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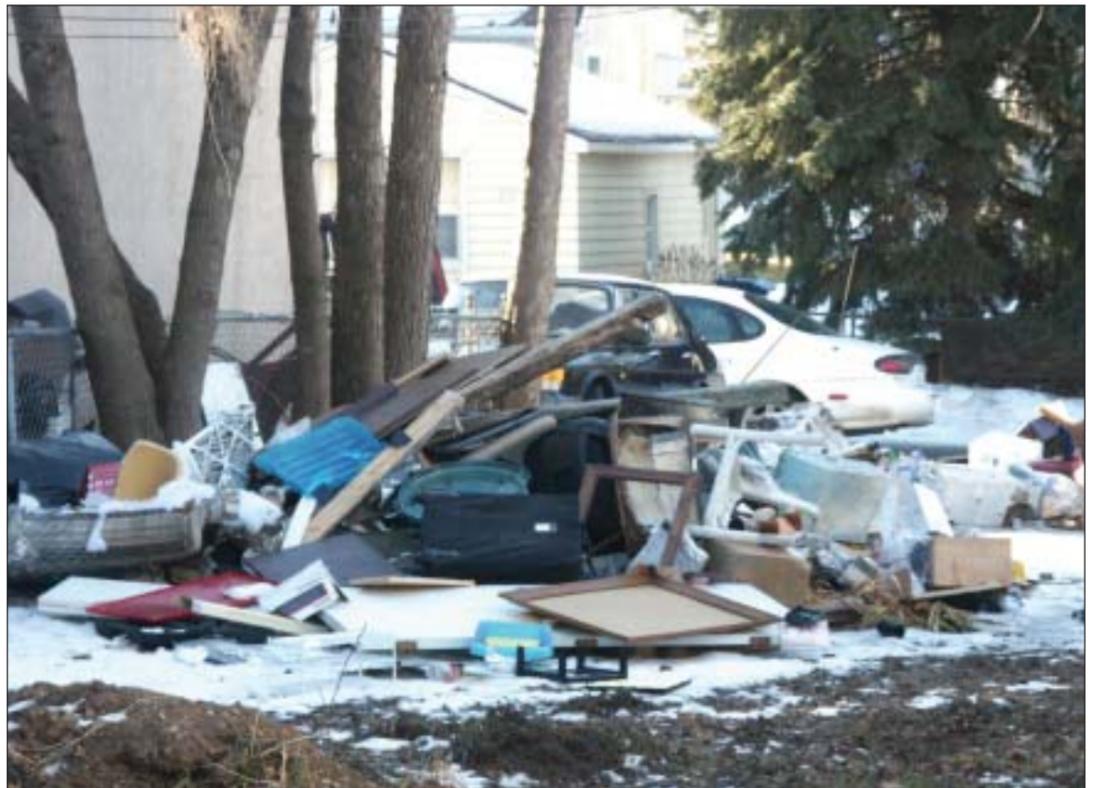
By DEBORAH BROTZ

Imagine sitting out on your deck in the summer entertaining friends and as you glance across the alley you see an old mattress, pieces of lumber, a refrigerator, old tires, three dumpsters, and unused vehicles. This was the situation at 992 Front Ave. until a neighbor couldn't tolerate the mess any more and made a call to the City of St. Paul. Within a day, things started to change.

"We got the complaint on Wednesday night (Jan. 25), and the inspector was out there yesterday (Jan. 26)," said Bob Kessler, director of License-Inspections and Environmental Protection (LIEP) and Neighborhood Housing and Property Improvement (NHPI), who became the new director when Mayor Chris Coleman took office.

"The owner has until Friday (Jan. 27) to clean it up because it was such a mess. We have an emergency or abatement order ready to issue if it's not cleaned up this morning (Jan. 27). Trash and garbage had spilled over several properties."

The mixed use building, with both residential and commercial uses, must have a certificate of occupancy issued by the fire department, who inspects the interior. Exterior complaints are handled by Neighborhood Housing and Property Improvements, which has plenty of clout in getting problem properties up to code.



This was the scene at 992 Front Ave. until a neighbor couldn't tolerate the mess any more and made a call to the City of St. Paul. Within a day, things started to change. (Photo by Terry Faust)

"The owner has been out there with a 40-yard dumpster," said Kessler. "He's cooperating. It may take more than one day. Since he's out there, we'll clean up what's left. He's diligently working now that he's had to clean it up. We'll clean up on

Monday (Jan. 27), if necessary."

By Feb. 1, the property got the City's okay.

"He cleaned up to our satisfaction including the vehicles," said Kessler. "One vehicle there that is still parked in the driveway is under repair. There is a small dent in the fender that he's working on. The inspector will monitor the property weekly."

While a City inspector had been out to the property a few times in December 2005, a neighbor, who asked to not have his or her name used, thought the City was unaware or wasn't doing anything about the trash problem on the property.

"I was really frustrated nobody wanted to take a look at it," the neighbor said. "The City of St. Paul hasn't done anything."

Next door to the property at 996 Front is a building, which used to be a barber shop, where the owners are not there all the time. Some of the trash from 992 had spilled onto the property at 996 before it was cleaned up.

"The people who bought the barber shop were unaware there were dumpsters on their proper-

ty," said the neighbor. "The guy from the towing company was dumping out what was in the dumpsters. He had never taken away dumpsters before because someone was not paying their bills. He just dumped out the garbage on the barber shop property."

According to the neighbor, the trash problem has been going on for many years.

"Nobody has ever done a thing about it," he said. "The inspector tagged all my neighbors but not him."

After years of tolerating the problem property, the neighbor finally decided to take some action by calling the City.

"The sh-- hit the fan yesterday when I saw the guy dumping the dumpsters," he said. "I'll do everything I can now."

While neighbors have complained to the homeowner and amongst themselves about the trash and vehicles on the property, they didn't call the City so that's why there's not a longer record of complaints.



Next door to the property at 996 Front is a building, which used to be a barber shop, where the owners are not there all the time. Some of the trash from 992 had spilled onto the property at 996 in the back of the lot before it was cleaned up (at right in photo). (Photo by Terry Faust)

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Midway Como in a Minute

Family Academy leaves the Midway location

For the second time in less than two years, a new occupant will be sought for the former St. Columba School building at 1330 Blair Av. Family Academy, a charter school that opened here in fall 2004, is reportedly closing its Hamline-Midway location February 17. Students will transfer to its New Brighton facility, which will open as a preschool through eighth grade program February 21.

Family Academy has 275 students. That is about 70 students lower than projected, causing a deficit of roughly \$45,000. Closing the Hamline-Midway building and consolidating at New Brighton is expected to help the charter school stabilize itself.

But it will leave the Hamline-Midway neighborhood's former Catholic school vacant again. The preschool through eighth grade St. Columba School was abruptly closed in the summer of 2004, sending its 143 students scrambling to find classrooms openings for fall. St. Columba had operated there for 82 years.

Dennis McGrath, director of communications for the Archdiocese, said a St. Columba parish is working with consultants from Teamworks International to discuss future uses for the school building.

Former St. Columba parents didn't return calls about the Family Academy closing. Nor did Family Academy officials return calls for comment.

In the summer of 2004 St. Columba parents and parish members fought a losing battle to keep their school open, organizing special rallies and masses and even opening a bank account to solicit community donations. Some parents argued at the time that they had arranged work schedules and even moved closer to the parish so that their children could attend the school. The closing not only meant finding new schools at the

eleventh hour for students, it forced some parents to rearrange work and child care schedules.

The Archdiocese indicated at the time that the school and parish had financial problems. At St. Columba, about 70 percent of the parish income went to support the school. In a typical parish that amount is about 30 to 35 percent. But many people in the St. Columba community said they weren't made aware of the financial problems until it was too late to do anything to save the school.

Sholom, Episcopal Homes awarded grants

St. Paul senior citizen housing projects did well in the 2005 round of federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 202 grants, as Sholom Community Alliance and Episcopal Homes both were awarded funds for projects. It is unusual for a city to win more than one grant in a HUD funding round.

Locally, the grants mean Episcopal Homes will be adding housing units in the area. But Sholom will be moving to the West End, freeing up its longtime Midway Parkway location for reuse or redevelopment.

Episcopal Homes, which has its main campus at University and Fairview avenues, received \$6.1 million to build low-income senior housing as part of the Lexington Park development at the southwest corner of Lexington Parkway and University Avenue. An Aldi grocery store and TCF Bank are already open for business on the site, and will be joined there later this year by Wilder Foundation's new headquarters building.

Construction on the 50-unit building will start in July, with completion in spring 2007. The housing will be in the southwest corner of the site, adjacent to market-rate housing planned by Lexington Park developer Steve Wellington.

Sholom will build its new east metro facilities as part of the Victo-

ria Park project at West Seventh Street and Otto Avenue. Sholom received \$5.5 million to build a 45-unit apartment building for low-income elderly residents. The apartment building is part of a larger continuing care campus for Sholom, which will also include assisted living units, a nursing home and hospice.

This was Sholom's second try for funding for the Victoria Park project. An application for 2004 funding was rejected because Sholom didn't have site control of the Victoria Park site. Construction will start this summer.

Project awarded new revitalization grant

One area project was awarded a Livable Communities Tax Base Revitalization Account (TBRA) grant January 25 by the Metropolitan Council. The council awarded more than \$3.6 million in grants for cleanup of polluted properties. Sixteen projects in seven communities won the grants. If all of the projects are completed, the result will be the cleanup of 96 acres and an additional \$3.9 million in tax capacity. An estimated 1,440 new jobs would be created by the projects.

Five projects in St. Paul were awarded the TBRA grants, including the Booth Brown House of Salvation Army in Como Park neighborhood. The facility for homeless youth was awarded \$136,000 to abate asbestos and lead-based paint. The building is the focus of a renovation and expansion project.

Other St. Paul projects include conversion of the downtown Park Square building into condominiums, cleanup of a former roofing materials manufacturing facility along Phalen Boulevard, environmental cleanup of the Old Swedish Bank building on Payne Avenue, and a vapor barrier for the new Sholom Community Alliance senior housing campus at West Seventh and Otto Avenue. The Sholom campus, which will

replace the current Sholom Home East on Midway Parkway, is being built on the site of a former fuel tank farm.

Townhouses build at Blair and Lafond

Sixteen townhouses will be built on Blair and Lafond, with St. Paul City Council approval of a needed zoning change. The City Council unanimously approved a change in zoning on January 25, following a public hearing.

The townhouses will be built at 608, 611 and 613 Blair Av. and 609 Lafond. The townhouses are a project of the Greater Frogtown Community Development Corporation (CDC). The project has the support of the Thomas-Dale (District 7) Planning Council.

The St. Paul Planning Commission voted unanimously approved a property rezoning, a parking variance and lot width variance for the project December 2.

The Planning Commission decision on the variances was final and the rezoning recommendation sent on to City Council.

About half a dozen neighbors attended the City Council public hearing, to ask questions and raise concerns about the project. Some said there wasn't adequate notice to the neighborhood and that they hadn't been informed of any community meetings. Others raised concerns about traffic in the alley.

Some of the vacant property where the townhouses will be built was left over from the reconstruction and widening of Dale Street several years ago. Businesses and some residential properties were purchased by the city and torn down when the street was widened. Some neighborhood residents questioned why the land wouldn't be left as green space. But others supported the townhouses, saying something should be built on the property and that the neighborhood needs a variety of housing types.

-Compiled by Jane McClure

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St. Paul colleges react to proposed student fee

By JANE MCCLURE

St. Paul's colleges and universities are giving a proposed \$25 per student fee a failing grade. Presidents of 11 of the city's institutions of higher education sent Mayor Chris Coleman and St. Paul City Council members a letter January 18 that outlines their concerns and opposition with the fee proposal.

The fee, proposed by Ward Four Council Member Jay Benanav, is seen as a way to help cover the costs of providing city services to the city's 12 institutions of higher education.

Benanav, who brought up the idea in 2003 and during a City Council budget session last fall, said the idea is still "very preliminary." "We're going to need to have a lot more discussion and debate before any formal proposal is brought forward," he said. No fee proposal has been written for City Council consideration and a study of the idea isn't due at council offices until June.

The 11 college and university presidents signing the letter represent schools including Hamline University, Luther Seminary and Concordia University. The presidents indicate they oppose the idea for a number of reasons, and question the fee's legality. They are also bothered by the suggestion that students are a burden to the community.

Public safety costs are Benanav's primary focus. This past year St. Paul Police responded to 407 calls for service on the city's college campuses. That number doesn't include calls to off-campus housing. A tally of fire calls is being prepared.

Benanav's ward includes or is near University of Minnesota St. Paul campus, Hamline University, Luther Seminary, University of St. Thomas, Macalester College, College of St. Catherine and Concordia University. "As Ward Four Council member, where several campuses are located, I know how much time my office spends on campus-related issues, to ensure the safety of students, faculty and staff, and neighborhood livability," Benanav said. Of all of the issues his office deals with, campus and off-campus student issues take the most time.

The service demands have to be weighed with rising property taxes and city costs. "We were told at the truth-in-taxation public hearing that we can't keep raising property taxes," Benanav said. Some single-family home owners had increases nearing 30 percent, with landlords reporting increases topping the 40 percent mark. The council member said other ideas for raising revenue need to be studied, or risk slashing city services.

But St. Paul's college and university presidents say they are already paying a lot to the city. "Our 11 institutions already pay significant fees for city services," the letter stated. "In fiscal

2004, for example, we paid \$660,000 in local taxes, fees and special assessments, and those amounts have increased significantly in recent years because of new or higher new or higher street or lighting assessments. In fiscal 2004, we paid \$1.4 million for municipal services such as water and sanitary sewers."

The presidents also remind city officials that colleges and universities have a significant economic impact, with a gross payroll exceeding \$261 million in fiscal 2004 and expenditures of more than \$450 million.

The idea of student fees for city services has been looked at in other United States cities, but never implemented on a mandatory basis.

Benanav said he began looking at the idea more seriously in times of tight city budgets and cuts to the city's local government aid from the state.

One group already questioning the fee is the Minnesota Private College Council, a group of 17 Minnesota private colleges. Six of its members are in St. Paul. Council President David Laird has questioned whether the idea is even legal. He also questioned whether such a fee would negatively affect colleges' ability to recruit new students.

He questioned why the city would single out colleges and universities, out of all of the nonprofit entities in St. Paul. Laird also wondered whether St. Paul wants to drive more schools out to the suburbs, noting the loss of Bethel College in Como neighborhood and Northwestern College's move from St. Anthony Park.

"I don't think this (colleges leaving) is something the city would want to precipitate any more of," Laird said.

Benanav had received more than 100 emails on the proposed fee. Responses were split evenly between St. Paul residents and college students. "Of the residents I've heard from, about 90 percent are in favor of some kind of fee," Benanav said. Student response is running about 99 percent against the fee.

Benanav said he can understand students' concerns about yet another fee tacked onto rising tuition and room and board payments. One of his sons recently graduated from college and another is a college student out-of-state. "But what is really unfortunate is the tone of some of the emails I have received from students. The foul language is unbelievable." Some of the milder emails against the fee start off by calling Benanav an "idiot."

The student idea has also sparked a lively debate on the St. Paul Issues Forum, an e-democracy web site where local issues are discussed. As of late last week more than 70 postings had been made on the student fee issue.

Opponents describe the idea as bad policy, saying the

colleges and universities already have a major positive economic impact on the city. They cite the jobs created by the school and the training schools provide for the city's workforce. Another argument raised against the fee is that it would take one class of people—students—and treat them differently from others.

Others argue that the issues raised by the college and universities do take up time for the area district councils and for the city, and that costs should be paid. Some have also said the fee is a small amount and pales in comparison to other fees tacked to a tuition bill.

One challenge for St. Paul city officials is that about one-third of the property in the city is in nonprofit hands, be it schools, other units of government, hospitals or community service agencies. St. Paul colleges and universities do not pay property taxes because they are non-profit entities. But they do pay street right-of-way maintenance assessments for snow plowing, street sweeping, street lighting and other expenses. Schools also pay for city utilities such as sewer and water service. The Private College Council estimates its six members paid \$1.9 million in assessments and fees to the city in 2004.

Fees do kick in for so-called problem properties. When off-campus students are considered, property owners pay fees for excessive city service if a dwelling generates too many police calls or additional calls for property code inspections.

In August 2005 City Council Research studied the per-student fee idea. The study indicates that while other cities have considered student fees, no mandatory fee has been successfully implemented anywhere.

"The political feasibility of this proposal is the real hurdle," a council research report stated. "The most feasible and potentially justifiable approach would be to charge students living in on-campus housing, considering most students living off-campus likely contribute to city services through property taxes whether they rent or own." The study also suggested that a commuter student fee might also be feasible.

The types of fees proposed varies by city. Erie, Pennsylvania officials withdrew a \$50 per student fee in the face of staunch community opposition. Muncie officials have been looking at a fee for students not contributing to the city coffers through property tax payments, meaning on-campus and commuter students from outside of that city would pay the fee.

In Muncie, Ball State University already pays the city \$100,000 per year on a voluntary basis. Boston also has a voluntary payment in lieu of taxes or PILOT program for its colleges and universities, but is considering a \$100 per student fee.

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I met the loveliest woman at a party sometime around Christmas. I can't remember the date, the days run together during the holidays. We started talking about being stepmothers. She, like so many of us, has had a rough time finding her place in the family.

She fell in love and married her husband several years ago. He'd been divorced for a short time, and had three teenage kids. He and his ex-wife shared custody. As in many shared custody cases, the ex is in the picture quite regularly. When the ex-wife is hanging out in the kitchen, dropping off or picking up kids, and always discussing one thing or another, it's easy to see how a second wife would feel out of place.

This second wife, I'll call her Cindy, had no children from her first marriage. The fact that she decided to gamble again is good, but marrying a man with teenage children and an active ex-wife is downright admirable! If it were up to me, I wouldn't have even attempted it. However, I have raised two kids, and understand how wrought with danger the teenage years are.

There were more problems than the ex-wife's frequent visits. They belonged to the same church. Every Sunday, she and her husband attended church, sometimes with his kids, sometimes without. Every Sunday, they would see the ex-wife, who never married, at the church alone, or with her kids. They were active in the church group, so Cindy didn't know when she should volunteer for some group, if the ex-wife would be in that group. She wasn't interested in being in the same groups with the first wife. She asked her husband if they could please join another church, but he didn't want to disrupt the kids. They'd been disrupted enough by the divorce.

There were more problems than the ex-wife just the church. Cindy worked at home. She ran an interior design business. Her hours were anytime she could meet with a client. The varying schedule worked out fine when she was alone, but found it hard to keep when she had to pick up or drop off kids at school or sports. Her husband, a self-employed professional man, tended to count on Cindy to help him out with transporting the kids.

There were more problems. The ex-wife, the supreme



Stepping In

By SHERRI MOORE

Fitting in where you're not wanted

stepford mother, was at every game, every play, every event that her kids participated in. She would sit off to one side...alone. Cindy and her husband would sit on the opposite side.

Naturally, the ex-wife had most of the sympathy from other mothers at school or church. Cindy had met her husband after his divorce, she didn't cause it. Yet, she was picking up on the other mother's feelings through comments they made, or cold-blooded stares she received.

The husband, who shall remain nameless, wasn't any help. He was the pie-in-the-sky type, who thought his kids would love her because he loved her. I don't know about some guys, they take relationships for granted and many times think everyone will be okay, while World War III is breaking out. He depended on her a lot to cook, clean, and care for the kids, in addition to being a taxi service. He managed his house badly, so she took over every aspect of running his home, including paying his bills. What a cushy deal he got!

Cindy tried to talk to her husband about how she felt: the ex-wife was a formidable force she didn't know how to deal with, and his children hated her, and spent much of their time at home letting her know it. She was exhausted from taking on so much of the daily running of the household. To top it off, when they were out as a family, she was the extra one, who didn't fit in. It seemed there was no place for this woman, no reason for a second wife, except, perhaps, for free labor.

The only good thing in Cindy's new life was her relationship with her husband. She did feel like he cared for her, and cherished their alone time, which was pretty rare. Once, during their first year of marriage, they managed to get a week away from everything. I forgot where they went, but it doesn't matter; they managed to get

away alone.

While they were away, she managed to make her husband see things through her eyes. She'd brought the helpful, instructional notes the ex-wife left for her, the calendar of notes she'd made regarding all of the driving, and her company books, showing how little business she'd had since she married him.

By the end of their week, he admitted there needed to be changes made.

Cindy chose to see a therapist on her own to learn how to say "no" to many requests for her help when she was in her home office. She closed the door, and requested no one interrupt her unless there was blood flowing, or the house was on fire.

Cindy's husband met with the kids, without Cindy and informed them that they had to be more considerate of her. She was not their beck-and-call-girl. They were to take care of their own laundry, and keep track of their own school work. Every night, after homework was done, they had to pack their backpacks and ask for whatever they needed for the next day. He would drive them to school in the mornings, but Cindy would pick them up. He ended his talk with them by saying that Cindy had nothing to do with their parents' divorce, and she would, God willing, be around forever. He also assigned household chores for everyone, on a big chalk board he'd set up.

It took several months for the kids to get the hang of being more independent. At first they were resentful, but gradually they warmed up to helping out around the house. When Cindy had more rest, and time to herself, she was able to deal with the kids better.

What happened to the ex-wife? That's another column.

Have you experienced these same problems? How did you and your husband deal with your problems? Please write me, we're all interested.

(Sherri Moore is a freelance writer, and a former resident of the Como neighborhood. She lives in Minneapolis with her second husband. Their children are grown and gone. Sherri welcomes your comments and can be reached via e-mail at sherrimoore92@msn.com.)

Well I promised something special for this my one-year anniversary of writing for the *Monitor*. And I have to tell you, I don't think you will be disappointed. In the past year I have written about play areas, kid classes, places to eat, going to the zoo. But this month I visited one of the most fascinating places I've been to yet in all of my Saint Paul wanderings—The Source Comics and Games store.

Walking into the place is a total throwback for me. I see wall to wall all my boyhood heroes: Superman, The Green Lantern, Batman; and the funny guys, too—Archie, Richie Rich. I tell John, the clerk, that this place is enormous—like a warehouse. "No," he laughs. "We have an offsite warehouse that houses a bunch more stuff."

"I've been collecting comics myself since I was six years old," he adds.

The Source seems to be, excuse me, the source for Twin Cities comic book enthusiasts. It is not uncommon to have small groups of devotees lurking outside the store each Wednesday to be the first to get their hands on the new goodies.

In the back of the store they have an area designated for card and board gamers; whom they seem to pack in



New to the Neighborhood

By NATE HAMILTON

Visiting The Source Comics and Games

every night of the week. The bunch I witness in here the night of my visit is of an assorted variety—a few brazen young girls matching wits and cards against some wiry old timers, college guys in sports sweatshirts huddling over a game board with some long-haired teenage kids.

"We have been in this location for going on 13 years" their web site boasts (www.sourcecandg.com). "We have a gazillion square feet of retail space. Comic racks, card displays, game displays and miniatures cover all the walls."

One of the owners, Nick, comes out to show me around. My overall impression is that this business is run by a group of friends. That here are a group of people, John, Nick, Bob the manager, who are just living the life. It may not be what we would do, but man do they know how to have fun. They are living their dream—on their own terms. "Every Wednesday is like Christmas here," Nick explains. "That's when we get in our ship-

ment of new comics."

He goes on to explain that there are comics now in every range of topic: sports, politics, soap operas, police dramas, you name it. The clientele have become equally diverse—new readers and long time collectors, and more females than ever before. "Now is the best time to be in the comic book industry," he

says.

To illustrate the influence that comics have on our culture, John points out the number of recent big screen blockbuster movies that have been made based on comics: Hulk, Batman, Spiderman and X-Men. And let's not forget the importance of artists like Art Spiegelman, whose mind-blowing Aushwitz comic, Maus, won him a Pulitzer Prize in 1992.

The conversation somehow turns to me. They ask me what are my favorite comics. If I know there is a new Superman movie coming out. How do I like being a writer. If I liked the new Star Wars or the old. If I am going to buy any comics for my son. Eventually, I say good-byes to my new friends Nick and John. Nick presses a packet of locally written comics into my hand. They are completely wild. I leave the store with my head buzzing from the experience.

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Target faces off with Midway on proposed Super Target

By JAN WILLMS

A lack of creative thinking appeared to be the main concern of community members at a meeting held Jan 12 at the Model Cities Brownstone in Saint Paul. The meeting offered an opportunity for Target representatives to explain their plans for a Super Target that will be built on the old Sheraton Hotel location.

Nancy Holman, representing the Mayor's office, praised Target's role in the Twin Cities and expressed gratitude for its corporate presence.

"You can see and feel the excitement along University Avenue," she said, "and the vitality of this street will not quit. We have this huge opportunity staring us in the face."

Holman expressed hope that Target and the community would think really big and make the area along University one of the most vital shopping centers in the city.

Brian McMahon, executive director of University UNITED, said the retail center is the face of the community, and those interested in the development of Target are both shoppers and residents.

McMahon said there are three contiguous centers along University, which are Midway, Midway Marketplace and Target.

"If this were thought of as one large center, it would cover 72 acres, the same size as Rosedale," McMahon said.

"We think this is a better location," he continued, "with superior transportation, freeways, arterials and possible light rail. There are approximately 50 acres of surface parking, or undeveloped dirt. We want to know how to make more productive use of that dirt," he said.

McMahon said University UNITED, Lexington-Hamline District Council, business and nonprofit representatives had been meeting and discussing the proposed Super Target. "The community goals are to maximize the jobs on the site, maximize property taxes, and create a 'place,' not another strip mall with a parking lot.

He said the community ideal would be a density of 100 jobs per acre, but they would love to see even 50 jobs per acres. "Big-box stores generally get 15-20 jobs per acre," he said.

McMahon emphasized that efficiency could be found by stacking, putting other businesses or housing on top of Target.

"We need to retain and enhance a mix of uses, such as a hotel, restaurants, apartments or condos," he said. "We need a plan for improved coordination, a mix of stores and design for the whole shopping area."

McMahon offered a comparative look at taxes paid per square foot of land by various businesses.

"Midway Bookstore pays \$2.03 per square foot," he said. "Skyline Tower pays \$1.73; Tar-

get, .92 and Midway Center, .83. The Mom and Pop stores pay premium."

"As retail moves to the core of the city, we need to figure out the density," McMahon said, "and there are many creative options. There is a Home Depot with a Target

He said Target is proposing a single-story store, 28 to 36 feet in height.

"The building resembles a two-story, but is single story," he said. "There are no two-level Super Targets."

Carrico said the intention is to sell off the front

much as possible and add landscaping.

"Banks and restaurants have approached us about purchasing part of the property," he said. He said Target would like to open the new store in 2007. Targets open only three times a year, in March, July or August.

"We figure it will take 11 months to construct the new store and a couple of more months to destruct the hotel," Carrico said. "We want to put in place a lot of landscaping, and we are developing site plans."

Describing himself as a dark cloud on the horizon, Bernie Hesse, director of organizing for United Food and Commercial Works local 789, said he did not like the Super Target design. "It doesn't look like transportation oriented development," he said.

Jesse said he had studied Super Centers for years, and he was concerned about the loss of jobs, labor standards and the upholding of the National Labor Relations Act.

He said Target has stated that unions are unacceptable, and wages at a West St. Paul Target are \$7.50 per hour.

"We have Light Rail Transit coming—let's be smart," Hesse said. "I would like to see some job density, living wages, health benefits and hires from the community. Just because you guys buy a piece of land, you still have to listen to the community."

Carrico responded that a regular Target has about 200 em-

ployees; a Super Target has 450.

"We will hire most likely from the local community," added Mike Logan, senior group manager and governing officer for Target. "I have never heard Target speak out against unions, and we will treat our workers with respect. We pay competitive wages and offer a benefits package."

Hesse said in a later interview that several years ago Target had advertised for union avoidance officers.

He said he lives in the Midway and does not want the additional traffic a big-box store brings.

"I would like Target to sign a code of conduct," he said. "We won't break the law if they won't. I expect them to remain neutral and give the union access."

"The veneer is falling off the bulls-eye," Hesse said, referring to the Target logo.

He said he hoped all concerned parties can sit down and "actually do something smart, and get it so everybody can win."

Carrico told the audience members at the community meeting that a Target store has to meet certain standards to qualify as a two-level store, and the one on University Avenue did not.

"We are not seeking any public subsidy or assistance from the city," he said. Referring to the current Target on the site, he said the store is a good performer, but not their best and did not meet the criteria for a two-story.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

"We look at the opportunities that present themselves. We have met with neighborhood associations, and we have tried to come up with a plan that works for Target and for the city."

- Tom Carrico, Target real estate manager

above it. Wal-Mart has a three-story building in LA, and housing is not being located on big-box stores."

McMahon said Target can help achieve the community goals by creating a two-story building and structured parking, an attractive public space and a mix of other stores and restaurants. He added that Target could work with the other shopping centers on a coordinated master plan for improved density and circulation.

Tom Carrico, the real estate manager for Target, said the company had purchased the Sheraton Hotel on Oct. 30 of last year with the possibility in mind of erecting a Super Target on the property. "It will be the first Super target in the city of Minneapolis or Saint Paul," he said. "We look at the opportunities that present themselves. We have met with neighborhood associations, and we have tried to come up with a plan that works for Target and for the city."

Tom Lasley, the lead project designer for Target, is also a Saint Paul resident. "We have listened and looked at the University UNITED website," he said.

Carrico said Target owns the whole block the current store sits on, except for an acre in the corner. He said plans call for a smaller parking field with smaller, denser retail on University. There would be bike lanes, an east-west connector and two entrances.

"A Super Target has two entries, one for the grocery and one for the general merchandise," Carrico said. "The front sidewalks will be safer and more pedestrian-oriented."

part of the property to other businesses.

It is important for us to have a say and some control," he added.

He said the business has taken into account that a lot of its customers ride the bus and tried to shrink the parking lot as

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Central corridor gets a boost with ridership forecast

By JANE MCCLURE

Months of waiting may come to an end soon for supporters and opponents of the Central Corridor transit project, as officials prepare for the pending release of project studies. A schedule of project public hearings could be announced this month.

The transit project plans got a push with a new ridership forecast of 43,000 passengers per day by the year 2030. Those numbers will help Ramsey County make a stronger case to federal officials that the proposed transit line should move ahead into preliminary design and engineering work.

The Central Corridor Coordinating Committee, a group made up of city, county and regional officials, got the good news January 19. The committee hopes to announce a schedule for public meetings on the project in February and prepare for the release of the project's draft environmental impact statement (DEIS).

Committee members were also told that Governor Tim Pawlenty has recommended that \$2.5 million in the 2006 state bonding bill be earmarked for Central Corridor planning. Central Corridor is a transit line that would extend from downtown St. Paul to downtown Minneapolis. Most of the route would extend along University Avenue.

The strong ridership numbers are used to calculate travel time savings. Steve Morris, project manager for Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority, said the ridership forecast is used to determine the cost-benefit rating for Central Corridor. Central Corridor's rating appears to fall within the range federal transit officials will allow to move ahead in the design and



This image represents a still from the Central Corridor Conceptual Simulation prepared for the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority. (Image courtesy of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority.)

funding processes.

For almost two years release of the Central Corridor draft environmental impact statement has been delayed as county and Metropolitan Council officials struggled with computer models, ridership projections and a cost-benefit analysis. The models are needed to project future Central Corridor ridership. Morris said project staff are optimistic that the numbers reached will hold up.

Central Corridor project staff will discuss the new forecast with Federal Transportation Administration officials this week, said Morris. If the figures pass muster, the long-awaited draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for Central Corridor can be released in the next several weeks.

Release of the EIS starts a 60-day public comment period. The Central Corridor Coordinating Committee would then be given

six to 12 months to select the locally preferred alternative for the transit corridor. The committee, made up of Metropolitan Council, Ramsey, Hennepin, Minneapolis and St. Paul elected officials, has tentatively chosen light rail over bus rapid transit for Central Corridor. That decision would be finalized after the EIS release and comment period.

Interest in Central Corridor and other St. Paul transportation and transit projects is quite strong, if the turnout at a January 23 forum at Hamline University is any indication. More than 200 people attended the forum, which was organized by Mayor Chris Coleman. The session, which featured speakers from the city, county, state and Metro Transit, is believed to be the first time that officials from all of the jurisdictions have gotten together to outline upcoming projects.

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Okay, the headline is plagiarized from a quote that made me laugh: "These aren't hot flashes, they're power surges!" Issues relating to menopause and perimenopause are becoming more public as baby-boomers reach their 50's.

First a definition of terms. Perimenopause is the period of time before a woman stops having periods, but during which she may experience physical symptoms from the changing levels of estrogen and progesterone in her body. Menopause means an absence of menstrual periods for at least 12 months. Perimenopausal symptoms can occur years before menopause actually happens.

Here is a quiz for you to take to help you determine if you are perimenopausal. Lab tests can sometimes indicate whether or not you are perimenopausal, but this quiz is easier, cheaper, and just as accurate.

Answer yes or no to the following questions -

1. Have you stopped wearing turtle-necks?
2. Do you find yourself asking "Is it warm in here, or is it just me?"
3. Have you learned how to sleep with one leg sticking out of the blankets?
4. Are your wool sweaters passed over even on cold winter days?

Cares and Cures

By JANE KILIAN, M.D.

Power surge

5. Have your periods taken on an unpredictable life of their own?

6. Do you wake up at 2 or 3 in the morning and have trouble falling back asleep?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you are likely having perimenopausal symptoms. As a woman ages, her ovaries produce smaller amounts of estrogen and progesterone. These are the hormones that regulate menstrual cycles, but they can also affect a woman's mood, her skin, her sleep, and even her memory.

The average age of menopause is 51 years. Symptoms can start 15 years before the actual onset of menopause, and may continue for the rest of a woman's life. Luckily, most women have symptoms for only a few months or years. Some women have no symptoms at all.

The quiz lists common symptoms of the perimenopausal time with hot flashes, night sweats, ir-

regular periods, moodiness, fatigue and painful intercourse being the most common. Hot flashes are usually brief...women experience a sudden feeling of intense warmth, often radiating from their chest to their head. They may turn red and may even sweat profusely.

Periods start doing all kinds of crazy things. They may become shorter or longer, lighter or heavier, farther apart or closer together. Until you have gone 12 months or more without a period, you could still become pregnant; so contraception is important if pregnancy is not desired.

If your periods become heavy and frequent, you should see your health care provider. You may become anemic (low in iron) from excessive bleeding. In addition, if you go more than 12 months without a period, and then have some bleeding, you need to see your health care provider.

The symptoms of perimenopause may be mild or severe. Some women lessen their symp-

toms by taking soy products, calcium, and/or black cohosh. Regular exercise can help with mood and weight problems, as well as sleep disorders. Alcohol and caffeine can worsen hot flashes, so it is best to avoid them.

If your life has become miserable because of your symptoms, you should see your health care provider. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is not for everyone, but it can help with the most bothersome symptoms. Years ago, HRT was prescribed for almost all perimenopausal women. Fairly recently a study was published which caused a shift away from prescribing HRT. Lately, however, that study has been challenged. As a result, HRT is once again being prescribed more commonly to help women enjoy their lives during perimenopause.

In addition, some of the newer low-dose antidepressant medications can relieve problems with mood, sleep, and hot flashes.

So...as you power surge your

way through the rest of the winter, know that you are not alone and also know that your health care provider may be able to help you as you go through this hormonal transition.

A personal note to my readers: My column has been absent for the last few months. My mother was diagnosed with cancer this fall, and died at the end of December. I temporarily stopped my medical practice and all other activities (including this column) in order to care for her while she died. This month I was planning to write an article offering tips to people taking care of ill family members, but I need a bit more time until I feel I can be objective. If you have cared for someone ill or dying and have suggestions to pass on to others, please contact the paper at denisw@aplacoremember.com. I will use your comments in a future column.

(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@aplacoremember.com.)

Volunteers feted at January 13 'Honor Roll' celebration

By JANE MCCLURE

Volunteers who have worked on district plans, events for children, bicycle lanes and neighborhood cleanups are among the latest additions to St. Paul's Neighborhood Honor Roll. The honorees were feted January 13 at a celebration at Metropolitan State University. The city's district councils organized the annual celebration.

Mayor Chris Coleman and City Council President Kathy Lantry presented the award. Both are former district council members. Coleman was president of the Thomas-Dale Planning Council more than a decade ago. That experience gives him an understanding of the time the honored volunteers put in and their commitment to their neighborhoods, Coleman said.

Names of the honorees are displayed on plaques hung on the third floor of the City Hall-Courthouse. Each district is allowed to nominate three people or organizations each year.

North End-South Como (District 6) Planning Council nominated three people. Duane Johnson is a Dale Street resident who is active at St. Bernard's and as a block leader. He also volunteers at the Rice Street festival, gathers and redeems cans for donation, and helps neighbors by cutting grass, clearing snow and hauling compost. Jeff Martens, a lifelong North End resident and District 6 Council volunteer, serves on the district council and chairs its land use committee. He is also active in a block club and other community activities. Paul Kammueler is a member of the district council and its land use committee. He serves as the committee secretary and prepares all of the correspondence with the city and the committee minutes.

Thomas-Dale (District 7) Planning Council had the largest group of nominees. The Frogtown Events Committee, led by Larry and

Sharon Paulson, organizes numerous neighborhood events ranging from kids' parties to a neighborhood garage sale. Seitu Jones, a Frogtown artist, has helped organize community gardens and design public art. He has also served on community task forces. Roger Waller was honored for serving as a block club volunteer for more than a decade. He hand-delivers 125 block club agendas each month.

All three of the Como (District 10) Community Council's nominees are involved in the writing of a district plan for Como Park neighborhood. Jillian Ierian, a mother of six-year-old triplets and an active member of Chelsea Heights PTSA. She has been a Como Community Council (District 10) Board member for three years and is co-chair of the council's land use committee. Nathan Volz is the other co-chair of the committee. Brian Tucker, architect for Cunningham Associates and member of the District 10 Land use committee, is the third plan participant honored.

He was recognized for his work on the neighborhood plan for Como Park, which will be submitted to the Planning Commission and City Council later this year.

Hamline-Midway (District 11) Coalition's nominees all have been involved in neighborhood activities. Hamline University student Allison Chapman was honored for coordinating the annual neighborhood cleanup and working on student renter issues. She is believed to be one of the first, if not the first college student to start a neighborhood block club. Cheryl Grefre started the Hamline-Thomas Walking Group as a way of addressing problems with a local business and helping neighbors build a sense of community. Benita Warns is a bicycle advocate and was a longtime member of the HMC Board. She currently serves on the district council's land use committee.

St. Anthony Park (District 12)

Community Council honored two district council committee members and a neighborhood businessperson. Gordon Murdock and Joe Michels have been active on the district council's committees. Murdock has been extensively involved in the environmental committee and has volunteered for many events and activities. Michels is active on the district council and its land use committee. Helen Dufault, of the Hampden Park Co-op was honored for her decades of

work to support local vendors, keep prices down, work with volunteers and maintain the co-op.

The District 13 councils also nominated three honorees. Saed Kakish, owner of Cahoots Coffee Bar since October 1997, was nominated by Snelling-Hamline Community Council. He provides meeting space for community council committees and beverages for community events. Urban Landreman, former board member and president of Lexington-Hamline Com-

munity Council, was nominated by LHCC. He founded Lex-Ham Community Band and Lex-Ham Community Theater, and led parent councils at J.J. Hill and Central. Mike Madden, a former Merriam Park Community Council board member and chair of the council's Transportation and Economic Development Committee, was nominated by MPCC. He has been very involved in issues including Ayd Mill Road and University Avenue transit-oriented development.

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Como Zoo plans \$10 million polar bear, gorilla exhibit renovation

By DEBORAH BROTZ

As zoo administrators and caretakers become more knowledgeable of how to take the best care of animals, they try to make changes in the animals' environment. Gone are the days of keeping zoo animals in a small cage with black iron bars. Modern zoos now strive to keep zoo animals in their natural environment in an open space. Como Zoo is striving to keep up with the times by planning a \$10 million polar bear and gorilla exhibit renovation.

"These are two projects we want to work on," said Liz Anderson, Como Campus manager. "CLR, a designer from Philadelphia, presented us with preliminary designs. We will get final ideas and cost estimates the beginning of March. We want to completely renovate the polar bear exhibit and some parts of the interior gorilla exhibit to replace the smaller one we have now."

The renovation is needed because information about how to take better care of zoo animals has changed.

"The polar bear exhibit is woefully inadequate," said Anderson. "There's not enough space. The animals cannot exhibit natural behaviors. They have a couple pools, but they're very small. Visitors can't see the polar bears natural behaviors. We want to let the public know about these animals."

The polar bear renovation will help Como Zoo to provide visitors with a better experience.

"It will provide a much richer experience for visitors," said Anderson. "The exhibit is designed for the public to watch some behind the scenes learning and to see how the animals are cared for. The exhibit will be eight times bigger than it is now."



Como Zoo officials say the proposed polar bear renovation will help Como Zoo to provide visitors with a better experience.

Como Zoo currently has two male polar bears, who are on loan. They would like to get a female.

"These are not our bears," said Anderson. "Herman, who was here when I came in 1999, was very, very old. He died of issues related to old age. We were able to get two polar bears. There's no way we ever could get a pair to mate. There's no space for denning. The new exhibit would provide the best opportunity."

New knowledge has also shown the gorilla exhibit to need some changes.

"The gorilla exhibit interior, what we call bedrooms and are what they use when they're not in the outdoor exhibit, is very small," said Anderson. "We want to improve their environment. Also, we want to get a female gorilla and have a gorilla family. We need additional holding space. This would entail renovations to the existing space."

The outdoor gorilla exhibit

be able to have outside places where they could warm up. There would be lots of up close viewing. The outdoor exhibit would provide these same opportunities. The viewing stations will be glass, and along these areas will be heating elements to extend the viewing season."

The renovations are desperately needed.

"The zoo has not had any

"The exhibit is designed for the public to watch some behind the scenes learning and to see how the animals are cared for. The exhibit will be eight times bigger than it is now."

- Liz Anderson, Como Campus manager

Senate. It is not unusual for local projects to not be included in Gov. Pawlenty's bill. Usually, we have to fight harder for those in committee. We're not giving up. We're still continuing to work."

Representing the area where the zoo is located, state Sen. Ellen Anderson is authoring the zoo renovation bill in the Senate and Hausman is authoring the bill in the House of Representatives.

"Those are initiatives brought to us by the zoo," said Hausman. "In the case of the polar bears, there are changing perceptions across the country of what to do. They recommend to have a family of bears and to separate the father from the mother and babies. There are cycles in their life when the father needs to be separated."

In the wild, polar bears not only walk on ice but also walk on ground.

"They do not have that in the current exhibit," said Hausman. "Daily, they go through exercises to test the health of the bear. The polar bear puts its paw on a gate to spread out its fingers to see if it has injuries. It stand upright, opens its mouth and you can see its teeth. These are all new things we understand we ought to do in the care of animals over time. The zoo has evolved."

In the case of gorillas, the zoo needs to get more things at eye level in a natural setting.

"Both were brought to us by the zoo triggered by changes in different perceptions of how we ought to be providing for the physical needs of the animal," said Hausman.

Hausman feels the zoo will get the funding it needs for the polar bear and gorilla renovations.

"I'm very confident that it will happen," she said.

In the future, Como Zoo has other exhibit renovations planned.

"The long range goal is to have four or five really excellent exhibits," said Anderson. "We want visitors to really understand the animals and to see what they're like. These two exhibits will be the first two so they will be the major exhibits at the zoo. We would like to renovate all the exhibits. It might take 20 years to do it. We're such a small zoo, we can't tear the whole place up. We'll have to do one thing at a time."

As a four-season zoo, Como is open 365 days a year. Anderson hopes it will get funding for the renovation so it can continue to provide visitors with a wonderful experience.

"We hope the Legislature grants our request, and the Como Zoo and Conservatory Society raises the necessary private funds, so we can begin construction next year," she said. "The gorilla renovations will be divided into two parts. We wouldn't do the gorilla and polar bear renovations at the same time. It's too disruptive for zoo visitors. We want to be able to provide experiences all the time."

also needs improvements. The zoo has had a bachelor gorilla troupe for at least seven years.

"We've been extremely successful in managing a bachelor group," said Anderson. "One needs to be dominant. Our outdoor exhibit is very small. The public has to look in and down so it would be much better for the public to be on the same plane as the animals. Now, the animals almost hide from public view."

Although the zoo has put in some play equipment for the gorillas, the environment could still use improvement.

"They need a lot better and bigger environment," said Anderson. "With renovations, we will

renovations since the mid-1980s," said Anderson. "The exhibits no longer are able to provide the animal care, enrichment and animal environment the animals deserve here. It does not allow visitors to interact with animals. That's what we're loved for. Visitors can get close to the animals. We need to provide a better animal environment."

Recently, Como Zoo's \$10 million polar bear and gorilla renovation plans were cut out of Gov. Tim Pawlenty's bonding bill.

"He didn't put it in for what he sees as a local project," said state Rep. Alice Hausman. "We see it as a statewide project. There is very broad support for the zoo in both the House and

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Local Red Cross volunteer spends four months in Louisiana



Carlos Garcia-Velez is a Red Cross volunteer who spent four months in Louisiana helping out after last year's devastating hurricane Katrina struck. He's also a Hubbs Learning Center outreach coordinator. (Photo by Terry Faust)

By JAN WILLMS

The logistics of 85 people sharing two showers is difficult.

"You learn to shower either very early or very late," said Carlos Garcia-Velez, as he described his stay in Baton Rouge, LA.

Garcia-Velez is, among other things, a Red Cross volunteer who spent four months in Louisiana helping out after last year's devastating hurricane Katrina struck.

"I left the Twin Cities September 4, a week after Katrina hit," Garcia-Velez said. For the first three and a half weeks, he was one of 85 volunteers from across the country who stayed at St. Timothy's Methodist Church.

In an e-mail Garcia-Velez sent to a friend, he said the floor was beginning to feel like his bed.

"The people at the church

cared for us and cooked for us," Garcia-Velez said.

He said that with the minimal bathroom availability, you develop a quick routine to get in and out quickly. After about a month, a hotel was available for the volunteers.

Garcia-Velez, who has served as outreach coordinator for the Hubbs Learning Center on University Avenue, and teaches ESL there, has been a Red Cross volunteer for several years.

Once an engineer at 3M, he has also worked for nonprofits in California and Brazil. He served as director of business development for Latin America.

More recently, he has instructed classes in health and safety, CPR and disaster for the Red Cross.

"I joined the Red Cross be-

cause I had a sense that I needed to do that," Garcia-Velez said. "There was nothing heroic about it. I just felt I needed to give of

"Disaster can strike at any time. It is not how much money we make, or our status in life, or the clothes we wear that matter. It is the relationships we have with friends and family that are valuable."

- Carlos Garcia-Velez

myself to others."

He said his volunteering has been a humbling experience and given him an opportunity to

work with an incredible set of people.

As a volunteer in disaster services, Garcia-Velez said he has responded to a lot of fires and has worked previously with hurricane victims in the United States.

He said he had never seen anything, however, like the devastation in the aftermath of Katrina. "It's the worst disaster in the history of the United States," he said. He also noted the damage done by hurricanes Rita and Wilma.

In Louisiana, Garcia-Velez was manager of Partner Service and served as a liaison to volunteer agencies.

"I worked with Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and other faith-based communities," he said. "I tried to coordinate assistance to evacuees. The Red Cross is a part of national VOAD, along with the Salvation Army and 7th Day Adventists."

He said he found the situation hard to put into words, but he was encouraged by the way everyone was working closely together to try and achieve the goal of serving the people.

Garcia-Velez said that over 375,000 dwellings were destroyed in Louisiana. He said the Red Cross served close to 65,000 people and distributed \$23 million in a space of two weeks.

"We served the entire state from Baton Rouge," he said. "I worked with mayors and parish presidents who were supportive of what we were doing. There was a lot of partnership work."

Garcia-Velez said he found

over," he said. "I heard "God Bless America" sung in a way I will always remember."

Garcia-Velez said there was no question in his mind that the people who do not live in the area that was hit cannot relate to the magnitude and severity of the disaster.

He also admitted there had been glitches in some of the recovery work, but had nothing but praise for the response.

"I don't think anyone could have had the experience to prepare for a disaster of this magnitude," he said.

"You just hear negative accounts of FEMA failure, but I met every day with transitional housing groups. They were a credit to themselves and the challenges they faced," Garcia-Velez said.

"The response by the American Red Cross was exceptional," he added. "I'm proud to have been associated with the organization."

Garcia-Velez said he came back to Minnesota with more of an appreciation of what is important in life, and what is not.

"Disaster can strike at any time," he said. "It is not how much money we make, or our status in life, or the clothes we wear that matter. It is the relationships we have with friends and family that are valuable. We need to support one another and be thankful for our homes, our health and our jobs."

Garcia-Velez said that 269 shelters had been set up in Louisiana by the Red Cross. More than 219,500 disaster relief workers responded from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

"Every family should create a disaster plan," Garcia-Velez said. "If something happens, who do you call? Where can you meet? These things became so important in Louisiana as families were separated."

He said the four months he spent there did take their toll. He cried one day for an hour as he witnessed some of the destruction.

"But it's okay to cry," he said. "We know we cannot fix everything. We can only help within the scope of our responsibilities. But the people are working to move forward and rebuild and get on with their lives."

15th Annual Midway Home and Garden Show planned March 18

Get Ready for the 15th Annual Greater Midway Home & Garden Show, Sat., March 18th Sparc, a non-profit community development corporation presents the 15th Annual Greater Midway Home & Garden Show at Crossroads Elementary School, 543 Front Ave., (Front & Dale). Visit expanded workshops on energy saving improvements, windows, gardening, kitchen design, color trends, pavers, and more. Exhibit Hall features local home improvement contractors/products, tree/garden experts, financing options, senior resources, Q&A with Ramsey County Master Gardeners. Workshops - 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Exhibit Hall - 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free admission and parking. 651-488-1039.

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In Our Community

Hamline dances celebrate 4th anniversary

Hamline United Methodist Church, 1514 Englewood Ave., hosts two Barn Dances on Friday, Feb. 24, and Friday, March 31.

The intergenerational events feature a three-piece Appalachian string band. Robin, the dance caller, teaches the dances, and those who wish to listen and watch are welcome, too. Admission is \$3 per person or \$10 per family.

Dancing takes place from 7-9 p.m., with snacks and beverages available from 6:30 p.m. on. Members of Hamline-Midway Neighbors for Peace will be on hand to provide information about their organization.

For more information, please contact the church office at 651-645-0667.

Stories and Taxes at Hamline Midway

Winter storytimes will continue at Hamline Midway Branch of the St. Paul Public Library. The toddler and preschool storytime will be offered on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. through February 22.

Bedtime storytime will be offered for preschool and early elementary-aged children on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. from February 7 through March 14. All children are encouraged to wear their pajamas and bring a favorite bear or blanket to storytime. Both storytimes will include storytelling, songs, fingerplays, and much more.

Also, free tax help will be provided for a limited number of people by AARP volunteers at Hamline Midway Branch. Hours are Fridays from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., through April 15. Please access the requirements of the program on the library's website, www.sppl.org, under Web Links, Tax Help at the Library.

For more information, please contact the Hamline Midway Branch Library at 651-642-0293.

Hancock Rec schedules spring sports and more

Adults 50 years and older are invited to join us Thursdays from 1-4 p.m. for an afternoon of card and dice games. Both experienced and beginners are welcome. The fee is \$12 per year.

Spring Sports Registration is from February 6-16 for children ages 4-18. Sports include: volleyball, indoor soccer and floor hockey.

Warm up for the Spring Volleyball season by attending the Hancock Volleyball Camp. The camp will focus on the fun-

damental skills of passing, serving and hitting. Both boys and girls ages 7-14 are welcome as well as all skill levels. Lead camp instructor is Alyssa Larson, former Hamline University player. The fee is \$15. A \$5 discount is offered to players who register for the Spring Volleyball season at Hancock. For more information call Hancock Rec Center at 651-298-4393. Hancock Rec is located at 1610 Hubbard Avenue.

Info session held at Medicare Part D Feb. 14

A free information session regarding the latest on Medicare Part D will be held on Tuesday, February 14 at 1514 Englewood Avenue. The event is sponsored by Hamline Midway Elders and the speaker will be from the Minnesota Senior Federation. Lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Persons interested in the presentation only should arrive by 12:10 p.m. A free will donation is collected for the meal and a registered nurse will be available for blood pressure checks and consultation. For reservations and to request transportation call 651-209-6542.

Funds are still available to help family members hire a friend or relative to provide respite companionship, homemaking or meal prep. And volunteers are needed to be trained as leaders of arthritis-friendly exercise sessions. Call the Hamline Midway Elders office at 209-6542 to learn more about both opportunities. Hamline Midway Elders provides volunteer & professional assistance to keep seniors in their own homes.

Children's activities planned at Ginkgo

Ginkgo Coffeehouse is now offering multiple fun activities for children, for free.

Every Thursday from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m., children can come to Ginkgo Coffeehouse and participate in a free craft and listen to a story read by one of the Ginkgo Coffeehouse employees. The crafts range from paper bag puppets, to water colors, to simple musical instruments. Kids of all ages are welcome.

One Saturday a month, Ginkgo invites a special guest to come and entertain children. This month, on February 25 at 10 a.m. children can join the Melnick/Dahlager family and create Crop Art (artwork created out of various kinds of seeds). Again, this activity is available to all children at no costs, but donations are accepted.

Ginkgo Coffeehouse is located on the corner of Snelling and Minnehaha. Ginkgo Coffeehouse has been awarded "Best Coffeehouse" by City Pages in

2004 and 2005. Feel free to stop in for more information, or call us at 651-645-2647.

Inter-faith conference at Hamline February 12

Over 1400 children and their families depend on Keystone Community Services' Food Shelves each month. Keystone operates the largest food shelf network in the East Metro area. Existing supplies are falling far short of the need. Here is your chance to be a part of the solution to this growing crisis in our community.

Executive Director of Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank of West Michigan, John Arnold, will be the keynote speaker at the Inter-Faith Conference To Make Hunger History which will be held at Hamline University on Sunday, February 12, from 1 to 4 p.m. The conference will unite, inform, inspire and train local faith communities in a variety of successful ways they can help end hunger locally. Registration begins at 12:30 p.m.

Clergy, lay adults and youth of all faiths are encouraged to attend. Lunch will be provided and a free-will donation will be requested to help cover expenses. For more information and registration forms visit www.keystonecommunityservices.org. Your registration form may be faxed to 651-645-8057, emailed to info@kestoneservices.org, or mailed to 2000 St. Anthony Ave., St. Paul, MN, 55113. Call 651-603-6644 with your questions.

Mayor Coleman to speak at merchants group

Mayor Chris Coleman will be the featured speaker at a meeting of the University Avenue Merchants Association (UAMA) being held on Tuesday, February 28, at 8 a.m. at the Model Cities/Brownstone Building, 839 University Avenue. The Mayor is expected to outline ways his administration will work with the community in developing a vision for the central corridor. University Avenue was the only major commercial corridor in the region without a business association, until UAMA formed last year.

Also on the meeting agenda is the unveiling of a \$200,000 facade improvement grant and loan program available to merchants and property owners. In addition there will be discussion about an effort to create a marketing and branding campaign for the corridor. Finally, there will be updates on significant development proposals including the proposed SuperTarget, and the status of the bus barn site.

In addition to merchants and retailers, the general public is also invited to the meeting. For addi-

tional information, call 651-647-6711.

St. Anthony Park School open house February 13th

Observe our classrooms at St. Anthony Park Elementary School. We are hosting an open house on February 13 from 9:30 to 11:45 a.m. The annual Kindergarten Registration event is on Wednesday, March 1, from 6-7:30 p.m. We can now guarantee admission to all students who register by or at the March 1st event. Registration packets are available at the school office. Call the school at 651-293-8735.

Direct bus service to St. Anthony Park Elementary is provided in the southern parts of the Midway Como Monitor's distribution area including most southern parts of the Midway and Thomas-Dale neighborhoods. This free school bus service zone extends north from I-94, east of Snelling and west of Dale up to Pierce Butler on the north. The exception to this zone is a section of neighborhood surrounding Hancock Elementary School and Hamline University near Snelling.

St. Anthony Park Elementary (2180 Knapp St., St. Paul, MN 55108; www.stanthony.spps.org) is the St. Paul School District's neighborhood school for the northwest portion of the city. St. Anthony Park offers both full-day and half-day kindergarten options for students. Both options are offered without fees for the 2006-2007 school year.

St. Anthony Park also offers Discovery Club, an on site sliding-fee based before- and after-school program for children in kindergarten through sixth grade.

We encourage you to visit and to find out more about your fine community school. Take a tour on any school day at 10 a.m. or 2 p.m. Call the school at 651-293-8735 to schedule.

Cub Scout Pack 243 honors scouts February 27

Cub Scout Pack 243 will honor ten boys at their annual Blue and Gold Banquet on Feb 27th. These boys will be graduating from Cub scouts into local boy scout troops. The boys are: Charles Davis, Jacob Goodale, Daniel Gould, Connor Heck, David Kolar, Dylan Koltz-Hale, Greg Kruchowski, Derek Murray, Christian Strasser and Matthew Westpfahl.

These 10-12 year old boys have accomplished all of the necessary cub scout requirements and have earned many achievement pins and belt loops. First Aid, swimming, archery, sports, citizenship, artist, fitness, camping and outdoorsman are among the requirements that they have completed. Cub Scout Pack 243 meets on Monday evenings at

Jehovah Lutheran Church. Cub scouts is open to boys 6-12 years of age. If you are interested or have questions about scouts, please call Sandy Kolar, Cub Master at 651-644-6858.

St. Cecilia's to host annual parish dinner March 5

The Church of St. Cecilia invites friends and neighbors to its annual dinner on Sunday, March 5th, from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the church basement.

The dinner features roast turkey and all the trimmings. Tickets for the dinner cost \$8; children age 8 and under eat for free.

The ever popular raffle is back. Prizes include a \$500 travel voucher, donated by Park Midway Bank; an Xbox 360 console; a five megapixel digital camera; a gas grill; and a DVD player.

And this year's Silent Auction will include hand crafted hardwood lamps, sports memorabilia, theme baskets, various services, and gift certificates for many local businesses and fine restaurants.

The Church of Cecilia is located east of highway 280 at 2357 Bayless Place, just north of the intersection of University and Cromwell Avenues in St. Paul.

"Grace" program begins Monday evenings

Ever wonder what life is all about? How does God make a difference? A new Monday evening small group study featuring Philip Yancey's "What's So Amazing About Grace?" offers some answers to life's questions. Pastor Bob Benke leads the group starting at 6:30 p.m. at Jehovah Lutheran Church, corner of Thomas and Snelling just four blocks north of University Avenue. Please use the Thomas Street entrance. For more information call 651-644-1421.

St. Stephanus Men's Club holds spaghetti dinner

The St. Stephanus Men's Club is hosting their annual spaghetti dinner on Saturday, April 1st from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The menu will consist of spaghetti and meatballs, bread, pumpkin dessert, and beverage. Donation is \$6 for adults, \$4 for children ages five to twelve, or \$15 per family household. Children under five are free. For tickets, contact Arnie at the church at 651-228-1486, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. St. Stephanus is located at 739 Lafond (at the corner of Lafond and Grotto).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

In Our Community

Continued from page 10

Gamelan & Sumunar Dance Ensembles perform

The Schubert Club and The Indonesian Performing Arts Association of Minnesota (IPAAM) present two evenings of Indonesian music and dance by the Schubert Club Gamelan Ensemble and Sumunar Dance Ensemble with special guest dancer Ngurah Kertayudha at the Sundin Music Hall on Friday and Saturday, March 10 and 11, at 8 p.m.

The Schubert Club Gamelan Ensemble performs music from Java on the beautiful bronze and teak instruments of Minnesota's first gamelan orchestra. Gamelan is the mostly percussion ensemble of Indonesia that is used for both the sophisticated classical music of the region and also for lively, new, pop-influenced music. Gamelan music also accompanies many dance forms in Indonesia, several of which will appear on this weekend's Sundin Hall performances.

Special guest artist from the Indonesian consulate in Chicago, dancer Ngurah Kertayudha will perform an exciting masked dance, which depicts the character of a passionate and arrogant demon king. Ngurah Kertayudha is a graduate of the prestigious Institute of Arts in Jakarta, and has performed widely in the US in the last 15 years. This is his first appearance in the Saint Paul/Minneapolis area. In addition, IPAAM's Sumunar Dance Ensemble, led by founder Tri Sutrisno, will perform other dances from Java, ranging from lively village dances to elegant and refined court dances.

The Schubert Club Gamelan Ensemble, under the direction of its founder, Joko Sutrisno, will perform pieces in a variety of styles, including a loud and majestic religious procession from the 16th century. To this has been added a contemporary vocal part sung by guest singers from the Indonesian Muslim Faith Group of Minnesota. Other pieces on the program will demonstrate the wide musical range that gamelan is capable of representing—from the dreamy and contemplative music of the classical repertoire to the lively rhythms and infectious tunes of the twenty-first century pop styles.

Sundin Music Hall is located on the campus of Hamline University at 1531 Hewitt Avenue in Saint Paul. Parking is available in nearby surface lots.

Tickets: \$15 general admission, \$10 students

For tickets, please call the Schubert Club Box Office at 651-292-3268.

Lord's Prayer In-depth Study Offered during Lent

"Lord, teach us to pray," a 9-week study of the Lord's prayer with video input from Professor James Nestigen of Luther Seminary in St. Paul begins Sunday, February 12, in the library/lounge at Jehovah Lutheran Church, Thomas and Snelling. Discussion facilitators include Dr. Rhoda Schuler, Dr. Ken Siess and Dr. Fred Bartling.

This study lends itself well to the six weeks of Lent, the period before Easter when seekers traditionally studied and prepared for baptism at Easter. The petitions of the Lord's Prayer include many of life's quandries and needs. The community is invited to share in this study. For more information call the church office: 651-644-1421.

Warm up to music at Northwestern College

The Northwestern College Music Department is presenting two noteworthy concerts in February.

Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m., "Masterworks for Winds II" will be presented by the Symphonic Band in Maranatha Hall. Enjoy an eclectic mix of music by composers Leroy Anderson, George Gershwin and others. Admission is free.

Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m., "Hot Jazz on a Cold Winter's Night," featuring guest trombone artist Dave Graf and the Northwestern College Jazz Band in Maranatha Hall. Enjoy Graf's lyrical trombone sound as the band plays a variety of music from the 1950s to the 21st Century. Tickets are available through the Northwestern ticket office, 651-631-5151 or online at nwc.edu/tickets.

Both concerts are located on the Northwestern College campus in Roseville, 3003 Snelling Avenue North. For directions, call 651-631-5151.

La Leche discusses breastfeeding March 14

The Art of Breastfeeding and Avoiding Difficulties is the topic of the next meeting of Como-Midway La Leche League, to be held on Tuesday, March 14, at 7 p.m.

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

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

Faithfully fit exercise every Thursday

Parish Nurse Lydia Volz leads the Faithfully Fit low-impact exercise class every Thursday starting at 4 p.m. in the church lounge. This is a great chance to "do something" about starting to exercise. In addition to 40 minutes of movement, 10 minutes of health tips and 10 minutes of devotions round out the hour. Wear comfortable clothes and enter through the Thomas Street door, please.

NUCCA office hosts grand opening Feb. 11th

The only NUCCA chiropractic office in the Twin Cities and just the third in Minnesota recently opened and will be having a grand opening celebration Saturday, February 11th.

Mighty Oak Chiropractic's Dr. Rodd Bruntjen specializes in the NUCCA technique, a highly technical and non-force form of chiropractic that is practiced by only a few hundred chiropractors in the entire world.

Mighty Oak Chiropractic first opened in September 2005 and is located in the Midway area of St. Paul at 2233 Energy Park Drive.

The grand opening is open to all and will introduce the NUCCA method of healthcare to the Twin Cities community. It will be held Saturday, February 11th from noon to 3 p.m. Events will include refreshments, prizes donated by area businesses and a ribbon cutting ceremony with the president of the Midway Chamber of Commerce. More information on the grand opening and NUCCA may be obtained at 651-646-2233 and at www.mightyoak.org.

Northwestern presents 'Rainmaker' in February

The Northwestern College Theatre Department announces five performances of N. Richard Nash's "The Rainmaker," February 17, 18, 23, 24 and 25 at 7 p.m. in the Studio Theatre located in the Totino Fine Arts Center at Northwestern College, 3003 Snelling Avenue North, Roseville, Minn.

Tickets are available through the Northwestern College Ticket Office and can be purchased in advance by calling 651-631-5151 or online at nwc.edu/tickets. Ticket prices are \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and seniors (60+).

Bethel Lutheran to host AARP tax site

Bethel Lutheran Church, 670 W. Wheelock Parkway, will host a free, weekly income tax preparation and assistance service for low- to middle-income taxpayers on Mondays from 1-3 p.m., beginning February 13. The service is one of 8,500 sites nationwide sponsored by American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Tax-Aide. The program serves millions of taxpayers, with special attention to those ages 60 and older.

AARP Tax-Aide volunteers are certified by AARP trained instructors who test volunteer counselors using Internal Revenue Service (IRS) training and testing materials as well as materials furnished by the State of Minnesota Department of Revenue. Volunteers at the site do not complete complicated returns outside the scope of their training (e.g., returns for those with private businesses, limited partnerships, rental properties, etc.).

Bethel Lutheran Church is a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregation of 175 families and 332 members located in St. Paul's Como Park neighborhood. Its mission is to make disciples for Jesus Christ in its church, neighborhood and world. Individuals interested in more information about Bethel Lutheran Church, its programs and ministries can visit www.bethelstpaul.com or call 651-488-6681.

MMSA hosts information meetings in February

Maternity of Mary-St. Andrew School will host a Kindergarten In-

formation Meeting on Thursday, February 16, at 7 p.m. Parents can meet the staff and register for 2006-07 Kindergarten. MMSA offers full-day and half-day sessions. Bring a birth certificate and a \$100 registration fee if you wish to register that evening. The school offers extended day, specialists in music, art, drama, computer, library, Spanish and physical education and small class sizes. For more information or to arrange a tour, call the school office at 651-489-1459.

The Preschool Information Meeting will be held Thursday, February 23, at 7 p.m. Parents will have a chance to meet the staff and register for the Tuesday/Thursday session or the Monday/Wednesday/Friday session. Preschool hours are 8:05-10:45 a.m. Extended day is available before and after regular preschool hours. MMSA is licensed by the State and has a quality program for children 3-1/2 to 5-years-old. For more information or a tour, call the school office at 651-489-1459.

MMSA is enrolling now for students in preschool through eighth grade. The school offers extended day programs, specialists, extra-curricular activities, and a wide range of sports offerings.

Arby's Night is February 13 from 4-8 p.m. Mention MMSA when you order and a portion of the sales goes to the school. The monthly fundraiser is held at the Arby's at 2300 N. Rice Street.

Have you always wanted to go to Paris? Well, now you can! MMSA School is hosting their annual live and silent auction and sit-down dinner on Saturday, April 22, 2006. Come and enjoy "April in Paris" with the MMSA community. It's always a fun night with fabulous food and great entertainment and socializing. All proceeds benefit the school.



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Trash

Continued from page 1

Now, the neighbor is really glad he took some action.

"I was embarrassed," he said. "It came to a head. I got mad. Hopefully, he will clean it up."

One thing still bothering this neighbor is the way the vehicles at 992 Front are parked.

"I can't get into my garage," he said. "One time I couldn't get past a car in the alley, and I dented my own truck and tore a mirror off. His friends park like it's not a problem for anybody else."

While the neighbor feels some progress has been made in cleaning up the property, he's not satisfied yet.

"It's a lot better," he said. "He's been working on it. But, it's not anywhere near cleaned up. I still can't get into my garage. It's driving me crazy that they park halfway into the alley."

The neighbor worries the City will forget about the property, and the owner will revert to old bad habits.

"I'm pleased with the job the City is doing," he said. "I just feel they're not going to follow up."

Another neighbor has been concerned about 992 Front for awhile.

"I've never seen it without garbage," she said. "I hesitate to even imagine what's in the house. It's a bad situation."

This neighbor feels if you're going to have property, you have to take on the responsibility of keeping it in good condition.

"I think it's unconscionable," she said. "If people can be called for having long grass or for not shoveling their sidewalk, how does that even compare? It doesn't. It's a health hazard and it brings animals into this area making it an even greater health risk. If a child came into this area and was attacked by an animal, I just don't know what would happen."

Allowing people to get away with not taking care of their property is not setting a good example for other people who may not be inclined to keep up their property.

"When you have trash houses,



The property has had a long history of code violations having to do with garbage, trash, and maintenance to the building's exterior but was only cited once for excessive accumulation of combustible materials in the interior. (Photo by Terry Faust)

es, people infiltrate areas with questionable behaviors," she said. "This isn't a slum neighborhood. (But) it will be if we keep attracting things like this."

Living in the neighborhood

Another neighbor explains why it took the City so long to get involved.

"We haven't been complaining to the City in the past, we had just been complaining to the

"They were taking truckload after truckload from the house," said a neighbor. "They had to remove a window to get the stuff out of the house. The Saab that's there hasn't been moved in 5 years. His truck is there. A 2001 Volvo is there. It broke an oil cap. That hasn't moved in three years. The property is 37 feet wide. The driveway has six cars back there. One is hidden behind the dumpster. One was parked in front of a neighbor's garage."

While both the neighbor and neighborhood are exasperated by the situation, they would rather tolerate it than get the government involved.

"How can this get this far?" he said. "How can an owner get this far out of whack?"

The property has had a long history of code violations having to do with garbage, trash, and maintenance to the building's exterior but was only cited once for excessive accumulation of combustible materials in the interior. The *Monitor* tried to contact the building's owner, but the telephone number we were given from the City was for the person who rents the office in the building's front during tax season, and the owner's number was unlisted.

"When you have trash houses, people infiltrate areas with questionable behaviors. This isn't a slum neighborhood. (But) it will be if we keep attracting things like this."

- A South Como resident

for 25 years in her first house, the neighbor takes great pride in it.

"It's almost like he's using his yard as a landfill," she said. "I'm going to keep my eye on it."

owner," he said.

In trying to clean out the interior of the apartment, the owner had so much stuff that the dumpster spilled over.

What many residents may not realize is that they don't have to tolerate a problem property. They can call St. Paul's Citizen Complaint Office at 651-266-8989. After receiving a complaint, this office enters it into their computer system and sends it to the appropriate department to respond to.

The City will not give out the name of the person making a complaint.

"We cannot give out the name of the complainant," said Kessler. "We would be guilty of a gross misdemeanor if we did that. People can call anonymously and not give their name. If they do it, their name is kept confidential."

Neighborhood Housing and Property Improvement does interior and exterior property code inspections for single family dwellings and duplexes.

While exterior property code violations are easy to spot, interior violations are more difficult. A homeowner may try to deny the City inspector access to the interior of their dwelling, but the City has a way to get in.

"If we suspect a major violation, then we can get warrants," said Kessler. "The rental of a one- and two-family structure can be a problem."

If inspectors determine a complaint is valid, they may issue a work order telling what homeowners need to do and the deadlines to have the work completed. If the problem is not taken care of, homeowners may get an administrative fine or criminal citation. As a last resort, the City may issue a summary abatement, which is usually a threat warning homeowners that if the problem is not taken care of in 72 hours, they will go in with a crew, clean it up, and charge them for it.

"The City charges \$250 an hour because of equipment and the crew," said Kessler.

Parking issues are a police matter.

"There must be at least 10 feet available in the alley for right-of-way for other vehicles to pass," said Kessler. "It's a police matter if the alley is blocked. Police tag cars if they're blocking the alley."

When homeowners are not able to maintain their property due to illness, because they're a senior citizen, or because of personal problems, it seems like the City is heartless.

"We want them to maintain their property," said Kessler. "We have a lot of tools and a good deal of discretion. Sometimes it becomes habitual. The challenge of this job is trying to get people to be responsible."

Problem property?

If you're having a problem with a house in your neighborhood, you can call the Citizen Service Office at 651-266-8989. If you want to track a problem property, you can go to the City's website at StPaul.gov. To contact your area's City Council representative, Ward 5 Councilmember Lee Helgen, call 651-266-8650; Ward 1 Councilmember Deborah Montgomery, call 651-266-8610; Ward 4 Councilmember Jay Benanav, call 651-266-8640.



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Dr. Ronald Saari, Senior Pastor

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6:00-8:30 p.m. Junior High/Senior High Activities

6:30-8:00 p.m. Children's Activities (kindergarten-6th grade)

6:30-8:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study/Prayertime

6:30-8:00 p.m. Worship Choir Rehearsal

6:30-7:30 p.m. Fit-4

7:30 p.m. Pilates

6:30 p.m. Love & Logic Parenting Classes (for info call 651-646-2751)

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History corps hope to change Hamline-Midway's place in history

By JANE MCCLURE

When it comes to local history, Hamline-Midway is sometimes the forgotten neighborhood. Hamline-Midway History Corps founders Kristi Mather and Phil Reinhardt hope to change that.

The two are fellows in the LISN or Leadership in Support of Neighborhood Program, a cooperative effort of Hamline University and Hamline-Midway Coalition. More than two dozen people attended the Hamline-Midway History Corps first meeting January 28. They filled the basement of the Hamline Park Playground building to look at pictures, see a display from Minneapolis' Southeast Como neighborhood and discuss ideas and resources.

The new Hamline-Midway group wants to hear ideas for future projects and programs that community members would be interested in. Some neighborhoods have done calendars. Residents of the old Rondo neighborhood recently compiled a book of oral histories.

Although several St. Paul

neighborhoods have had historical societies over the years, Reinhardt said there are few groups today in St. Paul and Minneapolis. Hamline-Midway neighborhood residents had gathered historical resources several years ago and put them at the Hamline-Midway Branch Library. But those resources have since been sent downtown, to the St. Paul History Collection.

Much of the first History Corps session January 28 focused on ways to research the history of one's home. Mather said there are many resources available for those wanting to learn more about home history. As more information becomes available online, ways of doing research are changing. But one downside is that costs for copies of information can rise, if researchers don't plan their work carefully.

One key piece of advice from the History Corps is that home history researchers need to be patient and take their time. For example, the St. Paul Public Library's St. Paul Collection is only open two evenings a week.

Getting a copy of some of your home's historic documents now means going to the Ramsey County Historical Society. The City of St. Paul donated the historic property records to the county the records are only available once a week, for a fee.

Another challenge is if your street name or house number has changed. Englewood Avenue has not always been Englewood.

Mather suggests starting with the web site of Ramsey County Property Record and Revenue, <http://rrinfo.co.ramsey.mn.us> This site can be used to look up property characteristics and tax information on a property in St. Paul and Ramsey County. This is a good place to start research if you do not have an abstract of title or torrens title available. Information can also be found on the City of St. Paul web site, at <http://www.stpaul.gov/maps>

To get a copy of your house's original building index card/building permit, you have to go to the Ramsey County Historical Society. You can email research@rchs.com or visit <http://rchs.com>

Ramsey County and St. Paul historic officials worked together years ago to prepare a city-county historic sites survey. Not all area homes are in there but several homes, business buildings and places of worship are listed. The closest place to find a copy of the survey is the Roseville Branch of the Ramsey County Library, in its Minnesota History collection.

The Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) has many resources for those interested in home history, Mather said. In fact, there is currently an exhibit at MHS detailing the history and the many families who have occupied a dwelling in St. Paul's Railroad Island neighborhood.

MHS regularly offers a class, for a fee, for persons interested in researching home history. There are also free general orientation sessions for first-time researchers who visit MHS.

MHS has a photo library, with many images available online. While there's not a picture of every house on every street, houses can be found in many street scenes or in pictures beside a business, church or school.

There is also a collection of pictures taken along railroad lines, in which houses or business buildings can be seen. The History Corps suggests looking for Midway photos under different street names as well as neighborhood names.

Another service from MHS is birth certificates, many of which can be found online. Copies of old neighborhood newspapers are on microfilm, including the original *Midway Monitor* that was published more than 60 years ago. The *Hamline Oracle*, the Hamline University student paper, also includes some historic information about the neighborhood.

There is also a collection of old city directories at MHS, so researchers can see who lived in a house years ago.

People at the meeting had additional ideas, such as finding printed obituaries for previous owners of one's home. Another idea is to look up census data to learn more about a home's previous occupants. Institutional histories of area churches and schools can also be drawn on.

LETTERS

Kudos on St. Paul's new smoking ban

Last month the City of St. Paul became the next in a growing number of Minnesota cities to protect public health by passing a smoke-free ordinance for bars and restaurants.

Despite pressure from a handful of bar owners and the actions of Hennepin County Commissioners—who recently rolled back their own smoke-free ordinance—St. Paul city leaders stayed focused on what we know to be true: the health benefits of smoke-free ordinances far outweigh any potential economic impact.

I'm glad that St. Paul has become part of the momentum that continues to grow for smoke-free policies instead of becoming a community that turns its back on the proven health benefits of smoke-free environments.

Thank you to our St. Paul City Council and the Mayor Coleman.

Marietta Dreher
Hamline-Midway Resident

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Black History Month events planned at Hamline University

Hamline University will host the following events for Black History Month. All events are sponsored by Hamline University and are free and open to the public (tickets are required for one event). For more information about these events, please call the Center for Multicultural and International Student Affairs at 651-523-2423.

Saturday, February 11: Black Entertainment Showcase: A Return to the Stage Bush Student Center Ballroom, 6:30 p.m.

Laugh, dance, shout, sing! Flash back to the days when Motown ruled the airwaves, when jazz and blues were the soundtracks, when gospel lifted spirits and comedy soothed pain, when Billie and Dinah were our reigning queens, and Richard Pryor was king. University and local entertainers perform and pay tribute to the legends who paved the way for today's performers. Local celebrities Thomasina Petrus and Regina Williams will headline this event.

Monday, February 13: Understanding the Hip-Hop Generation: A Keynote Address by Alexis Pate Kay Fredericks Room, Klas Center, 7 p.m.

Author, educator and performer, Alexis Pate is an associate professor of African-American and African studies at the University of Minnesota, where he teaches courses on fiction writing, English, and literature. His novel *Losing Absalom* received a Minnesota Book Award and was named Best First Novel by the Black Caucus of the American Library Association. Other novels include the New York Times best-seller *Amistad: The Novel*, *Finding Makeba*, *The Multicultural Sideshow*, winner of a 2000 Minnesota Book Award, and, most recently, *West of Rehoboth*.

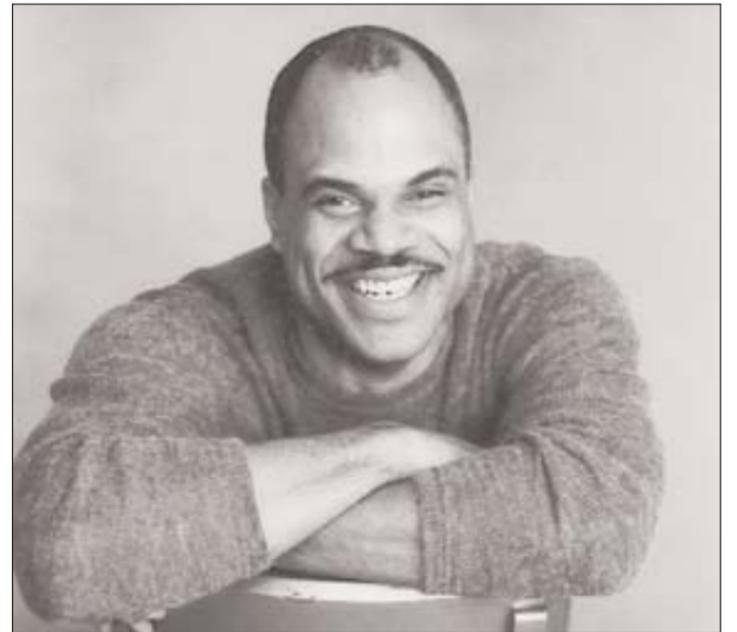
Thursday, February 23: Tribute to August Wilson: Remembering the Legacy, Lighting the Way, Sundin Music Hall, 7:30 p.m. Free, but tickets are required. Call 651-523-2420 for

ticket information.

Join the Hamline community for an evening of celebration and reflection on the life, artistry and legacy of August Wilson. Penumbra Theatre Company's Tonia Jackson, Terry Bellamy, T. Mychael Rambo, James A. Williams, and Regina A. Williams will join Hamline students to restage the theatrical magic from Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, and *King Hedley II*.

Sunday, February 26: 16th Annual Gospel Night: "... In the Days of Your Youth," Sundin Music Hall, 6 p.m.

Celebrate the legacy of gospel music in the Black community at this inspirational worship service. The Hamline University Gospel Choir, choirs from First Trinity Church of God in Christ and Christ Temple Apostolic Church and other musical groups will perform. Donations will benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina.



Join the Hamline community for an evening of celebration and reflection on the life, artistry and legacy of August Wilson. Penumbra Theatre Company's Tonia Jackson, Terry Bellamy, T. Mychael Rambo (pictured above), James A. Williams, and Regina A. Williams will join Hamline students to restage the theatrical magic from Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson*, *Seven Guitars*, *Fences*, and *King Hedley II*.

Target

Continued from page 5

"If expenses are too high, the store does not generate enough revenue," he said. "Every store has to stand on its own."

An audience member expressed concern about fair labor and treatment of employees. In response to a question about how the Super Target will affect Roundy's Rainbow grocery, Carrico said he believes there is enough business for all, and Target is not seeking to run

any other stores off.

"We deal every day with the big-box moment," he said. "It is what it is, a 175,000 square-foot prototype. We provide great service and a great experience to our guests."

"We treat our team members with great respect," Logan said. "It is in our best interest to retain them."

Carrico said the company has explored the possibility of a parking ramp, and it is a cost issue. "It is not economically feasible for us to do it at this location," he said. He said that safety is a concern as well in structured parking.

One audience member de-

scribed the Midway area as a critical part of the city and said he saw the creation of the Super Target as an opportunity to get cooperation to really think big, if more money were invested by the state. He said he saw jobs, housing and benefits to the community.

"A lot of us were hoping this was a chance for something different, but I don't think it is," the audience member said.

Carrico said he thinks it is. "We believe this option we've presented is the best option we have today. We struggle with how we do our best for our guests, too."

Lasley said there would be

bike parking located in the front, screened cart storage and smaller street width.

Another individual in attendance said he was really disappointed in the design and had thought Target would be more of an innovative leader.

Lasley said that to a retailer, parking is everything. "If you, as a consumer, can't find a place to park, you'll go somewhere else."

Lasley also said Target is conscious of the fact LRT might come in, but the store would be designed very much the same whether LRT is a factor.

Logan said they would love to have a transit stop in front of

the store.

Lasley said the parking lot will have four entrances, and an east-west connector will relieve some of the congestion. The parking spaces will be 9' x 18'. The current Target will remain open during construction.

At the meeting's end, McMahon said he would love the opportunity to present some ideas to Target. Carrico said it would have to be done quickly, because Target is currently heating a vacant hotel and needs to move on construction.

Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-District 66) attended the meeting. She said in a later interview that she was sympathetic to the community concerns about closing the hotel and opening a Super Target.

"Most people like having some of those stores to shop at," she said. "We need to strike a balance. Menards, for example, was a bit success. It's good to not have to drive to a suburb to get what we want."

Anderson said she sees the need for transit-oriented development, but the design of the stores needs to be incorporated into planning along University Avenue.

"It's really encouraging that the district councils are talking to each other," she said.

"There are creative solutions going on," Anderson continued. "We shouldn't be treated as second-class citizens along University Avenue. Why isn't University Avenue deserving and the city insisting we get more?"

She said she supports community efforts to incorporate housing with smaller and more local retail.

"I hope we can make some common-sense decisions," she added.

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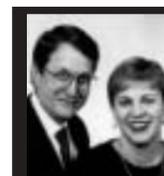
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Armed robberies reported on college campuses

Recent armed robberies in Hamline-Midway neighborhood have prompted a warning from area law enforcement and campus security officials. Both Hamline University and Macalester College officials issued warnings in late January.

At approximately 10:30 p.m. January 20, two students were approached by two men and robbed at gunpoint of their purses. The incident occurred near the Hamline Apartments, 1470 Englewood Av. The male suspects are described as African-Americans. One is between five feet five inches and five feet six inches tall, of aver-

age build and in his early to mid 20s. He was wearing a black baseball cap, a black, puffy hip-length jacket and armed with a small black handgun.

The second man is described as between five feet seven inches and five feet eight inches tall, with a bigger build than a first man. He was also wearing a baseball cap and possibly a green jacket. The students were approached by the first man while the second man stayed close to the street. The students were threatened with the gun before they gave up their purses. Both suspects fled toward Osborn Hall after the

robbery.

A Macalester College student was robbed at gunpoint near Summit Avenue and Fry Street at midnight January 25. Three men committed that robbery. All are African-American. One is about five feet, six inches tall, wearing a tan jacket. A second is five feet, eight inches tall, wearing a black down coat. The third was five feet, 10 inches tall, wearing a red coat with brown lining. It's not clear if the two incidents are related.

Anyone with information is asked to call St. Paul Police at 651-291-1111 or campus security.

Find us on the web at: www.MidwayComoMonitor.com

We Minnesotans are in serious danger of losing our bragging rights. Maybe I'm tempting the fates when I say that this has been a wimpy winter so far. I don't miss the bone-chilling temperatures, but I do miss the long blue shadows cast over drifts of brilliant white. Besides insulating the ground when it does get cold, snow provides cover for the small mammals that are active during the winter months.

If you have a backyard birdfeeder, look at the snow under your feeder. You will probably see a network of tiny trails right under the surface of the shallow snow with about 1 inch diameter entrance holes that converge at the feeder. I have often stood in the dark of night hoping to see the meadow vole or short-tailed shrew that made these trails under our feeder. (During other seasons the trails are visible in the grass and leaf litter.) Alas, I have never seen a vole or shrew emerging from their snow tunnels, but I have seen both these small mammals in our yard at different times of the year.

The meadow vole (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) is a common rodent that looks like a stout mouse only with its nose flattened and its tail shortened. Meadow voles have a huge reproductive capacity, and they eat all kinds of plant material including the bark of fruit trees. Over the years I've only seen one vole in our yard and I've never seen gnawing damage at the base of any of our trees or shrubs. Maybe I have the shrews to thank for this absence of voles.

A short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*) is a minute insectivore with a whiskered pointy snout, eyes the size of tiny black beads, and ears too small to see



Neighborhood Naturalist

By DEB ROBINSON

Mighty little hunters under the snow

through their velvet grey fur. Weighing no more than an ounce, you would think that this tiny predator couldn't take on anything larger than an earthworm or

ever, the active peptide present in the shrew's venom may someday prove beneficial to humans and is being studied both in Japan and Canada as a possible treatment for

came home from work, I heard frantic scratching coming from the bucket. Curious, yet a little apprehensive, I looked inside to see a short-tailed shrew treading water.



Illustration by Deb Robinson

a snail, but this species of shrew has a secret weapon.

Blarina brevicauda is the only venomous animal on the North America mainland; a shrew, with salivary glands that produce a neurotoxin, can immobilize its prey with one bite. This allows the shrew to tackle an animal bigger than itself, like a vole.

A human that handles a shrew may get a painful bite, but nothing health threatening. How-

migraines, neuromuscular diseases, and high blood pressure.

My first close encounter with this awesome little predator was during an early winter storm several years ago. There was already snow on the ground, but the snow had turned to rain by evening. My weeding bucket had been inadvertently left outside next to the back step where the snow had piled up to its edge making the bucket an accidental pit-fall trap. When I

I tipped the bucket on its side to let the water out, but the shrew stayed inside. Did the exhausted little insectivore need food immediately? I'd heard that shrews must eat frequently. (Later I learned that short-tailed shrews, unlike smaller species of shrews, can live for up to 24 hours without eating.) Just when I thought that the cold, sodden creature might be too weak to survive its ordeal, it lunged at me with a fearless snarl that sounded

like a loud kiss. I could only laugh and let the mighty hunter be on its way at its own speed.

Since that night I've seen short-tailed shrews many times in my yard, but never again in winter even though they are active year-round. Besides eating small rodents and all manner of invertebrates, it has been discovered that short-tailed shrews occasionally eat some plant parts (perhaps seeds under the feeder). This flexibility in diet may be why they are common across the northeastern third of North America. Yet, few people see them and few people are aware of the shrews' useful place in the urban environment.

Our backyard functions better as a miniature eco-system when I refrain from trying to control nature. I've learned to let the shrews work at keeping the insects and voles in check. I'm even content when I don't catch sight of the shrews themselves because their hunting progress is written in the trails under the snow and leaves.

Endnotes: *Help shape a vision for a greener St. Paul - attend an Environmental Roundtable meeting on the topic "Greening the Built Environment" at St. Anthony Park Library (2245 Como Ave.) on Feb. 16, 7 pm. "Improving Green Space" will be the topic at Hamline Law Grad Room 106 (1492 Hewitt Ave.) on March 15, 7 am. More info at: www.eurekarecycling.org/environmentalroundtable/ *A turtle conservation program will be presented by natural resource manager, John Moriarty, at the St. Paul Audubon Society meeting held at the Fairview Community Center (1910 W. County Rd. B in Roseville) on March 9 at 7 p.m. *To contact this writer: dm-robinson@bitstream.net

HAMLIN UNIVERSITY



UPCOMING EVENTS ❖ FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2006

Black History Month Celebration

All events are free and open to the public.
Contact information for all events: MISA Office, 651-523-2423

Keynote Address "The Hip Hop Generation"

Speaker: Alexs Pate, author, educator, performer
Date: Monday, February 13
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Klas Center, Kay Fredericks Room

16th Annual Gospel Night

Date: Sunday, February 26
Time: 6 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall

Third International Piano e-competition Screening Auditions

Dates: February 10, 11, 12
Time: call for times
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Cost: Free and open to the public
Contact: 651-523-2197

Health Care and Elder Law

Part of the Hamline Dialogue series "Thinking Forward: Finding Future Direction for Today's Critical Issues." For more information and to register, go to www.hamline.edu/news_events/dialogues/36621.html
Date: Thursday, February 16
Time: 4-6 p.m.
Location: Klas Center, Kay Fredericks Room
Cost: \$10
To Receive Credit: \$25 (for the Graduate School of Management, CEUs, or CLEs)
Contact: Kristen Norman-Major, 651-523-2814

The Rose Ensemble

Featuring a program focusing on the origins of Hawaiian music
Dates: February 17, 18
Time: 8 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: www.roseensemble.org for ticket information

Tribute to August Wilson: Remember the Legacy, Lighting the Way

Special guest appearances by Penumbra Theatre actors
Date: Thursday, February 23
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Cost: Free and open to the public
Contact: 651-523-2197

The Rose Ensemble

Featuring Bass John Bitterman and Contralto Lisa Drew (with Sonja Thompson, piano)
Date: Sunday, March 5
Time: 3 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Cost: \$10, tickets available at the door
Contact: 651-523-2197

Hamline University Jazz Ensemble

Annual high school jazz festival
Date: Thursday, March 9
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Location: Sundin Music Hall
Contact: 651-523-2296

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