamline-Midway property owner won't be allowed to have four dwelling units in what currently is a triplex. The St. Paul Planning Commission Nov. 21 denied Brett Ripley's request to re-establish 1685 Taylor Ave. as a fourplex.

The dwelling, which is more than 100 years old, was built as a single-family home and converted for multi-family use over the years. It is considered a triplex by the city; Ripley wanted a fourth dwelling unit for economic and space reasons.

Neighborhood residents had mixed reactions on the proposal. Some praised the Ripleys' work to restore and rehabilitate the structure, and said it made sense to have four units in the building. Others were against the request, contending it would bring more student renters to the community.

City staff recommended against the request, noting that the building already is considered a nonconforming use and that the space for the fourth dwelling unit could be reconfigured to be part of one of the three allowed units.

## Transitions Homes allowed to expand residents in program

Transitions Homes will be allowed to expand its program at 1956 Feronia Ave. from 25 to 31 residents, with a new conditional use permit. Union Park District Council's Land Use Committee recommended Nov. 12 that the permit be approved. That recommendation was approved by St. Paul Planning Commission Dec. 6.

Transitions Homes provides

housing and support services for men ages 18 and older, who are chemically dependent or who are coping with chemical dependency and mental illness. Residents stay for as long as 90 days. The program is in the historic Crosby Block, a former business building turned apartment building. It faced demolition for years before Transitions Homes bought and rehabilitated it.

The Feronia building is used for residents; programs are provided out of the Merriam Park Professional Building on Prior Avenue. Mike Mugaas of Transitions Homes said that adding residents would not only help more people, it would provide the additional revenue needed to add a new program for the men. The program is designed to help people improve job and life skills for success after they leave the facility.

Adding more residents would require converting some space in the building from lounge space to sleeping rooms. Mugaas said it would make better use of the building's space.

Because residents in the program don't have vehicles, it's not anticipated that expanding the number of residents would create any parking or traffic issues.

No one appeared at the committee meeting to speak against the request. However, some neighbors did oppose the request at the Planning Commission Zoning Committee hearing last month.

## Community gardeners have new rules for 2014 season

Community gardeners and urban farmers have new rules for the 2014 growing season. St. Paul's newly adopted urban agriculture ordinance won St. Paul City Council Nov. 13. The ordinance, which takes effect in mid-December,

is the city's first-ever comprehensive set of regulations for community gardens, farmers' markets, apiaries, beekeeping and other means of producing food. It went through more than two years' work by the city's Planning Commission, district councils, gardening groups and growers and producers of food.

The ordinance has its roots in a 2009 city resolution calling for more to be done to promote local food production and access to healthy food. One of its proponents is Ward Four Council Member Russ Stark.

Dozens of people and organizations have weighed in on the ordinance. While there are still some concerns about the regulations, such as fee costs and regulation of greenhouses and hoop houses, the ordinance has much more support than opposition. No one spoke against the regulations at a Nov. 6 public hearing, although issues were raised about specific points.

In late November staff in the city's Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) met to discuss how the regulations would be implemented, said DSI Deputy Director Robert Humphries. "We had a good discussion and we're confident that we'll be ready to help people with the urban agriculture projects," Humphries said the process of helping develop site plans and get property building permits will involve zoning, building permit and property code enforcement staff.

## Stretch eyed for St. Paul's first streetcar line

A 4.1 mile stretch of West and East Seventh streets could become St. Paul's first streetcar line. The \$246 million line, which would extend from Randolph Ave. to Arcade St., is part of a larger streetcar study the St. Paul



A 4.1 mile stretch of West and East Seventh streets could become St. Paul's first streetcar line. The \$246 million line, which would extend from Randolph Ave. to Arcade St., is part of a larger streetcar study the St. Paul Planning Commission is releasing this month.

Planning Commission is releasing this month. The commission will hold a public hearing on the study Jan. 24. It nosed out a line on part of Snelling Avenue or Rice Street as top picks.

But if a Nov. 18 discussion by the Planning Commission's Transportation Committee is any indication, there are still many questions about the first line and a larger streetcar network. The network would include four other lines, including a Selby Ave. line from downtown St. Paul to Snelling Ave. north to the Central Corridor. Other lines are Robert St., Rice St. and Payne Ave. Those lines were narrowed from a list of 17 potential streetcar routes.

Grand Ave., which was suggested for a line from downtown to Cretin Ave., was taken off of the table in part because of objections from businesses. Grand Avenue Business Association (GABA) recently sent Mayor Chris Coleman and city planners a letter outlining business owners' concerns, including potential loss of on-street parking. GABA hasn't taken a formal position on the streetcar line, but about 30 business owners have expressed opposition and only 15 have expressed support.

If Grand is put on a future

streetcar network, it might be with a shorter route, said City Planner Michele Beaulieu.

City leaders are interested in streetcars because of their role as a catalyst for redevelopment, as well as for increased transit ridership, said Beaulieu. But she cautioned that all of the streetcar lines require further study. Without outside funding, it could be some time before any line is building.

One huge question is how to pay for the first line, let alone an entire network. The Seventh St. line's current costs, which come out to about \$50 million per mile, could be covered through a \$75 million federal "Small Starts" grant. If the costs go too much higher, Small Starts isn't an option and the project would go into the larger "new Starts" program.

Another question is operations costs, estimated at \$8 million per year for the first line. Metropolitan Council, which operates the region's bus, commuter rail and light rail system, in June indicated that projects undertaken to promote economic development should have local, not regional or state transportation funding.

-Compiled by Jane McClure

## Black Bear

Continued from page 2

According to Glass, "The city has been telling us how well we have been doing as recent as this past spring when they asked us to look at park property in Phalen to see if we were interested in doing concessions there and handle the wedding business at that site."

However, he said that things changed earlier this year when council member Brendmoen "suggested I take on Sea Salt as a partner."

Glass, a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, questions whether it is the Native American influence inside their restaurant that has displeased the city. "Councilmember Amy Brendmoen disparaged the Native American influence in a meeting at the Pavilion with Mr. Glass," observed Marth.

"Since the year 2000, we've built a nice little business and helped to transform the site to the stature it was meant to have," re-

marked Glass.

During the Glasses' tenure, a patio was built on the lake side of the pavilion, and two perennial gardens created. A concession stand was added on the lower level of the pavilion, and it also handles paddleboats and canoe rentals.

Glass pointed out that they

have plans to upgrade the menu and remodel the restaurant.

"We've been good stewards of a public building and helped to improve the overall physical presence in the maintenance of the building," said Glass.

"We've been a good partner for the city and are very discouraged by their current actions."




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*"We've been a good partner for the city and are very discouraged by their current actions."*

- David Glass of  
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It seems like just yesterday that I was standing in my alley, parking cars for the State Fair, but the calendar says it's already December! I'd like to share some ideas and tips for a fun, safe holiday season in the Como Park neighborhood.

### Tip 1: Fun can be Close to Home

There's so much to do for the holidays, right in our neighborhood. Check out the variety of special events and holiday concerts at the Como Park Zoo & Conservatory, at neighborhood schools, and nearby institutions like Hamline University. You'll be surprised at the number of free or low cost, family-friendly events. A couple of my



## Como Community Council Corner

JON KNOX, BOARD CHAIR OF THE DISTRICT 10 COMO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A fun, safe holiday season!

favorites: the Holiday Flower Show at the Como Park Conservatory (through January 5), the impressive holiday lights from some of my neighbors, and the ornaments that neighbors use to spontaneously decorate an evergreen tree on the eastern side of Como Lake.

### Tip 2: Clean Sidewalks Make Good Neighbors

Snow in Minnesota comes right along with the holiday season. Sometimes, it seems like we have the Twelve Days of Shoveling instead of the Twelve Days of Christmas! Many of our neighbors

rely on the sidewalk to get around the neighborhood, so it's important that each of us makes the effort to clean our sidewalks when it snows, and keep them clean and free of ice. As most of us know, laws in St Paul require that sidewalks be cleaned to their full width within 24 hours of a snowfall. Fines for noncompliance can be steep, so it's best to keep on top of this and maintain a pathway for pedestrians.

### Tip 3: Don't Give Criminals an Easy Target

Unfortunately, criminals often take advantage of us letting our



guard down over the holiday season. Two areas of particular concern are package thefts and burglaries. As online shopping has grown, so have the number of packages delivered to residences when the occupants are at work or otherwise away. Packages are an easy target for thieves, so take some precautions to avoid being a victim – arrange for the package to be held until you can pick up or arrange to drop with a neighbor. Burglaries also increase around the holidays as people

visit out-of-town relatives. Before leaving town for a few days, let your neighbors know that you'll be gone. If you don't have a timer for an interior light, consider purchasing one and setting it up before you go. A motion-sensitive light can also help deter burglars.

### Tip 4: Know your Snow (Emergencies)

I don't know too many people who haven't run afoul of a St Paul Snow Emergency and learned an expensive lesson. One of the easiest ways to keep up to speed and avoid a tow is to sign up for the city's SnowAlert service – by email or text message. To sign up, click on the link "Snow Plowing Information" on the City of St Paul's website at [www.stpaul.gov](http://www.stpaul.gov).

On behalf of the District 10 Como Community Council, I'd like to wish you and your family happy holidays and best wishes for 2014!

The Hamline Midway Coalition is geared up for a big year in 2014. We have worked hard these past months readying a new organizational model and a new work plan that will allow us to better serve the neighborhood and make lasting improvements to the quality of life for all who call this great community home.

For the past year HMC has been working with other District Councils exploring ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our work. Together, we identified several ways to improve service through collaboration, co-operative agreements and sharing resources.

One such collaboration involves sharing staff with particular expertise in given areas. We have already begun to implement this exciting new model with District 12 in St. Anthony Park. Kyle Mianulli, our communications coordinator, has been sharing time between the two district councils and is looking forward to working

## News from District 11

By MICHAEL JON OLSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND KYLE MIANULLI, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

### Hamline Midway Coalition looking forward to big changes, continued success in 2014

full-time in the coming year to bring both neighborhoods' communications to new heights.

We are looking forward to launching a new website that Kyle has been developing over the past few months. It will be stocked full of user-friendly features and we plan for it to be a valuable hub of useful information and fresh content that will help build and strengthen our community. We are also exploring a possible partnership with the *Monitor* that we hope will benefit both organizations and the community at large.

Come the first of the year, Lauren Fulner, the current com-

munity organizer for the St. Anthony Park Community Council, will also become a shared staff person with HMC. She will specialize in transportation and sustainability, and is looking forward to connecting with members of the community around these issues.

The launch of a new Community Engagement Committee will also bring a new level of connection between residents, the neighborhood and HMC. Though details are still being tweaked, our hope is for the new committee to serve as a direct line between neighbor-led initiatives, neighborhood groups and HMC. We are

currently looking for engaged and active community members interested in sitting on this new committee. If you're interested, contact Kyle at [kyle@hamlinemidway.org](mailto:kyle@hamlinemidway.org).

Continuing our role of representing the neighborhood in important policy decisions, development projects and transportation initiatives will remain a major focus for HMC in the coming year. In particular, we will be focusing on implementing the North Snelling Development Initiative—a concerted effort to catalyze a vibrant housing and commercial corridor along North Snelling Avenue.

We will also continue and increase our efforts to organize community and institutional support for the Snelling Multimodal Transportation study, which calls for significant infrastructure enhancements to improve safety, accessibility, and connectivity in the Snelling Corridor from Selby Ave. to Midway Parkway.

Several other highlights of our work plan for the coming year include exploring the creation of a community investment cooperative, coordinating the Northwest Quadrant Transportation Forum, and continuing to support the Green Line Friendly Streets Initiative. We will also be exploring some innovative ways of recruiting new businesses to the neighborhood.

As always, the success of this important work relies on the active participation and engagement of Hamline Midway residents. If you are looking to play a more active role in your community in 2014, please contact us.

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## Terri Doohar Fleming joins Western Bank as senior vice president

Western Bank recently announced that Terri Doohar Fleming recently joined Western Bank as Senior Vice President, Commercial Banking Team Lead and SBA Lending. Fleming will use her broad business banking expertise to expand and develop new business relationships, facilitate SBA lending opportunities, and work to meet the financial needs of business customers.

Western Bank is grateful to have an individual of Fleming's caliber joining its organization. "Terri will play an important leadership role at Western Bank. She shares Western's strong commitment to servicing the bank's customers and the greater community," said Bridget Manahan, Executive Vice President of Commercial Banking, Nonprofit Banking and Treasury Services at Western Bank. "Terri complements the commercial banking team very well, is extremely knowledgeable, and of high integrity."

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# In search of community: A new principal and new beginnings for Galtier Community School

By KYLE MIANULLI

Galtier Community School, 1317 Charles Ave., is setting a new course to success. With an innovative building redesign on the way and a new focus on personalized learning, Principal Shawn Stibbins, who started at Galtier this fall, is now looking to the community to help bring the neighborhood school into a new era.

Stibbins was born and raised in St. Paul where he attended St. Paul Public Schools. He comes to Galtier from Meadow Lake Elementary School in Robbinsdale where he was assistant principal.

Coming to Galtier was, in a way, coming home for Stibbins. It was here that he first found his passion for education while working as a mentor for four years while attending Hamline University.

"Having that experience here in the classroom is what gave me the spark to say 'I want to be in education. I think I can make a difference,'" Stibbins said.

With a career of classroom education and school administration experience behind him, Stibbins is working hard to now make a difference at Galtier.

He recognizes the school has not always been the first choice for neighborhood families, partly due, he says, to it having a "rough reputation." With a broad range of improvements and changes coming, that's something the new

principal hopes won't last.

"Galtier is changing. It has had a negative reputation and I think that's something we are very intentional about getting rid of," Stibbins says.

When Galtier switched over from a magnet school to a community school, it turned over about two-thirds of its student body, Stibbins said. It remains a racially and ethnically diverse school—something Stibbins says contributes to a rich learning environment.

The student body at Galtier is 60 percent Black, 17 percent Asian, 11 percent Latino, and 10 percent White.

Aligning with the district's "Strong Schools, Strong Communities" initiative, Stibbins says support from the neighborhood is integral to making Galtier a point of pride for the community.

"For us to really have a strong school, the people in the community and in the neighborhood really have to be behind the school," Stibbins says.

There are some exciting new reasons to get behind Galtier, too. The school was recently selected to participate in the American Architectural Foundation's Design for Learning Program, which seeks to advance the value of design in supporting educational innovations, improved learning, and stronger communities.

As part of the program, the

school building is undergoing a major redesign with a focus on innovative flexible spaces for learning. The plans will completely overhaul the typical classroom structure.

Instead of a single static classroom, the new "learning studios" will have a spacious center area with movable partitions and garage door-like walls that will allow teachers to hand tailor unique learning spaces and allow students to freely move between different rooms and specialized areas. Movable ergonomic furniture will further provide flexibility in setting up personalized space for different projects and focus areas.

A new media center will also allow students to explore and interact freely with a variety of different technologies on their own terms, Stibbins said.

A greater emphasis on technology integration in classrooms is also planned. An early manifestation of this is a project Fourth and Fifth graders have just finished. Each student created a piece of art, then recorded a Podcast talking about their inspiration.

The pieces will be on display at Groundswell coffee shop, 1340 West Thomas Ave., through the end of the year. On each work will be a QR code that customers can scan and listen to each student talk about their work.

Groundswell has been an ear-

ly leader in setting a trend of community support for Galtier. The school was made a major focus of their Grounds and Sounds festival last summer. A silent auction at the event helped raise money to support arts programming at the school.

Stibbins knows that part of building community around Galtier means heading out and connecting with people directly. This year, Galtier teachers are participating in the St. Paul Parent-Teacher Home Visit Project. Sans paper and pencils, teachers are regularly making home visits, talking directly with families.

"It gives the teachers a chance

to learn about the families and about the students on a different level," Stibbins says.

Stibbins himself is starting a new program to get out in the community as well and champion the school. Starting in December, he will be hosting Coffee with the Principal events—a series of informal conversations with community members and families.

The new Galtier, including plans for the renovation, will be on full display at this year's School Choice Day in January. Stibbins encourages community members to attend, and to stop by for a chat or personal tour of the school.

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*"Having that experience here in the classroom is what gave me the spark to say 'I want to be in education. I think I can make a difference.'"*  
- Galtier Principal Shawn Stibbins

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By JAN WILLMS

When Cynthia Gayles was diagnosed with traumatic brain disorder five years ago, she lost her self-esteem as well as her short-term memory.

"With my memory gone, I felt embarrassed and fell into a deep depression," she recalls. "But I had a great case manager, and she encouraged me to try Ally People Solutions (APS)."

That organization first began in 1965. It was founded by families who had adult children with developmental disabilities and wanted to care for their loved ones at home. APS has evolved through the years from a safe place for people with mental health issues to gather for day activities to offering them job skills training and employment.

Gayles currently works on document preparation at the agency's new branch at 1885 University Ave., which opened Sept. 16.

"This is our premier site, because it houses many of our emerging programs," said Erika Hiller, director of development and communications. As well as providing space for arts and cultural and health and wellness programs, the location is dedicated to being a Business Solutions branch.

Timothy Danielson is another participant at the new branch. He was severely injured in a car accident seven years ago, which resulted in a traumatic



The Ally Business Solutions ribbon cutting and open house ceremony with the Midway Chamber of Commerce on Oct. 28 at their new location at 1885 University Ave. W. in Iris Park Place. The name of the organization changed from Midway Training Services to Ally People Solutions during the last year.

brain injury.

"I spent time in a coma and then went through rehabilitation," Danielson explained. "I tried to pick up my life where I left off." A veteran, he had used

his GI benefits to study culinary arts.

"I had a lot of trouble with what I had chosen to study," Danielson remembers. "Cooking involves a lot of multi-tasking.

It's not so hard to do it at home, but it's a different thing when you are cooking at a restaurant."

"It was like death by a thousand cuts," Danielson said. "There was no one thing that

made it impossible, but so many little things that kept adding up until I couldn't do it anymore."

He said he gave up. He resides in a group home, and his independent skills worker told him about APS. Although he has only been a part of the program for two weeks, he said he has already seen progress.

"Music was a very deep passion of mine, and here there are musical instruments I can play with. That outlet is worth a lot to me, and it lets me stay confident. I feel like I am a person and able to express myself."

Gayles and Danielson are only two of the approximately 270 individuals and their families who are currently being served at four branch locations of APS. Other sites are in Vadnais Heights, the Hillcrest area along White Bear Ave. and a location at 1246 University Ave., which houses the corporate offices.

Sen. John Hoffman, the marketing director at Ally Business Solutions (ABS), said the organization started at a time when de-institutionalization was taking place in Minnesota.

"Based on the overpopulation of institutions, local governments pushed to get people back into the community," Hoffman said.

Innovations and services have been steadily growing. In 1985 the organization incorporated as Midway Training Services (MTS) and located along University Ave. Multiple neighborhood branches were established in 2007. With the awareness that MTS participants and their parents needed an ally to navigate the complicated world of services, the name change from MTS to Ally People Solutions took place this year.

"We want to move individuals back into the community, and make everyone realize that disability is as natural as everything else in life," Hoffman said.

Current program activities include employment services, life skills services and Business Solutions, utilizing Ally consumers' skills in printing and documenting services, office support, document conversion, light maintenance and packaging.

Keith Johnson, community-based employment marketing manager, said ABS uses a program for supportive employment, Discovering Personal Genius, which is very person-centered and focuses on a consumer's skills and interest.

"We network with people we already know and try to find a supportive environment, where it's easier for an employee to feel at home," he said.

Donovan Grajewski, ABS operations manager, said employment in digital imaging is provided primarily at the new site for consumers.

"Some are in the community independently working, some work crews go out and work with a job coach doing cleaning and landscaping," he said.

He said digital imaging is the bulk of work in-house at three of the four branches.

For in-house employment, APS pays the wage. Consumers working in the community receive direct pay by the employer. APS also can function as a payroll agent for those working independently.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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# Ally People Solutions

Continued from page 6

Hoffman emphasized that the wages paid are minimum wage or higher. About 72 per cent of consumers have developmental disabilities and 28 per cent have mental disabilities. Of these, 18 per cent experience medical conditions and 13 per cent have ambulatory difficulties.

"Ally is committed to hiring veterans," said Hiller. "There is a great need right now with so many returning vets."

She said the organization is also focusing on providing musical instruments for consumer use. "When our consumers have down times, they can express themselves through the arts," she said. Art supplies are provided.

"Cedar Cultural Center has new visiting artists come over and perform, sometimes with our consumers. We also work with McPhail Center for Music



Cynthia Gayles works on documents at Ally's new Ally Business Solutions location at 1885 University Ave. W. Gayles is only one of the approximately 270 individuals and their families who are currently being served at four branch locations of APS. (Photo by Jan Willms)

on neural motor training, to unlock some of the real abilities our consumers have," she added.

Hiller said Creative Enterprise Zone and Springboard for the Arts offer structural art classes at the sites. She added that Ally has partnered with the YMCA to provide its consumers opportunities for exercising, learning about healthy eating and community gardening.

"Ally is not only a place to

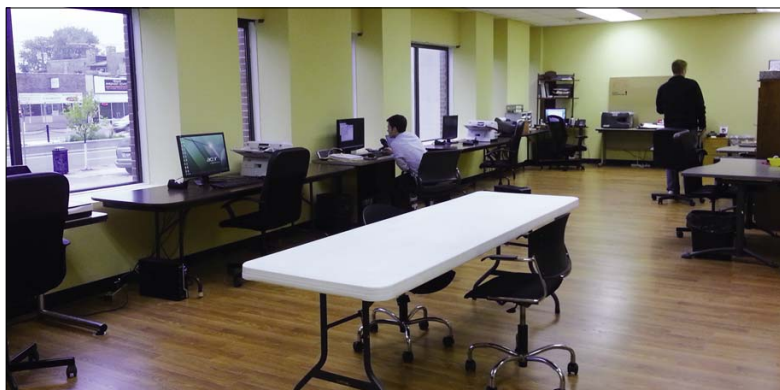
derive a paycheck, but to have a sense of belonging and community," Johnson added.

Gayles agreed. "I was on the pity pot before, but not anymore," she reflected.

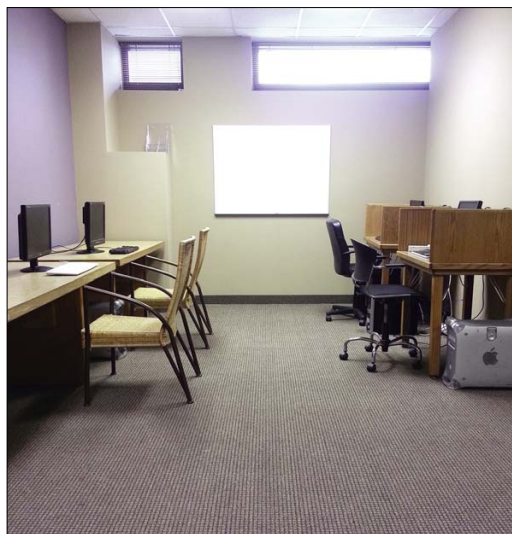
For Danielson, Ally is a place he looks forward to coming to. "That is something I have not felt in a long time," he said. "I couldn't tell you the last time I felt like I wanted to do something useful."



Timothy Danielson plays the piano at Ally People Solutions, 1885 University Ave. W. location. As well as providing space for arts and cultural and health and wellness programs, the location is dedicated to being a Business Solutions branch. (Photo by Jan Willms)



Current program activities at Ally People Solutions include employment services, life skills services and Business Solutions, utilizing Ally consumers' skills in printing and documenting services, office support, document conversion, light maintenance and packaging.



Keith Johnson, community-based employment marketing manager, said Ally Business Solutions uses a program for supportive employment, Discovering Personal Genius, which is very person-centered and focuses on a consumer's skills and interest.

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# Frogtown Park deal finalized

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) announced recently that it had closed on a deal to create a new park and urban demonstration farm in the Frogtown neighborhood, one of Saint Paul's most park-lacking areas.

The park will be located on land formally owned by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. The 12.7 acres is an oddly shaped parcel occupying about one-half the 6-square-block area bounded by Minnehaha Ave. on the north, N. Victoria St. on the east, W. Lafond Ave. on the south, and N. Chatsworth St. on the west. The land abutting Minnehaha will be the nature part of the proposed development, while recreation will be the focus on the part abutting N. Victoria. The "Frogtown Farm" (see article below) will occupy approximately 5 acres that con-

nects the other two parts of the park.

"Saint Paul has some of the best green spaces in the country, and it is crucial that every family deserves to have easy access to parks," said Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman. "I am thrilled that we are adding a natural area in this historic neighborhood. For far too long, Frogtown has gone without enough parkland. Today's announcement is truly a celebration for one of Saint Paul iconic neighborhoods."

Frogtown has the lowest amount of green space per child in all of Saint Paul, .006 acres per child. The new Frogtown Park and Farm will offer a safe place for neighborhood children to play and experience nature. The 12.7-acre park will feature dozens of 50- to 100-year old trees, a recreation area, a sliding

hill, an urban demonstration farm and beautiful hilltop views of the city.

"This was an underused, vacant space that will now be converted into an easily accessible park," said Susan Schmidt, Director of the Minnesota Office of The Trust for Public Land. "This new green space will benefit the current generation of Minnesotans, and many generations of Minnesotans to come."

TPL paid \$2.20 million for the property, which has a fair market value of \$4.7 million. TPL immediately conveyed the land to the City of Saint Paul who will own and operate the park.

The Wilder Foundation agreed to sell the property at a substantial discount to further its charitable mission and serve the Frogtown neighborhood. Wilder is a non-profit community organization that had owned this property since 1969.

"The Wilder Foundation Board agreed that dramatically decreasing the asking price would enable the neighborhood, the City and The Trust for Public Land to use this property in way that we could all be proud of as a community. We are thrilled that this park will be a reality for Frogtown residents," said Maykao Hang President and CEO of the Foundation.

Funding for this project comes from state lottery funds (the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources), the City of Saint Paul and many individuals and foun-



The Trust for Public Land (TPL) announced recently that it had closed on a deal to create a new park and urban demonstration farm in the Frogtown neighborhood, one of Saint Paul's most park-lacking areas. The site has long been a favorite of area children as a sledding venue.



While the site had been used by area children in the past, the new Frogtown Park and Farm will offer a safe place for neighborhood children to play and experience nature. The 12.7-acre park will feature dozens of 50- to 100-year old trees, a recreation area, a sliding hill, an urban demonstration farm and beautiful hilltop views of the city.

dations. In addition to funding for purchasing the land, The Trust for Public Land is also raising funds for initial improvements at the park, community engagement, and capacity building for Frogtown Farm, the non-profit that will lease a portion of the land to operate a demonstration farm.

"This deal is exactly the type of partnership that makes Ward 1 great, and will bring our diverse community together to create positive change," said Dai Thao, newly elected Councilmember representing this area of the city. "Too often we see roadblocks for these types of initiatives, but having all of these partners coming together to address a community need, is exactly the type of progress we need for Frogtown and the City

of Saint Paul." The urban demonstration farm is one of the more unique aspects of the park. The farm will grow a variety of crops, and will also serve as a tool for teaching about environmental stewardship, community self-sufficiency, healthy living and community collaboration.

TPL closed on the transaction on Dec. 4 after working on the project for many years. The Trust for Public Land is a national, nonprofit land-conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. Established in 1972, The Trust for Public Land has protected more than 90,000 acres of important lands for conservation in Minnesota.

## Frogtown Farm selects designers to plan urban farm

A team of designers, led by ReBar Art and Design Studio of San Francisco, was selected to guide the process to design a farm in the Frogtown neighborhood. Through work by Frogtown Farm, The Trust for Public Land, the City of St. Paul, and Frog-

town residents, a new 12.7-acre public park will be created on the former site of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. The educational and working farm will occupy 5 acres of this new City park.

In June of 2013, the Board of

Directors of Frogtown Farm circulated a Request for Qualifications for a design team to work with the Board and the neighborhood to create a landscape plan dedicated to farming. A small committee, including members of the Frogtown Farm Board of

Directors and a few volunteers, narrowed the field of 19 design team applicants from around the world to three finalists that were interviewed on July 31. After three hours of interviews and almost two hours of deliberations, the committee selected ReBar Art

and Design Studio to lead the Frogtown Farm design process.

ReBar is an interdisciplinary studio operating at the intersection of art, design, and ecology. ReBar creates projects that inspire people to reimagine the environment and our place in it. They produce artwork and design solutions that shape the landscape and public realm, rooted in the belief that human interaction, community, and a sense of wonder form the basis of the good life.

The process to design the farm will occur from September 2013 through January 2014. There will be several opportunities for input from our neighbors during that time. The goal is to present a final design and plan at the beginning of 2014.

The Frogtown Farm Board of Directors and the City of St. Paul will be seeking volunteers to help plan the new park and farm. There will be a committee working toward a design for the farm and another committee creating a compatible design for the park. Both committees are planning two or three jointly held public community meetings. Each design committee will then meet separately three to four times. For those interested, please contact [info@frogtownfarm.org](mailto:info@frogtownfarm.org) or sign up at one of several meetings to be announced.



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# In Our Community

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### Zion plans Holiday Bazaar Dec. 14

Zion Lutheran Church, 1697 Lafond Ave. will hold its Holiday Bazaar on Sat., Dec. 14 from 9am-1pm. The bazaar includes bake sale, craft sale, recycled Christmas item sale, and quilt raffle. A light lunch will be sold between 11am and 12:30pm for \$3.50.

### Dist. 10 to continue Sunday Series in 2014

The District 10 Como Community Council will present their popular Sunday Series speaker program on the following dates in 2014: Sun., Feb. 23 (The Bird Man of Lauderdale - Clay Christensen); Sun, Mar 23 (Solar Energy Panel); and Sun., Apr. 27 (Environmentally Friendly Lawn and Garden Care). Watch [www.distric10comopark.org](http://www.distric10comopark.org) for more information, including event venues.

### Sign up now for winter baseball camp

Hamline University is hosting a six week baseball camp starting Jan. 11. Hamline head coach Jim Weyandt will direct the program in conjunction with U.S. Baseball Academy. Classes are available for players in grades 1-12 and are limited to six players per coach. Sessions are offered in advanced hitting, pitching, catching, fielding and base-running. Proceeds from the program will benefit amateur baseball in the St. Paul area. Space is limited. Registration is now under way. For more information, visit [www.USBaseballAcademy.com](http://www.USBaseballAcademy.com) or call toll-free 866-622-4487.

### Check out the Reindeer Cam

How do reindeer spend their time leading up to their big day with the man in the red suit? Now you can see the daily details of their lives through Animal Planet LIVE's newest 24/7 cam. Viewers are invited to get to know Como Zoo's three resident reindeer on Reindeer Cam. Reindeer Cam brings viewers a glimpse of the behaviors of Como's hooved animals as they feed, navigate their habitat, and manage social relationships. In addition to being able to see them 24/7, Santa will personally check in and help feed his best friends (the ones with hooves, not pointy shoes) at noon on Dec. 18 and 23. Reindeer Cam is at <http://www.apl.tv/reindeer.htm>.

### New Bible Study starts at Jehovah

The book of Isaiah will be the subject of Bible study at Jehovah Lutheran Church in December and beyond. The 13-session study

### Saint Paul Hockey Club season is underway at North Dale Rec Center



Boys and girls born in 2001 or later who are interested in learning and playing hockey with little cost and time commitment are invited to join the Saint Paul Hockey Club. The club is now in its fourth year providing a program for girls and boys in St. Paul to learn hockey skills and safety. Kids learn skills with qualified coaches and divide into small teams to play games. There is a \$50 USA Hockey registration fee and players will need skates, a stick, and a helmet with mask. The USA Hockey registration is free for kids born in 2007 or later, and some equipment available for borrowing. Players can join anytime throughout the season. The club skates two evenings per week and Saturday mornings during the outdoor ice season. Special events are planned for Jan. 11 at the downtown WinterSkate rink; Jan. 18 at St. Paul Hockey Day; and to end the season in March. Details, schedule, and registration information are available at [www.stpaulhockey.com](http://www.stpaulhockey.com).

will use a guide published by Concordia Publishing House of St. Louis. The hour-long sessions at 9:30am Sundays are free and open to all, with snacks and coffee provided. Various members of the class will serve as leaders. The church is at 1566 Thomas in St. Paul. More information is available by calling the church office at 651-644-1421, e-mailing [jlc\\_dawn@msn.com](mailto:jlc_dawn@msn.com) or checking the church Web site: [jehovahlutheran.org](http://jehovahlutheran.org).

### Holiday concert scheduled Dec. 15

Lex-Ham Community Band and the Jehovah Lutheran Church choir will perform a free holiday concert at 7:30pm Sun., Dec. 15, in Concordia University's Buettow Auditorium. The auditorium is on the campus at Marshall and Hamline in St. Paul. The 40-member band, directed by Anthony Parrish, will accompany the church choir, joined by other singers from the community. Leading the choir will be Elizabeth Wegner, music director at Jehovah Lutheran Church and Central Lutheran School. Musical offerings will include a version of "Silent Night" in the style of the band Mannheim Steamroller and a selection called "Christmas on Broadway." The band, formed in 1992, performs 12 months per year at parks, senior homes, neighborhood festivals and

other venues. More information is at [www.LexHamArts.org](http://www.LexHamArts.org) or by e-mailing [urban@lexhamarts.org](mailto:urban@lexhamarts.org).

### Yulestride concert planned for Dec. 15

JAZZ88 FM KBEM 88.5 is proud to announce a special holiday concert featuring local jazz pianist Butch Thompson on Sun., Dec. 15 at Sundin Music Hall at Hamline University beginning at 4pm. Thompson's Yulestride Holiday Concert is a solo piano presentation of an exciting repertoire of New Orleans inspired music ranging from 1920s style classics to blues to spirituals. Under Thompson's hands, the holiday repertoire gets a respectful, fresh reading, from the blues-inflected "Away in a Manger" to the roaring stride of "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear." This popular concert also includes Thompson's distinctive arrangements of "Jingle Bells," "Silent Night," "Deck the Halls," as well as such vintage material as Ted Shapiro's "Winter Weather" and Charlie Straight's "Santa Claus Blues." The title, Yulestride, is a pun based on the term "stride piano," used to describe the two-handed style which is the main ingredient of Thompson's playing. The concert will be recorded for a later holiday broadcast on KBEM.

Tickets for Yulestride are \$10 in advance or \$15 at the door and are available now at [www.jazz88fm.com](http://www.jazz88fm.com).

### Bethel Lutheran to host living nativity

Bethel Lutheran Church, 670 West Wheelock Parkway, will host a living nativity Sat., Dec. 21. The event, which is free to the public, features a retelling of Jesus' birth (the Christmas story) with people, sheep, goats and a donkey in an outdoor stable setting. Fifteen-minute enactments will occur at 6pm, 6:30pm, 7pm and 7:30pm.

Between shows, guests are invited to pet the animals and will be invited inside the church building for coffee, hot cocoa and cookies.

"We invite our neighbors from Como Park, St. Paul's North End and across the Twin Cities to join us in this family-friendly event," said the Rev. David Seabaugh, pastor of Bethel Lutheran. "Experiencing this reenactment of Christ's birth helps remind us of God's incarnational love for all people this Christmas season."

Bethel Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

### Senior book club to meet monthly

Beginning Tues., Jan. 7, the Keystone Senior Book Club will meet the first Tuesday of every month (through 6-3-14) at the Merriam Park Community Center, 2000 St. Anthony Ave. The event is sponsored by the Keystone Community Services Senior Program, 651-645-7424.

### History Society plans program at Turf Club

The Minnesota History Society (MNHS) will present "History of Hip: Booze" at The Turf Club Lounge, Tue., Jan. 7, 7:30-9pm. This is an event only for those over 21, and The Lounge at the historic Turf Club is only accessible by stairs (please call for alternate accommodations). Reservations are recommended by calling 651-259-3015. Tickets are \$10/\$8 MNHS members.

It's impossible to ignore the resurgence of cocktail culture and artisan spirits in bars and liquor stores today. Panther Distillery in Osakis MN is currently the only licensed distillery in Minnesota, but many more are on the way: 11Wells, opening soon in the old Hamm's Brewery site, will be St. Paul's first distillery, with plans to recreate the once-famous Minnesota 13 Moonshine Whiskey. Said to have tasted much like "Canadi-

an Club" whiskey, Minnesota 13 was popular in the U.S. during Prohibition, so much so that Holdingford, in Stearns County, was considered the unofficial moonshine capital of Minnesota.

Learn more about Minnesota's illicit past with guests from Stearns County Historical Society, and taste and discuss new spirits with Adrian Panther of Panther Distillery. Lee Egbert of 11Wells and Dashfire Bitters will discuss craft cocktails and mix up some new versions of old classics using his artisan bitters.

### Met Council considers transit extension

The Metropolitan Council announced that it will evaluate a future extension of A Line (Snelling Ave.) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) from Rosedale Center in Roseville north to the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) property in Arden Hills.

"While we remain focused on opening the corridor to Roseville in the next two years, we are exploring the possibility of a future extension to the planned bus rapid transit line. An extension of the A Line presents an opportunity for us to make a strategic investment to support the development of over 400 acres in a prime location near the core urban area," said Chair Susan Haigh.

BRT is a package of transit enhancements that adds up to a faster trip and an improved experience for transit riders. As currently proposed, beginning in 2015, A Line bus rapid transit on Snelling Ave., Ford Parkway, and 46th St. will link riders to METRO LRT Lines and 24 regular bus routes. The Green Line will connect A Line riders to both downtowns; the Blue Line also connects riders to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America. BRT improves rider convenience and creates economic incentives for future development. The Council has identified \$15 million of funding for the estimated \$25 million cost of the A Line and intends to begin detailed engineering of the line as currently planned to Rosedale in 2013, while still seeking funding to construct and open the line in 2015.

Ramsey County and the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce applauded the Council's decision. "Evaluating a future extension not only improves the value of development on the TCAAP property, it serves two major universities and a host of major employers along and near Snelling Avenue," said Jim McDonough, Ramsey County Commissioner.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## In Our Community

Continued from page 9

### Parks and Rec opens Spring registrations

The St. Paul Parks and Recreation Department is moving to a standardized schedule for youth sports registration. Register online ([www.stpaul.gov/parks](http://www.stpaul.gov/parks)) starting Jan. 1 for spring sports volleyball, futsal soccer and floor hockey.

Discounts will be given to "early bird" registrants: 25% if you register on Jan. 1; 20% if you register on Jan. 2; and 10% discount if you register Jan. 3-5. Registration will now be held over the course of the full month (used to be a two weeks) of January.

Most programs are held for ages 3-18 (some programs are only held for 10, 12 and 14 and under age groups - but all the info is found online at [www.stpaul.gov/parks](http://www.stpaul.gov/parks) and in the brochure on the website). The

programs typically range in cost from \$25 - \$75 depending on the equipment needs. There is a scholarship program for any resident that can't afford the fees.

### Fantastic holiday light show at Phalen

A spectacular drive-through holiday light experience runs through Jan. 1, 2014, nightly (including holidays) from 5:30-10pm at Phalen Park (1615 Phalen Drive E). See the new holiday light sculptures and animated displays! St. Paul's Phalen Park is transformed into a fantasy of lights and color. More than 50 larger-than-life holiday sculptures and animated displays bring the season to life. Holiday greetings from Noah's Wild Ark, featuring a cast of colorful animals showing their holiday spirit. All of the money raised goes to Second Harvest Heartland, Union Gospel Mission, St. Paul Parks Conservancy, the Saint Paul Police Foundation, and UnderConstruction. Cost is \$10 per vehicle (\$8 value nights, Sun - Thurs excluding holidays); \$15 per limo/passenger van/mini bus; \$30 per coach bus.

### Tin Cups really bowls to the max

Tin Cup's bar in St. Paul's North End, 1220 Rice St, helped raise money for the nonprofit Spare Key, while at the same time maybe breaking a Guinness World Record. Tin Cup's 12-member bowling team bowled for 24 straight hours as part of Give to the Max Day, knocking over more than 46,000 pins. The previous record was 45,879.

The event, "Bowl to the Max for Spare Key" was held at Treasure Island Resort and Casino. Spare Key helps families with a sick or injured child with mortgage payments so that they can concentrate on their child. More than 200 participants raised about \$35,000.

### Winter Wonders showcase Dec. 18-19

A showcase filled with youth talent from all over the Twin Cities, Asian Media Access will be holding a Winter Wonders showcase Dec. 18 and 19, at 7pm. The programs will be held at Concordia University's Pearson Theater, 275 Syndicate St. N. This showcase will feature many things from short films created by the Youth Media Force (YMF), to the rock band "Scratch," to Asian styled dances from Iny Asian Dance Theater (IADT), and a fashion show that will put the spotlight on traditional Hmong clothing.

Dec. 18 will feature the work of the IADT. This last summer the top ten dancers from Iny Asian Dance Theater got a chance to work with Disney's Animal Kingdom representing their Asian theme. With the experience still fresh in mind Xufeng Lee from IADT's Hmong Heroes says, "It was an experience and also a way to teach many cultures about our own culture through our dance, our music, and our movements." The Winter Wonders showcase will feature all ten of the dancers that took part in working at Disney's Animal Kingdom. Each of them will be participating in newly choreographed dances with IADT's signature eye-candy costumes. The famous Ribbon Dance will also be in the program, which uses all of IADT's dancers with the ages ranging from 5-25, bringing more color and fresh energy to stage.

"The Moment" is a short film that will be featured at the Winter Wonders - Multimedia Showcase at Dec. 19, 7pm. This short film depicts the love of a husband as he tries to help his wife remember her past. With inspiration from a watch, the husband develops a watch theory and encourages his wife to remember the moments from her past by creating it.

For more information, please check on [www.amamedia.org](http://www.amamedia.org) or [www.inyasianandcetheater.org](http://www.inyasianandcetheater.org). This unique project is sponsored by the MN State Arts Board and Asian Pacific Council's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

### Baby FUNDamentals set at Rondo ECFE

Baby FUNDamentals will be held at Rondo ECFE (560 Concordia Ave.) on Dec. 20, 9:30-11am.

Attend with your infant and learn about baby massage, baby toys, and meet and visit with other parents of newborns. Have fun with your baby! Discussions happen on development, sleeping and feeding. For more information call Rondo ECFE at 651-325-2793. The group also meets on Fri., Dec. 20 at the same time and place.

### Dance Theater finds new home in Midway

CAAM Chinese Dance Theater (CDT) has moved to a new studio located at 800 Transfer Road, Suite 8. CAAM reports that the new studio is the size of the stage at the O'Shaughnessy Auditorium, and that dancers can now dance all year long in a studio the size of our production stage. The larger space means that even final rehearsals can now be held in the new space.

In addition, the studio boasts new dance floors with the latest in sprung floor technology to protect both young and old joints.

Another reason for the move was its proximity to the Arts Corridor on University Ave.; as the LRT comes to St. Paul, CDT will be part of a growing community looking for new artistic opportunities, and CDT wants to be a part of that.

The move to this new studio was only possible with the help of their volunteers. Fundraising conducted years ago provided the capital to build out the new space. Hundreds of volunteer hours by at least 60 people were contributed during July and August to move out of the old space and construct the new studios, saving CDT thousands of dollars and allowing CDT to complete the project in time for our opening day of classes in September.

CDT's mission is to preserve and celebrate the Chinese cultural heritage through the universal language of dance. CAAM CDT's Annual Production is scheduled Jan. 25 and 26, 2014 at the O'Shaughnessy and will feature a dance drama about Chinese New Year.

### District 10 to hold special meetings

The District 10 Como Community Council will be holding a special election at their December meeting (Tues., Dec. 17 at 7pm at the Historic Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway N.). They will elect two interim representatives from the new Subdistrict 4 area (representing the South Como neighborhood between Snelling and Dale and the northern and southern BNSF Railway tracks). The interim representatives will serve through District 10's annual meeting in April. Nominations may be made from the floor during the meeting; for more information, please call District 10 at (651) 644-3889.

Due to the holidays, the District 10 Como Community Council's January Land Use Committee meeting will be held on Mon., Dec. 30, at 7pm at the Historic Streetcar Station, 1224 Lexington Parkway N.

### Hamline Library closed most of Dec.

The Hamline Midway Library will close for renovations through Dec. 25, reopening on Dec. 26. The renovations will include a reconfiguration of the circulation desk and repainting.

On Mon., Dec. 30 at 6:30pm the library will feature stories for families and young children at Evening Reads with Lark.

The library will close at 5:30pm on Tue., Dec. 31 and remain closed all day on Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.

### Central Lutheran Pageant set Dec. 19

Central Lutheran School will present its annual Christmas Pageant at Jehovah Lutheran Church at 6:30pm on Thurs., Dec. 19. The presentation will involve more than 100 students from the school's choir, band and orchestra and younger children enacting familiar Christmas roles including angels, shepherds, Joseph and Mary. A free-will offering will be taken. The church is at 1566 Thomas. The school, at 775 Lexington Pkwy. N., enrolls about 120 students in pre-kindergarten through grade eight. More information is available from Central Lutheran School at 651-645-8649 or [school@clssp.org](mailto:school@clssp.org).

### Block Nurse Program receives UCare grant

The UCare Fund has distributed 29 community grants totaling \$885,116 and four research grants totaling \$295,460 to Minnesota organizations working to improve the health of people of all ages, cultures, and abilities in 2013.

Among the recipients was the Como Park/Falcon Heights Living at Home Block Nurse Program. They received funding to expand the hours of the program's Senior Wellness Volunteer Coordinator and Outreach Nurse in order to recruit and train 15 volunteers in "Expanded Healthy Moves," a home visit program to improve the well-being of frail and low-income seniors.

The UCare Fund is a community-directed initiative of UCare, the fourth-largest health plan in Minnesota. The Fund was established in 1998. UCare focuses its grant-making on programs and initiatives that improve the health of underserved populations across Minnesota with innovative services, education, community outreach, and research.

### Drum Circle meets on December 27

Announcing a Co-ed Drum Circle on Fri., Dec. 27, 6:30pm. Percussion, rhythm and freedom of expression will be explored. All levels of experience are welcomed and encouraged. Women's Drum Center is located at 2242 University Ave. W. Cost is \$10 at the door. Drums provided. Info and registration at [www.womensdrumcenter.org](http://www.womensdrumcenter.org).




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 9:45 a.m. Kid's Kingdom  
 10:45 a.m. Celebration Worship  
**Wednesday Advent Evening Prayer**  
 December 4, 11 & 18 at 6:30 p.m.  
**Christmas Worship**  
 Dec 24 Lessons & Carols, 4 p.m.  
 Dec 25 Worship w/Communion, 10 a.m.

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**Christmas Eve Service - 11:00 pm**  
 "Candlelight Service" Carols and Candles

**New Year's Eve 6:00 - 9:00 pm**  
 Potluck Dinner / Games /  
 Prayer and Praise Service

# Classifieds

## Monitor

Want ads must be in the Monitor before January 6 for the January 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)

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 [denis@deruyternelson.com](mailto:denis@deruyternelson.com). Want ads must be in the Monitor before January 6 for the January 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) 10-13

### ADDITIONS

Martin Dynneson & Son. Kustom Building and Remodeling - Kustom additions. Roofing, siding, exterior/interior painting. Metal roofs, guaranteed for 100 years. Marty 612-724-8819. 2-14

### AIR CONDITIONERS

Recycling discarded air conditioners. Free pick-up. No charge! Roger 612-210-3529. 8-14

### ANTIQUES

For Sale: Vintage 1900-1949 lights, house hardware, doors, tubs, radiators, etc. Also furniture hardware. 651-644-9270. 20% off with ad. 8-13

### ART CLASSES

Fine Art & Botanical Art Classes—beginning in January 2014 at Jack-in-the-Pulpit Studio, located just south of Lake Como. Classes and workshops in drawing, watercolor and oil painting. [www.jackinthepulpitstudio.com](http://www.jackinthepulpitstudio.com) 12-13

### ATTORNEY

Creative Solutions With a Personal Touch. Legal Services in the areas of: Small Business, Wills and Trusts, Probate, Real Estate, and Family. Kirsten Libby, 855 Rice Street, Suite 100, St. Paul, MN, 651-487-1208 [www.libbylawoffice.com](http://www.libbylawoffice.com). 8-13

### BATHROOMS

Bathroom/kitchen!! Basement finishing. Bad water pressure? Sinks, Toilets and tub/surrounds, etc. Ceramic tile. Basement bathrooms installed Call 612-275-9815. 11-13

### CARPET

Carpet and upholstery cleaning. Two rooms starting at \$59. Owner/operator, 45 years experience. Dave, 612-721-5105, cell 612-636-3073. 12-13

### FREE DISPOSAL

Washers, microwaves, water tanks, computer towers, and more. LLC. 651-399-0423 (Adams). 12-13

### FURNITURE

Furniture re-upholstery. Save grandma's chair and sofa! Owner/operator, 45 years experience. Dave, 612-721-5105, cell 612-636-3073. 12-13

### HELP WANTED

Wanted to hire - snow shoveler. Due to an injury, I am seeking a responsible individual or individuals who would commit to take care of my snow removal from my walks and roof for the winter. Referrals preferred. Joe. 612-978-3709. 12-13

### SNOW REMOVAL

Snow removal - sidewalks, driveways, rooftops. Gutter cleaning. Free estimates. Insured. 651-699-2832. 8-13

### PAINTING

Painter Jim. 25 years experience. Small jobs wanted. 651-698-0840. 3-14

Interior/exterior painting, enameling, plaster patching, free estimates. Bob. 651-633-5565. 12-13  
All Seasons painting/repair. Color patching/consulting. Insured. Free estimates. Kevin. 651-699-2832. 8-13

### PET SITTING

Wagners Pet Sitting. Walking Day and Overnight Care. 651-771-0421. 8-13

### PIANO TUNING

Quality piano tuning and repair. Reasonable rates. Call Robert Clough @ 612-722-7586 or e-mail: [robtclough@aol.com](mailto:robtclough@aol.com). 12-13

### WANTED TO BUY

\*\*WANTED\*\* - Old Stereo, HiFi Equipment, HAM, and Cameras. Andy 651-329-0515. 2-14

Paying the most for your furniture, dishes, glassware, knick-knacks, costume jewelry, antiques, pictures, lamps, household items, etc., I make house-calls. Call Mary. 612-729-3110. 1-14

### WINDOWS/SCREENS

Custom making/repairs. Thermal windows; fix frames, glazing. Kendall's—651-489-3210, 651-776-6996. 8-12

## Hundreds stage Midway protest against low wages

While shoppers braved the stores on Black Friday Nov. 29, hundreds of people turned up on University Avenue in the Midway to protest low pay for retail workers.

Demonstrators marched through the area, including the parking lot of the University Avenue Walmart store, calling for better worker wages and a hike in the state's minimum wage. The rally, which resulted in the arrests of 26 people, stopped traffic on University Avenue and ended up with a sit-

in at the intersection of University and Snelling Avenues.

Police estimated the protesters at 400 although organizers said it was closer to 1,000. Demonstrators singled out stores like nearby Walmart and Target as stores that paid low wages and minimal benefits. The protest began at 6 a.m. and lasted into the evening.

Authorities said the protest was peaceful and that those who were arrested drew misdemeanor citations and were then released.

# Dai Thao sworn in as Ward 1 City Council Member

A historic election season in Saint Paul came to a close as Dai Thao was officially sworn in as the Saint Paul City Council Member representing Ward 1 last month. Thao, 38, is the first Hmong American to be elected to the Saint Paul City Council. He finished at the top of a crowded field of seven candidates in a special election that was called this spring after Melvin W. Carter III announced

his resignation from the council to join the Minnesota Department of Education.

In his first official act, Councilmember Dai Thao announced that he has asked former campaign opponent Noel Nix to continue in his role as legislative aide in the Ward 1 office through the end of the year.

"We are in a time of incredible change and possibility for Ward 1. Noel has played an im-

portant role in a number of projects currently underway. He has graciously agreed to partner with me to ensure a smooth transition as I assume my duties as Ward 1's representative on the City Council," said Councilmember Thao.

Because this was a special election to fill the remainder of the current term, elections rules dictate that the winner be sworn in immediately as opposed to

waiting until January.

Said Nix, "Councilmember Thao is a dedicated community champion committed to securing the best possible future for everyone in Ward 1. Inviting me to collaborate with him as his legislative aide is just one example of his commitment to bringing community members together to accomplish this goal. I am honored to work with Councilmember Thao to lay a strong

foundation for future success."

The City Charter permits each council member to appoint their own Legislative Aide. Noel Nix joined the Ward 1 office in 2011 as the aide to former Councilmember Melvin W. Carter III. Former Councilmember Nathaniel Khaliq retained Nix after he was appointed in July by the Council to fill the Ward 1 seat after Carter resigned earlier this year.

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# Como Park hockey players score well on the ice and in the classroom

By MATTHEW DAVIS

Como Park may have the highest scoring boys hockey team in the state – academically.

"Our focus in hockey is to work hard, improve everyday, but family and school work comes first," Cougars coach Dave Bakken said.

The Cougars as a team have a grade point average of 3.98, and they have four student athletes earning more than a 4.0. Three of those four rank in the top 10 of their class.

"Our group of friends really pushes each other," Elliot Moorman said.

Moorman has achieved quite a bit in his academic career and on the ice too. The senior forward takes all of his classes at the University of Minnesota and holds a 4.72 GPA, ranked sixth in his class. He also plays club soccer and trains for a club rowing team.

All of the Cougars who earn over a 4.0 take mostly advance placement (AP) courses, and they



Como Park Cougar's Max Inskeep scores against Richfield. The Cougars have done well on the ice but they also take great pride in the fact that the team is the highest scoring boys hockey team in the state – academically.

set an example for the rest of the team by working hard at practice and cracking open the books when there's an opportunity on team road trips. Bakken often gets a classroom reserved at the opponent's school for his varsity players to study during the junior varsity game.

Tor Will, Moorman, Zach Lee and Rawley Crow all earn over 4.0 in school and play varsity hockey for the Cougars. Lee and Will also

are two of the team's leading scorers.

"He has a great shot and is a good decision maker," Bakken said of Will.

Lee plays defenseman and can play physical on the defensive end, and he can find the right guy to shoot the puck to. He is one of the team's leading scorers.

"He's real efficient," Bakken said. "His timing on defense as far as breaking up the other team's

plays is as good as I've ever seen in high school hockey. On the offensive end, he always makes the smart play."

Will played on the Cougars soccer team, which won the state title in the fall when he scored the game-winning goal. He also plays on the baseball team in the spring. He has a 4.60 GPA, ranked eighth in his graduating class.

"It's balancing, making sure you're managing your time," Will said.

Lee also played on the soccer team in fall, and he plays on the tennis team in the spring. He plays forward for the hockey team. Lee has a 4.84 GPA, ranked second in his class, and he takes all AP classes.

Crow, a senior forward with the Cougars, also has a 4.15 in the classroom.

Out of all their academic and athletic achievements, Moorman certainly would win the award for most traveled. He worked at a Hospital in Kenya over the sum-

mer after raising money to go. The year before, he played for a U.S. select hockey team to represent the country in Russia for an ambassador youth program.

"They picked the team based on leadership skills," Moorman said. "They needed to look at hockey skill insofar as you could at least play well."

The Cougars may not pile up all the accolades other programs do with the conference titles, section titles, state appearances; they come out to compete hard each game and display good sportsmanship. Bakken wants them to come away with building character and building for the future more so than filling up the win column.

"I just hope that we get better every day," Lee said. "I understand we're not going to win every game, but as long as we keep pushing forward and improving and staying positive with each other, then it will be a great season no matter what the results are."

## Light rail

Continued from page 1

committee meeting in October only drew two area residents, down from the crowds that flocked to meetings during heavy construction.

"It's very different than it was," said Shoua Lee, community outreach coordinator.

The city of St. Paul, which spent the past several years urging businesses to prepare for light rail, is refocusing its efforts. Nancy Homans, senior policy director for Mayor Chris Coleman, said the focus is shifting to ways to promote business districts and spur redevelopment.

Business owners and community leaders said they're looking toward the future. "I think a lot of work toward establishing unique area business and cultural districts is still taking shape and happening at the ground level," said Terri Thao, board chair of the Asian Eco-

nomics Development Association (AEDA). Businesses that weathered construction are reaping the benefits of rebuilt street and streetscape improvements now, she added, and hoping for more benefit when light rail is up and running next year.

"I think we're just glad it's largely done," said Ryan Wilson, owner of the UPS store at Midway Marketplace. His store is in an area that saw two years of heavy construction. Other business owners note they continue to deal with loss of on-street parking and access challenges due to changes in traffic patterns.

Homans said one city goal is to promote redevelopment of land along the light rail line. "We have a huge resource with underutilized industrial land and need to find ways to support redevelopment," she said. A pending West Midway industrial study, which is under review by the St. Paul Planning Commission, could help with that effort.

Business assistance programs

are winding down. Businesses got a variety of forms of help from the city, including façade improvements, new websites and forgivable loans. Instrumental in proving assistance was U7, a consortium of community development corporations along the rail line.

Homans said more than 400 businesses were helped over the past few years. The \$4 million Ready for Rail forgivable business loan program provided 266 loans totaling \$3,673,197 to 206 businesses. (Businesses could apply for up to \$20,000 and some businesses applied more than once for smaller loans.) Three businesses

the city assisted have closed. The city won't pursue collection of their loans.

Eighteen percent of the businesses are very small, with less than \$5,000 per month in sales. "We did, I think, reach the smallest and the most vulnerable of the businesses," Homans said. When looking at the businesses with the most significant loss, Homans said that had less to do with geography and more to do with the strength of the business itself.

Because there is some loan money left, it has been offered to businesses that slogged through two years of heavy construction,

including businesses in the areas around Snelling, Pascal and Hamline avenues. Businesses can apply for up to \$10,000 in additional assistance.

Other businesses only wanted marketing assistance, said Homans. The firm Mod & Co. helped with marketing, including coupon books and a billboard campaign. The avenue was split up into commercial districts and given new logos, including Midway, Historic Frogtown, Historic Rondo, Little Mekong and Rice Street. "Part of that is creating a brand and a stronger identity for an area," Homans said.

## Central students awarded scholarships



The St. Paul Optimist Club annually awards scholarships to college bound seniors who have overcome adversity. At the same time, they are looking for students who are excelling academically, participating in extracurricular activities, and giving back to the community. From a total of 15 high school students selected, Central High School has three winners that were announced recently (left to right): Emely Mancia Chavez, Daniel Katzman, and Ayaan Natalia. Each student will receive a \$1500 scholarship. Chavez says she plans to "pursue a career in medicine that will help others." Katzman is considering a profession in finance or sports journalism. Natalia wants to become a political activist for the rights of children: "My goals have always revolved around gaining the advocacy skills to enrich the U.S. educational system and to become the next director of the Children's Defense Fund."



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