



Midway Como monitor

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AUGUST 2005
Vol. 29 No. 12
20,000 Circulation



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Howie Bell to retire from Parks and Rec

Hamline Midway residents 'high' on rooftop gardening

By NANCY HEDIN

It seemed like a job for Gladys Kravitz, the nosy neighbor on the 1960s TV show "Bewitched" who kept staring out her window to see what Samantha and Darrin Stevens would do next. What were Hamline-Midway residents, Terry and Karen Kormann doing on their roof?

Last fall the Kormanns built a triangle shaped roof addition on their three-season porch. Then they hauled 3/4 cubic yards of dirt up a ladder, spread it on the roof and planted a garden.

"It was just a folly. We wanted to see what it was like," says Karen Kormann, a life-long entrepreneur and designer. Her creative eye and passion for antiques and interior design is evident throughout their home and garden. They have lived on Van Buren Avenue for 25 years and Karen has been gardening on the ground for all of that. This high-wire experiment is a more recent development.

The green roof project evolved over time. Karen heard about the idea first. It fit with the Kormann's philosophy about sustainable living. Then, when they needed new front steps, they decided the timing was right to do a green roof above the new steps. Terry Kormann can build just about anything. As a retired aircraft inspector, he knows the value of good planning, design and precision.

Terry and Karen heard



Last fall Hamline-Midway resident Terry Kormann, together with his wife Karen (not pictured), built a triangle-shaped roof addition on their three-season porch. Then they hauled 3/4 cubic yards of dirt up a ladder, spread it on the roof and planted a garden. (Photo by Terry Faust)

through the grapevine about Jim Nestingen who is an architect and a landscape architect. They contacted him and also saw the garden he made on top his flat roof

garage. Nestingen helped the Kormanns design the project and helped with some of the installation. He also knew a structural engineer who could calculate load

capacity of the structure and make plans that would help secure a building permit.

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Ambitious goals for MTC face funding, ridership challenges

By JAN WILLMS

The rosy picture painted by Metro Transit for its plans for increased bus ridership seems to have a small problem.

Rates are higher. Routes are decreasing. And ridership is down.

What's wrong with this picture?

Nothing that funding can't fix, according to representatives of several groups that advocate for mass transit in the Twin Cities.

"Metro Transit and the Met Council have had plans since 2000 to expand transit and ridership, but neither the region nor the state is willing to make an investment to do this," said Lea Schuster, executive director of

Transit for Livable Communities. "We aren't able to fund transit in a responsible way, and I'm afraid we'll see a decline throughout the region."

Although the entire region is affected, nowhere are transit problems discussed more passionately than along University Avenue, where the pros and cons of bus and potential light rail ridership collide.

Schuster said that 40 to 50 per cent of the riders taking light rail transit (LRT) are new to transit altogether, and light rail is not taking away from bus ridership. "It's a trend you see nationally," she said. "The group who is less likely to ride buses is more likely to ride light rail."

Schuster said her group and others have been working to pass a bill, Transportation Choices 2020 that has been rejected by Gov. Tim Pawlenty.

"Met Council had a plan to double bus ridership and build a full system of transitways, including the Central Corridor along University, and one to St. Cloud and one to Hastings," she announced. "The plan is on the books and went through the Legislature but was vetoed by the governor in May," she added, "because it included a tax increase."

Although the \$66 million bill was vetoed, however, by the end of the special session the transportation funding was back to \$46 million. "Transit was only cut

by \$20 million, so it was a real win on our part," she noted.

Schuster said she believes most Minnesotans understand the state is not going to build its way out of congestion. "We need new choices for people to get around," she claimed. "If an investment is not made, it becomes more expensive for our region. Legislators need to stop making pledges."

Schuster has hopes for the next legislative session, however, calling herself an eternal optimist.

Lack of funding is also a concern of Mathews Hollinshead, transportation chair for the Northstar Chapter of the Sierra Club.

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Midway Como monitor

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1885 University Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-645-7045

Publishers:
Calvin deRuyter, Tim Nelson

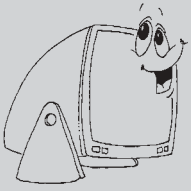
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The Midway Como Monitor is a monthly community publication in the Midway and Como areas of St. Paul, owned and operated by deRuyter-Nelson Publications, Inc. All correspondence should be sent to the Monitor, 1885 University Ave., #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. Editorial and advertising offices can be reached at 651-645-7045. Our fax number is 651-645-4780.

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Midway Como in a Minute

Board of Appeals OKs apartment building

Barring an appeal to the St. Paul City Council, Hamline Park Plaza Partnership's proposed apartment building can be built at 1500 Thomas Av. With little discussion the St. Paul Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) unanimously approved variances needed for the project July 18. That decision is final unless it is appealed to the City Council. As of Monitor deadline no appeal had been filed.

The project at 1500 Thomas Av. would be built on a site that was once part of the Samaritan Hospital property. The BZA held a public hearing on the project in June but laid the issue over so that HMC could take a position.

In recent years the Thomas Avenue property has been occupied by a sculpture garden. It was removed due to ongoing problems with vandalism and other crimes in the area. In 2004 a plan to build senior citizen condominiums on the site won BZA and City Council approval, but was shelved due to lower than anticipated pre-sales.

The newest proposal brought forward by owner-developers David and Terri VanLandschoot calls for a four-story building, with one three-bedroom apartment, eight studio apartments, 37 two-bedroom apartments and one-bedroom apartments. The building would have a skyway connection to the existing Hamline Park Plaza office building's parking ramp. The ramp would have 75 spaces earmarked for apartment dwellers and their guests.

The five variances are:

*A lot coverage variance of 35 percent is allowed and 45 percent is proposed, for a variance of 10 percent.

*A side yard setback of 24 feet is required and 18 feet is proposed for a variance of 6 feet.

*A front yard setback of 25 feet is required and 18 feet is proposed, for a variance of 7 feet.

*A rear setback of 25 feet is required and 0 feet is proposed, for a variance of 25 feet.

*The maximum density of the site is 38 units. Fifty are proposed, for a variance of 12 units.

Deli opposed with Summit Council vote

A proposal to expand a restaurant/deli at Uni-Dale Mall, add beer and wine sales, provide entertainment and rent space out for parties and events is opposed by the Summit University Planning Council (SUPC) and its Neighborhood Development Committee. Now Foodsmart owner Toua Xiong must decide when and if his requests for beer and wine, entertainment and catering licenses should move on to City Hall.

The full SUPC Board voted on the request July 26. More than 50 people attended SUPC's July 19 Neighborhood Development Committee meeting. Twenty people voted against the request and 12 were for it. (Only people who live or work in District 8 are allowed to vote.)

Xiong has owned Foodsmart since 1997. His mall space has been a grocery store since Uni-Dale Mall was built more than 30 years ago. The space recently housed Gala and Country Club supermarkets. The store's 39-seat restaurant area already has a dance floor and stage. Xiong said he often receives requests to hold parties and events there.

But neighbors and representatives of neighborhood churches said the rental hall business, combined with the serving of wine and beer and providing entertainment, would add to problems at and near Uni-Dale Mall. The mall parking lot is a late-night hangout for young people. Noise, litter, drag racing, public drinking and underage drinking are problems for the surrounding area.

Xiong said he dropped an initial request for an on-sale

liquor license after speaking with Ward One Council Member Debbie Montgomery and hearing her concerns. He said the business would be run in a responsible manner.

Xiong's supporters said the rental hall will give Hmong community residents a place to hold events. They also asked that the problems in the parking lot already exist and aren't caused by his business.

But neighbors were skeptical. "I don't want to give kids another place to drink in the community," said Laurel Bunker, a neighborhood resident and youth pastor. "Our community has worked long and hard to change the image of what people think." She and others said the business would add to the problems already in the parking lot.

The district council recommendation goes to city licensing officials. The next steps for Xiong are to have his license considered at a City Council legislative hearing. No date has been set. A recommendation will then go to the St. Paul City Council.

Townhouse project on Gilbert shut down

Many months of debate came to an end July 27 as the St. Paul City Council shut the door on a proposal to build a 33-unit townhouse development on Gilbert Street. The council rejected Matt O'Hara's plans to develop a vacant parcel just north of Interstate 94, denying a St. Paul Planning Commission recommendation to rezone the site from industrial to multi-family residential use. The rezoning is needed before any housing can be built there.

Now O'Hara isn't sure what his next steps will be. The developer would still like to purchase the property from the city. The city would in turn have to acquire the land from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

MnDOT purchased the property years ago when I-94 was on the drawing boards. The land wasn't needed when the freeway was built and is now considered surplus right-of-way. In recent years MnDOT has sold a number surplus right-of-way sites to the city. The city in turn sells the properties, either for new development or for adjacent home owners to expand their yards.

Ward Four City Council Member Jay Benanav said he's not inclined to recommend that the city sell the Gilbert Street land to O'Hara or to anyone else at this time. Benanav said he isn't seeing much community support for housing on the property and isn't sure what the best future use would be.

Benanav said the Planning Commission erred by failing to consider the noise impacts of building housing close to the freeway and to the Canadian Pacific Railroad tracks. But O'Hara said the units could be sound-proofed and points out that there are many new units of housing built adjacent to Twin Cities freeways.

O'Hara planned to build the townhouses in a three-phase project. The project would require front and rear yard setback variances.

The site development has been presented as potential housing for area college students, an idea that met with skepticism from some area residents and college officials. Merriam Park Community Council had initially expressed support for the project a few years ago, but ultimately voted in 2003 to recommend denial of the rezoning request. The council reaffirmed that position earlier this year.

In recommending denial, the district council cited the site's isolation from much of the rest of the residential area. District council members also raised concerns about the property's potential to become run-down and the noise impacts on residents.

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Midway agency offers hope, help to laid off workers

By JAN WILLMS

Her layoff was bringing her to tears.

Ann Bell was in her early 50s, and she had been working in factory positions for most of her life. The work was hard, but it paid well. Now, Bell was faced with unemployment and an uncertain future. And another problem was bothering her. She could not read or spell well enough to fill out an application without help.

These were the admissions she made to her counselor at Quality Career Services (QCS), 2515 Wabash Ave., St. Paul, as she started to pick up the pieces of her life following her layoff.

Hesitant about how much information to relay, she only knew that she was going to have difficulties finding another job in manufacturing, an industry that at the time was declining in Minnesota.

Little by little, however, Bell started putting a plan in place, with the assistance of QCS, an agency that provides career counseling, job seeking assistance and retraining for workers who have been laid off from a job through no fault of their own.

A resume was put together, so that Bell could see her qualifications and accomplishments on paper, and have something to present to the employers she contacted. Although she had a high school diploma, she knew her reading skills were limited because she had not received the help she required in earlier years.

A literacy program was located, and Bell began attending once a week. She attended faithfully and soon was reading a small book of stories and began to attempt reading a novel. The tears were coming less frequently now, and Bell started to develop a new confidence in herself.

After discussion about her fu-



Quality Career Services counselor Kathey Ferkul has been working with Como resident Rexford Sarpong throughout his training program designed to land him a permanent, full-time position as a legislative auditor. (Photo by Terry Faust)

ture career path, she decided that perhaps the rigors of factory work were not something she wanted to return to, as well as such employment being difficult to find. She focused on becoming a certified nursing assistant, a career she had started earlier in life but had left for manufacturing employment.

It had been many years ago, and she needed to become re-certified. A class was found for her, and she put all her energy into it. It was not easy—she missed one question on her first skills test and had to take it over.

But the second time she tested, she made it. Her visit to her counselor was much different from the first time she hesitantly

called at QCS.

"I passed my test," she said jubilantly. "And I've finished the novel I was reading. I'm up to 80 words a minute. I'm even helping with some of the other students."

Bell found herself among many other workers in the area who each year face the difficulties of an enforced layoff.

The latest available statistics indicate that between the second quarter of 1995 to the fourth quarter of 2003, there were 69 mass layoffs in companies located in Ramsey County, affecting 7,884 residents in Ramsey County.

State-wide, during that period, 1,284 mass layoff affected 227,285 state residents. And when

individuals find themselves in these circumstances, they turn to dislocated worker programs for direction and assistance.

Como resident Rexford Sarpong was in very different circumstances, but also in need of help as a dislocated worker. He had come to this country from Ghana several years ago to study, arriving first in Houston, TX, and coming to St. Paul in 1998. Sarpong was willing to work hard for his education, and he attended National American University, going to school during the day and working at 3M at night as a machine operator.

"These days, the economy is so fragile, and you have to have a

higher degree to live competitively," he noted. He worked first through a temp office and was then hired permanently. Things were going well for him.

Then in November 2003 he was laid off. The operation he was working for was moving to Mexico.

"The layoff was very devastating," Sarpong recalled.

"If you are not working, it is very hard. It makes your mind weak. You sit in the house, and you think about what you are going to do. How are you going to pay the rent and expenses? I didn't know this layoff was going to happen."

Sarpong was introduced to QCS, and was able to get tuition funding for classes in business administration. "I also got some help with my rent," he said. He managed to scrape by on his unemployment insurance, some occasional support assistance from QCS, and part-time jobs. He completed his studies last May, and then began utilizing the help of a job developer in looking for employment. He has attended some of the Monday morning coffee hours sponsored by QCS, with outside speakers discussing various aspects of job search. He is also benefiting from the computer lab and courses available at QCS, adding to his computer knowledge.

He has found temporary employment with Globe Aviation, and is applying for an operation management position at the company.

"At the time I signed up, I did not have any idea this organization would help me," Sarpong stated, "but they have helped me finish my studies and have stood behind me all the way."

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Summer is the season for unusual skin conditions such as sun burns, bug bites, and allergic reactions. When something appears on your skin that is itchy, painful, red, or bothersome you might find yourself staring at a multitude of products on the pharmacy shelf. The array of options can be overwhelming, so I want to help you make a good choice when selecting a medication.

Skin products can be classified by their function and by their consistency. In this article I will call everything a salve, which is meant to encompass the various consistencies available.

Products in tubes are either ointments or creams. Ointments are usually clear and greasy (like Vaseline). Creams are white and thick (like toothpaste). Lotions are thinner and come in bottles not tubes. Often lotions are used to cover larger areas of skin than an ointment or cream. The functions of skin products fall into four categories: antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, or moisturizing.

Moisturizing products simply keep skin protected from drying. This is more important during the winter than the summer, but sun exposed skin certainly needs good moisture protection. Products with fragrance added might irritate already dry skin, so read your labels carefully and avoid anything with fragrance, especially if you have sensitive skin.

Antibacterial products are used to fight infections caused by bacteria. Some names of antibacterial salves are bacitracin, neosporin, and mycitracin. When reading the tube, look for the active ingredient or for the word antibacterial.

If you have a wound or sore that is painful or has redness surrounding it or pus coming out of it, you probably need an antibiotic product. If, despite using a salve, the redness spreads, or you are running a fever, you should see a

Cares and Cures

By JANE KILIAN, M.D.

The skinny on skin salves

physician. You might need antibiotic pills in addition to a salve. People with diabetes need to be especially careful to treat skin infections aggressively—so see your doctor sooner rather than later.

Anti-fungal products are used to treat fungal infections. On the skin, these infections often occur in folds of skin (between the toes, in the groin, or under breasts). The area is often bright red and itchy. The affected skin area is usually solid red, and might have smaller, scattered red spots spreading out from the border. Some over the counter anti-fungal agents are lamisil and lotrimin.

Prevention of fungal infections includes drying your skin well after showers or swimming. If you wear wet swim clothing or sweaty socks for several hours, you are setting yourself up for a fungal infection. Skin needs air ... so uncover your body parts for a period of time every day.

If you have a widespread, very itchy, splotchy, red area of skin, you might have an allergic dermatitis. (Dermatitis is just a fancy word for skin irritation.) This type of skin irritation can occur from contact with a plant (poison ivy, etc.) or any other product ... new soaps, new fabrics, new perfumes, chemical exposures. Even exposure to sunlight and/or sweat can cause an allergic skin reaction.

Steroid products are the drug of choice for allergic dermatitis. The active ingredient is usually hydrocortisone. Cortisone blocks your body's inflammatory response to an offending agent, calming the redness and relieving the itching.

They should not be used on thin, fragile skin (eye areas, genitals) and should be used sparingly on children. A cortisone product will make a fungal infection worse, not better.

Over the counter antihistamines (benadryl, claritin) can also diminish an allergic reaction and can be used with steroid salves for severe symptoms.

Some final words. Get a tetanus booster if you have not had one in the last 10 years. Tetanus vaccination prevents serious complications from a puncture wound. If you cannot remember when your last booster was, you probably need one.

Wear sun screen to prevent burning. If you do become sunburned, applying plain white vinegar to your skin will reduce the redness and the pain.

If you have a bug bite that is red, swollen or getting larger in size, try an antihistamine but also schedule to see your doctor.

If you have a skin condition that is not improving, or is getting worse, see your physician.

If you have a severe rash of any kind, and find yourself short of breath or having difficulty swallowing, go to an emergency room.

I hope this helps keep you and your skin happy and healthy during the rest of the summer.

(Dr. Kilian is a family practice physician who lives and works in the Midway Como community. She believes that good medicine means caring for people as well as curing diseases. We want to address your health concerns so please let us know what topics you would like to see in future columns. If you have suggestions or questions, write to the Monitor c/o 1885 University Avenue West, #110, St. Paul, MN 55104. Or e-mail denisw@aplacetorember.com.)

While on our way back from a trip up North, I reminisced about my grandmother to my husband. He never met her. She died before he was in my life.

My grandmother, Granny, was a very important person in my life. She was a little old lady, somewhat like the Granny on The Beverly Hillbillies. Small and wiry, she gave the appearance of gentility, but was as tough as nails and had stamina that went on forever.

Granny's husband had a heart attack on moving day. She was a couple of blocks away, tending to the small children and the new baby, my mother. She told me a man came for her, and she ran those few blocks with lightning speed.

It was to no avail; when she got there, my grandfather was already dead. This was 1927, tough times for the country, and impossible times for a widow with eight children. Granny was a farm girl and had attended finishing school. She knew how to spread jelly on toast so your fingers wouldn't get sticky, but didn't know how to support a family. Over the years, she scrubbed floors, took in laundry, became a midwife, and tended to a large garden. In the winter, she'd walk along the tracks with one of her kids and pick up coal.

She heated her home as cheaply as possible. Actually, she did everything as cheaply as possible. Granny raised her children, and took a job as a kitchen worker at Miller Hospital when she was 65. She worked another ten years before retiring and moving to California.

Granny was always around for us when we were little. She'd come and spend the night when my dad was out of town. She'd be at every recital, every special event;—first



The Best Years

By SHERRI MOORE

The value of Grandparents

communions, confirmations, graduations, and finally, my wedding. I grew closest to her when she moved to California. I was lucky enough to have spent a couple of summers with her. It was during these extended visits that I learned how to cook, clean and become independent. Granny's constant remark was:

"No man's going to tell me what to do."

This became our family motto. My mother used to repeat it to my dad when, on those rare occasions, he'd tell her what to do. Granny didn't hate men; she loved my dad. She just didn't want anyone telling her how to live. She died at 97, her heart gave out after a couple years of medical problems.

My mother raised us and was a good mother. My Granny gave us the extra added attraction of her approach to life. She never contradicted my mother, but made sure her side was known. She's been dead 23 years, and yet, I can still see her standing in her kitchen with a full length apron covering her sensible cotton house dress.

I share the story of my Granny to illustrate how powerful grandparents can be. Because Granny had a hard life, she instilled in my mother and me the ability to take care of ourselves. No one in our family looks for a white knight to save them. There is no coddling of men to keep them agreeable

in our family. I never even thought of marrying to have someone take care of me, and even spurned several proposals that sounded like I needed someone to look after me.

What would've happened had Granny not been in my life? Perhaps my mother would have been more passive, and let my father rule the roost. He would've become much more overbearing,

seeing that he was Irish, and liked that castle and king theory. I may have married young to a man who would have put me on an allowance. My children could have very likely been raised the same way. Isn't it interesting how generations can be affected by a grandparent?

I'm not alone with these experiences either. President Clinton talked lovingly of his grandfather in his book. He learned how to value people, no matter who they were. Something I think he demonstrated throughout his presidency.

So what kind of grandparent should we be in these changing times. How can we teach the grandkids things that may not exist when they grow up? I suppose we can teach them to learn how to learn. We need to teach our grandkids to value themselves, and make sure they are aware of the dangers today. I think the most important thing to pass on to future generations is optimism. Even though these are troubled times. I'm still optimistic about the future. If we don't have hope, what can they look forward to?

(Sherri Moore is a freelance writer. She and her husband live in their empty nest in Minneapolis. Sherri welcomes your comments and suggestions and can be reached at sherrimoore93@msn.com.)

LETTERS

Commending Sen. Ellen Anderson

On behalf of the 90 conservation and environmental organizations that make up the Minnesota Environmental Partnership, I commend Senator Ellen Anderson for her commitment to protecting Minnesota's environment this past legislative session. Senator Anderson worked tirelessly for val-

ues that all Minnesotans – Republicans and Democrats alike – hold true, namely the need to protect and restore Minnesota's natural resources.

Among her many notable actions, Senator Anderson championed efforts to expand the use of clean, renewable energy sources in Minnesota. Her steadfast leadership on environmental issues in general is relied upon by all of us

who seek to ensure that Minnesotans have a clean environmental legacy to pass on to future generations. Senator Anderson deserves our gratitude for her work on protecting Minnesota's precious natural resources.

Ron Kroese
Executive Director, Minnesota Environmental Partnership

The Cheapskate says:

Contemplating the apostrophe, I pulled up to the entrance of Ol' Mexico. Being who I am, I had to wonder whether the missing "d" in "Ol" saves on signage. ("Surely you don't charge full price for a little ol' squiggle?")

But as I padlocked my bike to the fancy window grille next to the front door (what, you think the Cheapskate drives with these gas prices?) all thoughts of punctuation melted away. The adobe-style walls, the mariachi music coming from a speaker under the eaves. South of the border and I wasn't even in the front door yet.

I sat at the window to watch for my companions (right, they're too important to be on time). Instead I found myself glued to the view in the opposite direction: the buffet line. I couldn't see the food, but I could see the faces of people filling their plates. The usual range from judicious pickiness to pure, unmitigated WANT. And the buffet itself stretched out like an interstate



Without Reservations

Head North of the Border to Ol' Mexico

guacamole? Empanadas of tender, flaky cornmeal crust, stuffed with spicy shredded beef? A selection of fresh fruits and berries with real whipped cream? I know that's a lot of question marks for one paragraph, but I am trying to express a paradigm shift here. I was primed for greasy tacos and cheese-smothered enchiladas, and lots of 'em. Don't worry, the classics were there. But there was more good taste in that buffet line than I bargained for, especially for \$7.95.

The final touch that won my heart was the selection of tiny, bite-size dessert bars. I weighed the merits of mini-cheesecakes and lemon bars, but went with the raspberry fudge bars and caramel apple bars. They were ex-

accurately be called 'New Country Buffet' With Distractions for Diners with A.D.D. But even a snob can find something worth eating there. I did fine filling up on fresh pineapple, home fries, pound cake and whipped cream out of a can. So bring the kids, they'll love the variety, the room to run, and the antique video games so beloved to our Bachelor. Eat outside if the weather's fine, and repeat after me: "It's not a Mexican restaurant, it's not a Mexican restaurant."

The Bachelor

At the risk of incurring Quetzalcoatl's wrath and having my mirrored sunglasses struck from my chiseled face, I'm afraid I have to agree with the Food Snob on this one. Sure, with its adobe-splattered archways, courtyards and gurgling fountains, Ol' Mexico looks "authentic," but in a sort of Epcot way, if you know what I'm saying. I mean, this place is plopped right next to a Red Wing Shoe store and a Subway for Kulkulkan's sake!

But we can't really blame Ol' Mexico for this uninspired setting, this is the suburbs after all (I'm allowed to spew condescension here, for I grew up in this particular burb.)

However, once I stepped inside, any hint of my trademark qualities of understanding and forgiveness quickly evaporated. What's that? Could that be Quiet Riot's 1980s metal classic "Come On Feel the Noise" scraping my ears? Why, yes it is. And what's that I see on the buffet? Bacon,

eggs, and French toast? Welcome to the land of the Aztecs, mi amigos.

It's not like I was expecting the charm and flavors of some one-room cantina on the outskirts of Mexico City. You see, I've been familiar with the albatross known as Ol' Mexico for many, many years. So I agreed to this review more for the kitsch, camp, and nostalgia than any expectations of intestinal satisfaction.

(SNOB AND CHEAPSKATE INTERRUPT IN A HUFF:

The Bachelor's foot-stomping tantrum is the whole reason we went to Ol' Mexico in the first

place! The Snob almost quit the team over it. As it was, she managed to put it off for several months, hoping that the toddler-like mentality of the Bachelor would move to another shiny bauble he wanted to pick up from the asphalt and put in his mouth. But he was stuck on Ol' Mexico.]

Back to the Bachelor: To be honest, once I got past the "international" portions of the buffet, I actually found quite a few items that made for a perfectly adequate, safe, Mexican lunch. I can't remember what I ate, but the Snob has amply described the spread.

So the next time you drag your beaten-down body out of the office and slump off to lunch, consider Ol' Mexico. It won't challenge you. It won't intrigue you. You'll probably never even remember what you ate. But who really cares. You're going to have yourself a good ol' fashioned feed. Not to mention, your brain deserves the siesta. Hasta la vista!

Don't worry, the classics were there.
But there was more good taste in that buffet line
than I bargained for, especially for \$7.95.

across the prairie. It's 15 yards long if it's an inch.

Still waiting, I toyed with the menu. The word COMPLIMENTARY jumped out. That's my favorite menu word, after FREE. I read this: Happy Hour Monday through Friday, complimentary taco bar and reduced prices on tap beers. Of course, the only time I was here for Happy Hour, everyone in our party said the margaritas erred on the side of subsequent safe vehicle operation. Which is just fine with me. I only mention it because this is a critical review column.

But wait...up roared the Bachelor in a cloud of manly dust. I watched him stride to the door. It took at least six steps for him to suavely remove his mirrored sunglasses. I wonder if he learned that in GQ magazine. Seven minutes later I was still waiting for him. Then suddenly he was seated across from me at the window table. "Bathrooms are 45 degrees Fahrenheit and there's bacon and eggs on the buffet," he said. I wondered if I was supposed to know some espionage countersign, but it was just his way of saying, "Hello, sorry to keep you waiting." No wonder the man's romantic life is such a waking dream.

The Snob's arrival threw everything into upheaval. "I saw outdoor seating!" she verbalized. "Follow me!" I juggled my Diet Coke, my ice water plus the Snob's, and my undercover note-taking supplies as we obediently trudged behind her to the patio.

But I can't complain about the move. It was like worm to butterfly, emerging from the dim, grubby interior to a charming patio on one of the most splendid days of the year. A fountain bubbled. The Bachelor babbled. We ventured back into the dim interior for the buffet.

But what's this? Gourmet salad greens with arugula in the taco bar? Heaping bowls of fresh

cellent! And I am speaking as a 43-year veteran of small-town church basement desserts.

These bars were not only good, they were free with the buffet! Complimentary, if you will. See you in the buffet line. Save room for the bars.

The Food Snob

Cognitive dissonance—a term I learned long ago in college—leaps to mind when thinking about Ol' Mexico. It means roughly that messages being sent are twisted or confusing to the recipient. Here's what I mean: a building that, inside and out, resembles a hacienda, complete with terra cotta tiles, gently flowing fountains, and—video games, giant TVs with closed circuit trivia, Texas Hold 'Em poker matches, and a buffet stuffed with French toast, bacon, tapioca pudding and "better than sex" bars.

Overstimulation! Slow down! I just want to have lunch, not be confused.

Gotta give credit to the owners though. It's nigh onto 30 years ago that Mexican food for the masses became popular. Most Chi Chis are gone, I can't even remember the name of the other chain (El Torito?) and other survivors have been turned into a hipper concept (Chevvy's). Ol' Mexico remains, and it has changed—although not architecturally—with the times.

The buffet is designed for people who want mass quantities of inoffensive, middle American, steam table fare (step up to the plate here, Bachelor). In a tip of the hat to the surroundings, a few of the items are supposedly Mexican (enchiladas, a taco bar, refried beans), but lack any chiles or any flavor for that matter. Heck, my mother used to get more authentic Mexican food out of cans in the '60s.

So Ol' Mexico should more

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Hamline Midway resident raises money to fight lung disease

By DEBORAH BROTZ

When Midway resident Autumn Connell, 32, was in junior high school, her father, who was a pulmonary physician, did a triathlon. Although she had always wanted to do one herself, it wasn't until after her second child was born that she took up running to try to get in shape.

On Aug. 7, Connell did her fifth triathlon, the Brewhouse Triathlon in Duluth, to raise money for the American Lung Association.

"I wanted to honor the work my dad did by raising funds," she said. "I can pick the events I like to do and raise funds at the same time. My father-in-law was diagnosed with lung cancer and emphysema within the last few months. This made the triathlon more meaningful. He had surgery and is undergoing chemo. When I have a hard training day, I think of him."

When Connell first started running, she didn't like it.

"I hated running," she said. "I have never ever been a runner. My older brother had been doing half marathons and enjoyed them. I thought if he can do it,

I'll try."

After Connell did her first 5K, she looked at triathlons.

"I always loved swimming and biking," she said. "I never had a driver's license. 'I'm an at-home mom who commuted by bike.' Doing triathlons has not been easy for Connell.

"It's a real big challenge," she said. "The end of last year, I did a half marathon. That was eight months after I started running."

Connell started raising funds last February at a triathlon, Tri-U-Mah, at the University of Minnesota. The last event for fund-raising will be in October.

At the Brewhouse Triathlon, Connell raised funds for the American Lung Association by doing a 9-mile swim, a 21-mile bike ride, and a 5-mile run.

"I get pledges from people," she said. "I raise funds just for participating. 'I'm planning to do another series of letters to raise more funds. My goal for this whole season ending in October is \$3,000. Right now I'm at \$700.'"

Other fund-raising events coming up are the Perch Lake

Swim, a 2-mile swim in Hudson, Wis., on Aug. 20, and another triathlon in St. Paul, the Triamerica Triathlon, on Aug. 28.

Connell is working hard to reach her \$3,000 goal for this season.

"If I get there, hopefully I can do even more next year," she said. "If I do the Ironman next year, I'll raise more money. It's a 15-mile swim, a 56-mile bike ride, and a half marathon, which is a little over 13 miles."

As a mother of two girls, Ella, 4, and Fiona, 1-1/2, Connell includes her family in training for triathlons.

"It's a wonderful sport," she said. "As a mom, it's great. I'm not focusing on one sport. I run with the girls jogging stroller and put the girls in the burley and go biking."

Swimming early in the morning, Connell and her husband, Bill, go to Oxford Pool in the winter. He swims with their daughters in the wading pool while she does laps.

"You can make training a family thing," she said. "It's made all of us healthier."

For Connell's training pro-



As a mother of two girls, Ella, 4, and Fiona, 1-1/2, Hamline-Midway resident Autumn Connell includes her family in training for triathlons. (Photo by Terry Faust)

gram, she usually swims twice a week, bikes two to three times a week, and runs two to three times a week.

"This year, I'm trying hard to do strength training," she said. "I don't belong to a gym. I'm trying to do things outside and at home."

For 2005, Connell has biked 800 miles, run over 300 miles, and done 24 miles of swimming so far. She still has several more races to go.

"When you can't breathe, nothing else matters," she said. "My grandfather died of lung cancer, and my grandmother had cancer. She was exposed to second-hand smoke. Lung disease has touched my life in lots of different ways. If I have a hard day, I try to think how blessed I am to be able to do these things. It keeps me motivated."

Connell wants to raise awareness about lung disease because of her family.

"I want to honor what my dad has done in relation to lung disease," she said. "I have loved ones who have died because of lung disease or are currently suffering from lung disease."

Raising money for the American Lung Association gives meaning to what Connell is doing.

"I could do this, and it could be about me getting healthy and fit for myself," she said.

"Knowing how lung disease affects people of all ages gives meaning to what I'm doing."

Hopefully, it helps the American Lung Association and makes life better for some people."

Planning to do Grandma's Marathon in Duluth and the Ironman in Racine, Wis., next year, Connell will continue to raise money for the American Lung Association.

Connell's hope for the Aug. 7 triathlon was first just to finish.

"I always like beating my times from the last race," she said. "I'm not out to win, but just to do it. I hope being an active mom will help set an example for my daughters. I'm hoping they can avoid developing a lung disease by being fit. I'm hoping a life with fitness will help them to be healthy."

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Several area bus routes spared; others reduced or eliminated...

MTC Bus service cuts OK'd

By JANE MCCLURE

Several area bus routes were spared but others will be eliminated or reduced on September 10. The 3.5 percent cut in transit service is less severe than the 10 percent cut initially proposed by Metro Transit. That proposal would have eliminated 28 routes and reduced service on 78. The plan adopted June 29 by the Metropolitan Council eliminates 18 routes and reduces service on 34 on weekdays. On Saturdays, nine routes will be eliminated and 10 reduced. On Sundays two routes will be eliminated and 8 reduced.

One bit of good news is that funding decisions made during the 2005 special session of the Minnesota Legislature last month mean further transit cuts aren't likely this year. Metro Transit Director Brian Lamb said that if additional funding couldn't be found for transit, a second round of cuts would have been announced in August or September.

Mary Hill Smith, chairperson of the council's Transportation Committee, said the cuts are difficult to make, especially in light of the council's goal of increasing transit ridership. "This of course is a step backward," she said.

The cuts and changes are expected to result in 1.6 million

fewer riders over the next two years, an improvement over the 2.5 million fewer riders anticipated under the original service reduction proposal.

The Metropolitan Council, which oversees Metro Transit buses, Metro Mobility and the Hiawatha Light Rail line, had repeatedly postponed voting on the service cuts pending a legislative decision on transportation funding. But without action by state lawmakers until mid-July, the council was forced to act. Metro Transit faces a \$66 million deficit over the next two years.

During the regular legislative session, the House and Senate adopted a transportation bill that included an increase in the state's gasoline tax. Governor Tim Pawlenty vetoed that bill.

The council did decide June 14 to issue \$7.8 million in bonds to help offset the funding shortfall. The council also increased most transit fares, effective July 1, to help cover rising costs. Most fares rose by 25 cents.

Prices also increased July 1 for 31-day passes, which increased from \$8 to \$10, depending upon the type of pass purchased. Young adult 10-ride fare cards went up \$1.

Increasing the gasoline tax would have provided additional funding for roads and transit. Metro Transit has struggled in re-

cent years because much of its funding was shifted to motor vehicle sales taxes. Those revenues are down due to a decline in vehicle sales. Rising fuel costs and employee health care costs have also had an impact.

Transit advocates held a press conference prior to the June 29 vote. The Transit Partners Coalition, a statewide organization that includes Transit for Livable Communities, Minnesota Senior Federation, the interfaith group ISIAAH, Sierra Club, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Alliance for Metro Stability, Amalgamated Transit Union and other groups. The coalition is promoting expanded public transit and improved facilities for bicycling and walking.

"The likely decision that the Metropolitan Council will make at this meeting will bring disastrous results for thousands of transit riders and will further erode the limited transportation options available to Minnesotans," said Transit for Livable Communities Executive Director Lea Schuster. "The action planned by the council (June 29) is a direct result of the governor's inaction on transit. It is the governor's budget that failed to address a \$66 million shortfall in transit funding, and it is the governor who vetoed the Legisla-

ture's transportation bill which would have enabled the state to grow transit rather than cut it once again."

"The Legislature presented Governor Pawlenty with a very practical funding plan for preventing the cuts and incrementally expanding transit statewide," said Keith Miller of the Minnesota Senior Federation. "Governor Pawlenty went on TV with a big red veto stamp. And that's why we are here today."

But comments by transit advocates and riders may have made a difference in what services were ultimately spared or cut. More than 5,200 comments were received during a comment period this spring.

Routes cut had to meet the criteria of having a high subsidy and low ridership. A per-rider subsidy of more than \$8.25 per passenger put a route on track for reductions or elimination. The Metro Transit system per passenger average subsidy is \$2.27.

Low ridership, with fewer than 15 passengers per hour, also put routes on the chopping block. The system average is 40 passenger per hour.

Locally, routes met mixed fates. Route 76, which attracted many supporters to the St. Paul hearing, will be eliminated. It connects senior citizens and

physically handicapped residents of several Midway area high-rises to Midway Center and Midway Marketplace. High-rise residents testified that it would be difficult for them to walk to buses on University Avenue, Dale Street and other neighborhood streets. Many rely on Route 76 to get their groceries and prescriptions, and to get to medical appointments.

Route 87, Rosedale to Highland Park via Fairview, Raymond and Cleveland, will have its Saturday service eliminated. Route 67, which includes much of Minnehaha Avenue along its route, would have its service at Gilbert and Prior end at 6:38 p.m. instead of 8:38 p.m. Sundays.

One route spared is Route 8, on Franklin and University avenues. It connects the new Emerald Gardens and Berry Place housing near University and Highway 280 to the Hiawatha Corridor light rail line. Route 8 will retain hourly service between 5:15 a.m. and 6:40 p.m. weekdays, weekend service will be eliminated.

Also spared was bus service on Interstate 94. Interstate 94 express routes will not be changed. Route 94B service to the State Capitol would be eliminated, as would be service to River Park Plaza S.

Midway in a minute

Continued from page 2

"We frankly don't need any more student housing in the neighborhood," Benanav said. He pointed out that area colleges, including University of St. Thomas and Macalester College, have been building more on-campus housing in recent years.

Benanav also said he's seeing more "For Rent" signs in the Merriam Park neighborhood than he's seen in some time, indicating to him that the housing supply for area schools may be exceeding demand.

O'Hara said he has "overwhelming" community support for the project but needed more time to organize his proponents. He said the housing, at \$1,200 per month for each three-bedroom unit, would have provided an affordable housing option for area students.

Crews receive extension on Crosby project

Crews rehabilitating a historic Iris Park building will get more time to complete their work. The St. Paul City Council voted unanimously July 13 to grant an additional 90 days' time for the rehabilitation of the Crosby Block at 1956 Feronia Av.

The building's status will be reviewed August 23 by a legislative hearing officer, for recommendations on how the building rehabilitation should be completed. That additional review is a condition of the time extension. Ward Four City Councilmember Jay Benanav

brought the request to the council. He has visited the work site recently to check its progress and believes the work can be done with the additional time.

No additional performance bond will be posted under the agreement the City Council approved July 13. In December 2004 Crosby Block owners Naomi Isaacson and Laureen Marie Ballinger posted a \$25,000 performance bond, which is still in place. They also provided city officials with detailed plans for rehabilitating the three-story building, along with materials and documents demonstrating financial capability to execute the plans.

In December 2004 the City Council granted the women 180 days to complete the work. That agreement allows them to seek an extension that would extend the rehabilitation over 360 days.

The performance bond will be returned when the project is complete. If the project isn't completed, the bond could be used to help cover costs of rehabilitation or demolition. Typically the city only requires a performance bond of a few thousand dollars. The larger bond was approved because of the three-story building's large size. City staff have estimated it would cost \$30,000 to \$40,000 to tear down the building and more than \$1 million to renovate it.

Ballinger and Isaacson previously forfeited a smaller performance bond, of \$2,000, when they were unable to get a previous building renovation effort going in time.

The Crosby Block was designed by Barber and Barber Architects and built by J.N. Noble in 1888. The building became run-down in recent years, housing as many as 16 to 18 small apartments. Tenants generated many

police calls in the 1980s and 1990s before the last tenants moved out. The building has also languished on the city's vacant building and problem property lists for several years. But redeveloping the building for a new use has been difficult, with three different ownership teams trying to rehabilitate and reoccupy the structure.

Dutch Elm continues to plague city trees

As Dutch Elm Disease continues to take a toll on the city's trees, property owners who must reimburse the city for tree removal will be given more time to repay the

city. The St. Paul City Council unanimously adopted an ordinance July 13 that gives private owners up to 10 years to repay the city for tree removal.

Previously property owners were given up to five years to reimburse the city for tree removal. The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

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Bell was behind-the-scenes 'Music' maestro...

Howie Bell to retire from Parks and Rec

By DEBORAH BROTZ

When Howie Bell, 56, first took a job with St. Paul Parks & Recreation as a recreation leader at Belvedere Recreation Center in 1968, he never dreamed he would make a career out of it. Now, 37 plus years later, Bell, who has been a Service Area Coordinator for Area 4 since June 2003, will be retiring in December 2005.

"Originally, I took the job to work my way through college," he said. "I was majoring in broadcast journalism radio, TV, journalism at the University of Minnesota. There weren't any jobs at the time."

Since Bell knew finding a job in his college major would be difficult, he decided to keep working at St. Paul Parks & Recreation for awhile.

"At the time, I had no intention to make a career out of it," he said. "Some of the best laid plans don't work out."

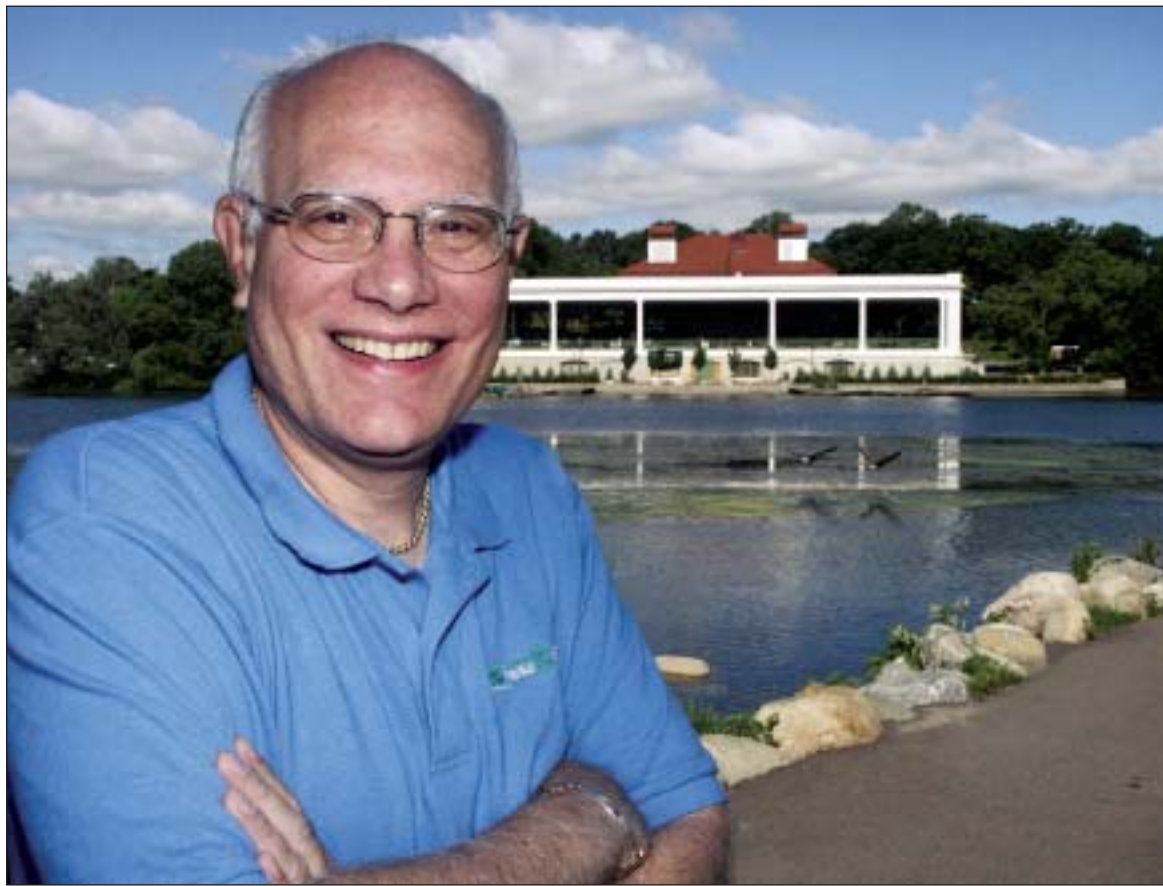
Bell's journey to his current position encompassed many changes. In 1990, he became assistant manager of Special Services, where he served for 13 years until the budget cuts of 2003.

"In March 2003, my position in Special Services was wiped out," he said. "The supervisor of Parks Security was replacing somebody who was laid off and had less seniority than I did. I did that for three months. Then, I was approached by the manager of Recreation Services, who asked me to join her team. I've been there ever since."

As Service Area Coordinator for Area 4, which includes South St. Anthony, NW Como, Langford, Orchard, Griggs, and Hancock, Bell also oversees adaptive recreation for mentally and physically challenged adults and youth.

Bell is probably best known for putting together Music in the Parks, which he has done since 1992. Susie Odegard, Battle Creek Recreation Center director, will be taking over Music in the Parks after he retires.

"The gentleman who had the program retired," he said. "Just prior to his retirement, he gave the



Howie Bell, who has been a Service Area Coordinator for St. Paul's Area 4 since June 2003, will be retiring in December 2005. (Photo by Terry Faust)

program to me. It was a much smaller program with 10 performances at Como, a couple at Phalen, and six downtown. Now, there are 141 performances in all four venues Como Lakeside, Phalen Amphitheater, Rice Park and Mears Park downtown."

In the beginning, Music in the Parks had a very small budget.

"We hired some Union groups to play," said Bell. "Most bands play gratis outside the Summer 'Pops' Concerts, in which they do pay musicians. These are the only performances we pay for. The rest of the groups play for free. This has allowed us to expand our program."

Bell's interest in technology has contributed to major accomplishments in his job.

"I've always tried to find ways to work smarter," he said. "I'm a

big proponent of technology. One of my strengths is finding software to help us work smarter. We didn't start using computers until 1984. Now, every full-time person has a computer."

In 2003, Parks & Recreation expanded their network to recreation centers.

"When I was in Special Services, I was responsible for moving from cash registers to a point of sale system," he said. "We use the computer as the cash register. It gives you all the sales records. We do this with our golf program since the 1990s at all four golf courses."

Mike Hahm, who is manager of Recreation Services for St. Paul Parks & Recreation, has known Bell since 1999, when they first worked together in Special Services. He views Bell's retirement

positively.

"I think everybody here is happy for Howie, his wife Lynne, and their family," said Hahm. "He has left a big mark on the Music in the Parks program, working on some technology advances, and helping the Division with technology initiatives. His impact on technology has proven he's been a leader in technology issues such as point of sale systems, computerized tee times, and web sites."

Bell has been a model employee.

"He's been a great asset to the Parks & Recreation system," said Hahm. "What we learned from Howie is how to approach change and not be afraid to take on new things. Howie has been a model for others to learn from in how to tackle new challenges and embrace change. This includes not only

how to move the organization forward but how to move yourself forward."

Possessing valuable characteristics, make Bell a valuable employee.

"Howie has shown flexibility and willingness to do whatever it takes to get the job done, is an extremely dedicated worker, and is extremely competent in what he has been responsible for," said Hahm.

Hahm feels Bell fills a special place at St. Paul Parks & Recreation.

"I think for 30 plus years, people like him have been the heart and soul of the St. Paul Parks & Recreation system whether he's working out in the community with customers or working with staff doing new things to better serve customers," he said. "He's been so instrumental in making things happen. Howie has been instrumental in making Music in the Parks his own and taking that program to a level it hadn't been previously. Now, thousands of people enjoy concerts and plays throughout the system due to his work and collaboration he was able to bring to that program."

Although he will be missed, Hahm hopes Bell's retirement will be everything he hopes for.

"I feel fortunate to be part of the Parks & Rec family with Howie," he said. "I wish his wife and home the best of retirement. Hopefully, Howie learned how to recreate himself and can take advantage of that in his retirement."

Bell decided to retire for several reasons.

"The budget cuts over the last few years have made it increasingly difficult to do a good job," he said. "I promised myself that when the job wasn't fun anymore, I would retire. It stopped being fun."

In the last couple years, Bell's health has been an issue.

"I have muscular dystrophy," he said. "It's been increasingly difficult to do the physical part of the job. I'm on crutches."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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Recently it was reported that a wood turtle (*Clemmys insculpa*), a species that is listed as threatened, was found plodding through a Como Park backyard this July. When I looked up the wood turtle's preferred habitat in *Minnesota's Endangered Flora and Fauna*, I couldn't help noticing the very un-Como-Park-like habitat description I found written there. "It [wood turtle] prefers small, fast-moving streams in relatively undisturbed areas in deciduous and coniferous forests."

The only fast moving water in these parts is the stormsewers on a rainy day. And if a fast-moving stream is rare in Como Park, undisturbed forests are totally absent. In summer, Como Park's woodlands are illegally used as BMX bike courses, for splat-ball games, and as hobo campsites. It would be difficult for a shy wood turtle to find a truly peaceful corner in Como Park. Maybe the wood turtle is more adaptable than we thought.

Adaptability is the word that can only describe the four juvenile pheasants that trotted into my neighbors' backyard on July 18. Mike and Nancy were gracious hosts to their unexpected guests and all the attention they drew. Kids and grownups alike peered over their fences to catch a glimpse of the motherless brood as they bedded down under the hydrangeas.

At first, we all thought they were young wild turkeys. I'll admit that I'm not familiar with upland game birds—like wood turtles, you just don't see many of them around Como Park. However, I knew enough to be suspicious when I heard that these young birds were roosting on the ground.

Turkey chicks instinctually want to roost in trees fairly early in their lives, but I was willing to accept this anomaly. At 5:30 a.m., I hung out my second story window to get a better look at



Neighborhood Naturalist

By DEB ROBINSON

Pheasants under grass

the foursome before they moved on.

For a few minutes I got an unobstructed view of one of the birds as it jumped up onto the birdbath for a drink. The bird I

panic nor did they allow her to approach very closely. I could see the birds dashing about under the plants in pursuit of insects, and scratching in the mulch. When they got separated from

swelling around the eyes and this proved to be a clue to the true identity of the unexpected visitors. A distinguishing feature of a young male pheasant is the developing crimson wattles around his eyes. His head was just starting to darken into the iridescent green and purple head of an adult. And there was a slight suggestion of a white ring that gives the ringneck pheasant its name.



Deb Robinson 8-05

saw had mottled brown feathers, a plump body with long legs, but no distinguishing features that I could see. The wary poult didn't stand exposed for long and returned to the garden to forage with its siblings.

Nancy came out with her camera and tried to take a few pictures of her guests without alarming them. The birds didn't

each other, they gave the "lost call" (a pathetic peeping that is common to many precocial chicks).

About the time I was entertaining the notion that these motherless chicks needed human help, one flew effortlessly up onto the garage roof to escape the neighbors' tiny Chihuahua.

One of the birds had a pink

introductions, pheasants haven't become an invasive species in their adopted home.)

The peak bag numbers of pheasants in Minnesota were in the 1940s and 50s. But then farming practices changed with the removal of fencerows, shelterbelts, and wetlands, which served as wildlife habitat. The increased use of pesticide and the change to early mowing of alfalfa fields also took their toll on ringneck populations. Many native ground-nesting birds have also suffered from these changes in agriculture.

Yet, there are still ditches, railroad right-of-ways, and urban parkland where a few adaptable ringneck pheasants must be finding marginal homes away from their preferred habitat.

"The only fast moving water in these parts is the stormsewers on a rainy day. And if a fast-moving stream is rare in Como Park, undisturbed forests are totally absent."

All these characteristics suggested that he was a 12 to 13 week-old ringneck pheasant rooster (*Aythya collaris*). The three little hens were dressed in nondescript brown camouflage.

So where did they come from? It depends how far back you go. The ringneck pheasant is native to Asia. They were introduced onto America's agricultural landscape in the late 1800s.

The Department of Game and Fish started introducing ringneck pheasants in Minnesota in 1905, but it took many introductions to get them established for hunting. (Unlike many other exotic

The little pheasant foursome moved out into the ally heading east through the backyards and deeper into the city. They looked like they knew where they were going. I wish them (and the wood turtles) luck—they'll need it.

Endnotes: *Want to help pheasants? Check-out Pheasants Forever Minnesota, "the habitat organization," at: www.minnesotapf.org *Mark your calendar for upcoming Como Buckthorn Busts on Oct. 1 & 22, 9 to noon, more info: 651-644-3889 *To contact this writer: dmrobinson@bitstream.net

Midway in a minute

Continued from page 7

change from five to ten years reflects current state statutes on diseased shade tree removal. The costs are charged back to the property owner through an assessment.

State law gives cities the right to inspect, mark and order the removal of diseased trees on private property. Under the regulations, the city forester acts as a coordina-

tor between the Minnesota Commissioner of Agriculture and the City Council. In September of each year the city forester is to report the cost of diseased tree abatements to the City Council.

Last year more than 1,300 trees on public property and 2,700 trees on private property were marked for removal. Dutch Elm Disease, which ravaged many city neighborhoods in the 1970s and 1980s, had a resurgence last year. Totals for trees marked for removal in 2005 weren't available.

—Compiled by Jane McClure

St. Paul voters to cast ballots in Sept. 13 primary

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul voters will be casting ballots on Tuesday, September 13 in the primary election, narrowing the field of candidates for mayor and St. Paul School Board.

Incumbent Mayor Randy Kelly is seeking a second term. Former City Council Member Chris Coleman, the DFL-endorsed candidate, is challenging him, as is Green Party candidate Elizabeth Dickinson, Socialist Workers Party candidate Jacob Perasso and independent candidates Nick Tschida, Sharon Scarella Anderson, Bill Dahn and Glen Mansfield.

The top two candidates advance to the general election in November.

Incumbent School Board members John Brodrick and Elona Street-Stewart have for reelection. Newcomers seeking a board seat include Tom Goldstein, Lori Windels, Rebecca Williamson, Jesse Nicholas and Terry Lake. The open seat was held by Toni Carter before she joined the Ramsey County Board earlier this year.

Brodrick, Street-Stewart and Goldstein have DFL endorsement. Windels has Republican endorsement and Williamson is the Socialist Workers Party candidate.

The top six candidate advance to the general election in November.

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In Our Community

Origami and more at Hamline Midway Library

Origami instruction and informal craft times will be the last Summer Reading Program events featured at the Hamline Midway Branch of the St. Paul Public Library. The Origami instruction will be offered on Tuesday, August 16, from 7 to 8:15 p.m. The session is for ages six and older, and will be taught by the Branch's Supervisor, Carol Martinson. The session is limited to twenty participants. Pre-registration is requested, by calling the library at 651-642-0293.

Later August craft times will be informal, drop-in, opportunities to make craft objects. They include Make a Bee on Thursday, August 18, anytime between 1 and 2:30 p.m., and Make a Colorful Clear Ornament, on Tuesday, August 23, anytime between 1 and 2:30 p.m. All events will be held at the library, which is located at 1558 W. Minnehaha Avenue.

Summer reading lists for children and teens can be presented, and awards selected, at any of the St. Paul Public Libraries or the Bookmobile, through the end of August.

For more information or to register for the Origami sessions, please contact the Hamline Midway Branch library at 651-642-0293.

MOMS Club seeks local moms for members

MOMS Club is an international nonprofit organization that offers daytime activities and support for mothers who have made the choice to be home during the day with their children.

Local chapters offer a calendar of daytime activities for mothers and their children, community service opportunities, and a monthly Mom's Night Out. The St. Anthony Park/Como West Chapter is looking for moms to join our group. For more information, please contact Jenny at 651-488-6967.

St. Columba, Archbishop installs pastor Aug. 21

St. Columba Church, 1327 Lafond Avenue, is celebrating our most recently renovated worship area and the installation of Father Tom Thakadipuram as our new pastor, Archbishop Harry Flynn will be celebrating Mass on August 21 at 9:30 a.m.

The church invites the Midway community and past members of St. Columba to come and celebrate with us. Past clergy of the church, as well as past teachers and principals of the now closed school will be here with us to celebrate.

125th celebration events at Hamline Church

On August 21st as part of the church's 125th anniversary as a congregation, the Rev. Kathi Austin Mahle will return to the Hamline United Methodist Church (HUMC) to preach. Rev. Mahle served as pastor to HUMC from 1992 to 1997. She has been District Superintendent in the Metro West Conference until July, when she was named as assistant to Minnesota Bishop Sally Dyck. Rev. Mahle will preach at both the 8 a.m. prayer service and the 9:30 a.m. worship service.

HUMC, established in September 1880, held its first services just 10 days before the opening of classes at the new St. Paul campus of Hamline University. Since then, it has welcomed thousands of students to various events. Baccalaureate services take place in its magnificent sanctuary. The HUMC Dining Hall on the State Fairgrounds holds the record for longevity as a concession there, welcoming (and feeding) more than 18,000 fair-goers each year.

Recently certified as a welcoming congregation, HUMC welcomes people of all religious (and non-religious) backgrounds and seeks to honor everyone, wherever they are on their spiritual journeys. A new plaque recognizes the congregation for its efforts toward that goal.

HUMC is located at 1514 Englewood Avenue, near the intersection of Minnehaha and Snelling. Information about HUMC programs can be found on its website at <http://www.hamlinechurch.org/>.

Elders needed for special project in the Midway

Hamline Midway elders will have the opportunity to be paired with nursing candidates from Inver Hills Community College. Activities include twice monthly home visits, phone visits, personal interviews, and student journaling. One of the curriculum goals is to familiarize new nurses with the home care settings. Students who complete a background check at the college may choose to provide chore assistance or light housekeeping, but will not provide any rides or medical care. Neighbors 65 and older with interest in volunteering for the project should call The Hamline Midway Elders Program at 651-209-6542 by September 2.

The Hamline Midway Elders Program will sponsor a luncheon on Tuesday, September 13 beginning at 11:30 a.m. The event will be held at the Hamline Methodist Church on Englewood between Simpson and Asbury and the

topic will be "Pain Management of Arthritis." Free transportation is available by calling 651-209-6542. Newcomers welcome.

Central Child Care expands care program

Central Child Care, a ministry of Central Baptist Church, recently expanded its current child care program to include school age children. Central Child Care staff will provide full-time care for school age children (Kindergarten through 12 years) during the summer and before/after school during the school year. Care will be also provided on days that school is closed for conferences and teacher's meetings. The center will be closed on holidays.

Central Child Care celebrated 55 years of continuous service in March of this year. The program was begun as a service to meet the needs of the community and continues to provide quality Early Childhood Christian Education today. It is a private, nonprofit program, licensed by the State of Minnesota Department of Human Services to serve children ages 6 weeks through 12 years old. The expansion to serve school age children was initiated three years ago, by the current director, Michele Hedberg, in response to the growing need from parents in the community.

For further information about Central Child Care and our school age program, please call 651-646-2846.

Jehovah Lutheran ice cream social, fireworks

Jehovah Lutheran Church invites the neighborhood to a free Ice Cream Social with Fireworks on Saturday, September 10, on the church parking lot. The fun starts at 6:30 p.m. with the sale of hot dogs, chips, pop and cookies by Cub Scout Pack 243. The free ice cream is available starting at 7 p.m. and the fireworks begin at 8 p.m. The event offers a chance for getting to know your neighbors and kicks off the fall Sunday School series which starts Sunday, September 11.

Neighborhood kids from kindergarten through 8th grade are also invited to the regular Sunday afternoon GET REAL program for youth. This program, already up and running, meets in the church youth room from 3 to 5 p.m. every Sunday for crafts, games, music, devotions and snacks.

Jehovah Lutheran is at the corner of Snelling and Thomas. For questions call 651-644-1521 or check the website at www.JehovahLutheran.org.

La Leche League holds September meeting

The Advantages of Breastfeeding is the topic of the next meeting of the Como-Midway La Leche League, to be held on Tuesday, September 13, at 7 p.m.

Mothers-to-be, mothers, babies and toddlers are invited to attend. La Leche League meetings provide breastfeeding information and support on an informal, mother-to-mother basis.

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.

Lex-Ham Community Theater plans festival

The Lex-Ham Community Theater will hold a 24-Hour Play Festival September 23-24, at the E.M. Pearson Theatre at Concordia University-St. Paul.

In the festival, teams will have 24 hours to write, cast, design, block, memorize, and perform a play after receiving a list of items, such as a parrot, Cleveland, a teen-ager, and the color green, that must be included in the play in some way. Audience members at the performances will choose the production that wins the "People's Choice" award.

Events such as this have been held elsewhere in the United States, but this will be one of the first such events in the Twin Cities area. Previous events elsewhere have proved quite enjoyable for both the participants and audience members.

Details for how teams and individuals can participate in the festival and ticket prices for the event will be distributed within the next few weeks. Updated information about the festival will be posted at the theater's Web site: www.LexHamArts.org/theater.

The theater company has been producing quality theatrical experiences for and by the residents of the Lexington-Hamline and surrounding neighborhoods in St. Paul since 1996.

Check the theater's Web site: www.LexHamArts.org/theater or call 651-644-3366 for more information.

Stroke Prevention and Response clinic Aug. 25

A free clinic on Stroke Prevention and Response will be held Thursday, August 25 from 1-3 and a free clinic on Avoiding Diabetes Complications will be held Thursday, September 8 from 1-3. Both events will be take place in the Community Room of Hamline Highrise, 777 Hamline Avenue and are open to Hamline Midway seniors. For additional informa-

tion, call Hamline Midway Elders 651-209-6542.

Orchard Recreation Center offers programs

Orchard Rec Center, 875 Orchard Avenue, offers programming for all ages. For more information about these programs call the rec center at 651-298-5816.

Youth: Youth Cooking: Children ages 5-14 are invited to learn how to cook. Bessie Pierce from the University of Minnesota Extension Services will show the kids easy recipes they can do at home. This free class begins Sept. 30 at 4:30 p.m.

Yu-Gi-Oh Gaming: Youth ages 7 and older learn the value of your cards and how to play them effectively. Battle with your cards against other youth in a non-threatening atmosphere. At the conclusion of each evening door prizes will be drawn compliments of Shinder's. Yu-Gi-Oh gaming is held every other Tues. beginning Oct. 4 at 6 p.m. Cost for each week gaming is \$1.

Drama & Art: Ages 5-15 create your own mask and have a role in the holiday play. We will choose a folk tale to perform as our play. Create a mask for your costume out of paper mache! You will spend part of the class rehearsing and part of the class creating. This 6 session class begins Oct. 25 at 4 p.m. and the cost is \$40.

Rec Check After School Program: Rec Check is a free check-in/check-out service provided at Orchard Recreation Center. Youth in grades 1-6 check in with a staff person upon arrival at the center and check out when leaving. Activities can include, arts and crafts, gym games, homework help, reading & outside play. Rec Check begins Sept. 7 and continues through out the school year. Rec Check is only available on days school is in session, Mon., Wed., & Fri. between 3-6 p.m.

Musikgarten: Preschoolers, ages 2-1/2 - 4 & their parents will explore the fall season through movement and music using nationally renowned early childhood Musikgarten curriculum. Classes introduce children to rhythm, tone, melody, and movement. Fee includes tuition for classes and family materials: CD, family book, eight color cards for listening activities, a Guatemalan bag. Register by Sept. 16 and receive a discount. There is also a reduced fee for siblings. Both sessions run for 8 weeks for a cost of \$85. You may register for Session 1 beginning Oct. 3 at 6 p.m., or Session 2 beginning Sept 29 at 10:15 a.m.

Musikgarten's Family Music for Babies & Toddlers: Ages birth to 1-1/2 with parent or care giver. Children and their care giver will move with bouncing and rocking songs and sing and play with wiggle and peek-a-boo games among many other musical activities.

Pierce Butler plans one of three requests for 2006 legislative bonding projects

By JANE MCCLURE

With a \$50 million price tag, the extension of Pierce Butler Route would be the largest road construction project here in many years. It would also bring changes to how motorists travel across the area.

The Pierce Butler plans are one of three area requests already in the hopper for bonding funds from the 2006 Minnesota Legislature. Just days after the 2005 special legislative sessions drew to a close, St. Paul City Council members and city staff began reviewing next year's bonding requests July 27. More than half a dozen projects are taking shape, with more reviews taking place in August and September. The City Council hopes to sign off on the requests by mid-September.

One is a request to fund the reconstruction and extension of Pierce Butler Route to link up with Interstate 35E and the new Phalen Boulevard. The other is to renovate two of the older areas of Como Zoo, the polar bear exhibit and the gorilla habitat. A third is for funds to build the third phase of the University Enterprise Laboratories (UEL), a key part of the city's bioscience corridor on the

St. Paul-Minneapolis west border.

Extending Pierce Butler to the east has been discussed in the Frogtown and North End neighborhoods for more than a decade, as part of the Great Northern Corridor project. Some ideas for the corridor, such as redevelopment of the old Maxson Steel and Great Northern Railroad Shops sites into light industrial parks, have moved ahead. Others, including locating a new National Guard armory at West Minnehaha playground, have languished.

The Pierce Butler proposal has had many starts and stops. It re-emerged as a possibility in the 2006-2007 St. Paul Long-Range Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process this past spring. The CIB Committee's Streets and Utilities Task Force recommended that instead of giving the project the entire \$50 million requested, the city instead set aside \$50,000 for detailed environmental studies. Neither Pierce Butler request is funded in the CIB package sent to the St. Paul City Council and Mayor Randy Kelly.

Ward Five City Council Member Lee Helgen said there is interest in the project at the east end of the roadway, where main-

ly industrial properties would be affected. But other City Council members are concerned that any changes to Pierce Butler not be made until neighborhood groups can weigh in.

"I don't want to replay the Ayd Mill Road discussions," said Ward Four City Council Member Jay Benanav, recalling the controversy over that roadway reconstruction project.

Mike Klassen of St. Paul Public Works explained the proposal. Extending Pierce Butler is seen as providing another east-west route through the western part of the city, relieving traffic pressures on University and Maryland avenues. If the proposed Central Corridor transit improvements are built on University, "the nature of that street would change," Klassen said. Having another east-west route could relieve University Avenue congestion and provide a place for trucks to travel through. It could also divert trucks off of Como Avenue and allow for that street to serve as more of a parkway.

Pierce Butler would be extended east along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad. The road would be similar in appearance to Phalen Boule-

vard, with bicycle and pedestrian paths and lantern-style lighting. The first phase of the project, connecting Pierce Butler to Pennsylvania Avenue, would cost \$16 million.

The city would work with Ramsey County to seek \$10 million for the project in 2006, to acquire property, clean up the acquired property and design the extension from Grotto Street to Phalen Boulevard.

Council members also discuss the UEL and Como Zoo projects July 27. The UEL bioscience project is a cooperative effort with the University of Minnesota. The partnership has already resulted in 15 companies housed in a building at 1000 Westgate Drive. The city would ask for \$20 million to build roads for the bioscience buildings, build a new bioscience building or redevelop and existing building and make other infrastructure improvements.

The total Como Zoo project cost is estimated at \$10.3 million. The 2006 request is for \$300,000, with the rest sought in 2008. The zoo has made changes to its visitor center, rides and other facilities in recent years, but needs to improve the living quar-

ters for its animals.

The state funds would be used to design and build new exhibits for the polar bears and gorillas. "The polar bear exhibit is totally inadequate to exhibit bears from the animal care perspective, zookeeper and visitor perspective," a report to the City Council stated. A new exhibit would have space for the bears to dig, swim and hide. The current exhibit is too small for the polar bears to engage in those activities. It also is too small to establish a family of polar bears here.

The outdoor gorilla exhibit would enlarge a space that is very small. Visitors currently must look down to see the gorillas. A new exhibit would put the gorillas on the same plane as visitors.

Parks and Recreation Director Bob Bierscheid drew chuckles when he talked about the need for more space for the zoo's bachelor gorillas. Gorillas are territorial animals, especially the males, and need space if they are to live in a manner similar to their wild habitat.

"When you mention bachelor gorillas, I just can't help but think about the student housing problems in Jay's ward," Helgen said.

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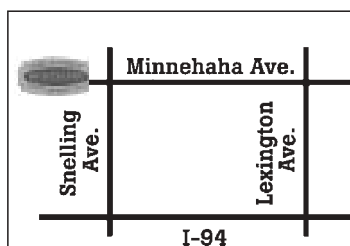
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8:00AM Morning Prayer

9:30AM Traditional Worship, 

Details on website:
www.hamlinechurch.org

9:45AM Sunday School for Pre K-2nd Grade

10:30AM Hospitality and Fellowship

August 21:

Kathi Austin Mahle, guest preacher

1564 Englewood Avenue - St. Paul 651-645-0667

MTC

Continued from page 1

"There is a faction in this state that considers transit to be like any other government program, and money is the battleground," he noted. Hollinshead said he believes it is a small minority that feels this way, claiming most Minnesotans, in all polls, support a strong transit system.

"We're heading for 2.8 million, maybe 3 million people by 2020," Hollinshead said. "A lot of metro areas with that population have a growing and well-funded transit system, but we have not been able to take the financial step which would put this battle to rest."

He said he considers Pawlenty's veto to be a last-ditch effort by what he calls the far-right fringe to stop transit.

He said urban and rural DFL and Republican moderates support improving transit, however, and he believes these are coalitions and voting blocs that will not go away.

Regarding concerns of small businesses with light rail, he said that transit systems in other cities

have been able to make agreements with these businesses along the routes for compensation if needed. "Problems are fully manageable," he said.

"People who dig in their heels and see transit as a threat are not really looking at reality."

Hollinshead said he is a full-time transit user himself, driving a car less than 5,000 miles per year.

"I bike, walk, take a bus and train. I just went to the Wisconsin Dells on Amtrak," he noted. Hollinshead said he is concerned that when services are cut, connections are cut.

He cited critics who complain that some of the buses run at certain times with only a few passengers.

"I can stand on any corner of a road, wait for 15 minutes and see only one or two cars pass per minute," Hollinshead related. "Does that mean it's a road we should dig up?"

Hollinshead also praised the safety of bus travel. "If you look at the stats of crimes on a bus or bus stop vs. accident injuries from a car, I surmise the physical damages from driver error are much greater," he noted. "People have stereotypes and feel safe within the cocoon of their car, until they

have an accident. I have been riding the #16 bus along University Avenue for 15 years, and I have never felt anything but safe."

Russ Stark, who represents the Midway Transportation Management Organization/University UNITED, said he sees the transportation problems as caused largely because there is no funding source for transit in the region.

"We got close this year to coming up with new funding, but the bill was vetoed by the governor," he said.

"The problem every year is that there is not a sustainable system."

He said the cuts in service may not directly affect the primary bus service, but connecting routes are either being reduced or eliminated. He sees even greater problems for the future.

"If you don't have good connecting bus service north and south, people will drive to use the light rail, causing more congestion," he said. "It does get hard to make the case for LRT when services are being cut."

Barb Thoman, program director for TLC, said that even with the added funding for transportation that was approved with the

extended legislative session, the fare increase will stand and route cuts proposed for September will go into effect.

"The lack of a regional source of funding for public transit is a real problem," she added. "We need payroll tax, regional sales tax and a parking surcharge so that we can implement a good plan for bus and rail."

A voice that would disagree with this plan belongs to David Strom, president of the Taxpayers League of Minnesota.

"I think we tend to ask the wrong question about transportation, Strom said. "Are we trying to increase ridership or mobility? The basic question is 'What are we trying to accomplish?'"

Strom said he considers the most important task of the transit system should be increasing mobility for those who do not have access to other transportation.

"When the transit system was shut down during the bus strike, a lot of underserved people could not get around," he admitted, "but I don't think adding to an overburdened system is the solution."

Strom said he thinks with transit problems, the tail is wagging the dog. "We're focusing on

the mode vs. how we help people get from point A to point B," he said. "Who are the people who need to use transit, and how do we best serve them?"

He said he believes the buses on University are high volume, but others are under-utilized.

Strom said that the governor vetoed the transportation bill because of the raise in the gas tax, but that transit still got a substantial bump in funding.

"My biggest complaint about the bus system is that for those who need it, it is relatively inflexible," he noted. "If you are using it to get to work or get your kids to daycare, it is a very complex system. For the hundreds of millions we spend on transportation each year, we could use the system much better."

Strom said he feels there is a need to move away from the one-size-fits-all mode, and tailor transit to particular needs.

He added that he thinks the LRT adds another tremendous expense for little return on the investment.

"People ride it, but that is not the test," he said. "The test is cost effectiveness. For the kind of money we spend, we could buy cars for all who ride the LRT."

Quality Career Services

Continued from page 3

He hopes to soon become certified as an internal auditor, and use his training to set up a travel agency here for Africans and others to tour their countries. He has further hopes of someday setting up a school and encouraging intercultural exchanges.

Working with clients as diversified as Bell and Sarpong is one of the challenges for QCS, an organization that began in 1985 with the layoff of the Donaldson Company, a large corporation with headquarters in Bloomington. Its production facility in Eagan laid off its workers.

"When they closed, they laid off about 200 people," said Joe Crowe, current director of QCS. "The company was a United Autoworkers Plant, and Art Berens

was the president of the union. He looked around at what was available for dislocated workers at that time, and he felt the services were too physically scattered. He wanted to create a program where all the services could be in one place, and he got a grant approved for the Donaldson dislocated workers."

From that project, the word spread. When other unions had layoffs, Berens was asked to write a project for each group. Crowe was working with the group as a contract employee. As time went on, the agency worked with non-union layoffs also. Little by little, the staff and services grew as the layoffs grew, in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

According to Crowe, the dislocated worker program was federally funded until approximately 1990. At that time, Gov. Rudy Perpich got a dislocated worker tax in place, with the employer paying a percentage per year per employee. At that time, also, agencies started competing for

layoff projects.

Today, there are several agencies throughout the Twin Cities offering services to dislocated workers.

"QCS is one of the few places where someone can come in and utilize computers with no prior knowledge at all," Crowe said. "Our computer lab offers skills-building training, a very practical component."

A computer instructor is on site full-time.

"QCS offers a Jobs in Transition program, geared for people looking for employment," Crowe added. This includes the Monday morning sessions described earlier, as well as an opportunity for individuals to meet with Don Sayner, a job developer whose specialty is networking. "We welcome people in the Midway area to attend a Monday jobs meeting," Crowe said.

Sayner has been in retail over 30 years and was laid off himself while in his mid-fifties.

"I was overweight, over-age

and overqualified," he joked, as he tried to decide what he wanted to do with his life.

He decided to set up a support group for people who were unemployed and in transition. He did this for 10 years on his own and was then hired by QCS to offer the same services.

"Eighty-five per cent of finding a job is networking," Sayner said. "And here, we offer hope and help."

It has a Community Task Force, a group composed of educators and business people throughout the area, as well as a representative from the Midway Work Force Center. The role of the task force is to provide feedback, guidance, advice and information to program operators, but it has no governing authority.

The agency employs 15 staff members, including counselors and job developers. Dislocated workers may arrive through a large layoff of 50 or more, or be an individual laid off worker.

"To qualify, one needs to be permanently laid off, eligible for unemployment and unlikely to be able to return to his or her previous industry or occupation," said Crowe.

"We retrain people for new careers, and we send people to school to bring their skills up to date. If they need credentials, we help them qualify." The agency also provides assistance for GED and ESL classes, serving many individuals who do not speak English as their first language.

"We pay for books, tuition, fees and supplies," Crowe stated. "We assist with transportation and child care costs and assessment testing." And perhaps, most important of all, counselors provide dislocated workers with a place to vent and get their frustrations off their chest, and move forward," he added.

Anyone who would like further information about QCS and its services can call 651-647-9322 or visit its location at 2515 Wabash Avenue.



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Howie Bell

Continued from page 8

Working for St. Paul Parks & Recreation has been an important part of Bell's life.

"I've always enjoyed making life better for people living in St. Paul," said Bell. "People pay taxes and are expecting quality services. I've always enjoyed being part of delivering these quality services."

After retiring, Bell plans to spend time with his parents, who live in Tampa, Fla. He also has been offered a part-time position as a ranger or starter at Highland National Golf Course.

"I enjoy playing golf and the whole golf atmosphere," he said. "It's the best of both worlds. I could greet customers and provide services."

Bell has a positive attitude about his life after retirement.

"I'll take things as they come and see how my health holds up," he said. "If there's something I want to do, I'll find a way to do it."

Three developers compete for two-acre spot along Lexington Parkway

By JANE MCCLURE

Will housing be part of the Lexington Park development? At least three developers are competing for a two-acre spot along Lexington Parkway, where as many as 100 new housing units could be built.

Lexington Park is the development planned at the southwest corner of University Avenue and Lexington. An old strip mall, car wash and Keys Well Drilling occupied the property for many years. Those old buildings are making way for an Aldi supermarket on University and a TCF branch bank on Lexington Parkway just south of White Castle.

Wilder Foundation is studying the possibility of consolidating many of its operations on a 3.2 acre portion of the site near Dunlap Street, moving administration, program and services from the current main campus in Frogtown and several locations in surrounding neighborhoods. But that leaves the southern part of the site up for grabs.

Property owner-developer Wellington Management has tangled with a number of area district councils and University UNITED over how the site has developed. For months debate has centered on whether the project reflects principles of transit-oriented development, which were the focus of a community-city study a few years ago at the Lexington-University corner. There have also been requests that the project include more housing. Another objection is that the property has been developed site by site, in a piecemeal

fashion, with separate site plans OK'd for Aldi and TCF.

"It does seem kind of helter-skelter to me, to make decisions on a site without knowing what everything looks like," said area resident Gerald Christopher, a member of the design advisory group. That prompted University UNITED Executive Director Brian McMahon to ask that the development process stop until there is a master plan in place for the southern part of the site. But developer Steve Wellington and others said a master plan has evolved over the past several months and that should be followed.

"It seems like a fairly typical site, in how it has evolved," said Tim Griffith of the St. Paul Design Center. While saying he is "not particularly pleased" with how the project has moved ahead, Griffin said there is still an opportunity to pull all of the project parts together.

Adding residential development to Lexington Park might ease some community concerns that the project isn't addressing area housing needs. Some support has been heard for affordable housing or a mix of housing types.

Renee Tyler, legislative aide to Ward One City Council Member Debbie Montgomery, said the council office is hearing more and more requests for market-rate housing, especially for empty nesters and senior citizens wishing to sell their single-family homes yet not move away from area neighborhoods.

"The community has ex-

pressed a strong interest in housing," said Wellington. But any housing developer that becomes part of Lexington Park is likely to need some level of city subsidy as well as neighborhood support. Land costs alone for the two-acre housing site are \$2.3 million. Wellington Management has talked to four developers. A fourth, Legacy Management, has not continued the discussions.

While there is no specific timeline to sell the land and bring forward more firm development plans, Wellington said things could start moving in the next three to six months.

Wellington said it's a credit to the project and to the community that there are "three very well-respected and experienced housing developers" contending for the property. "Any one of these three would bring a lot to the table," he said.

Here's a look at the preliminary ideas presented to the Lexington Design Advisory group August 1:

*Episcopal Homes. Episcopal Homes, which has its main campus at Fairview and University avenues, already has plans to build a 50-unit low-income seniors building on the Dunlap side of Lexington Park. The non-profit housing developer is waiting for word from federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) this fall on the grant request.

Episcopal's tentative idea for the Lexington part of the site is for below-grade parking and four levels of housing above that. The building would be a senior citi-

zen co-operative, with about 100 units. Initial drawings show a building that has its front on Lexington, with shorter wings to the north and south. Green space between this building and the 50-unit rental building would be an amenity for residents.

Episcopal Homes Chief Executive Officer Marvin Plakut was the only one of the three developers to present an initial estimate on how much city assistance would be needed, at about \$6 million. Whether the project would be built would hinge on pre-sales of shares in the co-op.

The project doesn't include any commercial space.

*Centex Homes. Centex is considering about 80 units of owner-occupied housing on the site. Matt Anfang of Centex Homes said the company has no building designs sketched out yet. One idea is three-story townhouses similar to a proposal for the Heritage Park neighborhood of Minneapolis. Units could range in size of 950 to 1,300 square feet.

Anfang didn't have prices for the housing yet. He indicated that Centex is trying to respond to the desire it heard for market-rate housing, although a development could be a mix of market-rate and affordable units.

The company has built a wide range of housing types throughout the Twin Cities. Its largest St. Paul development is the Upper Landing, which has more than 600 housing units.

Anfang said Centex is interested in adding some retail development to the first floor of its

project, possibly on the north side of the building facing the TCF Bank site. Some surface parking would be provided for the businesses. The residential units would have underground parking.

Summit-University resident Denise Fosse was among those expressing interest in the idea of a mixed-use building. "The mix of retail and housing development seems to make sense to me," she said.

*Central Community Housing Trust (CCHT). CCHT is a Minneapolis-based non-profit organization that is 19 years old. A few years ago CCHT developed more comprehensive plans for a residential neighborhood at the corner, with a mix of housing types ranging from apartments to condominiums. That large plan was developed in response to a proposal to put Home Depot on the property. When the Home Depot project fell through the property sat vacant.

Like Centex and Episcopal, CCHT would have to have some amount of city assistance in order to build at the two-acre site.

About 100 units of housing could be built on the smaller portion of the site, said Gina Ciganak of CCHT. The non-profit has no style of housing chosen for the property but is looking at affordable housing, market-rate owner-occupied housing, or a mix of housing types. Any housing developed would have amenities such as green space.

Ciganak said CCH would be open to including some commercial space in its project.

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New to the Neighborhood

By NATE HAMILTON

My Dad is a rock star!

I have been talking with two local dad/musicians about the importance of music in the lives of their children. I asked them a few more questions about their experiences fitting in being both a dad and a musician and what their music means to them and their families:

New to the Neighborhood: Do your children express strong musical aspirations?

Todd Seabury-Kolod, Saint Paul ECFE instructor and musician: "We encouraged piano lessons, starting in the third grade. I know that age 7 is a good starting age for piano. And our children continue to play piano just for fun. Our oldest son has gone on record as saying that he would have his children take piano lessons also. So there you go!"

Jonathan Rundman, local folk/rock musician: "Yes, Paavo loves music. We have a piano and some African hand drums in our living room where he hangs out most of the day. My wife and I sit with him on the floor, play the drums and sing in harmony. I think when he's around 4 or 5 we'll start him on piano or violin lessons. My wife and I both had music lessons when we were in elementary school, and it was an important and fun part of our

childhood, and we would like the same for him. My wife is a developmental psychologist, so she's got all sorts of research statistics about the power of music on a toddler's brain development."

N2N: What kinds of music do your children like?

JR: "Paavo hasn't shown any specific preference towards any genre of music. I don't think I'll limit the music he chooses to listen to. I'm looking forward to taking him to all ages shows at First Avenue and the Quest when he's a bit older."

TSK: "My oldest son totally immersed himself in hip-hop and took up DJ'ing in high school. In the early years we tried to enforce the "parental advisory" limits. In time, though, we caved in. But now that he's in college, I notice him revisiting some of the music from my youth like The Beatles."

N2N: Jonathan, earlier you mentioned that your career as a musician has taken second position to your role as parent. How have you come to balance these two roles?

JR: "The musician's lifestyle is notoriously destructive to families. Before Paavo was born, I was playing 150 dates a year around the country, spending a ton of

time on the road. I can't imagine being away from my family that much anymore. So I stopped touring, and now spend my days at home taking care of Paavo while my wife is at work. I only tour on the weekends, and play local shows in the evenings. The new arrangement is working out well, and I'm thrilled to be home. I had over a decade of traveling, so I think I got it out of my system."

N2N: Todd, you recently released your new children's CD?

TSK: "This year we released "Daddy-Doo-A-Rama." [www.daddy-doo.com] Proceeds have always gone to the ECFE program. "Daddy-Doo-A-Rama" is all original music. The track, "Welcome Home" is particularly poignant. It's about the struggles of parenting—those desperate moments when adults say, "What do we do now?"—and there seem to be no answers. "Daddy-Doo-A-Rama" (the title track) was named by my 8 year old, Joel. It's about the highs and lows of fatherhood. There's a point in the song... "hear our questions, hear our cries"... I remember my eyes starting to tear up while singing these words in the studio. I'll never forget that moment."

It was a desire of mine to write my own music and it took me half of a lifetime to do it. I think it will be a terrific gift to my children; not the product per se, but the process of following your guts to a goal. I feel like I may have helped knock down some barriers for my kids."

(Nate Hamilton is a stay at home dad. Email him at: nate@mdah.org)

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Gardener

Continued from page 1

All green roofs have the same components: the plants themselves and the media in which plants grow and a membrane protecting the structure below. The Kormann roof has: 3/4" plywood, a 1/16" roofing membrane, drainage fabric, and then landscape fabric. This is topped by 3/4 cubic yard of black dirt and farm post at a two-to-one ratio.

Terry built most of it himself with help and guidance from neighbor and local contractor, Scott Stern. Stern read the blue prints and helped Terry make a "To-Do list" for the following day's construction. Stern also helped install the rubber membrane and the copper facade.

Initially, they planned to support the structure with a cedar post but in the course of their construction they found fluted, solid wood pillars under their siding. True to their attraction to antiques and recycling existing resources, they recovered a matching pillar from the Re-Use Center on Lake Street.

The project evolved further and the Kormanns took out the grass in their front yard and made it a flowerbed with walkways of decorative stones. On most days you can see neighborhood toddlers walking the meandering path through the flowers and stopping to examine butterflies and bees climbing the blooms.

Roof gardening isn't new



Terry Kormann built most of the Kormann's rooftop garden himself with help and guidance from neighbor and local contractor, Scott Stern. (Photo by Terry Faust)

and likely dates back to ancient Mesopotamia. The motivation for roof gardening varies. Some people do it for ecological rea-

sons, others for economic reasons, still others plant a roof garden for aesthetics. When asked about their reasons for building

a roof garden, Terry Kormann flashes a warm smile and says, "We wanted to do something fun and affordable. It's not cheaper than a conventional roof but it's a lot more fun!"

Green roofs, particularly extensive green roofs, are touted to address a number of urban ecological and economic problems like slowing, cooling and cleaning storm water runoff, lowering heating and cooling costs, reducing the urban heat island effect, and extending the life of the roof by controlling temperature changes. Kormanns are seeing some of these benefits from their experiment. Terry said, "We've noticed that in conjunction with the drainage swale we're not having the runoff we had before; and the basement dried up." Terry continues, "There's no maintenance. We have watered it only once when we did some new plantings during a hot spell. There's a 1" pitch for drainage and it can be patched but I doubt it will leak."

Green roofs are also reputed to increase wildlife habitat. Butterflies visit gardens up to 20 stories high and birds up to 19 stories. Terry notes that he has seen more butterflies and birds.

With all these benefits, why aren't we seeing them everywhere? Besides the general resistance to new ideas, it has been difficult to convince people that the additional costs upfront are worth the payoffs down the road. Green roofs cost from \$10 to \$25 per square foot and conventional roof installation ranges from \$3 to \$20 per square foot.

In terms of the larger, commercial green roofs, Minnesota is making some moves that parrot projects in other cities around the world. Locally, there are green roofs on Brit's Pub, Crowne Plaza Northstar Hotel, the Phillips Eco-Enterprise Center and a green roof on the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the U of M. The new Minneapolis Central Library will have a 19,000 square foot green roof. The Olin Science Building at Carleton College is the first student-designed and built green roof in Minnesota. Students there will be testing the green roof viability of 78 varieties of prairie plants native to Minnesota. Green roofs and roof garden may not be spreading as fast as Creeping Charlie, but it is definitely on the move.

Russian sage, bachelor buttons, sedum, baby blue stem grass, California poppies, morning glories and oxeye daisies lift perky faces to the sun. The Kormann's roof garden is miniscule compared to the terraced flowerbeds in their front yard and the lush Eden they have created in their backyard. But the roof garden makes a bold statement about their commitment to sustainable living, fun and beauty.

What do the Kormanns have planned for the future? "We will be meeting with an architect and plumber at our home in Stockholm. We are looking into composting toilets." They offered this advice to budding roof gardeners, "You need a good plan and permits. Stay within those guidelines. Then the fun part starts!"

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Cost: Price of State Fair admission ticket

Contact: Hayley Knudsen, 651-523-2216 or hknudsen01@hamline.edu

The Great Hamline United Methodist Church Get Together

In celebration of Hamline United Methodist Church's 125th anniversary, come enjoy the many varied textures and colors of music for the church, assisted by some of the best known organists in the Twin Cities area.

Date: Sunday, September 25

Time: 3 p.m.

Location: 1514 Englewood Ave. Saint Paul, MN 55104

Contact: 651-645-0667 or www.hamlinechurch.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Inaugural Celebration

Please join us for these events celebrating the inauguration of Linda N. Hanson as Hamline University's 19th President.

Inauguration Ceremony

Friday, October 7
3:00 p.m.
Hutton Arena

Inaugural Reception

Friday, October 7
4:30 – 6 p.m.
Old Main Mall

Fall Festival

Saturday, October 8
11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Old Main Mall

HAMLIN
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